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Zarina Hashmi Papers, Clippings and Press, 1970-1999

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standing sculpture. The three-dimensional, shaped modules featured in each series are made of cut and glued-together patterns of paper that are then painted or otherwise marked by the artist to differentiate the separate examples in the editions. Multiples such as these constitute another major category of handmade-paper works.

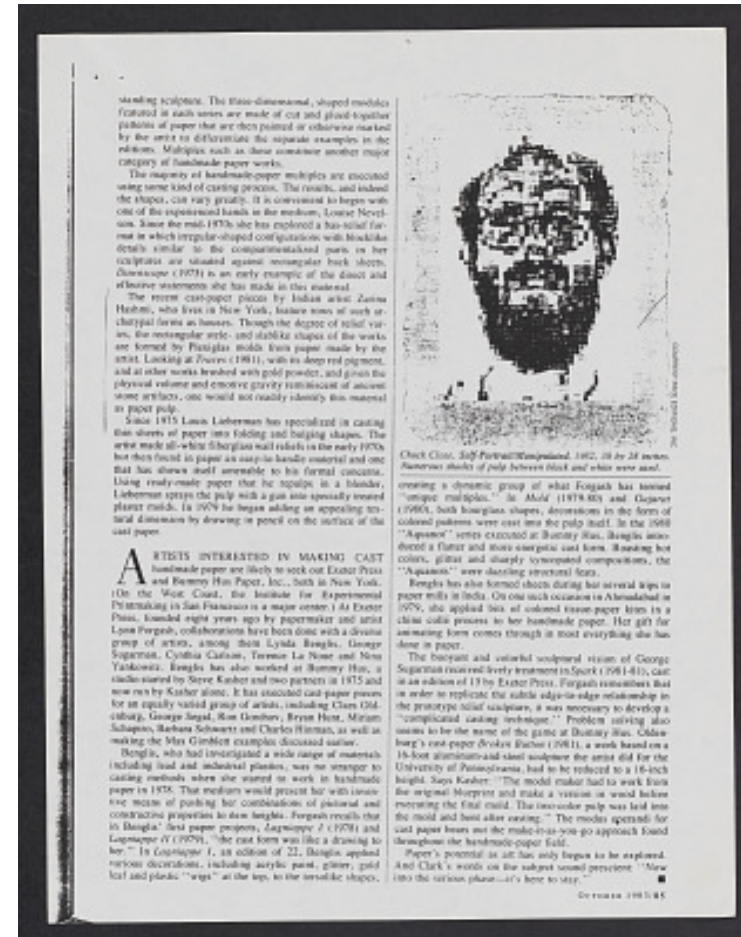
The majority of handmade-paper multiples are executed using some kind of casting process. The results, and indeed the shapes, can vary greatly. It is convenient to begin with one of the experienced hands in the medium, Louise Nevelson. Since the mid-1970s she has explored a bas-relief format in which irregular-shaped configurations with blocklike details similar to the compartmentalized parts in her sculptures are situated against rectangular back sheets. *Dawnscape* (1975) is an early example of the direct and effective statements she has made in this material.

The recent cast-paper pieces by Indian artist Zarina Hashmi, who lives in New York, feature rows of such archetypal forms as houses. Though the degree of relief varies, the rectangular stele- and slablike shapes of the works are formed by Plexiglas molds from paper made by the artist. Looking at *Traces* (1981), with its deep red pigment, and at other works brushed with gold powder, and given the physical volume and emotive gravity reminiscent of ancient stone artifacts, one would not readily identify this material as paper pulp.

Since 1975 Louis Lieberman has specialized in casting thin sheets of paper into folding and bulging shapes. The artist made all-white fiberglass wall reliefs in the early 1970s but then found in paper an easy-to-handle material and one that has shown itself amenable to his formal concerns. Using ready-made paper that he repulps in a blender, Lieberman sprays the pulp with a gun into specially treated plaster molds. In 1979 he began adding an appealing textural dimension by drawing in pencil on the surface of the cast paper.

ARTISTS INTERESTED IN MAKING CAST handmade paper are likely to seek out Exeter Press and Bummy Hus Paper, Inc., both in New York. (On the West Coast, the Institute for Experimental Printmaking in San Francisco is a major center.) At Exeter Press, founded eight years ago by papermaker and artist Lynn Forgash, collaborations have been done with a diverse group of artists, among them Lynda Benglis, George Sugarman, Cynthia Carlson, Terence La Noue and Nina Yankowitz. Benglis has also worked at Bummy Hus, a studio started by Steve Kasher and two partners in 1975 and now run by Kasher alone. It has executed cast-paper pieces for an equally varied group of artists, including Claes Oldenburg, George Segal, Ron Gorchov, Bryan Hunt, Miriam Schapiro, Barbara Schwartz and Charles Hinman, as well as making the Max Gimblett examples discussed earlier.

Benglis, who had investigated a wide range of materials including lead and industrial plastics, was no stranger to casting methods when she started to work in handmade paper in 1978. That medium would present her with inventive means of pushing her combinations of pictorial and constructive properties to new heights. Forgash recalls that in Benglis' first paper projects, *Lagniappe I* (1978) and *Lagniappe II* (1979), "the cast form was like a drawing to her." In *Lagniappe I*, an edition of 22, Benglis applied various decorations, including acrylic paint, glitter, gold leaf and plastic "wigs" at the top, to the torsolike shapes,



[[image of pixilated man]]

Chuck Close, Self-Portrait/Manipulated, 1982, 38 by 28 inches.
Numerous shades of pulp between black and white were used.

creating a dynamic group of what Forgash has termed "unique multiples." In *Mold* (1979-80) and *Gujarat* (1980), both hourglass shapes, decorations in the form of colored patterns were cast into the pulp itself. In the 1980 "Aquanot" series executed at Bummy Hus, Benglis introduced a flatter and more energetic cast form. Boasting hot colors, glitter and sharply syncopated compositions, the "Aquanots" were dazzling structural feats.

Benglis has also formed sheets during her several trips to paper mills in India. On one such occasion in Ahmadabad in 1979, she applied bits of colored tissue-paper kites in a chine collé process to her handmade paper. Her gift for animating form comes through in most everything she has done in paper.

The buoyant and colorful sculptural vision of George Sugarman received lively treatment in *Spark* (1981-81), cast in an edition of 15 by Exeter Press. Forgash remembers that in order to replicate the subtle edge-to-edge relationship in the prototype relief sculpture, it was necessary to develop a "complicated casting technique." Problem solving also seems to be the name of the game at Bummy Hus. Oldenburg's cast-paper *Broken Button* (1981), a work based on a 16-foot aluminum-and-steel sculpture the artist did for the University of Pennsylvania, had to be reduced to a 16-inch height. Says Kasher: "The model maker had to work from the original blueprint and make a version in wood before executing the final mold. The two-color pulp was laid into the mold and bent after casting." The *modus operandi* for cast paper bears out the make-it-as-you-go approach found throughout the handmade-paper field.

Paper's potential as art has only begun to be explored. And Clark's words on the subject sound prescient: "Now into the serious phase - it's here to stay."

OCTOBER 1983/85

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