



# LEGACIES IN PAPER:

Nancy Cohen, Sara Garden Armstrong, & Helen Hiebert

September 4, 2025 - January 30, 2026





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This catalogue is published in conjunction with the exhibition *Legacies in Paper: Nancy Cohen, Sara Garden Armstrong, & Helen Hiebert* on view at the Robert C. Williams Museum of Papermaking, September 4, 2025 - January 30, 2026.

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Curator: Jerushia Graham

500 Tenth Street NW, Atlanta, GA 30332

# DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

It is with great enthusiasm that we welcome you to *Legacies in Paper: Nancy Cohen, Sara Garden Armstrong, and Helen Hiebert*, an exhibition that honors the enduring artistry and innovation of papermaking—from its ancient origins to its vibrant presence in contemporary art.

At the heart of this exhibition lies a profound respect for the material of paper itself: a medium that has carried human thought, preserved culture, and inspired creativity for over two millennia. Few individuals have done more to document and preserve the history of this craft than Dard Hunter. A visionary historian, printer, and papermaker, Hunter's meticulous research and revival of traditional techniques laid the foundation for the modern hand papermaking movement. His legacy continues to inform and inspire artists and scholars alike, reminding us that the story of paper is as much about human ingenuity as it is about fiber and form.

In *Legacies in Paper*, we are proud to feature the work of three contemporary artists—Helen Hiebert, Nancy Cohen, and Sara Garden Armstrong—whose practices embody the spirit of innovation while reflecting on longstanding traditions. Each artist brings a unique voice to the medium: Hiebert's luminous constructions explore the interplay of light and structure; Cohen's sculptural works reflect ecological fragility and resilience; and Armstrong's immersive environments blur the boundaries between the organic and the engineered. Together, their works speak to the transformative potential of paper—not only as a surface for expression but as a sculptural, spatial, and conceptual force. Through their hands, paper becomes a language of memory, a vessel of emotion, and a bridge between past and present.

This exhibit would not have been possible without the incredible efforts of the staff at the Robert C. Williams Museum of Papermaking: Jerushia Graham, Museum Manager; Anna Doll, Education Curator; Daijah Suggs, Graphics Specialist; Belinda Person, graduate student intern; and numerous student workers. Special thanks to the Renewable Bioproducts Institute: Dr. Carson Meredith, Director of RBI for supporting the mission and efforts of the museum; Robin Wade, Lloyd Williams, and Nadine Junius for financial oversight and budgeting; Charles Brookshire for technical support; Jennifer Martin as communications lead; Joya Chapman of Institute Communications for photographing the exhibit; Jeremy Terry and Valerie Caldwell for physical plant support; and especially Sabrina Sealey for providing a warm welcome to all museum visitors.

May this exhibition and catalogue serve as a tribute to the enduring legacy of papermaking and the artists who continue to redefine its possibilities.

**Virginia Howell**

Director, Robert C. Williams Museum of Papermaking

# CURATOR'S STATEMENT

*"For millennia, handmade paper remained the province of skilled craftsmen bound by ancient techniques. Now, in a matter of some twenty years, the field has been transformed. Young artisans, university-educated and determined to put their own stamp on a highly traditional craft, have pushed the pulp medium in new directions. Painters, sculptors, and printmakers excited by the aesthetic possibilities of paper have appropriated its substances and processes. Collaborations have blossomed, and the old lines between craft and art have begun to fade. In the international contemporary art world, paper has become a hot commodity."*

-Judd Tully, *Paper Chase*, 1983

Judd Tully wrote these words capturing the palpable excitement around the endless possibilities of papermaking as perceived by the contemporary art scene of the early 80's. In 2025 it appears that hand papermaking is riding high on another crest of interest. In the last five years the National Museum of Women in the Arts and *Fiber Art Now Magazine* have hosted juried paper-based exhibitions, and the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art exhibited a two-part show featuring works produced at Dieu Donné. Publications such as *Papermaker's Tears: Essays on the Art and Craft of Paper* and *Radical Paper: Art and Invention with Colored Pulp* have provided articles to capture the contemporary history of papermaking's development as a fine art medium. These offers are in addition to the continued efforts of *Hand Papermaking Magazine* (co-founded in 1986 by Amanda Degener and Michael Durgin) to advance the discourse and learning around papermaking by hand. The Paper Museum recognizes the interest and greater need to continue promotion of this medium to the public.

The *Legacies in Paper* exhibition series is the Robert C. Williams Museum of Papermaking's contribution to capturing living history in the world of papermaking. *Legacies in Paper: Nancy Cohen, Sara Garden Armstrong, and Helen Hiebert* is the inaugural exhibit in this series; highlighting three women who each have spent a lifetime pushing the boundaries of hand papermaking. The museum solicited direct accounts in the artists' own words summarizing the path of their careers and the trajectory of their current explorations. Their commentaries are shown in conjunction with a selection of artworks, providing visitors with a greater understanding of how the pieces embody the long-term learning and exploration of hand papermaking by each artist.

Each has gravitated towards the properties of abaca's translucency, delicacy, and strength. Though they work with the same primary fiber, their approaches are drastically different.

Cohen presents some 3-dimensional paper covered wire sculptures, large wall-mounted abstract works, and a dangling suspended work that combines her glassworks and paper sculpture. These works invite us to consider our impact and relationship with nature. Armstrong's works are also abstract but evoke a very different understanding of the spatial relationship for the viewer. She presents large organic structures that breathe with the aid of mechanical light and air-powered movement. Viewers are invited to contemplate and embrace the state of transformation as a natural and inescapable state of being. While Armstrong manipulates states of change for the viewer to experience in real time, Hiebert's work captures a snapshot of transformation that happens over extended time as the abaca air dries. Hiebert takes a scientific, observational approach by changing small elements to adjust the outcome of nature's forces of dry time, constraint, and shrinkage. Despite the meticulous attention to detail required, all three artists manage to maintain and convey a sense of wonder, play, and unexpectedness. The spirit of curious innovation, familiarity, and experimentation provides a throughline that connects this contemporary work to earlier explorations of papermaking by hand.

