

# Continuous-Covered Liners - Step by Step

## Step 1. Getting Your Materials Together

Liner - you will want to join your liner and do any filling or cleaning up of the corners you think necessary. You may wish to prime the joined liner to avoid any hint of the wood showing through the fabric. One readily available brand of spray paint, which can be purchased at Home Depot stores, is "Painters Touch Flat White Enamel".

Fabric - in determining how much fabric you will need to order to cover this liner you will want to keep a few things in mind:

- a) Does the fabric have a grain to its weave?
- b) If there is a grain, how does your client want it to run on this piece?
- c) Make sure the fabric you order is at least 2-3 inches larger than the perimeter of the liner you intend to cover. This will allow you to avoid any of the minor flaws or irregularities, which are common within most fabrics.

NOTE: Virtually every fabric, which has a grain, has that grain running from bolt edge to bolt edge, and with the exception of very tall vertically oriented pieces, fabric grain is most often run horizontally (parallel to the floor). See also "Fabric Terms and Definitions"

## Other Materials and Tools -

- Foam Rollers -we recommend you get a couple of foam rollers (a 1"or 2" foam roller is always useful, but if you are covering a liner which is wider or very large in dimension, you might also wish to pick up a 3"-4" roller as well).
- Squeeze bottle with a Snout-type dispensing top - If you are using a wet adhesive like our Miracle Muck<sup>®</sup> it is useful to have a squeeze bottle with a snout for dispensing the glue.
- Small brush - a 1/2" artist's brush is also handy for applying the glue under the lip of the liner.
- Scissors and a Single edge razor blade - for cutting and trimming excess fabric from the liner.
- Miracle Muck - the best wet adhesive for doing this job.
- Blocks to put under the liner you are covering - a set of four blocks which are roughly 4" X 4" X 2" (or any size which is flat and stable) to set underneath the liner (at the four corners). This will help you to have space to push your fabric through the center of the opening, and keep your liner away from the stray drop of glue or other fabric-ruining whatever which might be there on your table top.

## Step 2. A Quick Check Before Things Get Sticky

Whether you are applying fabric to a Mat or to a Liner it is a good idea to lay the fabric down where you intend to adhere it, checking for flaws and getting the grain lined up, BEFORE you put down your adhesive. Its amazing how little flaws manage to hide and then suddenly appear just as you begin to adhere the fabric to your nice white mat board or primed liner. If you take the time to set the fabric onto the surface where it will be going you will see any potential trouble while you still have the opportunity to do something about it. In most cases you will be able to simply move the fabric over a couple of inches and avoid the flaw. If the problem is bigger than that, by doing this checking before you start cutting or gluing, you will be able to return the fabric for replacement. I know of no company that allows the return of fabrics that have been cut or mounted, even if the fabric has flaws.

When you have the fabric just as you would like it, we recommend placing small pieces of masking tape just outside each of the four corners to identify the area you want to return to once you have applied the Muck to the liner. Masking tape is more suitable for this task than marking with a pen or pencil, because it can be easily removed in case you decide to change the target area.

## Step 3. Applying the Adhesive to the Liner

We know of no better way to adhere Fabric to a Liner than using Raphael's Miracle Muck™. Because it dries clear, is heat re-activatable, and creates a very high quality bond, its perfect for this task. By squirting the Muck directly onto the top of the Liner you can work more quickly and avoid the mess and cleanup of using a tray. At first you will find the adhesive being soaked up by the roller, but soon it will be saturated and will begin to disperse glue across the liner face. Check to make sure you have covered the entire top of the liner with glue by holding the liner up so you can look across it into a light. If there are any "bald spots" just touch them up with your roller. It is always better to apply too much Muck and have to wait a little extra for it to set up, because so long as you have glue underneath your fabric, Muck can be heat re-activated. If you try to go too light with the glue because you are worried about bleeding through a sheer fabric, then you may leave yourself with nothing to stick to. If you do not put enough glue on the liner, not only is there nothing to stick to now, but also heat can't re-activate what isn't there. (Remember my tip from the workshop if you're worried about glue bleeding through a sheer fabric.) Once you have a good even coat covering the top of the liner, check the inside corners of the liner to make sure the glue is not puddling - you can use your artists brush to remove any excess. Do not worry about the underside of the lip just yet.

