

# FCA Victoria Chapter:

## STANDARDS and GUIDELINES for Matting and Framing Paintings

By: Jim McFarland, AFCA, and Anne Hudec, SFCA

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The Standards Committee reviews submitted artwork for FCA Chapter Shows with the intention of maintaining a “Gallery Ready” level of framing.

This does not reflect on the quality of the paintings themselves, only on the quality of their presentation, as well as the protection of all submitted works of art when paintings are moved around during the jurying and hanging process.

This information is provided to the Members so they can prepare their paintings according to these Standards & Guidelines.

**STANDARDS:** Standards are requirements by the FCA Victoria Chapter. Sentences in this document that include the word “must” are a STANDARD.

**GUIDELINES:** Guidelines are suggestions that are followed by the Standards Committee and are implemented at their discretion. Sentences in this document that include the word “should” are a GUIDELINE.

Please remember that good framing maximizes the presentation of your artwork.

A Glossary of terms can be found at the end of this document.

## OVERVIEW STANDARDS FOR FRAMING ALL MEDIUMS:

Frames must be strong enough to carry the weight of the painting when the painting is held up by the upper frame without the frame distorting.

Paintings in any medium must have a hanging wire. The hanging wire must be secured to the frame with a conventional hanging device that is screwed into the frame, and not attached by clips, and be mounted in the top 1/3 of the frame so the painting hangs flush to the wall.

Hanging wire must have only enough “give” in its tension to allow a hand to be inserted between the back of the painting and the wire to facilitate hanging (please note that hanging wire will stretch over time, and may require tightening).

Bare wire ends must be taped unless the wire is plasticized.



**The FCA reserves the right to refuse to hang any artwork**

**FRAMING STANDARDS SPECIFIC TO WATERCOLOURS & PASTELS, GRAPHITE, COLOURED PENCIL (etc.):**

Refer to: OVERVIEW STANDARDS FOR FRAMING ALL MEDIUMS found on Page 1 of this document

Refer to: OVERVIEW GUIDELINES FOR FRAMING ALL MEDIUMS found on Page 3 of this document,

as well as the following:

The use of “clip-style” frames: FCA Gallery Vancouver has ruled that they will not accept ANY clip-style frames for hanging in the Gallery. Our Victoria chapter however, has agreed to allow clip-style frames at the discretion of the Standards Committee, based on the reliability of the clips used. There must be sufficient clips to safely hold the back of the painting in place, and the hanging wire must be attached to the frame itself. Clips must be of the screwed-in variety if they are to be used to hold the frame itself together, or to hold the hanging wire to the frame. We will not accept paintings that have been sandwiched together between 2 pieces of glass or Plexiglas that are held together by clips. Please note that a painting that is framed in a clip-style frame that has been accepted into our Victoria Chapter show may have to be re-framed if it is to be entered into an FCA Vancouver Gallery show. It is therefore suggested that you bypass clip-style frames to avoid any extra framing expenses.

Watercolour and Pastel (Et al.) paintings must be framed under glass or Plexiglas, or their surface protected with an approved method.

## FRAMING STANDARDS SPECIFIC TO OILS & ACRYLICS:

Refer to: OVERVIEW STANDARDS FOR FRAMING ALL MEDIUMS found on Page 1 of this document

Refer to: OVERVIEW GUIDELINES FOR FRAMING ALL MEDIUMS found on Page 3 of this document,

as well as the following:

UNFRAMED canvasses or wood panels must have all sides painted and the staples must be on the back of the stretcher bars *for canvas*. Canvas paintings and wood panels that are less than 1.5 inches deep must be framed.

## OVERVIEW GUIDELINES FOR FRAMING ALL MEDIUMS:

Good taste and workmanship should be exercised in framing.

Frames should not be damaged – no scuffs, chips, dents or loose joins.

