Dry Mounting Procedure

Dry mounting involves permanently fixing your prints to a ridged board. Dry mounting uses heat, pressure, and a special adhesive to bond the print to the substrate. The adhesive is called dry mount tissue. It resembles tissue paper and becomes sticky when heated. There are many kinds of dry mount tissue. Each is used slightly differently so it is important to know what kind you have and how to use it.

There are two types of tissue:
Archival dry mount tissue – this is non-acidic and removable, but can be difficult to use. Regular dry mount tissue – this is easier to use, is more readily available. It cannot be removed and it is not archival. We will be using a non-archival dry mount tissue called Seal ColourMount.

A typical substrate is mount board or foam core. Each has its own advantages. If you are mounting archival fibre-based paper with archival dry mount tissue, you will need archival mount board or foam core.

Required Supplies:
- Dry Mount Tissue
- A very sharp ex-acto knife
- Metal Ruler
- Mount board or foam core
- Black and White or Colour print
- Blotting paper to be used as a cover sheet
- Tacking Iron
- Dry Mount Press

The most important thing to be aware of when dry mounting is cleanliness. Any bit of dust or grit on the surface of the print, the tissue, the cover sheet or on the press will mark the surface of your work with a lump or a dent. These marks are permanent and very noticeable so it is important to keep all materials and surfaces clean.

Procedure:

1. Preheat the dry mount press. The temperature will vary according to the tissue that you are using. For Seal Colourmount set the press to 200 F.
2. If you are mounting fibre based paper, press the print in the dry mount press for 30 seconds to remove excess moisture. Always sandwich the print in blotting paper to protect the surface.
3. Trim a piece of dry mount tissue to be 1 mm smaller than your print. If the tissue extends beyond the edge of the print it will adhere to the blotting paper. If it is too small the edges will curl. Tack the tissue to the center of the back of the print using the tacking iron. Tack only the center.
4. Measure the mount board or foam core carefully, and position the print face up in the center of the board. Both sides should be equal but sometimes the bottom will be slightly larger than the top to keep the image from looking bottom heavy due to gravitational pull.
5. Hold the print in place and lift one corner of the paper and tack the tissue to the foam core at one corner only.
6. Sandwich the board, print and tissue between blotting paper and place it in the press. The time will depend on the tissue used, the size of your print and the density of the mounting substrate. For most mounting, 1 minute is sufficient, although very dense materials may take longer.
7. Remove the print and check the edges and corners for curling. Extra time may help the edges to lay flat. Let the print cool under pressure if the edges continue to curl.
8. Trim the foam core if necessary.