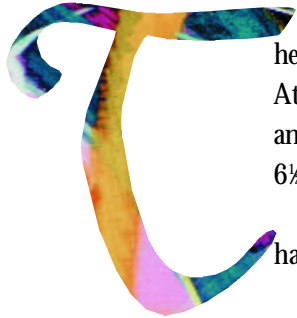


Float-Mounting Silk

by David Reed



The piece you see here was designed for the Roma Moulding booth at the ABC Show in Atlanta. My goal was to demonstrate the technique of framing a small piece of art with an unusually wide frame combination. In this case, a stack of four mouldings totaling 6½" in width was used to frame a delicate silk painting that was only 3" x 3½".

Using dry-mount adhesive film and a tacking iron, the artist, Aimee French, had mounted the silk to a piece of white matboard. The board was cut small



This piece demonstrates that an unusually wide frame combination doesn't have to be overpowering.

enough to suspend the silk without extending so close to the edge that it would become visible.

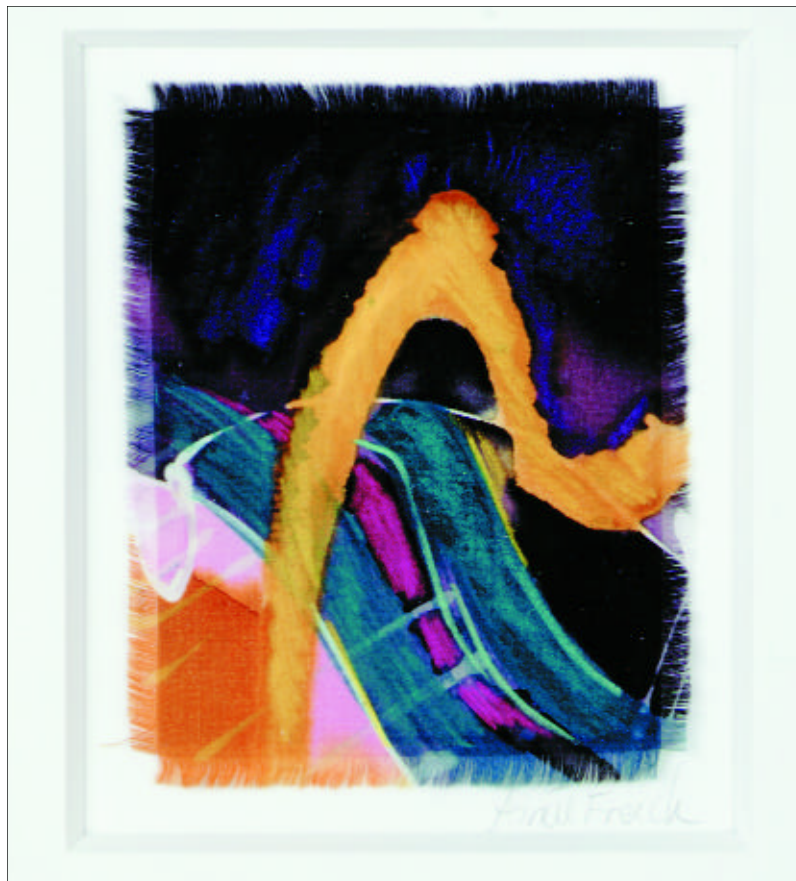
I took French's mounted silk and added another layer of matboard for depth; then, using ATG tape, mounted the entire package to a backing board of 8-ply white matboard. Finally, I added a 1½" mat with a window opening large enough to allow ½" of space around the edges of the silk. The mounted and matted artwork was framed by four mouldings, stacked from the image out as follows: Roma 2998, 24455, 6098 and 58198. Glass was then placed between the mat and the interior frame.

I knew that in my effort to showcase the moulding I ran the risk of overpowering the art. I wanted the silk to retain its own identity as an independent, three-dimensional item, separate from the frame that surrounded it.

By floating the silks above their backgrounds, French is able to reveal their fine, frayed edges, an effect I would have destroyed if I had "trapped" these edges under a mat. Instead, I chose to emphasize this by raising the silk even higher. In this way, I was able, not only to draw greater attention to the silk's frayed edges, but also to create the illusion that it was "floating." Thus, the true personality of the silk and its juxtaposition against a heavy frame actually seemed to underscore its delicacy.

Other Uses For Float-Mounts

The floating of French's silk is just one example of how the relatively simple technique of float-mounting can be used to make a huge difference in the appearance of a framed piece. Float-mounting works well any time an item has a distinct or unusual edge, including sheets of



The frayed edges of Aimee French's silk painting were emphasized by mounting the piece to matboard, which also gave it a "floating" appearance.

deckled paper, papyrus, postage stamps and perforated ticket stubs.

Float-mounting can be especially useful in helping a piece achieve a feeling of depth. Any seemingly flat item or sheet of paper is actually three-dimensional, even if its image only extends across two dimensions. Oftentimes, such items are interesting not just as images, but as objects containing images. Examples include dollar bills, baseball cards, old photographs, documents, sketches, love letters and wedding invita-

tions. Essentially, any item that might ordinarily be trapped under a mat can be brought into the third dimension by being placed over a mat and lifted slightly. Again, the effect can be striking and is seldom difficult to achieve.

Even in cases where it is not desirable to float the item being framed, a feeling of depth can be created by simply floating a mat. If a print of an Ansel Adams photograph, for example, is double matted with the top mat floating slightly, the result is the illusion that the image is sitting back, at a distance. In this way, the eye of the beholder is more easily tricked into believing that it is standing in the midst of a living landscape, not just looking at a flat image.

Time and time again, I have found that creating a feeling of depth can make the difference between a decent framing job and one that pulls a gasp out of my customer. Floating artwork and mats are an easy and inexpensive way to raise a framed piece to this level. ■

David Reed has been framing in partnership with his father, Edsel Reed, since 1986. He is the owner of Fine Frames of Duluth, Atlanta.