

# Nest Building

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SIT ON YOUR ART!

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It's great to find objects that creatively blur the line separating fine art from basic utility. Art does not have to be limited to two-dimensional objects hung on walls, or lonely sculptures parked in a corner. Art can be both enjoyed and employed. The differences between furnishings and accessories that blend aesthetic and functional values and those that remain pure art or pure utility, include originality, rarity, quality of execution and artistic vision.

Textile designers have long been part of the art-meets-function industry. Many renowned artists create limited edition fabrics used for blinds, upholstery and linens.

Furniture and cabinetmakers occasionally qualify as artists also. Consider, for example, David Catta's 'Aviator Chair', recently displayed at Gallery 378. Not only can it hold its own as an exquisite piece of sculpture on any gallery floor, but it also represents a commitment to meticulous engineering that delivers both comfort and utility.

Every year I marvel at the work of Selkirk College's fine woodworking students. The participants clearly demonstrate the marriage of form and function. The attention to detail and precision of assembly in the production of cabinets, tables and chairs confirms the artist's hand in each piece. The fact that these same pieces are fully functional further confirms that where there is art, there can also be purpose.

Turning one's living room into a sculpture garden of functional, but unique, furnishings can be costly which is why most of us go to regular furniture shops.

However, even small treasures can straddle that line between art and practicality.

For example, a beautiful vase that actually holds water, or a pottery platter that is food-friendly, is an affordable and accessible expression of art meeting utility.

Art is still great on walls, but don't stop there; surround yourself with pieces you can sit on, eat off, walk on, or wrap yourself up in.