

Recycle clear acrylic

To make archival fabric covered mounts and case furniture

REASONS TO USE CLEAR ACRYLIC

One reason to use clear acrylic in exhibits is because it is clear. However, another reason to use it is because acrylic is inert, and does not off-gas, tarnish, or rust. Unfortunately, clear acrylic is too often used once and is then discarded as soon as it gets scratched. However, if done properly, acrylic can be recycled into archival fabric covered artifact mounts, pedestals, wedges, book mounts and all types of exhibit case furniture. Plus, when recycled, it is inexpensive.

TIPS FOR WORKING WITH ACRYLIC

If acrylic is going to be covered with fabric, it can be solvent joined with the thicker solvent "Weldon 16". This solvent produces strong joints, can fill gaps, and can be used much like wood glue, making it possible to work much faster. The pieces of acrylic can be roughly cut, solvent joined together, and sanded smooth in just a few hours. Any scratches will be covered later by the fabric.

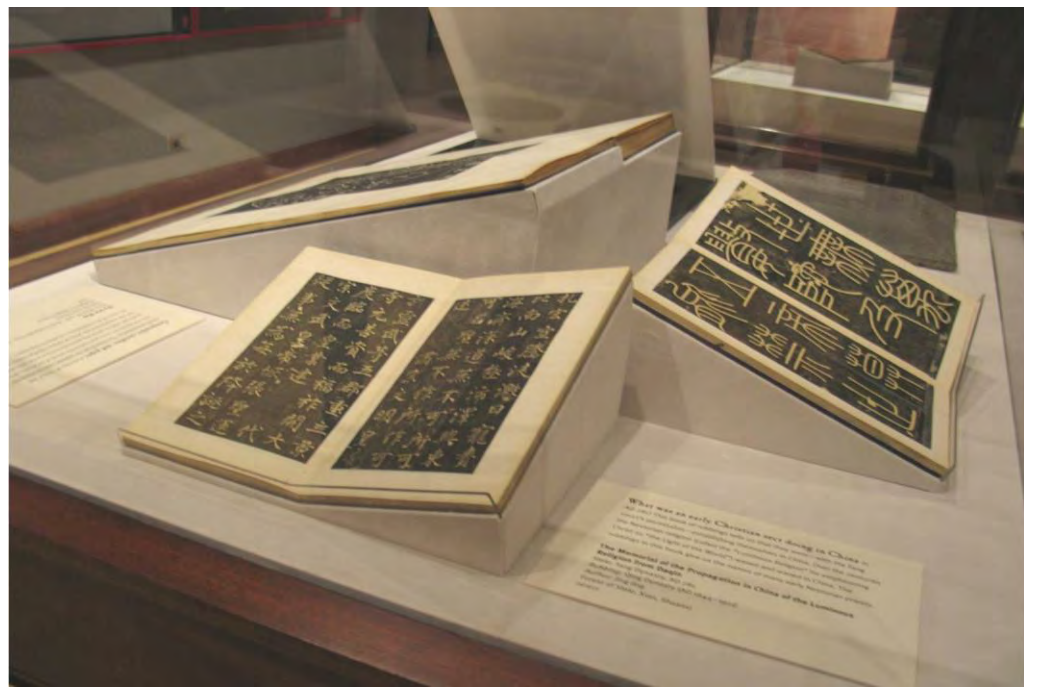
However, care must be taken to: get and read the MSDS for all the chemicals used; work in a well ventilated area; and wear appropriate respirator, gloves, and safety glasses.

TIPS FOR FABRIC WRAPPING ACRYLIC

Archival fabric can be attached to acrylic with 3M 415 double stick tape.

- First the fabric should be washed with Orvis soap and thoroughly dried.
- Next the fabric should be taped to each surface of the acrylic and slightly over the edges of the adjoining sides. Any extra bulk in the corner folds should be removed with an X-acto #11 knife.
- A piece of thin archival matt board can be inserted in the final piece and the fabric wrapped over its edge in order to give a nice straight seam.

See photos below.



Earl Lock has worked over 20 years as a mount maker in the Chicago area and teaches mount making each summer with Pam Gaible at Beloit College, Center for Collections Care, in Beloit, Wisconsin. <https://www.beloit.edu/summer-programs/center-for-collection-care/>

