

FIRSTCUT

COMMUNICATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE GUILD OF AMERICAN PAPER CUTTERS

SUMMER 2016



GAP: "TURNING CUT PAPER INTO ART"

You learn to cut
down trees

By cutting
them down.

PROVERB © Janelle Washington

Paper Angels

Members and institutions contributing financial support to the Guild of American Papercutters are welcomed blessings - Paper Angels



Divine Duet © 2014 Kathy Trexel Reed

You can be a Paper Angel by making a tax-exempt donation beyond your membership, a celebration contribution in someone else's name for a birthday or anniversary, or a memorial gift in a loved one's name. Mail a check or money order in any amount payable to

Guild of American Papercutters
Paper Angels Program
P.O. Box 384
214 South Harrison Ave.
Somerset, PA 15501

The Guild of American Papercutters is a tax-exempt nonprofit organization dedicated to original papercutting as an art form in all its historical and contemporary styles. The Guild of American Papercutters exercises no artistic or business control over its members other than the encouragement of personal artistic growth and ethical business practices. Membership is welcomed - the Guild has no jury requirements and conducts no contests. For registration, contact Sarah Madison at Guild of American Papercutters, P.O. Box 384, 214 South Harrison Avenue, Somerset, PA 15501 or email Marie-Helen Grabman at scissorcutter@yahoo.com.

Dues for new members which include the New Member packet: Individuals \$41 US (\$51 international) and Family \$51 US (\$51 international). Renewal memberships are \$35 US (\$45 international) and Family \$45 (\$45 international). We accept credit card payments for members through the secure online service PayPal indicated on the Guild's website for a small additional charge of \$2: www.papercutters.org. All payments are made in American dollars.

Current Executive Committee: President – Andrea Martin (2017); Interim Vice President – Marie-Helene Grabman (2017); Treasurer – Dave Jenkins (2016); Secretary – Linda Peck (2017); VP Membership – Marie-Helene Grabman (2017); VP Museum - Kathy Trexel Reed (2017); Past President - Marie-Helene Grabman; VP Exhibits – Andrea Martin

Current Board of Directors: Charlotte Grabman (2016); Trudy Kauffman (2016); Pat Stuntz (2016); Sue Throckmorton (2016)

Contact Information

General Information
Andrea Martin, President
andrea@andreamartin.com

Membership Information
Marie-Helene Grabman
scissorcutter@yahoo.com

GAP National Museum
P.O. Box 384
214 South Harrison Avenue
Somerset PA 15501

President's Corner

This past year has been a whirl-wind of activity. The 2015 Collection was held in St. Paul, MN on the campus of Macalester University. In conjunction with the Collection, GAP members exhibited their work at Banfill-Locke Center for the Arts in Fridley, MN. There was also a second exhibition of members' work at Highfield Hall and Gardens in Falmouth, MA. After exhibiting at Banfill-Locke, the show traveled to the River Falls library in River Falls, Wisconsin and to the Winona Arts Center in Winona, MN. All the art shows were very successful and many pieces were sold.

Each year GAP publishes three publications, maintains a website and gives you the opportunity to show your work at our museum at Laurel Arts in Somerset PA. This is made possible by the hard work of the board of directors and volunteers. **The same group of volunteers has been serving on the board for a number of years and it is truly time to get new people to step up and help out. There are a number of board and executive committee positions that need filling.**

GAP is at a crossroads where we will either continue to flourish or go "out of business" without people to help.

We hope that you will share your enthusiasm for papercutting with us by serving a term on the board, attending one of the gatherings or by sending in your work for one of our publications or exhibits.

If you are interested in being more active in GAP, please let me know ASAP how you would like to help. We always need members to help with exhibitions, website development, publications and to plan gatherings. Please contact me at andrearuthmartin@gmail.com if you are interested.

Keep cutting!

Andrea Martin

GAP President



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Front Cover:

MEADOW METAMORPHOSIS © 2016 Ellen Lengel

Back Cover:

MR. OWL © 2016 Clare Lindley

ERRATA

Please take note of these errors in the GAP Annual Celebration! :

p. 29 The titles should be reversed on the two pictures.

p. 74 The title should read "Celebrating the Sound of Fall."

My sincerest apologies to artists Carolyn Guest and Aki

Sogabe for these errors. They are completely my fault.

Sue Throckmorton

In Memory Of

PATTY KILE

Adapted from the Norristown, Pa Times Herald



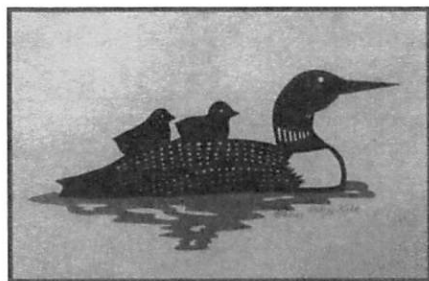
Patty served as Membership Chairperson of GAP for many years. She is remembered for her efficient and thoughtful manner in communicating with GAP members throughout the world.

--Pat Stuntz

Patricia (Patty) Kile, formerly of Plymouth Meeting passed on December 6, 2015 at Masonic Village in Elizabethtown, PA. She was the wife of 58 years of Wilson Kile. Patty graduated from Stroudsburg High School and went on to study elementary education at Beaver College in Jenkintown PA. Teaching in Springfield, Montgomery County then Upper Darby, Delaware County and finally Colonial School District in Montgomery County brought immense pleasure and rewards. Always interested in arts and crafts, Patty dabbled in many media developing skill in each and many times teaching courses -- copper enamelling, sewing, quilting, stained glass, photography, scrapbooking, and scherenschnitte papercutting.

Because of her love of Beaver College (now Arcadia University) Patty volunteered to be fund agent and class editor for her college class-- a position she held for over twenty-five years. In this capacity she corresponded with the members of her class keeping all informed of the location and accomplishments of her classmates. She was awarded the Mary Louise Armstrong Wolf Award for devotion to her university, the Class Officer Award, the Golden Pen Award, and the Golden Disc for Meritorious Service.

In 2005 they decided it was time to settle at the Masonic Village in Elizabethtown PA. Patty is survived by her husband, Wils, and two children: David in Mt Airy MD and Betsy from Lafayette Hill PA. Two beloved grandchildren Jill and Greg, four brothers, two sisters, and numerous nieces and nephews also will miss Patty's cheerful demeanor.



Patty will be missed by her many friends in GAP.

TILLY SCHOUTEN

Adapted from the Charles F. Snyder Funeral Home website , Lititz, PA

It is with sadness that I must announce that Tilly Schouten has passed away. Tilly was one of the founding members of the Guild. Some of us "older" members will remember her and the great times we had with her.

--Marie-Helene Grabman



Tilly Schouten, 80, passed away peacefully on February 28, 2016. She was the loving and devoted wife of Gerard M. Schouten, to whom she was married for 48 years prior to his death in 2010.

Born in Eindhoven, Netherlands, Tilly was the daughter of the late Harry and Nellie Broos. She was the secretary to the managing director of Van Doorne's Automobielen Fabriek, where she met, and after six dates married, her husband, Gerry. She immigrated to the United States with him in 1962, and lived in Lititz, PA since then.

Tilly was an immensely talented craftsperson and renowned for her Scherenschnitte paper-cuttings, often using her husband's designs in her work. She enjoyed cooking gourmet food with her husband, which was enjoyed by both family and friends alike. Tilly diligently followed politics and the news, particularly on CNN, and was an avid stock enthusiast. She enjoyed chatting with friends on Facebook, playing computer games, traveling and reading People magazine.

Known as an eternal optimist, Tilly had the uncanny ability to see the good in everything and everybody. She lived life to the fullest, and never knew a dance floor she didn't like. Her sense of humor drew many to her, including long-time Lititz girlfriends and members of St. James Roman Catholic Church in Lititz.

Tilly's greatest joy and accomplishment was her family. She loved dearly and took great pride in her husband, Gerry, and their four sons, Anthony, Ian, Erik and Alex. She welcomed with open arms her sons' wives and companions, Joan, Lisa, Jackie and Amy and cherished her ten grandchildren.



HELP NEEDED!

Attention all GAP members! The GAP Board of Directors is looking to fill a few vacant positions with individuals who have fresh energy, new ideas, and a zest for the art of papercutting. Here's your chance to join a great group of volunteers and help give back to the organization! The Board welcomes all who are interested in this opportunity, particularly those with skills or experience in information technology, communications, marketing, exhibits, and membership management. If interested, please email gapguild@gmail.com. Thanks!

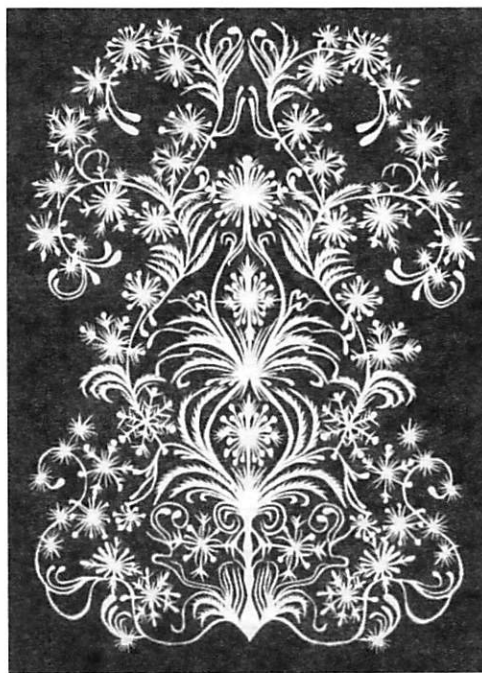
GAP National Museum

CELEBRATION is the current annual members exhibit, showing April 2016-April 2017 in the GAP National Museum. Located on the second floor of the Philip Dressler Center for the Arts, Somerset, Pennsylvania, in cooperation with Laurel Arts, members' papercuttings help promote public awareness of the art form. The annual theme encourages members to imaginatively develop an idea. This year's works feature a variety of subjects. Mardi Gras!, The Art of the Crazy Quilt, Vacation, Summer, Life, Lovin' London, Premier Night, Earth Star, May Days, Best Friends, and others illustrate different cut paper techniques and styles.

FUR, FEATHERS, FINS will follow as the April 2017-April 2018 theme, with April 5, 2017, as the target date for those submissions to arrive. Find the entry form on the website under "Call for Art", and please include your bio and artist statement.



SOUTHERN SCENE© Joan S. Fisher



© Jolanta Janonienė, a Lithuanian papercutter

Former Publications as Portable Galleries

The GAP National office, and a juried Gallery Shop, which includes local artists, are also cooperative ventures with Laurel Arts.

Within the GAP office many FirstCuts published during the past 28 years are stored. These publications are magazine quality and contain images and articles about the history, traditions, and innovations of papercutting throughout the world. They are available upon request with reimbursement for postage. They would make excellent resources for art classrooms or office waiting areas, as interesting "portable galleries" at your vendor booth, or to share as "Random Acts of Art", leaving them for people to find and serendipitously learn about GAP and papercutting. A large flat rate box could contain about 20 of our publications, or fewer could be mailed to you in a bubble wrap envelope if you will reimburse GAP for the postage. In addition, a small monthly Birthday Calendar of papercutting images, non-specific year, makes an excellent gift that is easily mailed, and another 4" X 6" History of the Silhouette traces the popularity of that portraiture. These are available for \$3 each, plus postage. Email gap guild@gmail.com to request these publications.

""""NEWS FLASH""""

The theme of the next GAP Annual in the spring of 2017 will be:
"FUR, FEATHERS, FINS"

RULES FOR THE GAP CALENDAR AND ANNUAL

1. Send all images at a high resolution of 300 dpi.
2. Do not send photos taken of images under glass.
3. Do not send images which are warped in shape, have extreme angles or deep shadows.
4. Send images which are appropriate/proportional to an 8 1/2 x 11 " vertical for the GAP Annual.
5. Send images which are appropriate to a 11" x 8 1/2" horizontal page for the Annual Calendar.
6. Images may be in color or b&w, preferably color for the Annual Calendar.

Remember: These publications can be successful only if members participate.

GAP NEEDS YOU!



SCHEDULE OF GAP PUBLICATIONS

	Date Images Due*	Estimated Publication Date
GAP 2016 CALENDAR	October 1, 2016	November 1, 2016
GAP ANNUAL "FUR, FEATHERS, FINS"	February 1, 2017	April 15, 2017
FIRSTCUT	June 1, 2017	August 15, 2017

*If possible, please send in images ASAP *before* this absolute due date. A deluge of images at the last moment is difficult for the editor to deal with.

CINDERELLA: A Cut-Paper Book

Part of a collaboration between illustrator Sarah Dennis and publishers Tango Books, this beautiful book is a delightful papercut mix of the classic tale of Cinderella by the German Brothers Grimm (1812) and that of the Frenchman Charles Perrault (1697).



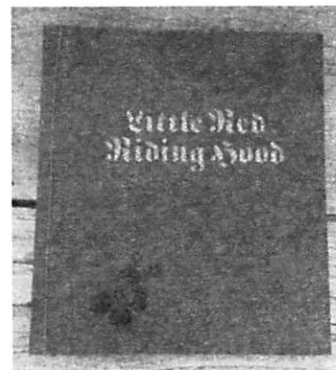
Sarah Dennis is a freelance illustrator and artist living in Bristol, England, where growing up in the heart of Sussex, she spent much of her childhood life drawing and experimenting with art. Sarah has always been influenced by storytelling, drawing inspiration from her grandfather's collection of old books and Japanese artwork.

Her work now combines papercutting with collage. Sarah's work illustrates classic poems and folk tales and exemplifies the beauty of nature in fairy tales and whimsical childhood dreams. Each piece is individually hand-cut using a craft knife to reveal exquisite, delicate detail within the illustration.

In *Cinderella*, between each double page spread, a delicate paper-cut page has been painstakingly designed to interact and cast shadows over the illustrations over the background spread. This addition to the book brings an added touch of magic to this beloved fairy tale.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

A look at the stark, black matte cover of this edition of Grimm's *Little Red Riding Hood*, translated by Anthea Bell and illustrated by Sybille Schenker, suggests that this version of the popular folk tale will not be a Walt Disney-like romp through the woods to Grandmother's house.



Sybille Schenker is a designer and award-winning illustrator from Germany whose work is dedicated to papercut art. Here she has combined laser-cut images, bold lines and colors, and patterned prints to take the reader on a layered "haunted" journey from one artfully staged scene to the next. Through shadowed, partial views of what is to come, she creates the suspense of secrets hidden and revealed and the awful menace of innocence being pursued by evil.

As Little Red Cap nears her goal, the sleeping grandmother can be glimpsed in the window of her cottage; as the page turns, she is revealed in her bed, while the wolf's threatening face can be seen through that same window from the through interior. The pace quickens as she nears her grandmother's bed obscured by a curtain cut with an intricate pattern. The "All the better to eat you with!" moment is appropriately terrifying: Cuts in the black page evoke the snarling wolf by revealing the crimson page beneath.

Publishers Weekly writes that it is "a remarkable example of the book as art." It is that as well as a theater of reading.



WINDOW FOR A WISH

In 2012 for illustrating the book *Little Miss Scissors* by Natalie Belhassen, GAP member and graphic designer Naomi Shapira was the winner of the Hans Christian Andersen Honor award. Her new book entitled *Window for a Wish* is both written and illustrated by her.

"I so very much want a something," the little girl wishes at the opening of *Window for a Wish*, "but I have it not. I miss a "Something" so much. Therefore all the time my head is full with what is not."

Her older sister urges her to go with her on a quest to find this "Something," and the two girls set out by questioning whether it is wide or thin, fast or slow, has a happy or sad sound, a sweet or bitter taste. They are tired at the end of the day after their search both inside or outside, but the next morning her sister suggests that she cut out a window for her "Something," and the little girl cuts out a large hole in a folded piece of paper. Does she find what she is looking for?

Naomi has a philosophical view of her papercutting. "The more as pieces are reduced from the picture," she says, "the more rich and meaningful the pictures become. The picture is revealed through what is missing. The game between 'what is' and 'what is not' reflects the spirit of the story for me: the wish coming through the missing spot - the light shin[ing] through the hole."

Naomi cut the illustrations with a knife from white acid-free paper. The papercuts were then photographed by leaving spaces between them and the colorful backgrounds which created natural shadows to emphasize the authenticity of the papercutting. "This helps people to realize that the illustrations are actually cut," she says, not just graphic illustrations.

As usual, Naomi's papercuttings are imaginative and evocative and perfectly complement the story. My wish for "Something" would be to create such beautiful papercuttings as these.

Note: Written in Hebrew, an English translation will be supplied to an English-speaking reader.



The Book Shelf

Lizbeth Lou Got a Rock in Her Shoe

by Troy Howell and illustrated by Kathryn Carr

The "rock" in the title of this new book published by Ripple Grove Press is really just an annoying pebble which a young girl named Lizbeth Lou tosses angrily from her shoe. However, to the rolling gait of its rhyming text, it takes on large and looming proportions to other characters as it tumbles through a number of further adventures in the book.



Charming in its own right, the book becomes a luminous treasure with the hand-cut paper silhouettes by our own GAP member Kathryn Carr. Her whimsical illustrations have been cut from white paper and arranged in a diorama. The stage was then illuminated from behind and below and the scene photographed. The resulting golden glow and warm browns which permeate all the pages plus the three-dimensionality of the layered out-of-focus trees and plants literally invite the reader in to explore this very creative and imaginative journey.

So many wonderful details appear as Kathryn plots the course of the rock with her playful pictures through Troy Howell's rhymes: a cricket's canoe is nearly sunk by a "boulder;" a trout spits the unchewable rock onto a duck's flowered umbrella; a large bird with a spyglass spots it resting on a woman's hatpin, it slips through a hole in the pocket of her gentleman friend's coat, etc. Round and round it rolls until "what goes around comes around...." - - - a conclusion which may make the book's young readers understand the surprising consequences of small, seemingly unimportant actions.

About a year in the making, Kathryn sees the book as a real learning experience and calls it one of her "most challenging accomplishments to date." The book will make a wonderful addition to anyone who collects children's books, especially those illustrated with her lovely papercuttings.

Note: Many thanks to Rob Broder of Ripple Grove Press who sent me a pre-publication of Kathryn's book to review. Ed.

"Papercutting: An International Phenomenon"

A Review of the 20th Anniversary Meeting of the German Papercutting Guild
by Marie-Helene Grabman

The German Papercutters Guild celebrated their 20th anniversary last October and invited papercutters and museum directors from the Netherlands, Switzerland, Israel, Austria, Poland and the US to attend their meeting in the southern German city of Tübingen. I was there to represent the Guild of American Papercutters.



The following day, while the German Guild members held their annual meeting, the international speakers were treated to a tour of Tübingen. Our guide was an American doctoral divinity student at the city's university.



That evening, I gave a presentation on the history of GAP, with a power point presentation of the work of about 20 of our members, showing the diverse styles within our Guild. Also presenting this evening were Joke Verhave from the Netherlands; Christi Chlebeczek, director of the Museum Kierling (Austria), who presented the museum's collection of Josefine Allmayer's (1907-1977) papercuts and her life history; and Felicitas Oehler, president of the Swiss Papercutting Association, who spoke on the history of papercutting in Switzerland.

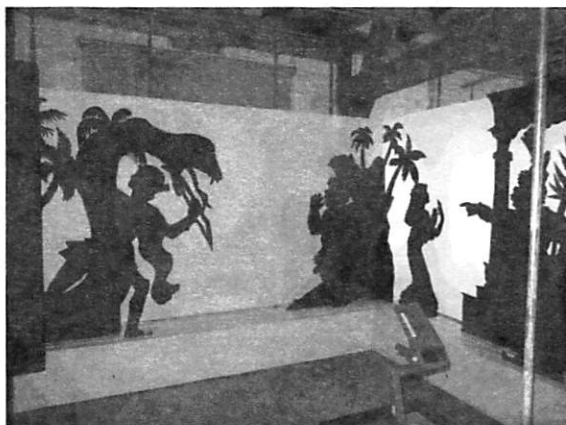
Above Left: Marie-Helene Grabman ready for her lecture

Above Right: Sue Throckmorton with a Lotte Reiniger shadow puppet

We met at the city's Stadtmuseum. It has a very impressive permanent exhibition on the life and work of Lotte Reiniger (1899-1981), a German film director and the foremost pioneer of silhouette animation. (See p.26.)

The three days of meetings were composed primarily of lectures by the invited guests, led by the German Guild president Antje Buchwald. Ingrid Jansen, a German Guild member, presented her powerpoint show and talk on the history and variety of Chinese paper cuts; Rina Biran, from Israel, spoke about the symbols in Jewish papercuts; and Susan Throckmorton, GAP member who lives in Warsaw, Poland, talked about Polish papercuts and how they are used in decorative ways other than as works of framed art.

Two workshops were also included in the weekend activities: Rina Biran instructed participants on Polish cutwork, and Gunthild Zimmermann held a children's workshop. Finally, there was a presentation on shadow theatre by Ann Fabuli. Unfortunately my travel arrangements prevented me from attending this class.



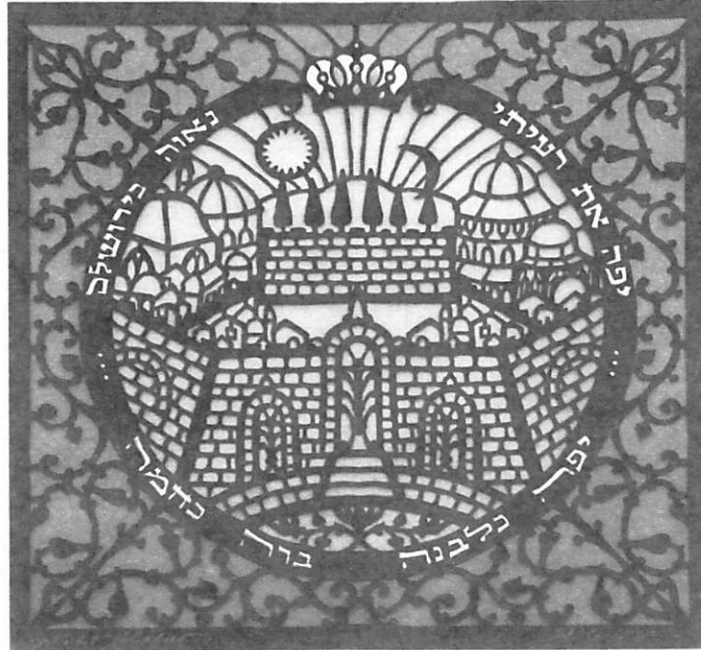
Left: Inside the Stadtmuseum



Right:
On a Tübingen tour

A Trip to the GAP Museum

by Tamar Shadur



Thou art beautiful, O my love © Yehudit Shadur

The long car trip with friends from Northampton, MA to Somerset, PA during the most spectacular time of the year felt like a pilgrimage for me. I was awe-struck by the vastness of rural Pennsylvania set "on fire" that day of October 20th, and arriving at the Laurel Arts Center the next day under bright blue sunny skies added to the pleasure of reaching my destination: a true cultural oasis and home of GAP.

Kathy Trexel-Reed greeted my friend Andrea and me warmly and showed us around that tastefully arranged gallery. She introduced us to the director, Mary Lee Stotler, and after lunch at a local classy restaurant, showed us the "jewel" of the art center, the GAP Museum upstairs, including some works in the permanent collection. I was impressed by the level of artistry of many of the papercuts there, quite a few of which were familiar to me from pictures and exhibits. Kathy and others have done a professional job curating, storing, and documenting the collection, making the most of the limited space.

I was pleased to donate to the GAP permanent collection the framed papercut "Thou art beautiful, O my love" by my late mother, Yehudit Shadur of Jerusalem, Israel.

Here is its description:

Paper painted in maroon acrylic over a painted underlay of beige and gold 10.5" x 10.5"

Symmetrical papercut. The circular frame encompasses a symbolic depiction of Jerusalem with the usual architectural features but with the addition of the sun and the moon, recalling the passage from the Song of Songs. The decorative motif of the surrounding frames is inspired by wrought iron grill work.

