



Framing Pastel Paintings

If you have purchased an original matted painting in a clear bag, it is best to remove the bag before framing by carefully cutting it away. Pulling it out of the bag creates static that may lift pastel dust, which may smear the pastel and transfer dust to the mat.

AVOID TOUCHING the SURFACE of the artwork. If you must lay some protective covering over the pastel for transporting, use wax paper (do not leave wax paper on artwork in intense heat) or glassine, affixing it so it will not slide around damaging the art. It is better if you can lift the protective covering with spacers/risers along the outside edges so it does not touch the art at all. The framer should not lay a ruler or mat or frame samples on top of the pastel. Handle pastel paintings extremely gently if/when working face side down. When securing the painting into frame, lean painting vertically so loose pastel dust will not fall on glass. I knock off loose pastel dust and use a very light spray of fixative spray on the finished painting. Most pastel artist prefer that a heavy layer of fixative NOT be used, as it darkens and takes away the positive aspects of the medium. With proper handling and framing, pastel dust should not be an issue.

Frame in the following layers, from top to bottom:

- 1) Use a **frame moulding** with a deep enough rabbet to support the layers of materials selected.
- 2) Use UV filtering **glass or museum glass**. Do not use plexiglass or acrylic sheeting as the static electricity will draw pastel dust to itself. The glass should not touch the pastel.
- 3) It is recommended all **mats** used on pastels be acid-free and cut with reverse bevels; the latter prevents pastel dust from showing on the beveled edges. The mat helps to lift the glass above the pastel. (if you use foam core riser around the painting to lift mat, the bevel may face the frame — this is what I do).
- 4) An acid-free foam board **spacer** or **plastic spacer (e.g. EconoSpace®)** may be used as an optional way to create space into which pastel dust can fall (or as a design preference).
- 5) **The original pastel painting** – which, has been carefully mounted by hinges or corners, mounts to an acid-free backing board.
- 6) The acid-free protective **backing board and then the dustcover** – usually a brown or black kraft paper to help seal out dust and insects. Or, whatever the framer use (such a Tyvek).
- 7) Do not use hammer-in style **bumpers** on the back of the frame as their application can cause vibrations that could shake loose some pastel dust.
- 8) When transporting your newly framed pastel or charcoal, rest it on its back so driving vibrations will not cause pastel dust to be loosened.