

Paper- craft 2

Design and Art with Paper

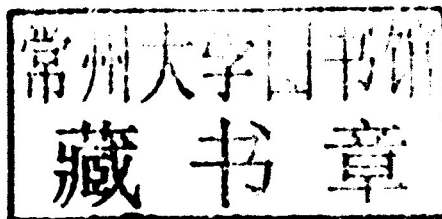
gestalten



J53P/wb:2

Paper- craft 2

Design and Art with Paper



gestalten

Papercraft 2

Design and Art with Paper

Edited by Robert Klanten and Birga Meyer
Preface, chapter introductions, and extended project descriptions
by Sonja Commentz
Project descriptions by Rebecca Silus

Layout by Birga Meyer for Gestalten
Cover image from short film *The Seed* by Johnny Kelly
Typeface: EngelNewSerif by Sofie Beier
Foundry: www.gestaltenfonts.com

Project management by Julian Sorge for Gestalten
Project management assistance by Rebekka Wangler for Gestalten
Production management by Vinzenz Geppert for Gestalten
Proofreading by Bettina Klein
Printed by SIA Livonia Print, Riga
Made in Europe

Published by Gestalten, Berlin 2011
ISBN 978-3-89955-333-8

© Die Gestalten Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, Berlin 2011
All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted
in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy or any
storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Respect copyrights, encourage creativity!

For more information, please visit www.gestalten.com

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche
Nationalbibliothek.

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the
Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is
available online at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

None of the content in this book was published in exchange
for payment by commercial parties or designers; Gestalten
selected all included work based solely on its artistic merit.

This book was printed according to the internationally ac-
cepted ISO 14001 standards for environmental protection,
which specify requirements for an environmental manage-
ment system.

This book was printed on paper certified by the FSC®.



Gestalten is a climate-neutral company and so are our
products. We collaborate with the non-profit carbon offset
provider myclimate (www.myclimate.org) to neutralize the
company's carbon footprint produced through our worldwide
business activities by investing in projects that reduce CO₂
emissions (www.gestalten.com/myclimate).



J53P/wb:2

Paper- craft 2

Design and Art with Paper

gestalten

Preface

As a species, we love to test our limits. In life and love, science and engineering, art and architecture, the boldest among us enjoy nothing better than flexing our – real or cerebral – muscles to see where daring, tenacity, and ingenuity might take us. And what better place to start than with a blank sheet of paper?

To some no more than a pragmatic means to an end, to others an infinitely fascinating and versatile material, paper has long ceased to be a mere medium for conveying thoughts and ideas. Liberated from its prime task as information carrier and receptacle, the humble page soon became the first point of call for all those who decided to give their graphics program or modelling software a break in favor of tangible, physical experimentation. Nevertheless, the relatively recent resurgence of DIY applications in art, design, and beyond often treats paper as no more than a temporary proxy for “real” works, a cheap prototyping stand-in and experimental base to be replaced by “worthier,” more lasting choices once the outcome is right.

A true waste, considering paper’s not-so-hidden assets. Far more flexible than it appears, this particular raw material can be delicate, gossamer, and brittle, but also strong and weight-bearing when corrugated or folded just right. It excels at both sharp folds and amorphous molds (in the guise of papier mâché), it tears and burns – and even dissolves under the right conditions. Cheap and cheerful in its basic incarnation, paper also comes in a broad range of types, weights, structures, and surface treatments. So why not promote this makeshift intermediate stage to a glorious and self-confident end in itself?

After all, both cost and properties have already made paper and cardboard the go-to material of set builders, window designers, and even select haute couture designers who glory in the glaring dichotomy between precious gown and mundane packing material. Here, cheap and disposable meets high-end

glam, lightweight paper appears strong to the core – and we delight in the obvious deception, in the brief illusion and resulting double-take that toys with our expectations.

In this spirit, artists from all disciplines set out to (re-)discover the tricks of the trade, to teach themselves scalpel cuts, origami folds and pop-up and animation techniques in a realm where failure comes cheap: all it takes is time, dedication, and an open eye for novel and unexpected techniques.

