

Workshop

Hand papermaking workshop

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The first paper was manufactured over 2000 years ago from hemp (*Cannabis spp.*) during the reign of Emperor Wu in China (RCW Paper Museum, 2007). Today, paper is manufactured on a large industrial scale from just a few plants. However, hand papermakers can still be found manufacturing specialty papers from hemp, mulberry, bamboo, abaca and many others. These smaller markets can still have significant environmental effects and do represent a significant source of traditional ecological knowledge among the people who manufacture them.

The goal this workshop is to expose participants to the basics of hand papermaking, a tradition that continues in many places around the world. During this hands-on, or more appropriately hands-in workshop, participants will make paper from at least two native sources including bast and leaf fibers. In addition to making small take home sheets of paper, we'll discuss the basic botany inherent in papermaking. This includes the manufacture of cellulose by the plant, structure and function of the compound, chemistry of paper formation (how the bond occurs and the function of various additives), why different fibers produce different kinds of paper and the basics of paper sheet formation. Lastly, we will view parts of a short film on traditional sheet formation around the world (Koretsky, 2002) as a means of exploring cultural connections to handmade papermaking.

Selected references

1. Koretsky, E., Koretsky, S., 2002. Traditional Paper Sheet Formation Around the World. Self-published DVD available through Carriage House Paper, New York, NY.
2. Robert C. Williams Paper Museum:
(<http://www.ipst.gatech.edu/amp/education/index.htm>, April, 2007)

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