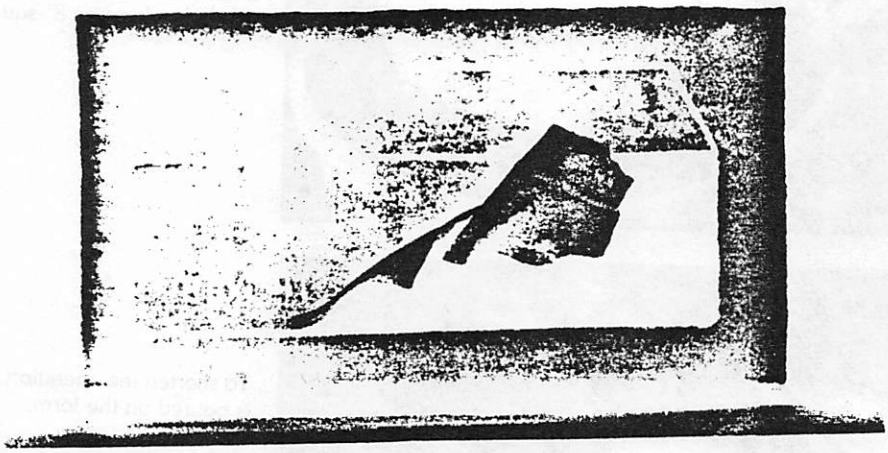
EXPERIMENTAL PRINTMAKING



Charles Hilger, "Box 41." First proof. 8½" × 16". Handmade paper on a laid-line screen. The box image outline is built into the screen with brass wire. The "torn" area is cut while the paper is wet (after it is removed from the press).

Paper Casting with a Screenless Mold

Paper pulp can also be hand-formed on a screen or over a mold. If it is cast on a screen, ¼-inch hardware cloth or nylon window screen edged with duct tape can be used. The paper pulp can be scooped out of the storage tank and poured or hand-deposited on the screen or over the mold. The pulp may be shaped, molded, and compressed by hand until the fibers start to link together. As long as water is still present, the pulp can still be manipulated. If it is desired, a sponge may be used to slightly compress it, while also drawing off some of the water.

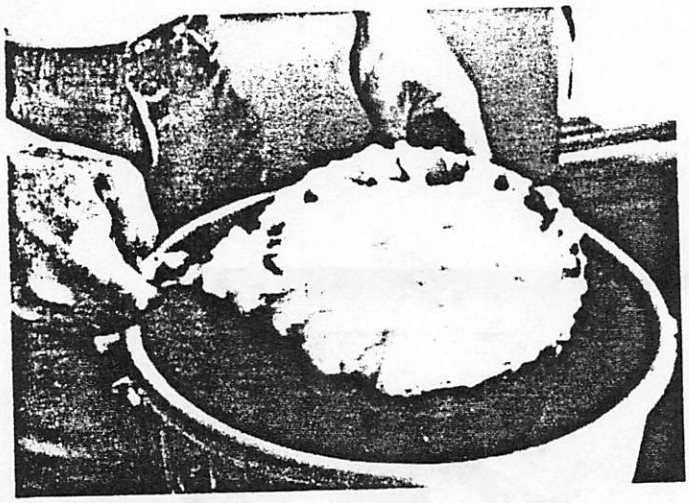
Optionally, cotton gauze (cheesecloth) draped over the wet paper pulp (doesn't stick) acts to hold the fibers in place. Terry-cloth towels can also be used. Of course, whatever the material chosen to compress and drain off water, it will leave its mark through its texture.

When most of the water has been extracted, the cheesecloth is pulled away and inclusions can be added. Hilger slices, penetrates, and otherwise manipulates the still viscous pulp at this point.

