

How to keep your artwork as fresh as the day it was created

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How to keep your artwork as fresh as the day it was created

By Heather Diodati

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Clueless about how to protect the beautiful acrylic painting you received as a birthday gift? Wondering how to mat and frame your new watercolor? Here's a handy guide on how to care for your precious artwork, no matter what media it was created in.

- . Handling
- . Storage
- . Transporting
- . Matting
- . Framing
- . Laminating
- . Display
- . Cleaning

Special care for different types of media

- . Acrylics
- . Oils
- . Watercolors
- . Pastels
- . Charcoal, Pencil, Colored pencil, Crayon drawings
- . Ink drawings
- . Digital art

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Handling

Always use great care in handling artwork. Never touch the surface of the art with your bare fingers as the natural oils, acids and salts on your skin can transfer to the artwork and cause permanent damage. If you must touch the art, wear cotton gloves.

Storage

Artwork not displayed should be stored in a clean, dry, dark and well-ventilated area in moderate temperatures and humidity levels that do not fluctuate a great deal. Avoid storage in basements, attics or garages as extreme temperatures and moisture can damage the artwork.

Store unframed art flat with acid-free paper between each item, or store individual items in archival-quality envelopes.

Avoid storing art between cardboard, as it is highly acidic and can damage artwork over time.

Store art created with charcoal, pastels, pencil or crayon between glass to avoid rubbing and damaging the delicate artwork. Preferably mat the item first with an acid-free mat and then cover it with glass to protect the artwork from any kind of contact with its surface.

Never store unframed art in shipping tubes for any length of time. Remove the art as soon as possible and lay it flat until you are ready to frame it. If a painting has been stored in a tube for a long time, consult a professional who will use the utmost care and expertise in unrolling and relaxing the artwork to avoid possible cracking and damage.

Never store framed art directly on the floor. Instead, rest the artwork on blocks or on shelves.

Transporting

Never leave artwork in your car for extended periods of time. Carry framed artwork by the sides and avoid resting canvas against any items that may damage the surface.

Roll prints carefully and insert into heavy duty shipping tubes. Remove the artwork and unroll as soon as possible after transport to avoid permanent damage.

Matting

Have your artwork matted with an acid-free mat board. Poor quality mats may damage art over time due to the chemicals in the board that can transfer to the artwork. The same is true for backing your art with cardboard which also has chemicals that may cause discoloration.

Never use rubber cement or white glue to adhere the art to a surface as it can cause damage to your precious artwork.

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Framing

Art created with ink, pencil, pastels or charcoal should be framed under glass. You may use Plexiglas only for pencil or ink drawings as any pastel or charcoal artwork may be damaged by the build-up of electrostatic charge emitted from Plexiglas and similar plastics.

Make sure to completely seal the back seams of the frame and backing with acid-free tape.

To further protect your print from harmful UV rays you can ask your framer to use glare-free glass with a UV protective coating to cover the artwork in the frame.

The frame you choose should be slightly larger than your artwork. Humidity may cause the paper to contract or expand and the extra space between the frame and artwork will allow for these changes without damaging the art.

Never frame artwork without also using a mat board between the art and frame. Wood may hold

humidity that can transfer to the artwork. You can use acid-free frame spacing instead of matting, if you prefer. Ask your art store to see what is available.

Also, if you have a glass insert to protect the artwork, make sure you add a mat to prevent the art from sticking to the glass over time.

Laminating

Since nearly all laminating materials have UV inhibitors in them it makes sense to consider this option for protecting your prints, photos and digital art as well as other artwork such as delicate pastels and charcoals.

Consult a photo store to ensure that this process will not damage the artwork you're thinking of laminating.

Either bring your print or photo to a photo shop to have it professionally laminated to a base, or use a laminating machine if you would rather use a frame.

A laminating machine that uses a heat process will protect the print more than a machine using cold lamination. Be careful of low-end laminators with fluctuating temperatures that can result in bubbles between the print and the plastic, incomplete lamination or variations in thickness of the plastic.

As an added protection, laminating pouches are also available with UV-resistance to protect against color-fade.

If you use low quality photo paper for your digital prints, make sure to test a sample print in your laminator as smearing of the photo may result.

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Display

Careful planning of where you'll hang your artwork should lengthen its lifespan considerably.

Humidity, extreme fluctuating temperatures, direct sunlight, bright light, heating vents and fireplaces can damage your previous art. Avoid contact with fluorescent lighting that emits harmful high-energy rays that can deteriorate the artwork.

Hanging art on exterior walls may subject the art to temperature fluctuations and dampness in climates where temperatures vary greatly with the seasons. Avoid hanging artwork in kitchens or bathrooms for this same reason.

Attach small cork pieces to the back of the frame to prevent mold from forming, by allowing air to circulate behind your framed art.

Never use clip-on lights on frames. The area of artwork exposed to this 'hot spot' will cause drying and damage over time.

Canvas stretcher bars may expand and contract with temperature fluctuations. This may make the canvas sag and/or crack the paint. A professional can correct this problem and save the artwork.

Cleaning

Dust frames regularly and inspect for signs of mold or insects. Make sure that all hangers and items used to secure the frame are still in good condition.

Never use commercial products to clean your bare artwork. Use a feather duster to dislodge dust particles from the surface. Cloth material may leave lint.

To clean the picture glass that protects your artwork, never spray cleaner directly onto the glass. Instead, spray your cleaning cloth and then wipe the glass to avoid cleaner from running down and seeping between the glass and frame and damaging the art. Avoid using a cleaner with ammonia.

