

GUIDELINES FOR MATTING AND HINGING ART ON PAPER FOR SHOW AND SALE

(prepared by Meg Nicks, Sunny Raven Gallery)

The following information is intended to help you choose professional methods and quality materials for presenting your work.

What does a mat do for you?

If your work is being presented unframed, a mat will give it a finished and professional appearance, enhancing saleability. White is often preferred by galleries as it is neutral and does not usually conflict with the art or customers' decor.

A mat does more than just set off your work. It also functions inside the frame to separate the glazing from your original art, allowing for air circulation. This prevents problems created by contact with glass or Plexiglas, such as fogging and adhesion and even mold growth. Along with the backing board, it acts as a support for your picture.

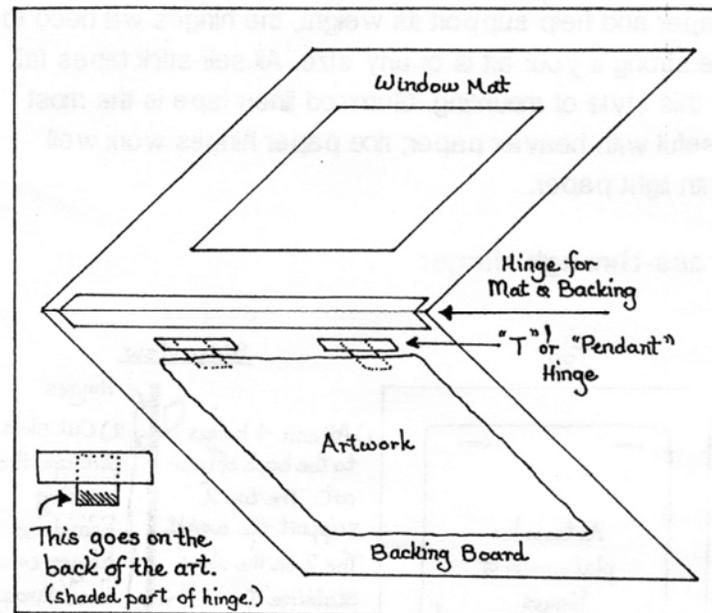
Matboards need to be "acid-free" as a minimum. This means that the board is acid free at the time of manufacture, and should also be buffered with an alkaline agent (calcium carbonate) to counter acidity that develops over time. Boards made of cotton rag or purified alpha-cellulose (with the lignin removed) and then buffered are of much better quality. (Crescent Flag, Bainbridge Alphamat, and Peterboro Accent board are examples.) The lignin in wood pulp is the greatest culprit in causing the acidity which will damage your art. Cotton naturally contains very little lignin.

Your **backing board** should be of reasonable quality. No corrugated cardboard! This can burn into your paper in as little as 7 years. Foamcore will last about 10 years before it starts to break down; "Art-care" and cotton-covered foamcores are much better. You can also use acid-free matboard for backing.

"Hinging" is the term used for attaching your picture to the backing board. **Never use masking tape!** It causes irreversible staining, dries out, or goes gummy and usually fails, as does almost every tape in general use. The exception is Scotch 810 (Magic™ tape. Glues and double-sided tape cannot be removed and lead to real problems later on. Framer's Tape II™ is stable. Tapes which are both stable and removable include gummed linen tape, rice paper hinges, and Filmoplast P90®. They can be purchased from some art supply stores and picture framers.

There are guidelines for picture framers about which hinging materials are best for specific types of paper. But, because of shipping and handling conditions related to galleries and shows, you will want your hinges not to give way too easily. Gummed linen tape is a very good choice for watercolour and other heavier papers.

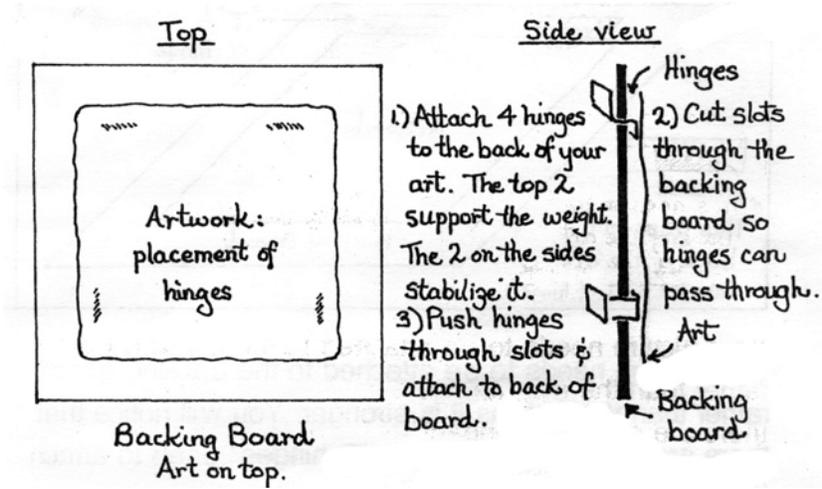
Recommended Matting & Hinging Package:



Your picture needs to be attached to the backing board, rather than the mat, as it is stronger. You will notice that there are only 2 "pendant" or "T-hinges" used to attach the art to the backing board. You could add another in the middle if your picture is very wide. Also, hinges are not put right at the corner, as that is a weak point. The vertical part of the hinge attaches to the back of the art. The cross-piece (top of the T) attaches the hinge and art to the backing board. Paper needs to expand and contract with humidity changes, and will lie flatter if it is not trapped by too much tape. The mat needs to cover at least 1/8" of the edge of the paper so that the paper doesn't pop through the mat later.

You may want the edges of your paper to show. Below is a hinging method you can use for this presentation. Because there is no mat to hold down the edges of the paper and help support its weight, the hinges will need to be strong if your art is of any size. All self-stick tapes fail in this style of mounting. Gummed linen tape is the most useful with heavier paper; rice paper hinges work well with light paper.

Pass-through Hinge:



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