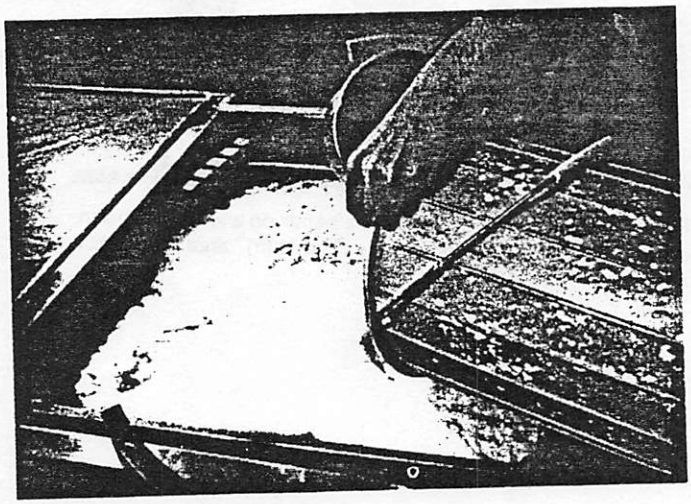
A fan (no heat) is the best vehicle for final slow drying of the pulp to minimize shrinking and warping (unless both attributes are desired). If warping is preferred, use a hair dryer.

CASTING AN OVERSIZED PAPER WITH A SCREENLESS MOLD

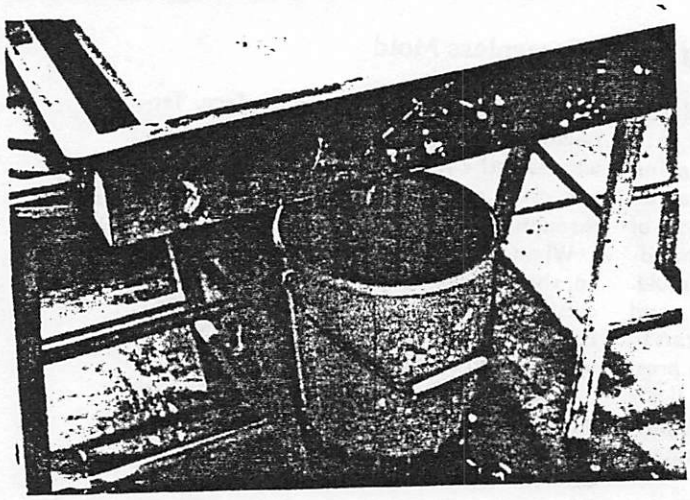
with Charles Hilger



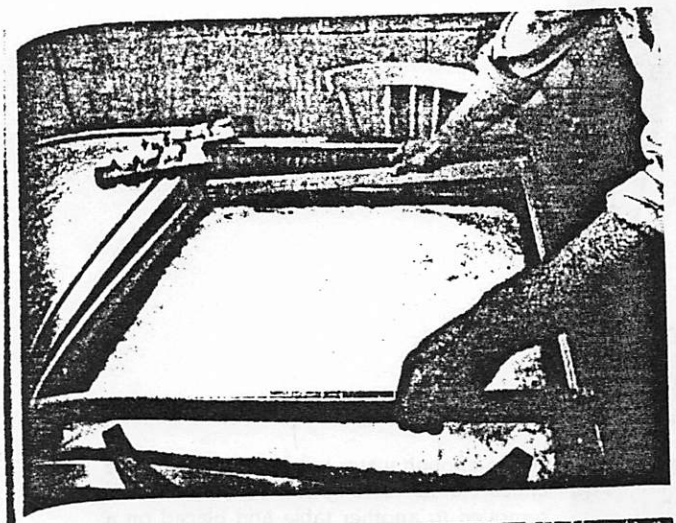
A pot of paper pulp is ladled out of the pulp vat and deposited over a piece of cheesecloth and nylon screening that is spread on a table. Twenty-four buckets of pulp are needed to form an 8'-square piece.



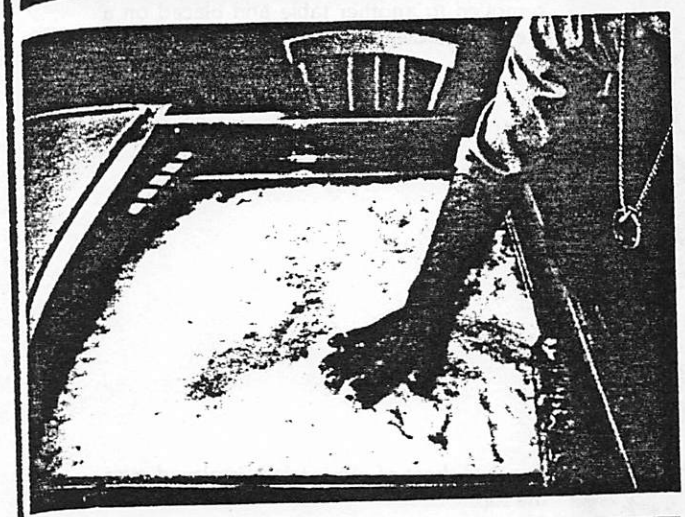
To shorten the operation, a part of the pulp is poured on the form.



