



Fine Art Trade Guild standards for mountboard (mat board) - a summary

The Fine Art Trade Guild's standards for mountboard are directed to the composition, combination and characteristics of paper and paper boards used in the framing of artwork, keepsakes and memorabilia. They help to give material categorisation of these to fit into the Guild's Five Levels of Framing.

Guild Member mountboard manufacturers and distributors **Arqadia, Crescent, Daler-Rowney, Great Art, James Cropper, LION, Nielsen Design, and Slater Harrison** (Colourmount) agreed in June 2004 to achieve compliance by January 2005. Mountboard needs to meet at least the Standard Board specification in order to be deemed to be suitable for professional framing. However, Standard Mountboard is only suitable for Commended, Budget and Minimum levels of framing. The quality of boards in this category vary greatly and framers should look closely at manufacturers' specifications as well as their product descriptions, to differentiate them. Some have 'conservation core and backing', but this does not raise them to Conservation level framing standard. They are not deemed suitable for collectable artwork, eg original paintings and limited edition prints of moderate to high value. It is a prerequisite that the type of surface and texture of any board purporting to meet Guild Standards be specified. If the surface is designed to accept decoration and embellishments, as in the case of most mountboard, it should be fit for the purpose (FACTS, USA, Test No. 6-97).

For Conservation level framing, mountboard that complies fully with the detailed specifications for Guild Conservation Board should be used, as a minimum. Cotton Museum Board is also acceptable for Conservation level framing but may be expensive for some jobs. Cotton Museum Board is the only standard of mountboard suitable for Museum level framing. Trade suppliers that have confirmed which of their products comply with the Guild standards can be viewed by clicking [here](#). The Guild accepts this. The boards should be clearly differentiated; if not, buyers are advised to check. There should no longer be ranges marketed as 'conservation' that contain mountboards with facing papers that bleed. There should no longer be misleading or confusing terminology. Where such things continue, please advise the Guild so that they can continue to improve compliance and clarity.

Note that some markets internationally do not make a distinction between Museum and Conservation Framing. In others, the terminology is reversed, with 'conservation framing' denoting a higher standard than 'museum'. The Guild Standards were developed primarily to satisfy the needs and expectations of the UK market, both trade and consumer. Used in conjunction with the Guild's Five Levels of Framing and with careful reference to the glossary for accurate interpretation of terminology, they can be used effectively worldwide.

The Guild identifies the following standard of mountboard:

- Cotton Museum Board
- Conservation Board
- Standard Mountboard

Mountboard suppliers able to certify their product meets the Guild Standards should contact the Guild if they wish them to be added to the listing. Email: info@fineart.co.uk