



Canadian
Heritage

Patrimoine
canadien

Canada



Condition Reporting – Paintings. Part III: Glossary – Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI) Notes 10/11



Written by the staff of the Fine Arts Section
Revised by the staff of the Fine Arts Section in 2016

Originally published in 1994

Also available in French.
Également publié en français.

© Government of Canada, Canadian Conservation Institute, 2017

ISSN 1928-1455



Introduction

This Note explains the terminology used by conservators in condition reports for paintings. It will help museum personnel write and maintain accurate condition report records. For detailed information on examination and condition reporting, refer to CCI Notes 10/6 [Condition Reporting — Paintings. Part I: Introduction](#) and 10/7 [Condition Reporting — Paintings. Part II: Examination Techniques and a Checklist](#). Technical terms used in other CCI Series 10 Notes are also defined in this glossary.

Conventions used in the glossary:

- Terms are listed alphabetically.
- Terms are followed by their French translation and gender notation: “masc.” for masculine, “fem.” for feminine, “pl.” for plural.
- Terms within a definition that are in **bold** letters can be found as entries in the glossary.
- “Other term(s)” provides synonyms for the term being defined.
- “See also” refers to one or many related terms.
- “See” refers to the term under which the concept is defined.
- A French–English index, in alphabetical order of French terms, is provided at the end of this Note.

abrasion (abrasion, fem.)

Changes to part of the **surface coating, paint layer** or paint and **ground** caused by **scraping, rubbing** or over-cleaning with an abrasive product.

See also: **rubbing, scraping, skinning, wear**

accretion (accrétion, fem.)

An accidental deposit of “foreign” material that was not part of the painting process.

Note: Dried liquid residue, foodstuff or fly specks are examples of these types of deposits.

See also: **grime, surface dirt**

alligator cracks (pl.) (peau de crocodile, fem., or peau de crapaud, fem.)

Drying cracks that resemble the pattern of certain animal skins, such as an alligator.

Other term: alligatoring

See also: **concentric cracks, cracks, diagonal cracks, drying cracks, feather cracks, mechanical cracks, spiral cracks, stretcher mark**

alligatoring

See: **alligator cracks**

artist’s board (carton toilé, masc.)

A **rigid support**, usually paperboard, covered by a thin primed **canvas**.

Note: Canvas board is included in this category. Some paperboards are only primed and known as millboard and academy board.

See also: **auxiliary support, composite support, rigid support, support**

auxiliary support (support auxiliaire, masc., or support secondaire, masc.)

The framework over which a **canvas** is stretched.

Note: It usually refers to a **stretcher** or a **strainer**. It could also refer to a secondary support material such as a rigid board or stretched fabric that provides additional support to the primary support (see Figure 1).

Other term: secondary support

See also: **artist's board, composite support, cross bar, half-lap joint, mitre joint, mortise-and-tenon joint, rigid support, strainer, strainer bar, stretcher, stretcher bar, support, tongue-and-groove joint**

backing board (dos protecteur, masc.)

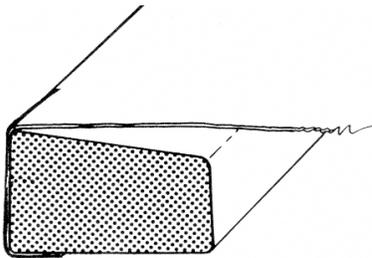
A rigid board attached to the back of an **auxiliary support** or frame to protect the painting.

bevel (biseau, masc., or chanfrein, masc.)

Angled face of a **stretcher** or **strainer bar** (on the **canvas** side).

Note: A bevelled edge (see Figure 1) prevents the canvas from coming into contact with the stretcher bars when **ground** and the **paint layer** are being applied. In the long-term, it may also help to prevent a **stretcher mark** on the canvas or a **crack** from developing on the completed painting.

Other term: chamfer



© Government of Canada, Canadian Conservation Institute. CCI 122428-0001

Figure 1. Cross-section of a bevelled auxiliary support (stretcher bar).

binder (liant, masc.)

The film-forming material that holds together the **pigment** particles in **paint**, such as drying oil in oil paint and vegetable gum in watercolour paint.

Other terms: binding medium, medium¹

See also: **paint, paint layer, pigment**



binding medium

See: **binder**

blanching (blanchiment, masc., or chanci, masc.)

A localized, opaque, whitish discolouration in the paint or varnish layer. It can appear in spots on or in the surface of a painting or its coating.

Note: Blanching may occur when the binding medium in an oil film has been altered (e.g. by inappropriate cleaning) or when a **varnish** film has been degraded.

See also: **bloom**

bleeding (saignement, masc.)

The spreading of **paint** into adjacent areas of a painting.

Note: Bleeding may be intentional (caused by the artist) or unintentional (caused by water or solvent action).

blind cleavage (ampoule, fem.)

Cleavage that is hard to see or invisible between the layers of **paint**, between the **paint layer** and **ground** or between the ground and **support**.

Note: Blind cleavage may appear as a slight **bulge** in the paint surface.

See also: **buckling, cleavage, cupping, flaking, incipient cleavage, lifting, tenting**

blind lining

See: **loose lining**

blister (cloque, fem.)

A convex **deformation** of the **ground, paint layer** or **surface coating** creating a void between or within layers, often caused by excessive heat or humidity.

bloom (bleuissement, masc.)

A white, bluish-white or yellowish haze on the surface of a painting that is caused by components of the **paint** and **ground** migrating to the surface.

See also: **blanching**

buckling (soulèvement en tuile, masc.)

Lifting in the **paint** and **ground** layers in the form of ridges that is caused by pressure (compression).

Note: Buckling is often associated with **cracks**, **cleavage** and **flaking**. Buckling also occurs in some **rigid supports** (e.g. metal, paperboard).

See also: **blind cleavage**, **cleavage**, **cupping**, **flaking**, **incipient cleavage**, **lifting**, **tenting**

bulge (bosse, fem.)

A convex **deformation** involving the **canvas**, **paint** and **ground** layers.

Note: Bulges on the face of a canvas can be caused by blows to the back of an unprotected canvas. A bulge can also be caused by sustained pressure on the canvas, e.g. from debris lodged between the **auxiliary support** and canvas, from an object leaning against the back of the canvas or from extra material (e.g. excess glue) caught between a **primary** and **auxiliary support**.

