

# Summer Internship at Silpa- Sadan

Sanjay Nair  
Industrial Design  
o8613002

## About the place

Silpa Sadana (SS) is a crafts institute located 3 km away from Santiniketan in Sriniketan(SN) ,

About Sriniketan:

The object of Sriniketan is to bring back life in its completeness into the villages, making them self-reliant and self-respectful, acquainted with the cultural tradition of their own country, and competent to make an efficient use of the modern resources for the improvement of their physical, intellectual and economic condition.

Rabindranath Tagore, 1928

Sriniketan today comprises the following departments within its broad ambit:

- (i) Palli Siksha Bhavana (Institute of Agricultural Science)
- (ii) Palli Sangathana Vibhaga (Rural Extension Centre)
- (iii) Department of Social Work
- (vi) Palli Charcha Kendra
- (i) Silpa Sadan

Silpa Sadana commenced work in 1922. It has aimed at revitalizing decaying crafts as also innovating craft-related activities to introduce them to local artisans. It has, broadly, a training aspect, a production arm (marketing) aspect, and a development aspect.

In its training aspect, SS (Crafts Centre) offers a 3-year diploma course in nine descriptions to about 80 regular students.

- i) Textile Technology (handloom)
- ii) Furniture technology and interior design
- iii) Pottery and Ceramic Technology

It also offers four 2-year certificate courses in

- i) Handmade Paper
- ii) Book binding
- iv) Batik
- v) Leatherwork

Most of the products of the SS are sold at its Sales Emporium in SN and through counters put up at the Pous Mela, Magh Mela and the Rathindra Shilpa Mela held once a year. Predictably, the SS has become the provider of bric-a-brac to Visva Bharti, in terms of its convocation scarves, uniforms, dress materials, parchments for certificates, files, bookbinding material, and some furniture, as per the needs of the University. Apart from this, four traditional village weavers, enlisted from nearby villages, produce handloom fabrics on a piece-rated basis, upon receiving raw materials from SS.



## Shona Jhuri Haat

The more organized craftsmen in Santiniketan sell their products through the local handicrafts shop. The kind of products one can find in these shops include batik leather products, batik clothes, kantha (hand embroidery) products, terracotta products etc.

There's a large section of craftsmen in Santiniketan operating on a smaller scale, who face difficulties selling their products through local shop. A need was felt to start a market which would allow these smaller craftsmen to sell their products independently. Shona Jhuri- Haat, haat meaning a make shift market was started few years ago, where these craftsmen assembled at a place called Shona Jhuri on every Saturday. This place offered these craftsmen to sell their products directly to the customers without having to depend on any middle man/shop. This started off as a small idea with 3-4 artisans selling their products initially. Today the no. of craftsmen/artisans selling their products here has increased significantly and this market is hugely popular amongst the local people and outsiders alike.





7/29/2010

08613002

Sanjay Nair

## The artisans

Staying in Santiniketan gave us the opportunity to interact with some of the artists /artisans. It not only gave us more insights about materials and processes, but also their lives and the problems that they face in this profession. Some of the people whom we met were:

- Mr. Bidyut Roy (Artist/ Architect)
- Mrs. Lipi Roy (Ceramics/pottery artisan)
- Mr. Kamal Malakar (Sola- Silpi artisan)
- Mr. Yosuf Ali (Gala artist)
- Mr. Deepak Biswas ( Wood turning craftsman)



7/29/2010

08613002

Sanjay Nair

5

## Challenges facing the craft industry in Santiniketan

- **Low income generation:** The revenue generated by selling craft products is not significant when one looks at the effort that is required to make them. This is one of the reason why the skills are not passed on to the next generation.
- **Lack of design/technology intervention:** Often the kind of products that the craftsmen create get constrained due to lack/unavailability of technology that they use. Also, there's not much variety in the kind of products that they make and consequently lesser innovation.
- **Low demand among middle class section of the society:** Most of the products made are show pieces and tend to have lesser utility value due to which the cost conscious customer refrains from buying it.
- **Lack of a strong supporting body for the craftsmen:** Unlike some of the developed nations like UK, USA etc. which have properly organized craft councils, which support the craftsmen to fund their activities, spread their network etc. India lacks a commonsupporting body.
- **Dependence on middle men for selling products:** The craftsmen sometimes don't realize profit on their products even if they are of high quality, due to dependence on middle men to sell these products.

