

4walls

the magazine for art & framing professionals

#11

MAL'S MASTERCLASS

Conserving antique textiles

NEW YEAR, NEW YOU

Business resolutions to kick-start 2014

Ben Riley

Pop Art with a modern makeover

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New Year, New You

FROM 4WALLS

A few winter warmers to welcome in 2014

Out with the old, and in with the new! 2014 is finally here, and it brings with it a sense of real optimism and enthusiasm for the many possibilities the next 12 months could hold for your business. Now is a time to both reflect on and learn from your past, but also look forward to a fruitful future. As ever, we're happy to help kick your New Year off with a bang.

In this issue of 4Walls, we will be celebrating those who have enjoyed continuing success in the face of adversity and learning some lessons in the art of diversifying your skills in order to carve out your own niche in the sector.

To help enhance your technical skills, we look at tackling those trickier shaped objects, take another masterclass on framing samplers with the superb

Mal Reynolds, and get some invaluable advice from our ever-helpful Ask the Experts panel.

We'll also be talking about the new era of pop art which has a real emphasis on the 'pop', whilst unveiling more about the musical influence behind Arqadia's new Intermezzo collection of mouldings.

Couple all this with the latest news and the best dates for your diary and you have another bumper issue of 4Walls – the perfect way to banish any January blues!

We really hope you enjoy your read and, as always, we'd love to hear your feedback and your own stories. In the meantime, let us take this opportunity to wish you a happy and prosperous 2014!

Pauline

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News



The Best of British - It's a family affair

The winner and runner-up of Arqadia's photography competition have been announced – they are Oliver Dixon and his father, Ian.



Arqadia launched its nationwide hunt for the photographs that best capture the essence of Britain, in April 2013. The winning image, by Oliver Dixon, who is a professional photographer, is a striking picture of Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament. His father, Ian Dixon GCF, is an expert framer and owns Ian Dixon Bespoke Framers in East Horsley, Surrey. He took second place with his image of vintage British fighter planes in flight.

Oliver said: "I am thrilled to have won Arqadia's Best of British Photography competition. I chose an iconic view of London as my entry. The Houses of Parliament seem so still and timeless and the lights of the traffic show the frenetic quality of the city. I was really pleased with this image so I'm glad the judges thought it was a winner! It was brilliant to have Dad in the running too – but obviously I am just a little pleased to have beaten him!"

Ian said: "I'm delighted that our photographs were so well received and I am very proud of Oliver's achievements – of course I taught him everything he knows! But he has taken it to the next level and rightfully deserves the top spot; I am really chuffed I managed to make the top ten, let alone runner-up."

Judged by Louise Hay from the Fine Art Trade Guild (FATG), Andy Cole from Arqadia, and Derek Poulston from One Vision Imaging, the winning submissions will be professionally framed and used by Arqadia's sales team during in-store promotional activity throughout the course of 2014.

The selected images will also be exhibited at the both the FATG awards event in May 2014 and Photokina in Cologne in September 2014. Oliver also takes away £250 worth of Arqadia products and Ian will receive a set of Larson Juhl corner chevrons.

Bob save the Queen

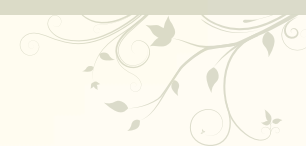
The Royal Chelsea Hospital, home of the Chelsea Pensioners, has completed a project to restore and preserve four portraits of the Royal family which hang in its Great Hall.

The individual signed portraits of King George, Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother and The Duke of Edinburgh are some 55 years old and had become significantly degraded over time. The RCH called on the services of photography expert Bob Hadley to undertake the restoration work. Each portrait required professional rebuilding and printing, as well as mounting, framing and preserving for posterity under museum-quality glass.

Arqadia donated the mouldings and mount board, while Tru Vue® provided the glass required for this prestigious project.



A symphony of style



For framing projects that offer traditional yet contemporary elegance this season, look no further than the new Intermezzo collection by Larson Juhl.

Wrapped with cherry veneers and embossed to heighten the unique finishes, Intermezzo has a polished wax lustre to bring added sophistication to any classic oil painting, photographic project, portrait or landscape, whether they are to be displayed in a traditional or a modern setting.

