

Paschke Online

Designs Ink Publishing Article Archive and Reference Library

Articles by Chris A. Paschke, CPF GCF CMG

"TRENDS FOR 2003: Canvas Transfers and Copyright"

January 2003

"Duplication is the highest form of flattery." OK, perhaps a bit paraphrased, and I think the word is supposed to be *copying*, but the concept is the meat of the statement, which is not to be upset or challenged over a student or neophyte copying your artistic style, or for that matter the very painting itself, unless of course you get paid for it. So, replication, canvas, digitals and their interaction...all appear to be ongoing trends for the new year.

WORDS OF WISDOM

Looking back to "Mastering Mounting" January 2002 I see the world of digitals being discussed, yet again by me, in *Everything Old Is New Again*. The interesting thing about digitals one year later is that everything I have been stating about the types of images, the problem with their identification, and their ultimate handling is now being spouted in various venues all over the country.

One of my students recently quoted to me from another instructor's class she took "...the newest piece of equipment framers would buy would likely be the roller laminator". I wrote just that, in *Heat Tolerance Testing for Digital Photos*, PFM June 2002. Then in *Are You Keeping Pace with Digital Prints*, PFM October 2002 I read support information that mirrored not only my "Identifying Digitals" class discussions, but the same June article information mentioned above. My comments on open dialogue with the customer over the origin of their image; the request for a duplicate; cold pressure-sensitive mounting or hinging rather than applying heat where all included...I love it. Seems I am finally getting through to the masses that digitals are the dilemma of choice for this decade, though a little credit wouldn't be refused.

NEW ADHESIVES

In an attempt to keep up with the demanding world of digitals and the continual rise in conservation and preservation framing desires, there are two new adhesives I think warrant mentioning in any new trends article. The first adhesive is a 150°F low bonding temperature, preadhesived dry mounting board by Hunt Bienfang called SingleStep Plus. They have manufactured SingleStep for years as a coated, ready to use, preadhesived board that mounts at 190°F, the average mounting temperature for permanent, porous tissue adhesives. Like its predecessor, this new product is a 3/16" foam board, but this one has been developed for the digital market. Mounting time varies in a mechanical press depending on the porosity and type of image being mounted. From what I understand it is 15 seconds for paper to 3 minutes for photograph, but that could depend on size of the image being mounted also.

In the same digital low temperature world Bainbridge has released SpeedMount Black 3/16" foam board to round out the photo and digital needs of the framer. SpeedMount was the original 150°F preadhesived dry mount board for digitals and the black version is a welcome addition.

Not having been developed for the digital market is NORI, fine art hinging paste. The moisture in the adhesive won't make it the first choice for water sensitive digitals, but it is a totally new approach for our-ready-when-we-want-it lifestyle. It is a precooked, packaged wheat starch and water paste with no preservatives or other additives, that is sterile until opened. It comes in small packets of approximately 1 tablespoon of premixed ready to use adhesive that will mount about six, two hinge conservation pieces. It is quick, easy and eliminates all excuses for not offering true traditional conservation mounting. It is distributed by FrameTek out of Eugene, Oregon and meets current FACTS standards.

Thank you manufacturers for hearing our mounting plea and feeling our pain. Now if my original prayers could only be answered with that dry, nontacky, roll of cold mount tissue that bonds by pressure alone in a mechanical or vacuum frame. Remember, the one I have been asking for since 1996 when I first began fighting the battle of the heat sensitive electrophotographic toner copiers? Then we would be truly armed with what we need to fight the battle of the digitals.

CANVAS FLATTERY

Since this is a new trends issue it is difficult to relay truly new things when the digital world continues to reinvent itself on a daily basis. This past year PFM revisited the topic of traditional and in-house canvas transferring with the eruption of digital canvases onto the scene. The question that continually arises of which is best, cheapest and then again will it sell still remain. Same as we have addressed in the past.

I had an interesting conversation recently over the pros and cons of hand (in-house or commercial) vs. digital printing on canvas. Strictly from a mounting and framing point of view is the stretching issue. Digital canvases must be primed with a sealer in order for the sprayed inks to adhere well and to prevent them from spreading as they soak into canvas fibers. This keeps the inks on the surface of the canvas and sometimes allows the ink to flake from the corners as a digital canvas is stretched. This does not always occur, but can be a potential problem.

