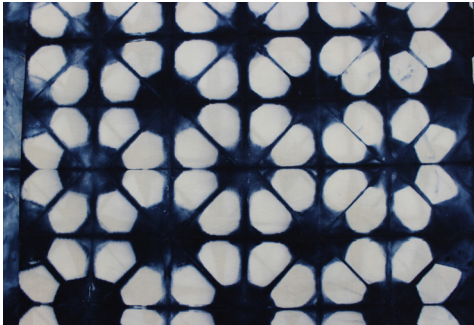


Itajime Shibori

by Cindy Lohbeck

Sponsored by Bernina of America, eQuilter.com, FreeSpirit Fabrics, QNNtv



Cindy Lohbeck with host Susan Brubaker Knapp

Materials

- Prepared for dyeing (PFD) fabric, cut into fat quarters
- An assortment of clamps (I use both 4" and 6" sizes and like the plastic kind, as they don't rust as fast.)
- Fiber reactive dye
- Urea
- Soda ash
- Textile detergent
- Squeeze bottles
- Gloves
- Dust mask
- Plastic bag
- 6 sets of Plexiglas® templates in sets of 2

The ancient Japanese *shibori* technique of *itajime*—meaning fold and clamp—will give you bold, graphic, and geometric patterns. Traditionally done using wooden blocks as resists, my modern approach utilizes acrylic templates to create these inspirational patterns.

This simple and easy technique is so versatile and fun! Every time I unfold a batch I feel inspired to do it all over again, moving each template just a bit, or trying out a particular set of templates on a new fold. The possibilities are endless!

INSTRUCTIONS

Make the 45° triangle fold

1. Begin folding the fabric accordion-style (back and forth) into a 3"–4" stack. Don't worry if it doesn't stack perfectly. By starting with an accordion-style fold, an exposed edge is always available to collect the dye.
2. Fold the bottom left corner of the accordion fold fabric stack up to meet the top edge to establish the 45° angle. (figure 1)
3. In keeping with the idea that we always leave an exposed edge to collect the dye, fold the triangle back onto itself, repeating until you have an accordion stacked 45° triangle. (figure 2)

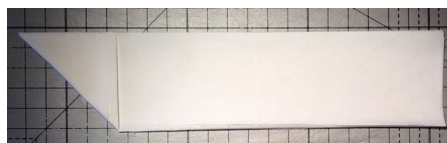


Figure 1

Figures 1–3 courtesy of the artist



Figure 2

4. Make a fabric sandwich: Place an acrylic template where you want it on the fabric, and the mate on the other side of the fabric stack. Secure the templates with clamps. On larger templates, the more clamps you use, the more force, and the tighter the template will resist. (figure 3)



Figure 3


Let's find out just how versatile this basic fold can be! Try experimenting on this fold with several different templates. Or the same template used differently on the triangle.

CAUTION: Always wear a dust mask and gloves while working with powdered dyes and chemicals. All measuring and mixing tools used in this process should be dedicated to nonfood use.

Dye the fabric

1. While there are many ways to dye using this technique, I have found that clamps get bumped in a large dye bath. For this reason, I use a Fiber Reactive Indigo Dye solution, applied with a squeeze bottle.
2. Soak the clamped fabrics in a soda ash solution for 30 minutes to an hour, and then drain excess water from the fabric. Fabrics should be damp when dyed, not saturated. Using a light and dark solution of dye will result in a softer transition line around the template, along with some value play in the dye.
3. Mix 1 cup water with 1 tablespoon urea and stir until dissolved. Divide into 2 containers. In container #1 (marked Dark) mix 2 tablespoons of dye powder. This is the liquid dye concentrate.
4. In container #2 (marked Light) mix 1–2 tablespoons of liquid dye concentrate from container #1.

5. Fill squeeze bottles with light and dark dye. Outline each template first in light, then in dark. Continue to stick the nozzle in the folds to dye the remaining fabric.
6. Allow dye to batch overnight. Batching means to allow the fabric to be kept moist and damp in a plastic bag. Rinse thoroughly *before* you remove clamps and templates. Follow with a machine wash in textile detergent.

I hope you have enjoyed seeing the results of your itajime shibori experiment. If it has piqued your interest, and you would like to learn other folds or check out some of our specialty templates, visit my website. 

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