

AN INTRODUCTION TO BATIK

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Abstract

AN INTRODUCTION TO BATIK

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The thesis contains a slide and written demonstration of the wax and dye process of batik. The introduction covers the origins and some contemporary uses of batik. Tools and equipment for batik making are shown and described, along with methods of waxing and dyeing fabric, followed by removal of the wax. Dye formulas and equipment lists are included in the Appendices.

Preface

This slide demonstration is designed primarily for students in their last years of high school, or for adults. It is assumed that the viewer has an interest in batik and wishes to experiment in this medium.

This is not an all-inclusive book, but a brief introduction which, it is hoped, will stimulate the viewer enough to make further experiments.

No practical work should be attempted before the demonstration has been both seen and read at least once.

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Slide numbers and subjects are listed at the left side of the pages. At each red dot, move on to the following slide.

(46 slides accompany the thesis).

1.
Title Slide

AN INTRODUCTION TO BATIK

2.
Abstract
Blue Batik

Introduction

This is an introduction to the wax and dye process of batik. It covers a brief history, the tools and equipment needed, how to apply wax to the fabric, dyeing, and, finally, removal of the wax.

3.
Javanese
Batik

Little is known of the origin of this art; it is, like many others, lost in antiquity. Batik is believed to have originated in India or China but is known as a Javanese art. These intricate patterns are still created today by the natives of Java for their clothing, different families and regions having their own designs and colours.

4.
Contemporary
Batiks

Usually the women do the waxing and the men do the dyeing. Brought to Europe by the Dutch traders, batik has now become a popular art form in both Europe and North America. Pillows, scarves, yardage for clothes, wall hangings and many other decorative and functional objects can be made.

5.
Equipment
Slide

Tools

(A complete list of tools and equipment will follow at the end of the demonstration.)

The following tools and equipment are needed to start your batik. A metal container (in this case, a tin can) holding parafin wax is placed in another metal container filled with hot water.

N.B. NEVER put the wax container directly on the stove; it may catch fire.

White cotton or silk are suitable for batik, but other fabrics may be used, e.g. linen, velvet. Old sheets or pillow cases are excellent for the beginner. Keep away from synthetics as they react poorly to dyes.

Stiff bristle brushes of different sizes are to apply the molten wax and the two tools on the right are Javanese tjantings.

6.
Tjanting
Close-up

The metal bowl of the tjanting is filled with hot wax which pours down the hollow tube and onto the fabric. These tools are used for making thin lines and will be explained further when they are being used.

7.
Drawing
Design

Drawing the design

A design for your batik may be sketched or painted beforehand to give you some idea of how to proceed. Do not be disappointed if the colours of your finished batik do not exactly match the design; this is part of the appeal of batik making. Remember each batik is unique, thus cannot be duplicated. The design is only intended to give a rough guide-line for colour and composition.

8.
Stages of
Waxing and
Dyeing

Diagram

The diagrams show how the batik will look after each stage of wax and dye. The first dye bath will be yellow, the second red, which mixes with the yellow to give orange, and the third will be blue, giving a greenish-blue background.

9.
Drawing on
Cotton

Drawing the design for first waxing

Take cotton that has been washed and ironed. Sketching the design lightly on the cotton with pencil or charcoal will help as a guide, but if you can get into the habit of working without sketching, your batik will often be much more spontaneous.

10.
Stretching
Cotton on
Frame

Two ways of preparing material for waxing

Waxing can be done either with the fabric tacked to a frame or just spread flat on a paper background. The latter is quicker and easier because the fabric must be taken off the frame for each dye bath.

11.
Dipping
Brush in
Wax

First Waxing

When both wax and brushes are hot enough, and some preliminary experiments on scraps of material have been tried, you are ready to start waxing. Wipe the brush carefully to avoid dripping. The nail in the brush stops it from sitting on the bottom of the wax container and getting bent or burned.

12.
Waxing

Waxing

Remember that the areas you wax will be protected from the dye and will remain white. You are applying wax rather than colours. Paint on the wax with short, smooth strokes and put the brush back into the wax after each stroke. This procedure keeps the brush warm and the wax flowing.

13.
Lifting

If the material is lying flat it must be lifted

continually to stop it sticking to the paper, otherwise wax will be pulled off the back and dye will seep in.

