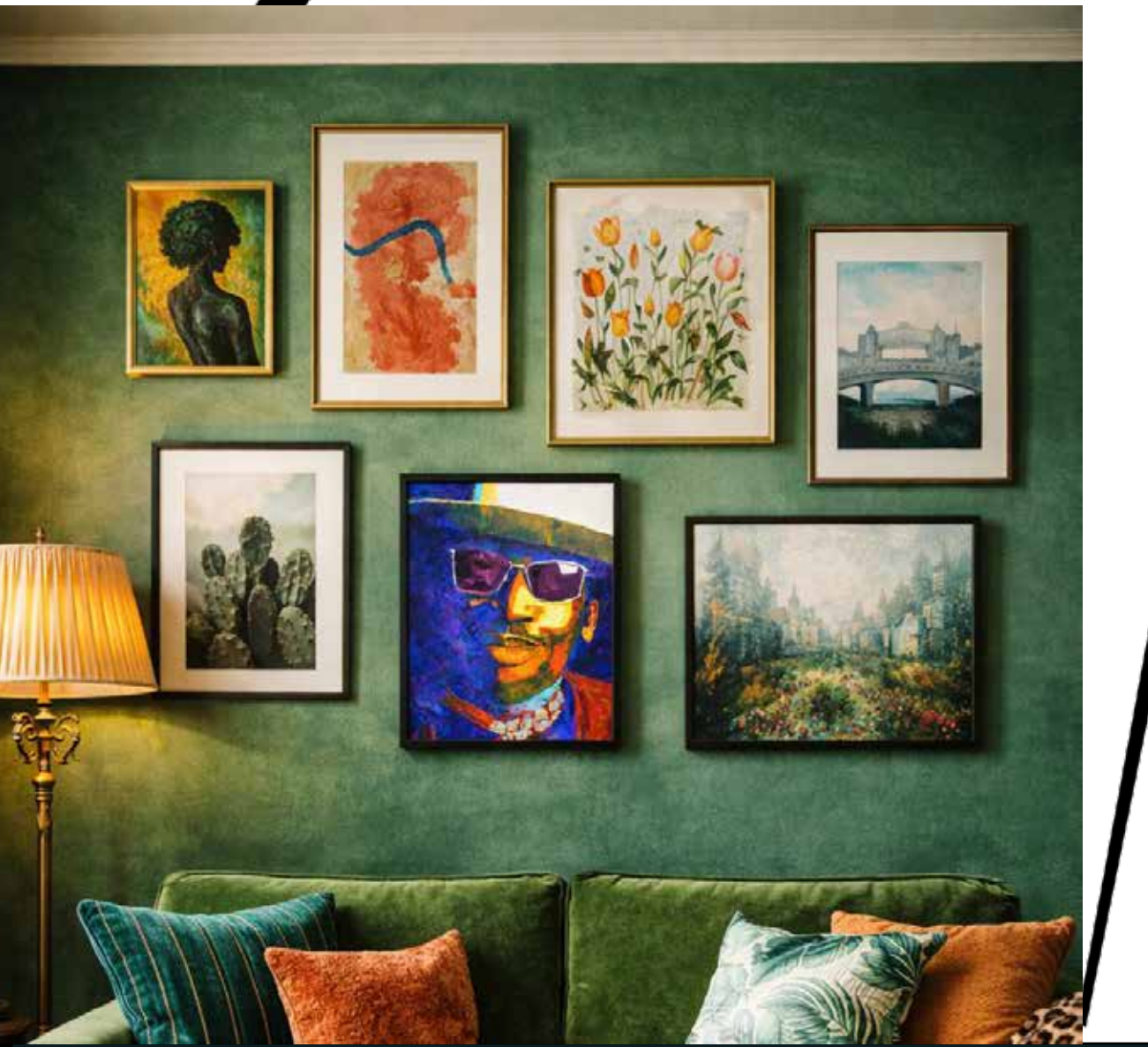


*Hollis*



# *Collecting & Styling*

## **A GUIDE TO GALLERY WALLS**

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**A step-by-step guide to creating your first, unique, gallery wall that doesn't break the bank including a SPECIAL BONUS OFFER from the studio.**



# HELLO & WELCOME

Hi There,

I'm so glad you're here, with the studio now and thanks for signing up to dig into the stories and new pieces that make my heart flutter.