Although a fascinating field of study in itself, this publication will not focus on those resolute souls who have dedicated their lives to a single idea, to the almost autistic recreation of a landscape fashioned from paper Lego bricks or faithful renditions of St. Paul’s Cathedral, but instead aims to retrace the accelerating evolution of paper-based art and design beyond mere monothematic skill or deranged dedication.

And there is plenty to be discovered: emerging from the playful bedroom industry of early experimentation, the artists assembled in this book have left the inside-joke-riddled playground of simplistic sets, scenes, physical doodles, and papercraft toys behind to concentrate on more elaborate motifs and encompassing installations. The resulting explosion of expertise not only manifests in the visible works, but also in a more professional approach: no longer reduced to the one bright spark or great idea, these particular protagonists place equal emphasis on related aspects: technique, craft – and final documentation.

Chopping and snipping with the steadiest of hands, some of the featured scissor-fiends might take inspiration from Peter Callesen’s economical yet ingenious cuts to create alternate realities from image and negative space, from removal, not addition, to explore the natural restrictions of paper cuts and silhouettes. Graduating from monochrome simplicity to often colorful, multi-layered, and even backlit landscapes or staggered dioramas, these miniature sets serve to tell a

story, adding a narrative twist to the art. And this is a recurring theme: from chunky, almost solid translations of an illustrator's signature style to entire villages emerging from pages, as if by magic, many of these works not only venture all the way into space and back to see how far they can stretch our sense of wonder and paper's properties, but also aim to convey a message. Exploring the realm of romance and mystery, of childhood favorites, school staples, and late 19th century classics, we are invited to get up close and personal with Jules Verne's retro-futurist adventures, Alice's wild ramblings in alternative, pre-LSD dreamscapes, or Captain Ahab's heroic and desperate crusades against his inner and outer demons.

On a similar note, and following in Brian Dettmer's eminently capable footsteps and knife slashes, even the relatively young discipline of book carving has turned over a new leaf to whittle sculptures rich in textured meaning and reveal a reshaped story of their own making. From eviscerated tomes to pop-up notes, the resulting works become compact homes of self-contained tales – multi-layered, beautiful, and riddled with hidden messages. Naturally, this element of reverential recycling also extends to other, non-book works that thrive on the deliberate, decipherable inclusion of pre-existing subtext; from political statement to timeless classic, secret love poem or tax statement (to some, the most intimate of them all).

Meanwhile, those with a more mathematical mind push paper's boundaries into worlds of jutting spikes, stealth bomber folds, or complex geometries, all set to invade space with abstract calm or near military aggression. As part of their ambitious undertakings, the medium itself can become something of an afterthought, hardly more than a neutral necessity. While some still indulge in its obviously ephemeral qualities – construct painstaking illustrations, installations, or scenes for stop-motion masterpieces, only to watch them go up in flames or delight in their dissolution, a sizeable section of works on display hardly betrays its paper origins.

Satisfyingly solid, even towering, these sculptures and objects transcend paper's implied limits in a stunning metamorphosis of its perceived properties. Illustrating paper's relatively recent, almost alchemic and unrecognizable transformation from simple building block or perhaps flimsy attire into a whole gamut of novel textures, into something radically and fascinatingly different, these works turn pulp and paper into glittering jewels, coarse knitting yarn, delicate faux ceramics, or even the semblance of gleaming plastic grids.

As part of this sheer proliferation and professionalization of paper art and its countless permutations, the discipline has now attracted the attention of those with a more mundane goal and message: faced with society's universal yearning for authenticity, for personal touches among mass-produced perfection, big brands welcome paper-based communication measures as an ingenious means to differentiate their own product from the almost indistinguishable competition. From hand-crafted set to three-dimensional poster, from endearing stop-frame animation to cinema-quality trailer, paper adds instant depth, personality, and emotional reach. No longer the work of a sole tinkerer or idealistic bedroom artist, the respective commercials, portfolios, or image campaigns require the interplay of entire sets, scenes, and teams, choreographed by seasoned art directors and producers who take the new medium in their stride.

