



Why we do it, how we do it and some practical considerations.

This workshop will include a brief historical tour of framing style and methods, with a spotlight on some contemporary framing strategies.

We will then get down to some practical considerations, including: framing aesthetics, archival concerns, weighing economy and expertise, and finally some simple how-to.



This session also includes the demonstration of a simple method for framing small-scale works on paper and panel.

Participants are encouraged to ask questions regarding their own framing dilemmas.

Overview:

Introduction: History of Framing

Demo 1: Straight cutting a matt and hinging a paper work.

To Frame or not to Frame: Strategies for presenting artwork.

Demo 2: Paperwork's, mounting up!

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Why Neutral works.

Demo 2: Simple panel framing.

Hang 'Not to High': A quick look at framing hardware.

About the instructor:

Mixed media Artist Heather Cline spent the first three years after completing her BFA at the University of Saskatchewan working as a professional picture framer at Art Placement, Inc. in Saskatoon. She also had the opportunity to work as a part-time gallery preparator with the excellent staff at the Mendel Art Gallery. These experiences combined with a strange need to work in multiple mediums from painting to wood carving to works that incorporate audio/video elements, has resulted in life long obsession with effective art framing and gallery display.

About the 'The Art of Framing', a brief look at the history of framing VIDEO. View this video again at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bc1CMDASEgl>

All of the visual examples for this video are from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. If you have further interest in framing and conservation visit:

<http://www.metmuseum.org/collection> and read *Italian Renaissance Frames* at

http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/fram/hd_fram.htm

Other recommended reading includes: *A Brief History of the Frame*,

<http://www.paulmitchell.co.uk/publications/history.html>

Materials:

Demo 1- Exacto Knife, 36" metal ruler, 4H pencil, linen tape or *Framer's Tape II*, 100% rag archival Mat Board and optional- archival foamcore.

Demo 2- Linen tape or *Framer's Tape II*; small weighted objects (glass coasters work well); couple of heavier identical weighted objects (to medium tin cans, full); scissors; small sponge in container; filtered or distilled water

Demo 3- Stock wooden frame molding; 1/8" MDF, canvas or linen material; Acrylic Regular Matte Gel; small foam roller; scraps of 100% rag mat board (at least 2" wide); optional neutral PH adhesive.

Demo 1: Straight cutting a mat

1. Start by using the easy measuring method to plan your mat size. Custom framing measurements are based on the artwork. You also need to first determine if you will be overlapping the image or floating the image in the frame. It is best to overlap the image by as much as is aesthetically and practically possible, this should be a minimum of 1/4" overlapping around the entire edge of the image. Generally when floating an image, a measure of 1/4" to 3/8" works quite well. Remember that paper can often be irregular, so you need to measure at various points along the height and width.
2. If you are cutting a mat to fit a ready-made frame, the frame size will determine the backing board and window mat size. Frames are always measured from the inside (rabbet) of the frame. That is the size of a piece of glass that will fit in the frame. The actual size of the frame is 1/8" larger than indicated to allow room around the glass, mats, image etc. The actual rabbet size of an 8" x 10" frame is 8 1/8" x 10 1/8" (however always double check the exact measurement of the rabbet).
3. Generally artists choose to center an image in the frame or will add visual weight to the bottom of the frame by creating a wider border as the bottom edge of the mat.
4. Always leave at least a 1/16" to 1/8" allowance in your mat board; this will allow the mat to move inside the frame with changes in humidity and temperature without buckling or stressing the corners of the frame.
5. The straight cut method is easily achieved at home with a few simple tools. It is essential to have a very sharp and good quality exacto knife. Prior to cutting it is important to double-check that this blade is clean and free of any oil or lubricant (some blades are coated to help separate the blades in the packaging). It is also important to have a straight and well-marked metal ruler, precision is essential for professional results. Also you will need a clean work area with a scrap mat board and protective surface to cut on.
6. Once the outside dimensions of the mat are determined cut two identical mats, one for a backing board and one for the window mat. The backing board can be cut out of archival foamcore for a stiffer backing.
7. It is important to correctly mark the window mat prior to cutting. Using light thin lines will also improve the final appearance of the mat, use a 4H pencil. Working on the back- side of the mat, mark off the appropriate border widths for each side.
8. When you start cutting begin outside of the final border with a shallow cut, this will keep your knife on a straight path as you begin to cut completely through the mat to the surface below. Using a scrap of mat board underneath your cut will allow you to cut cleanly through your mat into the surface below, eliminating tearing on the edge of the mat.
9. Straight cut mats can be finished off with a bone paper folder to create a slightly beveled edge.

