

# Condition Reports for Artwork

by Don Bowen

**A** condition report – what’s it for? Why should picture framers be concerned with it? The answer to the first question is simple, and the answer to the second question is, in today’s framing environment, quite realistic.

A condition report is simply a detailed statement of the physical condition of a work of art at the time it is brought into your store. This report could be the completion of a prepared form or it could easily be written at the time the work is brought into the store.

A prepared format usually works best because it lends consistency to your assessment of the conditions of all works of art. You can create your own form or you might decide to copy someone else’s with their permission (two are included here as examples). A prepared form is also more acceptable in legal situations, should that become a concern.

A thorough condition report should include several basic elements:

- Client identification, address, phone number etc.
- The name of the person completing report.
- The date and time report was taken.
- A note as to whether the client was present or not.
- Description of the art: a brief statement of what

**NOTICE, RELEASE, and AGREEMENT**

The purchaser, \_\_\_\_\_, by signing this notice, release, and agreement, and for the consideration of one dollar (\$1.00) the receipt of which is herein acknowledged:

- (1) Signifies his/her acceptance of the framing materials and the process used in the framing of his/her object of art; and
- (2) Acknowledges notice that the materials used in the framing of the described object of art do not meet traditional standards within the picture framing industry known today as "museum mounting," "archival treatment," "conservation framing," or any other term, or terms, that may be interpreted to mean the same; and
- (3) Hereby releases, discharges, and agrees to hold harmless, \_\_\_\_\_

its employees and/or agents, from any and all claims, demands, actions or proceedings, including but not limited to, diminution of value of said object of art, which the purchaser, its heirs or assigns, or buyers of said object of art, may have arising from the framing materials and processes used; and

- (4) Agrees that the original of this writing shall remain affixed to the back of the framed object of art in the event of transfer to any other person(s).

Description of object of art: \_\_\_\_\_

Condition of object of art: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of purchaser \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of framer, employee, or agent \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

the artwork is (watercolor, print, photograph), subject matter, and size of the art for identification.

- A written description of any damage to the art.
- Charted locations of the damage, if any.
- The recommended work to be done on the art.
- A note as to whether the client agreed to the assessment.
- Signatures of client and salesperson completing report.

Now that we have answered the question of what a condition report is, we can start thinking about why framers should be concerned with having one at

their shop. Is it worth the time and effort to set one up and use it as a day to day routine?

Looking back about 20 plus years of experience in the industry and thinking of how some works of art have been framed, it is apparent that many of us did some terrible things way back when: rolls of masking tape, acidic corrugated board, painted mats. The list goes on!

A tremendous amount of art, (regardless of value) has really been abused. Most of us did these things because that was all we knew, and quite frankly, it was the "acceptable" way to do things at that time. Today things are very different

Framer and consumers are



**CLIENT**

Owner: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**ART**

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Artist: \_\_\_\_\_  
Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Width: \_\_\_\_\_ Medium: \_\_\_\_\_  
Value: \_\_\_\_\_  
Condition: \_\_\_\_\_

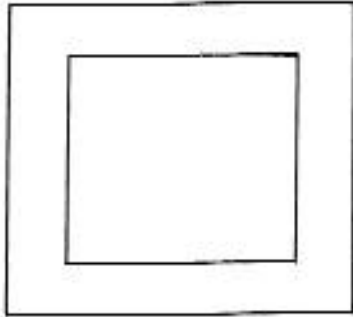
**FRAMING**

Frame: \_\_\_\_\_  
Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Width: \_\_\_\_\_ Glazing: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mat, window: \_\_\_\_\_  
Top: \_\_\_\_\_ Bottom: \_\_\_\_\_  
Pencil marks: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mounting: \_\_\_\_\_  
Hinges: \_\_\_\_\_ Backboard: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fillerboard: \_\_\_\_\_ Nails or staples: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dust cover: \_\_\_\_\_ Hanger: \_\_\_\_\_  
Bumpers: \_\_\_\_\_  
Condition: \_\_\_\_\_

**CONDITION OF ART**

General appearance: \_\_\_\_\_  
Bulge, warp, cockle: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tears: \_\_\_\_\_  
Wrinkle, fold, crease: \_\_\_\_\_  
Missing parts, holes: \_\_\_\_\_  
Surface dirt: \_\_\_\_\_  
Scratches: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cleavage or disjoint: \_\_\_\_\_  
Crackle or crazing: \_\_\_\_\_  
Flaking or chipping: \_\_\_\_\_  
Darkening or yellowing of paper: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fading or blanching of color in design: \_\_\_\_\_  
Stains (water, food, grease, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_  
Insect Damage: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mold or foxing: \_\_\_\_\_  
Old hinges (paper, linen): \_\_\_\_\_  
Glue/paste: \_\_\_\_\_  
Type of varnish & condition: \_\_\_\_\_  
Support of art: \_\_\_\_\_  
Identification numbers, stamps, seals, etc.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Previous restoration: \_\_\_\_\_  
Other observations: \_\_\_\_\_

Matting:



Art Condition:

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

Front of Art

Art Condition

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

Back of Art

**RECOMMENDED RESTORATION**

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Examination: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Examiner: \_\_\_\_\_