With a mix of traditional and more transitional profiles to offer real versatility for framers, the carefully selected modern shapes ensure that the Intermezzo collection maintains a broad appeal for customers. Here's how you can make it work in your projects.

- Because Intermezzo is available in a selection of walnut, mahogany and wenge, the collection makes a perfect match for more earthy artworks to create a subtle statement – think about working with matching mountsips to offer understated style.
- While you could look to complement the hues within the artwork to those featured in the mouldings, you might also consider accenting the profiles against strong primary-coloured art pieces to create striking stand-out for plainer walls.
- For a more contemporary edge, match dark shades of deep rebated mouldings with an equally deep mount in a contrasting colour. This works especially well to give smaller artwork an illusion of grandeur.
- To create a more modern look for a traditional certificate or formal document, utilise one of the transitional shaped profiles with a dark mountsip – this will provide a more dramatic focal point for any interior.



Did you know..?

Intermezzo is the term used for a piece of music which fits between other musical or dramatic entities, such as the acts of a play.



A legend in the making

Influenced by a love of popular culture, music and contemporary art, Ben Riley's rise as one of the country's most exciting new talents is very much a result of his dogged determination and commitment to creativity. It's a journey that has been far from smooth. For Ben, his success story is a cautionary tale of never giving up your dreams.

Less than a year ago, 32 year-old Ben Riley was close to considering leaving his art behind him in favour of a more stable career. Having spent much time selling a selection of his pop art prints online to make a living following university, Ben had begun to recognise that something needed to change if he ever wanted to gain the recognition for his art that he desired. Fast forward 12 months, and his unique take on iconic portraiture is so sought after, that he has commissions for his work coming in thicker and faster than he'd ever imagined.

"Since February 2013 I have sold over 190 of my pieces. Life has been a bit of a whirlwind! But it hasn't always been that easy to get myself seen.

"At school I struggled with the indifference of my teachers who did not understand what I was trying to achieve with my work. But thankfully I was never scared of experimenting with art, and I think that has been the key. I just needed to find the right outlet for my creativity and the right support from within the art community. That is just what I have managed to do. Whilst it's been a long road, now there's no looking back."

On the surface, Ben's signature style may not be immediately distinguishable from many other types of contemporary pop art. But on closer inspection, his thoughtful compositions shout complexity and innovation.

Made entirely of broken and crushed vinyl records, each piece of Ben's work depicts an iconic image of a musical legend that has been crafted on canvas, before being framed by a wide glossy moulding. It was a creative process born of trial and error, but perfected by his drive to create accessible artwork that lives and breathes a love of music.



He explains: "The idea came from when my father and I cleared some old 78 bacolite records from my grandfather's house. He had always been one of my biggest supporters so it seemed apt that I could use our shared love of music with our shared love of art.

"I have a fascination with the lines of faces and I've always been struck by the iconic images of the musicians we've all grown up with. I worked hard to devise a technique which would have real texture and feeling, and would bring these well loved portraits to life.

"Not everyone fully appreciated what I had created at first, and many local galleries in my native Staffordshire seemed wary that this kind of art would sell. But when someone suggested I try to get representation, I was lucky enough to tempt Ray from Buckinghamshire Fine Art to visit me, and finally everything fell into place.

"Buckinghamshire Fine Art (www.bucksfineart.com) understood me right away and has been incredibly supportive. The team has done an amazing job of ensuring my work is exhibited exactly where it will have its greatest impact, and could even advise on the framing I needed to ensure it accentuated my monochrome lines and dark edges. I now know that in every gallery my work hangs in, it will be respected by those who view it and will always look as I intended it to."

Despite having many a door closed on his ambition throughout his life, Ben is now adamant that he wants to use his success to help others realise their potential sooner.

"I'm doing brilliantly now. I have held sell-out exhibitions, and there is even talk of going to New York. But I realise that I have a lot to be grateful for, and without Ray and the team at Buckinghamshire Fine Art, these are opportunities I may never have had.

"I hope that my success continues, because I'd really like to give something back and launch a foundation to help other struggling artists. It's the kind of thing I wish had existed when I was younger. Having belief in yourself is one thing, but having it from other people is an entirely different matter. It's something that can make all the difference."

Did you know..?

A Velvet Underground record once sold for \$25,000, making it the priciest vinyl record ever bought.

