

# Mastering Mounting



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## *2001 Mounting Odyssey*

**O**dysey—defined by *Webster's Dictionary* as, “any long series of wanderings, especially ones filled with notable experiences.” Well, picture framing has turned out to be one of my odysseys. During my past 30 years in this industry I have repaired, destroyed, mounted, and remounted too many projects to mention. I wandered alone for years with my new vacuum press, without much direction. Yet I knew there had to be ways to wrap with fabrics in that press, transfer images to watercolor papers, and laminate photos that were 40"x60" without crushing the outer edges of the full-sized foam boards.

To make a long story short, through trial and error and many notable disasters, I discovered the answers, began teaching, and ultimately wrote my books so that other framers embarking on their own odyssey would have some help from my experiences. And now, after writing a decade of “new trends” articles for *PFM*, it's time to launch into a new odyssey—framing in the 21st century.

It is hard to believe I am sitting down to write the new trends column for 2001. How time flies. So what does the future hold for the framing industry? What are the new trends? I stated last year that no matter how high-tech this industry becomes, or how many computers are used to create a design, calculate prices, or complete framing jobs on-line, there will always be the need for mounting; the need to

physically glue something down to a substrate or suspend it within a frame will always exist.

Regardless of conservation or decorative applications, the need to understand all versions of wet glues, spray glues, pressure-sensitives, and dry mounting will prevail. What a relief. But have the applications changed? Well, the basic methods may have not specifically changed (still wet, spray, pressure sensitive, dry heat), but some of the players may have been modified and new products with differing requirements continue to be introduced.

### ***Heat Activated Boards***

Last year I told you to stay tuned for mounting product updates, and here's one for 2001. Nielsen Bainbridge has released a new heat-activated foam board product called Speed Mount. That's not a new concept you say? True enough. Heat-activated boards (a.k.a. adhesive-coated boards or pre-adhesived boards) come with adhesives already applied to them and these boards are found as pressure-sensitives and heat-activated (HA) types.

The substrate structure, rigidity, and ease of cutting all remain consistent as with any mount or foam board. They have been available from many manufacturers and were originally designed to save time in framing operations. Traditionally, they have been priced to reflect the cost of the basic foam center board plus a layer of adhesive,

designed and priced not to cost more, simply being much more time effective.

The interesting thing about this new Bainbridge product (Speed Mount) is its time and temperature claims. It is claimed to bond in 15 seconds at 150°F, which is quite a claim. This speed mounting issue has not occurred since Seal introduced MT-5 (Mounting Tissue-5 seconds) some 30 years ago. It has been awhile since there has been a dry mount tissue or board that claims such a low bonding temperature as this new 150° product. That in itself deserves some attention. The lower the temperature, the less chance for problems to occur with surface damage.

High gloss resin-coated (RC) photographs are prone to surface scuffing, which seems to be a combination of temperature and silicone damage from the release paper. Lower temperatures reduce potential for damage. Other situations where lower temperature adhesives are beneficial include mounting wax rubbings, possibly digital images (tests are inconclusive to date), and some certificates. The applications for photos alone are an advantage. The only previous heat adhesive that low in temperature was Seal Fotoflat at 150°F. So the temperature is an advantage here!

However, also take into consideration that adhesives need to absorb to best hold two mounting layers together. Adhesive saturates into an item by traveling toward the heat source as it heats up, and the longer and hotter in the press, the more it absorbs, thus bonds. The only time there is no absorption is when the item being bonded is a

coated nonporous, nonabsorbent surface, like an RC photograph. So for photos, this could be the answer we have been searching for.

### ***Heat Activated Times***

Now based on my traditional TTPM concepts (time, temperature, pressure, moisture), I want to examine Speed Mount in terms of time. I have declared numerous times that the relationship between time and temperature directly impact longevity when mounting. In order for the temperature to be low (150°F), often it must be made up for in the length of time under pressure in the heat press. It makes sense that the lower the temperature, the longer it will take for the layers of the mounting project to heat up, activate, and, in turn, bond a permanent adhesive.

I have performed a few basic tests on this Speed Mount product and I must say the control of orange peel is fantastic. I'd like to add that in order to ensure the best long-term bond, consider increasing the temperature from 150°F to 170°F, or extending the time within the press.