Welcome to my own private "Harvard Yard" so-to-speak. I grew up in Massachusetts and Boston is just a day trip away from the studio. I have an exclusive surprise that I hope you enjoy at the end of this guide but for now this is going to be a how-to guide to creating a gallery wall.

My first studio space here was first formed with arranging my art inside my studio into a gallery wall. I also curate my own shows and I have a bachelors in Interior Design-- so I got you.

Here's the thing. One of the best ways to add personal style to any space is to create a gallery wall. These curated compositions of art will give your space a ton of character. The options for a final look and feel are endless. Big, small, modern, antique, or a mix of styles...original art, prints, photos, or handmade items. The sky isn't even the limit!

Before you stress, remember that you don't need to be a professional interior designer to create a gorgeous gallery wall.

I've got you covered and will give you exact step-by-step instructions to create your gallery wall. It doesn't need to be intimidating or break the bank and is actually quite simple.

This guide will walk you through the entire process of how you can include some of my pieces, how to layout, and how to hang your art, plus some pro tips to get it just right- the first time!

Let's dive in-



**FOLLOW ME:**



“I think of my paintings as the contemporary layer in a long story — meant to sit comfortably beside older things, not replace them.”

— Hollis Machala, RIWS

## A BRIEF HISTORY

Before I take you by the hand and walk you through my process of creating your gallery wall, I want to take you to the Wayback machine with me (Back to the Future...anyone?). Did you know that gallery walls go back all the way to the 1600s? They were called “salon walls” and had a myriad of different-sized and textured art displayed in one space. Like a wall collage, before salon walls came into fashion, art was staler and the classic way to decorate French courts. After all, salons were the place where most important thinkers and intellectuals gathered their minds.

The first salon was established in 1670 at the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture in Paris. From there on, the new “trend” spread like wildfire, and more and more salons took it on; the wall-to-wall artworks that captured the artistic spirit of that time.

So, isn't it amazing how we get to turn our homes in the 21st century into “salons” in our own time? It's 2026, and some people believe a gallery wall is a thing of the past. However, when done right, a gallery wall like the one we're about to create together is a brilliant way to display your artwork collection and make a wow moment in your space, aka “The salon.”



# GATHER YOUR PERSONAL HISTORY

This year is about slowing down and a my paintings are meant to do that in the best way possible. The paintings can live inside a story-rich home — one layered with memory, place, and personal history. These works are contemporary heirlooms, which can stand alone but are also designed to sit comfortably beside older pieces while adding fresh energy and texture. Below the turquoise *New England Neptune* painting anchors the coastal vibe you love.

## Historic Coastal Gallery Walls

In historic coastal or colonial-inspired spaces, the painting becomes the modern anchor. It pairs beautifully with antique maps, botanical studies, quiet seascapes, and inherited portraits. Frames need not match — variation signals confidence and a collected eye.



## What Lives Next to a Hollis Machala Painting.

- Objects with provenance or personal history
- Art that whispers rather than shouts
- Natural materials: linen, aged wood, brass, stone
- One human element to ground the story

## What to Avoid in your Gallery Wall

Highly trendy decor, overly glossy photography, or loud abstract work can compete with the texture and story of the painting. The work shines best when surrounded by pieces that feel timeless and intentional.



### **X** WHAT DOESN'T PAIR WELL

Highly trendy decor, overly glossy photography, or loud abstract work can compete with the texture and story of the painting. The work shines best



*Collected Coast*

### **PRO TIP**

For your next gallery wall project, place darker colors opposite one another, and if you have more than one sketch or repeating color, I also tend to have those opposite one another. Consider the lines and the expression gazes of each piece. Proper placement keeps the eye moving and the viewing experience dynamic. Go with your gut.

## COLLECTED COASTAL HOME

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A way of living with art — layered, storied, and gathered over time

It's poetic, warm, intimate, and narrative-driven. Emphasizes place and belonging.



## LET'S GET STARTED

All right, it's time to get hands-on with your new gallery wall.

On the following pages, I'll explain to you step-by-step how in just a single afternoon you can transform any wall in your home into a jaw dropping display of art in different colors, textures, and frames.

