

## *Working Backwards: From Papercutting to Papermaking*

BY ROSA LEFF

There are three questions I always get asked when I'm talking about my work. How long does it take? Do you make prints? And, do you make the paper? It seems that people are always looking for whatever ways they can to understand the "non-negotiable" value of a cut. My husband's theory is that people don't trust themselves to invest in something that they like just because they like it. But hours are quantifiable and relatable. Having created paper somehow seems more concrete. And so, ever a lover of learning, I gave in.



I drove to day one of my workshop at Pyramid Atlantic Art Center in Hyattsville, Maryland and found a group of artists, my new classmates, sitting around a table discussing their preferred forms of papermaking. Uh oh! At this point I'm only fairly certain that I once made a sheet of paper in after school. And continuing my walk down the memory lane that is a grade school hallway, we were asked to pair up. Mercifully I found myself partnered with someone who had not made paper before. What a relief that Tim and I could work together with a fully equal chance of ruining each other's work!

Tim had never heard of a "pancake." Not the delicious

syrup drenched kind. The first pancake of the morning. The kind that for some reason just doesn't cook right and ends up being tossed in the trash or in the direction of a dog. Our instructor, Radha Pandey ([www.radhapandey.com/](http://www.radhapandey.com/)) was kind enough to ensure us that in papermaking there's always a pancake. A dozen or so "pancakes" later, Tim and I had finally found our rhythm. We did an excellent job of looking like we knew what we were doing while we added pulp to our mix. We consulted each other about whether the paper was getting to thin, if we thought a sheet should be tossed back, how a repair might be made, etc. At the end of the day our shoes were soaked. In fact, we were much more soggy than our classmates. Apparently there was a drainage bucket at our station that we were supposed to have been dumping out periodically. I drove home in my waterlogged flats questioning why I had ever dared to kvetch about the cost of a pretty sheet of paper and swearing to never complain again.

My lesson in the value of paper continued the next day as I hand burnished each sheet with a bone folder until it was smooth and shiny. My heart sank when I burnished a little too enthusiastically and ripped right through a sheet. I felt my arm getting sore and stiff but was determined to complete my task. And I did. I am now the proud owner of 15 sheets of irregularly sized paper! ...that I am terrified of using lest the work come out sub-par. I have always had a similar issue with papers purchased during my travels. I can only assume that knowing how much work goes into these handmade papers will make that even worse. I don't know if I will ever make paper again, but I do know that it helped me fall even more in love with my chosen medium—papercutting.

# First Cut

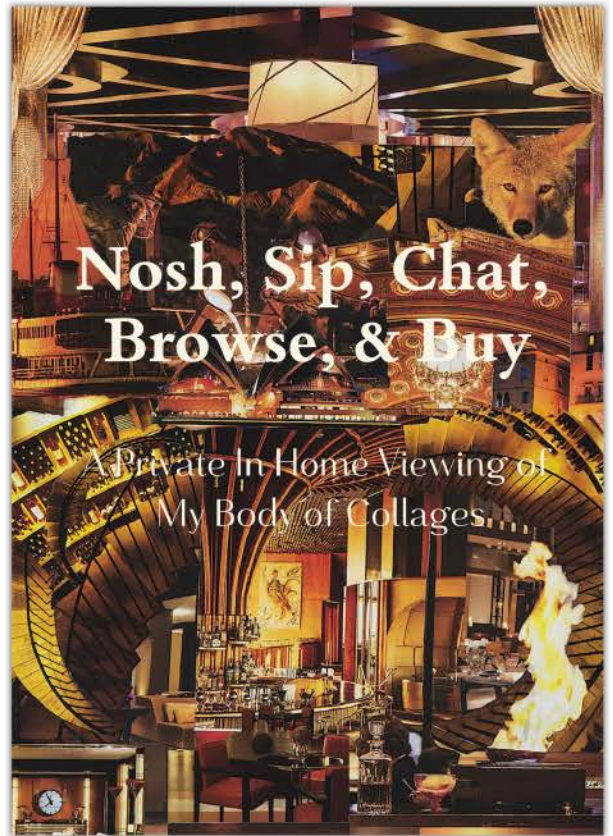
## From GAP member Jeri Fogel:

