

WEARABLE ART

Mandurah

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Welcome to the Paper Category of Wearable Art Mandurah 2021.

This exciting new category is a celebration of paper as an inspirational material for wearable art. Working with paper as the primary material will provide rewards, challenges and the chance to experiment and innovate.

To help you get started, below are some Frequently Asked Questions about the Paper Category and paper wearable art. This document will be updated as new questions are raised.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

DOES MY GARMENT HAVE TO BE WEARABLE? WHY?

Yes - your garment needs to be wearable. After all, this is Wearable Art Mandurah! Garments in this category will not be appearing in the Showcase (appearing in a static exhibition instead), because we want to minimise the risk of damage to the garments that the rigours of the showcase entails. However, all garments must still be wearable. All pre-selected garments will be worn and photographed on judging day. Requiring the paper garments to be wearable, challenges artists to think about the engineering of the garment, the construction approaches used and the relationship of the garment to the body. It will push artists to a deeper engagement with their materials.

WHAT SIZE DOES MY GARMENT NEED TO BE?

Your garment size must meet the standard Wearable Art Mandurah sizing - i.e.

- Female: Size 8 -12
- Male: Size Medium

If you want include shoes the size recommendations are:

- Female: Eur 38-41
- Male: Eur 44-46.5

WHAT IS PAPER/HOW IS PAPER DEFINED FOR THE WAM PAPER CATEGORY?

Here is a dictionary definition of 'paper'.

“ A thin, flexible material usually made in sheets from a (compressed) pulp (containing cellulose fibres) prepared from rags, wood or other fibrous (plant) material, used for writing or printing on, for packaging, as a structural material, as a fabric substitute etc.” [yourdictionary.com]

If we take this definition of paper, it leaves a lot of scope about what types of paper you can use, but is also clear about what paper is and the processes through which it is made. **So your 'paper' needs to be made from cellulose fibres that have been pulped and compressed into sheets.** If you come across a material you think might fit the definition, find out how it is made and ask yourself:

1. Is it made from cellulose fibres?
2. Have the fibres/original plant materials been pulped/macerated?
3. Has the cellulose pulp been compressed into sheets?

WHAT TYPES OF PAPER CAN I USE?

You can use different types and weights of paper and paper combinations; including recycled and repurposed papers, new papers, handmade papers, commercial papers, card papers and text papers. Just be sure that your 'paper' fits the broad definition discussed in the "What is Paper?" FAQ.

Generally speaking, long fibres will create stronger and potentially finer papers, as will papers where there has been alignment of the fibres during the papermaking process. The length of fibres varies between different plants.

HOW MUCH PAPER NEEDS TO BE INCLUDED IN MY GARMENT?

Your garment must be 90% paper (hard materials). That means that you can still use, paint, dye, thread and adhesives etc to construct your garment but the physical materials ('fabric' – for want of a better word, and decorative elements) must be 90% paper. So think paper for the body of the garment, paper for embellishments such as beads, trim etc (as much as you can) and paper as the dominant stabilizing material if you are layering to create strength in your paper 'material'.

For blended papers and paper products you might need to calculate your proportions to meet the 90 % requirement. For example some brands of teabags are 80% paper and others are less. In this instance you could check with the manufacturer or try a dye test. Teabags with a higher percentage of plastic do not take up dye as well as those with a higher paper percentage.

You may need to experiment a little to achieve the effects and durability you want. There are so many types of paper to choose from for different elements of your garment and in different combinations, even before you start manipulating the papers.

CAN I USE MODESTY GARMENTS UNDERNEATH MY PAPER GARMENT FOR JUDGING DAY AND PHOTOGRAPHS OF MY GARMENT BEING WORN?

Modesty garments can be used if required for the times the garment is worn (i.e. on judging day or for your submission photographs). However, you should minimise the visibility and use of modesty garments so they cannot be construed to be part of the garment and therefore affect the 90% paper requirement.

WILL THE PAPER GARMENTS BE IN THE SHOWCASE?

No, the paper garments will not be appearing in the choreographed showcase. The garments that are selected during the final judging will be exhibited in a static exhibition at the Mandurah Performing Arts Centre.

HOW WILL THE PAPER GARMENTS BE DISPLAYED?

The garments that are selected during the final judging will be exhibited in a static exhibition at the Mandurah Performing Arts Centre during November 2021. They will be installed in the windows and lit up at night. Therefore, they will be visible to visitors to the Centre and to people passing by. A static exhibition changes the focus of the viewer, enabling close examination of the detailing and construction of each garment and therefore opens up a whole new range of creative possibilities for artists choosing to enter the Paper category.

