

Mastering Mounting

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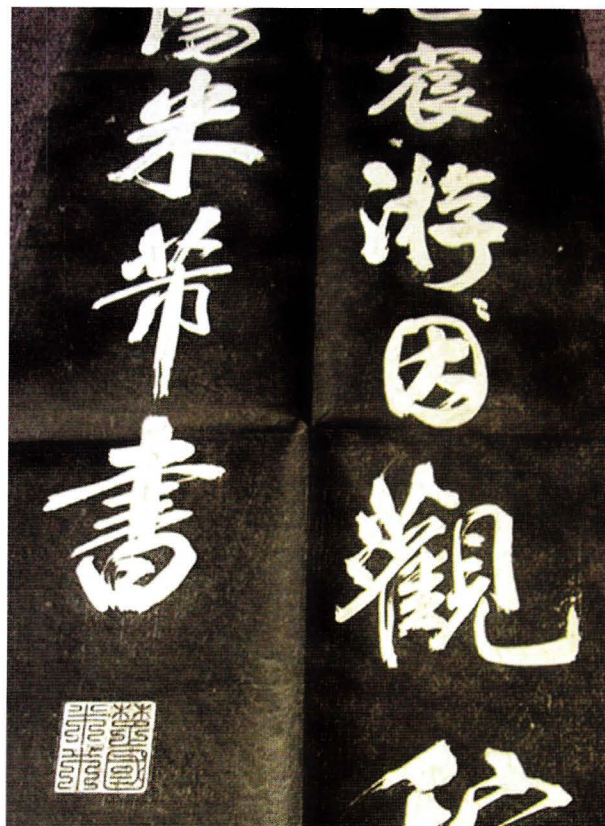
Noninvasive Mounting Techniques

To be fully prepared to handle the vast array of art in the twenty-first century, it is important to understand today's mounting options and their impact on art. Common sensitive art items might include inked stone prints from China, papercuts, vintage studio portraiture with a folder, original pastels, or hand painted leaves from India. These and many others require the care and treatment of preservation mounting methods. Preservation mounting uses a noninvasive mounting approach with techniques and materials that remain totally reversible after bonding, allowing mounted art to be forever returned to its original, unmounted state at any time in the future.

Non-preservation methods involving commercial adhesives are considered to be invasive mounting methods. These create a permanent or remov-

able bond that is never fully reversible. Removable does not mean reversible. Permanent bonds may be dissolved by chemical solvents, while removable bonds are broken by the re-application of heat. In either case, there will be some degree of adhesive residue remaining in the art once removed.

Mounting adhesives used in framing are neutral pH, insert and stable, meaning they will not



The folded rice paper ink rubbing from Xian, China, required a wet kozo paper backing to smooth it down.

Noninvasive mounting uses techniques and materials that remain totally reversible after bonding, allowing mounted art to be returned to its original state

react with anything else to create a new chemical reaction. It is the saturation of the adhesive—its non-reversibility—and the pH of the mount board, materials, or surface papers that make a mounting method invasive, not the adhesive.

Tear Strength

With noninvasive mounting, tear strength is not an issue, but with invasive methods it is. One of the most important issues when selecting any mounting technique is knowing what to expect of the end result, and that final result should have tear strength. That means



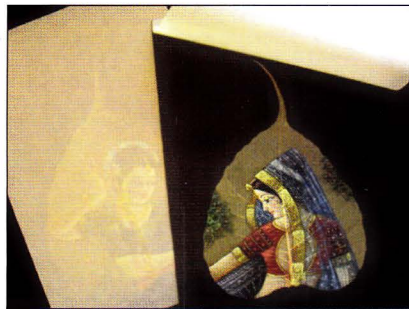
Kozo paper backing can be applied as a support sheet using starch adhesive to the wrinkled, creased, or sheer art to allow it to be scroll mounted or framed.

the art, substrate surface papers, or both will tear apart when tested for bond after full curing. All invasive mounting methods should have some degree of tear strength. Reversible heat-activated foamboards—Restore, Preserve, 100% Reversible AF, and Preserve Ultra—are considered noninvasive products designed without tear strength. They fuse more like a static mount, gently bonding until removal.

Starch Adhesive

Mastering assorted mounting techniques and understanding possible applications is vital, regardless of invasive or noninvasive method. Standard preservation practices include hinges and use of reversible starch pastes, but there are more applications for using starch than simply hinging.

Kozo Backing — A folded ink rubbing is actually a pounce technique using a thickened ink that was dried and folded for easy storage and transport. In China, inks dry permanently and are able to be fully saturated to remove paper creases and apply a reinforcing sheet of paper, a mounting process referred to as backing. This technique involves bonding a slightly heavier sheet of kozo paper as a support sheet to original rice paper art using starch adhesive. Once



Hand-painted leaves are sheer and delicate. They come tacked with PVA to black construction paper covered by glassine.