The memory preserver



“My business is not about fashion, or trends or art. It's purely to do with what an object means to an individual,” says Peter Clevely of Picture Corner in Bedfordshire. Take inspiration from his very personal and creative approach to framing.

individual,” says Peter Clevely of Picture Corner in Bedfordshire. Take inspiration from his very personal and creative approach to framing.

Peter Clevely (GCF) is a true craftsman. A member of the Fine Art Trade Guild for over 20 years and three times winner of its coveted annual prize for framing, he runs his own business Picture Corner in Ampthill, Bedfordshire. He frames people's pictures, photographs and works of art for them, but his real speciality is framing and displaying unusual objects.

He said: “Before I had the shop, I worked from home and a guy knocked on my door with a shoe box. He said: “scuse me mate do you think you could frame this for me?” It was a six inch black scorpion, which he assured me was dead. That really gave me the ‘bug’ for creative framing.

“Since then I’ve had hundreds of objects, keepsakes and mementos presented to me with customers asking me to find a solution to displaying them. I’ve framed wedding rings and rusty nails from a listed cottage, as well as a shot putt and a torch from the 2012 Olympics. I won this year's award for framing a Rubik's Cube.

“My business is not about fashion, or trends or art. It's purely to do with what an object means to an individual and I deal with those pieces individually.

“One of the most moving moments was a retired lady who had been adopted as a child. She had gone on this journey to find her lost family and found out she had brothers she never knew. She found her mother who was still alive and very elderly. Her mother had given her a sapphire ring which I had been asked to display in a frame. I constructed a box frame and used fabric to line the box which matched the sapphire. It really set it off and made a spectacular piece. The lady

burst into tears when I showed her the finished product. She was so delighted. It still gives me goose bumps to know that I have preserved something so special for people.

“I am a precision engineer by training. I used to make tools and gauges until my interest in photography took me down this route. I suppose I have an eye for displaying things from a photographer's point of view and the technical know-how to solve an engineering problem, which means I can put my hand to most projects. And I do!

“I have basic ways of constructing a frame, but the detail and look of a finished piece comes from talking to a customer about what their object deserves. An antique piece wouldn't look its best set in cheap modern materials. I like to mix my media too – using fabrics to highlight colours for example, or using different materials like cork or waxed wood to line a box frame and enhance the object on display.

“Over the year's I've framed different objects for myself and I have these up on display near my till; they act as talking points or springboards for customers to get ideas about their own possessions. The piece that causes most interest is the one that won me my first Guild Award in 1996. I was an archer in my youth and I shot an arrow through another arrow into the centre spot on the target. I have framed this in a triangular box frame and used a circular cut piece of mountboard to recreate the target. It looks really dramatic and I get so many comments.

“I am a bit of a collector too. I love coins and over the years I have fiddled about framing them and displaying them. I love testing myself and working out – how can I do this? You can always think of several ways of doing something. So I have all these experimental pieces to show people, plus photos so customers can see what is possible.

“It's really important to show all the materials too. I have a display of different mountboards, box frames, and mouldings that I can use. It spurs people into thinking about what I could do for them.

“A lot of my work comes from recommendations and word of mouth as well as happy customers who keep coming back with different things for me to have a go at. It makes me proud and happy that I am framing people's history and stories. I am a preserver of memories.”



Peter's top tips for tackling unusual objects:

- Think outside the box!
- Don't be frightened to experiment
- Use a range of materials for different effects
- Work in partnership with your customer to get a feel for what they want
- It's all about the object – not the frame. The display and mount should enhance the artefact and show it at its best, not detract from the subject
- Have examples on display to inspire your customers and create talking points.

Mal's Masterclass

Antique Sampler

The diversity of textiles presents framers with a number of technical challenges as different forms require different framing solutions. The items need supporting and may require ‘squaring up’ without harming the original piece of work. Conservation framing materials and techniques, particularly where historic textiles are concerned, should also be used.

Here Mal Reynolds (GCF Adv) of Harlequin Frames takes you step by step through the process of framing an antique sampler. His useful advice and handy tips will help you to offer your customers a professional and decorative framing solution for their textiles, and one that will also offer the best practical solution to preventing deterioration and conserving the item for posterity.