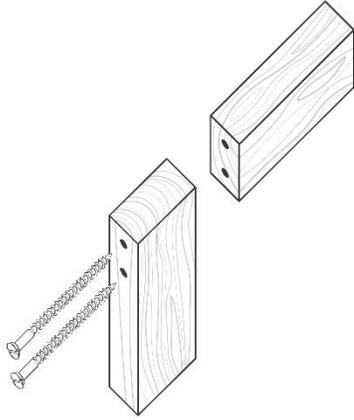
See also: **cockling**, **corner draws**, **dent**

butt joint (joint abouté, masc.)

A **joint** formed by two lengths of wood meeting without any interlocking element cut into the adjoining pieces.

Note: Butt joints may be square-ended, with the end of one piece meeting the edge of the other at 90°. Butt joints may also be mitred, with both ends cut to meet at a 45° angle (see Figure 2).

See also: **half-lap joint**, **joint**, **lap joint**, **mitre joint**, **mortise-and-tenon joint**, **strainer**, **stretcher**, **tongue-and-groove joint**



© Government of Canada, Canadian Conservation Institute. CCI 122428-0003
Figure 2. Butt joint.

cani-lining (former des., avoid)

See: **stretcher bar lining**

canvas (toile, fem.)

A woven fabric painting **support** usually composed of one of the following natural fibres: linen, cotton, hemp, sometimes jute (burlap) or ramie, or mixtures of these materials.

Note: More recent canvases may be composed of synthetic fibres (e.g. polyester).

chalking (farinage, masc.)

A powdered deposit on a **paint layer**, caused by an insufficient amount of binding medium or weathering of paint from outdoor exposure.

chamfer

See: **bevel**

check (fissure, fem.)

A partial **split** along the grain or against the grain of a wood surface caused by too rapid drying or from repeated or severe fluctuations in humidity.

See also: **split**

chip (éclat, masc.)

A small amount of material (**paint layer, ground** or wood) that breaks away accidentally as a result of mechanical action.



cleavage (clivage, masc.)

A separation between layers of **paint**, between the **paint layer** and **ground** or between the **ground** and **support**.

See also: **blind cleavage**, **buckling**, **cupping**, **flaking**, **incipient cleavage**, **lifting**, **tenting**

cobweb cracks

See: **concentric cracks**

cockling (gondolage, masc., or ondulation, fem.)

A wavy **deformation** in the **support**, usually associated with works on paper.

Note: In paintings on **canvas**, cockling or rippling is often seen along the edges of a painting and may be the result of inadequate or uneven tacking of the canvas to the **auxiliary support** combined with relaxation of the materials of the painting and fluctuations in humidity.

Other term: rippling

See also: **bulge**, **corner draws**, **dent**

compo (composition, fem., or composé du doreur, masc., or mélange à mouler, masc., or pâte anglaise, fem.)

A mix of materials, traditionally hide glue, rosin, linseed oil and whiting (chalk or gypsum), that can be pressed and shaped to make moulded ornamentation on frames.

Note: Compo ornaments are applied on a frame's wood surface and are often gilded.

Other term: composition

composite support (support composite, masc.)

A **support** composed of two or more materials, such as **canvas** (primary support) attached to cardboard (secondary or **auxiliary support**).

See also: **artist's board**, **auxiliary support**, **rigid support**, **support**

composition

See: **compo**

compressed wood board (panneau de bois aggloméré, masc.)

A rigid panel engineered from wood fibres, particles or flakes that are compressed under heat and pressure with bonding agents such as wax, resin and other additives in order to produce specific properties for particular end uses.

Note: Compressed wood boards that have been most commonly used as painting **supports** are high-density fibreboards (**hardboard**), medium-density fibreboards (MDF) and low-density fibreboard, such as beaverboard. Particleboard is also a type of compressed wood board.

See also: **hardboard, panel**

concentric cracks (pl.) (craquelure circulaire, fem.)

Mechanical cracks in a roughly circular or cobweb-shaped pattern that are caused by a blow to or pressure on a painting.

Other term: cobweb cracks

See also: **alligator cracks, cracks, diagonal cracks, drying cracks, feather cracks, mechanical cracks, spiral cracks, stretcher mark**

corner cracks (pl.)

See: **diagonal cracks**

corner draws (pl.) (pli d'angle, masc.)

Ripples in a **canvas** radiating from the corners.

Note: Draws also develop along the edges of a painting where there is **cockling**. Draws occur during exposure to low relative humidity (e.g. during winter in cold climates with central heating) and may disappear when moderate relative humidity returns.

Other term: draws

See also: **bulge, cockling, dent**

crackle (pl.)

See: **cracks**

cracks (pl.) (craquelure, fem.)

Surface or deep checks in one or more of the **varnish**, **paint** or **ground** layers.

Note: Cracks are caused by a combination of mechanical forces and the response of the paint, ground and **support** layers to relative humidity fluctuations, periods of low relative humidity and low temperatures.

Other terms: crackle, craquelure

See also: **alligator cracks**, **concentric cracks**, **diagonal cracks**, **drying cracks**, **feather cracks**, **mechanical cracks**, **spiral cracks**, **stretcher mark**

cradle (parquetage, masc.)

A system of wooden or metal bars running horizontally and vertically in a grid pattern across the back of an artwork painted on a wood **panel**.

Note: Cradles were meant to prevent warping without restricting the natural expansion and contraction of the panel in response to changes in relative humidity.

craquelure (pl.)

See: **cracks**

crazing (faiençage, masc.)

A network of very fine **cracks** in a **varnish**, causing a loss of transparency.

Note: Crazing is associated with a brittle varnish layer.

cross bar (croisillon, masc., or traverse, fem.)

An extra horizontal or vertical piece added between the main bars to strengthen a **strainer** or a **stretcher**.

Other term: cross brace

See also: **auxiliary support**, **half-lap joint**, **mitre joint**, **mortise-and-tenon joint**, **strainer**, **strainer bar**, **stretcher**, **stretcher bar**, **tongue-and-groove joint**

cross brace

See: **cross bar**

cupping (soulèvement en cuvette, masc.)

Lifting in which islands of **paint**, separated by **cracks**, develop concave centres with raised edges, like shallow cups.

See also: **blind cleavage, buckling, cleavage, flaking, incipient cleavage, lifting, tenting**

cut (incision, fem.)