And this is where we come full circle: driving the limits ever further – with increasing intricacy, larger sets, bigger budgets, proliferating ramifications, and novel paper properties – the genre's original reject, the computer itself, is slowly starting to regain its status: as a welcome, if additional, tool for modeling and prepping all those brain-frazzling complexities and abstract algorithms required to realize tomorrow's visions.

Reality, Reimagined

Evolving in leaps and bounds, paper-based illustrations and collages have come a long way since the era of enthusiastic slash and churn punk publications. Right about now, an immaculate grasp of technique and technology is almost taken for granted – it's what you make of it that counts, beyond your skill with scissors or scalpel.

From the tentative portraits and silhouettes of yore, the artists assembled in this chapter have graduated to encompassing worlds, whorls, and layers shaped from their favorite material. With a self-confidence that emancipates artist and art alike from conventional notions of the material, paper has become a valid stepping stone and stage for entire intricate microcosms.

Take Megan Brain's Endo-period Japanese silhouettes and paper cuts, based on the origami patterns of precious paper, on delicate leaves and sheets saved for special occasions. From lady of leisure to cheerful and perfectly poised Female Ninja, her strong, if misguided, female protagonists embrace the traditional background and backdrop while they find themselves in decidedly more contemporary situations.

And while paper-based illustrators translate the line of an imaginary pen to the drapes and folds of tissue paper, shiny sheets, or coarse cardboard, those of a more disjointed mind add a secondary layer of meaning and intent to the humble collage – a meaning conveyed by the chosen material and its overt or inherent message.

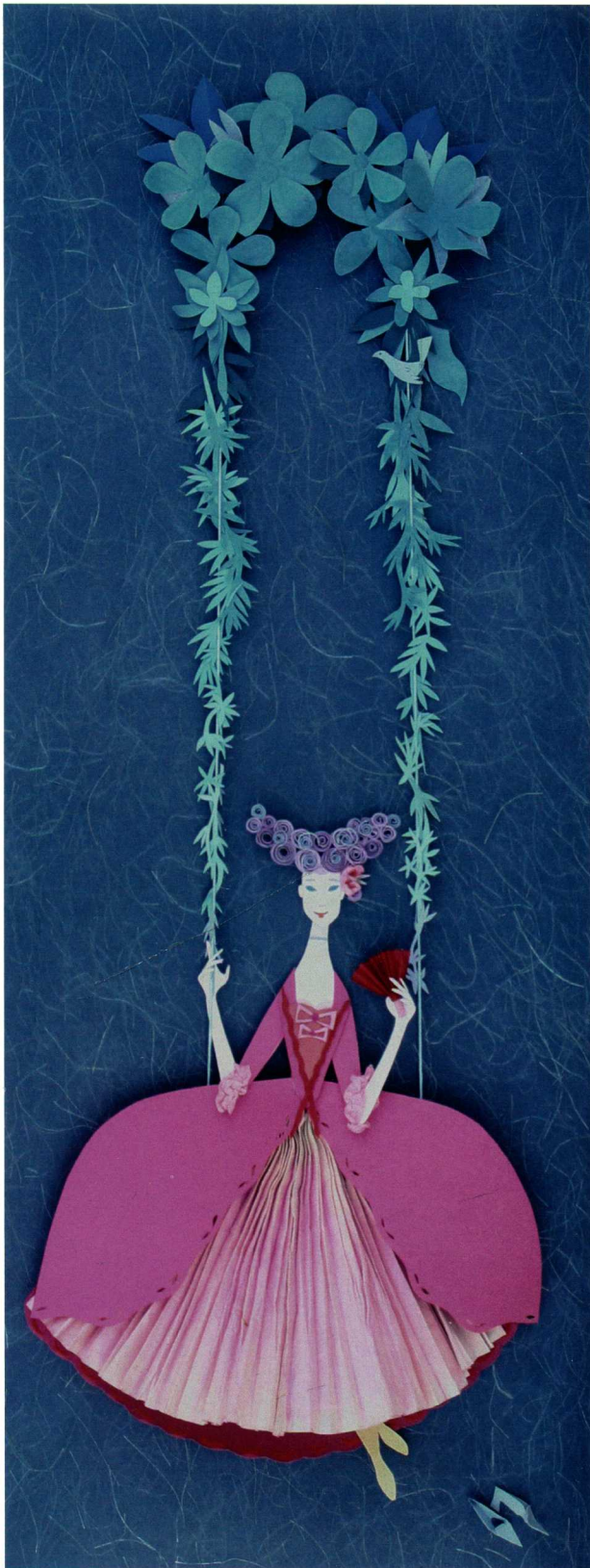
To anchor their subject in a period or theme, they reach for what is already there, for pre-existing products – from simple sheet and brown paper bag to humble toilet roll or corrugated cardboard boxes – to serve as starting points for new revelations and paper-based exercises. Nick Georgiou, for example, adds a touch of history to his evocative works with salvaged books and paper artifacts, while Mark Langan's stern sculptures take on an almost metallic solidity in a deliberate denial of their flimsy origins.

