

Papermaking Basics

Note that I'm not trying to be instructional here – this page is simply meant to help you understand the process!

1. The selected fiber is collected, processed and prepared in a vat. This process can take anywhere from one to many, many hours, depending on the fiber.

2. Using a mould and deckle, a sheet of paper is scooped out of the vat (Figure 1).



Fig.1

3. After a bit of gentle shaking, the pulp settles down evenly on the mould (Figure 2).



Fig. 2

4. After the deckle is carefully removed, excess water is drained off the mould before the sheet is couched (Figure 3).

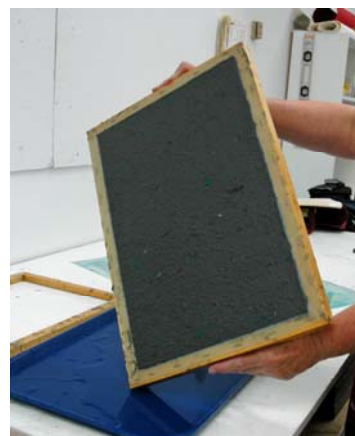


Fig. 3

5. The sheet is then couched onto a felt (Figure 4).



Fig. 4

6. The mould is removed (Figure 5). Multiple layers of felts plus wet sheets are built up into what is called a post.

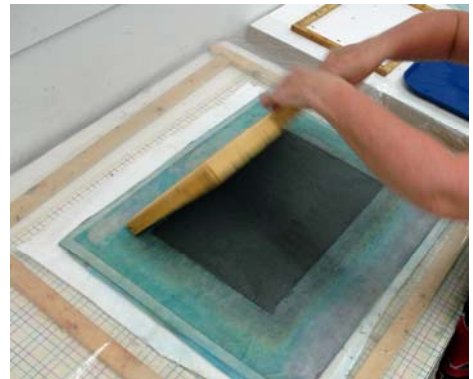


Fig. 5

7. The entire post goes into a pressing system that removes much of the water and helps to create flat, thin sheets. The Ottawa School of Art drying system (Figure 6), built by The Paperwright, uses a 20 tonne press. (The posts of wet paper are sandwiched between hard boards to ensure an even application of pressure.)



Fig. 6

8. Finally, the paper goes into a drying system. The paper is dried under pressure while subjected to an even drying agent (in this case a fan). The photo shows the Ottawa School of Art drying system, built by The Paperwright (Figure 7).



Fig. 7

9. Ta da! After 48 hours or so, you've got a dry, flat (and in this case, multi-textured) sheet of handmade paper (Figure 8).



Fig. 8