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Paper Trails

The Anatomy of a Book

Issue 06 . October 2015

PAPER TRAILS

Paper, one of mankind's most important inventions, lives as an ordinary item in our daily lives but have you ever wondered about the extensive history of this otherwise, everyday item? Looking back at the origins of paper, its invention and spread throughout the world, it is a truly remarkable journey worth celebrating.

From its beginnings in China as a rare and precious material, to the advances in its production through papermaking in the 19th century, paper has become an integral part of our lives. They are the vessel to knowledge, disguised in the form of books. Even before identities were established and statuses defined by what was worn; familial coats of arms and insignia on outer clothing to differentiate social class or occupation, the humble paper was already present as a carrier of

identity in which birth certificates and passports were printed on.

Today, paper has moved beyond its functional purposes. It can be reconstituted to be used as lampshades, wallets and decorative pieces to adorn your homes with. Designer paper of different textures and weights are here to stay. The mastery of paper creates art that is surprising and often changes our perspective of what paper can do. As an art medium in paper pleating, etching, sculpture and installation, these contemporary methods breathe new life into this everyday material.

Let's take a second to appreciate the paper, tracking its birth and migration through the world. Perhaps, we will learn to regard this seemingly everyday item as one to rave about.

References:

Basbanes, Nicholas A. On Paper: The Everything of Its Two-thousand-year History. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013. Print.
Weber, Therese. The Language of Paper: A History of 2000 Years. Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Editions, C2008. Print.



GERMANY

1390: the founding of what is possibly the first paper production mill in Germany but the demand for paper only increased with the introduction of printing in the 15th century.

IRAQ

794: First paper factory was opened. Paper was an integral part of the Middle Eastern economy.

CHINA

105CE: paper-like fibres made from hemp by Ts'ai Lun, a Han dynasty official.

MOROCCO

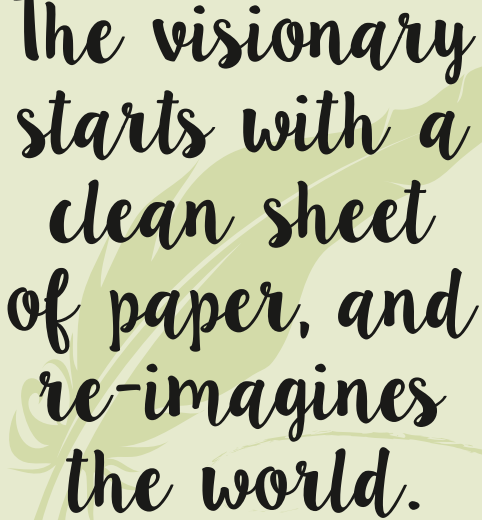
The Arab's conquest saw the spread of papermaking to the region and the first paper mill was set up in Fez, Morocco in 1100.

JAPAN

610CE: Paper began a slow migration to Japan, with Korea as the bridge between China and Japan.

FRANCE

Many believe that the paper mill at Troyes in the Champagne was the first, having been set up in 1348. However, the Auvergne and the Ard'che also claim to be the first, though without proof.



The visionary
starts with a
clean sheet
of paper, and
re-imagines
the world.

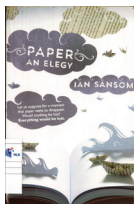
- Malcolm Gladwell

RECOMMENDED READS



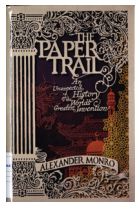
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Handmade Paper: From Rags to Riches
Edited By Laxmi Dass
Concept Publishing, New Delhi, India, 2009.
Call Number: English 676.22 DAS



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Paper: An Elegy
By Ian Sansom
Fourth Estate, London, United Kingdom, 2012.
Call Number: English 676.09 SAN



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The Paper Trail: An Unexpected History of
the World's Greatest Invention
By Alexander Munro
Allen Lane, an imprint of Penguin Books, London,
United Kingdom, 2014.
Call Number: English 676.09 MON

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Choosing and Using Paper for Great Graphic Design
By Mark Hampshire and Keith Stephenson
Rotovision Publishing, Mies,
Switzerland, 2011.
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