

# Kushed Procedures

## Picture Framing - Design

G4

The Shed has all the necessary equipment and a large range of materials to suit almost any picture framing project.



## THE PURPOSE OF FRAMING

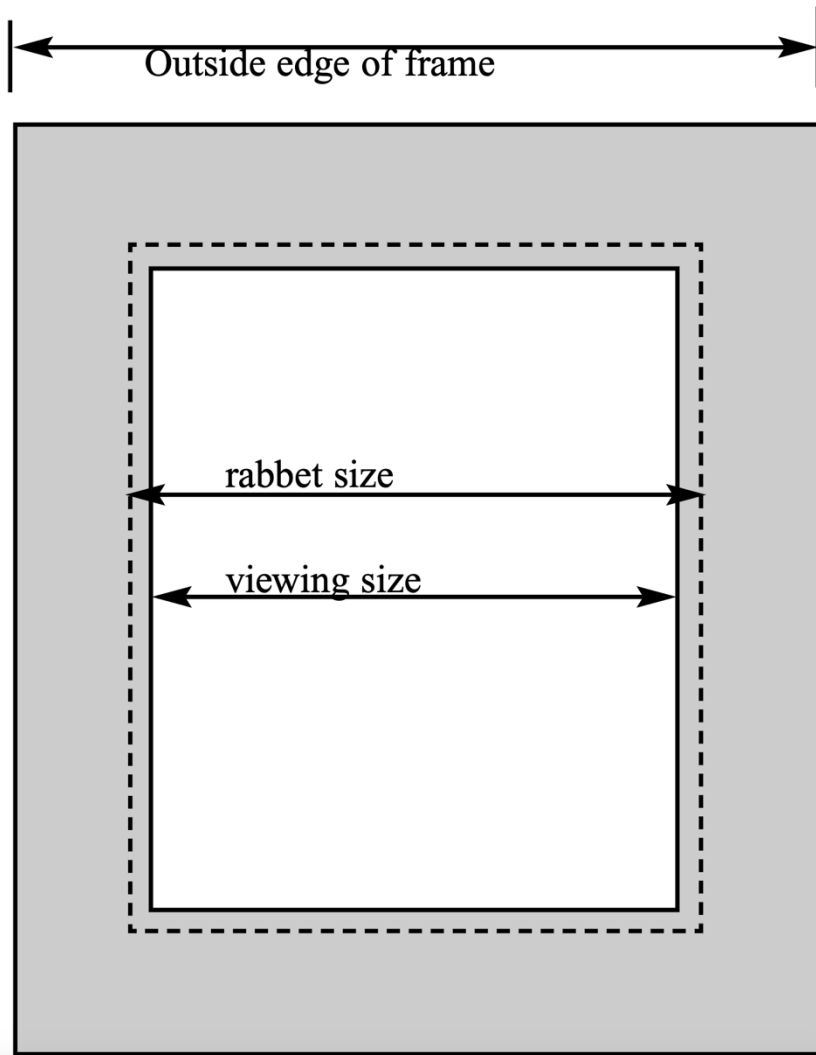
Picture framing provides two important services for a piece of art—protection and presentation.

Protection is provided with proper materials and methods. Presentation begins with designing the project. The presentation should complement the art. “Overdoing” is a tendency of amateurs in any field of endeavour, and sometimes the beginner framer “over frames” the piece both visually and structurally. In an attempt to make it look professional, the art is sometimes overwhelmed by the framing. The goal is a presentation that allows a viewer to see the beauty of the artwork and not be distracted by the framing.

The methods suggested here are designed to expedite the learning process, allowing DIY framers to begin framing right away, while giving a “professional” finish to the work.

The mechanics of framing are important, but equally important are the aesthetics of framing—the style, colour, and proportion of the frame and matting. Understanding these elements makes all the difference between a “homemade” and a professional-looking presentation.





## FRAMES

When choosing a frame, the style and strength is important. The frame must be strong enough to bear the weight of all the materials it will hold. Glass is heavy, so a large piece of artwork that will be glassed requires a strong frame.

## SIZE

The lip and inner sides of the frame, which accommodate the framing materials, is called the “rabbet,” and the inside frame measurement is called the “rabbet size.” Make sure there is room for all of the layers that are planned. The glass, matboards, artwork, and backing board must fit into the frame without bulging out of the back.

