

PAPER PLAY

Paper is an exquisite and dynamic material. Paper has the flexibility to function as a fashion protagonist and has enough strength to support practical daily uses. Through cutting, gluing, folding, pinning and collage, a common piece of paper evolves into fine art, expressing artists' unique visions. In PAPER PLAY we discover paper's special properties through a selection of innovative and often surprising designs.

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Sponsored by Design 360°
- Concept and Design Magazine

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Mademoiselle Maurice

Artist

Savoy — France

"Paper, where do you come from? Who are you?"

From the Latin *papyrus*, *papuros* in Greek, meaning "Egyptian reed." Paper is defined as: "Material appearing as thin and dry sheets mainly composed of fibers or pieces of fibers adhering to each other." Paper weighs less than 224 grams per square meter. Above this value it is considered cardboard.

Everyday and everywhere, paper is used as a medium. It passes from hand to hand, from eyes to eyes. We often touch it, almost always read it, but it is rarely contemplated. It remains a common object, which we do not always pay attention to in our daily lives. We have been using paper since ancient times and it has evolved and adapted to our needs. Its original components may vary, but we still use natural sources: flax, hemp, cotton, wood and even the droppings of herbivores. Some insects are amazing manufacturers and architects of paper, just think of the honeycomb nests created by bees.

The paper is foremost a writing medium, used as a tool for communication and to share knowledge. It may seem obvious in our daily lives, but paper contains numerous hidden treasures and beauty. Many artists do not see it as a simple object of consumption, but transform it into artistic compositions with the appreciation of each of its features.

Paper is a medium with nearly inexhaustible resources. It is one of the most modest materials, but one that can be shaped in the most complex of ways. The role of the artist is to make it sublime, as if he or she is orchestrating the movements and changes of a living element. Texture, weight and color give paper its first visible characteristics, but the artist can transform it and give it an unexpected personality, sometimes spectacular and sensational. Its lightness pleases, but its apparent fragility can also turn into an unexpected strength, resulting in a graphic character the artist has imagined and realized.

When I'm in front of a sheet of paper, its purity touches me. A single sheet is perfect, smooth, with impeccable edges. Paper may seem simple, but what you can create makes it excessively complex. Working with the material inspires something magical. Its transformation can be long and tedious with intricate steps or incredibly simple.

Paper can come in infinite shades. It may be soft, but its relief can be felt under our fingers, its delicacy reveals itself before our caresses and every type of paper has its own smell. It may curl sensually, or bend sharply. The single sheet can be transformed into different forms linked by folds with straight edges. Each fold that is brought to the paper stiffens it a little more. Yet one blade can cut it easily and every piece cut out from it makes it, on the contrary, a little more fragile.

An artist can use paper on large or small scales. Thousands of cuts can turn it into delicate lace, worthy of the most precious traditional lace, but a paper lace is more fragile and a small tension could pull it to pieces.

Carvings may remain abstract and graphic or may represent realistic and figurative compositions. Its expression surface may be a few square centimeters or on a gigantic scale. Paper can cover entire walls and be the medium of writing, painting or various designs. Paper is the privileged canvas for expression and transmission, used as a medium in the various techniques of creations, such as traditional writing, calligraphy, drawing, folding and painting but also unique ways of expression like Braille, where the paper is not read with the eyes, but felt with the sense of touch, thanks to a new dimension provided by hundreds of small raised dots.

Artists must be able to use all their senses to transform it, to understand it, to work with it. It is a poetic and sensitive approach, where emotion passes through the senses, either for the creator or for the spectator who appreciates the creation.

