

Space Matters

A beautifully framed piece of art can still look out of place in a room when it doesn't suit the space it is displayed in. It is important to think about spatial proportions, not just the colours and style in a room. A small but important piece of framed art can be diminished if it is hung in too large space. It may end up looking insignificant, simply because its scale doesn't stand up to the surroundings. When too large a piece is crowded into a tight space, it can become overpowering and also lose some of its effectiveness.

Many new framers are taught that a frame design should enhance the art, not match the décor of the room where it will hang. That makes perfect sense to a point, however, there is an exception where it makes perfect sense to pay attention to the room and that is scale.

There are a number of ways framing can and should relate proportionally to its allotted space. Nearly anything that can be framed can be framed to different proportions. You may need to be thinking of small, medium and large design options, depending on where the completed piece will hang. It is up to you to ask all the right questions and to offer suggestions that you feel may help your frame design shine in your customer's home.

What size is the room?

Scale is important with furniture and it is also important with custom framing.

You can take two copies of the same print and effectively alter mount borders and moulding widths to create two completely different size frame designs. One would be well suited to a small space and the other to a large space. When your challenge is to make something as small or as large as you can, it is all about the relationship of the framing components. Even a postage stamp can be framed quite large if the components relate well to one another.

What size is the actual wall space where the piece will hang?

When you ask your customers what size room the framed piece will hang in, never assume a large room means there is unlimited space on the actual wall where the art will hang. Obstacles such as

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doors, windows, a high fireplace, etc, can all reduce the usable space and alter the course of your frame design. It is best to find out about these things early on so you don't end up going down the wrong design path.



How high is the ceiling?

These days, ceiling heights can be quite varied. Nine and ten foot ceilings are becoming more commonplace as are two storey rooms. Why does this matter? We used to have more horizontal spaces and today there are a lot of vertical spaces to work with.

Two specific ideas that work well in taller spaces are vertically enlarging the mount with either a bottom-weighted or elongated mount design or recommending that your customers hang pairs, sets or groupings up the wall instead of across it.

What is the scale of the furniture in the room?

There are many popular furniture styles today, some of it is small and other pieces are quite massive. When you know what scale furniture your frame design will be displayed with, it will help you establish proportions that will make the art look its very best in the given situation.

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Will the piece hang directly over furniture or on an empty wall?

If the framing you are designing is destined to hang over a specific piece of furniture do your best to be in sync with its size and visual weight. If the art will hang over a massive desk, a narrow delicate frame may look too skimpy. A more substantial frame will create a better sense of balance with the piece of furniture. If you take that same frame and hang it over a glass top table with slim legs, it will look top heavy and overwhelming. If the table is taken away, the large scale frame may actually be more effective because now the art is 100% responsible for filling the space and balancing with the wall.

Will the piece hang or sit?

Walls generally offer less in the way of boundaries, allowing you to fine-tune your frame designs to suit the scale you feel is best. When the finished piece will sit on top of a piece of furniture, you instantly have some restrictions to deal with.

As you can see, the space in a room can play an important role in your framing. When you take time to ask a few more questions, you will be doing your customers a big favour by providing them with framing that truly relates to their needs. You will also be doing your business a favour by increasing the level of customer satisfaction as they see how much you care about them and their specific needs.