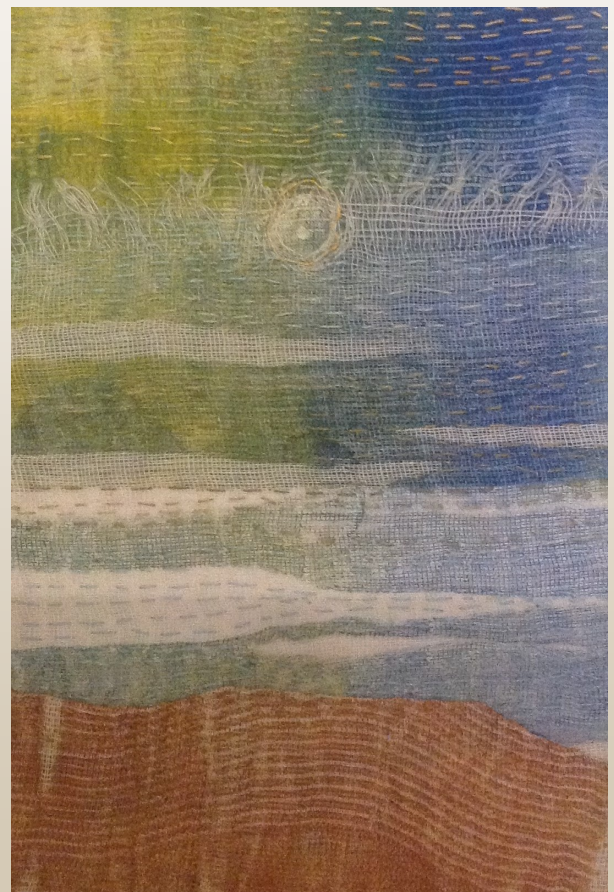


the
stitchbook
COLLECTIVE 2022

Workshop 3 of 12

Introduction to Painting, Dyeing, Staining & Printing onto Fabric

These notes should be read in conjunction with the online video



www.untangledthreads.co.uk/MEMBERS

Video Password: paint

Introduction to Painting, Dyeing, Staining & Printing onto Fabric

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OVERVIEW

In this workshop we will look at different ways of applying colour to fabric. It is NOT intended to be a comprehensive guide to dyeing, staining or even painting!

What I really want to stress here is that it doesn't matter what you use to colour or stain your fabric... AS LONG AS YOU DON'T WANT TO WASH IT! **If you are wanting to colour fabric for clothing or soft furnishings, you should use a proprietary product, and follow the instructions.** BUT .. if you are just using colour as a design element in your stitching, and the item doesn't need to be washed, then really anything at all which gives the effect you are looking for is good enough! The cheaper the product, the less pigment it will contain, but you can achieve great results with even the most basic equipment.

Since we are concentrating on recycling and repurposing our existing supplies this year, rather than purchasing new, the instructions for using paints and crayons etc, are fairly generic, BUT you may find that you would like to purchase a few specialist items for some of the later examples.

I am going to start with some really basic colour theory, and showing you how you can layer and stitch fabrics to create an illusion of perspective in your work. Don't be put off if you think you can't draw or paint! If you can just make a series of marks .. you'll be OK.



