Framing Your Artwork

Entering a WAS-H show can be easy. There are just a few rules you need to follow. These rules will always be found in each month’s prospectus, so be sure you read the instructions.

One thing to consider: working backwards: Pick the frame and components before deciding what size painting to create! This may make your life easier!

Here is a list of framing instructions from the most recent show:

**Framed Artwork:**

\*Simple: Frames must be simple, not embellished in any way.

\*Color: Frames may be black, white, gray, tan, metallic or neutral colors only.

\*Protection: Most use plexiglass to protect their framed artwork. Glass is not allowed.

\*Protection: Varnish, wax or other fixatives are allowed instead of plexiglass.

\*Frames must be wired across the back so they can be hung from a single point. (No Sawtooth hangers)

\*Size of frame molding: Can’t be wider than 2” front facing.

\*Mats: Framed pieces must have a mat and mats must be white. Off-white is not acceptable.

**Unframed Artwork:**

\*Artwork may be submitted on a cradle with fixative.

\*Art on canvas is also allowed without a frame, as long as sides have a finished look.

\*Unframed pieces must have a wire across the back so they can be hung from a single point. (No sawtooth hangers)

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1st - Photograph your art before framing! Once it is framed, it’s much harder to get a clear picture without glare.

Framing Options to consider:

1. **Professional Framing** – Your local framer will do a great job and will bring out the best in your artwork. This is a more expensive option. This is certainly the most efficient and easiest option.
2. **Buying framing components and putting it together yourself** - The main components you need are:
   1. The frame – Wood or Metal
   2. The Mat and backing– White only!
   3. The Wire & D-rings or other hanging hardware
   4. Plexiglass or fixative
3. Before you buy: MEASURE to determine:

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| Opening size of Mat (overlap the sides of your painting by 1/8” inch) | Overall size of Mat | Overall size of frame | Size of Plexiglass |

Tips: Measure carefully!

While the size of the mat opening may be custom, it’s a good idea to use a common size frame.

Custom mats can be ordered online or at any of the local art stores listed below.

It’s not unusual to buy a frame from one source, a mat from another, and plexiglass from a 3rd source.

Talking to a customer rep to ensure you’ve ordered the right components/hanging hardware can help.

1. **Common sources for frame components:**

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| Online: | Pictureframes.com | Jerry’s Artarama | Dick Blick |
| Local stores: | Texas Art Supply | Michaels | Hobby Lobby |

Tips: The local sources listed above can cut a custom mat for you and they sell both metal and wood frames in standard sizes. While you may want to pick a style that complements the artwork, make sure it meets the WAS-H specs or it can be disqualified from the show.

1. **Plexiglass – the hardest component!**

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| Local stores: | Southland Hardware | Home Depot | Lowes |

Tips: Measure carefully! Take your frame with you. If it is off by just 1/8”, it may not stay in your frame.

Cutting Plexi yourself is difficult but can be one with a box cutter. (Not recommended!)

Ikea also sells frames with plexiglass for extremely reasonable prices. You may want to check to see what sizes they offer. This could be a very cost-effective option.

1. **Other sources to consider** - local thrift stores or garage sales. It’s only a good deal if it fits your artwork! Even looking around your own home for a frame that can be swapped out should be considered when on a budget.

**Putting your frame together**:

Mounting your art:

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| On Cradled Panels, no frame required | On foam core or mat board | Float Mount, no mat required |
| Use heavy acrylic gel as glue. When dry, spray varnishes to fix the work | Use Artist Tape or Linen Tape to secure your painting onto the foam core or mat board. Scotch tape/masking tape will not hold well. | Glue your painting to Matboard with archival glue or rice paste (rice paste is easily removed) |

* **Mats** - If you are cutting a mat to place over the artwork, measure and cut so that there is overlap by 1/8th to ¼”
* **Plexiglass** - clean the surface on both sides and then drop the plexi from about 10” above the matted or floated artwork. The air that rushes out will take the dust and lint out so that you have a nice clean presentation.
* **Metal Frames** – put together 3 sides, slide your matted artwork inside and follow steps above to add your plexiglass. Add your fourth side and place tension clips (sold separately), to hold the artwork towards the front of the metal frame.
* **Wooden Frames** – Clean the plexiglass in the frame, place your mat, artwork and backing board (in that order) and then use a point driver to secure it in the frame. Check your artwork from the front after securing with a few points to make sure there isn’t dirt/dust showing. Secure every 4” with points. The place d-rings/wire for hanging.
* **Wire** your frame about 1/3 of the way down the back of the frame and keep the wire taut. Too much slack will have your painting pulling away from the wall when it is hung.