A severing of fabric or paper caused by a sharp instrument, leaving clean or sharp edges.

See also: **puncture, tear**

deformation (déformation, fem.)

A change in the original shape of a **support**, including **bulges**, depressions or **cockling**.

See also: **warp²**

dent (enfoucement, masc.)

A concave **deformation** (indent) on the surface of a material caused by a blow or by pressure from another object.

See also: **bulge, cockling, corner draws**

diagonal cracks (pl.) (craquelure en diagonale, fem., or craquelure d'angle, fem.)

Mechanical cracks often found at the corners of paintings and that can result from inappropriate **keying out** or from dropping the painting on its corner.

Other term: corner cracks

See also: **alligator cracks, concentric cracks, cracks, drying cracks, feather cracks, mechanical cracks, spiral cracks, stretcher mark**

draws

See: **corner draws**

drying cracks (pl.) (craquelure prématurée, fem.)

Cracks occurring during drying that can be wide, exposing **paint layers** or **ground layers** below, and that have rounded or sloping edges and no **cleavage**.

Note: Although frequently disfiguring, drying cracks are usually stable and do not spread.

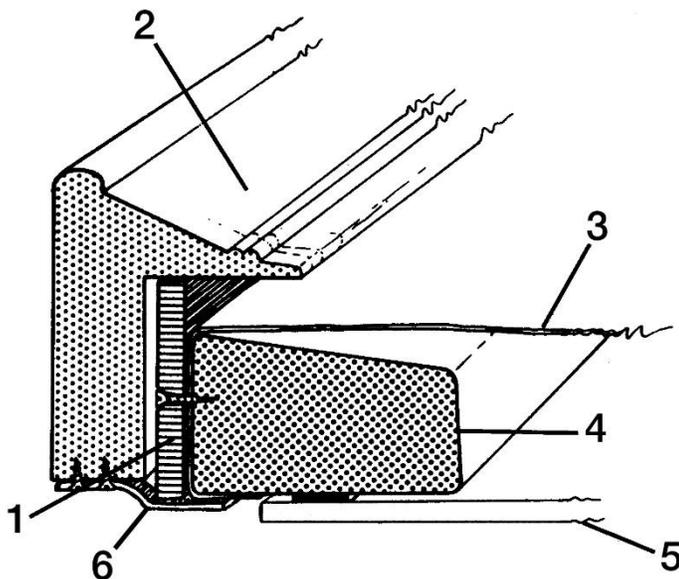
See also: **alligator cracks, concentric cracks, cracks, diagonal cracks, feather cracks, mechanical cracks, spiral cracks, stretcher mark**

edge-strip (bordure de protection, fem.)

A thin protective strip of wood, metal or plastic attached to the sides of a painting and extending above the **paint layers**.

Note: Edge-strips on the four sides are used to isolate the paint surface from the **rabbet** or **glazing**² of the frame (see Figure 3). However, in many circumstances using padding along the rabbet is now preferred.

See also: **glazing, rabbet**



© Government of Canada, Canadian Conservation Institute. CCI 122428-0002

Figure 3. Cross-section of a framed painting with edge-strips: 1. edge-strip; 2. frame; 3. canvas; 4. auxiliary support; 5. backing board; 6. mending plate.

facing (cartonnage, masc., or facing [avoid, anglicism], masc.)

A reinforcing material, usually tissue paper, temporarily attached with adhesive to the surface of a painting in order to secure loose **paint** particles and protect the **paint layer** during certain conservation treatments.

feather cracks (pl.) (craquelure en épi, fem., or craquelure en arête de poisson, fem.)

Mechanical cracks in a pattern resembling a feather which are caused by a line of contact against the back of the painting (e.g. a scrape) or a glancing contact on the **canvas** with a hammer when **keying out**.

See also: **alligator cracks, concentric cracks, cracks, diagonal cracks, drying cracks, mechanical cracks, spiral cracks, stretcher mark**

fill (mastic, masc.)

Material replacing lost **paint** or paint and **ground** layers so that an area of **loss** becomes level with surrounding paint.

Other terms: filling, infill, infilling, luting

filling

See: **fill**

flaking (écaillage, masc.)

The partial or complete detachment of fragments of **paint layers** or **ground** from an underlying layer.

Note: Untreated flaking will result in the loss of paint layers and ground in the form of a **lacuna**.

See also: **blind cleavage, buckling, cleavage, cupping, incipient cleavage, lifting, tenting**

glaze (glacis, masc.)

A transparent layer (oil or resin-rich; usually pigmented) applied by an artist on the surface of a painting.

Note: The glaze can be composed of a single or multiple layers.

glazing¹ (verb) (vitrage, masc.)

The action of fitting a protective sheet of glass or acrylic into a frame, separated from the painting by a **liner**, spacer or an **edge-strip**.

glazing² (noun) (vitre de protection, masc.)

A protective sheet of glass or acrylic placed into a frame and separated from the painting by a **liner**, spacer or an **edge-strip**.

See also: **edge-strip, rabbet**

gouge (entaille, fem.)

The damage caused when material has been removed or dug out of a painting's surface, **support, auxiliary support**, frame or another element of the artwork.

grime (encrassement, masc.)

A disfiguring deposit on or ingrained into the surface of a painting.

Note: Grime is often a combination of airborne soot, nicotine, cooking oils, smudges or finger and palm marks.

See also: **accretion, surface dirt**

ground (préparation, fem., apprêt, masc., or enduit, masc.)

An opaque white or coloured preparation layer applied to the **support** as a base for the **paint layers**.

Note: Grounds were traditionally composed of chalk or white lead combined with glue or oil. Today, grounds formulated with modern **pigments** and acrylic medium are common.

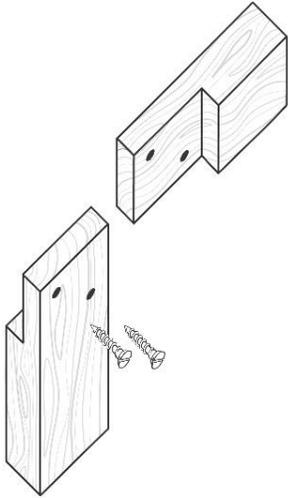
Other term: priming

half-lap joint (assemblage à mi-bois, masc.)

