

Creating Blanco Matte Canvas Gallery Wraps

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Photos by Lon Shelton

Print your photos on professional quality canvas and then gallery wrap to transform them into authentic art. This is a popular option offered by high-end retail print shops. The result can be a very pleasing art piece worthy of hanging in a museum. This process can be expensive.

Creating a [Blanco Matte Canvas](#) Gallery wrap is a relatively easy process that may be quickly accomplished in your home or studio, producing a very professional result. This is easy to accomplish and cheaper than framing.



The writer made several gallery wrapped photos using Red River's Blanco Matte Canvas and gallery wrap kits purchased over the internet. You can create a very professional gallery wrap the first time with a little effort.

Such a project is accomplished in two steps:

1. Print your photo on Red River Paper's Blanco Matte Canvas.
2. Set up a framework of wooden bars allowing the canvas image to be stretched and adhered to wood, creating a gallery wrap.

Printing your photos on canvas is a relatively painless process for which Red River has published instructions. Converting your canvas photo image into a gallery wrap can be quickly accomplished, with the major tool being only a knife.

Red River offers Blanco Matte Canvas in several sizes. I have found that those offerings of widths of 13", 17", or 24" are best suited to create canvas gallery wraps. Of course, the size of the available printer dictates the width of canvas and subsequent size of the gallery wraps you can make.

The gallery wrap process assumes you have selected an image so that a portion of the image will extend over the wooden bars to create the sides of the wrap.

Generally there are two sizes of wooden bars available for this process, one has bars with a width of about 1.25 inches (generally referred to as *standard* bars), and a second has about a 1.75- inch bar width (generally referred to as *pro* bars).



In the following descriptions, it is assumed that you are using 1.25-inch bars. The same process can be used for wider bars if you mentally adjust the bar size as you read.

For images of 20 inches or less in length for the finished gallery wrap, the narrower width (1.25") is more than adequate.

You will need to size and print your images appropriately, allowing for this overlap. Experience has taught us to allow a 3 inches total overlap for the length and width of your image (1.5 inches on each side.) This 1.5 inches allows the canvas to be wrapped and adhered to a 1.25 inch wooden bar. Many tutorials exist that will help you with sizing your images, so this will not be discussed here.

If you are using a printer capable of printing 13-inch images, the maximum width of a gallery wrap will be 10 inches. If the printer is capable of 17-inch wide prints, the maximum width will be 14". Thus, a 13"x19" Blanco Matte Canvas will produce a maximum gallery wrap of 10" by 16".

Printing

Red River Paper offers the [Blanco Matte Canvas handling guide](#) to help you with the printing process. Follow that as accurately as possible.

For many, the most difficult part of printing on canvas is feeding the canvas into the printer in a fashion that works reliably. A technique discovered after searching many internet sites that has worked nearly 100 percent of the time is described here.



Please note, the below process to feed canvas sheets is not required for inkjet printers with single sheet specialty media feed. If you are unsure of your printer's capabilities, check the user manual.

Cut a piece of photo paper so that you have 1-inch strips. You may need to cut several pieces and tape them together with scotch tape to produce a 1-inch wide strip, whose length is the same as the width of the canvas.

Tape this photo paper strip onto what will be the leading edge of the canvas with frog tape, found in the paint departments of many stores. (Some people use blue painters' tape



and tell me that it works satisfactorily.) On the print side of the canvas, adhere the paper strip with the tape. The tape should begin 1/4 inch from the leading edge and overlap the printable canvas surface by 1/4 inch or less.

The purpose of leaving about 1/4 inch of the leading edge (or more) of the 1" paper strip free from tape, is to allow the printer to "grab" onto it and feed it through. It is critical that the front edge of the 1" paper strip is at a right angle to the long edge of the canvas – or the printing may end-up crooked. Ensure the frog tape is pressed flat on the paper and canvas surfaces, or you may be cleaning tape from inside the printer. To avoid problems, please take care to ensure the leader is securely adhered and at a right angle to the canvas length. This technique has worked reliably for me.

With an image editor, such as Photoshop, you'll need to add a one inch of "canvas" to the leading edge of the image to be printed. This represents the 1-inch strip adhered to the piece of canvas we will print on. Thus, if we have an image that is 13"x19" to be printing on a 13"x19" Blanco Matte Canvas, set up Photoshop to add a 1" canvas to the leading edge of the image making the print size 13" x 20" (you will probably be required to define a custom image size.) When the canvas is fed into the printer (top feeder works for the Epson 3880 printer), the first physical inch will be the 1" paper strip adhered to the Blanco Matte Canvas.

After printing on the Blanco Matte Canvas, you may remove the 1-inch paper strip and the tape.





Please follow Red River's instructions for the Blanco Matte Canvas on letting the inks dry before proceeding. Red River Paper recommends 24 before handling the canvas and up to 48 hours before coating.

Finishing the Print

Follow Red River's instructions for placing a protective coating on the canvas to provide it the protection it deserves. This is a must as the canvas will probably be bumped into or exposed to dust, when you hang it on your wall.

Creating a gallery wrap

You will need to purchase four plastic corners designed to position the wooden bars when making canvas gallery wrap images. When purchasing corners for the wrap kit you will use, you will usually be supplied with glue and corner fasteners to put the gallery wrap together. This is a one-time purchase – the cost should be approximately \$10, but certainly will vary with the retailer you choose to purchase from.



For each image to be gallery wrapped, you will need to purchase pairs of wooden bars for the length and width of your gallery wrap.

