Professional Certificate in Paper and Ink Conservation

Mounting and Housing for Paper Artifacts

Mounting and Housing for Paper Artifacts: Key Terms and Vocabulary

In the field of paper and ink conservation, mounting and housing are crucial techniques used to support, protect, and display paper artifacts. Proper mounting and housing techniques ensure the longevity and stability of the artifact while providing access for study and exhibition. Here are some key terms and vocabulary related to mounting and housing for paper artifacts:

1. Mount: A mount is a support structure used to hold a paper artifact in place. Mounts can be made from a variety of materials, including paper, board, and fabric. The purpose of a mount is to provide physical support to the artifact while also preventing direct contact with the housing material.
2. Housing: Housing refers to the enclosure that contains the paper artifact and its mount. Housing materials can include boxes, folders, and enclosures made from archival-quality board, plastic, or fabric. The housing provides physical protection to the artifact and helps to control its environment, preventing damage from light, dust, and pollutants.
3. Mat board: Mat board is a stiff board used to create a window mount for a paper artifact. Mat boards are typically made from alpha-cellulose, cotton, or museum board, and are available in a variety of colors and thicknesses. The window mount is created by cutting a window in the board, which provides a visual frame for the artifact while also preventing direct contact between the artifact and the glazing material.
4. Window mat: A window mat is a type of mat board that has a window cut out of it, creating a frame for the paper artifact. Window mats are used to provide visual interest and to prevent direct contact between the artifact and the glazing material.
5. Backing board: A backing board is a stiff board placed behind a paper artifact to provide additional support and stability. Backing boards are typically made from alpha-cellulose, cotton, or museum board, and are cut to the same size as the artifact.
6. Hinge: A hinge is a flexible strip of paper, fabric, or other material used to attach a paper artifact to its mount. Hinges allow for movement and prevent stress on the artifact. There are several types of hinges, including T-hinges, V-hinges, and swing-arm hinges.
7. T-hinge: A T-hinge is a type of hinge made from a strip of paper or fabric that is folded into a T-shape. The short end of the T is attached to the artifact, while the long end is attached to the mount. T-hinges provide stability and allow for movement.
8. V-hinge: A V-hinge is a type of hinge made from a strip of paper or fabric that is folded into a V-shape. The V-hinge is attached to the top edge of the artifact and the mount, providing stability and preventing curling.
9. Swing-arm hinge: A swing-arm hinge is a type of hinge that allows for movement in multiple directions. Swing-arm hinges are typically used for larger or heavier artifacts that require additional support.
10. Glazing: Glazing refers to the transparent material used to cover and protect the paper artifact. Glazing materials can include glass, acrylic, or plastic. Glazing can help to prevent damage from light, dust, and pollutants, while also providing visual clarity.

11. Spacer: A spacer is a thin strip of material placed between the glazing and the artifact to prevent direct contact. Spacers can be made from a variety of materials, including paper, board, or plastic. Spacers can help to prevent damage from condensation, dust, and pollutants.
12. Ultraviolet (UV) filter: An ultraviolet (UV) filter is a film or coating applied to the glazing material to block harmful UV rays. UV filters can help to prevent damage from light, while also providing visual clarity.
13. Environmental control: Environmental control refers to the techniques used to regulate the temperature, humidity, and light levels around the paper artifact. Proper environmental control can help to prevent damage from temperature and humidity fluctuations, while also protecting the artifact from light damage.
14. Archival-quality: Archival-quality materials are materials that meet specific standards for longevity, stability, and chemical composition. Archival-quality materials are designed to prevent damage to paper artifacts and to provide long-term protection.

Challenges in Mounting and Housing for Paper Artifacts

Mounting and housing for paper artifacts can be challenging due to the delicate nature of the materials and the need to balance preservation and access. Some common challenges include:

1. Preventing damage: Paper artifacts are susceptible to damage from light, dust, pollutants, and physical handling. Proper mounting and housing techniques can help to prevent damage, but must be carefully balanced with the need for access and study.
2. Providing support: Paper artifacts can be fragile and may require additional support to prevent damage from bending, tearing, or creasing. Mounting and housing techniques must provide adequate support without causing additional stress or damage.
3. Preventing chemical reactions: Paper and ink can react to changes in temperature, humidity, and light levels, leading to degradation and discoloration. Proper environmental control and the use of archival-quality materials can help to prevent chemical reactions and prolong the life of the artifact.
4. Balancing preservation and access: Mounting and housing techniques must balance the need for preservation with the need for access and study. Techniques that are too restrictive may prevent access, while techniques that are too permissive may risk damage to the artifact.

Examples and Practical Applications

Mounting and housing techniques can vary depending on the type of artifact, its size and condition, and the intended use. Here are some examples and practical applications:

1. Window mat and backing board: A window mat and backing board can be used to create a simple and effective housing for a paper artifact. The window mat provides a visual frame for the artifact, while the backing board provides additional support and stability.
2. T-hinge: A T-hinge can be used to attach a paper artifact to a mount, providing stability and allowing for movement. T-hinges are ideal for lighter artifacts or for artifacts that require frequent handling.
3. Swing-arm hinge: A swing-arm hinge can be used for larger or heavier artifacts that require additional support. Swing-arm hinges allow for movement in multiple directions, preventing stress on the artifact.
4. Spacer and UV filter: A spacer and UV filter can be used to prevent direct contact between the glazing and the artifact, while also blocking harmful UV rays.

5. Environmental control: Environmental control techniques, such as temperature and humidity regulation, can help to prevent damage to paper artifacts. Proper environmental control can also prolong the life of the artifact and reduce the need for frequent conservation treatments.

Conclusion

Mounting and housing techniques are essential components of paper and ink conservation. Proper mounting and housing techniques ensure the longevity and stability of paper artifacts, while also providing access for study and exhibition. Understanding the key terms and vocabulary related to mounting and housing can help conservators to make informed decisions about the best techniques to use for a particular artifact. By balancing preservation and access, conservators can help to ensure that paper artifacts are preserved for future generations while still being accessible for study and enjoyment.