

The website for Jack-of-All-Trades artist Olivia Snyder

- [« Addendum... Mixed Bag »](#)

Main Menu

- [Scripto Continuaia: Blog](#)
- [Fine Art](#)
- [Graphic Design](#)
- [Automata](#)
- [Stuff for Sale](#)
- [Family Only](#)
- [Patchwork Faces](#)

External Links

- [Internet Nest: LiveJournal](#)
- [Stuff for Sale: Etsy Store](#)
- [DeviantArt Doodles](#)
- [Flickr Cellphone Photos](#)

Of Interest

- [I Hate Copperplate!](#)
- [Nicole Mills](#)
- [Drawn.com](#)
- [MAKE:](#)
- [CRAFT:](#)

• Recent Posts

Grass Paper

- **June 23rd, 2005** • • [experiments](#), [how-to](#), [papermaking](#) •

I mow a lawn on a regular basis, and wondered what I could do with all of the extra grass clippings. Maybe I could...make paper? Yes! This week I embarked on a “make paper out of grass clippings” project. I’ll gladly share the process and the results, but I don’t think I would do it again. The smell of cooked/soaking clippings makes me want to retch now. I mean it, I almost vomited at one point in this project. Fortunately, the smell of fresh-cut grass doesn’t smell remotely like my project, so I can still enjoy that summer pleasure.

On to the paper!

1) Collect clippings. I estimate that I used about 8 cups of freshly clipped grass to start. The lawn mowed for them was free of poison, fertilizer and animal droppings. (That might’ve made it smell *worse*.)




2) Cook clippings. My goal here was to soften the clippings so that they would break up better. OH MY GOD this part stank. The whole apartment reeked of cooking grass. If you try this, make sure there’s plenty of ventilation. Blech. I added about 1/2 cup of baking soda to help the softening. (Most papermaking



About

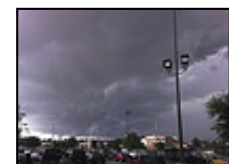
Olivia Snyder likes getting her hands dirty and making things. She writes about stuff she does here on this blog.

Communicate

- [AIM Status](#)
-  olivia@pinkfrog.net

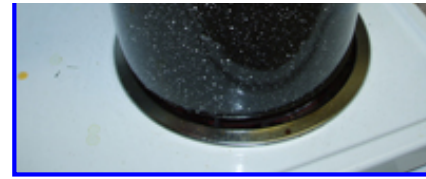
Cellphone Stream

www.flickr.com



- [Unrelated Note](#)
- [Cheapskate](#)
- [Purse Mark II](#)
- [It's Maaaaaagic!](#)
- [Venture](#)

recommends *washing* soda, but baking will do in a pinch. Or if you're poor.) The grass was cooked for about an hour.



More of
pinkfrogdotnet's
photos

• Archives

3) Blend cooked clippings. This part looks truly vile. They should make people on those crazy TV game shows drink cooked grass shakes. Gag. Most of the clippings broke up fairly well; most pieces were about 1/4in-1/8in long. Not bad!



Shopping

4) You can go two ways on this one. Either make pure grass paper, or, mix the grass pulp with recycled paper pulp. I chose to make pure grass paper first.



5a) Grass paper. There's probably about 5 gallons of water in the tub, and all of the cooked clippings. I slipped the deckle in and ewwwwww the water was extra slimy. A fairly thick sheet was dumped on a drying rag and proceeded to smell like cooked grass. Blagh.





5b) Grass paper with recycled pulp. I simply added about 3 cups of pulp I had on hand to the grass tub and mixed together. The sheet pulled from this mixture looked much less like a square mat of pond muck.



6) Drying. The Texas heat is perfect right now; no humidity, and 90 degree weather. The paper dried overnight.



This project makes me cringe now. I would gladly try again with dried straw, but my attempts to use something I had an abundance of didn't work well enough for me. The main problem was the "Gag Factor." Oh yeah, you probably want to hear about my near-vomit experience? A portion of the clippings I left in a bucket to "cook" in the summer sun. I would swear that something had DIED and was ROTTING for several

days in that bucket instead of grass. Cleaning out that bucket was a real treat, I tell ya. Admittedly, the finished result looks quite nice. The paper should get more of a golden hue as the grass dries completely. But darn it, all I can think of when I see the sheets is that awful smell!

6 Responses to ' Grass Paper '

Subscribe to comments with [RSS](#) or [TrackBack](#) to ' Grass Paper '.

1.

Nicole said,

on June 24th, 2005 at 6:09 am

I love reading about your projects. The pictures help a lot too. 😊 I'd like to see the paper once they dry.

Who knew grass could smell so vile? :O

P.S. Can we see pics of the shirt you made for your dad? 😊

2.

Olivia said,

on June 24th, 2005 at 7:55 pm

I'll totally get some pics up of the finished paper. I want to wait until it "goldens up" a bit, which, with the heat shouldn't take too long!

And I think I'm going to have to catch my dad to get a photo of him in those shirts...

3.

camille said,

on July 7th, 2005 at 11:41 pm

i like reading your website especially the paper-grass making because its my research paper in my school. I'm planning to try your project... thanks a lot camille

4.

Anonymous said,

on January 23rd, 2006 at 4:00 am

thanks i have now my research topic at last!!!

5.

Anonymous said,

on April 26th, 2006 at 8:24 pm

I did an experement independant of this, and have some suggestions:

- 1) use allready dry clippings, and pre-blend prior to cooking. This improves the fineness of the end product, and reduces processing time somewhat.
- 2) USE BLEACH. Take the pre-blended, dry clippings and add about a cup of straight bleach. This will produce prodigious ammounts of foam, as it breaks down various protien compounds inside the grass. It also helps to soften the grass fibers themselves somewhat in a chemical manner. Adding bleach prior to cooking replaces the “Boiled grass” smell with “My god, boiling bleach!” smell, but at least then you can blame it on cleaning the bathroom..... USE A VENTILATOR!
- 3) Cook for several minutes, until you start to see bits of the grass floating in a manner simmlar to a very coarse pulp. STRAIN the mixture through a section of polyester or nylon fabric (tight weave– an old sheet works well) and squeeze out all the liquid. Place the wrung out chunks of coarse pulp back into the blender, and add a fresh cup of bleach. Blend on low setting. YOur will notice a temporary lightening of the fibers– this is good, since we want to dissolve all that nasty stuff in the grass to get a nice light colored paper.... Blend until smooth and creamy, by slowly stepping up the power on the blender. If it is too thick add more bleach. try to avoid adding water at this stage.
- 4) Once nice and creamy, return to the cookpot and cook some more. If you notice any separation (heavy bits going to the bottom of the pan) while cooking, then simmer at medium heat for 15-20 minutes, then return to blender and blend again. Keep cooking/blending until it no longer separates, and has a decidedly ‘cream of wheat’ consistancy.
- 5) Strain again through the cloth. Be sure to wash the cloth first from the previous straining, to remove any large fiber chunks that evaded blending. Once strained, return to blender for the final time, and add another cup of bleach. Blend throughouly. You will notice by now a DECIDED lightening of the product, and it should even RESEMBLE cream of wheat completely by now. (If not, keep blending-cooking-blending-cooking-straining-bleaching until it does).
- 6) Cook on medium heat several minutes. If the mixture darkens, strain immediately, and add more bleach. Once the mixture remains light, fluffy, and cream colored after prolonged cooking it is time to strain, and RINSE.
- 7) Take the strained chunks and return them to the pan. Add hot water to re-melt the

chunks into fluffy paste. Cook on the stove 15 to 20 minutes longer. Strain through the fabric again, return the chunks to the pot, and add water— repeat 3 times. By the end of the 3rd washing, your pulp should be more or less bleach free, and ready for couching.



Thin the mixture in your pot to a suitable consistency, and pour into your resevoir. Get out your mold and deckle, and prepare some paper. The grass clippings from my lawn made a nice cream colored paper this way.

6.

Olivia said,

on April 27th, 2006 at 10:07 am

Interesting on the alternate grass-clippings technique.

Yeah, I had an afterthought about drying the grass before-hand; that would probably make it similar to using straw. Upon doing some research, I found that when using woody plants for paper, using sodium carbonate (washing soda, different than sodium bicarbonate or baking soda) is good to use. If a stronger effect is desired, use sodium hydroxide or lye. WEAR your gloves and goggles and remember to always add the lye to water never water to lye (it may splash into your face).