A type of **lap joint** where two wood pieces of equal thickness are made to fit together by reducing half the thickness of the wood at the joint site (normally a corner joint) and then overlapping the two thinned sections to produce a flush surface (see Figure 4).

Other term: halving joint

See also: **auxiliary support, butt joint, cross bar, joint, lap joint, mitre joint, mortise-and-tenon joint, strainer, strainer bar, stretcher, stretcher bar, tongue-and-groove joint**



© Government of Canada, Canadian Conservation Institute. CCI 122428-0004
Figure 4. A half-lap joint.

halving joint

See: **half-lap joint**

hardboard (panneau dur, masc.)

A **compressed wood board** that has a density of 800–1200 kg/m³ and that can be smooth on one or both sides.

Note: Hardboard is commonly found under the name Masonite.

Other term: high-density fibreboard

See also: **compressed wood board, panel**

high-density fibreboard

See: **hardboard**

impasto (empâtement, masc.)

Paint standing in relief on the surface of a painting following pronounced brush strokes or the thick application of a layer of paint.

imprimatura (imprimatura, fem.)

A thin layer of **paint** applied over a **ground** by the artist to provide the base tone for the painting.

Other term: preparation layer



incipient cleavage (début de clivage, masc.)

A **cleavage** that is imminent and that often begins along the edges of **cracks** in the **paint** and **ground** layers.

See also: **blind cleavage, buckling, cleavage, cupping, flaking, lifting, tenting**

infill

See: **fill**

infilling

See: **fill**

inpaint (retouche¹, fem.)

New **paint** applied on areas where original paint has been lost or abraded.

See also: **inpainting, overpaint**

inpainting (retouche², fem.)

In restoration, the application of new **paint** on areas where original paint has been lost or abraded.

Note: “Retouching” used to sometimes mean inpainting, but it was also used to imply an unnecessary and damaging change to the original painting (**overpainting**). Today, the term “overpainting” is preferred for this concept.

Other term: retouching (former des., avoid)

See also: **inpaint, overpaint**

joint (joint, masc.)

The point of contact where two parts come together.

See also: **butt joint, half-lap joint, lap joint, mitre joint, mortise-and-tenon joint, strainer, stretcher, tongue-and-groove joint**

key (clé, fem., clef, fem., or coin, masc.)

A small piece of wood inserted into slots at the corners or **joints** of an **auxiliary support** to make the joints adjustable.

Other term: wedge

key out (régler la tension de la toile)
To expand a **stretcher** corner.

lacuna

See: **loss**

lap joint (joint à recouvrement, masc.)

A **joint** made at the intersection of two pieces of wood that are partially cut away so that they overlap smoothly when placed partly over one another (see Figure 4).

Note: How the cut is made and where the joint occurs determines the type of lap joint. Two examples include a joint at a corner where two planks meet at right angles (half-lap joint) and a joint near the middle section of one of the planks (cross lap joint).

See also: **butt joint, half-lap joint, joint, mitre joint, mortise-and-tenon joint, strainer, stretcher, tongue-and-groove joint**

lifting (soulèvement, masc.)

The partial detachment and elevation of fragments of **paint** or the **paint layer** and **ground**.

See also: **blind cleavage, buckling, cleavage, cupping, flaking, incipient cleavage, tenting**

liner (marie-louise, fem.)

The inside portion of a frame that borders a painting and is made separate from the frame.

Note: Liners are attached to the frame usually with nails or staples.

lining (rentoilage, masc., or doublage, masc.)

The process of providing a new fabric **support** to the back of a painting on **canvas**.

Note: This support may be attached to the original fabric support with adhesive or may just be in contact with it. Attaching a new fabric to the back of a painting that has previously been lined is called relining.

See also: **loose lining, stretcher bar lining**

loose lining (toile de soutien, fem.)

A fabric that is stretched directly behind, but not attached to, a painting on **canvas** and that provides additional **support** and protection to the painting.

Other term: blind lining

See also: **lining, stretcher bar lining**

loss (lacune, fem., or manque, masc.)

An area where **paint** or the **paint layer** and **ground** are missing because of damage or deterioration.

Other term: lacuna

luting

See: **fill**

marouflage (marouflage, masc.)

The process of attaching a canvas to a rigid surface (e.g. a wall, a **panel**).

mechanical cracks (pl.) (craquelure de tension, fem.)

Cracks that are caused by movement or excessive stress in various layers of a painting and that have sharp edges.

Note: Mechanical cracks may be distributed over a painting or may be restricted to one area associated with a blow or pressure to the back or front of the painting. These cracks are often described by the pattern they create.

See also: **alligator cracks, concentric cracks, cracks, diagonal cracks, drying cracks, feather cracks, spiral cracks, stretcher mark**

medium¹

See: **binder**

medium² (medium, masc.)

A substance mixed with **paint** to change certain characteristics (finish, texture, drying time or flow of the paint).

Note: Different types of mediums are used with each type of paint (acrylic, vinyl, oil, water).

Other term: painting medium



mending plate (plaque de renfort, fem.)

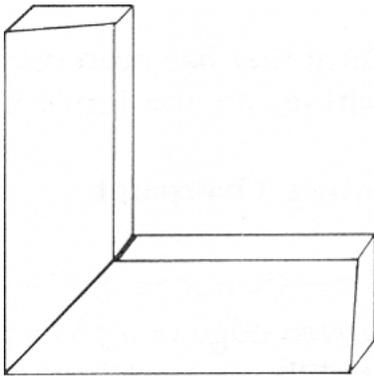
A custom-shaped narrow metal (normally brass) plate used to hold a painting in a frame.

Note: These are plates with a drilled hole at one or both ends; they are bent at angles to accommodate the projection of a **stretcher** or **strainer** beyond the back of the frame (see Figure 3).

mitre joint (assemblage à onglet, masc.)

A **joint** where the wood pieces are each cut at a 45° angle so that they meet to form a 90° angle (see Figure 5).

See also: **auxiliary support, butt joint, cross bar, half-lap joint, joint, lap joint, mortise-and-tenon joint, strainer, strainer bar, stretcher, stretcher bar, tongue-and-groove joint**



© Government of Canada, Canadian Conservation Institute. CCI 122428-0005

Figure 5. Mitre joint.

