

First Cut

COMMUNICATION FROM MEMBERS OF THE GUILD OF AMERICAN PAPERCUTTERS

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ISSUE III

The Toolbox

One of the questions I get sent most frequently is “What supplies do you use?” Selecting the right paper or cutting implement can be a daunting task. With so many options on the market, it seems impossible to try them all.

Fortunately, we have GAP. Members, like you, from across the country sent me their favorite blades, holders, scissors, papers, and adhesives, so that you know what to try next. Many of these items are available at Blick, Plaza, and other national art supply retailers, but many can also be shipped straight to your door via Amazon.

If you try something new, be sure to share what you think. Inquiring cutters want to know!

FISKARS FINGERTIP
DETAIL KNIVES



SWANN MORTON SCALPELS



SURGICAL SCISSORS



X-ACTO #11 BLADES



X-ACTO #11M BLADES



X-ACTO GRIPSTER WITH DESIGNER HANDLE



First Cut

Toolbox: CONTINUED

FABRIANO TIZIANO PAPERS



CANSON MI-TEINTES PAPERS



SWANN MORTON 15A & 10A BLADES



OLFA ART KNIFE



A Visit to Papercutting Land

BY DAVE REICHARD

On a day in mid-September, I walked into the heart of Swiss papercutting country. Das Huesy is a 4-room, chalet style inn and also a restaurant in the village of Blankenburg, just a three minute train ride from the town of Zweisimmen in the central canton of Bern. You won't find Das Huesy on Hotels.com, but you'll find it if your primary search is for Swiss *scherenschnitte*. German for "scissor cuts," *scherenschnitte* is a style of papercutting dating back to the 16th century.

Das Huesy is owned and operated by Hans-Jurgen and Marianne Glatz. Frau Glatz greeted me and my wife upon arrival, assuming correctly that I was the guest from America who was interested in papercutting. She said I was in luck; one of Switzerland's most famous papercutters was sitting in the downstairs dining area.

It was Ernst Oppliger, who was at that time taking part in an exhibition at Das Huesy along with another Swiss papercutter, Renate Weber. I introduced myself to Ernst as a Board Member of the Guild of American Papercutters. He then surprised me by saying he too is a member. Through my less than fluent German, I understood that he had attended a GAP event in the United States and remembered meeting some of the members. From his description of someone who cut with sheep shears, I assumed he had met Carolyn Guest.

Ernst asked about my own papercutting and, with some trepidation, I showed him a few items I had on my phone. He was very kind and made a few technical comments that I didn't fully follow. Everyone at Das Huesy was very nice, helpful, and hospitable. Frau Glatz offered me a beer on the house as I sat down with Ernst. Later during our stay, Hans Jurgen would show me around the *scherenschnitte*-filled walls and halls of the inn.

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A Visit to Papercutting Land

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I found visiting Das Huesy to be an interesting, even once in-a-lifetime experience. It was also very humbling. I consider myself a pretty good cook and an adequate papercutter. But Hans-Jurgen is far superior in both areas, although I'm not sure he would tell anyone that; nor would he put himself on the same level as Ernst Oppliger. However, whereas I recently sold a cutting for \$110, Hans-Jurgen's work can command thousands of dollars, even tens of thousands. And while my Buffalo chicken wing soup is widely praised (and justifiably so), the restaurant at Das Huesy, where Hans Jurgen is the chef, has been listed in the Michelin Guide for Switzerland. So I am somewhat envious, except with respect to how hard Hans-Jurgen works to accomplish all that he does. Fortunately he seems to enjoy it.

Besides being a papercutter and chef, Hans-Jurgen Glatz is also an avid collector of scherenschnitte and maintains the archives of the Society for the Swiss Friends of Papercutting (Schweizerischer Verein Freunde des Scherenschnitts). His collection numbers about 400 pieces and the archives add another 500 or so. Combined with his own work and those involved in exhibitions, there must be well over 1000 papercuttings housed at Das Huesy. I worried about all this art and history being in an inn, with a restaurant, that is made completely of wood. Hans-Jurgen assured me the fire department could be there in three minutes. Still, if it were me, I might have trouble sleeping. But, I guess if you work hard enough, that's not a problem.

On the day Hans-Jurgen gave me a tour of his collection, he met me downstairs after my wife and I had finished breakfast. His collection lines the halls on the second and third floors of the inn. Represented there are all the names of famous Swiss papercutters (or at least all those I have personally heard of). They included Johann Jakob Hauswirth, Louis Saugy, and Christian Schwizgebel. But I also learned about Jacques-Laurent

Agasse and Jean Huber, who were also painters from the Geneva School, Josefine Allmayer, Luise Duttenhofer, David Regez, Wilhelm Mueller, and my favorite new discovery: Englehard Schmitt of Germany. Hans-Jurgen has a "penny tree" from Englehard Schmitt in his collection. It's called a penny tree because it's the size of a penny; such trees by Englehard Schmitt can have over 1,000 branches. (No, that's not a typo.)



