

Using mount slips

By Jan Price GCF (APF)



00:06 Picture 1

I have to admit I feel very proud of the videos I helped to make for Larson-Juhl. It gives me a great sense of satisfaction every time I see the 'Jon Price Master Class Videos' heading on Larson-Juhl's website. However, there's also a little part of me that feels like a fraud. There I am showing the UK's framers how a wonderfully simple but effective technique such as using mount slips can enhance their everyday framing and increase their profits, when I know I'm not using the technique enough myself.

It's not that I don't believe in the message. I do. I really do. In my opinion, these techniques are simple and effective, and they add value to your framing, helping you to stand out from your competitors. You only have to watch the six videos to see how good the finished pieces look and how simple each technique is. It's just that, when I'm talking to a customer, I forget the range of design options that are available. Also, I don't want to overwhelm my customer with options.

One answer is to have lots of examples of different framing options on display and see what the customer is drawn too. Miniature examples are good if, like me, you don't have much space. An organised file of photographs of previously framed pieces is another good idea but these have to be sought through to find inspiration. I need something right there in front of me and my customer shouting: "Pick me, choose me, I'd work really well with that picture".

There are a wide range of mount slips available in all different shapes, colours and sizes. For this particular piece, I chose Larson-Juhl's Confetti range where the mount slip's colour and finish match that of three different sizes of square profiled mouldings. My choice was made easy by the provision of great art work. The purples and blues of the image are obviously the most dominant so it didn't take much playing around with the Confetti range to see that the purple 140639 moulding and 115639 mount slip matched the image perfectly and would really enhance the picture. I did consider the deeper, wider 150639000 moulding in the same range but thought it might be too much and so erred on the side of caution.

Bold, strong, vibrant images like this abstract flower design are always fun to frame, especially when you have free rein. Strong images mean you can often use strong colours, like those in the confetti range, without overwhelming the picture. Many talented framers believe that good framing should complement and enhance a picture to the extent that the framing itself goes unnoticed. Rightly or wrongly, I disagree. Of course, I want my framing to enhance and complement but I also want it to be striking. A picture that's not easily overwhelmed makes that an easier task!

Once you've decided on the size and proportions of the window mount, cut it accordingly. Then mitre the mount slip to fit the inner edges of the window aperture. I find the only way to get these really accurate is to cut each piece slightly too long and then trim them, bit by bit, until they are exactly the right length.



00:10 Picture 2



& 00:27 Picture 3

With the window mount face down, place the four cut pieces of mount slip into position along the sides of the window aperture. To assist me, I use offcuts of mountboard to create a double step under the window mount. The highest step, which doesn't extend in to the window aperture, holds the mount up leaving space for the slip to be positioned. The lower step, which does extend in to the aperture space, supports the slip while I fix it in to position. Have a look at picture 3 (00:27) and this should make sense.



00:22 Picture 4

Cut four pieces of gummed paper tape (999000026) about 5 centimetres longer than each piece of mount slip. Wet a piece of the tape, using deionised water, and stick it along the mount slip. Make sure all the wood of the mount slip is covered by the tape - the wood is acidic and the pH neutral tape will help protect the artwork. Whilst doing this make sure that you don't move the mount slip out of position, and that you allow enough extra tape to generously overlap on the mount board.



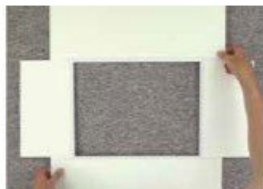
00:16 Picture 5



& 00:17 Picture 6

While the tape is still wet, attach it to the mount board. Run your thumb over the tape along the outer edge of mount slip a few times working downwards with each

stroke. The first stroke creates a crease along the edge of the mount slip. The second stroke smoothly folds the tape down so that it attaches to the vertical outer edge of the mount slip. The third stroke, using the tip of the thumb, pushes the tape right into the bottom right angle where slip meets board and the final couple of strokes secure the tape to the mount board. This 'S' shape means there is no 'bridging' between the mount and mount slip and therefore gives a stronger fixing. Slice the tape at either end of the mount slip and stick the loose ends down (see picture 6) before securing the next section of mount slip.



