

BMPG SOME PRINTING AND MATTING IDEAS AND OPTIONS

Printing our work is one of the most satisfying things we can do. It can be expensive and can lead to a storage issue at home. Some members choose to only show digitals for these reasons.

Here are some ideas and a bit of advice about printing and matting your work.

1. Mats

When buying mats, you may want to get a few at once. This will often be less expensive.

It's also good to decide up front if you are planning on recycling your mats – many of us do that for costs and storage reasons.

Advice I was given years ago was to consider what is your most common crop and size. Eg If you like to shoot or crop to 1x1 or 10x8, then consider organising mat openings in that size. Our cameras shoot 4x3 but that may not be your aesthetic. I rarely show my work at 4x3 so a standard mat opening isn't much use to me.

Also consider if you plan to mostly print on A4 paper. Your actual opening can then be decided. Alternately, if you want to print on A3 paper sometimes, design a mat opening that fits that size.

Our club guidelines say that no mat can be larger than 40 x 50cms or 16x20". That is pretty standard across competitions. However, that is a large size, the mat will cost more and maybe you will want to use a larger print.

The other aesthetic to consider is the width of the mat. Wider mats can make images look different to very narrow mats. Narrow mats will be your least expensive option and they are very acceptable. However, if you are questioning what mat width you like, spend time over a couple of exhibition evenings and consciously check out the matting. Also consider the mat colour. Off white is the most popular and you will have heard Nicola Read, one of our judges always comment to that effect. Any colour is acceptable and it ultimately comes down to your choice.

- We have an arrangement with Ben from Picture Framing Warehouse in Emu Plains to cut mats that fit an A4 sized photo (size reference only) for \$10. You can vary the opening. These will be archival material.
- You can pick up standard precut mats from many of the art shops and places that sell photo prints and frames such as BigW. These will be less expensive. If it is for important work, always check it if is acid free and archival.
- There is a large outlet in Silverwater that a number of my photo contacts use. The mats are standard sizes and there is a variety of colours. You usually buy them in packs and they work out to be very cost effective. I have exhibited with members of another photography club who always buy their mats here.
<https://www.artandframing.com.au>

2. PRINTING

There are local walk in self service printers in stores. If you are using these, always get a test print done to see that the colour is correct before you spend money on larger prints. If you happen on the right day of the week after the machine is serviced, you are in luck. It also helps to have a knowledgeable staff member if you are printing important work.

Other walk in print services locally

- [Cottontail Press, Mt Victoria](#)

I have used this business to print a huge image and they did an excellent job. They have a good range of quality papers. Their pricing for A4 size is \$15

<https://cottontailpress.com>

- [Artsup, Kingswood](#)

I have not used this print service but they have a large format Epson and they have good reviews. A couple of our members use them.

<https://artsup.com.au>

Further Afield and Online

1. [RGB Digital](#)

Is in Brisbane and comes very highly recommended from good photographers.

This online service is quality and efficient HOWEVER – you must ensure you follow their specifications to get the best print. They do offer a paid service to help set your file up. Other than file size issues, the biggest issue is colour space.

Recommend that if this is your printer of choice, you invest time at the beginning to get it right.

Their pricing always seems reasonable. I have linked their pricing page as well. An example 8x12” which we can compare to A4 is \$2.95.

<https://rgbdigital.com.au>

Pricing is here.

<https://www.roesweb.com/configs/RGBDigitalRW/products/rgb/photographicprints>

This is a link to their test print service – 5 photos 5x7” for \$2.99. Seems a good option.

<https://rgbdigital.com.au/test-prints/>

2. [Image Science](#)

Is in Melbourne. They are an excellent service and well worth considering for important work. They now offer standard pricing irrespective of what papers you choose.

As a comparison, their A4 price is \$16.

<https://imagescience.com.au>

<https://imagescience.com.au/services/fine-art-printing>

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This business also does print profiles. They cost \$60 per profile which is intended to work on one printer (yours) and for one paper. If you want to profile multiple papers, you pay the same for each. I have bought a profile from them and it was perfect.

Other Places to Check Out

All the online photobook businesses offer photo printing services. They all have great specials. This can be an incredibly inexpensive way of printing a bunch of images. HOWEVER, the same disclaimer is repeated. TEST their colour first and if it doesn't work, contact them or move on.

They will probably not allow custom sizes but they seem to have a decent range to choose from. As an example, Photobookshop offer a 24 pack of 8x12" (A4 approx) for \$19. It looks like you can mix the images.

You will find many of these are almost identical across the brands. Do your due diligence before jumping in.

RedBubble

Their prints are good. Mieke Boynton used them for many years until she had her own printer. You need an account. I have one. You upload images and you can decide if you want to make them public (so others can buy). There is a basic price owners pay. It is very reasonable for the artist to buy. They have many products but there is a basic Photographic Print. NB If you see prints listed on their site, they will have artist profit included.

<https://www.redbubble.com/>