A frame that is said to measure 400mm x 500 mm has a rabbet size of 406x 506". This allows a bit of expansion space for the mats, glass, and other framing materials, which should be cut to 400mm x 500mm.

## Standard Matboards

- Acid-Free and pH Neutral to protect artworks from fading
- Approximately 1.3 - 1.4mm thick
- Opening cut with a bevelled edge to reveal core colour
- Available in White Core and Black Core

## Museum Grade Matboards

- Engineered to the highest museum archival standards
- 100% Cotton Fibre
- Naturally acid and lignin free
- Buffered with calcium carbonate
- 4-ply, 1.3 - 1.4mm thick
- Available in Black, Off-White and White
- Solid colour throughout, core matches face colour
- Opening cut with a bevelled edge

## BOARDS FOR FRAMING

In picture framing, the term “board” generally refers to various types of paper board sheets. Boards are used for matting, backing, mounting, and filler. They are made especially for picture framing.

There are acids in many papers and boards, especially those made from wood pulp. Acids can cause paper and boards to turn yellow and deteriorate (think of an old newspaper) and can cause the same sort of damage to the artwork they come in contact with. Many paper products are “buffered” with calcium carbonate or other chemicals during production to neutralize these acids. Such products are then labelled “acid-free.” Buffering is very effective but may not last forever.

Boards are like art papers. They are made from chemically processed wood pulp or cotton. Cotton is naturally white and acid-free, and therefore requires far less bleaching and processing during manufacturing. The finest papers and boards for art and framing are made from cotton. Matboards or mount boards that are made from cotton are often called “rag,” from an old papermaker’s term referring to the strips of cotton scrap used in the papermaking process.



## Decoration

In some cases, a frame can be too distracting when placed right next to an image, adding a matboard will help provide a visual break between the frame and artwork. Using the right colours around your image can help draw your eye toward the image and accent its key colours.

## MATTING

Matting is a border that surrounds and supports artwork. Matboard is designed especially for picture framing. Most matboards consist of a surface sheet that carries the colour and texture of the board, a backing sheet, and several tightly compressed layers that make up the core

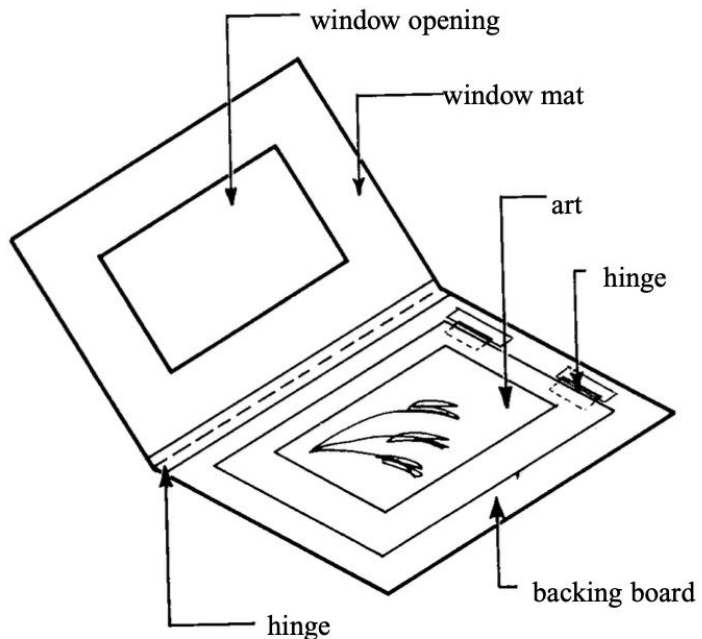
Matboard is available in many colours and a number of textures, including simulated linen, marble, and flannel. Matboards are typically 32" x 40", but some are available 40" x 60", and smaller pieces are sometimes sold for the do-it-yourself framer.

## Why use a matboard?

### Protection

A matboard can protect the image inside the frame from moisture damage. They provide a small gap, reducing the chance of direct contact between the image and glass, which is where most condensation builds up. The matboard will tend to absorb moisture first, thus limiting the amount of condensation that will build up on the glass.





*A “mat package” consists of a window mat and a backing board. The backing board is usually made of the same kind of board as the mat. The two boards are sometimes attached to one another with tape, either along the top edge or along the left side.*

## MATBOARDS

### STANDARD OR REGULAR MATBOARD

This board is made from processed wood pulp. If the package states it is acid-free, the board has been buffered to neutralize the acids, especially in the wood pulp core. The buffering will help the wood pulp last longer. Many wood pulp boards will discolour and become dry and brittle over time.