#### Brief Summary of Hand Papermaking as Fine Art

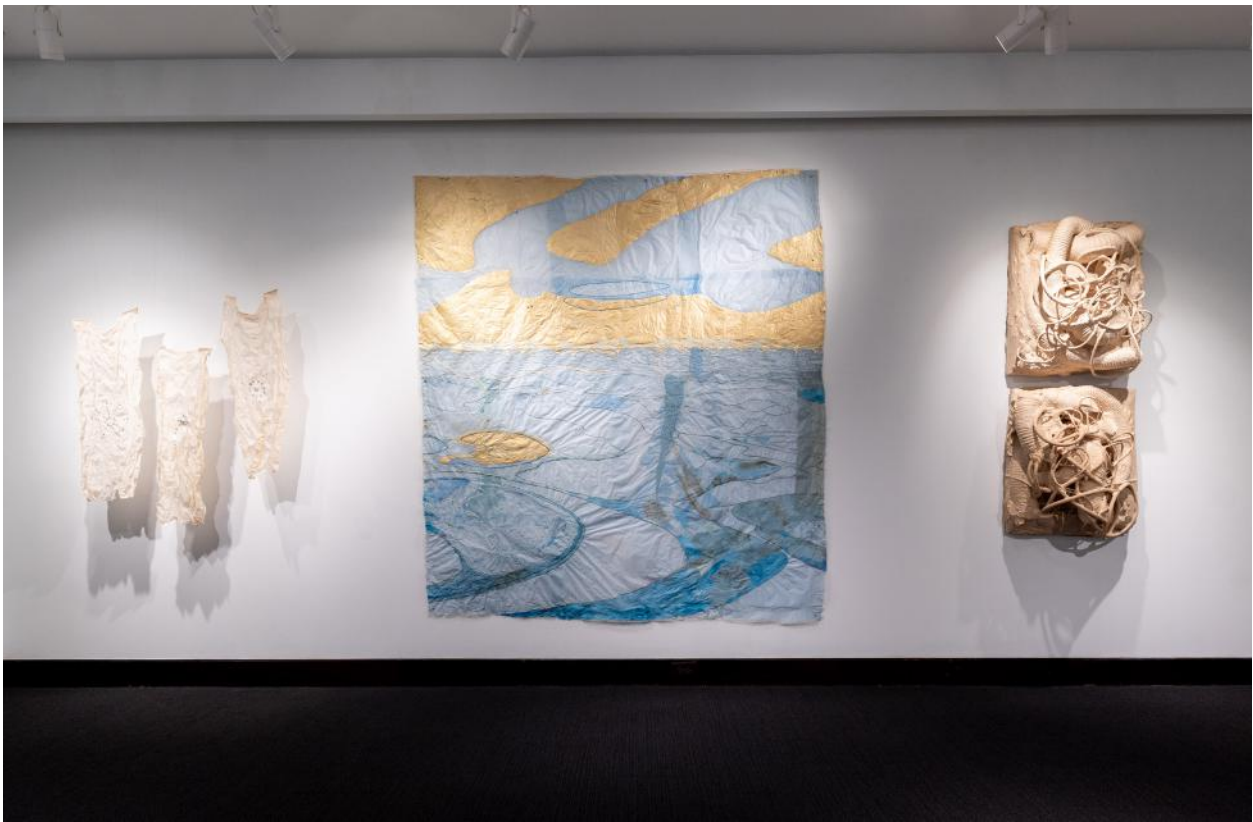
Papermaking and printmaking are forever tied to one another. Much as in the earlier emergence of these two processes, papermaking and printmaking strengthened one another's growth and appeal as fine art media. Commercial print and papermaking inspired artists of the Avant Garde Movement and the Arts and Craft Movements to rethink their relationship to the material. Dadaists experimented with collage, paper texture, paper furniture, etc. while the Arts and Craft Movement sought to preserve traditional crafts from being erased by industrialization. Dard Hunter preserved hand papermaking in America during the 1930s through scholarship and the creation of a museum dedicated to papermaking. In the 1950s Douglass Morse Howell redefined and revitalized traditional papermaking techniques and developed new processes for contemporary art. Many of Howell's developments have become standard processes taught in today's classrooms. The 50s and 60s saw developments in commercial printing as well, which were co-opted in service to the Pop Art Movement. These revolutionary techniques in hand papermaking and printmaking were disseminated and sometimes combined with impressive innovation during the 1960s and 1970s via Ken Tyler's fine art print shop, Tyler Graphics; Laurence Barker's printmaking program at Cranbrook; and papermaking studios across the country. In 1971, Kathryn and Howard Clark established Twinrocker in San Francisco, CA, later moving the papermill to Brookston, IN. Their studio is one of two major US providers of papermaking supplies for today's papermakers. Joe Wilfer opened Upper U.S. Paper Mill in 1974 in Oregon, WI and that same year, Tatana Kellner developed the papermaking studio for the artist residency Women's Studio Workshop. During 1975 Elaine and Donna Koretsky started Carriage House Handmade

Paper Works. Carriage House remains the other major supplier for hand papermaking supplies today. Susan Gosin and Bruce Wineberg developed Dieu Donné Press and Paper, Inc in 1976 with Paul Wong joining in 1978. Many contemporary papermakers have benefited from Dieu Donné's internship and fellowship programs. The excitement and momentum of the 70s resulted in increased collaborations between contemporary fine artists and master papermakers/printmakers. The eighties saw the establishment of institutions advocating for hand papermaking as a fine art medium. The Friends of Dard Hunter (now the North American Hand Papermakers) was established in 1981 to preserve the collection that is currently known as the Robert C. Williams Museum of Papermaking. That same year, Pyramid Atlantic was founded by noted artist and teacher Helen C. Frederick in Hyattsville, MD, and Magnolia Paper Studio was founded by Donald Farnsworth in Oakland, CA, to conduct renaissance linen & hemp paper research. The research later informed collaborations with contemporary artists through Magnolia Editions print studio. The University of Iowa Center for the Book, established by Timothy Barrett in 1986, remains a hub of innovative art and research. Tandem Press, established by William Weege in 1987 as a fine art print publisher and gallery, associated with the University of Wisconsin–Madison incorporated papermaking techniques within its collaborations with international artists to produce original prints. The 80s and 90s saw papermaking and book arts being added to many printmaking and fiber programs across the nation. This interconnected community and growing knowledge base set the stage for the emergence of artists like Nancy Cohen, Sara Garden Armstrong, and Helen Hiebert. All three of the artists have direct ties to transformative experiences with the collaborative atmosphere of Dieu Donné. Their legacies are strongly rooted in the history of the papermaking community while reaching forward as educators, mentors, and examples of what papermaking can develop into when the established notions about paper are questioned and challenged.

