

# Framing Matters

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IEA Newsletter - Wax-On, January 2013

## "Recto Verso for Wax Saturated Monoprints"

A few years ago Paula Roland had a stunning monoprint trio on display at the Montserrat Encaustic Conference which as a framer I could not pass up. Those of you who attended will remember them suspended from the ceiling and beautifully backlit allowing the light to pass through the translucent originals (**photo 1**). She and her framer came up with an inventive preservation way to present her pieces while maintaining the translucency allowing light to reflect through them. She wanted to use natural light, rather than housing LED lighting within, and preferred the frame to become more virtual than a visible part of the presentation. They opted for recto-verso mats, acrylic sheets and metal trim.



photo 1

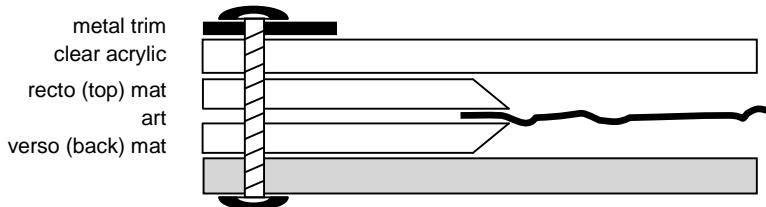
This encaustic monoprint is housed in a translucent acrylic frame unit hung suspended by cables in the center of the gallery to allow light to penetrate through.

*Art and frame photo courtesy of Paula Roland, Santa Fe, NM.*

### Recto-Verso Mats

A recto-verso mat is a two-sided unit which employs 4-ply, 8-ply or 12-ply bevel cut window mats placed back to back allowing the art to be suspended between them with Mylar corners or starch hinges for viewing from both sides. In Paula's case though viewing from both sides was nice it was done more to allow the translucency of the art to be showcased. Paula's monoprints were matted between 4-ply rag mats in this type of recto-verso design. They were then housed between a sheet of 1/4" frosted acrylic on the back and 1/4" clear acrylic on the front (**diagram 1**) if I recall correctly. Even if Paula's design varied a little from this description this is a sound and viable way to present any sheer monoprint, or two sided opaque image.

diagram 1 - Recto Verso Mat



The presentation unit is held together with strips of black metal surrounding the perimeter of the face of the art using short screw bolts to snuggly hold it together. All screws and metal trim on the front were painted black (**photo 2**). The detail of the screws at the back corner of the frame show they were perfectly sized to fit the thickness of the package.

I might have suggested the metal strips be painted a more neutral color--rather than black--to help the illusion of the frame not being there, or better yet tried 1/4" acrylic strips. There may have been a need for a few additional bolts to prevent the strips from warping but it might have removed the visible exterior banding thus helping the non frame floating image.

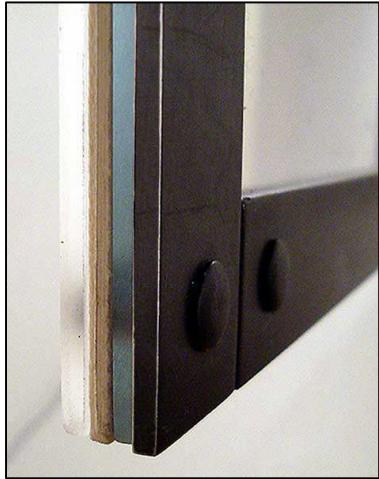


photo 2

The art is between recto-verso mats,  
backed with frosted white acrylic,  
topped with clear acrylic and held together  
by 1/8" thick metal strips bolted at the corners.

By using double mats in a recto-verso design, air is allowed to circulate between the acrylic and the art preventing sticking or condensation. Also the cotton rag 8-ply mats helped protect and seal the enclosure to better protect the art from pollution and ozone damage.

All in all this was a brilliant solution to the desire to float the monoprints and I applaud the innovation.

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There is a special section in the library for all past IEA Framing Matters articles from Wax-On!

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