Discourse

from the end of the line

December 2008

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From the Editor

Drachen Foundation
is a non-profit 501(c)(3)
corporation devoted to the
increase and diffusion of
knowledge about kites
worldwide.

www.drachen.org

In this installment of *Discourse* you will see the first examples of the two-way conversations that we had hoped this new publication would bring. Gary Hinze, an old friend from California and one of the earliest contributors to the Drachen *Kite Journal*, returns with his experiences with cyanotype kites. He was inspired by Susan Robb's work at the Hui No'eau Visual Arts Center, discussed in the last *Discourse*.

We revisit the kites of Guatemala, too, as they were the centerpiece of the Foundation's kite celebrations in Oaxaca, Mexico. You'll get to see what became the largest kite exhibit ever staged by the Drachen Foundation.

I hope this issue will inspire you all and spur you on to contributions in the future. *Discourse* is intended to be an open dialogue of serious kite-talk and it depends upon the reader for its success.

Scott Skinner
Board President
Drachen Foundation

Contributors

Paul Chapman
England

A longtime kite enthusiast and aeronautical engineer, Chapman has long been the "expert" on all things Cody. A specialist in flight control systems, he has an intimate knowledge of the pictorial history left to us by Cody.


Simon Bond

Ben D'Antonio
San Diego, California

From working on the production floor to flying kites on almost every continent, D'Antonio has become the ambassador for Revolution kites. Tireless on the field, he introduces all comers to the wonders of four-line kite flying.


The Rev Family

Ali Fujino
Seattle, Washington

From work at the Smithsonian to her present status as administrator for the Drachen Foundation, Fujino is an expert in archival practices. She works daily with the Foundation collection, organizing and storing its thousands of items.


Akiyoshi Odagawa

Maria Elena Garcia Autino
Argentina

A Barriletes a Toda Costa (BaToCo) member, Autino is a retired professor who taught for many years at the University of Buenos Aires. She has won national and international awards for her work in education.


Adrian Dubisnky

Joe Hadzicki
San Diego, California

An engineer, inventor, and entrepreneur, Hadzicki is one of three brothers who started Revolution Enterprises, the first to make a completely controllable four-line kite. The Rev has been the standard for the kite industry for twenty years.


Mike Larson

Contributors

Gary Hinze
San Jose, California

One of the first contributors to the Drachen *Kite Journal*, Hinze continues to follow his own path in kiting. He is a serious researcher of kite performance, but can't pass up the chance to try something new and put it to the test.


Gary Hinze

Christopher Ornelas
San Antonio, Texas

Ornelas holds a degree in Latin American Studies and Fine Arts from Yale University. After living in Central America for several months, Ornelas recently returned to his San Antonio, Texas hometown to work at the Museo Alameda and create art.


Christopher Ornelas

Scott Skinner
Monument, Colorado

A former Air Force instructor pilot, Drachen's board president has flown and designed kites for three decades. Skinner's military training created the structure for him to express himself as a visionary kite artist.


Greg Kono

Jan Westerink
Zutphen, Holland

Westerink, a former industrial designer turned handicraft teacher, has built replicas of several dozen largely unknown kites from the first half of the last century, and refers to himself as a "student" of early historical kites.


Jan Westerink

Oaxaca's Day of the Dead Takes Flight

Scott Skinner

Greg Kono

Big projects start in small ways, and so it was with this fall's *Dia de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead) celebration in Oaxaca, Mexico. Almost two years ago, former Drachen Foundation employee Melissa McKelvey dashed through Seattle – to and from Mexico – and in her wake she left a Mexican kite, crudely framed and bridled, but with beautiful graphic treatment.

The kite was hand painted on a very heavy handmade paper, like the surface of a woven mat of reeds. The colors were earth-like green shades. The image was not just an illustrated bat, but an impression of a bat articulated by an artist.

ABOVE: The kite exhibit at the Instituto de Artes Graficas de Oaxaca (IAGO), the largest exhibit ever staged by the Drachen Foundation.

NEXT PAGE: Two original Toledo kites discovered in Mexico.

Intrigued, Administrator Ali Fujino researched the kite online and learned that it came from renowned artist Francisco Toledo and the Instituto de Artes Graficas de Oaxaca (IAGO). She wanted to learn more!

At the same time, through a Drachen grant, Christopher Ornelas was in Guatemala, documenting the kites of Sumpango. Ali immediately sent him on a mission to Oaxaca to find the kite's source.

Kiyomi Okawa

The next steps in the story took some time. Christopher met the director of IAGO and learned that it had been established almost 20 years earlier by Francisco Toledo. Additionally, Toledo had started a paper factory located close by, and we learned that there were plans to do something special to celebrate the 20th and 10th anniversaries of both. What better, than to celebrate with kites!

For over a year, Ali, Christopher, and the IAGO staff worked to plan the kite exhibit that would be the center of the celebrations. Kites from nearby Guatemala were essential, as well as local kites made at the *papel taller* (paper factory) under the direction of Toledo. Two Drachen Foundation exhibits – The *Artist and the Kitemaker*, featuring Greg Kono and Nancy Kiefer, and *SkyArt*, with works by Jose Sainz, Nobuhiko Yoshizumi, and me – would be featured as well. The most exciting element of the show would be kites made by local Oaxacan and Mexican artists [2], using paper from the papel taller.

About one week before 2008's Dia de los Muertos celebrations in Oaxaca, Greg Kono and I arrived at IAGO to supervise the installation of kites, give kite workshops to local children, and give workshops to IAGO artists. Both the Drachen Foundation exhibits and the Guatemalan kites were held up in Mexican customs, so we were committed first to finishing local artists' kites. Our job was to use Japanese bamboo to finish the kites and make them flight- and exhibit-worthy.

Oh, did I tell you that when the Drachen exhibits cleared customs, hundreds of bamboo spars were confiscated?! It left us to finish the Mexican kites with the bamboo I had brought (or, evidently, smuggled) with me. It looked like we had about 75 kites to make. Well, call me naïve, because the 75 kites became 100, the 100 became almost 200, and with workshop commitments included, we worked our way through all but about 20 of my bamboo spars.

Through all of this, the exhibit was slowly taking shape. The paper sails from Guatemala were expertly sparred with local cane by Jose Sainz, Greg, Christopher, and me (see our contribution to *Kitelife Magazine* for details [1]). They became the boundaries for the exhibit in the huge space provided and gave us a direction for the layout. Local art kites were prepared by an enthusiastic group of middle-school students and were installed by the IAGO crew.

In the days before Dia de los Muertos, Christopher Ornelas presented a slide presentation about the Guatemalan kites of Sumpango. He was assisted by Guatemalan kitemakers Luis and Vitorino Tejaxun Alquijay, who were able to come to Oaxaca for just two days, before returning to finish their own kites for their Day of the Spirits celebration.

Masaaki Modegi presented a kite-making class using Japanese woodblock print techniques. With the help of his wife, Sachiko, Yoshizumi-san and his wife, Michiko, Sato-san, and Odagawa-san, local adults and children made kites. The entire group was treated to the privilege of flying kites at Monte Alban, one of the most important archeological sites in Mexico.

Throughout all of these activities, the magic of kites was demonstrated. Toledo, the most famous artist in Mexico, was interviewed while having no luck flying his kite. The largest kite exhibit ever staged by the Drachen Foundation opened successfully at

NEXT PAGE: Kites created by Oaxacan artists, sparred by kite maker Scott Skinner.


NUESTROS MUERT
SERAN VENGADO
COMO
AP
ME VEZ
Y VUELAS
•Paz•
Oaxaca.08

Ali Fujino

IAGO. Oaxacan Day of the Dead festivities provided the cultural backdrop for the IAGO and Papel Taller anniversaries.

IAGO Exhibit and a Conservation Problem

In every exhibit venue there are compromises that must be made in order for a successful kite exhibit to be launched. Sometimes it involves the venue's restrictions: low ceilings, bad light, or non-existent tie-points. Other times it is a restriction of time: "You have 8 hours to install the show." Very infrequently, an opportunity arises that offers a venue with almost unlimited space, dramatic light, interesting architectural details, and plenty of time to accomplish the vision of the exhibit. That's what the Drachen Foundation had at IAGO. What we didn't expect was a very interesting archival problem!

The featured attraction of the exhibit was four Guatemalan *barriletes gigantes*, traditionally used to celebrate the "Day of the Spirits," much like the Day of the Dead celebrations in Mexico. Christopher Ornelas and I were faced with the problem of framing these huge paper sails – one, a 20-foot diameter circle, another about 30 feet across and 20 feet high – so they would provide the backdrop for the entire exhibit. Because Christopher works at San Antonio, Texas' Museo Alameda, and will likely bring these same kites to San Antonio, we realized that what we did in Mexico would likely have to be repeated in the US.

I suggested that we use the local reed that was readily available to construct frames. These light and brittle stalks could never hold up to the real stresses on a large kite, but could at least give the appearance of authenticity and provide enough structural support for hanging. But how to connect them to the fragile paper sails without altering them? I suggested a solution and let Christopher, the museum professional, make the final call. After consulting with his registrar in San Antonio, our strategy was set.

