

# 4walls

the magazine for art and framing professionals

## A glimpse into Zinsky's world

– a rising star in British art

Plus: What's new in framing  
Preserving Egypt's Treasures  
A history of Larson Juhl



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ARQADIA

# welcome...

to 4walls magazine



3000 micron

## A cut above

**As framing techniques and styles change to keep up with the latest design trends, thicker mountboards are becoming increasingly popular.**

However, using deeper mountboards often raises the question of cutting and which mountcutting machines can handle the extra-thick board. Some framers avoid using the higher micron mountboards for this very reason but feedback from a number of leading cutting equipment suppliers shows that it needn't be a problem.

Nico Valiani from Valiani said: "Our 45° BLUE head can easily cut Arqadia

Tru Cut also claims that its machines can handle extra-thick boards easily. Jon Hill said: "Our machines can cut Arqadia 3500 micron board without any problems."

Andrew Roberts, from Keencut explains: "The Keencut Ultimat Gold will cut mounts up to 4200 microns thick using the specially designed Keencut TECH S blades. These are available in two thicknesses, the standard 012 (0.012" thick) is suitable for conservation and white core boards up to about 3000 microns and the thicker 015 blade for those over 3000 microns. However, Keencut do recommend that a little trial and error is advantageous to select which of the two blades gives the best results for the particular board being used.

It is essential with any mountcutter to make sure there is no loose sideplay in the cutting head, the Ultimat Gold has fully adjustable sliding bearings under the cutting head which ensure the close blade control needed to cut these tough boards. An immense amount of pressure is put on the blade tip but Keencut have built the Ultimat Gold to withstand this extra load, allowing even the 4200 micron board to be cut in one stroke.

Ultimat Gold owners can obtain samples of both the TECH S 012 and

TECH S 015 blades free of charge from Keencut and their Customer Service department can also supply any technical advice needed. "

Thicker micron mountboards can create a stunning, impactful visual effect that really enhances the framing. Arqadia now sells a wide variety of different mountboards in everything from 1400 to 4200 micron. Its 2800 micron Artique Solidcore comes in 11 colours ranging from whites and ivories to browns and blacks, a 3500 micron version is available in four shades of white and ivory and a 4200 micron mountboard is available in off white.

The message from manufacturers is clear, today's machines are more than capable of handling thicker boards so do not be afraid to use them – your customers will be very happy with the result and, don't forget, a satisfied customer is a repeat one.



2000 micron board



**Welcome from Mike Brown, Arqadia's Managing Director**

Welcome to the second issue of 4Walls. Inside you'll find interesting articles on a range of topics such as a profile on up and coming artist Zinsky, as well as a look at the fascinating work Conservation By Design has been doing to preserve ancient manuscripts in Egypt. There's also some great advice from our panel of experts, an in-depth look at framing memorabilia and 3D objects and advice on how to make the most out of exhibitions.

Hopefully you'll all find information in this issue that is useful to your business. There's no denying the market has been quite difficult over the last couple of years, with people spending less on luxury items such as custom framing. Despite this, however, business has fared well generally, and I think this is mainly because of our ability as an industry to meet the changing needs of our customers. Product design, innovative retailing techniques and first rate customer service have been and still are the key to surviving in this difficult economy.

At Arqadia, we will continue to assist our customers and do whatever we can to help them ensure their businesses succeed; whether that's through new initiatives, developing our web site to make ordering even easier, launching new products or just continuing to offer the very best customer service possible.

So enjoy this latest issue and, as always, if you have any comments or feedback please let us know.



Savona

## What's new in Framing

**Strong, saturated colour has been very popular in both home decor and fashion over the past few years and continues to be so. But now a brand new set of more neutral, softer shades is emerging, creating an important juxtaposition of fresh, optimistic colours and chameleon-like neutrals. These new chameleon neutrals are actually infused with colour, making them both complex and versatile. They can change in appearance, depending on what they are paired with.**

Both colour palettes work well together. Neutrals represent the blank canvas to which you can add hits of colour, creating a new and fresh look for home decor. Arqadia's new Savona range of mouldings is the perfect example of this new trend. With 12 different colours to choose from, this versatile range is the perfect match for any interior design scheme. Savona features a 19mm bevelled profile with a generous 33mm rebate and is available in eight soft painted tones and four metallic variations. Each features an indent running along the length of the moulding which gives an added depth to its appearance. The wide selection of colours and classic finish make it suitable for any type of material – from modern, contemporary prints to more traditional, classic artwork.

It's not just the colour of the frame that you need to consider. Colourful feature walls have been popular long enough

now that some people are over it and going back to neutrals, but all sorts of colours are still fashionable. With this in mind, custom framing using neutral mat colours is the best choice to provide the flexibility to look good on any background.

As well as changes in colour trends, the way we use accessories and home furnishings has also evolved over the years. For example, rather than always hanging framed art or mirrors on the wall, people are increasingly setting pieces on mantels, shelves and other pieces of furniture. Arqadia's latest range of Loft frames are perfect for leaning against the wall in this style. The frames feature a 3" profile and are available in two sizes – 12"x48" and 12"x60". With five colours to choose from – white, ivory, gold, silver and black – they are the perfect accompaniment to any interior design scheme.



# Sales Team



Steve Burke

Steve, who joined Arqadia (then Arquat) in February 1981 as an area sales representative, likes to lead his troops by example. And high among his list of requirements is for himself and his sales team to be close to the customer.

He says: "The main feature of the job is to achieve good sales figures. But my aims, my objectives, are to help develop the sales team, develop understanding with the customers, deliver fresh ideas for the company, provide related training within the sales team, and be close to the customer."

Accessibility is very important, which is why people are able to contact me on a daily basis."

