

Going for the Gold, or Pre-Mounting for Float Mounting

By Chris A Paschke, CPF

Going for the gold, silver or bronze this summer? What a concept. Hopefully, customers will come bounding into our shops with loads of precious (and priceless) photos of their Atlanta experience. With luck they will all be at least 16"x20" enlargements of their favorite athlete winning yet another gold medal, shot with that special telephoto lens and top of the line stop action film. You know the print...the kind they are willing to spend the big dollars to frame. What was it that Kodak used to say about preserving those memories?

But alas, we must also be prepared for the abundance of family shots taken at

Grandma's 80th birthday; and let us never forget the graduations! This summer should be full of photo opportunities. Some will arrive with carte blanche excitement, allowing us to showcase our most tasteful and perhaps creative presentations. Some will scream for special touches to help camouflage an otherwise weak photo presentation. Others will quietly request being floated on a piece of foamboard to be bevel cut for temporary display in a school office or kids' bedroom



TEMPORARY IS BETTER THAN NOTHING

Though we should always "go for the gold" in terms of selling to the top of the project chain, it's clear that certain projects don't require top notch framing. And we should always remember: a little bit is better than nothing at all.

Laminating is an alternative to glazing which allows for mounting/laminating artworks onto 3/16" or thicker foam substrates which may be hung without a frame or moulding. Edges may be bevel cut

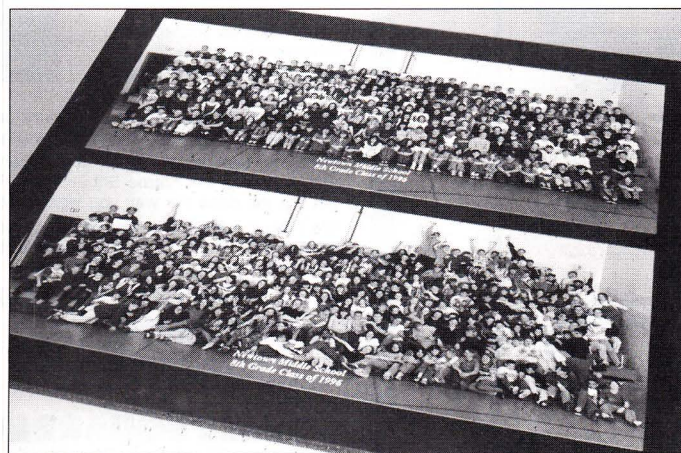


Photo 1: A before and after class photo is perfect for limited framing... ideal for laminated float mounting onto foam, bevel cutting and hanging in an office or bedroom for a year or two.

mastering mounting

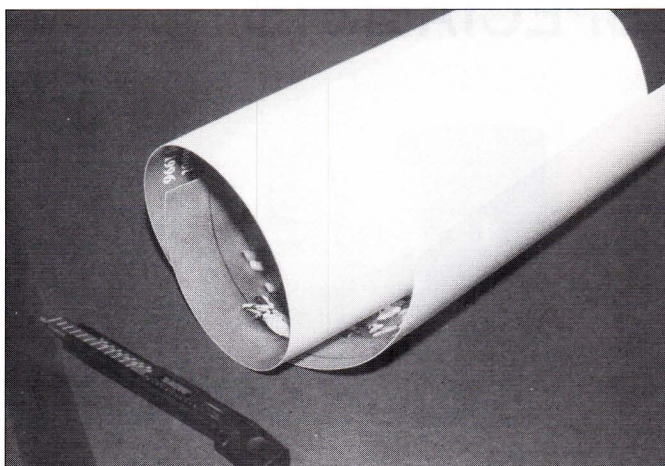


Photo 2: The photos were rolled when received and resisted laying flat.

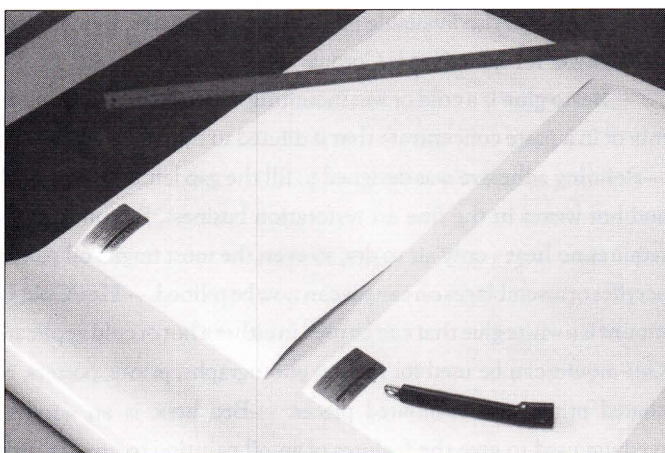


Photo 3: The gold stickers from the verso needed to be removed to prevent a ghosted embossing once mounted.

