

HAND PAPERMAKING

VOLUME 30, NUMBER 1 • SUMMER 2015

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FRONT COVER: Hanne Frey Husø, *A still from the animation Hornfels*, 2015. Set is approximately 18 x 13 inches; background: kozo paper; stairs: flax; puppet: Hollander-beaten silk fiber. Courtesy of the artist. BACK COVER: Peter Gentenaar, 100-foot-long handmade-paper ceiling sculpture, being installed in the Capa Restaurant, Four Seasons Hotel, Orlando, Florida, 2014. Photo: Pat Torley. Courtesy of the artist.

Letter from the Editor

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Hand Papermaking, Inc. is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing traditional and contemporary ideas in the art of hand papermaking through publications and other educational formats. Please visit the website: www.handpapermaking.org.

Hand Papermaking (ISSN 0887-1418) is published twice a year by Hand Papermaking, PO Box 1070, Beltsville, MD 20704, USA. Tel 800-821-6604 or 301-220-2393.

Hand Papermaking is indexed by Art Index (since 1998). An index covering Volumes 1 through 7 (1986 through 1992) is available from the publisher for \$5. A keyword search function covering all volumes is accessible on Hand Papermaking's website at <http://search.handpapermaking.org>.

Annual subscriptions are \$55 per year in North America; \$80 elsewhere. Two-year subscriptions are \$105 in North America; \$155 elsewhere. Payment in US dollars is required. Visa/ Mastercard accepted.

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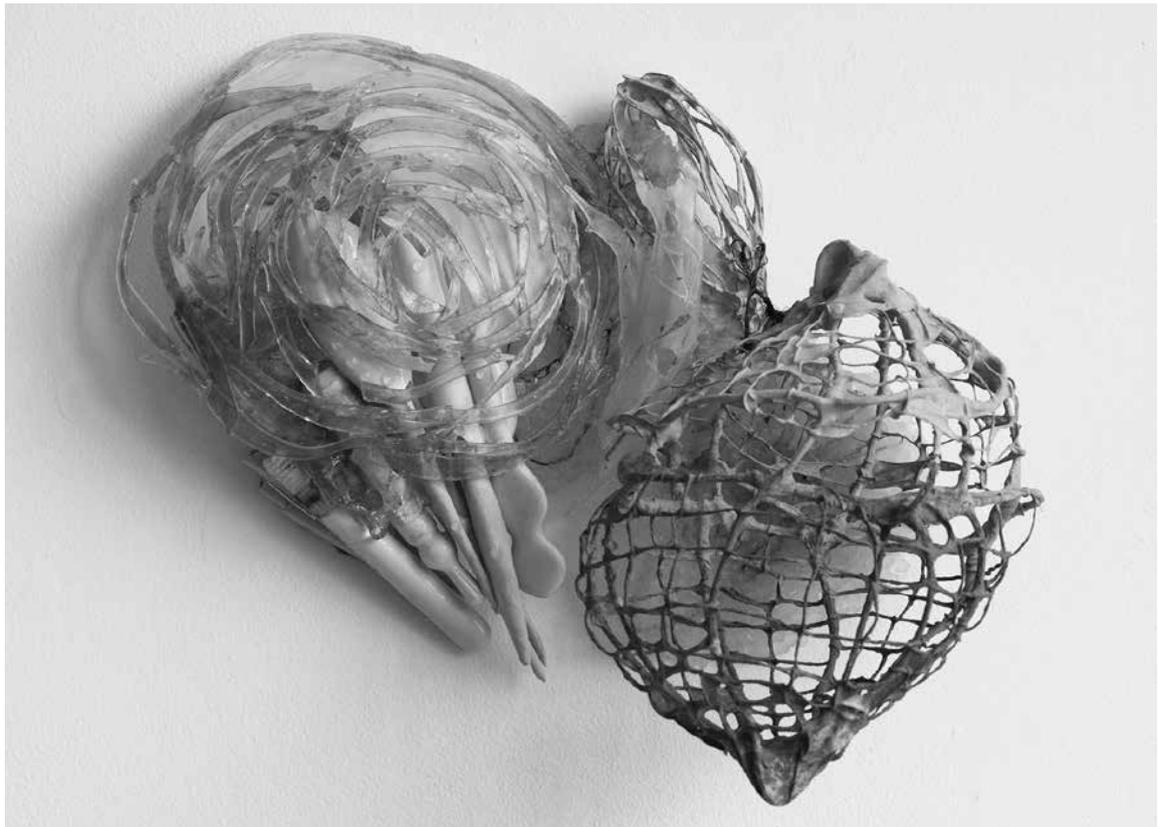
Hand Papermaking welcomes and will consider unsolicited manuscripts but cannot guarantee their return unless they are accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Initial inquiries are recommended. Write to: Editor, at the address listed above.