On the backs of the paper sails, we adhered 1-foot squares of clear tape at each spar end-point. I can attest to the fact that the tape was exactly like that used originally on the backs of the kites: very thin, poor adhesive, and impossible to find the end! To each of these square areas, we then taped the spars in place, using additional spars for support where needed. We found that this method would allow us to simply cut away the spars without any alteration of the sail; no additional holes, tears, or paper.

Over time and a series of venues, this method will serve to reenforce the entire outer edge of the kite sail without visible changes to the front of the kite. Original tears in the backing paper or in the sails themselves will be left alone to show the original treatment of the sails. If the sails were to be restored to their original condition, it would be a simple task to remove the backing paper under the tape sections and re-tile backing paper on the entire sail. The fragile artwork on the front of the sail would be left undisturbed.

Needless to say, with the barrilletes gigantes in place, the IAGO exhibit was a great success. Close to two hundred artists submitted artwork, including Francisco Toledo, founder of IAGO and the Papel Taller. The final exhibit included almost three hundred kites. Installation was accomplished by Christopher Ornelas, Greg Kono, Jose Sainz, Ali Fujino, and myself, with help from local middle-school students and IAGO staff.

[1] "Drachen Archives: Making Kites Fly" in *Kitelife Magazine*: www.kitelife.com/magazine/issue63/drachen63/content.php

[2] View more Oaxacan artist kites on the Drachen website: www.drachen.org/special_events_oaxaca-images.html

The Revolution Kite's 20th Anniversary

Highlights

Joe Hadzicki

Kirsten Hadzicki

After 20 years of Revolution Kites, Ali Fujino at the Drachen Foundation has asked me to look back and recount some of the highlights.

We all have memories of kite flying when we were kids, but instead of buying my first kite for $1.50 and seeing how many spools of string I could let out before losing it in the clouds, my first kite started at the dining room table. When I was around 8 years old, my family (three boys, three girls, three left handers, three right) sat around the dining room table with my aunt, and we built diamond kites out of paper bags, complete with tails made with a string of rag cloth bows.

Ali Fujino

LAST PAGE: During a mega fly at the Bristol International Kite Festival, fliers honor the Rev's 20th anniversary.

ABOVE: The Hadzicki brothers fly their kite creation at the Smithsonian in the early 1990s.

It was late in the evening when we finished. My brothers and sisters went to watch TV, but I was so excited to test my new creation that I took it out and ran down the middle of the street and flew it under the moonlit sky. Looking back on it now, I can still feel the visceral sensations of my first kiting experience. The cool evening air, the magically lit road becoming my personal test runway, the shadows of the neighborhood watching my experiment unfold.

I received my Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Since I always loved to create things, I knew early on that engineering was the discipline for me. During my senior year, a guest lecturer gave a presentation on car crash equipment he had designed and built for the Ford Motor Company. Talking about how "drunks off the street" were used in the original crash tests, I knew this guy was a rogue maverick of an engineer. I promptly followed him out of the lecture hall and asked for a job. The following Monday, I was knee deep in military computer programs, sheet metal retrofits on trailers, stainless steel plumbing for jet engine starters, and vacuum forming plastic fairings for underwater sonar towing. This guy was nuts and I loved it. But some of the most influential experiences came in the off hours. We would spend hours and hours reverse engineering and building WWII fighter aircraft models from pictures out of books. I mean from scratch! Then we would bolt a motor in and throw them – crash them – rebuild – adjust – and throw them again. I developed a certain sense for subtle control of aircraft using control surfaces. Now THIS truly influenced my later kite designs.

One weekend traveling down to San Diego to visit my family, I was stunned to see from the freeway a large man being pulled across the park by an incredibly powerful kite! (I believe this was Don Tabor of Top of the Line Kites.) I said to myself, "Now THAT'S what I call a kite!" I spent the weekend building and flying my first delta kites. Since it was a dream of mine to work for myself since I was a little kid, I thought it would be a good idea to take some time off to see if I could get something started. Little did I know that this would be the beginning of Revolution Kites.

After playing with deltas for a few weeks, flying, stacking, team flying with my brothers, I felt a need for more control. I tried various wing shapes, adding more control lines, and even hinged control surfaces, and even though I was having some limited success, it wasn't what I was looking for. My vision was a kite that you could stop at any point in the sky, then back down with total control, and land – like the Harrier Jump Jet. That was my vision, and I'm big on visions. That's what drives my passion.

Several months into experimenting (build the kite in the morning, fly it in the afternoon, wrestle with the results that evening, and come up with design changes for the next day's attempt), I found I had hit a wall. I had run out of ideas.

Then one day, by chance, I was on the phone with my old boss in Santa Barbara, tying up some paperwork on an old project. Although our conversation had nothing to do with engineering or design, it somehow changed my state of mind. The next morning I opened my eyes and sat up in bed and said to myself, "That's it! I need two independently controllable wings, just like an airplane!" This was the "Aha!" moment that changed everything.

The concept worked on the first prototype: two squares of fabric separated by an empty space. From then on it was the daily routine of building in the morning, flying in the afternoon, and re-designing in the evening for the next day's build.

At this point I felt the hard work was done. We had made the leap to a conceptually new design, radically different than the current trends. We took eighty kites to the 1989 international kite trade show in San Diego. The Revolution design was an instant show stopper at the convention, selling out in the first hour, followed with orders for 400 more! We had a wall of people, three deep for three days placing orders.

But now we had a new kind of challenge before us – meeting demand. Things were crazy at our "headquarters" (AKA our parents' garage). We enlisted everyone we knew to help us with production. We managed to get a golf club manufacturer to make our shafts, and a sail company to sell us rip-stop material and provide us with sewers. We did all the kite assembly, packaging, and shipping ourselves. As we sold more kites, we were able to hire people to work for us and to rent a production facility. I think my mother and father were a bit sad to see us go as they worked with us in the shop for many years after we moved. My dad made a lot of handles and tied a lot of bridles!

During that first year, we cleaned up the design, streamlined production, developed our graphite structure, filed for a patent, and started our company.

Once we had a kite that could be made efficiently, we had to concentrate on making it more accessible to the average person. Although selling the kites complete with a training video was the original plan, it had been dropped due to advice from store retailers that the cost would be prohibitive. After a couple months of frustration from new Revolution fliers and retailers, we began including the training videos with each Revolution sold. (This was the first time in history for stunt kites to come complete with training videos!) We instantly noticed the difference! New fliers that used to take two weeks to get the basics would now buy the Revolution, watch the training video that night, and learn the basic flying skills by the next day!

Revolution has always been a family affair.

Simon Bond

LAST PAGE: Joe Hadzicki, father of the Revolution, "revs up" with other fliers in Bristol, England.

Both my brothers, Dave and Jim, were key to the company. Revolution Kites would have been much less successful, maybe even impossible, without them. The actual business structure of the company is virtually Jim's creation. With a business degree from USC, he had the skill set to do the nuts and bolts of the company. Both Jim and Dave spent countless hours test flying. Jim spent a lot of time just flying for fun, whereas I was more on a mission. After the company was started, Jim was very successful during the early years incorporating quad line flying into the international competitions, including precision, ballet, and team events. From the beginning and through to the present, virtually all quad line events are dominated by the Revolution design.

In the early days, Revolution kites were only allowed to compete in the Innovative classification. The four line control system and the independently controlled wings make the Revolution so precise that it is virtually impossible to compare it to a two line delta design. But a mistake was made one time when we were invited to a kite competition in Reno, Nevada. The event was sponsored by the local casinos and the competition was open to all comers. My two brothers and I promptly competed against the rest of the field which consisted of delta teams. We flew a knot tying demonstration, which is simple for a Revolution kite, and walked away, hands down, with the $1,000 first place prize. Needless to say, that was the first and last time we were allowed to compete against dual line kites.

My brother, Dave, was a registered golf pro at the time, and his connections in the golf industry set up the graphite R&D with the world's leading golf shaft manufacturers that, over a six month period, developed the bullet-proof Revolution shafts that are the cornerstone of Revolution's infamous durability. Before the graphite structure was developed, I built the prototypes using "70 series" aluminum arrow shafts. Although this material is stiff enough to use in a Revolution test, it soon bends and becomes useless. This is a classic difference between building for fun and building for production. The graphite was critical to our Revolution's success. This also led to one of our patents in the golf industry for our computer controlled golf shaft machine. In fact, the company that helped developed our original Rev I shaft over 20 years ago now produces its golf shafts using our machines.

As the company grew, we brought in our sister, Lolly, to run the front office. She has been a great point of contact with all of our distributors – she's become well known in kite circles on and off the field.

We also welcomed Ben D'Antonio to our team as the general manager of kites. He's been instrumental in the Masterpiece Series and helps keep all of our fliers happy and in-the-know.

We have continued to add to our product line as a result of our experience in graphite. We've made bicycle components, model airplane parts, canes for the blind, and military components. Maybe nearest to my heart after kites is our Revolution Skateboard. After all these years, I'm still skateboarding every weekend – not bad for a guy who's nearly fifty!

The Revolution Kite's 20th Anniversary

Dream Becomes a Reality

Ben D'Antonio

The Rev Family

Above: Joe Hadzicki and Ben D'Antonio at the Bristol International Kite Festival.

