

BIO



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Shelly Uhlir has been making exhibition mounts since Reagan was president. She has been the staff mountmaker in the conservation department at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian since 2001. She loves learning from and training the next generation of mountmakers and being part of the International Mountmakers Forum. Shelly originally apprenticed with Benchmark and continues to love to solve a good mounting challenge.

ABSTRACT

Coatings for Exhibition Mounts: A Deep Exploration of a Superficial Process

Since the birth of modern mountmaking in the mid 70's, little has changed in our mount coating processes. This is a small part of our process, so we tend to keep it simple. We know that choosing the wrong coating can have a damaging effect on the items we are trying to protect. Guided by our institutions, our conservation colleagues, our aesthetics, our tried-and-true methods, and our metalworking processes, we have generally whittled our personal choices down to a useful and select palette of dips, sprays, powders or patination methods. Inspired by a desire to shake up my own old habits by trying to use materials that are less toxic sent me down a multi-branched path of exploration, collaboration, and discovery that resulted in potentially useful choices for our work.