

LOOKING AFTER ARTWORKS ON PAPER

- Before unwrapping an unframed artwork make sure you have a flat space large enough to place it and that it is clean and dry. Paper acquires grease spots very easily from tiny specks of food and stains from liquids.
- When handling flat paper do not pick it up between two fingers and thumb, this invariably leaves a kink mark in the paper. Pick it up with two hands on one short edge and let it hang naturally or better still slide a rigid support like cardboard or a book underneath.
- Avoid rolling paper if possible, it is prone to creasing when rolled and unrolled. It can also be hard to remove the curl entirely . When unrolling a sheet do not hold the centre of the free edge or the paper is likely to kink around this point as it is unrolled. Try to weight the two free corners and unroll slowly adding other weights if necessary.
- To flatten strongly curled pictures place onto a flat surface and cover with tissue then a rigid board plus enough weight to keep it flat. (Don't forget the picture is under the board). Leave it for a day or two and you should be able to see if the paper has started to flatten - you may need to leave it longer. If curling or waviness is still a problem talk to a paper conservator who will be able to recommend other treatments. Rolling the sheet in the opposite direction to the curl is not recommended as it can add creases to the sheet. Do not try ironing a sheet to make it flat; the heat forces moisture out of the paper in an uncontrolled manner and causes the paper to become wavy.
- Store unframed work in a dry and dust-free place. For best protection place between acid-free tissue or other clean paper and then between rigid boards. The fluted polypropylene used to stiffen envelopes etc. is an excellent support, especially if the fluting of the two sheets is run crosswise. If the picture is to be stored long term place the tissue wrapped print within an archival polyester sleeve with acid-free mountboard underneath for support.
- When mounting and framing pictures on paper always specify the use of acid-free materials. Check that your framer is aware of the Fine Art Trade Guild guidelines for artworks and can frame at least to 'Conservation Level'



LOOKING AFTER FRAMED PICTURES

- When handling the frame do not lift it by one edge, always use two hands and avoid twisting the frame as this will put the glass under stress.
- Make sure that the wall fixings you use are strong enough and suitable for the type of wall. For large pictures you may need to hang the work from two wall fixings. Do not hang pictures by mirror plates attached to the top edge of the frame.
- Check all wall and frame fixings periodically for signs of strain or damage and inspect the cord or wire to ensure that knots are safe and there is no sign of fraying. Always use proper framing cord or wire, never string.
- When cleaning the glass always put the cleaner onto a cloth not directly onto the picture and avoid liquid running down the glass as this can creep inside the frame.
- Keep pictures where the temperature and humidity remain fairly constant. Avoid areas where they fluctuate strongly e.g. bathrooms and kitchens.
- Don't hang pictures above radiators or other sources of strong heat as the temperature fluctuations may cause strong expansion and contraction of both frame and work. This could lead to cockling, possible deterioration of weak papers and splitting or cracking of frames.
- Avoid direct sunlight falling on pictures as this may cause colours to fade, papers to discolour and can accelerate the deterioration of many papers.
- Delicate works like watercolours and coloured pencil drawings will prefer lower light levels ~ avoid the use of spotlights directly on the picture.
 - Oil paintings prefer a light situation (but not sunlight). If kept in the dark for long periods oils may turn yellow, however this should be rectified if the picture is given more light.

