

Framing Tips for Artists

Keep it simple to let your art speak.

Frames: black, dark wood, or light wood, depending on the colors of the piece.

Mats: white, cream, black, or charcoal gray. Single 4-ply mat for watercolors, 8-ply mat recommended for photography. No mat for paintings on canvas. Make sure it is acid-free (standard paper mats will turn yellow over time and can even “burn” your piece yellow). When putting a piece behind a mat, tape it in a T shape in each corner at the top. This allows the paper to hang flatter behind the mat as paper expands and contracts with temperature change.

Backing: Use acid free. To attach in the frame, use glazier points or flex points. The first can be used with a standard flat screw driver to push into the frame. The latter is used with a point-shooting gun. These are widely available and recommended if you do a lot of framing.

Paintings on canvas can be placed directly into a frame with or without a lip. Keep in mind the lip of the frame will cover about ¼ inch. Paintings on canvas are recommended to be finished with a UV protective varnish and require no glazing (glass, plexiglass, etc.)

For pastel paintings, a reverse cut bevel on the mat is a must otherwise pastel dust will fall in the front and dirty the mat. Pastel paintings require glass as plexiglass is static and will lift pastel dust off the paper.

Glass: If shipping, plexiglass is highly recommended as it will not break. If glass breaks, it may gouge the piece and leave shards behind. Non-glare glass or non-glare plexiglass is not recommended because it has a frosted look and doesn’t show as much detail. If glare is a concern, museum glass or museum plexiglass are preferable. These materials are more expensive, but they provide everything: clarity of detail and texture, UV protection, and less glare. Museum plexiglass will not break or scratch.

Wiring: All pieces must be wired and ready to hang. Recommended hanging devices- D-rings screw into the wood, eurohangers will work on most metal frames. No sawtooth hangers.

In addition, a felt or rubber bumper on the bottom frame corners will help the piece hang evenly and protect the wall from scratching.

Tips supplied by Kacie Draeger