

## The Matting and Framing Process I Use Annie Thayer



### Materials:

- I use acid-free mounting board and archival quality matboard. You can tell the difference:
  - Acid-free mounting board has a paper quality to the outside, whereas non acid-free has a smooth, slick surface.
  - Archival quality matboard has a white core. Other matboard will yellow inside over time.
- Mat cutter blades: change the blade every 3 or 4 mats.
- ATG (double stick) tape: ATG gold is archival/acid-free; regular ATG tape is not. I use ATG gold for sticking the mat to the mounting board but use the cheaper regular ATG tape for adhering the dust cover to the back of the frame.
- I use a marble candle holder that has felt on the bottom to hold my painting in place while I'm hinging it to the mounting board. You can also use clean bean bags.
- Glass: I use Tru Vue Conservation Clear glass that has a high UV protection.
- Glass cleaner: DO NOT use any glass cleaner that has ammonia in it! I use Sprayway glass cleaner and always check to make sure that it says, "Contains no ammonia."
- Framers Tape II for hinging painting to mounting board (Amazon carries it)
- Artists Tape for covering ends of wire (as a protection to individual hanging the art)
- Other hardware:
  - D rings
  - Wire
  - Bumpons
  - Felt pads
- Other Equipment
  - ATG gun
  - Point driver
  - Photography lint brush
  - Dust cover trimmer
  - Burnishing tool

### Steps in Framing:

1. Determine what frame size you will be using.
  - a. Standard sizes are: 11x14" for 1/8<sup>th</sup> sheet of Watercolor paper, 16x20" for ¼ sheet, 22x28 for ½ sheet (SEE CAVEAT below!), 28x36 for a full sheet.
  - b. These sizes will provide room for a mat of 2.5 to 3.5" around the painting.

**\*\*Caveat: a half sheet of watercolor is 15x22". If you wanted an even sized mat all the way around the painting, you would end up covering more of the 22" side of the painting. Or you can cut the mat a different width for the height versus the width.**

[The math:  $(22-15)/2 = 3.5$ " mat (or thereabouts);  $(28-22)/2 = 3$ " mat] SO, when painting a half sheet watercolor, I will consciously not put anything interesting on the edges of the long side of the paper so I can crop it without losing anything.
2. Measure your painting and determine the inside measurement of the mat; ALWAYS let the mat cover the artwork by at least 1/8" on all sides OR ¼" if you have painted to the edge of your paper. Otherwise, it is difficult to center the painting in the mat AND if you've painted to the edge of the painting, the painting could pull out from under the mat with expansion/contraction of the paper.
  - a. Example for a 16x20" frame:
    - i. Custom frames will come 1/8" larger on each dimension to account for squareness and expansion. Store bought frames have a tighter dimension and sometimes even smaller than noted. SO, ALWAYS measure the inside dimension of the frame before proceeding.
    - ii. Note the depth of the frame. If less than ¼" deep, you will need to use a thinner mounting board rather than the standard 3/16" board.
  - b. Measure the size of your mat opening, giving yourself the extra ¼" or ½" allowance.

**c. DO THE MATH:**

- i. My frame size is 20 x 16"
- ii. My painting dimensions = 14.5 x 10.5 so I subtract  $\frac{1}{4}$ " from each dimension to arrive at a mat opening of 14.25 x 10.25
- iii. Longest side:  $20 - 14.25 = 5.75$ ; divide by 2 to get a mat width of 2.875 (2  $\frac{7}{8}$ " wide)
- iv. Shortest side:  $16 - 10.5 = 5.75$  (Yeah! This matches my longest side, so I will have an even mat all around! This is highly recommended for this size and smaller.); divide by 2 to get a mat width of 2  $\frac{7}{8}$ ".
- v. Cutting the mounting board, matboard, and opening: a mat cutter is highly recommended!
- vi. Tips: use an extra piece of matboard underneath the mat you are cutting; Cut it upside down; use pencil mark on all 4 sides; don't over OR under cut

**d. Putting the painting in the mat:**

- i. Place the painting on the mounting board and then place the mat over it; adjust until the painting edges are all hidden and the 4 sides of the mat line up evenly with the mounting board; place a weight on the painting to hold it in place.
- ii. Cut 3 pieces of Framers Tape II (or linen tape if you prefer) about 1" long. Place them along the top of your painting sticky side up with a little over  $\frac{1}{2}$ " under the painting.
- iii. Cut 3 pieces of Framers Tape II a little longer, and starting with the center, place the tape sticky side down over the other tape but not touching the painting to create a hinge. Do the same for the other two hinges. Place your mat back over to double check that all edges of the painting are covered.
- iv. Use the ATG or double stick tape to adhere the mat to the mounting board

**e. Framing:**

- i. Clean glass with lint free rag not paper towel; can use Scotch Bright High Performing cleaning towels.
- ii. Place glass on painting; let fall onto artwork to help remove dust.
- iii. Place frame over glass; put in a couple points to hold everything together
- iv. Turn over and check for any specks of dust on the mat or glass; remove points and remove specks
- v. Repeat steps iii and iv until you are satisfied that your job is clean
- vi. Use point driver to put in at least 3 points on each side of the frame; you can use a block of wood to keep the frame from bending outward.

**f. Seal everything up:**

- i. Put double stick tape on the back of frame about  $\frac{1}{8}$ " to  $\frac{3}{16}$ " from edge
- ii. Place brown craft paper covering all edges
- iii. Crease edge and use blade or dust cover trimmer to trim off excess.
- iv. Burnish the paper onto the back of the frame

**g. Wire:**

- i. Find the top of the painting
- ii. Measure  $\frac{1}{3}$  or less down from top
- iii. Make awl hole
- iv. Screw in hanger (at an angle)
- v. Install wire; put tape on wire ends
- vi. Put bumpers and/or felt pads on corners
- vii. Put a business card on back so someone can find you (example of painting that found its way to an estate sale)