WHEN WILL THE PAPER CATEGORY EXHIBITION BE AND HOW LONG WILL IT RUN FOR?

The Paper Category exhibition will run from the 4th of November 2021 to the 27th of November 2021. As it will run over the weekend of the Showcase, anyone who attends the Showcase will also be able to see the paper garments.

WHAT ELSE WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE PAPER CATEGORY EXHIBITION?

We are planning on including images and artist journal excerpts in the paper category exhibition so make sure you keep a record of your creative journey and process and take lots of good quality images of the different stages of your work (including photos of you at work) and keep samples of the experiments you try.

WHEN AND HOW WILL THE PAPER GARMENTS BE JUDGED?

Paper garments will be judged as all others are and will be eligible for major prizes.

Pre-selection by photograph will occur after the pre-selection submission closing date, which is the 23rd of June 2021. Successful applicants will be notified by the 9th of July 2021 and listed on the website.

Successful national and international pre-selection artists will receive a garment freight subsidy of \$100 AUD.

Successful pre-selection garments will be professionally styled and photographed on the judging days – the 27th and 28th of August 2021. Finalists will be selected at this time.

WHEN WILL THE WINNER(S) OF THE PAPER CATEGORY BE ANNOUNCED?

The winner(s) of the Paper Category will be announced on the 4th of November 2021 at the opening of the paper category exhibition at the Mansurah Performing Arts Centre.

ARE THE SELECTION CRITERIA FOR JUDGING THE PAPER CATEGORY DIFFERENT TO THE OTHER CATEGORIES?

There will be some variation in the selection criteria used to judge the paper category. The criteria will reflect the category brief, the differences in the exhibition format for the category and the unique properties and opportunities presented by paper as a material.

The judging criteria for the Paper Category are:

- Artistic Vision:
 - Articulated inspiration or narrative in your artist statement, with specific reference/association to paper.
 - The synergy between your artwork and your artist statement.
- Creativity and Originality:
 - Creativity of concept and use of paper.
 - Use of traditional techniques in a non-traditional way.
 - The presentation of unconventional ideas.
- Innovative use of materials:
 - 90% or more of hard materials are paper.
 - The innovation, manipulation and transformation of paper; including demonstrated engagement with the material qualities (e.g. fragility and resilience) of paper.
- Quality of craftsmanship and construction:
 - Excellence in form and technique, including consideration for static exhibition
 - Fit for purpose, including durability for wearable and static exhibition purposes without compromising the material nature of paper.
- Visual Impact
 - Level of visual impact from all angles
 - Level of visual impact of detail and textural applications

IS THE ARTIST STATEMENT FORMAT THE SAME AS FOR OTHER CATEGORIES?

Yes, it is. Remember to emphasise paper.

WILL I NEED TO SUBMIT ADDITIONAL PHOTOS FOR PRESELECTION?

As well as full-length photos of your garment, you will need to submit photographs that clearly show the detail of your work and the way you have treated your paper material. You will also need to submit full-length imagery of your garment on and off a body. So, in total you will need to submit four images. One full back and one full side view worn (on a body), one full front view off a body (not worn, but displayed as you think it best presents the garment) and one detail image.

There is also a guide to photographing your garment on the Mandurah Wearable Art website.

SHOULD I KEEP A RECORD OF MY CREATIVE JOURNEY?

Absolutely. Keeping a record of your practice and garment is always a great idea. It will preserve your ideas and learning and help you continue to grow as an artist. We are also planning on including images and artist journal excerpts in the paper category exhibition so record your creative journey and process, take lots of good quality images of the different stages of your work and keep samples of the experiments your trial. If you can get someone to take some photos of you while you are working, that would be great too.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CREATIVE CONSIDERATIONS I SHOULD THINK ABOUT IN DESIGNING AND CREATING MY PAPER GARMENT?

The Paper category has been included to specifically celebrate paper and set it as the hero element for the category. In designing and creating your paper garment there are a number of things you could consider.

Think about 'paper' from a conceptual and socio-historical sense. What is its history? How has it been used and evolved over time? What has been its importance over time and in different contexts? How is it used, practically and artistically? How important has it been in different times and places? How does

it intersect with and support other human activities? Consider paper also as an artistic genre and craft in its own right.

