

What You Should Know About Light And Your Artwork

The single most important step you can take to protect your framed artwork from harmful UV rays is to specify the use of Conservation Series Glass featuring TruGuard UV Protection.

The Blessing and Danger of Light

Without light there would be no art, as light is what allows us to see and appreciate color. It is one of the great ironies that the very thing that lets us enjoy color also works to destroy it.

Have you ever seen a faded gum wrapper, lying in the sun, bleached to a mere fragment of its original color? Perhaps the paper had become brittle as well – ready to be broken apart at the touch of a finger. The damage you saw was caused by the sun... specifically, the sun's damaging UV, or ultraviolet light rays.

Ultraviolet light rays are the same villains that your doctor warns you about. They cause breakdown whenever you come in contact with organic materials, burning noses, bleaching gum wrappers and ruining your son's first finger painting. The damaging effects of the UV light on artwork are cumulative and irreversible.

UV Protection for Your Artwork

All this talk about invisible UV light rays would seem to spell certain doom for artwork, but thankfully that is not the case. A proprietary development in glass technology by Tru Vue has resulted in a product called TruGuard UV Protection, a coating which effectively blocks out a minimum of 97% of all harmful UV rays. The cost premium for using Conservation Series Glass is minimal, and the benefits of its use cannot be ignored.

Tru Vue offers four types of glass available with TruGuard UV Protection

All four types block a minimum of 97% of harmful UV light rays.

CONSERVATION CLEAR

Essential for conservation framing

CONSERVATION REFLECTION CONTROL

Single-sided etched non-glare

CONSERVATION PERFECT VUE

Proprietary technology improves transmission and clarity

MUSEUM GLASS

Anti-reflective technology with UV blocking properties

Proper Lighting Techniques

- Choose subdued lighting effects that will not reflect into the glass, especially when you are not using reflection control products.
- Add a sense of atmosphere by using wall lights or sconces on either side of your framed piece.
- Add emphasis to framed pieces by adding individual picture lights – see your framer for details.
- Do not hang your valuable artwork in direct sunlight. Even with protective UV-blocking glass, prolonged exposure to the sun's heat can destroy your art.
- Use incandescent bulbs to light your work. Incandescent lights have only 4% of their rays in the damaging UV range. (Fluorescent lights, on the other hand, have a high concentration on UV rays and should not be used to light your work.)
- Illuminate your art at the lowest light level possible for enjoyment.

Unfortunately, the sun is not the only source of harmful UV light rays. All light sources, whether natural or artificial, have some of their components in the ultraviolet range.

The most drastic visual effect of exposure to UV light is the dramatic fading of colors – especially those colors that contain red. Other effects include the yellowing and/or bleaching of paper fibers, sizing dyes, brighteners and fillers. Some pigments may experience the opposite effect and actually darken to black when exposed to UV light. The materials that make up your artwork- the paper or fabric on which the image is displayed, may become brittle. Photos may appear yellow or stained with ghostly silver deposits rising to the surface.

Once damage from UV light has occurred, it can never be reversed. That is why it is important for you to understand what you can do to prevent this type of damage in the first place.