I'm opening my studio (gulp!) to the public on June 8, 2-4pm, as part of the Uptown Arts Stroll, which lasts May 28 to June 30, in Washington Heights, upper Manhattan, NYC. The event is sponsored by a coalition headed by NoMAA, Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance, <http://www.nomaanyc.org/>. If anyone is in the neighborhood of West 186th St that day, please holler and come visit! There will be some art materials out for folks to try papercutting too. Email [jerise@jerise.com](mailto:jerise@jerise.com) for more info!

**GAP member Annie Stone** will be collaborating with InLiquid along with three other collage artists to celebrate the second annual "World Collage Day" created by "Kolaj Magazine" on May 11th 12-3PM. Here is the link to learn more about it: <http://www.kolajmagazine.com/worldcollageday/2019/>

In Liquid  
Crane Arts Building, 1400 N. American Street, Philadelphia, PA, 19122

She is also hosting a private show of her work and studio on Thursday May 16th from 4-8pm. (The piece to the right won first prize in a juried show!)



## Happy 10th Anniversary GAP and Laurel Arts!

Laurel Arts has been home to the Guild of American Papercutters National Office, the GAP National Museum, and the GAP Archive since 2009. This collaboration at the Philip Dressler Center for the Arts, Somerset, Pennsylvania, includes free, year round, public admission to all exhibits, and is the site of papercutting classes and workshops.

A special exhibition of GAP Permanent Collection Papercuttings by American and International cut paper artists will be mounted in the downstairs galleries during May 14 - June 14, 2019. The opening reception is scheduled for Saturday, May 18th, 6-8 p.m. Visitors can expect to see the ceremonial, red, 20 foot long "Mouse Wedding", presented to the guild for its inaugural event by the Chinese Papercutting Association. Small Devotionals, created in monasteries and convents during the mid 18 century will be among the antique and contemporary treasures on view. An interactive scavenger hunt is being planned to invite visitors to locate details in the artwork during the reception and exhibition. Visiting hours at the Dressler Center are Monday-Thursday - 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday - 12 p.m. - 4 p.m.; Friday and Sunday closed.

There will be LIVE MUSIC Saturday, May 18...(Morgan Simmons, Joe and Rose Svonovec)

*Kathy Trexel Reed will start to bring GAP artwork down from upstairs Saturday, May 11th at 2:30 p.m. and will continue early, 9:00 a.m. Monday and also early Tuesday. 5/14/19.  
All volunteers will be welcome !*

# First Cut

**GAP member Judith Hankin** currently has work in the member's show at Maude Kerns Art Center in Eugene, Oregon through June '19 & at Congregation Neveh Shalom in Portland, Oregon through the end of August. Check out her cut on the right!



Above, Left: "Joy", 16x16", Britta Kling.

Above, Right: "Spring Winds- Return of the Purple Martin", 14x10", Mary E. "Bette" Wells

## Membership Fees

UPDATE BY DAVE REICHARD

At its recent meeting in April, the GAP Board of Directors voted to lower the initial cost of membership by eliminating the additional one-time \$6 fee both new U.S. and international members have paid to join. This change partially reflects the fact that the packet mailed to new members is no longer as bulky as it once was. For similar reasons, the new and renewal membership fee for international members has been lowered from \$45 to \$38. The U.S. fee will currently remain at \$35.

The Board hopes these changes will encourage new members to join the Guild and thus offset any decrease in revenue due to the lower fees.

So now is the time to encourage friends to join GAP! They may do so on the GAP website homepage at [www.papercutters.org](http://www.papercutters.org).



## Shout Out!

Northern Virginia band Local 12 commissioned GAP member Dave Jenkins to do a papercutting of a toddler with an electric guitar for their CD album, "Baby Steps," which was recently released. For more information on the album and the band, see [localtwelve.com](http://localtwelve.com).



Unidentified cut from the permanent collection.