

When All Else Fails, Go Back to the Basics

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National Gallery of Art

This presentation will be a review of the book cradles used in exhibitions at the National Gallery of Art. These cradles are designed to both support the books and meet the desires of the exhibition designer, curator, and conservator. Additional considerations include creating supports for multi- page openings as well as single page supports using a variety of preservation and conversation materials such as Vivak. The use of HDPE as a base support for fabric or mat board and what type of adhesives work for this will also be considered.

Shan Linde is the Museum Specialist, Matter/Framer in the Paper Conservation Department of the Conservation Division at the National Gallery of Art, responsible for the preservation of their collection of old master prints and drawings. She has been framing art for over 30 years and has worked on exhibitions for numerous institutions and private collections. Shan enjoys the unique challenge of working collaboratively with conservators, curators, and exhibition designers to create mats, frames, and book cradles that confirm to preservation guidelines.



When all Else Fails, **Go Back to the Basics**

Shan Linde
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National Gallery of Art
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Introduction



Book installation of *The Art of Byzantium from Greek Collections* exhibition, National Gallery of Art, 2013

Purpose of the Book Support

- Begin with the end in mind
- Agreement among all stakeholders
- Minimal handling, maximum support
- Design should not distract from the object
- Preserve integrity of the object



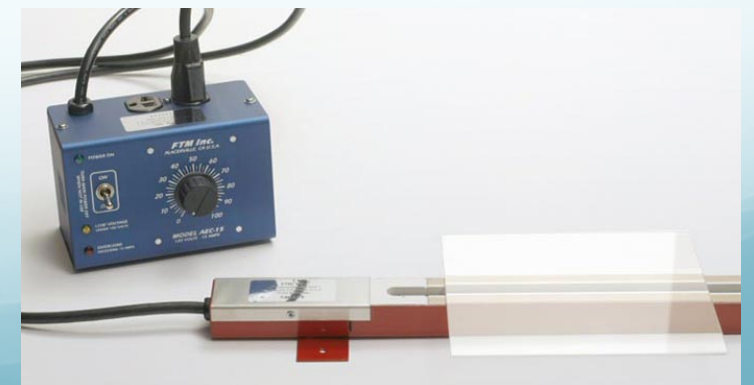
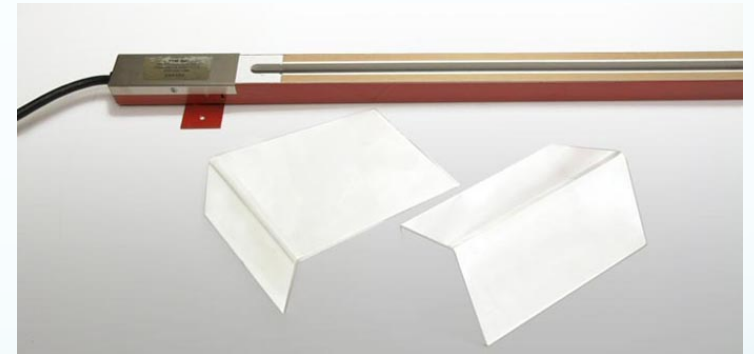
Know the Object

- Assess condition and book's needs early in design process
- Don't force the book: Hold the book open and let it guide you
- Spine flat to the deck—no textblock support is necessary
- If book will be tilted, must have textblock support



Tools

- Weights, supports
- Straight edge
- Acrylic scoring tool, extra blades
- Microfiber cloth, scratch remover
- Flat-nose glass pliers
- Wall-mounted cutter (optional)
- File, sanding tool
- Strip or Calrod-type heater



Materials

- **Acrylic** – variations of thicknesses
- **Vivak** – thinner, bendable without heat
- **Polyester Film** – 10mm can be used for small cradles and ledges



How to Cut Acrylic

- Score several times using even pressure
- Remove 1/3" thickness of sheet
- Work without interruption
- Align sheet with edge of table; quickly snap over edge of table



Working with Vivak

- Co-polyester that can be cold bent
- Cut and bend on board shears
- Or with a sheet metal brake



Layout for Production

- *Construction of Acrylic Book Cradles*, Linda A. Blaser http://www.jstor.org/stable/3179951seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents
- If book can be used as template, use Blaser's instructions
- If not, lay book on stationery support and draw profile onto Mylar

