

Stroll Galleries for Holiday Gift Giving

Nothing says “you are special” like a gift of art. Here are a few suggestions to send you in the right direction.

For sheer variety and volume under one roof, it’s hard to beat the annual RISD sale. If you looked for it this year and were ready to give up, search no more: the Art Providence Holiday Show, Dec 9 - 10 at the RI Convention Center, has taken over where RISD left off. The show has been expanded to two days and now includes local artists as well as RISD alumni. This year there will be 200 artists and artisans with the best RI has to offer. Bringing the kids? They will get the chance to explore and create with print and blockmaking, free of charge. Doors open 10am and close at 6pm on Saturday, 5pm on Sunday. artprovidenceshow.com

Gallery Z at 259 Atwells Ave in Providence welcomes you with its annual Affordable Art sale from now through Dec 23, with paintings, drawings, photography, sculpture, glass, pottery and handmade jewelry by local artists. Gallery Z also carries a wide selection of Armenian and international handicrafts and textiles. Join owner Berge Zoobian for a special holiday reception on Dec 21 from 5 - 9pm.

Schatz ships its sleek, organic designs all over the world. In Providence, you can tour their studio at 46 Dike St and make direct purchases in a tax-free zone. Owners Jim and Peter have created inspirational ceramic ware that is both modern and timeless. They are open Monday through Friday, from 10am to 6pm, and by appointment on weekends. Call them at 866-344-5267 or 401-273-0500.

RISD Works, located in the Chace lobby of the RISD Museum at 20 North Main St, features intriguing wares designed or made by RISD alumni and faculty, including items based on the museum’s exhibitions and collection. A visit to the museum itself can be an excellent way to spark gift ideas, too. risdmuseum.org/visit

Gallery Belleau on 424 Wickenden in Fox Point shimmers with color. Visit their Facebook page at facebook.com/GalleryBelleau to preview the vibrant flowers, opalescent fish and fantasy recreations of nature.

Shopping for someone who craves treasures from mysterious places? My favorite pick is Peaceable Kingdom at 116 Ives St in Providence. Owners Joan and Phil Ritchie have traveled the world for over 30 years searching out unique folk art treasures. You can find everything from authentic Eskimo masks to burkas, and they have one of the most extensive Day of the Dead art collections in New England. The best part? Their authentic imported jewelry and clothing collections are both beautiful and affordable.

Another inspiring mix of collectibles can be found at Studio HOP at 810 Hope St in Providence. This gallery features over 45 Rhode Island artists as well as artists from around the country and the world with a focus on fine art and handcrafts; you can also find vintage and antique jewelry and furniture. For hours, call 401-621-2262.

The Foundry Show at The Pawtucket Armory Center for the Arts is an annual event. This unique group of artists self-produces the seven-day holiday sale that runs over the course of two weeks, from Dec 1 through Dec 10. Here at 172 Exchange St in Pawtucket, the displays are a holiday wonderland, spilling over with fiber, jewelry, leather, metal and glass along with paintings, photography and even furniture.

foundryshow.com/holidayshow.html

For a sense of nostalgia, Wickford Village holds holiday magic. Picturesque waterfront streets are lined with twinkling lights and shops. You can find galleries and antique shops nestled between jewelry shops, clothing stores and more. Take a stroll - the churches and colonial homes glow with warmth and light. wickfordvillage.org

The Jamestown Art Center, 18 Valley St, opens its doors for the holidays with Artsmarket, featuring established and emerging artist works, along with textiles, glass and wearables. The event is free to the public, Dec 8 from 5:30pm to 7:30pm and Dec 9 from 10am to 3pm.

For those who love to window shop, Water St in Warren has a delightful stretch of galleries and antique shops. And no holiday shopping trip would be complete without a visit to Newport, where restaurants, galleries and unusual gift shops grace the harbor side and winding streets of the city.

Remember: Rhode Island is a tax free zone for original and limited-edition art!