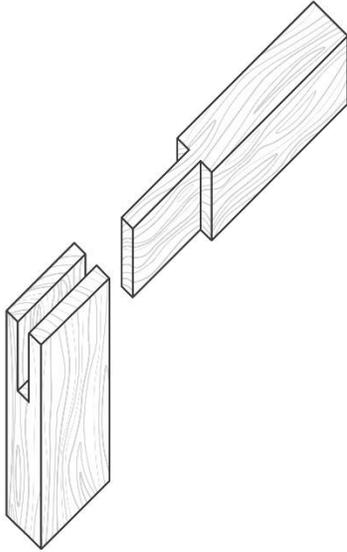
mortise-and-tenon joint (assemblage à tenon et mortaise, masc.)

A **joint** where a projecting wood piece (tenon) at the end of one piece of wood fits into a corresponding recess (mortise) cut into the end of the other piece of wood (see Figure 6).

Note: Unlike a tongue-and groove-joint, a mortise-and-tenon joint is visible.

See also: **butt joint, cross bar, half-lap joint, joint, lap joint, mitre joint, strainer, stretcher, tongue-and-groove joint**





© Government of Canada, Canadian Conservation Institute. CCI 122428-0006
Figure 6. Mortise-and-tenon joint.

over-cleaning

See: **skinning**

overpaint (repeint, masc., or surpeint, masc.)

Paint that was not applied by an artist and that covers original paint.

Note: Overpaint was often used to change a painting's image or to hide damage and usually covered more original paint than was necessary.

See also: **inpaint, inpainting**

paint (peinture, fem.)

A film-forming material composed of **pigment** or dye and a **binder**, such as oil, acrylic, resin, gum or glue.

See also: **binder, paint layer, pigment**

painting medium

See: **medium²**

paint layer (couche picturale, fem.)

One or several colour layers which make up the **paint**.

See also: **binder, paint, pigment**



panel (panneau, masc.)

A rigid primary or secondary **support**.

Note: Traditionally, a panel was a wooden board or a number of boards joined together. The term has now broadened to refer to wood-based supports, such as **compressed wood boards** and plywood. Other rigid materials, such as aluminium honeycomb-core supports and aluminium/polyethylene boards, can also be referred to as “panels.”

See also: **compressed wood board, hardboard**

pentimento (repentir, masc.)

An underlying design element seen through the surface **paint layer**, where an artist made a change in composition while painting that work of art.

Note: Oil paints become more transparent with age, so underdrawings or design elements executed in a preliminary composition may become visible.

Note: pentimenti: plural.

pigment (pigment, masc.)

Finely divided coloured particles that, when combined with a **medium**, form **paint**.

See also: **binder, paint, paint layer**

plain pattern

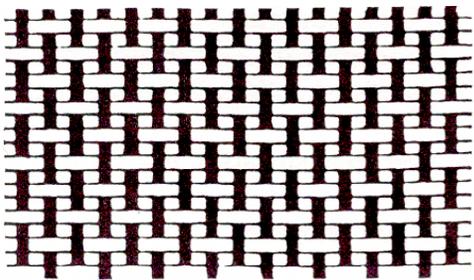
See: **plain weave**

plain weave (armure toile, fem.)

A weave pattern seen in **canvas** paintings where one **weft** thread is woven alternately over and under the **warp** threads (see Figure 7).

Other terms: plain pattern, tabby pattern

See also: **twill weave, warp¹, weave, weft**



© Government of Canada, Canadian Conservation Institute. CCI 122428-0011
Figure 7. Plain weave.

powdering (pulvérulence, fem.)

Condition of a material that can be easily reduced to a powder.

preparation layer

See: **imprimatura**

primary support

See: **support**

priming

See: **ground**

puncture (perforation, fem., or trou, masc.)

A small hole through a painting.

Note: A **deformation** of the surface may accompany a puncture.

See also: **cut, tear**

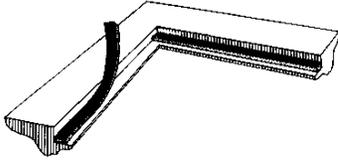
rabbet (feuillure, fem.)

An L-shaped recess on the back of a frame in which a painting rests.

Note: “Padding the rabbet” usually refers to padding the part of the rabbet that is in contact with the surface of the painting or **glazing** (see Figure 8).

See also: **edge-strip, glazing**





© Government of Canada, Canadian Conservation Institute. CCI 122428-0008
Figure 8. Rabbet being padded.

retouching (former des., avoid)

See: **inpainting**

rigid support (support rigide, masc.)

A hard and/or inflexible **support** for a painting as opposed to a flexible fabric (**canvas**) support.

Note: Rigid support materials include **panels, artist's board**, glass, ceramics and metals.

See also: **artist's board, auxiliary support, composite support, support**

rippling

See: **cockling**

rubbing (frottement, fem.)

Repeated contact with a surface resulting in a compression or loss of material that changes its appearance, usually its gloss or its colour.

See also: **abrasion, scraping, skinning, wear**

scalloping

See: **tension garland**

scraping (grattage, masc.)

Repetitive **abrasion** by a sharp object or instrument that results in the loss or removal of one or more layers of material.

See also: **abrasion, rubbing, skinning, wear**

secondary support

See: **auxiliary support**



selvedge (lisière, fem.)

The original woven edge of a piece of fabric where the **weft** threads return over the **warp** threads.

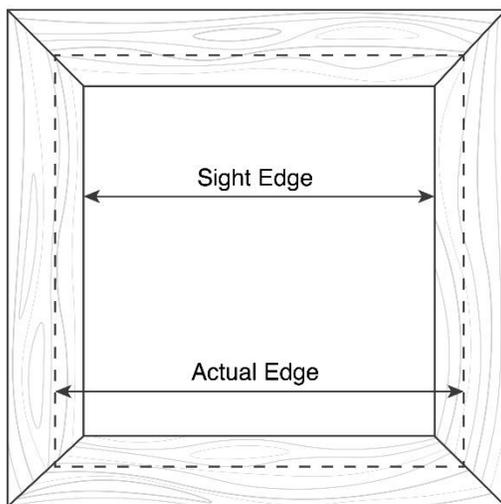
Note: A selvedge usually is a tightly woven “finished” edge.

sight edge (mesure à vue, fem.)

The visible perimeter of a painting in a frame (see Figure 9).

Note: Term used when describing the locations and coordinates of areas of damage or alteration when a painting is examined in its frame.