Colour Theory

Primary

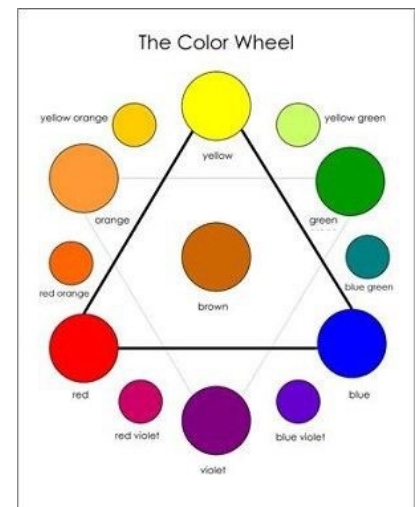
Red
Blue
Yellow

Secondary

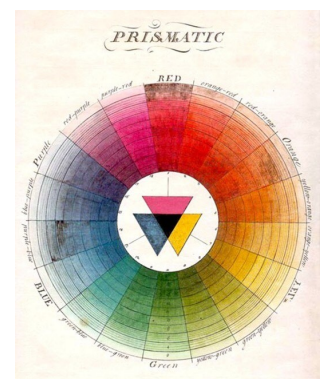
Orange
Green
Purple

Tertiary

Brown



Please watch the video for full demonstration of colour theory. The PRIMARY COLOURS are Red, Yellow and Blue. With these three colours (technically) you should be able to make virtually ANY colour you would like! In practice it is very easy to turn all your colours sludgy and brown.



Perspective using colour, tone and size

(depth of field/atmospheric perspective)

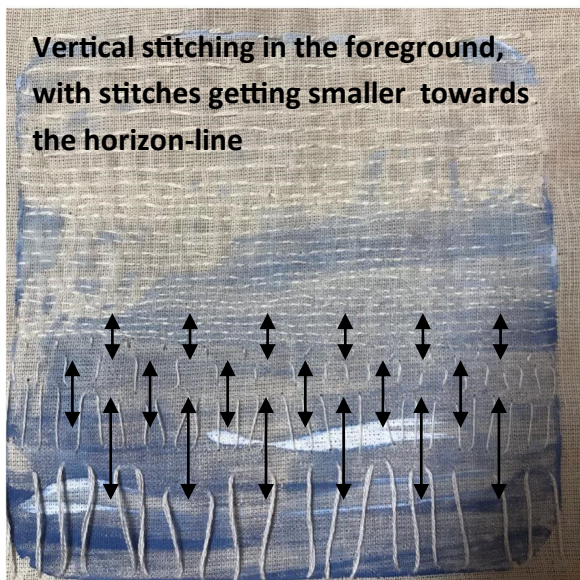
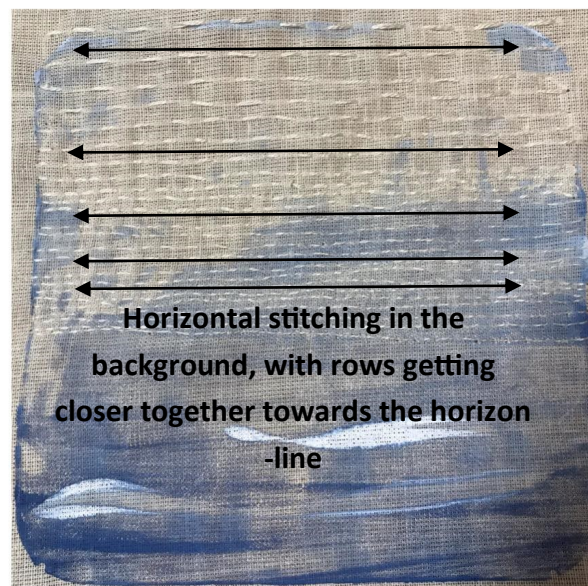
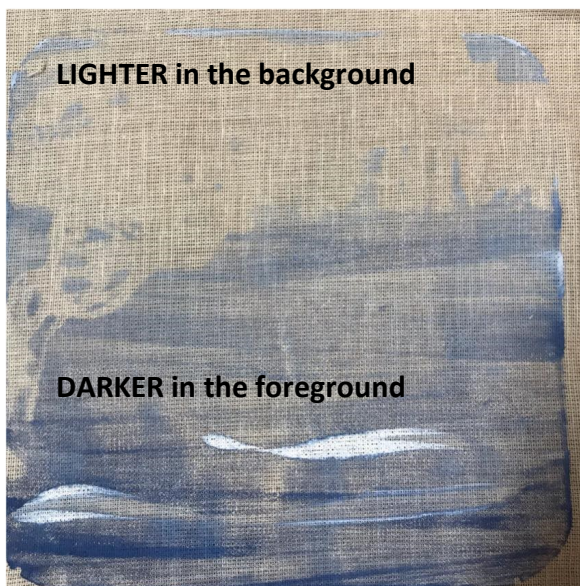
This is going to be unapologetically simple!

