



KANDIS SUSOL STUDIO VISIT 2023



Working out of a studio tucked on the edge of her property, beyond an orchard and a quiet grove of aspens, Kandis Susol handmakes paper for her rhythmic, meditative encaustic sculptures. In the expansive forests of Orcas Island, Susol's working space is a converted barn aptly called Jakuan, or 'arbor of tranquility' in Japanese. Each morning after a bowl of Matcha tea and a walk through the apple and plum trees, Susol seeks contemplation and quietude in the studio, working on her most recent composition.





Beginning with raw kozo pulp from Japan, harvested from the inner bark of Mulberry trees, Susol suspends the stringy fibers in a large tub of water to then sift. With a deckle functioning as a wooden frame or 'fence,' the pulp slurry is scooped into a mold as excess water is drained off. Susol then adheres the still wet individual piece of paper onto a wood panel to dry. This process repeats for every individual strip of paper that eventually ends up on an artwork.



Before any additional application, the dried kozo paper retains a surprising sturdiness. The strength of the fiber is paradoxical to its feathery appearance, allowing Susol to comfortably manipulate and bend the paper further along in the process.

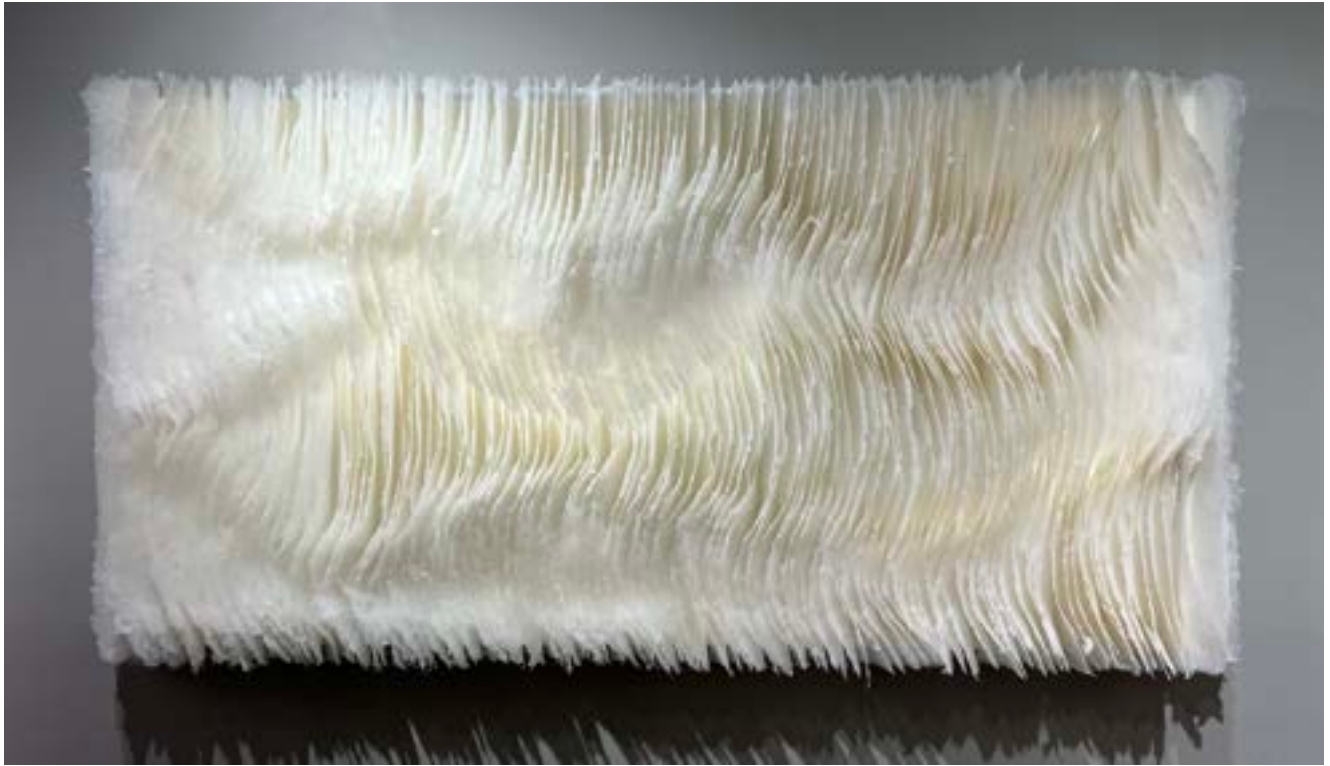




Susol then paints each sheet of paper with a combination of beeswax, resin, and iridescent pigment to both fortify the material and create a complex sheen that alters with changes in shadow and light. The finished sheets of paper are hung to dry, and then torn in half to create two strips from each piece of paper, both with a flat and a 'deckled,' imperfect side.

Central to Susol's artwork is a meditation on movement, both in physical states of flowing and conceptual shifts within the individual. The procedural nature of crafting such seemingly effortless compositions that ripple like wind or water contrastingly requires a calculated precision in Susol's practice. Working on a chalkboard, she works out directional movements for her paper that alternate inward and outward, interpreting the eventually flow of an artwork. The breezy, calming nature of finished artworks such as 'A Running Stream, The Cold Mountain Path' only arise from a thoughtful, meticulous rendering of the implied gestures.





‘A Running Stream, Cold Mountain Path’

2023

32 x 62 x 5 inches

Artist made paper encaustic sculpture

Once the movement of a piece has been planned out, Susol adheres the finished strips of paper onto panels with applied heat, always leaving the richly textured, deckled edge sticking out. Working in evenly spaced vertical lines, Susol applies different sized sheets of paper and smooths out their folds into the multidirectional motions. Always working vertically, Susol leaves enough space between each segment of paper such that the shadows and light shift as a viewer walks around the artwork.





Completed artworks are imbued with Susol's entire ideology of connectivity and presence. Her daily practice of 'in the moment' work, in which she maintains the meditative energy of her everyday life, complements the sculptural paper artwork in its soothing propulsion. The translucent fibers neatly rustle against each other, pulling from the trees on her property, the gentle breeze, the wholeness of nature around her.

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