Inscriptions: "Thou art beautiful, O my love...Comely as Jerusalem" (Song of Songs 6:4); "Fair as the moon, clear as the sun" (Song of Songs 6:10). (Value for insurance: \$4,000.00)

See image above. (Note: the image above is of the same design as the donated papercut with a very minor change in the gate of the city and slightly different colors).

Yehudit Shadur's work is juried/accepted in the Gallery Shoppe @ Dressler.

About me, Tamar Shadur, the artist's daughter: as a tapestry weaver since 1978, I have collaborated with my mother by weaving tapestries of her papercut designs. Alongside a career of teaching ESL, Adult Basic Education, and Hebrew, I have been conducting papercut and tapestry workshops and lecturing about these fields. I am a member of GAP, ATA (American Tapestry Alliance), and TWiNE (Tapestry Weavers in New England).

THE BUSINESS OF POSTERS

by Linda Emmerson

What do Buffalo Bill and P.T. Barnum have in common with papercutters? POSTERS. They used them. We create them. P.T. Barnum famously said "Every crowd has a silver lining," but in our case every public event or celebration could put some money into our pockets. A poster is a clear, bold, concise, eye-catching statement. Sounds like a papercut. Designs can be economically reproduced in any size, color or number.

Promotion works both ways. Not everyone in need of a poster will automatically think of papercutting. That's up to us to approach prospective customers well in advance of events to make our pitch. With the job in hand it is essential to have a conversation that makes clear to both sides the purpose of the poster, the costs involved and the limitations. Not every image can be made into a papercut, but people are invariably surprised at what can be done.

For example, will it be a one-time advert for an event or will the original be auctioned off and copies sold for fund-raising? Is it to be one color or many? What's the deadline? Note exactly the information that needs to be there: names, dates, times, admission fees and the required images. Then like Santa, check twice to be sure they are all in.

I start by making thumbnail sketches that include all the essential elements and various ways to make them work together. These can be shown to the client and a choice can be finalized. Sometimes with a complicated project getting to that point takes awhile. When the Ames Historical Society asked me to do a commemorative poster for the Sesquicentennial Celebration, I said yes and then went to the dictionary.

I met with a committee of 10 to discuss and answer all necessary questions. Not all of them had a clue as to what Scherenschnitte or even papercutting meant, so I took examples of previous projects to help them visualize possibilities. Then for an hour they discussed the 150-year history of Ames and what they wanted on the poster. They had a very long wish list.

This poster was to be part of a fund-raising project so there would be multiple copies for advertising and sale and the image or parts thereof would be on postcards, fridge magnets and coffee mugs.

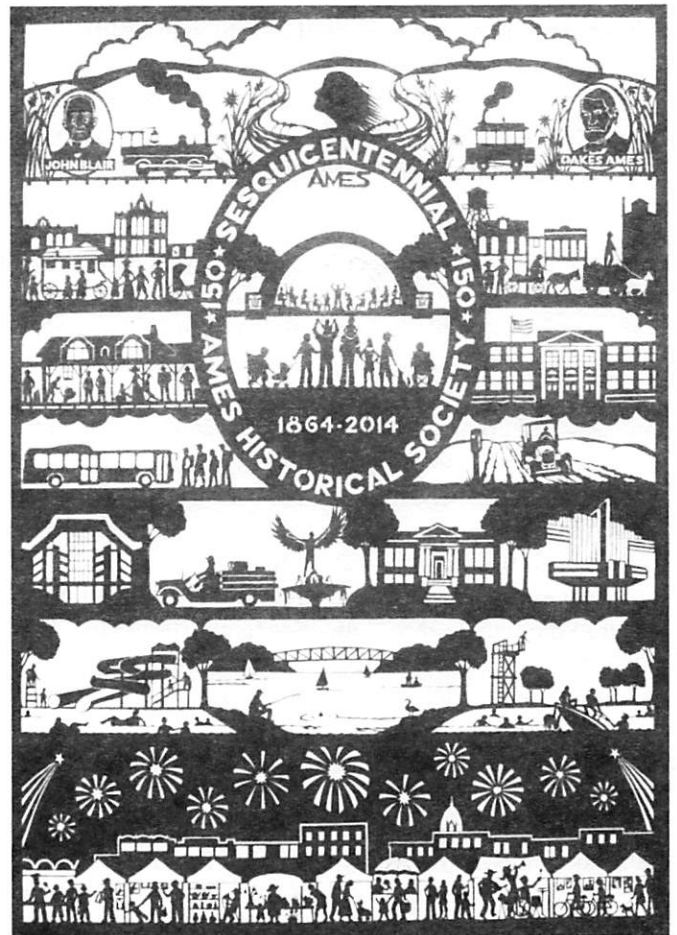


At the first meeting the committee agreed on a basic design concept. It would be one color with a large important image in the center and historical and modern Ames images top, bottom and sides.

My commission was also settled. The expense of reproducing and framing of the original was the responsibility of the Historical Society. The design would be their property to reproduce and sell as they wished.

Warning: As is likely to happen I got very interested in the project and wanted to make it as perfect as possible. I needed to do lots of research, design and cut.

It was completed 137 hours later. Normally I would hope to make more than \$7/hour, but I was pleased with the result and would almost certainly do it that way again... Maybe you will be smarter.



Poster for the Sesquicentennial Celebration, Ames, Iowa
© Linda Emmerson

PAPERCUTTER PROFILE : Janelle Washington



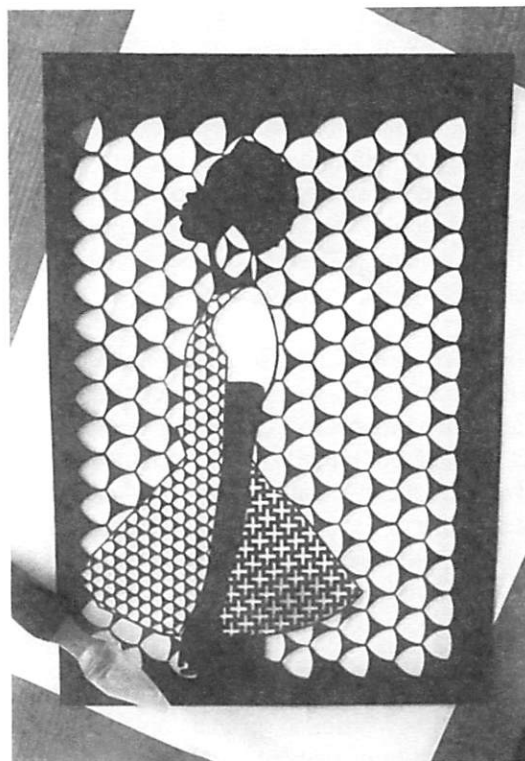
Janelle's love for art was formed at an early age, when as a child she often drew on the walls, chairs, and lamps shades in her parent's home in Richmond, Virginia. Tired of the ensuing punishment of creative furniture expression, she pursued her love of drawing in high school and continued

in college where she received her Bachelor of Fine Arts from Virginia Commonwealth University where she concentrated in Children's Wear Fashion Design. She furthered her fashion education at The Academy of Arts University in San Francisco, California and was selected to participate in the Britex Fabric Fashion Show.

Janelle worked in New York's fashion industry where she designed for several major children's wear brands. From there she moved to California and then to Wisconsin to continue work in the fashion industry. While working, she was presented with an opportunity to display her other artistic talents during a company show and tell presentation. Designing with paper proved to be quite an interesting concept and after extensive research, she designed and made her first paper cut. All her paper cuts and silhouettes are cut using an exacto knife and one piece of paper. As a self-taught paper cut artist, Janelle is intrigued by the negative and positive spaces created and the boldness that each of her pieces delivers.

Janelle's art explores history, identity, family and beauty of African American culture. Adinkra symbols are incorporated into her art to express messages that convey traditional wisdom and to express aspects of life or the environment. Further inspiration for her art comes from historical events, children's stories, quotes and beauty found in the female face. Janelle recently started to experiment with several mediums and techniques, such as watercolor, cyanotypes and collaging.

Her art has been featured in an interior design vignette for a book signing at Room and Board in Washington DC. She has hosted the Make your Mark station at the Baltimore American Craft Council and had a miniature paper cut series exhibited at the Ghost Gallery in Seattle, Washington. Currently her work is being exhibited at the John J. Wright Educational and Cultural Center Museum in Spotsylvania, Virginia.



FASHION PAPER CUT © Janelle Washington



ROYAL QUEEN © Janelle Washington

PAPERCUTTER PROFILE : Juan Manuel Pedraza

I was born and live in Bogotá, city of my beautiful Colombia. I studied graphic design and animation, and I combine my time between my motion design work and my personal paper art as my great, lovely activity, because I have always been fascinated with paper as a medium to create characters and stories and the possibility to play with shapes, colors and design. My art is for all ages, but it's usually greatly appreciated by children. It is always so positive, so colorful, so graphic, and sometimes funny too as I try to express my feelings and personal view of life.

It all started at school, when I was about of 7 years old, where I loved the craft exercises; homework was (with assistance of my mom) a lot of experiments with different and new tools, and my favorite: paper. Sculptures, puppets, collages, scissors, glue, dirty hands, oh I loved it!

Later, at college I made some class projects by using paper in pop-ups and paper sculptures, and I felt great; I started to use a craft knife, and I learned to organize and understand better the process and production of a cut paper piece. So for my final project I decided to make a picture book entirely made of cut paper illustrations. It was a big work and a gratifying experience for me.

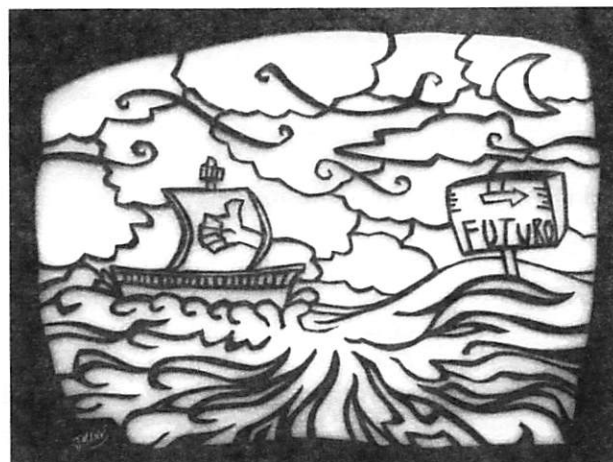
My work in papercutting has been self-taught; I didn't know anybody who worked in it here or how to learn more about papercutting before the internet era; however, I remember two images that attracted me to enter into paper art: the first, in my childhood, a paper diorama of caveman and a sabretooth tiger in the children's encyclopedia "El mundo de los niños" (Childcraft: The How and Why Library). I felt they were alive, as opposed to the other illustrations in the book.



THE ARTIST © Juan Manuel Pedraza

The second reference was in my teens, a dollar paper sculpture illustration that I discovered in an "Illustration Showcase" book. Beautiful. Here I knew that it was possible to work (play) with paper in a professional way.

My themes are usually adventure, fairy tales, music, animals (I love cats, bears and lions), and my roots, my childhood, life experiences/motivations. My inspiration comes from several disciplines, like Vassarely, MC Escher, Lichtenstein's art, cartoons and animated art, children's books, newspaper comic strips, and, of course, my Latin culture, which is full of colors, music and joy. I'm always looking and learning visually from new art forms and artists on the internet. It's great also to find other paper art and meet other paper artists worldwide: I love the idea to being part of a big group of people like me.



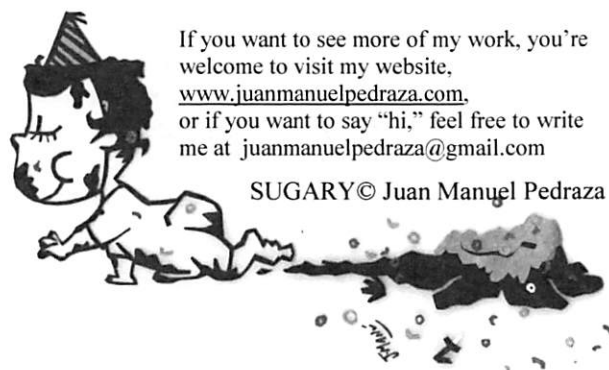
GOOD WINDS © Juan Manuel Pedraza

The paper art that I have developed over the past fifteen years has evolved into the strong fields of illustration and animation. Creating illustrations from paper allows me to enjoy the process of cutting and to get into the world of design, color, light and shadow, figure and ground. I like to work with a preview sketch and to cut in a free way. For the piece with a preview sketch, I draw some ideas and I choose the one I like; I draw a final version, and I transfer the sketch onto the paper with wax paper (for a single sheet of paper; in the case of a paper sculpture, I transfer each shape onto colored paper), and I start cutting. In a free way, I use only a craft knife to "draw" on the paper; this is of course, a less planned way, but with a lot more freedom and discovery in the creation phase, in most cases, the results of which are more conceptual or abstract. I love working both ways. If the piece is flat, I try to have soft, balanced lighting to take a photo of it. If the piece has volume,

I have a main light and a supplementary light to emphasize shapes. It's always important to me to have nicely cast shadows, because they enhance the image; however, you need to be careful with their use because if they are so hard, they could distract from the image itself! With this illustration work, I have participated in some exhibitions and have also done commissioned work. I would love to do children's books.

Play with paper in animation has given me a new level of possibilities for my work; it's wonderful to play with music and cut papers for "animation." I choose papers of different sizes and thicknesses and explore different ways to animate the paper in the process of trying to transmit what I want to tell. Sometimes I have a story, sometimes it's only exploration. I must take a lot of pictures for this process, moving the pieces for each new frame to get the illusion of movement. Then, digitally I join all the images together with music, and so I get my animated film. I like to keep a clean, stylized, graphic style, and pretend to play visually with harmonies to create a lively composition of paper. "Voces en tiempo de mí" (Voices in My Musical Time) was my first short film with cut paper, a personal experience about my feelings for choral singing. Actually, I'm working on a new animated videoclip "Långtan", also entirely made of paper. With the animation work I have participated in several screenings at international film festivals.

I always have in my desk a pencil, sharpener, craft knife, steel ruler, wax paper, foamboard, glue stick, toothpicks, paper tape, and a sketchbook. I often use paper weighing 90 grams, and most of the time I prefer to cut on glass. When I make animation, I use a camera, and a pair of lights as well. I have learned some things about my work on paper: to put always a concept behind the artwork, to keep reading about design and art, to discover a new wonderful artist every day, to share my art, to receive feedback, to have fun, to enjoy it. This technique demands that you find new ways of expression within itself, and it's an amazing process that never ends. Through the years I've noticed that this beautiful art/craft of papercutting has a lot of experimentation and freedom, and you can always count your "flight hours traveled" on this journey. Try to connect with it, and get carried away by what may arise!



If you want to see more of my work, you're welcome to visit my website, www.juanmanuelpedraza.com, or if you want to say "hi," feel free to write me at juanmanuelpedraza@gmail.com

SUGARY© Juan Manuel Pedraza

GAP Member Ruth Grabner Receives Award

Ruth Grabner, recently received a blue ribbon award for cutting silhouettes of members of the New Jersey Federation of Women's Clubs Year Books.

Ruth, known as the "Silhouette Lady", has been cutting silhouettes of people and pets for over thirty years.

Below is a photo of Ruth with her ribbons as well as a sample of one of her silhouettes.

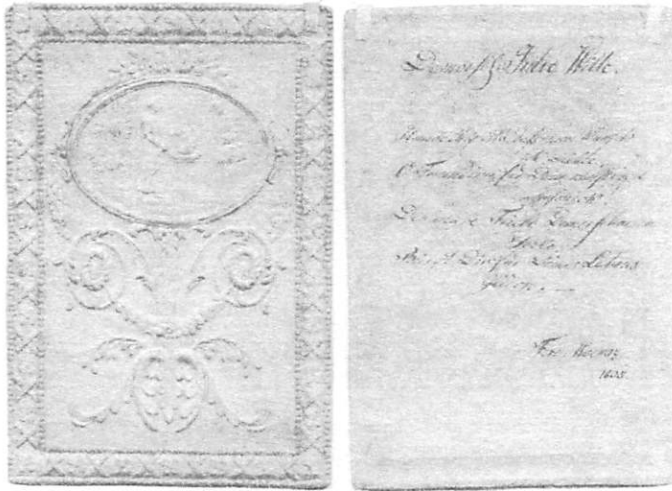


Poster of Iowa State University © Linda Emmerson

The Biedermeier-era Greeting Card

By Nancy Rosin
(nancyrosin@aol.com)

In the hands of the great Viennese artisans of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, paper rivaled gems and metals, as a material responsive to their infinite creativity. Elaborate paper greeting cards celebrated New Year, Name Day, Friendship – and all manner of celebrations, including Love. From the period of 1750 to 1850, paper remembrances evolved from the more simple French cartes de visite (calling cards), to the popular collage masterpieces with romantic, floral, mythological, or even everyday subjects, as background for the essential messages of poetry or good wishes, often hand-written on the verso.

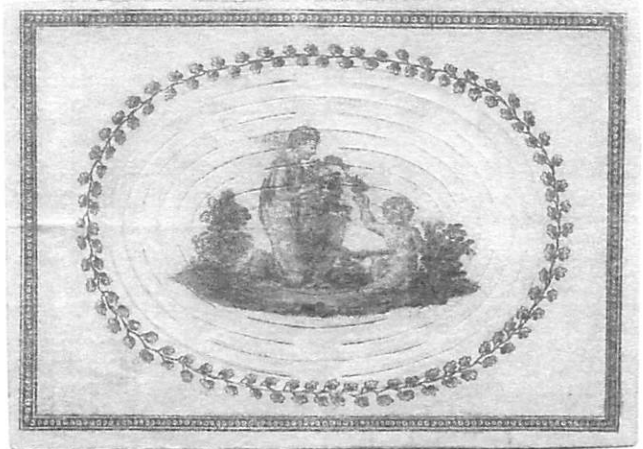


Above: A cameo-embossed card with the image of a goddess at the Altar of Love. The oval flap lifts to reveal words printed on pink satin. The verso shows the handwritten message to Demoiselle Julie Wille, and signed 1808. Size is 4 x 5 1/2"

Intricate paper engineering, utilizing pull-tabs, levers, transparent films, and seemingly magical transformations appealed to a very sophisticated audience, and generated a significant industry. For a populace accustomed to fine art, opera, and ballet, these lavish paper gifts became an elevated and tangible instrument of both personal communication, financial success, and often, even licentious frivolity. These were toys for adults, and there was a level of appreciation, which made these paper games and mementos a fulfilling and important element of socialization. The overall concept has been described by the Dutch author, Johan Huizinga, as Homo Ludens, the Playing Man, reflecting play as an important element of culture and society. It has been written that these cards are historical objects, which embody the precise elegance and playful debauchery of the Biedermeier era. The

Austrian author, Ingeborg Micko, comments that they border on the attraction of witchcraft and charlatanism, yet they convey messages that we can still comprehend today. From the avant-garde, to conservative, they occupied an important place in the history of interpersonal relationships and the greeting card. There were numerous Viennese publishers, each selling thousands of cards annually.

The advancement of papermaking processes made possible a "canvas" for popular artistic creativity. From the early simple engraved images, to pressed-paper "cameo" embossed cards, to more elaborate versions, and from the basic, to playful moveable cards with threads connecting parts in ingenious intricate mechanisms, artists and engineers were inspired by a very receptive audience. In this category of fantasy "luxury papers", there were dance cards, ball invitations, autograph albums, and a wide range of elaborate paper creations, unlike any known today.



Above: Oval cobweb design, concentric circles lift to reveal a message. The image is a cherub presenting flowers to an angelic woman. Unsigned. Size is 4 1/2 x 3 1/4, circa 1820.

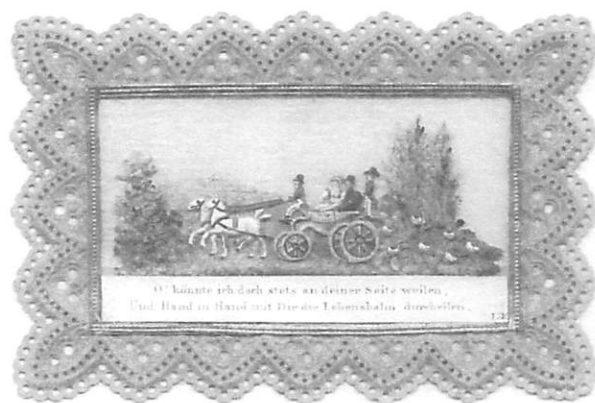
Friendship albums and fine stationery, designed for polished penmanship, graced elegant desks, which were further adorned with exquisite accessories, such as enamel and gold pens and seals made from semi-precious stones. They became emblematic of an era where correspondence and expressions of love and friendship were very important, and there was no limit to opulence in every facet. One great Viennese engraver,

Johannes Endletsberger (1799-1856) created incomparable jewel-like paper confections, and has been called “the Fabergé of paper” because of the delicate, almost incredible, creations bearing his name. It is said that he had a small atelier, from 1815 until 1840, where his dedicated artists worked to carefully create his treasured productions, made in small numbers, and at great prices – even as much as fifty dollars by today’s comparisons. These greeting cards were like no others, and were jewel-like in that they were crafted from silver and gold wires, silk mesh, fish scales, feathers, mother of pearl, mirrors and gilt paper. Mr. Endletsberger is said to have been an engraver of coins, and his capability of creating miniature masterpieces was apparent in the tiny flowers and images, which were molded and painted; every flower petal was made by hand. Competition developed, and there were other fine, but less well-known artists, working in this circle. The engraved, J.E. or J. Endletsberger, identifies his sought-after creations.



Above: An engraved man and woman show their closed palms and say they will reveal the contents, if the other does the same. When the tab is pulled, (top), their hands lift and reveal that they both are holding hearts. (bottom). Nuremberg, circa 1810.

As a collector of Valentines and Expressions of Love, finding these treasures was always imagined to be the unreachable pinnacle. For years they were elusive, but they were essential to my story of the evolution of my material – from the Devotionals – to the paper lace Victorian confections – so I continued my search. Eventually, I was rewarded. I gradually acquired a collection of these elegant paper gifts we call “Biedermeiers” – named for the era in Austria during which they were created. It is apparent that they were a stage in the development of the later Valentines, as many of the details were reproduced in England in the following years. Discovering these little jewel-like cards, the epitome of that craft, became a critical link in my study of the evolution of the entire subject. Two hundred years later, they are still the most beautiful paper crafting I have ever seen.



Couple in a horse-drawn coach, driving through a floral glade. The message: “O! but I could always stay by your side/ And rush through hand in hand with you the course of life.”

Signed I.E. (Johannes Endletsberger) circa 1820

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Galjer, Jasna, *Biedermeier Greetings Cards*, Museum of Arts and Crafts, Zagreb, Croatia, 1997.

Huizinga, Johan (1938). *Homo Ludens: Proeve Ener Bepaling Van Het Spelelement Der Cultuur*. Groningen, Wolters-Noordhoff cop. 1985. Original Dutch edition

Micko, Ingeborg, “Take with grace, the small gift...” *Nimm mit Huld die kleine Gab, Freundschafts und Glückwunschkarten des Biedermeier im Stadtmuseum Wels*, Stadtmuseum, Wels, Austria, n.d.

Pazaurek, Gustav von, *Biedermeier-Wünsche*. Stuttgart 1908

Wolfe, Robert, *Ich wünsche Ihnen 1000 Glück*, Munich, Germany, 2003

SHALOM

By Stu Copans

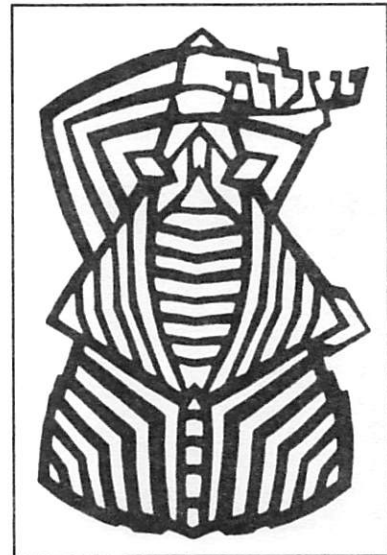
In February of 2005, when my first grandchild was born in Jerusalem, I wanted to do something to help bring peace to the world he would grow up in. I am not an activist, and have perhaps too little faith in the ability of politicians to change the world. I rely on papercutting to solve many of my little problems, to calm myself down when angry, to relax after a stressful day or encounter, to cheer myself up when nothing else seems to work.