Mal's Masterclass Antique Sampler

Your step-by-step framing guide



1 Cut conservation mountboard to size and use an artist's bone to dull the edges such that any sharp cut edges are removed and do not snag delicate fabrics.



2 Spread EVACON-R™ conservation adhesive on the board.



3 Attach quilters' cotton wadding which will provide extra support for the textile and strengthen stitching.



4 Trim to fit.



5 Take a piece of linen which has been washed to remove the size, then rinsed well in de-ionised water, dried and ironed. Trim the linen and fold around the padded mountboard.



6 Use T pins to secure the donor fabric (linen) to the sides of the mountboard being careful to align the warp and weft.



Top Tips

Always inspect the condition of the item thoroughly with the customer present, particularly if you're having to dismantle an old frame. Be exceptionally careful to ensure the textile will not fall apart and there are no insects or mould present. If it is a valuable item, ask them to sign written inspection notes.

Make a careful note of any damage. Look out for

colour runs, fraying and holes which may be present in older items. Also examine the fabric for rust marks which are evidence of it having been tacked onto a backing board. At this stage, consider if the customer needs to involve a textile conservator.

Old textiles can often be dirty or creased. Do not attempt to clean or iron the item; this should be the responsibility of the customer. Remember there is very little

that one can do to improve the aged appearance of antique fabric art.

Samplers and other forms of embroidery often have loose threads or travelling stitches on the reverse. These may be removed to improve appearance but as a general rule NEVER take scissors to a customer's work – that is their responsibility.

Many textiles incorporate surface embellishments such as beads and ribbons.

It's important to check these are secure and to choose a moulding with sufficient rebate depth to house the finished article.

Handle antique samplers as little as possible and with cotton gloves. Use conservation framing materials and techniques to preserve the item and to minimise further deterioration and fading.



7 Cut thread for lacing at an angle, pull it firmly through a beeswax block for ease when threading a blunt-nosed tapestry needle.



8 Start lacing on the longer side first regardless of whether the artefact is portrait or landscape. Begin at the top left and work along. Pull the thread through a bit at a time rather than having long looping threads which may get tangled.



9 Using a blunt-nosed needle will part the threads rather than cut through the threads, thereby weakening them.



10 At the end, cut the thread and tie off.



11 Work back and retension the threads, without pulling them too taut – it should support not stretch.



12 Place a weight to hold the laced material in position while tying off the other end of the thread.



13 Remove side pins and replace them in the top and bottom edges, ensuring neat, square corners.



14 Repeat the lacing process along the remaining edges and remove all pins.



15 Carefully pin the sampler onto the donor material and secure it using stainless steel pins.



16 Use a single strand from multi-strand thread, choosing a good colour match with the sampler. Use a maximum of two strands.



17 Thread a fine curved needle...



18 ...then stitch the sampler onto the linen using backstitch with gaps.



19 Use frame sealing tape or cotton museum tape to avoid any acids leaching from the wooden frame/slips and attacking the material. Use slips to hold the sampler away from the glass. (See above) Simply place them in the assembled frame without fixing.



20 Place the mounted sampler in the frame.



21 Use 3mm Plastazote® for additional protection.



22 Create a reactive interface barrier system using RIBS foil, which will change colour when it needs to be replaced. Attach to the mountboard and place in frame.



23 The finished job.

Materials used:

Moulding: LJ667593
Slip: 161900246
Glass: Tru Vue® Conservation ClearBDTVCC2501
Mountboard: BDTHMD3301
Evacon-R™ SUEVAR0001
Plastazote® BDPLAG0003
Cotton rag gummed paper 999000031
RIBS Foil SURIBS1219



Three-dimensional objects come in all shapes and sizes. Customers present framers with a wide array of artefacts to be framed and displayed, ranging from champagne corks commemorating a special event to sports memorabilia, and from baby's first shoes to a collection of model cars.

Each item requires a unique framing solution to ensure it remains undamaged and is firmly secured without the fixings being visible. Creative mounting can also be employed to showcase the artefact. Use of the correct framing materials is also important to achieve a quality finish. For example, using reflection-free art glass will allow the viewer to get 'up close and personal' to enjoy the framed object to the full.