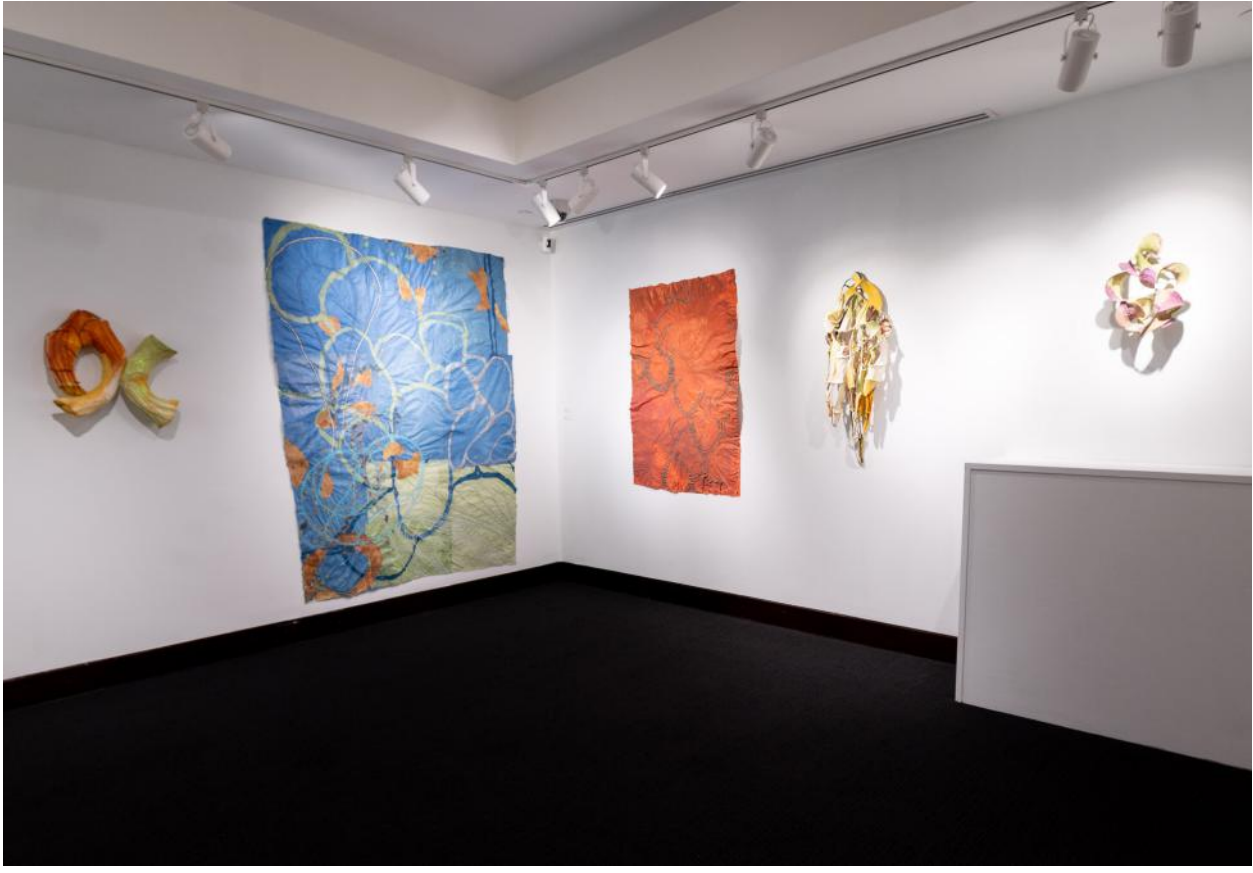
This catalogue and exhibition series are intended to serve as a foundation for further research and investigation into the medium of papermaking. The Paper Museum thanks Nancy Cohen, Sara Garden Armstrong, and Helen Hiebert for being extremely generous with their time and willingness to invite the viewer into their processes and the histories of their creative development. We also thank Bridget Donlon for a beautiful and informative essay contemplating the work of these fabulous artists. A special thanks also goes out to Daijah Suggs and Belinda Person for their contributions to putting together the catalogue and other materials for the exhibition.

**Jerushia Graham**

Museum Manager, Robert C. Williams Museum of Papermaking







# HOLDS WATER:

HANDMADE PAPER ARTWORK BY SARA GARDEN ARMSTRONG,  
NANCY COHEN, AND HELEN HIEBERT

*Legacies in Paper* brings together the work of three artists who each began a creative journey in conventional tracks such as sculpture, painting, and fine art. Sara Garden Armstrong, Nancy Cohen, and Helen Hiebert each describe a formative period of searching for materials that could meet a desire for something that can be two-or-three-dimensional and mimic textures of nature and the body. Individually, they found the unique, multitudinous medium of handmade paper. Coincidentally, that discovery for each took place at the storied institution Dieu Donn , where expert papermakers collaborate with visual artists. The relationship pushes forward the millennia-old medium as an art form and opens up new avenues of creation for the artist. For Armstrong, Cohen, and Hiebert, paper became an integral medium. After decades of experimentation and exploration, paper continues to fascinate these artists.

The three artists in *Legacies in Paper* approach artmaking full of curiosity, combining observation and repetition to yield new discoveries. Each works methodically but is open to experimentation, creating bodies of work largely based in handmade paper, specifically with the fiber abaca. It is an alluring fiber and requires a level of expertise to intentionally manipulate. It is an incredibly strong fiber, and one that becomes more translucent the more it is beaten in the process of becoming pulp. It can be tinted with color and dries as an ethereal skin-like diaphanous surface, serving as a perfect proxy for physical bodies. It is derived from banana plants and has been used to make tea bags – something that must withstand being submerged in hot water without falling apart, yet porous enough to steep its contents.

Paper is ancient but always offers new surprises. As an artistic medium it requires patience and a willingness to concede to forces beyond control. Water is one such force. It can be powerful but also gentle and delicate, with its impacts becoming evident over long spans of time. A broken glass beer bottle is dangerous and can cut skin or puncture a tire. But that same fragment tossed around in the ocean for a while becomes beach glass, smooth to the touch and a desired collectible item instead of rubbish. This transformative force is met with resilient fibers that hold water and release it in cycles to create paper in all its infinite potential forms. To make a basic sheet, gallons of water beat fibers into pulp, which are then suspended in a vat and formed on a screen. Then the water must be removed from the sheet by pressing and drying until the water molecules completely evaporate to form a chemical bond and become solid. Even when the paper is complete, the fibers can still absorb moisture and grow mold, or ripple the surface. At any step

along the way, nature can have an unexpected impact even for the most seasoned of papermakers.

Helen Hiebert is an artist for whom the unpredictable nature of papermaking is part of its appeal. It is a tangible way to consider the universality of time and its effects. Paper takes many forms in Hiebert's work, including sheets manipulated by cutting or embedding, installations, artist books, sculptures, and functional objects like lamps. Sometimes pigment is incorporated but often Hiebert emphasizes the natural texture and surface of the paper itself. She experiments with the essence of the handmade paper process, yielding no two identical results. Her film *Water Paper Time* documents the wet stage juxtaposed with the dry stage and illustrates the radical possibilities of this one material when certain variables are introduced such as thread or wire. Equivalent in size and shape, each paper displayed in a grid is radically different in the way that they pucker or shrivel. Working iteratively allows Hiebert to examine the material while achieving new results each time. Hanging sculptures further

explore the fibers' distinct properties. Abaca is delicate while also being strong enough to hold shape and suspension. For example, the installation *Hydrogen Bond* depicts the molecules as a physical web pattern, making visible the chemical effect in papermaking. Suspended in a large interior space, it becomes larger than its individual parts and a situation for a body to navigate. The physical bonds conceptually represent invisible emotional connections people have with each other. Through social engagement, Hiebert has also incorporated contributions from people around the world into her projects. Writing, podcasting, and teaching about paper underlines her passion for paper, and provides opportunities to explore the medium and disseminate it beyond exhibition displays. The web of papermakers, artists, craftspeople that Hiebert weaves in her educational work underlines her artistic concepts.



Helen Hiebert, *Hydrogen Bond* (detail), 2008

Unique individuals are united by common experiences and traditions, compressing humanity across cultures and generations.

Throughout her career, Sara Garden Armstrong has also deeply investigated material and form through distinct series of works. Beginning as a painter and printmaker, Armstrong came to paper by way of sculpture and installation in searching for materials

that can move fluidly between disciplines. Central to her oeuvre is the *Airplayer* series of installations that was first displayed at New York City's PS1 in 1982 with air moving through copper pipes. It evolved over the next decade to include paper forms, mechanical air blowers, tubes, lighting, sound, and computer programming. In its development over time in space, so too its meaning evolved, taking on the corporeality of the life cycle and the spatial interiors representing the interiors of the body and mind. After a 29 year pause between *Airplayer XIV* and *Airplayer XV*, the artist's recent traveling retrospective provided an opportunity to revisit that installation three times in as many years, and the Robert C. Williams Museum of Papermaking allows for another site-specific iteration of this work. In its latest inception, the viewer has a new vantage of the *Airplayer* forms, looking into instead of around them. They are accompanied by pieces from the series



Sara Garden Armstrong, *Airplayer XV*, 2021

*Layered Shadows*, photographs of shadows printed on translucent paper embedded in abaca sheets layered together. These pieces invite intimate viewing while the *Airplayer* forms are bodily sentinels within the space. Armstrong's decades-long investigation of abaca paper is evident in her ability to control the fiber to meet her

intent with spraying, forming, or pressing processes in the collection of work on display. These pieces work together to create an environment that is mysterious and yet familiar, biomorphic and open to personal interpretations. The transformation process conveyed by Armstrong's work is an evident representation of time, which is a constant that inevitably catches up with everyone and everything.