### CONSERVATION MATBOARD

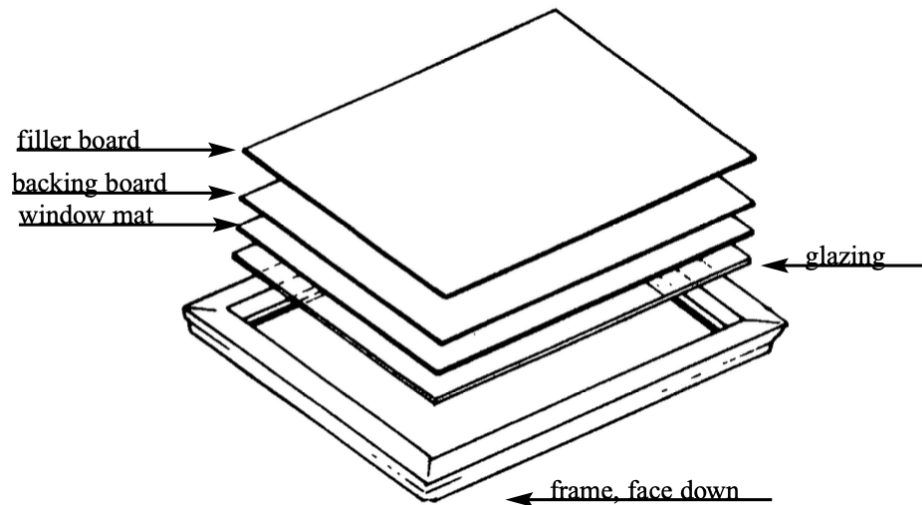
These boards have either a cotton or purified wood pulp (alpha) core, plus buffered, acid-free surface and backing papers to make them last unchanged for many years.

### RAG MATBOARD

Museum grade matboard. Cotton throughout. Made from cotton pulp compressed into a solid sheet.

### UNSUITABLE BOARDS

- **POSTER BOARD:** This is an acidic craft board, meant for short-term use. Moisture-sensitive, fades and deteriorates rather quickly.
- **CARDBOARD, CONSTRUCTION PAPER, ETC.:** These and similar types of craft materials have high acidity and uneven density that makes them unsuitable for picture framing.



## BOARDS FOR BACKING, MOUNTING AND FILLER

Besides matting, boards are also used in picture framing for backing (the board that goes immediately behind the artwork and supports the art), for mounting (bonding the art to the surface of a board), and for filler (extra board that goes into the frame for additional support during final assembly of the framing package.)

When choosing these boards, the decision is based on the quality and sturdiness needed for the artwork. Choose a board that is strong enough, but don't overdo it. Nothing needs to be backed with or mounted to Masonite®—it is very heavy and highly acidic. Corrugated cardboard is lightweight and sturdy, but it is very acidic, and its ridges may show through the art- work.

Textured boards are unsuitable for mounting because of this tendency to show through. Poster board is too flimsy. Chipboard is highly acidic and deteriorates over time.

Suitable options for backing, filler, and mounting boards are:



## **MOUNTING BOARD**

These boards have smooth white surfaces made especially for mounting. Available in various thicknesses for different mounting needs. Also available acid-free.

## **MATBOARD**

Primarily for matting and backing, matboard can be used as a filler board and it may be used for most mounting applications. If desired, mount the art on a colour that coordinates with the artwork and leave a border of the mat colour showing around the art.

## **FOAM CENTER BOARD**

Styrofoam core with smooth surface papers adhered to both sides. Lightweight and sturdy, available in several thicknesses (1/8", 1/4", 1/2"). Strong enough for large artwork. An acid-free version is available for use as conservation mounting or backing board.

## **ILLUSTRATION BOARD**

Although typically used by graphic artists, illustration board may be used as a backing and mounting board.





*Beginners often fear that large mat borders will overwhelm small artwork, but in reality, a wide mat border focuses attention on the art and gives it an importance it deserves.*

## **COLOR & DESIGN**

Operating side-by-side with the craft of framing is the artistic aspect. The framing should serve as an attractive presentation for the artwork

### **CHOOSING THE FRAME**

Picture frames are available in a wide variety of styles and materials. The best choice for each framing project depends on the most suitable presentation for the piece being framed.