In this, they are not alone: plenty of artists toy with textures, slipping and sliding multiple layers of construction paper to achieve a level of perceived solidity that boosts the immediacy of perception. By lending paper entirely novel qualities – think the feathery thickness of Carlos Meira's Brazilian carnival dress, Play-Doh like panorama or faux Plaster-of-Paris ballerina (a technique taken to ever-increasing extremes by paper sculpture veteran Jeff Nishinaka) – they leave its implied restrictions and symbolism behind and glory in its versatility.

But let's take a step back and return to the overall picture: from Meira's satisfyingly thick and almost diorama-like landscapes and panoramas to the deep-set "take a look inside" displays by the likes of Jayme McGowan or Andrea Dezsö, these stunning collages and illustrations add drama and depth to what used to be a decidedly two-dimensional discipline: a welcome development that keeps us guessing – and wanting more.



Megan Brain
Kunoichi - Female Ninja
Created for the "Ninja Show"
at Gallery Nucleus in Alhambra,
California.



Megan Brain

01 Marie Antoinette

02 Peacock Dress





03

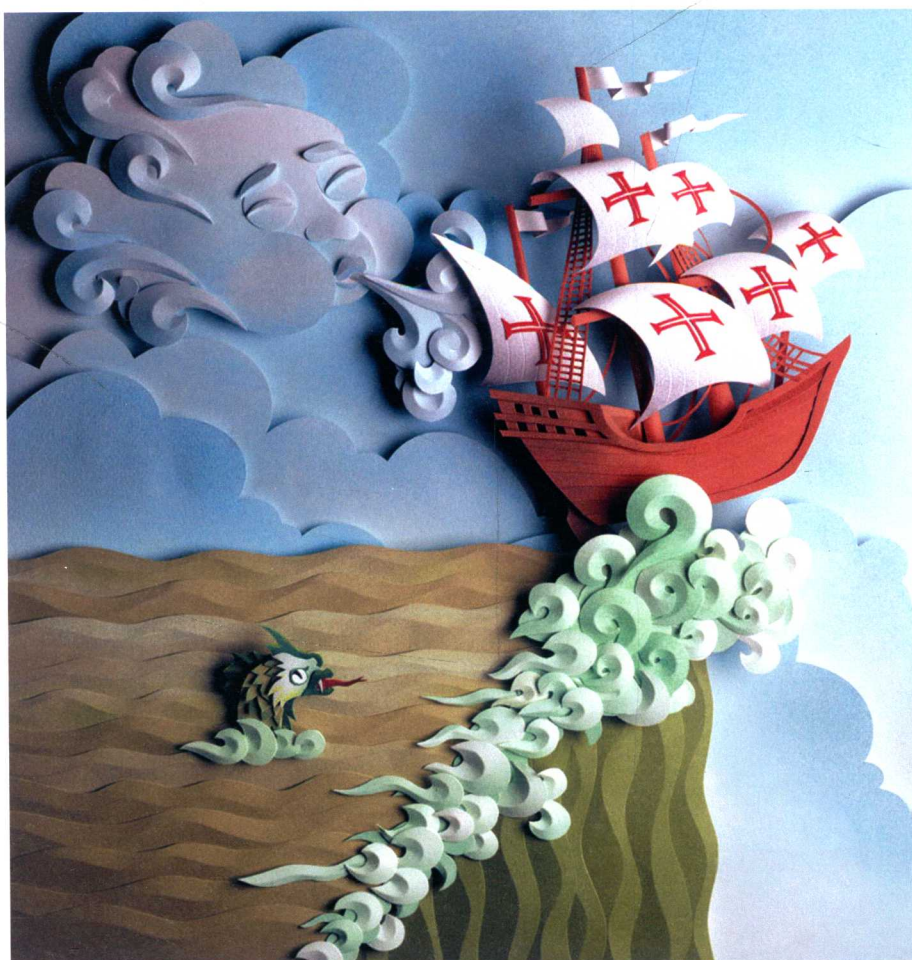
04



05



06



Jayme McGowan

01 Aerial Adventurers
Wallet illustration for Poketo.

02 Deeper Impact
Illustration for a *New Scientist* magazine article about the effect meteors have on Earth's volcanic activity.

Helen Musselwhite

03 Birds of a Feather

Jayme McGowan

04 In the Trees

Carlos Meira

05 Springtime
Illustration created for the advertising campaign of a shopping mall.

06 Abysm

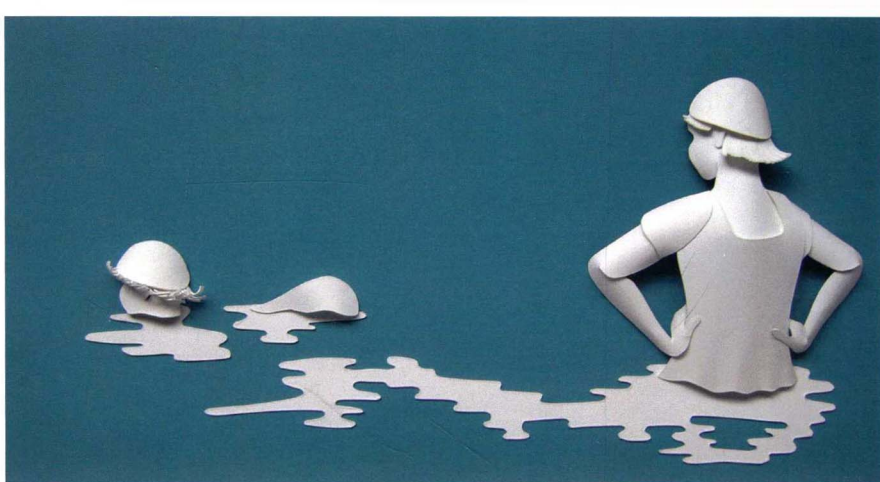


CARLOS
MEIRAS

02



04



03



Carlos Meira

- 01 Porta-bandeira – Carnival Paper
Work created for "Carnival Paper,"
an exhibition dedicated to the
members of the samba schools of
Rio de Janeiro.
- 02 Green Shiva
- 03 Ballerina

Sher Christopher

- 04 Bathers No. 3, Bathers No. 2
Relief sculptures for "Bathers,"
a series based on photographs
of Victorian bathers. Created for
the "Pulp Fiction" exhibition at
Artsreach in Dorchester, U.K.