In very general terms:

- The nearer something is to the viewer, the darker and larger it will appear.
- The further away, the lighter and smaller it will appear.
- Warm colours tend to feel closer (red, yellow, orange)
- Cool colours tend to feel more distant (blue, green, purple)



Here is an example of how stitching can enhance the illusion of depth in your work ...



Project 1:

SIMPLE Painted & Stitched Landscape

You will need: Plain calico or polycotton sheeting
Fine muslin (optional)
6 strand embroidery thread
Paint or Ink watercolour or acrylic



Begin with a piece of plain cotton fabric (approx 15cm x 15cm).

Using any paint, ink or crayons of your choice, add two areas of colour, One at the top and one at the bottom.

Blend them together loosely in the middle and leave to dry.

The following samples were made on plain 'unwashed' calico. If you find that your chosen paint or ink seems to be sitting on the surface rather than soaking in, it will be as a result of a finish in the manufacturing process. If it is proving to be a problem, you should wash the fabric before applying paint or ink.

Natural plant-based fibres tend to work best: muslin, calico, linen etc, but have a play. **NB: Polycotton seems to work really well too, and a very cheap resource for this is old sheets, or curtain linings.**



cheap colouring pencil



artists' watercolour pencil



cheap watercolour paint



artists' watercolour paint



cheap acrylic paint
(straight from pot)



cheap acrylic paint
(watered down)



crafters acrylic paint
(straight from pot)



crafters acrylic paint
(watered down)