The interplay between time, bodies, and nature is also evident in Nancy Cohen's practice. Among the inspirations for her work are repeat visits to the marshland at the edges of urban sprawl in New Jersey. Time becomes manifest in the view composed of prehistoric forest remains, an ecosystem of birds and other wildlife, human detritus, and a backdrop of the New York City skyline. Created by combining sheets of handmade paper and paper pulp, her ethereal works in paper are as informed by observation as they are by memory. Cohen works with wet paper, pulling sheets and using pigmented pulp to draw on the surface of those sheets with a keen sense of color. The materials transform as they dry, with shifts in hues and surfaces. In *Espirito Santu*, a blue and gold abstract work in

paper inspired by a desert hike in the Isla Espiritu Santo National Park in Mexico, the eye starts to recognize a horizon line, land masses, glints of light, and the swirling currents of a body of water mixing with sand. In other paper works, abstract forms become apparent with natural references to mycelium growths, kelp-like leaves, the rings of a tree stump. However, there are also lines that might be read as human intervention like webbed netting, fishing lines, and the radiating orbs of an oil slick. Other readings of those abstract forms could be the cellular or circulatory structures of a human body. Like the environment, bodies can be strong and fragile at the same time. This dichotomy is also explored in Cohen's sculptural works of glass, paper and wire forms combined with paper pulp and often suspended from the ceiling or fixed to walls. The delicate balance of these objects emphasizes the precarity of our planet at this Anthropocene moment.



Nancy Cohen, *Espiritu Santo*, 2020

The three artists whose work is brought together in *Legacies in Paper* have made distinct contributions to handmade paper by elevating its use as a creative medium. In addition to the properties of paper and pulp as a studio element, their work contemplates themes related to states of change, both physical and symbolic. The pressing issues of the time we live in now, such as climate change and social inequity for two, will require creative thinking to surmount. Curiosity, empathy, and searching for deeper meanings are hallmarks embodied by each of these three artists. These are qualities that have always been necessary to our species' evolution and are now essential to our continued survival. Paper, too, has been central to the journey over the human era. It is a surface on which to document and communicate ideas and feelings, but itself can be a vessel for meaning. For Armstrong, Cohen, and Hiebert, this versatility has provided the perfect means of expression when none other would do. It remains a medium that continues to excite and intrigue these artists after decades. The ancient expression *Ars longa, vita brevis* comes to mind, which means that life is short but art is forever. In their experimental and collaborative processes, these artists have made indelible contributions to the field of papermaking as a contemporary artform.

### **Bridget Donlon**

Contemporary Art Curator and Arts Administrator, MTA Arts & Design

# SARA GARDEN ARMSTRONG

## Artist Bio

Sara Garden Armstrong received her Master of Fine Arts from the University of Alabama and a Master of Art Education from University of Alabama Birmingham. A past recipient of the Joan Mitchell Foundation Creating a Living Legacy project, Armstrong's national and international exhibition record extends over a period of more than 40 years. Her artist's books can be found in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, among others.

A monograph—*SARA GARDEN ARMSTRONG: Threads and Layers*—was published in 2020, revealing the influences and concepts that run through her diverse body of work. Its publication coincided with a three-state traveling exhibition of the same name. After living in New York City for 36 years, in 2017 she returned to Birmingham, Alabama where she currently lives and works.



Photo credit: Tara Stallworth Lee

## Artist Statement

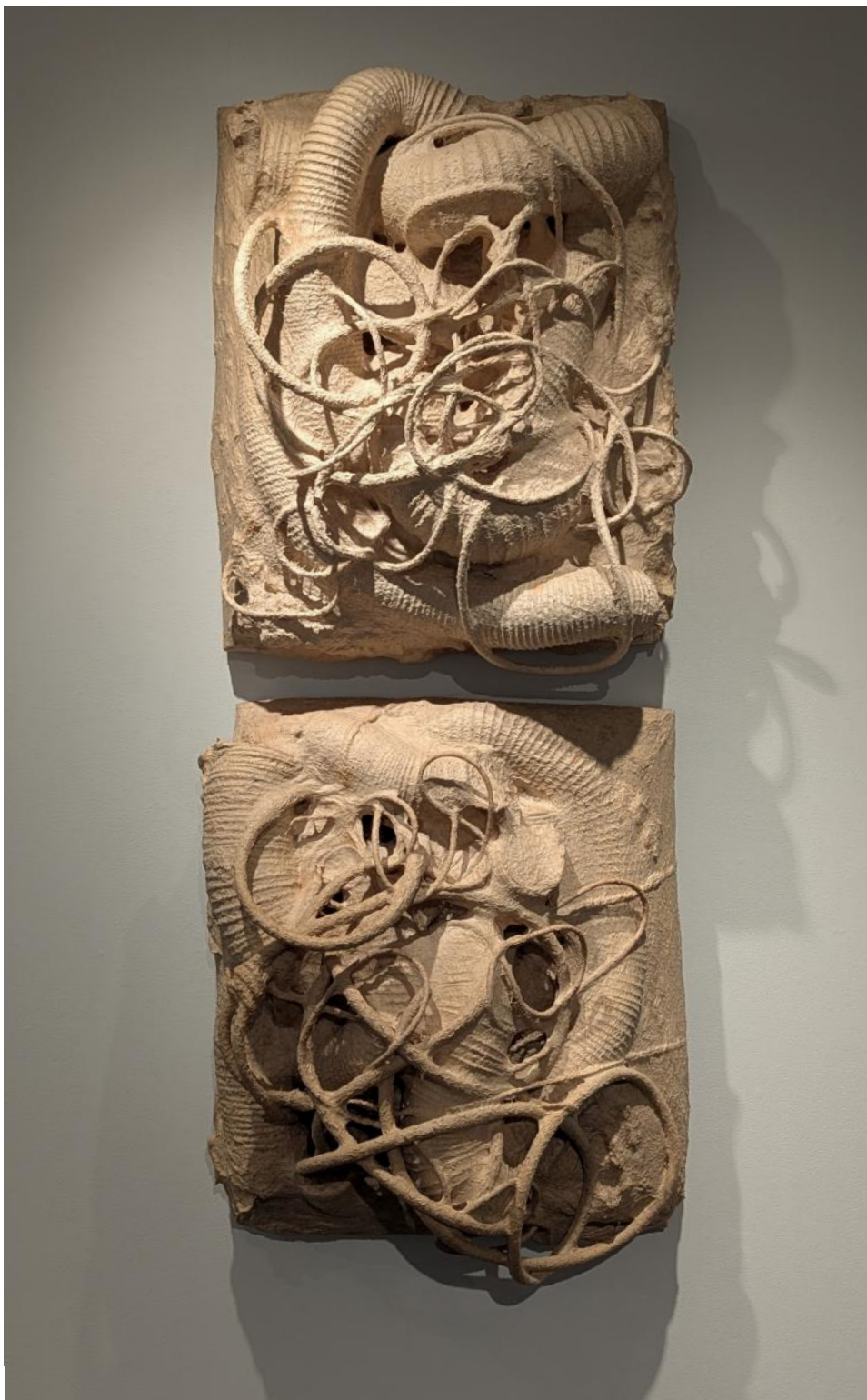
My art focuses on life processes and systems, addressing organic change and transformation, developing into nature-based biomorphic abstraction. My creative research/practice spans a wide range of mediums, from large site-specific sculptural installations and atrium commissions to flatwork and artist's books. My concerns include chance/exploration, fluidity/ambiguity, and control/loss of control. Results rely on the properties of materials as they transform.