Steve is responsible for managing the whole of Arqadia's sales team as well as overseeing all UK customer accounts. In fact, he adds: "I am responsible for every stick of moulding that goes out of the building, as well as dealing with all the customers' needs and inquiries which land on my desk."

Steve points to the length of service of his sales team as a significant factor.

"Half of the team have worked for more than ten years, which is amazing. They have anything from two years to 30 years' service, and that longevity is testimony to the company."

Their' background in fast moving consumer 'goods', Steve adds: "means they have a good, sound, basic sales training, but then we provide specific sales training within the company."

"The objective of the sales team is to get close to the business they deal with, to develop a good working relationship, and to advise and direct the business to a brighter future and profitability."

"The special skills we require are being able to understand the customers' business, to understand why their customers are in business, and what motivates them. If they can do that, and help their customers increase their profitability, that is the skills we require."

They don't just walk in, show a product, and walk out again. An Arqadia sales person has to be able to do more than that."

For the vast majority of the sales team, another requirement has also been to operate within the public as well as private sector. Three years ago Arqadia purchased Conservation By Design Limited, a company dedicated to the design and supply of high quality conservation storage and display products.

"The company is involved in preservation, conservation and restoration, and my guys have to have a different set of skills for the public sector, as well as previously for the private sector."

So what makes for a routine day in the life of an Arqadia sales person?

Steve, who has been an active member of the Fine Art Trade Guild throughout his career in the framing industry, says: "Their daily activity involves visiting the customer in the field, to discuss their needs, to help devise short and long-term business development, and to enhance IT values between customers and ourselves."

Another key element of their job is to launch new products to their customers every four months.

Steve adds: "We are at the forefront of new business within the art framing industry and we actively seek gaps within our range. We also work very closely with our customers in product development of future ranges. And we work with our partners Larson Juhl in the US. Their product is exclusive designs which we are proud to have in our existing range."

The global economy has been having a pretty hard time of things, and there are likely to be further difficult periods ahead. So what does the future hold?

"One of the biggest challenges over the last two years of the recession has been customers asking how we can see them through it, which we have done by holding bigger stocks ourselves."

"What happens in a recession is that most customers de-stock and that's why we took a serious decision to make sure we held good stocks. So when the time came for our customers to live off our stock it paid off. Every order they needed we were able to fulfill as much as possible."

"That was important to our customers because we held the stock rather than them. We had faith we would come out of the recession and have managed to see them through tough times, and help ensure the future of the framing industry."

We have still got tough times ahead but I think, if we run a very tight ship and help our customers through it with shipping and delivery, we will survive."

**The key to a successful sales team is ongoing professional training in a fast-moving company. That is the expert view of Steve Burke, Sales Director of UK market leader Arqadia.**

**With nearly 30 years' experience in the framing industry, all of it with Bedfordshire-based Arqadia, Steve clearly knows the market inside out. He presides over an 11-strong sales team which together looks after the needs of some 4,500 customers spread across the whole of the UK and the Irish Republic.**



Archive image of Pacific Picture Frame Co.

a history of

# Larson Juhl

**Arqadia's parent company, global giant Larson Juhl has been helping to brighten up the homes of people around the world for well over a hundred years.**

And the world's leader in framing products intends to continue to lead the way in making beautiful custom framing materials for generations to come with the help of its team of top designers and manufacturers, who work hand-in-hand to create enduring frame designs in all the popular home furnishing styles.

Larson Juhl is both contemporary and steeped in history. The company can trace its origins to 1893 when the then Pacific Picture Frame was founded in Seattle, Washington, USA. Over the next half a century, many new inventions helped make custom framing a real business opportunity for entrepreneurs. By 1957, Roger Larson had founded Larson Picture Frame, a frame manufacturing business in Minnesota, and Tom Juhl had opened Juhl Inc, a frame shop in nearby Minneapolis, Minnesota, with the two men immediately recognising the industry potential.

In 1968, Juhl merged with Pacific Picture Frame to form Juhl-Pacific and, within three years, their distribution territory stretched throughout the west and midwest. Meanwhile, in the early 1980s, Larson Picture Frame also recognised the need for fast, efficient distribution with a strong emphasis on customer service.

The company combined the strengths of Titan in Denver and Palatine in Chicago with its Ashland operation to enhance much-needed distribution of materials. Larson later opened additional distribution centres to serve customers locally in Dallas, Atlanta and Los Angeles.

The perfect match was finally achieved in 1988 when Larson Picture Frame merged with Juhl to form Larson Juhl. They soon expanded internationally and, today, the company operates 67 facilities in 17 countries around the world.

February 2002 saw the sale of Larson Juhl to Berkshire Hathaway, but maintaining the values that have made the company the premier manufacturer and distributor of fine custom picture frame mouldings.

Larson Juhl now offers more than 7,000 products, including the Craig Ponzio Signature Collection of moulding, the Larson Juhl Classic Collection, the Concerto Collection of finished corner frames, most boasting 22K gold or 12K white gold finishes, and a wide range of metal mouldings, mountboards, glass, framing supplies and equipment.

In 2006, Larson Juhl also introduced a new product line of high quality, customised art reproductions called Artaisance, which allows customers to view an online gallery of more than 150 artists and more than 3,500 images.

Larson Juhl believes that art and creativity are all inspired by people, places and things in the world around us. In each of our daily lives, inspiration plays an important role.

As such, the company is inspired by the inherent beauty of the earth, by the artistic expressions of all types of creative people, and so much more.

Larson Juhl is also about protecting and caring for the world in which it lives.

It is the first custom framing manufacturer to offer environmentally friendly Forest Stewardship Council and Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification products. And in 1991, Larson Juhl partnered with American Forests to begin the Global ReLeaf ecosystem restoration project. Since then, the company has funded the planting of more than 350,000 trees in over 25 unique Global ReLeaf ecosystem restoration projects within the US and around the world. This year, Larson Juhl donated 25,000 trees and has planted more than 9,000 so far.

