

# Mastering Mounting



by  
Chris A. Paschke,  
CPE, GCF

## Trim, Mount & Protect

**A**s an artist, calligrapher, and second generation framer, I am extremely proud of the framing industry.

Having been raised in retail, I continually strive to give consumers what they want. I also try to teach the high value of fine art and the need to properly respect and care for it. That also goes for limited edition art books—collections of images by an artist in a hardbound book format.

### *The Lesson: Fine Art Books*

That said, there are some practices frowned upon in the

fine art industry. Professional framers have been taught never to trim a customer's artwork as well as framing images from a fine art limited edition book for resale because it is illegal. The same goes for never defacing or dismantling a book for the sake of selling off individual pages or for framing the artwork in that book.

In the October 2006 issue of *House Beautiful*, under the monthly section called "The Best Ideas," comes their Number 1 monthly suggestion: "Pay thousands of dollars for a watercolor by (a name artist) when their show opens...or buy...their limited edition book of 50 color plates, and—be daring—take it apart. For \$1,100...you'll

end up with several walls full of art." This is the actual quote, without the names to protect the innocent.

When a national design magazine teaches the consuming public to deface, be cheap, and illegal, then how can a gallery and framer compete? Perhaps they should also teach them to watch a few episodes of *Trading Spaces* to learn how to throw house paint on a piece of Masonite, or blow up a digital photo of the kids and press it against glass in a readymade frame from Target. When practices like this are perpetuated, framers will forever have an uphill fight explaining the costs surrounding fine art and custom picture framing. The lesson is that while it is legal to do whatever you wish with your own purchased fine art book in the confines of your own home; let the framer beware. It is borderline illegal and a terribly unethical practice.

### *The Project: Two Maps*

Still, there are times when trimming is legal and profitable. Such was the case with an irregularly shaped Tehachapi area map. A local real estate agent walked in with two maps to be mounted and framed for her office wall. One was a local street map of the residential areas, and the other was an older 1960s elevation map from the Forest Service.

The elevation map was a straightforward basic mount and laminate project. It was printed on only one side and could



Photo 1: A 30"x18" real estate map is printed on two sides with heavy solid areas of blue and black ink on the back. It is new but has bold folds and heavy ridges because of the heavier weight paper.

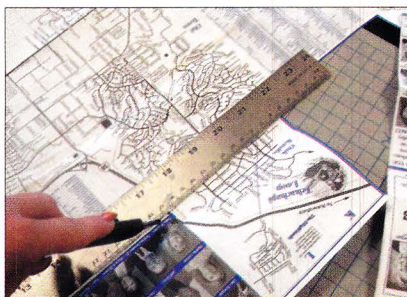


Photo 2: The unwanted ads were trimmed away from the map, leaving the contrasting blue line as a border.

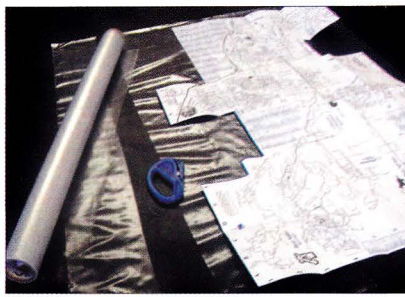


Photo 3: The Flobond dry mount film was sized larger than the map and left in a rectangular oversized format, untrimmed, not matching the shape of the map.

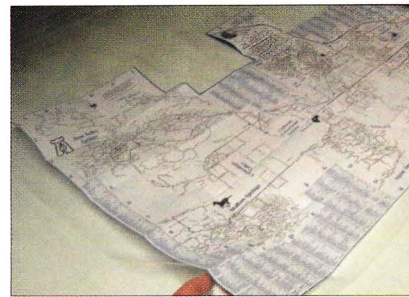


Photo 4: The oversized sheet of adhesive was laid on a release paper sheet and the map positioned on top. This was covered with a second sheet of release paper and bonded at 190°F for two to three minutes to pre-mount the film adhesive to the back of the map.



Photo 5: Drytac Flobond is self-shaping. When the top release paper is lifted from the mount, the trim adhesive may be easily lifted from the sheet and will break off to the edges of the odd-shaped map.



Photo 6: Once the excess adhesive is removed, carefully lift the pre-mounted image from the release paper. It will be slightly stuck to the paper, so make certain not to tear the map.

