



## Care of Oil Paintings

As time passes, oil paintings tend to darken due to the accumulation of dirt and yellowing of the protective varnish layer. Improper cleaning can harm a painting. Therefore, we suggest that beginners engage a conservator to clean paintings having monetary or sentimental value.

1. Frame the painting up! This is to ensure that your precious painting is protected from external damage like knocks. If you are unsure, you can bring it to a local framer and even choose the design which you desire! However, do not use a glass to frame your artwork as it will damage the delicate surface of the oil painting.
2. Never touch the surface of your oil painting when handling your piece of artwork. Be sure to hold it up by the sides of the wooden frames
3. Expose your painting to the least amount of environmental damage as possible. You should never expose it to extreme heat, cold or humidity. Such changes in temperature will cause the frequent expansion and contraction of the canvas and the stretchers, which will in turn damage the integrity of the oil paint.
4. Avoid placing your painting in extreme light or darkness. Extensive exposure to light causes the painting to fade away while being kept in darkness for too long will deepen the colour of the painting as well.
5. Apply a layer of varnish to the painted surface of your oil painting to serve as an extra layer of protection from the environment.
6. Do not leave the paintings near or on pointed objects. These sharp edges could inflict dents or cuts on your fine portraits, hence disfiguring them.
7. Dust your paintings occasionally to prevent dirt from accumulating. Use soft and clean brushes to brush the dirt off gently or a dry micro fiber cloth to lift these particles up. Alternatively, you can also employ a low power vacuum with a brush attachment.
6. If something bad happens to the work (i.e. it crashes down off the wall and gets a big gash in it), bring it to a professional conservator who can fix it properly. Don't do it yourself! Bring it to someone who knows what to do. The artist will appreciate it.
7. If you ever need or want to get rid of the work for any reason, always contact the artist, who should be informed of the work's new whereabouts so he or she can update the work's provenance records. Never, ever 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.
3. You might want to dust your painting regularly, so that a thick layer of dust does not build up which will dry out the paint and possibly result in cracking and peeling. Do not spray anything (like pledge) on the work. Dust with a soft, dry cloth. If the surface of your painting looks dry and dull, you may want to have it varnished. Most artists will offer to varnish the work, if they haven't done so already, at a new owner's request and free of charge. 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).

**A Word of Caution:** If you must transport the work, lay a flat piece of cardboard, mat board or similar firm material over the front and back surfaces, and then wrap it in bubble wrap or styrofoam wrap. Try not to keep it wrapped up for too long as to avoid moisture buildup which might cause damage to the work.