Classic Posters - Banking On the Wall

by Michael Erlewine (Michael@Erlewine.net)

Posters Around the House

Concert-music posters are informal and can be put up almost anywhere, in the home or at the business.

At some point, I decided to take down the Klee prints, the O’Keefe, and the little batiks we had picked up at the flea markets and replace them, at least in some rooms, with rock and roll art - concert music posters. For one, I had to have some of the concert posters that I had designed and printed for my own band, back in the sixties, on the wall.

Canned Heat poster by Bob Fried

And of course, the music room would not really be cool without at least a touch of Woodstock, at least for an old hippie like myself.

My Own Posters

I think that this Bob Fried piece, another favorite of mine, looks great over the fireplace, too.

Woodstock
Well, Perhaps not Palaces Yet

My house happens to be pretty funky, but many of these posters are just elegant and look right at home in more elegant settings. True, you have to be just a little daring to do it, but who is looking, anyway? Who cares what we do in our own home? The two photos below give you some idea of how posters could look in what we might agree are very elegant homes.
When I decorated the new headquarters of AMG (the All-Music Guide), when we moved it to Ann Arbor, I bought hundreds of posters and had them matted and framed. They lined the halls and meeting rooms and looked just great, everything from Boss Hog to Bob Dylan.

While I tend to be pretty sparing as to how many posters I want to put on any given wall, this is not always the most successful approach. Many folks like to fill every available space.
with posters and they look pretty great at that. Here are three views of San Francisco’s S.F. Rock, one of the main stores for posters on the West Coast. As you can see, the walls are filled, but it is all very tastefully and effectively done. There is a lot to see.

S.F. Rock in San Francisco

S.F. Rock Gallery

Stash Rooms and Artist’s Studios

Every serious poster collector has his stash of posters, whether it is under the bed, in the back of a closet, or in a special room. These special stash rooms, sometimes called “vaults” are always fascinating to visit.

A Stash Room

Just for interest’s sake, here is a poster “stash” room of a famous artist, we won’t say who this is, but some of you may be able to have a guess.
or two. These stash rooms or poster vaults are always a lot of fun to visit and always crammed full of fascinating items.

Moscoso’s Studio
Artist’s studios are another fascinating thing to observe. The photo above is a part of Victor Moscoso’s studio, a wonderful place, every wall just filled with art, from floor to ceiling.

Alton Kelley’s Studio
Alton Kelley’s studio is right in his living room, where he sits on a fine leather coach. In front of him is a glass-toped table on which he works. He is surrounded by pens, papers, and inks. Apparently Rick Griffin worked a lot at the kitchen table.

Randy Tuten’s Studio
Another wonderful (and very neatly kept) studio is that of poster artist Randy Tuten. He works at a wooden drafting table, surrounded by carefully framed pieces of art, bookshelves, and various things he has collected.
Here is a shot of Stanley Mouse's studio. On the one hand you have a roomful of the most sophisticated computer printing equipment, large machines capable of printing off one perfect poster after another. Yet, as you can see, here is a canvas on which the artist is working, in a style about as ancient as you might imagine. What a contrast.

The very neatest studio I have ever visited is that of legendary Fillmore artist, David Singer. Everything here is neat as a pin, clean as a whistle. You could eat of these floors.
Poster shows and exhibits are another place where lots of posters have to be displayed in a small space. Here is a part of artist Gary Grimshaw's wonderful store in Oakland, "Paper Song."

Hopefully, the photos above will help to encourage readers to break out some posters, get them framed and on the wall, so that you and your family can enjoy them.