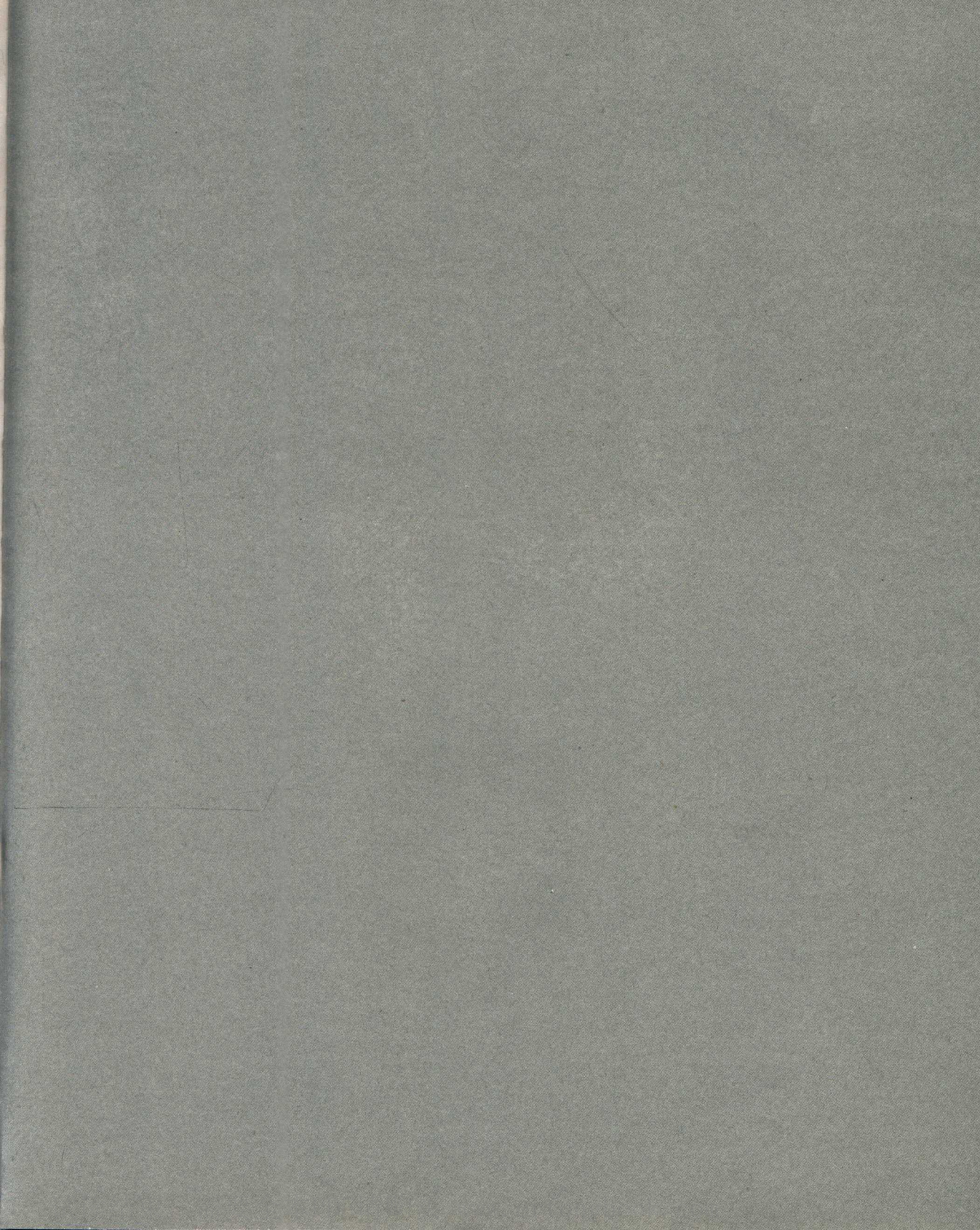
However, paper work also requires technique, logic or even mathematical calculation. Calculation of area and perimeter to transform a flat surface into a perfect geometric shape or pattern. Paper folding is an art, and the Japanese are masters. The art of 'Origami' (折り紙 from *oru*, fold, and *kami* paper, a technique brought back from China to Japan by Buddhist monks) is now an international and very popular art; it has even become the source of some legends and beliefs.

Paper also expresses itself through movement. The movement of paper is often slow, almost more mechanical than organic. Paper may be suspended, moving with the wind, twirling in the air, appearing to open or close depending how it has been worked, cut and folded.

The accumulation of paper is also changing. Many artists work with a multitude of different layers or elements – they overlap, line, stack, glue together, assemble, gather or spread. Paper, by accumulation, then receives a new strength and offers other possibilities, multiplying the options for creation.

Although a tiny flame can destroy it, its edge is so thin and flexible it can cut the skin of a finger. These numerous paradoxes fascinate us and make paper the unique material that it is. We are seduced by its infinite poetry, along with its modesty.

Finally, do not forget that its origin is humble and powerful. It is created from nature. It does not have inexhaustible resources, which is why more than ever paper should not only be admired and worked, but also respected.



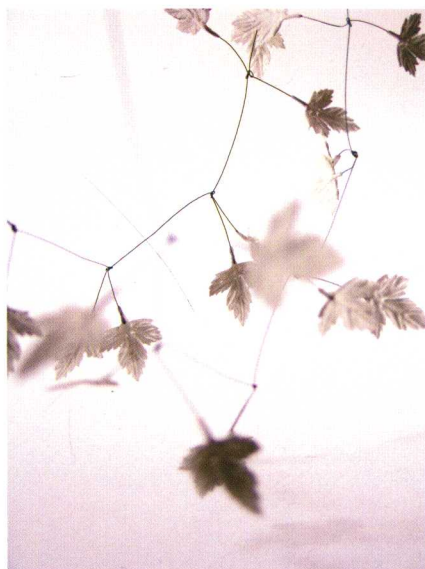






Sensing Nature

The white trees that appear to float in the gallery space were molded by the artist from Japanese larch trees in Yamagata, using Awa washi (handmade paper). The washi, which was made from natural materials such as kuzo (a type of mulberry tree) and mitsumata (paper bush), were molded into tree forms, becoming a symbol of the ecology of our natural world. People were able to view the installation by peering out through a crevice in the 'forest floor' and observing the world that lay above the ground, observing the forest from an insect's perspective.



Blanc de Neige

Together with two partners, German communications designer Anne Franke runs the renowned design studio 'Art des Hauses' in Dortmund, Germany.

Her affinity and passion for paper led to the formation of her jewelry. Her work in design meant she dealt with paper distributors and different kinds of paper everyday — it was therefore only a matter of time until a new project with paper began and this culminated in her jewelry collection. Numerous experiments with different papers formed part of her creative process, which she called 'Blanc de Neige.'

Fine, sensual, uncoated paper is the base of the necklaces. Each individual leaf is created one at a time and then combined with a blend and arrangement of silver and stainless steel. When worn, the leaves move with the person — like leaves in the wind. The leaves are shades of white and designed in a light and simple way. Each leaf is hand embossed by Franke.

The designs vary in their form: either a few leaves strung together by an elegant chain, or hundreds of closely strung together leaves forming an opulent collar, resembling a Greek laurel wreath.

All necklaces are handmade and produced in limited editions. The pieces have been featured in many international magazines and professional design journals. Various exhibitions of the jewelry have been held at galleries in Germany, Austria, Australia and America.

