



## Care & Instructions

As for any artwork, caring for fine art paintings requires a certain understanding and attention to detail. This document addresses some important characteristics of the medium and offers guidance to help keep your paintings in good condition and safe for future generations. While acrylic and oil are not the only techniques of painting, they are the most common and thus the focus of this article. The most prevalent causes of damage to both acrylic and oil paintings are inappropriate storage, displaying works in areas with fluctuating temperatures, over exposure to light, fluctuating humidity levels and airborne dust and dirt. These dangers should be kept in mind whenever you hang or store your paintings.

Whether you are hanging your paintings for display or storing them sudden environmental changes should be kept to a minimum. The following are commonly acknowledged as acceptable environments for paintings: during Winter 18 to 21°C (65 to 70 °F) with relative humidity of 40 to 45%, during Summer 21 to 24°C (70 to 75 °F) with relative humidity of 45 to 55%.

## Oil Paintings

Oil painting, which became prevalent in the 1400s, consists of pigments suspended in oil — the carrier. Today, the most commonly used oil is cold-pressed linseed oil known for its durability, the fact that it is quick drying and because it yellows less than other oils. However, other oils are still used to achieve different effects of viscosity or consistency; this is one benefit of using oil instead of water as a carrier.

There are a few points to consider when it comes to care and maintenance:

- Oil paintings yellow over time, this should be considered an unavoidable and perhaps even an attractive trait
- Oil paintings are more likely to crack than other kinds of paint
- Oil paintings can flake due to the hardness of the material
- Oil paintings can take up to a year to fully dry; those which are not fully dried are most sensitive to light or dark
- A coat of varnish can be applied as a protectant by a professional only after the painting has fully dried.

If properly cared for, oil paintings can last for centuries. Like all paintings your works in oil should be kept clean and free of dust but deep cleaning and other interventions should always be left to a professional.