

Caring for Your Serigraphs

You've just left a gallery with your first ever fine art purchase: a serigraph print by your favorite artist. You carefully set it down in the back seat of your car and drive below the speed limit so that it doesn't accidentally move in ways it shouldn't. Once home, you move it in its sleeve to the kitchen table to admire the brand new treasure. As the euphoria of buying something wonderful and expensive slowly recedes, you realize that you have no idea what to do next! How do you care for this piece of art?

Have no fear! Here is a handy guide of best practices for serigraphy care:

When handling your piece before it is framed, use both hands to help avoid creating any creases in the paper or varnish in the case of a canvas print.

Get the serigraph framed by a qualified fine art framer. You can find a good framer at a local gallery or specialty frame shop. If your print is on paper, you need to make sure that all materials used in the framing process are acid-free. Non acid-free mats will cause a chemical reaction with the print and cause discoloration. A qualified fine art framer will know the importance of museum-quality framing.

Keep your serigraph away from moisture of any kind (this includes rooms with high humidity, such as bathrooms). Whether your print is on paper or canvas, liquids are a big no no! And definitely steer clear of solvents! All you need to clean a canvas print is a fine feather duster.

Do not spray the back of a canvas print with water to tighten it on its stretcher bars. While this is a technique used for tightening oil paintings, it can be very detrimental to the piece if it is a serigraph or other print. If the canvas loosens, have it restretched by your fine art framer.

Avoid hanging the print in a location that received direct sunlight or high reflective light. Sunlight will damage the color of the piece and can severely fade it over time. This doesn't mean you have to hang your piece in a room without windows, though!

The first thing you'll think is "Will this process be expensive?" Possibly. The cost of framing will depend on the size of the serigraph, as well as the type of frame, matting, and glass you choose. You may also want to invest in having a professional art installer come out to the house and hang the framed piece. But when the piece is framed and hung correctly, the upkeep is minimal and you can sit back and relax knowing that these steps will help you keep your serigraph print as bright and beautiful as the day you walked out of that gallery with it.