



Framing Your Work

While going through the Todmorden Biennial show with the juror to select the prizes, we discussed whether she found any major differences between the work she saw during the digital jurying those that she saw on the walls of the gallery.

She commented that there were no surprises, but added that had she seen the actual works during the jurying process, there were some that she would have declined because of the framing.

The framing of the work is an important part of the overall presentation, and often an inappropriate frame can diminish the positive impact of the work itself.

Some of the framing “sins” could include:

- Poor quality or condition of frame;
- Dirty glass;
- Poor wiring of the frame, leaving part of the wire exposed during hanging (when hung, the top of the wire should be about 3” below the top of the frame);
- Mismatch between the style of the frame and the painting, e.g., ornate frame with simple subject, mismatch between frame colour and the overall palette in the painting; Simple, black frames, especially floating frames, set off the painting well and are recommended. Otherwise, ensure that the painting complements the picture and does not clash with it.

Framing is not necessary for paintings done on stretched canvas – especially for large works – but edges should be clean and preferably black or white. If the artist decides to paint the edges a colour (other than black or white), it should be remembered that the edge then forms part of the work itself – and would be juried as such.

Although it was not an issue in the pieces in the Todmorden show, the juror also noted that the size, placement and colour of the signature is important. An over-sized signature – especially a coloured one – can dominate the canvas and detract from the work. As she noted, “The viewer wants to see the work, not the artist’s name.”