

Read, Reflect and Learn - 017

Conservation Mountboard - Confused dot Com!

by Mal Reynolds GCF(APF)Adv

As part of GCF training and preparation for the GCF(APF) examination Candidates should have a basic knowledge of the Guild's Mountboard Standards, the three categories and to some extent board specifications. However, with suppliers continuing to rely on the internet to advertise their products some descriptions leave a lot to be desired! It is easy for a supplier to make a mistake especially when they have little or, in some cases, no knowledge of the Guild's Mountboard Standards and attempt to put a gloss on what pertains to be an otherwise inferior product.

Recently I was advised of a couple of examples taken from suppliers, web-sites/catalogues. These were misleading and the specifications did not reflect those of the Mountboard Standards. Both descriptions left much to be desired, they were confusing and it could be considered that the supplier's intent was to pass Standard board off as something it wasn't?

I would like to remind readers that Guild Standards specify three categories of board; Museum, Conservation and Standard each having very different properties. Whiteboard does not feature and as far as the Framing Standards and Qualifications Committee(FSQC) are concerned, whitecore, is a Standard quality board.

The implication that any category of board is classed with a whitecore is not correct, Conservation boards have a core which is 84% alpha cellulose, it must not contain post consumer waste and no Optical Brightening Agents(OBAs) which in some cases are added by manufacturers. Additives such as fillers, sizing and colour are strictly controlled and the board's lignin content is less than 0.65% and hence, in simplistic terms the alpha cellulose core will remain white.

Turning to such a statement as 'Conservation backed white core' what advantage does this offer - the answer, in my opinion, is ***absolutely nothing!*** Standard board has a core which is essentially wood pulp, it may contain both pre/post consumer waste and there are no restrictions on additives with respect to fillers, sizing and colour. There is no limit

to the core's lignin content and hence one might expect the core to turn brown over time, that is unless OBAs have been added. Essentially, such a 'Conservation backed white core' board provides no protection from the normal degradation factors associated with Standard board.

A note of caution; if asked to frame artwork to Conservation standards these boards ***do not*** meet that standard and as mentioned leave the artwork vulnerable to a number of deterioration factors that will, undoubtably, damage the artwork. This may leave the framer open to adverse criticism and possible litigation, the fault of which may not totally lie at the door of the framer, but I might argue that the supplier would not accept any responsibility for misleading descriptions on their web-site or catalogue. Furthermore, any GCF(APF) examination candidate submitting work using such boards would fail and it is my intention to instruct examiners to ask candidates the make and supplier of any mountboards used.

It is the responsibility of the FSQC to highlight such cases and whilst there is very little the Guild can do other than ask the suppliers to remove inaccurate descriptions/ information, should members have questions relating to such products or find such discrepancies then please contact the FSQC through the Guild office or use the Guild's FaceTalk forum.

M Reynolds GCF(APF) Adv
Chair FSQC