



ÉVA MAJOR

FRAMING & CARING FOR YOUR PAINTING

A few thoughtful choices help protect the colour, surface and materials of an original artwork. This guide covers everyday display and framing for oil paintings on canvas or panel, and watercolours on paper.



Oranges still life · Éva Major · Artwork photograph from her Etsy listing

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General preventive care for paintings at home. For advice about a particular work, consult a qualified conservator.

SIX HABITS FOR EVERYDAY CARE

Small choices in the room, the frame and the way you handle the work make a difference.

01

CHOOSE GENTLE LIGHT

Keep the painting out of direct sunlight throughout the day. Use curtains or blinds, and turn display lights off when they are not needed. Watercolours can be especially sensitive, but oils can fade too. UV-filtering glazing helps with UV exposure; it does not prevent damage from visible light. [1]

02

FIND A STABLE PLACE

Choose a room with fairly steady conditions. Avoid radiators, fireplaces, heating or cooling vents, and damp storage areas. Keep art clear of cooking splashes, watering plants and places where someone might brush against it. [2]

03

MOVE IT WITH SUPPORT

Plan a clear route and a safe place to set the work down. Check the frame before lifting. Support it securely; never carry a painting by its hanging wire or one edge alone. Get help for a large or awkward work. Avoid touching the paint or pressing the back of a canvas. [3]

04

FRAME FOR PROTECTION

A frame should hold the artwork securely without squeezing it. Ask a qualified framer to match the mount, backing and fixings to the work. If glass or acrylic is fitted, it must remain clear of the painted surface. [4]

05

LEAVE THE SURFACE ALONE

Leave cleaning and repairs to a conservator. Do not try household cleaners, water, solvents or improvised remedies on the artwork. Even dusting can disturb a fragile surface. A stained or darkened painting needs assessment before treatment. [2, 5]

06

NOTICE CHANGES EARLY

If you see lifting paint, a tear, new distortion, dampness or mould, seek conservation advice before handling or reframing. Photograph the problem without touching it and record what happened. A framer can advise on framing; a conservator assesses damage and treatment. [2, 3, 6]

CHOOSE FRAMING FOR THE MATERIAL

WATERCOLOUR ON PAPER

Ask for conservation-quality matting and backing, with a window mat or spacers that keep the paper clear of the glazing. A paper conservator or conservation framer can select appropriate hinges and mounting materials. Avoid ordinary adhesive tape, glue and cardboard touching the artwork. Ask about UV-filtering glass or acrylic, then still choose a low-light position. Until framed, keep the work supported in a suitable acid-free folder or box. [6]

OIL ON CANVAS OR PANEL

Ask for a strong, well-fitting frame with protected contact points and space for the support's natural movement. A suitable backing board protects a canvas from contact at the rear. Discuss protective glazing with the framer or conservator: it can reduce dirt and accidental contact, but needs a gap clear of the paint. The work's surface, support and condition determine the best arrangement. Do not tighten a canvas or modify its stretcher yourself. [4]

THREE QUESTIONS FOR THE FRAMER

1. How will the artwork be supported without pressure on its surface?
2. Which materials will touch the artwork, and why are they appropriate?
3. How will the finished frame protect the front and back, and hang securely?

Keep any labels and information supplied with the painting. For unusual materials or existing damage, ask a conservator for advice specific to the work. [2, 4]

FURTHER READING

Canadian Conservation Institute · Sources checked 9 October 2026. Select a title to open the source.

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| 1. Environmental Guidelines for Paintings, CCI Notes 10/4 | 4. Framing a Painting, CCI Notes 10/8 |
| 2. Basic care - Paintings | 5. Caring for paintings |
| 3. Basic Handling of Paintings, CCI Notes 10/13 | 6. Basic care - Works of art on paper |

General preventive care cannot assess an individual artwork. The sources do not endorse this guide. For condition-specific advice, consult a qualified conservator.