

## Preparing Art Quilts for a Gallery Exhibit

Fiber art poses unique hanging challenges. Your piece must be supported across the top and hang straight. The hanging hardware must not show. The instructions that follow were developed by trial and error and tested at Coco Gallery–Estero. The system involves a slat, a split hanging sleeve, and a wire hanger. This system is easy to put together and will help you make a professional showing wherever you exhibit or display your work.

### COMPONENTS

**Slat:** A 2"-wide window blind slat will support small art quilts. Shop the "damaged goods" aisle for blinds you can repurpose. For larger or heavier pieces, substitute a wood slat.

**Hanging Sleeve:** Use muslin or a fabric that matches the back of your piece.

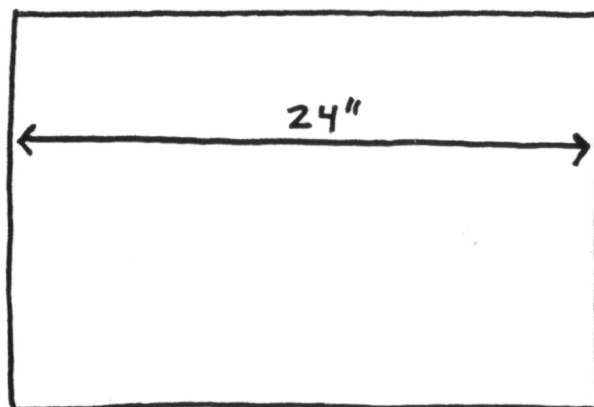
**Wire:** Use 20-lb.-weight picture hanging wire.

### YOU'LL ALSO NEED:

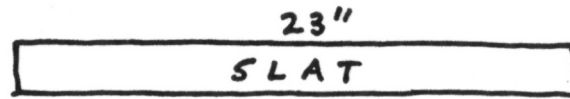
Sewing machine, sewing thread, hand-sewing needle, tape measure, iron, rotary cutter, straightedge, cutting mat, scissors, awl or drill, X-Acto knife or saw, wire cutters, packing tape, pencil

### INSTRUCTIONS

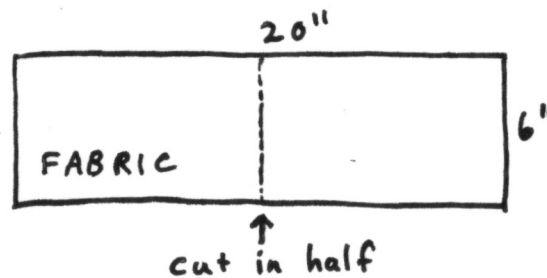
1. Measure across the top of your artwork to find the width.



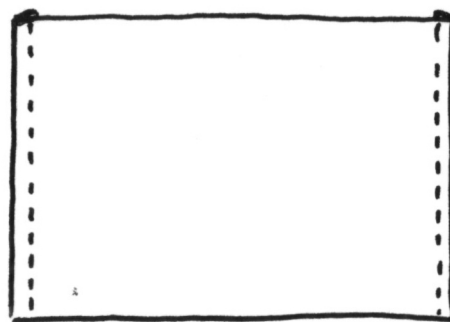
2. Cut a slat to a length that is 1" shorter than the width measurement. An X-Acto knife will make a neat cut on most composition blind slats. Wood slats may require sawing.



3. Cut a strip of fabric 4" shorter than the width measurement x 6" wide. Cut the strip crosswise in half for two 6"-wide sleeve strips.

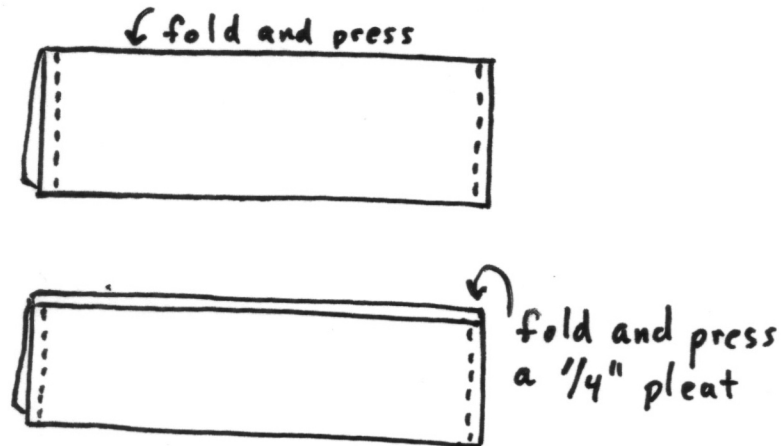


4. Press the 6" edges of each sleeve strip 1/2" to the wrong side. Machine-stitch 1/4" from the folded edges with matching thread.