I'd only caution about boiling bleach because of the release of chlorine. Heating bleach would make it *highly* aggressive (read: dangerous) until the chlorine dissipated. In addition to using a ventilator, I'd use a respirator, open all the doors and windows and turn on all the fans; but I'm fairly paranoid about evil gasses!

An alternative to chlorine bleach might be oxygenated bleach (like Oxyclean) which would help to cut the color, if that is what is desired. Whenever I make paper, I only add a bit of chlorine bleach to the pulp to prevent stuff from growing in the water.

I probably should post a follow-up to how my paper actually looked when dried. The grass/pulp blend dried with a beautiful cream color, no chemicals necessary! The pure grass paper dried to a lovely golden color and smells like fresh hay. (A contrast to the vile cooked grass smell it had when fresh!)

Leave a reply

Name (required)

Mail (will not be published) (required)

Website

Copyright © 2008 Olivia Snyder pinkfrog.net

The website for Jack-of-All-Trades artist Olivia Snyder

- [It's Maaaaaagic!](#)
- July 10th, 2008 • [0 Comments](#) • [experiments](#), [fun stuff](#), [pottery](#) •

Main Menu

- [Scripto Continua:](#)
[Blog](#)
- [Fine Art](#)
- [Graphic Design](#)
- [Automata](#)
- [Stuff for Sale](#)
- [Family Only](#)
- [Patchwork Faces](#)

External Links

- [Internet Nest:](#)
[LiveJournal](#)
- [Stuff for Sale: Etsy](#)
[Store](#)
- [DeviantArt Doodles](#)
- [Flickr Cellphone](#)
[Photos](#)

Of Interest

- [I Hate Copperplate!](#)
- [Nicole Mills](#)
- [Drawn.com](#)
- [MAKE:](#)
- [CRAFT:](#)

• Recent Posts

[It's Maaaaaagic!](#)

• July 10th, 2008 • [0 Comments](#) • [experiments](#), [fun stuff](#), [pottery](#) •

Honestly, these are probably prototypes. I'm still getting used to this whole "painting with glass" thing. The "photographing super-shiny objects" issue is a learning experience as well. In any event! Here is my magical plate and bowl set. Glitter is difficult to photograph in the first place, the glitter detail I put on the unicorn and the fairy don't seem to photograph well at all! (I promise, they're all sparkley and cute.)




My intent was to create something just a little cheesy, hence the "Believe in your dreams!" and "Magical Bowl" bits on each plate. I assume the urge to write on stuff will pass; as of now I find the idea of labeling kitchenware hilarious for some reason. How delightfully juvenile.

About

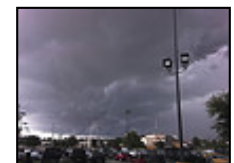
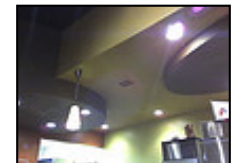
Olivia Snyder likes getting her hands dirty and making things. She writes about stuff she does here on this blog.

Communicate

- [AIM Status](#)
-  olivia@pinkfrog.net

Cellphone Stream

www.flickr.com



- [Unrelated Note](#)
- [Cheapskate](#)
- [Purse Mark II](#)
- [It's Maaaaaagic!](#)
- [Venture](#)

• Archives

[My First Bag](#)

• **March 14th, 2008** • [3 Comments](#) • [experiments](#), [screen printing](#), [sewing](#) •



More of
[pinkfrogdotnet's](#)
photos



In November a friend of mine visited Japan and of course I asked her to pick up some cute webbing and ribbon I saw online at a shop she would be near. She came back with some really cute orange webbing with tulips on it and I immediately knew I wanted to do something special with it. But what? There it sat, waiting for a purpose.

Shopping

A few weeks ago was our second anniversary. Michael thought I would like the [traditional gifts better than the modern ones](#): last year I got a stack of awesome paper and this year I got a bunch of fabric. (Second year is cotton.) What to with my traditional pile of brown duck cloth? Why, attempt to make an awesome bag of course. A trip to IKEA for a cool-looking liner fabric and a few dozen more trips to the craft store for buckles, thread, zippers and rings: I got all my supplies! It took a couple of on-and-off weeks of work to puzzle out how to make my ideal bag. I loosely followed this [handy guide](#) I found on [CRAFTzine](#) (In addition to [another helpful](#) one on how to sew a two-sided strap.).

So here you have it, my first bag.



Overall it turned out pretty good, I'd say! I originally intended to use it to replace my purse entirely, but it's just too big for that. So, I made an accessory purse for day-to-day use when I don't want to haul all my supplies around in a big bag. (Or when stores make me leave a

big bag up front while shopping.) I re-used an old stencil for the front since I like it so much, the big weenie dog. The entire bag is padded with an old U-haul moving pad left-over from a move. I also put a piece of masonite in the bottom of the bag to add some stability after I finished sewing. The strap is double-sided with a pad (also made from U-haul padding) for added comfort.

[Oil](#)

• **August 20th, 2006** • [3 Comments](#) • [experiments](#), [jobs](#), [screen printing](#) •

whew!

Freelancing wasn't paying enough of the bills, so I took on a regular 9-5 job. My time is now being squeezed like a lemon, resulting in super-concentrated evenings and weekends of *doing*. As one of my new coworkers put it, "What do you...NOT do?" I honestly didn't have an answer for her.

Last night, however DID bring on a pleasant surprise. You may recall (or view for the first time) [my experiments](#) in removing old photo emulsion from a screen. Again, I had trouble getting a few spots and haze out. Anger mounting, I gave up on the acetone. While it immediately eats out the emulsion, the unpredictability of the liquid makes it hard to control. If one could have a wash-out hose filled with acetone, it would be perfect. (Well, except for the horrible smell and ghastly amounts of acetone.)

Out of sheer frustration, I thought, *Aw hell. You can use acetone for toner transfers, why not wintergreen oil? They seem to weaken the same things...* Thus, a speedy application of wintergreen oil made its way onto the screen. Amounts of green photo emulsion came off of areas I thought were clean! To break up the oil, I poured some Dawn liquid soap and scrub scrubbed with a toothbrush. After a quick wash-out and dry, it was perfect. Perfectly clean! Nothing! Absolutely AMAZING.

Now my only problem is actually FINDING some more wintergreen oil. I have a small bottle (with precious few drops left) purchased from a now defunct drugstore chain. Going to national chains yielded NO results; I even asked the pharmacists if they had any on hand, only to be given a blank look and a "Winter-what oil?" Looking online is even more difficult as results are crowded with aromatherapy and foodstuff results. Point of fact, the aromatherapy and "natural" joints will try to sell you PURE wintergreen oil, not the synthetic stuff. Obviously, 100% natural/homegrown oil is going to be more expensive than the man-made junk. The bottle I have was 2oz of synthetic purchased for \$2.75 back in 2001 (as opposed to the *fifty-five dollar half-ounce bottle of pure!!*). An acquaintance of

mine who does all kinds of sciencey stuff at Berkley gave me a link to a site that will sell me *five gallons* at once for the low low price of \$165!! Yeesh! I should buy the damn stuff and sell it on my own online shop; I'll be rich, rich I tells ya!

Ah well. This may bring on the need for finding a "wintergreen" substitute.

[More Screenprinting](#)

• **May 2nd, 2006** • [0 Comments](#) • [experiments](#), [how-to](#), [screen printing](#) •

Screenprinting has been helping me to satiate my printmaking fix; it's been almost two years since I've touched an etching press! Fortunately silkscreening is horribly cheap and easy, and doesn't require a whole lot of space. I'm sure some of the hardcore old dudes would cringe at my self-taught techniques, but hey, when you're broke some of 'em look pretty good!

I figured I would share some of the troubleshooting I've gone through (most of it last night) in hopes of some feedback or benefitting others. Back when I was messing around with a lithography press, I made a horrible mistake. See, when you're working with a stone, you make parts of the stone *hydrophilic* and other parts *oleophilic*. Because I was new to litho, my stone wasn't quite set up right: it was absorbing some ink in areas it shouldn't have, and water in others. However, it was still crudely workable. My Big Mistake(tm) came when it came to running the stone through the press. When litho stones go through a press, they have a sheet of plexiglas or metal on top, covered with a line of grease to help it squeeze through the press at tremendous pressure. Whoops, dopy me, I ran a newsprint proof through with the plexiglas *upside down*. This means that the sensitive stone ran through the press at high pressure just SUCKING grease in. I panicked of course, but my prof came by and ran emergency stone resuscitation procedure and fixed my unfixable problem. Point of my long drawn-out story is, "It can be fixed!"

