

SHIBORI DYEING

Shibori dyeing is a technique where manipulation and binding of the fabric act as a resist to the dye or paint. Where the fabric is bound, the dye or paint can't penetrate, resulting in a wide variety of patterns and designs. Tie-dye from the 60s is an example of this. We'll explore two manipulation techniques-- pole binding and folding.

Supplies--

The usual latex gloves, protected surfaces, and protected clothes.

Fabric. Cotton or silk, ready to dye by removing any sizing and ironing flat. Dye or paint--Setacolor is great for this technique. Liquid Rit dye will work, but check for color saturation if you want something really bright. Also fabric paint or liquid acrylic paint like Ceramcoat can be used. If you use Ceramcoat or other artist's acrylic paint, a textile medium needs to be added so the colors don't wash out. Two parts paint to one part textile medium is the usual recipe. Textile medium is available at Michael's--either Martha Stewart brand or Americana brand and are found with the other paint products. Instructions for heat-setting or air-drying are on the product.

For fold-resist--rubber bands, small binder clips, or mini-clamps.

Iron the fabric and then accordion-fold it, ironing each fold flat. Try for about 1 1/2" folds.

Technique 1--use binder clips to hold the long bundle together. Use a disposable bowl or plate and thin your dye or paint with water so it's the consistency of cream. Prepare as many colors as you want to try. The more water you use, the lighter your color will be and don't have more than a quarter inch of dye in the bowl at a time. If you want a diffused look, soak the bundle in water and squeeze out the excess. Otherwise you'll get sharper, brighter colors with dry fabric. Hold the top long edge and keeping the bundle upright, place the other long edge into the dye. Let it sit in the dye as the color creeps up the fibers. Take it out when you're happy with the color and spread. Turn it over and place the other edge in a second color. Remove when you like what you see. Remove the clamps and carefully unfold the fabric. Spread out to dry, making sure it isn't folded or crumpled. I put mine on the grass outside and they were dry in about 20 minutes. This will give you stripes with some blending depending of the width of your folds , whether your fabric was wet or dry, and the spread of the dye.

Technique 2--same accordion fold. Fold again the other way all the way to the end, making a nice cube of fabric. Use lots of rubber bands to secure both ways. Soak the bundle in water and squeeze out the excess. Lay one folded edge in the dye for a short time, pressing down to make sure the dye is penetrating the inner folds. Take out and immediately place the adjacent folded side in the same dye color. Remove and place the next side in another color dye. Remove and put the last folded side in the same (second) color. You'll have two adjacent sides one color and the other two sides another color. Snip the rubber bands and open the fabric to lay out to dry. This will give you windowpanes--one color in the center surrounded by the other color. If you dip opposite sides in the same color, you'll get a

plaid-type pattern. Another result with the cube shape is to dip the corners instead of the folded edges. Push the corners down hard into the dye and use several colors. This will give you even areas of roundish color and lots of pretty diffusion in between.

Technique 3--the same accordion fold. Clamp both ends to hold and take rubber bands and tightly bind at intervals along the folded strip. Make them as tight as you can. You can use clamps along the way, or bottle caps held really tight with a clamp. These tight areas will separate the colors. Mix your dyes--at least two colors. Use a sponge brush to push the dye between the rubber band areas. Once the strip is dyed on one side, turn the strip over and apply dye to the other side, matching colors. Push as much dye in as you can to reach the inner folds. Snip the rubber bands, remove the clamps and unfold to dry. This one will be very wet. I applied some rock salt to the top when I laid it out to dry, to add some interest. The salt absorbs the wet dye and leaves behind a dark spot where the salt concentrates the color and a lighter surrounding area where the salt pulled the dye in. It's very pretty and batik-like.

For pole binding--a ball of twine or crochet thread and a cylindrical object. This can be an aluminum can or short piece of PVC pipe about 10" long. If you use a tomato juice can or smaller vegetable can, the grooves in the can will help with the binding.

Cut a piece of fabric six inches wider than the circumference of the can or pipe so there is an overlap, and about 8 inches longer than the length of the can. Lay down the twine or thread going out from you and place the fabric on top, longest side running horizontal. Place the pipe or can also running horizontally, bringing the fabric around to overlap. Pick up the twine and tie the fabric to the can in the middle, leaving one short end of the twine at the knot and the rest still on the ball. Holding the can, wrap the thread around the can about a half inch apart. When you have six wraps or so, push the wrapped fabric towards the center knot. Continue wrapping and pushing towards the center. The end result is to load all the fabric onto the can by wrapping and pushing it until all the fabric is scrunched onto the can. When one half is loaded, wrap back to the middle and wrap and load the other half of the fabric. Dilute your paint or dye to the consistency of cream and push it onto the scrunched fabric with a foam brush. Work the color into the folds and crevices. Use as many colors as you want but try to keep them a bit separate. They will naturally blend. Snip and remove the twine and lay out to dry. Heat set and if you want, a second color of diluted dye can be brushed over the fabric. Heat set again. You can also reload a dyed and heat-set piece again to the can, wrapping in the other direction and following the same procedure. This makes interesting jagged stripes.

A good source for Shibori Dyeing online is <http://www.dharmatrading.com/information/shibori-diy.html>

There are many folding, pleating, stitching, and wrapping techniques for Shibori. Check online for other resources. Call me if you have questions.