Next Page, Top: Team fliers in Bristol, England.

Next Page, Bottom: Team fliers in Portsmouth, England.

"Bristol was part of our year long celebration of our Twentieth Anniversary. But it was a party for many reasons. It gave me a chance to do what I do best: give lessons and share the excitement of my invention with all interested, young and old." - Joe Hadzicki

Revolution took its 20th birthday to the UK to be a part of the kiting scene in Europe, and what a birthday it was, and even more, what a way to have a birthday party. Myself and team iQuad and even Joe Hadzicki took off for this once in a lifetime event and congregation of Rev fliers.

The first stop on the European tour was Portsmouth, England, where we took to the field as both a company and as a group of many nations and beliefs to fly Revolution kites. In attendance were no less than 8 to 10 teams of the very best fliers in the world from at least six different countries.

We left all the nonsense and personal differences behind and met together to just fly a kite that has given so many of us such great pleasure over the last 20 years, and to tell and show Joe H. what started as a dream is so much more 20 years later.

In Portsmouth we battled weather, wind, and even each other at times to put on the show of a lifetime and fly in sync together with a massive group of fliers, and then to put on the "Biggest Mega Fly Ever" that really did some flying rather than just going up and then down.

After hours of lessons and demos by each team, we came to the line not as any single team but as the largest team ever with only the very best of the best. Set aside was this team or that team. What we had become was the "Revolution Team," and as an added bonus we even had the man who started all this with just a dream and a hope, Mr. Joe Hadzicki.

The Rev Family

When you were on the line you could hear the moves called in English, French, Portuguese, Dutch, and Spanish. That is when I was finally able to be a part of my own personal dream of "one sky, one world and all joined together with kite lines." All the hard work of helping to put this together was right there in front of me for the whole world to see. There were 47 fliers all together going thru patterns being called.

The thing that sticks in my mind is when I set my kite down and then walked away to look at it all. The tears came to my eyes when I thought of all the people who made my dream possible – people like Ali Fujino and Scott Skinner of the Drachen Foundation; Team iQuad, who kept me going when I just wanted to give up; all the other teams, who believed in someone they really didn't even know; Revolution, who saw the dream and knew I could pull it off; and Mary Shaffer, who passed away just a few weeks before this all took place, who no matter what wanted me to be happy and live out my dreams. At this point I had to walk away with a tear in my eye and look up at the sky and know that the heavens were looking down and smiling.

From there it was off to the second part of the tour in Bristol where the winds were not what we would have liked but the fliers never stopped, no matter what the conditions were. Once again Team Revolution pulled it off and gave a great show. At one time we were over 50 fliers going through routines, and even though the winds were light, we as a group had fun and were able to strut our stuff for the people.

What really sticks in my mind was looking over and seeing Joe Hadzicki flying with his daughter and son, and thinking to myself how this sport is such a family sport. It makes no difference if you're young or old, or from here or there. It's just about having fun with what you're doing.

For me, this was so very much more than a kite event. This was about putting lots of different people together in a place where we can all be together, leave all of the world behind, and just enjoy each other's company, where we can fly as one rather than as small groups. In my mind, this is what the world lacks in so many areas. We as a people have forgotten that the person next to you is your brother, not someone you're in competition with for some prize. We were in fact a world of many nations all joined together by kite lines, just enjoying each other's company.

There are so many people that made this possible that to thank everyone would take up way too much space as well as time, but there are several people that must be mentioned and these folks were prime examples of what all this was about. They are: Felix Mottram of the Decorators, Steven Hoath of the Flying Squad, and mostly Ali Fujino and Scott Skinner, and the most important, my friend as well as boss, Joe Hadzicki, thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

Introduction

Paul Chapman

Jean Roberts

Above: A painting of Samuel Franklin Cody's military kite trials by Cody expert Jean Roberts.

Bottom: In another Roberts painting, Cody crosses the English Channel in a kite boat.

This year is the centenary of the first powered, and some say controlled, aeroplane flight in the UK. It was made by a middle-aged American who was probably better known at the time for his storytelling and theatrical skills. He also made a few kites and flew them wherever his travelling theater pitched up for a performance.

This self-styled birdman from Birdville, Texas (clearly a self-styled myth) had earlier crossed the English Channel by kite-borne boat in 1903. By 1905 he had flown in his 50-foot wingspan glider. And in 1906 he finally became Chief Kiting Instructor to those British Army chaps. Along the way he had undertaken man-lifting kite trials with the Royal Navy and had dabbled in airships.

This man? Samuel Franklin Cody FRMS [1].

Of course, he was not the first to get airborne in the UK. Surely the honor for that goes to Eilmer of Malmesbury in or around 1008 AD. Nor was he the first airborne kiteist. That may well have been Bristol's George Pocock, who experimented with man-lifting kites in the 1820s. But Sam Cody and the British Army succeeded where Machine Gun Maxim failed, and particularly when Alliot Verdon Roe *nearly flew* (his words) from Brooklands in the summer of 1908.

Cody's British Army Aeroplane No. 1 took about a year to build, partly because it was delayed by the availability of the French Antoinette engine. Then from August and September, Cody was dabbling with Naval Kite

Trials at Portsmouth, as well as airship business at Farnborough. The first aeroplane flight (and crash) took place in a great fanfare of secrecy. The Army bosses didn't know, although it was a well-photographed event.

Within a year, and despite being sacked for unauthorized crashing, Cody and his redesigned BAA No.1 had become a reliable flier. Sam Cody was a larger-than-life figure in the pioneering days of aviation.

He struggled against all sorts of odds. For example he survived a crash brought on by a collision with what his lawyer later described as a "suicidal" cow, and he went on to win the 1912 Military Aeroplane Trials. (The aeroplane is now in the Science Museum.) Sadly, this winner of the Aeronautical Society's Silver Medal was never to build his Transatlantic Flier because he was killed in an accident to his Round Britain Waterplane in August 1913.

100 Years of Cody

The Importance of a Collection

Ali Fujino

Among all the kite items that we have amassed in our 13 years as the Drachen Foundation, the Cody Collection has been one of our most interesting.

What has happened since 1996?

After the auction, our purchases were shipped back to Seattle by Sotheby's of London. The cargo went by sea, and we anxiously awaited its arrival. Like any shipment, the items were subject to customs clearance, and without much difficulty, all the items were safely delivered to our front door. Unfortunately, the small house that we operated in at that time was not equipped to take 25-foot-long spars. We had no choice but to break down the crates on our sidewalk and hand carry the large kites into the house.

Stabilizing the collection was the first matter of operation. We were sad to find that the original Sotheby auction numbers (tags) had almost all fallen off the correct pieces. Having those numbers were the best identification system for the items, as they were the first numbers assigned to the pieces since brought to the public. (For almost 83 years, these pieces were in storage, owned by the Cody heirs.)

Most of the items were in good to excellent condition. Care had to be given to the fragile items, glass negatives and kites frayed and worn from flight, age, and poor storage. Our work was set out for us, and each item had to be inspected, logged, and numbered. Each piece had to be photographed.

Once the collection was numbered, the Foundation began to meet the criteria of sharing our collection, and photographic images of each item traveled to various countries for study. Many of the kites were desired to be examined, and a loan system for various kites was implemented.

The next step was finding affordable and functional museum quality acquisition software to database the collection. After testing and pricing the various programs, we settled on a company known as PastPerfect.

Work began on designing a plan to digitize the slides. We solicited companies who were qualified to do the work and worked out a timeline to schedule the digitizing of over 500 pieces. Once the items were

Next Page: Cody poses with a series of his man-lifting kites in a painting by Jean Roberts.

Jean Roberts

digitized, we had to check the office numbers with the image numbers to make sure all the pieces were numbered correctly. Finding the right data entry personnel was also a task that we had to address. Accuracy of entry is required, and some individuals have the focus to match numbers with photos and to systematically identify each item using the same nomenclature.

Once the items were in the computer and general descriptions were assigned, we enlisted the help of two well qualified Cody experts, Jean Roberts and Paul Chapman.

Funding was found to send Simon Bond from our office in Seattle to England, hand carrying over 400 printouts of the Cody photos. It was our intent to have the two look at and annotate each photo, providing information that we did not have in our database. Extremely enthusiastic and open in sharing their expertise and time, they spent the last part of their summer working together, cross referencing the photos.

100 Years of Cody

Cody Collection Online

Scott Skinner

How long does it take to curate a collection and put it up online? The Drachen Foundation can now speak from experience, and the answer is not pretty – almost 10 years!

In a small organization it takes a fair amount of prioritization to make sure things get done. So it was with the Cody Collection, purchased for the Foundation at the Sotheby's auction in 1996 (see the Drachen Foundation *Kite Journal* #25 [2]). Taking care of the glass-plate negatives, photographs, papers, and actual kites has been an ongoing priority from which we have learned many of our archival practices.

But making the collection truly useful has been another problem completely. The Foundation has traveled several of the kites for study, it has shipped copies of the paper archive, and it has offered Cody kite plans for sale. All these efforts have been appreciated, but have been aimed at a few recipients. Putting the archive online would drastically increase the number of people worldwide with access to this information.