So! A buddy of mine called me up in a panic about her screen which wouldn't let go of some **diazo photo emulsion on a nylon screen**. She hadn't left it out or overdeveloped (as near as we could figure it was either mixed wrong, or a bad batch) but the emulsion stuck fast despite her using an entire bottle of diazo solvent. Hmm.

Analysis: How bad was the damage?

I'm not sure I would've attempted this on an ENTIRE screen but my buddy's screen only had a few stubborn spots. I figured this was workable. We both agreed to try an all out assault at the risk of ruining the screen, seeing as how it was ruined with the perma-spots anyway.

Trial 1: Bleach

We poured straight household bleach into a tub and tossed the screen in to soak for 10 minutes. The emulsion broke up and released a little bit after some coaxing with a toothbrush. The bleach method was repeated two more times, with some success, but largely the spots stayed.

Trial 2: Mr. Clean Magic Eraser

If you don't own one of these, [get one](#). They're delightfully non-toxic, require no chemicals and are surprisingly effective at getting dirt/grime/whatever out of tiny areas. We made sure to rinse off ALL of the bleach, as chlorine bleach ruins the "eraser". Mr. Clean did a pretty darn good job at cleaning out many of the pinholes in the screen! While the eraser didn't do enough to remove our emulsion spots completely, I definitely will be using it to clean screens in the future.

Trial 3: Acetone

After a VERY THOROUGH RINSING I opted to try alternative solvents. Down in the studio I tentatively brushed acetone onto the trouble spots with an old paint brush. Almost like magic, the emulsion released and dissolved. My concern was dissolving the screen as well, but it didn't seem bothered. The only problem with the acetone is that it broke the emulsion down into a fine film. I figured that the photo emulsion remover would take this right off.

Trial 4: Photo Emulsion Remover

Nuthin'. Lot of scrubbing and the emulsion film stayed.

Trial 5: Back in the Bleach

SOME spots came clean, most of it stayed though.

Trial 6: More Acetone

Rather than brushing on, I set the screen down so that the actual screen touched a sheet of glass. Then we poured acetone into the middle of the screen so that it pushed any photo emulsion residue outward to the edge of the screen. Worked well! Hooray! I dabbed intermittently with an old rag to work the acetone around.

There you have it, the trials of recovering a screen! It was my concern that there would be enough residue on the screen to cause new photo emulsion or screen filler to not adhere properly, but apparently this was not a problem. I am able to happily say that with a fresh coat of photo-emulsion my friend's screen [turned out perfectly](#). My only regret is that I didn't take any pictures! Ah well; this might be a project for a screen with a stencil on it I left out all last summer. Rev up yer toothbrushes!

Spring Cleaning

• **April 21st, 2006** • [0 Comments](#) • [experiments](#), [studio 4A](#) •

Ahhhh. The studio is finally clean and organized. It's pretty much been a disaster area since last summer, when I helped my parents move out of their house of 20+ years. In the final days of packing, a lot of items were moved to my garage temporarily. There is some corollary of Parkinson's Law that states something to the effect of: stuff will multiply such that it fills all available space, irrespective of how much stuff or space there is. I think this is even more true when someone moves. Soon after my parents moved, I started student teaching and the studio was all but forgotten as it was filled to the brim with boxes and whatnot. Immediately after student teaching came the holidays, during which I was planning a wedding! The weather lately has been most conducive to being outside so FINALLY, 4A is clean.

Good thing, too! I've had a few projects brewing in my brain so having some working space will do me just fine. One of my projects I'm not sure what to do with, though. I had a plot to cut up some of the many many circuit-boards and computer parts in attempt to make jewelry. Cutting up a video card was fairly difficult with the Dremel; the cutting wheel protested several points and I dared not cut though anything other than board as I was unsure as to the contents of those little transistor-looking things. (That's a technical term.) This endeavor made a helluva mess! There was powder everywhere, and it did not like being swept up. (Yes, I was wearing a respirator and goggles!) A little too late I found a source saying what's actually *in* those circuit boards.

Printed Circuit Boards contain heavy metals such as Antimony, Silver, Chromium, Zinc, Lead, Tin and Copper. According to some estimates there is hardly any other product for which the sum of the environmental impacts of raw material, extraction, industrial, refining and production, use and disposal is so extensive as for printed circuit boards. [Exerpt from The Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition](#)

Whooooo nelly! Take a look at some of the lists on that site for all the nasty things in there! No way in hell I'm setting the Dremel loose on 'em now; heck, I would feel bad about simply hucking my piles of parts into the trash as well. Their purpose has been for making wearables for so long, I can't get my mind to thinking about something else; I'll have to grind the ol' clutch on this one.

Mixed Bag

• July 11th, 2005 • [0 Comments](#) • [experiments](#), [meandering](#), [photo](#), [supplies](#) •

Several items to cover, in random order.

1) I don't recall whether or not I talked about my new sink! No, the studio doesn't have running water...from an outside source! My father gave me a bunch of left-over plumbing bits, so I crafted a new sink with a 3 gallon or so reserve. My technologically-advanced sink has the following features: an actual faucet with an on/off valve; a flexible hose drain which snakes around the outside of the garage door into some bushes; a method for plugging the drain which involves looping the end of the drain hose and slipping it over a curl of iron the shelf the sink is sitting on. Huzzah!

2) Grass paper update: Arrrg, I just realized that I deleted all of the photos I took off of my camera before uploading them! Why did I do that? Well, there IS news, but I'll put that in another post with some nice close-ups of the paper. Grrr.

3) Remember [Michael's Mother's Studio](#)? Well, I got to root around in the mountains of art supplies again last weekend. It's so much fun to discover the treasures this woman left behind. From clippings of poetry and quotes she found to be important, on to sketchbooks and journals, it's all very interesting. Unfortunately, the summer heat and lack of room to move items (this place has no A/C; it's a converted garage) kept me from looking too long. However, I did manage to find the following treasures this time:

- 1 - a complete X-Acto Knife kit. They don't sell kits this complete anymore! Wow!
- 2 - a nigh-complete compass set. It even came with a compass lead sharpener. I didn't know those existed!



- 3 - a carbonite marking pen. Cool! Another etching tool!
- 4 - a variety of french curves and floorplan stencils
- 5 - a home-made light table. I might have to replace the light on it, but hey! It's well-made!
- 6 - two home-made clay sculptures. I like having artwork from my future-past mother-in-law.
- 7 - a jewelry vise with magnifying glass
- 8 - computer punch cards. HOT DAMN!!! Need I say MORE??



The coolest thing I found was a portable screen-printing setup. Yeehaw! Whotta deal. It appears to be homemade, as best I can tell. There's a large portable board with different hinge layouts for the various screens I found. I have to replace all of the silk, as it's somewhat rotted

and filled with holes. Other than that, they're all in great condition, and I can't wait to try them out when I get the chance to order some new screen! Yippie!

[Grass Paper](#)

• **June 23rd, 2005** • [6 Comments](#) • [experiments](#), [how-to](#), [papermaking](#) •

I mow a lawn on a regular basis, and wondered what I could do with all of the extra grass clippings. Maybe I could...make paper? Yes! This week I embarked on a "make paper out of grass clippings" project. I'll gladly share the process and the results, but I don't think I would do it again. The smell of cooked/soaking clippings makes me want to retch now. I mean it, I almost vomited at one point in this project. Fortunately, the smell of fresh-cut grass doesn't smell remotely like my project, so I can still enjoy that summer pleasure.

On to the paper!

1) Collect clippings. I estimate that I used about 8 cups of freshly clipped grass to start. The lawn mowed for them was free of poison, fertilizer and animal droppings. (That might've made it smell *worse*.)



2) Cook clippings. My goal here was to soften the clippings so that they would break up better. OH MY GOD this part stank. The whole apartment reeked of cooking grass. If you try this, make sure there's plenty of ventilation. Blech. I added about 1/2 cup of baking soda to help the softening. (Most papermaking recommends *washing* soda, but baking will do in a pinch. Or if you're poor.) The grass was cooked for about an hour.



