

Care and Preservation

Caring For Your Collection

Knowing how to acquire posters is the first step to building a movie art collection. The second step involves the proper way to preserve and display your collection.

Preservation

Preservation is a very controversial area, almost like our court system. Every expert has a different opinion! As such, we have tailored this section to present the various methods that can be used for storing and displaying your collectibles. We strongly suggest that in addition to the advice you get, you apply your basic common sense when deciding how to preserve and protect your collection.

Here are a few points to consider. Movie paper was primarily a cheap form of advertising for the movie studios. Movie paper was designed to be thrown away when the promotion was finished or sent to different locations to be reused until it was eventually thrown away. Because it was to be thrown away, the cheapest quality ink and paper was normally used. Poorer quality paper is more likely to get damaged by the elements.

These are the factors that damage movie posters:

moisture (water damage)
humidity (mold and fungus)
heat (makes brittle and brown)

light (fades the colors)
acidity (disintegrates the paper)
critters (eats through it)

Any weakness in protection in any of these areas will affect the value and longevity of your poster. Once you understand the enemies of your collection, you need to decide what you want to do with your poster, i.e., store it or display it. Here are some options.

Storing Posters

Before you store your poster, make sure that it is clean and free from all tape, dirt and marks that may continue to eat away at your poster while you have it stored. It is fine to store your poster folded under the proper conditions. You must realize that folds create a weakness in the paper, so two things must be considered. Every time you open and close your poster, you're putting extra wear on it. So, if you're going to be showing or handling the poster a lot, then it would be better to store it flat or "unfolded" if possible. Because of the weakness of the fold lines, it has to be kept as acid free as possible. Acid eats through the weakest points first, normally the folds.

Take a look at your poster. Is it paper stock or card stock? Do you want to store it standing up (in a row like files in a storage box) or lying down? If you have paper stock, then you will need a more rigid holder if you want to stand it up. Don't store them in the material that they were sent in from the studio. (Yes, even the stills in the press kits are shipped in cheaper plastic acid-based sleeves). They need to be removed and placed in better holders. Don't discard the envelopes, just keep them with your collection.

Some people like to store their posters in envelopes. This is not recommended. Even coated paper is still paper, which means that it is self-disintegrating. Acid-free plastic sleeves are the recommended method of storing, with the added bonus that you can see the poster, even if it's folded. Do not use the plastic bags that you find around the house. Cellophanes, PVC and plastic bags like cleaner bags will not do. They give very little protection and do more damage than good. Of course, higher grades of plastic offer better protection for your poster than the lesser grades.

If cost is not an issue, then the highest grade of untreated plastics recommended by preservationists is Mylar. The best places to find these plastic sleeves are collector supply houses or collector shops (one of our advertisers should have them available). I recommend that you use the best grade that you can afford. Some people have larger collections so you may have to break it down if cost becomes a problem. Store your best posters in the higher grade plastic covers and the rest in as good a grade as possible.

Once you've picked out your plastic covers, then you have the choice of putting in some type of backing. It's better to have no backing than to have anything acidic. Acid in lower grade plastics and newspapers or regular paper will travel to your poster and start eating the fold lines. It's called "acidic migration," so you must store your poster as far away from these materials as possible. Once covered, keep your folded posters in a cool, dry place away from heat, humidity and light.

Storing Rolled Posters- Many collectors store their rolled posters in a large tube or tubes. As they get new posters, they just unroll the roll of posters, add the new posters, re-roll the posters and stick them back in the tube. Plastic and cardboard tubes are loaded with acids. Acids can migrate to attack posters unless they are sealed in an acid-free, untreated, high quality plastic holder. Cheaper grade plastics contain acid also. You need to store your collectibles in a better grade material.

Make sure your posters are clean and free of any type of tape, dirt, etc., and that there's nothing sticky, pokey, dirty, ugly or smelly in there. Neatly roll the posters together, making sure that all the edges are even. If possible, separate them with an acid free sheet. Stick the roll of posters in an acid-free plastic bag. Tuck and roll it across the bottom of the bag (sort of like a jelly roll) until you reach the end. Tape the plastic, then fold the top of the bag down and tape it shut.