In issue 12, Mal will take you step by step through the process of framing a Clarice Cliff style ceramic bowl. In addition to offering his handy tips to ensure a perfect box frame, he'll demonstrate some clever finishing touches to inspire you to upsell and wow your customers with a creative framing solution to display their own artefacts.



business profile

A Sporting Chance

Business can be about taking risks, making contacts and bold investment decisions. You still need to speculate to accumulate, advises Adam Gascoigne of Sportsframe Ltd, but sometimes simply making the right decision at the right time can shape a business for the better. And, for an enthusiastic business owner, learning that Rome wasn't built in a day can be tough.

Adam Gascoigne is a lucky man - his passion is also his job. He runs Sportsframe Ltd in Northamptonshire, collecting and framing sports memorabilia. The business has been running for 11 years and plans are now underway to grow the business.

Adam said: "I started framing as a hobby in 1998. I am sports mad - I especially love cricket. I started to pick up a few pieces of memorabilia and wanted to get them framed. I was amazed by the cost of framing. But moreover, I just couldn't get people to grasp what I wanted or how I envisaged my piece on display.

"So, I thought I'd have a go myself. I did graphic design at university so I understand layout and design. I started to do these little projects in my garage. As I showed my mates how things turned out, they started bringing their things for me to frame or display. I also have friends in the sports industry and they would recommend me to other people. So I had two or three years of practising in my garage without the pressure of trying to make a living out of it. This coincided with the massive growth of ebay, so I was able to sell a few items online and see what the market was like."

In 2002 Adam decided to take the plunge and go full time with his business. Soon after, he realised he needed premises too.

He said: "The original idea was to run it as an online business from home, but it soon became apparent we needed a workshop and extra storage space, as well as the basic need to separate work from home life.

"We found a traditional framing business for sale in Wellingborough. Buying an established business was great because it had a good reputation and was already a destination for local people who wanted something framed. We were able to take on the traditional framing part of the business and also add our core business of sports memorabilia to the offering.

"My wife Laura had taken redundancy from work and she said she would spend a couple of months helping out while she looked for a job. It worked so well that she never left the business and we still run it together.

"We first planned to expand in 2008. We were going well, but the bottom just dropped out of everything that year and our business stalled. That was difficult enough, but then Laura became very ill. It was hard and frustrating. That is when we found running your own business can be a very lonely place."

Thankfully Laura has made a good recovery and the couple are now in a position to begin expansion again.

Adam said, "Our business is progressing again and we've just opened a showroom in Highgate in London. It made sense to invest in this showroom as a good proportion of our work is London-based. We run it on an appointment only basis and we're only 60 miles away so it means it's easy for us to use. We're also looking for a couple more premises up here in Northamptonshire with workshops big enough to take on some larger projects."

Having built a sterling reputation within the sports industry, the Gascoignes are now growing into other areas of the memorabilia market.



"We're now looking at what other products and services we could bring to market. We have built up a lot of contacts in the sports industry from the elite teams like the national rugby and cricket sides. That puts us in a position where we are able to source unique items for private collectors, rather like the antiques trade.

"We're also moving into more general memorabilia. We have an ongoing contract with the O2 Arena to install their backstage areas. Off the back of that, we've also secured a really exciting contract with Alexandra Palace, restoring and archiving their old black and white photos and scanning and reprinting them for display.

"We are also taking on joinery work to build bespoke, museum standard display cases in situ in clients' homes and for this we're using a lot of conservation products like the CXD range."

Much of this new work has come to Sportsframe Ltd because of Adam's continual investment in new technology.

"We've found it extremely important to keep ahead of the curve when it comes to investing in technology for the business. The biggest single springboard for our business was investing £25k in a mount cutter. It changed our business over night by freeing

up our time to work on other things. About three years ago we also invested in large format print technology which has allowed us to take on a whole new range of contracts.

"We are also keeping an eye on the advent of the 3D printers. When the technology becomes more reliable and the cost comes down, I think we will invest. It will allow us to take a lot of services in-house which we currently outsource, therefore cutting our costs and speeding up our delivery times."

With such growing business opportunity, amidst all his passion and enthusiasm there still lurk a few frustrations for Adam.

