

PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR PRESENTING YOUR WORK

By Donna Cosentino

I do not claim to be an expert...far from it. Your local framer is the expert. I simply have a few rules that I go by which I have found makes it easier for me when I work at home.

Tools and materials you will need:

A table to work on. Space is important, the bigger the better

Mat cutter and plenty of new blades

Thin lead Pencil-0.5

White or kneadable eraser

A weight of some kind

Good straightedge-metal ruler and/or see-through plastic ruler

tape-acid-free linen or artist's tape

Clean soft brush to dust off the work

Cutting a window matt:

If your images are always the same size this process will be a lot less complicated. I prefer printing my images with a border. This allows the whole image to show...usually a window cuts just a bit ($1/8"$ - $1/4"$) into the image area. This border also gives me the option of being able to *tape* or hinge my images onto the backing board as well as allows me to sign directly on the print's surface underneath the image.

Measure the image's width. Subtract that from the board's width then divide that by 2. This will give you the measurement in from each side. Do the same for the image's height and board's height. What this will give you is a symmetrical window....same distance on right and left and top and bottom. This is the easiest hole to cut. However...it is generally accepted to have slightly more room at the bottom than the top. Visually this seems to look better...the image floats a bit above the middle and if you sign it, it allows for a visual space for your signature. Adjust your measurement if you wish to have more space at the bottom.

Example: Cutting a window for a 6x9 print on an 11x14 board:

Using the formula above you would have 2.5 inches all around. If you want more space at the bottom (preferred) you would adjust your print so that it has 3" at the bottom and 2" at the top. A Personal note: My image area is 9x9 and my board is 16x20. If I don't want the white print edge to show, I end up with a window that is $3\frac{1}{2}"$ on the sides and (if centered) $5\frac{1}{2}"$ on top and bottom. Or I could use 5" on the top and 6" on the bottom. I could even fudge that more.... $4\frac{1}{2}"$ on the top and $6\frac{1}{2}"$ on the bottom rendering a 'heavier' bottom. Take care to not put the image too high however...it does not look good!

These measurements are drawn onto the back of the board. Accuracy is important!!! Use a good straight edge and a fine point pencil! Measure everything after you have drawn the lines. I cannot tell you how many times this has saved me from cutting the wrong size Mat!!! Now you cut the mat. Follow the directions for your mat-cutter.

The materials you use for mounting/matting your photographs is critically important. Only archival materials should be used. See the handouts on this. I use 2 or 4ply to support the work and 4ply or thicker to overmat the work. The backing board should be archival. I have used thick mountboard or foamcore. Importantly most foamcore is not archival. You can tape around the edges to stop it from off-gassing. Gatorcore is, I believe, an archival material and is often used to mount prints at the fair. There are other creative ways of presenting artwork. Some are mounting on metal, some on acrylic.

I sign my work. I print my image with extra area around it so that I sign *in pencil* directly on the print which is a matte surface. I then cut the overmat so that the signature shows. There are myriad ways to sign and you will see all kinds of suggestions. There are special archival pens for signing digital prints. There is a pen made by micron called "Pigma Micron 005 #1" archival ink pen but as I haven't used it I can not directly recommend it for your digital prints. Some people sign directly in the print area with gold or silver inks.

Addendum: In tonight's demonstration you have seen other ways of positioning your print. Becca uses two clear t-square rulers to set the position and does not draw lines across the entire board but rather only at the corners where she cuts her mat. This is neater and saves time. And it works for her when she cuts her mats.

Judith uses a Falcon Print Positioner which saves time when she positions for dry mounting or to position her prints for taping. I personally find I often modify the end result I get using the Positioner because it seems a bit high to my eye. Directions for the Falcon Print Positioner belowvvvvvv

- 1) Place print in upper right corner of matte board. Slide Positioner across top of matte board until number readings at points A & B are the same." (Using the large numbers on the short bar of the T : left number aligned with left edge of board, right number with print edge.) 2) Hold Positioner in place. Slide print flush against Positioner and slide down to bottom of board. Note reading at top of print on the LARGE scale ." (long bar of T) 3) Holding Positioner in place, slide print up to matching number on SMALL scale. Your print is now at the optical centre of the matte board.

I think you will find that you will come to your own way of doing it as most of us have. It's "whatever looks good". See some of the suggestions off of Photo.net below.

Some Resources:

Light Impressions- lightimpressionsdirect.com

Freestyle- Freestylephoto.biz

Valley Moulding and Frame-
7825 Arjons Drive San Diego Ca 92126
800-243-2467

CMI Moulding
8148 Ronson Road, Suite T San Diego Ca 92111
800-373-8177

AND DON'T FORGET YOUR LOCAL FRAMER-THEY REALLY *DO* KNOW BEST!

NOTES;

Suggestions off Photo.net:

Sal Santamaura, jul 06, 2001; 10:17 a.m.

Basic, starting rule of thumb: center left-to-right, put around 45% of the total vertical mat area above and 55% below the image. Modify to taste.

Scot Salmon , sep 21, 2000; 05:25 p.m.