Use a cleaner specifically designed for Plexiglas or similar materials such as acrylic, or use a soft damp cloth and spot clean gently to avoid scratching.

A professional may be needed to clean your artwork if you notice color changes and dullness from contact with smoke, whether it was from cigarettes, heavy use of candles, or if the artwork was subject to smoke damage from a fire. See your professional if you notice any signs of mold or insects.

Special Care for different types of media

Acrylic Paintings

Not to be framed under glass, acrylics are fairly sturdy and can survive in various lighting conditions.

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Dusting the surface lightly will prevent any build-up. Be careful when shipping acrylics in the winter as extremely cold temperatures may cause cracking. You'll have the same problem when storing your acrylics in unheated attics, basements or sheds if you live in areas that experience very cold winters.

Oil Paintings

Also not for framing under glass as these have to 'breathe'. Direct sunlight will fade oils over time. Choose its location with this in mind.

Make sure to dust frequently as build up may crack and peel the paint. Never spray commercial cleaners on your painting. Should the colors appear dull after awhile, you can have your painting varnished at your art store to renew the colors and protect the surface from possible cracking.

Transport your painting carefully wrapped in cardboard and protected with bubble wrap. Avoid leaving the artwork too long in the packaging as moisture may form and damage your painting.

Watercolors

Frame watercolors behind glass. Colors may fade if fragile watercolors are exposed to strong lighting conditions.

Oil Pastels and Chalk Pastels

Pastels are very delicate and must be handled with extreme care. Framing under glass as soon as possible is a necessity to protect the easily damaged surface. Full sun can fade the colors but they can

survive strong light or indirect sunlight. Never touch the surface of the art or place anything on its surface to avoid smearing.

Charcoal, pencil, colored pencil, crayon drawings

These are just as fragile as pastels; therefore they must be handled and protected in the same manner. Do not touch the delicate surface of these drawings.

Ink Drawings

Also very light sensitive, fades quickly in direct sunlight. Frame under UV-protected glass.

Digital Art

Avoid touching the surface of your digital art. Mount your artwork behind UV-protected glass to reduce fading. Make sure that the artwork is dry before doing this. An acid free mat inserted between the artwork and frame will prevent the art from sticking to the glass. Aluminum frames should be considered as humidity does not affect them and will not transfer to your prints. Make sure to keep your digital prints away from excessive heat for long periods of time, high humidity, direct sunlight and

extreme temperature fluctuations.

Taking extra care of your precious artwork today will ensure many years of enjoyment later on.

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7 Easy Ideas for Organizing Kids Artwork

By Maria Gracia

In school, kids are encouraged to create, draw, color, paint and build. These activities can certainly stimulate children, and help them grow.

Very often, these masterpieces that your children create are brought home and proudly displayed. But what do you do when all of the artwork begins to take over your home? Here are 7 great ideas:

1. **FIND THE DIAMONDS.** Rather than keeping every single piece of artwork your child creates, sit down with your child on a regular basis and ask him to choose the one or two he likes best. By the end of the year, you should have no more than 5 pieces of artwork that your child believes to be his "best" pieces. This will help keep the artwork under control, and will still give you an opportunity to save his creations for future memories.
2. **A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS.** Take photos of the artwork that your child creates and keep these photos in a scrapbook. This way, even if the artwork is discarded for space purposes, you'll still have the memory!
3. **KIDS FILE STORAGE BOX.** Office supply stores carry portable file boxes that hold hanging file folders. These generally have a cover and a handle for easy portability. Help your child create her very own filing system. Perhaps one file folder for 2nd grade artwork, one for 3rd grade artwork, and so on. Now, all the drawings, and any type of artwork that lays flat, will be kept safe and organized. You'll even be teaching your child filing skills! It's never too early!
4. **KEEP IT CONTAINED.** For other artwork that does not lay flat, the perfect container may be a large, plastic container with a lid. Your child will have a space for shadowboxes, and other artwork that won't fit into a file folder. Again, be choosy. If you keep every single piece of artwork your child brings home for the next 15 years, your house is going to be overflowing with it.
5. **HANG IT.** Get your child his very own artwork bulletin board so he can display his favorite artwork in

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his bedroom. When organized on a nice cork board, this really adds a nice touch to a child's room. Plus, your child can very easily switch one piece of art, with another.

6. SUPPLY MANIA. If your child produces a lot of artwork at home, she probably has tons of crayons, markers and other art supplies. Keep it all in a portable box, light enough for your child to be able to transport it from one room into the next. In addition, separate and organize the supplies into separate Zip-lock baggies before putting them in the box. This will keep everything organized and easily accessible.

7. THE PERFECT GIFT. Kids artwork makes the perfect gift for grandma, grandpa, sister Jane, Aunt Sue, Uncle Jim, and so on. Rather than buying gifts for your child to give to family members, encourage them to give their creations away as special gifts to special people.

by Maria Gracia – Get Organized Now!

FREE Idea-Pak and E-zine filled with tips, ideas, articles and more to help you organize your home, your office and your life at the Get Organized Now! Web site!

7 Easy Ideas for Organizing Kids Artwork

Export of Inuit Sculpture Containing Whalebone or Ivory

Decorating On A Dime

Why Your Artwork Is Garbage!

Being Creative And Develop Your Own Design

Making money at online auctions

The Amazing Bonus Pack

111 Egg Recipes

PDF Labelling and Stamper Pro

131 Ice Cream Maker Recipes

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