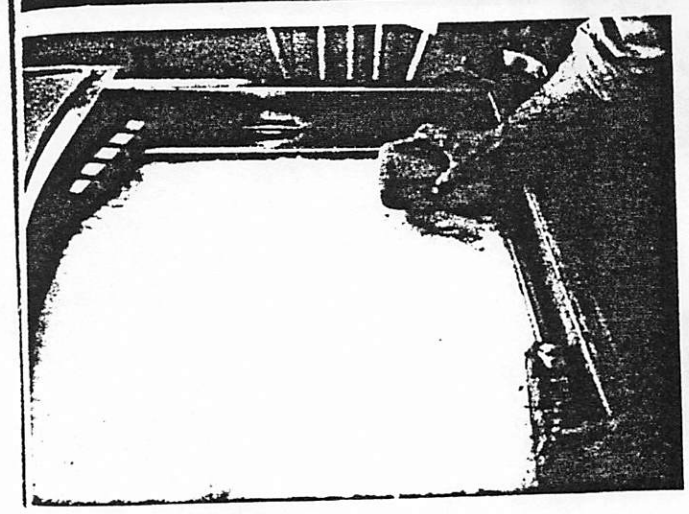
The table has a channel all around its sides and a drain for excess water to run off into a pail.



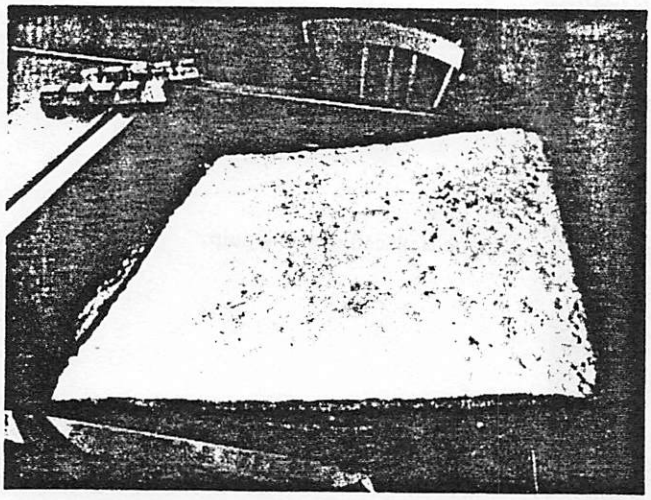
A frame is placed over the pulp.



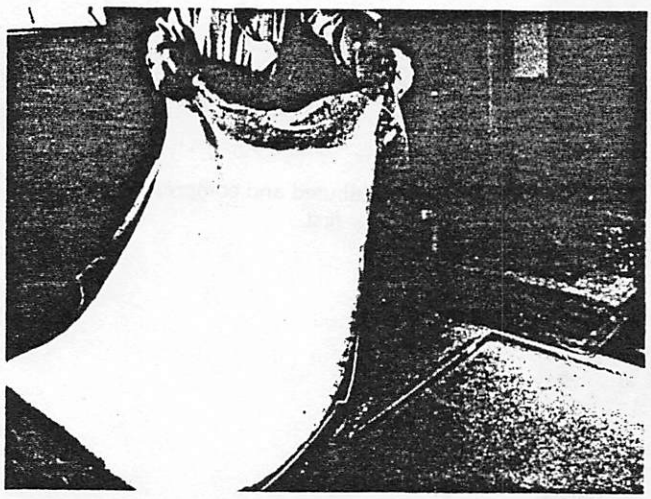
The pulp is distributed and compressed by hand pressure at first.