Think about the tension between the fragility and strength of paper, between the rigidity and flexibility of paper, and how you can utilise both and the tensions in your garment. How can you highlight, celebrate and best exploit the qualities of paper in your garment? Think about using papers that aren't automatically resilient and how you can create resilience in your use of papers, without losing their material nature.

What is it about paper that has drawn you to work with it as a material? Can you celebrate that in your creative processes?

These considerations may or may not be useful or inspirational for you and you may already have a specific creative vision and story in mind for your garment.

Embrace the possibilities for detailed and textural work that will be seen up close in the gallery setting and how this invites an intimacy in the viewing of a work. Unlike the non-paper garments that appear in the showcase, your garment does not need to make its strongest impact from a distance, as it will not be seen from a stage. Its impact will be at close quarters so make the most of this opportunity in your creative response.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS I SHOULD THINK ABOUT IN DESIGNING AND CREATING MY PAPER GARMENT?

Your garment needs to be constructed so that it strong enough to be wearable for photos and judging, so you do need to think about the practical aspects of your garment – getting it on and off a model, fastenings, sizing, stress points and how you will reinforce them; as well as aspects like silhouette and how your garment relates to and interacts on the body. However, finalist garments will be exhibited in a gallery exhibition so you also need to think about how your garment will perform off the body in a gallery context. Your garment may not be exhibited on a mannequin, so you need to think about form, structure, support and hanging (and the requirements that will best support your garment). This will definitely involve identifying hanging points on your garment that will maintain its integrity and be strong enough to support your garment for the duration of the exhibition. It may also involve padding props that give form to critical aspects of your garment when it is not on a body. Your dressing instructions will need to include these details.

Achieving a 90% hard materials paper quota might take some additional consideration. Apart from the papers you use that will be the visible fabric of your garment, there are many other ways of using paper in your work and

upping the paper ratio. If your garment needs lining or stiffening, think about using different types of papers that might achieve this. For example, tissue paper used as a laminated backing may work as well or better than a fabric base. Layering different weight papers can help achieve volume and structure. Serviettes work well for quilting and padding and shredded paper can be great for a lightweight stuffing. Think about using paper for embellishments – layering and appliqué techniques; creating beads from quilled paper; using paper clay for buttons and paper yarn and thread for knitting, crochet and lace effects, cords and hand-stitching. Cardboard forms can be used for creating structures and supported shapes. For non-weight bearing shape framing, rolled sheets of a stiff paper might work. There are endless possibilities for paper inclusion. Experiment and think paper first.

Papers with long cellulose fibres, such as hanji and kozo are stronger and lighter than short fibred papers and are often texturally interesting by themselves. Hand-made papers also offer textural and potentially strength benefits. Paper pulp can be shaped and formed and even used for painting. Good quality papers can be moistened and embossed either with presses or through hand shaping.

While adhesives will be necessary for some elements of garments, don't reach for adhesives as the first solution for every phase of construction. Adhesives are not always reliable over time in bonding and they tend to stiffen the material you apply them to. Stiffened paper can be strong but it limits the ways you can manipulate your paper and its possibilities for drape and form softness. Think about combining construction processes and demonstrating your skill with a number of construction methods and techniques.

Explore existing creative traditions and see if you can apply them to your work. Joomchi (felting), momogami, embossing, making your own custom papers, paper yarn making, and shifu are a few eastern techniques that there is widespread information available about.

Think about the full range of textile techniques and how they might be useful in your design. Even very fine papers can be heavily stitched with the right management. Remember that the paper garments will be seen up close, so the detail is a critical component of your work.

Finally, think about postage/freight. Your paper garment will probably be lighter than a garment made from other materials but any framing and heavily stiffened components may be less flexible and bulkier to pack, send and store. Another good reason for really exploring the range of processes you can use for construction.

This is not a definitive list of practical considerations but hopefully it covers the main bases and prompts you to consider all the possibilities for construction.

WHO CAN I CONTACT IF I HAVE MORE QUESTIONS OR AM HAVING DIFFICULTIES?

If you have specific questions about your garment or process or you are having any particular difficulties you might need support with, or you are not on Facebook; you can contact the Paper category coordinator, Anzara Clark through the dedicated paper category email wampapercomp@gmail.com

If your question is of a more general nature and it would be useful for all paper category entrants to know the answer, please post it on the Wearable Art Mandurah Designer Forum Facebook group (and join the group if you are not already a member).

