

Ask the Artsperts

by Kristine Meek and Juliana Meek
Harmon-Meek Gallery, Naples, FL

Works behind glass and reflection

Dear Artspert:

We've just moved into a condo facing the beach and we love having the view and the sunlight, but worry about damaging our artwork that's on paper (watercolors and pastels) and we don't like the reflection. Is there anything we can do?

Signed,
Blinded by the light

Dear Blinded,

I have great news for you: there is a solution to your problem! The latest in acrylic glass is called Optium Acrylic Glazing, a product by TruVue (www.tru-vue.com). Unlike regular acrylic (often called Plexiglas), Optium Acrylic is UV protected, anti-reflective, abrasion resistant and anti-static. All acrylics are lightweight and some are UV protected.

Optium Acrylic is not cheap and not easily available. Most frame shops in town can special order a piece for you and Gregory Frame Shop in Naples keeps Optium Acrylic in stock. A two-by-three-foot sheet of Optium Acrylic will cost about four times as much as Museum Glass. But if you have an expensive or important work, it is worth the price.

TruVue coats both sides of the acrylic sheet with anti-reflection coating; the result is a protected work that doesn't look like it is behind any protection. Note the difference in the two works on paper photographed here. The work on the left is a mixed media by Gabriela Gonzalez Dellosso and is protected with the Optium Acrylic; the work on the right is a pastel by Richard Segalman and is behind regular glass. See the difference in reflection on the one on the right and also note the one on the left looks to not be covered at all.

Since regular acrylic creates static that pulls pastel and charcoal from the paper, glass has always been required to exhibit these static-sensitive pieces. Optium Acrylic is 2000 times less static than regular acrylic and ideal for exhibiting pastels.

Glass is also twice as heavy as Optium Acrylic and will scratch and shatter. Optium Acrylic is abrasion resistant – you can take a piece of steel wool to it and it will not mark – though at such a high price I wouldn't recommend testing it! This makes it easier for shipping a work as it doesn't require film or glass skin protection when shipping a work.

The product is ideal for works that are 40" x 60" or smaller, for shadow boxes, and any artwork that would benefit from reflection-free viewing. It also provides 93% UV protection – the highest protection today.

Cleaning Optium Acrylic is easy with ammonia-free cleaner and a soft cloth. Given that all the works in the art collection at the Loos Art Gallery at the Golisano Children's Museum of Naples are protected in Optium Acrylic (all the Optium has been donated), the staff at C'MON can attest to the durability and easy cleaning nature of Optium. They can also tell you how the kids go right up to the paintings – putting their noses to the glass since they don't see that there is any protection.

Now you can enjoy both the setting sun and your artwork!

Sincerely,
The Artspert



At left is a mixed media on paper by Gabriela Gonzalez Dellosso protected in Optium Acrylic and on the right is a pastel by Richard Segalman protected with regular glass. Both photographs were taken from the same location but there is no reflection on the one protected with the Optium Acrylic.

"Homage to Angelica Kauffman" by Gabriela Gonzalez Dellosso, mixed media on paper, 18 ½" x 14 ½", 2016
"December Dressing Room" by Richard Segalman, pastel, 30" x 22", 2013



This pastel painting by Richard Segalman was originally framed using regular glass. After the work was placed in the home of a private collector, it became apparent that the glare from the nearby window created too much reflection to fully appreciate the work. Instead of relocating the work to another area of the home, we replaced the glass with Optium Acrylic and reflection is no longer an issue.