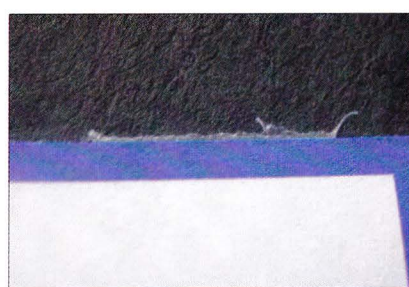


Photo 7: Examine the edges for any small bits of remaining adhesive that need to be removed. An adhesive like this would show against the selected black substrate when the pre-mounted map is mounted to its backing board.

quickly and easily be mounted to a pre-adhesived white foamboard, then laminated. The residential map had a few more issues. Though printed in a rectangular format, the street map was irregularly shaped with window inserts of other real estate agent ads scattered around the edges. As with most maps, it was also printed in detail on both sides (Photo 1). The two requests for this map were to trim away competitive agent ads and to mount and then laminate it to a foam substrate. It needed to be mounted with no visible adhesive and the text and photos from the opposite side could not be allowed to bleed through. The ghosting could be easily controlled by mounting to either a blue or black substrate. The unwanted ads were trimmed from the map, leaving the contrasting

blue line as a border (Photo 2).

In this case a 1/4" black foamboard was chosen as the substrate so push pins could be used to mark properties for sale. A clear adhesive was required to bond the map so that the color of the black foamboard would dominate over the printed text on the back. Spray glue, pressure-sensitive film, or dry mount film could have all been used as the adhesive of choice, but since the maps had been mounted in that fashion, laminated, dry mounting was selected (Photo 3). Dry mount film melts and bonds clear, while dry mount tissue allows the benefit of mounting to a black substrate.

### ***Premounting and Mounting***

The cut adhesive was then pre-

mounted to the back of the map at 190°F for 2½ minutes in a 4060 VacuSeal vacuum press (Photo 4). The beauty of Drytac Flobond is its self-shaping nature. When the top release paper is lifted from the mount, the trim adhesive may be easily lifted from the sheet and will break off to the edges of the odd-shaped map (Photo 5). The self-shaping occurs either when the adhesive is still warm right after mounting or after it cools. Once the excess adhesive is removed, the pre-mounted, adhesive-backed image can be carefully lifted from the release paper. It will be slightly stuck to the paper, so make certain not to tear the map as it is removed (Photo 6).

Closely examine the edges of the pre-mounted art to make cer-

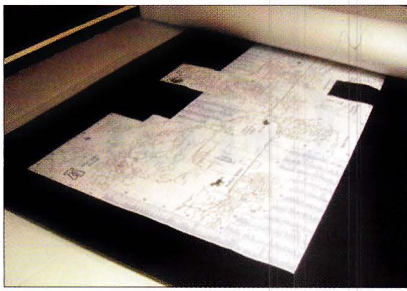


Photo 8: Align the map, tack it in position, and move it to a heated vacuum press for final mounting. Cover with release paper so any exposed adhesive does not stick to press platen.



Photo 9: Fold back the top few inches of the release liner backing attached to the laminate to expose the tacky adhesive on the underside of the laminate.

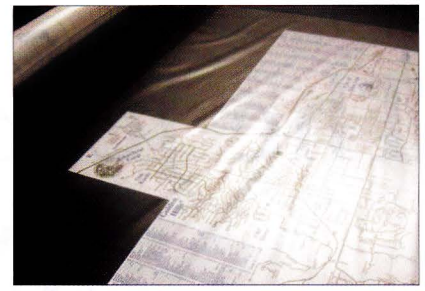


Photo 10: Stick the exposed end to the end of the map substrate and remove the liner from beneath the laminate, allowing the clear polyester film to cover the map. Often there will be ripples in the laminate when first applied to the board.

tain all pieces of adhesive are cleanly separated from the map. If any rogue adhesive remains, it may be easily pulled off with your fingers (Photo 7). Align the map, tack in position, and move to the heat vacuum press for final mounting. Cover it with release paper so that any exposed adhesive does not stick to press platen before mounting (Photo 8).

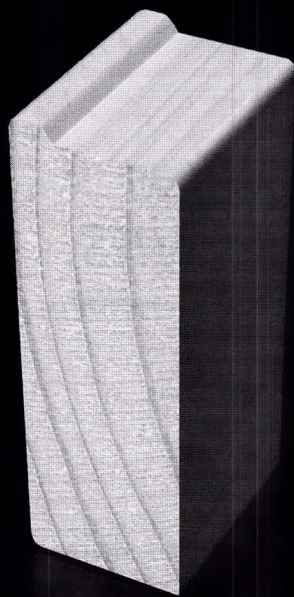
### ***Laminating***

Once mounted and cooled, the laminate may be sized, positioned, and mounted. Sized laminate should be cut to cover the entire rectangular board and not just the odd-shaped map. Fold back the top few inches of the release liner attached to the laminate to expose the tacky adhesive on the back of the laminate (Photo 9). Stick the

end of the polyester film laminate to the end of the substrate and pull the liner out from under the rest of the laminate film. This will allow the remaining clear polyester film to cover the map and substrate.

