

# Alternative Presentation

*Dry Mount, Foam core & clips*

-Bobby Cooper

Black and white photography seems to be enjoying a resurgence even as it migrates toward Alternative Process status. The demand for this beautiful medium comes as people (once again) appreciate its classic look.

Whether your style is portraiture, fine art or documentary the presentation of your work is challenging and potentially expensive even if you only display in your own studio. Obviously, a key to recognition and to sales is being seen. You may have to spend money to make money, but you don't have to go broke in the process!!

Over the years, we have exhibited in various venues – fine clothing boutiques, upscale restaurants, fund-raising events and of course, galleries. Our photographic images have been mounted, matted and framed and over time have suffered its share of bumps, nicks, scrapes and bruises either while on exhibit or during transit and handling.

We've discovered a classic, elegant way to display your fine black and white photographic images that at least offer an alternative to traditional framing without diminishing the perception of value...and can save a few bucks in the process. There are pros and cons to our method so we've tried to address them here. But first, the method:



## **Drymount on Foamcore**

**The Print** – begin with a fine print that comes from a good negative. While most prints For Sale are printed on very fine fibre papers with a matte or semi-matte finish, we instead print on glossy RC stock. We've found it easier to keep clean since we don't have glass to protect the print yet it displays nicely in most gallery light. Our philosophy is that we are only representing the images For Sale, while our finer prints are tucked away and less subject to handling. We either have limited edition prints available or we take orders.

**Print Size** – have you decided what size your print should be that you wish to exhibit? Size is usually the personal preference of the artist, however, we highly recommend 16x20 or larger. It's a good size...not overwhelming, but not understated. Additionally, you'll find that people will buy a size smaller than you display.

\*On a side note\* - the majority of our exhibited photographs come from 35mm negatives. We are successful enlarging to 16x20 consistently. Don't push beyond the size



that maintains the desired print quality.

### Mounting your Print

– We prefer dry mounting over spray mounting for longevity. Using acid-free adhesive, for both RC and Fibre, the suggested mounting temperature setting is 175-200°F.

Be mindful of your temperatures when using a dry mount press. Resin Coated images are basically coated with *plastic*. Too high a setting can melt portions of your photograph. Fiber prints are much more tolerant of the extreme heat settings but may suffer from too high a temperature.

**Foam Core** – Our personal preference is a ½ inch acid-free black foam core. While we have dry mounted on 3/8 inch foam core, we've found them to be more apt to curl, especially in warmer, humid climates. The curl can loosen the mounting...especially the spray mount and it just doesn't look as good.



As a result also, they are subject to more frequent replacement. While the ½ inch foam core is more expensive and harder to find, it's well worth the effort and expense. The board stays flat and lasts considerably longer. We have images that have been handled quite a lot for over a year, without nearly showing signs that they need to be replaced. Almost all of our images are 16x20 and dry mounted on 24x36 boards. It makes a very sharp display.

**Set up** – The foam core is light but durable. We've got boxes that hold three boards so it's so much easier to install the exhibit. Because not every venue isn't an art gallery, we have to be mindful of the walls. We've found that a simple clear push pin leaves a very small usually unnoticeable hole yet it is sufficient to hold the foam board. We then use a giant binder clip at the top of the board.

Solid black binder clips (pictured) are what the image is hung from. It's a 'contemporary, kitsch' look that doesn't detract from your hanging image.

Remember, these are our personal opinions and tips from our *own* experiences in the gallery and show place. Needless to say that a framed image is THE way to go...but this has proven to be a unique, classic and eye catching way to display your fine black and white photography.

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### You Decide

**Pros** – light, easy to hang, classic looking, easy to handle, easy to keep clean, dry mount stays firmly attached, giant binder clips mounted with clear push pins don't leave gaping holes in client's walls.

**Cons** – thinner board (1/4" and 3/16") tends to warp, spray mount will eventually release usually at corners, not easy to change images on board.

**Suggestions** – make sure plenty of business cards and brochures are available, put your name by each image...and if particular prints are for sale, are limited editions, make sure you show the pricing and detailed information with tag cards near-by with the ability to take orders or sell the prints.