

Written Transcript for the presentation “The Effects of Framing and Displaying Two-Dimensional Artwork?”

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Hello, my name is Meadow Kaye, and I am presenting the effect of framing and displaying two-dimensional artwork in a gallery setting. I am student in the School of Art, and I study film photography. Being that this was my last semester at BGSU, I had to present my artwork at the thesis exhibition show in April after four years of creating a cohesive body of work. This brought me to my question;

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What is the best way to display work without inhibiting the viewership in a gallery space? There are quite a few different options for artists on how they could display and install their work in galleries. There are the traditional frames, non-traditional framing by removing mats or glass, or even mounting prints onto backing board with no frame at all. Each if these options have their own draws and setbacks. Glass can cause distracting glares, as well as feel like a barrier. Frames can confine the space in an image or monumentalize an image. Mounting can be tricky or let the piece breathe. All this aside, frames also become expensive very quickly.

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The first aspect we need to take into consideration is the quantity and scale of the body of work. A larger size and quantity are going to make materials more expensive. In my research project, I used a large body of work.

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Here is an image of the prints I will be using for this project. There are twelve 20 by 24 inch silver gelatin prints. This is very important as we begin budgeting for the materials in each scenario. Another thing to note is that each of the twelve images will be displayed together in a group, meaning that they will need to feel cohesive.

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Next thing to consider is what the artwork is about and how you want this to be presented to the viewers. The way that work is displayed can sometimes be the first impression on the viewer's, so it is important that the impression is accurate to the work itself. Displaying choices can also be used to push certain aspects of the work in certain ways. Such as artwork about feeling confined or claustrophobic may look good with a large tight frame.

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So, to the biggest question in this project, to frame or not to frame? I created three separate mockups in Photoshop of roughly how my thesis would look in each of these options. I took these mockups and showed them to peers, family, and friends, as well as a physical mockup during my review with the School of Art faculty.

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Here are each of the three digital options. White frames with a bit of matting, Black frames, and finally the option of mounting the images so that they are frameless. In the last option, I would also be removing any white borders from the photographs.

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After all these opinions and feedback, the decision was almost unanimous! I would be going with the route of mounting the images onto a board and going frameless! It was decided that this option felt the most cohesive for the group of photos and allowed all the images to exist in a close space without overwhelming the viewer. The whites of the images being cut off also offered a more immersive relationship to form between the images and the viewers.

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a Though, this decision did involve more craftsmanship and preparation than framing normally would have required. There was a lot of clamping down, rulers, cutting, and concentration involved. The process was using double sided contact paper to adhere the prints onto the cores. I had invested in all archival foam cores and contact paper.

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However, the result was well worth the work put into it. Here is a video of me unveiling the last print and a photo of me being very excited with how these came out.

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As for the actual installation using this method, there needed to be some innovation because you can't wire or nail hang the prints like you can in a frame. It was decided that command strips would be the best route, however, I wanted space from the walls and the prints. To do this, I attached foam pieces to the backs and used command strips to adhere them to the wall.

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Here some images after they were fully installed together. Once installed, the prints all had a nice space from the walls and were quite secured in place. This choice in instalment made installing very simple,

fast, and easy, as well as the teardown after the show. No nails, spackling, or much clean up at all.

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For the opening of the thesis show, the choice of displaying as frameless prints was a great decision and ended up being given recognition with rewards. There was a great deal of praise on the presentation and the interaction it offered with the viewers. They were not overpowered even though there were so many of them and felt like a cohesive project together.

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However, there was one fatal flaw from this decision. This was the humidity within the gallery and lack of climate control. Unfortunately, the humidity built up around my project so much that it affected all the adhesive within the prints and the command strips. This caused a few of the prints to fall from the wall multiple times and bent the corners. This caused the prints to bubble in spots and in general, ruined the prints. This was really upsetting to find at the end of the show.

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The materials used for this project were all high quality and of archival level, so it was not the fault of the materials used. So, this was a quite avoidable mishap that could have been different with the use of more archival and climate-controlled issues. However, these conditions

would have never affected the prints if they were frames as opposed to mounted. The frames would have protected them, and they would have been nailed to the walls instead of adhered.

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Because of the lack of protection from frameless, this meant that there needed to be an investment in storage to protect the prints. This is an extra cost, but these boxes can keep all the prints together and in a similar area. This adds a nice convenience to finding all the pieces of my project in the future. The box can keep every print, print edition, film, and test prints together in one space.

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As a recap, the advantages, and setbacks to this choice of presentation in my experience are quite comparable. There is much more labor and craftsmanship involved with this style of presenting and involved in cutting the actual prints as well. This is an irreversible and the permanent option, frames can be changed easily. Unfortunately, little protection for the prints is also offered using this method. Meaning climates and galleries are more likely to damage them in the long run. You also must invest in storage for these, but this can also be seen as an advantage. However, in the gallery, the prints look very clean, modern, and professional, this way of display catches many people's eyes. It is a

unique and less used method within most galleries too. This was very cost efficient and made sense for the work overall.

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So, was this the best option? Would I do this again had I had the chance? Yes absolutely. This method was such a great looking collection and was great looking in the gallery. There were a few mishaps, however, this was still stylistically and affordably the best option. With frames, the presentation would not have felt as successful or cohesive. I am very happy with the choices made and the results of the options being almost unanimously for this method.

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Thank you for your time and listening to my presentation on how Framing and Displaying Two-Dimensional Artwork effects presentation in a gallery.