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ASKED BY ARTISTS

CAN I USE MASKING TAPE AS THE 90% PAPER COMPONENT?

As a general guide the adhesive components of masking tape would not be counted, just the hard material components. Normally the hard material component of masking tape would be true paper, unless it had a plastic coating over it.

If you are unsure, check with the manufacturer or obtain the safety data sheet for the product.

CAN I USE 'SILK PAPER' FOR MY 90% PAPER COMPONENT?

'Silk paper' is not a true paper but more of a fabric. This is because

1. Silk is not cellulose fibre
2. 'Silk paper' is not made from macerated (pulped) cellulose fibres.

'Silk paper' is made by gluing the silk threads/fibres together in flat sheets. The glue medium that binds the silk fibres together may be cellulose based or may be an acrylic polymer. If an acrylic polymer is used, then the resulting 'silk paper' sheets would be compositionally closer to plastic or synthetic sheets than to paper.

Therefore 'silk paper' does not fit in to the working definition that we are using for paper.

However, it would be fine to use ‘silk paper’ for the 10% other hard materials.

If you wanted to make a traditional handmade pulped cellulose fibre paper and scatter some silk threads through it for embellishment (not so many that it was the main component of the paper) , that would not be silk paper but a true paper with silk added. Just remember the ratios.

CAN I USE BARK CLOTH (TAPA OR SAIPO) FOR MY 90% PAPER COMPONENT?

There are various arguments about whether or not bark cloth can be considered ‘paper’.

While bark cloth has been used for ‘paper type’ purposes (among other uses) – for painting on etc; from the perspective of the Paper category, the short answer is no, bark cloth cannot be used for the 90% paper component.

The paper definition we are using is cellulose fibres that have been macerated/pulped and then formed into paper (generally on molds). The cellulose has been disintegrated, the fibres macerated and then reformed.

Bark cloth uses sheets of bark that are adhered together by beating. So while the fibres are cellulose, they are not disintegrated and reformed as in the paper making process, the bark fibres are flattened and compressed.

There is quite a bit of discussion in the academic literature about bark cloth being a forerunner of paper, but it is not referred to as actual paper. It is referred to generally as cloth and is not recognised as paper or ancestral to paper by traditional papermakers and paper historians; although they do recognise a strong connection and acknowledge its pre paper use to write and paint on. So, in this sense it would have a similar conceptual/contextual relationship to paper as vellum (which is animal skin).

Bark cloth could be used as the other 10% hard materials but not as the 90% paper content.

HOW DO I TELL IF THE MATERIAL I WANT TO USE IS OR ISN'T PAPER?

The name of a material can be misleading. Just because the word ‘paper’ appears in it, doesn’t mean it is a true paper. For instance, ‘paper taffeta’ is not paper, but is a true fabric – woven (with a warp and a weft) from a fibre that may not be cellulose. In this instance, the term paper is used to describe the textural quality of the material, not the compositional elements or process.

‘Tear ribbon’ (often called paper ribbon) is similar in that it is frequently made from poly propylene and is therefore more like a plastic.

There are a number of ways to confirm whether your chosen material is Paper or not. The most obvious ones are to

1. Look for composition information on any labelling that comes with the product.
2. Check the product specifications on the manufacturer’s or seller’s website.
3. Contact the manufacturer or seller direct.

You can also test the material through:

1. Tearing and looking for a woven or structured fibre pattern.
2. Dyeing to check for colour uptake (many synthetic or plastic based ‘paper’ will not absorb colour well.
3. Soaking to see if the material becomes a pulp when wet.
4. Burning or singeing to see whether the material burns easily and leaves an ash residue or whether it melts and leaves a sealed raw edge.

You might need to use a few different strategies/tests to get the confirmation you want.

IS POWERTEX OR OTHER HARDENING, STIFFENING OR SCULPTING MEDIUMS CONSIDERED AS ADHESIVES OR DO THEY COUNT IN THE 90% PAPER REQUIREMENT?

Products like Powertex, Paverpol, Bondcrete and other adhesives do not count as part of the 90% paper requirement. However, consider how much and why you use hardening products in relation to the judging criteria. Remember that you will be judged on your innovative use and manipulation of the material nature of paper (its fragility and resilience) and how you bring that out in your work. Too much hardening or stiffening of paper could compromise your demonstration of the material engagement. So think about using such products only where needed. Remember too that paper garments will only be worn for judging and photographs so the durability requirements are different from other WAM categories.