Check List for Measuring:

Frame rebate-outside dimension of the mat:

_____H(eight) x _____W(idth)

Float or overlap of mat:

_____top _____bottom

_____sides

Width of border (Window Mat)

_____top _____bottom

To Frame or not to Frame: Strategies for presenting artwork.

Factors to think about when considering to frame or not to frame:

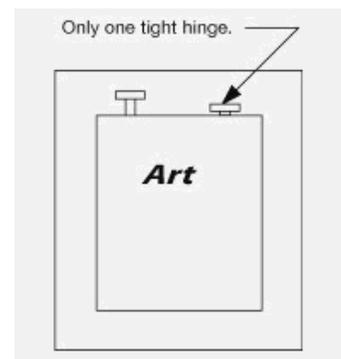
- Is this a temporary or permanent installation?
- How fragile are the mediums in the artwork?
- Is my mounting system easily explained to other users?
- Will my mounting system damage the wall that it is being installed on?
- Does this framing choice honour my work?
- Is it appropriate for the planned venue?
- Can I afford this approach to framing?
- Do I have the skills, to frame this work?
- Is this artwork for sale?
- Will my framing choice have universal appeal?
- Does my framing choice have longevity?

Also Consider:

- Budgeting for framing as a part of your art practice
- Placing works in archival plastic folders for temporary display
- Matting an artwork and displaying in a plastic archival folder
- Using magnetic fasteners (to prevent damaging paper)
- Mounting paper works on archival foamcore and using mounting clips to attach to wall
- Using ready-made frames, replacing the supplied mat with archival mat board
- Keeping several neutral stock frames at hand (metal can be re-cut to a variety of sizes)
- Having a professional framer cut your mat for a ready-made frame
- Price checking professional framers in your area; some times the best deals are not the best deals
- Be informed when you go to have your work framed, resist the up-sell

Demo 2: Paperwork's, mounting up!

1. Start by evaluating the scale of your paper work; small works require 2 hinges; larger works may use 4-8 hinges. Generally works less than a full sheet of paper require 2 hinges (but this is also impacted by the weight of the paper).
2. Prepare a clean working area. Have on hand some small thin weights (I recommend glass coasters); 2-4 equal size and weight tin cans; small container of distilled water; linen tape or Framers Tape II.
3. Start by attaching your window mat to your backing mat. Use tape across the entire length of the edge.
4. Temporarily position your artwork in the mat to check the fit. Then finalize position and hold in place with glass coasters.
5. Lift up the window mat carefully, so that the artwork isn't moved out of position.
6. Cut linen tape or Framers Tape II to create your T-hinge, 2 per side- **one hinge should be significantly longer than the other**, remember the adhesive side of the tape should stick together to create the T.
7. Attach you hinges in from the edge of the artwork, start by gentle placing the bottom edge of the T under the edge of the artwork with the adhesive side up. Then carefully position the top of the T on the backing mat (see diagram). Close window mat and apply weight to the hinge (a piece of mat board laid over top and then some tin cans for weight works well). Linen hinges need to dry for at least an hour.



Demo 2: Simple panel framing

Traditionally canvas works are framed with a linen liner and additional frame. A key aspect of framing works on panel is that they are removable from the frame and that the edges of the panel are protected by the framing method.

Simple Panel Framing: Mounting panels on linen/canvas backing and using ready-made frame.

