

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR PAINTING FOR AN EXHIBIT *by Linda Verhagen*

Having painted, exhibited and run art shows for many years, I was asked by a member to give advice to newer members concerning matting and framing of your artwork. If you are at the point in your artist's journey where you are exhibiting in shows and want to sell your paintings, it is necessary to realize that not only the quality of your artwork is important but also is the quality of its presentation.

When accepted into an art exhibition, it is important to follow all the rules that the exhibit requires or you are in danger of having your painting rejected to be hung when you deliver your painting.

Whenever you place your artwork onto a show or for sale, always be sure that the mat, glass/plexiglass, and frame are clean. This says to the viewer that you are proud of your painting and want it to be seen in the best possible way. Large overcuts on a mat are not acceptable especially when using a double mat. Make sure that the corners of the frame match up and are not off-line with each other. Similarly, be sure that the frame envelops all side of the glass, mat and backboard so that dirt, dust and insects cannot get under the glass and settle on the mat or work of art. Obviously breaks in the glass or heavily scratched plexi-glass should be replaced. When locating the hanging hardware where the wire is attached, don't place them so high that the wire may appear above the painting when hung on a wall. When showing your art in an exhibition or gallery, the mat you select to surround your painting is important. It is always safest to choose a neutral or white mat rather than a dark or bright colored one that may be similar to color in the painting. Using a mat that is either very dark or colorful tends to distract from focusing on the painting itself. Instead, if you want to compliment a color in your painting, use that color in an inner mat and have the larger outer mat be a neutral.

I hope that these recommendations help when you prepare your artwork for the next exhibition. A painting may be well executed, but how you present your visual ideas will have an affect on the viewer's opinion of your art and of the artist.