There will often be ripples in the laminate when first applied to the board (Photo 10). Each corner or end may be gently lifted from

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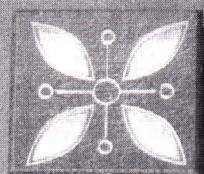


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Photo 14: Whenever mounting or laminating, always inspect for dirt and particles that are trapped between the layers before mounting. The film can be lifted again and the particle removed.

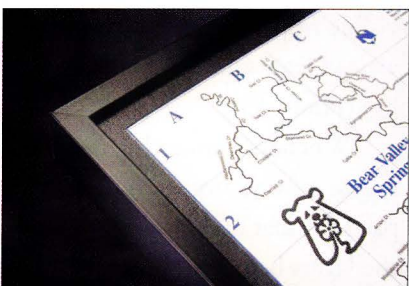


Photo 18: Nielsen Arthaus Black #117-50 was selected as the moulding for these two laminated maps to give some weight to the border and to allow replacement with other maps in the future.

Place the mounted map with unmounted laminate into the press with either  $\frac{1}{4}$ " or  $\frac{1}{2}$ " overlay sponge foam to activate and adhere the laminate. Though the temperature for Drytac laminate is the same as its adhesive film, the mounting time is extended from three to five minutes because of the addition of the overlay foam (Photo 15). The sponge is required to allow for all air to be removed from between mounting layers prior to bonding. Mount at  $185^{\circ}\text{F}$  to  $190^{\circ}\text{F}$  for five minutes.

## Adhesive Saturation

Adhesives are drawn toward the heat source, which is in the lid of a heat press. When a porous paper is left in a hot press for an extended time, the adhesive will saturate the paper as it is drawn toward the platen. This laminated sample was left in the press for nearly 20 minutes while a

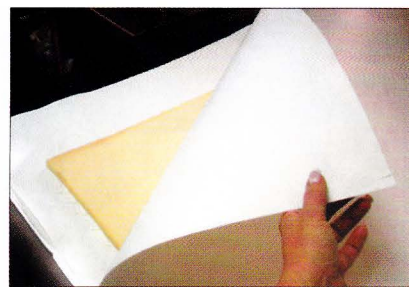


Photo 15: Place the mounted map into a press with a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " or  $\frac{1}{2}$ " overlay sponge foam to activate and adhere the laminate. Mount at  $185^{\circ}\text{F}$  to  $190^{\circ}\text{F}$  for five minutes. The color of the foam varies with manufacturers, and thicknesses are a matter of preference.

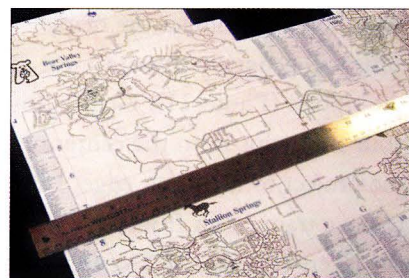


Photo 17: After lamination, trim the outer edges of the foam for a clean, blunt-cut edge. Then fit it into the frame.



Photo 16: This laminated sample was left in the press for nearly 20 minutes while a customer was being helped. The adhesive saturation left blotchy spots across the surface of the map, which meant starting again.

customer was attended to, and the adhesive had left blotchy saturation spots across the surface of the map (Photo 16). The project died. A new map needed to be purchased, trimmed, mounted, and protected.

## Trimming

Once mounted and laminated, the map may now be trimmed for framing (Photo 17). Trimming of foam-board substrates should be done after all mountings in order to

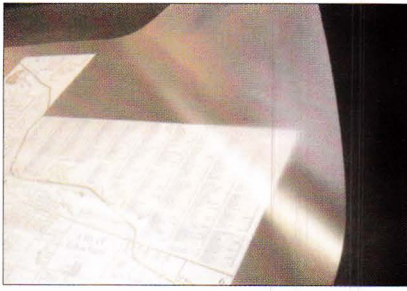


Photo 11: Each corner or end may be gently lifted from the board and allowed to gently roll back down to contact the map. This will generally smooth most of the ripples.

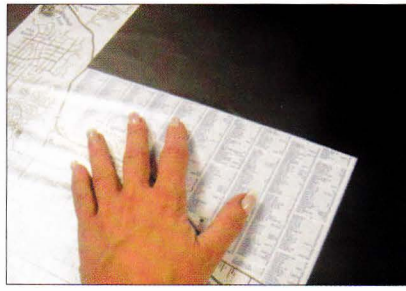


Photo 12: Gently run your fingertips from the center of the project to the outer edges to remove trapped air from between the layers.

