

Fabric Dyeing with Sharpie® Pens

Supply list (2 pages)

Instructor: Helene Knott 503-888-9784 Email: helene.m.knott@gmail.com

Website: www.heleneknott.com

This is a fun and easy way to dye fabric, scarves, and/or T-shirts with less mess and fewer toxic materials than other immersion-dyeing methods. It's more like coloring than dyeing, giving you better control of the designs you create. For your project, you can make a precise pattern or design by tracing from a master pattern drawn or adapted from a design source (keep it simple) on freezer paper, or go for the fun and serendipity of random doodling and see what you get. My latest project – Flower Power – was a free-form exploration into Pop Art flowers. Either way, it's fun, and the resulting fabric looks very much like a batik. This is a great way to modify ugly fabric or to disguise a stained cotton shirt or T-shirt. Though less messy than dyeing with liquid dyes, you should wear old clothing to prevent the chance of staining something you weren't intending to dye.

Please be courteous to others by arriving for class with the correct supplies. Contact me at 503-888-9784 or helene.m.knott@gmail.com if you have any questions.

A Note to Students: Many students do not realize that once the teacher is paid, the shop offering a class makes little if any income on the class itself. The shop is relying on product sales to continue offering quality classes to you. Therefore, I urge you to patronize this shop when buying your supplies for this class as much as possible and remind you that big chain stores do not offer the variety of classes that the smaller shops do. Keep quilt classes alive by supporting this shop.

Thank you, Helene

TOOLS/MATERIALS:

- **PFD Fabric or washed cotton fabric:** PFD stands for 'Prepared For Dyeing'; you can purchase it at many quilt and fabric stores. You can also prepare your own fabric by 'scouring' regular white or colored fabric in hot water and a good strong detergent (without fabric softeners or additives) to remove all the sizing and any stray oils that might interfere with the dyeing process. White fabrics will show true colors but you can get interesting results by over-dyeing commercial fabric – a great way to modify ugly bland fabrics. The fabric should be light as Sharpies are transparent ink and will not cover dark fabric. Using colored fabric will affect the colors you plan to over-dye with. Fat Quarters will be more manageable than larger pieces of fabric but smaller pieces can be used as well.
- **T- Shirt, scarf, or other clothing (optional):** An alternative to dyeing fabric would be to dye a scarf or shirt... If you want to do this, make sure the clothing is cotton and either white or light colored and if new, has been washed in hot water with detergent to remove any commercial sizing. You might consider other unusual articles of clothing or accessories such as white cotton gloves, hankies, a canvas shopping bag... use your imagination.
- **Protective Gear:** Gloves (latex or plastic) - choose well fitting gloves as it's hard to work in gloves that are too big and have fingers that stick out well past your own; Sharpie pens are not as toxic as Procion Dye but it's probably a good idea not to get the ink all over oneself.
- **Sharpie™ brand colored pens:** Buy the 'traditional' fine point type, not the ultra-fine for most of your palette; the classic fine point pens come in the greatest range of colors. You can opt for one of the prepackaged sets of colors or buy individual pens in a variety of colors. An economical approach might be to buy a pre-packaged basic set and then supplement that with individual pens in additional colors you like. You can add some of the ultra-fine pens if you think you might want to add fine details but to get the best coverage for the colors; the original fine point markers will fill the areas faster. There are a lot of off brand markers that are marketed as being similar to Sharpie™ brand markers but may not work as well. I know this process works great with the name brand Sharpies so stick to the those and make sure you get the permanent ones that are alcohol based.
- **Freezer Paper:** This will be ironed to the fabric to stabilize it for drawing on so bring several feet off a roll. It can also be used to help you draw a precise design if you prefer a controlled pattern as opposed to doodling. You can buy freezer paper in packaged sheets (8 ½" x 11) that will feed through your computer printer so you can print coloring book style designs or whatever else you want to trace onto your fabric or project. This will limit the size of the design to something that will fit on that paper size and keep in mind that due to the way it will be used, the

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image will be reversed on the final project so if your image includes lettering, you will have to print it in a reversed form onto the freezer paper.

- **Light box (optional):** if you want to trace precise designs onto your project to color, you will need a light box to carry out the tracing
- **Pencil:** an ordinary drawing pencil to trace a design with if you want sketch out a design before coloring it.
- **Rubbing or denatured alcohol:** the stronger the solution, the better the results; buy alcohol with at least a 70% or 90% concentration. Available at pharmacy departments
- **Spray bottle/mister:** You can also get this at hardware, home goods or garden center stores; you need one that emits a fine mist if possible. **NOTE:** you can find some smaller misters at art supply or craft stores.
- **A vinyl picnic tablecloth or large plastic garbage bag:** to protect the table surfaces from the Sharpie ink – remember it is permanent and we don't want to ruin the tables.
- **Masking tape:** to tape the edges of the plastic bags or tablecloth in place.
- **A roll of paper towels:** always a good idea if you are working with paints dyes or inks.
- **Old clothes:** You might get ink on your clothing; make sure you wear something you don't mind turning into a piece of modern art if that happens.

