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"Dry Mount Work Station"

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Regardless of individual talent, expertise, education and professionalism...we all should have learned by now that we are only as good as our equipment and materials. As already discussed in April and May PFM, the four key elements to predictably successful dry mountings include controlling the ratios of TIME, TEMPERATURE, PRESSURE and MOISTURE. Although these elements need also be considered when both wet and spray mounting, careful thought and planning should be paid to the work area, work space or mounting station where all of these vital elements are to be controlled.

As a second generation picture framer who not only followed in her father's "perfectionist" footsteps, I also inherited the tight quarters and lack of the luxury of a spacious framing workroom. This seems to be a common scenario when it comes to most framers' facilities, nonetheless it is extremely important to stress the need for a mandatory clean, well lit work place with the proper tools and materials within reach to execute your craft. Remember that time lost locating misplaced or buried tools, fighting with rolls of mounting tissue in a cluttered environment, or attempting to reflatten warped mounting boards due to improper storage can never be replaced. This lost time directly translates into burned up profits, if for no other reason than by limiting the projects achievable in any given day!

"CLEAN AREA...CLEAN PROCESS"

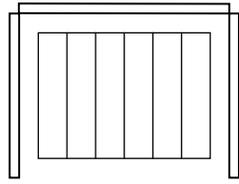
Organization often (but not always) lends itself to a clean work space. You must organize the mounting area to accommodate your specific requirements. If dealing with sprays, a well ventilated and masked spray booth is required (diagram 1), in addition to the space requirements necessary for any given mounting frame or press. Most other needs will remain the same regardless of the mounting procedure being used. "A clean area equates with a clean process", for the cleanliness, or lack of, will often transfer directly to the art. Dust and debris circulating in the air may become trapped under the mounted art or fabric. Fortunately some mounting adhesives are removable and that "Matterhorn" dust particle beneath the black background of the newly mounted poster may be removable.

If at all possible, do not set up your mounting station near any other dust creating framing process. A miter saw will throw metal and wood chips into the air, a heavily used wall cutter may create paper dust and particles and even glass particles could be a problem. I've mentioned before...use common sense. Eliminate the problem prior to it being one, you will save time, money and create a much more professional and efficient environment within which to work.

LIGHTING

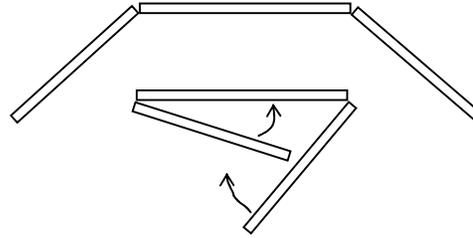
Dust and fibers will never be detected if they cannot be seen. Working in a dark, dungeonous basement environment will not only be a potential humidity headache, but could create frustration and eye strain if the lighting is inadequate. A fluorescent tube light fixture may not give you the color reference of natural light, but it can efficiently illuminate the work area. Shadows are not your friend! Release materials need light to be examined for adhesive residue, wrinkles, folds and potential problem troubleshooting prior to each mounting. Laminates create static electricity when the peel-off backing is removed often attracting lint...always use the manufacturer's suggested preparation methods and good light!

Portable Screen with Hinged Hood

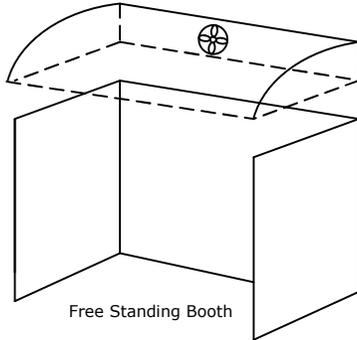


Scored mount or mat board makes a good support, as it will better hold its shape if saturated with spray adhesives.

The art is supported on the tops arches of the accordion to keep it from accumulated adhesive.



This portable spray booth may be easily folded for storage when not in use, but extremes of overspray may encourage the folding leaves to stick if still wet when stored.



Free Standing Booth

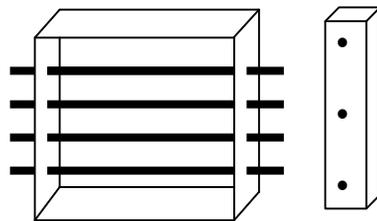
Excess use of spray adhesives will require appropriate ventilation facilities that meet all OSHA health standards.

A spray booth permanently set-up with a ventilation hood, fans, and exhaust system.