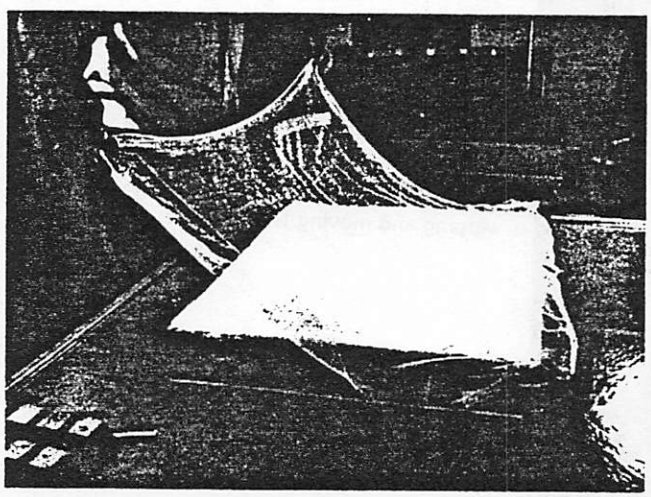
And more water is sponged off. (Note weights at ends of frame to keep it from warping and moving.)



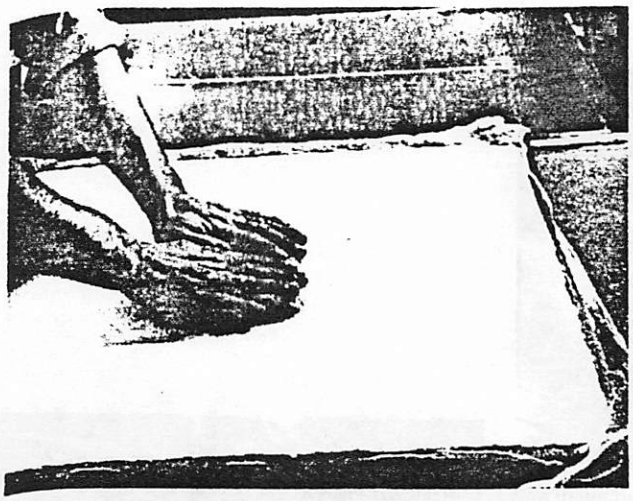
The frame is tilted to encourage further drainage of water.



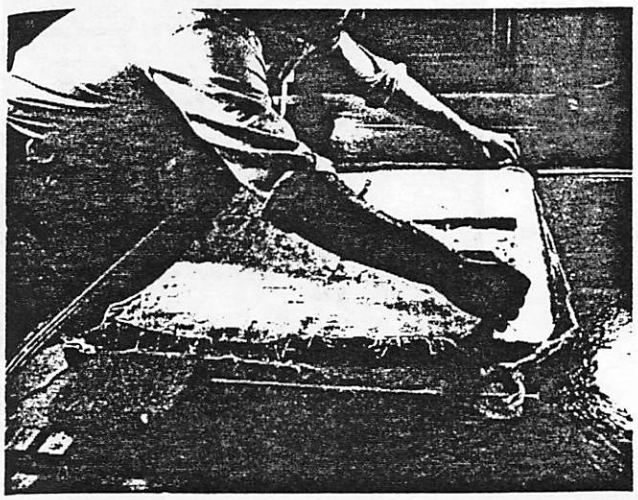
When enough water has been sponged, the cheesecloth/screening backed pulp sheet is removed to another table and placed on a piece of hardware cloth.



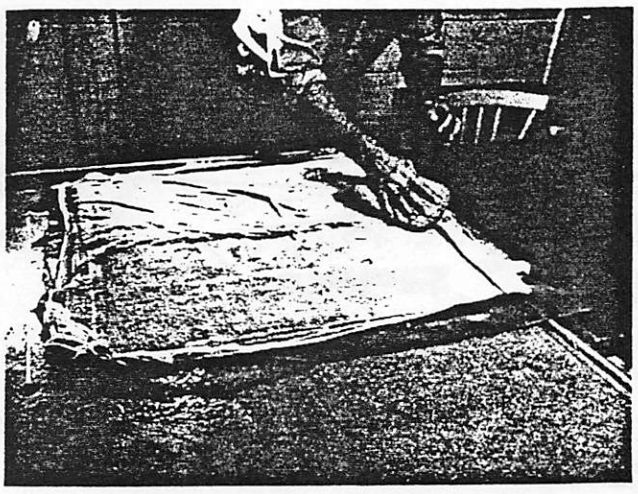
Another sheet of cheesecloth is placed over the top.