It is with great pride that I announce that the Cody Collection is now online at the Drachen Foundation website.

Circumstances contributed to the success of this project. Simon Bond was our almost-full-time summer intern, there was a break in Drachen projects, and new computer capacity was added. With Simon driving the train, documents were scanned, photos digitized, and kites photographed. Simon also traveled to England to work with Cody experts Jean Roberts and Paul Chapman to annotate the photo collection. This was a massive job which will be a continuing work-in-progress as more information surfaces from Cody enthusiasts worldwide.

So now it's up to you, the user, to give us feedback on the archive. If you have additional information about any pictures or documents, we'd like to hear it. The Foundation will post its policy on the use and reproduction of all archival items.

Visit the Cody Collection Online:
www.drachen.org
click "Online Catalog"

[1] FRMS stands for Fellow of the Royal Meteorological Society. Cody was made a Fellow in November of 1902, following his meteorological kiting experiments in Newcastle that same year.

[2] "Cody Collection Coup"in the Drachen Foundation *Kite Journal*: www.drachen.org/journals/journal25/25-1/Cody.pdf

Adrift in *el Istmo*: a Kite Journey to Juchitán

Christopher Ornelas

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Left: In the isolated indigenous communities of San Mateo and Santa Maria del Mar, fishermen have developed the practice of fishing with kites in the ocean.

Middle and Right: Señor Reynaldo Ramirez Bartolo stands in his patio alongside a fishing kite and nets. His father was among the first fishermen to start using kites to fish in the 1970's. Today the practice has become a way of life for the people of San Mateo and Santa Maria del Mar.

On the southern coast of Mexico, where the North American continent narrows between the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean, there is a region known as the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. *El Istmo,* or the Isthmus, is unlike any place else in Mexico. It is one of the most purely indigenous regions in the country, and its relative isolation between the mountainous highlands of Oaxaca and Chiapas has preserved many old traditions which have long since died out in other parts of the country.

Among these customs is the practice of flying kites for the Day of the Dead. It is an old tradition that is now fading away, especially as the Isthmus becomes more connected to the

outside world. However, there are two small villages in el Istmo, known as San Mateo del Mar and Santa Maria del Mar, where the tradition of flying kites is still thriving.

In early February 2008, I traveled to the Isthmus to visit several indigenous villages around the city of Juchitán where I was told that people still make kites. The region is heavily Zapotec. [Editor's note: The Zapotecs are an indigenous people of Mexico, whose several closely related languages are called Zapotec.] Most people in the vicinity are bilingual, with one important exception. There is a small peninsula known as the *Zona Huave* where people speak a language completely unconnected to Zapotec, called *Ombeayüits*.

Although the region is referred to as the Zona Hauve by outsiders, the people of San Mateo del Mar and Santa Maria del Mar strongly disdain the term "Huave," which is actually a deprecatory Zapotec word meaning "rotten parrot." Rather, they call themselves *Icot*, which is not a name, but simply means "our people."

Marginalized even amongst indigenous communities, this region is one of the few places left in Oaxaca where the tradition of kite making lives on. Not only are kites made every year for the Day of the Dead, but the Icot make a living by fishing with kites in the ocean – a tradition not found anywhere else in Mexico.

The people of San Mateo del Mar and Santa Maria del Mar have lived along the narrow barrier peninsula on the edge of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec since before the arrival of the Spanish. They live a spartan lifestyle, and for centuries they have depended on fishing, and on the bounty of the sea, to survive. Their houses, made from concrete blocks and thatched palm roofs, are the only sign of human habitation on an otherwise barren and impossibly remote landscape.

The villages of San Mateo del Mar and Santa Maria del Mar are reminders of a culture and history that are often overlooked by the contemporary narrative of Mexican history. The great achievements of pre-Colombian cultures, such as the Mayan or Zapotec, form a core part of the Mexican identity. But present-day indigenous communities are often stigmatized as backward, and viewed as barriers to progress. The presence of the Icot, and that of countless other living indigenous cultures, is directly at odds with the idea of a unified national identity. Their rich cultural legacy cannot be found in the history books, but it is passed down through oral history and customs from father to son.

I traveled to Juchitán on a rickety *Estrella Roja de Sureste* second-class bus. All second-class buses leave out of the Central Bus Terminal, located next door to the sprawling *Abastos* street market, whose ten block radius packs in an amazing density of people, livestock, produce, and every kind of plastic trinket and XXX rated movie imaginable. Leaving Oaxaca from *Abastos* is like emerging from the center of a great ant hill. The city seems to swirl around in a haze of cars, tractor trailers, and a swarm of pedestrians.

The highway to the ocean winds its way along the ridges of the Sierra Madre del Sur mountains. As the crow flies, the coast is less than 100 miles from Oaxaca City. Yet it takes seven hours to drive there because the highway meanders back and forth along the ridges of the mountains. As the road descends, the vegetation dramatically changes. The tops of the mountains are covered with pine trees, and as I ascended higher, the forests become thicker and lush.

The mountains end abruptly at the ocean, and after we turned down a bend in the road I could suddenly see the Pacific glittering a few miles in the distance. Sandy plains stretched to the sea, dotted with palm trees. I discovered that large coconut plantations line the coast, creating the illusion of a Caribbean paradise, even though the natural landscape is desert-like and thorny.

As I got off the bus in Juchitán, I immediately felt as though I had entered a sauna. The air was thick with the scent of tropical plants and heavy with humidity. El Istmo is cut off from the rest of Mexico by the Sierra Madre del Sur mountains, and going there is like traveling to a different country. The geographic isolation of the isthmus has created a cultural bubble of customs and religious practices which are not seen anywhere else in Mexico. Forbidden delicacies such as eating sea turtle eggs and iguana meat for breakfast are still widely practiced, and in the past, animal rights activists have been run out of town for trying to enforce international restrictions on their consumption.

There are perhaps three thousand people who live in San Mateo and a little more than a thousand who live in Santa Maria. There is only one road which leads to the peninsula, which begins as a two lane highway and then turns into a sandy, dirt road. In Juchitán I teamed up with a local painter named Cristián Piñeda, who offered to guide me around the region. To reach the villages we had to travel through a heavily fortified military barricade at the edge of the peninsula. Armed soldiers ordered us to leave our car as they searched the inside for evidence of narcotics.

The long empty stretches of beach along the peninsula make it an ideal dumping spot for planes delivering shipments of narcotics from Columbia into Mexico. In recent years, the peninsula has become heavily militarized as part of Mexican President Felipe Calderon's intensified war on drugs. Upon entering the Zona Huave, I saw at least thirty armed soldiers stationed at the barricade, checking every car.

The people of San Mateo and Santa Maria are ultimately caught in between the military and the drug cartels. The Mexican military has a history of abuse towards indigenous groups in Mexico, especially in Chiapas, and they suspect the villages of abetting the cartels. Meanwhile, the drug cartels actively exploit the extreme poverty of the villages. Most Icots are fishermen, but for many young men, trafficking narcotics provides a lucrative and tempting alternative to the poverty of the peninsula and the lack of other jobs.

Because of this tension, and because of their long history of exploitation by outsiders, the Icot towns are extremely hermetic, and most people are very distrustful of outsiders, even those from neighboring Juchitán. Perhaps that is why after arriving in San Mateo, Cristián and I were immediately taken to meet the local *comite* (town council). They meet every day in a large open air room just behind the local *preperatoria* (high school), where they attend to town business and discuss any disputes with people from the neighboring villages.

As I entered, the comite sat facing me lined in a row, and suddenly I got an aching feeling that I was about to be interrogated for some unknown offense. Eight pairs of eyes sat staring at me, impassive and stoic. A momentary silence filled the room, as neither of us were quite sure what to say.

NEXT PAGE: Señor Mendoza Osoria builds the frame for a kite using sticks made from palm fronds and a nylon sack.

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In my head, I began to lay out my argument, defending my reasons for being there, explaining that I had no ulterior motives, and hoping that kites were a sufficiently apolitical subject to exculpate me from any wrong doing. Although my intentions were good, I was preparing myself to be questioned, interrogated and found unworthy to do research in the town.

However, this momentary fear was quite unnecessary. Instead of making a case for myself, I shared with them my stories about studying kites in Guatemala. I made clear that my only purpose for coming was to investigate local kite traditions and to learn more about the practice of kite fishing in San Mateo.

Like opening a window in a dark room, the mood changed almost immediately. They no longer viewed me as a threat, but perhaps as simply eccentric for being so interested in kites. Their demeanor became more relaxed and the mood became almost jovial. Before too long, everyone was eager to share their own story about flying kites.

Like in Guatemala, special kites are also made for the Day of the Dead. One of the women on the Junta told me that the kites are sent to guide the spirits of the dead back down to earth, but that the kite also symbolizes a person's soul as it is being lifted into heaven. They are flown on October 31st to guide the souls down from heaven and again on November 1st to raise them back into heaven.

