

PAPER : PAM DELUCO



MEET Pam DeLuco and **WATCH** a video that features the artist at work. **MAKE** artwork inspired by the artist and **REFLECT** on your finished artwork as you consider what you might want to make next.

MEET

MEET Pam DeLuco, owner of the Shotwell Paper Mill.



Top and middle: Pam DeLuco, paper dolls. Bottom: Paper for the Paper Doll book is placed in a standing press to cure, courtesy of Pam DeLuco and Craft in America.

“Asking somebody to tell a story through a part of their clothing, it’s like a really gentle entry into allowing somebody to talk about whatever they want to talk about.”

—Pam DeLuco

PAM DELUCO makes large and small quantities of artisan paper at her paper mill in San Francisco. Most common paper is made from wood pulp. At her paper mill DeLuco makes sheets of paper from a variety of substances, including cotton fabric, grasses, coffee filters and other natural and/or recycled ingredients. These sources determine the color and appearance of the paper. For example, the use of denim blue jeans results in paper in beautiful shades of indigo.

You can see the artist’s papers (and see the labels of what they are made from) at the Shotwell website at shotwellpapermill.com under the heading Shop. The paper is sold in sheets or made into cards, small books, and other specialty items. The books and cards are printed with a vintage letterpress machine that requires typesetting. Each metal letter (or type) needed is set in a galley, a metal frame which is tightened to hold all of the letters in place. This forms a temporary printing plate. After using the set type in the letterpress to print the pages or cards, the type is cleaned and re-used for the next job. You can see the Shotwell Paper Mill website for images of the typesetting process.

DeLuco teaches papermaking through workshops, special projects, and even for couples who want to make their own handmade wedding invitations. In the video, you will see her leading a special project with women who have served in the military. They used their own uniforms to make paper. Inspired by thinking about their uniforms, the women told stories about their military experiences which were made into a book. A paper doll theme was used to illustrate their stories.

WATCH



Watch DeLuco making the paper for the paper doll book. Listen to the women who served in the United States military and participated in the book project.

<https://youtu.be/NWVqult7YfA>

After viewing the segment, consider the following:

- The women's stories were personal and meaningful. Was there one story that stood out to you?
- DeLuco says, "Everybody knows what a paper doll is." Did you know what a paper doll was before seeing the example in this video? Can you tell how to dress the figure with the clothes? (Look at the little foldable "tabs" on each item of clothing.) Just for fun, think about clothes that you might make for a paper doll of yourself?
- Look at the [Shotwell Paper Mill website](#) and examine the colorful papers. Compare them to a typical piece of paper that you use for writing notes, lists, etc. What makes her paper special? If you had some of the Shotwell handmade paper, what would you use it for?

MAKE

You can try making paper at home with some simple materials. Use paper you already have and recycle it to make it into new paper. These instructions will make a small round sheet of paper.

Gather the following:

- a small (around 6-inches in diameter) screw-tightened embroidery hoop,
- a square of mesh cloth several inches larger than the hoop (8 by 8-inches; a piece of an old sheer curtain works well),
- a blender (handheld or stationary)
- mixing bowl
- dishpan
- a cotton rag such as an old kitchen towel,
- a thicker towel folded to make an absorbent surface
- some paper (such as used looseleaf notebook paper) to recycle.

THE PROCESS

1. Tear 5 pieces of the notebook paper into strips, and then into shredded small pieces. Place the paper in the mixing bowl and cover it with hot water. Let it soak to soften for one or two hours.
2. Carefully pour off the water, saving the soaked paper (called pulp). Add a cup of water to the blender, a small handful of the pulp, and another cup of water. Blend. Pour the mixture into the dishpan. Repeat until there is 3-4-inches depth of "slurry"—the mixed paper and water. The slurry should be cloudy with paper fibers, but not thick.





3. Stretch the sheer fabric in the embroidery hoop. Trim the fabric to about 1/2 inch from the hoop edges. Gently swish the water around in the dishpan to distribute the paper fibers, then dip the hoop like a dish under the water and lift up, capturing a “sheet” of fibers. Let the water drain over the pan. The fibers form a mat on the surface of the fabric.
4. Place the hoop on the folded absorbent towel, paper side up, and press gently on the new paper surface with the cotton towel, crumpling the towel to make a kind of sponge. Carefully separate the hoop rings, then turn the sheer fabric holding the new paper upside down on a dry part of the towel and press gently again to remove extra water. Carefully peel away the sheer fabric from the new paper. Then you should be able to gently peel the paper from the towel and place it on another surface to dry.
5. Re-hoop the fabric and make some more paper. To clean up, make sure to separate the pulp from the water and dispose of the pulp in paper recycling instead of pouring it down a drain (or save it in the fridge for more papermaking!)

REFLECT

LOOK at your finished product.

THINK about the process.

- Paper making is messy! Did you enjoy the process? If you didn't enjoy it, would you make more paper anyway because the “mess” is worth it?
- Would you like to make more paper? You could try something different next time: Add tiny dried leaves to the blender, or bits of colored tissue paper to the slurry. (If you want to make more paper, look up “mold and deckle” online to see how to make a sturdier screen that does not need re-hooping for each sheet.)
- Thinking about the paper doll book project that Pam DeLuco organized, can you imagine a papermaking project that you would lead? What would you do? What would the theme be?
- If you are interested in characters, fashion, or costumes, you can try making your own paper doll figures. Use a magazine cutout or draw a character. Use a light table or tracing paper to outline the figure, then design clothes over the traced figure to make sure they will fit. Add small tabs so the costume can be temporarily attached to the character. Look online to find the history and plentiful contemporary versions of paper dolls.