

# This Year's Most Commonly Asked Questions

by Chris A. Paschke, CPF

It's truly hard to believe this year is ready to draw to a close. Another active year of trade shows, new uses for existing products, workshops, and continuing education. This month, I thought it would be a great year end wrap up to share with you some of my students' most commonly asked mounting questions, which in turn are mounting problems.



## What's The Best Way To Mount Needlework?

Lacing is the best and most conservation sound way to properly mount a piece of needlework. Most can tolerate the heat in a press, but since you are dealing with an original piece of art, adhesives of any kind should always be avoided.

## How Can I Prevent Large Foam Boards From Bowing After Mounting?

I've heard it said that scoring an "X" into the back of a mounted piece of foam will often relieve the paper stress that is created when adhesive and artwork are mounted on the verso side, but it can also create a slight visual indentation on the front of the board opposite the score on the back, which is not acceptable.

A better solution to this problem would be to counter mount something of equal weight using the same adhesive as on the front to compensate for the surface tension created by the initial mounting.

This often is a situation which has

been created because the customer is attempting to cut costs by eliminating the use of a frame. By suggesting the counter-mounting solution to the potential problem of a large poster size mounting, the charges of the paper, adhesive and mounting for the verso side might actually sell them up into a framed job after all.

## Isn't A Glass Topped Vacuum Press Better Because You Can See Through It To What's Happening Inside?

Although the theory of seeing through a glass topped press might allow to stop mounting mistakes before they occur, there are a series of events that often prevent this. I'm a firm believer that first, by the time you detect there is a problem in folded materials or wrinkles and you shut the press off, it's probably already mounted itself. And second, if you stand there and watch the mounting process for pure intrigue, you're probably wasting your time.

## If An Air Bubble Occurs In The Mounting Of A 16" x 20" RC Photograph, Can't I Just Put A Pin Hole Through The Back Of The Mount Board And Put It Back In The Press?

Although any mounting may be repeatedly placed back into the press for additional time, the problem can't be solved by creating a hole for the air to escape. The edges of the photo have been firmly mounted into the domed shape which trapped the air under the

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photo in the first place.

Even with the air hole, the mounted edges of the photo can't move to flatten the arched photo no matter how long you leave it in the press. It's better to realize why this occurred and therefore prevent it from happening again.

This is a common problem when mounting large RC photos in a heat vacuum press and it is the direct result of the delay in pulling of the vacuum. If a permanent, breathable adhesive has been selected, it creates a bond between the photo and substrate as they reach bonding temperature. Since heat presses warm the materials from the outside in as an over rather than from the inside out (like a microwave), the edges of the mounting unit will often begin to adhere prior to the pulling of the vacuum. This allows air to be left beneath the mounting after bonding has begun.

A two-step temperature process should be used to mount large non-breathables in a heat vacuum system allowing for the air to be squished from between all the layers as the vacuum is pulled and the temperature reaches bonding level. Watch for an article on this topic next year.

**If I Have A Problem, How Do I Best**

### Determine What Went Wrong With A Mounting?

This goes back to the four basic elements of mounting: time, temperature, pressure and moisture. Though human nature would love to lay blame on equipment or adhesives for unsuccessful mounting, it remains most commonly the result of operator error. By always going back to the four basic elements ... whether wet, spray, pressure sensitive or dry ... a poor mounting can usually be traced to not paying proper attention to one of these areas.

### Is "Z-Method" Tacking Always The Right Way To Tack Prior To Mounting?

Actually, just as with the English language, there are exceptions to many rules. Though Z-method tacking is the most efficient way to prevent a hot tacking iron from coming into contact with the surface of any piece of paper art or photo, it would not be the best way to tack in preparation for a multiple bite project.

The Z-method tacks the adhesive to the back of the art on one end while tacking to the substrate on the other, thus creating the "z". This could allow for the adhesive and art

to shift during a multiple bite process creating wrinkles or bubbles beneath the mounting.

### What Creates The Little White Clouded Scuff Marks When Mounting A Glossy RC Photograph?

These marks are most often detected on glossy photos and are the result of the heat sensitivity of a particular emulsion on that photo. About half of the glossy finishes available have a sensitivity to heat that even lowering the temperature may not prevent. It's not a melting of the emulsion, it's more of a reaction.

The best way to deal with this potential problem is to run screaming from the room ... actually it's to explain to the customer there is the possibility of this happening. Then suggest solutions should this occur by use of a photo overspray (which would also help combat the double gloss glare when framing a high gloss/glassed photo), applying a laminating film rather than glazing, or perhaps an alternative mounting method altogether.

### Can Parchment Be Dry Mounted?

The question isn't can it be dry mounted, but moreover should it be dry mounted! In actuality, many animal skins will tolerate moisture or heat when applied separately, it's the combination that often kills the animal. Always test the skin for heat and moisture sensitivities as well as ink permanence prior to even considering dry mounting.

Then remember the "nature of the beast" and try to convince your customer that the natural cockling of the skin is its true nature and that dignity should be maintained.

### How Do I Tell If Something Is Heat Sensitive? And What's The Best Way To Mount Such Items?

Be aware in our state of the art industry that new technologies are hitting the market nearly every day ... framer beware! Always try to be

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aware of thermographic tickets, FAXs, some computer printouts, brass rubbings, embossed items, parchment and vellum, wax seals, and Ilfochrome Classics.

Alternative methods will include wet glues, sprays, pressure sensitives, hinging and numerous other conservation methods includ-

ing corner pockets, tabs, etc.

The best solution will always be determined by the individual project. A thermographic wedding invitation will melt in a press, but would do well hinged, wet or pressure sensitive mounted. It depends on each individual situation.

#### How Do I Mount A Cibachrome?

An Ilfochrome Classic

(cibachrome) doesn't wet glue well due to its nonabsorbant plastic make-up and often looks best when mounted with a pressure sensitive adhesive. Hinging with a pressure sensitive tape such as Lineco or Filmoplast also works well. Remember they are 100% polyester and don't absorb adhesive to help affix them to any substrate.

Some people still prefer sprays, but there too they can't absorb adhesive and leave little to bite to a mount board, and beware those terrible oversprays. PS. Always handle any photographs, including cibachromes, only when wearing white photo gloves.

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#### What Can I Use To Mount Two-Sided Laminates, With Like Maps And Professional Diagrams, When Nothing Seems To Stick To Them?

It's absolutely true that no adhesive can saturate into the plastic mounting surface to affix these to a substrate. The best solution is to subcontract the mounting of them to someone with a large pressure sensitive cold roller laminator, often found in the advertising and graphics world. The pressure sensitive adhesive is much more aggressive than found in the framing industry and that with the additional pressure holds the polyester much more permanently than any other adhesive to date.

#### How Can I Make More Money From My Heat Press?

Keep on reading Mastering Mounting each month and I promise to continue giving you tips on mounting, facts on laminating and how to have fun creatively thus making more money in the process!

Happiest of holidays ... and here's to 1996! 🍷

Chris A. Paschke, CPF, owns Designs Ink, Oxford, Connecticut, featuring custom framing, product consultation and design. She specializes in mounting, matting and design creativity and works with numerous industry leaders including Bienfang, Crescent Cardboard, Fletcher-Terry, Larson-Juhl, PFM, PPFA, and Seal Products.

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