The kites are made in many different shapes. Some are star shaped and others are simple arch topped kites. One man on the council described to me a very special kind of kite called a *quip*, which is made in the shape of a cone, and it is unique because it can be flown without a tail. Another common kite is shaped like a hexagon and called a *barrilete*. This is same word used for "kite" in Guatemala. The word for kite in Mexico is *papalote*, and in the Icot language, it is *papalotl*. Incidentally, the most common kite shape in Guatemala is also a hexagon!

The uncanny connection between the two towns seems to suggest the existence of a much older kite tradition, perhaps one that was introduced during colonial times when Mexico was a part of the trade route to Asia. But there is also a possibility that the kite is linked to pre-Colombian paper-making rituals. Paper was an important part of Aztec and Mayan religious rituals, and many sacred sacrificial objects were made from paper, including clothing, weapons, and large hanging banners. I hope to explore these connections in a future essay.

The kites for the Day of the Dead are made with a thin stick frame. In years past, they used a plant known as *gulabere* to make the glue, and sometimes the fibers of the *maguey* plant were used to make the string. The frame was usually covered with *papel de cemento* and *papel de china*, cement paper and tissue paper, respectively. The kites were made in conjunction with *ofrendas* or offerings of food and flowers for the graves of loved ones.

A local writer from Juchitán named Victor Terán told me that the kites in Juchitán were made in the shape of *beaynets* or ornamental wreaths made in the shape of a cross and decorated with flowers. According to Terán, these kites were much bigger than the kites made during the rest of the year, and they were made specifically to celebrate the sprits of the dead.

The practice of kite fishing stemmed from the tradition of flying kites for the Day of the Dead. A relatively recent creation that began in the 1960's, kite fishing became

very popular and was quickly adopted by local fishermen. It is an ingenious strategy to fish in the notoriously dangerous waters off the Oaxacan coast.

Puerto Escondido, the famous surfing Mecca, is less than two hours from the Zona Huave. It is known worldwide for its monumental rolling waves, matched only by Hawaii in their height and intensity. The same giant waves also hit the barrier peninsula of San Mateo del Mar and Santa Maria del Mar. Not only do the waves make swimming dangerous, but there is an extremely strong riptide that can pull a swimmer a mile out into the ocean in a matter of minutes.

For this reason, the fishermen of San Mateo del Mar and Santa Maria del Mar fished in the relatively calm waters of the *laguna superior*. But since the development of kite fishing, they are now able to catch hundreds of kilos of fish without ever having to set foot in the ocean.

The kites vary in size, but mostly they are between three and five feet in length and the skin is made from nylon sacks. Because the winds along the coast are extremely powerful, the kites lift up quickly and exert a tremendous amount of pull. In fact, a few hours to the north of Juchitán there is an electric wind farm in a town called *la Ventosa,* the windy place, where the wind is continually funneled between two mountains. Sometimes the winds are so strong that it requires several men to reel in just one kite.

The fishermen usually set their nets out at night or early in the morning. They leave the kites flying all night and come back the next day. The winds are strong enough to support the kite continuously during this time. The kite is attached to a long rope, which is then attached to a net. The net is then anchored by a bucket filled with stones. This also serves to anchor the kite. Essentially, the kite is flown from the water, not the land.

When the kite is lifted from the beach, it pulls the net, along with the anchor, into the ocean. Another long rope is tied to the opposite end of the net, connecting the net to the land. On land, the cord is anchored to a wooden post or buried deep in the sand. On a good day, the fishermen are capable of catching up to three hundred kilos (more than 660 pounds) of fish.

Accompanied by Catalina Mendoza of the comite, I traveled half an hour west to Santa Maria del Mar to meet with a man named Reynaldo Ramirez Bartolo. Santa Maria is a small collection of palm roofed homes which seemed to be huddled around a tiny main plaza with an old white church on one end and a basketball court on the other. I wanted to meet with Reynaldo because he was among the first fishermen to begin fishing with kites. His house is on the outskirts of the town, a low-roofed building with walls made of smooth grey colored concrete.

The rooms of the house face a large open patio, encircled by a bamboo fence. The sound of giant waves can be heard in the distance like muffled thunder. Reynaldo welcomed us into his home with a warm smile. Neatly folded fishing nets hung from posts along the patio.

Reynaldo told me that a man by the name of Juan Martinez Robles was the first fisherman to begin fishing with kites. Before then, some fishermen would fish in the

NEXT PAGE: Holding a traditional octagonal kite known as a *barrilete,* this elementary school boy enjoys an afternoon of kite flying under the Oaxacan sun. Unlike other parts of Mexico where the tradition of kites is slowly fading away, kite flying is still a popular pastime in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

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ocean using nets tied to floating *gallones* (large plastic containers), but it was cumbersome and difficult to get the nets beyond where the waves break.

At that time, kites were viewed as something sacred by *los viejos*, the older people, but the use of the kites for fishing came about because of the necessity of the *pueblo,* the community. The soil on the peninsula is mostly made of sand and it is not suited for agriculture. Therefore, fishing is the primary form of income for these towns. The kites have dramatically increased their yield of fish, some of which is now sold commercially, providing a small profit. But even so, the majority of the yield is still consumed locally, and many of the families struggle to obtain basic food and medicine.

After returning to San Mateo, Catalina invited me to her home. Her husband is a fisherman, she told me, and she wanted to show us how the kites were made. In a simple room, her husband laid out several *pencas de coco,* the stems of dried palm fronds. The stems are cut to the right size with a machete and then stripped of the bark. Using these sticks to create the frame, he assembled a simple square diamond kite.

The frame is covered with an industrial nylon sack used to carry sugar cane. The corners are tied with string to secure them to the frame and the bridle line is tied to the spine and then pulled through a hole to the front of the kite. The tail is made up of a long string of torn rags, knotted together and attached to the kite using a nylon fishing cord. The line is made of a thicker nylon cord. They are simple utilitarian kites, but they are nonetheless well made and sturdy.

As I was about to leave, I was abruptly stopped by an imposing figure in the doorway of Señora Catalina's home. A tall, stately woman entered the room dressed in a radiant yellow *huipil* and a flowing black dress. Her long grey hair was braided with red *cintas,* ribbons, and tied together in a bow behind her back. After looking closer, I saw that she was an ancient woman with piercing black eyes.

Señora Catalina introduced the ancient woman as her mother. She gave me a haughty look and remained standing in the doorway. I humbled myself before her, bowing slightly as I shook her hand, and the old woman gave me a small smile. In her posture I could see the reflection of Señora Catalina's proud and commanding demeanor. She said nothing to me, but wordlessly she consented to my presence in her home.

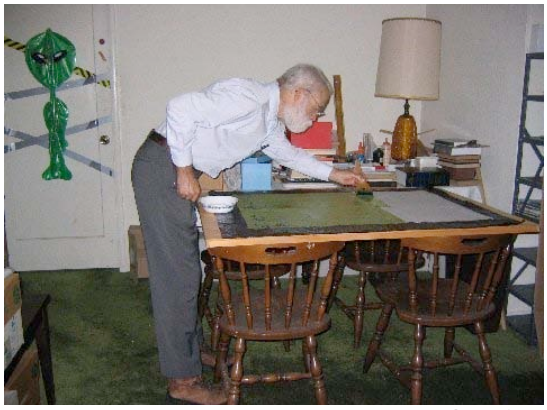
Only months after visiting the Zona Huave did I begin to realize the unique opportunity that had been given to me. After being isolated and marginalized for centuries, the people of San Mateo del Mar and Santa Maria del Mar are naturally distrustful of outsiders. They carefully guard the secrets of their culture. But despite that fear, the people of San Mateo opened up to me in a way I had not expected. Señora Catalina opened her home and allowed me to glimpse into one small part of her rich and ancient culture.

As we walked back to the car, I saw two young boys in the school yard flying kites. One of them stopped and came up to us carrying a bright red one in the shape of a barrilete. He asked me a question in Ombeayüits, which I could not understand. A moment later he handed me the kite string, and I needed no further explanation.

We sat there flying kites in the late afternoon. It was early February and long past kiting season, but it didn't seem to matter much.

Making Cyanokites

Gary Hinze



Gary Hinze

ABOVE AND FOLLOWING: Kite maker and researcher Gary Hinze takes a series of photographs of himself making and flying his *Discourse*-inspired cyanotype kites.

A Cyanokite is a kite made from a cyanotype. A cyanotype is an art print made with blueprint chemistry.

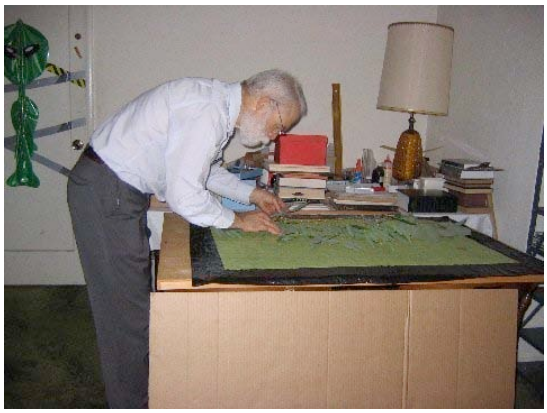
The August 2008 *Discourse* featured kites made from cyanotype prints [1]. The prints were made by Susan Robb and they were made into kites by Scott Skinner and Nobuhiko Yoshizumi.