And the pulp is compressed further with a sponge with overlapping pressure, extracting even more water in the process.



A terry-cloth towel is placed over the cheesecloth . . .

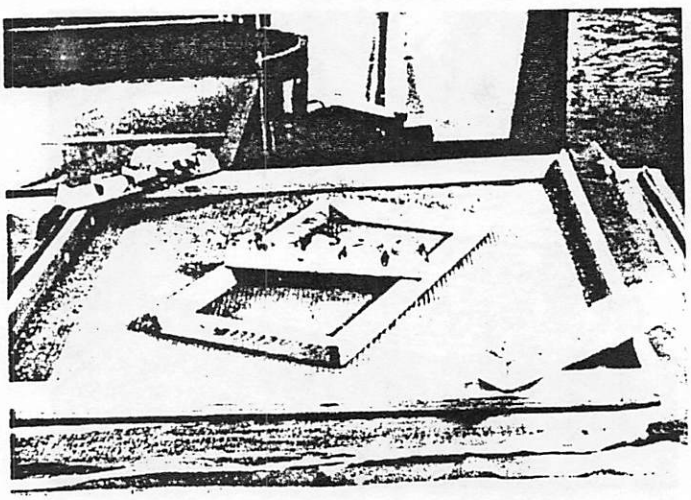


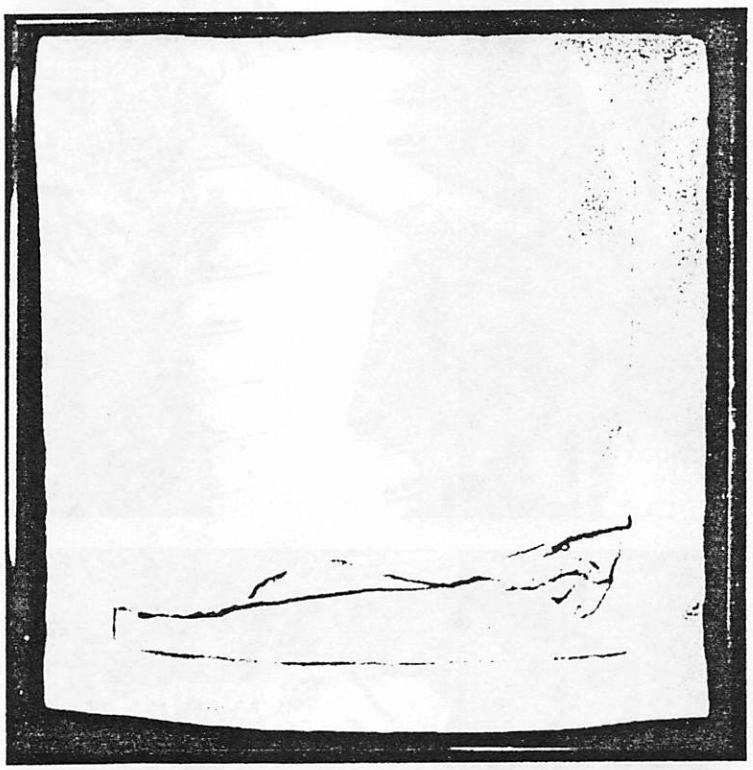
. . . to sponge off more water.

The top layers of cheesecloth and toweling are pulled away and a screen is placed over the top. As long as water is still in the paper, patterns can be made at this point.

