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The Lively
NEEDLE

By MARY KAY DAVIS
Anyone who can stitch needlepoint can block. It certainly saves money. And your deadline, the precision that you expect and the quality of your work are under your own control.

If you talk with fifty needleworkers, you will get fifty different ways to block. Here's mine.
First, be sure that your yarns are colorfast and that only paints or waterproof marking pens were used to mark your canvas. To test for dye fast yarn, wet a strand, wait two minutes and press firmly between the folds of a white tissue. Examine the tissue for any dye bleeding. Repeat with each color yarn used. If you find any color, don't dampen your canvas because the dyes will run. Red and black tend to give the most trouble.

In general, block with as little moisture as you can. Water is necessary to loosen the sizing of the canvas so that you can move it back into shape. But too much moisture can wash that sizing away and leave your piece limp.

ONLY LAUNDRY your needlepoint if you must. But if worse comes to worse, wash the canvas as you would a cashmere sweater. Use Woolite, cold water, gentle swishing and blotting with a white terry cloth towel. Don't squeeze, wring or soak any longer than you absolutely have to. And rinse very thoroughly.

When you block, you'll need a board larger than your needlepoint, a clean sprayer filled with water—a Windex bottle is fine, and a white terry cloth towel. Also get pliers, a hammer, non-rusting upholstery tacks of aluminum or copper, a ruler and a T-square or triangle to get your corners square.

Wet your towel and squeeze out the



By
MARY KAY
DAVIS

excess moisture. Place it flat on the board. Spray the back and front of your needlepoint until it is moist but not wet. Place it face up on the towel. Pound each tack in only half way, so that you can easily remove it if you wish. Position tacks half way between the needlepoint and the edge of the unworried canvas.

TACK DOWN the top left corner. Firmly pull canvas to the right. Tack down the upper right corner. Place the ruler along the top edge and straighten the needlepoint by tacking every three quarters of an inch.

Now pull the bottom right corner straight down and tack. Check the upper right corner with the triangle or T-square. Move that bottom tack if you have to until the upper right corner is square. Straighten the right side and tack.

Next, pull the lower left corner firmly to the left and tack. Check the lower right and upper left corners. Move that tack until all corners are square. Straighten and tack the bottom edge, and then the left side. Recheck all corners and sides for squareness and straightness.

Place your board flat in a cool, unheated place and let it dry slowly. Forty-eight hours is not too long for drying. Spray with the mister if the needlework seems to be drying out in less than 24 hours. Then take out the tacks and you're finished.

If your work is badly out of shape, block it more than once. It will get straighter each time.
And that's all there is to it. Happy hammering!

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**Handy
guide
to art shows
available**

The University of Michigan Extension Service has published its listing of 1977 art shows, fairs and exhibits in the state of Michigan.

This year's publication has been expanded to include events taking place throughout the year, since art fairs no longer are limited to "clothesline" summer events in city parks, according to the extension service. Art shows now include many fall and winter activities which draw many participating artists and observers.

The listing provides the title, date and location of the event, entry fees, deadlines and restrictions, along with name and address of a contact person. A supplement will be published later, and organizers of upcoming events are invited to send details for inclusion.

Persons wishing to receive a copy of the art show listing should send check or money order (not cash) for \$1 to: Art List 1977, U-M Extension Service, 412 Maynard, Ann Arbor 48109.

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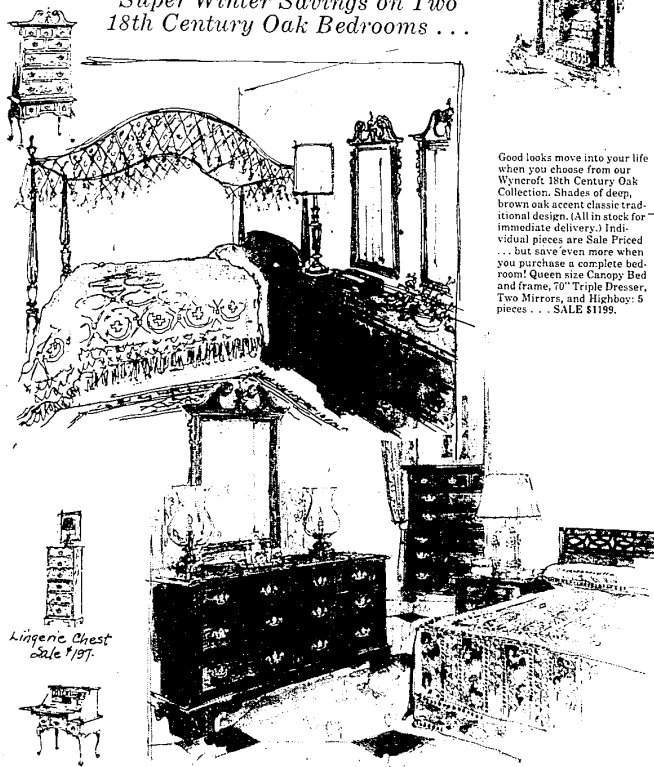
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