Katazome

Katazome, which literally means "stencil - to dye," involves applying a resist paste to fabric through a stencil, then dyeing the fabric. There are several ways this can be accomplished.

Thoroughly wash and dry 100% cotton fabric, pre-cut into 12"x12" squares. Tape each fabric square firmly to a pad of newspaper covered with waxed paper.

Mix the resist paste. A simple paste can be made from the following recipe:

1 Tablespoon corn starch
1 Tablespoon white wheat flour
1 Tablespoon rice flour
1 Tablespoon laundry starch
½ tsp. alum
Dissolve flours and starches thoroughly in 1 cup cold water. Heat in a double boiler, stirring constantly until the mixture is clear. Add additional water to achieve the consistency of honey. Add alum and stir thoroughly. The paste should be applied to the fabric while it is still warm, but it can be refrigerated and reheated as needed.

Paint the paste directly on the cloth with brushes, or place a small amount in a zip-lock baggie. Seal the bag and cut diagonally across a bottom corner, leaving a small opening through which the paste can be extruded directly onto the cloth in lines.

For stenciling, cut a monsho or crest design from contact paper. (For best results with rolled contact paper, cut to 12"x12" squares and stack under a weight for several days to flatten.) Peel the backing paper off carefully and position the stencil, sticky side down, on the cotton fabric. Freezer wrap paper may also be used as a stencil. It is cheaper than contact paper and does not have to be peeled away from a backing, although it may not adhere as well. Attach it to the fabric by ironing, plastic side down. Pour a small amount of paste on open areas and spread with the edge of a piece of rigid cardboard. Be careful not to force the paste under the edges of the stencil. Allow to dry briefly, then peel away contact or freezer paper. Hang to finish drying; this might take 2-3 days.

Procion MX series reactive dyes can be pre-mixed before class. Depending upon the kind of alkali used in the mixture, the dyes will stay reactive from 4-48 hours. The liquid dye should be brushed over the fabric and allowed to air dry. Make sure students wear rubber gloves and avoid getting dye on their skin. Again, depending upon the mixture of the dyes, they may set at room temperature or have to be ironed or tumbled on hot in a clothes dryer.

After the dyes are set, the fabric must be rinsed in a number of changes of clear water to remove the paste resist and excess dye.

For a simpler project, apply opaque white textile pigment to the fabric through the stencil instead of paste. It may be squeegeed on, brushed on, or applied with a sponge. Allow

pigment to dry, then, peel off the contact or freezer paper stencil. Use an iron to heat-set pigment according to package directions. Fabric prepared this way may be dyed all together in a dye bath, rinsed, and dried. The paste does not have to be removed.

Resources:

Mizoguchi, S. (1973). *Arts of Japan I: Design motifs.* New York: Weatherhill, Inc.

Nakano, E. and Stephen, B.B. (1982). *Japanese stencil dyeing: Paste-resist techniques.* New York: Weatherhill, Inc.

(Spring 1995). *Surface Design Association Newsletter.* 8(2); paste resist recipe

Procion MX reactive dyes and textile pigment may be ordered from PRO Chemical & Dye, Inc., P.O. Box 14, Somerset, MA 02726. 1-800-2-BUY-DYE (Orders only). 508-676-3838; fax 408-676-3980.

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