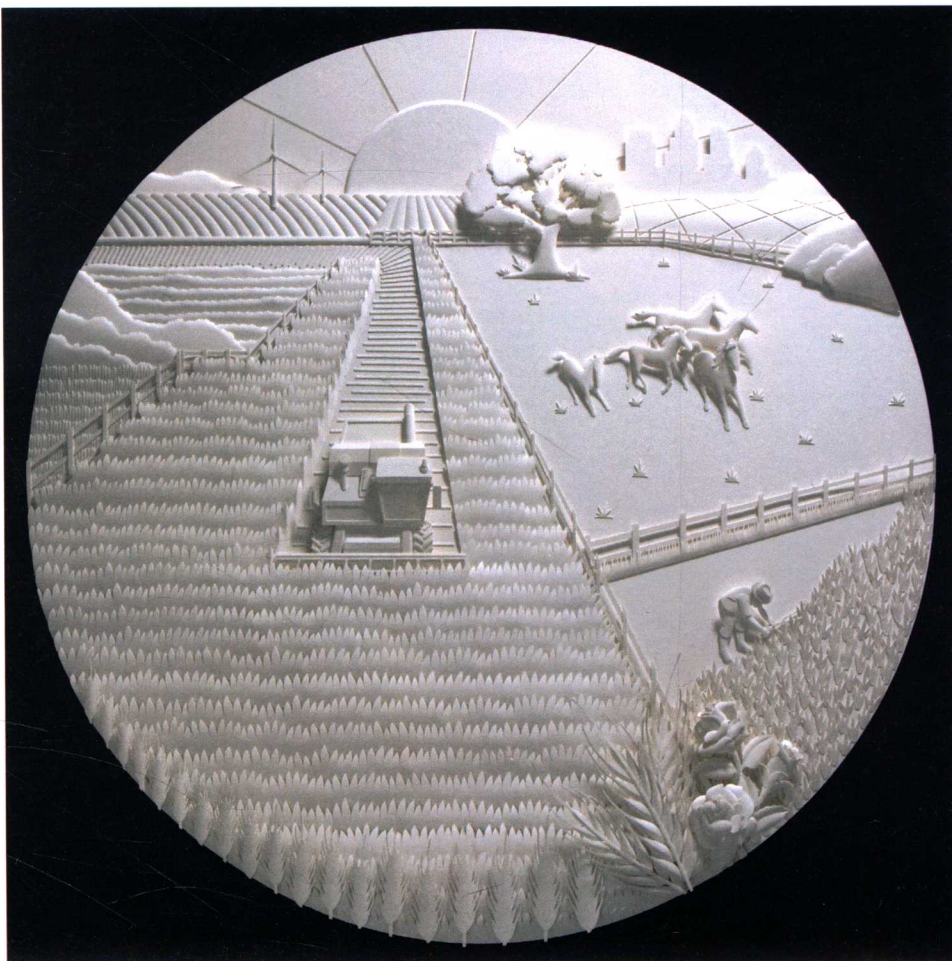


left page

Jeff Nishinaka

Peninsula Hotel Dragon

A paper sculpture commissioned for the interior of the Peninsula Hotel in Shanghai, China. The piece leads to the restaurant's entrance.



02

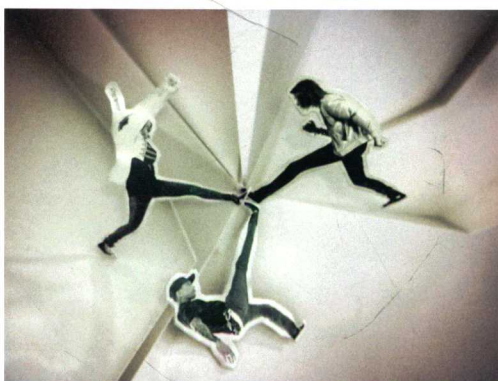
Jeff Nishinaka

01 **Novae: Courthouse, Marine & Agriculture**

Paper sculpture series for the new visual identity of Novae, a London-based insurance company.

02 **My Chic Grande Epicerie**

Illustration of the Grande Epicerie de Paris for retailer Le Bon Marché's Christmas 2010 catalog.



Psyop

01 Converse "My Drive-Thru"

Video about the concept of connectivity. Using 9,580 paper dolls, 30 animators created a world out of paper that tricks the viewer's perception of perspective. Instead of cutting actions together in the video, the camera is thrown around to find the next moment in time, while music and personality create a sense of energy through the camera moves.

Javan Ivey & Jamie Edwards

02 W+K: 12.6

Advertising agency W+K commissioned this animated piece to profile the 13 participants in its Wieden + Kennedy 12 program. It was created using the Stratastencil technique devised by Ivey, which adds a layer of paper to each frame while continuing to show the layers of the previous frames.

02

