

MAKERS MANUAL #56

DNJ Paper



INTRODUCTION

Paper is for drawing, wrapping, wiping, absorbing, sketching, crumpling, covering, tearing, soaking up, writing, throwing away. But paper can be a beautiful and radical material for clothing; in longstanding cultural histories throughout Asia and the West and as a tool to critique the disposability of fashion. In this manual, you'll be making yourself a paper T-shirt by adding a paper cutout to a second-hand T-shirt.

STEP 1

Prepare your T-shirt base. Iron your used T-shirt and make it as flat as possible. Cut a slit on one side from the hem to armpit.



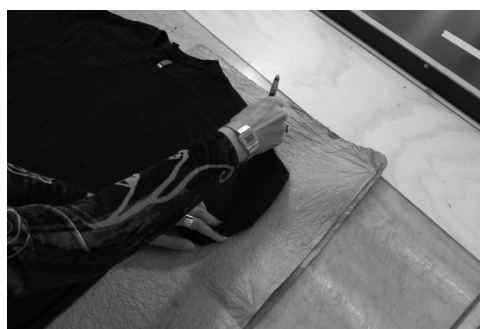
STEP 2
Prepare your paper. Select a paper you like the look of. Ideally this would be durable handmade washi paper (We used washi made in Mino, Japan, for this example).



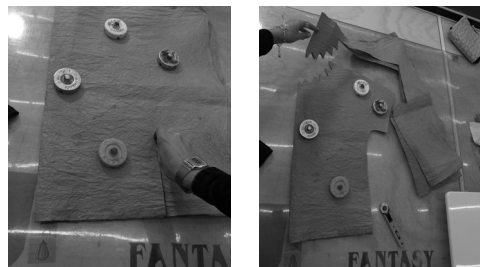
Paint it, dye it, draw on it, if you want. Crumple it up to make it flexible and then iron it to make it flat.

STEP 3

Make your paper T-shirt. Either make a pattern to use to cut out the paper, or simply lay it on your T-shirt and try to trace the shape of the T-shirt underneath. Use a pencil, marker, crayon, or even your fingernail!



Cut out the paper shape. You can make the neck round, or zig-zag it so it doesn't tear easily. You can change the shape in any way you want.



STEP 4

Attach the paper shape. There are two ways you attach the paper shape to the T-shirt; one with a sewing machine, and one without.



With a sewing machine: Pin the paper shape to the T-shirt. Make sure everything is very flat and you aren't stretching anything.



LIST OF THINGS

MATERIALS

- A second-hand T-shirt, preferably with no print and in a dark colour (you won't be washing this very often)
- A large sheet of paper, preferably washi paper

TOOLS

- Scissors
- Sewing machine or hand sewing supplies
- Pins
- (Optional) fusible interfacing (the kind that is only glue, with no fabric attached. In Australia they call it Vliesofix)
- (Optional) drawing supplies

BIO OF THE DESIGNER

DNJ Paper is a collaborative research project and label situated in Melbourne, Australia, and is led by designers Daphne Mohajer va Pesaran and Jake Nakashima-Edwards. We use a range of techniques, both traditional and nontraditional, to create paper clothing, accessories, and objects. We aim to address pressing social, aesthetic, and conceptual questions related to fashion and textiles design.

FURTHER READING

Paper Clothes Resources:

- Atopos Collection
- Kamiko, Washi, Takuhonshi: Making paper clothing in Japan
- Kamiko: Growing Paper Clothes in Rural Japan
- COSMIC WONDER kamiko/kamikoromo
- MOMIGAMI by Donald Farnsworth
- Pride of Japan Papermaking Map
- Katakura, Nobumitsu. 1988. Shiroishi Washi Shifu Kamiko. Tokyo: Keiyusha.
- Omura, Tomoko. 1999. "Konnyaku Paste and Kozo." The Journal for the Society for Washi Culture 7: 102–07.

Makers Manual is a collaborative project between exciting makers and STORE STORE. This is a collection of manuals encouraging people to make objects from what is around them. These manuals are both a practical guide to making for beginners and experts, and a journey into the designers' practice. You can share your creations using #makersmanual.

This project is supported by G.F. Smith.

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CONTEXTUAL READING

Paper may not seem like suitable material for making clothing but, if made in a specific way, it can become strong and durable enough to be used for clothing. For at least 1200 years, artisans across the Japanese archipelago have been making paper clothing using whole sheets of paper that have been softened for flexibility and treated with plant-based strengtheners. As early as 910 CE, Japanese Buddhist monks – the earliest custodians of papermaking knowledge in Japan – began creating garments out of their paper sutras, spawning a lasting tradition of wearing paper clothing that was later adopted by farmers and the upper classes. Through its history, paper has been worn for many reasons, including necessity, worship and aesthetic preference. It's widespread use peaked in the Edo Period (1603–1868) but it has now been replaced by other, less expensive, materials.

In the 17th century, the proliferation of tools and skills made washi accessible to all levels of society. It was used to disseminate images and texts, and incorporated in architecture, home furnishings, fashion and textiles. Hundreds of regional forms of washi, used to produce these unique items, were developed via small-scale operations, and each local derivation was contingent on a local climate, landscape and specific needs (Katakura 1988). The localised uses for paper flourished and vernacular applications developed as a replacement for more expensive materials such as leather, silk and cotton.

During the Edo Period, paper was used for doors, windows, crowns, hats, oilcloth, mats for sitting or sleeping, wax-cloth, faux-leather pouches, official certificates with watermarks, embossed wallpaper, lighting, raincoats, umbrellas, pillows, stationery boxes, serving trays, bowls, mosquito nets, small dishes, quivers, tea caddies, water receptacles, boxes, luggage and bags, lunch boxes, sandals, furniture, and tobacco pouches, among other things (Omura 1999).



Use a zigzag stitch around the entire edge. Without a sewing machine: Cut out your fusible interfacing the same size as the paper shape. Use an iron to affix the paper to the T-shirt.

CARE

Different kinds of paper will need different cleaning methods. Start with spot cleaning any spills or stains immediately after soiling. We have had success with dry cleaning a washi T-shirt, as long as your local dry-cleaner is willing! Do not machine wash or tumble-dry.

To make the paper more durable and even waterproof, try waxing it using beeswax, or even crayons! Apply the wax, then put the whole thing in the oven on 50 degrees c for 5 - 10 minutes to blend it all together. You could also try the traditional way of making paper cloth by applying a layer of konnyaku or agar jelly while you wrinkle and crumple your paper. Or, you can simply let the paper eventually soften and float away in time.