Once your posters are sealed in the acid free plastic bag, place them gently in the tube. If there's extra space between your plastic roll and the sides of the tube, you can stick newspaper or cardboard strips in between the plastic roll of posters and the edge of the tube, since you don't want the roll to bounce back and forth. Then close your tube and keep in a dry cool place away from heat, moisture and critters.

Storing Posters Flat - Flat storage can be an excellent method if done properly. The first step is to pick out how you're going to store each individual poster. Are you going to seal each poster? Are you going to use a backing board? How many posters are you going to store together?

The first step is to pick out how you're going to store each individual poster.

Of course the best method is to seal each poster in a Mylar sheet with an acid free backing board and place it in a heavy duty case. The sealing of each becomes more important in this type of storage because of dust. You can also look at your poster without taking it out of the sealed sleeve. If you're storing them lying flat, you can use a lighter grade of plastic than if you're storing them standing up flat. If you choose the standing methods, be sure to get a more rigid grade of plastic and preferably include an acid-free backing board.

Displaying Posters

Boards and Bags - Many collector shops display their posters in a "board and bag." In this method, a movie poster is attached to an acid-free board with small rolled pieces of acid free tape (almost like tacking it) in several major points. The poster is then placed in a large acid free bag that is taped down tight from the back side. The tighter the bag is taped, the better and smoother the poster looks. The posters are then stood up so customers can flip through them to see what posters are for sale. Mirror holders can also be used. See "Shrink Wrap" for more information.

Shrink Wrap - This method is very similar to the “board and bag” method. However, instead of placing the “tacked” poster in a bag, it is shrink wrapped, using acid-free shrink wrap plastic. For an inexpensive way to display larger posters, we suggest the shrink wrap method. Go to your nearest framing supply house and look for a sheet of acid free backing board (white). The larger size normally comes in a sheet 48” x 96”. Next, go to a commercial frame shop or anyone who does shrink wrapping. You want a piece of doubled shrink wrap (this means they put the item to be shrink wrapped in between them and seal it.) at least 28-36 inches wide and about a foot longer than your poster. Trim your backing board where it’s ½” to 1” larger on each side of your poster to give a border look.

Take little pieces of acid free tape and tack down your poster in major points, centering it on your board. Start from one end and work to the other smoothing it as you go. Be sure to have all the wrinkles out and smoothed down with no dirt or dust on it. Next carefully lay your board on a table or combination of tables so the edges of the board hang over and you can get to the back side edges of your board. Very carefully, unfold and center the shrink wrap over your poster and easily brush out the shrink wrap. Make sure that there are no dust particles under the shrink wrap or they will show up later.

Next, take regular tape and tack the shrink wrapped edges to the back of the board about every 6 inches. The easiest way is to go down one side tacking the back, then go to the opposite side where you can tighten it a little as you go and tack that side down. Then go to the end and fold the corner under and tack it down the same. Then, go to the opposite end, pulling slightly to tighten the shrink wrap and tack it down. Once you’ve tacked the shrink wrap to the back on your board, your poster is encased on the board. Next, gently take the encased poster and turn it over with the back side of the board face up on your table.

Take a roll of clear packing tape, the 3” wide is best, and go down with a long strip sealing the shrink-wrap to the board. You don’t want any air to get out between the shrink wrap and the board. This is the final step and has to be done very carefully. Your board should be able to be stood up on end now with your poster encased on it. Take a hairdryer and put it on low heat. Staying about 8-12 inches away from the poster, move the hair dryer back and forth. Do not let the hair dryer stay on one spot. You will notice that the shrink wrap will gradually “shrink” and tighten to the poster. Be very careful not to pop the wrap. If you do, you will have to take all the shrink wrap off, get another piece of shrink wrap and start all over.

After you have completed the shrink wrapping and blow drying, go to a hardware store and look for a pack of mirror holders. They are small “L” shaped holders with screws that come in a set. These holders, which are normally used to hold mirrors in place, come in a variety of shapes and sizes, both plain and elaborate. Choose your favorite. You can use these to put your shrink wrapped poster on the wall. So for under \$20, you can temporarily display your large poster for everyone to see.

