

Tip: Movable Pocket and Crossbar Hinge

The movable pocket and crossbar hinge was created by former Freer|Sackler Paper Conservator Martha Smith and further refined by Emily Jacobson and Amanda Malkin. The hinge consists of folded Japanese paper pasted to create a pocket that accommodates a polyester film crossbar (fig. 1). Gummed linen tape strips are then adhered across the crossbar to attach the hinged artwork to the back mat (fig. 2). The purpose of this style of hinge is to allow an artwork to be moved from one mat to another without having to remove the old hinges and apply new ones; simply cut the linen tape to release the crossbar from the back mat. This hinge is particularly useful for collections that are regularly moved from storage mats to exhibition mats, or where mat sizes frequently change.

Eliminating the need to remove and reapply hinges saves the object from possible skinning as well as unnecessary exposure to moisture, which can harm water-sensitive media or cause distortion in the paper support. This style of hinge also saves the time and energy involved in removing and applying new hinges every time an object needs to be rematted. Once the hinges are attached, rematting requires little handling or manipulation of an object, leaving the work to a capable technician or assistant rather than the conservator. All of the components—the hinges, crossbars, and linen tape strips—can be premade so that little preparation time is necessary to begin hinging.

At the Freer|Sackler, the bottom of the hinge is cut to create an “eyelash” attachment (fig. 3). The “eyelash” aspect of the hinge is valuable in that it allows only small points of contact with the object, reducing the amount of adhesive introduced, in addition to allowing the paper support to expand and contract without much restriction from the hinge.

When making this hinge, it is critical that the polyester crossbar fits snugly inside the pocket to prevent the hinged artwork from shifting up and down. Additionally, the linen tape must be placed as close to the sides of the hinge as possible to prevent the artwork from shifting side to side.

Finally, if the paper used to make the hinge is not thick enough, it is possible for the hinge to fold up on itself in the

area between the crossbar and the artwork (fig. 4). This area is necessary to give room for the linen tape strips to safely secure the crossbars to the back mat. Therefore, this style of

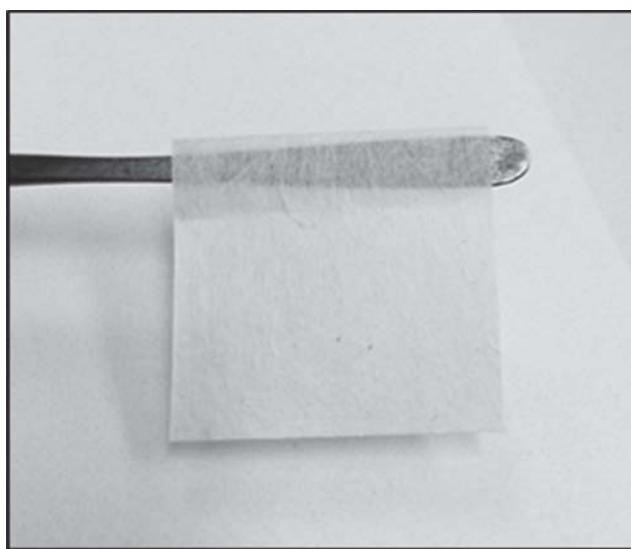


Fig. 1. Japanese paper pocket hinge with spatula inserted to show pocket.



Fig. 2. Pocket hinge with polyester film crossbar held to back mat with linen tape strips.

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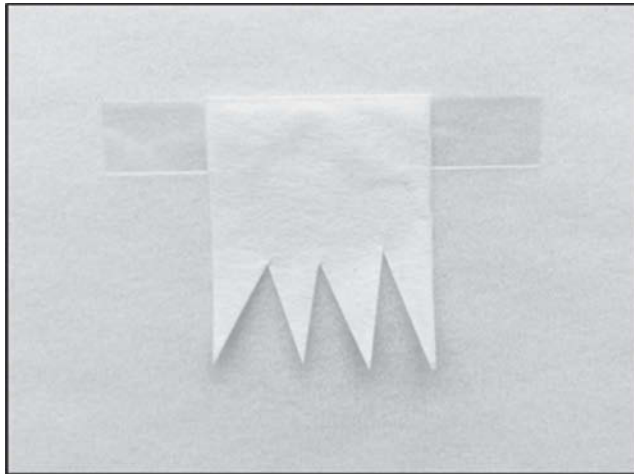


Fig. 3. Pocket hinge with “eyelash” attachment.

hinge may not be appropriate for artworks travelling on loan where the chance of movement is greater.

FURTHER READING

For instructions on making batches of the movable pocket and crossbar hinge, go to <https://www.freersackler.si.edu/research/conservation-scientific-research/paper-photographs/resources/>.

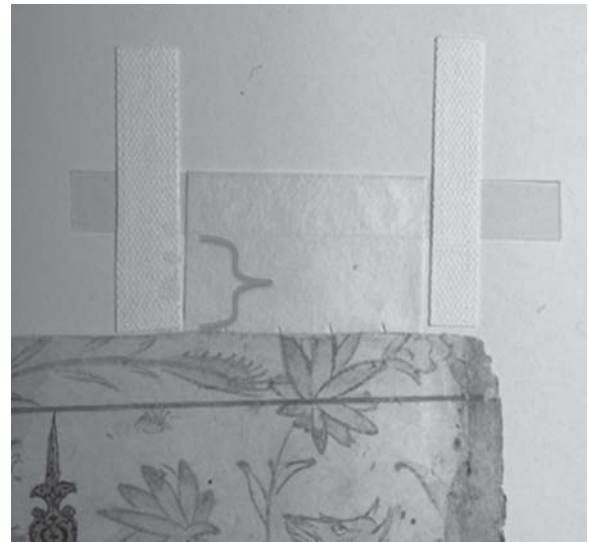


Fig. 4. Marked area indicates the space needed to allow full overlap of linen tape over the crossbars. Depending on the thickness of the Japanese paper used, the hinge can fold up on itself in this area.

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