

Batik Workshop

Aims of the Session:

- To introduce basic methods of Batik including health and safety and equipment needed.
- To “Have a go” at using simple methods of Batik.
- To explore ways that Batik might be incorporated into a scheme of work; how might other skills be used i.e. using sketch books for the collecting and recording of information, working from observation, developing ideas, looking at the work of an artist.
- How might staff then take this forward into their own work?

What is Batik?

Batik originates from Java in Indonesia but has spread to many other countries including Africa. The word Batik is thought to stem from the word “ambatik” meaning “a cloth with little dots”.

It is the art of creating coloured patterns on fabric using a combination of dyed and dye resistant areas.

In its simplest form, wax candle or crayon can be used to draw a design onto paper. Paint or drawing ink can then be applied over the top of the waxed areas. The wax crayon or candle will resist the paint or ink, as it is waterproof.

Alternatively, a mixture of flour and water can be drawn onto fabric, and dyes applied. The effect is the same as using wax, without the health and safety issues of using hot wax kettles etc.

Basic Batik method.

The required design is drawn onto the fabric. A design can be prepared on paper and traced onto fabric, templates can be drawn round, paper shapes can be attached to the fabric and waxed round, or the design can be drawn directly onto the fabric.

Dye resistant areas are made by applying hot wax to the fabric, either with a paint brush or copper tjanting. (Traditional waxing tool).

Solid areas of material can be waxed, or shapes can be described by using a waxed outline.

The material can then either be dipped into a dye bath, or colour can be applied with a paint brush.

The fabric is allowed to dry.

More wax is then added to other parts of the design. Remember that the application of the second waxing will retain the first dye colour used. A second colour is now applied to the fabric.

The process is repeated until all the colours have been applied. The wax is then removed from the fabric by ironing the material inside a "sandwich" of newspaper. The wax will melt into the newspaper.

It is important to note that colours, when applied will be affected by the colour previously used. E.g. Red placed over yellow will create orange.

A crackled effect can be created by crumpling the material once the wax has been applied. Any dye which is subsequently added will seep into the cracks creating the traditional veins associated with the process.

Equipment you will need:

- Wax.
- Pre-washed fabric.
- Dye and fix.
- Salt.
- Rubber gloves.
- Plastic bowls.
- Iron.
- Paintbrushes and/or tjantings.
- Wooden frames and drawing pins.
- Wax kettle.
- Newspaper.

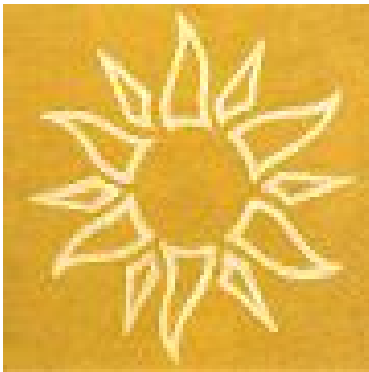
Detailed method:

- 1)** Heat the wax in the wax kettle until it is completely melted. (If it has reached the right temperature, the wax will appear translucent when applied to the fabric. If the wax appears white it is not hot enough and will not have fully penetrated the fabric.)

Stretch pre washed natural fabric onto a wooden frame and fasten with drawing pins. Draw your design onto the fabric. Make sure that all shapes are enclosed or completely filled with wax.

- 2)** Use a brush or tjanting tool to apply wax to areas that will remain the original colour of the fabric. Wax must be applied quickly - it is not like paint and will cool rapidly once away from the heat. Don't go over the waxed areas more than once.
- 3)** Prepare colours to be applied to the fabric. There are two ways that the dyes can be used:
 - a.** By removing the fabric from the frame and dipping it into a dye bath. This works best if solid areas of wax have been applied to the material. The wax can be cracked by crumpling the fabric prior to dipping it in the bath. The material must be left in the bath for approx 60 mins to ensure good colour take up. After this time, the fabric is rinsed and dried. It is then restretched onto a frame. The waxing and dipping process is then repeated.
 - b.** If the wax has been applied by using wax outline, several colours can be used to fill in different unwaxed shapes. To do this, it is important that shapes have been completely surrounded by a wax line, or else colours may bleed into each other.
- 4)** Allow the fabric to dry between the applications of dye, as wet fabric will cool down wax and reduce its effectiveness.
- 5)** To remove the wax, place the fabric between layers of newsprint or newspaper. Iron with a hot iron, changing the newspaper frequently to absorb the melted wax.
- 6)** Strain wax from dyes once you have finished using them.

Diagram of basic Batik method using red and yellow dye.



Waxed outline on white fabric remains white when dyed in yellow dye.



A second coat of wax is applied on areas to remain yellow.



The design is then dyed with the second colour (red dye)

Health and Safety:

- The most obvious thing to mention is the heat of the wax and kettle. Pupils must be made aware of dangers. Wax kettle and flex/extension lead must be positioned so that pupils will not trip up.
- Wax is flammable so pots must not be allowed to overheat.
- Place the pot close to the hand you would normally use. Don't overstretch.
- Try to ventilate the room as fumes from wax can be quite strong.
- Be aware of heat generated when ironing wax out of the fabric.