

TIMBER MATBOARDS

By Jodie Prymke, CGF

We all know about beautiful, old timber matboards, often seen surrounding antique sepia portraits and photographs. If they are in good condition, they can usually be brought back to life with a quick clean and a fresh layer of shellac. But how can we recreate the look if they are beyond repair; for example, bug- or water-damaged?

IMITATION TIMBER VENEER MATBOARDS

We are lucky these days to have so many different products available that are readily accessible from all over the world via the internet. One product I have used with success is timber-look wallpaper purchased on eBay, which can be seen in the example photo on page 34. For that piece, the wallpaper was dry-mounted onto a black, 4-ply 100-percent cotton rag matboard with dry mount tissue.

A domestic iron was used to fuse the dry mount tissue between the matboard and the wallpaper, with a piece of calico placed over the top of the wallpaper to prevent it from scorching and melting. The wallpaper is matchable across the width, so the size required is not an issue if you're framing a large piece of art. Once mounted and cooled, the matboard can be stained if you wish with any timber stain, then cut in the usual manner with the timber face down in your CMC. Remember to adjust the blade depth to 5-ply to allow for the thicker matboard.

GENUINE TIMBER VENEER MATBOARD

For smaller artworks, and if you're feeling adventurous with your design, why not try a genuine timber veneer matboard? You can offer your clients a genuinely one-off piece that simply exudes luxury. (Please note: this technique is not suitable for conservation work.)

There are many different timber veneers available by the sheet and length. Choose pieces which are relatively flat and thin; 0.5mm thickness or less. Prepare the veneer by taping the pieces together using removable tape. Tape

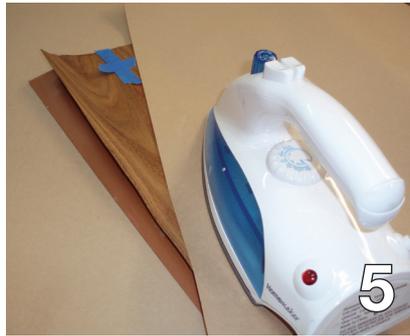
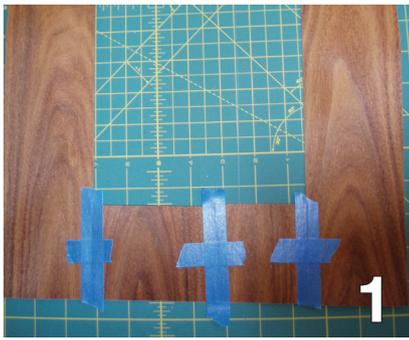


● *Reviving an antique timber mat or recreating the look of one with new materials (like the mat shown here) can turn your client's framed artwork into a standout piece. The frame and mat colors complement this black-and-white lemur artwork for a classic look.*

on the face of the veneer only. Make sure you allow at least 1" extra on the outside and the inside of the veneer, which will be trimmed later. Apply Titebond Wood Glue to the back of the taped veneer as well as the 100-percent cotton rag matboard to which it will be adhered. Wait until the glue is touch-dry, then glue the two pieces together using a heat press or a domestic iron with a piece of release paper over the top to protect the veneer. Set aside to dry thoroughly overnight.

Once completely dry, fill any gaps in the veneer with a color-matching wood filler. Timbermate is a non-shrinking, water-based wood filler that is available in an array of different timber colors. Sand the veneer until it is completely smooth and flaw-free. Wipe off any excess sawdust with a cloth and apply two or three layers of shellac to seal the timber. Allow to dry completely.

When the veneer is dry, the mat opening can be carefully cut on the CMC. Adjust the blade depth to allow for the extra thickness of the veneer covered matboard, which is now approximately the same thickness as a 6-ply board. Set the cutting speed to very slow—10 percent is recommended—and always remember to use a fresh blade. Place the matboard in the CMC face side down and cut from the back. Finally, trim the outside to size.



● (1) Prepare the veneer by taping the pieces together using removable tape. (2, 3, 4) Apply Titebond Wood Glue to the back of the taped veneer and rag mat, and wait until the glue is touch-dry. (5) Glue the two pieces together using a heat press or a domestic iron with a piece of release paper over the top to protect the veneer. (6) Once completely dry, fill any gaps in the veneer with a color-matching wood filler. (7) Sand the veneer until it is completely smooth and flaw-free. (8) Wipe off any excess sawdust with a cloth and apply two or three layers of shellac to seal the timber. (9) When the veneer is dry, the mat opening can be carefully cut on your CMC.



● Wallpaper that looks similar to a genuine timber matboard was dry-mounted to black rag mat for use with these larger artworks.

The timber veneer used in the framed example above is Macassar Ebony, which was glued onto a black 100-percent cotton rag matboard. An additional black rag mat was used as an inner mat (cut separately). The black-and-white lemur artwork is from “The Natural History of Madagascar” c.1885 by John G. Keulemans. The piece was finished with premium glazing and a spacer was used to separate the glass from the timber matboard. The frame is an olivewood veneer timber in black from Bellini Fine Mouldings. **PFM**



Jodie Prymke, CGF

Jodie is an international award-winning frame designer and PFGV Certified Guild Framer. Her boutique framing gallery, Jodie Prymke Fine Art Framing, in North Adelaide, South Australia, opened in March 2008. She specializes in unique frame designs, French matting, and frame restoration.