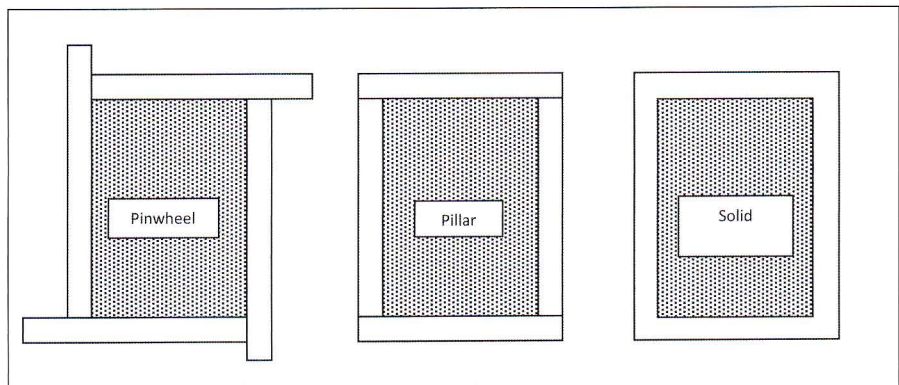
backed, the wrinkled, creased, or sheer original art is ready to be scroll-mounted or framed. This ink pounce most certainly may be smoothed and supported, but should only be done by a professional skilled at scroll mounting techniques. Knowing what needs to be done and when it should be passed on to a specialist is extremely important.

Starch Dots — Sheer, hand-painted Bo leaves from India often come tacked with PVA to black construction paper covered by glassine. They are very deli-



Papercut art from China is inexpensive, delicate, fragile, and light-fugitive.

preservation technique is Mylar encapsulation. Papercuts from Europe and Asia are a perfect candidate for encapsulation as these original pieces of folk art are delicate, fragile, and very light-fugitive. Though there are other methods of mounting fragile art, encapsulation allows for added dimension in the design of floating pieces above or between window mats with spacers. Mylar should be placed back-to-back so the concave curve lightly presses against the art to help suspend it in

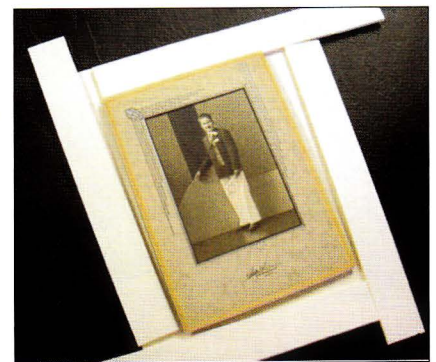


The basic pinwheel design uses four strips of foamboard to fill the entire space between the photo folder and the outside edge of the mat. Strips could also be applied as pillars, header, footer, or solid window.

cate and should be carefully removed from their support and attached to preservation boards using fine dots of starch along the spine of the leaf. Tiny dots of reversible PVA or EVA might also be used.

Mylar Encapsulation

A well known and frequently used



place. Gloves should be worn to prevent fingerprints between the sheets, and paper dust needs to be avoided,



Polyester encapsulation is a noninvasive method that preserves a paper object without adhesives, allowing it to float between mat layers for added depth.

especially if floating over dark surfaces.

Sink Mounts

Sink mounts are one of the most versatile noninvasive techniques and should be part of any custom framer's repertoire. They easily adapt to any thickness of art simply by adding 4-ply layers or foamboard depending on the art being encased. It is a technique that remains totally reversible regardless of the selected materials.

The pinwheel border, pillars with header and footer, or solid blunt-cut window are all options for sink mounts. The pinwheel design is the most popular and easiest to assemble. It uses four straight-cut strips of 4-ply, 8-ply, or foamboard to fill the entire space between the thick art and the outside edge of the mat. ATG should be applied to the back of each strip and butted firmly against the previous strip, allowing extra length to extend. It is then pressed firmly and trimmed to fit.

Pillars are meant to support the header and footer pieces. ATG should be applied to the back of the strip, aligned top and bottom, and then the sides cut to fit in between as a support. The solid window is a straight-cut opening in a sized board. Overcuts are suggested for clean cor-



Freeform or deckled-edge wax-saturated pieces may be sink mounted over a colored 2-ply rag allowing for design contrast and support.

ners since this spacer will never be visible. Though this type of sink mount is clean and unified, it doesn't allow for using endcuts and strips from other projects and creates a new fallout, making it less cost effective. No matter what style sink mount is selected, the top mat is what holds the item in place and should be overlapped by a full 1/4". The window must sit flat against the sink spacer, and the art fits fully beneath the edges.

Vintage Photos —

Heirloom photos should be preserved in their original folders, which have added depth and weight, making them perfect for sink mounting. The varied thicknesses of photo folders may require additional ply layers when constructing the sink. The borders must butt fully against the perpendicular strip, and they need to reach all the way to the outer edge of the backing board to fully support the top window mat.

