

FRAMING TIPS FOR A STARVING ARTIST

Framing your artwork will enhance the viewing experience by surrounding it with space, which focuses the viewer's attention to the artwork itself. It's protected from the elements as it gets transported through central New York weather to the exhibit, from greasy fingers pointing at the marvelous aspects of your artwork, and even from spit as people get close and exclaim their approval of what they see!

Although we like to support our local framers, sometimes the timing isn't quite right for spending a lot of cash on a custom frame. Here are some DIY tips for framing your artwork inexpensively.

SWISS-CLIPS (BARE EDGES)

These are a no-no if used with glass because they chip and break so easily and can injure the volunteers hanging the show. They are only acceptable if used with plexi-glass.

USE A COUPON

Sign up for coupons at the local art supply stores (Michael's, AC Moore, Joanne's, Commercial Art Supply will accept these) and purchase a ready-made frame. Insert your artwork and voila, you're done! Just make sure you didn't put lots of fingerprints on the inside, or frame up some noticeable dust or cat hair along with your artwork.

METAL FRAMES

The art Store has metal frame kits that are available in many sizes. You can select 2 pieces for the horizontal dimension, and then 2 pieces for the vertical dimension.

PICK UP AN OLD FRAME

Discarded frames frequently appear on the curb. Pick them up if they are still in one piece, especially if they have glass that's intact. The Salvation Army, the Flea Market, garage sales, and antique shops often have frames for sale (usually with some artwork still in them).

FIX UP YOUR OLD FRAME

If it's wood, use wood glue to glue the corners back together. Clamping can be a little tricky, if you do this alot, it may be worth investing in a Pony Frame Clamp for about \$25.

MAKE YOUR OLD FRAME SHINE

Amaco Rub 'n Buff Metallic Finishes are available in many colors and patinas. It's similar to shoe polish, and dries to hard finish.

You can also just paint your frame, or try out the gilding kits available at art supply stores. It's a fairly simple process: you paint your frame a deep rust color, then put a sticky substance on it and carefully apply the thin guiding sheets, then paint over it with a sealer, and then apply an "antiquing" finish on it.

PURCHASE THE MOULDING

If you have a business and can provide a retail certificate, you can get an account at Syracuse Sales. They make much of their own moulding from local wood sources and have a good selection of ready made frames as well as seconds. They will chop your moulding to size. You can opt to have them glue it together for you, or to make "thumbnails" so you can glue it yourself.

GLASS

If you need glass, the easiest solution is to stop by a framer and order a piece to fit your frame. Hardware stores also carry glass, but often it is much thicker than picture framing glass. You can also check the ready-made frame section at the store and see if you can find a deal.

For showing a large piece, sometimes it is best to use Plexi-glass. It's much lighter, puts less stress on the frame, and is easier for the people installing the show. This material can only be cleaned with water. Windex and such things will cause it to get cloudy.

FINGERPRINTS AND DUST

Truly filthy glass gets pretty clean with running water, a sponge and dish detergent, Just be very careful when handling the edges. If the edges are very sharp, you can tone that down with some fine grain sandpaper.

To really get the glass clean and free of any greasy fingerprints, you can use rubbing alcohol. Use a lint free rag for this.

You can put on a pair of gloves for handling to avoid cuts.

Right before assembling the frame, you can dust it off with compressed air, blowing on it, a feather duster, or vacuum it. Take a peak at how it looks before sealing it up.

ARCHIVAL (FOR WORK ON PAPER)

If you would like to keep your artwork in the frame for a long time, it's best to use archival materials. These would be acid free foam core, acid free linen tape, and acid free matting (Alphamat or Museum). All of this is available at Commercial Art Supply and elsewhere.

NON-ARCHIVAL

If this is temporary framing and the artwork will end up back in your drawer after the exhibit, you can get away with regular foam core and matting.

FOAM CORE (BACKING BOARD)

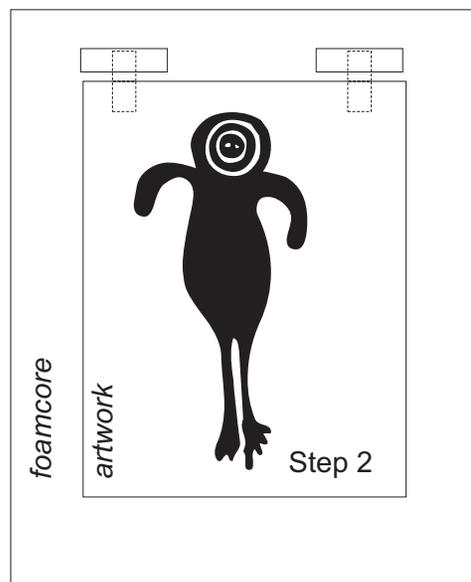
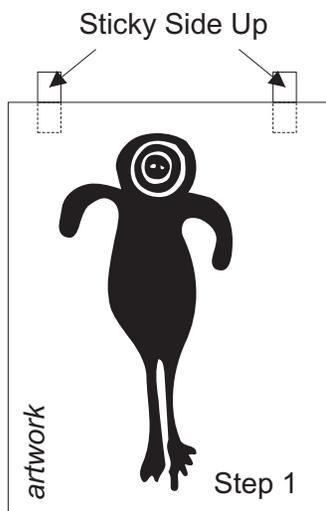
Lay your frame over the foam core and trace the inner outline of the frame to get the size you need.

