



Schools & Studios

By: DiAnna E. Tindell

DiAnna founded Tindell's Restoration Schools & Studios in Nashville, Tennessee. It is very broad scoped & has expertise in many fields to offer the best of each for restoration services. DiAnna is a member of many international groups & serves actively at regional & annual events. DiAnna has expertise from a Score of years training internationally and has taught many talented students in areas such as Graphic Art & Paper Conservation, Oil Painting & Frames, Crystal & Glass, Pottery, Porcelain, Marble, and many other Mixed Media types. She has restored many objects for museums and rare collections. She is a published columnist in many antique trade papers & magazines and has authored books on restoration. Tindell's Restoration has been featured on HGTV and other educational programs. Her website is a library of useful information & time well spent to view at: www.TindellsRestorationSchools.com.

Note: The following article was co-authored with the assistance of Paul M. Howard. DiAnna will be demonstrating at the CPPC 2017 Workshop in April 2017. Full details within this publication.

History and Purpose of Mats - Article #3 in Framing Series

Framing is an art form unto itself, and that includes the mat process that is often involved. It can be very crucial to execute proper matting in order to make your piece as good as it can be. Especially if you do it for a business, as you want your quality to be the best of the best. Mats come in a variety of styles, colors, thicknesses, and textures. They also come in two primary kinds: basic and conservation. The purposes for mats in framing are for protection and presentation.

In the picture framing industry, a **mat** (or **mount** in British English) is a thin flat piece of paper-based material included within a picture frame, which serves as additional decoration and to perform several other, more practical functions, such as separating the art from the glass. Putting mats in a frame is called **matting**, a term which can also usually be used interchangeably with **mat**.



Mat decoration originated as the artists desire to set their work apart, to direct the eye to the image. It may have started as a simple line etched or engraved into the plate and then progressed to elaborate, eye catching borders.

ity. The earliest type of mat would most likely have been of wood, made as part of the frame. It would have been decorated or at least gilded. Mats then separated from the frame and were paper covered wood frames. The first window mats were single sheets of paper. The first cardboard dates from the industrial revolution in the early 19th century. The cardboard was hand-covered with artists paper by the framer. The late 19th century saw the introduction of ready to use mat board. Framing as we know it had arrived.

It wasn't until after World War II that mats became more versatile in variety and quality. In the 1960's and 1970's, acid-free mat boards were created, as framers noticed terrible damage to the artwork over time. From that point on, the quality and variety of mats increased exponentially, and today you have seemingly too many options. So where to begin?



Well, if you have an eye for art and design, which you probably would if you're involved in framing, then you should be just fine in knowing what mats to use and when. If you're correcting or restoring a piece or making a "fit", you'll replace the mat the same way it was more often than not. If you are framing a piece from scratch, and it's up to you to make the decision on mat style and color, you'll want to consider the color scheme going on in the piece. Often neutral colors related to the piece are a safe bet, and the more you work with mats, the more comfortable you'll be trying out new methods and styles.

There are several types of mat board you'll find yourself using. Several categories of mat board are separated by the level of protection offered the art work or artifact being framed. While some say that acid-free framing mat