There is a formula out there, I remember vaguely from a photo class long ago. However, when using it, I almost always reverted to a modification of that formula. The modification was "whatever looked best for that particular print in the particular matt/frame." I don't mean for this to sound flippant, but the matt job usually looked better to me (and others) when using my best guess rather than the formula. BTW, the formula was centered left/right and slightly higher than center up/down. There were specific measurements, but that was the general idea.

Steve Swinehart, sep 21, 2000; 07:33 p.m.

There is a very interesting psychological effect that has been studied and documented about where a person's vision falls on a totally blank page. If you give a person a blank sheet of unlined paper, in either horizontal or vertical orientation, hand them a pencil, and ask them to place the pencil point in the most comfortable place in the center of the paper, they will invariably place it centered left to right, BUT 5/8ths of the way up from the bottom. That is the optical center of the paper.

In other words, people like to see things with a little more room at the bottom. It has, therefore, become standard matting practice to give a larger border at the bottom than on the sides or top because people naturally like that arrangement.

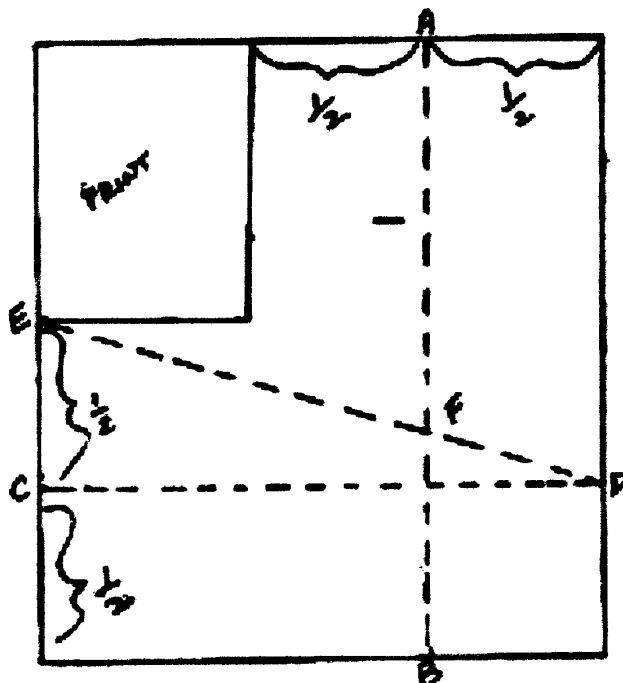
So, if you want to put them at ease – give more room on the bottom mat border. If you want to aggravate them – make even borders all around.

And TADAAAH! I found *the* formula which I can tell you I will personally never use but which is close to the Falcon Print Positioner:

From Paul Stephenson:
MEASURING THE GOLDEN MEAN

According to the golden mean, a print is always mounted centered on the sides and slightly higher than center from top to bottom.

1. Lay print on mount board in upper left corner.
2. Line A-B is a measurement of one-half the distance between the print and the right edge of the mount board.
3. Line C-D is a measurement of one-half the distance between the print and the lower edge of the mount board.
4. Point E is the lower-left corner where the edge of the print meets the mount board.
5. Point F is the intersection of lines E-D and A-B, and is then the position of the lower-right corner of the print when placed and mounted on the mount board.
6. A T-square is necessary to accomplish this mounting procedure with minimum time and maximum ease. A mechanical pencil is also nice, and dustless eraser to remove any marks from mat. Markings for dry mounting print are made on the front of the mat board; markings for cutting windows in overmats are made on the back of board.



Measurements for hanging :

Midline: Decide what the mid-line will be for your images. This is considered eyelevel. Typical is 60" (tho 58" or 59" are also used). And with high walls *you* can decide where you want it. The easiest way to hang off the midline is this: Take 1/2 of the vertical length of the frame, subtract that from 60 and that is where the bottom of the frame is. Example: with a 16x 20" vertical frame, subtract 10" (1/2 of 20") from 60" and the bottom of the frame is at 50". I measure from the floor up. I mark using tape rather than pencil.

Distance between images:

To get the distance between images on the walls this is the technique: Add up the number of inches of frame-width you will hang. Subtract that from the total inches of the wall/hanging space. Count up the number of spaces between all photographs including the ends. Divide that into the number of inches left from above.

The resulting number is the number of inches between each photograph. I 'fudge' this number when I hang because I like extra inches on either end to separate the walls from one another.

Example:	Wall is	200"
		-
	Nine 16" wide frames is	<u>144"</u>
		56"

There are 10 spaces counting the end spaces

$56 \div 10 = 5.6"$ or close enough to $5 \frac{1}{2}"$

Therefore it should be $5 \frac{1}{2}"$ between prints.

I fudge this all the time but it's a good starting point.

Of course if you hang 'salon style' this does not apply. 'Salon style' is the kind of hanging you might see in a photographer's studio....many images in differing style frames of differing sizes. This can be quite beautiful and was used in exhibitions at the end of the nineteenth century. For hanging salon style I map everything out on the floor in the arrangement I wish. Then transfer that to the wall. Take a digital picture as a record so you remember where everything goes. Also it may change and morph as you go. I think it's best to begin hanging in the middle of the wall. You can 'fudge' the measurements on either end if it doesn't quite work out.