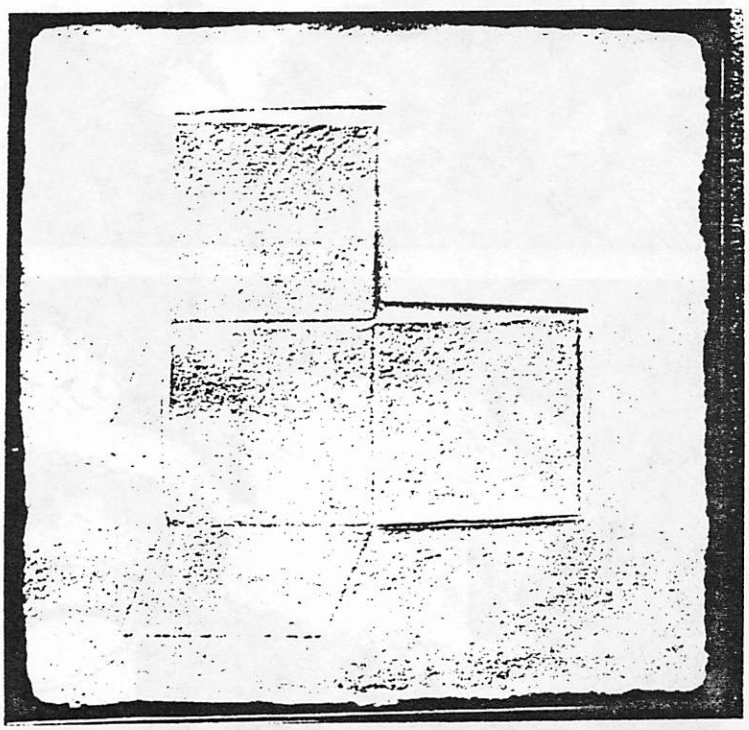
Here Hilger further compresses the paper.

Boards and weights keep the paper from warping in the drying stages. A fan is placed on the paper to aid in the slow-drying of the pulp.

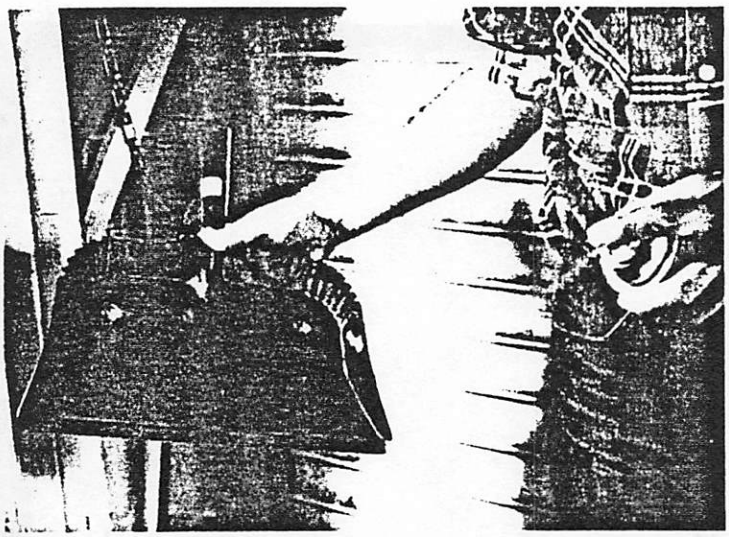




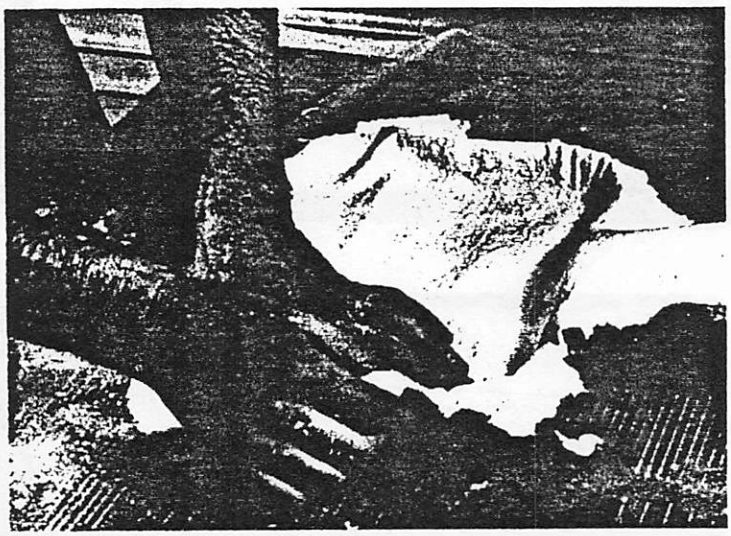
Charles Hilger, "Box 38." Cast paper panel, part of the *Box Series*, 1976. 58" × 58".