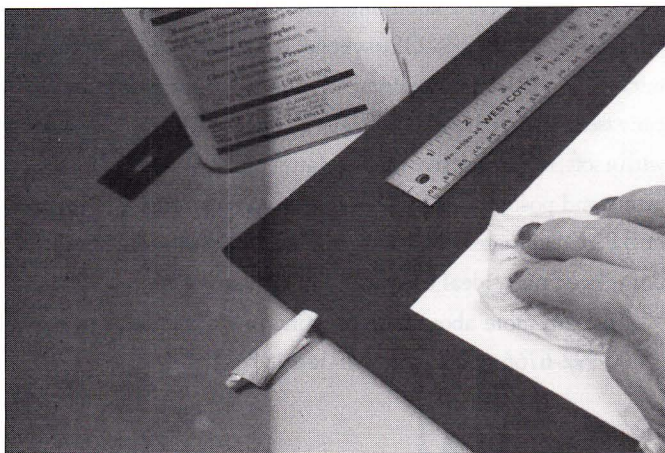


Photo 4: The peeled stickers left an adhesive residue which was easily removed with a standard solvent.

on a mat cutter with a result that is an inexpensive solution to glass and moulding. Not an upper end project, but still a good one.

PRE-MOUNTING FOR DRY MOUNTING

If laminating is the chosen presentation without moulding, then dry mounting will most likely be the adhesive of choice, since heat is required for laminating. If the photo or project (perhaps multiple smaller photos) is to be centered on a substrate with no mat, the first decision will be how to adhere it to the mounting board without allowing tissue to show.

Much time can be wasted attempting to trim adhesives to the exact print size, or 1/16" smaller, and then aligning it perfectly prior to mounting. It is important to always remember that time is money. Being time efficient is the most direct path to profits.

The quickest way to align adhesives is by pre-mounting them, or placing them into the mechanical or heat vacuum press with the selected adhesive, between appropriate release materials, using no substrate. This then mounts the adhesive to the photo so it may be trimmed, tacked and then mounted to the selected substrate.

SELECTING ADHESIVES

Tissue adhesives are composed of a tissue in the center, called a carrier, with adhesive applied to either side of it (like an Oreo cookie). The tissue center is paper which will expand when exposed to heat and moisture, as any paper will. Even if the tissue adhesive is painstakingly sized, trimmed and checked to be exactly perfect for a photo, odds are the photo may not expand much in the press while the tissue adhesive will indeed expand some.

This explains the slight 1/64" of shiny white adhesive film that may be seen protruding from beneath the photo after mounting. On a white foam substrate this is not overly visible and therefore less of a problem. It will not matter if the white or black foam is to be trimmed at the exact edge of the poster or photo print, but in the case of a black foam substrate being used as a border or substitute mat, a white strip will detract from the finished presentation.

Pure film adhesives are removable and therefore reactivate each time they are placed into a heat press. This reactivation may allow for adhesive to ooze out along the photo edge after premounting when actually tacked and float mounted during

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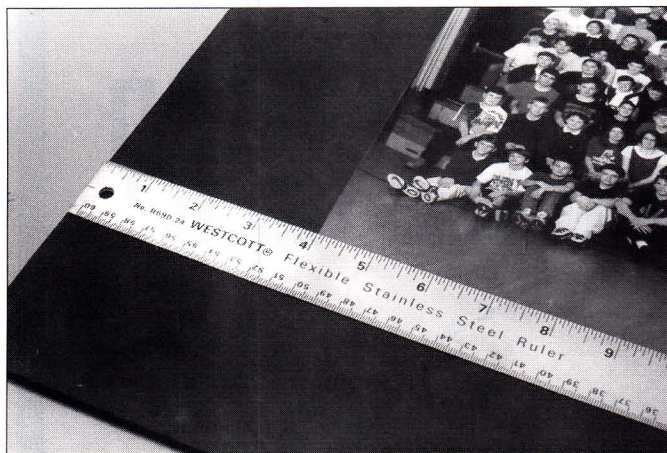


Photo 5: A 4" allowance is calculated into the board sizing for later bevel trimming.