In turn, when an open edition lithograph is layered with a coating or vinyl laminate for soaking and peeling it will easily tolerate the aggression of stretching over bars as a traditional oil canvas. The down side of stretching a coated transfer is the stiffness of that vinyl laminated canvas transfer, making it difficult to stretch. But the resulting transfer will pass the traditional "thunk" test. When a white gloved finger is lightly tapped against the surface it acts like a "real" canvas rather than a print camouflaging as a real canvas.

And yes, and then there is the artificial canvas textured vinyl laminate that allows for mounting the image to a solid substrate and surface laminating over it. Is it real or is it Memorex...sorry, laminate? This brings up yet another issue, copyright infringement.

THAT COPYRIGHT ISSUE

In my last ReCertification class we discussed copyright along with canvas transfers, which led to a question over the act of mounting and laminating as conversion of a printed image. Copyright is there for the artist and publisher to be protected against the conversion of their image into another form, which is why canvas transfers are an issue in the first place. If the artist had wanted to make his work on canvas he would have done so. Hence converting it without permission is illegal.

Based on this thinking, the very act of mounting a soft paper or photo image to a stiff board is altering it from its original form. Since it remains the same image and some form of mounting is necessary for viewing of the print to be hung vertically, it is accepted practice to mount many items. This has already been discussed in legal articles and court reports in business magazines.

Technically we are breaking a subtle form of copyright by laminating that same image rather than glazing it, as it is being altered irreparably from its original, though kind of a grey area, particularly when you laminate with an overlay texture of linen or canvas. Now it has been altered from its original state into another texture, so is it a copyright issue? Maybe, maybe not...but mounting that same image onto a routed, painted piece of wood thus turning it into a plaque rather than a mounted substrate suitable for framing...is. Be careful.

Laminating is generally accepted as an alternative to glazing, simply another version of framing. It is one that makes the open edition decorative art capable of being hung in a restaurant, child's bedroom, or daycare center. We have not changed the image with the sole intent of creating a new form for distribution, but have only made it suitable to be viewed and enjoyed where it might not have been able to if glazed...I hope.

SQUARE PEG IN A ROUND HOLE

The popularity of the above canvases makes for the next question, are we supposed to stretch this 21st century canvas as we have canvases of the past? I already mentioned flaking inks. The thing with digitals it they are nothing like we ever had to deal with before. They are not like traditional canvases, traditional photos, or traditional hand written invitations. Those are the *traditional*, the way things always *were*, the comfortable "round hole".

Digital canvases, digital photos, and digitally designed and printed invitations are essentially a "square peg". They are the new technology, new art form, new media. And what we appear to be doing, is trying to shove that square peg of new media into the traditional round hole of framing practices. And it doesn't work.

The way to live successfully with these square pegs is to reshape the hole, reshape the traditional practices to reflect the new look, the new shape of things to come, that has already arrived! That means we must break out of the thinking that a canvas must be stretched. A traditional oil painted canvas is stretched, as it always has been, but the digital canvas may need to be mounted with a cold high tack pressure-sensitive and a roller laminator to a solid substrate. It's only a matter of retraining your thinking. The same is also true with photographs. Traditional photos have always has the luxury of being wet, spray, p-s, or dry mounted while a digital photo is best if cold mounted with a pressure-sensitive adhesive.

FLATTERY OR THEFT

Well, since copying is the highest form of flattery, we artists should just get over the borrowing of our images from the web and our watercolors being transferred to canvas. Most of this objection truly comes from a monetary rather than purist standpoint, and maybe a control issue. If an artist gets paid to allow their image to be converted to a canvas transfer, or floated onto a china plate, which sells more images, we usually say yes to the request.

Just as an artist agrees to open edition reproductions, an educator or author freely gives of their words, techniques and opinions. We must expect to be replicated, quoted and borrowed from, particularly if we are trusted and admired as knowledgeable and have great information. Though giving credit where credit is due isn't a bad practice either. I try to credit all who I have borrowed from in my verbal and printed history and hope I have not offended; after all...copying is the highest form of flattery.

END

Copyright © 2003 Chris A Paschke, CPF, GCF

For more articles on design or mounting search your desired topic under **Articles by Subject**.
If you know your specific title check **Articles by Title**.

Additional information on mounting basics is found in
The Mounting and Laminating Handbook, Second Edition, 2002, and
The Mounting And Laminating Handbook, Third Edition, 2008.
Creative Mounting, Wrapping, And Laminating, 2000

will teach you everything you need to know about getting the most from your dry mount equipment and materials as an innovative frame designer. All books are available from **Designs Ink Publishing** through this website.