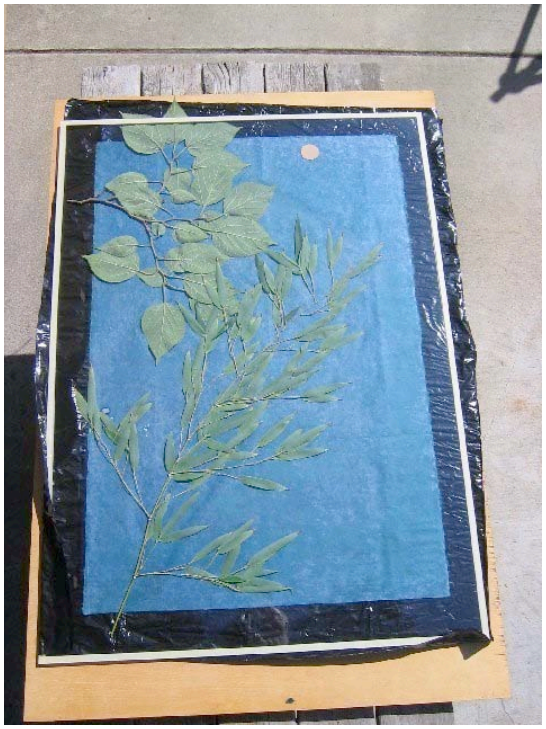
My daughter Jessica is an art student with an interest in alternate photographic processes. She has wanted to try the cyanotype process and I have wanted to make some kites from materials given to me by Japanese kite maker Minoru Matsui. I forwarded the *Discourse* URL to her. We got together to do this project. Jessica had the chemicals and I had the paper and bamboo.

The first step was to mix the chemicals. Wear clothes you don't mind staining.

The Photographers' Formulary produces a New Cyanotype Kit containing all the necessary chemicals [2]. The kit comes with complete instructions, also available on their web site. All you need to add is distilled water. (You can also get the solution pre-mixed.) I dampened the chemical before grinding, to prevent dust spreading.

The coating of the paper with light sensitive chemical was done under subdued light. The windows in direct sunlight were covered with sheets of cardboard. I went around the neighborhood on garbage night to collect discarded boxes. Curtains were drawn over the





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other windows. There was still plenty of light to see. These indoor pictures were made with flash.

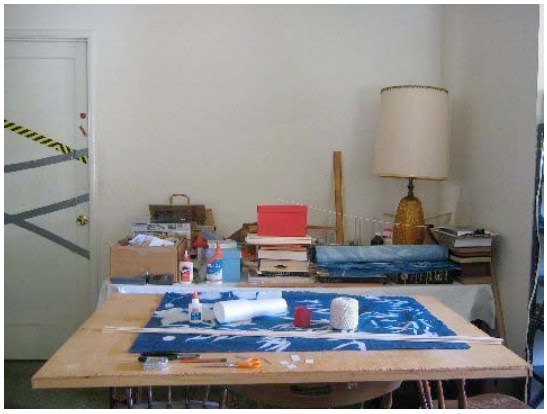
The printing paper was placed on a board covered with a plastic garden bag. (Newspaper will absorb too much of the solution.) This is a lightweight, 24 3/4″ x 36 3/4″, Kozo paper, 26 grams per square meter, handmade in Japan from mulberry bark. You can get similar papers from Hiromi Paper International [3]. The solution was put in a wide bowl and brushed onto the paper using a wide Japanese sumi brush. The paper may be air dried in a dark place, but we used a hair dryer.

A cyanotype is a shadowgraph. Somewhat flat objects are needed to make a silhouette. My concept for this print was a reference to the materials from which Japanese kites are made, mulberry bark paper and bamboo sticks. I collected samples of each from the garden. I cut out a cardboard disk to represent the sun.

The flat objects were arranged on the paper according to my design. Everything was covered with a sheet of glass to hold it in position as it was taken outdoors where wind was blowing. The materials must be kept still to get a sharp image. A sheet of cardboard was placed over the glass to protect the sensitized paper from light during the maneuvering to get it out into the sunlight.

The printing board was placed on a table in bright sunlight. Printing is best done in the middle of the day when the sun is directly overhead. The cardboard cover was removed to expose the sensitized paper to sunlight. At this time the paper is yellow.

On exposure to sunlight, the yellow quickly turns blue. Those parts of the paper that are covered will not turn blue. The depth of the blue is determined by the length of time in the sun. You must allow the blue to fade completely away before development, to get



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the deep blue that I desired in the final print. This took 16 to 20 minutes. You may want to make a test strip, exposing sections of a coated strip for different times like 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, and 32 minutes. Also experiment with different dilutions of the chemical. At full strength, the coating was self blocking. The top layer of blue blocks light from getting through to the deeper layers.

The print was covered with the cardboard and brought back into the house. The cardboard, glass and plants were removed.

The glass and the print were taken into the bathroom where the window had been covered and the tub filled with water. The paper was placed in the bathtub full of water and soaked for several minutes, until all the yellow chemical washed out of the white areas and a deep blue developed in the exposed areas.

The paper was gently lifted from the water by gripping as much of the top edge as possible. It was held momentarily at a slight angle to allow much of the water to drain. The wet paper is soft, so it must be handled carefully to prevent tears.

The bottom edge of the print was gently touched to the glass, slowly laying the whole length against the glass. Water was gently blotted off with a damp sponge. This is the back side of the print. The print was dried with the hair dryer. It worked very well, and quickly.

The print I picked to make a kite is *Mulberry and Bamboo in the Sun*. To be effective, art must say something or evoke an emotion. Keep it clear and simple.

The tools and materials required to make the kite were collected on the work table.

The sticks were glued to the back of the paper.

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This kite does not require tails, but tails add color and activity to a kite. I made tails from 2″ strips of crepe paper. They are attached to the kite with large loops of string, the free ends of which are glued inside the folded over corners of the crepe paper strips.

The bow was strung.

The bridle was rigged and the flying line tied to the bridle loop with a slip knot. This is so if the wind dies and I have to drop the kite on the other side of a tree, I can untie the knot easily and pull the string through the tree.

This is a very light kite, 2.5 ounces per square yard. It is lighter than some light cloth. With this light kite, flying in light winds, there won't be much tension in the line. A simple slip knot in cotton will hold.

With a kite as light as this one, I shouldn't have any trouble keeping the kite in the air by reeling in the line if the wind dies. You can see I was already eager to get out on the flying field, with my sun hat on.

I took it to the park and flew it. I exhibit my kite art in the sky. It attracted some attention from the people in the park. Maybe somebody else enjoyed seeing it.

I added the tails to put two red lines in the sky. I ran it up to the end of the line, which wasn't very far on this little spool, but you can't see the details way up. Art kites are best flown close to the ground where they can be seen.

In the tradition of Japanese woodblock print artists, I wrote a poem for this kite.

Mulberry and Bamboo in the Sun

Mulberry paper,
bamboo sticks. Skilled hands and eyes.
A kite in the sky.

Gary Hinze

Gary Hinze

The Drachen Foundation produces several kite kits, some designed by Nobuhiko Yoshizumi. I made four cyanokites from the Yoshizumi Two-in-One Kite Kits [4].

I made a print with Liquidambar leaves for the Sode (sleeve) kite kit. Sode often have leaf designs on them, sometimes even being made with a cyanotype process. I used Liquidambar leaves because I used to climb the tree in front of our house on summer evenings to get up into the cool breeze. This tree has associations of height and breezes appropriate for a kite.

Liquidambar Leaves in the Breeze

Liquidambar leaves
now fly in the wind on my
kite, high in the sky.

I printed, built and flew a Buka with a theme of seagulls that came to find the thermal when I put up my first 6′ seagull kite. I am also playing with the concept of the picture window. The seagull patterns were cut from thin cardboard from cereal boxes.

Window on the Sky

Seagulls circled my
kite. Now they fly on
my kite in the sky.

With the Rokkaku print, I am playing with levels of reality, symbol, meaning and self reference. The ideograph means “kite.” The stencil was cut from brown grocery bag paper.

What is the Name of the Name?

The object is named,
the name is an object, too.
This kite names itself.

For the Suruga kite I chose a traditional Japanese theme, a crane flying in front of a full moon. This stencil was cut from a cereal box.

Gary Hinze

A Crane Flies on the Moon

The sun has gone down,
full moon in dark eastern sky,
a crane flies across.

I made an Edo kite from my daughter's print. I spaced the lateral spars logarithmically, rather than uniformly. This puts more strength where the pressure is greatest and moves the center of gravity forward, improving stability. The bow sticks are at 0.0000, 0.1892, 0.4142, and 0.6818 of the full length. This makes an interesting pattern of rectangles and triangles on the back of the kite.

Some of the cyanotype kites from the exhibit at the Hui are available for purchase from the Drachen Foundation Store [5]. I made a copy of kite #5 from one of my mulberry and bamboo proof prints. Scott Skinner made this kite to reflect the forms of Polynesian fishing kites.

As I was flying this kite at the park, a woman came over and told me it was a very beautiful kite.