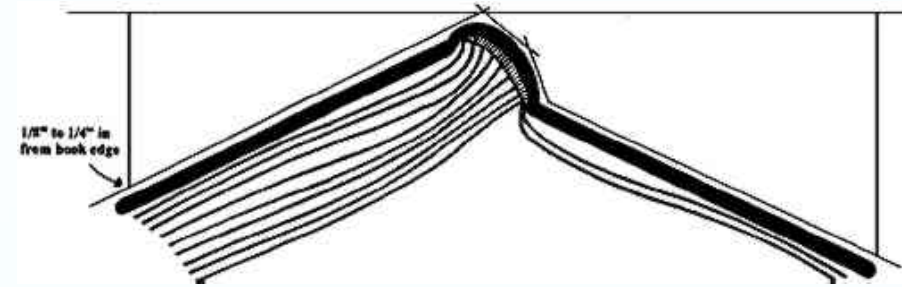
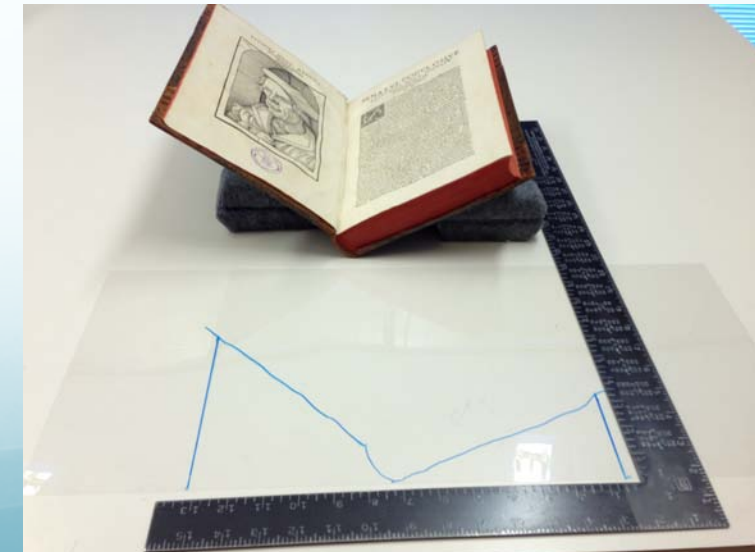
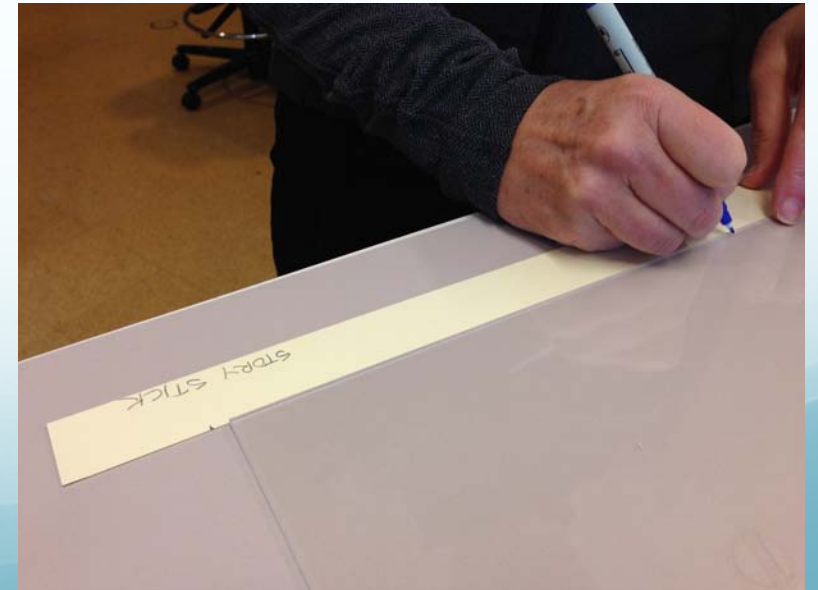
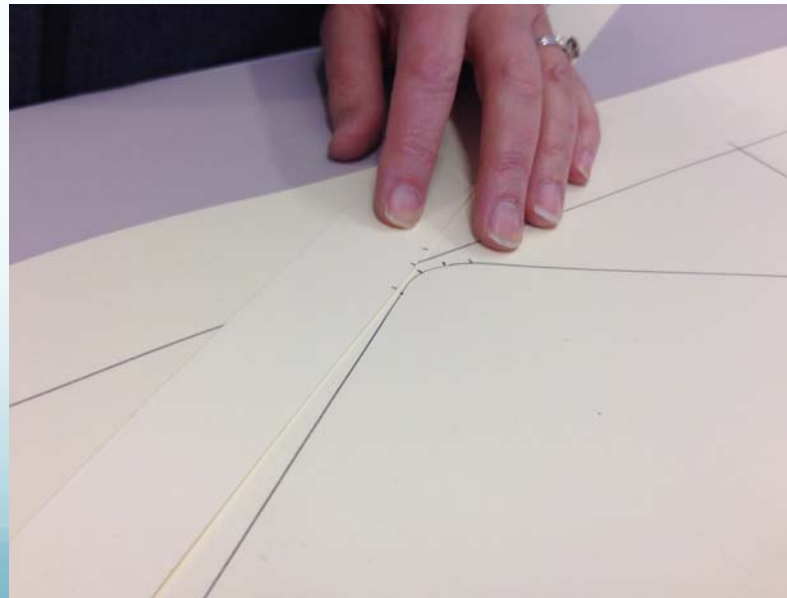
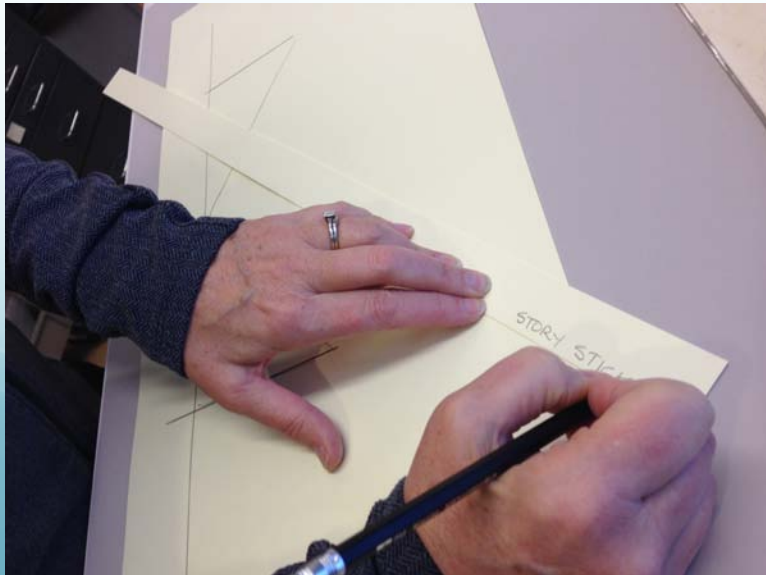