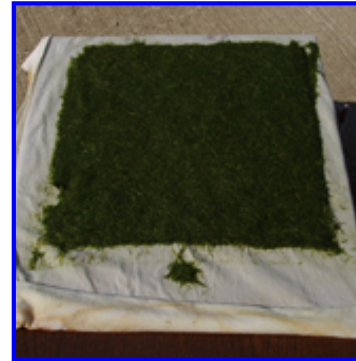
3) Blend cooked clippings. This part looks truly vile. They should make people on those crazy TV game shows drink cooked grass shakes. Gag. Most of the clippings broke up fairly well; most pieces were about 1/4in-1/8in long. Not bad!



4) You can go two ways on this one. Either make pure grass paper, or, mix the grass pulp with recycled paper pulp. I chose to make pure grass paper first.



5a) Grass paper. There's probably about 5 gallons of water in the tub, and all of the cooked clippings. I slipped the deckle in and ewwwwww the water was extra slimy. A fairly thick sheet was dumped on a drying rag and proceeded to smell like cooked grass. Blagh.



5b) Grass paper with recycled pulp. I simply added about 3 cups of pulp I had on hand to the grass tub and mixed together. The sheet pulled from this mixture looked much less like a square mat of pond muck.



6) Drying. The Texas heat is perfect right now; no humidity, and 90 degree weather. The paper dried overnight.



days in that bucket instead of grass. Cleaning out that bucket was a real treat, I tell ya. Admittedly, the finished result looks quite nice. The paper should get more of a golden hue as the grass dries completely. But darn it, all I can think of when I see the sheets is that awful smell!

This project makes me cringe now. I would gladly try again with dried straw, but my attempts to use something I had an abundance of didn't work well enough for me. The main problem was the "Gag Factor." Oh yeah, you probably want to hear about my near-vomit experience? A portion of the clippings I left in a bucket to "cook" in the summer sun. I would swear that something had DIED and was ROTTING for several

Copyright © 2008 Olivia Snyder pinkfrog.net

The website for Jack-of-All-Trades artist Olivia Snyder

• [Grass Paper](#)

Main Menu

- [Scripto Continua:](#)
[Blog](#)
- [Fine Art](#)
- [Graphic Design](#)
- [Automata](#)
- [Stuff for Sale](#)
- [Family Only](#)
- [Patchwork Faces](#)

External Links

- [Internet Nest:](#)
[LiveJournal](#)
- [Stuff for Sale: Etsy](#)
[Store](#)
- [DeviantArt Doodles](#)
- [Flickr Cellphone](#)
[Photos](#)

Of Interest

- [I Hate Copperplate!](#)
- [Nicole Mills](#)
- [Drawn.com](#)
- [MAKE:](#)
- [CRAFT:](#)

• Recent Posts

• June 23rd, 2005 • [6 Comments](#) • [experiments](#), [how-to](#), [papermaking](#) •

I mow a lawn on a regular basis, and wondered what I could do with all of the extra grass clippings. Maybe I could...make paper? Yes! This week I embarked on a “make paper out of grass clippings” project. I’ll gladly share the process and the results, but I don’t think I would do it again. The smell of cooked/soaking clippings makes me want to retch now. I mean it, I almost vomited at one point in this project. Fortunately, the smell of fresh-cut grass doesn’t smell remotely like my project, so I can still enjoy that summer pleasure.

On to the paper!

1) Collect clippings. I estimate that I used about 8 cups of freshly clipped grass to start. The lawn mowed for them was free of poison, fertilizer and animal droppings. (That might’ve made it smell *worse*.)



2) Cook clippings. My goal here was to soften the clippings so that they would break up better. OH MY GOD this part stank. The whole apartment reeked of cooking grass. If you try this, make sure there’s plenty of ventilation. Blech. I added about 1/2 cup of baking soda to help the softening. (Most papermaking recommends *washing* soda, but baking will do in a pinch. Or if you’re poor.) The grass was cooked for about an hour.



About

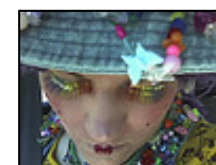
Olivia Snyder likes getting her hands dirty and making things. She writes about stuff she does here on this blog.

Communicate

- [AIM Status](#)
-  olivia@pinkfrog.net

Cellphone Stream

www.flickr.com



- [Unrelated Note](#)
- [Cheapskate](#)
- [Purse Mark II](#)
- [It's Maaaaaagic!](#)
- [Venture](#)

• Archives

3) Blend cooked clippings. This part looks truly vile. They should make people on those crazy TV game shows drink cooked grass shakes. Gag. Most of the clippings broke up fairly well; most pieces were about 1/4in-1/8in long. Not bad!



More of
pinkfrogdotnet's
photos

 Shopping

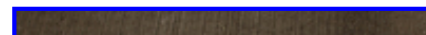
4) You can go two ways on this one. Either make pure grass paper, or, mix the grass pulp with recycled paper pulp. I chose to make pure grass paper first.



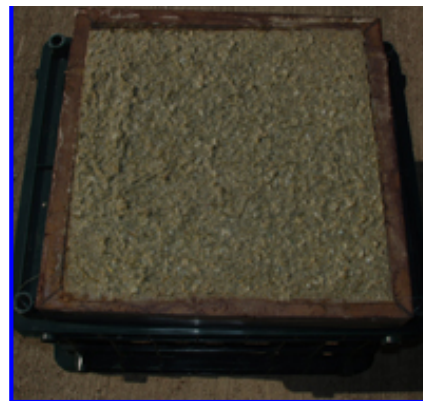
5a) Grass paper. There's probably about 5 gallons of water in the tub, and all of the cooked clippings. I slipped the deckle in and ewwwwww the water was extra slimy. A fairly thick sheet was dumped on a drying rag and proceeded to smell like cooked grass. Blagh.



5b) Grass paper with recycled pulp. I simply



added about 3 cups of pulp I had on hand to the grass tub and mixed together. The sheet pulled from this mixture looked much less like a square mat of pond muck.



6) Drying. The Texas heat is perfect right now; no humidity, and 90 degree weather. The paper dried overnight.



This project makes me cringe now. I would gladly try again with dried straw, but my attempts to use something I had an abundance of didn't work well enough for me. The main problem was the "Gag Factor." Oh yeah, you probably want to hear about my near-vomit experience? A portion of the clippings I left in a bucket to "cook" in the summer sun. I would swear that something had DIED and was ROTTING for several

days in that bucket instead of grass. Cleaning out that bucket was a real treat, I tell ya. Admittedly, the finished result looks quite nice. The paper should get more of a golden hue as the grass dries completely. But darn it, all I can think of when I see the sheets is that awful smell!

[Picture Time!](#)

• [May 6th, 2005](#) • [0 Comments](#) • [papermaking](#), [photo](#), [studio 4A](#) •



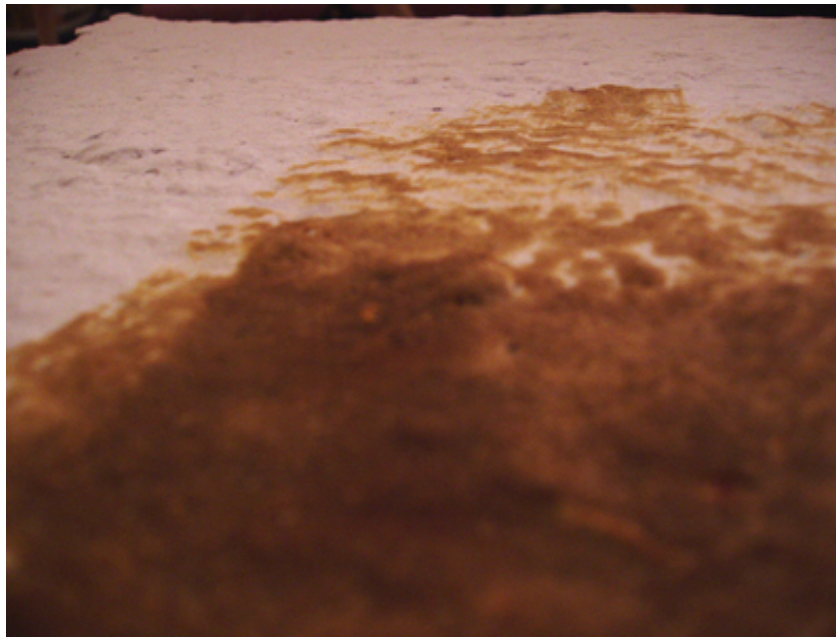
What I wouldn't give for a good ventilation system.