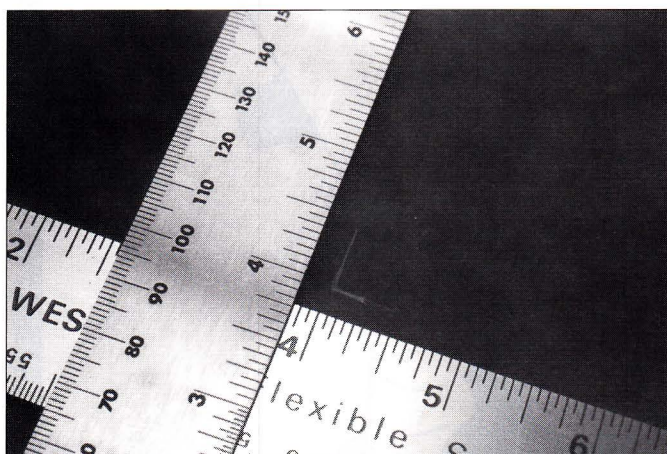


Photo 6: While measuring for the size of the project, mark the actual float mounting corners in pencil at the required 4" junction for quicker placement when tacking.

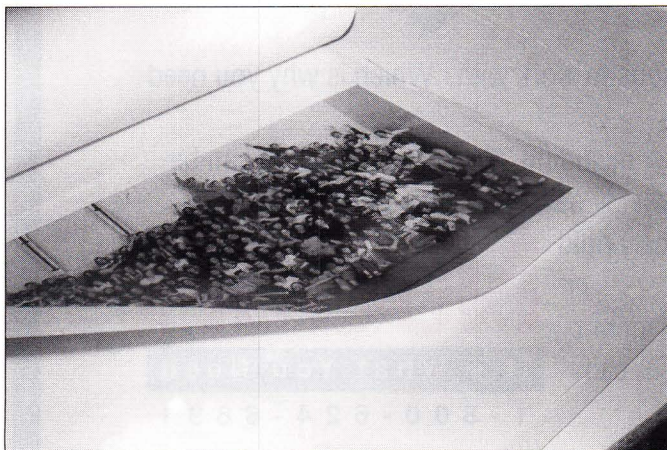


Photo 7: After mounting in a release envelope at 185F for approximately 1 minute in mechanical press (2 in a vacuum unit), gently peel the pre-mounted photo from the release paper.

the second visit to the press.

Since photos aren't porous, the best adhesive choice for a dry mount application will be a permanent, breathable, tissue. Permanent tissues bond in the press as they reach temperature and, once mounted, will not be able to ooze beyond the photo edge during the second mounting.

IDENTIFYING THE PROJECT

The "definition", or first stage, of design requires us to establish what needs to be done. The project for this month includes two 10"x24" class photographs to be float mounted 1" apart onto a 3/16" black foam board, then laminated (photo 1). The project is to remain unframed leaving a 2" border around the outer edge after laminating, so a black on black foam board was selected for its clean bevel cutting.

The photos had been kept rolled, (photo 2), and the gold sticker from the verso needed to be removed (photo 3) to prevent a ghosted embossing of the sticker once mounted.

Any standard adhesive solvent (ie: Unseal, Bestine thinner, Toluene...) will remove unwanted residue after the bulk of the sticker is peeled off (photo 4).

TECHNIQUE AND PROCEDURE

Establishing the outer dimensions of the board may be done by quick measurements then adding an inch or so to allow for bevel trimming and foam crush during mounting (photo 5). Since a 2 to 3" border would remain, the board is sized with an overall 4" allowance (photo 6).

PRE-MOUNTING

The best solution to cleanly applying adhesive is pre-mounting. Cut a piece of tissue-core adhesive larger than the two photos if mounting them on the same sheet. (Or mount each separately on smaller sheets, but still larger than the 10x24" photo.) Randomly float the photo onto a piece of mounting tissue larger than the photo, place in a release envelope, and mount in 185F press approximately 1 minute, 2 in a vacuum unit. Carefully peel up the lightly adhered pre-mounted photo from the release paper (photo 7) and trim to the exact edges or desired shape (photo 8).

If there were a series of smaller photos, wine labels, odd shaped memorabilia etc, this is the perfect way to prepare pieces for later float mounting. Montages (e.g. photo on top of photo) may be built as long as the breathability issue is always

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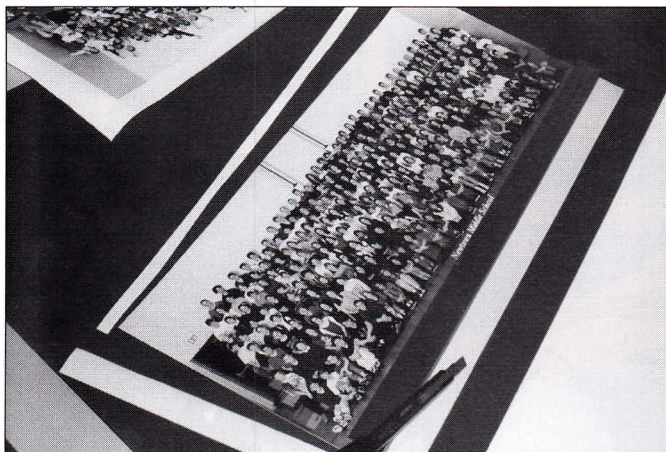


Photo 8: Trim excess adhesive from the edges of the photo.