Note: Not to be confused with the actual painting’s edge, which is hidden under the **rabbet** of the frame.



© Government of Canada, Canadian Conservation Institute. CCI 122428-0009
Figure 9. Sight edges.

size (encollage, masc., or colle, fem.)

A solution, emulsion or gel applied to raw **canvas** or another painting **support** before the **ground** layer is applied in order to protect the canvas fibres from the oil medium and reduce the absorbency of the support.

Note: Traditionally, skin glues, gelatin, gum or starch were used. Modern sizes include synthetic formulations.

Other term: sizing

sizing

See: **size**



skinning (épidermage, masc., or nettoyage excessif, masc.)

The **abrasion** of original **paint** by inexpert cleaning.

Note: Skinning often exposes an underlying **ground** layer. It also emphasizes the **weave** of the **canvas** on a thinly painted canvas.

Other term: over-cleaning

See also: **abrasion, rubbing, scraping, wear**

spiral cracks (pl.) (craquelure en escargot, fem., or craquelure en colimaçon, fem.)

Mechanical cracks in the shape of a spiral that are caused by release of stresses in the **paint layers**.

See also: **alligator cracks, concentric cracks, cracks, diagonal cracks, drying cracks, feather cracks, mechanical cracks, stretcher mark**

split (fente, fem.)

A complete break through a piece of wood along the grain.

See also: **check**

strainer (châssis simple, masc.)

An **auxiliary support** framework (usually wooden) with fixed corners, over which a **canvas** is stretched.

See also: **auxiliary support, butt joint, cross bar, half-lap joint, joint, lap joint, mitre joint, mortise-and-tenon joint, strainer bar, stretcher, stretcher bar, tongue-and-groove joint**

strainer bar (barre¹, fem., or montant, masc.)

The main outer piece of a **strainer**.

See also: **auxiliary support, cross bar, half-lap joint, mitre joint, mortise-and-tenon joint, strainer, stretcher, stretcher bar, tongue-and-groove joint**

stress garland

See: **tension garland**

stretcher (châssis à clés, masc.)

An **auxiliary support** framework (usually wooden) with expandable corners, over which a painting **canvas** is stretched.

See also: **auxiliary support, butt joint, cross bar, half-lap joint, joint, lap joint, mitre joint, mortise-and-tenon joint, strainer, strainer bar, stretcher bar, tongue-and-groove joint**

stretcher bar (barre², fem.)

The main outer pieces of a **stretcher**.

See also: **auxiliary support, cross bar, half-lap joint, joint, mitre joint, mortise-and-tenon joint, strainer, strainer bar, stretcher, tongue-and-groove joint**

stretcher bar lining (rentoilage sur barres, masc.)

Lining that does not require a painting to be removed from its **stretcher** or the use of adhesives.

Note: Lining fabric is inserted between a painted **canvas** and its stretcher's crossbars, then stretched and attached to the back of the main (outer) stretcher bars.

Other term: cami-lining (former des., avoid)

See also: **lining, loose lining**

stretcher crease

See: **stretcher mark**

stretcher garland

See: **tension garland**

stretcher mark (marque du châssis, fem.)

A line of **cracks** or **deformation** in a painting's surface that follows along the inside edges of the **stretcher** or **strainer bars**.

Note: The marks may result from repeated contact of the **canvas** with sharp-edged or inadequately bevelled stretcher or strainer bars or from the influence of the differing environments behind the canvas at the inner edges of the bars.

Other term: stretcher crease

See also: **alligator cracks, concentric cracks, cracks, diagonal cracks, drying cracks, feather cracks, mechanical cracks, spiral cracks**

support (support, masc., or support principal, masc., or support subjectile, masc.)
A material on which a ground and paint are applied.

Note: Examples of material include **canvas**, wood, paper, ceramic, metal, glass, ivory or plastic, etc.

Other term: primary support

See also: **artist's board, auxiliary support, composite support, rigid support**

surface coating (couche de protection, fem., or couche protectrice, fem.)
A transparent layer or series of layers applied to the surface of a finished painting.

Note: Various materials are used as a surface coating including natural resins, drying oils, waxes and, more recently, synthetic resins.

Other term: surface film

See also: **varnish**

surface dirt (saletés superficielles, fem., pl., or salissure, fem.)
A deposit of dust, dirt, **grime**, nicotine, soot or other contaminant on the surface of a painting.

See also: **accretion, grime**

surface film

See: **surface coating**

tabby pattern

See: **plain weave**

tacking edge

See: **tacking margin**

tacking margin (bord de la toile, masc., bord non peint, masc., bord de tension, masc., or côté de la toile, masc.)

The part of a **canvas** that wraps around the edges of the **auxiliary support** and that is held in place by tacks or staples (see Figure 1).

Other term: tacking edge

tear (déchirure, fem.)

Damage to fabric or paper where it has pulled apart, leaving ragged or irregular edges.

See also: **cut, puncture**

tension garland (guirlande de tension, fem.)

A scalloped pattern along the edges of a **canvas** indicating where the original tacks or staples held the fabric to an **auxiliary support** during sizing and priming of the canvas.

Note: The presence of a tension garland can help to determine the original dimensions of a painting when the size has been changed.

Other terms: scalloping, stress garland, stretcher garland

tenting (soulèvement en tente, masc., or frisure, fem.)

Lifting in which the **paint**, or paint and **ground** layers, are forced upward in a tent shape.

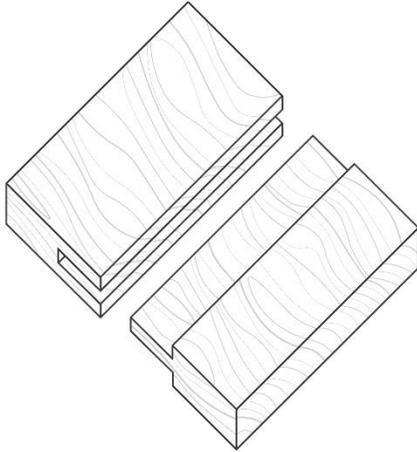
Note: Tenting is caused by compression of the paint layer, due to shrinkage in the **canvas** or wood **support**.

See also: **blind cleavage, buckling, cleavage, cupping, flaking, incipient cleavage, lifting**

tongue-and-groove joint (assemblage à rainure et languette, masc.)

