

ABSTRACT

What Your Mountmaking Mama Never Told You

Presenters:

Erika Johnson and Jen Simons, Brigid Mountmaking, USA

It's worth stating the obvious: mountmaking is not easy. There is no shared and established path for learning and a ridiculous amount of ground to cover. Whereas, for example, conservators might specialize in a type of object, like books or textiles, mountmakers are fitting mannequins and determining book angles. We have to be able to work on tiny delicate pieces and rig enormous sculptures. Our skills are passed down through an apprenticeship-like tradition but materials and ideas are always changing. The techniques we were taught aren't necessarily what our neighbor learned. A culture of openness is the only way to grow a shared knowledge in order to protect and display artifacts.

When Brigid Mountmaking was founded, we each had eight to twelve years of mountmaking experience. Our different backgrounds and training had left us with some different ideas about how mounts should work and new insights into how to approach the mount process. As independent contractors who travel to museums, we've developed methods for collaborating and working remotely and stripped down our tool kits to the essentials. In our six years together, we're still learning from each other. We're happy to share some of the tips and tools we wish we knew a decade ago broken down into our five stages for the mount process: templating, blank fabricating, fitting, finishing, and installing.

BIO



Brigid Mountmaking was founded in 2014 by three mountmakers, Jen Simons, Erika Johnson, and Deanna Hovey. Before mountmaking, Jen started out as a structural welder, Deanna was an elevator mechanic, and Erika designed and built clocks. Brigid is based in the Washington DC, Baltimore, and St. Louis areas and we work on exhibits nationally and internationally. Our presenter, Linda Johnson, is 14 years old. This is her second time attending the forum.