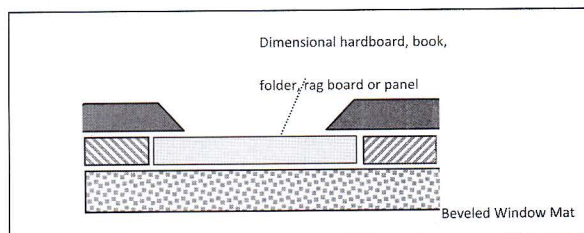
Original Pastels — Since pastels are a dry pigment that is prone to dusting off before, during, and after



Static charges created by the removal of the paper from acrylic sheets can be used to mount silk paintings, scarves, and polyester media photos.

framing, they are very vulnerable during the mounting process.

Original pastels are often created on sanded paper, which may have been mounted to 4-ply rag prior to painting. This is a common practice by experienced pastel artists, but sometimes the framing design may exceed the outside dimension of the anticipated mat window width, such as there being a 3" space surrounding the pastel when a 4" mat border has been designed. A narrow 4-ply sink



Original pastels on sanded paper had been mounted to 4-ply rag prior to painting, which required a sink mount to enlarge the backing to fit it to the desired mat window's outside dimensions.



mount is the perfect, totally reversible solution to enlarge the backing to fit any mat window dimension.

Wax Saturated Art — Wax has long been used as a resist technique for

protecting areas of fabric and paper from applied colors in batik, Sumi-e resist, silk painting, and resist printing. Though the wax is generally removed after the design has been completed, there may be residue remaining. Sometimes fabrics may be ironed between layers of clean Kraft paper to remove remaining waxy residue. Once the wax is removed, these pieces may be hinged, laced, or sink mounted as needed.

Wax removal is not possible for encaustic on thin rice and printing papers. Encaustic monoprints are original (one of one) prints created on an encaustic hot plate using translucent media; opaque, pigmented colors; and oil sticks. The wax saturates the paper to create the art. Removal of the wax would destroy the art. Wax-saturated encaustic monotypes resist starch hinges and may only be effectively hinged with fused encaustic medium, applicable by the artist, making them another candidate for sink mounts.

Originals with square corners that are heavy enough may be mounted using edge strips or corner pockets, but sheer, saturated rice papers are too lightweight to be supported by the corners. Sometimes they are freeform or deckled, disal-

lowing edge strips or corners at all. Shallow sink mounts—4-ply or less—might require a small platform lifter beneath the art. This might also be needed if the saturated image is translucent and the color tint needs to be controlled. Freeform shapes may also require a colored lifter to help contrast the art as a support for the art to rest on between the backing and the window mat. All methods are totally reversible.

Static Mount

Static mounts were first introduced to the custom framing industry in the late 1990s, which borrowed the technique from museums. This is an ingenious method of noninvasive mounting that uses the static charge created when paper or film is pulled from a sheet of acrylic sheeting. The static charge is used to mount silk paintings, scarves, and the 100 percent polyester-based photographic media for Ilfochrome Classics and contemporary digital FujiFlex photos.

An acrylic sheet to be used as backing is cut the same size as the window mat. The mat is then book-hinged together with the acrylic. The paper or film liner is cut 1/16" larger than the photo, peeled free, and placed within the exposed acrylic

space. The window mat needs to overlap the image by 1/4" to hold down the edges. The static will remain constant until the mat is removed, and the photo may be freely lifted from the nonadhesive mount. It is wise to flange-hinge the photo along the full top edge to the paper with a neutral pH pressure-sensitive tape. If the image is to be transported to shows or shipped, it should have lower corners to prevent slipping. The paper remaining on the acrylic serves as a tiny sink mount to help hold everything in place.

Thinking Noninvasive

If preservation is the issue, then only noninvasive mounting methods must be used. Aside from Kool Tack and Bainbridge reversible HA boards, that means that no wet, spray, pressure-sensitive, or dry mount techniques may be used. There are many totally reversible mounting methods applicable to a wide variety of art. There have been numerous discussions online over heat-activated and pressure-sensitive products and their proposed preservation qualities. Remember that it is not the adhesive but the method and materials connected with that adhesive that must be taken under consideration when selecting a noninvasive mounting method. ■

Noninvasive Mounting Methods

Natural Starch
Hinges
Kozo Backing
Cold Alternatives
Edge Strips
Corner Pockets
Mylar Encapsulation
Sink Mounts
Static Mounts
Lacing and Pinning
HA Reversible Boards

Invasive Mounting Methods

HA Dry Mounting
HA Roller Laminators
Cold Mounts
Cold Rollers
Vacuum Frame
Commercial Wet Glue
Commercial Paste
Spray Adhesive
Manual Applications
Commercial Wet Glue
Pressure-Sensitive Films & Boards
Spray Adhesives

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