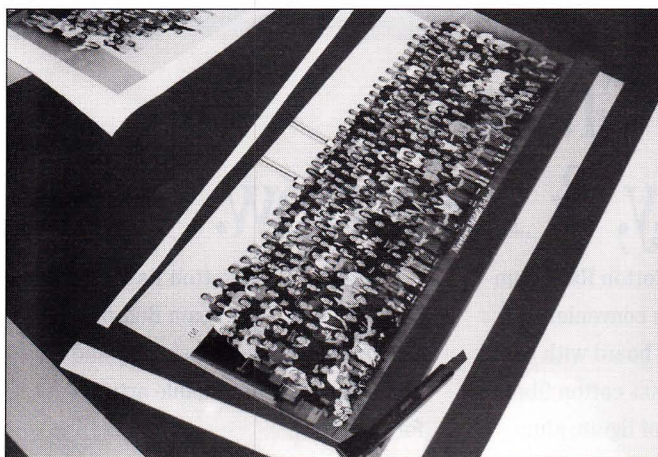


Photo 9: Tack the art to the substrate aligning the pencil corners earlier marked.

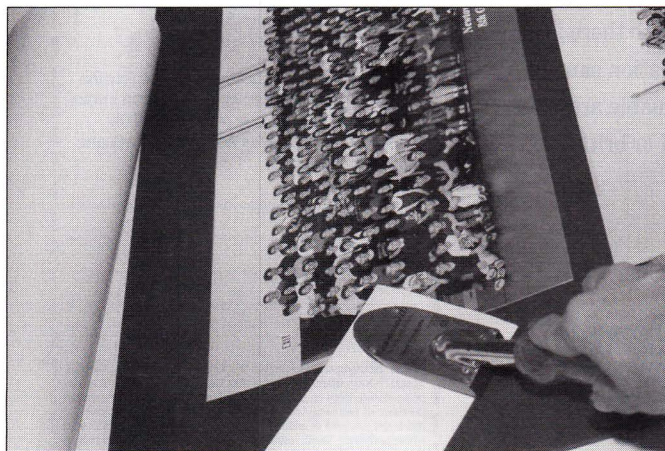


Photo 10: The float mounted double photo is now ready for lamination, bevel trimming and affixing with hanger on the back.

kept in mind

FLOAT MOUNTING

The actual float mounting in this project is simple after the adhesive has been applied, trimmed and the photos are ready to mount.

Tack the end of the pre-mounted art to the black foam substrate aligning with the pencil marked corners drawn earlier (photo 9). Place the foam board unit with tacked photos into a 185F mechanical press with release board for 1-1/2 to 2 minutes. A vacuum press will only require 2-1/2 to 3 minutes.

The pre-perforated laminate may now be applied, layered with overlay foam and mounted for completion (photo 10). Measure the edges from the photos to determine exact 2" borders, mark and bevel cut using a mat cutter with sharp, new blade. And yes, this mounting/laminating process may indeed be accomplished in the press in one step rather than two.

IMPORTANT NOTE

The reason foam boards are crushed during vacuum mounting is that the rubber diaphragm compresses the edges as it conforms around substrate thickness while pressing against the platen. Less time in the press will lessen the compression; plus the item really only requires as much time in a vacuum unit as it does under heat/pressure in any mechanical press.

OTHER OPTIONS TO DRY MOUNTING

This is not to say dry mounting is the only solution to a float mounting question. It is in this case because of the laminating. Sprays, wet glues or pressure sensitives might also be the answer. In fact, stay tuned for more to come on pressure sensitives. In this contemporary era of "is it heat sensitive?", pressure sensitive adhesive films are becoming more and more versatile and perhaps even more in demand.

Watch for "Float Mounting with Pressure Sensitives" and "Seeing Your Way Clear to Pressure Sensitives" in upcoming issues this fall.

Is there gold in your future? How about silver, or green-back? Cash in on the potential photo dollars by suggesting float mounting. If may not be the gold in the project, but at least it's still in the running. ■

Chris A. Paschke, CPF, owns Designs Ink, Oxford, Connecticut, featuring commercial and custom framing, product consultation, design and education. Specializing in mounting, matting and design creativity she works with numerous industry leaders including Bienfang, Crescent Cardboard, Fletcher-Terry, Larson-Juhl, PFM, PPFA, and Seal Products.