As the world's leading manufacturer and distributor of custom framing products, Larson Juhl has a rich tradition of caring for its customers and team members. It is a company committed to its values of the customer always coming first, being fair and honest in all its dealings, having respect for the individual, providing excellence in its products and service, offering rewards tied to service, and providing leadership by example. Throughout its distinguished history, Larson Juhl's mission has been what binds this international company. This is to help its customers, create beauty and preserve memories, something it has been doing for more than a century.

## The rise of

# Zinsky



Walking into The Lincolnshire Gallery is very much like walking into an old village pub, the atmosphere is warm and friendly and groups of people are standing chatting about life and art.

**Mark Fisher, the owner, is wandering around helping those who need advice on artist materials and framing which is exactly what he was doing when he stumbled upon Zinsky.**

Since then, Mark has continued to guide Zinsky in his art, gaining his trust with support and encouragement, and he has now produced a wealth of high quality oil paintings, of which most are sold as soon as they become available,

Some people have drawn a parallel with the urban artist Banksy, who also has the aura of anonymity. "It's simple," explains Mark, "Banksy has a choice, Zinsky does not. He views the world through a different set of eyes to the rest of us, his anonymity is enforced not chosen and that is also his appeal."

The name may not be that familiar, although some of you may remember seeing some of his stunning work on the Arqadia stand at this year's Spring Fair. But it won't be long before the name is at the forefront of popular artists.

Mark says, "It's been fantastic, I have never known anything like it, the buzz is incredible. I encouraged Zinsky to try new subjects like street scenes and landscapes and his second exhibition of Barcelona street scenes sold out within 15 minutes!"

So what of the future for a man who just over 2 years ago was unemployed and unable to express himself in the modern world? At the time of going to press, leading international publishers, DeMontfort Fine Art has signed Zinsky in an exclusive deal. Creative Director, Sara Hill said: "We are delighted to represent an artist of Zinsky's stature. His remarkable portraits capture the essence of his subject in a way that sets his work apart from that of his contemporaries, and in a world where iconic art is in such great demand, we believe he brings something new and exciting to this hugely popular genre."

Mark is well known across Lincolnshire for selling and promoting local artists so when he overheard a customer complaining that her son had great trouble getting his work shown in galleries in the local area, Mark stepped in to see if he could help.

"One of the key measures of his success has been that since the beginning people have come to us, we haven't had to knock on doors or push his work in any way – his art speaks for itself which is very rare in this day and age."

"I always take an interest in local artists" explains Mark, "When I chatted to the lady about her son I discovered he was a very private young man, someone who the world had passed by, who's only real focus in life is his artwork."

Mark's favourite Zinsky? "His self portrait; I love it, it has humour and classic Zinsky style using his cat as a shield. The other one is of Hugh Grant which we donated to The Marie Curie Cancer Fund raising over £1,500 for the charity."

"I had a real feeling speaking to his mother that she believed in his talent and felt I should put it to the test."

Zinsky's work isn't just attracting public interest; he's also received high praise from his peers. "A very well known and respected artist told me that Zinsky has created his own style of painting that is truly unique," explains Mark. "The confidence and skill he shows with his painting together with how quickly he produces his pieces demonstrates real raw talent that is completely natural."

Mark Fisher will continue to play a key role in Zinsky's career. "My task is to encourage Zinsky to realise his potential as an artist, allow him space to try different mediums and to protect him from the spotlight," added Mark. "I believe his future is secured with the help of people within the trade who have shown enthusiasm for such an unusual story, but overall his art will stand alone in a very critical world."

Mark asked if Zinsky could produce an oil painting of the then Babyshambles front man Pete Doherty, knowing that this would test the measure of Zinsky's ability to produce art under time pressure, with real quality artwork to which he could then give his own touch. The next day, Zinsky's mother presented Pete Doherty's portrait and it struck Mark that the image had something special about it. He proceeded to encourage portraits of other famous people, Amy Winehouse, Mohamed Ali as well as film stars and masters of music and theatre.

But what of Zinsky as a person? As his mother first explained to Mark, he cannot and should not be identified; his art must stand or fall on its quality and subject.

Zinsky's story is one of great hope, artist's can be discovered in this day and age and people considered different could find someone like Mark Fisher who will not only believe in them but also help them on the ladder to success.

## The key to successful Exhibitions

The annual Spring Fair event in Birmingham is the perfect example of what makes a successful exhibition. Held every February at the National Exhibition Centre, Spring Fair is the biggest gift and home trade event in Britain, with more than 70,000 buyers coming to source their stock for the coming year. The 2011 event, which takes place between February 6 and 10, will attract trade professionals relating to everything from art and antiques to household products and sports and leisure goods.

### So what is the best way to ensure a super successful exhibition?

Top exhibition business managers will tell you that the most common reason why events go wrong tends to be that not enough time is devoted to adequate planning and preparation. And many of those exhibitions that are believed to have been successful are often likely to be the result of chance rather than actual organisation.

As with all other forms of marketing, it is important to plan your exhibition properly and in good time - often as soon as the previous year's annual show has finished. Proper planning will result in a good show that will give good results.

Successful exhibition managers have a strategic marketing and tactical plan of action. They like to adopt five basic questions as their foundation before making any arrangements - where does this show fit into our corporate marketing strategy? why are we exhibiting? what are we exhibiting? who is our target audience? and what is our budget?

### Taking care of detail is key to putting a trade show together.

Creating checklists is one of the best methods of achieving this as there are hundreds of things to take into account.