Sleeves and Binders - Binders are perfect for displaying the smaller sizes of movie art. The easiest way to preserve these is with plastic sleeves, very similar to the sleeves that hold baseball cards. These sheets feature one big pocket for either 8x10s or 11x14’s. They’re inexpensive, easy to handle, easy to store and easy to carry. This also works for pressbooks and any small flat collectible. Sleeves are also available in larger sizes

Racks – Movie poster racks attach to the wall, so you can store and show your posters without having to buy an extra house for the wall space.

Encapsulation - Encapsulation is a technique developed by the Library of Congress for the long-term preservation of rare and valuable documents. It is done in two steps. First, the item is chemically stabilized and de-acidified, and then it is sealed in an acid-free polyester enclosure. The polyester (Mylar) capsule is a tough, clear and attractive material that can withstand routine handling and moving for many years. The seal keeps the item dry and free of contaminants, while the transparent polyester allows the paper to be viewed from both sides. The polyester capsule itself is not attached to the paper in any way, and thus the poster can always be safely removed. The only loss in the event of removal would be breakage of the seal, but the unsealed capsule

could still be reused as a protective sleeve. It's like sticking your poster in a clear envelope and it can still be framed.

Lamination - Lamination is very similar to encapsulation except that the whole poster is sealed with a heat press. It makes the poster look great. However, even though manufacturers say it can be reversed, quite often it destroys the poster if it ever has to be taken out. We strongly advise against lamination.

Dry Mounting - Dry mounting is a permanent mounting process where the art is glued to a mounting board, using heat and pressure. The mounting board is usually a foam core board, but other boards can be used depending on the circumstances of how the art will be used. A tissue type adhesive is placed between the art and the mounting board. This combination is then inserted into a vacuum press and heated up to activate the adhesive while the press applies pressure.

This method does take out the creases, wrinkles and even most of the original fold lines. What's wrong with that? Let's look a little closer. If you decide in the future to sell your dry mounted poster through an auction house, they will charge you up to \$400.00 to remove the dry mounting because it's considered defective and has to be fixed before it can be auctioned. And, the type of glue the framer used will dictate how well the poster comes through the removal. Then if there's any damage, it has to be repaired. Even though it makes the poster look better, it destroys a lot of the value of the piece, so we strongly advise against it. There are other ways to prepare your poster for framing if you have a decent framer.

Linen Backing - Linen backing is a process whereby a poster is mounted to a cloth, such as linen or cotton. Linen backing helps preserve the poster, makes the poster more durable, and is used by professional restorers to repair posters and return them to their original condition.

Proper linen backing is actually accomplished through a double mounting process. The first step is putting the poster on a sheet of acid-free Japanese rice paper, then mounting the poster (with the rice paper) on to the cloth. To keep costs down, sometimes a poster is mounted directly on cloth. To keep costs down, sometimes a poster is mounted directly on cloth. This is not recommended because: (1) the poster does not stick as well to cloth as it does to paper; and (2) because of temperature extremes and moisture, or lack of moisture, paper shrinks and moves differently from cloth. Because of the constant friction between the paper and cloth over time, lines will form in the paper and the poster will begin to disintegrate. The rice paper acts as a neutralizer between the paper and cloth. Linen backing is normally done on one sheets and other paper posters. Paper backing is suggested for card stock materials.

Framing

The proper way to frame a movie poster is a constant source of disagreement among framers across the country. Unfortunately, many framers are not familiar with the movie poster industry. Their expertise lies in the "framing." They do not take into consideration the factors that help determine authenticity and condition of a movie poster as a collectible (i.e., hiding important markings). This debate will continue until framers and movie poster collectors come to a consensus, which is probably not going to happen in the short term.

Since we cannot offer any expertise in this area because we are not framers, we talked with collectors and dealers around the country to determine who are the knowledgeable experts in this area. Consistently, the name we were given was Sue Heim, whom we've known for years.