MATERIALS STORAGE

There are a number of important elements here, ones that may affect other steps in your mounting process. Board (substrate) storage is best when kept clean, dry and flat, though most storage facilities stand board on end. By standing them up, they are encouraged to warp during storage, which only adds to the warping frustration which can be created upon mounting large pieces on lightweight boards. If boards are stored in a basement, warehouse or other room subject to extremes of temperature and humidity, the issue of predrying these boards prior to mounting may carry over into vacuum mounting systems where predrying is generally not required. Most vacuum frames and presses are set up with an optional lower shelf which makes an ideal storage space for boxes of foam and mount board.

Adhesive rack (not to scale or proportion)



Front

Side

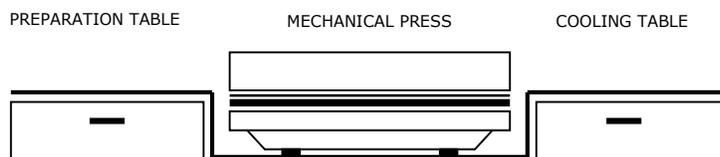
Removable dowels for easy replacement.

Adhesives should also be stored in a clean, dry and accessible locale. They should be well labeled to avoid mix-up and should also be stored away from release papers for the same reason. A convenient storage or dispensing rack to the side of your mounting press is ideal (diagram 2). This way dry adhesive can be pulled to the desired length, cut, positioned, tacked and mounted with no confusion or clutter. Also, through repetition and systematic placement, the correct adhesive will generally be sized for mounting thus reducing error potential.

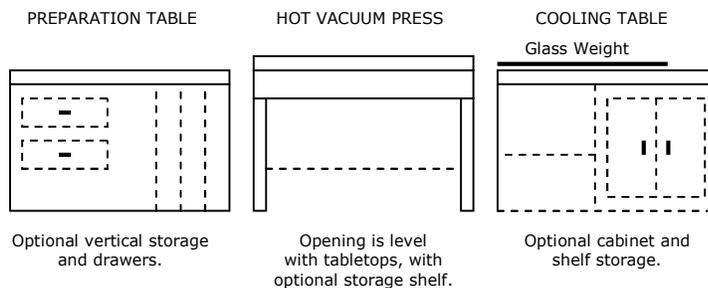
PLACEMENT

The actual placement or location of the equipment will vary as to whether you have a vacuum, mechanical or hand application system as well as your space limitations. It could also matter as to whether the dominant user is right or left-handed, but this is strictly an optional matter of preference and convenience. If setting up a mechanical press, the ideal situation is to recess it into the work table so the sponge pad is even with the table surface. This will allow easy level insertion into and out of the press.

Since many removable dry mount adhesives as well as wet and spray glues need to be weighted as they cool or dry, the mounting work table should have a cover sheet of clear plate glass. This glass should be large enough to accommodate most of the anticipated mountings, but still small enough to handle. It is an extremely good practice to always place any newly mounted item beneath a weight, it will aid in flattening any potential bow and encourages consistent pressure while bonding. Although not the only choice, glass is excellent as a weight because it is cool, may be seen through so you don't misplace a project, and may be used as a cutting surface.



In an ideal space environment, the cutting/preparation table will be to one side of the press with the weighting/cooling table to the exit side of the press (diagram 3). Since space limitations are common, the cutting/application/cooling glass space may be combined as the same table alongside the press (diagram 4). In the worst possible scenario I've heard of the level top of a vacuum frame or press being used as the entire work station, but this often creates frustration when attempting to prepare, mount and cool projects all at the same time...so framer beware.



To recap the requirements of an efficient mounting work space you must consider and address the following elements:

- * Organization for efficiency
- * Clean area...clean process
- * Lighting adequacy
- * Storage of adhesives and substrate
- * Cutting/preparation table
- * Placement and height of equipment
- * Cooling table and glass

Don't lose sight of the need for water for clean up if using wet glues and electricity for tacking irons. Drawers for small tools and miscellaneous materials would be an asset in the preparation table also. Maintain adequate space around a mechanical press to allow the benefits of oversized mounting in bites. When designing a new work space try to imagine all of the extremes, such as multiple production mountings, oversized mountings, laminating, and creative applications. Keep materials handy yet out of the way and be efficiently as productive as possible.

END

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For more articles on mounting basics look under the mounting section in **Articles by Subject**.

Additional information on all types of mounting and creative applications in:

The Mounting and Laminating Handbook, Second Edition, 2002,

The Mounting And Laminating Handbook, Third Edition, 2008,

Creative Mounting, Wrapping and Laminating, 1999.

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