Diagram of book as template, Image from Blaser, *Construction of Acrylic Book Cradles*



Layout Steps

- Figure length of materials to cut
- Cut materials
- File edges (before removing protective coating)
- Remove protective coating from sheet
- Use story stick to mark acrylic where it will be bent
- Requires no math



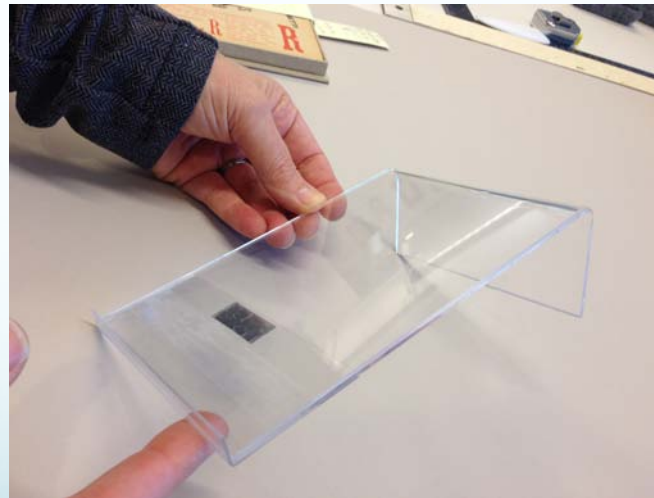
Heating and Bending

- Pre-heat freestanding heating tray
- Set up jig for 90° angle to deck
- Start in center and work out
- Let cradle cool completely before testing the fit
- WARNING: file off edges created by heat-forming at bends before fitting book
- Clean up bits and markings with micro-fiber cloth and scratch remover if necessary



Risers with Vivak/Acrylic Supports

- For for smaller books
- For books that cannot be opened
- Raises books off deck closer to the viewer
- Easy to make: only one heated bend
- Bottom support made with Vivak: cold bend and attach with double-sided tape



Book installation *From Neoclassicism to Futurism: Italian Prints and Drawings, 1800-1925* exhibition, National Gallery of Art, 2014

Conclusion



Book installation of *The Art of Byzantium from Greek Collections* exhibition, National Gallery of Art, 2013