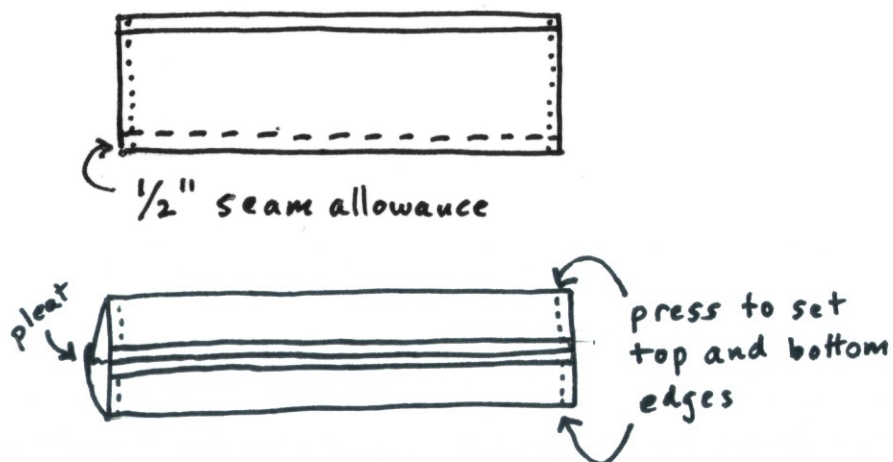


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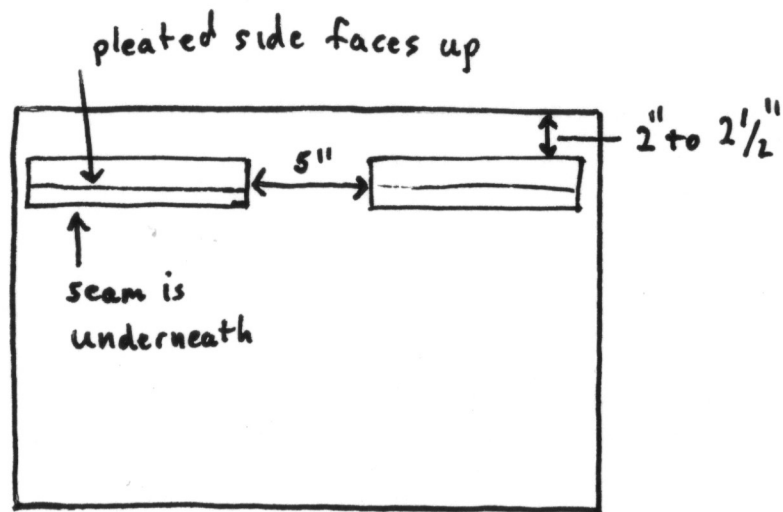
5. Fold one sleeve strip lengthwise in half, wrong sides together. Press the folded edge. Fold down this folded edge  $\frac{1}{4}$ " and press again to set a narrow pleat. Prep the second sleeve strip in the same way.



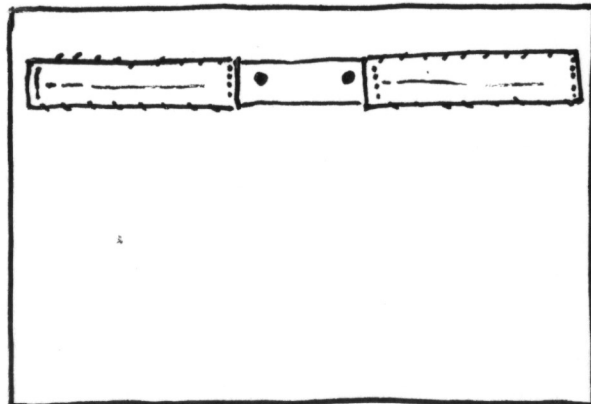
6. Machine-stitch the long raw edges of the strip together,  $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the edge. Lightly press the seam open without unfolding the narrow pleat. Finesse to keep the seam more or less centered, then press with more pressure to set the creases at the top and bottom long edges. This will create a sleeve that has a narrow side (the side with the seam) and a slightly wider side (the pleated side). Note that the seam allowance is on the outside and there is no need to turn the sleeve. Sew and press the second sleeve strip in the same way.



