

CULTURED MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 17, 2019

A Very Cultured Gift Guide

by Alix Dana



I'm of the mindset that if you don't have a truly good gift to give, you shouldn't give one at all. Bad gifts contribute to clutter and waste, to awkward moments, and to a material mentality. But as any other art-world aesthete, I am a true lover of things. My brain is wired to collect and hoard, and with these covetous tendencies in mind, I must constantly tell myself: more stuff is not better, better stuff is better.

Giving good gifts doesn't have to be difficult or expensive, and if you optimize your hunter-gatherer instincts, it definitely releases some delicious brain chemicals. I recommend getting things that you can't find on Amazon—they exist! Look for items that are produced by expert creators and designers; maybe even get an artist-designed limited-edition object that benefits a local non-profit organization. (If you're going broke buying presents for people anyway, doesn't that at least soften the blow a little bit?) If you're perpetually last-minute, make it work in your favor by bringing the recipient into the process and ordering something they can help design or customize.

After all, the most important thing about the holiday season is to remind your loved ones what good taste you have. Here are suggestions for shopping more intentionally and thoughtfully, while prioritizing above all the art of giving a good gift.

Ann Craven Wrapping Paper

A gift that keeps on giving. Artist Ann Craven designed this wrapping paper in 2013 for the non-profit organization RxArt. 100% of proceeds support RxArt's contemporary art commissions in children's hospitals.