

Notes from Max Doerner & Jacques Maroger

THE MOUNTING OF THE CANVAS.

Objective

By the end of this short tutorial, you should have a firm grasp on what types of stretcher bars you should use, and how to mount your canvas to the bars.

Key points

1. What to Be Aware of When Purchasing Stretcher Bars
2. Putting the Stretch Bars Together
3. Laying You Linen in the Proper Direction
4. Centering the Canvas With a Tape Measure
5. Mounting the Canvas
6. Stretching the Canvas
7. How to Handle the Corners

Materials

1. Canvass Pliers
 2. Hammer
 3. Linen
 4. Pencil
 5. Razor Blad
 6. Square
 7. Stretcher Bars
 8. Tacks
 9. Tape Measure
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1. What to be aware of when purchasing stretcher bars
 1. In order to prepare a canvas for painting it must be mounted on a stretcher. In doing this one must take care that the threads run parallel with the stretcher bars.
 2. The frame must be well beveled on the inside so that the inner margins cannot press through the canvas; otherwise damage may result which will be difficult to repair.
 3. The frame must be joined together at right angles, the accuracy of which can be determined by applying a right-angle to the corners.
 4. One must also take care that in the stretching of the canvas the frame does not lose its proper alignment. By paying attention to these apparently unimportant details one will save oneself much annoyance when the picture is later fitted into its frame.
 5. A stretcher should never be made of green wood, or it will shrink and the canvas become creased and out of shape.

6. With larger frames of a yard or more in dimensions a cross-brace should be inserted so that the frame will not warp under tension.
7. Stretcher bars come in various sizes. It is advisable to be familiar with standard frame sizes if you want to use standard pre-made frames.
8. I have found very practical, especially for sketching trips, the machine-made patent stretcher bars whose ends are all mitered alike so that individual pieces can be used to make different frames of varied proportions.
9. The joined stretcher is next laid on the canvas, which must be about 1 inch or greater for excess.
10. Larger on all sides, and fastened temporarily with a few thumbtacks, or tacks, on all four sides of the frame. ***I prefer to use copper carpet tacks. The steel carpet tacks can rust. Staples can bend if they go into a harder wood.*
11. With the canvas pliers, which should have a good grip, or with the hand, a middle section of the canvas is then pulled taut and even over one side and a short, broad-headed tack driven in, but not yet too firmly. [It is important that this be done on all four sides before proceeding further.
12. Still keeping within the span of the pliers, the next tack is then driven in [and this operation is again progressively carried out on all four sides of the stretcher).
13. While fastening the following tacks the canvas is given a slight pull with the hand or pliers toward the corner, so that folds are avoided.
14. With certain types of canvases which stretch unequally it is often necessary to give them a second tightening.
15. Therefore it is advisable not to drive in the tacks too firmly in the beginning.
16. The corners are now turned over, and somewhat longer nails are used here, since tacks do not hold well in the miters. If the tacks are to be withdrawn, a screwdriver is best used. ***I put hospital corners on the ends of my canvass, then trim to the stretcher bar.*