And so I decided to bring about peace in the Middle East by creating 1,296 papercuts incorporating the Hebrew word for peace "Shalom." I picked 1,296 because it is 36 x 36, and in the Jewish mystical tradition 36 is a particularly holy number. The numerical value of Chai, the Hebrew word for "life," is 18 and 18 x 2 is 36. It took 6 years to cut the 1,296 shaloms.. Every year when we traveled to Jerusalem to see our grandchildren I would be looking for ideas for papercuts whether in the desert, in the corals of the Red Sea, in the collections of Jewish Artifacts in the Israel Museum, the Islamic Designs in the Museum of Islamic Art, or the decorations and hanging lanterns in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. After I had finished cutting the 1,296 cuttings, I had a selection framed and had a show in the West Village Meeting House, the Unitarian Church where the Brattleboro Jewish Community has services for Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur, the two holiest days of the Jewish year. The Show opened before the Holy Days began, and closed sometime after they were finished.



The first show consisted of approximately 54 black 5" x 7" papercut Shaloms. After the first show closed, I donated 18 of the framed papercuts to the Jewish Community, and they now hang in the sanctuary, next to the Ark containing the Torah, the Jewish scroll that contains the first 5 books of the Bible.

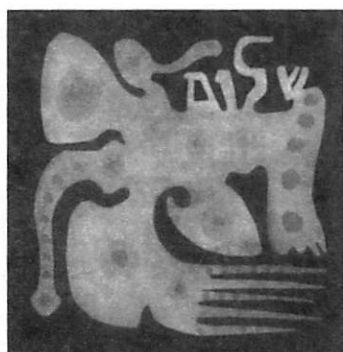
The next year (year 7) I cut some larger multicolored, multilayered papercut shaloms, and began working on a second series of papercuts involving multiple layers and multiple colors. Again I hung the show during the Jewish Holy Days. Still there was no peace.



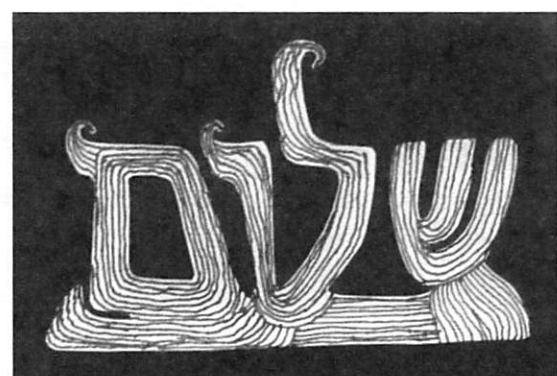
The next year (year 8) it became clear to me that simply cutting Shalom's was not sufficient. A friend's daughter was Moslem, and worked with me to create two large canvases, 4' x 6', one of which contained the word for peace in Arabic (Salaam) and one of which contained the word for peace in Hebrew (Shalom). She also taught me how to write and cut Salaam, and so some of the cuttings for the show included both Salaam and Shalom. During year 8 I had learned about a peace camp in a nearby town that included Jewish, Moslem, and Christian teenagers from Israel and the West Bank. During year 9 I arranged to teach papercutting to the teenagers in the camp, and in the process improved my ability to cut Salaam. The card inviting people to that year's show featured a design including both Shalom and Saalam. The camp that year took place during a stressful time, when Gaza was sending rockets into Israel and Israel invaded Gaza.

I found myself full of hate, sometimes at the warriors in Gaza who were launching the rockets, and sometimes at the Israelis who were killing civilians in their attempts to destroy the rockets. I felt that both sides were making it harder to reach peace. I had found a book of prayers for peace, including prayers from many cultures and many religions. One of the prayers "Free my heart from hatred" very much spoke to where I was and what I needed, so I taught that prayer to those in the camp and did a series of cuttings including that prayer.

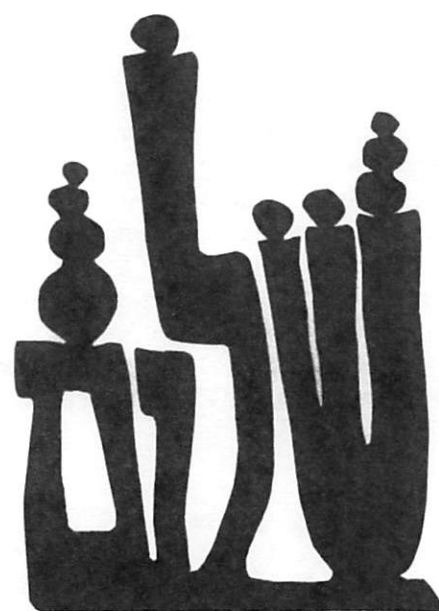
During year 10 I worked on both black cuttings and on multicolor, multilayer cuttings. Also, prompted by comments from some of the children in camp I began doing some cuttings including the word "Peace" in English. They had suggested that Peace in the Middle East depended not just on the actions of Arabs and Jews, but very much on what America did, both in the open and secretly, and that if peace were ever to come to the Middle East, American needed to support it as well. I also did some grids with multiple small papercuts, including papercut Shaloms. These grid cuttings were inspired by the work of Ueli Hofer, a wonderful Swiss papercutter. I taught two classes in the peace camp, and was amazed by their interest and ability to create papercuts. One of the exercises involved pairing two campers from different backgrounds, and having each pair collaborate on a multilayered papercut, then looking at what made it wonderful and/or hard to work together with someone else.



If enough people
believed in peace
and did a little bit to
help make it happen,
we might live in a
world of peace



This year, year 11, the Peace camp will have adults, but I am planning to continue teaching there. The show will include a mix of black papercuts, multicolor papercuts, and grids. It will include a mix of Salaam, Shalom, and Peace. I am also exploring combining shaped papercuts with Pen and Ink, and with concentric designs inspired by the paintings and writings of Hundertwasser.



All images © Stu Copans

There is still no peace in the Middle East. If anything, it seems worse and more discouraging than 11 years ago when I started this project. It sometimes seems crazy to imagine that cutting out paper designs could help bring peace, but I'm not ready to give up. My next goal is to figure out a way to make my peace cuttings available for free on the internet, for anyone to download and print as long as they promise to put them up on their wall and to look at them once a day and to think about what they can do to bring peace in the world.

LAYERS, LAYERS AND MORE LAYERS

Layers of paper.... of different colors, different types, or different thicknesses, placed on top of each other, under each other, or next to each other achieve contrast, depth or special effects. Let's look at six of our members who use different methods of layering in their paper work.

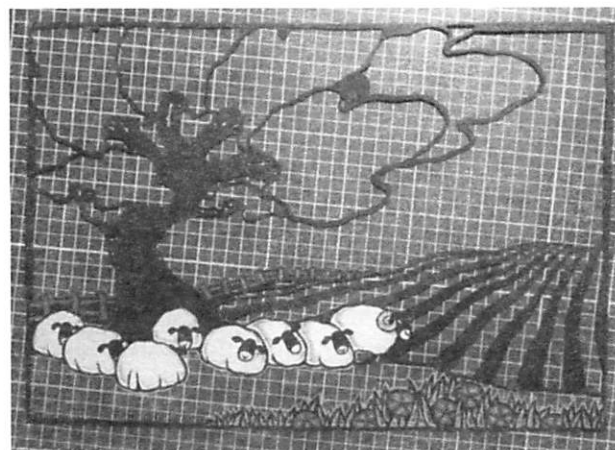
Clare Lindley

You must have enjoyed Clare Lindley's layered picture of a rabbit on the April page of our GAP Calendar. Here's what Clare tells us about how she layers her lovely birds, rabbits, sheep and other scenes of country life.



My layered pieces start with a layer of black card, into which I cut the main design. I draw straight onto the black with a hard pencil so my lines are visible.

Once this layer is cut the paper is flipped over and I can start adding the coloured layers. In this case, the flowers were first as they are in the foreground and also, the sheep, as they are prominent. These two parts of the picture are also the smallest in area with the more complex detail so it is best to get the hardest bits done first!



Further, larger, areas of colour are added to indicate the grass and the field, and these are then cut into to add the details, blades of grass and crops bursting through in the ploughlines.

The tree is next, the leaves cut individually and built up by adding further colour behind that is cut into again for extra depth. I always do the sky last; it usually has clouds in it, but I only ever do 2 or 3 layers, this sets off what is happening in the scene.... it is lighting.



I rarely know what they will be when I start; sometimes I spend far too long deciding which work best together, and sometimes they don't! The paper I use for these layers is pastel paper, I have drawers full of it! I use a scalpel and 15a blades, and the layers are glued using PVA glue put on using the end of an old blade with a small paper offcut.

Gail McCormick

Selecting the appropriate photo is very important, as not every photo lends itself to a good paper cut. High resolution photographs with a strong lighting source work best, because the natural shadows create a nice gradient of colors to work with. I then manipulate the selected photograph in Adobe Photoshop, ultimately using the “cutout” tool to help make discrete sections that become the basis of my paper layers. In Photoshop, I alter the complexity and connectedness of these sections as well as the number of colors used. When I am happy this version of the photo, I print this “pattern” to scale.

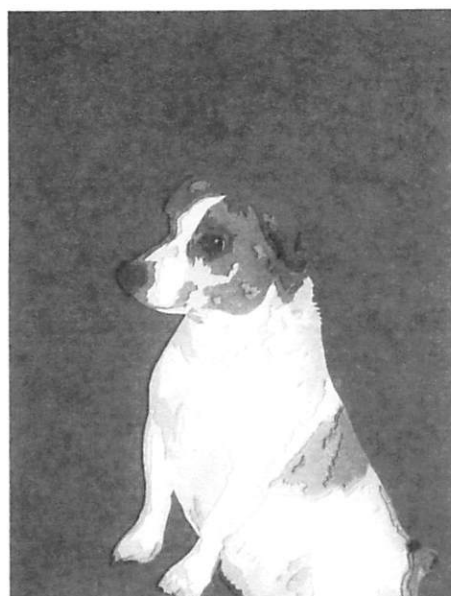
After selecting my papers (I have many tans and browns!), I identify whether I would like to “work up” or “down.” In some cases, I begin with the bottom layer, cut the layer to be placed immediately on top, and “work up,” while in other cases I begin with the top layer and “work down.” In this way, I often only need to cut the “leading edge” of each layer—the other side is hidden behind the last layer. I tend to glue each layer once it is cut, using the pattern as a guide, so as not to lose small pieces. Sometimes I work “down” and “up” within the same piece. Keeping these decisions straight is often the hardest part! I have posted some work-in-progress videos on my website that demonstrate this layering process (gailmccormick.wordpress.com).



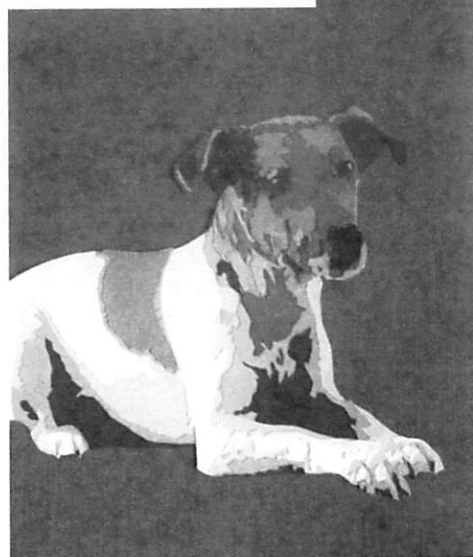
NINA (Originally commissioned and published in Penn State Magazine © Gail McCormick)

I usually create the image slightly larger than its intended size, extending the layers past the box, especially as angles are often adjusted as I work. Once completed, I trim off the excess and square it up.

This kind of work can be challenging, as it doesn't always look quite right during the cutting process; each little paper blob doesn't look particularly interesting. Taking a step back (or taking a photo and looking the thumbnail) is a great way to assess the piece during the process; it all comes together in the end!



Above: PIP
© Gail McCormick



Right: TALI
© Gail McCormick

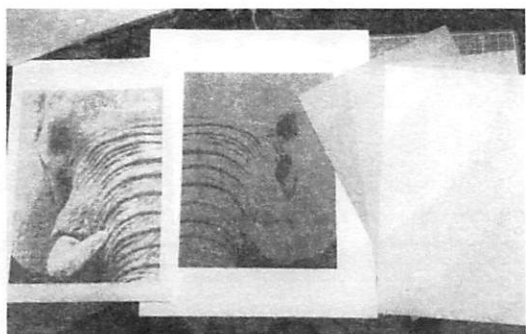
PAPER ELEPHANT

My layered paper cutting style has greatly been inspired by my mother's quilting and appliqué techniques. She in turn is inspired by my work! She converted my layered paper elephant into a quilt. (Ruth McCormick, <http://ruthmccormick.com/>)

Janna Loucks

I make paper art using several layers of paper built on top of each other to give a subtle 3D effect. I created my very first multilayer piece back in 2011, after having been inspired by a friend who was making single layer/silhouette family trees.

Cutting a very long story short (or I'll be writing pages), I use computer software to separate a photo into layers; this can be as little as 3 layers up to 8 or 9 layers depending on the details I am trying to capture. After "reflecting" and finding the images negative, I size and print out my layered photocopy and choose a selection of papers to use. For example, if I am doing an Elephant, I'd choose a selection of grey shades, a Lion, a selection of reds and oranges, and so on. I have learned that this is one of the most important steps that will make or break the final piece. I personally like to start from dark and work up to the lightest colors. I find this suits me, and I think it looks better than the other way around.



My very first layer is the base layer which is usually black, and I then go ahead and trace out each layer on to its respective colored paper before cutting it out with a scalpel. I am a real stickler for details and neatness; if something isn't just right, I start again. Of course, these details are often missed in photographs of my work; only when you see them in person, can you appreciate the level of detail I obtain.

I glue as I go so not to get confused with all the little separate pieces. I call these "floaters." I have spent some years finding the glue that I like to use, something that dries clear, is easy to use and doesn't dry too quickly so that I am able to adjust pieces if necessary. I HATE to see glue evidence on my work and so I work with tweezers, glue and tissue to make sure the layers are positioned just right, glued securely and there is no glue evidence. I'm a glue Snob! :) If I see bits of dried glue that have seeped from under my layers, I have failed... and depending on the extent, I'd start again. Attention to detail is key and I don't let anything leave my studio that I am not 100% happy with! :)



6

Janna Loucks shows her multi-step layering process.



7

Kathy Reed

Seasonal weather conditions offer beautiful variations of light and humidity, the kind that have inspired poets and painters for centuries.

Moody, foggy conditions emphasize spatial depth beautifully. It's sometimes referred to as "aerial perspective" or "atmospheric perspective", and can be illustrated with layers of cut paper. Simply making the foreground layer a more dominant color than the background layer, achieves that illusion of depth. Another technique I like uses all black paper layers with vellum or a translucent tracing paper separating the background layers.

I use Canson tracing paper because it is less fibrous than other brands and the overlap image is clearest. It also comes in different sizes and is less expensive than vellum.

My black cuttings are designed with borders, but when I mount them with the Canson additions, I attach all papers only at the top edge, so that they are suspended, hanging freely from the top. (Otherwise, when framed, they can shrink or swell unevenly to changes of temperature & humidity.)

Sometimes working with 3 black cuttings and two "fog layers" over the two bottom layers, I may apply a dot of glue with the tip of a skewer between the fog paper and the paper BENEATH it. That helps keep the papers flatter, and the fore-ground shape hides evidence of any glue.

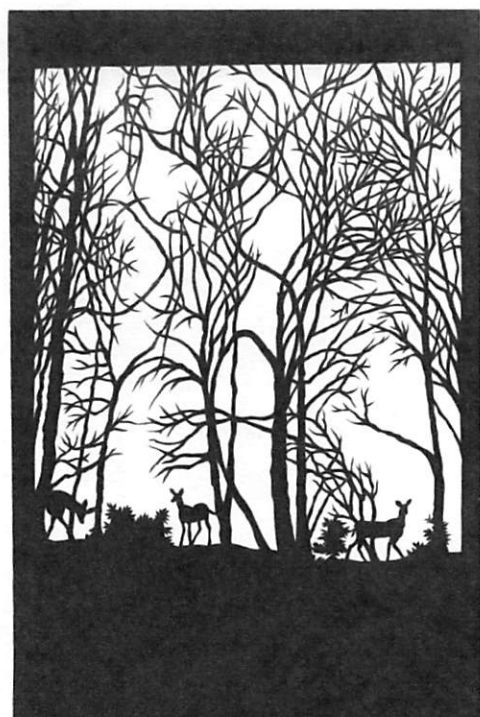


Inspiration out the Back Window

©Kathy Trexel Reed



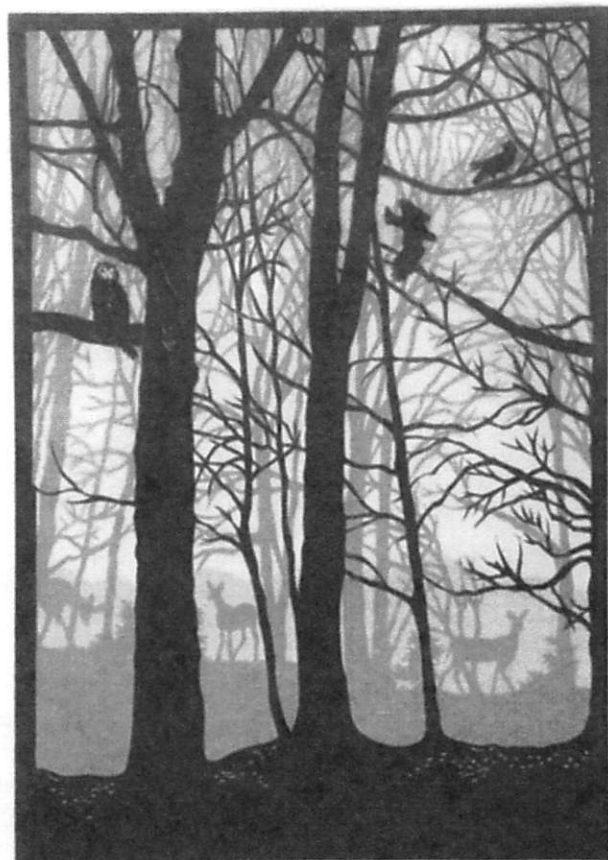
Right: Top Layer



Above: Bottom layer detail

Left: Bottom Layer

Right: Finished Picture



Susan Throckmorton

I have been living in Poland for the past 28 years. It was here that I taught myself to make papercuttings for the first time. Papercuttings in Poland are called wycinanki (Vee-chee-non-key), and so I became a wycinankarka, or papercutter. Here papercuttings had originated as an inexpensive means of decorating the homes of Polish peasants and were popular from the mid 19th century. They were generally made by women using big sheep-shearing scissors and any readily available paper and replaced each spring when homes were whitewashed. Today they are mostly made for exhibitions and for sale to the public.

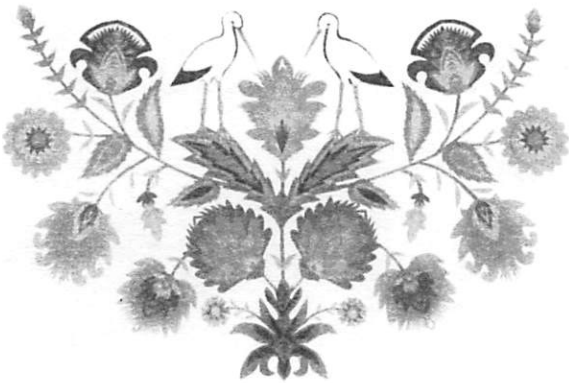
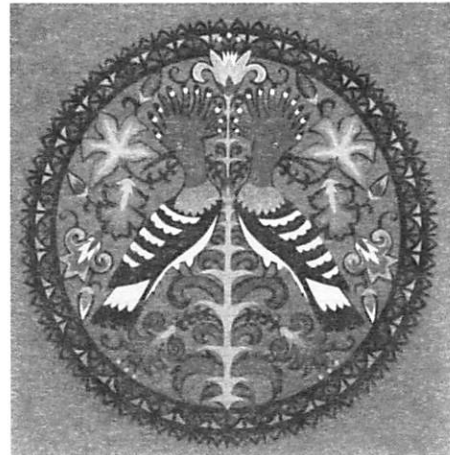


Illustration from "They'll Be Back" by Susan Throckmorton

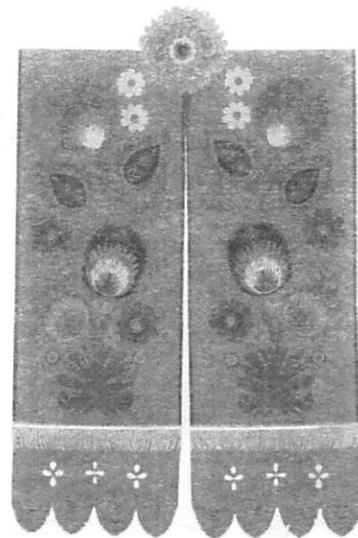
I was first attracted to the papercuttings made in the Lowicz region of Poland, where they are traditionally multicolored and multi-layered. The main design is purposely cut so that the basic design, usually cut from black paper, contains areas large enough to be embellished with other colors. Each contrasting color is laid on top of each other in an ever diminishing size so that each color can be seen. Sometimes each layer is identical to the one beneath it, only smaller; sometimes a layer is slightly different from the preceding one. The paper is not thick, so the layers emphasize contrasting colors and shapes, not the depth of the layers.

One of the most basic designs is a medallion-like, mirror image called a gwiazda (gvya-zdah), or star, with two repeats, or it may be the round design with eight or sixteen repeats. Some artists make designs which are square, heart-shaped, etc., but they are almost always symmetrical. I tried many papercuttings like this, not using sheep shears which were easily available in most Polish papercutters' environment, but small embroidery scissors which were more available in mine. My pictures were traditional with the usual, most common designs of roosters or peacocks facing each other entwined with flowers and leaves. My round pictures with more repeats were also traditional, decorated with multiple flowers,

roosters, etc. Later I tried different designs with traditional elements—i.e., gwiazdy with birds like hoopees or storks facing each other and colors which were not so bright but more varied and subtle. My biggest picture was a one entitled "A Polish Garden" which was in the 2013 issue of the GAP Annual in which I designed a non-traditional setting but used traditional, Lowicz-style flowers which had as many as 7 different colored layers.



GWIAZDA WITH HOOPOES © Susan Throckmorton



TASIEMKA © Susan Throckmorton

My method of cutting the layers is using tissue paper to outline the first colored layer which I will glue later onto a portion of the large base black design. I cut the tissue pattern plus the colored paper out at the same time, and then use the cut tissue pattern to cut the next smaller colored layer and so on until I have the desired number of layers that I want, sometimes making some changes in a layer as I go.

Another popular layered type of papercutting from Lowicz, which I find more interesting, is called a kodra which is usually a kind of frieze which depicts the life, work and customs of the people who lived in villages and farms years ago. These pictures include busy people in costume, buildings, birds, animals, trees and flowers. Usually below each scene is a kind of fancy border and on top sprays of layered flowers. I tried these because I thought they might make interesting illustrations for a book. That was 20 years ago, and only in 2012 did I finally get that book printed. It's called *They'll Be Back*, and it shows what the people do in a village (planting and harvesting their fields, getting ready for and celebrating holidays, going to market, getting married, etc.) between the time the white storks which populate Poland migrate to Africa in the late summer until the time they fly back in the spring. The different elements of this papercutting are layered the same way, but the process takes longer and is more complicated. I finally developed an assembly-line system where I kept lots of pieces in envelopes for putting the elements, such as human figures, together—heads for men, boys, women and girls, hands, legs, hair in different colors, men's trousers, shirts, hats and boots, women's blouses, kerchiefs, skirts, aprons and shoes, etc—to which I added stripes, decorations looking like embroidery, hatbands of different colors, feathers, and other layered details to individualize them.