## Step 4 Laying the Fabric on the Liner

Congratulations, you have made it through the first three steps without any problems, nice going! This is the point where we really find out who's got "skills" though. . With the right set up, a little planning, and a little practice, it does not have to be so hard. After you finish your first few continuous-covered liners you will be wondering why you did not get into this sooner. Enough daydreaming, back to work . . .

I am going to assume we are working with a fabric, which DOES have a grain to its weave, since this is the case with the majority of fabrics. This step is a balancing act between somewhat conflicting goals, getting the fabric down ONTO the liner with its grain straight, and at the same time getting your fabric down INTO the center of the liner to allow you to wrap the nose of the liner and inside corners cleanly and completely. If liner profiles were completely flat, this would not be difficult. Unfortunately, because most liners have at least some slope in their makeup, you are usually fighting, to a greater or lesser extent, what I'll call the "drum head" effect. For examples of what I am referring to take a look at our profiles S, E, HR and N. Profile S is a nice flat profile, which the fabric can simply be laid across. If you have marked your fabric, as recommended in Step 2, you only need to worry about hitting your marks to cover this profile well. The profiles E and HR are more representative of the sort of profiles you will normally be covering. The profile N is one, which simply cannot be covered, in the continuous style. Note the difference in each of the four examples between an imaginary straight line beginning at the top outer edge of each profile and running parallel to that back ledge straight over what would be the center of a joined liner across to the other side of the liner. If you ran another line across the same space representing the fabric, as it will need to be configured to fit the contour of the liner, you will see the essence of the challenge and probably be able to anticipate the factors that determine how hard it will be to cover a certain shape with a certain fabric. The most important factors, listed in order of relevance but more often than not depending upon one another, are:

1. **The slope of the profile** - slope is a combination of the amount of a given rise taking place over a given distance. It is possible to cover almost any amount of rise if you have enough distance, but picture frames do not allow us much distance. Gentler or more gradual slopes will more readily accommodate a greater variety of fabrics without difficulty.
2. **The amount of "give" in the fabric** - "give" comes from either looseness in the weave or in the case of non-woven goods, the stretch in the material. With woven fabrics unfortunately, "give" usually comes at the expense of the grain alignment. How much curving of the grain are you willing to tolerate in order to get the fabric to cover a profile?
3. **The size of the opening** - most people don't get this one right away, but a liner with a very small opening can be difficult to cover with one piece of fabric even when the slope is fairly mild. There is just no place to acquire your "sag".
4. **The thickness of the nose of the liner profile** - occasionally you may run into

a liner which has a really fat nose - look out for these, they are almost impossible to do with clean, completely covered corners.

When you begin laying the fabric down onto the surface of your liner, before you allow the glue to take hold anywhere, take the palm of your hand and apply pressure on the center of the fabric to create a little extra "sag" in the fabric down into the center of the liner. Apply as much pressure as you can without noticeably distorting the grain alignment. Once you create as much "sag" as you can get away with, go ahead and cut out the center of the fabric leaving at least ½ inch hanging over the inside edge of the liner. Only after you have done this should you begin applying light pressure with your fingertips to smooth the fabric down onto the liner. If the liner is a scooped profile, gently focus on the cove portion first and work your way outward from there. Always paying extra attention to the corners of your liner (especially in the case of scooped liners) apply increasingly greater pressure as you finish bonding the fabric to the face of the liner. When you have the fabric adhered to the top of the liner, flip it over and while face down, then take a razor blade or sharp scissors and carefully make 45 degree cuts in the overhanging fabric toward the inner liner corners **MAKING SURE TO STOP YOUR CUT AT A DISTANCE GREATER THAN THE THICKNESS OF THE NOSE OF THE LINER FROM THE INNERMOST POINT YOU COULD CUT.** Generally this will be something like 1/8" TO 3/16". **DO NOT OVERCUT OR YOU WILL ALLOW THE INTERIOR CORNER OF YOUR LINER TO BE EXPOSED.** **OVERCUTTING** is the most common mistake made when creating seamless liners.

#### TIPS

If you are working with a dark color fabric, before you begin to put glue down on your liner, be sure to take a dark marker and touch up the inside corners of the liner. This way the lighter color of the wood will not be visible if you are unable to get the fabric all the way into the corner and around the nose of the liner.