Gahh, there was a minor oopsy when I came in this evening; I forgot I hadn't fixed a leg on that desk, so the weight of my pulp bin seems to have slooowly pulled it down. I'm surprised it didn't fall over entirely, which would have left dried paper pulp everywhere.
How precarious!



Shellac-ing the paper I've been making. This sheet has a hole in it that the shellac has frozen in time. It's quite beautiful the way it moves in the light, especially with fresh shellac on it. This is the third coat being applied to this sheet.



This sheet is receiving a brand new coat of shellac, as it finished drying a few days ago. Uncoated paper is amazingly absorbent. I need to buy a beater.



Satisfying more of my own photoegotism with a self-portrait. To the left you can see Spindle; behind me is my wiener dog screen I can't bring myself to wash out. I'm getting

too much milage out of it!

[Wow, two posts in one week!](#)

• **April 28th, 2005** • [0 Comments](#) • [painting](#), [papermaking](#) •

Quoting Bill and Ted, “Whoa!” Today was such a beautiful day, I HAD to go back down to the studio this evening. My fundage is a little tight right now, which means everything that can be painted on will be painted on. Paper supplies are VERY low, mostly due to my lack of place to store a varied stock. When there’s no paper, what’s a girl to do? Make some, of course!

There have been a couple of pulp balls lying around all winter, so I reconstituted them. While they broke up well, methinks I need to get ahold of a cheap egg beater to break up the smaller chunks. The ol’ potato masher just doesn’t cut it. Despite large paper chunks, I decided to make two sheets for painting on tomorrow. It’s nice and warm and dry outside tonight. In addition, I took some of the wood chunks that are building up around my newest “painting” and threw them in for a third sheet of extra-chunky paper.

* * *

If my vast memory serves (and by looking back ONE post...) I took a photo of the very beginnings of the “painting”. I’m somewhat skittish about taking another one as it’s in a working stage. As I’m no longer in a college environment, my work is more prone to people telling me what my artwork looks like. Spindle, as it’s tentatively titled, had already been subject to being labeled as a recognizable item. May I say, “Arrrrgh!”? Telling me what a non-objective artwork is irritates me to no end. Granted most folks need to know what an object is in order to make sense of it, so it really isn’t fair of me to feel irritated. Nevertheless I am, and so I won’t show any photos of what Spindle looks like. So there. Nyaaaaah.

I’m faced with a problem in creating Spindle. Room and time. One, space is at a premium in Studio 4A. This project is somewhat large. Two, I have not had time to find a show space in which to present my large-scale paintings. These works NEED to be in a show. I am convinced that they are successful; Anxiety Beast was the only one to make it into my only show, and it isn’t nearly as delightful as the Industrial Strength Tryptic. I’d love to be able to have a show of the larger paintings...but it isn’t possible right now. Sigh. Perhaps the Summertime will offer more opportunities?

Copyright © 2008 Olivia Snyder pinkfrog.net

The website for Jack-of-All-Trades artist Olivia Snyder

- [Allieviation](#)
- July 9th, 2006 • [0 Comments](#) • [how-to](#), [screen printing](#) •

Main Menu

- [Scripto Continuaia: Blog](#)
- [Fine Art](#)
- [Graphic Design](#)
- [Automata](#)
- [Stuff for Sale](#)
- [Family Only](#)
- [Patchwork Faces](#)

External Links

- [Internet Nest: LiveJournal](#)
- [Stuff for Sale: Etsy Store](#)
- [DeviantArt Doodles](#)
- [Flickr Cellphone Photos](#)

Of Interest

- [I Hate Copperplate!](#)
- [Nicole Mills](#)
- [Drawn.com](#)
- [MAKE:](#)
- [CRAFT:](#)

• Recent Posts

[Allieviation](#)

- July 9th, 2006 • [0 Comments](#) • [how-to](#), [screen printing](#) •



While combatting the mystery injury, I've been working on new t-shirt stencils and experimenting with screen printing some more. I found a delightfully *lame* piece of clip art with some 80s guy proclaiming "Paint it!" While I typically strive to create my own t-shirt art, a copyright free image that just *screams* to be put on a t-shirt must be obeyed. After making some modifications, I cut the stencil out on some good ol' freezer paper and rather than use a sponge (so *passé!*) I liquified some brown and orange fabric paints and airbrushed the mixture onto a royal blue shirt was procured down at Wally World for \$3.00 .

(This worked horribly well as compared to a sponge.) After everything was dried and heat-set, I stuffed the shirt into a bleach solution and let it soak. End result? A soft, worn, thrift-store-worthy shirt with an ultra-lame design. Huzzah!

In other news, I found a delightful solvent for the screen fillers I've been using. Rubbing alcohol! The trauma of scrubbing and scrubbing to clean screens: gone! This method worked *beautifully* as an "eraser" for a screen I was working on. Just pick up a Microbrush, dip it in alcohol, gently rub both sides of the screen and poof! Mistakes can be fixed. (Though probably not so well for incredibly *fine* line work.) Another t-shirt surfaced while I was experimenting with alcohol and screen filler, though I do not have a picture of it yet.

Speaking of pictures, thanks to the generosity of a relative, I am now able to upgrade to a digital SLR. *Kick ass!*

About

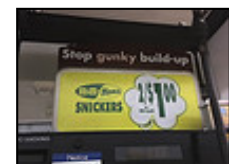
Olivia Snyder likes getting her hands dirty and making things. She writes about stuff she does here on this blog.

Communicate

- [AIM Status](#)
-  olivia@pinkfrog.net

Cellphone Stream

www.flickr.com



- [Unrelated Note](#)
- [Cheapskate](#)
- [Purse Mark II](#)
- [It's Maaaaaagic!](#)
- [Venture](#)



More of
[pinkfrogdotnet's](#)
[photos](#)

[\\$4 Pressure](#)

• **May 17th, 2006** • [2 Comments](#) • [how-to](#), [screen printing](#), [supplies](#) •

• Archives

A while back, I made a [mod for my shower](#) to wash out screens. Well, the whole thing works pretty good, but for stubborn photo emulsion, I need more pressure! I wanted to use some sort of garden hose jet as most cheap shower heads just don't have the blast-your-skin-off kind of pressure I want. Here's a simple fix I did to add more power!

1) Purchased a 1/2" to 3/4" adapter and an ordinary garden hose jet attachment for about \$4 at the store. (All showerheads are 1/2" and garden hose fittings are 3/4".)



2) Screw them into existing fitting thusly, and *viola* you have more pressure.



For this, there is obviously more splash-back, but I can live with that.

 Shopping

[More Screenprinting](#)

• **May 2nd, 2006** • [0 Comments](#) • [experiments](#), [how-to](#), [screen printing](#) •

Screenprinting has been helping me to satiate my printmaking fix; it's been almost two years since I've touched an etching press! Fortunately silkscreening is horribly cheap and easy, and doesn't require a whole lot of space. I'm sure some of the hardcore old dudes would cringe at my self-taught techniques, but hey, when you're broke some of 'em look pretty good!

I figured I would share some of the troubleshooting I've gone through (most of it last night) in hopes of some feedback or benefitting others. Back when I was messing around with a lithography press, I made a horrible mistake. See, when you're working with a stone, you make parts of the stone *hydrophilic* and other parts *oleophilic*. Because I was new to litho, my stone wasn't quite set up right: it was absorbing some ink in areas it shouldn't have, and water in others. However, it was still crudely workable. My Big Mistake(tm) came when it came to running the stone through the press. When litho stones go through a press, they have a sheet of plexiglas or metal on top, covered with a line of grease to help it squeeze through the press at tremendous pressure. Whoops, dopy me, I ran a newsprint proof through with the plexiglas *upside down*. This means that the sensitive stone ran through the press at high pressure just SUCKING grease in. I panicked of course, but my prof came by and ran emergency stone resuscitation procedure and fixed my unfixable problem. Point of my long drawn-out story is, "It can be fixed!"