The third type of layered cutting from the same area is called a tasiemka (tash-ee-em-ka). I haven't tried this, but it usually consists of a kind of medallion similar to a gwiazda pasted to two wide paper ribbons which extend from the bottom of the medallion. Like all Lowicz-style papercuttings, both the medallion and ribbons are decorated with layered designs in many bright colors. It is said that this cutting resembles the ribbons which extend from a bride's headdress.

At Easter time it's also possible to find chicken, goose and even ostrich eggs decorated with layered Lowicz papercuts as well as dzbanki which look like little pitchers built on the bases of the eggs.



DZBANKI © Carolyn Guest

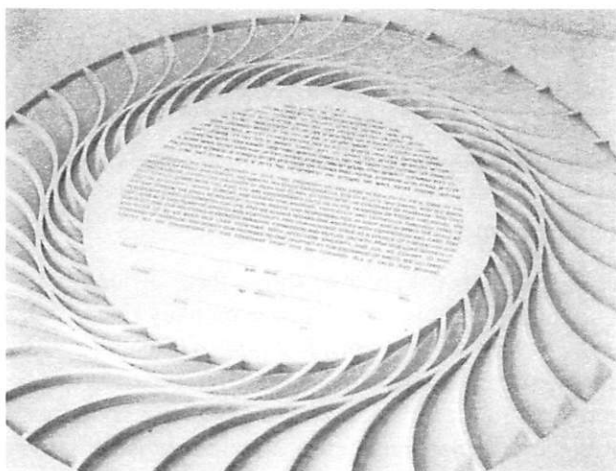


KODRA Depicting Wigilia Pasterka (Christmas Eve Mass) © Susan Throckmorton

Ruth Mergi

My current work consists of cut paper sculptures, each comprised of a series of layered or stacked papercuts. The work explores the projection of two-dimensional shapes into three-dimensional space by means of a tightly delimited combination of repetition and scale.

All of my layered pieces are designed in Adobe Illustrator. Each image takes as its starting point a relatively uncomplicated two-dimensional geometric or organic shape, such as a scribbled line or an Islamic rosette. I tend to start with a general concept in mind and then experiment until I come up with a specific layout or composition that truly excites me. This design work and experimentation is by far my favorite part of the process: I love to play with shape and line, and digital drawing — which I began learning just a few years ago — still seems like magic to me. Once I have a design that I love, I refine the shape until it is ready to be developed into a layered design. The basic shape is then repeated, scaled, rotated, or otherwise adjusted until the image is complete.

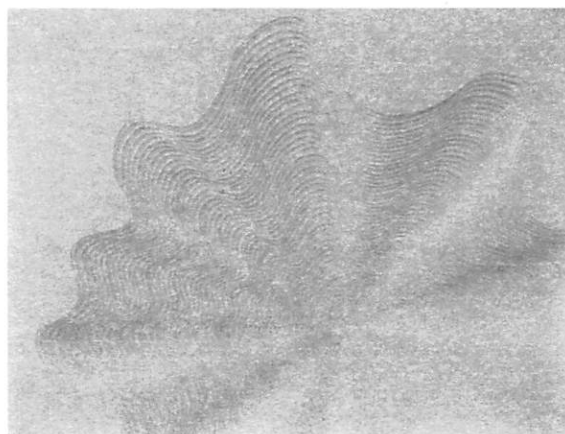


REGAL KETUBAH -18 layers © Ruth Mergi

At this stage, the composition is a 2D digital line drawing. The process of turning a single 2D digital image into a series of 20 or 50 or 100 individual files is very technical and time-consuming, but a necessary part of the process. The exact method depends on the composition. The resulting series of two-dimensional images is then rendered on individual sheets of paper — I use Canson Mi Teintes — and either cut by hand with a scalpel or laser cut.

Finally, the series is stacked and assembled. I tend to use a combination of adhesives and hardware for this. For smaller pieces, just a bit of white glue along the clamped-together edges of a piece will suffice, but larger pieces need a stronger mount. These are designed with

holes in the corners and I use screw posts to mount the artwork to either acid-free museum board or clear acrylic. Assembling and mounting the pieces is often even trickier than cutting, since the paper loses some of its surface tension once it is cut, making the work of precisely lining up 50 or 100 layers difficult and time-consuming. Sometimes I use templates to ease the process. Adhesives need to be applied very carefully: too much or the wrong kind of adhesive may cause paper to warp or ripple over time, so it is important to know your materials if a work of art is to last a lifetime.



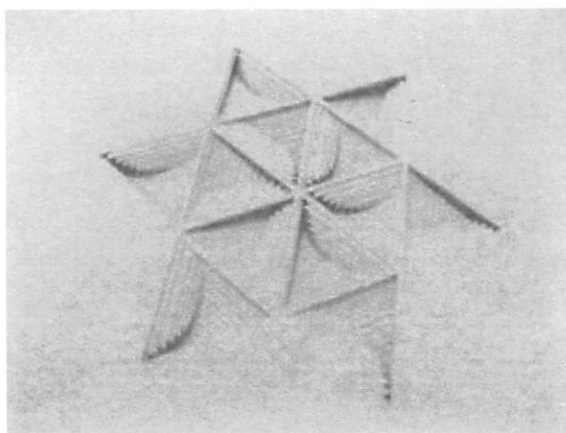
TOPOGRAPHY – 50 layers © Ruth Mergi

My work is very idea-driven: Much of my inspiration is abstract and philosophical, in the enduring "good / true / beautiful" sense of the word. That is, I believe that if I create something truly beautiful, I am always by necessity, at the same time, expressing something that is true. I am intrigued by what happens when we combine the sheer power of repetition with minor, progressive change; I think these two forces together teach us a lot about what complexity is, and help explain how structures — physical and conceptual — emerge over time. I also think that "meaning" as a concept, tends to derive from tensions and oppositions, so I enjoy the way the delicacy of individual cut paper layers contrasts with the robustness of the structures that emerge when we stack a great many layers of paper together. The other contrast seen throughout my work is between order — geometric or mathematical — and more spontaneous, organic shapes. This is where the magic is, for me: between order and chaos. That's where things come to life.

More prosaically, my recent work represents an effort to develop what I hope will eventually become a more fluent visual language. I see all of my paper cuts as experiments — mock-ups or prototypes. I'm rather scientific about it, using a restrained, monochromatic palette in order to keep the emphasis on form and structure. Hopefully, this will allow me to learn to really

control the designs, just as an introductory drawing course usually starts with pencil or pen and ink, and starts with line drawings before proceeding to volumetric drawing. So right now I'm keeping the emphasis on design and form, with an eye towards exploring light and shadow as this allows me to explore as independent and contingent elements of a composition.

For artists interested in doing multilayered work, I would suggest starting slowly and planning meticulously until you have the basics down. Do experiment, and definitely use the GAP Facebook page as a resource — there is nothing so useful for an artist as a community of experienced and skilled fellows.

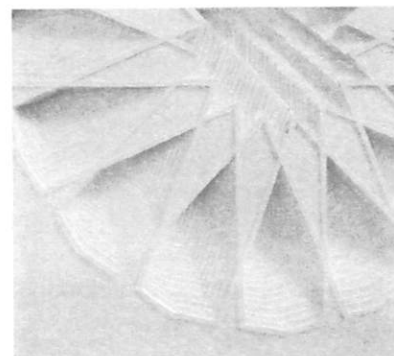
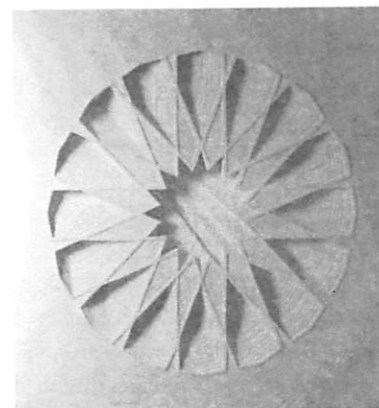


Left: MAGEN DAVID
KETUBAH -18 layers

All images
© Ruth Mergi

Right Top: 16 POINT
ISLAMIC STAR

Right Bottom Detail of 16
point Islamic Star



A few years back I had a regular column for several years in FirstCut called "Personal Papercuts." I thought many members would have stories to tell about how their papercuttings influenced their lives or those of others or how they might have been involved in an adventure or incident connected to buying, collecting or making a papercutting...stories that might be funny, sad, or even scary. GAP member Naomi Hordes sent me this little story not long ago, and I thought it might fit into the old column, so here it is in a brief revival of.....



From Naomi Hordes:
I had just had one successful cataract operation and was being wheeled into

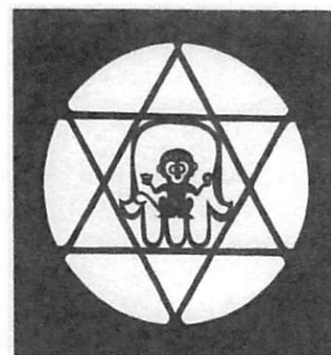
the operating room a week later for eye number two. My delightful surgeon walked into the room and cheerily wished everyone a Happy New Year. It was mid-February! What was he talking about? Everyone was confused, until one of the nurses remembered that it was the Chinese New Year of the Monkey - and our surgeon was Chinese.

All of you fellow papercutters can imagine what a wonderful feeling it is to have your sight improved by a

skilled surgeon. I wanted to give him a token of my appreciation for a job well done and immediately began planning a papercut.

The finished artwork, below, shows three different "good luck" symbols. The Chinese monkey (isn't Google images wonderful?) sits inside a *hamsa* (from the Aramiac word for "hand", derived from the Hebrew word for "five - *hamesh*) which is a good luck symbol among Sephardi Jews. That in turn is surrounded by a *Magen David* (the six pointed Shield of David) which appears in many ancient Jewish art works and in modern art and jewelry as a good luck symbol.

Red is not usually the color for Jewish art - we are frequently blue - but luckily I had a piece of Chinese red paper, which did very well for the lucky Monkey. I think the doctor was pleased with his gift - and he certainly was acquainted with the #11 Bard- Parker, green-handled disposable scalpel that I used to cut it.



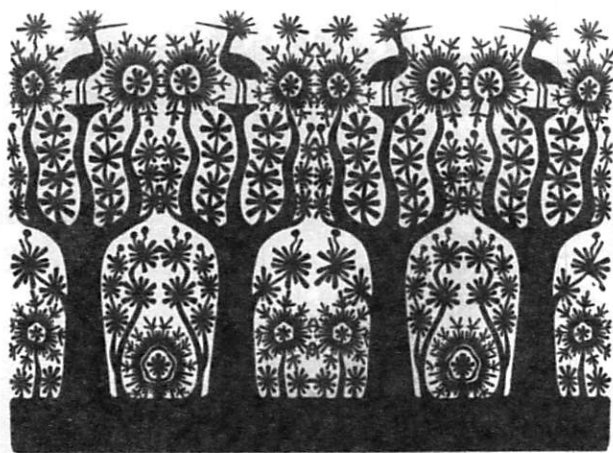
LITHUANIAN PAPER CUTTING

By Sue Throckmorton

Last winter I wrote to GAP member Odeta Bražėnienė to ask her for an article about herself. Odeta lives in Lithuania, the largest and most southern of the Baltic republics in central Europe and bordering Poland where I live. I was hoping also for an article about Lithuanian papercutting. She replied, however, that she didn't speak English, and that the communications that we had been having for some time were actually translated for her by her daughter. Nevertheless, she said she would send me some materials that would help me. Soon afterwards I opened my mailbox one day and found a package of wonderful things from Odeta: 2 beautiful books, one filled with pictures of her papercuttings and another of her lovely paper curtains, an original paper curtain and a floral paper cut, postcards, and several articles in English about herself and Lithuanian papercutting. So.....based on the information she sent me, here is an article about papercutting in her country and an introduction to Odeta herself and her many talents. (See page 27 for her bio.)

In Lithuania papercutting has been practiced since the 16th century when aristocrats put paper cut silhouettes in their albums, and small pieces of paper in the shape of circles or rhombuses with cut out perforations were used as stencils for sealing official documents. This application of wax seals over simple paper cut designs continued on into the 18th century.

In the 19th century papercutting, when paper became cheaper, however, became popular in the everyday life of the people living in the countryside. They were mostly made from white and, occasionally, colored — red, green and blue — paper. At weddings silhouettes of horses, cows, birds, apples, bells, flowers, etc. were cut from paper and hung in the bride's corner, used to decorate the seats of the newlyweds or made into decorations with herbs. Sometimes paper cut birds or horses were used to decorate Christmas trees.



By the end of the 19th century and in the first decades of the 20th century, papercutting was no longer confined only to holidays or special occasions, but were used as

decorations for the home. Country women, eager to find ways to arrange the interiors of their houses in an attractive way, cut out folded paper, often from newspapers, curtains for windows, adornments for the kerosene lampshades, decorations for shelves, frames of mirrors or pictures, or even for the edges of coffins. They especially strived to create a so-called “clean corner” where a cross or a picture of saint was kept on a three-cornered shelf.



Dalios Darbai

Papercutters cut patterns from repeatedly folded paper which were arranged in horizontal bands of rhombuses, triangles and circles grouped together along vertical axes, with more complex lilies, herringbones, sunbursts and stars interspersed between.



UNTITLED © Nijolė Jurėnienė

In the second part of the 20th century, with a change in living conditions, papercutting almost died out. By the second half, however, it was revived through the efforts of the Lithuanian Folk Artists' Association, specialists of the Lithuanian Folk Culture Center and papercutters like Julia Daniliauskienė and Nijolė Jurėnienė who reintroduced openwork papercuts. No longer were they used just as decorations for houses, but papercuttings developed as a form of art on their own merit. Techniques were improved, and the content became more varied and complex.



UNTITLED © Nijolė Rimkienė

Like many of the papercuts of other Slavic countries, the works by the majority of Lithuanian papercutters are marked by tradition. The symmetry of their designs and the image of the "Tree of Life" are similar, as well as themes with supernatural creatures, birds and plants, the change of seasons, people, sacred and architectural objects, folk and literary characters, and traditional holidays. Their color combinations, however, are different. Slavic artists tend to combine bright colors, but Lithuanian artists usually cut from one color only. Rarely are 2, 3 or 4 colors combined, and, if so, they are pale and subdued. Gradually, each artist has found his or her own style and character, and in recent years Lithuanian papercutters have shown increased professionalism.



UNTITLED © Ada Germanavičiene

The first national exhibition of paper cuttings was organized in Vilnius in 1981 at which time thirty authors exhibited their creative works. By 2010 the book *The Art of Papercutting in Lithuania and the World* by Feliksas Marcinkas was published in which more than 200 Lithuanian artists were represented. Since then there have been many national, regional international exhibitions.

Currently 17 papercutters enjoy the status of "art creator" conferred by Lithuania's Ministry of Culture. Papercuts are recognized as part of the Lithuanian national heritage, and 11 papercutters are certified as traditional artisans. Four folk artists, including GAP member Odeta Bražėnienė, have received awards from the Ministry of Culture.

PAPERCUTTER PROFILE : Odeta Bražėnienė

"LAUKIAMAS," (WELCOME), ODETA

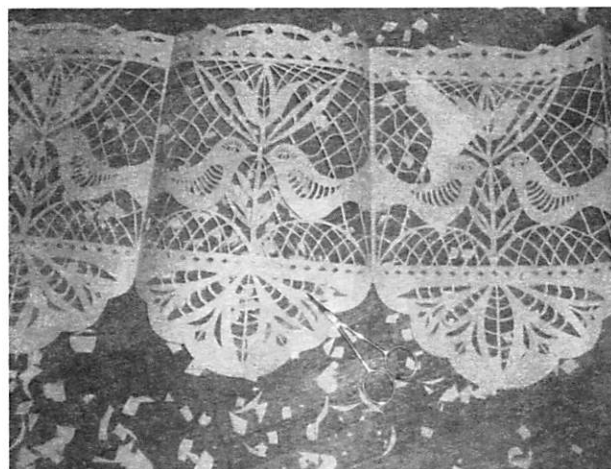
I was born and grew up in the hilly Rokiškis region of Lithuania, on a cosy single farm in the village of Keležeriai. Up until now, I can hear the rustle of centuries-old birches. I can remember the taste of their sap and the wild strawberries of my native land; my bare feet can still feel the tenderness of the knot-grass; I can see the spring kidney-worts blooming on the slopes, the hard-to-overcome snowdrifts in the depths of winter and infinite spaces, not just for feet and eyes, but for ideas and the creative drive as well.

When I was a little girl, the bedspreads woven by my grandmothers and Aunt Zosytė, the iron roadside cross braided with lilacs, Easter eggs carved by my mother and the simple melody of my father's *garmon* (accordion) were so great for me. As far as I can remember, I was interested in the different arts: literature as well as fine arts and music. I chose to study literature, but art, and namely, folk art, was the field to which I gave my greatest attention.



EASTER MORNING © Odeta Bražėnienė

After attending an art studio owned by A. Sapranaviciėnė where I became acquainted with papercutting, papercutting seized all my leisure time. In 1983 I participated in regional and national exhibitions with my first papercuts, and one year later, I arranged my own personal exhibition of my papercuts and was admitted into the Lithuanian Folk Art Union in the capital of Vilnius.



PAPER CURTAIN © Odeta Bražėnienė

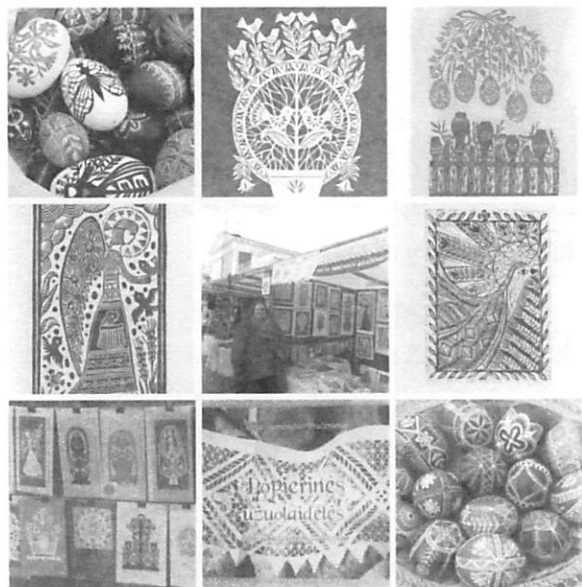
In 1986 I completed my studies, moved to Utena where I taught the Lithuanian language and literature, got married and had four children. My family is a source of my inspiration and the strictest critic of my creative work.

During thirty active creative years I have created thousands of pieces of art. I have participated in hundreds of different regional, national and world exhibitions with my papercuts, linocuts, Easter eggs and even moulded ceramics. I am a frequent prize-winner and laureate. My greeting cards are published each year. More than ten books of Utena authors and various periodicals have been illustrated with my papercuts, and I am the author of four books: *Papercuts* (2004), *Let's Learn to Cut* (2008), *Easter Egg Decorating in Aukštaitija* (2012), and *Paper Curtains* (2014).



SPRING SEASON © Odeta Bražėnienė

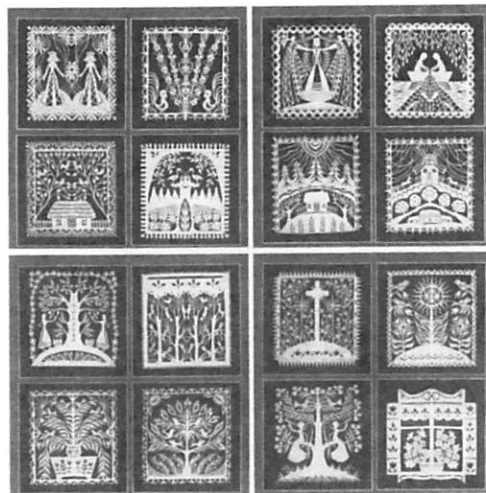
When people ask me where my creative ideas come from, I always reply: from there — from my childhood, from my native land, from nature. Inexhaustible sources of my inspiration have always been Lithuanian folk songs, legends, fairy tales, the wooden hits of *Aukštaitija*, the old roadside crosses, the rhythmical patterns of my grandmothers' woven fabrics, the ornamentation of dowry chests, the variety of palm-bunches and Easter egg patterns.



Odeta and Her Works

I have never given up my verbal creative work as well; I create poems and miniatures that are published in regional and national press, and participate in the activities of the Utena Region Authors' Club "Verdenė."

Since 1996 I have been a leader of folk artists in the Utena region and became chairwoman of the Folk Artists' Club "Svirnas" in 2000. For 1999-2000 I was given the highest rank state grant and in 2001 was awarded the "Bonus of Culture and Art" in the Utena region. Today I teach children the art of papercutting in the Utena schools.



MINIATURES © Odeta Bražėnienė

Former librarian and fellow GAP member Martha Kreisel has been working on an index of all the FirstCut issues. This has been a pet project of hers for some time, and it's coming along well, but slowly. She has divided the Index into several categories as you can see below and has sent us some sample entries which we have abbreviated here for lack of space. Kudos to Martha for donating all time to this ongoing project! Ed.

Sample Selective Index for First Cut: Communication for the Members of the Guild of American Papercutters

Index to First Cut, Paper Illustrator and GAP Annuals

- 1.....Author's and Artists' Index
- 2.....How-To
- 3.....National/Ethnic Styles
- 4.....Book Reviews

Authors' and Artists' Index

- Clark, Melissa. "Snow White and Rose Red (ill.)" Paper Illustrator (2012): 10.
 Clements, Heather. "Embrace (ill.)" GAP Annual (2013): 56.
 Clements, Heather. "Rhapsody; Silent Few; Suspended; Ecocide VI (ill.)" First Cut 28 (Winter 2013): n.p.
 Clements, Heather. "The Business Side of Papercutting: What Happens After the Last Cut." First Cut 28 (Winter 2013): n.p.
 Cook, Nancy. Illustration. First Cut 12.2 (Spring 1999): 4.

How-To

- Buchanan, Dorothy and Marjorie Flick. "How to Make a Square Box Using a Greeting Card." First Cut 11.1 (Winter 1998): 20.
 Harris, Sukey. "How to Make a Geometric Valentine." First Cut 12.1 (Winter 1999): 22.
 Harris, Sukey. "How to Pin Prick." First Cut 9.1 (Winter 1996): 15.

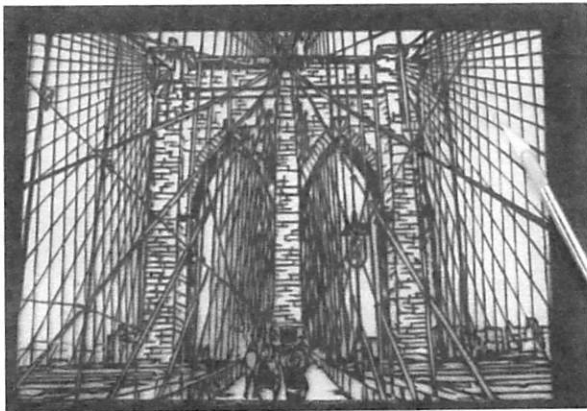
PAPERCUTTER PROFILE : Rob Chambers

Rob Chambers, one of our British GAP members, wrote this when requested for a bio:

"I won't be offended if you feel it is better to ask someone else with better credentials!"

Hmmmm.....I don't think Rob has anything to worry about papercutting "credentials," do you? Ed.

