

Finishing Ornaments Using Foam Core

Finishing ornaments worked on canvas or other even weave fabrics is an fairly quick and easy process. The embroidery is first laced to a mounting board of foam core board or acid free alpha-matt, backed with fabric, and trimmed using your favorite cords, braids, ribbons and beads.

Square or Rectangular Ornaments

Lacing is one of the best methods to use for mounting a piece of needlework. It is relatively easy to do, producing a firm, even appearance to the fabric. You should leave a 1½" to 2" excess margin for finishing. Because no glue or other adhesives are used in the process, your needlework can be removed from the backing material at any time. To preserve your needlework, use conservation quality materials whenever possible.

For the front of the ornament, use an acid-free foam core cut to the appropriate size and shape. Simple geometric shapes such as squares, rectangles, circles and ovals are most appropriate for lacing. Apply a thin layer of felt or thin batting to the surface of the matt to act as a light padding with a piece of double-sided, acid-free conservation tape. The padding serves two purposes. First, it cushions any bulky tails on the reverse side of the fabric, eliminating any bumps that may show through on the right side; and second, the slight padding softens the appearance of the fabric on the right side. In addition, if you are not using an acid-free matt, the padding acts as a barrier between the mounting board and the embroidery. Apply the layer of batting, then trim to the size of the foam core.



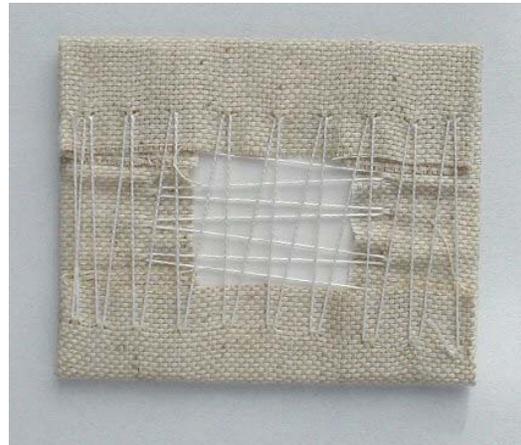
mounting board.

Prior to lacing, the embroidery is held to the foam core using straight pins. The silver dress maker's straight pins are fine if you are going to remove them once you have laced the fabric to the foam core. If you want to leave the pins in permanently, use brass sequin pins as they will not rust over time and possibly damage the fabric. Mark the center of each side of the embroidery with a straight pin or basting stitches. Mark the center of each side of the

Place the embroidery face down on a clean towel and center the mounting board on top of it, padding side down, Using the straight pins, work from the center points to the edges, inserting the pins through the fabric and into the center of the foam core, following a line of the fabric. Place the pins approximately 1/4" apart. Be sure that the embroidery is smooth, straight and taut, but not too tight.



Using a sharp needle and a strong thread, lace the embroidery to the mounting board, mitering the corners. A double strand of quilting thread or a single thread of DMC #8 Perle cotton works well on small pieces. Once the lacing has been completed, remove the pins.



The backing fabric can be applied in the same manner. If you are using the same fabric with a stitched name and/or date, use another piece of foam core and lace the backing fabric in place. If you are using velvet, ultrasuede or another fabric, you can use a piece of matt board, rather than foam core for mounting. The difference is in the thickness of the ornament and the ease in which the pins are inserted. Pin the fabric in the same manner, but glue it to the matt board using water soluble and clear drying glue such as Aleene's Super Tacky or Sobo. A few clothes pins hold the raw edges in place while the glue sets.

Once the front and back sides of the ornament have been mounted, they can be glued together. Spread a thin layer of Aleene's glue to the reverse sides of the ornament and put the two sides together, matching the corners and making sure that the edges are even. Hold the two halves together until the glue sets, by either adding a weight (heavy books work well) to the ornament or pinning the two halves together using clothes pins. Whichever method you use, make sure that the ornament is sandwiched between parchment paper or two other pieces of matt board to protect the embroidery while the glue sets.



Once the two halves of the ornament have been glued together, cover the join along the sides with cording, velvet ribbon or other trim. Hide the join at the top of the ornament with bows, flowers or other special objects and complete by adding a hanger.

Round or Oval Ornaments

Round or oval shaped ornaments are finished in basically the same manner, with one exception to the lacing process. Place the oval foam core board over the fabric and center as above. Cut the fabric to the shape, leaving a 1 1/2" to 2" working margin.

Pin the fabric to the foam core as above. Once pinned in place, thread a long length of # 8 white or ecru Perle cotton onto a needle and run a gathering stitch around the edge of the fabric, leaving long tails. Pull the tails tight to gather the fabric and knot to hold the fabric securely.

Lace the fabric in place, working around the oval, taking care that the stitches are angled to the oval and not taken horizontally and vertically.