I am very pleased with the results. I hope this will inspire someone else to make a cyanokite. I thank Susan Robb, Scott Skinner, Nobuhiko Yoshizumi, and the Drachen Foundation for inspiring me to make these cyanokites.

[1] Scott Skinner and Susan Robb, "Two Weeks at the Hui," *Discourse: from the end of the line*, August 2008, Volume 1, Number 2, page 21. www.drachen.org/pdf/Discourse2.2.pdf

[2] The Photographers' Formulary: www.photoformulary.com

[3] Hiromi Paper International: www.hiromipaper.com

[4] Yoshizumi Two-In-One Kite Kits: drachenstore.easystorecreator.net/items/diy-kite-kits-and-materials/yoshizumi-two-in-one-kite-kit-e033-detail.htm

[5] Skinner/Robb Cyanotype Kites: drachenstore.easystorecreator.net/items/Cyanotype-Kites/list.htm

An Unusual Kite Trip through Argentina

María Elena García Autino

Adrian Dubisnky

"What does it matter where my body happens to be?" he said. "My mind goes on working all the same. In fact, the more head-downwards I am, the more I keep inventing new things."

– Lewis Carroll
Alice through the Looking Glass

LAST PAGE: Scrap or waste plastics are reclaimed, and the material is used to make colorful kites.

NEXT PAGE: Across Argentina, Barriletes a Toda Costa (BaToCo) teaches children to build and fly kites.

It sounded like, when retiring after completing a wide and extensive professional experience of more than thirty years as a teacher and professor, I would have been ready to choose some quiet corner according to age and situation.

But among many things, I have been a constant reader of Lewis Carroll and strongly believe that "the more head-downwards I am, the more I keep inventing new things."

Choosing a dynamic and amused way of life, I still enjoy looking through the viewfinder of the splendid kaleidoscope that life is.

I have taught letters, literature, logic, philosophy, and basic computer science. Now after retiring, I accepted the incredible challenge to travel around Argentina, showing children and their teachers how to build kites, with *Subite al Colectivo* [1], a program by the Ministry of Education that assures the access of all to the many diverse manifestations of the culture.

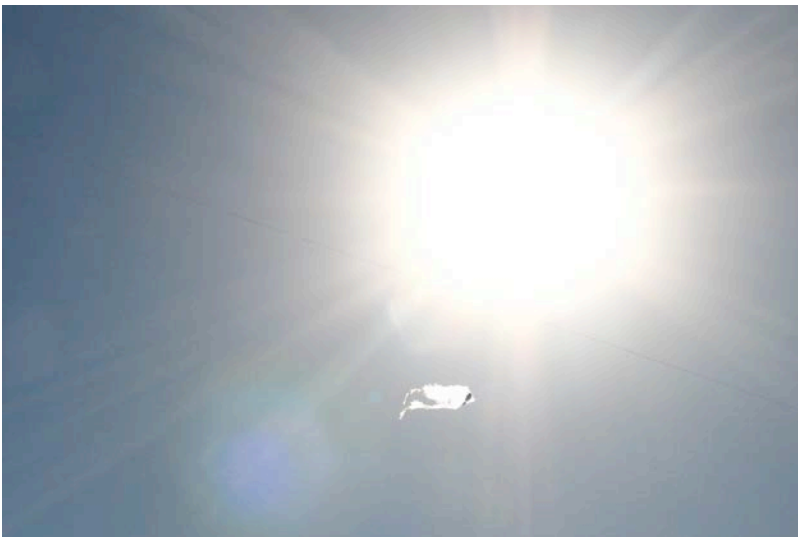
I learned how to build kites from Barriletes a Toda Costa (BaToCo) [2], or, I shall say, I keep on learning every day from this fantastic group of friends to which I belong. BaToCo is a non-profit corporation that, by means of workshops, exhibits and web activities, organizes many different cultural and educational events related to building and flying kites. It promotes the activity at schools, hospitals, special institutions for the old and disabled, and remote or isolate villages such as the ones I visit.

And so I am not alone. During the trips, I have permanent assistance from the organization, and I also travel with a group of young artists that integrates disciplines such as acrobatics, film making, comedy, pantomime, and many others – including kite making, of course.

Thousands of youngsters, their teachers, and families share an incredible experience coordinated by these educational and professional artists. Usually they are very young teachers or students in their last years of college. I feel really honored to have been invited to share the trip and enjoy this unique opportunity, learning a lot from them, and quite often feeling like I am twenty years old again!

I accepted the challenge and I travel along with a few basic and easy to build kite models [3] that the children around the country transform and modify permanently, creating absolutely unexpected, unusual, and unpublished models. We pay special attention to encourage the process of recovering scrap or waste plastics and reprocessing the material into kites.

It is not easy to describe the reaction of children that have never seen a kite before,



Mario Mey

Ana Maria Pagani

Romina Gimenez

Ana Maria Pagani

or that the only one they know is the old traditional model their elders have been building for years. All of a sudden, they found themselves exploring new sizes, colors, shapes, and materials, facing, proving, and often defying quite different winds.

Although I constantly propose new experiences, I encourage children to build their own traditional models using classic elements from their surroundings and take advantage of plastic pieces that are habitually discarded around the landscape.
I visited little villages of very poor and extreme life conditions, sometimes with lack of water, hard winds, desert conditions, like El Totoral, La Rioja or Iglesia, San Juan. I found everywhere the same enthusiastic attitude towards building kites.

After they paid careful attention to my lesson, kids from a little school on Iglesia were worried and busy looking for materials that would ensure them the possibility to keep on building kites after I left their village.

In more sophisticated communities, "city kites" were challenged by local models on thread fights not easy to win.

I still remember the fantastic race of professor Ana Maria Pagani and her students in Angaco, a very small San Juan village. These were their first kites and so they ran desperately to raise them, defying the almost total lack of wind. They elevated the kites to a zone where there was more wind and they raised. Nobody could believe it.

In Tama, La Rioja, a very isolated zone where almost everything is lacking, with precarious houses, a water shortage, and lack of transportation, the children have little access to artistic and cultural experiences. It was very moving to listen to a boy who, sighing with force, said spontaneously to himself, "*Ay, y pa cuándo hay de volver ustedes* (and who knows when you shall return)…" Beautiful indeed – but sad, because it will take a long time for us to come back.

To travel all over the country building kites with the children was a way to discover their problems and difficulties, but also their hopes for a better quality of life.

It was a magnificent opportunity to offer information on new designs, materials, forms, and techniques of construction and flight to them. This unique approach to their traditional ways to construct and fly kites allowed me to know better their families and communities, to listen to their stories, to understand and include their myths and legends. Many of the children and young people who participated in the program shared their new knowledge with their brothers or neighbors.

I did not take the account of how many kites were constructed throughout this ongoing experience, but an approximate calculation is around 1200 kites in 2008.

Each one special, each one reflecting the creativity and the enthusiasm of its author. And their smiles.

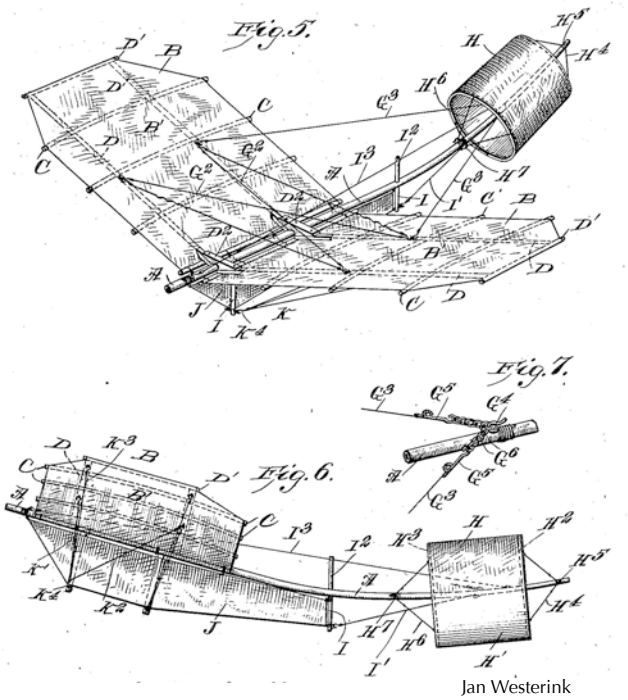
[1} Subite al Colectivo: www.me.gov.ar/curriform/subite.html

[2] Barriletes a Toda Costa: www.batoco.org

[3] Kite model: www.akg.cwc.net/so%20you%20want%20to%20make%20a%20kite.htm

Working on Historical Kites

Jan Westerink



Jan Westerink

ABOVE: Figure 1, a drawing of Sellers' "Aerial Apparatus" from the 1908 patent.

NEXT PAGE: The rebuilt kite flies.

In the last issue of *Discourse*, author Ben Ruhe introduced us to Jan Westerink's work to build a Matthew Sellers kite replica. See "Spotlight on an American Flight Pioneer: Enthusiast Brings Old Kite Back to Life" in our August 2008 issue.

