



BAMBOO PAPER

(This technique can also be used with silk or rayon fiber)

Materials

- Bamboo fiber (a 2 oz pack will make 4-6 letter-size pieces)
- Liquid soap (Synthrapol, dish washing soap), white glue
- Nylon or polyester netting (It can be re-used, you will need a top and a bottom piece for each piece made in a session)
- Something to dab on water and glue, such as a small chunk of foam or sponge.
- A work surface that tolerates water and glue. I use cafeteria trays, a vinyl or heavy plastic cover will work

Lay down one piece of mesh. Pull off wisps and tufts of fiber, and arrange them on the mesh. Be sure that your hands are dry and non-sticky. Move gently, so that you do not dislodge the fiber already in place as you add to it.

One approach is to make a fairly even layer with the fiber going in one direction, then another at right angles to it. More fiber will make thicker paper, but a surprisingly sparse amount will still hold together. As a very approximate rule of thumb, 2 oz of bamboo fiber will make 4-6 letter-sized pieces.

When you are satisfied with your arrangement, lay the second piece of mesh on top, carefully. Put a very small drop of soap in a cup of water. Dab this solution on. Dampen everything, but do not make it out-and-out soggy. Flip the fiber sandwich over to work on the other side.

Time for glue. Dilute it, about one part glue to two parts water. Again, this ratio is approximate, and will vary with the type of glue and the degree of stiffness desired.

Wipe excess glue off of your work surface, and anything else you want it off of, before it dries.

Hang or lay the netting-encased paper to dry. Hanging will allow excess moisture to drip off. You can remove extra water with your foam or sponge. Or just wait for it all to dry.

When the work is mostly dry, you can remove the netting to see your results. If you want to shape your paper, drape it over an appropriately shaped object. Leave the layer of netting touching the mold in place. Remember that you will want to remove the mold, so don't trap it or the netting.

Trim the edges with a scissors, or leave them rough.

This is just a starting place, do try whatever comes to mind. Play every day.

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