

NORTH NOTABLES



THE REGION'S BEST AND BRIGHTEST.

BY KATIE DOHMAN

KELLY NETISHEN AND HOLLIE BLANCHARD

Art Girls

After working in fashion, at high-end art galleries, and as stylists and interior designers, sisters-in-law Kelly Netishen and Hollie Blanchard gained a great understanding of how style and creative expression work together holistically — and realized that a lot of people didn't think the hunt was as fun, engaging or satisfying as they did.

Enter their brainchild: Art Girls, a full-service art concierge firm. They handle sourcing artists, styles, mediums, framing, staging, shipping, installation — you name it — for residential and commercial spaces from coast to coast. You just get to admire it.

"Our mission is to make fine art more fun," Netishen explains. "Hollie and I make really good partners; we bring creativity and happiness to the process of looking for fine art." To wit: They recall one couple who had been looking for artwork for a particular space in their residence for nearly a decade. One round of Art Girls' magical sourcing, and the job was done. Plus some clients get the collecting bug; one even sold her Harley to acquire more art.

One major perk? The confidence of knowing a piece will work in your unique abode. The duo works closely with artists to bring the works to your house for a test drive of sorts for up to two weeks. "By seeing the artwork in their home versus just in a gallery, clients are able to feel the excitement, the emotional pull and the synergy that manifests when the art is in the right space," Blanchard asserts. And that inspires the confidence to make an investment.

Companies are starting to use Art Girls' services, too. The W Minneapolis, for instance, recently tapped them to redesign the historic Foshay Tower's elevator foyers. They elected to showcase two alternating works that were made into larger-than-life wall coverings that greet guests and set the tone for their stay.

But it's not just about putting art on a wall. As concierges, they want to not only connect clients to art, but also give artists access to new audiences and platforms. "We're working to crack the code," Netishen notes. "And we're finding that a lot of people are hungry to buy art, but they just don't know where to go or they haven't found anything with the resources they've tried."

In one case, Blanchard spotted the work of Minneapolis-based mixed-media artist Stephanie Dillon on Instagram and discovered that she had representation on the coasts, but not here at home. "We needed a fine artist who dabbled more in a rock-and-roll vibe," Blanchard says. "We fell in love with Stephanie, her work and her mission." Dillon's Citizen T project, which involves rescuing and upcycling discarded T-shirts with her art, is just one such endeavor that resonated with them. And because Art Girls has a charitable component, Blanchard and Netishen found Dillon's business model to be simpatico with their own.

Those genuine connections create a deep, lasting love and understanding of the artwork — which the duo insists is the most important part. After all, the works may or may not appreciate in value, but the clients will always appreciate the art. "Art can be intimidating, but we like to think we add ease and comfort for a rewarding experience," Blanchard concludes. "We are changing the way it once was, and we're having a ton of fun along the way."

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