

PRESENTATION GUIDELINES FOR 2D ARTWORK

ArtsWA | Art in Public Places Program

Durable and archival preparation of artwork for display is essential to protect the work for years to come, especially when the artwork is displayed in an active public environment.



Adequate framing of works on paper protects the artwork from becoming soiled, being impacted by some temperature and humidity changes, and discoloration and fading. A semi-rigid, archival backing board applied to the stretcher of a work on canvas supports the shape of the canvas—reducing sagging and paint loss—and keeps dirt from adhering to the canvas.

Please budget for the presentation of 2D artwork using the following specifications.

Works on paper

Prints | Drawings | Photographs | Collage | Paintings on paper

Matting:

- Use only 4-ply or greater 100% cotton rag mat board for the window and backing mat board. This product is sometimes referred to as Museum Board. Paper-based mat boards should never be used, as they contain acid and lignins, causing discoloration and deterioration of paper over time.
- Artworks should be secured to the backing mat board with 4 “corners” and not hinged unless necessary. Although hinging can be safe in many environments, it is less secure than corner mounts and not durable enough for artwork in a public environment.
 - Corners should be made of acid-free, non-reactive paper or Mylar and adhered with self-adhesive linen tape.
- Artworks should be “over-matted” and not “floated.” The “over-matting” acts as a spacer between the artwork and the glazing (Plexiglas). Artwork should never be in contact with glazing materials.
- Window mats must be secured or “hinged” to backing mat board on the topside only with linen tape.
- Use bright white, antique white, or cream-colored mat board only.
- A secondary, more rigid backing board should be made of archival corrugated board (usually comes in light blue, grey, or white), not foam core. The surface paper of foam core is acid-free, but the core will off-gas and deteriorate over time.

Framing:

- Use only hardwood frames, such as maple, walnut, oak, or ramen. Do not use metal or plastic frames.
- Wood frames should be stained, not painted. Painted frames chip easily, showing wear and tear. The most preferable frame stains are natural (clear), dark gray, dark brown, or black.

Glazing:

- Use UV coated acrylic (Plexiglas) in all situations:
 - If the artwork material is pastel, charcoal, or other powdery media it must be well-fixed so the static charge created by acrylic glazing does not lift artwork media.
 - All works on paper are light sensitive and will fade with exposure to natural and artificial light (florescent lights give off an amount of UV second only to natural light).

Works on canvas, linen, or panel

Oil or acrylic on canvas or linen

- Use a backing board of corrugated archival board (usually comes in light blue, grey, or white) to protect the canvas from buckling and becoming soiled.
- Paintings should be framed unless the artist has specified that his/her work should not be displayed with a frame. The frame will protect an artwork from improper handling and limit dust settling into the canvas.
- Frame should stand off the canvas face by ¼ inch to deter abrasion and collection of dust on the canvas surface.

Oil or acrylic on panel

- Paintings should be framed unless the artist has specified that their work should not be displayed with a frame. The frame will protect an artwork from improper handling.
- Frame should stand off the panel face by ¼ inch to deter abrasion and collection of dust on the surface.

Artwork labeling

- Artworks in the State Art Collection should be labeled before their final installation. ArtsWA will provide stickers to apply to the backing board that identify the artwork, its ownership, and its accession number. Stickers will be sent along with plaques prior to installation.

Should you need additional information about materials, techniques, suppliers, or framers who are able to provide archival-quality services, please contact **Janae Huber, Collections Manager** at janae.huber@arts.wa.gov or **360.586.2420**.