



Article: Mounting Medium and Large-Format Photographs

Author(s): Maria Fernanda Valverde

Topics in Photographic Preservation, Volume 12.

Pages: 143-143

Compiler: Brenda Bernier

© 2007, Photographic Materials Group of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works. 1156 15th St. NW, Suite 320, Washington, DC 20005. (202) 452-9545, www.aic-faic.org. Under a licensing agreement, individual authors retain copyright to their work and extend publication rights to the American Institute for Conservation.

Topics in Photographic Preservation is published biannually by the Photographic Materials Group (PMG) of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works (AIC). A membership benefit of the Photographic Materials Group, *Topics in Photographic Preservation* is primarily comprised of papers presented at PMG meetings and is intended to inform and educate conservation-related disciplines.

Papers presented in *Topics in Photographic Preservation, Vol. 12*, have not undergone a formal process of peer review. Responsibility for the methods and materials described herein rests solely with the authors, whose articles should not be considered official statements of the PMG or the AIC. The PMG is an approved division of the AIC but does not necessarily represent the AIC policy or opinions.

MOUNTING MEDIUM AND LARGE-FORMAT PHOTOGRAPHS

Maria Fernanda Valverde

This is a mounting technique that has been used for medium size to moderately large format photographs (up to 110 x 80 cm approximately). It takes advantage of the contraction experimented by paper, which is more pronounced in the machine direction (in machine-made papers), as it dries. Its principle is similar to that used by artists for stretching watercolor paper (in preparation for using it as support) and by paper conservators for flattening large format prints and maps. It is also used by canvas-painting conservators for stretching wavy supports before lining the paintings.

Four paper bands (7 to 10 cm wide), to be used as hinges, are cut the same size of each side of the photograph. The hinges can be adhered to the photograph in either wet or nearly dry state (with the humidity provided by the adhesive only), but they need to be **entirely moistened** when attached to the rigid support. 8-ply rag board has been used as support but another type could be tried. Wheat starch paste (with or without a small amount of methyl cellulose – depending of the size and thickness of the photograph and the working time determined by the RH of the environment) has been used as an adhesive. This has been used to attach the hinges to both the photograph and the rigid support. Other water-based or water-compatible adhesives might be used.

The photograph might be dry or moist during the mounting process but the latter state will create more tension (which might be desirable or not depending on the photograph). 1 to 2.5 cm of “free” hinge must be left around the photograph; between the edges of the photograph and the area of the hinge to be attached to the rigid support. This area of “free” or loose paper creates an even tension as the hinge dries and will compensate or absorb possible dimensional changes of the photograph in the future. The outer edge of the hinge is attached (to the front) of the rigid support.

Hand-made Japanese papers of various thickness have been used as hinges, but machine-made papers might be also used for larger photographs or when more tension is required (the machine-direction of the paper must be parallel to the edge of the photograph). The hinges can be left air dry but the areas attached to the photograph and to the rigid support **must dry first** or at the same time than the loose or “free” surrounding zone, otherwise the tension exerted by the latter will provoke detachments of the hinge (from either the photograph or the rigid support) and consequent deformations.

MARIA FERNANDA VALVERDE
Conservator of Photographs

Papers presented in *Topics in Photographic Preservation, Volume Twelve* have not undergone a formal process of peer review.