

## Reframing the Problem: Caring for Framed Objects in Small Institutions (aka: On a Budget)

February 9, 2016

**Rachel Waters [Flagstaff, AZ]:** If you have a frame that is not historic and is damaging/ugly is there a generic preservation frame you can buy to protect the work?

*Partidge/Jamison: Not Really. Just get a sturdy wood or metal frame that has adequate space for the object and is substantial enough, if the object is larger, to hold the weight of the object on the wall.*

**SILVIA Manrique [Miami, Florida]:** What do you use to fill spaces when the frame is larger than the painting? I have used cork or archival board (which might compress) before, but I am sure there is something more suitable

*Partidge/Jamison: Both of your solutions are perfectly fine. We also use mat board and sometimes, wooden spacers when we need to fill a larger area.*

**Lisa Barrera [Santa Fe, NM]:** In the diagram for matting and framing works on paper, it shows that there is a moisture barrier and dust cover but not in the presentation, are those necessary if we use a Coroplast® backing board?

*Partidge/Jamison: No. The Coroplast® board serves as a vapor barrier as well as a protective backing board. Although, if you are not going to seal the mat package, you might want to put on a dust cover to keep dust from getting into the mat package.*

**Natasha Thoreson [Madison]:** Would you recommend removing framed textiles from their frames when storing? Should we be worried about the wooden frame off-gassing and damaging the textile?

*Partidge/Jamison: It depends. If you have a safe place to store them (drawer, box), that would be fine. But if all your materials in the frame are archival quality and you line the rabbet with Marvelseal® or foil backed framers tape, there should be no problem leaving the piece in the frame.*

**Suzanne Hale [Fort Collins, CO]:** When packing a framed unglazed painting, what is a good material to use as the first wrapping? Plastic? Glassine? Tyvek®? This is for a temporary trip.

*Partidge/Jamison: For temporary packing, virgin polyethylene sheeting is fine as a first layer. Then a cardboard facing cut to the size of the frame. Finally, wrap overall in bubble wrap. If the frame isn't high enough to prevent the poly from touching the face of the painting, you might need to build a cardboard tray higher than the surface to keep it away from the painting.*

**Francoise Hacke [Sarasota, FL]:** Suzanne- if the painting is framed, twill tape can be tied around the frame to create a barrier to prevent the wrapping material from touching the surface. Make sure to tie it tightly, but not so tight as to damage or abrade the frame. The frame can be protected by acid free tissue paper

*Partidge/Jamison: This is a fine solution, as long as the frame is higher than the surface of the painting. If not, see above for tray instructions.*

**Sharron Lawson [Eagle Point, Or]:** We have a pair of moccasins that are just hanging on the wall; shouldn't they be in a frame of some kind?

*Partidge/Jamison: That would probably be a good idea if you can afford a shadow box. For a less expensive solution, you could also use a Plexiglas® vitrine mounted to the wall over the object to keep dust off and provide protection from UV light.*

**Julia Welby [Sleepy Hollow]:** Does anyone wrap their framed oversize object in foam before storing upright in display shelving?

*Partidge/Jamison: That is not really necessary if you have proper cardboard dividers protecting it from adjacent objects. Although, foam might be a good idea if there is a lot of ornamentation on the frame.*

**Stacey Durham [Altus, Oklahoma]:** How would you care an object in an unconventional frame? Say for instance a ford window car frame?

*Partidge/Jamison: The frame sounds like it is part of the object and might need specialized care based on the materials if it has its own condition issues. For general care, if metal, it can be dusted as with any other frame – soft brushes, vacuuming.*

**Brigitte Campeau [Montreal, Quebec]:** Any recommendation on what to do with old empty frames. Are they worth keeping? (I arrive late so sorry in advance if you talk about this at the beginning). Thanks!

*Partidge/Jamison: It depends on whether you have space and whether the frames are period frames, which may fit objects in your collection. If it belongs to a specific object in the collection, you should tag it and keep it as a historic record. If it does not belong to a specific piece and is just a generic frame, you can discard as you wish.*

**Emily Murphy [Littleton MA]:** Should we use the felt tape in the rabbet if the object is glazed?

*Partidge/Jamison: Like for works on paper, there should be a space between the surface of the painting and the glazing. Therefore, the felt would be moved to the bottom of the spacer resting against the paint layer. Basically whatever is touching the paint layer should be as soft a surface as possible.*

**Betty Walsh [Victoria BC]:** What do you think of frame sealing tape?

*Partidge/Jamison: In general, we only use the foil-backed frame sealing tape. We use it for sealing the backs of frames if needed. It can also be used to line the rabbet of a wood frame if off gassing is an issue.*