14.
Waxing

It is better to refill the brush often to avoid letting it cool rather than attempt to rewax the same area. Check the back of the material to make sure the wax has penetrated and is protecting both sides.

15.
First
Waxing
Finished

Now that the waxing is finished, the batik is ready for the first dye bath. No wax will be removed until after the third and final dye bath.

16.
Dyeing
Equipment

Dyeing

Dyeing is a complete chemistry unto itself. It has been simplified here. The dye chart gives formulas and preparation of the dye. Be very careful when handling dyes as they are usually in powder form and will stain almost anything. All dyes have to be mixed in cool water or the wax will melt. Tintex or Rit can be used, but they are hot water dyes and have a tendency to fade when used with cold water. They are good for your first experiments as they are inexpensive and easy to obtain.

This batik is being made with PROCION dyes which are good for both light and wash fastness. Dye and chemical supply companies are listed at the end.

Equipment

A photo developing tray or large flat container.

A measuring cup.

Teaspoons and tablespoons.

Rubber gloves.

Funnel.

Large containers for storing mixed dyes.

(Dyeing formulas are given at the end.)

17.
Mixing
Yellow Dye

First dye bath - Yellow

Many different dye baths may be used, but remember to dye from light colours to dark colours. Batik cannot be made lighter after it has gone dark.

Keep little strips of material handy to dip into the dye before your batik; this way you can tell the strength of the bath. The batik should remain in the bath for five minutes.

18.
Dipping
Yellow

When the bath has been prepared and is well mixed with a spoon or stick, protect hands with rubber gloves and carefully immerse the batik.

Make sure it is completely covered and keep the dye circulating around and over it. The waxed areas will stay white while the rest of the batik dyes yellow. Allow ample time in the dye; check the formula. If you wish to save it, pour the dye into a large container after the dyeing and carefully wash the bath using Ajax.

19.
Hanging
Yellow Batik
to Dry

When the batik is evenly dyed and is not becoming any darker, hang it up to dry. Make sure it is not folded or crinkled as this will leave marks. Rinse off the rubber gloves so they won't dirty the next bath.

20.
Result of
First
Waxing and
Dyeing

This is the result of the yellow dye bath. The waxed areas are white and the rest yellow.

21.
Second
Waxing

Second waxing

Once dry, the batik is waxed to protect the yellow. The white areas, already waxed, will remain white. A larger brush is used to fill in big spaces.

22.
Mixing
Red Bath

Second dye bath - Red

With the waxing of the yellow finished (the darker areas are wax covered), the red dye bath is mixed with the same formula as before. The red dye on the yellow will make the batik go orange.

23.
Dipping

The dyeing procedure is the same as before.

24.
Taking Batik
out of the
Bath

The batik must be handled carefully or the wax will crack.

25.
Hanging

Hang to dry.

26.
Result of
Second
Waxing and
Dyeing

We now have white, yellow and orange.

27.
Waxing

Third waxing

Now the orange is waxed to protect it.

28.
Tjanting
Close-up

Use of the tjanting

The tjanting is used for fine lines. This tool requires practice to master. Dip the tjanting into the wax and allow it to warm up. Scoop it out and practice drawing lines on scraps of material. A little piece of cotton held under the spout will stop it dripping on the batik.

29.
Tjanting
on Batik

Smooth, even strokes give the best results. Refill often so the wax won't harden and block the spout.

30.
Crackling
Batik

Crackling

Crackling is another technique that can achieve interesting textures and patterns. Let the wax cool, then crumple the batik.

31.
Smoothing
out Batik

Smooth out again and repeat the crackling several times. The more you crumple it, the more pronounced the crackle will be.

32.
Dipping
Blue

Third dye bath - Blue

Mix dye as usual and immerse the batik. Make

sure the dye penetrates all the cracks.

Rubbing the material helps.

33.
Dipping
Blue

As this is the last bath, leave it in longer; keep it moving and make sure the material has dyed evenly. Remove from bath and hang to dry.

34.
Hanging and
Wiping

After dark dye baths, it helps to dab off any drops caught on the wax. If allowed to dry, they will leave marks.