If at some point you have questions or have unique spaces that you're unsure of how to deal with, please don't shy away from reaching out to me.

I will personally read and answer every message promise.



## HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED



Firstly, I hope you have fun picking out or choosing the painting that most speaks to you to anchor your gallery wall. If you like my collected coastal style then just choose from these three below. If you would like to see more styles for gallery walls [contact me here](#) and let me know what kind of vibe you are looking for and I'd be happy to help further.

**Option 1: New England Neptune**

**Option 2: Right Whale - Moody Blues** ←.....→

**Option 3: Schooner Ernestina**

**\* PURCHASE PRO TIP on HollisMakesArt.com**

Write down the size options of your favorite piece, but Do NOT Purchase until, you finish the layout arrangement and measurements of each piece (see pages 10, 15, 16 & 17) Measure Twice. Cut Once!

2. Grab 30% OFF the print that will anchor your gallery wall from [my online shop](#) with code **GALLERYBFF** at checkout. This 30% off gives you a chance to get the frame as well on my shop so it arrives ready to hang.

3. So to not overwhelm you, I suggest you pick as least one piece of art that is personal to you, one that holds a story for you, which you may or may not have. Framed or unframed. [Order extras or get inspired here.](#) Frames can be found here too. If you need to DIY the frame. If you already have a few pieces great! Find the rest (you can pick up to eleven items if you have the wall space) and then...

4. Once you pick your Hollis anchor piece and your personal piece/s you may want to print a personal piece so you may need these things. (Personally, I like ordering the framed art size I need sometimes on etsy.com so most of it is done and I can usually find another unique item and another artist to support.)

- **Canvas Paper** to print your artwork on and a printer. It's going to look authentic! But I hope you have something authentic to work with or frame. (Something you made. Maybe your kids first shell art)

- Sharp scissors or an **x-acto blade**

- **Get a few frames. (For each piece as needed)** I love to incorporate vintage or thrifted frames whenever possible.

- **Frog tape.** This is great for visualizing.

- Wall hooks or a **picture hanging set** or command hooks.

- Measuring tape from 25 - 60 inches

- Pencil and Level. I love this **level and hangar** in one.





## ABOUT HOLLIS'S PRINTS

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It is such an honor and love of mine when one of my pieces becomes the main statement piece in someones space or even just a little slice of a gallery wall but it is a little bit of a challenge even for me to think about how the styles of the rooms really can make or break a gallery wall. "Right Whale" above can go both ways. One rule of thumb is, if you're starting on a white wall try something similar to page 4, 6, or 7.

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I can't get over how this painting gives me chills. I fell madly in love with the five colors, bold contrast, hints of gold on the original, and the moody sky in this piece. Of course, the look is austere and the rock is grounding and provokes thoughts of time and story. I really enjoy the stillness within the texture.

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I have a rule. Every gallery wall has to be a passion project or you might give up on the process.

I love this particular piece because its more abstract than the other two. The background to me reads like the ocean foam flowing over a shell embedded in the sand. The wide palette knife stokes give it movement and an enticing new life and rebirth feeling. There's always time to start a new with renewed hope - always.

