Making a Fabric-Covered Mount Board

Fabric-covered mount boards are used to support a variety of flat and three-dimensional textiles. They can be used horizontally, on a slant, and within a framing system, either with or without padding beneath the cover fabric. With a bit of ingenuity, you can add display windows to view the back of your textile.

- Block your textile to determine its maximum height and width. Add in the desired border width and calculate the final dimensions of the mount board. When framing a textile without a visible border, add ¼ inch to your maximum measurements to allow room for a spacer to sit on the board, rather than the textile.

- Cut an acid-free mat board to the dimensions determined in the previous step. Most small textiles require an 8-ply board (or two 4-ply boards connected with archival double-sided tape). For larger textiles, use one or two sheets of corrugated polypropylene or acid-free cardboard. Add a 2-ply acid-free board for a smoother face.

- Choose a washed cotton mounting fabric that has no stretch, such as muslin or poplin. The fabric should be about 1.5 inches larger than your board on all sides. Feather the edges of the fabric and iron any creases.

- Center the fabric on top of your board. Beginning with the middle of one side, place a pin every inch into the side of the board. Work outward toward the corners of the board, making sure that your fabric is on grain. Pin the middle of the opposite side before pinning the other two sides. The fabric should not pucker when you slide your hand over it, but not be so tight that the board appears cupped when you're done. Place the mounting board face-down.

- Prepare several 1-inch wide strips of 2.5 mL BEVA film. Take off the silicone-release paper backing and place a strip on two opposing sides of the back edge of the board. With a warm tacking iron, affix the strip to the board. Peel the silicone-release Mylar, fold the fabric over, and adhere with a warm tacking iron. Start at the center and work towards the corners, tensioning and pulling out pins as you progress. If the adhesive bleeds through to the top of the fabric, your iron is too warm or you are pressing too long. Trim the fabric to just beyond the adhesive if necessary. Adhere BEVA film onto the two remaining edges, covering the fabric at the corners. Adhere the remaining two sides, leaving the outer two inches at the corners unglued.

- The corners are finished with a box pleat. Fold the fabric at the corners into clean, right angles. Iron the fabric flat, making sure none goes past the outer edge of the board. Trim the fabric to just beyond the adhesive if necessary. Slip another square of BEVA film between the layers of fabric at each corner. Press once with the iron to adhere one side of the BEVA film; press again after removing the silicone-release cover with tweezers.