So! A buddy of mine called me up in a panic about her screen which wouldn't let go of some **diazo photo emulsion on a nylon screen**. She hadn't left it out or overdeveloped (as near as we could figure it was either mixed wrong, or a bad batch) but the emulsion stuck fast despite her using an entire bottle of diazo solvent. Hmm.

Analysis: How bad was the damage?

I'm not sure I would've attempted this on an ENTIRE screen but my buddy's screen only had a few stubborn spots. I figured this was workable. We both agreed to try an all out assault at the risk of ruining the screen, seeing as how it was ruined with the perma-spots anyway.

Trial 1: Bleach

We poured straight household bleach into a tub and tossed the screen in to soak for 10 minutes. The emulsion broke up and released a little bit after some coaxing with a toothbrush. The bleach method was repeated two more times, with some success, but largely the spots stayed.

Trial 2: Mr. Clean Magic Eraser

If you don't own one of these, [get one](#). They're delightfully non-toxic, require no chemicals and are surprisingly effective at getting dirt/grime/whatever out of tiny areas. We made sure to rinse off ALL of the bleach, as chlorine bleach ruins the "eraser". Mr. Clean did a pretty darn good job at cleaning out many of the pinholes in the screen! While the eraser didn't do enough to remove our emulsion spots completely, I definitely will be using it to clean screens in the future.

Trial 3: Acetone

After a VERY THOROUGH RINSING I opted to try alternative solvents. Down in the studio I tentatively brushed acetone onto the trouble spots with an old paint brush. Almost like magic, the emulsion released and dissolved. My concern was dissolving the screen as well, but it didn't seem bothered. The only problem with the acetone is that it broke the emulsion down into a fine film. I figured that the photo emulsion remover would take this right off.

Trial 4: Photo Emulsion Remover

Nuthin'. Lot of scrubbing and the emulsion film stayed.

Trial 5: Back in the Bleach

SOME spots came clean, most of it stayed though.

Trial 6: More Acetone

Rather than brushing on, I set the screen down so that the actual screen touched a sheet of glass. Then we poured acetone into the middle of the screen so that it pushed any photo emulsion residue outward to the edge of the screen. Worked well! Hooray! I dabbed intermittently with an old rag to work the acetone around.

There you have it, the trials of recovering a screen! It was my concern that there would be enough residue on the screen to cause new photo emulsion or screen filler to not adhere properly, but apparently this was not a problem. I am able to happily say that with a fresh coat of photo-emulsion my friend's screen [turned out perfectly](#). My only regret is that I didn't take any pictures! Ah well; this might be a project for a screen with a stencil on it I left out all last summer. Rev up yer toothbrushes!

[Paper Storage](#)

• **August 31st, 2005** • [2 Comments](#) • [how-to](#), [supplies](#) •



I have been hunting for weeks for a suitable solution to my paper storage problem. Most are 8.5"x11" for running through the printer. There is no room in the ol' home office for another file cabinet to put them in, and no room on the desk for a stack of unsightly shelves. What to do, what to do? Build your own paper storage unit! 1. Go to the office supply store and buy a big box of hanging file folders, enough to accommodate the different number of paper types you have. Me, I got mine off of the clearance table for 50 cents.

2. Go to the hardware store and buy two 4' lengths of chain. I got mine for 39 cents/foot; not sure what gauge it is but it's about the same thickness as the 7/8" brass cup hooks I also purchased for 69 cents. You want to make sure the file folder will hang on the type of chain you buy. (I bought cup hooks to screw into a door. If you want to do this project on a wall, buy wall hooks that are appropriately strong.)

3. Go home. Screw the two cup hooks into the door approximately 11.5" apart on a horizontal level.

4. Hang chains from cup hooks

5. Fill file folder with paper, and hook the file folder hooks into a link of chain so that the folder hangs evenly. Viola!

It's so simple, it's stupid. Now my paper is off the ground, out of my way, and super-organized. I suspect this project could be modified to hold larger projects, provided you put bolts into wall studs to hold the weight.

Cleanliness is next to Rapidographness

• August 9th, 2005 • [7 Comments](#) • [cleaning](#), [how-to](#), [pens](#) •

It's time to clean the ol' Rapidos again; they've been out in the summer heat and have crusted up as they tend to do when it's hot and dry. So what better way to celebrate the Zen of Cleaning than taking something tiny apart, cleaning it thoroughly then putting it back together only to fill it up with a black staining fluid? Beats me. (Heck, this is the second post on [cleaning technical pens](#).) Paragraphs with a fist (✊) at the end indicate that the picture has a link to a more detailed picture.



For cleaning, I recommend buying a Rapidograph cleaning kit. You know, the one with cleaning solution and the little bulb. Most of 'em cost about ten bucks. Steep? Not when you consider how much the pen mechanism itself costs. A cleaning kit is *well-worth* the investment and can put years on the pen. You should also have on hand: paper towels to set the pen parts out on to dry and to clean; an old toothbrush (Run it through the dishwasher if you've used it! Blech!); cotton swabs; a pen key (shoulda come with the pen); some sort of old food container or jar (again, clean); and headphones with some nice trance or soothing music for that extra-meditative experience.

This pen is a .60; a little larger than the .00 that most folks get. Still, these pens work exactly the same. It's well-traveled; I took it to Europe and penned my diary whilst there (sounds so romantic!) and draw with it constantly. As a pen-mistress, I am abusive. Look at the dust! Who knows what managed to get up in the well when it was sitting out. Blech. ✊





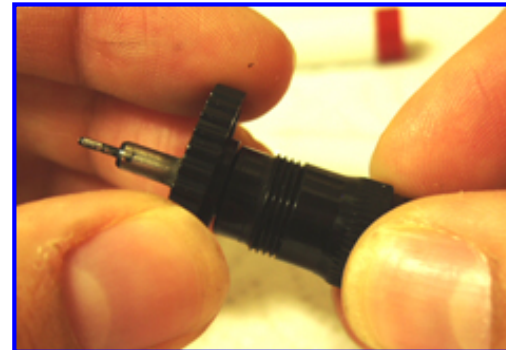
First thing to do is take the pen apart. Everything on the Rapidograph unscrews or gently pulls apart; there's no snapping or difficult pushing. Everyone knows the first twist; you gotta refill the ink well! Twist the black pen top off at the colored band.



Next, gently pull the inkwell off. Mine was filled with gummy/watered down ink, so I just rinsed it off and added a little pen-cleaning solution and set it aside.



Remember that little circular thingy that came with the pen? That's the pen key. It opens a magical world of...not really. It opens the pen and gets down to the icky bits that really need cleaning. Place the key over the point of the pen and gently twist. Keep twisting and one should have...



...removed the innards from the outer casing. Ewwwww, look at all that crusty build-up! No wonder I haven't been getting any pen-writin' action. 🖊️

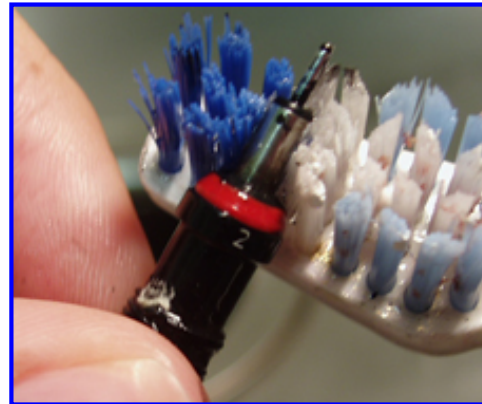




First, a cold-water rinse. Running water is a must, especially if the pen is filled with black ink, otherwise your cleaning water will become black and unclean after the first dip!



Scrubby scrub! But be *gentle*; the brush is just to loosen the dirt. If the pen is very dirty, or even dry then just leave it in the cleaning solution for a bit.



Time for some pumping. The pen top neatly screws into the pump that comes with the cleaning kit.





Pumped and ready to go! Haha! I have had my pens for a while, so I use two different cleaning solutions. One is my “dirty” jar and one is my “clean” jar. I use the dirty jar to get the big chunks and excess ink off. After a time, cleaning solutions can get pretty scummy, but still work. They just leave a little bit more scum on the pen for the likes of me.