Budget will play a major role in deciding what and how much promotional activity is possible. In fact, appointing an exhibition contractor is likely to be the most economical solution, especially for those on a limited budget. On the issue of cost, exhibiting start-up kits can be bought which are easily erected and dismantled, so reducing on-site costs. And, as modular systems are reusable, they can be used in differing forms at different events.

Developing a meaningful theme that ties into a strategic marketing plan is extremely important. This involves knowing and understanding target audiences and planning different promotional programmes aimed at the different groups the exhibition is looking to attract.

There are many different reasons to be in a trade show exhibit, such as selling more products, branding your company, or unveiling a new range. If good planning is the first step, then pre-publicity is a fundamental part of this. Send out invitations to potential customers with free entry tickets; post an advert on your website. Also prepare press releases and catalogue entries and place an advert in the relevant trade press.

It is also essential to have a high quality display, as there is no point in wasting resources with a stand that is not designed to sell. There are many displays that will be perfect for any trade show, and the best place to begin your search is online with plenty of helpful tips and tricks to help achieve an attractive and successful display.

Moving exhibits or displays attract attention. If you have a static display create movement with the use of light and audio visual effects. Be careful not to make it too cluttered with information as it needs to be clear and precise.

If you have had to reduce the amount of space you usually take up at exhibitions, there are still ways of achieving the same big impact. These include going tall to give the feeling that your stand is larger than it is, incorporating mirrors to create the illusion of space, adopting lighter colours to create a better impression, and, where possible, adding hanging graphics from the ceiling above.

Appoint someone to take overall charge of your exhibition stand who should be effective, efficient, diplomatic and flexible. Also, ensure that exhibition staff are fully trained and briefed. Make sure that each member of staff understands his or her role on the stand. Create the correct balance between sales and technical staff as buyers attend exhibitions with specific questions about products performance, price and delivery. It is important to remember that you only have once chance to impress potential new customers. Keep a log of visitors to the exhibition stand and create a clear and precise enquiry form. A successful trade show will help a company to build its business and generate a good amount of sales. So, to help achieve this, be sure to include giveaways, and always include your business card with every sale. This is going to help keep your company fresh in their minds.

Brochures are expensive to produce, so it is not a good idea to leave them on the stand for anyone to pick up. Produce a concise sales leaflet or postcard and keep the glossies back for those with genuine interest to support your goals.

And when the event is over, waste no time in following up leads immediately after the show, as well as finding out how the exhibition could have been even more successful.

Create a system to evaluate results, such as asking exhibition stand visitors and staff for their feedback. Find out what they liked about the display stands and general show participation, and what would they like to see improved.



## Matt Finish goes Greek

It's 30°C in the shade, the clear blue sea laps on the white sand and a crisp cool unoaked chardonnay has been gently introduced to a sparkling glass. "What are you on about, Matt, are you day dreaming again?" I hear you say.

**Summer holidays, that's what. We need them, we love them, we dream of those exotic and far off places that offer an escape from the stresses of modern living.**

Holidays also provide a wealth of fantastic objects for framing, from the bizarre to the downright illegal. Over the years I have seen thousands of papyri, all 2,000 years old and found in the Tomb of the Kings in Egypt. They even came with a certificate of authenticity.

I have seen Ming dynasty silks from China, mosaics from Roman ruins and Aztec woodcarvings but my favourite is when you see a Far Eastern, mass produced oil painting sold on the harbour. He would then sit on a wall in Greece by some crusty old local with a pallet and brushes under a free standing easel.

This is just what happened when, some years ago, Mrs Finish and I went off to the Greek island of Domestos - it's an old joke but it was named because all the people were clean round the bend!

In a small hotel on the edge of town we would rise early and walk down to the pretty harbour front for breakfast with the locals. We sat and watched the fisherman land boxes of silver fish as the richly coloured boats bobbed in the harbour.

Each day a bearded old man dressed as if midwinter was about to arrive would set up an old easel upon which he put an oil painting of, yes, you've guessed it, fishing boats in a harbour, he then sat on a stool with his coffee and his pipe. When the tourists arrived, he put down his mug of coffee and proceeded to add

a touch of white to the already white buildings, the tourists would chat with him and admire his 'original' artwork, usually walking away with a canvas rolled up under their arm and a few hundred Euros lighter.

Each morning we would see a particular lady go into deep conversation about the contrast of light and shade, the balance of colour and a certain amount of flirting seem to be involved but each day she would walk away with a canvas rolled up in her bag and the old man would have a smile on his face. "Another tourist taken for a ride" I thought and continued with my daily worship of food, drink and sunshine.

Many months later I was in a framers in West London when a familiar face walked in, yes, it was my holiday victim. To my surprise she opened her bag and produced about fifteen of the finest mass produced Chinese oil paintings of harbour scenes with a lot of extra white on the buildings. "I want these framed in your best frames please" she said to the owner.

I was bursting to tell her that they were worthless and she had been conned by her so called 'artist' when the door opened and there stood the harbour conman, clean shaven and beaming. "I know they are just worthless tat but they brought Costas and me together, so to us they are priceless." So, the result of all this was: she caught her man, he gained a new lease of life and we gained all the framing. Now that's what I call a summer holiday.



Frames: Ryan Giggs' shirt

The new hi-tech frames form part of the company's commitment to innovative design and presentation techniques. Embedded in the frame is a MCU (multimedia control unit) which has volume controls, ac/charging port, USB, on/off button and speakers, all enabling easy control of the frame, in addition to the infrared remote control.

## Bringing sporting heroes to life

A specialist framing company is successfully raising the bar in the world of sports memorabilia. Sportsframe founder Adam Gascoigne has turned his passionate hobby of collecting sporting items from cricket bats to football shirts into a thriving small business.

And he has now incorporated flat screen technology into his frames to offer customers, who range from sports stars to fans, an even better package.