35.
Result of
Blue Bath

This is the result of the blue bath. As the blue was more powerful than the orange, it has turned the background blue-green.

36.
Ironing

Removal of the wax

Now that the batik has been finished, the wax must be removed. The simplest and least expensive way is to turn the batik upside down on newsprint paper. Use an old iron as it will become dirty with wax and cannot be put to normal use again without extensive cleaning. Move the hot iron carefully across the batik.

37.
Changing
Newspaper

Keep changing the newspaper until very little wax comes out.

38.
Ironing

Make sure no wrinkles are pressed into the fabric; they are almost impossible to remove.

39.
Dipping
Batik in
Varsol Bath

To get rid of the remaining wax, the batik is dipped and gently rubbed in varsol.

40.
Varsol
Bath

It is then squeezed and hung to dry. After twenty-four hours the batik can be washed in cool water and mild soap, but it is always better to have batik garments dry cleaned.

41 - 44.
Drawing
Original
Design and
Three Stages
of Waxing
and Dyeing

Resumé

You can see from the original design through the various waxings and dye baths how the batik has developed. Many varied and beautiful articles can be created with this medium. Don't be afraid of experimenting and making mistakes; adapt to them. Some mistakes lead to the best results, and, as mentioned before, the unique quality of batik is the unpredictable.

45.
Abstract
Blue Batik

46.

THE END.

APPENDIX I

Complete list of tools and equipment

A single burner stove (with temperature control switch)

A container for hot water (bottom of a double boiler is excellent)

A metal container for melting wax (apple juice can)

*Parafin wax (grocery store)

White cotton or silk

Assorted oil paint brushes

Electric iron (use it only for batik - it will become unsuitable for anything but batik)

Varsol (hardware store)

Dye

Rubber gloves

Smock or apron

Photo developing basin or large flat container

Large containers for mixed dyes

Rags

Newspapers

Clothes pegs

Strong cord for drying lines

*Beeswax added to parafin wax avoids cracking.

The more beeswax you add, the more supple the wax becomes; it is expensive and harder to iron out.

Notes

Rit and Tintex are available at grocery, drug, hardware or department stores.

Basic and Procion dyes are available from:

Estelle Post,
4980 Dundas Street West,
Islington, Ontario.

Batik materials are available from:

Fisher, Corbeil-Hooke,
1218 Drummond Street,
Montreal, Quebec.

Tjantings are available from:

Crafttools,
1 Industrial Road,
Wood-Ridge,
N.J. 07075,
U. S. A.

or

Prescott & Company,
5625 Paré,
Montreal, Quebec.

APPENDIX II

a) Procion dye*

Solution A

1 tablespoon soda ash*

2 tablespoons baking soda

or

4 tablespoons table salt

Dissolve in 2 cups hot water and allow to cool.

Solution B

2 tablespoons urea powder*

Dissolve in 2 cups of hot water and allow to cool.

Both of these solutions should be made up and kept in separate bottles.

To mix dye bath

Put 2 tablespoons of solution A and 1/4 cup of solution B into 1-3/4 cups of cool water. Add 1 teaspoon of dye powder. (For a weaker colour add less dye, but never change the other ingredients.)

Make sure the dye is well mixed. Any lumps of dye will make blotches on the batik.

*Available from Estelle Post.

Once solutions A and B have been put together they are good for two to three hours, then they lose their wash fastness. This means that after the three hours the dye can only be saved for non-washable articles like wall hangings. The bath is now ready for the batik.

When ironing, cover the batik with a sheet of newsprint as dark Procion colours tend to smear.

b) Basic dye formula

This is a simple formula to mix and gives brilliant colours. However, it has a tendency to fade in light and when washed.

A good way to mix the dye is by shaking the mixture vigorously in a bottle; this way you avoid lumps. The blue dye is especially difficult and should be strained through a fine sieve or nylon stocking when mixed with the other ingredients.

Take $\frac{3}{4}$ of a quart cool water.

Add 1 teaspoon of glacial acetic acid (available at drugstores).

Add 1 level teaspoon of dye for powerful colour,
less for a pale shade.

Mix well and the bath is ready. Leave batik
in the dye for five minutes, then dip in a tub
of cool water, rinse gently and hang to dry.