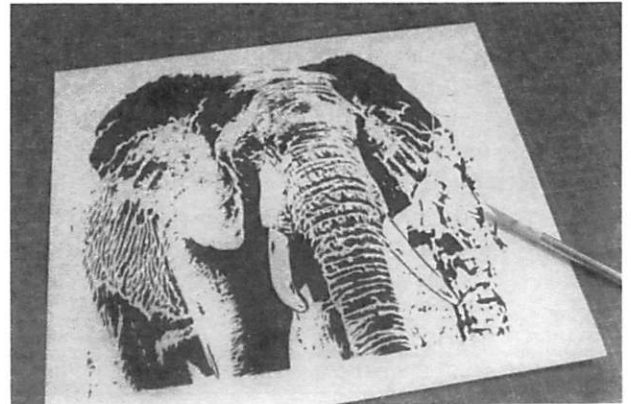
I am a completely self-taught, 'hobbyist' paper cutter - so I am sure I have many bad habits, but they work for me! I have always had a love of 'creating things' having studied Art at GCSE and A'level. Mainly painting and drawing, and initially, very focused detailed work but my A'level teacher taught me to look at things differently and work on a larger scale with mixed media which led to some large 3-dimensional work on natural forms for my final piece. This certainly helped me start to look at things from new perspectives but I've never lost my love of detail and papercutting appeals to me in the sense of working in a very fine and detailed way yet being able to create pieces at different scales.



UNTITLED © Rob Chambers

Straight after university, where I studied Geography, I trained to be a secondary teacher and have been teaching 11-18 year olds since 2000. Unfortunately my career took over and left very little time for me to follow my love of art but, it has always been something I have seen as a creative release for me and by late 2011/early 2012, determined to try and take some time back for myself art I discovered and started papercutting. I had seen some paper cutting work mainly based on typography and cuts of names or lyrics and as a friend of mine had recently had a baby I wanted to create a personalised present. I wasn't sure exactly how to start, but via facebook I had seen the work of Louise Firchau, a papercutter also known as PaperPanda who now runs a highly successful papercutting business <http://www.paperpandacuts.co.uk/>. Louise was a real inspiration and she very kindly (and

patiently) answered various messages I sent asking questions about types of material, equipment etc. I made a start and very quickly got hooked! Louise continues to be an inspiration as does Suzy Taylor, another very talented papercutter from the UK who also very kindly gave me lots of advice in the early stages (<https://www.facebook.com/craftysooz/>).



UNTITLED © Rob Chambers

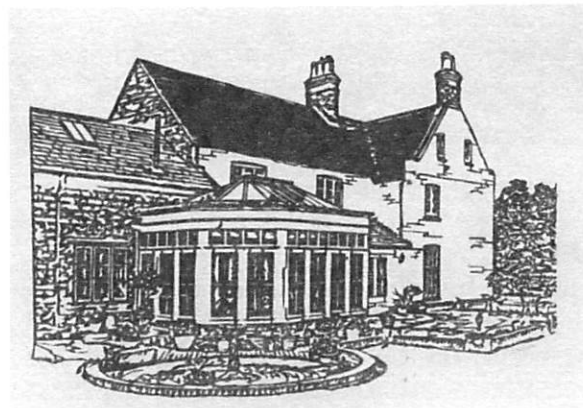
I find papercutting a great stress buster as you have to really focus; I stick my headphones on with my favourite music and can get lost for hours in what I am creating. When I look back at my initial cuts, I have certainly come along way, just through practice, but it also took time to find the knife and paper that worked best for me. I have a couple of trusty xacto knives and use #11 blades, nothing else I have tried comes close to the control I feel they give me. With regards to paper, I usually use black silhouette paper, although every now and again I enjoy branching out with colour (mainly using the murano range from Daley Rowney).

Whilst I still occasionally create cuts to celebrate occasions for friends, such as births and marriages, I have moved away from these more now. I have a love of photography and travel, linked to my love of Geography of course! Consequently, a lot of my more recent inspiration has come from my visits to places around the world. I have a love of Africa and a couple of years ago on returning from South Africa I created some 'elephants in the sunset' silhouette paper cuts, and more recently I worked on a detailed elephant cut based on a photograph I took whilst on Safari. More and more I use my camera to capture inspiration to use in papercuts. One of my favourite cuts is one of Brooklyn Bridge, based on a photograph I took during a fieldtrip. NYC is one of my favourite cities and when I look at the paper cut I can remember standing there capturing that very moment with my camera. Most recently I also tried some mixed media, combining shading on a white paper cut using

faber castell crayons to create a woodland kingfisher cut for a close friend who was retiring.

A while ago I was asked if I would put my papercutting to use in creating a set of wedding invites for a very good friend I work with which has been a new challenge; an original cut, scanned and then used with other design components to create the final invites - I really enjoyed this. Unfortunately it has now been a number of months now since I have had chance to cut as work, as it tends to, has rather taken over, but I am determined to get back to it. I cut purely as a hobby and for my own enjoyment. I love the stages that a cut goes through and watching as an image gradually appears from what was once just a black sheet of paper. I also like capturing the different stages of the process on camera to look back on and having done this from the start, it is really interesting to see how my style and precision has developed. I am just hoping I can now start

to make more time and I am always seeing 'papercut' potential when out and about. I am off to Borneo shortly which will undoubtedly give me even more inspiration and I'm hoping to create a papercut based on my travels when I return.



UNTITLED © Rob Chambers

PAPERCUTTER PROFILE : Rina Biran

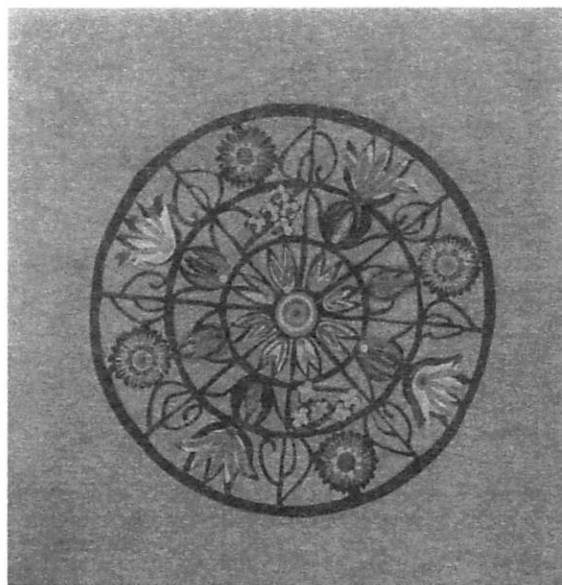
My name is Rina Biran, and I live in Jerusalem, Israel. In the year 2000 I retired and took my first course in papercutting.

This was my first acquaintance with this great art. Following that course, I started doing my own paper cuts. Most of what I do is Jewish themed such as a lamp, Tablets of the Covenant, lions and more. I also create Hamsas, home blessings, and a variety of other artworks. I worked as a volunteer for many years in archived paper cutouts at the Hebrew University.

The archive is headed by Professor Olga Goldberg, a Polish anthropologist. She travels to Poland and each time she comes back, she brings me Polish papercuts. They are very beautiful and special. Their beauty is in their colorfulness and the pasting of colored paper in layers.

As I kept receiving more Polish papercuts, my enthusiasm and curiosity increased about how Polish artists manage to do so. Every time Professor Goldberg brought me another papercut I asked her how the Polish artists create such unique artwork. As a result, in 2000 she organized an educational tour of the region in Poland called Waish (near Krakow). Three great Polish artists demonstrated how they create their specific paper cuts.

Following the tour where I learned how to create these very beautiful Polish papercuts, I started to create my own papercuts in this unique Polish style. I glue colored paper layer upon layer; each layer is smaller than the previous, and, thus, one can see the color of each layer. Today I just create this style of Polish papercuts.



UNTITLED © Rina Biran

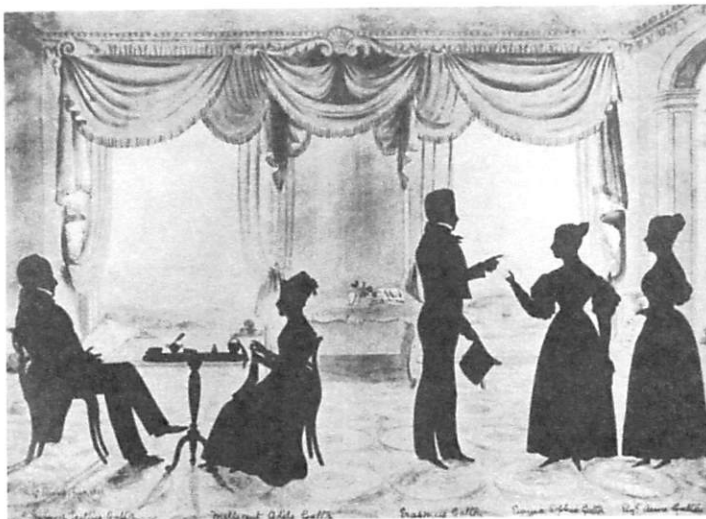
IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR

IN THIS SECTION we will find examples of families in which the art of papercutting has been passed down from generation to generation, papercutters who cut pictures of their own families, papercutters who cut pictures of families called "conversation pieces" many years ago, and papercutters who currently specialize in cutting silhouette portraits of families. For them, papercutting was, and is, truly a "family affair."

CONVERSATION PIECES

An arrangement of several silhouettes in a single frame, such as a family group of full-length figures, from the 18th century on, was known as a "conversation piece" or just a "conversation." It was stated that "the necessity is for [such] a picture to portray definite personalities in their intimate surroundings." It was an opportunity to not only show intimate family life, however, but also to display all the domestic paraphernalia of the day: chairs, tables, stools, tea services, flower pots and vases, knitting and sewing instruments, musical instruments, pillows, books, snuffboxes, dolls and other toys, and even the family dog.

The "conversations" could engage from two people up to many figures, depending on the size of the family. Two to four figures were rated the most successful as they avoided the "all in a row" method. Perhaps the most famous silhouette artist of all time, Augustin Edouard (1789-1861), was quick to defend his pictures against this "abhorrent" method by writing, "Can my groups of Families, with the simplicity and the playful attitudes of the children, the expression portrayed...in the countenances and figures of the father and mother in a room adapted to the grouping of figures...Can these, I repeat, be compared in execution and value to those all in a row processions?"



THE GALTON FAMILY © Augustin Edouard, 1837

Many silhouette artists in the 18th and 19th centuries, advertised conversation pieces, but few were ever sold. They were created to impress, and, thus, were displayed prominently in a silhouettist's studio, the largest and most expensive ones on show. They were a tease, and the majority of potential customers, drawn in to admire these pieces, would actually purchase smaller and less expensive bust-length shades or full-length portraits.

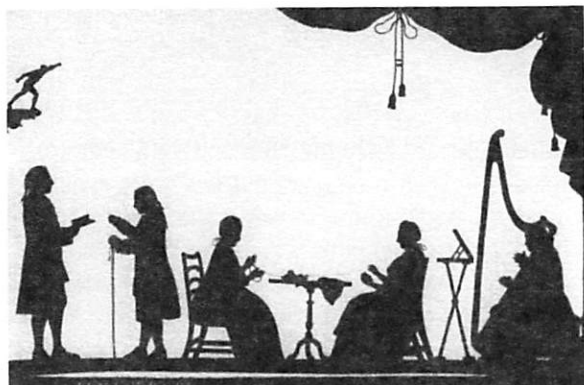


UNKNOWN FAMILY GROUP,
Laura Jemima Muir Mackenzie, 1790-1828

Some artists did sell conversational pieces successfully and are sometimes remembered more for them than for their individual portraits. Augustin Edouard was renowned for both. He "cut" individual portraits of most of the prominent people of his day, both in Europe and in America, but also was known for his family pieces. They picture members of a family separately or engaged in the everyday activities of daily living with family members congregating around the tea table, ladies sitting knitting in rocking chairs or playing musical instruments, children playing games, etc., which he mounted often against stock or custom-designed interior scenes lithographed or painted with a sepia wash. Several of his pieces picture four generations of a family.

There were also many amateur silhouette artists who were swept away by the craze in the 18th century for shadow portraiture. One in particular, Mary Wray, wife of Daniel Wray (1701-83), a distinguished antiquarian, man of letters and trustee of the British Museum, made a

number of delightful “conversations” in 1766, which were equal in proficiency to many professionals. Her family scenes were filled with household furnishings, china, silverware, etc., which were all cut with minute accuracy.



FAMILY Cut by Mary Wray, 1766

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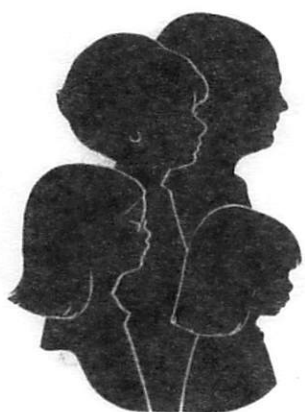
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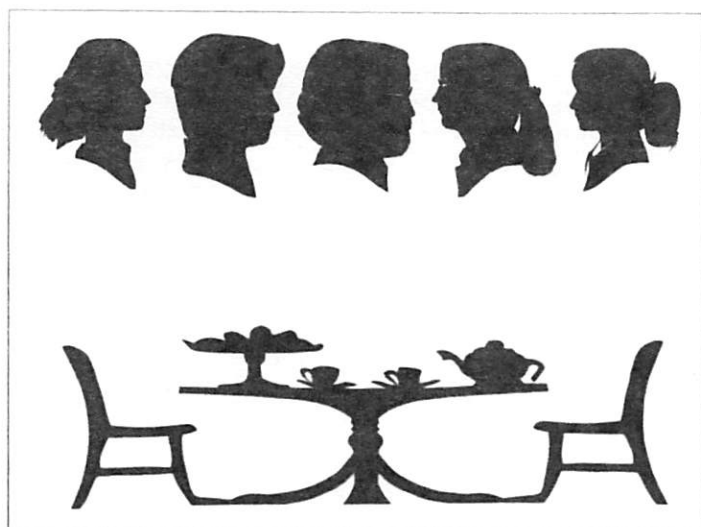
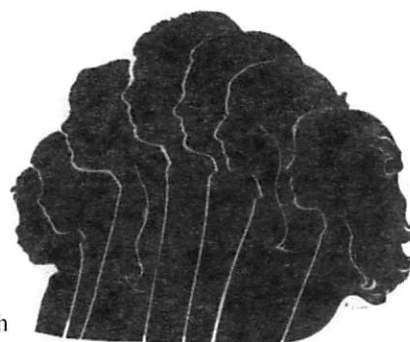


William Henry and Wilhelmina Webb, ca 1838



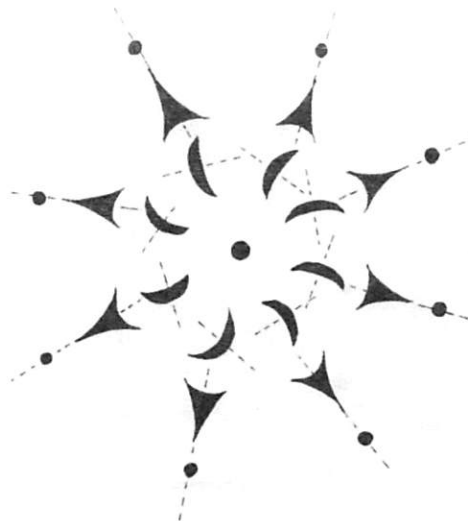
Left: FAMILY 2 © Joyce Yarbrough

Right: FAMILY 3 © Joyce Yarbrough



Portrait of Carolyn Guest's Family for her sister's 25th anniversary © Carolyn Guest

Pinwheel Luminaria enlarge 165%



Pattern for Pinwheel Luminaria. See the entire article and instructions on page 43.

THREE GENERATIONS: The Grabman Family

For master cutter Marie-Helen Grabman, her artistic influences travel in both directions in her family. Her German maternal grandmother was the one who introduced her to scissor cutting.

Marie-Helene says, "She lived very near us when I was growing up, and I often was at her home on weekends and during the summer. As she put me to bed at night, she would tell me folk tales and nursery rhymes and do papercuttings to illustrate what she was telling me. I thought all grandmothers could do this! I was totally fascinated...and often would recut over and over the cuttings she had done the next day. She used her embroidery scissors and old ledger papers. I remember finding some operating room scissors in the medical bag of my grandfather on my father's side of the family. My first cuttings were done with these. I still have these scissors and use them occasionally. So...both sides of my family contributed to my future career as a scissor cutter, but it was my grandmother who was my inspiration...

Marie-Helene's daughter Charlotte also cuts. Charlotte, who is an 8th grade English/Language Arts teacher, says that many of her themes for papercutting come from poetry and also from the pictures of her mother and the horse pictures of Suzi Zimmerer. She is also inspired by the low country of South Carolina where she lives. Charlotte first cut with hand-me-down scissors from Marie-Helene, who finally gave her a new pair, and mainly uses black silhouette paper. She has also experimented with some collage.

"Of course, my main influence has been my mother, who taught me to turn the paper, not the scissors!" She feels being a papercutter has made her a better creative writer.

Both Marie-Helene and Charlotte cut in the Swiss-German tradition but incorporate many American themes. In 2011 Charlotte won the Award of Excellence's blue ribbon in the juried Art in the Park show in Blowing Rock, NC.



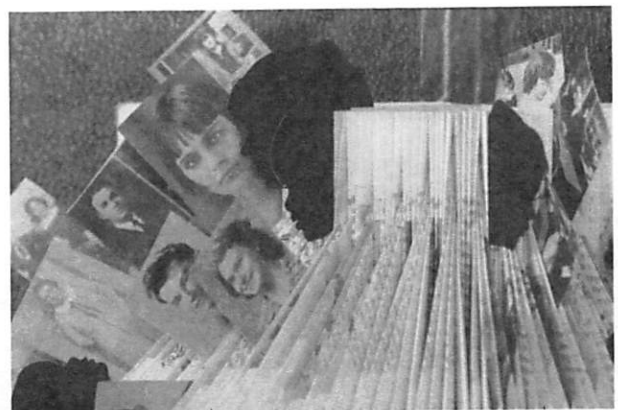
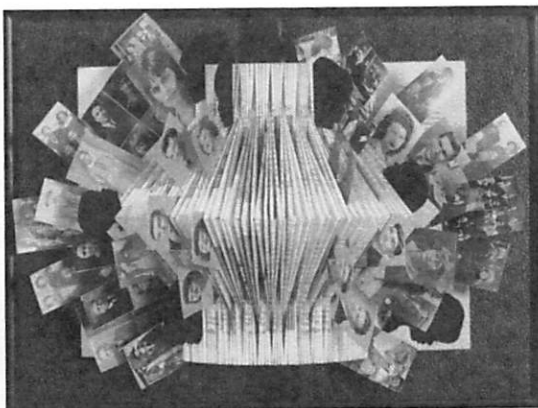
Above left: Charlotte Grabman with her Award of Excellence blue ribbon in the juried Art in the Park show in Blowing Rock, NC



Above right: IN THE BEGINNING © Charlotte Grabman

"My mother won that same award back in 1993 in the May Art in the Park show," Charlotte says. "An article about her was published in The Blowing Rocket on May 21, 1993, and I was in the picture. I was 8 years old at the time."

Charlotte gave birth to a baby boy last February and when urged to teach him to cut ASAP in order to add another chapter to the family sage of papercutting, she replied, "I figure I should start requiring at least a snowflake for the amount of time he spends feeding. I mean, geesh, where is the appreciation?"



THE YEARS HAVE FACES, View from the top (above left) and detail (above right), © Kathy Trexel Reed

THE BIRNBAUM FAMILY

From GAP member Amy Birnbaum (Sheep farmer and papercutter of farm animals, farm equipment and..... wonderful family portraits!):

I have rounded up photos of most of the paper cuts that I have done of my family. The order, by age, of my children are Theodore, Amanda, Jenna, Andrew, Olivia, Samantha. These paper cuts have been done over the years and don't represent their current age.

The first ones were Amanda and Jenna done in 2011, the photos were a little older. Amanda was probably around 11 in the picture, Jenna was around 9. Then I did Olivia in 2012 and Andrew after that. Olivia and Andrew were probably around 5 or 6 in their pictures. Samantha's I did a couple months ago from a baby picture (she is almost 6 now). And the last one is attached of Theodore (TJ)- he is 18 now.

I also included a paper cut I did of my Mother's parents. My grandma died when my mom was about twelve so I never met her. I based the paper cut on two separate photos - my grandma's graduation picture and the photo taken of my grandpa when he entered the military. (See this papercut on page 37.)



SAMANTHA © 2011 Amy Birnbaum



JENNA Amy Birnbaum



AMANDA © Amy Birnbaum



OLIVIA © Amy Birnbaum



TJ ©Amy Birnbaum



ANDREW ©Amy Birnbaum

Kathryn Flocken

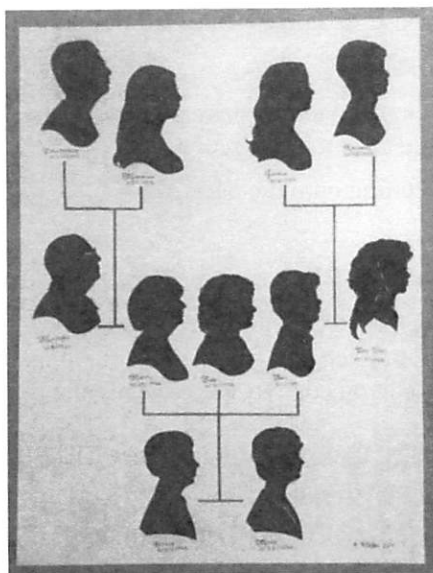
Our GAP member, Kathryn Flocken, is a well-known silhouette artist who began her career in 1989 and since has worked throughout most of Central Florida's major theme parks.

She also travels all over the country cutting silhouettes at special events, and has been featured on national television demonstrating her amazing skill.

In her book, *Silhouettes: Rediscovering the Lost Art (A Step-by-Step Guide to the Art of Silhouette Portraiture)**, Katherine has a useful chapter about cutting out multiple subject portraits. She cautions that, when making a portrait of several people, one has to exercise caution in not making a mistake on the last person or you will have to start all over again!

She stresses that "composition is the most important aspect of a multiple subject silhouette." All members should be present, and the factors of age, height, hair lengths and gender should all be balanced. Her discussion of hair is especially interesting. For example, the female should always sit last in order to showcase her hair against another subject; in the case of two or more females, all the subjects should be made to look feminine by showcasing their hair in some manner; for long hair, some hair can be put over the shoulder to show the length and style; for short hair, the hair style can be shown by going back into the picture and making a cut which reflects the shape of the hair.

*Kathryn's book can be found on her website, www.paperportraits.com and on Amazon.com.



FAMILY TREE
© Kathryn Flocken



MOTHER AND CHILD,
© Kathryn Flocken



SISTERS,
© Kathryn Flocken

Papercutting as Jewelry

By Marie-Helene Grabman

Making jewelry with my papercuttings is a lot of fun and a diversion when you get tired of just framing work.

Also... you are able to use up all those bits of paper you have saved from larger papercuts.

I use several different techniques for making jewelry, some for pins and the others for pendants. Sometimes I also look for antique photo lockets and pins where I remove the picture and replace them with papercuttings.

I taught a class on making jewelry pins using papercuttings at the 2012 St. Louis Collection. Because we were limited in class time and facilities, we used a simple technique with supplies you can obtain from a stain glass supplier, such as Delphiglass.com.

Design Considerations –

For all artwork, it is very important to keep in mind the “Principals of Good Graphic Design”. This is especially true in working on a small scale canvas, both for pins and pendants.

Some of those Elements to keep in mind for these projects are:

- 1) Balance: symmetrical, radical, formal and informal. All are ways to arrange elements to achieve visual balance,
A simple silhouette is strong and eye-catching. Consider designs using a flower; animal; snowflake; butterfly, etc.
- 2) Proximity: how to arrange things; how close together. Do you want to create energy? Use odd numbers – “the rule of 3”. For serenity, use even numbers, symmetry. Other design arrangements can be off-center or at a diagonal, and even extending off the canvas. All will create unique designs.
- 3) Contrast: black/white; big/small/ varying heights and shapes.
- 4) Effective Use of White Space: less is more, especially on a small canvas.



