



# Expressive Arts

## Quick and Clean Mounting & Matting

You'll need two work areas: CLEAN SPACE and MESSY SPACE

### CLEAN SPACE:

- Post it notes
- Center finding ruler
- Rolling pin
- Box knife
- Safe cutting surface or scrap of smooth linoleum
- (Discontinued samples from floorcovering stores work well)
- Metal straight edge
- Double sided tape
- Cans of soup (any can as long as it has the rolled bottom will do)
- Optional: ATG tape gun (instead of double sided tape)
- "Spacers"  $\frac{1}{2}$ ",  $\frac{3}{4}$ ", 1",  $1\frac{1}{4}$ ",  $1\frac{1}{2}$ "
- Print weights (instead of soup cans)



### MESSY SPACE:

- A large flat surface at least 4 feet square as a SPRAY BOOTH (can be the floor) out of the wind but in a well ventilated area
- Lots of newspaper (spread out in multiple layers on the large flat surface)
- POSITIONABLE spray adhesive
- A DRYING AREA, a second area away from the SPRAY BOOTH



## Mounting

*Adhering a photo or work of art on a paper directly on the front surface of mat board.*

Adhesives require a combination of three things to do their job:

1. TIME
2. TEMPERATURE
3. PRESSURE

Know what combination your adhesive requires!

1. Decide where you will crop your photo. Using this method allows the photographer the opportunity to determine where the corners of the image will be (which is not always true when using as mat).

2. Decide where to place the photo: Centered, weighted or skewed.

Centered: Equal amounts of mat showing on all sides

Weighted: Having a significantly wider margin on one or two sides. Typically we see a weighted bottom but weight can be used however desired.

Skewed: Rarely done but the photo is rotated or placed on the mount in a “random” or “freeform” method.\*



3. Center mounting

- A. Use “centerfinding” ruler and post-it notes to identify where photo is to be placed.
- B. With ruler still in place gently place post it notes along at least three edges.
- C. Once the position is marked remove photo\*\* and go to your Messy Space
- D. Apply spray adhesive as directed.
- E. Allow to dry “enough”.
- F. Position photo inside your post-its, press lightly with a cover sheet, remove the post-its and roll.
- G. Allow to rest for a minimum of 24 hours

## Matting

Using a “window mat” over a mounted print.\*\*\*



Matting involves mounting your photo using most of the above listed techniques and then placing a mat on top. The biggest downside in matting is that unless you have a custom cut mat the size of the opening will determine what of the image is seen regardless of how you have “cropped” the photo. I have developed this method to be the simplest, most expedient and cleanest way to accomplish this process. Yes there is some waste but the savings in time for me has always offset the costs of the wasted foam core.

Start with your mat, photo and a piece of foam core at least an inch larger in both directions than your mat.

1. Put your photo approximately in the middle of your foam core board.
2. Place the mat over top to see that there is foam core showing on all sides.
3. Place your can of soup on the photo, now lightly mark the corners of your mat on the foamcore
4. Without moving the photo, lift the mat off and set it to the side.\*\*\*\*
5. Now, without moving the photo, place post-it notes along at least three edges.
6. Apply spray adhesive as directed.
7. Allow to dry “enough”
8. Position photo on foam core inside your post-its, press lightly with a cover sheet, remove the post-its and roll.
9. Apply double sided tape to the back of the mat approximately 1/2” from the edges.
10. Apply mat to foam core inside the pencil marks and roll.
11. Trim off excess foam core board. -WORKING ON A SAFE CUTTING SURFACE!!!-  
To trim foam core board using a box or utility knife (always use a sharp blade if in doubt change it, blades are cheap relative to having to start over from a botched cut.): The knife is held along the edge of the mat so that the cut “disappears” under the mat (we call it a reverse bevel, the mat has a beveled edge on the inside) and is tilted toward your body so that the maximum amount of blade lays against the mat as a guide and the maximum amount of cutting edge is used to make the cut (not just the tip). Each side is cut in no less than THREE passes, four is better. The first pass scores the paper giving the knife a “track” to follow, the second pass cuts the top layer of paper and may cut part of the foam layer, the third pass completes the cut through the foam and sometimes the back paper, a fourth pass may be needed to finish the cut and separate the scrap. Rotate 90 degrees and repeat, repeat, repeat. All the excess foam board is gone and you have a nice reverse beveled edge.
12. Allow to rest for a minimum of 24 hours.

## Following Your Stars\* (okay asterisks...)

\*Changing the weighting is just a matter of siding the photo up or down along your centerfinding ruler before applying your post-its.

\*\*A caution when handling photos. The surface of a photo, especially if it is a glossy finish is susceptible to “etching” from fingerprints. The oils on our skin are actually acidic enough that if left on the surface of a photo they will become permanently etched into the surface.

A glossy print can show etching in a matter of minutes whereas matte finishes can tolerate up to an hour. That is why we try not to touch the surface of photos! If you do get fingerprints on a photo wipe them off with a microfiber cleaning cloth, the type we use to clean our glasses.



\*\*\*Window mats can be expensive but developing a “relationship” with your local Custom Picture Framer can net you some significant savings. For every window mat there is what we call the fall out, the piece that gets cut out. Framers typically will have boxes of fall outs that they can rarely find a use for. They already have a nice reverse bevel, will come in an incredible array of colors and often will be donated to 4-H programs. These work great for MOUNTING, pick your color and size and use the above methods. If you really want a window mat ask if you can pick a piece of mat board from their fall outs and pay to have them cut it. Most framers today have computerized mat cutters and can cut a mat in seconds; input the numbers, put the board in the easel and press start. In the time it took to read that sentence it can cut the interior opening and even resize the perimeter if so programmed.

\*\*\*\*Just as we try not to touch the surface of a photo, we NEVER want to handle a mat by pinching the inside bevel and outside edge. Two reasons: the first is those same oils from our fingers will be sucked up by the paper and cause what we refer to as acid burning. You’ve seen how newspaper yellows very quickly, that’s because they use cheap paper with a lot of acids still in it. (The acid actually helps with ink adhesion and leaf separation, thus they deckle the edges of newsprint to keep it together!) Mat board is usually acid free or even alkaline so as to not transfer acids to the photo or artwork under it, because it would cause it to yellow effectively destroying it. Second and even more importantly is when you pinch that inside edge you crush that nice sharp bevel making it look sloppily cut.