## GUIDELINES SPECIFIC TO WATERCOLOURS, GRAPHITE, COLOURED PENCIL (etc.):

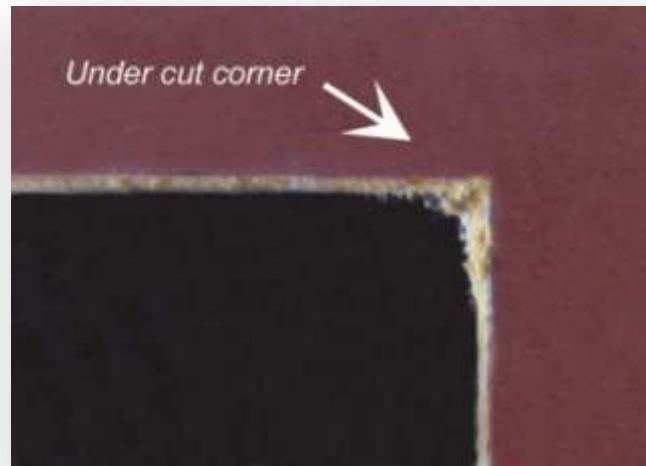
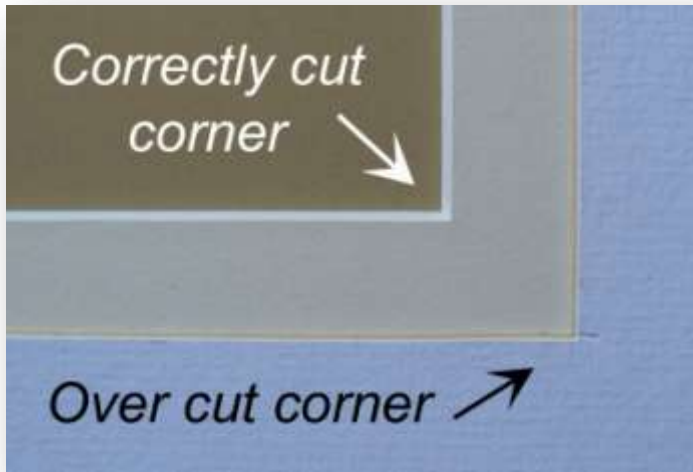
Glass should be clean.

Paper dust cover should be clean and undamaged.

Mat boards should be clean and look professional, without dust or debris sandwiched between the mat board and the painting.

Mat Board and Backing should be acid free.

If a square or rectangular window is cut into the mat board, it should have straight cuts and cleanly cut corners with no over-cuts or under-cuts (see definition below as well as photo example below).



## GUIDELINES SPECIFIC TO PASTELS:

Pastels should conform to the guidelines for Watercolours (etc.) above, as well as the following:

Mat spacers should be used to keep mats clean and allow pastel dust to fall behind the top mat (see framing definitions below).

## GUIDELINES SPECIFIC TO OILS & ACRYLICS:

If a Linen Liner is used, it should be clean and undamaged.

### FRAMING DEFINITIONS:

**Acid-free:** Paper materials with a pH of around 7 are considered to be acid-free. These materials are less likely to harm artwork over time. Materials with a pH below 6.5 or above a pH of 8.5 are not considered acid-free.

**Backing:** The support that comes into contact with *the back* of a watercolour or pastel (Et al.) painting and holds the painting into the frame. The support should be acid-free, such as *Corroplast*, acid-free *Foamboard*, or acid-free Mat Board, or by using an acid-free paper barrier in between the artwork and a corrugated cardboard backing (which is not acid-free).

**Clip-style Frames:** Frames that use a metal clip system – where the clip is under a spring tension – to hold the back of the painting in place. Examples of clip-style frames:



**Dust Cover:** A *Kraft* paper seal adhered to the back perimeter of a picture frame is called a dust cover. This protects the picture from insects, dust and dirt from entering the frame and damaging the artwork.

**GUIDELINES:** Guidelines are suggestions that are followed by the Standards Committee and are implemented at their discretion. Sentences in this document that include the word “should” are a GUIDELINE.

**Hardware:** The hangers, brackets, screw eyes and other materials used to assemble a wood picture frame or metal picture frame.

**Linen Liner:** A frame that fits inside an exterior frame, and is covered in a white or neutral coloured fabric material. These are very commonly used in the picture framing of oil paintings.

**Mat Board:** A paper material that protects the artwork from coming in contact with the glass and provides an aesthetically pleasing border to draw the eye to the center. Mat Board is available in acid-free and also in specialty designs. It comes in a variety of densities; the thicker it is, the more the core will be exposed in the window.

**Over-cut / Under-cut:** When the mat-cutter blade has either extended past the actual corner or has fallen short of the corner while cutting the window in the mat. This can leave either over-extended cuts at the corner of the mat (visible on the good side of the mat), or a corner that is not crisply cut and looks torn out (see photo examples on page 4).

**Pastel Mat Spacer:** It is highly recommended that an acid free foam core spacer be attached to the underside of the window mat. This can be strips of foam core held in place by tape or glue, or by actually cutting a window mat out of foam core with a slightly bigger window than the top mat (1/4 to 1/2 inch). This unseen spacer lifts the mat off the painting and allows pastel dust to fall behind the mat and not dirty the presentation mat with loose pastel particles.

**Profile:** The curves and design of a frame. A picture frame's profile includes the height, width and rabbet (channel on the frame's underside in which the materials sit), and come in a variety of shapes and sizes.

**STANDARDS:** Standards are requirements by the FCA Victoria Chapter. Sentences in this document that include the word "must" are a STANDARD.

**Stretcher Bar:** A stretcher bar is used to construct a wooden stretcher frame used by artists to mount their canvases. They are traditionally a wooden framework support on which an artist fastens a piece of canvas.

**Window:** The opening cut in a mat board through which the image can be viewed. The window is commonly in the exact centre of the mat, but can be positioned elsewhere (higher or lower) to achieve certain artistic techniques.

**Wood Panel:** A wood panel is a rigid support that is an alternative to painting on canvas. It is available in various sizes and depths of profile, but it must first be prepared with a suitable ground prior to painting.