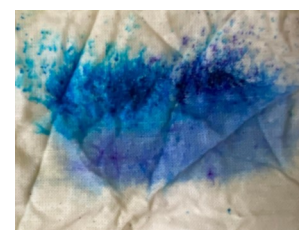
water-based ink



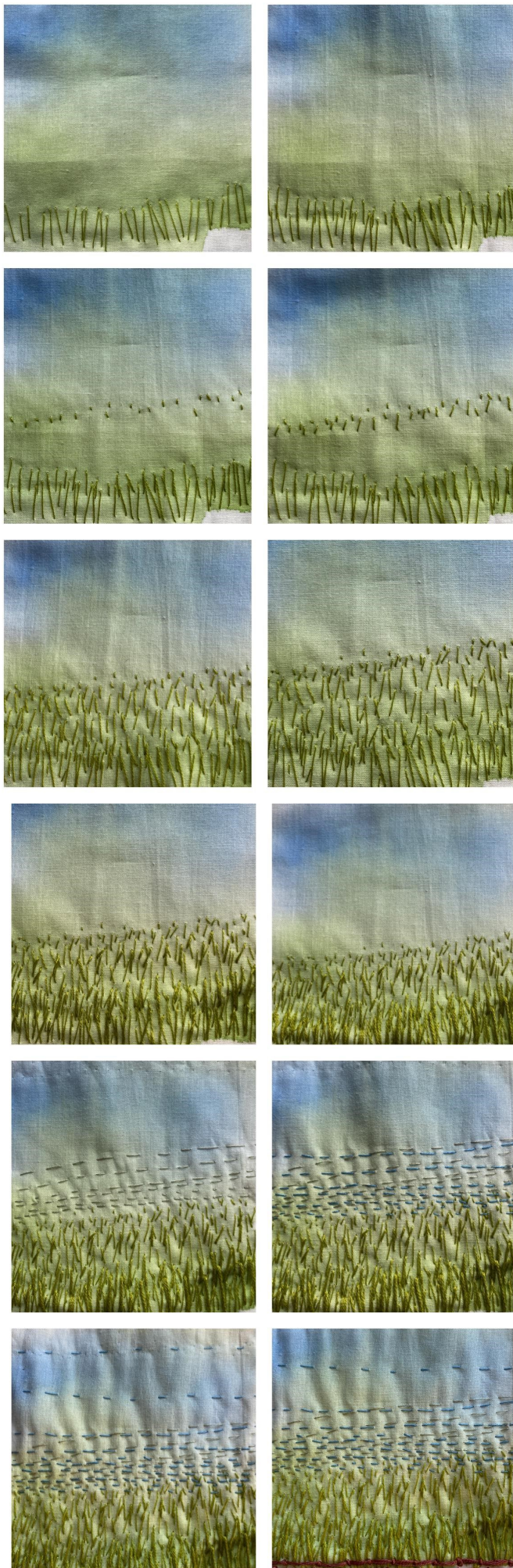
Inktense pencil



Brusho
(pre-mixed in water)



Brusho
(sprinkled onto damp fabric)



For this first sample use a very limited colour palette and just two or three different types of stitch. If you are using 6 strand embroidery thread, use various numbers of threads and use a variety of stitch lengths.

Keep working layers of stitching one over another, and maybe add some extra layers of muslin or other fine fabric. It is VERY easy to overwork this type of image. It is really an example of less is more. Stop every now and then, and try to connect to the work when you return, it will tell you when it is finished!



Experiment with Stitched Layers



Try painting very loosely onto some muslin. When dry, tear the painted muslin into strips and lay them onto a background of painted or unpainted calico. Pin into place.

Careful selection of colour, tone and width of strips will enhance the perspective.

Try holding different threads against the work before you make a final decision. ... but remember, you can always unpick or stitch over, or even add another layer over the top of something you aren't happy with!



Remember that your horizon line doesn't need to be straight, and neither does it have to be in centre of your design. You could represent hills and fields by changing the angle of your torn strips of fabric.

The direction of your stitching will be important too.

You can see on this sample that I have added a layer of unpainted muslin in the closest foreground, in order to be able to add a higher level of contrast with my darkest thread.

Interpretation



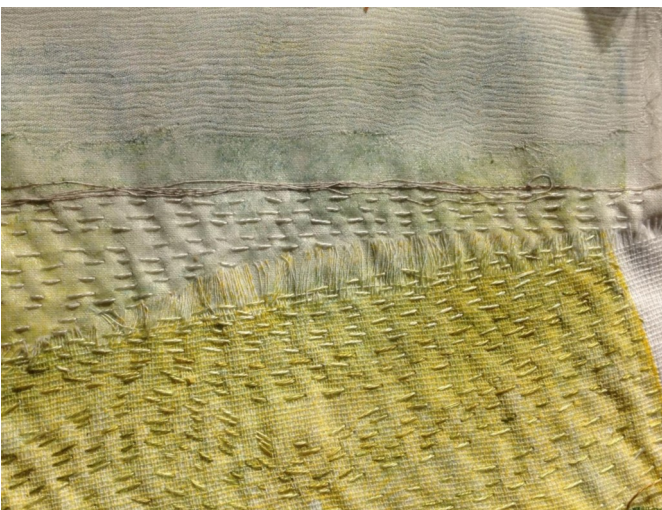
The best piece of advice I can give you is to begin with a very simple image, and interpret it as loosely as possible in the early stages.

You are trying to express the 'feeling' of the photograph, rather than recreate every single detail.