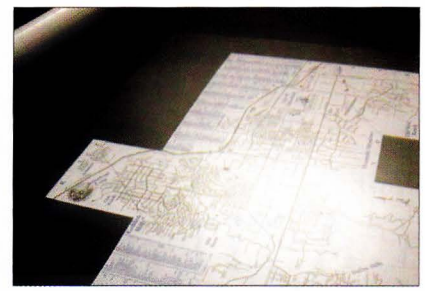


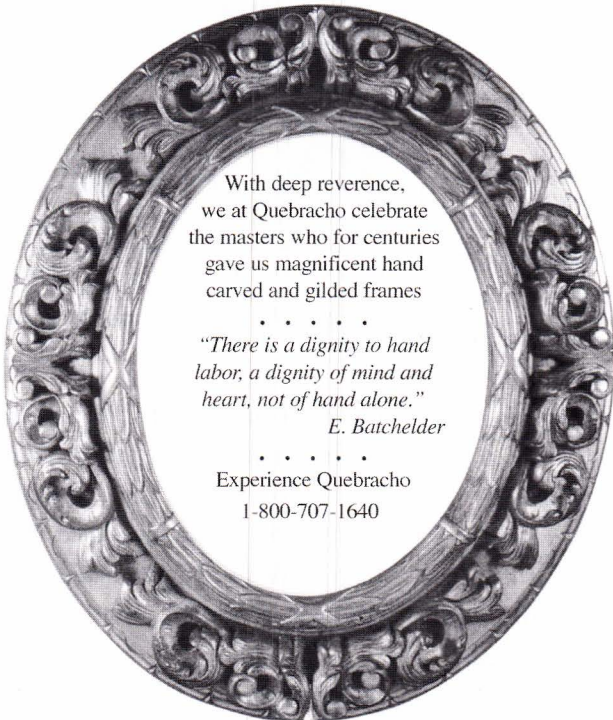
Photo 13: The prepped mounting is smooth, with no visible air bubbles.

the board and allowed to gently roll back down to contact the map. This will generally smooth most of the ripples (Photo 11). Gently run your fingertips from the center of the project to the outer edges to remove trapped air from between the layers (Photo 12). Do not aggressively burnish it down, as air should still be able to move between the layers. Properly applied

laminate will be smooth with no visible ripples or air bubbles when viewed from the side before mounting (Photo 13).

Whenever mounting or laminating, always inspect for dirt and particles that are trapped between the layers before mounting (Photo 14). In this case, there were tiny particles trapped between the film and the black substrate. They could

be felt with fingertips when lightly running a hand across the laminate surface as well as being very visible. The film may be lifted at the corner, and the particle removed. The laminate has a static charge, and tiny particles will not be easily extracted from under the film. One trick is to wrap a piece of tape around your finger and use it to attract the particle.



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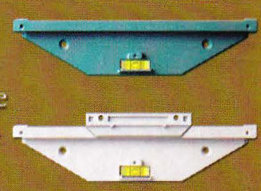
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achieve clean, blunt-cut substrate edges. All foamboard edges compress in mounting systems. At higher temperatures and longer durations, they compress the most. Foamboard begins to melt at 230°F, which can be tricky when a laminate activates at 215°F when compression is greatest.

### Framing

Nielsen Arthaus Black #117-50 frames were selected for this map project (Photo 18). This line of metal mouldings has a clean professional appearance, which helped give the outer edges of the map a little weight, and they are easily opened to replace with a new map when needed. The ½" flat face and ⅛" raise off the surface also give an added dimension to an otherwise flat map. About ¾" surrounding the outermost edges of the map were left to help maintain a bit of a matted appearance and to compensate for the wider front lip. The extra lip also helped offset the larger voids of plain black laminated foamboard created by ad trimming.

Trimming, mounting, and laminating photos, open editions, and maps like these are a fine way to make inexpensive replaceable items useful and to pick up extra framing dollars. Fine art books remain another story. ■

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Chris A. Paschke, CPF, GCF, Mounting Editor, owns Designs Ink in Tehachapi, CA, featuring commercial custom framing, fine art/graphic design, and industry consulting. Specializing in mounting, matting, design creativity, and fine art, she works with industry leaders and has taught for The National Conference. She has written two books on mounting: *The Mounting and Laminating Handbook* (now in its second edition) and *Creative Mounting, Wrapping, and Laminating* and can be contacted at [www.designsinkart.com](http://www.designsinkart.com).

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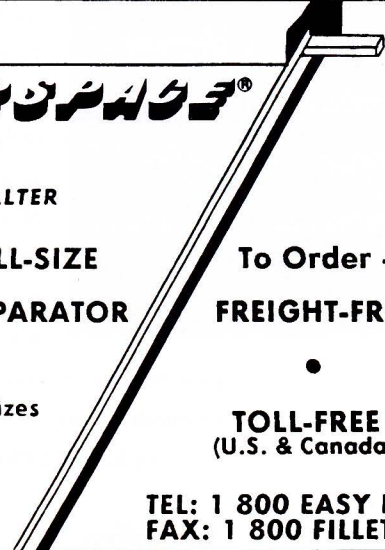
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