Das Huesy Inn and Restaurant

Hans-Jurgen has assembled his collection from many different sources, including the internet. He seems to have a story for each one. The one with the oldest known date was from 1701. Hans-Jurgen also explained to me his theory about the works attributed to one of Switzerland's famous papercutters. But, please don't ask me about it, because it might be a secret I'm not free to repeat.

As the tour was ending, my wife caught up with us, and we ended up in Hans-Jurgen's studio. Again I was envious of the large desk, nearby computer, giant magnifying lens extending on an arm over the desk ("Dear, I need one of those!"), tools, works in progress, etc. The same room houses the very organized archives of the Swiss papercutting organization. Most are unframed (thus taking up less space) and are mainly from current artists and members. The Swiss organization assembles its collection in a somewhat different manner than GAP; They charge more for participation in exhibitions and then use that money to purchase the works they want to retain.

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First Cut

A Visit to Papercutting Land ...CONTINUED

The feeling of being in the heart of papercutting country does not end when one goes out the door of Das Huesy. If you walk the 1/4 -mile to the small, automated Blankenburg train stop, you will probably see or get on a train decorated with a Johann Jakob Hauswirth scherenschnitt. If you take the three minute ride into Zweisimmen and walk to the traffic circle in the center of town, you'll see that it too is decorated with a paper cutting. This one is a metalwork copy of an original by another local artist, Ueli Hauswirth. His work also decorates a train in another part of the Bernese Oberland area. Go into the local craftwork store and you'll see scherenschnitte decorated mugs, scarves, wallets, etc.

Finally, if you are in Zweisimmen and interested in papercutting, then you must also get on a train and take the 50 minute trip to the French-speaking town of Chateau d'Oex. Fifty minutes is an average. Whichever train you take will be on time unless your expectations become too high, as mine did, and you get perturbed when the train back to Zweisimmen arrives two minutes late. Traveling to Chateau d'Oex, you will pass through picturesque villages such as Saanen and internationally-known Gstaad, both of which have well-known local papercutters. Chateau d'Oex itself is the home of a museum recognized for its extensive collection of papercuttings. In fact, the sign on the Musee du Pays d'Enhaut boasts that the museum is a Swiss Center of Papercutting (in French, of course). In fact, scherenschnitte had now become "decoupage" and it took me a minute to realize that Jean Jacques Hauswirth was an artist I already knew!

The museum, is also a mutli-floored wooden structure. Besides papercuttings, it displays old furniture, snowshoes, tools, giant metal door locks, and cowbells, among many other items. But the main attraction is the many papercuttings, including again many from Hauswirth, Saugy, and other well-known paper artists. My wife and I particularly liked the work of Anne Rosat and bought a poster of one of her works. The special exhibit in the museum at the time was called "Ursula Astner et Les Oiseaux" (The Birds), most of her pieces featuring different birds.

I became particularly interested when I read about Polly Guth, an American philanthropist who donated 17 "decoupages" to the museum from the Chateau de Rougemont when she sold it in 2014. I thought: "My grandmother was a Guth! Maybe we're related!" However, after doing a bit more research, I concluded that Polly was quite wealthy and thus very unlikely to be related to me.

-Dave Reichard



Meeting Ernst Oppliger



*Scherenschnitte
Decorating
the Restaurant*



Zweisimmen traffic circle

First Cut

Member Profile(s): MEET THE BOARD

ANDREA MARTIN: *President*

I am a papercutter living in St. Paul, MN. I received my BA in biology from Indiana University and studied art at the Maryland Institute College of Art. I have been cutting paper for about 7 years and started working as a full time artist after retiring from teaching science. I exhibit my work at art fairs and exhibitions in the Twin Cities, as well as nationally and internationally. In addition, my work was featured on the Twin Cities Public Television series Minnesota Original. My term as GAP Board president is over at the end of the year. I have been the president for the past three years.

The focus of my papercuts is the urban environment. I like to tell stories about the plants and animals that I encounters every day in walks and bike rides around the Twin Cities. The stories may be humorous or serious in nature and often focus on relationships, adaptations, and how we interact with our environment and with each other.



DAVE REICHARD: *Co-vice President of Membership*

Dave's article, "A Visit to Papercutting Land" is featured in this issue. He also wrote last month's "Planning a Papercutting Exhibit: The Ups & Downs."



MARIE-HELENE GRABMAN: *Acting Vice President*

I have been a second generation papercutter from my earliest memories. My grandmother would put us to bed at night and as she told us a fairy tale, she would cut a papercutting. I thought everyone's grandmother did this! I began exhibiting my papercuttings in 1980 at craft shows in the Charlotte, NC area where we lived. A customer told me about the Guild and I immediately joined and have been a member for almost 29 years. In the beginning, I only participated in a handful of shows each year, but I was so successful at them that I continued to cut, getting better each year. My degree is in TV/Journalism, but I also took as many art classes as I could and each class contributed to my artistic career.