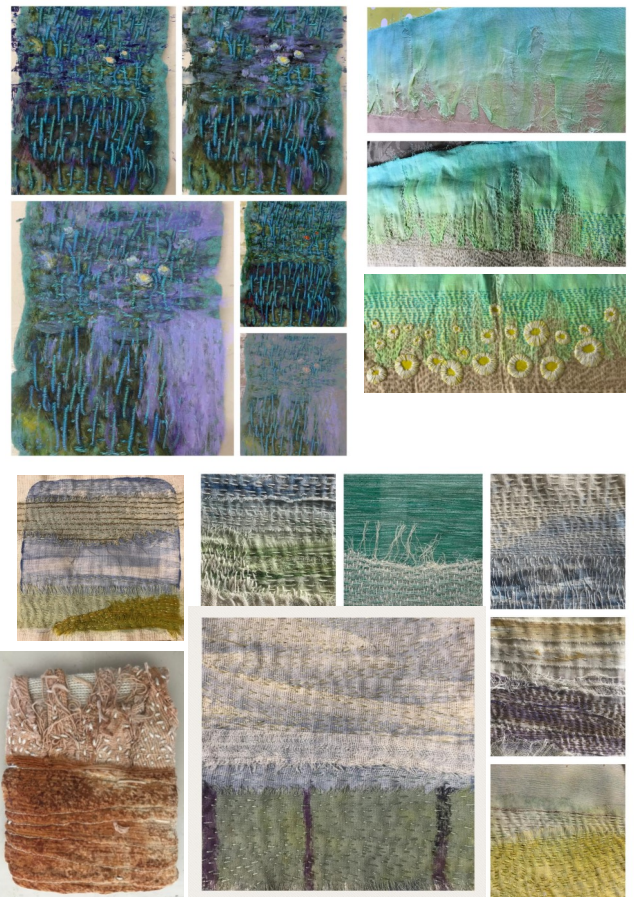
'To paint is not to copy the object slavishly, it is to grasp a harmony among many relationships.' Paul Cezanne

'By using patches of colour and tone it is possible to capture every natural impression in the simplest way, freshly and immediately.' Paul Klee

'Lots of people will protest that it's quite unreal and that I am out of my mind, but that's just too bad ..' Claude Monet



Loose interpretation of a landscape
Helen Birmingham



Project 2: Rust Staining & Gel Plate Printing OVERVIEW

RUST STAINING

You will need:

Plain Calico (or polycotton sheeting)

Rusty Metal pieces (or non-galvanised metal to rust)

String

White Vinegar

Salt

Old container (i.e. baking tray)



GEL PLATE PRINTING

To make your own plate

You will need:

200ml vegetable glycerine

50g agar agar powder

2 teaspoons salt

600ml cold water

Saucepan

Mould approx 23x23cm



RUST STAINING

SEE VIDEO FOR FULL INSTRUCTIONS

The results you can get with this process are simply amazing, and amazingly simple!

The key piece of information you need is that the rusting of the object itself and transferring the rust onto fabric are two completely different processes!

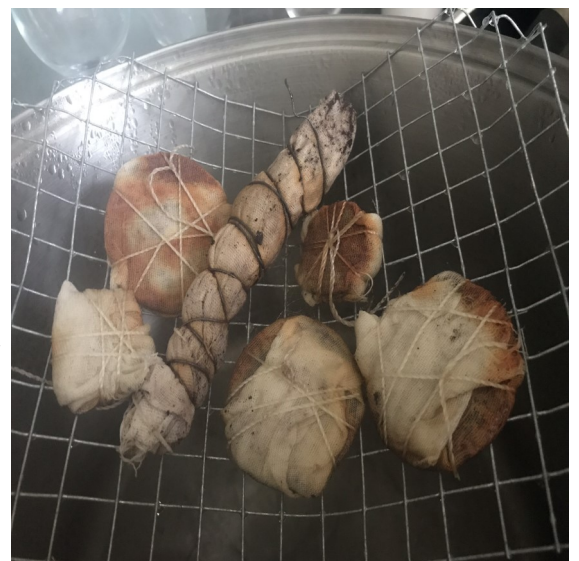
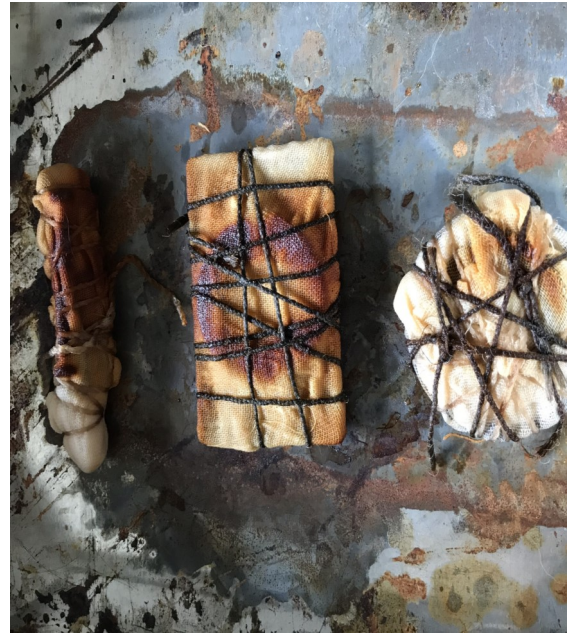
RUSTING THE METAL Iron or steel will rust (corrode) in the presence of oxygen and water. Salt water makes it rust more quickly. It is hard to buy metal these days which has not been galvanised (coated with zinc to stop rusting). If you have a piece of non galvanised metal which you want to rust, simply place it in salt water and leave it for an hour or so. Take it out and leave it to dry. Rust will begin to form on the surface. To increase the amount of rust, you can spray the item with salt water every few hours. It's as simple as that!

