

Welcome to ConservationFraming.org

Brought to you by [Artists Frame Service](#), this website seeks to explain conservation or preservation custom picture framing and answer frequently asked questions about this important area of service.

What is Conservation Framing?

To have something conservation or preservation framed is to employ methods and materials to ensure the object being framed is protected from harmful environmental factors while not compromising its condition or integrity. No process that is irreversible is used in [framing the artwork](#).

The best way to preserve your art is to keep it wrapped flat in acid free materials and stored in a climate neutral dark place but it's difficult to enjoy your collection that way. [Conservation Framing](#) allows for the safe display of artwork while avoiding deterioration from exposure to the environment.

What are environmental factors harmful to artwork?

Light: Any amount of light is damaging to artwork over time. Colors will fade by UV rays from natural and fluorescent sources alike. Paper absorbs high-energy photons, which through a chemical reaction break down the paper over time causing it to brittle.

Heat and Humidity: Warm and moist conditions invite the growth of mold and bacteria. Framed artwork should be kept away from sources of heat or water in your home.

Moisture: Moisture in the form of condensation can collect inside the framing if subjected to radical changes in temperature or humidity. Glazing should never be touching the artwork in the frame. Using a mat or a spacer will allow an area for air circulation and prevent condensation from soaking into the paper.

Dirt and Dust: Pollution in the atmosphere can combine with moisture in the air to form acids that will cause damage to works on paper.

What things need Conservation Framing?

Items of historical, resale, collectible or simply sentimental value will require conservation framing. Anything you would like preserved for the enjoyment of future generations is a [candidate](#) for conservation framing.

What are the elements of Conservation Framing?

Frame: Besides complementing your piece, the frame choice should be strong enough for the size and weight of the art and provide enough depth to allow for air circulation or any necessary reinforcements within the frame.

Glass: A glazing that filters out harmful UV rays is necessary for conservation framing. The highest quality acrylic or glass will shield your art from 97% of damaging UV light. All UV coated materials are also available with anti-reflective coatings to reduce glare and provide amazing clarity for the viewer. UV Acrylic is a good option for larger pieces or when there is any danger of glass shattering, such as in shipping or art hanging in a public space.

Matting: 100% acid free cotton rag mat board with no artificial pigment is the traditional and historically proven choice for conservation matting. Alkaline buffered wood pulp based boards are a new innovation. These boards are made with zeolites, or MicroChamber technology. Zeolites are molecular sieves that trap acids present in the environment and lock them away from the art.

Hinging the Art: Hinging is the process of attaching the art into the matting. The hinges are tailored to each piece based on the weight and substrate of the artwork. Hinges should be made of acid free Japanese rice paper attached to the art with a wheat paste. In general two hinges in the upper corners are adequate to support the piece while allowing for natural movement with changes in the atmosphere. The weight of the hinge should be slightly less than the weight of the paper. This ensures that with any stress, movement during shipping for example will cause the hinge to give rather than the art to tear. All hinging must be able to be reversed at a later date and not cause discoloration with age.

Backing: Any backing boards used to support the piece from behind should be stable and rigid as well as archival and acid free. Backing boards are also available with MicroChamber technology.

For more information visit: www.ArtistsFrameService.com