For a 13" x 19" Blanco Matte Canvas, you would purchase 10" and 16" bars for the respective width and length of the resulting gallery wrap.

The wooden bars come with a strip of adhesive placed along their length and overlapping the ends. When you make your first gallery wrap, initially leave the tape on and assemble the bars using the purchased plastic corners. Do not be concerned about placement, as the plastic corners are designed to allow the wooden bars to be inserted only one way - correctly. When this is complete you will have a rectangle of wooden bars with a plastic piece at each corner.

Place the Blanco Matte Canvas image face down on a clean surface that you can cut on – something like a piece of plywood



works well. You should consider placing a scrap or scraps of mat-board between the canvas and the plywood to protect the image.

Place the wooden bars with plastic corners centered on the canvas. Assuming you have not removed the paper covering the pre-applied adhesive, the bars will not stick to the canvas and you may move the rectangular base with corners around to position it. When doing this, you should notice that there is a small space between the bars and the canvas – the space was created by correct placement of the bars into the corners.



Once the bars are centered to your satisfaction, use a pencil to lightly mark the outside of the four corners. This will greatly aid you when re-centering bars for the next step.



Remove the paper from the bars exposing the adhesive surface and ends. Place the bars back into the corners. Again, the plastic corners are constructed for correct placement of the bars.

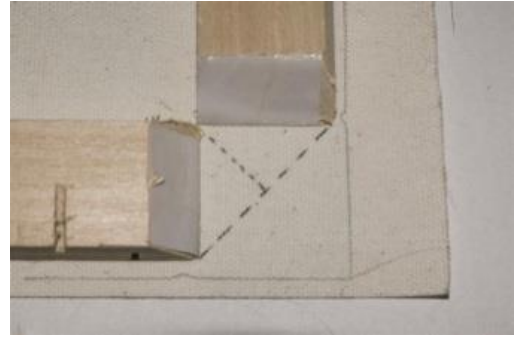
Carefully place the adhesive side of the corners/bars toward the back of the canvas. Using the previously marked corners, move the structure on the canvas until you are satisfied it is positioned as you wish.



Push the wooden bars down against the canvas adhering the canvas and bars. When this is done, remove the plastic corners.

If you have placed the gallery wrap frame incorrectly, gently pull the canvas from the adhesive and reposition it. If you are careful and do not damage the canvas, this will enable you to straighten the canvas prior to cutting with a knife.

With the plastic corners removed, take a sharp knife and cut the four canvas corners at a 45 degree angle (cut as shown by the dotted lines) as close to the part of the wooden ends as possible without cutting into the wood.



After the cuts, there should be a triangular piece of canvas between the two wooden ends at each corner.



With your knife, cut from where the length and width wooden pieces meet the canvas out to the edge you created with the first cut. Do this for all four corners. Bend the flaps created up and against the ends of the wooden bars.



Trim the excess canvas along the outsides of the four bars with your knife

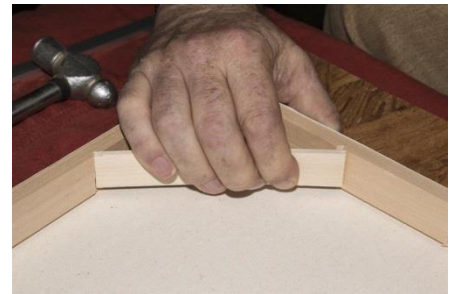
Run a thin bead of glue, supplied with the purchase of the plastic corners, along the canvas where the canvas meets the inside of the bars.



Fold any two adjacent corners of the package up, so the ends of two bars meet. Put a corner fastener into slots in the wooden bars to hold this end together. Repeat until all four corners are fastened.



Four small thin straight lengths of wooden pieces should be supplied when you purchase the bars. Snap these strips into the corners to give provide stability and strength. These wooden strips usually snap into place with little effort. This should complete the gallery wrap.



Turn the completed gallery wrap project over. Assuming you have positioned the gallery wrap frame correctly on the canvas, you will have a professional looking masterpiece.



Tips

1. Where do you obtain gallery wrap corners and bars? What is the approximate cost? Searching on the internet for “photo gallery wrap” or “photo gallerie wrap” can yield several sites where you can purchase the plastic corners and wooden bars of various lengths. At the time of this article, the various sites appear to obtain plastic corners and bars of the same design.



2. Purchasing rolls of Red River Blanco Matte Canvas will save money, but you will need to cut the canvas into print sized pieces. Take care to ensure the cut across the canvas is perpendicular to the length of the canvas. If you are just slightly off, do not be overly concerned, as you can tape the 1" photo paper strip so its leading edge is perpendicular to the length of the canvas.

3. Purchasing wooden bars can be done as a bulk purchase. Most retail outlets package 20 bars in a box as well as sell single pairs of bars. Purchasing bars in quantity, can save money. A package of 20 bars for the lengths and another package for the widths are sufficient to make 10 canvas gallery wrap images.

4. Assuming you demonstrate this process to make gallery wraps to others, the results are a) quick and easy to produce, b) inexpensive compared to framing, and c) very professionally appearing. Often others will be willing to share the cost of a roll of canvas or a package of wooden bars. Each may need to purchase plastic gallery wrap corners or share the corners among the group.

5. A completed gallery wrap set of bars can be reused. This can be done if you can gently remove the canvas without damaging the adhesive on the bars – then repeat the gallery wrap process with a different piece of canvas. Generally, the original piece of canvas will be damaged, so plan on printing a new canvas.

