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THE ART OF PAPER



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(Nenad, 2018)

THE ART OF PAPER

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When most people think of paper, the first thing that comes to their minds is the letter-sized plain white paper purchased in bulk at stationery stores for at-home printers. However, paper itself has a history that roots back to China and which then made its mark around the world as the process and materials were adapted to each of the countries resources available. In today's day and age where paper is vastly industrialized with an endless amount of variations, the limits of what one can make with paper are endless. Each type of paper redefines the end product as every type of paper delivers a different message. Amongst the variety of paper substrates available today, there are a few trendy paper types and uses for paper that stand out in 2020. Paper is as adaptable as water, it has many unique qualities and characterizations that define each project it is involved with. As every couple of years a new paper related trend emerges, it is more evident how paper can be a commonly used product in everyday lives but also transform mundane things into something spectacular.



THE HISTORY OF PAPER

The history of paper dates quite far back and has been adapted by different cultures, adding their own twists to the substrate to suit their needs. T'sai Lun is credited for creating the first forms of paper in 105 AD, which was during the Chinese Han Dynasty. The paper was made primarily from rags and then later made out of bamboo fibres as well. The Han Dynasty produced paper in multiple sizes, coats and dyes. China is known as the birthplace of paper, which then spread across Asia and eventually made its way around the rest of the world. As the craft of papermaking spread throughout the years, some adaptations included coating the substrate in starch, using water to power machinery, drying sheets of paper on ropes, and creating pulp from cellulose (*About Pulp & Paper*, 2020). Although wood grinding machines were invented in the 18th century and paper began to be made of wood pulp, hemp was also used in North America. Until the late 1800s, 75% of paper produced was sourced from hemp material. Hemp paper was considered an economically friendly alternative to paper made of wood pulp. Even the Gutenberg bibles were printed hemp paper. However, the production of hemp paper started to decline as the hemp plants were banned across America due to the psychoactive properties found in the plant (Harden, 2013). Papermaking remained an artisan craft until the industrialization in the 19th century. The demand for paper grew as paper making was spreading across the world and machines were constantly reinvented and improved to increase paper production speed. 20th century, paper became industrialized on a full scale as the production of paper became fully automated from pulping to papermaking, and finishing. In the 21st century, recycled paper became the primary source of raw materials for papermaking.

Paper is now innovative and creative with the chemical makeup for the different types of paper substrates, suiting various needs. The paper industry is also a lot more environmentally conscious as well (*About Pulp & Paper*, 2020). The industrialization of paper was only pushed in the last couple of centuries but have developed greatly in terms of production and economic consciousness. The development of paper when spreading across the world aided in the creation of multiple paper substrate to suit various uses of paper.



(Rice Paper - Old Post Cards, 2020)

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF PAPER

When creating a product that is to be delivered via paper, the type of paper can change everything about the message that is intended to be sent and the feeling that is going to be provoked. There are several qualities and characteristics that paper are made with. Some qualities include colour, coating, size, fold, thickness, transparency, strength, and much more. The combination of these characteristics creates various types of paper. Paper can also be selected by paper grade, which categorizes paper based on the qualities and its typical end-use; such as book paper, bond, and bristol (*Papermaking - Paper grades*, 2020). Being aware of these individual characteristics help navigate the specific paper types needed for the intended end-use and application. For example, a glossy paper would be chosen for photographs so that the colours are vibrant and the finish looks of high quality.

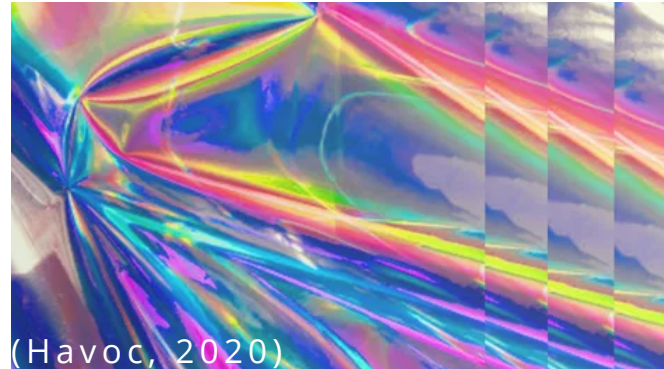
Meanwhile, an eco-friendly company might opt for the recycled uncoated paper since a glossy paper may not convey the eco-friendly branding since the glossiness could be flashy. When picking a wedding card to send out to relatives, the couple may pick a thicker cardstock with a glossy finish rather than a thin paper so that the card holds up over time and conveys the elegance of their wedding since thinner papers end up looking like store advertisement papers. It is also recommended to create digital mockups of products on their intended paper types to make sure it looks like what they want it to look like (French, 2015). The type of paper selected can either make or break the quality of the end product. Choosing the right paper is just as important as what the application is for, as they work hand in hand.



2020 PAPER TRENDS

TYPES OF PAPER

Holographic: Holographic designs have recently been everywhere from cosmetics to vinyl stickers. Specifically, holographic paper has been used in a lot of flashy packaging to capture consumers eyes. Holographic paper gets coated with a very thin layer of metal to reflect various colours depending on the angle the light is hitting the substrate. Holographic paper has the same visual effect as a traditional disk. (*What Is Holographic Paper?*, 2020)



Vellum: Vellum paper has been around for a while now but in recent times has been increasingly used in invitations. Vellum is a translucent paper that can be used for a variety of things like printing text onto it and layering the paper on a patterned paper and as tracing paper in drawing.



Kraft Paper: Kraft paper is a versatile paper that can be used for wrapping objects, making crafts, or rustic looking tags. As minimalist designs are seen everywhere now, kraft paper is often used for clean design due to its neutral tan colour. Kraft paper is unbleached paper and contains 80% virgin fibre wood/cellulose pulp (Velarga, 2017).



TRENDING PAPER CRAFT

Paper has always been utilized for various crafts and do it yourself home decor. Recently, many have people been taking up their free time during the pandemic to create pretty paper cutouts to hang on their ceilings. Most commonly, butterflies of various sizes are cut and attached to string, and then stuck to their bedroom ceilings. Some have even attached these paper butterflies along their windows so that the breeze gives the paper movement.



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