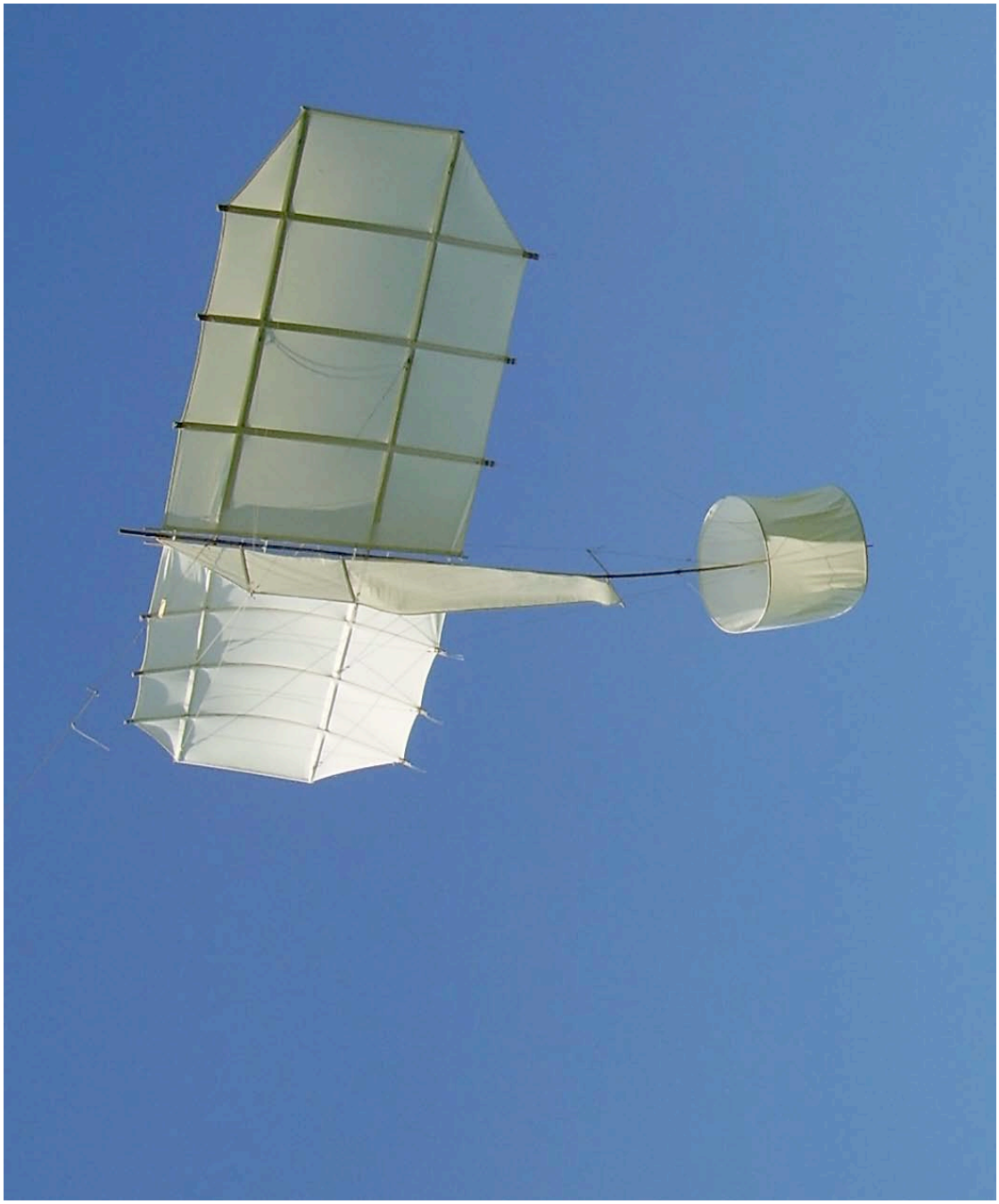
"AERIAL APPARATUS"
US PATENT 886.159, APRIL 28, 1908 [1]

Working on historical kites with, most of the time, a minimum of information is quite a job of guessing, trying to get a touch of feeling or understanding of the original inventor's thoughts about construction, design, and his aeronautical knowledge.

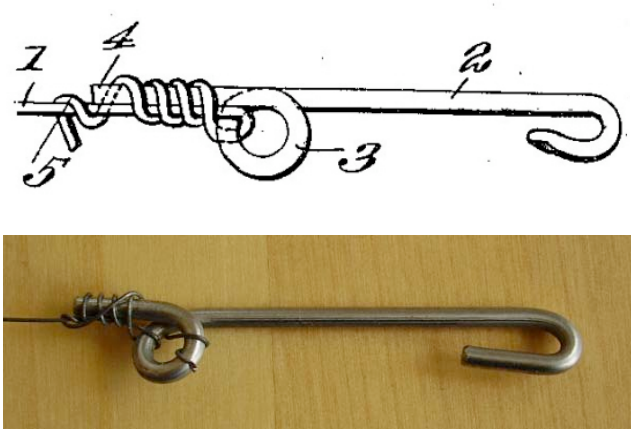
Last week, for instance, I received a picture from France of a giant kite which was launched from a marine vessel. Although it is a very clear picture of a flying kite, it doesn't give you any information about the technical construction of the frame. Bamboo or wooden rods, metal fasteners or not: many questions to answer or to guess to my best knowledge. The only thing that is sure is that this kite has to be built because of its mathematical beauty.

So if I have finished this kite and it would be possible to meet the designer, he would immediately recognize his own design, and this would start a most interesting and exciting discussion about the difference of the construction solutions I chose and the ones he made let's say one hundred years ago.

Looking back on the Sellers project, there was just this kind of moment. Halfway through the project, after choosing the size of the kite and puzzling all the sizes of the kite together fitting to scale, I got copies of some pages of the technical diaries of Matthew Sellers himself. The really exciting moment was reading about his daily experiments and building activities, page after page getting the feeling that I was



Jan Westerink



Jan Westerink

ABOVE, LEFT: Figure 2, the wing adjustment hook is placed in the cylindrical tail on the rebuilt kite.

ABOVE, RIGHT: Figure 3, the original patent drawing and a rebuilt copy of the coupling rod.

NEXT PAGE: The rebuilt kite.

looking from his shoulders at his work, recognizing the same interest and fascination about the work from Woglom (and that he had Woglom's book *Parakites* [2], which is very high on my "should have" list).

Reading all this, I got the feeling that this time the job was done quite well. Only the measurement of the kite was somewhat bigger then Sellers was used to. But he did make one bigger kite of the size I was working on. So I allowed myself to continue with the work that was done and didn't have to do it all over.

In the mean time, the assembled parts of the kite didn't easily fit anymore in my working room. This was not so pretty because all the parts were ready and the adjusting of all the parts together had to be done. But as always, everything worked out.

AN ALMOST TRUE COPY

With the well described patent and the technical diary, it was not difficult to get very close to the original kite. The so-called *Aerial Apparatus* from the patent was noted down as *Bird Kite II* in the diary, while "new Johan call this model no. 2," as Sellers wrote February 10, 1904. With his precise descriptions he made it very easy to reconstruct his kite even in the smallest details.

On figure 1 for instance, you can see the wing adjustment hook on the patent. This hook is placed in the cylindrical tail as shown in figure 2, a close up of the rebuilt kite.

Sellers, who seems to be particularly proud of the coupling rods (see figure 3) on his Bird Kite, wrote in his patent: "In this construction the coupling bar 2 is bent between its ends to form an eye 3 and line wire 1 passes along the shank 4, through the eye 3 and is given one or more turns about the eye and then several turns around the shank, then one or more turns at 5 around the line wire, then several turns around the shank back to the eye, then one or more turns at 6 in the eye."

So it was very clear how this kite had to be built. On the other hand, when there is only one picture that shows the shape of the kite, and it only gives you an idea about the

Jan Westerink

dimensions and nothing more – such as the picture from France I got last week–, such a project gives you lots of freedom. Everything you do fitting within the time period the kite has been photographed is okay. You are not making a replica, just a sketch.

But what to do with another project waiting on my desk, which is well described with a clear set of drawings, but from which half the drawing is missing? Go on with the search for the missing drawings or start building the kite with what there is, so that half the kite is a replica and the other half the best guess you could make?

Sometimes you get the information you need just after finishing your kite. You finish it, go to your kiting field, make some photographs, publish your enthusiastic stories, and just after that you get an email with something like: "You did a good job, but it is a pity you placed the sticks in the middle. I have some old photographs with the stick one third from…" Then you are both happy and a little sad. Sad because you apparently did something quite wrong, happy you got some desperately wanted information.

Hunting for the Right Materials

Almost as exciting is the search for the right materials: cotton, *toile d'Alsac* as the French call it, *maco or nanzuk* for the German and cambric, nainsook or Egyptian cotton for the British and American people. All are, in the right specification, not so easy to obtain these days.

Research, experimental building, and test flying is great fun. Exciting enough to keep spending hours reading old books or sanding spruce sticks and writing a little about it. Keep in touch at www.firstkites.nl.

[1] The patent sheets are free at: v3.espacenet.com

[2] Woglom, Gilbert Totten. "*Parakites, a treatise on the making and flying of tailless kites for scientific purposes and for recreation,*" NY, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1896.

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