Try this exercise: look at the artwork, describe it, then look at the chosen frame. Adjectives such as strong, dark, pale, or soft describe entirely different styles of art as well as styles of frames. Do the same adjectives describe the art and frame? If so, it is probably a good combination.

There is also the “visual weight” to consider. A narrow metal moulding may be strong enough to handle the actual weight of a 30" x 40" oil painting but may not provide a good presentation for the art, looking out of balance.

On the other hand, an 8" x 10" oil painting may only require a narrow, plain frame to manage its physical weight, but may be more beautifully presented in a wide, ornate gold frame.

## CHOOSING MAT COLORS

Matting protects the art from touching the glass and allows air circulation within the frame. The mat has an aesthetic purpose as well. It can highlight a colour in the artwork, accent a shape, or simply increase the size, making a more dramatic display for the art.

- Let the mat colours complement the character of the art. What colours are in the artwork? In what proportions? Lots of dark green? Just a little blue? What is the mood or feeling of the image depicted? Soft, bright, dark? These are the guidelines to use when choosing the mats.
- Often artwork is framed for a specific location in the home, such as over the couch. For these pictures, it is fine to choose mat colours that help coordinate the decorating scheme—but if those colours do not appear in the art- work at least a little bit, it will look like a “forced fit.” In those situations, try a double mat with a neutral top mat and a liner mat that accents the room colours.



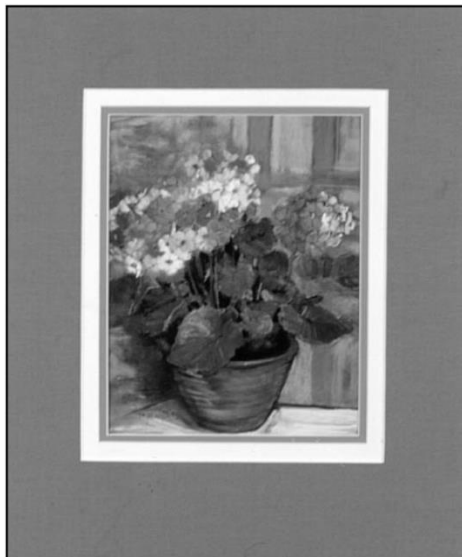


## PROPORTION

Proportion is a relationship between various parts of a whole thing. Unless a person is an artist or a scientist, well-balanced visual proportion is something one sees rather than measures. It is a personal visual balance of light, colour, texture, shape, and line. The proportions an individual feels most comfortable with are based on a lifetime of personal, cultural, and educational (both formal and informal) experiences.

In picture framing, the size of the matting is very important to the presentation of the art. Beginners typically choose narrow mat borders, thinking that a wider border might overwhelm the art. In fact, the opposite is often true, as narrow borders become stripes that can distract the viewer from focusing on the art.

In museums, very large mats are used, even on small pieces of art, to showcase the art itself. This style is frequently adopted when framing fine art for homes and offices. At first, these wide mat borders may look over-sized, but as picture framers gain more experience, they usually start to prefer wider mats.



## Wider Bottom Border

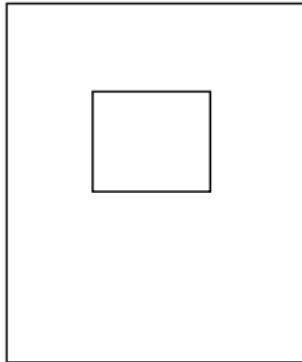
One traditional matting proportion is a wider bottom border. The top and sides are one size, and the bottom is either slightly wider or may be as much as several inches wider. There are a variety of theories about why this proportion is appealing to the human eye, including elements like gravity and natural proportions.

For picture framing purposes it is enough to know that a heavier bottom mat border provides a comfortable balance for many viewers. It is commonly used on fine art and photography and is often seen in museums.

Look at the examples on this page, and notice the differences created by adjusting the width of the borders. Experiment with wider mats, especially in neutral colours.

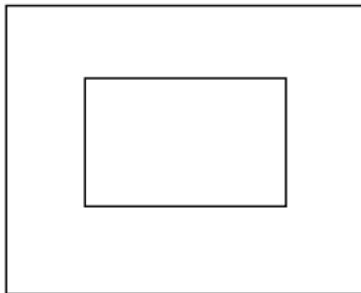
See <https://www.logangraphic.com/learning-center/complete-picture-framing-guide/index.php> for some great guidance.

