

ROSEGALLERY is pleased to present *Paper, Activated*. We invite you to consider paper not as a passive support, but as a material put into motion—by air, by structure, and by collective intention. Across papalotes [kites] and Mandils [aprons], paper becomes architectural, social, and performative: something that signals, declares, and gathers meaning through activation rather than utility.



Handmade Kite made by Francisco Toledo
(2005 - 2014)

At the center of this exhibition is CASA (Centro de las Artes de San Agustín), founded by Francisco Toledo in San Agustín Etla, Oaxaca. Conceived as a living workshop rather than a monument, CASA emerged from Toledo's conviction that artistic practice is inseparable from ecology, education, and community stewardship. Housed in a restored nineteenth-century textile factory, the site embodies reuse, continuity, and care—values that resonate deeply with paper as a material shaped by water, fiber, and labor.

Francisco Toledo's papalotes are a celebrated intersection of art, activism, and communal craftsmanship. Developed in close collaboration with local artisans and workshops, these works activate paper through the logic of flight and display, transforming a fragile material into a public declaration. Though rooted in the language of air and movement, the papalotes are conceived as works to be presented—framed or freely hung—where their images, structures, and political charge remain fully legible. For Toledo, the papalote is not merely symbolic; it is operational, carrying messages of resistance and care into shared cultural space.

This ethos took tangible form in Taller Arte Papel, founded by Toledo in 1998 in San Agustín Etla and housed in the former La Soledad spinning and weaving factory. The workshop became both a site of experimentation and a pedagogical model, foregrounding sustainable paper-making and the transmission of artisanal knowledge. Taller Arte Papel shares its grounds with CASA, together forming one of the most significant cultural ecosystems in Latin America—the first eco-friendly arts center of its kind.

Within this context, artist Manfred Mueller was invited by Francisco Toledo and CASA to lead a workshop with students and workers at the paper mill. Alongside the making of Toledo's papalotes, participants produced paper aprons—known as *Mandils*—not intended to be worn or used, but conceived from the outset as three-dimensional works of art. Each Mandil bears the stamped name of its maker, transforming a familiar form associated with labor into a declaration of identity and authorship.



Apron [Apolo], Manfred Mueller,
2009

Presented sculpturally—either framed or freely hung—the Mandils occupy space much like the papalotes: suspended between object and architecture, between individual mark and collective presence. They are not tools, but emblems. As with the papalotes, they function as collectibles, yet their deeper resonance lies in what they signify—pride, visibility, and recognition for the workers whose labor sustains the paper mill and the cultural ecosystem surrounding it. Twenty percent of funds from acquisitions of papalotes and Mandils will go directly to support CASA and its programs.

Paper, Activated is on view from February 7 - March 7 2026.

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