Layered three-dimensional work—drawing in space—is basic to my practice. The sculptural installations often incorporate video projection and sound. Recurrent themes are water, time, and shifts of reality, with elements of chance and change. The exploration—asking questions, not necessarily getting the answers—is a major part of my process. At times my drawing pushes the sculpture, other times sculpture and installation push the flat work—insight from one media continually affecting another.

Important is the evolution of process, using advances in technology, and collaboration with fellow creatives. My work with multimedia installations began in the late 1970s with sound added to sculpture. Next sound became air movement, and air movement became breath. The viewer was asked to become a participant in the experience, which had the ambiance of a ritual. Eventually more meditative installations followed, including the *Airplayer* series.



Armstrong, *Airplayers XIX*, 2025. Sprayed abaca forms, embedded plastic hosing, blower boxes, microcontroller, video projections, digitized sound, LED and incandescent lighting, motion sensors



Armstrong, *Overtures 5*, 1996. Abaca fiber, plastic, hoses, wood, 29" x 23" x 15"

Armstrong, *Overtures 6*, 1996. Abaca fiber, plastic, hoses, wood, 30" x 24" x 14"



Armstrong, *Figure Form 7*, 2025. Sprayed abaca, LED lighting, aluminum tubing, wood, 7' x 28" x 7"



Armstrong, *Structured Mapping 5*, 2025. Pigment, pigmented fiber on fiber paper, 84" x 45" x 20"

# SELECTED EXPERIENCES

Sara Garden Armstrong | saragardenarmstrong.net

## Solo Exhibitions & Installations

- 2023 *Sara Garden Armstrong: Landscapes of Breath, Time and Change*, Bittners, Louisville, KY
- 2023 *Sara Garden Armstrong, Layered Scapes*, Steffany Martz Gallery, New York, NY
- 2023 *Works on Paper 1970 - 1990*, Hoover Public Library Galleries and artist for Southern Voices Festival, Hoover, AL
- 2020 *SARA GARDEN ARMSTRONG: Threads and Layers*, curated by Paul Barrett, Wiregrass Museum of Art, Dothan, AL
- 2017 *Breath and Shadow*, Alabama School of Fine Arts, Birmingham, AL
- 2008 *Distant Views: Works on Paper*, 41 PARK, New York, NY
- 1997 *The Interiors Project*, Dieu Donn  Gallery, New York, NY
- 1991 *Airplayer XIII*, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York, NY
- 1988 *Airplayer X*, Souyun Yi Gallery, New York, NY

## Group Exhibitions

- 2023 *Sizing Up: Seven Women Sculptors*, curated by Amy W. Jenkins, Georgine Clarke, Alabama Artists Gallery, Montgomery AL
- 2018 *Women with Their Work: Materiality*, curated by Jessica Dallow, Ph.D., and Peter Prinz, Space One Eleven, Birmingham, AL
- 2006 *Contour*, curated by Jon Coffelt, Schedler Minchin Fine Art, Homewood, AL
- 1992 *Dialogues in Paper: Hungarian & American Artists*, curated by Robbin Ami, Silverberg, Feszek Club Gallery, Budapest, Hungary
- 1991 *ACCENT ON PAPER: Fifteen Years at Dieu Donn  Papermill*, curated by Margaret Mathews-Berenson, LINTAS: WORLDWIDE, New York, NY
- 1985 *Paper as Paint*, curated by Paul Wong, Artisan Space, Fashion Institute of Technology, New York, NY

## Press

- Amy Barnes, "Sara Garden Armstrong Brings Her 'Ethereal Magic' to Louisville," *The Voice Tribune Louisville*, October 2023, 80 - 84
- Ray Wetzel and Mary Jones, *SARA GARDEN ARMSTRONG: Threads and Layers Traveling Exhibition Catalog*, Gadsden Museum of Art, 2022
- Kami Sloan, "Intonations of Art, FATVillage debuts Sara Garden Armstrong's Modulative Retrospective," *Ven  Magazine*, Issue 45, 2021, 60 - 67
- Sara Garden Armstrong and Helen Hiebert, "Public Sculpture Installations: A Conversation, Sara Garden Armstrong & Helen Hiebert," *Hand Papermaking*, Summer 2015, 32 - 35
- Tatiana Ginsberg, "Paper in Public," *Hand Papermaking*, Summer 2008, 7 - 10

## Publications

- David Ebony, Gail Andrews, Dan Talley, Laura C. Lieberman, Alice Meriwether Bowsher, Alan Bruton, Jon Coffelt, Daniel White, Dana-Marie Lemmer, Steffany Martz, *SARA GARDEN ARMSTRONG: Threads and Layers*, Great Jones Street Press, 2020
- *Airplayers*, Willis, Locker & Owens, 1990

# NANCY COHEN



Photo credit: Megan Maloy

## Artist Bio

Nancy Cohen has a Masters of Fine Arts from Columbia University and a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Rochester Institute of Technology. Cohen has been awarded a Pollock Krasner Foundation Grant and six fellowships from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. Her work is featured in museum collections including the Asheville Art Museum, Memphis Brooks Museum, Montclair Museum, NJ State Museum, Smith College Museum, Tang Teaching Museum, Weatherspoon Art Gallery, Yale University Art Gallery and the Zimmerli Museum. Cohen has completed large scale paper installations for the Noyes Museum, the Katonah Museum, the Power Point Gallery at Duke University and New Jersey City University, The CODA Museum in the Netherlands and the NTCRI Museum of Craft Design in Taiwan. She lives in Jersey City, New Jersey.

## Artist Statement

Line is the operative formal element in the work shown here, but there are many other lines in play. Pieces walk a line between drawings that might be tapestries or sculptures or paintings or quilts and sculptures that draw in space. More fundamentally though, there is a fine, fragile line between existence and its opposite, a line we all walk and which the small and large environments that contain us walk as well. Environmental and personal vulnerability has been a longstanding focus in my work. Waterways, in particular, with their almost human balance of fragility and strength, their perseverance through adversity—much of it inflicted by us—trace lines of stress and hope through our landscapes—as well as a strong line through the body of my work.

There is also the fine, fragile line between the internal and the external. Handmade paper and glass—translucent, delicate, and yet unexpectedly tough and durable—expose the internal and yet protect it, becoming skin and structure, portal and shield. For decades, these materials have played a central role in my work exploring dualities of vulnerability and strength. Finally, the line between existence and its opposite has been sharpened for all of us in recent years with the climate crisis and, more recently, the Covid pandemic. At the same time, the lines between our individual fragilities and those of the collective and the planet have been blurred. More than ever, we walk the line together.