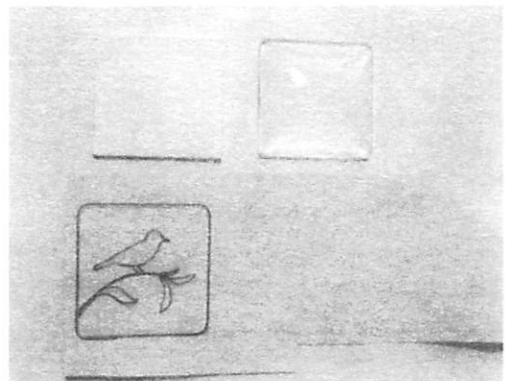
My papercutting in an antique setting



A Pendant for Sale

Steps to Create Pins:

Materials needed: A small piece of clear glass (cut your own or buy small flat or beveled pieces from a stain glass supplier. I would recommend not larger than about a 1 1/2" square or similarly sized rectangle); a matching small piece of mat board; a papercutting to fit within the edges of the mat board, glued in place; copper foil tape with pull off paper backing to reveal the sticky glue (made for stained glass- 5/16"). You need to be wide enough to overlap the back of the mat and front of the glass); industrial strength adhesive (like E600); jewelry supply bar pins, sized depending on material sizes, usually about 1" (jewelry supply sources or Michaels).



Beginning materials

Directions

1. Take the piece of glass or back mat and draw an outline on your silhouette art paper to size the cutting. Keep the design at least 1/8" inside the edges (otherwise the copper tape will cover the design) or extend the design off the canvas on purpose, as I do for this bird design.

2. Cut your design.

Make sure the back mat and the glass are exactly the same size. Trim the back mat if needed.

3. Glue the paper cutting onto the back mat.

4. Add the top glass.

5. Measure out a strip of foil. For a piece that measures 1 1/2" square, you will need a strip of foil 6 1/4" long.

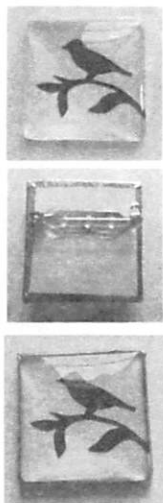
6. Starting at the bottom edge, wrap the foil, standing the sandwiched glass/mat on edge to space evenly the front and back foil.

To get a nice finished look, miter the corners AFTER completely wrapping the glass.

7) Glue the pin to the back of the mat. Let it dry overnight.



Putting on the copper foil tape



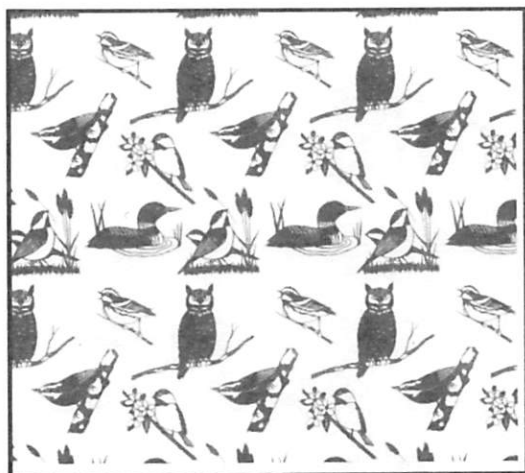
Top: The finished bird;
Middle: The finished back;
Bottom: The finished pendant

Pendants:

There are several ways to create pendants, some easier than others.

I have used pendant trays where I mix resin to seal a papercutting into the frame. There are toxic risks using resin as well as a learning curve. I still manage to get dust, bubbles or pet hair into pieces, which of course ruins the piece. I would recommend looking online for videos on how to make resin jewelry to try this method, as it is rather complex and there are various kinds of resin that have different mix directions.

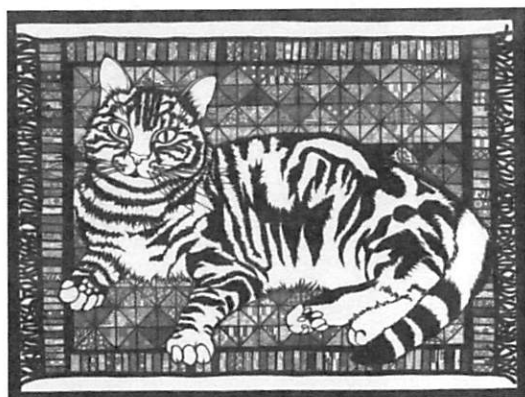
There are also jewelry suppliers who sell glass lenses that fit their pendant tray molds. You need to size a backing paper to the pendant tray and then glue on your paper cutting. The glass lens is then added, usually using a sealer/glue that the company sells.



Fabric using papercuts as design elements
© Andrea Martin



Left: NOW I LAY ME DOWN TO SLEEP © Maureen Darby
Right: CELEBRATING THE ART OF THE CRAZY QUILT © Gail Stan



Left: CAT ON A QUILT © Sue Throckmorton



MY GRANDPARENTS © Amy Birnbaum

PAPERCUTTING ILLUMINATED: LIGHT AND SHADOWS

For centuries people have experimented with light to make things shine, glow, sparkle, dazzle and become clearer. Let's explore here how paper artists have used light in books, to create wonderful silhouettes and shadows in movies and plays, as symbolism and interesting special effects in their work.

CHINESE TROTTING HORSE LAMPS

If you have ever been to Germany at Christmas time, you may have seen a kind of wooden carousel known as a "Christmas pyramid." They are also imported to the USA, and you may have bought one which you put out every December. Made of several levels with Christmas motifs such as angels and manger scenes, it rotates with the help of candles whose rising heat turns the blades of the propeller above. Constructed in Germany more than 200 years ago and called a *Weihnachtspyramide*, it might have been a precursor to the Christmas tree, and today life-sized versions often take center stage in German Christmas markets.

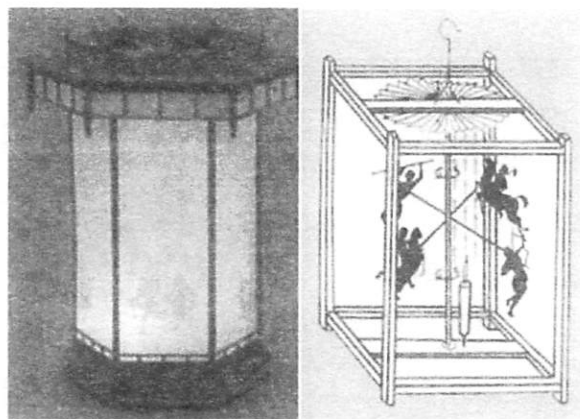


What most of us will probably not know is that the Chinese created a lamp more than 1000 years ago which uses the same principles but includes papercuttings and projects moving shadows.

Called a "trotting horse lamp," it has a long history. During the Song Dynasty (960-1279), Jin Yingzhi in *Zui Weng Tan Lu (Remarks Made by a Drunk Man)*, recorded the grand occasion of a lantern festival which included a description of a kind of decorative lamp and lantern with movable objects or shadows. In another book written in the Song Dynasty by Wu Zimu called *Meng Liang Lu (Dream Memory)*, there was a story featuring a night market in Nanjing where trotting horse lamps were sold. In the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), there were poems in praise of the trotting horse lamp, and more recently in 1906 during Emperor Guangxu's reign in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), it was recorded that "For trotting horse lamp, make paper-cut as wheel-like objects and candle will heat the air which will rise and push paper-cut to move, and the shadows of the paper-cut will be cast by the candle light on the screen, then figures will continuously move, thus vehicles and horses on the paper-cut will correspondingly rotate, just

like they are chasing each other ceaselessly. When the candle is out, then they will stop chasing each other."

More precisely, the trotting horse lamp is so named because of the images of ancient horse-riding military officers which were originally painted, cut from paper and attached to the ends of metal cross bars attached in turn to a vertical shaft inside a colored hexagonal or column-shaped paper lantern. At the top of the shaft was an "impeller" or a kind of umbrella made of painted slanted paper blades, which like the German Christmas pyramid, turned when a candle was placed underneath. However, when the rising airflow caused the paper blades to rotate within the Chinese lantern, the shadows of the horses and figures could be seen at night moving around the screen of the lantern.



Top left: A wooden carousel known as a "Christmas pyramid," constructed in Germany

Top right: Trotting Horse Lamp showing construction diagram

Right: An elaborate contemporary trotting horse lamp





Above: Constructing a Lamp

Today, an elaborately made trotting horse lamp is still Due to its unique feature of rotating, the lamp also found its way into Chinese idioms that are used to symbolize never-ending things. If someone keeps going to and fro, others will describe it by saying, "the guy is like a revolving trotting horse lamp."

Today, an elaborately made trotting horse lamp is still one of the most popular color lanterns at various lantern fairs. Some have an outer lantern installed, and between this and the inner lantern figures of paper with their hands, feet or heads move by way of fine wires connected to the inner shaft. Apart from the traditional horse-riding military officers, poems, songs, mountains, rivers, flowers and birds are also featured.

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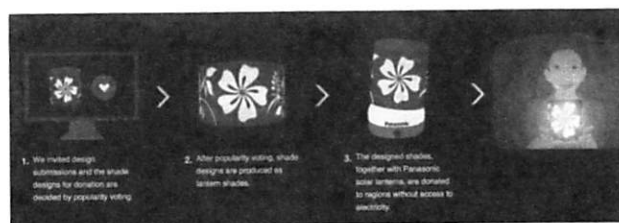


There are 1.3 billion people worldwide, that's 1 out of every 5 people, who have no access to electricity. The goal of the Panasonic Corporation is to give away 100,000 solar lanterns by 2018 to mark their 100th anniversary to improve and enhance the quality of life in what they call "off grid" communities in emerging economies and developing countries.

Since 2006, Panasonic has been handing out solar lanterns. The recipients are non-profit, non-governmental and international organizations working in Southeast Asia, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa where there still are major areas without electricity.

The company hopes, "by providing light from electricity generated with renewable energy, ...to help address social challenges is education, health, and the empowerment of women, and to generate positive change in the lives of the people."

As part of their effort, last year Panasonic sponsored a program called "Cut Out the Darkness," in which they initially invited 11 well-known paper artists to design and submit cut-out patterns for shades for the lanterns. Eventually, it collected hundreds of shade designs from people all over the world and selected the top 100 designs for donation by web voting. Then they produced lantern shades from the designs and donated them along with the solar lanterns to areas without electricity.



LIGHTING UP MY BOOK

By Kathryn Carr

I wanted to share with you my experience in illustrating a new children's book, *Lizbeth Lou Got a Rock in Her Shoe*. It started with a friend of mine nudging me to join the "Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators" group (SCWBI). So, that very night I went online and found my regional group and joined up. I posted a few images of my silhouette paper cut images and did not think much more about it. About a week later I received an email from a publisher inquiring if I would be interested in illustrating a book. I was thrilled and yet a bit cautious about this opportunity. I was in uncharted territory and knew really nothing about the world of book illustration. I did some research about the publisher and the author and after some formalities I signed the contract to illustrate my very first book.

After reading over the story I knew that it would require something other than my flat paper cut art. I wanted to create a more inviting "feel" for the readers than what the black and white images could offer. After a lot of experiments I found that if I cut out my art from white paper and illuminated them it would create a magical and dimensional scene. Setting them up in a diorama and taking a photo allowed me to capture the warmth and glow of the lighting and select certain objects to be in or out of focus creating a sense of depth.

My process began with sketching out the imagery for the story. I did not go in any particular order, I just took what ideas came to me and started and hoped that the rest of the pages would follow. Once I had a collection of sketches and knew what direction I wanted to go, it was time to begin the actual paper cutting.



Left: Preliminary sketch



Right: papercutting

I tried lots of different weights and brands of paper. Some were too stiff to cut though easily and others were flimsy and fell over when I set them up. I finally decided on Cason 90 lb watercolor paper. To cut the

paper I used x-acto X-life #11 blades with a comfortable handle.

Once I cut out my scenes and characters I arranged them in my makeshift photography booth. I set up a small metal shelf on top of an elevated sheet of glass and covered it with white paper. I arranged lights to shine from the bottom and back and sides.

When I had everything in place I set up my digital camera on a tripod and took lots of shots moving the paper cuts, changing the lighting, altering the focus. I must have taken hundreds of photos. I downloaded them onto my computer and scrutinized over the best shot. The publisher I was working with was wonderful and supportive. He gave me advice when needed and let me have a lot of creative freedom. I had about ten months to complete the art, and most of the work seemed to happen in the last three months from the due date.



Papercuts with lighting from the bottom, back, and sides

It was completed on time! I am happy to say that it has been receiving great reviews and the book will be on the shelves May 3rd.

www.gocarrgo.com

FROM SCISSORS TO ANIMATION

Lotte Reiniger

"Among the great figures in animated film, Lotte Reiniger stands alone. No one else has taken a specific animation technique and made it so utterly her own. To date she has no rivals, and for all practical purposes the history of silhouette animation begins and ends with Reiniger. Taking the ancient art of shadow-plays, as perfected above all in China and Indonesia, she adapted it superbly for the cinema." (Philip Kemp, British Film Institute)

Lotte Reiniger was born in 1899 in Berlin to cultured parents, and as a child not only showed a fascination with the ancient art of shadow puppetry but also an astonishing and self-taught ability to cut free-hand paper silhouettes, which she used in her own home-made shadow theatre to entertain friends and family.

In 1926, when she was in her 20's, she produced *The Adventures of Prince Ahmed*, the first feature-length animated film of all time. It was 66 minutes long, and it took her three years to complete by painstakingly cutting by hand the people, plants and animals which would fill each frame and then filming the small movements of the paper. For each second of film she cut 24 individual pictures. The total was around an unbelievable 100,000 slides! It was very detailed work as each figure had to be moved very precisely in front of the camera so that the movements would appear fluid and not stiff or choppy. Today "*The Adventures of Prince Ahmed*" can be seen at Goethe-Institutes all over the world and is among the most frequently borrowed silent films.

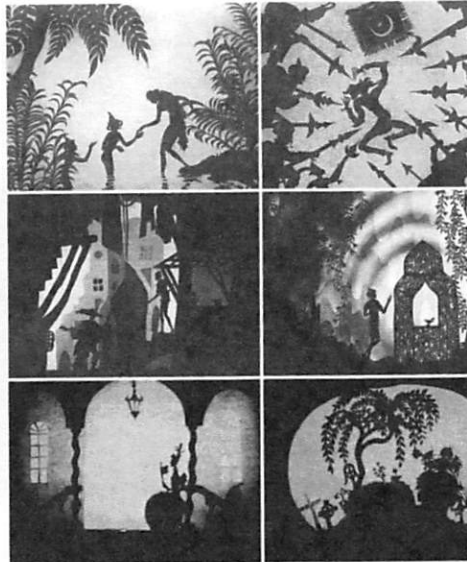


Lotte Reiniger at work

Lotte Reiniger always worked with her husband Carl Koch, who usually ran the camera, but for bigger projects like *Prince Ahmed*, she had a staff of five. She herself, however, was the prime genius behind all of her films. Besides cutting all the figures by holding the scissors still in her right hand, and manipulating the paper at lightning speed with her left hand so that the cut always went in the right direction, she drew the storyboards and devised the plots and characters. If a figure needed to make some complex or supple movement, it would have to be built from 25 to 50 separate pieces, then joined together with fine lead wire. If a character needed to appear in close-up, a separate, larger model of the head and shoulders would have to be created as well as larger background details to stand behind it.



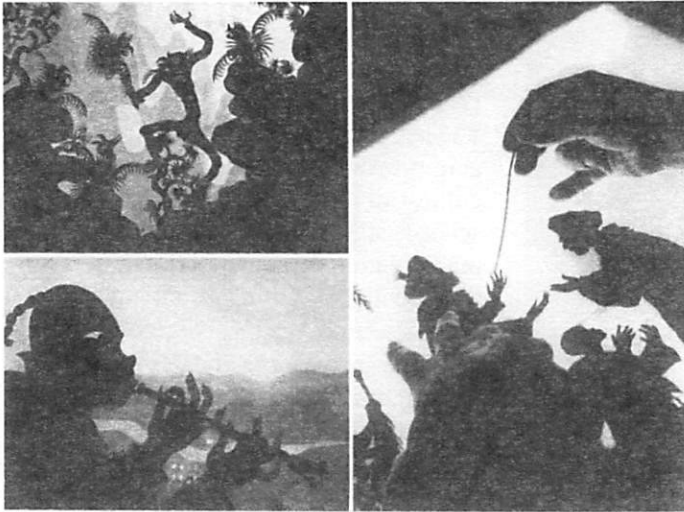
Filming Prince Ahmed



A Sample of Scenes

Together with her husband, she developed a special table with multiple levels, over which she hung her multiplane camera. The table had a hole in the middle that was covered with a piece of glass over which she put transparent paper and the cutout figures on top of the paper. Then she shined light through the glass from below, so that the silhouettes of the shadow figures became clear. By putting multiple sheets of glass on top of each other, the depth of the scene could be increased and it would look like the figures were moving through a dimensional landscape. This method was particularly useful for creating waves, for example.

She went on to produce more than 60 films in the rest of her 60-year career, 40 of which survive today, but she produced only that one feature film. The rest were shorts and sequences inserted in other people's films. She was inspired by fairy tales, myths and opera, the delicacy and fantasy of which best suited the intricate, imaginative techniques of most of her work. She said of herself, "I am obsessed with ballet, film and theater and have a fable for Mozart."



Lotte Reiniger's films were an amazing feat, but today she is better known abroad than in Germany. Students and lecturers at the media sciences department of the University of Tübingen, however, wanted to change that with their documentary film *Tanz der Schatten* (Dance of the Shadows), which is a new examination of the silhouette film and the shadow theater, whose development has been decisively advanced by the woman from Berlin. The starting point for the film was the extensive legacy of the filmmaker at the City Museum of Tübingen where Reiniger died in 1981.

In Malaysia, Indonesia and India, particularly, her work is an inspiration to animators who carry on in her style. For those of you who are fans of Harry Potter and have seen *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows- Part 1*, you may remember the scene where Hermione tells "The Tale of the Three Brothers." The supervisor of the animated sequence, Dale Newton, said:

"One of the things that got me excited about it in the early stages was the question of what it should look like. We knew it was going to be stylised, but not exactly how. The producers came along with the suggestion of creating something in the vein of Lotte Reiniger, an Austrian-born animator working in the 1930s and 50s doing silhouette style animations. What we got out of that was a certain simplicity and naivety. We knew it had to be told very graphically with bold silhouettes."

You can still buy copies of Lotte Meininger's films today which have been transferred to CD's, and you can see many of her short films on YouTube. There is also an older film entitled *The Art of Lotte Reiniger* (1953-1971) which can be found on www.dailymotion.com/video/x4wc6s_the-art-of-lotte-reiniger-1953-1971_shortfilms

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All papercut images are by Lotte Reiniger.

Pinwheel Luminaria

*The following is by GAP member Kathleen Trenchard and taken from her book **Mexican Papercutting: Simple Techniques for Creating Colorful Cut-Paper Projects** (Lark Books: Ashville, NC, US, 1998)*

Using the simple pleated method of folding and cutting paper, a standard lunch bag can be transformed into a festive candle holder, called a luminaria. The candle inside will shine through the cut work, casting a lively shadow pattern on the wall behind it.

Luminarias are popular outdoor decorations for Christmas, Halloween, and other celebrations throughout the southwest United States. About a week after Thanksgiving, white paper bags with sand and candles are placed along the San Antonio Riverwalk in Texas, for the annual Festival of the Luminaries. At night the view of the narrow river glowing with candlelight is breathtaking. The tradition dates back to Spanish missionaries who lit cedar boughs along roads to symbolize the illumination of the path to Bethlehem. Cut-paper luminarias appear to be a hybrid, combining two different Mexican folk arts — the punched metal candle holder and paper picado.

What You Need

5 x 9 1/2 inch (13 x 24 cm) flat-bottomed lunch bag*
Dry sand
Glass votive holder
Votive candle
Paper clips
Hammer and chisels**
Hole punch
Small scissors with sharp blades

*White-coated and colored bags are available at stationery and party-supply stores

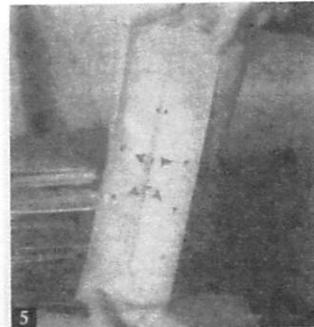
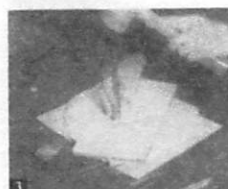
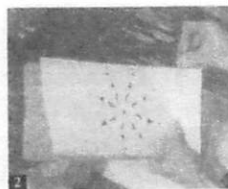
What You Do

1. Flatten the bag completely by folding the bottom over and fastening it down with a paper clip so that you do not accidentally cut the bottom of the bag (photo 1)
2. Enlarge the pattern on a copier as indicated.
3. Use clips to attach the pattern to one side of the bag (photo 2)
4. The pinwheel pattern can easily be cut with scissors by folding and cutting along the dotted lines. To cut this design, I used hammer and chisels and a hole punch (photos 3 and 4). Three bags can be cut at a time with chisels; one at a time with scissors. Whatever tools you use, cut the design in the center or midway between the bottom and top of the bag. The idea is to hide the candle, but focus its illumination through the cut work. (NOTE: You can create your own design and cut it out using a combination of scissors and hole punch. Simple shapes that can be cut on a fold work well in cutting paper bags with scissors.)
5. When you have completed cutting the pattern, remove it and open the bag. If your cut design stretches to the

edges of the bag, you may be surprised and delighted to find a different cut design on the sides (photo 5).

6. Cut a simple scalloped border across the top of the bag or fold the top over as a simple reinforcing hem (photo 6)

7. Pour in about 2 inches (5 cm) of sand. Center the votive candle in the bottom. A long match is helpful in lighting the candle. You can also light the candle first and then place it in the bottom of the luminaria.



Note: The pinwheel pattern can be found on page 32.

Pinwheel Luminaria

Shadow play or puppetry is an ancient form of storytelling and entertainment which uses flat, articulated, cut-out figures which are held between a source of light and a translucent screen. When did it actually begin? No one knows, but there is a wonderful legend that it started in China when long ago, the favorite wife of the Chinese Emperor Wudi (156-87 B.C.) died. He was heartbroken, and his court and his councilors became very worried when he lost interest in everything and stopped performing his duties as Emperor. There was a great artist in the court who had an idea and created a moveable shadow figure of the Emperor's wife, Lady Li, that looked just like her. He then put up a silk screen and lit it from behind. Next, he put the figure of Lady Li behind the screen and imitated the way she moved and even disguised his voice so it sounded like her. The grief stricken Emperor was immediately pleased by the work of the great artist, and returned to his work.

WATCHING AN INDONESIAN SHADOW PLAY or HOW TO SPEND 9 HOURS OF YOUR DAY

By Sue Throckmorton

As a teacher, I had always been interested in puppets, and I had been active in after-school puppet activities, taught special puppetry classes and usually tried to include puppetry in my regular classroom teaching by relating it to various subjects in the curriculum.

During the 1980's I worked as a teacher for 2 years in Indonesia. While there I was eager to see a performance of Indonesian shadow puppets which were world famous. However, shadow puppetry wasn't indigenous to the island Sumatra where I lived, so I had to wait until I visited the island of Java where it was practiced. During my trip there I was fortunate to attend an authentic, live performance of a shadow play and later visited a workshop where the puppets were constructed.

Called *Wayang Purwa*, which literally means ancient shadows, the puppet play began around 9 p.m. and was scheduled to continue without a break until dawn of the next day: needless to say, I didn't stay for the whole performance! Sitting on the ground in front of a large white cotton screen and I was struck by the almost carnival atmosphere; whole families had come for the show, the atmosphere buzzed with conversation, people moved to and fro constantly, and food was eaten, all of which continued on throughout the performance.

