

Cave Paper

lessness. Slowness is where we are renewed, where we sense ourselves in the world, where we can explore the boundaries of our existence. There is a restfulness of working till things are fully resolved. Sometimes there is an intensity of that moment of making, of being alive. The mind can fall into an internal void where the sensibilities are sharpened to respond to every detail of the outer world with heightened perception, awareness, and insight. Fleeting glimpses of things observed with intense clarity punctuate the linear passage of time. Something as simple as water dripping from the paper mould, can help one to listen and accept the flow of life. Effortless things, like watching water, can teach us to simply let go of trying to accomplish, be in the moment, and feel the way forward.

On the front cover:

"Alight" by Bridget O'Malley
Embossed and walnut dyed handmade paper.

"Restricting Elements: Wood to Earth to Water to Fire to
Metal to Wood"
by Amanda Degener
Pigment, mica, and natural dyes on handmade paper.

To purchase works,
please contact the Library Director at
651.275.4338 ext. 118

THE GALLERY

The purpose of the Stillwater Public Library Gallery is to provide education through exhibits and displays; to increase community involvement in the library; and to provide an enjoyable environment for the library's users.

For more information about the gallery, contact
Lynne Bertalmio, Director,
651.275.4338 ext. 118.



Works by Bridget O'Malley and Amanda Degener



Handmade Paper & the Artful Book

STILLWATER PUBLIC LIBRARY GALLERY
November/December 2012

224 N. Third Street
Stillwater, Minnesota 55082
651.275.4338
www.stillwaterlibrary.org

CAVE PAPER: BRIDGET O'MALLEY & AMANDA DEGENER

Bridget O'Malley and Amanda Degener are artists; their life's work is in hand papermaking. They are the recipients of the Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library 2012 Minnesota Book Artist Award sponsored by Lerner Publishing Group.

As co-proprietors of Cave Paper, the making and selling of handmade paper is what they have done together for the last seventeen years. These high quality papers are used in books that live in public collections like: The Library of Congress, St. John's University, and the Walker Art Center. They have collaborated with many talented and famous artists from coast to coast like: Peter Koch, Alison Knowles, Sue Leopard, and Claire Van Vliet. Cave Paper is known for providing custom papers for deluxe limited editions. They team with private presses locally and worldwide including Brighton, Cedar Fence, Charnal House, Indulgence, Inka!, Nawakum, Ninja, Super Session, and Traffic Street Press. A range of books, broadsides, collages, and both letterpress and relief prints, are on display.

Both have produced and consistently exhibited their artwork for over thirty years. Their work draws attention to nature and it evokes feelings towards the environment that we also reserve for other humans: love, empathy, compassion, and care. The artists are in collaboration with nature; the plants and colors they process are a mixture of fiber, sun, soil, and rain. While they process the materials all their senses are present, there is a conversation with the materials. During this dialogue they cook, beat, color, mould, press, and dry what started as a plant. As their ideas are realized, their spirit and heart get infused into the work. There is a spiritual connection with being present in the natural world. The product is often a concrete example of the inter-relationship between environment in both the material and spiritual world.

In 1984, after Amanda Degener received an MFA from Yale School of Art, she moved her paper studio to the not-yet-opened Minnesota Center for Book Arts (MCBA). Degener has worn several hats at MCBA: a Founder, an Educator, their first Artist-in-Residence, their first Artistic Director. She is a member of the Artist co-op that she designed and helped to start. Degener educates through writing, publishing and traveling to teach and exhibit her work in places such as Japan, Italy, Sweden, Canada, Australia, Korea, and

Taiwan/China. Degener's community service work includes co-organizing national paper conferences (four of them) and teaching Tai Chi.

Bridget O'Malley is an Adjunct Professor in the Print Paper Book Department at Minneapolis College of Art and Design. O'Malley also teaches papermaking, bookmaking, and printmaking workshops across the country including; Southwest Craft Center, Penland, and MCBA. In 1988, after receiving her MA/MFA in Printmaking from the University of Iowa, she was awarded a 5-year papermaking apprenticeship at the University of Iowa Center for the Book where she worked under the direction of Timothy Barrett (recent MacArthur fellow). In 1994, O'Malley moved back to Minneapolis to join Degener who was in the process of setting up a 3000 square foot paper studio in the basement of the Campbell Logan Bindery. This downtown Minneapolis location is where Cave Paper continues to operate.

O'Malley and Degener first met and worked together over twenty-five years ago in the early days of MCBA. Perhaps meeting was a fortuitous choice but some life choices arise from a subconscious inner world. Rather than haphazard accidents, they seem more like interventions of grace. These interventions coincide without apparent meaning but are later found to be intensely significant.

Cave Paper often gets complimented for the work they have developed, but it seems more about noticing than conceiving. They learn how to repeat what is often an unexpected discovery. Depending how the fiber is prepared it is capable of looking like fragile translucent skin, expensive leather, or even metal. These strong, often dark, flax papers are used in books that are often bought by libraries and are in countless private collections.

The labor-intensive process helps O'Malley and Degener, and others who view their work, to remember that time is not as the 21st century seems to demand. The chaotic world may be speeding by, ever faster and ever changing, but our needs have not changed. Reflection, nearness, care and love are found in slowness. Slowness is where we are renewed, where we sense ourselves in the world and find the boundaries of our own existence. This "doing" seems to include undoing. When engaged with making, the incessant banter of the brain is gone or no longer dominates. The busy hand quiets the brain; it brings the mind to a calmer state. This slowness has been one threshold to freedom and time-