Cohen, *Accretion*, 2025. Handmade paper, paper pulp and wire, 38" x 16" x 6"



Cohen, *Dividing Line*, 2024. Paper pulp and handmade paper, 44" x 24"



Cohen, *Conjecture*, 2025. Handmade paper, paper pulp and wire, 16" x 12" x 5"

Cohen, *A Bridge Between*, 2025. Handmade paper, paper pulp, wire, and LED lights 20" x 20" x 5"



Cohen, *Fire Balloon*, 2017. Paper pulp and handmade paper, 82" x 61"

# SELECTED EXPERIENCES

Nancy Cohen | nancymcohen.com

## Solo Exhibitions and Installations

- 2024 *The State We're In*, Kathryn Markel Fine Arts, New York, NY
- 2021 *Nancy Cohen: Atlas of Impermanence*, Visual Arts Center of New Jersey, Summit, NJ
- 2015 *Hackensack Dreaming*, curated by Midori Yoshimoto, traveling exhibition: New Jersey City University, Jersey City, NJ; Schuylkill Center for Environmental Art and Education, Philadelphia, PA; Power Point Gallery at Duke University, Durham, NC; Urban Glass Brooklyn, NY
- 2009 *Perspectives on Salinity: River From Within*, Katonah Museum of Art, Katonah, NY
- 2007 *Estuary: Moods & Modes*, Noyes Museum, Oceanville, NJ
- 1996 *Only Connect*, Staten Island Botanical Garden, Staten Island, NY

## Group Exhibitions

- 2025 *Beyond the Surface: The Art of Handmade Paper (Part II)*, curated by Efe Igor Coleman and Dr. Patricia Lee Daigle, Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Memphis, TN
- 2023 *Earth Speak: Giving Voice to Paper*, curated by Amy Richard, International Biennial of Fiber and Paper Art, Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall, Taipei, Taiwan
- 2014 *Pulp Culture: Paper is the Medium*, The Morris Museum, Morristown, NJ
- 2008 *Holland Papier Biennale 2008*, Museum Rijswijk, Rijswijk, Netherlands
- 2001 *Rags to Riches: 25 Years of Paper Art from Dieu Donné Papermill*, curated by Donna Stein, traveling exhibition: Kresge Art Museum, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI; Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD; Beach Museum of Art, Manhattan, KS; Heckscher Museum, Huntington, NY; and Fort Wayne Museum of Art, Fort Wayne, IN
- 1996 *Innovations and Explorations in Handmade Paper*, curated by Margaret Mathews-Berenson, Dieu Donné Papermill, New York, NY

## Press

- Lynn Sures and Michelle Saymour, *Radical Paper: Art and Invention with Colored Pulp*, The Legacy Press, 2024
- Susan Hoffman Fishman, "On the Enduring Beauty, Power and Fragility of Water," *Artists and Climate Change* (blog), June 2019
- Jordana Munk Martin, "Paper Tapestries: The Marsh Drawings of Nancy Cohen," *Hand Papermaking*, Summer 2017, 44 - 45
- Jonathan Goodman, "Nancy Cohen," *Sculpture*, April 2016, 75 - 76
- Nancy Cohen and Ming Fay, "Two Sculptors Discuss Why Paper? Nancy Cohen & Ming Fay," *Hand Papermaking*, Summer 2015, 27 - 29
- Dominique Nahas, "Nancy Cohen at Noyes Museum," *Sculpture*, September 2008
- Donna Stein, *Rags to Riches: 25 Years of Paper Art From Dieu Donné Papermill*, Dieu Donné Papermill, 2001

# HELEN HIEBERT

## Artist Bio

Helen Hiebert is a Colorado artist who constructs installations, sculptures, films, artists' books and works in paper using handmade paper as her primary medium. She teaches, lectures, and exhibits her work internationally and online, and is the author of several how-to books about papermaking and papercrafts. Hiebert has an extensive network of paper colleagues around the world and her interest in how things are made (from paper) keeps her up-to-date on current paper trends, which she writes about in her weekly blog called *The Sunday Paper*. She interviews papermakers and paper artists on her podcast *Paper Talk*, and she holds an annual paper retreat and papermaking master classes in her Red Cliff studio. Hiebert's artist's books are in collections around the world, including Cranbrook Academy of Art, Harvard's Houghton Library, Swarthmore College, State Library of Queensland, among others.



Photo credit: Mars Vilaubi

## Artist Statement

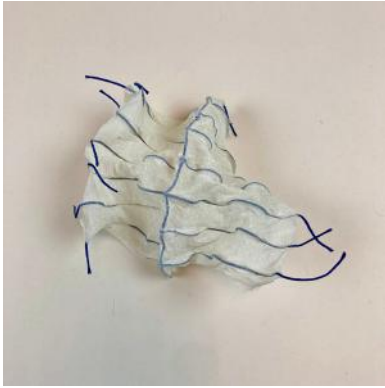
Helen Hiebert works like a scientist, conducting experiments with abaca paper pulp. Her process explores how external forces such as time, gravity and molecular structure bend, tear, and wrinkle the material, producing startlingly elusive and organic forms. She sets a process in motion, embedding strings or wires between wet sheets of paper, slashing through the surface, or nailing wet sheets to the wall. They seem to briefly come alive as water evaporates – bending, shrinking, puckering, and sometimes ripping – before freezing in place, a final snapshot in time. Her work reveals the fascinating ways in which nature and art go on changing even, and perhaps especially, when we are not looking. Hiebert's works in paper take form in time-lapse photography on film, sculpture, installations, and artists books.



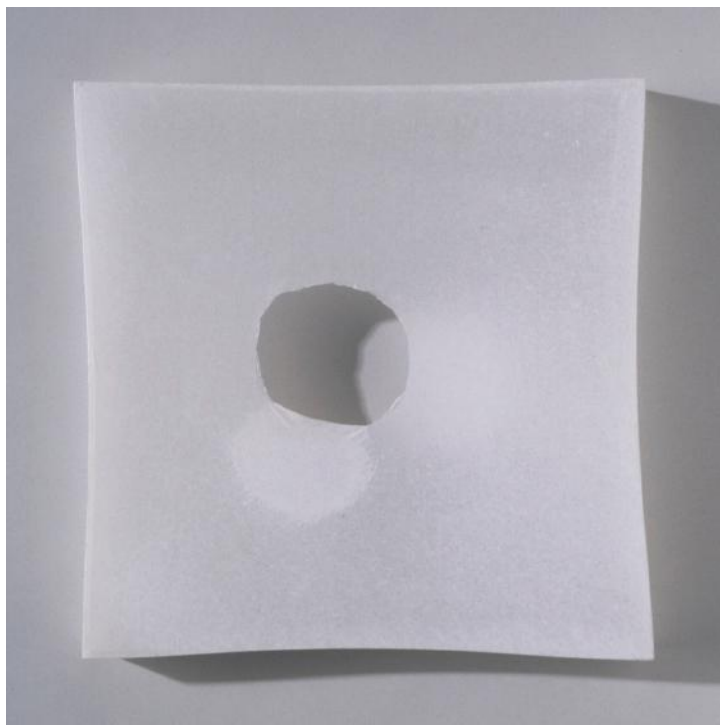
*"I work in collaboration with my medium -- handmade paper. This installation was made by draping wet sheets of paper over a clothesline. As the sheets dried, they contracted and twisted into these forms. I then stitched the washers onto one side of each form, creating thread patterns on the other side. The images resemble constellations, plant forms, fireworks, the big bang, etc. – metaphors for conception, growth, birth, life. I see all of these things as magical and mysterious, and this ties into my fascination with paper and the magical and invisible occurrences that take place throughout the papermaking process."*