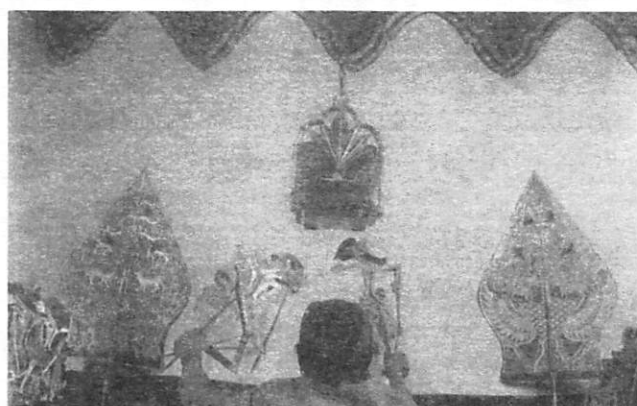
Behind the screen, before a brass oil lamp in the shape of the mythical Hindu eagle Garuda which would cast the shadows on the screen, sat the *dalang* cross-legged, the sole puppeteer and director of the whole performance. It

is his job to narrate parts of the story, which is one of the 30 or 40 he knows by heart; he sings the songs which set the mood of the scene; he speaks for all the puppets in at least 30 different voices which suit the individual characters; he groans, grunts, cries and shrieks in the fighting sequences; he operates the wooden knockers and metal rattles, often with his foot because his hands are busy, to add drama to the performance; and he signals to the gamelan orchestra which sits behind him what to play, how to play and when to start and stop.

The gamelan orchestra has about 13 members who play at least 15 different instruments — all kinds of gongs, xylophones, lutes, flutes and the all-important drum. Sometimes there are singers as well, although I

don't remember any in this particular performance. Nevertheless, it was a noisy show!

Also behind the screen was a wooden chest to store the puppets and other equipment and act as a soundbox which the *dalang* could strike, and the banana *boles*, solid sheaths of leaf stalks running under the screen, into which the puppets could be stuck and lined up, the "good guys" on the right and the "bad guys" on the left.



Top: Shadow play from the audience side

Bottom: The dalang operating puppets behind the screen

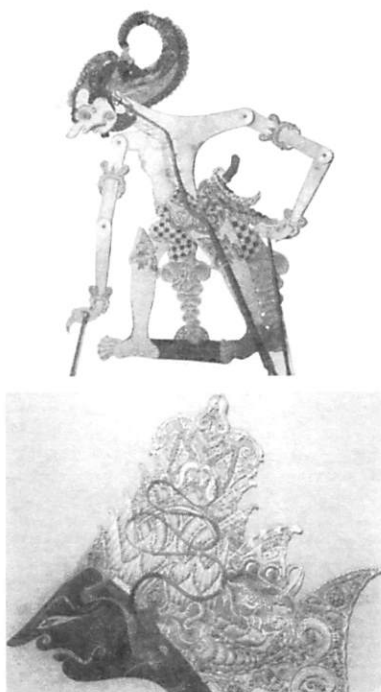
I don't remember the specific story portrayed, but I do know the repertoire is an extensive one—traditionally 177 plays about the gods and demons in stories, very Indonesian in nature, but based on the Indian legends of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*.

Every performance, however, is a complicated compound of so many elements. It is a shadow show and a puppet play which requires the greatest dexterity of the *dalang*, especially in the fight scenes where he must control the action of the armies and chariots, the flights of arrows, the welding of magical weapons and, of course, the movements of the main characters. Although, sitting on the shadow side, I couldn't watch the *dalang*, I could pay special attention to the actual movements of the shadows and, thus, fully appreciate his skill. He always took into account the nature of shadows and used that nature in his puppetry. For example, by operating the puppets at different distances from the screen, he was able to make a large and threatening shadow dominate the stage to show how important or dangerous the character was. He also controlled the movement of the puppets; giants and demons could not be allowed delicate and dainty movements; clowns had jovial, rolling gaits, etc.

Although I couldn't understand what was actually said or sung, I did know that the performance was also a recital of both classical and modern Javanese music, both vocal and orchestral. It was a compilation of classical prose poems, known and loved by the Javanese people and composed of the most beautiful language; it was enlivened by clowning, often ad lib, and slap-stick; it contained comments on current affairs, local, national, and even international, and, though all this, its focus was on ethical education and character-building. It was still a magical evening for me, but I wanted to see the puppets up close.

For that I traveled the next day to a workshop where the puppets were being made. About 20 inches (50 cm) tall, they are cut from a thin parchment of buffalo hide. I watched them being tooled and delicately perforated with very fine punches to outline their features and dress. Through these tiny holes, light would penetrate the shadows and reveal beautiful and intricate patterns to the audience. Then they were beautifully painted and

gilded. The arms were jointed at the shoulder and elbows which were usually the only moveable parts. The figures were supported and strengthened by lengths of polished horn and manipulated by polished horn handles which were attached to the hands and hung loose.



Top: Typical Indonesian shadow puppet

Bottom: Detailed close-up of cut and painted puppet

Each of the puppets can be immediately recognized by its individual characteristics — the shape of the body, eyes, mouth and eyes, the stance, dress, and ornaments all say who each character is. Important characters sometimes are portrayed by different puppets to express different moods.

A complete collection of puppets, that is, a sufficient number to play the entire repertoire, consists of about 200 figures, although no more than 60 are used in a single performance. In sets owned by the wealthy, however, 400 or more figures can be found. Besides heroes and heroines, demons and villains, the puppets include elephants, horses, birds, chariots, armies, weapons, etc., and tall, leaf-like structures which stand at either end of the stage and are moved to the center to mark the end of a scene or the performance, or waved through a scene to show a storm, the passage of time or a change of scene.

When I returned after my vacation in Java to my school on Sumatra, I was ready to experiment with shadow puppets with my students. There were many wonderful stories to tell, the puppets seemed easy to construct from cardboard, brass fasteners and sticks, and a white sheet for a screen and a projector for light was all the equipment needed. Now there are many templates on the Internet for shadow puppets as well as “how-to” articles for constructing them. Members can download PDF instructions for making a cardboard Indonesian shadow puppet by Googling Wayang Kulit Shadow Puppetry-Lesson Plans-Blick art materials.

Try making one and have fun!

Additional information was obtained from *Lordly Shades: Wayang Purwa Indonesia* by Pandam Guritno et al, Jakarta: PTV Jayakarta Agung, 1984.

Ernst Oppliger's Papercuttings: Between Tradition and Modernism

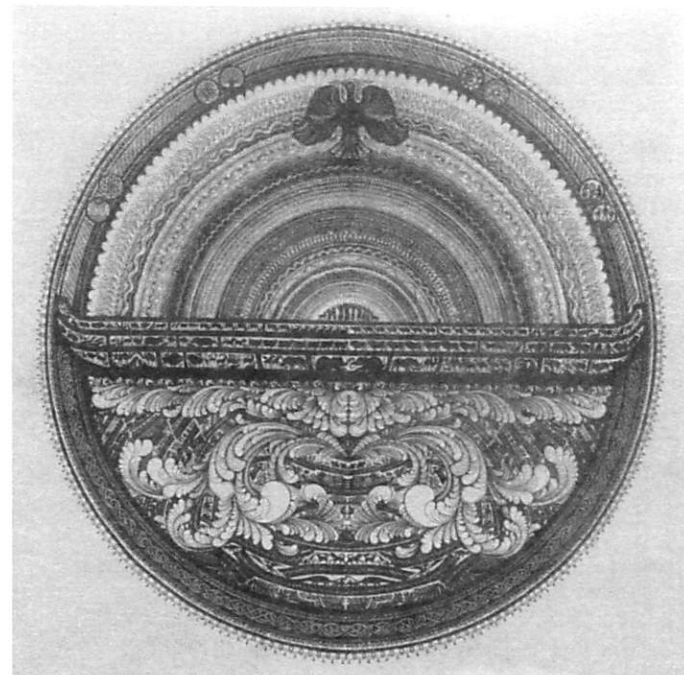
Written by Sabine Siebel (Art historian, Oldenburg)* Translated by Lucrezia Beerli-Bieler

Ernst Oppliger is one of Switzerland's best known papercutters and is a virtuoso who commands this medium. While at the beginning of his art career he was long occupied with the classical Swiss paper-cutting tradition that shows motifs of Alpine Country life in an ornamental framework, today he produces meticulously segmented large formats that seem simultaneously photo-realistic and abstract.



ELEPHANT © Ernst Oppliger

Oppliger very early mastered the precise incising of the most filigreed structures and the skillful organization of them on the picture plane, both of which are the basis for his joy in experimentation and his individual style. The subject of Noah's Ark was motivated by his preference for animal portrayals and inspired him to a number of pictorial ideas. His version of Noah's Ark from 1989 focused entirely on the expressive power of ornament structures.



NOAH'S ARK © Ernst Oppliger



ZEBRA © Ernst Oppliger

Stylized and symmetrically double-folded grooves, in a forceful whirl, obliterate all the evil on earth. What is surprising is the inclusion of up-to-date "Sins: against creation. Tiny silhouettes show scenes of violence aimed at man and his environment. The rainbow is the peaceful counter-image. And Oppliger has attempted to reproduce its colors via the oscillating effect of a web of finest lines, thus adding countless gray shades to classical black and white.

These past years Oppliger no longer cuts his large formats with surgical scissors but with a knife. What, above all, appeals to him is reproducing and reworking the graphical structures that he finds directly in nature. The basis for his most recent work is the photo of a farmhouse densely covered in branches and a pale fence that he copies directly onto the paper. Oppliger multiplies his motif by folding the paper at least five times, similar to the silhouettes from his childhood days. The mirroring reflection brings patterns to light that are surprisingly geometrical and generate a new enigmatic, visual order. The impenetrable picture plane, fluctuating between duplication and abstraction, seems to be a reflection of our own cognitive faculties in an ever more complex world. In order to augment the spatial impression, Oppliger has, for some years now, mounted his works between two panes of glass, thus very effectively incorporating the shadows that fall on the wall behind.

*from the catalog "final cut" exhibition at the Horst Janssen Museum in Oldenburg,

WINTER IN AUGUST

Are you bathed in perspiration, yearning for a cold lemonade or iced tea, ready to take a dip in the pool, waiting to get back into that air conditioned room? Well, take a break from the summer heat for a few moments, close your eyes and think..... SNOWFLAKES!

GAP member **Angela Mohr** takes a broader look at the composition of snowflakes. Angela is the author of several craft books, and in this one, *Creating Snowflake Art: Designing Original Snowflakes* (Schiffer Books, 2008), she will help you design snowflakes having up to 12 points!

Using beautiful photographs, coupled with clear instructions and tips, she uses a casual, friendly approach to take you through chapters on equipment, folding and cutting techniques, putting together a design, putting into practice a “blizzard” of project ideas and finishing techniques.

Both beginners and experienced papercutters will be motivated to design, make and apply snowflakes for everyday household purposes, holiday decorating and unique gifts.....and Angela makes it fun!



Wilson “Snowflake” Bentley



A native Vermonter, Wilson Bentley, later known as “Snowflake Bentley,” was the first known photographer of snowflakes. He photographed his first snowflake in 1895 by attaching a bellows camera to a compound microscope. He was the first to argue that no two snowflakes are alike. During his lifetime he photographed more than 5000 images of snow crystals, and with William J. Humphrey of the US Weather Bureau, published a monograph entitled *Snow Crystals* which contains 2453 illustrations. This book is still published today as a Dover reprint in its Pictorial Archive and is literally the “Bible” of snowflakes, providing inspiration for artists of all kinds. A shorter version with 72 of his best plates is also published by Dover as *Snowflakes in Photographs*.

“Of all the forms of water the tiny 6-pointed crystals of ice called snow are the most beautiful and varied.”

Wilson Bentley, *Snow Crystals*, 1898
Illustration by William J. Humphrey

A charming picture book for children about the story of Bentley told by Jacqueline Briggs Martin was published in 1998 by Houghton Mifflin. It won the Caldecott Medal for its wood cut illustrations by Mary Azarian in 1999.

Today’s most foremost snowflake expert and photographer, Kenneth G. Libbrecht, has published a number of gorgeous snowflake books such as *The Snowflake: Winter’s Frozen Artistry*, *The Little Book of Snowflakes*, *The Art of the Snowflake*, *Ken Libbrecht’s Field Guide to Snowflakes*, and a children’s book *The Secret Life of a Snowflake: An Up-Close Look at the Art and Science of Snowflakes*.

When is Your Papercutting a Snowflake?

by Carolyn Guest

(based on an article from FirstCut, Winter, 2009, p.12)

Would you walk up to someone with a horse and say, "Oh, what a beautiful llama," or into a yard full of hens and say, "Oh, these are the most beautiful geese"? Probably not, but how often have you looked at a round or square multi-fold/repeat-fold cutout and exclaimed, "Oh, what a beautiful snowflake!"

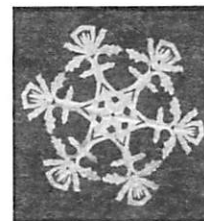
In reality, snowflakes are amazingly unique creations and come in many different types: i.e., plates, needles, prisms, simple stars, fernlike stellar dendrites, etc. What each one has in common is the hexagonal form. In other words, for a papercut to be a snowflake, it has to have a six repeat base structure. Of the many types of snowflakes, most of us prefer cutting the fernlike stellar dendrite type.



As educators passing on the art of papercutting, we need to choose our language carefully. If you prefer to teach cutting eight repeat stars, that is fine; just call them stars. Actually, you may want to teach this first for your youngest students. You may also want to teach them how to fold with five, seven or nine repeats, but refer to them as the stars they are, not the snowflakes they are not.

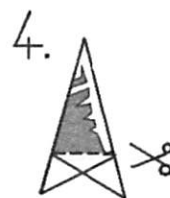
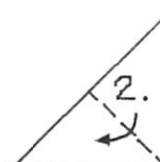
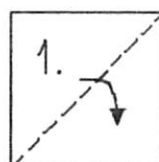
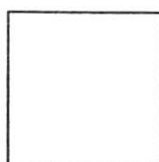
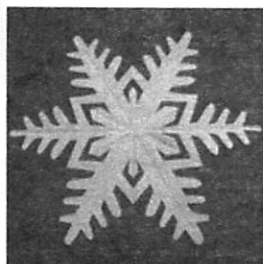
Teaching students to fold paper in half, half again and again and calling it a snowflake feels easier at the time but perpetuates the unspoken myth that students are not capable of higher levels of learning. This also leaves the student with inaccurate information and the feeling of "why bother to learn more details if my teacher doesn't bother" and that it doesn't matter.

In conclusion, any two snowflakes are never exactly the same in nature, but they all have a hexagonal format. Let's teach our students how to make this hexagonal form and to experience the magic of opening a folder cutout to see their own unique and structurally correct snowflakes.



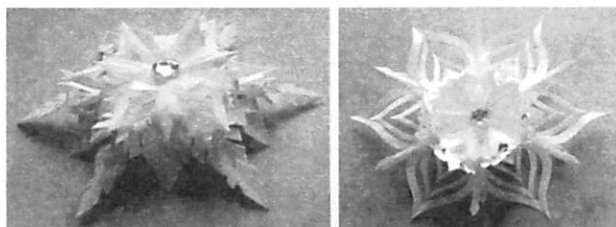
Carolyn adds "One of the things Paul Beal (one of the GAP founders) really disliked about fold and cut was the tendency of parts not being perfectly equal (note different size openings in the outer points)...I do try to fold carefully to get as little distortion as possible. For me this distortion is one of the parts I enjoy seeing in hand cut folded paper. It makes each cutting more like a true snowflake that transforms as it goes through the different layers of atmosphere getting tossed and turned, bumping into other flakes, getting warmed and chilled at different rates before it reaches the ground...."

HOW TO CUT A 6 POINT SNOWFLAKE



The Snowflake Master: Keith Bonnstetter

"When people ask me about my snowflakes and how I started cutting them, I often will ask if they have an hour... To me, all the artwork I have created in the last 16 years is simply paper...unless you understand the reason I do what I do. When a person knows why I made that first cut in December 1999 and hears about the amazing journey I have been traveling, that paper is transformed into beautiful art: art that has been used by God to console an average man during his most difficult moments in life."



Three and Four Layer Snowflakes © Keith Bonnstetter

If GAP members have been following the GAP Facebook page, they must have marveled over the amazing 3-D snowflakes Keith Bonnstetter cuts each day in answer to a 366 day Challenge proposed by paper artist Tong Li Steinle for the year 2016. Keith's story of his 16 year papercutting journey from 1999 until now is one of tragic loss, prayer, miraculous recovery and a deep religious conviction.

In 1999 Keith's 3 1/2-year-old daughter Claire had been diagnosed with Dejerrine-Sottas Neuropathy by the Mayo Clinic, and could only walk with the aid of a walker. In September of that year, Claire's condition was given a second diagnosis by a chiropractor who suggested that her condition was due instead to a bone in her neck pressing on her spinal cord since birth. Following treatment that day, Keith writes, "The next day at story hour at the local library, Claire walked out of her walker! I could list many activities that Claire could do on Wednesday that she could not have done on Tuesday. When we returned for a second appointment, the doctor's comment: 'We take miracles at this office!'"

Keith and his family were also confident "that if God could heal Claire, we knew He could help us with the bills from the Mayo Clinic. He continues his story: "One evening as Christmas approached, I sat down in the living room with the idea of cutting snowflakes to fill our picture window. Since college I had cut angels and trees into snowflakes. That night I realized that if I could cut angels and trees, I could probably cut...the Grinch, Max, and Cindy Lou Who. So I did. If I could do that, I figured I could probably cut Santa and Rudolph into a

snowflake. I did. If I could cut Santa and Rudolph, why not the Holy Family? The shepherds? The Magi? So I did all of them. My wife thought they were amazing, but she wondered what I would do with all of them...I took them to school to show my colleagues what I had done. Suddenly they were asking if they could buy them! Then the other teachers started asking me to create snowflakes with their ideas...bass fishing, lighthouses, a Norwegian theme...in May another teacher came to me with a list. She said, "These are all of the things my daughter did in high school. I want you to make her a snowflake." Whoa. I had envisioned a lot of snowflakes, but this was something new! I told her I would try. Sarah's was the first personalized snowflake that I made.

The personalized snowflakes gained popularity and have been the most popular snowflake order ever since. That December we experienced God's help in a much smaller way. As people learned about my snowflakes, they began to place orders for Christmas. I just kept writing them down. Suddenly one day I realized that I would never have enough time to get them all finished for Christmas. Again we prayed. Our school district had six snow days in the month of December! I was the only happy teacher in the district! I finished the last snowflake order before noon on December 23, the day we were supposed to leave to celebrate Christmas with my in-laws." Keith calls his mother-in-law, Rita, his biggest fan, but, sadly, in 2009, she passed away. However, a former student of Keith's that same year sent him an email telling him she worked for the Martha Stewart show and asking if it "would be ok" to pitch his snowflakes as an idea for the show.



Left: Keith Bonnstetter with Martha Stewart. Right: Decorated Christmas Tree at Keith's church

They loved Keith's artwork and definitely wanted him on the show, so he flew to New York for the taping of the show for Mother's Day. (You can still get the directions online to make the snowflakes!) Keith's local newspaper ran an article about his appearance on television, and as a result, a writer from Guideposts Magazine contacted him to allow the magazine to print

his inspirational snowflake story in the Christmas edition that year and film a video for their website.

“A month after the segment aired,” Keith continues, “I received a phone call from a photographer who was doing some work for a Christmas catalog for Dillard’s Department Store. She was searching the internet for some snowflake artwork and my name came up. She told me that when she saw that I had appeared on the Martha Stewart Show, she knew she didn’t need to see any credentials. She hired me over the phone to do some paper artwork for her. As a teacher it was a big deal that they paid me about as much as I was making per month teaching at the time!”

Later that summer Keith was contacted by Babytalk Magazine which wanted three-dimensional snowflakes to hang as backdrops for their baby of the year issue. “They had a very low budget,” Keith says, “but we were able to work out a rental arrangement; they used the snowflakes for a small fee and then returned them to me. They now decorate a very large tree in our church every year at Christmas time” and are the precursor to what he is doing now for the 366 Day Challenge.

As 2015 drew to a close, Keith needed a focus. His beloved sheltie and “best friend” Cubby died. He was Keith’s constant companion and would sit at his feet in his office while he cut his snowflakes.” Every time I would go in my office, I would remember Cubby there with me and miss him terribly; it was very difficult to make myself go in and cut snowflakes,” Keith says. “Then I saw something about the 366 Day Challenge from Tong Li Steinle – cut one snowflake per day for the whole year 2016. So I decided to start on January 1, and this challenge has been my motivation to make myself go into my office and cut snowflakes and only allow happy memories of Cubby to come in there with me. So every day I cut a snowflake and focus not on what I have lost, but on the gifts that I have been given.”

Looking back over the past 16 years Keith feels God has been beside him during his most difficult moments, and that each times his art work, “a God-given talent,” has helped him move forward.

NOTE: Keith has sent us these links to see how he cuts and assembles a 2-layered snowflake along with a template for the 2 layers and a picture of the finished snowflake.

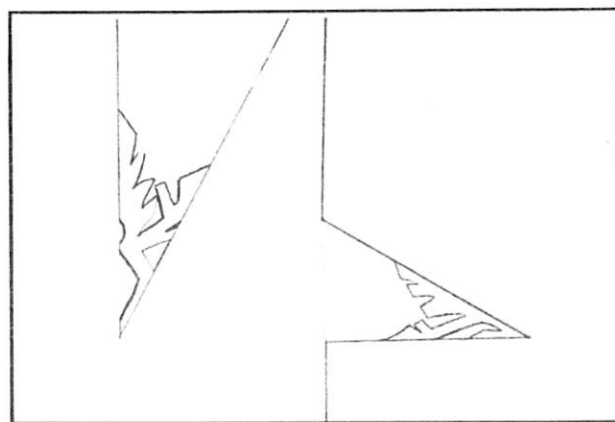
folding paper video link <https://youtu.be/gmdJNTXjipE>

cutting link: <https://youtu.be/A4CTPTYPTg>

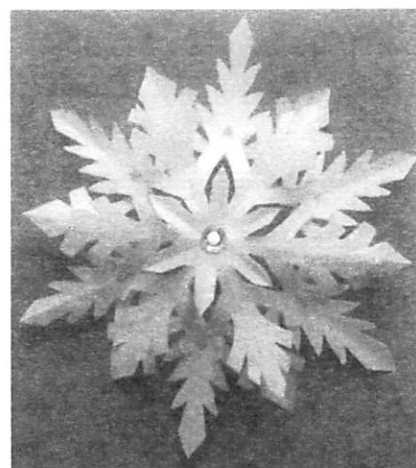
assembling 3D snowflake:

https://youtu.be/Q_OXUyyC5bk

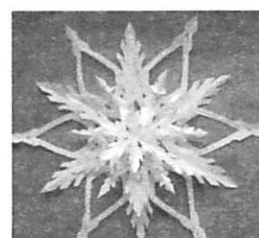
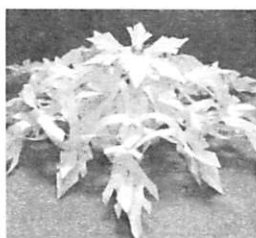
You can see all of Keith’s 366 Day Challenge snowflakes on his own Facebook page or the GAP Facebook page (Just type in his name in the space “Search this Group”). It’s a real treat!



