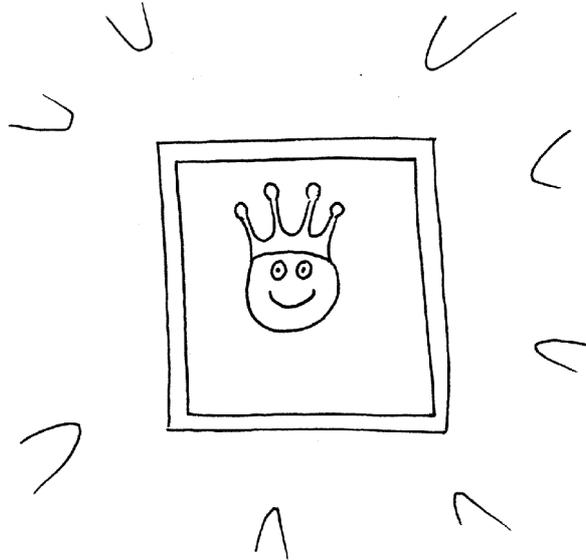


Conservation Framing

Conservation framing is a way of properly framing an artwork so the risk of damage is minimised. Conservation framing protects an artwork in normal conditions (see below) allowing it to be displayed and enjoyed as it was intended. An artwork will not be damaged, altered or changed in any way during the framing process and all processes in Conservation framing are completely reversible.



Gluing the artwork down is not permitted at Conservation Level, nor is cutting or reshaping the artwork in any way. No marks are allowed to be made on the artwork either accidentally or deliberately.

The highest level of Conservation framing is Museum Level framing. Museum Level framing uses only the best quality materials and very strict framing processes.

What should be framed to Conservation Level?

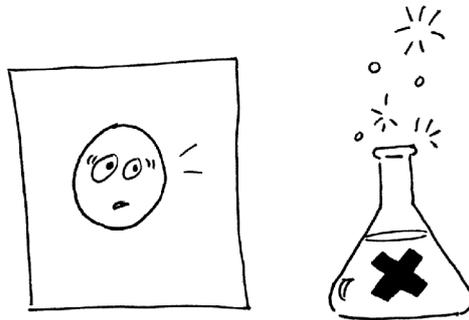
Artworks of value should be framed to either Conservation level or Museum level. The value of an artwork might be of a Monetary value, a Historical value, a Sentimental value, or a Future Value. Conservation framing is for any artwork or document which needs to be properly protected and conserved.

Museum Level is recommended for original artworks, particularly works of high value (i.e. the kind of artwork you would expect to see in a museum).

Acid Damage to paper

One of the most common causes of damage to an artwork on paper is acid damage. Acids can form in poor quality paper which leads to discolouration, embrittlement and eventual deterioration. Artist quality papers, which are free of acids, can receive acid damage by being in contact with materials containing acids.

The use of acidic materials will destroy an artwork over a long period of time. It is essential in the Conservation process that all materials in contact with the artwork must not contain any acid.

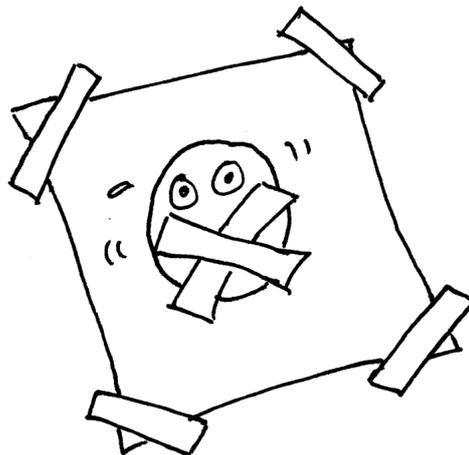


Some framers use highly acidic backboard for all their framing. At Fine Artisan we use Conservation quality backboards as standard for all of our Conservation frames.

Wooden frames are also acidic which means it is important that the artwork does not come into contact with the wood of the frame. The artwork can be held away with a mount or the edges of the frame can be sealed to provide a safe barrier.