Adam said: "I collect sports memorabilia, cricket in particular, as a hobby, but I took the decision more than eight years ago to turn it into a full time business. I got frustrated because I couldn't get anywhere to frame it the way I wanted and, gradually, the framing side became more of an obsession."

"High street framers had set ideas of how they wanted to display items, and I was concerned that items like cricket bats might end up getting damaged. The memorabilia industry has really taken off, but it was in its infancy then and high street framers had no experience of it. I just thought I would have a go at working out things myself."

Having studied graphic design at university, Adam obtained a framing

equipment catalogue and set to work. "I looked at bits of kit and worked out how to frame from there. Basically, I made all the errors in the garage but, gradually, as people got to know about it, I started getting asked to do framing jobs for friends and neighbours and the business grew from there."

"A big area of our work is on the conservation side," explains Adam. "Because I collect myself, it's as much about conservation as design. I have seen some real horror stories with signatures fading because of the wrong type of glass. And it's important that the shirts never touch the glass because you can get condensation from moisture in the shirt and can cause mildew growth on the shirt over time."

Sportsframe has now unveiled the most exciting development in sporting memorabilia framing for years with the addition of a small screen installed in a standard picture frame.

The new hi-tech frames form part of the company's commitment to innovative design and presentation techniques. Embedded in the frame is a MCU (multimedia control unit) which has volume controls, ac/charging port, USB, on/off button and speakers, all enabling easy control of the frame, in addition to the infrared remote control.

It incorporates an LCD screen resolution of 480 x 234 and connects to a PC by way of a USB stick. It utilises a Compact Flash memory card, MP3 to support music files, MPEG to support video files and JPEG for image files. It also has a battery play time of between two-and-a-half and three-and-a-half hours.

"It's effectively a rechargeable seven-inch television screen which is specifically designed to take memorabilia, explained Adam. "It will play movies, jpgs, and also play music over a slideshow of photos."

Adam has already used the new frames to present memorabilia from some very well known personalities, including Ryan Giggs whose framed shirt was on display on the Arqadia stand at this year's Spring Fair. "James Milner has a framed Aston Villa shirt which includes footage of him scoring a free kick against Everton, a goal he was particularly proud of. We also regularly produce screen displays for some of the top race horse owners and trainers around the world including Sheikh Mohammed, owner of Godolphin. Some of the most memorable and valuable pieces we've framed for collectors include a pair of Tiger Woods golf shoes, Muhammed Ali's gloves and Andrew Flintoff's Ashes bat & helmet."

"Because I collect myself, it's as much about conservation as design. I have seen some real horror stories with signatures fading because of the wrong type of glass."

Adam Gascoigne

James Milner and Adam



# Preserving Egypt's Treasure

The history and knowledge of ancient Egypt are being preserved using skills and techniques developed thousands of miles away at a company in Bedford. Conservation By Design Limited, which has been producing high quality conservation storage, display products and materials for almost 20 years, is currently involved in protecting ancient manuscripts for the Dar Al-Kutub Egyptian National Library in Cairo.

The 19th century library houses several million volumes, including more than 57,000 of the most valuable manuscripts in the world. Collections include a wide variety of Mushaf manuscripts of the Qur'an and collections of Arabic papyri from across Egypt, some dating to the 7th century AD. Conservation of this important collection is currently being undertaken by the library, with the help of the Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation and companies such as Conservation By

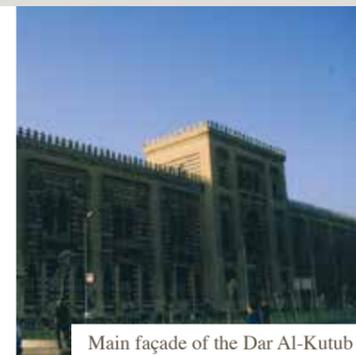
Dar al\_Kutub Manuscript Project, to recommend and supply equipment for carrying out anoxic treatments of documents to kill any infestations of insects in the collection. We had worked with the Foundation previously on a similar but smaller library project in Istanbul where they had donated a CXD ArchiPress vacuum sealing machine".

"We have had lots of experience using vacuum packing as a means of preserving items such as manuscripts, particularly where poor climate conditions create problems such as mould and insect infestations which come into libraries through the books and can quickly spread through a collection, especially in hot climates. In the past, it was common to spray documents with formaldehyde which is dangerous to the people handling the documents as well as damaging to the items themselves."

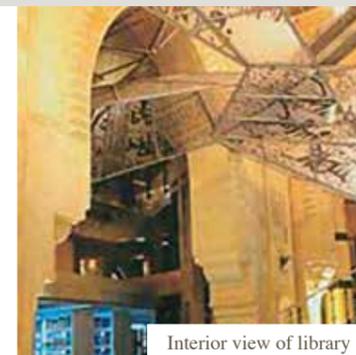
"After various discussions with the Foundation and the library it was decided

mouldy documents from deteriorating further and kills any insects."

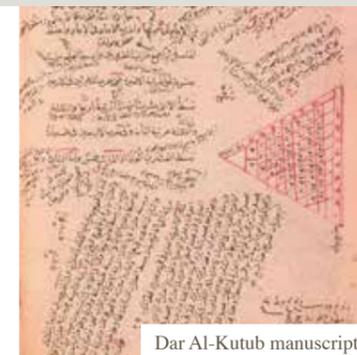
The National Library's team of highly skilled conservators and scientists took part in the training on the machines supplied by The Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation. The training was a success and any potential dangers were highlighted ensuring the machine is used with suitable materials. The equipment and training supplied by Conservation By Design will play an important role in establishing safer and improved methods for the preservation of the collection. This pivotal work at the Egyptian National Library has attracted many eminent people to Cairo, including the former Head of Conservation at the British Library, John Mumford. "The project will go on for many years and some of the best conservationists from around the world are taking a keen interest," added Stuart.