Consider for a moment that most paper and photos will indeed bond at 150°F when placed into a mechanical press for 15 seconds, and hold quite well. However, the same project cannot bond in a vacuum system in the same amount of time. The very nature of a vacuum press requires *draw time*, the amount of time it takes (once the press is turned on) for all the air to be drawn out from within the press to apply pressure to the mounting package.

This is not to be confused with *dwelt time*, the time a mounting needs to be held within the press to properly heat up all layers of release

material, substrate, adhesive, and item to be activated and fused. Remember the standard time/temperature to vacuum dry mount most commercial products is 190°F for four minutes. My advice is check it out for yourself. It's worth a look!

### ***Eliminates Orange Peel and Bonds in 10 Seconds!***

This past September, I heard about another board (although I did not get a chance to see or test it) that also boasted of 150°F mounting temperature, and this one was specifically for photos. It was reported to mount an RC photo at 150°F in 10 seconds with no orange peel and no surface damage. But when mounted for 15 seconds, a little orange peel might be evident.

I hope to find out more! about this product.

### ***New Adhesive Film***

Another new product, (again I have only seen this one advertised), is a high tack general purpose, pressure-sensitive film, Scapa 4405, from Scapa Tapes North America. It appears to be a more commercial product for use with roller applicators in large scale printing and digital graphic arts markets, but nonetheless deserves to be mentioned. This is an aggressive high tack adhesive, rather than a repositionable one with a PVC carrier. It may be best for production framers and photo labs.

### ***Still More Digital Discussion***

Here, I am referring to the mounting of images not easily identified. I have written about giclées and their limited edition nature precluding them from being mounted, but other digitals that are cleverly camouflaged as RC photos (digital pho-

tos) or offset litho posters (inkjet) should be carefully handled. If you can't identify it, be very careful about mounting with heat, and it's best to avoid spray or wet altogether.

Laser and inkjet papers of light poundage are thin and can easily cockle when exposed to moisture. Glossed color copies, originally setting the dry toners by application of inner heated rollers, will be damaged by heat in mounting. A good solution in both cases is pressure-sensitive, or very low heat dry mounting.

### ***Perforated Laminates***

Another new derivative, this one in the laminate line, is pre-perforated laminates on rolls from The Hunt Corp. This type of product has been available from Hot Press as their Pre-Pierced Over-Laminate since they were introduced in the U.S. Bravo to the manufacturers for once again seeing that time is money. I hope they both continue to offer their surface vinyl laminates in both pierced and nonpierced varieties, though numerous creative applications exist for using the release liner from these films that are better produced without the tiny perforation holes (see *PFM* September 1997, "Wrinkled Laminates").

### ***Plaquing***

Interestingly enough, things often come full circle. In fact it is very common in the world of retail for styles, colors, and even crafts to resurface after 10 or 20 years of hibernation. Just consider bell bottom pants, gold and green in home interiors, and candle making. Well, here's another comeback.

Classic 18th century decoupage is the art of applying cut paper images to furniture and accessories, layering it with 30-35 coats of lacquer, sanding it smooth, and making it appear hand painted. Thirty years ago, this was very big in the craft market, and by the end of the 1970s, it had evolved into a more expeditious method of mounting stripped posters to painted boards with acrylic mediums that cleaned up with water and dried quickly.

The concept of plaquing was first introduced to the mass production and framing markets in the early 1970s by Drytac Corp. located in Canada. It utilizes ¾" MDF boards with routed or bevelled, painted edges that have poster images mounted and laminated to their surface. This has been a huge industry in Canada and Europe,

but never really took off in the U.S. (Watch for an article on this technique in upcoming months).

At the Atlanta show, I noticed that The Hunt Corp. had begun teaching plaquing using their tissues and laminates. This technique has always been possible in mounting press, but just has never really been promoted in the U.S. until now. It's funny, an 18th century concept being promoted in the 21st century. What an odyssey.

### ***Education in Vegas!***

Notable upcoming experiences and wanderings for framers should include the West Coast Art & Frame Show and National Conference, January 14-17, 2001 in Las Vegas. Once again, top industry educators will be there to help you on your 2001 odyssey. This year, *PFM* writers will also be available in the *PFM* Booth (#1003) to meet and greet you, as well as to answer any questions about the things that make you go...hmmmm. I'll be there, will you? ■