## Hand Made Paper Section

The hand made paper section in Silpa Sadan is headed by Mr. Sanjay Goswami .

Hand made paper has several advantages like being eco-friendly (use of natural materials and industrial waste)and more strength (cross fibre bonding).

But due to higher capital costs and initial investments there aren't many units in this place.

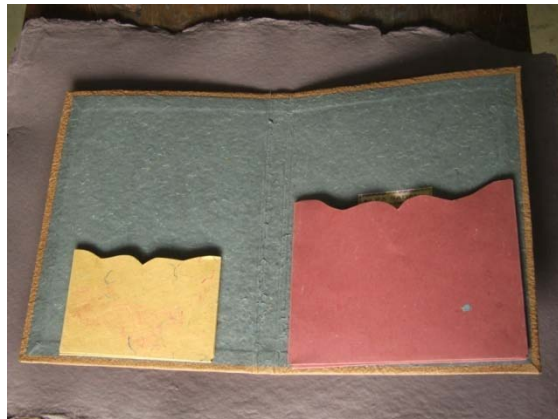
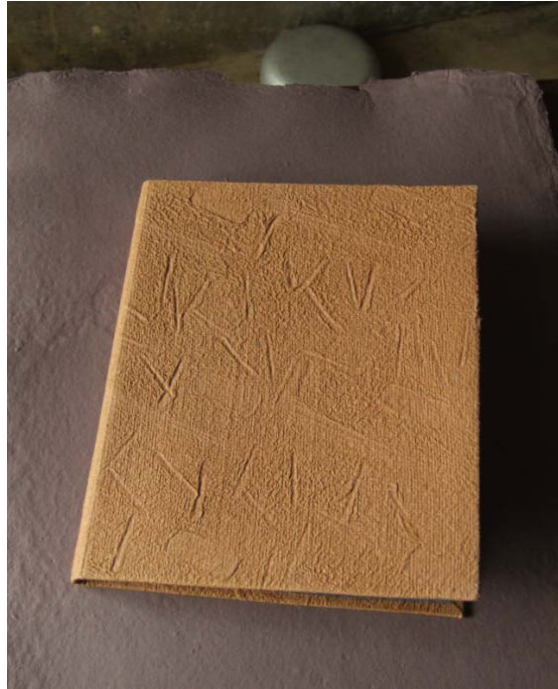
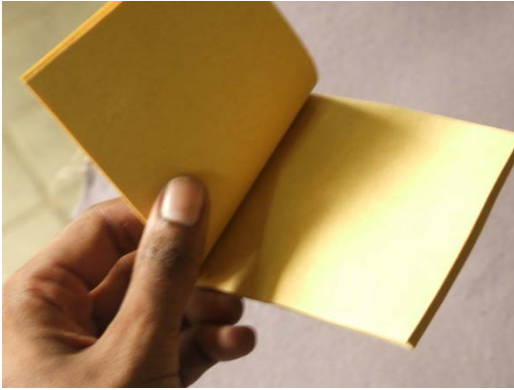
The paper can be classified on the basis of raw material or their composition/usage. On the basis of raw materials hand made paper can be broadly classified into those made from industrial waste and those made from agricultural waste.

On the basis of their usage and composition the types of paper made here are:

- Drawing Paper
- Bond Paper
- Water mark paper
- Writing Paper
- Tissue paper
- Filter paper
- Blotting paper
- Card sheet
- File board
- Straw board
- Grey board
- Wood finish
- Moonspace paper
- Album paper
- Marvell Paper
- Decoration paper
- Electrical insulation paper
- Offside paper
- Packing paper

Apart from these papers the section also makes paper pulp toys which are also sold through the emporium.

# Existing products



# Hand Made Paper Making process from Industrial Waste

- Raw material Sorting
- Cutting



- Dusting
- Beating (pulp making)



- Lifting

## Hand Made Paper Making process (contd)

- Pressing



- Drying
- Calendaring



- Cutting
- Packing

## Design Brief and Process

**Brief:** To design simple and cheap products that can be copied by the local artisans without difficulty using available resources.