00:37 Picture 7



& 00:40 Picture 8

Once the mount slips are secured into position you'll find they are about 5mm thicker than the window. They therefore create a gap between the window mount and the artwork. This gap needs to be filled in order to support both the artwork and the mount properly. Fill the gap with foam board or layers of mount board. The layers need to stack up to either the same depth as the gap or slightly thicker and need to be of a material that matches the required level of conservation. 5mm foam board is a perfect thickness for the Confetti mount slips. You can cut these fillers to the correct width even before securing the mount slips in place. However, I find it easier to trim the outside to the same size as the window mount after they've been glued in to position (Picture 8). Glue them in to place using an ATG tape gun (tape 999000056) or PVA glue if you prefer.



Cut a piece of under mount (1111008950) to the same external size as the window mount. Place the window mount face down with the longest side butted up to the longest side of the under mount. This should be the top edge for landscape mounts or the left for portrait mounts. The under mount needs to be raised to sit at the same height as the window mount whilst the two are hinged together. To do this place layers of foam board or mount board under the under mount until it sits at the same height as the window mount. Cut a piece of gummed tape a few millimetres shorter than the length of the join. Dampen it with deionised water using a brush or sponge and then place the tape over the butted joint smoothing from top to bottom and applying a little pressure with your fingers. Some people prefer to hinge mounts with a linen tape but I find it doesn't adhere as well as white gummed or cotton rag tape. Leave the hinge to dry for a few minutes and then fold the window and under mounts together along the hinge to form a 'book'. Ensure the window and under mount sit together properly with their edges aligned - I like a well formed mount hinge (who doesn't?) and like to run my hand along the hinged edge after folding, applying a little pressure.



00:51 Picture 10

The usual way to attach artwork on paper in to a window mount package is with T-hinges. For framing at Fine Art Trade Guild 'Commended' & 'Conservation' levels I generally use Larson-Juhl white gummed paper tape (999000056), however the type of tape used and the number of hinges depends on the weight of the paper and the conservation level the artwork is being framed to. In this case two hinges of white gummed paper tape (999000026) were used.

To make a T-hinge cut a 30mm (or longer) piece of the gummed paper tape. Dampen the end 5mm (of the gummed side!) using deionised water and a clean brush. Attach the 5mm of dampened tape to the underside of the top edge of the artwork a quarter of the way in from one side. Apply gentle pressure by smoothing it down your finger. Repeat with a second piece of tape on the opposite end of the underside of the artwork. These two pieces of tape are the uprights of the capital 'T' of the two T-hinges.



01:01 Picture 11

Place the artwork into the hinged window mount package and carefully adjust it so it sits in the right position. Place a paper weight in the centre of the image to hold off the artwork in place. Open up the window mount and secure the artwork by dampening two 75mm long pieces of gummed paper tape and placing them across the T-hinge uprights that you've already attached to the artwork. These are the cross pieces of the T's and there should be a few millimetres gap between them and the top edge of the artwork. This gap allows the artwork to expand and contract. Let this dry for a few minutes and then close the mount package.

Finally, cut a back board (999110000) and glazing. I used Larson-Juhl Clarity AR-99 (CLF080110) which is both anti-reflective and offers 99% UV protection, so it looks great and offers as much protection from fading as possible. The mount package, glazing and backboard should always be a couple of millimetres smaller than the frame to allow for expansion.

Once you've cleaned the glazing and brushed off the mount and backboard, place them into the cut and joined frame. Secure with framers points (999000084) and brown gummed paper tape.

Now you've seen both the finished article and the process involved, I hope you'll agree that as well as looking great mount slips are also simple to use. Just consider for a minute how much more appealing this picture is than if it were framed in exactly the same way minus the mount slips. I find it incredible just how much difference the mount slips make. Now I've just got to remember to offer them to my customers.

Jon Price is Cornwall's only Guild Certified Framers and a member of the Fine Art Trade Guild's Framing Standards and Qualifications Committee. His recent exploits include framing 50 artworks for an exhibition of M.F. Husain's work at Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art in Qatar.

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