We think of paper as primarily having two dimensions, defined by its edges north to south, and east to west; a flat rectangular plane that broadly accepts graphic notations, drawings, and pictures on its surface. This general description is quite similar to the way A. Square, the resident narrator of Flatland, explains his “country and countrymen” in Edwin A. Abbot’s *Flatland: Romance of Many Dimensions* (1884): “Imagine a vast sheet of paper on which straight Lines, Triangles, Squares, Pentagons, Hexagons, and other figures, instead of remaining fixed in their places, move freely about, on or in the surface, but without the power of rising above or sinking below it....” However, like A. Square—after he visits Spaceland and gains a sensibility of light, shade, perspective, and “Feeling”—if we too think a little more deeply about paper as an object and not as a plane, we quickly recognize that paper indeed has a material thickness. We know this to be true when we lift the deckle from the mould and see a measurable layer of fiber turn into a sheet of paper. And we also acknowledge that the figures on the surface rise above (microscopically in the case of graphite) or sink below (as they do in light-and-shade watermarks). All to say that paper, even when “flat,” is undeniably three-dimensional. With this firmly established, let us now explore what happens when artists move with great intention into the third dimension.

To start off, Anne McKeown profiles celebrated artist Lynda Benglis and her long-time exploration of handmade paper in her sculptural practice. Rachel Gladfelter introduces Will Cotton’s whimsical and impressive paper-pulp cake sculptures. Roberto Mannino shares his thought process—via drawing—in developing an ambitious, large-scale installation of paper sculpture. Hanne Frey Husø outlines her comprehensive use of handmade paper, from set background to props and puppets, in her remarkable animated films. Steve Kostell interviews Kiff Slemmons about her collaboration with Arte Papel in Oaxaca, Mexico to create dynamic paper jewelry. Gibby Waitzkin takes us step by step through her process in creating her paper sculpture. Melissa Jay Craig explains how she re-shapes high-shrinkage sheets to arrive at volumetric forms. Nancy Cohen and Ming Fay discuss why and how they count paper as an integral part of their sculptural media list. Peter Gentenaar describes his recent experiences mounting large-scale sculptural paper installations. Sara Garden Armstrong and Helen Hiebert trade stories about their public sculpture installations. In addition, Julie Brewer tells us about Paper Circle’s summer arts day camp for at-risk youth in Nelsonville, Ohio; Cathy Baker gives us her take on Elaine Koretsky’s DVD about her visits to a Thai papermaking village in the 1980s; and Velma Bolyard reviews Hiroko Karuno’s recently published book on *shifu*.

This issue features three very special tip-in samples. To accompany her article about recreating seventeenth-century Japanese book-cover papers, Anne Covell contributes two exquisite paper samples with subtle relief elements. And renowned pop-up artist and birding enthusiast Shawn Sheehy designed a special paper tip-in expressly for this issue: an “oriole migration navigator” that is ready for assembly. Shannon Brock produced the paper to Sheehy’s pop-up specs, and GW Corcoran Art and the Book Program completed the letterpress printing and trimming. Now, it is up to you, dear reader, to assemble it so it can take its full 3D form.

Mina Takahashi



Two Sculptors Discuss 'Why Paper?'

NANCY COHEN & MING FAY

Nancy Cohen, Gathered Together, 2014, 16 x 14 x 10 inches, glass, ceramic, wire, handmade paper. Courtesy of the artist.

Hand Papermaking posed a short list of questions to Nancy Cohen and Ming Fay—two mixed-media sculptors based in the New York metropolitan area—to discuss why and how they count paper and pulp as an integral part of their sculptural media list.

How did you come to work with paper and pulp?

MING FAY (MF): In my early New York days when I was living and working in a loft with very limited resources for sculpture materials, a pile of *Sunday New York Times* inspired me to try to make papier-mâché sculptures. Much later, in 1990, when I was in residency at Dieu Donné, it was like going into a candy store with so many choices of pulp to work with, all kinds of high-quality pulps that were closest to the organic forms I was making. I liked working with flax because I was interested in making seeds and that material dried very hard and felt very much like a tree. But I have always been playing with paper since childhood—making things with it and drawing on it. My mother was very good with her hands and made lanterns, kites, origami, and boxes using rice paper, cardboard, and wheat paste. So as a kid I watched and learned some of her skills. I think of her when I use paper.

NANCY COHEN (NC): My undergraduate education was in ceramics and I continued to work with clay through most of grad school. At the end of that time I spent a year in China and couldn't get any clay and began working with whatever I could find, including discarded paper. I too was introduced to a wide range of paper pulp in a residency at Dieu Donné, working with Paul Wong. It was a transformative time. The pulp felt very much like clay, in its ability to mold and drape and take virtually any form, without having the issues of weight and breakage in the kiln.



Ming Fay, *Butterfly Twig*, 2000, mixed-media installation at Nathan Cummings Foundation, New York.

What working properties of paper and pulp appeal to you?

