

ABSTRACT

Nowhere to Hide: Seamless mounting on a Plexiglass Panel

Presenters:

Andrew Estep, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York, USA
Jody Hanson, Independent Mount Maker, Freelance Mountmaker, Buffalo, New York, USA

One of the many goals of Mount making in a museum context is to prioritize viewing the art; our work must be as inobtrusive as possible. This presentation and talk discuss the heightened challenges we faced when the exhibit Curator and the Designer wanted the artwork to appear to be suspended in the air.

The "Retail Case" is a focal point in the center of the renovated British Gallery at the Met and is viewable from any angle. It contains approximately 130 small objects representative of the period of the rise of the middle class in Britain. These are displayed on individual brass mounts that emerge from both sides of four 8 ft high x 2 ft wide x 1.25" thick clear frameless plexiglass panels. The effect of this method of display is that the artifacts appear to be floating, like jewels in space, and yet viewed from across the room, it creates an impressively large visual impact. There were many steps to this process, including multiple mock-up sessions and inevitable changes in the planning. The fact that objects were displayed on both sides of the panels was a real contributing factor in this need for thorough practical mock-ups. Problem solving the Plexiglas itself raised many issues, for example: how to determine the best thickness, how to treat the edges to avoid distracting reflections in the panels, and the best way to drill reliable straight holes. We will share some of the many lessons we have learned in making this final display a success.

Unfortunately, the exhibit opened only two weeks before both the Museum and the City closed due to the Covid 19 Pandemic, but we were able to see people enjoying the beautiful display of objects during the gallery opening and the short time it was on display to the public.

BIO



Assistant Conservation Preparator; The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Andy Estep was born in Alexandria VA and spent many hours visiting the museums in DC. He came to the Department of Objects Conservation at The Met in 2017 for the Musical Instruments galleries renovation. He joined the department in 2019. Before coming to The Met, Andy was a prop builder for theater, television, and advertising, as well as a scenic designer for theater and for large-scale retail window displays. Andy also worked as a mount maker at the American Museum of Natural History during the Hall of Ocean Life restoration. He has a BFA in sculpture from the Rhode Island School of Design and an MFA in visual arts from the UC San Diego.



Jody Hanson was born in Champaign-Urbana, IL and currently lives in Buffalo, NY. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Silversmithing and Jewelry Design from Indiana University. Her career in museum work began at the Krannert Art Museum 28 years ago while earning an MFA at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. She is currently working as a freelance mountmaker and installation preparator and has a diverse background of working with a wide range of objects from antiquities to contemporary art. Current and past employers include the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Cooper-Hewitt: National Design Museum, Peabody Essex Museum, Guggenheim Museum, Asia Society Museum, Queens Borough Public Library and Japan Society. Her enjoyment of working with artworks never wanes as each piece is an interesting and meaningful challenge. Bringing the curator's, designer's and artist's visions to reality through sound display practices remains a focus of her work.