TRANSFERRING THE RUST If you had a rusty old bike when you were a child you already know that you can rub the rust off the handlebars with a cloth and white vinegar! To transfer the rust to your fabric, deliberately, all you need is white vinegar. **I find that cheap polycotton sheeting works really well for this!**

Soak your fabric in white vinegar for 10 minutes or so. Put one piece of fabric flat on to your working surface. Arrange the rusty metal pieces then fold, or roll the fabric into a tight bundle. Use cotton string to tie the bundle tightly. Where there is pressure from the string, your staining will be more intense. Dip the bundle back into the vinegar for a second, and then leave it for at least 12 hours. (overnight is perfect). If the bundle looks like it is drying out, you can spray it with a solution of vinegar and water to keep it damp. I will sometimes place a weight on top of the tied bundle. Unwrapping the bundle is always exciting!

Rinse the stained fabric well in clean water and leave it to dry naturally. Stitch into the surface of the fabric? Could you use the stained string in your design too?

You can speed up the transfer of rust to the fabric by steaming your rusty bundle. Steaming requires quite a bit more equipment, but if you intend to repeat the rusting process on a larger scale, it might be useful to know. I will show this process on the video for your information, but I don't anticipate that everyone will want to have a go, it is a bit messy and rust will stain not only the fabric but also your worktops and your pans!



SEE VIDEO FOR FULL INSTRUCTIONS

Vegetarian Gel Plate

Untangled Threads' OWN Recipe
for 23cm" x 23cm x 2cm printing plate

Ingredients:

600ml cold water
200ml vegetable glycerine
50g agar agar powder
2 teaspoons salt

Method:

Add ingredients to a large saucepan. Whisk well to ensure all powder is dissolved. Bring to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Pour into mould. Leave to cool. Your Gel plate is ready to use!



Clean saucepan and whisk with cold water. The residue will form into plastic-like sheet and lift off. All the ingredients are of food quality. This recipe is animal-friendly!

- You can use any water-based paint on this gel plate.
- Watered down Crafter Acrylic is great.
- You should use the surface which was at the bottom of your mould.
- The top surface may have a few bubbles or marks.
- You can apply the paint with a sponge, a brush or a brayer (roller)
- The plate should be cleaned after use with a wetwipe.
- The plate should be stored in an airtight container.
- It will last for about 3-4 months (longer if left in the fridge).
- You may find that a few mould spots appear on it.
- Wipe any spots away with a wetwipe. The mould is the same as will appear on top of a cup of tea if it is left unwashed! It is not toxic.



