

## DYEING AND PAINTING FABRICS

by Betty Conlin

Learning to embellish your own fabrics using the simple techniques available today is a must for any serious quilter. In the early 50's, when I first started playing with dyes, emphasis was placed on exact measuring with scales. We believed this method was necessary to create perfect and repeatable, results. The process became a scientific experiment with everything documented rather than an artistic adventure. I started dying my own fabrics because it gave me greater control over the creative process, however this still didn't appeal to my

artistic sense. Fortunately times have changed and fabrics once considered to be mistakes are now hailed as mottled colours and are very desirable. Each of these pieces has its own gradation built in. After working through the mechanics and understanding colour, one can set themselves free to enter into the field of all



possibilities where every piece of fabric is a masterpiece and one can create true colour magic.

Over the years, I've read almost every book available dealing with dyeing, painting and embellishing fabrics. I experimented with all the techniques taught in these books. I noticed that each author used a different set of words and a slightly different format to describe similar processes. I eventually came to the conclusion that all the instructions were correct.

When it came to dyes, most of the authors chose to use the cold water method (Procion MX dyes). Sodium

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## INTRODUCTION

As we wind down toward the year 2000 (everyone knows the true Millennium isn't for another year), I cannot stop but reflect on my personal past, the present and of course the future. I have many goals I wish to achieve. The most obvious is to continue to explore and improve on my personal passions (golf, snowboarding, driving, travelling, etc...). But how does this relate to G&S Dye?

As some of my long time customers know, G&S Dye is a family business started 13 years ago by my father. Long "semi-retired", Godwin is now enjoying the fruits of all his past labors. I've discussed the many quantitative improvements that I've made in past newsletters, but I think that the most important thing I've added to G&S Dye is making more contacts and allowing everyone to put a face to the company. The retail

and mail order environment has changed tremendously and we'll be trying to keep up and lead. Our successes and failures will eventually rest on finding, teaching, nurturing and providing the best products at competitive prices for existing and future customers.

So what changes have we planned for the near and further future? I'm a big fan of the Internet, as most of you know. Fear not, I have not forgotten those who have yet to embrace this technology. I know it's not for everyone and most, if not all the information available on-line is available only a phone call away. The advantages to those who embrace computers early are faster information, more readily available information and the cost savings for the consumer to retrieve and for us to provide this information.

There is a huge rush for companies to start taking orders through the web site. Although our current site doesn't have

that capability, I don't believe it provides the proper experience for our customers. I cannot say that we won't add this feature eventually, but I believe our site is meant to be informative. Orders should be place by phone or email. These two methods are interactive and allow us to review and respond accordingly.

Another ambitious change in the future is to continue to add more outlets that carry our products, first in Canada and eventually the US. The combination of a low dollar and good facilities have prepared us well to concur this New Year, decade, century and millennium.

I wish everyone happy holidays and the best in the New Year

Dixon



carbonate (soda ash) was the setting agent and salt was used to make the fiber more acceptable to the dye. I also noticed that I was using varying amounts of dye per colour due to the varying densities. One teaspoon represented differing weights for each colour. It also did not matter if the dye, sodium carbonate and salt were all mixed together before applying or if the fabric was soaked in the setting agent before the dye solution was applied. They all worked. I even discovered that the microwave oven was a useful tool and quick method for setting or to create more unique looks.

I recently produced a video, *Magical Colours for Quilters* (available for \$42.95). The video includes the visual experience plus an easy to follow instructional booklet. It shows Twelve Easy Steps to follow for successful results. So now one can tie, splatter, scrunch and microwave fabrics to their hearts content and the Magic can be yours (*Perfect with our MX Dye Starter Kit for \$25*).

There are other products besides dyes to create subtle backgrounds on your fabrics. Interesting surface designs can also be created using fabric paints. The difference between dyes and paints is the method of bonding. Dyes bond to the very fiber while paints bond to the surface of the fabric. Most paints are water-based and fixed with an iron. This makes them easier to use than dyes but many brands of fabric paints are acrylic based and create a thick crust on the fabric. For quilters, who understand the importance of "hand" and the natural feel of the end product, the best fabric paints on the market today are the pigment system and Pebeo Setacolor. Setacolor is a pre-mixed line of fabric paints. The pigment system starts with a non-coloured fabric paint base to which you add drops of concentrated pigments to produce a ready to use fabric paint similar to Setacolor but much more economical. Either brand of fabric paint is of high quality and will leave very little residue, thus assuring a soft "hand". With these paints, stamping, sponging, stenciling and printing are possible.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Q:** I have accidentally split some bleach onto my clothing. Can I buy a pen or marker to touch it up or just re-dye the whole garment?

**A:** There are no miracle products that correct this problem. It is very difficult to match the colour again. If one were to re-dye the garment, most likely the bleached area will not dye as intense as the unaffected areas. If you were to use a marker, it'll again be difficult to match the colour. It usually looks like an oil stain or the colour is too bright. The best solution is to discharge the whole garment with bleach (if it is safe to use on it) or to use thiourea dioxide (safer on silks and dyes). After lessening the contrast between the bleached area and the unaffected area, it is then easy to re-dye to the same or another colour.