After surveying the markets and looking at the existing products made in the section I made the following observations:

- There were no hand made paper products in the market.
- The products that they sell through the emporium don't have much demand.

After these observations I short listed on the products which I could explore using hand made paper:

- Hand made paper bag
- Paper Mats
- Packages
- Lampshades

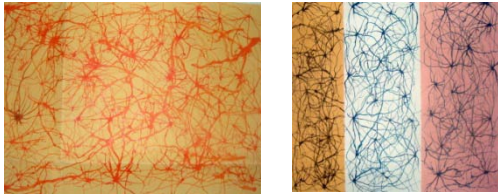
I got interested in the idea of making lampshades using this paper. The lampshades available in market were made of bamboo, cloth and terracotta.

Some of the problems I found with these products were:

- They were expensive
- Though they looked good aesthetically, they lacked basic things like frame, bulb holder etc.

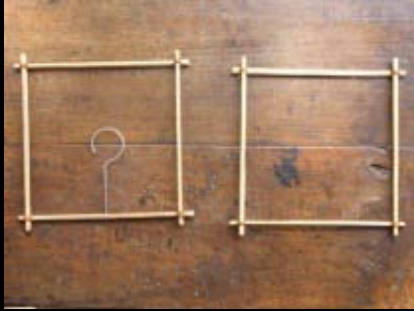
Mr. Vishal Bhand, HOD of Silpa-Sadana asked me to explore the possibility of generating a Batik like effect on the paper by blowing paint on it.

I started off by trying to blow ink (known locally as Chinese ink) using an empty pen body of a ballpen. I found that the ink is too diluted and when the paper is seen against light the effect is not significant. So I tried mixing the ink with other mediums like acrylic colour and found that there is a balance between the opacity obtained on the paper and its viscosity when one uses this combination.

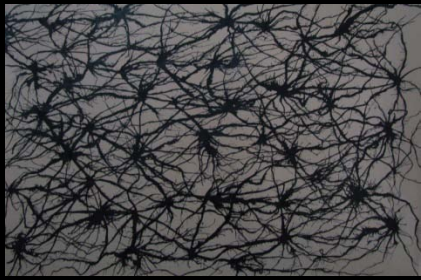


All the lampshades I made had this pattern. Initially a lot of time was lost making a frame for the lampshade. After trying out options like metal wire frame, I realized that the place lacked metal wire shops and workshop facilities. So, I decided to make use of locally available materials like plastic ring(used for shopping bags), bamboo sticks, fishing thread etc. The raw material cost for all these lamps are less than Rs.10/- The subsequent pages show the different forms of lampshades that I have explored.









08613002



Sanjay Nair



15





7/29/2010



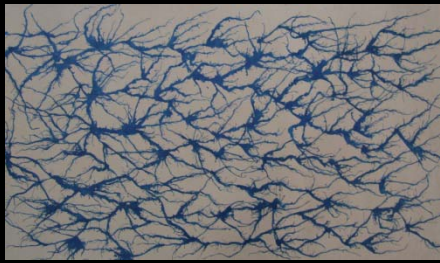
08613002

Sanjay Nair



17







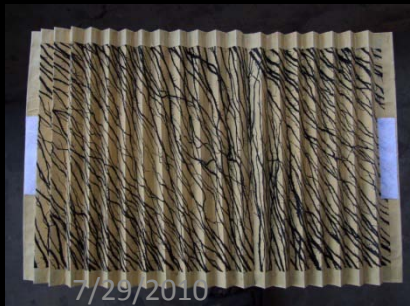
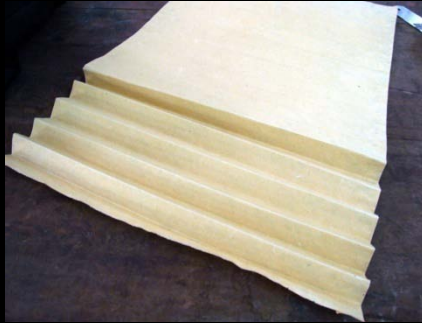


7/29/2010

08613002

Sanjay Nair

21



08613002

Sanjay Nair