Project 3: Procion Dyeing OVERVIEW

Dyeing is a complicated processes which requires an in-depth and comprehensive knowledge of fibres and the theory behind the chemical reactions. This workshop is intended to provide just enough information to get you started with dyeing plant-based fabrics i.e. cotton. Home dyeing fabric is not an exact science. It is unlikely that you will ever be able to repeat an outcome exactly. Relax and enjoy the magic of the process ... accept the results as a wonderful surprise!



Procion MX Dye is a fibre reactive dye. It is a cold water dye and perfect for small quantity dyeing, tie dyeing, and even fabric painting. **It works on plant fibres.** It needs salt to draw the dye into the fabric and an alkali to transfer the colour permanently to the fibres.

For more information and supplies of Procion Dye go to:
www.dharmatrading.com or www.georgeweil.com

If you are completely new to this process, I would initially recommend that you purchase a Procion Dye Sample Pack , (www.untangledthreads.co.uk/SHOP) Procion Dye is expensive (even in relatively small quantities) and the sample pack gives you just enough to try colour mixing, immersing, painting and tie dyeing without a great investment.

For this workshop you will need:

- Cotton or polycotton sheeting
- Procion MX Dye
- Soda Ash
- Salt
- Jam jars with lids
- Milk cartons with lids

PROCION DYEING

SEE VIDEO FOR FULL INSTRUCTIONS

PREPARING THE WORKSPACE

It goes without saying really, but **YOU MUST PROTECT** your work surfaces from the dye! I would suggest at least one layer of plastic, then a layer of kitchen roll. Wearing gloves is not essential, but highly recommended!

Although Procion MX Dye is non toxic you may wish to reserve kitchen equipment specifically for dyeing. You may also like to allocate a different spoon to the different colours for mixing and transferring the dye. Try to keep your dye solutions completely separate, until you deliberately want to mix them. It is amazing how even the tiniest drop of blue can affect the whole jar of yellow. Being fastidious may not be in your nature, and 'mistakes' can be great, but if you want fairly consistent results, you'll need to be methodical.



PREPARING THE FABRIC

About 10% of the weight of calico is the oil, wax or size used in the manufacturing process. You must scour your fabric for the dye to work properly. For our purposes: hand wash the fabric vigorously with a mild detergent, then rinse well. The fabric can generally be left wet, but I find that tie dyeing works better if the fabric is dried again first.

Pure Dye solution

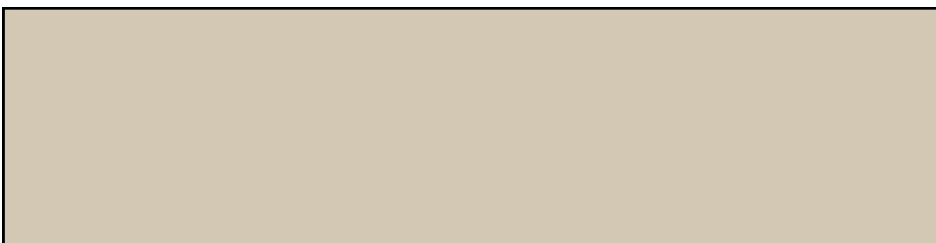
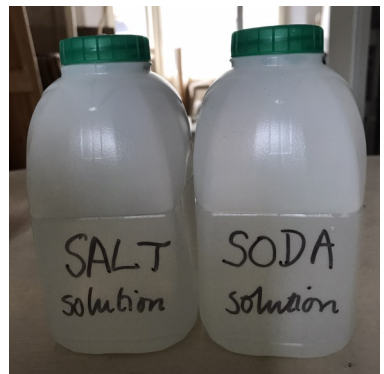
1g Procion MX powder
100ml tepid water

Soda solution

20g sodium carbonate (soda/ash/alkali)
500ml tepid water

Salt solution

125g salt
500ml tepid water



You will ultimately find what ratio of solutions works best for you, but a rough guide would be:

*5 dessertspoons of pure dye solution
100ml soda solution
100ml salt solution*

Pure dye solution will remain useable for up to a couple of months BUT as soon as it comes into contact with the soda, it has a useable life of around 3-4 hours.