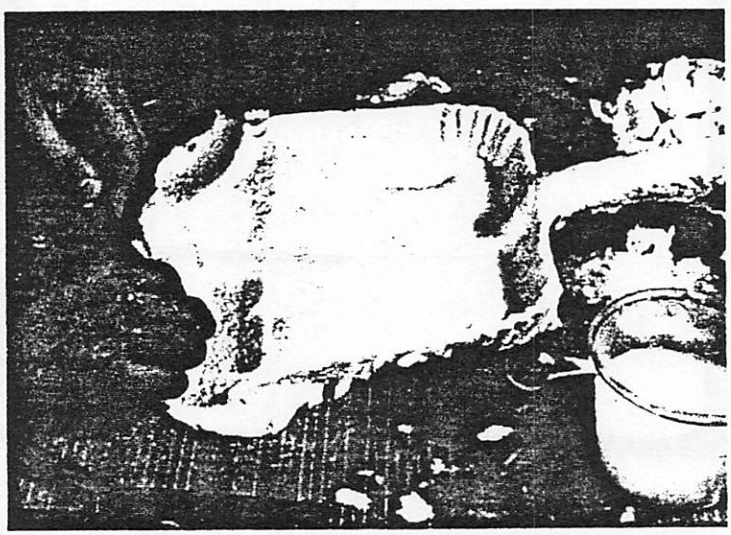
Charles Hilger, "Box 13." Cast paper panel, part of the *Box Series*.



David Whipple casts a dustpan in paper. Silicone is sprayed over the pan. (Silicone acts as a release agent.)



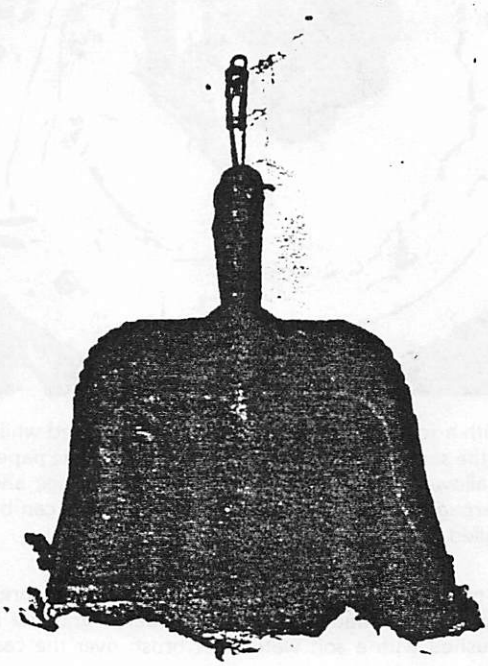
Sheets of wet/compressed paper are molded over the dustpan.



Edges are trimmed and the paper is dried with the aid of a fan that circulates the air.

David Whipple, "Cancelled Dust." Cast paper finished with powdered graphite over shellac. (Edition: 100.)

David Whipple, "Three Dustpans with Deckled Edges."

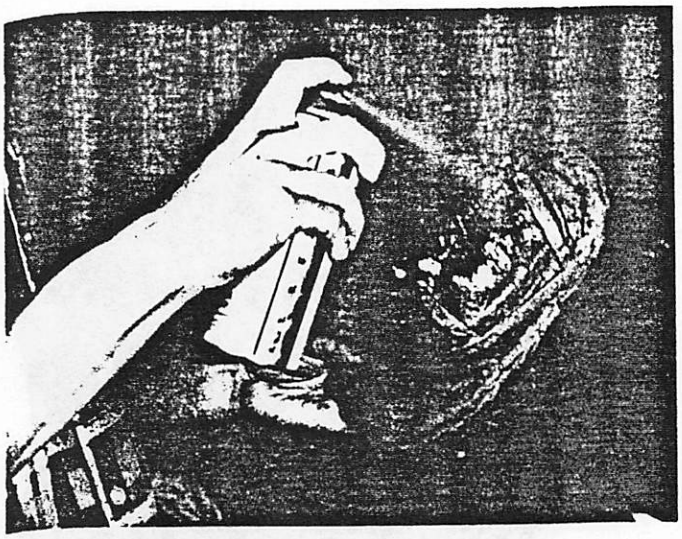


WILBERT FOO CASTING JOHN BATTENBERG'S "BONDAGE HEAD II"

Paper pulp is hand-placed into a RTV silicone mold that is braced in a plaster jacket.