**Q:** I have a pair of blue jeans that have faded and I would like to re-dye them darker. What dye should I buy?

**A:** Two things help give denim its unique look. One, the fabric was yarn dyed. This means that the yarns were dyed before being woven into fabric. Secondly, the blue dye used on denim is indigo. It's a very finicky dye stuff to use. These factors give denim, its blue and white look. If one were to over dye the fabric with a Procion MX dye it would turn the fabric into a solid "flat" colour. Quite unappealing on denim, especially on blue jeans.

**Q:** What about using black dye on blue denim to turn them black?

**A:** You get a dark aqua blue when you mix black with denim blue. Yes, if you add enough black you will eventually get the colour black but you just may use more than if you had started from white. The best way to get black denim is to buy it black first and use Raycafix in the first washing to help retain the colours longer so you don't have to re-dye as soon.

**Q:** I see Ludigol as one of the chemicals you carry. What is it for?

**A:** Ludigol is a chemical mixed with Procion MX or Procion H that localizes the dye during the steam setting process. As many of my customers know, our G&S Procion H Dyes have to be steam set. Ludigol is built in to our Procion H Dye formulation to minimize the dye being absorbed into the newsprint or moving to other areas of the fabric when steam is introduced. The same logic is applied to Procion MX Dyes when one needs to steam set the colours (block printing or screen-printing)

**Q:** I have spilt something on my fabric and I'll like to dye it a different colour. How?

**A:** The dyes are transparent, so any colour or stain before you dye will affect the colour that you are dyeing. It is best to find a way to remove the stain. You may want to find the best dry cleaner in the city. They are usually experts at stain removal (chain stores are usually not your best bet).

## Mail order across Canada and to the US

The options for ordering items has expanded. First in products and now methods. I'd like to explain a bit further these options and hopefully one will fit your preference, convenience, speed and cost. Payment for any of the below methods can be paid by credit card (Visa, MasterCard and Amex). For Canadian

customers only, COD is also an option.

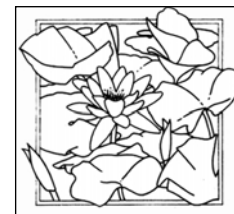
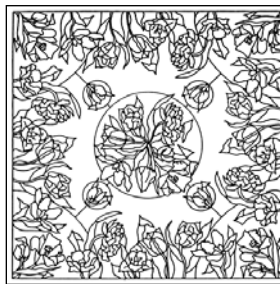
Please note that due to the varying weights, locations, values and shipping carriers, we usually cannot provide on the spot quotes on the shipping costs until the order is packed and weighed. Please see our Spring '98 G&S NEWS for a chart on the estimated costs and carriers available.

## PRE RESISTED SCARVES

We've added even more designs to this fast selling line. I've now added 4 more large 35"x35" squares @ \$14.95 along with a new style of cards @ \$13.95 for a set of 4 and 11"x11" handkerchief @ \$4.95. With Christmas quickly approaching any of these designs would be make a great gift painted or as part of a kit. See Holiday Gift Ideas.

*Top Row: Marriage, Tulip Squares and Animal Cards*

*Bottom: Parrots, Tropical Flower Squares and Water Lily Handkerchief*



## HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS

### Ten Specially Priced Gifts

- 1) Any one 35"x35" square pre-resisted scarf along with a Procion H Dye Starter Kit (or Liquid Colours Starter kit) plus three brushes (one pony hair #4 and two small sheep hair brushes) is \$40.00.
- 2) Any 11"x11" pre-resisted hankie along with 5 Pebeo Setascrib markers is \$20.00.
- 3) Procion MX Starter Kit along with 3 white T-shirts (children's to XL adult sizes, your choice) is \$40.00.
- 4) Microwave Dyeing kit:  
Bought separately \$16.55, now on sale for \$13.95
  - 3 x 60mL Procion H Dyes (your choice of colours)
  - one H5 8"x54"
  - a small sheep hair brush.
  - instructions
- 5) One T-shirt (children's to XL adult size) along with a package of 12 colour Pastel Dye Sticks is \$10.00
- 6) A tradition for the past 5 years at G&S Dye is our December book sale. The perfect opportunity to pick up any of the new or exciting titles for yourself or a friend as a gift. All books this month will be 15% off.

- 7) The ultimate holiday gift valued around \$375, now only \$295.00 complete
  - 2 yds Habotai 8mm 36" wide
  - 3 pcs 8mm Habotai 36"x36" silk scarves
  - 3 pcs 8mm Habotai 11"x60" silk scarves
  - one advance silk painting frame
  - 6 Pony hair brushes (2 each of size #4, #12, #18)
  - One copy of Susan Moyer's, Silk Painting: Gutta and Wax Resist Painting or Silk Painting: Fashion and Fine Art
  - One Procion H Dye Starter Kit
  - One Air Pen
  - 250mL G&S Waterbased Resist – clear
  - 100mL G&S Waterbased Resist – black
- 8) Airpen: The ultimate applicator bottle. Regularly \$145.00 with 6 tips and cartridges, now \$120.00.
- 9) Electric Tjanting Tool: The cleanest and most effective way to apply wax. Reg. \$85.00, now \$65.00
- 10) Buy any package of open faced cards (circle, oval and rectangle) for 15% off. Regularly \$3.70 - \$4.20 a package of 6 cards.

