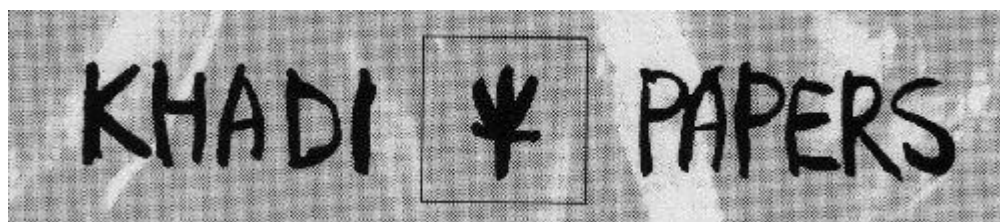


Khadi Papers

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KHADI

The word khadi has a strong resonance in India. Khadi is the handspun cotton yarn which has been produced in India's villages for thousands of years. But the meaning of khadi goes beyond that. It is associated in India with Gandhi and the khadi movement of the 1930's, which was about decentralising production, about taking work back to the villages, about making things by hand. This is the context of contemporary Indian handmade paper.

KHADI PAPERS

KHADI PAPERS have been importing handmade papers from India since 1980. We came to paper from an art school background and our idea was to make interesting papers accessible and affordable to art students as well as to professional artists.

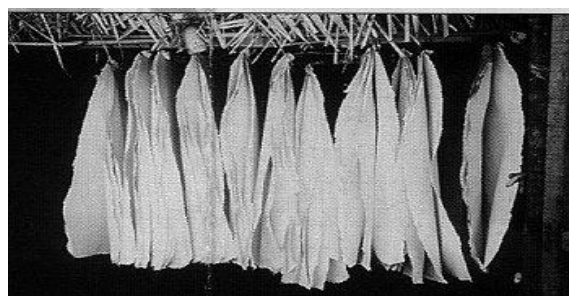
When we first showed Indian papers at the London art schools and the warehouse studios of London's East End, no one had seen anything like them. We had talked to painters and printmakers, graphic artists and designers and soon we were taking back to India ideas for new kinds of paper.

Since the beginning we have always worked directly with the papermakers, first in India, then in Nepal, Bhutan and Thailand, and it has always been a collaborative process. In 1995 we took this collaboration a step further and formed a partnership with Vasudevan, without doubt the most experie

COTTON RAG PAPERS

Khadi cotton rag papers are made for us at our new paper mill in the rural area of Karnataka, South India. Here between 30 and 40 people from surrounding villages work alongside Vasudevan and two members of his family, Subramanaia and Srikumar, to make white and coloured handmade cotton rag papers.

Papermaking involves two processes, first beating raw material to make the pulp, and then forming the pulp on a mould to make a sheet. Both these processes use water and at the khadi mill we recycle this water into our compound where we have planted teak, mango, papaya and banana trees.



Recycling is in fact the essence of papermaking: a material transformed through the medium of water. the rag papers are made out of white woven cotton cuttings which are broken down in the Hollander beater, the fibres separated and opened out to form a pulp. Woven cotton has greater fibre length then cotton liners and this fibre length make the

papers exceptionally strong.

The sheet is formed in a vat of water by pouring pulp onto the surface of the paper mould. Doing this in water allows the pulp to spread evenly over the surface of the mould. The mould itself is a frame made of teak wood, covered with a fine wire mesh. On top of the mould is a second frame, the deckle, which holds the pulp in place and defines the edge of the sheet, the deckle edge.

The surface texture of the paper is the impression of the wooden felts which interleave the wet sheets for the first pressing. This is the rough surface. Medium surfaced papers have the textured flattened by a second pressing and smooth papers have a further pressing, this time, between sheets of galvanised steel.

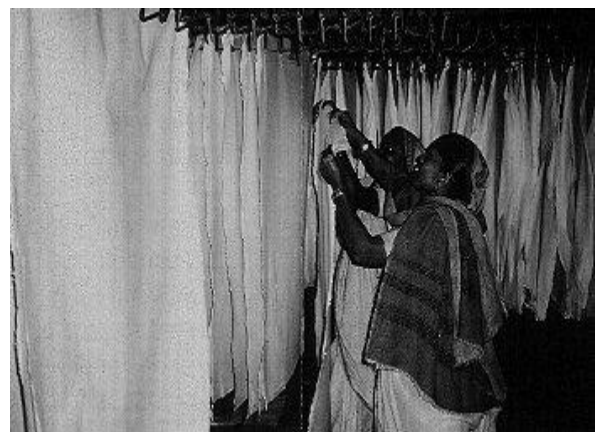
Because cotton is absorbent the papers need to be sized to take ink or watercolour. Size is added internally during the beating, and again on the surface after the sheet has been made, by dipping the sheets in a solution of gelatine. The gelatine size gives the papers a hard, resistant surface and they can stand up to a lot of rough treatment. For oil painting the paper can be sized again with gesso.

Coloured khadi rag papers are made from pulp dyed in the beater. We have chosen red and yellow earth colours, a range of blues and greens, stone and black.