Template for two layer snowflake in video



Two layer snowflake in video



MAKING A SNOWFLAKE BALLERINA

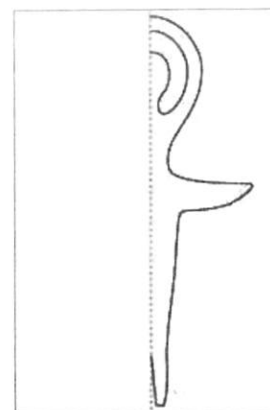
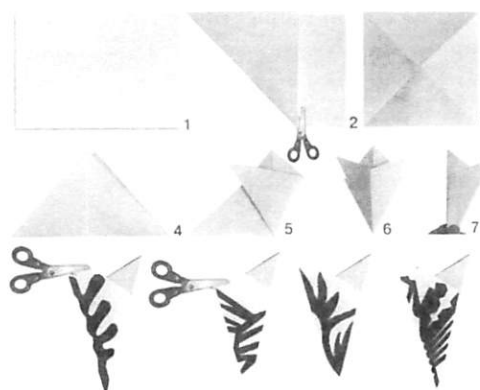
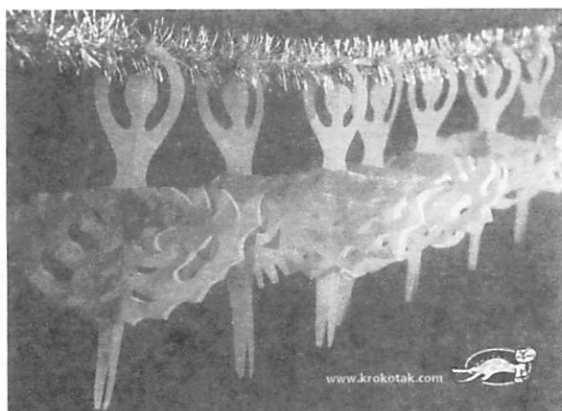
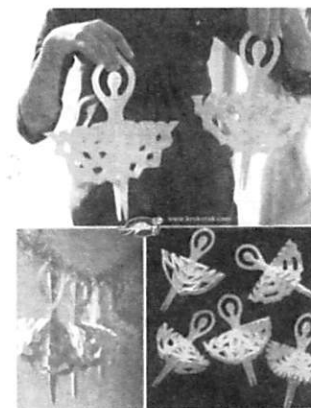
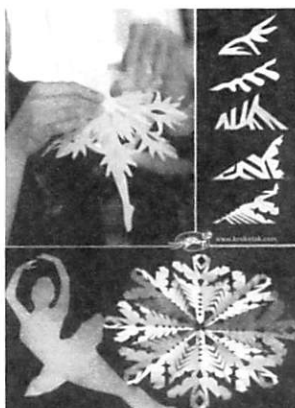
Originally from a Russian blogger, this lovely ballerina snowflake project appears on many websites. There are templates available, three of which appear here in reduced size plus an easier version for kids. You can also string several ballerinas together to make a beautiful Christmas garland.

1. Print or draw your ballerina on stiff yardstick and cut out.

2. Cut out a snowflake “skirt.” Be sure that the center of the snowflake, after it is opened, is not cut out in the center.

3. Fold the snowflake back in half and make a slip to insert the ballerina. Unfold only when the figure is already glued or taped in place.

4. Hang with white string or thread or clear fishing line.



Ballerina Templates 1, 2, and 3

Kids' Ballerina Template

Material Girl

*"You know that we are living in a material world
And I am a material girl"*

Madonna

I'm sure Madonna wasn't referring to GAP when she sang this song! She has a different concept of the word "material." Many GAP members are entering the "material world," however, by applying their paper designs to all kinds of textiles which can be made into sheets, hangings, quilts, bags, tea towels, etc. Some have made paper quilts or cut pictures with quilts in them. Here are some wonderful examples of our "material world." Ed.

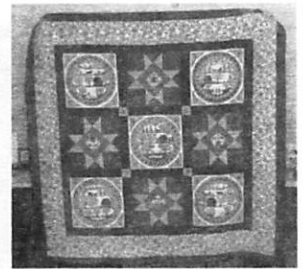
From Papercuttings to Sheets – Carolyn Guest

In 1998 I was approached from the design department at a local natural fiber company named Garnet Hill about selling commercial rights to some of my designs. They were familiar with my work from our local Northeast Kingdom Artisans Guild. At the time I was keeping photocopy images of my work, so they took copies of an assortment of my designs. We signed an agreement that I would receive one time payments for any designs used. I would retain the copyright and use of the designs but would not be able to sell the images to others for commercial use. They purchased the six designs that were to be used on cotton flannel sheets. What interested me the most about the process was how their graphic designers chose aspects of my cuttings and how they used them. In addition to the payment for the commercial rights, I received a complete set of sheets, comforter cover and shams!



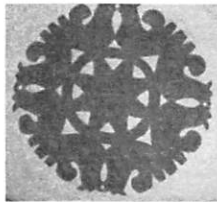
Simple Pleasures – Carolyn Guest and Marie-Helene Grabman

Carolyn Guest says: Northcott fabrics worked with Marie-Helene Grabman to create a line of fabrics they called "Simple Pleasures" which were offered in a variety of colors. I had the pleasure of working with Marie-Helene to create 2 wall quilts. She chose to use the black & white series and wanted each to be a nine blocks (using the 5 medallions and 4 piece work stars) plus a border. The fabrics were wonderful to work with and though each quilt has the same 5 medallions, using different pieced stars and using different pieced stars and borders gave each quilt its own uniqueness.



My Blue and White Applique Quilt – Carolyn Guest

I had used paper cut patterns to create simple applique as quilters have for generations but when I began to create paper cuttings, I wanted to create a quilt using leluje (a Polish "tree of life") and star patterns. My first concern with papercut patterns for applique was the loss of space with turned edges. I pondered this for several years until I stumbled on an antique Pennsylvania Dutch quilt that was used to wrap around a refrigerator for moving! The quilter had hand appliqued her simple layered fabric floral motif using a "catch" stitch. I had used this stitch many times when hemming. I loved the way it encased the raw edge of the fabric, but with time the edge had softened with wear. I proceeded to cut simple designs from paper and then the folded fabrics similar to the methods used by



Hawaiian quilters. I found using a fine woven cotton fabric worked really well for this. My first attempt was a wall hanging of one of my barn cuttings. The one pictured is a work in progress. I appliqued the leluje designs after basting each one to the muslin blocks and then pieced it with alternating plain blocks. I had planned to use the star designs as the designs for the hand quilting in the alternating blocks. I didn't like the results and proceeded to applique the stars in the alternating blocks. Next I pieced the blue and white border with the Kurpie leluje borders in mind. I originally chose to have cut out corners. I wasn't satisfied; the quilt top sat for a number of years, with me taking it out now and then to rethink the border. Finally, I found enough of the scrap fabric to rework the border and have started quilting it.

Kathryn Carr's Tea Towels

Kathryn Carr writes:

Putting your art on a tea towel is a great way to sell your work in a different medium.

I first met with a local screen printer and talked with them about cost, looked at their examples, found out what computer file they like to work with and what materials would work best for screen printing. If I ordered over 100 of any style I would receive a price break!

I ordered a few different styles of towels in small quantities to see which ones were the best fit for my art and quality standards. Once I decided on the towel, I ordered 300 high quality 100% cotton towels from Amazon and had them shipped to my local screen printer. I sent them my jpg digital files via Dropbox and they printed up the art and delivered the towels to my house a few weeks later.



I came up with a paper cuff that had the towel image and my logo on the front and the care instructions on the back. Did you know that before you use a tea towel you should soak it in water for around 48 hours and then wash and tumble dry. Soaking the towel first expands the cotton fibers and makes them softer and more absorbent.

With two of the three styles I wanted to add a touch of color, so I used a fabric paint pen to add red to my Poppins towel and a touch of orange to my finch's beak. I looked over each towel to make sure there are no smudges or irregularities. I folded the towel and added the cuff around it for a complete and professional packaged look.

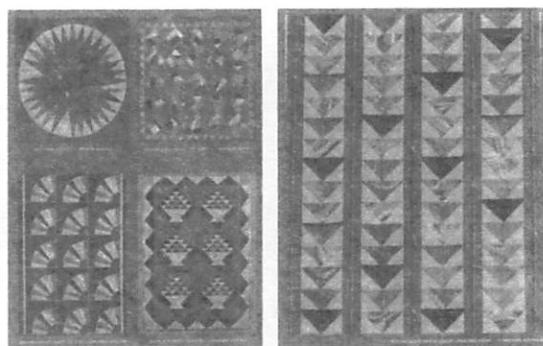


Kathryn Carr says that her tea towels are heavy weight 100% cotton and made of virtually lint free fabric. They have handy hanging loops and measure approximately 15"x24," just the right size for drying your dishes or

displaying in your kitchen. The red stripes in the fabric and her decorative logo at the top of the towel give them a classic vintage look. They were screen printed in Pittsburgh, PA.

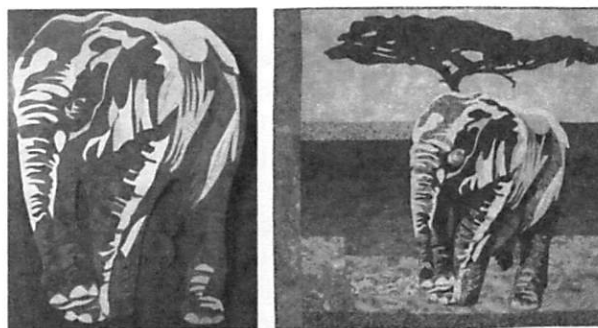
Sharon Schaich's Pieced Paper Quilts

Long-time GAP member **Sharon Schaich** calls her paper quilts the "shake 'em up" part of her papercutting. She says when she showed a photo album of her cut, layered paper quilts to master Swiss papercutter Ernst Oppliger years ago, "he took a long look, then said softly to our interpreter Suzanne, "but this isn't papercutting." In response, Sharon says, "No - not traditional papercutting, but it is cut paper, folded into geometric shapes which are then layered to interpret early American quilts. And the world is full of colorful, textured, layered embellished PAPER! A paper store is my candy store. My Pieced Paper Quilts take lots of measuring, planning, experimentation with value of color, painstaking application of embellishments - and anywhere from 30 to 80 hours of work. And sometimes they succeed, and sometimes they don't. But they do sell, and for that I'm grateful - otherwise, what would I do with all this paper!" (FirstCut, Fall, 1998)



Gail McCormick writes this about her "Paper Elephant"

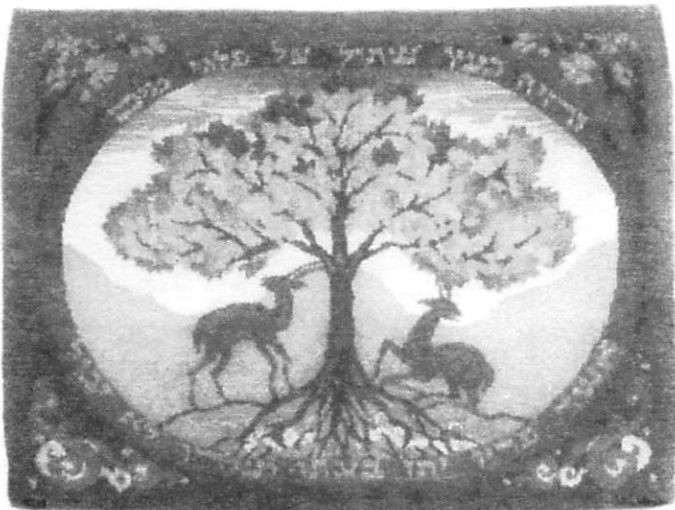
My layered paper cutting style has greatly been inspired by my mother's quilting and appliqué techniques. She in turn is inspired by my work! She converted my layered paper elephant into a quilt. (Ruth McCormick, <http://ruthmccormick.com/>)



A Mother-Daughter Collaboration: Honoring Traditions with Papercuts and Tapestries

By Tamar Shadur

Tzadik Ka'tamar Yifrach, Hebrew for "The Righteous Shall Flourish as the Date Palm" from Psalm 92 is sung in the Friday night liturgy at the synagogue. It is the title and subject of a large tapestry that hangs in the sanctuary of the Jewish Community of Amherst, MA. The two deer flanking a central date palm (Tree of Life) surrounded by five kinds of birds, vines, and pomegranates, a scroll with the biblical inscription in Hebrew, all within a decorative border are re-curring motifs in Yehudit Shadur's Jewish papercuts. This tapestry is the first of three biblical tapestries with Hebrew inscriptions based on her papercuts I wove with Paul Maynard in 1980-81 in Walpole, NH shortly after an apprenticeship and work at the Jerusalem Tapestries work-shop in Jerusalem.



Y. & T. Shadur (design), T. Shadur & P. Maynard (weavers), "He is Like a Tree", 18 in x 24 in, 12 epi, 1981, T. Shadur: photo. Cotton warp, wool, metallic, rayon weft. Private collection.

A Wisconsin born Jerusalem artist, my late mother is renowned for her exquisite, intricate Jewish papercuts and for authoring two definitive books about Jewish papercuts with my father, Joseph Shadur. Prior to drawing and painting the Tzadik tapestry design, she made the proto-type Tzadik papercut utilizing white paper on a warm brown background (later to be made in different variations and sizes). Her symmetrical papercuts involve a process of designing images on a folded paper, then cutting with a small sharp knife the negative shapes through the two sides of the paper. Over

the years she developed painted underlays with highlights, adding jewel-like qualities to her papercuts.

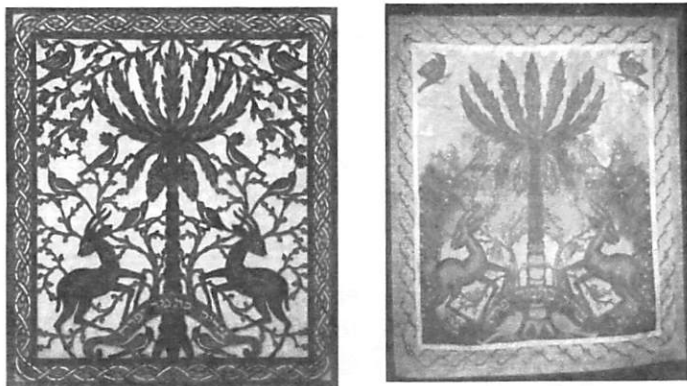


Y. Shadur "He is Like a Tree" papercut

In designing the mural-size tapestry, she painted areas of color and their gradations applying brush strokes as in hachure, or "hatching," a tapestry technique for interpenetrating linear areas of contrasting colors. Then I drew the "cartoon" (to be put under the warp) transferring the full scale design with a crayon on the fabric side of sections of wallpaper. To match the colors of the design, I carefully selected combinations of yarns and wound them on many fluted tapestry bobbins. It took me several days to prepare the warp and dress the loom by threading about 800 warp threads through our homemade jute heddles and later brushing then rolling it over the back beam, tying several strands at a time onto a rod along the front beam and adjusting the tension of this 5' 6" wide warp. At this point the weaving of the Tzadik tapestry was ready to begin.

Paul's brother Peter, a fine cabinet maker living in New Hampshire, made our 6' wide low-warp Aubusson loom, modeled after the one we used in the Jerusalem Tapestries studio in the late 1970's. We used John Deere tractor spreader ratchet wheels on the edges of the two large roller beams to control the tension of the warp. Like a traditional loom made for mural-size creations, its bench was long enough to seat both of us as we worked side by side on different sections of the tapestry, beating down small sections of the weft threads with special wooden tapestry "combs" at our individual paces.

The gold highlights and inscriptions in my mother's papercuts were inspirations for weaving the biblical verses in gold, copper, and silver metallic threads worsted with rayon, silk, and fine wool yarns. The Tzadik tapestry took us 5.5 months to complete. Finishing work and preparations for hanging took another week or so. Seeing it hung for several months in a reputable gallery on Newbury Street in Boston was rewarding.



Left: Y. Shadur, "Tzadik Ka'tamar" Papercut, 16.5 in x 12.5 in, 1980. Hand painted paper and metallic paper.
Right: Yehudit Shadur (design), Tamar Shadur and Paul Maynard (weavers), "Tzadik Ka'tamar Yifrach", 64 in x 57 in, 12 epi, 1981, T. Shadur: photo. Cotton warp, wool, metallic, rayon weft. On loan at the Jewish Community of Amherst, MA.

The devotion or holy act of "beautifying the commandment," according to Jewish tradition, as observed in papercut plaques, ceremonial objects, and embroidered Torah covers was also employed in these three tapestries. Indeed, the Tzadik tapestry, with its gradations of greens, reds, crimsons, metallic threads, and intricate border fulfills and imparts the message to strive for righteous living as it hangs on the sanctuary wall to the right of the bimah, the raised platform and focal point of the synagogue where the Holy Torah is kept in its ark, in the Amherst JCA. (Before the tapestry was displayed, a mural-size papercut by my mother with the inscription "Love thy Neighbor" hung there and later moved to the social hall in the building).



Soon after Tzadik, the next two biblical tapestries we wove were based on two smaller biblical card-size papercuts. The design of "How Beautiful upon the Mountains are the Feet of the Messenger," an Isaiah 52 peace prophecy, was a later non-symmetrical version of my mother's Jerusalem genre in papercutting. "He is Like a Tree Planted by Streams of Water," is the first verse in Psalms 1 referring to the righteous man whose "leaf shall not wither." It took close observation and careful manipulation of few warp threads at a time while beating down metallic threads combined with silky rayons thereby giving form to the letters, vines, and Dove of Peace over the walled City of Jerusalem in the Isaiah 52 tapestry and subtle gradation of greens in the foliage of the tree in the other tapestry. Hovering over the front roller beam, pressing treadles and focusing intensely while passing bobbins rapidly over and under warp threads at the sixth month of my pregnancy was a physical challenge. But the craft begged my full devotion.



Y. & T. Shadur (design), T. Shadur (weaver), "How Beautiful upon the Mountains", 20 in x 26 in, 12 epi, 1981, T. Shadur: photo. Cotton warp, wool, metallic, rayon weft. Private collection.

In 1994, my mother designed the Holocaust Memorial Tapestry-Yizkor, the last of our collaborations. The “cutting off” celebration when I finished weaving Yizkor in Feb. 2013, exactly two years after her passing, was a good time to honor and commemorate Y. Shadur’s contribution to contemporary tapestry as well as to the Jewish art world; she had been instrumental in the revival of the rich traditional folk art form of Jewish papercuts nearly lost with the Holocaust.

The single inscription Yizkor (Remembrance) in the center of the baroque Menorah in the Holocaust Memorial Tapestry refers to the Yizkor prayer Jews recite in commemoration of the victims of the Holocaust. Y. Shadur’s inspiration for this elaborate design were the 18th C. ornately painted wooden synagogues of Poland and Ukraine that were destroyed by the Nazis.

The two Lions of Judah stand on the columns suggestive of the ancient Temple in Jerusalem, the focus of Jewish worship and nationhood. Beneath the Menorah is a gazelle, “Tzvi Yisrael,” encompassed by grapevines with their deep-running roots, both symbolic of the Jewish people. The seven burning flames of the Menorah converge upward into the Crown of Torah, “Keter Torah.” These symbolic elements with their multiple layers of meaning have been recurrent themes in Jewish ritual and folk art through the ages.



My weaver’s marks in the border of the tapestry add yet another layer of commemorative meaning: Working at my loom listening to the ongoing radio reports after the horrors of 9/11, 2001, I was moved to weave the letters W T C in the top border above the crown. On a more personal level, I wove the Hebrew letters to spell the names of my father and only brother, Yossef and Raphael, both deceased, along the vertical left side border (near my mother’s and my woven initials), a spontaneous decision I made just before finishing this project that saw the passage of almost a third of my lifetime.

I wish that my parents, who witnessed a good part of the progress of the Yizkor weaving over many years, had been able to join the celebration of its completion and see it displayed in galleries. Blessed are the memories.

Tamar Shadur has been a tapestry weaver since 1978. She holds a BFA.Ed and MEd.ESL degrees from UMass, Amherst, and for many years has taught ESL, Adult Basic Ed, and Hebrew, as well as conducted papercut and tapestry workshops and given talks in these fields. Tamar is a member of ATA (American Tapestry Alliance), TWiNE (Tapestry Weavers in New England), and GAP.

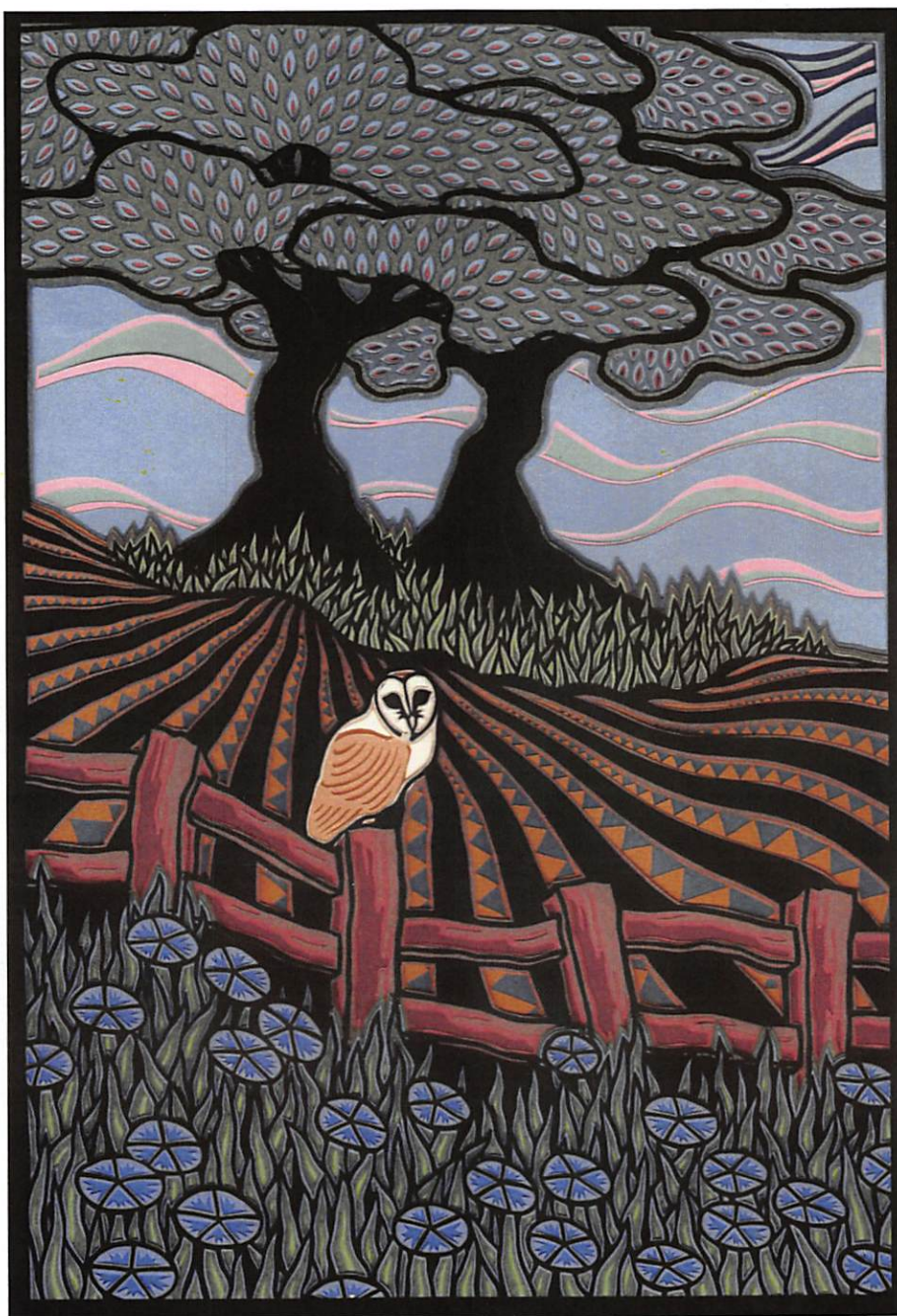


Detail from “Yizkor- Holocaust Memorial Tapestry”, T. Shadur (weaver),

Y. Shadur (design), T. Shadur (weaver), “Yizkor- Holocaust Memorial Tapestry”, 68 in x 57 in, 10 epi, 2013, Pivot Media: photo. Cotton warp, wool, chenille weft.



GAP Collection St. Paul, MN
June, 2015



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