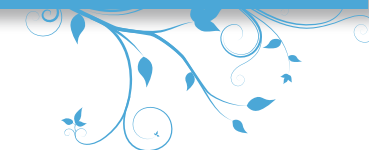
"Despite everything we're doing, it is frustrating that the core business grows so slowly. There are mass market dealers like those who sell on ebay. But it's a contrived memorabilia market - they get hold of replica shirts and get them signed by the job lot, put them in any old frame and sell them. There is a market for that kind of thing, but it's not what we do. We can't compete with those guys.

"Our market is bespoke, high-end and therefore, slower. We have fewer items; we buy one-offs; we never use the same design twice to display items; everything that comes from us is unique. That's the way we see our business going."

Adam's business acumen:

- Consider buying an existing business as a going concern to get a head start on customer footfall.
- Invest wisely in technology which will help you secure new business
- Be patient and expand at a sensible rate - however frustrating
- Know your business inside out and always look for the next client lead
- Have a 'we can do that for you' attitude. Look at aspects of your business which can be applied outside your core offering and expand your business.

For more information visit www.sportsframe.co.uk



You don't need to break the bank to boost business

The economy may be starting to show a few green shoots of recovery, but with many people still nervous about spending their hard-earned pennies, small businesses such as framing stores need to be working even harder to ensure their profits continue to flourish. Here Sandra Loftus from The Framing Loft in Galway, Ireland, shares her tricks of the trade for keeping the tills ringing even in the trickiest of times.

The Framing Loft moved from its original premises at an out-of-town retail park in 2012 after nine happy years, due to the financial restraints the economy had placed upon them. Keen not to see the move as a negative, Mark and Sandra Loftus set about analysing how the relocation could not only reduce their overheads but deliver a host of other business-boosting opportunities.

"They say location is everything, and that is definitely true in our case," adds Sandra. "Our main challenges at our old premises were the limited opportunity for passing trade and a lack of available parking. Once you recognise that and set about finding somewhere which solves those issues, you are half way there.

"Where we are now, we are not only visible from the high street, but are on the access road to a fast food drive-through. People who previously didn't know we existed can now see our signage, so we are already raising awareness. Plus we now have dedicated parking facilities, so those who want to perhaps just drop in as they are going about their other business can do so without worry of additional parking charges or congestion.

"The building itself is about the same size, but the ceilings are higher, which has allowed us to turn it into more of a showroom for our work. We don't really sell from stock and prefer to offer a truly bespoke service, but being able to display some examples of mouldings is really beneficial as the customers can see the quality up-close and in person."

Showcasing Mark's craftsmanship is at the heart of Sandra's vision for the rejuvenated business. But their combined efforts don't just stop at the showroom. "My husband, Mark, has been a professional framer for 28 years and we are very proud of the business we have built over the years," states Sandra. "What we offer is a quality bespoke service – it's what we are known for in the area, and as such it's our biggest asset. The standard of our service is the one thing we can always be sure of when times get tough. That makes it very marketable. You just have to be sensible with how you go about doing it.

"Just because we have consolidated our overheads and are increasing footfall, the last thing we want to do is start spending more on things like expensive advertising. We like to think Mark's work speaks for itself, so we decided to show it off a little bit more.



"Through our new Facebook profile (www.facebook.com/framesloft) we can display many more photos and ideas for framing projects. I spend a lot of time researching framing themes on Pinterest, and I use these images almost as a prompt to get people thinking about their own projects. I can then display Mark's work alongside them if something similar is commissioned. It really shows people's visions coming to life - plus it's free and works like an extended shop window!

"Many people will protest that business diversification can be the saviour for maintaining profitability in a difficult economy.

"While there is something to be said for widening your business' scope to encourage potential new custom,

for us it has been more a case of sensible planning and utilising the skills already at our finger-tips.

"The Framing Loft is now fairing much better, but we will continue to be frugal in our decision-making, as it does ensure that every move we make is well thought out and for the good of the business. Taking a moment to think before you spend will definitely help you to prioritise better. And that doesn't cost a penny!"

Did you know..?

Galway is nicknamed "the city of tribes" after the 14 merchant families who led the city during the Hiberno-Norman period.

Making the most of the New Year

After the excesses of the Christmas period, it's no wonder that New Year is the traditional time to cut back, with giving up smoking and losing weight topping most people's lists. But a fresh new year is also the perfect time to try new ventures and do things differently. If you only resolve to do one thing for your business in 2014, make it something you've never done before, says Steve Burke from Arqadia.

