

ABOUT LIGHT AND YOUR ARTWORK

Note: The following is from the website of Tru Vue, the leading manufacturer of glass used for framing, so it is informative, but not altogether impartial. This does describe the various types of glass available, but it does not include a discussion of acrylic products that could also apply in certain situations (i.e., where weight is a factor or when the item is at increased risk of breakage). Acrylic is available in sheets larger than most glass products, and like the glass options described below, comes with a variety of uv-filtering and anti-reflective characteristics. Acrylic is lighter in weight than glass and far more difficult to break; however, it is more susceptible to scratching.

The Blessing and Danger of Light

Without light there would be no art, as light is what allows us to see and appreciate color. It is one of the great ironies that the very thing that lets us enjoy color also works to destroy it.

Have you ever seen a faded gum wrapper, lying in the sun, bleached to a mere fragment of its original color? Perhaps the paper had become brittle as well – ready to break apart at the touch of a finger. The damage you saw was caused by the sun ... specifically, the sun's damaging UV, or ultraviolet light rays.

Ultraviolet light rays are the same villains that your doctor warns you about. They cause breakdown whenever they come in contact with organic materials, burning noses, bleaching gum wrappers and ruining your son's first finger painting. The damaging effects of UV light on artwork are cumulative and irreversible.

UV Protection for Your Artwork

All this talk about invisible UV light rays would seem to spell certain doom for artwork, but thankfully that is not the case. A proprietary development in glass technology by Tru Vue® has resulted in a product called TruGuard® UV Protection, a coating which effectively blocks out a minimum of 98% of all harmful UV rays.

The cost premium for using Conservation Glass is minimal, and the benefits of its use are significant. Tru Vue® offers four types of glass available with TruGuard® UV Protection.

All four types block a minimum of 98% of harmful UV light rays.

MUSEUM GLASS®

Anti-reflective technology with UV blocking properties

CONSERVATION ULTRA VUE®

Anti-reflective technology improves transmission and clarity

CONSERVATION REFLECTION CONTROL®

Single-sided etched non-glare

CONSERVATION CLEAR®

Essential for conservation framing

Proper Lighting Techniques

- Choose subdued lighting effects that will not reflect into the glass, especially when you are not using reflection control products.
- Add a sense of atmosphere by using wall lights or sconces on either side of your framed piece.
- Add emphasis to framed pieces by adding individual picture lights – see your framer for details.
- Do not hang your valuable artwork in direct sunlight. Even with protective UV-blocking glass, prolonged exposure to the sun's heat can destroy your art.
- Use incandescent or LED bulbs to light your work. Incandescent lights have only 4% of their rays in the damaging UV range, and LED bulbs even less (fluorescent lights, on the other hand, have a high concentration of UV rays and should not be used to light your work).
- Illuminate your art at the lowest light level possible for enjoyment.

Unfortunately, the sun is not the only source of harmful UV light rays. All light sources, whether natural or artificial, have some of their components in the ultraviolet range. The most drastic visual effect of exposure to UV light is the dramatic fading of colors – especially those colors that contain red.

Other effects include the yellowing and/or bleaching of paper fibers, sizing dyes, brighteners and fillers. Some pigments may experience the opposite effect and actually darken to black when exposed to UV light. The materials that make up your artwork – the paper or fabric, on which the image is displayed, may also become brittle. Photos may appear yellow or stained with ghostly silver deposits rising to the surface.

Once damage from UV light has occurred, it can never be reversed. That's why it is important for you to understand what you can do to prevent this type of damage in the first place.

This information was provided for your assistance courtesy of Tru Vue®.

Tru Vue® manufactures a complete line of Conservation Series® Glass featuring TruGuard® UV Protection that work together to protect your framed valuables. For hanging and shipping oversized artwork, we recommend ACRYLITE® acrylic sheet products. ACRYLITE® is a registered trademark of CYRO Industries.