With a small sponge, excess water is extracted while at the same time the paper is compressed. The paper is allowed to dry slowly to minimize shrinkage and warpage. It takes two days before the paper can be pulled from the mold.

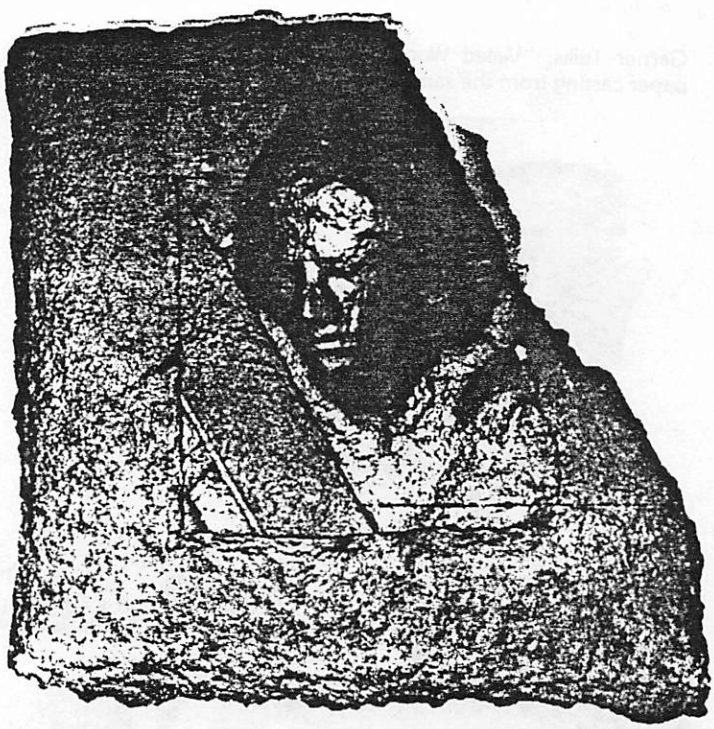
A mixture of three parts shellac diluted with three parts alcohol and three parts powdered graphite is brushed with a soft watercolor brush over the cast paper head.



Krylon clear acrylic spray is then sprayed over the mold . . .

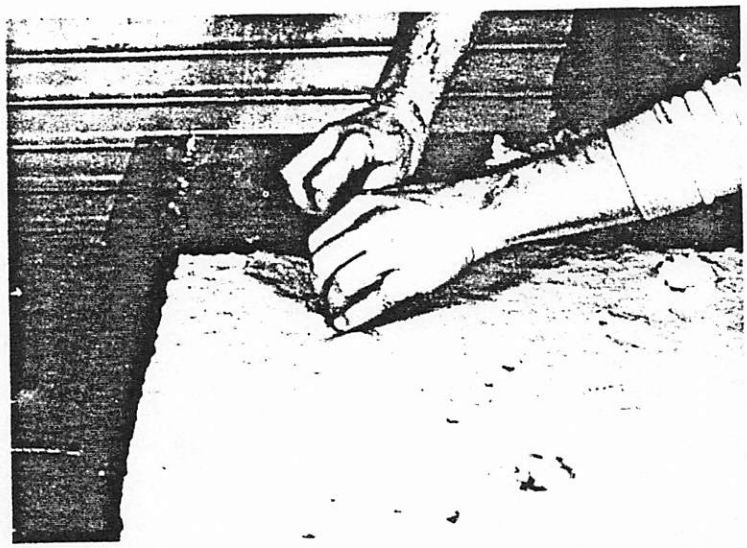
. . . and powdered graphite is dusted over the acrylic while it is still wet. The piece is then buffed to a shine.

Garner Tullis, cast paper head, finished with graphite.



Garner Tullis, a second version of the cast paper head on preceding page.

Garner Tullis, "Veiled Woman." A third version of a paper casting from the same mold.



John Babcock forms paper into sheet form and then textures it (while the paper is wet) by using hand manipulation and by dropping water on it from high.

John Babcock, "Luna 38." Cast paper. *Courtesy: John Babcock*