Sue Heim operates Hollywood Poster Frames, a wholesale picture framer located in Hollywood, California. Each month, Hollywood Poster Frame does framing for the studios: film, television and recording. They also do picture framing for the sets of some film and TV shows, including their actors and crew members. In addition, the Motion Picture Academy, the Television Academy, the Motion Picture Producers Guild and many studio affiliates have used Hollywood Poster Frames to supply the custom frames needed for the valuable

movie memorabilia they display. More importantly, Hollywood Poster Frames is owned and operated by two movie poster collectors who understand the framing dilemma faced by most collectors. We asked her to detail the most important points in framing a movie poster. She submitted this letter to help clear up this area:

Protecting Your Investment: the Real Story Behind Conservation Picture Framing

Over the past several years, antique paper collecting, especially movie posters, has become one of the hottest investment opportunities in the market. However, for most of us who collect because we love the movies, the fact that our poster collections have increased in value is an added bonus. Displaying our collections can be costly and if not done properly can deteriorate the posters. A lot of information has been disseminated to collectors on how best to frame their movie posters, some beneficial and accurate, but some erroneous.

In all fairness to retail frame shops, many are not experienced in collectible movie posters. Others, however, tell customers they need frame components that are truly unnecessary to increase the price of the overall frame job. Often, they play on the customer's lack of knowledge and desire to preserve their posters by suggesting that by adding this component or that component they will preserve and even increase the value of their collectable. There is generally some truth to the suggestions but remember, these are still just posters, not original works of art and they do not need to be framed in gold to preserve the archival integrity for many lifetimes.

I receive phone calls, emails and letters daily from customers all over the country telling me that they were told they had to do this or that in the framing to preserve their poster often telling them if they did not follow the suggestions, the framing establishment could not be responsible if the poster deteriorated. Well, this is enough to make any serious collector submit to consumer blackmail since for most of us our poster collections are one of the most important things we own and treasure. So in an attempt to clear up some misconceptions and hopefully educate the collector, here are some tips on framing.

First of all, the actual frame you choose has little, if any, impact on the preservation of the poster. The frame is, for the most part, purely aesthetic. Now this is assuming that you are choosing custom frame quality materials specifically designed for picture framing. If someone tears the side of a barn off and makes a frame for you, it may look great, but it might also have some friendly little termites living in it.

The most important components of the frame job are what's in front of the poster and what is behind the poster. Let's begin with what's in front. First off, glass is a no-no! Not only does it break, but it is very inexpensively made and has no archival attributes, thus creating an environment for fading and decay. Glass has one other very negative aspect and that is moisture entrapment. Framers often recommend spacers, but then do not dissuade customers from using glass. Also, even if you use spacers, movie posters are so large that they often touch the glass near the center, thus defeating the purpose of the spacers. In addition, movie posters, whether linen-backed or not, will move into the space in front of them and begin buckling. Paper has a memory and the only way to remove the buckling, once it's there, is to either linen-back or re-linen-back the poster.

Framers often recommend conservation glass, which does have archival qualities except for one thing, it still breaks. Conservation glass is also extremely expensive since it is very much a specialty product. Glass, of any kind, is also extremely heavy for a piece the size of a movie poster. When glass breaks it can shatter or just have a clean break in half. Either way, the likelihood is moderate to severe damage to your poster. Often times with such a large piece of glass, when it breaks, the top half of the glass slides behind the bottom half and scrapes the face of the poster which is extremely difficult to repair. Therefore, plexiglass is the recommended covering for your movie poster.

I have had customers who say they don't like the look of plexiglass, that it scratches, turns yellow or gets an opaque film over it with time. This is not high grade plexiglass. Just as some people call all tissues Kleenex, many people call all plastics plexiglass and it is not. There is Lucite, styrene, low grade acrylics and many other forms of plastic sheeting, most of which have no archival qualities and least of all have no UV filtering which is the most important component of plexiglass for movie poster preservation purposes. Plexiglass also does not absorb dirt and grime from the air since typically it has been polished with an anti-static cream before it is installed in the frame and it actually repels dirt and dust and very rarely even needs cleaning or repolishing.

Just an added side note, if you currently have something framed in your home in plexiglass or any form of plastic, never use any ammonia based cleaner on it as the chemical reaction with the plastic is what causes clouding. One of the other complaints I hear about plexiglass is that it warps and gives the poster a distorted look. Again, this is typical of the lower grades of plastics that are very thin and don't lay flat in the frame. A good piece of plexiglass should be the same thickness as glass, about one eighth of an inch thick.