1. For this framing method you will need an appropriately sized ready-made frame (a 2-3" float around the image works well). A piece of birch panel or 1/8" MDF cut to the rebate size of the frame. A piece of un-bleached canvas or linen at least 2" larger than the H X W of the frame; Matte Acrylic regular gel; a small foam roller; small pieces of 100% rag mat board (at least 2" X approximately the width of the artwork).
2. Start by cutting your panel to the size of the frame.
3. Cut a piece of canvas/linen approximately 2" larger than the H x W of the panel.
4. Apply an even coating of acrylic medium to the back of the panel and let it dry.
5. Apply an even coating of acrylic medium to the front of the panel and lightly place the piece of canvas on the panel, make sure the bias of the material is straight with the edges of the panel. Apply pressure evenly to the surface of the panel by covering with a smooth piece of canvas and then a piece of heavy board (drawing board works well). Leave this to dry for at least several hours.
6. Trim the edges of cloth from around the panel.
7. Place the panel in the frame and secure with framers points.
8. Cut several mat board strips slightly smaller than the width of your artwork. Use neutral pH glue or a thin coating of matte acrylic to attach several strips to the back of your artwork panel.
9. Apply a slightly thicker coat of acrylic to the back of the mat board strips and position your panel in the center of the linen frame panel, adjust until it is properly centered and then apply even weight to the artwork and leave it to dry for several hours.



The Good, the Bad and the Ugly:

Why Neutral works.

The reality of framing is that aesthetic choices have generally been made in response to trends in architectural and interior design. Some of our assumptions about what type of framing looks good on our work are rooted in these design trends.

I think it is smart as an artist to be aware of trends and then disregard them to a degree. The more neutral a frame or complimentary to a work of art, the more longevity it will have. In this case I'm referring to aesthetic longevity. If you are a professional artist framing your own work, it is important that the frame be appropriate over the several years or frankly decades that it may be shown in public/commercial galleries and in your client's homes.

Keep your mat and frame colour choices simple and neutral. White mats generally compliment work and never go out of fashion. Neutral metallics- flat black, silver, german silver, seem to have had lasting appeal. Make sure your metal frames are anodized (this is a stronger finish). Maple, ash and oak in simple square profiles have been used to frame artwork for hundreds of years.

Never directly use cardboard or masking tape in your framing process.

Hang 'Not to High': A quick look at framing hardware

Framing hardware comes in several different sizes for use on wooden frames. Always pick a size appropriate to the weight of your frame. When in doubt, go up a size in fastener. For thin frame profiles small single-hole hangers can be clipped flat with tin snips so that the curved edge doesn't protrude past the edge of the frame. Replace cheap fasteners on ready-made frames with proper framing hardware to improve the quality of your framing.

ALWAYS pre-drill your frames with a drill bit slightly smaller than the size of your screw (this will prevent splitting). Use #4 or #6 screws in the longest size possible with each particular frame profile. Pre-drill for your fasteners **before** you place your glass and artwork in the frame. Then place the glass, matted artwork, backing board in the back of the frame and seal the frame with a **dust cover** (paper covering the back of the entire frame, attached to the frame molding with double-sided framers tape). Then attach your hangers and wire.

Measure and place your fasteners at the **same height** (gallery staff will love you for this). Generally hangers are attached approximately 1/4- 1/3 down from the top edge of the frame.

Use braided and preferably coated picture wire. It is well worth purchasing proper wire from your local art store or picture framer. Dollar store and hardware picture wire is often too thin and brittle; the wire can break over time. Plus you will get wire splinters in your fingers! There are different weights of wire available for different weights of art work- **use appropriately weighted wire.**

Use bumpers. If your work is traveling, include the bumpers in the packaging for application on location. These foam squares, placed in each corner on the back of your frame, protect both your frame and the walls that your piece will hang on.



Check out the CARFAC Saskatchewan publication '**VISUAL ARTS HANDBOOK**', for a list of Saskatchewan businesses that stock art and framing supplies.

Find a video overview of this workshop at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YbiG03jv-kQ>
This does not include the live demos.