Conservation Quality

Many people might be familiar with the term 'acid-free' which is often used jointly with descriptions of Conservation framing but it is not enough for the materials to be merely acid-free. The materials used must be Conservation quality and artworks must be attached correctly. Self-adhesive tape is not permitted: the tape used must meet Conservation or Museum standards only.

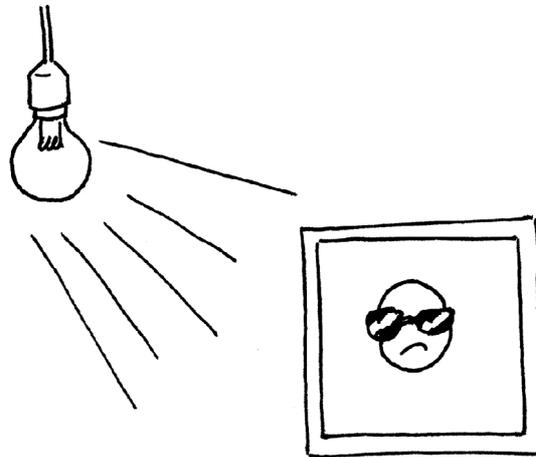


Other factors must also be considered including secure hanging fixings, a structurally solid frame that will last several years, and framing the artwork with UV filtered glass.

(Ready-made frames might be ideal for temporary framing but many do not meet Conservation standards; some are not even made from wood but a kind of fibre board).

Light Damage

All kinds of artworks can fade and the fading effects of UV light are irreversible. It is important to consider UV filtered glass to properly protect an artwork.



Unless a room is a UV filtered environment, wherever there is light, there will probably be UV light. Even in the shadiest areas, UV light will still have an effect and household light bulbs also emit UV light. UV filtered glass should be considered for all valuable artworks in order to properly protect them.

Even with UV filtered glass, artworks must be kept away from direct sunlight which is especially damaging.

Glazing Oil paintings

Although oil paintings are often framed unglazed, glazing with UV glass is a sensible option to dramatically reduce the fading of valuable pieces. Glazing oils will also protect the painting from dust collection, airborne pollution, and tobacco smoke (if you happen to be a smoker).

Dust collecting on artworks will hold moisture from the air which will damage the artwork over time. This is particularly important for painting with especially thick layers of paint. If you notice in Museums Frank Auerbach paintings are nearly always put behind glass, as are Francis Bacon oil which are painted on raw, unprimed canvas.

At Fine Artisan we use the finest anti reflective glass, allowing exceptional clarity for all glazed artworks.

Particular types of artwork

Certain materials do not react well to the most common types of Conservation mount board. These include certain types of traditionally printed photographs and artworks on animal hide such as vellum or parchment.

In these cases it is important to mount them with the correct kind of mount board, which is a Museum level mount board, so they are properly protected.

Looking after Artworks Framed to Conservation or Museum Level

To repeat the first line of this article: Conservation framing is a way of properly framing an artwork so the *risk of damage is minimised*. Of course, a Conservation frame will not protect an artwork from excessive force or maltreatment.

Conservation framing protects an artwork in **normal conditions**. Normal conditions mean the artwork is out of direct sunlight, stored within the temperature range of 10°-25°C, in a dry place with humidity levels between 40%-60%.

It is important to properly care for and correctly store your frame so it is protected along with the artwork inside. Artworks framed to Museum and Conservation level should be checked by a framer every 5 years. Please read our guide **Caring for Framed Artworks** for more details.

Much artwork is intrinsically self-destructive, made with materials that will not last. Paper, being made from organic matter, will eventually decompose, and the role of Conservation Framing is to reduce this decomposition as much as possible to prolong the life of the artwork.

It should also be noted that there can be unavoidable changes to an artwork that will happen over time. Conservation Framing cannot stop an artwork degrading if the materials used to create it are of particular poor quality, for example, or the pigments and dyes used to create it are prone to fading. If the artwork was created using an acidic surface (such as newspaper or printer paper) it will most likely become brittle and deteriorate over time. However, such paper can be treated by a qualified Art Restorer prior to framing.