Try diversifying

Is there a range of items that would sit well with what you already stock? Have a think about what your high street is missing - could you stock it? A small range of gifts which do not require much display space could be introduced to complement your current offering for generic events such as weddings or christenings. Many artists now produce ranges of greetings cards, which could attract more footfall into your store. Start small and see what sells.

Try trends

What colour is the new black? Get into fashion and textiles for 2014 by trawling home interest magazines. Look into trends for the home across the seasons and use the information to your advantage. Use 'this year's colour' in your window displays or frame articles from aspirational lifestyle magazines at your point of sale, along with a display of the mouldings you could use to achieve that look.

Try cross selling

Sales might strike fear into your heart, but it is a sure-fire way to boost cash flow. Cross selling is selling add-ons and additional products to complement the initial product purchase. Done well, it can establish you as an expert who customers turn to for advice. Put together a display of accessories and related products close to your point of sale to give you a starting point from which to discuss a range of products to meet your customers' framing needs – and entice them to buy.

The key is to prepare and practice – especially if you're self-conscious. The more you practice the more natural you will sound and the more confident you will appear to your customers.

Try a different style

Is your shop dated? What do customers think when they step through the door? Does your image match your abilities? Doing something as simple as having a new sign above your shop or installing a feature wall behind the till will make you feel reinvigorated and will attract customers in to have a look.

Try promotions

All big retailers do promotions - why don't you? Have a stocktake and see what you need to sell, perhaps a moulding that is lingering. Put together a bundle of products with a price incentive - bring together several smaller items which offer your customers an all-in-one framing solution. For example, include a sample moulding and mountboard, along with picture wire and D rings. Offer a special price for the whole bundle to customers who will appreciate the value for money and the answer to their problems, while you will enjoy additional profit on the total sale. Consider running a 'refer a friend' scheme. Offer your loyal customers a discount on their next purchases from you if they refer a friend to your business. And of course welcome your new customer with a discount off their first order.

Try social media

Are you using Twitter, Facebook or other social media platforms to benefit your business? Seek advice from people you know who are already doing it well and use it as a method of direct communication with your local customer base. Share deals, product information, or just the brilliant new framing idea you had today. They'll love to hear from you and you'll be front of mind when they're looking for framing.



Your questions answered

Ask the Experts

Q I have been asked to float mount some rather expensive limited edition prints. The problem is my client doesn't just want them float mounted, he would also like them to sit on top of something such as foam board so they are literally floating above the surface. As they are rather expensive prints of course I don't want to permanently stick them.

A A couple of points you might want to consider: First, if the paper is lightweight then it is more than likely you will see the hinges through the paper. Float mounting is best done on medium to heavyweight paper. Second, if the artwork has been rolled in a tube or is not completely flat then the edges will be wavy - there is very little that one can do to avoid this problem.

The method you describe is called 'Shadow Float Mounting' and the procedure is as follows:

There are a number of hinges one can use, but I use what is termed a 'Pass Through Hinge' which is by far the strongest. Cut a piece of 5mm foamboard to approximately 10mm smaller than the artwork, just sufficient that it is not seen when looking at the edges. Cut small slits in the foamboard slightly larger than the width of tape to be used. The slits should

be approximately 10-15mm from the edge of the foamboard and approximately 150mm apart.

The best tape to use is Arqadia's Cotton Museum tape. Cut lengths of tape 60mm long and fold them in two, sticky sides facing each other. Take an artist bone/burnishing tool and ensure the fold is sharp - this forms your hinge. Push the folded tape through the foamboard until there is approximately 5mm left on the front of the foamboard. Turn the back of the hinge flat with the foamboard and secure with a further piece of tape. Then turn the front of the hinge revealing two flaps. With the artwork face down on a clean piece of board, slightly dampen (do not soak) the adhesive on the hinges and position the foamboard on the artwork. Apply a weight to the foamboard and leave until the adhesive has set.



Mal Reynolds
Harlequin Framing

On inspection, should there be any hinges that have not adhered to the back of the artwork then apply a small amount of Evacon-R™ with a paint brush to re-dampen the adhesive.