When I found GAP, I tried to attend as many meetings as possible. My fondest memories were when a large group of GAP members went to Switzerland! What a great adventure! Likewise, the GAP Collections forged lifelong friendships with our members from around the world! I have been a Board member of GAP for many years, taking on the jobs of at-large member, secretary, membership VP, and President. Now I think I am listed as Vice President. I would encourage others, who have a love of papercutting, to get more involved with your Guild. You will not only learn a lot from the experiences of others but also make really good friends from around the world!



First Cut

MELANIE KEHOSS: *Co-Vice President of Membership*

During my years at Lawrence University in Appleton, WI, I became enamored of graphical line and bold color. I tried to achieve this with digital prints, but they lacked a tactile quality. Then I tried oil paintings, but was bored with the process of brushing in large areas. After graduation, I stumbled on paper-cutting, and have been exploring the medium ever since.



I experimented with sculptural approaches to cut media as a graduate student at University of Wisconsin-Madison, where I earned an MFA in 2007. Shortly after, I began making papercut light boxes, a technique I developed during my short residence in Orange County, CA. I moved to Arlington, VA with my now-husband in 2011, where I have been alternating between making narrative light boxes and flat papercut art. When I'm not in my studio, I teach painting and drawing for kids and adults.

I became a member of GAP in 2015, when I saw a call for artists for a GAP show advertised. When one year later I saw that GAP was looking for board members, I decided it would be great to be more involved, especially with member outreach. As Co-Vice President of Membership, I send welcome packets to new members, answer members' questions, and work on recruitment and retention. Lately, more of my time has been devoted to the nomination committee, finding qualified board members and officers. I look forward to helping bring a new generation into GAP so we continue to flourish in the 21st Century!

KATHY TREXEL-REED: *Vice President of The Museum*

As an artist-educator I find the possibilities of cut paper infinitely exciting. Its multi-cultural influences and ancient traditions are fascinating connections to the past, and make it an ideal, contemporary art medium to explore shapes, textures, and relationships. This once "overlooked art form" is wide open now for interpretation and is experiencing exciting new directions. Sculptural forms, artists books of cut paper and mixed mediums, pop-up and altered book forms, are all making the papercutting scene diverse. I want to try it all! While living and teaching twenty years in the Philippines and ten in Germany, my high school art curriculum included papercutting. As a PA Council on the Arts Artist in Education and through a hospital Arts for



Healing Program, I have shared papercutting activities with all ages, and I continue to teach, demonstrate, exhibit, and cut silhouette portraits. As a Director for both GAP and the non-profit Laurel Arts, I currently coordinate the GAP National Museum at the Philip Dressler Center for the Arts in Somerset, PA.

JERISE FOGEL: *Secretary*

Jack of all trades, master of ... a couple! I am a papercut and lettering artist living in New York City. I am also a classicist, teaching ancient Greek and Roman civilization and literature, language, and...



First Cut

JERISE FOGEL: *Secretary*

...Women and Gender Studies classes at Montclair State University. I'm very interested in Greek tragedy and comedy, and have performed in and directed a number of productions on and off campuses around the US. I'm also a long time member of the Jewish People's Philharmonic Chorus, as singer and (more recently) in-house artwork resource.

I've been a proud member of the Guild of American Papercutters for a number of years--basically, as soon as I found them! I am in awe of the work of some of the artists in this group, and hope to emulate their dedication to creating beauty in a challenging and satisfying medium. Much of my papercutting is done as part of ketubah artwork (Jewish wedding documents), but I have done work in many different directions. I have a personal gallery at www.jerise.com, and an Etsy shop that shows much of my most recent work at jerise.etsy.com

ELIZABETH GROSS: *Co-Vice President of Exhibits*

I am an illustrator and author living in Portland, Oregon. Picture books are my passion, but I also create papercuts for products, galleries, and private collections. I think of



papercutting as an exquisite cross between drawing and sculpture, and love that the media allows me to literally lift lines out of paper. I swear by my fiskars fingertip craft knife and am deeply inspired by books, food, and the distinctive scenery (and attitude) of the Pacific Northwest.

I am currently serving as a VP of Exhibits and have been a member of the committee organizing Collection 2018. I am so excited that Collection is going to be held in Portland next July, and cannot wait to share my love of the city with the amazing members of the GAP community.

LUCREZIA BIELER: *Co-Vice President of Exhibits*

I have been a papercutter since the late eighties. During my Scientific illustration studies in Zurich, Switzerland, I began to cut as an expression of contrasting shapes. In 1994 our family moved to the US.



My work is focused on themes discussing the balance of nature and how nature touches our souls. My preferred instruments are scissors. The production process and the material reflect the delicacy, and also the fragility, of nature. I am a member of the GAP board and am helping to find places for member exhibitions, as well as funding sources for these exhibitions and catalogs.

As always, thank you for reading. Please keep in touch. Let us know what you thought, what you'd like to see next, and what you've been up to.

Happy cutting!