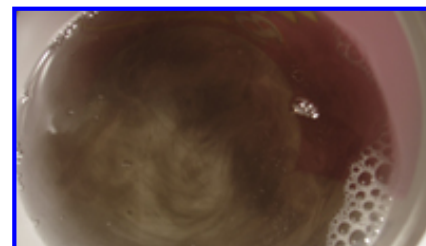
Take the pump and immerse the pen tip into the solution and gently squeeze. Then, gently release. Patience time! The bulb will slowly fill with cleaning solution; when it’s full gently squeeze the bulb to push out the cleaning solution. It will bubble and carry one, producing all sorts of dirtiness. Repeat, depending on how dirty the pen is. 🖐️

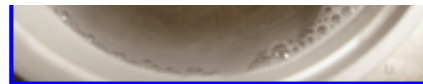


That ol’ jar will come in handy. Fill it with clean, cool water and dip the pen tip in and repeat the slow, gentle squeezing.



The water will be quite dirty. Check out the chunks on the bottom!





Time for the clean solution! For this one, I like to keep the clean solution clean. Before dipping it in, *first* squeeze the bulb, *then* dip it into the solution, sucking up fresh cleaner.



Repeat the process of blowing out the pen in the tub of water (Make sure you put fresh water in first!). Notice that the water is much cleaner after squeezing the bulb in and out this time.



Most folks could stop there. Rinse off the pen with water and let it dry. *But I ain't most folks!* Take it one step further. Unscrew the pen top from the bulb and turn it over. See that little plastic cap? Gently wiggle it off. This will give you access to the pin. 🐸



The pin is directly below that plastic cap. When I say *gently* remove it, I mean it. The pin is the most delicate and important part of the pen. If you bend it, it can ruin the way ink flows. So be nice! To remove, simply pull it straight out. 🐸



The whole pen head has been disassembled. Now you can scrub the whole pen from the inside out, using the bulb and cleaning solutions. Everything should be rinsed thoroughly with water then placed onto a paper towel to air dry. It's not necessary to disassemble the pen to this degree every time one cleans, but I love taking things apart and putting them back together again. For people with a more exciting life, taking the whole darn thing apart is really only handy when a pen has been left dormant for about 6 months. 🖊️



But what about the ink well? It's been just sitting there. Ah-ha, that's what the cotton swabs are for. Simply insert and swish around with the cleaning solution dropped in earlier. Oh, is the pen cap dirty? Just do the same thing to it. (Remember to rinse rinse rinse!)



Ahh, the reassembled pen top, complete with a shiny clean ink well. How does one put the pen back together? Why, simply follow the above steps in reverse. (Well, except for all of the cleaning, because that would negate the whole exercise, now wouldn't it?) Would you look at the top of that pen? Whotta difference! No more scunge, Now I can fill up the well with some fresh ink and get back to what I *really* want to do: draw! 🖊️

[More Photo Screens](#)

• August 7th, 2005 • [0 Comments](#) • [how-to, screen printing](#) •

Busy weekend! Some of my girlfriends and I like to periodically get together for a “Craft Day” where we make stuff. One of my friends really wanted to use the [new exposure unit](#) I rigged up, and another wanted to make candles, as she was running low. (That and I had a huge bag of old crayons.) I’ll happily go over the candle bit later; for now I’ll share how the screen unit works.

Please note that until the screen is ready to be developed and subsequently to be washed out, the room was dark.

1) The coated screen sitting around drying. Two mistakes were made on this screen. One, the coating is uneven: thick spots have the potential to cause problems when washing out the screen. There should be a nice, thin coat so that when the image is developing it all develops evenly. The thick coat won’t develop at the same time as the thin coat, so when wash out time comes, thick areas won’t wash out! Two, I put a fan *directly* in front of the screen. Normally I use fans for drying everything. This time there was an unforeseen problem with the fan blowing dust and small bugs (!) onto the screen’s surface. Fortunately these didn’t land on any parts that would be difficult to fill in later on, but the bug chunks definitely cause uneven coating.



2) Putting the screen on the unit. I have an old file box the screen sits on. Ideally this should be black, but eh, I’m cheap. This photo doesn’t show it off well but the box sits *inside* the screen, while the image will be placed on the *back* of the screen. What we’re doing here is minimizing light that comes in on the wrong side of the screen.



3) So, what kind of image do you need? Since all we have is the cheapo home setup with 100 watt bulbs, the image needs to be 100% black on something like an overhead transparency. (A higher wattage would likely help to penetrate an image on tracing paper, but remember, I'm cheap. New bulbs would mean new lamps, and that means money!) When I say 100% black, I mean it! Don't use your home inkjet, the ink isn't opaque. Go down to your local copy shop and make identical copies onto three separate transparency sheets. This way you can *physically* layer them. (Running one sheet through typically doesn't work well; copiers will misalign your image.) The first time, the image should be really simple. My friend had never done this before, so she picked a really simple egg-man picture. The lines are really crisp and clean, with little room for error. This way, it's easier to see what the screen should look like in all its stages.

4) Developing the picture my friend found. Filebox, screen, image, glass, fan. The glass goes on top of the image to keep it from moving around, and keeps minimal area between the screen and the image. (Thus keeping light from going in between it.) Rather than blow small bugs onto the screen in this step, it keeps everything slightly cooler. (Heat will develop the screen as well as light. Keep the room cool!)

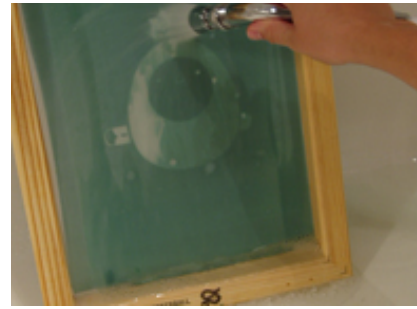


5) It done be developed! It was hard to see so in the dark, but the developing solution is actually bright green before it goes under the light. The bit that remained under the image stayed bright green while the rest turned more of an aqua color. This shot shows the "bugs" (har har, get it?) that occurred while the screen was drying. The big white spots are where the lil' guys landed.



6) Washing out using my snappy setup I made! The development was nice and clean; the image washed out well.





7) Almost there, just a bit left. The screen is nice and clear. Fortunately, the “buggy” areas aren’t causing too many problems. All in all, this screen came out really well. It should be interesting to see how my friend’s image prints up.



Whew! All that work, and I don’t even get to print the screen. Humph! Guess that means I better get on top of ordering some new material for those old screens I got. Which means I need to get some money, which means I need a steady job, which means...

[Grass Paper](#)

• **June 23rd, 2005** • [6 Comments](#) • [experiments](#), [how-to](#), [papermaking](#) •

I mow a lawn on a regular basis, and wondered what I could do with all of the extra grass clippings. Maybe I could...make paper? Yes! This week I embarked on a “make paper out of grass clippings” project. I’ll gladly share the process and the results, but I don’t think I would do it again. The smell of cooked/soaking clippings makes me want to retch now. I mean it, I almost vomited at one point in this project. Fortunately, the smell of fresh-cut grass doesn’t smell remotely like my project, so I can still enjoy that summer pleasure.

On to the paper!

1) Collect clippings. I estimate that I used about 8 cups of freshly clipped grass to start. The lawn mowed for them was free of poison, fertilizer and animal droppings. (That might've made it smell worse.)



2) Cook clippings. My goal here was to soften the clippings so that they would break up better. OH MY GOD this part stank. The whole apartment reeked of cooking grass. If you try this, make sure there's plenty of ventilation. Blech. I added about 1/2 cup of baking soda to help the softening. (Most papermaking recommends *washing* soda, but baking will do in a pinch. Or if you're poor.) The grass was cooked for about an hour.



3) Blend cooked clippings. This part looks truly vile. They should make people on those crazy TV game shows drink cooked grass shakes. Gag. Most of the clippings broke up fairly well; most pieces were about 1/4in-1/8in long. Not bad!



4) You can go two ways on this one. Either make pure grass paper, or, mix the grass pulp with recycled paper pulp. I chose to make pure grass paper first.



5a) Grass paper. There's probably about 5 gallons of water in the tub, and all of the cooked clippings. I slipped the deckle in and ewwwwww the water was extra slimy. A fairly thick sheet was dumped on a drying rag and proceeded to smell like cooked grass. Blagh.



