

## A Note about my Process :

I began by welding an armature of fine steel. I painted the armature to prevent rust from forming during the long wet stage. Over the armature I sewed cheesecloth to form a substrate for the paper pulp to cling to. In Arcidae's purse, I stitched hundreds of pieces of bamboo between two layers of cheesecloth. I then beat cotton paper pulp with water in my Hollander beater for several hours. I applied the pulp to the sculpture with a pneumatic sprayer, which has a "hopper" to contain the pulp. It is a device designed for the application of plaster to ceilings. I sprayed thin layers, and allowed each to drain for at least two hours before applying the next; otherwise the pulp would have sloughed off from the weight of the pulp, which is as runny as thin applesauce. Between four and twenty layers were needed. I allowed the sculpture to dry slowly, so that the shrinkage of the paper was very even. Wet paper pulp is quite weak, but as paper dries, strong molecular bonds form between the paper fibers, making the paper strong enough to bend a poorly designed or constructed steel armature. Highly beaten paper pulp can have very high shrinkage, creating powerful tension as it dries. I sheet-formed cotton paper and applied the wet sheets in swirl patterns to the interior of the piece with Carboxy Methyl Cellulose, an archival organic adhesive. To color the finished piece, I brushed pure dry pigments directly onto the dry paper. The entire process took over four months.

I developed this process while in graduate school at the University of Iowa. My process is described in more detail in the Winter 1998 issue of Hand Papermaking, and in Helen Heibert's book The Papermaker's Companion (©2000).

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Arcidae's Purse