## Popular Mat Styles



### Museum Mat

Typically white, black or pale neutral colours. The art is often placed in the upper area leaving a very large lower margin. Often museums use this style when mounting a collection of different size pieces using frames of uniform size. Especially suitable on small images.



### Weighted Bottom Mat

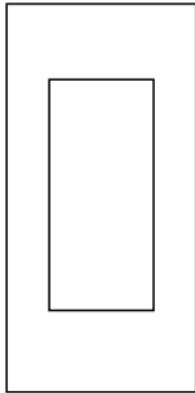
Equal borders on the top and sides, extra width on bottom border. The amount of weight may be slight or moderate, appearing balanced when viewed. Whether rooted in the Victorian tradition of hanging pictures very high on the wall, or in response to a natural visual preference for a solid base, this style is an attractive design option for both traditional and contemporary art.



## Popular Mat Styles

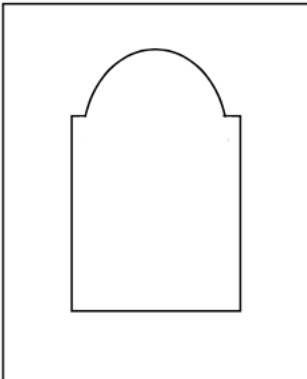
### Oriental Style Mat

A traditional oriental proportion based on the proportions of paintings done on scrolls. Used both vertically and horizontally depending on the artwork. To mimic scroll proportions, the narrow sides are one third or less than the width of the wider sides.



### Roman/Gothic Mat

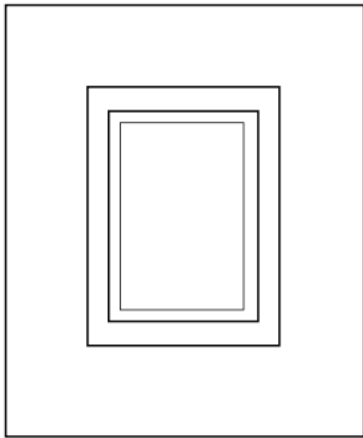
This arched design conveys a feeling of tradition, antiquity, and romance. Suitable on Renaissance prints, wedding, and ancestral photos. For visual balance, a bit less matting is used on the top than on the sides and bottom. The rounded arch is Roman; the pointed is Gothic.



## Popular Mat Styles

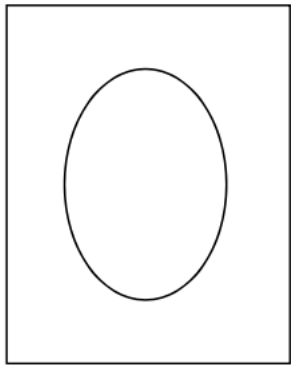
### French Mat

This traditional style, also called wash panels, is created with subtle-coloured painted panels and a series of ink lines. Frequently used on 19th-century etchings and watercolours, French matting can bring an air of refinement to traditional reproductions as well. For the best visual balance, keep the decorative elements within the first third of mat width from the mat opening.



### Spandrel Mat

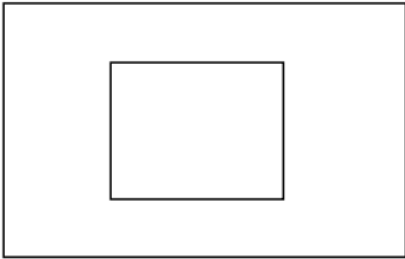
An oval or circle within a rectangle or square is called a spandrel. The curve of a mat opening can give elegance, dignity, and grace to a design. Because oval and circle openings invite central focus, they are especially suited to art which is featured in the centre such as vignettes, portraits and sketches.



## Popular Mat Styles

### PRINT MAT

Often this design is used to accommodate the size of the artist's printmaking paper. To preserve the value of original art on paper, the paper should not be cut or altered in any way. If the painting, print, drawing, etc. is done on a large sheet of paper, matting can cover the excess "carrier sheet."



### DECORATED MATS

Decorative corners, hand-cut designs, rubber stamping, dry transfer designs and ink lines can all be used to decorate mats. The decoration should be placed within the first third of the mat border next to the window opening.