Main façade of the Dar Al-Kutub



Interior view of library



Dar Al-Kutub manuscript

Design, to preserve these treasured items for future generations.

The Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation employs a team of highly skilled international conservators who lend assistance to renowned institutions to protect and preserve their collections using the latest techniques and best conservation practice. Conservation By Design's Development Director, Stuart Welch, said: "We were contacted by the charitable, non-profit organisation, Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation &

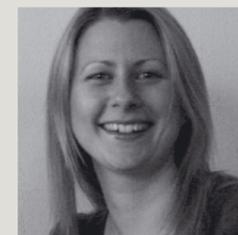
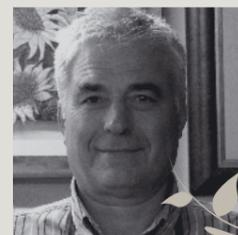
that using the CXD vacuum packaging fitted to flush with Nitrogen gas would be the best way forward to get away from the use of formaldehyde."

"So far we have supplied four machines for oxygen-free storage of documents and manuscripts," explains Stuart. "What this means is that the documents are flushed several times with nitrogen to remove the oxygen and then sealed after the inclusion of an oxygen scavenger sachet and oxygen indicator. Doing this preserves the manuscripts, stops any

Conservation by Design is also working with the Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation on a groundbreaking new framing and drawer storage system to house the Libraries collection of Papyrus – but that is another story.

# Got a problem?

## Ask the experts!



The panel (l to r): Arqadia's Sales Director, Steve Burke; Mal Reynolds from Harlequin Framing; Eve Reid from visual merchandising consultants, Metamorphosis, and Stuart Welch, founder of conservation storage and equipment specialists, Conservation By Design.

Since their appearance at Spring Fair in February, Arqadia's panel of framing and business experts have been busier than ever offering help and advice on a wide variety of interesting and some slightly unusual topics! Here are some of the latest problems posed to the experts.

**Q. We have a customer who owns a bar and he has several china ashtrays in the shape of letters of the alphabet which he would like framed as 'ENGLAND' in one frame. Each ashtray is about 4"x3"x1". Any suggestions?**

A. There are couple of questions that you need to answer; how do I support the ashtrays and is the rebate depth of the chosen moulding deep enough to accommodate the framing package?

Supporting the ashtrays could be achieved in one of two ways. First, they could be glued onto mountboard such that they are floating in the frame. This would, perhaps, enhance the ashtray as one would see the whole shape but you would need a sufficiently rigid mountboard (min 2mm) to ensure they were secure. If you were to use PVA as the adhesive then coat the ashtray first, let the PVA dry and then apply a second coat before gluing to the mountboard. The first coat of PVA provides a bond between the ashtray and mountboard. Using this method of support you would need to use spacers to position the ashtrays in the frame.

An alternative method of support would be the use of foamboard the

same thickness as the ashtrays, this may require several pieces to be stuck together to achieve the required depth. Mark and cut the shape of the ashtrays into the foamboard, this will then provide the support but then to stop them falling forward cut the final shape 'ENGLAND' from mountboard, slightly overlapping the ashtrays, thereby holding them in place. The downside to this is that you would need a CMC or access to a framer with one. This could look good if a double mount was cut with the colours of the ashtrays reflected in the mount. Even though I have a CMC I may opt for the first method but that would be dependent upon the condition of the side of the ashtrays.

I would suggest they were glazed. Claryl or standard water white glass would suffice as there should be no UV protection issues as the ashtrays are most probably glazed and fired.

Moulding rebate depth could be a problem, it may be easiest to choose a moulding with a deep rebate. I have just recently used a black Arqadia 233.167.000 to frame a football shirt – nice moulding and might look good with the ashtrays. Otherwise you will need to use a shadow box.

I mentioned the use of spacers in the first method of support. Home-made spacers give flexibility: if you missed my seminar at the Spring Fair, the details are on my web site [www.harlequin-frames.co.uk](http://www.harlequin-frames.co.uk) under articles. What Lies Beneath - explains how I make them. You could

also cut and glue strips into the spacer rather than having them all one colour, these could be in the England colours – just a thought.

**Q. I'm currently framing a commissioned oil painting for a customer. I asked if the painting had been varnished by the artist but my customer had been told by the artist that she doesn't want the picture varnished, that it wasn't necessary and would spoil the appearance.**

**I want to offer my customer the best advice so if an oil or acrylic painting is not going to be glazed should it be varnished, after an appropriate length of time?**

A. This is an interesting conundrum. Of course, you can only advise customers and the final decision lays with them. Varnishing oil or acrylic paintings can be viewed as the final stage to a painting after it is finished and completely dry, however there are a number of factors one should consider.

Varnishing provides a protective film or layer to those paintings that are not going to be framed under glass. It provides protection from abrasion, dirt, dust and pollution in the atmosphere; as this film becomes dirty it can be easily removed and replaced by a restorer. Further, varnishing homogenizes the painting's final appearance. As a painting dries, some areas may appear glossier than others due to variations in the types of pigments and/or mediums used; also

colours may lose some of their brilliance, which is especially the case with acrylics, but oils too could become somewhat darker. The use of a varnish will help to bring out the colours to the brilliance they had when first painted i.e. before being fully dry.

It's crucial that a painting is completely dry before it's varnished otherwise the varnish may crack. Waiting for a painting to dry thoroughly is less of an issue with acrylics than it is with oils about which some experts say one should allow at least six months before varnishing.