- Helen Hiebert

Hiebert, *Orbiting*, from the series *Line Dried*, 2007. Handmade abaca paper, metal washers, linen thread, 36" x 10" x 2"



Hiebert, *Specimens* series, 2015 - 2025. Artist-made abaca paper, linen thread, wire



Hiebert, *Hole*, 2006. Artist-made abaca paper, plexiglass, 14" x 14" x 1-3/4"

Hiebert, *Mend (detail)*, 2006. Artist-made abaca paper, linen thread, plexiglass, 14" x 14" x 1-3/4"



Hiebert, *Same / Not Same*, 2025. Artist-made abaca paper, set up 39, 15" x 65" x 3"

# SELECTED EXPERIENCES

Helen Hiebert | helenhiebertstudio.com

## Solo Exhibitions & Installations

- 2022 *Step Into the Light*, Anythink Huron Street Library, Denver, CO
- 2016 *The Secret Life of Paper: 25 Years of Works in Paper by Helen Hiebert*, Kalamazoo Book Arts Center, Kalamazoo, MI
- 2014 *The Wish*, Anythink Huron Street Library, Denver, CO
- 2010 *String Theory*, 23 Sandy Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2010 *Mother Tree*, The Portland Building, Portland OR
- 2008 *The Hydrogen Bond*, Reed College, Portland, OR

## Group Exhibitions

- 2024 *Earth Speak: Giving Voice to Paper*, curated by Amy Richard, International Biennial of Fiber and Paper Art, Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall, Taipei, Taiwan
- 2022 *Off The Shelf: Contemporary Book Arts in Colorado*, curated by Anna Bernhard and Johnny Plastini, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO
- 2017 *Paper Works*, curated by Collin Parson, Arvada Art Center, Arvada, CO
- 2013 *Raw Potential*, curated by Jo Stealey, Craft Alliance, St. Louis, MO
- 2012 *The Letter, The Word & The Book*, curated by Tom Leech, New Mexico History Museum, Santa Fe, NM
- 2011 *Paper, Print, Type*, Korean Craft Museum, Cheongju, South Korea
- 2011 *The Art of the Book*, curated by Donna Seager, Donna Seager Gallery, San Rafael, CA

## Press

- Correy Baldwin, "Helen Hiebert." In *Rag & Pulp: Creativity with Paper*. UPPERCASE Publishing, 2023, 174 - 181
- Helen Hiebert and Barbara Tetenbaum, "Helen Hiebert" *Paper Talk Podcast*, Episode #100, December 2022
- Sara Garden Armstrong and Helen Hiebert, "Public Sculpture Installations: A Conversation, Sara Garden Armstrong & Helen Hiebert," *Hand Papermaking*, Summer 2015, 32 - 35
- D.K. Row, "On View: Helen Hiebert, Diane Jacobs and Nancy Chaung," *The Oregonian*, August 2008
- Laura Thomas, "Light and Paper Make Luminous Art," *San Fransisco Chronicle*, October 2003

## Publications

- *Weaving With Paper*, Storey Publishing, 2025
- *The Art of Papercraft*, Storey Publishing, 2022
- *The Secret Life of Paper*, Helen Hiebert Studio, 2016
- *Playing with Paper*, Rockport Publishing, 2013
- *Papermaking with Garden Plants and Common Weeds*, Storey Publishing, 2006
- *The Papermaker's Companion*, Storey Publishing, 2000

# SHARED CHRONOLOGY

**1939**

The Dard Hunter Paper Museum is established by Dard Hunter at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

**1954**

The Dard Hunter Paper Museum relocates to the Institute of Paper Chemistry in Appleton, Wisconsin.

**1974**

Women's Studio Workshop is founded by Ann Kalmbach, Tatana Kellner, Anita Wetzel, and Barbara Leoff Burge.

**1976**

Dieu Donné Papermill is founded by Susan Gosin and Bruce Wineberg in New York, New York.

**1977**

Sara Garden Armstrong receives her Master of Fine Arts from the University of Alabama and a Master of Art Education from University of Alabama-Birmingham.

**1979**

Armstrong completes her first artist's book, *MS SERIES 500: Microminiaturization*.

**1981**

Friends of Dard Hunter (now North American Hand Papermakers) is founded.

Nancy Cohen receives her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Ceramics from Rochester Institute of Technology (School for American Craftsman).

**1982**

Armstrong's first exhibit in NYC with Czashka Ross, who stimulates her interest in working with handmade paper. Armstrong was introduced to Dieu Donné Papermill.

Cohen is awarded an influential art residency at MacDowell in Peterborough, New Hampshire; then a 6-month ceramic residency at the Archie Bray Foundation in Helena, Montana.

**1984**

Cohen receives her Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture from Columbia University.

Armstrong begins to work with Dieu Donné Papermill in order to find a way to embed plastic air hoses into her shaped paper forms.

**1986**

Hand Papermaking, Inc. is founded by Amanda Degener and Michael Durgin with the publication of *Hand Papermaking* magazine.

The Rutgers Center for Innovative Print and Paper (now The Brodsky Center) is founded by Judith Brodsky at Rutgers University.

**1987**

Helen Hiebert receives her Bachelor of Arts in Fine Arts from the University of the South.

**1989**

Institute of Paper Chemistry relocates to Atlanta, Georgia and renamed the Institute of Paper Science and Technology. The Paper Museum moves with it.

Cohen is awarded the Pollock Krasner Foundation Grant.

**1991**

Hiebert becomes a program director at Dieu Donn  Papermill.

**1992**

Cohen is awarded a Workspace Residency at Dieu Donn  Papermill.

**1996**

Armstrong and Cohen's work included in *Innovations and Explorations in Handmade Paper: Twenty Years of Collaboration* at Dieu Donn  Papermill.

Institute of Paper Science and Technology Museum becomes the Robert C. Williams American Museum of Papermaking.

**1997**

Armstrong's exhibition, *The Interiors Project*, opens at Dieu Donn  Papermill.

**1998**

Hiebert relocates to Portland, Oregon.

**2000**

Hiebert publishes her first book on papermaking, *The Papermaker's Companion*.

**2003**

The Paper Museum becomes part of the Georgia Institute of Technology.

**2006**

Hiebert's first paper-related group show opens at Portland Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center in Portland, Oregon.

**2008**

Hiebert releases her film, *Water Paper Time*.

Morgan Art of Papermaking Conservatory & Educational Foundation opens to the public.

**2012**

Hiebert awarded the Artistic Focus Project Grant in Visual Arts by the Regional Arts & Culture Council of Portland, Oregon.

The Paper Museum renamed the Robert C. Williams Museum of Papermaking.

**2013**

Hiebert opens Helen Hiebert Studio in Red Cliff, Colorado and begins hosting workshops and retreats.

**2015**

Armstrong is invited by Space One Eleven in Birmingham, Alabama to participate in the Joan Mitchell Foundation program "Creating a Living Legacy."

All three artists are featured in interviews in the summer issue of *Hand Papermaking* magazine.

**2016**

Armstrong opens Ground Floor Contemporary Gallery, an artist-run collective, on the ground floor of her Birmingham studio.

Cohen is awarded the Works on Paper Fellowship by New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

Hiebert begins her podcast, *Paper Talk*, which interviews hand papermakers and paper artists from around the world.