7. Lay the artwork facedown on a flat surface. Position the two sleeves on the artwork 2" to 2 1/2" below the top edge with the seams facing down. Allow a 5" space between the sleeves and a 1/2" allowance on each side. Measure to confirm the placement and alignment. Pin in place.

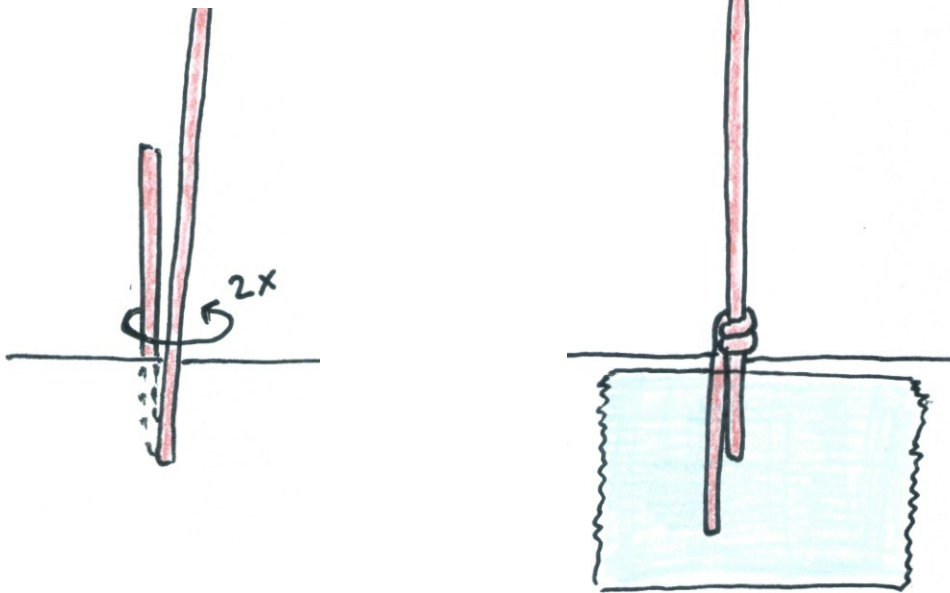


8. Hand-sew the two long edges of each sleeve to the reverse side of the work.
9. Insert the slat through both sleeves. On the exposed center section of the slat, mark two dots, 1/2" from the top edge and about 4" apart. Remove the slat from the sleeves. Use an awl to pierce a hole at each dot. Use a drill to make holes in a wood slat.

