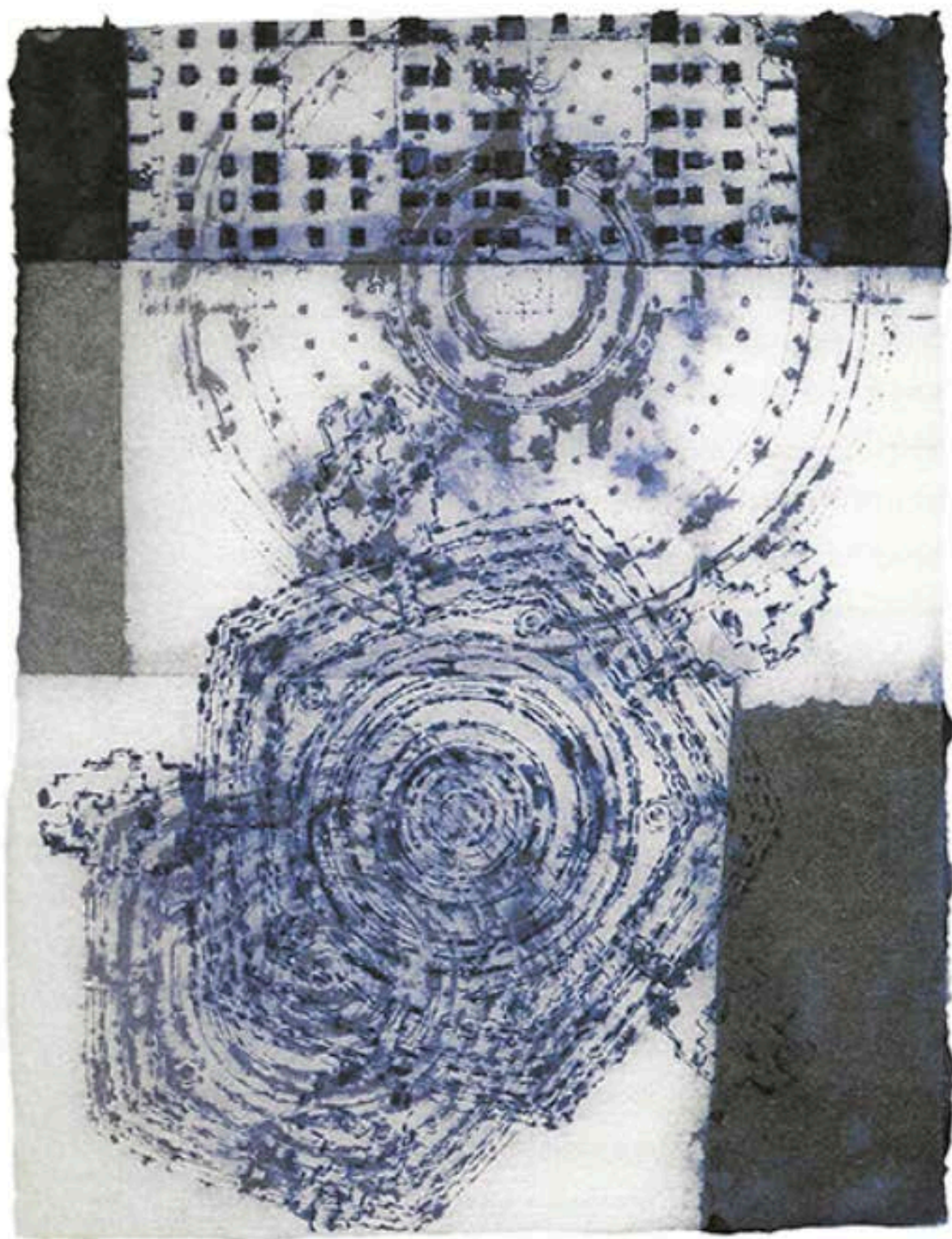


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On the cover: Arlene Shechet, *Flow Blue Series: Mirrored Sites*. Stenciled linen pulp on translucent abaca base sheet, pigment, 33" x 25", 2000. Collaborator: Paul Wong, assisted by Dirk Staschke. Photograph by Tom Warren. See review of *Rags to Riches: 25 Years of Paper Art from Dieu Donne Papermill*, page 29.



An abandoned paper mill above the town of Amalfi. All photographs by the author, except where noted.

Living Museums of Papermaking in Italy, Part 1

Lynn Sures

This article will appear in two parts, published in consecutive issues. This issue's installment focuses on paper museums in Amalfi; the Winter 2002 issue will cover facilities in Bevagna and Fabriano. ED.

In several different regions of Italy, devoted people are operating museums of papermaking, keeping alive the machinery and methods used there continuously since the thirteenth century. Amalfi, in Campania, is the site of the historic Amatruda and Cavaliere papermills, and the unique Museum of Paper. La Valchiera, an engrossing reconstruction of a medieval mill, is located in Bevagna, in Umbria. The Museum of Paper and Watermarks is in the famed paper city of Fabriano, in Marche.

Amalfi

Amalfi, built into a mountainside, is exceptionally picturesque: against a background of blue sky, houses dot the mountain, interspersed with flourishing terraced citrus groves. In medieval times the Amalfi valley was called the *Valle dei Mulini*, Valley of the Mills. A walk up the Via delle Cartiere brings you to the Cartiera Antonio Cavaliere, followed by the Museo della Carta, and finally the Cartiera F. Amatruda. Until forty or fifty years ago, the papermill street was an open waterway, and raw materials and bales of paper were carried by mule to the ships below in the port. Today the water is covered by the street. Climbing beyond the town, the road follows the stream, and one encounters vast structures in ruin. They are all papermills. On a thirty-minute hike one sees mills without roofs, their walls crumbling. Inside lies evidence of vats and beaters. I was told there are remnants of twenty-two mills in this valley. Located in rugged terrain without overland transportation ties to large cities, the Amalfi mills were left behind by industrialization and victimized by nature. Subject to a seasonally variable water supply anyway, they could not withstand periodic catastrophic floods, such as one in 1954 that destroyed thirteen of the sixteen mills then active.