NC: When I first started working with Hollander-beaten pulps, I was immediately drawn to translucency, of abaca in particular, which reminded me of porcelain; and the fact that color can be inherent to the material rather than something that needed to be applied afterwards. I also love the weightlessness and the flexibility of the material. I can work large and still be able to move it around by myself. In addition I find that paper is really adaptive. I am often working with multiple materials in a single piece, and I like that I can make it look like other materials, use it as a transition between materials, or make it in response to other materials. At the moment I am working a lot with glass—paper and glass seem perfect together. They can both be dense or transparent, pale or brightly colored, smooth or chunky—the combinations are endless. I find that I am continually discovering new ways to push the material as my work evolves. For instance, I just completed *Hackensack Dreaming*, a large installation that uses sheets of pigmented abaca draped as a skin over wire armatures and cotton pulp mashed onto similar structures. I have been using paper this way since my residency at Dieu Donn e in 1993. That said, this piece introduces a number of other ways I have been using paper—for example as a surface for image making where the wet pulp creates a dense line that the wet and buckled sheets dry around (the line appearing almost as if it has been embroidered into the paper) and in this case incorporating those drawings into a sculptural installation. I also embedded cast rubber forms in between layers of cotton and abaca, some of which have images of similar forms stenciled on their surface. Finally to pull together these disparate sheets of paper and sculptural

elements (including a large number in glass) I began pouring the pulp directly onto the floor of the studio, literally to bring the pulp and the studio together in the work. I mention this because I feel like my vocabulary in the material is constantly building, and with each piece I'm able to bring the previous experiences along with the new work.

MF: The fact that paper pulp is non-toxic, lightweight, and goes onto any substructure makes it a very desirable material. Paper is economical and creates a friendly working environment. And it is available all over the world—wherever you go, you can find paper to work with. Texture is really important to me, and I like that I can manipulate the paper pulp into multiple grades of smoothness and roughness. Even when I am working on a piece that will be cast in bronze, I prefer to work with paper in the initial stage to create the surface that is most appropriate for the work. I feel connected with the material—it has an extended feeling of the self, an organic quality that lets me shape it into any form. Thirty years ago, I used mainly newspaper pulp and glue on wire armatures. Now I use abaca, rag and commercial papier-m ch  products with a mix of materials such as wire, wood, foam, paint, and acrylics to create forms that evoke plant life—mythical, imagined, and surreal—infusing aspects of Chinese culture, philosophy, and popular mythology, grafting together Eastern and Western traditions.

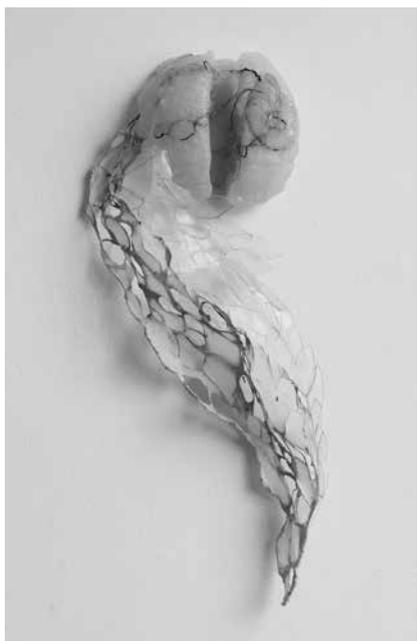
What are the challenges of working in paper and pulp?

MF: Paper is still considered a “lightweight” material and has a reputation for not being able to sustain a legacy of permanence.



ABOVE: Nancy Cohen, *Hackensack Dreaming* (south wall), 2014, 20 x 11 x 13 feet, handmade paper, glass, rubber, monofilament. Courtesy of the artist.

RIGHT: Nancy Cohen, *As If Interwoven*, 2014, 24 x 18 x 4 inches, handmade paper, glass, wire, monofilament. Courtesy of the artist.



LEFT: Ming Fay, *Fair Lady Works at Shuttle 1*, 2014, 30½ x 10½ x 10½ inches, mixed media. Courtesy of the artist and Lesley Heller Workspace, New York.

BELOW: Ming Fay, *Untitled installation*, 1989, mixed media. Courtesy of Dieu Donn  Papermill, New York.



The market is not open to paying for paper sculpture in a way that matches the labor and material cost of the work.

NC: Sculpture in paper has its own issues, especially on a large scale and for permanent work. It gets dusty, can get punctured, and some engineers and fire marshals worry about it catching fire. I have not yet found a method of fireproofing or sealing the forms in a satisfactory way that doesn't change the visual quality of the work.

In our increasingly digital world, what do you think about the function, significance, and future of paper as a material, both in everyday life and in artmaking?

NC: My son and husband are mathematicians and they both think by scribbling ideas and numbers on scraps of paper. My students have all kinds of electronic devices they are very connected to but they still doodle and many have sketchbooks. Writing and drawing and thinking on paper are going to be part of our thought processes for a good long time to come. The more digital our lives become the more essential tactile

experiences are. I believe that art which encompasses a sense of touch is directly connected to our primary human experiences, both for the maker and the viewer and will remain meaningful, and perhaps increasingly necessary.

MF: In everyday life, if paper could be substituted by something else and the alternative is more convenient, then nature will take its own course. In art, paper is a traditional hands-on material. While artists have a broad range of technological materials and methods to choose from, I think paper will always be around as a material for artists to work with, as long as art is made by hand by humans! And paper is certainly a stable material with proven longevity, so art made in paper will endure.