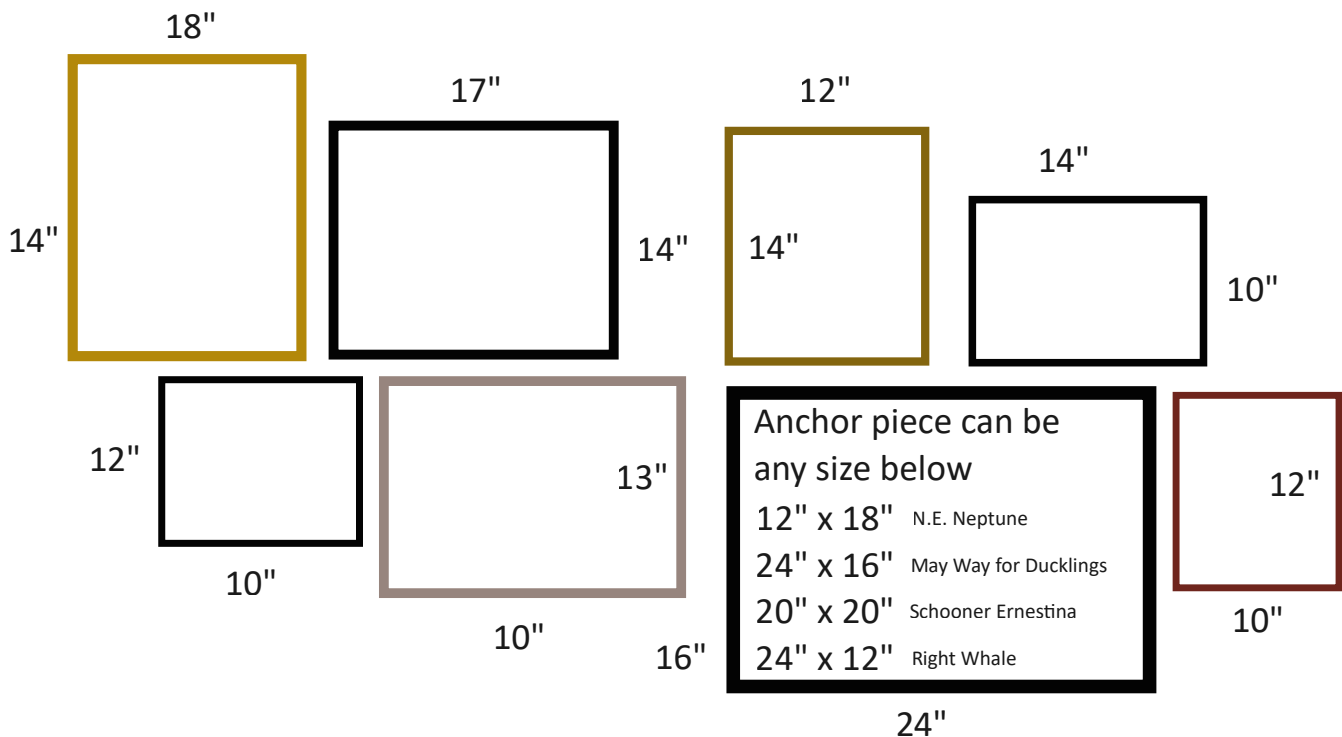
So don't give up when something feels off in a gallery wall take it as your cue to keep looking for that perfect piece that fits the puzzle of this unique expression of you.





## DOWNLOAD + GATHER YOUR FAVORITE ART

Let's face it. Wall art can make or break a space. It's no secret that some of the best interior designs use framed art as a focal point to not only tie the elements of a room together but infuse personality and charm into a home. The challenging thing is that it can get costly, and there are a million and one ways one can go about buying and placing art. Coordinating the proper supplies, art colors, layout, and frames can be a challenge. How do you do it well? Don't worry I gotcha...



**Figure A:** This layout is good centered on at least 80" w x 45" h visible wall space. It's great for behind a standard three seat couch. *To get started pick one anchor piece and try these dimentions and layout. Some adjustments might be needed. Keep it fun!*

Get a piece of personal art ready in one of the other art spaces. This will make the gallery wall unique and meaningful to you! It can be anything you want it to be. A drawing from your kids, a cute polaroid, a poster, or maybe an antique map you brought back from one of your travels. You got this! Don't worry about them working design wise just lay them out in one of these configurations. *Figure A* above is one idea. This also works on that corner wall or hall corner that needs a pop of interest. Simply place the left four on the left wall and the right four on the right wall. **And remember! Measure twice. Hang once!**



## COLOR PALETTE - TAKE A LOOK AT EACH PIECE

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### WHAT TO CONSIDER

Aside from the actual subject matter of a gallery wall, the color palette and frame selection really help guide the entire mood and feel of the final look. I prefer a modern collected eclectic - full of lived-in charm and imperfection. Bonus points if the final gallery wall feels traveled. Some like a pop of color, or a warm neutral palette of creams, and browns. Regardless you can't go wrong with my signature Collected Coastal incorporating the anchor piece from the studio with softer neutral or blue or yellow tones paired with wooden or gold / pewter frames. This combination produces an inviting, and complex aesthetic. Pair vintage-inspired art with an uneven texture that is more neutral or low contrast (opposite of the anchor piece to give it space to breath but not feel out of place) with a 3D piece, like antlers or feather wreath or even lightly painted watercolor landscapes like page 3 has, or with sketches/watercolors to juxtapose the look and create an upscale modern vibe that never fails.