The merchants of the maritime republic of Amalfi had been trading with Sicily and with the Arabs in North Africa since the tenth century. By the twelfth century, paper was being used in Sicily. Lucio Amendola of the Amatruda mill says that paper pro-

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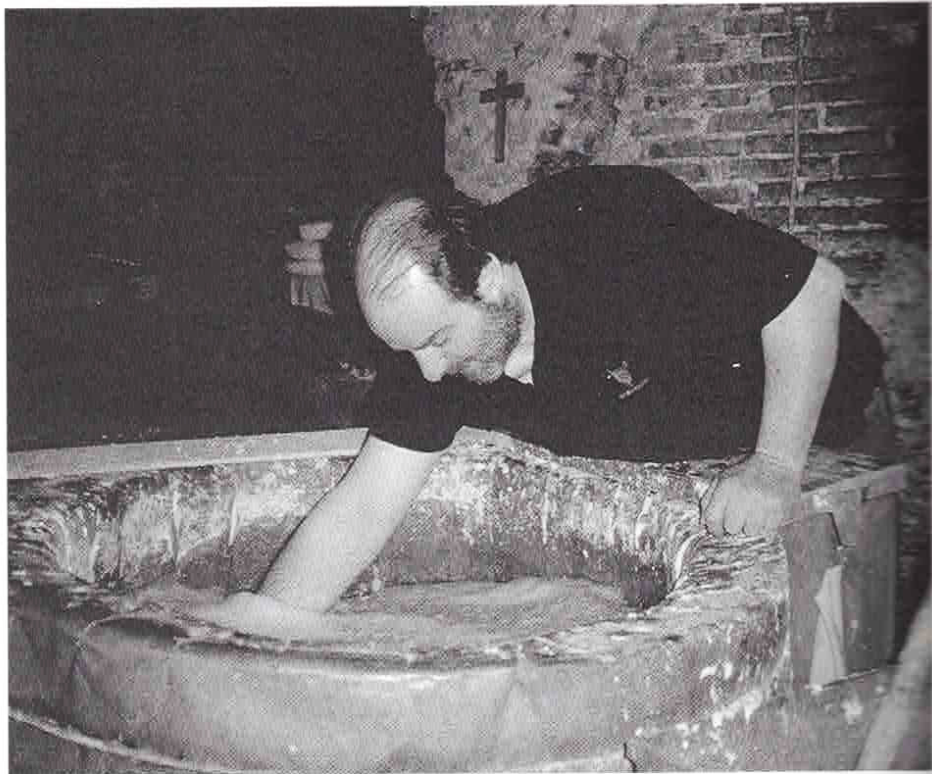
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Front cover: Bobbie Lippman. *Where I Go to Dream #7*. Artist-made paper using abaca, overbeaten cotton rag, and aqueous dispersed pigments. 22" x 19", 1998. Photograph by John Carlano. (See pages 34-39.) Back cover: Erica Spitzer Rasmussen. *Dirty Little Secret*. Mixed media with handmade paper (flax, acrylics, wax, horse hair). 48" x 64" x 42", 2000. Photograph by P. Ytsma. (See pages 2-5.)



Master papermaker Francesco Proietti at the vat in La Valchiera in Bevagna. All photographs by the author, except as noted.

Living Museums of Papermaking in Italy, Part 2

Lynn Sures

This article has appeared in two parts, published in consecutive issues. This issue's installment focuses on Bevagna and Fabriano; the Summer 2002 issue covered facilities in Amalfi. ED.

Bevagna

La Valchiera is a reconstruction of a typical medieval papermill, in the small town of Bevagna near Assisi, in Umbria. Bevagna has no history of papermaking, but a group of town leaders recently brought Italian papermaking to life in the town's ancient Roman ruins. For a local festival some years ago, residents worked purposefully to represent the medieval crafts of Italy. Master papermaker Francesco "Cecco" Proietti, a former accountant, says that building the papermill was "very demanding." He and others traveled to the paper museum in Fabriano, where they researched drawings and notes in the Library, then returned to construct the mill in the spirit of the originals.

Great care has gone into authenticity. Old railroad ties provided the wood for the building; the machines, built according to the old drawings, look original. Signor Proietti recounts, "After almost a year and much difficulty, the papermill was a reality. Here the seeds were sown that made me fall in love with this trade, ...[and] I decided to make a profession of it."

Almost the entire mill is housed in one cavernous stone room. A long, narrow anteroom contains a basket of rags and a lime-pit on the floor. A gallery wall features artwork given to the mill. Production paper and products made at the mill are for sale; Signor Proietti also uses them as examples. On one visit, the mill had almost nothing to sell because it had recently shipped most of its stock. Clients local and national desire useful articles, such as paper for business cards and wedding announcements. Painters and commercial engravers also buy the mill's paper.

The mill proper is in the lower section of an old Roman amphitheater. This setting creates an exciting way to see how the old equipment functioned, to sense the scale of the machinery, and to get the feel of what it was like in a papermill of the Middle Ages. (Recently, Signor Proietti told me that the mill will move to a new site within the amphitheater. They will dismantle and then reassemble the equipment.)

Signor Proietti is very accommodating and has welcomed my companions and me on several visits, something he does regularly for school groups and others. A high-

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