



Matting and Framing Guidelines

Simplicity is the rule – period frames look very good on pictures from the same period. Frames and picture should present a single, complete entity. Strive to present your work in a very professional manner.

Framing Conventions:

- For watercolor, water media (including some acrylics), pen and ink, pastel, some collage: mat, metal or wooden frame, and Plexiglas or glass.
- For photographs: mat, metal or wooden frame, and Plexiglas or glass.
- For oils, some acrylics, some collages: wooden frame or wooden frame with linen insert.
- D-rings or screw eyes for wire: on sides of frame 1/3 down from top.
- Wire: use picture wire; adjust length so wall hook will be about 1" below top of frame.

Color of Mat(s):

- Bright colors if there is a lot of white space in the painting.
- Complements of a color in the painting (could be the prominent color or a minor color).
- Soft pastel colors or neutral colors for delicate watercolor paintings.
- Mid-tone or color from the art piece for outer mat, and complementary color for the inner mat.
- White or off-white is usually preferred for juried competitions.

Size of Mat:

- Narrow mat surface for art pieces with large white areas.
- Wide mat surface for other art pieces – an average mat width of 2 ½" to 3".
- Equal width mat on all sides for most horizontal paintings; sometimes a bit wider at the bottom for vertical painting/picture.
- Equal width on all sides of inner liner.
- At least an inch of difference in size of mat compared to frame.
- Large enough mat opening (the window) to display all of the artwork but not so large as to expose the edges of the painting.
- Up to 3/8" distance from signature to edge of painting so signature is exposed.

Condition of a Mat

- Perfectly straight mat edges.
- No ragged edges on the mat anywhere – window should fall out if cut correctly.
- No visible overlap of cuts at mat corners.
- No smudges, coffee stains or fingerprints on the mat, frame, or glass (if used).