If it's a big piece, you are better off using 1/4" thick foam core. For small pieces, you can get away with 1/8" thick. To cut it, use an x-acto knife (or something similar) with a sharp blade. Using a straight edge, make a very shallow cut (score it), and follow up with 2-3 successive cuts until you pierce through (make sure you have something under it as a cutting surface - cardboard, glass, cutting mat). This will give you a nice clean cut.

MOUNT YOUR ARTWORK TO THE FOAM CORE

Step one: Using archival tape, cut two pieces that are about 2 inches long. Place your artwork facing up. Apply the tape to the back of the piece, but allow about 1" tabs to stick out beyond the artwork.

Step 2: Cut two more pieces of tape. Place your artwork (still facing up) on the foam core. Apply the tape over the tabs to secure your piece to the foam core.



MATTING

You can have a professional mat cut by a framer, but if you prefer the DIY route, here are some options:

1. Spring for a good \$300+ mat cutter at the art store. Mat cutting will be a breeze with the right equipment and sharp blades.
2. Learn from the web: There are dozens of tutorials online on how to cut mats with various implements.
3. Make your own mat with an xacto knife (or something similar)

Step one: Figure out with a ruler how wide your borders will be. Generally, it's good to cover up at least 1/8" or 1/4" of the edge of your artwork so that the paper lays flat.

Step two: Draw these lines on the back of your mat board with careful measuring.

Step Three: Cutting

The trickiest part of cutting a nice looking mat is the beveled edge. Without a mat cutter and 10,000 hours of practice, this edge can be a challenge. So, forget about that beveled edge, and just make a straight cut with a very sharp xacto knife.

Cut with the back of the mat facing up: don't attempt to cut through the board on your first cut: score it using a straight edge, and keep making shallow cuts until you pierce through.

A trick for keeping your corners tidy: When you make your first cuts (that don't go all the way through), over shoot the cuts a little.

Essential: you must have a sharp new blade for cutting matboard.

Step 4: Make a ring with some tape (preferably archival) with the sticky surface facing out and use that as your double stick tape to attach your mat to your foam core (or you can use double stick tape if you have it).

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Metal frames

If you are using a metal frame, they usually come with all the hardware you need, plus instructions. If those are missing, you can find the hangers and spring clips at the Art Store. You screw three sides of the frame together using the special corner hardware. Slide in the glass and mounted/matted artwork. Insert the hangers, then attach the last side of the frame.

Wood frames

Place the wood frame face down and insert the glass, then the mounted/matted artwork.

Usually, a point-driver is used to insert little pieces of metal that secures everything together. If you don't have access to one of these (they cost between \$35-\$65) you can make do with brads or glazier points (see illustrations).

Hanging wire

Screw in D-ring hangers or eye hooks 1/3 of the way down the frame. Thread wire cable through and wind the excess around the cable. If your frame is extremely large and heavy, hanging wire puts too much stress on the frame. In this case, use d-rings designed for a heavier load. These will have to be used as the hangers for the frame.

THE BACK OF THE FRAME

For shows, it is a great idea to label the back of the frame with your name, contact info, and the title of the piece.

You can "paper" a wood frame to make it look tidy and to keep dust out. Be warned that if there's a hollow space between the frame and the paper, it's possible the paper may get torn in transportation.

Use double stick tape around the edge of the frame. Lay out a piece of paper that is larger than the frame (wrapping paper will do) and carefully lay the sticky side down. Flip it over and trim off the edges with a sharp xacto knife. Be careful not to dig into your frame when you do this.

You can also use Framers' Tape to seal the back of the frame.

Bumpers are useful for keeping the frame level once it's hung, and for making it hang better on the wall. These are available at art supply stores and hardware stores.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS:

Self-Adhesive Linen Mounting Tape, or Gummed Linen Mounting Tape
ATG Tape Gun and Tape
Plastic Coated Picture Hanging Wire
Bumpers
Rb 'n Buff
Gilding (Gold Leafing) Kit
D-Ring Hangers
Point Driver with Flexible Points
Acid Free Foam Core
Framer's Tape
Metal Frame Kit
Pony Frame Clamp



BUMPERS



D-RING HANGER



SCREW EYE



RESOURCES:

Edgewood Frame and Art Gallery
edgewoodartandframe.com
216 Tecumseh Rd.
Syracuse, NY 13224
(315) 445-8111

Commercial Art Supply
wholesaleart.net
935 Erie Boulevard East
Syracuse, NY 13210
315-474-1000

Syracuse Sales (PB&H Moulding)
www.syrsales.com
124 Pickard Drive East
Syracuse, New York 13211
Phone: 315-455-1756

www.framing4yourself.com

framingsupplies.com

centralnewyorkartist.com



PONY FRAME CLAMP



GLAZIER'S POINTS



EPBOT.COM



ATG TAPE GUN & TAPE



PLASTIC COATED WIRE



RUB 'N BUFF



LINEN HANGING TAPE



GILDING KIT



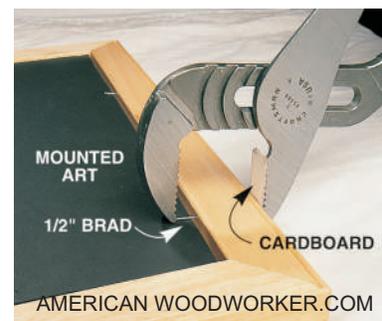
FRAMER'S TAPE



METAL FRAME KIT



POINT DRIVER



MOUNTED ART

1/2" BRAD

CARDBOARD

AMERICAN WOODWORKER.COM