It's a lot I know. Good news! I did all of this for you already in the visuals here so feel free to find things that are similar in subject and scale that are your own to make the wall uniquely you.

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#### PRO TIP

I achieve my signature look through collecting and thrifting for antique frames. If you want to go all out and step it up a notch, read my resource post about the best places to shop for affordable thrifting and antique frames:

[Read My Tips](#)

#### IMPORTANT NOTE:

I'm about to tell you the best DIY for printing art that is your **own work**. I am not endorsing you copy and print out other artist's work and make your own gallery wall from work that is copyrighted by other artists and if you are thinking of doing this please **ONLY** do it with your own created or purchased artwork.

# 25

Disclaimer \*We do not endorse the printing or selling of any artist's work without written permission of the artist.



## PRINT AND CUT ART

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Grab this [Canvas Paper](#) and read the printing instructions. I use an Epson XP 15000 printer, but most will do.

Here's where the magic happens! Printing your art on this paper allows you to get an authentic look because the weight and texture of the paper match that of a real canvas oil painting. This paper is made specifically to be printed on a home printer up to 11" x 17" (it looks) and feels real. If the paper is sold out try to get another archival mat finish art paper.

## MEASURE AND PRINT ON CANVAS PAPER

Measure the size you need and print at that size but an inch bigger. Ensure your printer can handle the paper source. I would suggest not going above 11" x 14" unless your printer can handle it. Print at the best quality and be sure to print on the proper side. It's the side with texture.

## CROP

Once you print all your artwork, use a straight edge and scissors or an x-acto blade to make precise cuts, so you don't bend or fray the paper. This paper is much denser than traditional paper, you will want to be careful here.

You can also take one blank page and do some test cuts to get a feeling for the paper.

Make cuts to fit in the matte and frames of choice. I like to make my cuts just a tad bigger than the matte opening to prevent any gaps.

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### PRO TIP

Check out my [Resources](#) page where I share local framers and printers if you don't want to DIY the prints or the frames.





## FRAME YOUR ART

### OPEN EACH FRAME

At this point, go ahead and loosen any clips/pegs on the back and remove any paper from your frames so that you can access the old art and display glass. If this is a new frame even easier. Depending on your frame, you will want to dispose of any loose paper and potentially remove the inside art, etc. I always use a flathead screwdriver to bend up the metal pegs

### CLEAN THOROUGHLY

Wipe with a damp cloth and consider Windex to get the frame and glass as clean as possible. You don't need the glass, but I think it takes the quality of the final piece up a notch if you do. I also use a feather duster once wiped clean to avoid having any pesky dust or debris stuck to the glass that could show once framed.





## PLACE AND SET ARTWORK

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Once the frame is open, place your art in the desired location and use frog tape on the four corners to hold your art in place. I prefer this over adhesives. The tape can be removed anytime and won't damage the print or frame. Also, if you want to swap art out, you can do so easily without wear and tear

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## ASSEMBLE

Once you have your art firmly in place, proceed to reassemble your frame back together.

Be careful to bend back into place any cardboard backing and pegs to seal your picture up tight.

Before you tighten all the pegs, take a quick peek at your art from the front to see if you got everything in the right place. Nothing is worse than tightening all the pegs to realize your art looks wonky.

But if things are looking great, then flip it over and enjoy your new piece of art!

I hope it looks great and you had a good time doing it.





## LAYOUT PLACEMENT & STYLES

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Now that your artwork is framed, let's discuss how you will want each piece of art on the wall to appear so that it feels cohesive and not cluttered. Feel free to take inspirations from previous pages but creating a gallery wall with varied sizes or art with orientations both vertical and horizontal can be tricky. I prefer a natural curated timeless look, that's laid out in a free-flowing effortless layout over a grid look. Some examples of a good AND what I prefer not to do are seen below.

