

Once you decide to purchase or commission an oil painting (from me or any other painter of course) it might help to know just how to take care of it. This overview will give you a basic understanding of how to take care of the original oil paintings you have chosen to make a special part of your personal space at home or work. The well-being of artwork, even after it 'leaves the nest' is important as each painting is personal and remains as special to the artist as it is to you. Oil paintings are remarkably durable, which is why we are able to view paintings from many hundreds of years ago in museums today. While they are certainly not invulnerable, the biggest risk is accidental holes or rips.

Whether you're purchasing an original painting or a reproduction, it is important to know how to properly care for your artwork. With proper care and handling, you can protect the artwork from deterioration and preserve its beauty for many years to come. So, to be sure you will be able to enjoy your painting for a long time here are a few pointers.

## *Handling and Transporting*

First, when handling a painting, make sure that there is nothing on your body that is likely to scratch or tear the painting (i.e. some rings, belt buckles, watches, etc.). When transporting a framed artwork, lay cardboard over the front and back of the painting (not on the surface, but over the frame) then cover it with bubble wrap. Keep bubble wrap away from the painting surface as it could leave marks. Always keep a painting upright and never lay it flat. Be careful of the frame corners as they are easily damaged. Always carry a painting with two hands from the sides of the frame, never just by the top or the hanging wire. Avoid moisture buildup (which can cause damage to the work) by keeping it wrapped for as short a period of time as possible.

## *Displaying and Storing*

The painting should ideally be displayed at eye level. Avoid hanging the painting where people may bump into it. Never lean the front or back surface of a stretched canvas on a pointed or sharp object, no matter how small. Corners of chairs and tables must be avoided. If you lean the canvas against something, it can leave a dent that will disfigure your work. If you must lean it against something, lean it on the wood

of its stretcher bars or the frame, so that nothing presses against the canvas. When hanging a painting on wall hooks, make sure that the wall hooks are driven into the wall studs for maximum stability. For large, heavy paintings, particularly those with a thick and deep frame, use a bracket under the painting to support its weight. Make sure the painting is hanging securely and safely. Make note of the weight of the painting and use suitably heavy screws and hooks. Ask a framer for advice if you are not sure what your artwork requires for safe hanging.

Store the artwork in a room with relatively constant temperatures. Avoid storing paintings in rooms with excessive humidity (i.e. attic, basement) as this can cause mold to form on the painting. Routinely examine the painting for pests. If infestation is found, isolate the painting in a plastic bag and have it examined by a professional. Again, a professional framer would be a good resource or, you can contact your local art league (try a Google search) for assistance.

### *Light*

To keep the colors in your painting bright, do not display the artwork in direct full sunlight. It may take a few years, but prolonged exposure to long hours of direct sunlight will fade the colors in your oil painting. Please be aware of this when choosing a location for your work. Avoid using ultraviolet light, which can also cause discoloration to the painting. If you use a picture light, use a low frequency bulb or diffused spotlights that are mounted at least 10 feet away to avoid heat build-up.

### *Temperature and Humidity*

Monitor the environment where the painting is displayed. Keep the fluctuations in temperature and humidity to a minimum as extreme changes in temperature may cause the painting to stretch or shrink. Never expose your painting to extreme heat, cold, or humidity. Never hang directly over fires, radiators, heaters, in bathrooms, kitchens or around a swimming pool. Do not keep in a damp room as it encourages mold and mildew. Check your painting regularly (front and back) for any signs of mold, pests or insects.

### *Cleaning*

Dust your painting regularly - a thick layer of built up dust can dry out the paint and possibly result in cracking or peeling. Use a clean soft artist brush or lint-free cloth to dust the painting. Do not use your regular dust cloth or feather dusters, as these may

scratch the painting or contaminate it with the cleaning material. Do not ever apply chemicals or household cleaning products (like Pledge) to the painting surface. Moisture may cause loss of paint so avoid using moist cloths. If the painting is thickly textured, be gentle with any cleaning as the lumps of paint may get caught on the cloth and torn off the painting.

If the surface of your painting looks dry or dull, it may need a coat of varnish. Varnish is a protective surface which will not only enhance the image, but will keep the surface intact and safe from cracking (except under extreme circumstances, of course). All my paintings come with a protective coat of varnish and should not require additional varnishing.

### *Other*

If you ever need or want to get rid of the work for any reason, please let me know so I can update the work's provenance records. Please don't destroy or throw away an original work of art!!! If you absolutely can't keep it for any reason, offer to give it back to its creator.

Please note that the artist will always retain copyright in the painting. This means that nobody but the artist can copy, reproduce or photograph the work for distribution or commercial gain without the prior consent of the artist.

Most important of all – be proud of your investment and enjoy your painting!

More info can be found on my [FAQ page](#). Still have Questions? Email me at [barbara@bteusinkart.com](mailto:barbara@bteusinkart.com) and I'll be happy to help!

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