Dispose of spent solutions responsibly: it is safe to dilute and

Tips & Recommendations

USING A PAINTBRUSH, or DRAWING DIRECTLY onto the surface are pretty self-explanatory, but I would like to mention that both of these methods are more successful if you have your fabric under tension. Either use an embroidery hoop, OR tape or pin your fabric to a frame before starting. You might find that 'silk pins' are very useful. They hold the fabric at three regular points, which prevents putting too much strain on the fabric, and it is therefore less likely to tear or leave holes.



RELIEF PRINTING

Very basically, relief printing is when you put the colour onto an object or surface BEFORE transferring it to the fabric. Examples of this are Potato Printing, Lino Printing, Rubber Stamping, but could also include printing from found objects.



Making a printing plate using the surface and texture of cardboard and other items, like bubble wrap and string etc is called Collograph Printing. You might like to look this up on the internet. Most of the examples which I found are for printing onto paper, but there is NO REASON why you shouldn't print onto fabric and then embellish with stitches.

MONOPRINT

Monoprint literally means making one print from each image you draw. This is usually done on a flat, non porous surface, like glass or plastic. The image is drawn or painted on the flat surface and then paper (or fabric) is laid on the top and pressed. The image transfers in reverse.

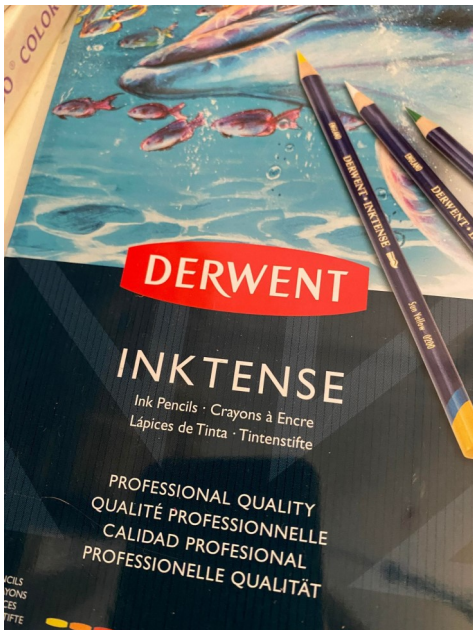


TYE DYE/RESIST

A resist means you are preventing dye from reaching certain areas of your fabric. One of the simplest ways to do this is to use rubber bands or plastic tubing as the resist. (Plastic tube comes in different diameters and can be purchased from hardware shops). Fold or roll your fabric and wrap the elastic band round tightly, or work it into the tube. Immerse the fabric in the dye solution .. wait .. take it out, .. remove band or tube .. unroll!



If you did want to treat yourself, or have a birthday coming, these are some products which I KNOW you wouldn't regret spending money on ... but be warned they are fairly expensive, so you'd have to be sure that you were going to get plenty of use from them.



These are a similar principle to watercolour pencils, but they have loads more pigment in them. If you draw with them onto a slightly damp surface, the colour feels rich and creamy, but still very controllable. You can then spread the colour around with a wet paint brush. They are also water-fast when they have been ironed onto the fabric!

Cost is about £2.00 Per PENCIL



BRUSHO is pure pigment! The pots are tiny, but you only need a tiny amount at a time. Making a hole with a map-pin in the lid is a brilliant way to be able to shake the pigment out, without fear of dropping the whole pot. You can pre-mix a few grains in water, and use it like an ink, or sprinkle it lightly onto a damp surface, and just watch the magic happen.

Cost for 12 colour starter set is about £20/25.00



Fabric paints come in many different brands and the thickness of the product varies considerably. I tend to use colour which is recommended for screen printing. It is thick enough to paint gesturally, but you can always thin it down.



Fabric Paint on calico

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Next Workshop



7th April 2022

*Rag Textiles & Visible
Darning*

Workshop 4 of 12

A list of supplies needed for this workshop will be announced in the next Newsletter (March 18th 2022) and online www.untangledthreads.co.uk