



Handmade Paper

a metaphor for sustainability

By Gibby Waitzkin

MEET GIBBY:

Her artwork is a reflection of her training and life experiences during extensive work in photography and printmaking. Her company, Gibson Creative in Washington, D.C., applies her training in graphic design and communication, and focuses on sustainability and global warming. She found this focus in the lower-east side of New York City during the 1970s, a time and place which had a deep and profound impact on her life. She was both a political and environmental activist seeking social change. While in NY, she endeavored to create a trust whereby public land, at the El Sol Brillante Garden on 11th Street, would remain a permanent community garden site using alternative energy such as windmills, solar panels, and raised garden beds with solar pods.

These experiences, and nature itself, are sources for her creative expression through, particularly, the art of hand papermaking...

Hand papermaking involves growing and harvesting the plant fibers and flowers, shredding, cooking, beating and pouring the pulp, photography and digital printing, and composition. The thoughtful blend of these elements articulate the poetic experience of a life or a moment, and for Gibby Waitzkin, it has become also a journey of personal exploration. The artist-made paper is arranged with photographs, scanned imagery and dried and encaustic-preserved flowers from her gardens.

"These combinations evoke memories of family, friends and places.



My Amy's Quilt

In addition to their function and aesthetic, flowers, plants and trees possess a rich and textured language of symbolic meanings that I hope to convey through my work". Examples? Daisies evoke innocence; grasses reflect the fleeting quality of life; thistle – hard work; witch hazel - peace; red rose - love or war; black-eyed susans - justice. "As I seek to communicate my emotional relationship to the subject of a piece, my work has become like my own personal diary and like portraits of others. While it possesses a strong element of personal feeling,



Meditation, 27" x 29", 2006 - Archival Digital Photograph printed on Hemp/Iris/Cattail/Bamboo/Abaca/Grass - Flowers: Ferns, Grasses

Gibby Waitzkin is proud to announce the opening of her new studio and gallery,

Grand Opening
November 1st 2008

Sarvisberry Studio & Gallery
(by appointment only)

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Beating Woods Grass

I believe that the lost language of flowers can speak to universal themes that span generations of human experience”.

“The process of my papermaking is a metaphor for sustainability and recycling. Harvesting fiber from plants, linen, grass clippings, and even the Catawba Tree pods that I found on my neighbor’s sidewalk; cooking the fiber in an alkaline mixture to create an acid-free and chlorine-free pulp; beating the pulp, often by hand for hours and hours, with a pair of heavy mallets – these are only a few of the elements that go into preparing my paper. The source of my creative expression is clearly found in nature, and primarily through my love of gardening. All of the plants that I grow will turn into either fiber or art in the form of photography or as the pressed flowers and plants that will ultimately be embedded in the fiber.”

“After preserving the acid-free paper with beeswax, my work is either framed on linen or in a handcrafted frame made from salvaged hemlock trees that had been destroyed by blight several years ago. I also use recycled windows (which would otherwise take up space in a landfill somewhere), not simply as a frame for my artwork, but as an integral part of a given piece.”

“New technologies such as digital photography, printing, and more sophisticated papermaking equipment can be utilized, in harmony with the ancient art of papermaking. The result is something beautiful and meaningful...something that can speak to others. There is a charm to using objects which would otherwise be discarded in order to create some functional or aesthetic contribution to our society. It compels the viewer to rethink their relationship to apparently worthless items...to see them as having potentially enduring value.”

“As my work continues to evolve, the need for more space and a more functional studio has also become an inescapable necessity. My son, Graeme, a product designer and engineer, enabled me to emphasize the importance of sustainability in construction of my new “Green” studio. Graeme’s design for the studio includes a gallery, office, papermaking area, and the room with a large cooking porch for the beating and cooking the fibers. The gallery will include photography printed on my handmade paper, botanicals, boxes, note cards, envelopes, and bookmarks, and will open in October, 2008, by appointment only. I will also host workshops at my studio for people interested in learning how to make paper from plants.”

Maple



Long Peony

Pulmonaria

The Green Building

Natural Ventilation: taking advantage of cross-room ventilation

Daylighting: Garage doors to distribute daylight within a space

Passive Solar: heat gain through poured concrete walls built into a south-facing hill to retain temperature and maximize solar exposure

Gray Water Recovery: collecting rainwater from the roof and storing it for use in the papermaking studio

Salvaged Materials: Local artisan Curtis Crowe crafted a staircase made from recycled metal discarded from an old railroad, metal found at the bottom of a pond, as well as wood treads made from a hundred-year-old tobacco barn; salvaged stainless steel restaurant sinks.

Local Building Products: reusing the timber cut down to clear the site for the studio, as well as using the dead hemlock for the columns, the harvested pine, cherry, and maple – while the space cleared of the dead trees was replanted with local bamboo; corrugated metal produced in Mocksville, NC – local products cut down on the carbon footprint by decreasing shipping.

Eco-Friendly Products: OSB boards, paperless sheetrock, eco-friendly paint, energy-efficient windows, concrete board, soy and paper insulation, Parallam Beam made of laminated wood-trash.