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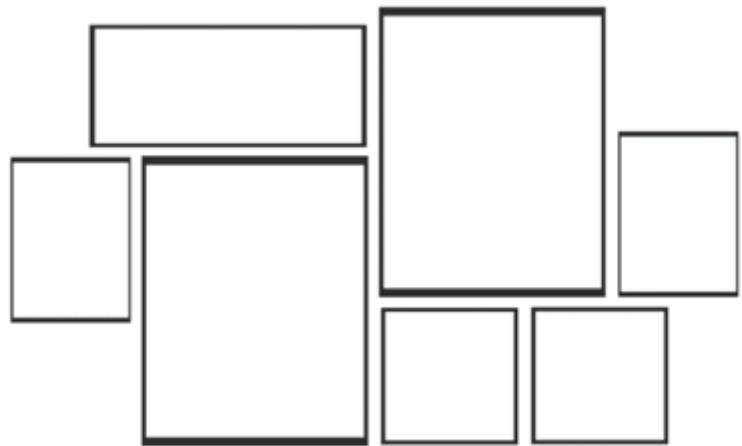
### PRO TIPS

For larger-scale gallery walls, using a variety of sizes and orientations of art will dance the eye across the design.

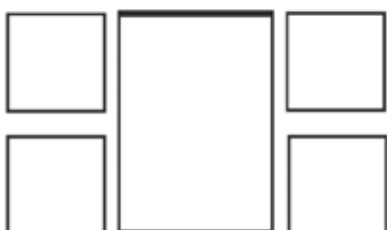
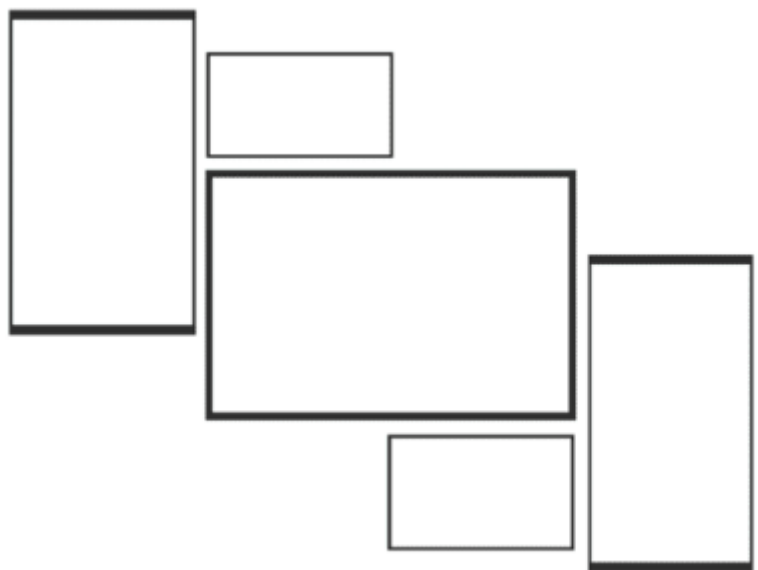
To accomplish this avoid placing identical sizes or art next to one another together, as this will make the overall design feel "forced."

Be sure to mix graphic prints, landscapes, and portraits to elevate the look of a free-flowing gallery wall.

More tips on how to create movement with your placement of art in a bit.



**YES**



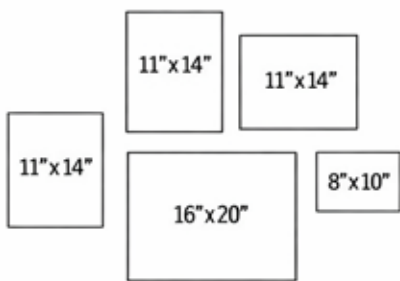
**NO**



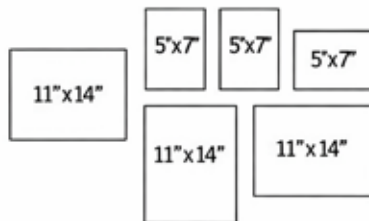
## A FEW OTHER OPTIONS

Want to try your own layout? Have a different size wall. Perhaps you don't want to use all nine pieces of art. Not a problem - get creative. Check out these other great organic layout options.