The type of varnish and method of application are important. Gloss varnish dries completely clear whereas a matte/satin varnish leaves a slight frosted-glass appearance that might affect the finer detail in a painting. In addition, I understand that there are varnishes that offer protection from UV radiation. The varnish should be removable in order that it can be removed and replaced at some future date, by a restorer, should it become discoloured or damaged. Varnishes for acrylic paint are either water-thinable or solvent-based. It is also important that varnish should not contain or be the same as the medium used in the painting because: should the varnish, for whatever reason, be removed then the painting itself could be damaged.

**Q. I have a potential customer who owns a textile workshop. One of the things she is looking to produce is a series of photographs of landscapes/**

**country scenes printed onto synthetic velvet. The finished prints are 90cm x 62cm, with additional material all round, and we've discussed using stretcher bars but my one slight concern is how to attach the fabric to the stretcher bars. Stapling would be the easiest method but that would obviously damage the fabric, she's not overly concerned about conservation framing so am I unduly concerned?**

As you mention this potential customer is not concerned about conservation framing and so obviously will be unwilling to pay for such. I suspect she wants a reasonably inexpensive job doing so that her work can be sold at a good profit for herself. In which case there is one answer to your question – stapling onto stretcher bars. Remember to angle your staples at 45 degrees along the back of the bars. It is not going to damage any of the artwork that is showing and if you glue using Evacon-R you are still likely to damage the fabric even though this adhesive is reversible. If you had been conservation framing you would have had to seal the stretcher bars but in this case that will not be necessary.

# Framing of Memorabilia

and 3D Objects  
by Mal Reynolds



Quilt box design, Diagram 10

**The framing of memorabilia and 3D objects is considerably different from the framing of artwork on paper or in some cases simple fabric art and should be treated more as a 'project'.**

From the start it is essential that the framer discusses the 'project' with the customer to establish what is required; this also provides the framer with valuable time to work out how the 'project' is to be completed, the techniques and materials to be used, how long is it likely to take and any problems that might be foreseen before taking on the work. By working through these questions it can be established if one has the experience to complete the 'project' and finally, the cost. By getting these questions correct thereby completing a good, cost-effective job will, without a shadow of doubt, enhance a framer's reputation.

The first, most important, question is how one should support the item. Is the item valuable in terms of cost and/or sentiment and therefore requires conservation framing in which case reversibility is the key. Supporting the item effectively can be achieved with a little thought and it is good framing

practice to ensure that whatever method of support is used, there is no damage to the item.

In many cases a framer might reach for either silicone or one of the many adhesives available; but first consider reversibility and that the item should not be damaged. Adhesives might be an option for ceramics but in the case of the spoon as the mountboard surface was gold foil most adhesives did not work; consequently, silicone was used (see Diagram 1). If I were to use an adhesive then in the first instance I would use EVACON-R, a conservation adhesive that is reversible.

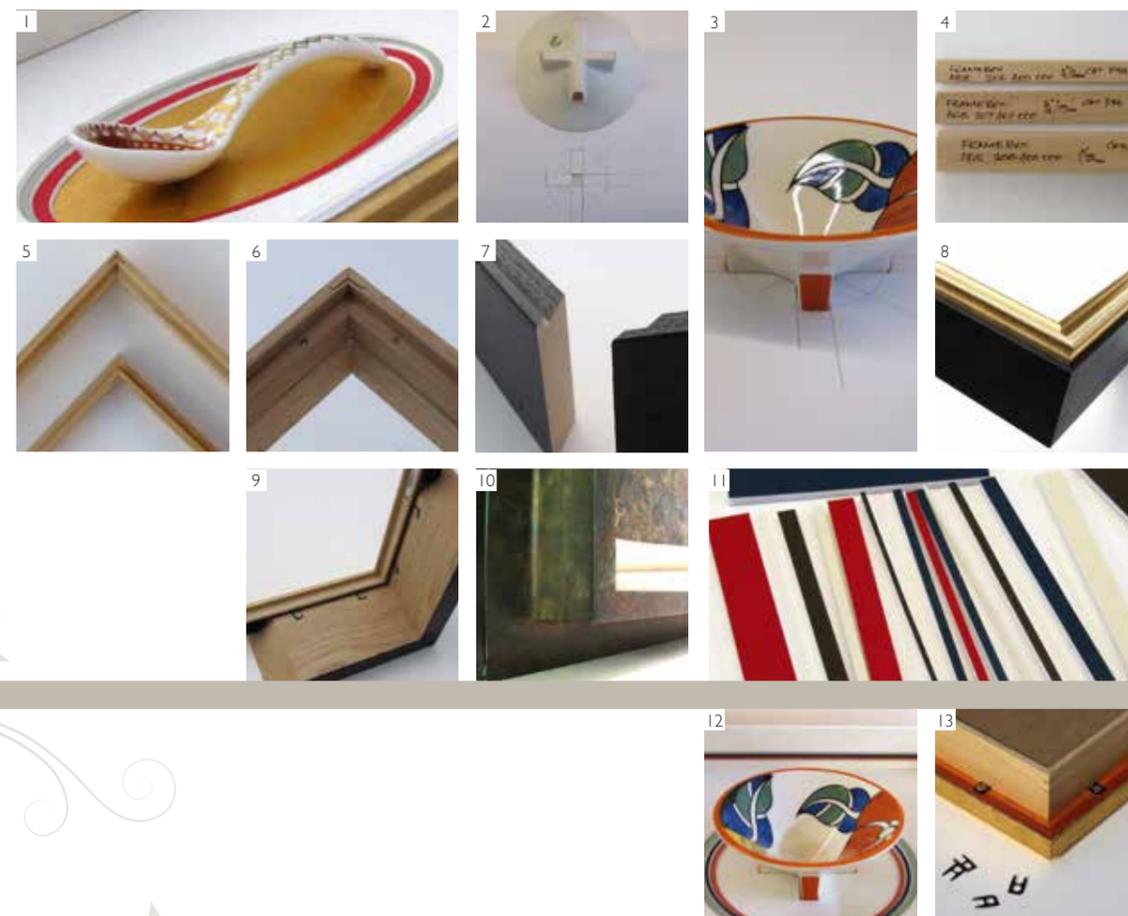
In many cases foamboard/plastazote can be used as a sink support whereby the shape of an item is cut into the board and the item is held in place by a mount. Alternatively, the shape of the base of the object may be cut into the board which is then supported by a push or tight fit. This method was used to support the dish (see Diagrams 2 & 3). Two pieces of 5mm foamboard were used; the shape of the base was cut exactly into the top layer, in the bottom layer the shape was slightly smaller, the two layers were then glued together, a triple mount was cut and the dish

