

2-Dimensional Artwork Concerns

What happens when the work is “finished?”

Each artwork, after it is completed to your satisfaction, is ready for some final considerations prior to exhibiting the work, selling it to an eager buyer, giving it to your Mama, or putting it in storage for the day you decide to do one of those things to it. This paper is an outline, you must decide what is important, how much money you can afford to spend on any of these concerns, and how much time and effort you want to spend on what is, essentially, “student work.” The following list of concerns is not in order of accomplishment (#1 is not necessarily the first thing that needs to be done), rather it is in order of what I consider most important to what I consider less important. However, given that caveat, I consider all three concerns important to preserving, conserving, and identifying your artwork.

1. **Presentation:** How artwork is presented is as important as the work itself. A poor, or messy, presentation will not put a potential buyer in a buying frame of mind just as a poor presentation will not help you convince an instructor that you take the work seriously, putting your grade in jeopardy. One must also remember that 2-dimensional artwork is matted and framed to protect it, so a “professional looking” mat and frame will help “sell” your work but making it last through time is as important as how it looks.
2. **Conservation:** Also called Preservation, careful handling, proper storage, and correct matting will make sure your artwork lasts, in its finished state, as long as possible. This assumes you have the desire to make sure your artwork will last as long as possible and that you have enough money to “do it right.” The longer you want the artwork to last the more expensive it becomes. And it also assumes you used an archival support (acid free paper, for example) and the best, and longest-lasting art supplies available. There is little you can do to protect artwork done on Newsprint using non-lightfast supplies, but artwork done using archival materials deserves to be treated with respect.
3. **Identification:** Proof the artwork is actually yours, and when it was completed, in case there are questions in the future. By signing and dating a piece of artwork you have given yourself an “implied copyright,” and this protection works if you are willing to take someone who “steals” your concept, image, or actual work to court. Putting a date on the work, even if it is only the year, helps when you are trying to keep track of your work for such things as portfolios, exhibitions, retrospectives, etc.. By adding a title, even something as noncommittal as “Untitled #1,” you are able to identify the specific piece of work for exhibitions and/or buyers.