

MASTERING MOUNTING

Trends For 1993

by Chris A. Paschke, CPF

Over the past two years, as a regular contributing editor to PFM, I have written numerous articles on technical and creative topics. I regularly refer to both past and future articles in an attempt to create not only continuity, but to develop a valuable source of reference material for you. With the new trends for 1993 comes my new monthly mounting column, *Mastering Mounting*, in which I will continue to present technical information, tips and step-by-step procedures for many basic mounting projects and those fearful, tougher ones you often wish would never have crossed your threshold in the first place.

Trends For '93

The issue this month is from the business standpoint of increased mounting profits for the new year. Thus, the trend for '93 involves increasing your profits by increasing mounting sales. By assessing your current mounting procedures, and possibly investing in a new piece of equipment, it is often easy to increase profits simply through the additional services you offer clients.

It has been said that only about 20% of all professional picture framers own a heat mounting system; if that is true, the mounting market still remains quite untapped.

Increasing Sales

If statistics are the trigger that stimulate you into action, and you currently sell graphics or poster art of any kind, then note that 90% of the artwork leaving your store should be mounted prior to walking out the door! Whether you spray, wet or vacuum mount, that figure will remain constant. The key to selling a greater percentage of mounting is never losing control of your sale. Rather than trying to sell a customer "up" into



mounting their piece, perhaps you should just eliminate the option of offering it unmounted completely. If posters are shipped to you shrink wrapped on corrugated cardboard, repackage them mounted onto an appropriate substrate. Guaranteed, if the customer truly wants the print, it will still sell!

Obviously, visual examples of what can happen to posters left unmounted are probably the best form of clinching a sale. I can't tell you how many customers have had an inexpensive \$5 travel poster slated for use in the bathroom ... *unmounted!* Granted, I frequently received opposition to the \$100 framing of a \$5 poster, but if a picture is worth a thousand words, then a sample of a rippled, buckled poster should help close the sale. Better yet, mount half of that thin inexpensive poster, dampen the unmounted half with a wet sponge to encourage the cockling, then mat and frame as usual. The contrast of the two halves

are about the most convincing argument I've found yet.

Pricing

If purchasing a new mounting press is in your future for 1993, the concept of mounting as many items (that walk through your door) as possible is constantly on your mind. Thus, when a conservation or a limited edition slated for hinging is the issue, you must shift into a "creative mode" and consider the use of mounting fabrics or perhaps tiered matting (PFM, February 1991). As a second generation framer who once made a capital investment, I know first hand that the more you mount, the quicker you pay off the equipment investment, and the sooner the profits start rolling in. The fact is, that same mounting fever should have been there *before!* Anytime additional charges can be worked into a framing job the cost of the job increases, and unless you operate a low profit, high volume shop, increased per ticket sales mean higher profits. The key could be more *mounting*.

It's a necessary practice, when dealing with the process and price of mounting a conservation piece or limited edition, that the sensitivities of archival hinging and reversibility often need additional explanation. When approaching the issue of mounting in relation to the most general custom framing, mounting paper, photos and fabrics may easily be camouflaged into the framing package as a necessary portion of the process.

Though economists and business consultants tell us we should calculate the completed price of framing and then present only the bottom line to the customer, my clients have always wanted a breakdown of the

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costs. By simply presenting the total price of (for argument's sake) \$150, then stating, "That breaks down to \$60 for the frame, \$40 for the matting, \$20 for the glazing and of course, that includes mounting and fitting," many closed questions concerning mounting may be readily avoided. Group segments together (i.e. the entire matting cost) to simplify the pricing for the customer; by not breaking down each individual united inch matting item (i.e. single mat + single mat + spacer + embossed line = \$) it is less overwhelming to the customer, and will not seem (to them) as if they are getting charged for unnecessary items that might easily be eliminated.

Control

Never lose control of the sale. The customer has chosen you as the professional, whether as a result of your ad in the yellow pages, your location or because you have just completed something for his sister. You were chosen *by him* as his framer. If that customer could frame it for himself he probably would, but once he walks into your store *you* are in charge; respect your customer and cater to him, but never lose control of the sale. Always be the professional the customer expects, look the part and be proud of what you do. Don't sound apologetic for what you may consider a high price and don't take it upon yourself to determine what is expensive to someone else; you may very well be mistaken.

Never ask "closed" questions during the selling process. Closed questions are those requiring only a simple yes or no answer, such as, "Do you want this mounted?". Dealing with objections such as, "what is mounting?" or "what's the difference between mounting and fitting?" or "does it have to be mounted?", simply refers you back to that framed, buckled poster you have as a visual example on your wall.

As professionals striving to earn a living we seldom turn any job away, even a mounting project with which we are insecure. There are many sources for mounting assistance, as well as conservators capable of help-

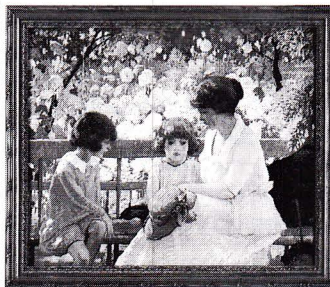
ing you solve fearful problems, and it is always better to contact a specialist when in doubt. So this year, for all of you professionals, I'll be one of your sources covering topics on wet, spray and dry mounting; more on laminating, photographs, fabrics, creativity, and profit potential, too. After all, we are all trying to *master mounting*.

P.S. Readers: Contrary to popular belief, and, as the fingernails in my photos show, *this* Chris is a *female!*
PFM

Chris A. Paschke, CPF, a second generation picture framer, owns Designs Ink, Oxford, Connecticut. Ms. Paschke continues as 1993 instructor for Seal Products' HOW-2 educational workshop series and is a 1993 PPFA instructor as well as an independent lecturer and demonstrator at industry events around the country.

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