5b) Grass paper with recycled pulp. I simply added about 3 cups of pulp I had on hand to the grass tub and mixed together. The sheet pulled from this mixture looked much less like a square mat of pond muck.



6) Drying. The Texas heat is perfect right now; no humidity, and 90 degree weather. The paper dried overnight.



This project makes me cringe now. I would gladly try again with dried straw, but my attempts to use something I had an abundance of didn't work well enough for me. The main problem was the "Gag Factor." Oh yeah, you probably want to hear about my near-vomit experience? A portion of the clippings I left in a bucket to "cook" in the summer sun. I would swear that something had DIED and was ROTTING for several

days in that bucket instead of grass. Cleaning out that bucket was a real treat, I tell ya. Admittedly, the finished result looks quite nice. The paper should get more of a golden hue as the grass dries completely. But darn it, all I can think of when I see the sheets is that awful smell!

[Back to Screen Printing](#)

• **June 15th, 2005** • [1 Comments](#) • [how-to](#), [screen printing](#) •

I've been working on a Father's day present which entails shooting a photo screen. For the most part, I'm self-taught on this one, so there's quite a bit of trial and error! Way back when, last December, I tried to shoot a screen, but could never get a good exposure from the lights I was using. So I gave up and used screen filler/drawing fluid for the project.

Now I NEED to have a photo transfer, so I NEED to learn this right. Many of the online "how tos" suggest using the all-purpose poor man's exposure unit, the sun. My last two attempts failed miserably.

Time One: The design on the transparency was not opaque, thus the whole screen was exposed. I fixed this problem by doubling up on the transparencies.

Time Two: Conditions were perfect, it sat in the sun and should've exposed... Yet the design would not wash-out. I later discovered that the solution I was using would also develop in the HEAT as well as LIGHT. D'oh.

The heat problem is a major one; the average temperature in Dallas is 90 degrees. I do not believe that the screen can be outside for any amount of time during exposure if this is the

case. (This includes wash-out time.) Therefore, I've converted the shower in the spare bathroom to accommodate screen washing! I've found this to be an extremely cheap and easy way to wash-out and develop screens.

1) Go to Home Depot (or hardware store of choice). For about 15 bucks, I was able to buy these items (left to right). A shower arm and flange, a 5-ft reinforced vinyl hose and a "power/watersaving" shower head. The extender arm at the bottom I already had on hand to use, but you could get away without purchasing one. I like the extra length and swivel it adds. Remember, MOST if not all showerheads have a 1/2in pipe thread.



2) This is your standard showerhead, in your standard apartment. 1/2in pipe, so I can attach about anything in the "Shower Section" at the hardware store. Some apartments don't want you messing with the showerheads so they will put in some sort of gunk to keep you from removing it. By *hand* that is.



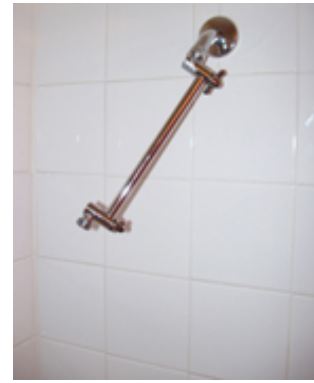
3) Vise grips are your best friend. My showerhead was extra tight, so these were *required* to get it off. I kindly purchased some silicone tips so as not to ruin the apartment's showerhead. Removing the head is the only part of this endeavor that will require some sort of tool. Oh yeah, I should mention the tub needs to be dry so you don't slip and bonk your noggin.



4) Attach the swivel arm. Again, I like the movement and



extra length it affords the hose. These things cost about \$15, so it can easily double your shopping trip. I've had mine stashed away for years trying to figure out what else I could use it for...



5) Connect the hose. If you want to get fancy, you can buy a metal hose, or spend some more dough and get a longer hose. I found this plastic one for \$5 on sale. No tools needed for setup!



6) Screw in the flange arm and the power showerhead to the other end of the hose. The flange arm acts as a converter piece so you can hook up the hose with the head. Most hoses are built to accommodate fancy shower massagers, not standard showerheads. The flange also doubles as a nice handle for your hose. Some power showerheads have a "soap up valve" which you can use as a water cutoff instead of having to turn the water on and off all the time. I saved \$2 to get a power showerhead without, but should I ever want one later, I can purchase a valve separately.



And there you have it! You now have your very own screen-washer-outer. That's really the only part I figure I'd give some step-by-step on, since some folks are scared of anything plumbing-related. It's easy, really!Down below, I have a nice photo of the entire bathtub

setup. I will point out that the tub should NEVER be filled with water for this setup, as you have several electric appliances hanging above. Not responsible if you have no common sense!

1) The shower curtain rod was lowered roughly 40in from the rim of the tub to accomodate the lights, which have 100W clear bulbs in them. I realize many home kits recommend the light being 12 inches from the screen, but some developers develop not only develop with light, but also with heat. The reflective surface of this particular bathtub helps to make more light w/out heat, which is handy.

2) I stole a board from a melamine bookshelf and put it across the tub with a box on it for developing. (I know, everything's white, it's difficult to see.) The board can easily be moved when it's time to wash-out the screen.

3) The fan I use for drying screens, and to help circulate air in the room so that the screen does not get hot. Lucky for me, this tub has an air vent practically above it!



There you have it. I took this baby for a test-run the other day, and it works like a dream. No more developing out in the heat, no more waiting for some guy to finish using the communal carwash hose so I can wash-out. I'll probably make a few modifications as I use it more, but this appears to be a great cheap cheap method that doesn't actually damage the bathroom or require major renovations.

Old 'n' Dusty

• May 28th, 2005 • [0 Comments](#) • [framing](#), [how-to](#) •

I've been doing a lot of archival and restoration work this week. My family has many old photos in frames which have suffered at the hands of neglect: foxing, acid burns, cockling, water stains etc. By no means am I a professional, but I think I have figured out how to re-frame most of these pieces so that they are protected a bit better than before. (Putting *glass* on one of the frames probably helped it a great deal!)



Admittedly, I purchase cheaper frames and modify them. My process has consisted of:

1) Clean the glass with ammonia-based glass cleaner. (Yes, I would use UV-plexi if it wasn't cost-prohibitive. Besides, MOST of these photos are hung in dark hallways.)

2) Seal the glass into the frame with silicone sealant. Why? I don't like how most frames have glass that wobbles around. It usually seems to settle back in the frame to rest on the art/photo. Glazier's points are used if the frame is antique or old and the picture has become coupled with the frame. I've read about how pictures need "air flow" but I feel like the silicone seal helps to protect the front of the frame, where it's most-likely to get hit by water, bugs, dirt

etc.

3) Either: mat art, mount art (in archival photo corners, no glue) or fit art back into frame. I never thought about keeping the art/photo from touching the edge of the frame before, but after removing an old photo with a mat around it from a frame, I noticed that there was an acid burn the size of the frame on the perimeter. Use spacers or extra glazier's points to keep art from touching wood/frame.

4) Fit art into frame; if it needs more fill space, put in a piece of foam board or davy board. Fit with glazier's points.

5) If I have a scan of the photo, I affix a CD in a paper sleeve to the back of the foam/davy board.

6) For neatness, I put dust paper on the back of the frame. This is done by lining the entire outside edge with mounting tape, and rolling out brown paper or butcher paper over the tape

border. Trim off the edges, and the back of the frame looks tidy and has a breathable barrier against dust 'n' bugs.

7) Attach desired method of hanging. NO I never use those awful "alligator" hooks most frames are provided with. Typically I use some kind of eye loop with regular picture-hanging wire.

My personal experience has been that the frame should be a safe display box for art or a photo to exist in. Moisture cannot be protected against; but I'm sure someday a vacuum-sealed frame home kit will be available.

Searching the Internet for information hasn't returned me much on how to conserve/identify old photographs, though I did find a few good sites: [Cyndi's List](#) has a good section on photographs, as well as other old items of geneological importance. [Guidelines For Preserving Your Photographic Heritage](#) provides a hefty manual for photographic preservation. But what about identifying ages and types of photographs? That information has been lacking. I suspect that I could best find answers by scouring a college bookstore. Based on what information I have on family members in the photos I can guess an aproximate age, but being the printmaker that I am, I want to know about how they were made.

Copyright © 2008 Olivia Snyder pinkfrog.net