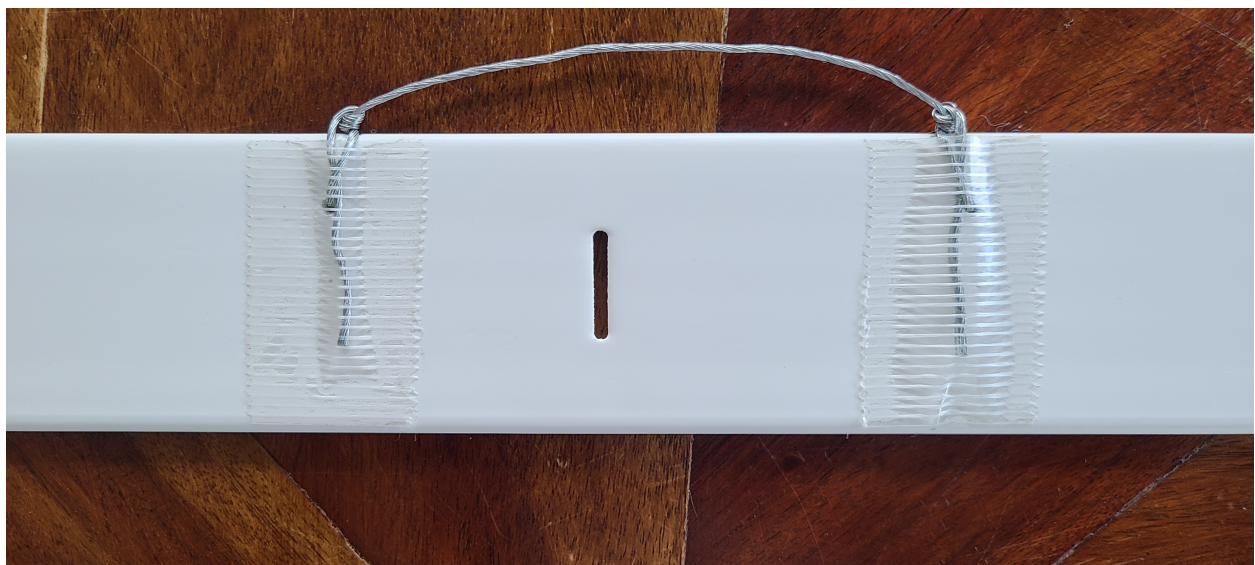




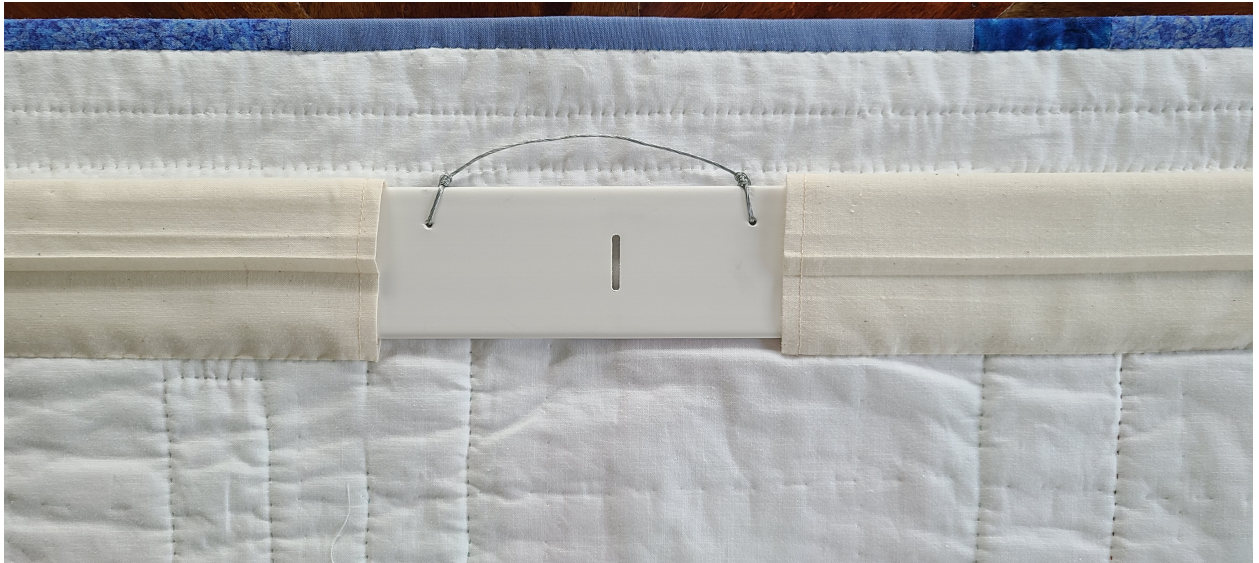
10. Thread the free end of the picture hanging wire through one hole (do not cut the wire from the roll yet). Bend both wire pieces up, and twist the shorter wire twice around the standing wire. Bend the shorter wire down and press it flat against the slat. Trim off any excess wire. Tape down the wire to cover the sharp ends.



11. Cut the wire from the roll, allowing a 10" working length. Working with the newly cut end, repeat step 10 for the other hole. Make a "shopping bag handle" that extends no more than 3/4" above the top edge of the slat. Trim off any excess wire. Make sure that both taped sections are on the same side of the slat.



12. With the taped side faced down, reinsert the slat into the sleeves, scrunching the wire "handle" if needed until it reaches the open middle section. The top of the handle should fall 1 1/2" to 2" below the top of the artwork—low enough to conceal the gallery hanging hardware.



13. Test-hang your piece on the wall. The top edge should not droop forward and the hanging hook should be concealed.



*Tip: To test-hang your piece during construction, skip step 8 and complete the steps 9 through 12. Hang your artwork on a picture hanging hook, a nail, or a*

*T-pin in a design wall. Step back and assess the appearance. If the top of the quilt droops forward, adjust the sleeve position closer to the top edge. If the hanging hook shows, bring the sleeve lower (or shorten the "shopping bag handle"). Work in increments until you find the ideal position. Remove the slat and complete the hand sewing.*

Prepared by Candie Frankel, November 2024

Consulting Artists: Sally Dutko and Pam Richardson