**2018**

Cohen awarded the Studio Works Residency at Tides Institute & Museum of Art in Eastport, Maine.

**2019**

Cohen featured on *Paper Talk* Podcast.

**2020**

*SARA GARDEN ARMSTRONG: Threads and Layers*, a monograph is published.

**2022**

Armstrong awarded Artist of the Year Award from the Birmingham Museum of Art Collectors Circle.

Armstrong and Hiebert featured on *Paper Talk* Podcast.

Cohen awarded the Murray Reich Distinguished Artist Award by New York Foundation for the Arts.

Cohen awarded a Studio Art Residency by the Women's Studio Workshop in Rosendale, NY and Denbo Fellowship by Pyramid Atlantic Art Center in Hyattsville, MD.

Hiebert is inducted into the North American Hand Papermakers Hall of Champions.

#### 2024

Cohen and Hiebert's work displayed in *Earth Speak: Giving Voice to Paper* at the International Biennial of Fiber and Paper Art in Taipei, Taiwan.

#### 2025

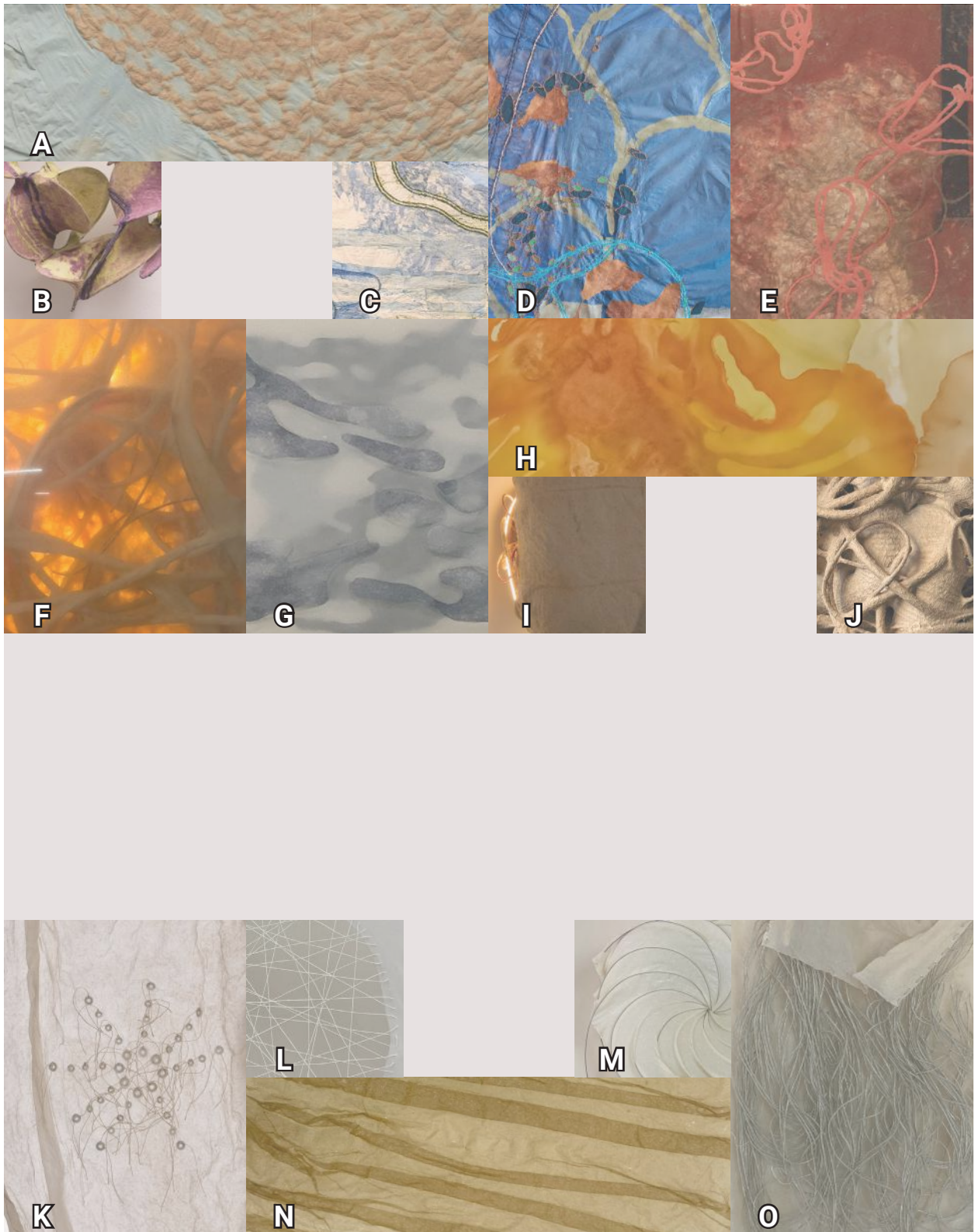
Cohen awarded a Visual Arts Fellowship at MacDowell in Peterborough, New Hampshire (also 2023, 1986, 1981).

Armstrong, Cohen, and Hiebert featured in a joint exhibition, *Legacies in Paper: Nancy Cohen, Sara Garden Armstrong, & Helen Hiebert*, at the Robert C. Williams Museum of Papermaking.



From left to right Helen Hiebert, Nancy Cohen, and Sara Garden Armstrong. Photo courtesy of Institute Communications, Joya Chapman (photographer)

# COVER COLLAGE



- A. Cohen, *Land as Wind* (detail), 2023. Paper pulp, wax and handmade paper, 53" x 37"
- B. Cohen, *Conjecture* (detail), 2025. Handmade paper, paper pulp and wire, 16" x 12" x 5"
- C. Cohen, *Elliptical* (detail), 2024. Paper pulp and handmade paper, 58" x 62"
- D. Cohen, *Fire Balloon* (detail), 2017. Paper pulp and handmade paper, 82" x 61"
- E. Cohen, *Topography of a Storm* (detail), 2022. Paper pulp and handmade paper, 56" x 38"
- F. Armstrong, *Growth Dialouge* (detail), 2021. Plastic, lighting, tubing, paper fiber, 14" x 20" x 20"
- G. Armstrong, *Layered Shadow 11* (detail), 2014. Translucent digital images embedded in layers of abaca papers, 15" x 33"
- H. Armstrong, *Structured Mapping 5* (detail), 2025. Pigment, pigmented fiber on fiber paper, 84" x 45" x 20"
- I. Armstrong, *Abaca Wall Backs* (detail), 2022. Sprayed abaca forms, plastic hoses, LED lighting, sandblasted plastic, 84" x 144" x 16"
- J. Armstrong, *Overture 6* (detail), 1996. Abaca fiber, plastic, hoses, wood, 27" x 24" x 12"
- K. Hiebert, *Growth* (back detail), 2007. Handmade abaca paper, metal washers, linen thread, 36" x 10" x 2"
- L. Hiebert, *Chaos* (detail), 2006. Artist-made abaca paper, linen thread, plexiglass 14" x 14" x 1-3/4"
- M. Hiebert, *Swirl* (detail) from the *Specimens* series, 2015 - 2025. Artist-made abaca paper, wire
- N. Hiebert, *Pleated Abaca* (detail) from the *Specimens* series, 2015 - 2025. Artist-made abaca paper
- O. Hiebert,  *Holding* (detail), 2007. Handmade abaca paper, linen thread, 15" x 18" x 18"



Robert C. Williams  
Museum of Papermaking