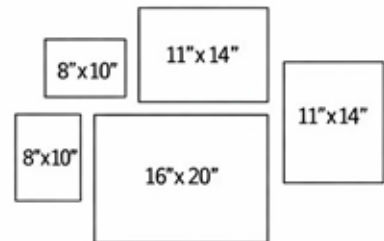
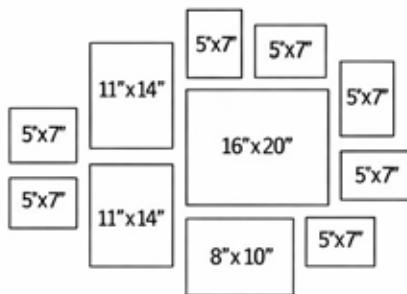
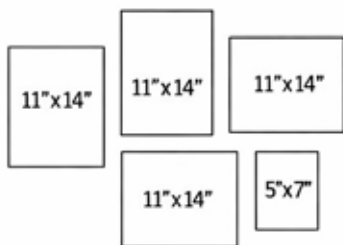
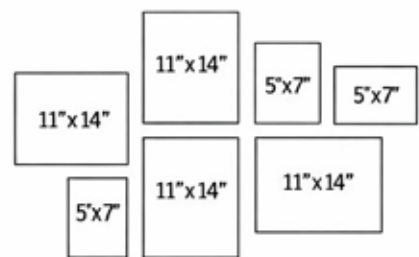
### SMALL WALLS



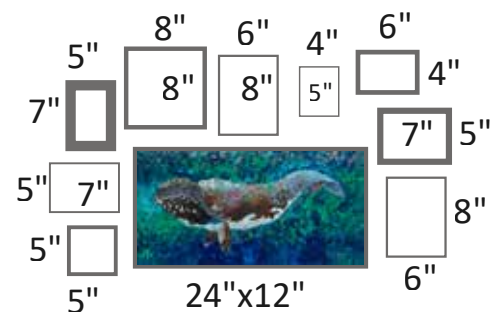
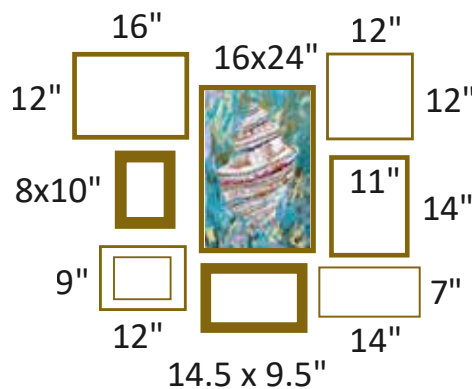
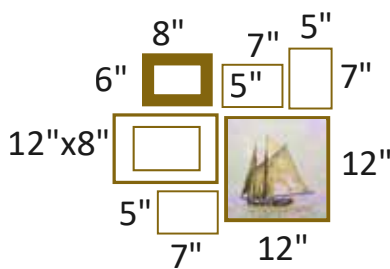
### MEDIUM WALLS



### LARGE WALLS



## Anchor Piece Layout Suggestions



10

## MEASURE YOUR WALLS

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Want to try your own layout? Have a different size wall. Perhaps you don't want to use all nine pieces of art. Not a problem - get creative. Check out these other great organic layout options.

## USE FROG TAPE TO MARK YOUR WALL DIMENSION

Tape the length and width of your wall with frog tape on the floor. Ideally, you do this in front of the wall if you have the room. In this way, you know what space you have available to move your “pieces” around to create the final composition. Not enough space? Do it in another room.

I use this FrogTape because doesn't leave behind any residue on the floor. This is an important step to knowing the boundaries by which you can arrange your pieces precisely.  
Just do it!

Move things around until they feel right. Start with the biggest piece first (this should be the one you picked from page 9) and work around it. Don't forget to keep inside the tape and have fun! We will transfer this layout to the wall next.



## TAKE A PIC

You would be surprised how quickly you can forget where things go.

### PRO TIP

Stay inside the lines of the tape and pay attention to where the hanging hook or wire is on the back of each piece. That is where you will have to hang each piece of art. You don't want that to slide below or above the tape. Step back and look at your gallery holistically.

## TRANSFER YOUR LAYOUT TO THE WALL

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Here is where it gets really fun! Take out your hanging kit you purchased prior and hopefully that includes your handy dandy yellow/orange Picture Hanging Tool with Level. Place the art on the wall where you want it to live then gently press into the wall and pull it off. Guess what? That tiny little dot is where you will want to place a nail or Command Hook to hang each item one by one. Magic!