Q I've started seeing QR Codes (Quick Response Codes) around on marketing material much more of late. While I've used them as a customer myself, I'm not entirely sure if I should be using them for my business. And if so, how I could use them?

A QR codes, while offering a great tool for data capture, aren't something that will suit the needs of every business. For starters, you are relying on your customers owning smartphones, having access to the right apps, and knowing how to use them properly. Some people may not be as comfortable with this technology as those who use their phones as handheld computers on a day-to-day basis. Doing an accurate assessment of the people you are trying to sell to is important, so that you can be sure the technology will be used accurately and have real impact.

The type of business you run should also influence your choice to utilise QR codes. Remember; the whole point of this technology is to offer the user more in-depth information about a particular product. For example, a large art gallery with a high footfall of customers could use QR codes on paintings to disseminate informative facts and figures, such as artist profiles and pricing, without the business having to invest in extra staffing to deal with customer queries. Whereas, for small



Steve Burke
Arqadia's Sales Director

businesses with limited stock portfolios, direct face-to-face discussions with customers will reap far more business benefits, and not incur such hefty design and implementation costs.

Feedback...



We always welcome your feedback for our articles in 4Walls, so were delighted to receive a letter from Tony Lawson at Scotframe, who followed the advice from Mal Reynolds in Issue 9 about the framing of some leather and hessian-like cloth items from Kenya. We must say you did a wonderful job, Tony, and many thanks for keeping us updated - we're delighted to have been of assistance!

The first two pictures were completed by loose stitching the artwork over an acid-free card. I then sealed wood inner rebate to protect the artwork and used an acid-free backing to provide additional support along with a backing to the inner slip frame. I attached this into a bare wood moulding with glass on top of a slip frame to keep it off the artwork.

The bare wood moulding was rubbed down and all joints smoothed over with the sawdust into any minor cracks to provide a lovely finish but very natural to blend with the natural feel of the artwork.

I then secured the final backing to the outer moulding.

For the other artwork I used the same slip frame to tie in with the other pieces, but this time the canvas-type material was dry-mounted with agreement from the customer on the level of protection required. As the artwork was in oils it seemed a shame to put glass over it so I mounted the slip frame inside a bare wood (rubbed down again) canvas moulding.

Tony Lawson

Dates for your diary

Barbican Art Gallery, London

Until 9 February 2014

Pop Art Design

In celebration of Pop Art, this exhibition features 150 works by artists and designers inspired by the radical post-war art movement.

National Maritime Museum, London

Until 21 April 2014

Turner and the Sea

JMW Turner had a life-long obsession with the sea which influenced many of his works from the tempestuous 'Snowstorm' to the fiercely dramatic pictures of whalers battling sea monsters. In this exhibition, Turner's position as Britain's greatest maritime painter is celebrated.

Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham

Until 30 March 2014

Photorealism

Showcasing key photorealist artists from the 1960s to the present day, this exhibition explores the questions and debates raised by the movement on what makes an authentic image and the ways in which we perceive the world.

Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester

Until 2 February, 2014

The Vanity of Small Differences

View six tapestries by the Turner Prize winning artist, Grayson Perry, which explore class mobility and the influence of social class on aesthetic taste.

The Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead

Until 23 February 2014

Thomas Bayrle: All-in-One

All-in-One is the first major survey exhibition of German artist Thomas Bayrle, a pioneer of Pop Art seriality and media art.

National Museum of Wales, Cardiff

Until 16 March 2014

Peter Blake illustrates Dylan Thomas' Under Milk Wood

Sir Peter Blake presents his illustrations of Thomas' dramatic classic, Under Milk Wood (1953). This major body of work is the culmination of a 25-year project and is exhibited for the very first time. The show includes portraits of each of the characters in the cast, watercolours of the dream sequences and collages and paintings of the fictional village of Llareggub.

Turner Contemporary, Margate, Kent

25 January - 11 May 2014

Making Painting

This exhibition juxtaposes the landscapes of abstract impressionist Helen Frankenthaler and JMW Turner, looking at their use of colour and light.

The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh

Until 18 May 2014

New Acquisitions at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art

A chance to view some of the newly acquired collection, which includes works by Cezanne, Picasso and David Hockney.

Did you know..?

Until 713BC the Romans had no names for January or February as the winter months were deemed unworthy of names.



The WINTER COLLECTION

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