

MASTERCLASS

Framing a canvas using L-shaped mouldings

By Jon Price GCF (APF)



Meet Jon - the latest framer to join the 4walls team of experts. Jon Price GCF(APF) runs Handmade Picture Framing & Gallery in Bude, Cornwall and we welcome his expertise and enthusiasm. For his first masterclass, which is one of six that are now featured on our website, Jon wanted to demonstrate ideas and techniques that most framers don't use every day, but easily could! This framing of a canvas using L-shaped mouldings includes a slight twist....

L-shaped mouldings offer a modern, stylish finish for paintings and prints on canvas. A finish that's simple but sophisticated and one which provides a strong contrast to traditional styles of canvas framing. The majority of modern works on canvas have images that continue around the sides of the stretched piece. Unlike traditional profiles, L-shaped mouldings enable such canvases to be framed with this part of the image displayed. This makes L-shapes a great alternative to stretched but unframed canvases, which look unfinished and a bit naff to me!

A wide frame on a canvas makes a statement and gives a picture presence. However, a wide moulding of the right colour isn't always available.

With an L-shaped moulding it's easy to place another frame on top and add width. Have a look at the finished piece. Not only does it look good, it's more bespoke and individual than your average frame, and the addition of the second moulding increases the job price and also, of course, the potential margin.

There's a lot going on in this vibrant canvas print. Therefore, I wanted to keep the frame modern and simple so as not to distract or detract from the artwork itself. Arqadia's Essential Float Moulding 61912700 was ideal, especially when I added the flat profile, 40mm wide 3346WH, which has the same painted finish. The 3346WH gives the finished frame substance and I love the little step between the two mouldings which adds detail and draws the viewer's eye into the picture. But, before I could start stacking mouldings, I needed to stretch the canvas.

Arqadia's Arrow-Head system is quick, easy and perfect for stretching open edition prints. With the image being relatively small, I decided not to wrap it around the side of the stretcher bars despite wanting a gap between the stretched canvas and the L-shape.

FIGURE 1



Place the stretched canvas onto the L-shape and decide how much gap you would like. Too much gap means there is not enough overlap between the canvas and moulding to easily join the two together. Too little and the gap becomes a dust trap. I aim for an overlap of at least 10mm. In this case, that meant a 15mm gap between the vertical of the L-shape and the side of the canvas.

FIGURE 2



For a 15mm gap on all sides of the canvas, cut the moulding 30mm longer than the canvas. Repeat on all four sides.

FIGURE 3



Once the frame has been glued and underpinned, fix the canvas in place. Pre-drill guide holes in to the back of the L-shape. In this case, the centre of the hole is 5mm from the inner edge. For a canvas of this size (300 x 400mm), four screws are sufficient. I centre each hole for a more professional finish.

Normally, I would attach the canvas at a later stage, after the second moulding has been assembled and attached. However, for the video, I really wanted to emphasise the difference that adding the second moulding makes. The most visually effective way to do this was to simply place it on top of the already assembled piece.

FIGURE 4



To centre the canvas and ensure an even space all round, I use off-cuts of backboard or mountboard as spacers.

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FIGURE 5



Screw in the screws. Obviously they need to be long enough to go through the moulding and well into the stretcher bars underneath.

FIGURE 6



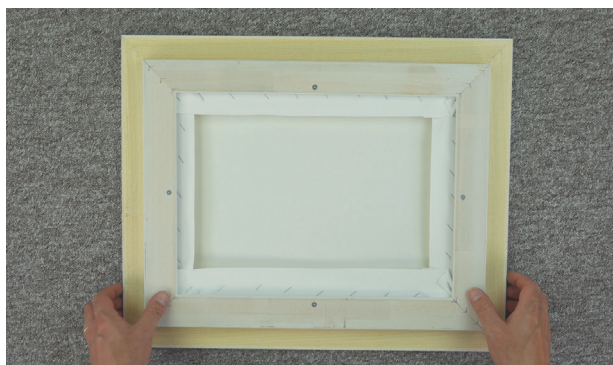
Remove the spacers. I take out the inner pieces first to minimise the risk of marking either canvas or moulding.

FIGURE 7



Cut the second moulding as close as possible to the outer size of the L-shape. Both mouldings were made of the same wood and have the same finish, so I didn't feel any need to leave space for one moulding to expand/contract at a different rate to the other. A tight fit also makes it easy to achieve an even space between the two mouldings when you join them.

FIGURE 8 AND FIGURE 9



Turn the whole thing over and join the two frames together. A Fletcher Multimaster makes this an easy job and gives a professional finish.

We framers don't stack mouldings often enough. It's effective, it's easy and it makes a frame unique. Different profiles of the same colour and finish or different colours of the same finish and profile make it simple, but all sorts of combinations work. In this case, we've given the L-shaped moulding added width, presence and detail without taking away from its simplicity or detracting from its modern clean look.

Jon is Cornwall's only Guild Certified Framer and a member of the Fine Art Trade Guild's Framing Standards and Qualifications Committee.

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Products used:

- Stretcher moulding 721500000
- L-shaped moulding 619127000
- Moulding 3346WH