A **joint** consisting of a projecting ridge (the tongue) cut into one piece of wood, which slides out of sight into a corresponding groove on the other board (see Figure 10).

See also: **auxiliary support, butt joint, cross bar, half-lap joint, joint, lap joint, mitre joint, mortise-and-tenon joint, strainer, strainer bar, stretcher, stretcher bar**



© Government of Canada, Canadian Conservation Institute. CCI 122428-0007
Figure 10. Tongue-and-groove joint.

turn-over edge (arête, fem., or arête de la toile, fem., or arête du châssis, fem.)

The edge of a painting where the **canvas** is turned over the **auxiliary support** (see Figure 1).

See also: **tacking margin**

twill pattern

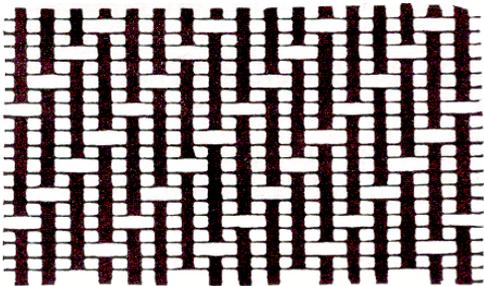
See: **twill weave**

twill weave (armure sergé, fem.)

A complex weave that creates a diagonal pattern (see Figure 11).

Other term: twill pattern

See also: **plain weave**, **warp**¹, **weave**, **weft**



© Government of Canada, Canadian Conservation Institute. CCI 122428-0012
Figure 11. Twill weave.



varnish (vernis, masc.)

A solution of resin dissolved in a solvent, which dries to form a transparent film.

Note: Varnish is usually used as a final **surface coating** over a finished painting to even out the gloss, to saturate the colours and to protect the **paint**. The most common varnishes consist of natural resins such as mastic, dammar or copal. Recently, various synthetic resins have been used.

See also: **surface coating**

warp¹ (chaîne, fem.)

The set of threads in a fabric that run parallel to the **selvedge** edge.

See also: **plain weave, twill weave, weave, weft**

warp² (gauchissement, masc.)

A **deformation**, such as a bend or curve, in a rigid or semi-rigid material.

See also: **deformation**

wear (usure, fem.)

A change in the surface from the effects of **abrasion**.

See also: **abrasion, rubbing, scraping, skinning**

weave (armure, fem.)

The pattern created by the **weft** threads overlapping the **warp** threads in a woven fabric.

See also: **plain weave, twill weave, warp**¹, **weft**,

wedge

See: **key**

weft (trame, fem.)

The set of threads in a fabric that run at right angles to the **selvedge** edge.

See also: **plain weave, twill weave, warp**¹, **weave**

white card

See: **white cardboard**

white cardboard (carton blanchi, masc., or carton blanc, masc.)

A paper-based board produced in various thicknesses, usually from multiple layers of paper fibres, which is normally used as a **support** for smaller paintings.

Other term: white card

wrinkles (plissement, masc.)

Puckers or ridges and furrows in a **paint** or **varnish** film that occurred during drying.



Bibliography

Buck, R.D. "Inspecting and Describing the Condition of Art Objects." *Museum Registration Methods*. Washington, DC: American Association of Museums, 1979.

Conference on Comparative Lining Techniques. *Handbook of Terms Used in the Lining of Paintings*. London, UK: National Maritime Museum, 1974.

Gettens, R.J., and G.L. Stout. *Painting Materials: A Short Encyclopaedia*. New York, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1966.

Keck, C. *A Handbook on the Care of Paintings*. New York, NY: Watson-Guption Publications, 1974.

Office québécois de la langue française. [Le grand dictionnaire terminologique](#).

Philmore, E. *A Glossary of Terms Useful in Conservation*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Museums Association, 1976.

Stout, G.L. "A Museum Record of the Condition of Paintings." *Technical Studies* III, 4 (1935), pp. 200–212.

Bibliography for French-English Glossary

Adeline, J. [Lexique des termes d'art](#). Paris, France: E Gründ, 1927.

Association française de normalisation (Afnor). *Dictionnaire technique des peintures et des travaux de peinture*. Paris, France: Afnor, 1978.

Béguin, A. *Dictionnaire technique de la peinture*, 6 volumes. Paris, France: André Béguin, 1981–1984.

Béguin, A. *Mémento pratique de l'artiste peintre*. Brussels, Belgium: André Béguin, 1979.

Bergeon, S. *Science et patience*. Paris, France: Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1990.

Bergeon, S., et C. Perier-D'leteren. "Typologie des altérations de surface de la couche picturale." In K. Grimstad, ed., *8th Triennial Meeting of the ICOM Committee for Conservation, Sydney, Australia, 6–11 September 1987: Preprints*. Marina del Rey, CA: The Getty Conservation Institute, 1987, pp. 13–15.

Bergeon, S. *Comprendre, Sauver, Restaurer* [Exhibition catalogue]. Avignon, France: Musée du Petit Palais, 1976.

Binette, R. *Vocabulaire des panneaux dérivés du bois : français-anglais*. Québec, QC: Office de la langue française, 1985.

Bontinck, E. *Physique et peinture*. Brussels, Belgium: Éditions Lumière, 1944.

Conserver-restaurer [exhibition from 25 June to 28 October, 1975]. Museum of Grenoble, 1975.

De Henau, P. "Approche d'une terminologie descriptive de l'état de surface des matériaux pierreux." *Bulletin de l'Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique* 18 (1980–1981), pp. 170–182.

Émile-Mâle, G. *La restauration des peintures de chevalet*. Fribourg, Switzerland: Office du livre, 1976.

Garcia, P. *Le métier du peintre*. Paris, France: Dessain et Tolra, 1990.

Hours, M. *Analyse scientifique et conservation des peintures*. Fribourg, Switzerland: Office du livre, 1976.

Marette, J. *Connaissance des primitifs par l'étude du bois*. Paris, France: A. et J. Picard, 1961.

Marijnissen, R.-H. *Dégradation, conservation et restauration de l'œuvre d'art*, vol. 1 and 2. Brussels, Belgium: Éditions Arcade, 1967.

Petit, J. et H. Valot. *Glossaire des peintures et vernis*. Paris, France: Section française de l'Institut international de conservation, 1991.

