

Preparing Images for Competition

Before Printing

Ensure you're presenting the best version of your image that you're capable of producing. Crop for best composition. Don't crop too tightly. Allow for loss at the edge of the print behind the mat.

Straighten horizon.

Remove sensor dust spots.

Where possible/allowed remove or minimise distractions eg. bright spots in background. Check brightness and contrast (and be aware of how they may show differently in a print compared with screen).

Select paper to suit the image – matte, satin, gloss, metallic. Different images suit different papers and can give your image a totally different look. However, if you don't wish to experiment, stick with a semi gloss/satin look which gives reasonable results with most images.

Printing

If you have a decent photo printer to print your own have it correctly calibrated and use paper colour profiles. Print a small test shot if you're unsure and make adjustments before making a large print.

If printing at a retail outlet learn to use the photo kiosk software to adjust contrast, brightness, colour etc. Run a small test print and make adjustments if needed before printing to a larger size. Record the adjustments required to make the image look the same in your print as it did on your screen at home. The same adjustments should apply next time.

If printing at a professional outlet consult with the assistant to get the best outcome from your image file.

Matting

There are several good reasons to mount your images using mat board.

1. To frame the image without distractions and draw the viewers eye
2. To keep the print flat so that light falls on it evenly
3. To protect the image from fingerprints, clip marks etc.
4. To make it easier to handle
5. The mat colour can be selected to enhance the image

Buy pre-cut mats and print your images to fit OR (preferable) have mats cut to fit your prints. I allow only about 5mm all round ie. my print is 10mm wider and higher than the window.

(At Crazy Roys, 1255 South Road St. Mary's, pre-cut mats are available from around \$2 and custom cut mats are around \$7 - \$10.)

I have my mats custom cut to suit prints made on A4 or A3 paper, but have some shallower or narrower to suit different aspect ratios, including square.

I generally have mats cut 5cm wide all around which allows the mat to be used in either portrait or landscape format. (You can have a trim line cut in to make it more decorative BUT this won't be accepted in SAPF Annual Exhibition.)

Buy light weight white cardboard to use as a backing sheet/protective flap and a good quality masking tape.

Run masking tape around the edge of the window on the back of the mat and more around the outer edge, or use a wide tape to cover both areas. Cut the light cardboard to cover the window and allow ample room for the print, but smaller than the outside of the mat. Run tape around the outside edge of the back of this piece of cardboard. (Then it can be repeatedly taped over and removed without damaging the card.)

Tape the cardboard on one edge (the top) so that it will form a flap over the print.

Place a small piece of tape behind the top of the print, facing up, and place the mat over the photo, carefully lining it up- so that it is straight and no white edges show. Press down to tape it in place. Turn the mat and image over and run tape the length of that top side to hold the image in place. Do not tape the other three sides. Allow the print to hang from the top so that it doesn't develop "pull marks".

Close the flap over the print and tape IT down right along all three remaining sides. These tapes should only touch tape on both the thin cardboard and the mat itself. Then they can be removed without causing any damage.

Place another piece of tape across the top, over existing tape, to write a label for your print. This can then also be removed easily without damaging or leaving writing on your mat. The print can remain in the mat for several months before the tape may loosen and it can cope with being handled multiple times eg. being sorted, judged, hung for several exhibitions in a row etc. However, this is NOT a permanent framing method!

Using this method the mat can be reused many times.

To remove a print just remove the label, take off the three sides of tape on the flap, remove the print and carefully peel the tape from it.

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