

Creating a Finished Canvas Print

Kamloops Photo Arts Club

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Overview

- Linda McRae started showing and selling her photography work as fine art in 2004. Around 2006, she ventured into presenting her work on stretched canvases. This document (with demonstration at the meeting) provides high-level information about the stretched canvas creation process.
- Of course, you could save yourself some effort and get a framing shop to do it.

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Tools and Materials

- Your printed canvas
 - see “Image considerations” for more information
- Stretcher bars
 - Available in different lengths; you need to buy 4 pieces (for example, for an 8x10 canvas, buy two 8” lengths and two 10” lengths)
 - Available in different depths: 3/4” and 1.5”
 - Use a mallet and square or tape measure to ensure the assembled frame is square at the corners
- Ruler, cutting mat, and Exacto knife
 - trim away excess canvas
- Protective coating– spray on or roll-on
 - If using roll-on, you also need
 - 2 high-density foam rollers and matching size tray; one to apply, the other (dry to remove excess); for larger prints use a larger roller
 - a sheet of foamcore to use as working surface (do not use corrugated cardboard as the ridges will appear in the coating)
- Canvas pliers
 - different “grades” are available
- Staple gun and staples
- Hanging hardware – wire, rings, and screws
- Screw driver (manual or powered (preferred))
- Artist label (your artist statement/bio)

Image considerations

- Before you print your canvas, consider the finished look you want
 - Colored sides (for example, black)
 - White sides (no border)
 - Mirror wrap (image appears to continue around the frame to the back)
 - Thickness (depth from wall approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ " or 1.5")
- Do the necessary preparation on your digital file before printing it
- Or... If the canvas will be printed by a print supplier (for example, London Drugs), ask if they can do this preparation for you
- **TIP:** OnOne Software's Perfect Resize can automatically create the mirror wrap edge for you by selecting a check box (or something like that); How cool is that!!



Timing

- Work backwards from your deadline (for example, exhibition start date)
 - 1 to 3 weeks shipping if ordering any materials (online or in-store)
 - 2 to 5 days (??) for your print supplier to deliver printed product
 - 24 hours to allow printed canvas to cure
 - ½ hour to trim your canvas (or less)
 - ½ to 1 hour to apply the protective coating (more time may be required for drying between coats)
 - 24 hours to allow the protective coating to cure
 - ½ hour to stretch your canvas (or less if you are really comfortable with the process)
- Don't leave everything to the last week before your exhibition to get started!

Protective coating

- Eco Print Shield by Premier Imaging Products
 - Satin, Matte, or Glossy, available by the quart or gallon
 - Water-based, easy cleanup, no offensive odor
 - **ATTENTION:** Water-based! Do not use on inkjet prints that are NOT waterproof. Will cause water-based images to run. If you are in doubt, print a small 4x6 print, and then drop water on it. If the print remains undamaged, it is safe to use Eco Print Shield.
 - mix 80% Eco Print Shield with 20% water
 - Apply with roller or spray gun
 - If rolling on, apply with “tight-weave” foam roller; tight weave is more expensive than looser weave, but gives better results; the looser weave foam can create bubbles during the rolling process
 - Use one roller to apply; the other (dry roller) if necessary, to remove excess
 - Get it from vistek.ca; the online product description links to excellent YouTube videos that show how to apply it with a roller, and suggestions on when to use glossy, matte, or satin
- Krylon PreservIt
 - Satin or Gloss in aerosol can
 - fumes, so must be applied in a well-ventilated area
 - Safe to use on inkjet prints that are printed with inks that are NOT water-proof.
- Regardless of which you choose
 - apply at room temperature (that is, not outside in the winter!!)
 - Spray or roll in even sweeps beyond the edge of the printed surface; do not stop spraying in mid-sweep
 - For roll-on, allow to dry before applying the next coat
 - Turn the print 90 degrees and repeat
 - When dry, check the surface of the print against your light source for even-ness; if you notice an uneven look on the surface, reapply;
- I highly-prefer/recommend the roll-on method, for ease of application and quality after application. Mistakes during the roll-on process are more forgiving.
- **TIP:** Practice the spraying or rolling technique on a scrap until you feel comfortable with the process.

Assembling the canvas

- Assemble the stretcher bars
 - Labels all on same side
 - Tap with mallet against the corner of a door frame until the frame is square at the corners; test with a contractor's square, or use a tape measure to measure diagonally from corner to opposite corner
- Trim excess material from the canvas; measure and mark on the back of the canvas
 - I like to leave about ½" of blank canvas beyond the image edge (depending on amount of room on the back of the canvas frame)
- Verify the placement of the image on the front of the canvas frame, then apply a staple in the center of the longest side on the back of the canvas frame
- This YouTube video provides an excellent demonstration for stretching and folding the corners on a painted canvas (google "how to stretch a canvas" for more):
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QkToBRa-O-U>
- **IMPORTANT:** If your image has straight lines that mirror-wrap around the frame, or you chose a non-border or bordered edge that wraps around, keep verifying the placement of your image on the frame and adjust accordingly
- Apply your hanging hardware and your artist label
 - For the artist label, I print my own, affix to stiff board (like mat board) and then staple that to the back of the frame.

Suppliers

- Trends Art & Frame (1302 Battle Street, Kamloops)
- Opus Art Supplies (Vancouver, Victoria, Kelowna)
 - <http://opusartsupplies.com/>
- Currys (Ontario)
 - <https://www.currys.com/default.htm>
- Michaels (next to Walmart in Kamloops)
- Vistek.ca

Prices

- Eco Print Shield (roll-on protective coating): \$39.99 per quart, or \$139.95 per gallon, plus shipping and tax; expensive, but worth it!
 - <http://www.vistek.ca/search/Eco%20Print%20Shield.aspx>
- Krylon PreservIt (spray protective coating): \$6 to \$11 per can (depending on where you buy it; I think it's cheaper at Michaels); recommended for small pieces only (11x14 or smaller); its harder to spray evenly on larger pieces
- Canvas pliers: \$19 to \$132
 - More expensive = heavy duty for the artist who stretches many canvases
 - Look at the jaws and consider whether you want a textured jaw versus rubber coated jaw; I prefer the rubber coated to reduce the risk of damage to delicate inkjet prints
- Stretcher bars
 - each side purchased singly, or in sets of 2; price is based on length and depth
 - Examples for $\frac{3}{4}$ " depth (all 4 pieces):
 - 8x10 < \$5 from Trends Art & Frame
 - 16x20: \$8.80
 - 18x24: 10.00
 - 24x30: \$14.40
- Hanging wire: \$60 for \$280 yards (2011 price at Trends Art & Frame; it's plastic coated, really nice, does not fray and cut the fingers like braided wire can)
- D-rings and screws: buy these in bulk from art suppliers (like Currys or Opus); in Kamloops, ask for them at Trends Art & Frame
- If you choose NOT to do it yourself: professional canvas stretching by Trends Art & Frame as at Feb 14, 2012 (includes stretcher bars, labor, and tax):
 - 8x10: \$20.75
 - 11x14: \$25.20
 - 16x20: \$35.20
 - 24x30: \$46.20