



Lauri Kramer Serafin

A set of three reproduction picture rail hooks includes an oversized Regency style in pressed aged brass, left, a heavy cast polished brass, middle, and a cast bird in aged brass.



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An antique framed image with vintage gold cording hangs in a Forsstrom House main bedroom.



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A framed oil painting sits in the dining room of the Forsstrom House, hung with gimp cording.

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casted metal and stamped varieties. Consider purchasing one to use for a test fit before buying a large quantity.

Note that a casted hook can't be bent to fit a picture rail. These are best for situations with ample room above the moulding. However, a lighter stamped metal hook can be bent to fit almost any profile and easily slips between narrow spaces.

Items of light to moderate weight can be hung with decorative cord or light wire. The cording or wire is passed through screw eyes or D-rings mounted on the back of the frame. Mount the screw eyes or D-rings a few inches below the top corner in a sturdy area of the frame. I make a hanging bridal with a square knot at the back of the picture or mirror.

Heavy items should hang with decorative cord with embedded wire, plain wire or chain. Multiple hooks can distribute the weight more

evenly if needed. Decorative rosettes, medallions or tassel embellishments at the top of the hook were popular in the Victorian era. Simpler hooks and wire can easily fit a more modern look.

Although the use of picture rail mouldings was in decline by the late 1930s, I've seen a resurgence of interest. Recently, I helped a friend who wanted picture rail mouldings in her modern condominium to hang a large collection of framed needlework and family heirlooms.

She wanted to rotate pieces and not disturb her walls. I helped her determine a location for the picture rail, which was installed with cove moulding. This antique idea deserves another look.

Lauri Kramer Serafin is the owner of the Forsstrom House in Astoria's Shively-McClure Historic District. For more about her restoration work, contact forsstromhouse@gmail.com or visit theforsstromhouse.com.



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