pushed into the shape. The whole frame package was made for demonstration purposes with the dish being removed on numerous occasions - the support remained tight.

The framing of fabric art often involves the use of box framing to ensure the fabrics don't come into contact with the glass; there are methods used in the support of fabrics that could be transferred to memorabilia e.g. the use of hidden stitches to attach items direct to mountboard. This might require the use of either thread or wire dependent upon the weight of the object. Methods of supporting and framing fabrics will be the topic of a further article.

The selection of moulding can cause problems as there are few with sufficient rebate depth to accommodate the whole framing package and consequently the framer needs to construct some form of box. The following considers two types of box construction; the use of FrameBox and stacked mouldings.

FrameBox is available in three interchangeable widths, 13mm, 19mm and 25mm (see Diagram 4). FrameBox is easy to use; the different widths can be cut to the size required, glued and



pinned together to provide the depth of box required (See Diagram 5 & 6) It is important to remember that when using FrameBox the box is made before the moulding is mitred otherwise the resulting frame will be too small; further, a spacer will be needed in order to position the supported item. When finished the outer face of the box can be painted to suit.

**Stacked Moulding.** This is a particularly interesting method of using two mouldings to provide a rigid/strong box. First, select a flat moulding, the width of which should equate to the approximate depth of box and mitre it vertically down the width thereby providing the depth of box (see Diagram 7). Then the choice of moulding for the frame is mitred and joined as normal. The frame is then placed inside the rebate and secured using Framers Multi-points (see Diagram 8 & 9). This will then require the use of spacers in order to position the framing package.

Two mouldings stacked together can also provide for an object to be viewed from both the front and back; whilst the method is slightly different the principle is the same whereby the deep rebated moulding provides the depth of the box.

The deep rebated moulding is mitred as normal and fits inside the frame with the glass held in place both front and back with the use of spacers (see Diagram 10).

In both cases the use of spacers is required to position the supported item such that it is kept away from the glazing. This subject was covered in some detail in the January issue of 4 Walls magazine and so I don't intend to spend time discussing the advantages of home-made spacers. Needless to say they provide an effective and flexible option in terms of size, colour and level of framing. With a little ingenuity they can also enhance the object being framed (see diagram 11 & 12).

The construction and final assembly process is important; first, the object should be supported using the chosen method; the depth of box is then determined and the box made, this is a priority as it will determine the dimensions of the moulding used for the frame. The moulding can then be mitred, the frame made and glass cut to size. The framer can now decide whether or not a window mount is required so as to hide any cross section of box showing, once completed, the spacers can be designed and made.

The frame, glass, window mount and box are loosely assembled and then the spacers are glued into place. The supported object is then placed on the spacers and the backboard secured using framers points. Assembly in this order enables the framer to check for and remove any debris inside the frame. Once content the box can be secured to the frame using Framers Multi-points (see Diagram 13). The back is then taped up and hangers and buffers applied. To really finish the job the tape may be painted an appropriate colour.

- 1 - Spoon secured using silicone
- 2 - Dish prep
- 3 - Dish in place
- 4 - Framebox
- 5 - Framebox
- 6 - Framebox
- 7 - Moulding Vertical Cut
- 8 - Stacked Moulding
- 9 - Stacked Moulding secured
- 10 - Quilt Box design
- 11 - Variety of spacers
- 12 - Example of multi-coloured card
- 13 - Secured Framebox



Dreamflight winners Editquest

## Sports auction raises money for children's charity

A recent charity golf day and sport auction sponsored by Arqadia, raised an amazing £7,500 for children's charity, Dreamflight. The event at Moor Park Golf Club in Hertfordshire featured 18 holes of golf, dinner, cabaret and finished with an auction of sporting memorabilia, all framed by Arqadia.

Dreamflight is a registered UK charity that changes young lives through taking seriously ill and disabled children, without their parents, on the holiday of a lifetime to Orlando, Florida. Once a year, 192 deserving children from all over the UK, accompanied by a team of medical carers, board a chartered Boeing 747 and head to Florida to spend 10 magical days of fun and excitement. Many children could not undertake such a trip without the support of the army of doctors, nurses, physiotherapists and non-medical volunteers who care for the children 24 hours a day.

Event organiser, Ian Goss said: "The Golf Day was a fantastic, fun event and the money raised will go towards funding more holidays of a lifetime for those the charity helps. We are hugely grateful to our sponsors, Arqadia, and could not have wished for a more professional and supportive partner. As the market leader, the company supplied a quality of mounting and moulding that would have normally been out of the budgetary reach of the charity. As a consequence the memorabilia was stunningly enhanced, which added real value to the items and everyone who bought a piece commented on how wonderful the framing was. We cannot thank the team at Arqadia enough."

Arqadia's managing director, Mike Brown, said: "We were delighted to once again be able to offer our support to this fabulous charity. The golf day and auction was a huge success, everyone had a great time and we raised a fantastic amount of money for a very worthwhile charity."



Ian Goss and Team Dreamflight winners

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