One other note regarding the differences between glass and plexiglass that definitely is not crucial to the preservation of the poster, is that glass has a green tint to it and a good grade of plexiglass is crystal clear. Lower grades of plastics have been made with inferior materials and are not acid-free. Remember, the most important element of framing anything you want to preserve is that it be framed in an acid-free environment. Plexiglass with extremely high levels of UV protection often has a yellow tint to it and this type of plexiglass would be used on extremely valuable items and perhaps items that are hung near high exposure areas. Plexiglass is available in clear and non-glare.

For many years I had customers who preferred a non-glare covering over their artwork. Non-glare glass was available, but there are inherent problems with this product. By nature of its design, non-glare glass is glass that has been acid etched on one side to achieve the non-glare effect. When placed over the artwork, it has a tendency to dissipate color and take the art slightly out of focus, especially if you are using a mat over your artwork, and of course, most importantly, it still breaks.

A few years back, non-glare plexiglass became available that was as near true-view perfect as you can get, while still maintaining the high quality of UV. I immediately switched all of my posters that hung in highly lit areas into this non-glare plexiglass product and have been thrilled with the look ever since. Whichever type of plexiglass you choose, as long as you select high quality material with UV filtering, you will be helping to preserve the integrity of your own collectables.

The last component and probably the most important is the backing. Whether your poster is linenbacked or not, it is still important never to put a non acid-free product behind your poster. Paper is very absorbent and will absorb the acid out of cardboard or the like very quickly and you will be left with a yellowing and brittle poster. Many people, including picture framers, believe that foamcore is the best product to use as backing for valuable items. However, regular foamcore, which is what most people use, is not acid-free. They assume because it is white in color it must be acid-free. It is not.

I have had customers bring me very valuable movie posters that had been framed elsewhere, believing they had paid for a museum quality frame job, and when we removed the foamcore behind the poster it began to disintegrate in our hands. In addition, the side of the foamcore that faced the poster was yellowing. Remember, most movie poster paper is not acid-free either, so in order to stop it from yellowing and disintegrating away, it must be housed in an acid-free environment.

There are several companies that make an acid-free foamcore or artboard. One of the best is the Artcare Archival System by Bainbridge. Artcare is the only foamboard that actively protects artwork from the ravages of pollution, paper degradation and the by products of the artwork's own aging. It traps and actually neutralizes harmful pollutants that cause fading, discoloration and damage. For my customers who frame a \$100 movie poster to a \$100,000 movie poster, this product preserves their condition from the day they are put in the frame. The amazing thing is, this acid-free foamboard only costs a few dollars more than the plain non acid-free foamcore, but many framers cut corners and assume the customer will never know.

The bottom line is that it doesn't have to cost an arm and a leg to frame your movie posters in an archival way for display. You also don't have to fall prey to custom frame shops where the only thing that's free is expensive advice.

We would like to thank Sue Heim for the above contribution.

Movie Poster Frames

Direct from Studio Supplier

Specializing in framing your collectibles since 1984

**Made to order custom frames
At Wholesale Prices
~ Delivered to your door ~**

www.hollywoodposterframes.com

(800) 463-2994

**9260 Deering Ave
Chatsworth, CA 91311**

**Open to public:
Thur-Fri: 10-5 p.m.
Sat: 9-2 p.m.**

SPOTLIGHT DISPLAYS

MOVIE POSTER FRAMES



FRONT LOADING SNAP FRAMES

FRAMES CUSTOM CUT TO ANY SIZE POSTER
STRAIGHT FROM THE CUTTER TO YOUR DOOR
LOAD POSTER IN FRAME RIGHT ON WALL
HIGHEST QUALITY ANODIZED ALUMINUM

WWW.SPOTLIGHTDISPLAYS.COM

(847) 894-3894

SALES@SPOTLIGHTDISPLAYS.COM

High quality shipping tubes for Vintage Posters.

48 sizes in stock. Immediate Shipment.
End Plugs included. One box minimum.
Credit Cards Accepted.



CALL TOLL FREE 1-800-242-5216 FAX 717-624-4420



ORDER ONLINE
www.yazoomills.com



chris@posterfix.com
718-230-4085
by mail
by appointment



Poster Restoration
Linen Backing
Archival Conservation
for Original Posters
Posterfix Studio
Chris Cloutier
317 Washington Avenue #2B
Brooklyn NY 11205

Posterfix
www.posterfix.com