Rostain, E. *Rentoilage et transposition des tableaux*, 2nd ed. Puteaux, France: EREC, 1987.

Sochoux, L. *L'encadrement* (Collection Connaissance et technique). Paris, France: Éditions Denoël, 1982.

French–English Index

abrasion (fem.) – **abrasion**

accrétion (fem.) – **accretion**

ampoule (fem.) – **blind cleavage**

arête (fem.), arête de la toile or arête du châssis (fem.) – **turn-over edge**

armure (fem.) – **weave**

armure sergé (fem.) – **twill weave**

armure toile (fem.) – **plain weave**

assemblage à mi-bois (masc.) – **half-lap joint**

assemblage à onglet (masc.) – **mitre joint**

assemblage à rainure et languette (masc.) – **tongue-and-groove joint**

assemblage à tenon et mortaise (masc.) – **mortise-and-tenon joint**

barre¹ (fem.) or montant (masc.) – **strainer bar**

barre² (fem.) – **stretcher bar**

biseau (masc.) or chanfrein (masc.) – **bevel**

blanchiment (masc.) or chanci (masc.) – **blanching**

bleuissement (masc.) – **bloom**

bord de la toile (masc.), bord de tension (masc.), bord non peint (masc.) or côté de la toile (masc.) – **tacking margin**

bordure de protection (fem.) – **edge-strip**

bosse (fem.) – **bulge**

carton blanchi (masc.) or carton blanc (masc.) – **white cardboard**

cartonnage (masc.) or facing (avoid, anglicism, masc.) – **facing**

carton toilé (masc.) – **artist's board**

chaîne (fem.) – **warp**¹

châssis à clés (masc.) – **stretcher**

châssis simple (masc.) – **strainer**

clé (fem.), clef (fem.) or coin (masc.) – **key**

clivage (masc.) – **cleavage**

cloque (fem.) – **blister**

composition (fem.) or composé du doreur (masc.) or mélange à mouler (masc.) or pâte anglaise (fem.) – **compo**

couche de protection (fem.) or couche protectrice (fem.) – **surface coating**

couche picturale (fem.) – **paint layer**

craquelure (fem.) – **cracks**

craquelure circulaire (fem.) – **concentric cracks**

craquelure de tension (fem.) – **mechanical cracks**

craquelure en diagonale (fem.) or craquelure d'angle (fem.) – **diagonal cracks**

craquelure en épi (fem.) or craquelure en arête de poisson (fem.) – **feather cracks**

craquelure en escargot (fem.) or craquelure en colimaçon (fem.) – **spiral cracks**

craquelure prématurée (fem.) or craquelure de séchage (fem.) – **drying cracks**

croisillon (masc.) or traverse (fem.) – **cross bar**

début de clivage (masc.) – **incipient cleavage**

déchirure (fem.) – **tear**

déformation (fem.) – **deformation**

dos protecteur (masc.) – **backing board**

écaillage (masc.) – **flaking**

éclat (masc.) – **chip**

empatement (masc.) – **impasto**

encollage (masc.) or colle (fem.) – **size**

encrassement (masc.) – **grime**

enfouement (masc.) – **dent**

entaille (fem.) – **gouge**

épidermage (masc.) or nettoyage excessif (masc.) – **skinning**

faïençage (masc.) – **crazing**

farinage (masc.) – **chalking**

fente (fem.) – **split**

feuillure (fem.) – **rabbet**

fissure (fem.) – **check**

frottement (masc.) – **rubbing**

gauchissement (masc.) – **warp²**

glacis (masc.) – **glaze**

gondolage (masc.) or ondulation (fem.) – **cockling**

grattage (masc.) – **scraping**

guirlande de tension (fem.) – **tension garland**

imprimatura (fem.) – **imprimatura**

incision (fem.) – **cut**

joint (masc.) – **joint**

joint abouté (masc.) – **butt joint**

joint à recouvrement (masc.) – **lap joint**

lacune (fem.) or manque (masc.) – **loss**

liant (masc.) or médium (masc.) – **binder**

lisière (fem.) – **selvedge**

marie-louise (fem.) – **liner**

marouflage (masc.) – **marouflage**

marque du châssis (fem.) – **stretcher mark**

mastic (masc.) or masticage (masc.) – **fill**

médium (masc.) – **medium²**

mesure à vue (fem.) – **sight edge**

panneau (masc.) – **panel**

panneau de bois aggloméré (masc.) – **compressed wood board**

panneau dur (masc.) – **hardboard**

parquetage (masc.) – **cradle**

peau de crocodile (fem.) or peau de crapaud (fem.) – **alligator cracks**

peinture (fem.) – **paint**

perforation (fem.) or trou (masc.) – **puncture**

pigment (masc.) – **pigment**

plaque de renfort (fem.) – **mending plate**

pli d'angle (masc.) – **corner draws**

plissement (masc.) – **wrinkles**

préparation (fem.), apprêt (masc.) or enduit (masc.) – **ground**

pulvérulence (fem.) – **powdering**

régler la tension de la toile (masc.) – **key out**

rentoilage (masc.) or doublage (masc.) – **lining**

rentoilage sur barres (masc.) – **stretcher bar lining**

repeint (masc.) or surpeint (masc.) – **overpaint**

repentir (masc.) – **pentimento**

retouche¹ (fem.) – **inpaint**

retouche² (fem.) – **inpainting**

saignement (masc.) – **bleeding**

saletés superficielles (fem., plur.) or salissure (fem.) – **surface dirt**

soulèvement (masc.) – **lifting**

soulèvement en cuvette (masc.) – **cupping**

soulèvement en tente (masc.) or frisure (fem.) – **tenting**

soulèvement en tuile (masc.) – **buckling**

support (masc.) or support principal (masc.) or support subjectile (masc.) – **support**

support auxiliaire (masc.) or support secondaire (masc.) – **auxiliary support**

support composite (masc.) – **composite support**

support rigide (masc.) – **rigid support**

toile (fem.) – **canvas**

toile de soutien (fem.) – **loose lining**

trame (fem.) – **weft**

usure (fem.) – **wear**

vernis (masc.) – **varnish**

vitrage (masc.) – **glazing¹**

vitre de protection² (masc.) – **glazing²**

CCI wishes to thank the Translation Bureau as well as the Centre de conservation du Québec for their assistance in creating this glossary.