If you are working with a linen fabric you can lightly mist the fabric with water to loosen up the weave and allow it a greater amount of "give". Do not mist silk fabrics. Most other fabrics do not "relax their weave" in this way

#### Step 5      Securing the Bond - Burnishing

The best way to insure a solid bond between the fabric and the liner is to burnish the fabric with a folded up, smooth piece of fabric. Burnishing with a smooth piece of cloth (old sheets are great because besides being very smooth, they don't tend to have enough color left in them that you need to worry about rubbing their color onto your liner) is especially important when you are dealing with "slubbed fabrics". These fabrics, usually Silks or Satins, tend to trap air around the slubs, which if not dealt with, can soon turn into little bubbles. Even if you have the luxury of putting your liner into a vacuum press after putting down the fabric, the broad pressure applied by this device will not do the job as well as a little burnishing.

## Step 6 Wrapping the Fabric Around the Lip of the Liner

Laying the liner face down on your work table take your Muck bottle and run a line of glue near the front edge of the bottom of the lip stopping about an inch short of each corner. If you take your artists brush and starting in the middle of each bar of the liner work toward each corner distributing the glue along the nose and back of the lip, you will normally find you carry enough glue on the brush to cover that last inch or so. If you run your glue line all the way to the corner you will usually find you have too much glue accumulating there and can risk having it bleed up to the face of the liner. Once you have the glue on the nose and back of the liner stand the liner on its back edge with the fabric covered top facing you, then use the palm of one hand to gently push the fabric over the lip while using the fingertips of your other hand to form a sort of channel which conforms with the shape of the lip and finishes the wrapping of the fabric. Do not be concerned if your corners are somewhat rounded at first, you will come back and clean them up at the end. First just complete the wrapping of the lip everywhere else but the corners. Be sure to hold the liner up and look along the nose to make sure you do not have any bumps or other irregularities in the fabric. (This is the second most common place for mistakes to occur.)

## Step 7 Finishing the Corners

At this point you probably have a liner with very rounded looking corners. That's ok. Now we will do our final cutting of those last few threads, which will allow us to wrap the fabric down into the corners. Working with the liner face down first just push into the corner with your fingernail. If your fabric does not quite go into the corner then cut a couple more threads into the corner with your razor blade. Just as when you removed the center of the fabric earlier, you will feel the fabric relax slightly more with each thread you cut allowing you to push the fabric further down into the corner. Once you have completed your corners, then trim off the remaining excess fabric by cutting parallel to the back of the lip into the rabbet of the liner with your razor blade. When you have removed any excess fabric, if you hold the liner face up, put a tiny speck of glue on your fingertip, and reaching underneath the nose of the liner, drag your finger across the bottom corner of the liner's nose, you will see that this finishing touch controls any loose threads and prevents their future occurrence. You now have a beautiful liner which has no seams and which has nice clean, sharp corners.

### TIP

If you anticipate having difficulty getting the fabric to cover your corners well because of the presence of one or more of the factors I have mentioned which make this task more difficult, you may wish to add a fillet to your design. Aside from their usefulness in the overall design of a framing job, Fillets can be used to make up for situations where it is simply not possible to cover the innermost corners with fabric. Building one into your design can take the pressure off of having to do what just cannot be done.

Congratulations, you now know how to produce the finest style of fabric-covered liner. You will find that there are few things your clients prize more highly than uniqueness and originality in framing. With your new skills you will be able to take any fabric and any profile (they don't even have to come from Raphael's) and create custom liners you can be proud of. We encourage you to take the time to also read through the information contained in "Working With Fabric-Covered Liners" for a more in depth look at some of the more important aspects pertaining to the ordering, cutting and joining of liners. As with most things, there are better, and worse, ways to do the job, and this piece is likely to save you from having to do too much of your learning "the hard way." Please feel free to call Raphael's help line at (800) 872-5191 if you need someone to walk you through that first liner or two. We've got several people who've been doing this for more than 20 years who can answer almost any liner related questions.

P.S. If you just don't have the time or space or inclination to create your own custom-wrapped liners or custom-wrapped mats, Raphael's does more of this work than any other company on the planet and can also offer these products in their finished form. Please see our Price List for details.