## ONE DAY SALE

Our Second Annual One Day Sale was a roaring success. We greatly surpassed last year's totals. Besides the sales numbers, it seems these one day events bring out quite a few long term customers who may have let their painting and dyeing hobbies slack. Many of those customers discovered that G&S has not stood still over their sabbatical and has introduced many new and innovative products. Another surprise was that our sale prices lowered what were already quite competitive prices. I cannot promise that prices will stay the same over the coming years, but G&S Dye has tried hard to hold prices in check. We've pushed our suppliers for better deals with increased purchased volumes, absorbed small increases and worked on a pricing policy of every day fair prices.

A common question I get with my customers is that they wish for a discount. In a society where media blasts large signs signaling huge discounts, consumers forget to stop and realize that a \$5.00 item is still the same as a regularly priced \$10.00 item that is half off. People just seem happier that they got a deal.

- special pricing effective until Jan 7th, 2000

## WORKSHOPS

We've planned a very exciting workshop season. I've revamped many of the classes by lowering the minimum and maximum students allowed in each class. I've re-vamped the course structure, by providing more detail, better handouts and more hands on practice. All classes are at our Markham location (pick up and drop off at the Toronto store can be arranged) on Saturdays (Sunday also for the Kaleidoscope class) between 10-4 and all materials are included.

Prepayment is required and we recommend enrolling at least a month in advance.

### Kaleidoscope Session

Dates: Feb 26&27, May 27&28

The most exciting new addition is our "Kaleidoscope Session". This two day course allows everyone to experience all our usual techniques in a condensed but thorough lesson. We shall be covering, silk painting, marbling, screen printing, batik and dyeing fabrics. We shall hold two sessions. One in mid February and the other in mid May. Both on a Saturday and Sunday. The course will be \$175 + tax and will include all materials. There will be some prep work but we shall discuss it closer to the day of the class and also when you register.

### Advanced Silk Painting

Dates: March 25, June 17

Taught by Rita Lange of Capagnaro Designs. Students carry on with more advanced techniques. Much of the lesson involves helping students improve blending, lighting effects and textured effects. Also covered are free form painting and avoiding resist / gutta while still creating definite images. Using bees wax is also taught. The second half of the class is individually tailored to each student's level. Rita will answer specific questions on a one-to-one basis. Although each student will complete many samples in the class the purpose of this workshop is to stress new techniques and improve old ones. Price is \$75 + tax - all-inclusive (we still recommend bringing your own brushes).

### Silk Painting

Dates: January 15, March 11, April 29, June 10.

This course has been revamped quite a bit over the past year. I've experimented with the format the past few courses I've taught and it's evolved into a much more hands on experience and rewarding day. The course covers all the basics with silk painting. We learn about setting up your painting area, the dyes, the 'new' paints, the resist/gutta and the types of silk. The techniques covered are salt, resist/gutta, free form and blending. The price includes all materials and students will finish the day completing a silk scarf and multiple samples. Price is \$40 + tax.

### Marbling

Dates: Feb 19, April 8

With the recent release of Creative Marbling by Judy Simmons, there has been a mini revival in this ancient art form. This class appeals to absolute beginners and seasoned marblers. Marbling is messy, what better way to enjoy this than at our place. Students will finish many samples along with a silk scarf. Students have access to a large tray (54"L x 38" W). Price is \$55.00 + tax.

### Dyeing Fabrics for Quilting

Dates: Jan 29, May 13

Hands on dyeing courses for quilters. Learn the proper use of dyes for all types of fabrics and yarns; washes, blends, solid colours, gradations, and many other techniques to create one-of-a-kind patterns on fabrics. Students will complete 2 colour wheels, 2 colours of gradations and a few free style texturing (about 5-6 yds of cotton in total). Price is \$75 + tax

### Screen Printing

This is a private workshop for up to three students. At the end of the workshop, students finish printing original designs and will know enough to be able to start their own printing business. We cover many stencil preparation techniques (manual, photocopy and computer). Please call for more details/prices and to book an available day.

## MAIL ORDER - continued from page 2

Before ordering, please prepare your order as much as possible, with payment method, colour, product codes and questions ready at hand. We don't mind picking up the charges for the call but respecting our time will be much appreciated.

**Email:** As more than half our customers have already discovered, email is becoming the most efficient way to order, especially if you have ordered from us previously. Do not submit credit card information by email on your first order. Please call us or we shall call you for it if it isn't in our files.

[order@gsdye.com](mailto:order@gsdye.com)

**Phone or Facsimile:** These are other popular methods to send orders in. Like email, facsimile provides us a clear written description of your order (minimize errors) and is a safe method of submitting credit card numbers. Of course you can always call toll free to us. See below for all the contact information.

**1-800-596-0550**

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