## HANG AND REPEAT

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Hang your biggest and largest piece first. I just use my eyeballs here and tape measurements from earlier. Then work your way out both left and right, then up. If you build out from the middle(ish) starting with the largest art then your gallery wall will continue to feel balanced. Don't forget to lock each piece of art like a puzzle and keep things spaced evenly. Repeat with the Picture Hanging Tool trick above until you have the look you want. Don't worry if things are a little too far apart or not exact. A natural look that isn't perfect is best - trust me! Keep your level handy and check along the way as you go. Keep checking that you like the spacing and that things are level compared to your biggest and first laid piece.

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## TWEAK AS NEEDED

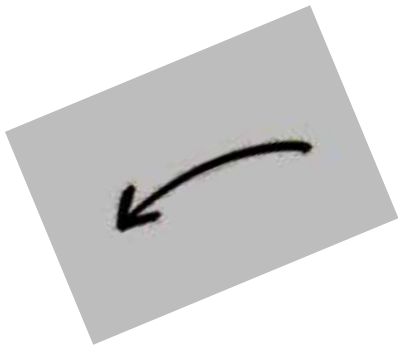
Once you have a command hook in place for each piece of art and have them snugly placed on the wall, you will see how well your layout works in your space.

Take a moment to lightly nudge anything that looks crooked, and feel free to remove or add additional command hooks as you see fit.

That's it – now you have a brand new gallery wall!



Main Middle Painting:  
[Ladybird - Bohemian](#)

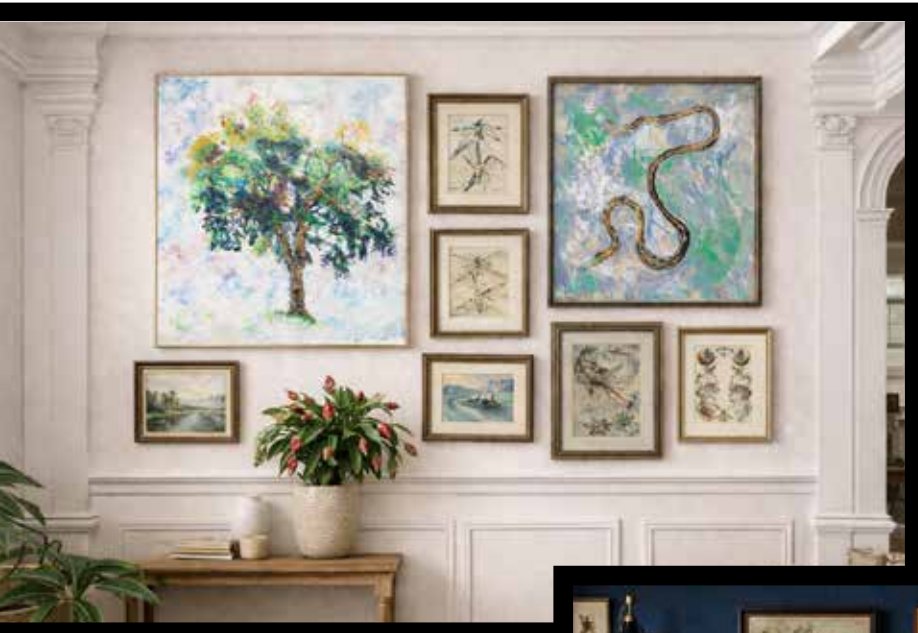


## SHARE YOUR CREATION

I'd love to hear and SEE what you created! Like for real.

Snap a pic, post it on your IG using the hashtag **#MyCollectedCoastal** and tag me **@HollisMakesArt**

You'll be entered into my monthly drawing for some amazing giveaways and a chance to be featured.



Upper Right: [Garter Snake](#)

Middle: [Right Whale - Moody Blues](#)





## Hollis Machala Art Gallery Wall

Top Left: [Make Way For Ducklings](#)

Bottom Left: [Mayflower](#)

Middle: Schooner Ernestina

Right: [Ulmus Americana - The Elm True](#)



## THANK YOU

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If you loved this guide. I have more resources and stories over at [@HollisMakesArt](#) on facebook and instagram.

I look forward to sharing more soon.

Your well on your way to creating a home you love one detail at a time.

### My greatest advice?

Have fun with it and enjoy the process.

*Hollis*