

Quick Facts

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ART ON PAPER

Drawings, etchings, engravings, watercolors, pastels, lithographs, etc. as well as all other media that uses paper as the support for the art is referred to as Art On Paper.

The type of paper, its thickness, composition, manufacture and appearance may vary. But all paper is affected to a greater or lesser degree by the same problems. Proper handling, framing and storage may minimize these problems. But the ultimately, the condition of all paper art is determined by two basic facts: Nothing will last forever, and, Everything is always in a constant state of change, Somewhere between the poster thumb-tacked to a outside wall, and the Declaration of Independence sealed in its carefully constructed, controlled and continuously monitored environment, there is a compromise.

1. Our environment is not conducive to a long a life for paper if:

- a) Its is not made of quality materials,
- b) abused by handling,
- c) exposed adverse environmental conditions, such strong light, high temperatures and extreme humidity.

2. Art on paper is not a flat media, and should not be expected to always maintain a flat surface. Paper reacts to environmental changes, it expands and contracts with these changes, during this process the paper may become wavy as the changes are occurring. This is the normal life of all papers.

3. Restriction of these normal changes that occur in paper such as:

- a) perimeter gluing or taping,
- b) mounting with spots of adhesive,
- c) holding all four corners in a fixed position,
- d) or any other method that restrict a portion of the paper can create undue stress and cause additional destructive problems.

A glazing material placed directly on the artwork can also create problems as the support paper adjusts to its changing environment.

All light contains ultraviolet rays, which contribute to the artworks and the paper's deterioration, especially in paper made from unpurified wood pulp. Paper should not

be constantly exposed to large amounts of ultraviolet rays. Many museums solve the problem by displaying art on paper only in low light conditions and only short periods of time.

In our acidic environment, paper and paper products will become acidic, this may occur more rapidly in some areas and with some types of papers.

To reduce the problems with art on paper, maintain its condition, and extend its life an active program of maintenance should be started. This program should start with a professional condition examination of the artwork.

Framing, like everything else, is not forever and the framing materials may need to be replaced periodically.

Acid free or pH Neutral framing materials should always be used when condition and longevity are required.

The display environment will have a daily effect and should be carefully considered if the long-term condition of the art on paper is important.