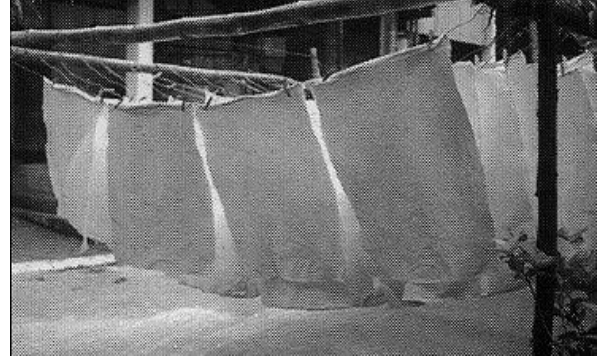
Sheet sizes from KHADI PAPERS INDIA go from A5, A4, A3, and A2 through imperial and double elephant, two traditional handmade paper sizes, to Indian atlas, at a metre by nearly a metre and a half, probably the biggest handmade paper to be found anywhere in the world.

RAG AND FIBRE PAPERS

These are made exclusively for KHADI PAPERS at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram paper mill in Pondicherry, south of Madras. This is tropical South India, the landscape a patchwork of flooded rice fields and groves of coconut palms. The paper mill has been built in a coconut plantation on the edge of the town of Pondicherry. Over the workshops and drying sheds the fronds of the coconut palms rattle in the wind which blows almost constantly from the Bay of Bengal.



The papers made here from cotton rag with natural fibres are the original and finest papers of this kind made in India. In these papers the colour and texture come from the different raw materials added to the pulp. Gunny paper is made from recycled jute sacking, bagasse paper from sugar cane fibre, banana paper from the leaf fibre of banana trees. Other paper are made with rice straw and rice husk, with black specks of tea dust - recycled from the workers' morning and afternoon tea - and green strands of algae collected from ancient village reservoirs.



HEMP PAPERS

This is a traditional Islamic paper made by the Muslim kagzi community in North India. Paper of this kind was made by the kagzi during the Moghul period and earlier. The paper is made from hemp fibre and formed on a chapri, a screen of grass stems, which gives this paper its characteristic laid pattern. The paper is sized on the surface with wheat starch.

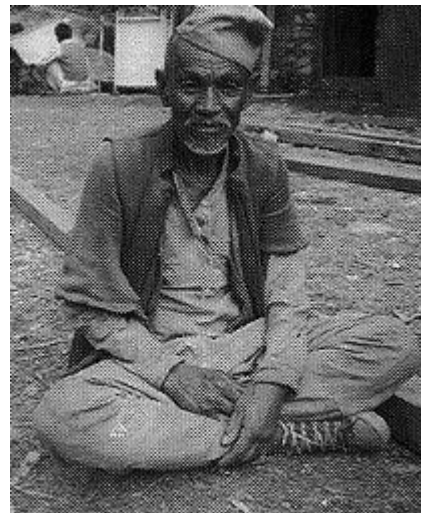
LOKTA PAPER

Paper drying on wooden frames, the frames angled towards the sun, on a terraced hillside at three thousand metres. High up, a range of white peaks with snow smoke blowing off them. Below, green terraces of barley and rice dropping away to a thin silver river ... a paper factory never had a better view than this.



Paper has been made in the foothills of the Himalayas for more than a thousand years. It is made from the bark of a woody shrub, called lokta in Nepal and deyshin in Bhutan, which grows at high altitudes in the Himalayan forests.

From Nepal we have three traditional lokta papers, made by pouring pulp onto the mould, a heavy wooden frame covered with cloth, which floats in a pool of water. The mould is then propped upright and the sheet dries in the sun. This is a very primitive method of papermaking and these papers have a special quality.



Also from Nepal we have a range of nagashizuki papers which we have developed in Katmandu with Milan Dev and Manesh Bhattarai. Nagashizuki is a Japanese method of papermaking in which the pulp is formed in fine layers onto a silk backed su mould. We have a number of these papers with inclusions of bark, leaves and bamboo.

The lokta for these papers is grown in the hill forests from seedlings. The planting and harvesting of lokta creates work for the people who live in the hills and helps preserve the forests by creating a renewable resource within them. This project is run by Mahesh and one of the hill farmers, Shiva Ram.



From Bhutan, which borders Tibet and the north eastern frontier provinces of India, we have two traditional papers, resho and tsasho. These are made from the same sort of bark fibre as the Nepalese but they have a somewhat wilder character, Resho is made on a cloth covered mould. like the Nepalese mountain papers. Tsasho is made on a mould of split bamboo and has a very distinctive laid pattern which is in effect the watermark of the bamboo mould.

MULBERRY PAPERS

And finally, from the Chiang Mai district of Northern Thailand, three very fine, almost weightless handmade papers made from the bark fibre of the paper mulberry, called the ton saa. These papers are traditionally layered and waxed to make Thai paper umbrellas but they have many applications in printmaking and paper conservation.

