



TIMELESS FABRIC DESIGNS

By Tim Franer

Successful custom framing retailers emphasize the unique and personal nature of what they're offering to their customers. Few things will help you customize your framing more than using fabric in your designs. It vastly expands the palette of creative possibilities and often leads to framing that is every bit as original as the artwork it is designed to enhance.

Fabric yardage not only offers a framer a rich array of colors and textures, but it also offers customers a value that is immediately apparent. Selling such designs is one of the most effective ways to counter the priced-based appeal of mass merchandisers; and there is no better way to personalize a job than to include a fabric-wrapped mat or liner in your design.

With the latest technological advances, there are now unlimited options when ordering continuous liners. You can, for example, order panel liners with circular or oval shaped openings, liners with arches, and liners with multiple openings. You can have them sent raw, primed, or covered with an unlimited variety of fabrics. They are available in shapes and configurations up to 49" x 97" and in board thickness of ¼", ⅜", ½", and ⅝". These examples aim to encourage you to expand your creative arsenal by applying various fabrics using a continuous fabric technique.

COLOR AND DIMENSION

In the first design shown on page 29, a trio of hand-colored fish etchings were placed behind three

rounded corner windows. The design and layout were determined from both the subject matter and where the piece was going to be displayed (inside a recessed off-white, painted-block panel above a large mantel in a man's trophy room). The room had several mounted trophies, which created a feeling of nature and wildlife with a spacious atmosphere. The room's overall colors, finishes, and textures were neutral in tone.

For this layout, I chose a ⅜" thick Ultralight LDF panel liner, 19" x 54" with three 9" x 12" round radius window openings. Each window opening had a deep bull-nose bevel cut to help create dimension. The layout dimensions for the three-opening panel liner were laid out to fit inside the recessed block panel above the large mantel. Instead of using square corners in each window opening, a bull-nose, deep-rounded corner bevel was chosen. Designing with rounded corners typically adds a nautical look or feeling to the presentation.

Each hand-colored etching has a dominant brown tone, which lent itself nicely to a dark brown fabric. The dark brown suede that was chosen created a contrast between the cream-colored background of the art and the fabric, drawing the eye inward to the artwork. The suede also enhanced the three-opening panel liner because of its rich, smooth fabric texture and stretching ability when covering the round corner and depth of each opening. A Flexible Fillet placed inside the bevel provided definition between the brown



(Top) Dark brown, suede fabric creates a contrast with the cream-colored background of the artwork, drawing the eye inward.

(Bottom left) Front view of the primed panel liner shows the rounded corners with bull-nose bevels and two rods underneath to raise the panel off the table for fabric application. Miracle Muck adhesive was applied to the panel liner using a sponge roller.

(Bottom right) The back view of the panel liner shows the fabric application process. After fabric has been applied to the front, the center of each window is cut, wrapped around the bevel, and glued to the back.



(Top) In this design, fabric highlights a collection of hand-carved stone musicians, adding texture and richness to a three-dimensional design.

(Bottom, from left) Silk fabric was applied in a horizontal format with fabric adhesive; each carved stone musician was glued to a hand-covered fabric wood to give a true three-dimensional look without getting lost in the opening; the stone musicians were then glued to a linen-covered backing.





This frame design encompasses many customized components, such as a hand-crafted, rounded frame and mat window openings, elegant gold leaf moulding, and continuous, hand-covered silk fabric with Flexible Fillet enhancements.

The back of the inner wood liner shows where the flexible silk fabric-covered fillet was placed around each rounded corner. To achieve the rounded effect, small sections were spliced together. Keeping designs simple and creating focus are among the most important elements you can use when designing a frame like this one.



mat and the cream-colored artwork.

Adding dimension to the art and fabric-covered flat panel liner was important to help it tie in with the spacious trophy room setting. A 20" x 54" x 4 ½" Bourbon Tabacchino Collection frame from Roma was selected for its unique antique finish, preserving the warmth and beauty of the pure olive veneer. A smooth transition liner was placed to give dimension to the overall presentation.

FRAME, FABRIC, AND LINER

For the above design, I chose a Divina frame from Roma in Raven Black. The ornate, handcrafted frame was selected for its style and finish. The swan shape profile provides a deep rabbet that will house glazing, artwork, and backing boards. What is unique about the profile's shape, style, and color is that the pattern of the profile complements the bird's black feathers, with the black raven satin finish matching the subject matter. The top edge of the profile's gold leaf ornamentation creates a very upscale appearance that brings out the true richness of the piece. Two ultralight wooden liners were designed and primed for this project.

Each inside liner corner was rounded with a radius parallel to the outer frame curve and primed with white gesso to seal the wood from contamination or unexpected bleed through. A silk fabric from Frank's

Fabric (FE-2176) was applied to both liners. The silk was glued with Frank's Fabric Glue and applied in a vertical direction.

To give the design a customized look, a Flexible Fillet was applied to both liners. The inner liner Flexible Fillet was covered with the same silk as the liner silk and, for the outer liner Flexible Fillet, a Chinese Red Cotton (FE-2401) was used. The Chinese Red Flexible Fillet was selected to coordinate and accent the subject. Each component plays an important role in the design. The frame is narrower than the liners, which are large enough to give the artwork ample breathing room. Using two liners creates a dimensional effect that adds to the overall custom look. The fillet components give this piece an added touch of customization.

I encourage you to employ the timeless appeal of fabric-wrapped matting in more of your framing consultations. Your customers will be impressed! **PFM**



Tim Franer

Tim has framed artwork for heads of state, corporations, galleries, and fine homes across the globe for more than 40 years. Known for his creative design and skilled craftsmanship, he is an authority on art and design, consults with industry leaders to define color and design standards, and is a speaker and educator on art, design, and framing. Tim leads seminars and workshops worldwide, including The National Conference in Las Vegas. A former gallery owner, Tim has worked as senior design and market development manager for Tru Vue and as development design manager for Nielsen Bainbridge. He owns Tim Franer & Company and is a regular contributor to PFM.