

Working with Intention

InStitches, 31 March to 4 April 2025

This workshop is for students who wish to focus on creating the work they want to make, and to build their ability with composition in relation to art textiles. It will encompass:

- Working with key design principles in terms of exploiting elements such as balance, contrast and relationship, and the use of..
- Key tools such as colour, value, scale and imagery to drive visual interest.
- How to use devices such as focal points, pathways and other 'doorways into the picture plane'.
- Starting with the background or starting with a strong compositional element.
- Looking at work-in-progress and figuring out next steps.

Claire will work individually and with the group to review completed work and the work-in-progress as it develops throughout the week. As such, whilst this is a hands-on class, the focus is not on technique or processes.

Claire's main focus will be to:

- ⇒ Understand individual goals in terms of what each student wishes to achieve. To help with this, each student will be asked to share their intent with Claire and the rest of the group. This activity will happen at 9.30am on the first day.
- ⇒ Provide advice and guidance on the best choice of tools to generate the imagery sought (e.g. use of the silk screen, rollers, scrapers, bottles and so forth)
- ⇒ Provide advice and guidance on the order of process; pre-dyeing, working with dye paints, discharge, fabric paints etc. and where appropriate, refining technique.
- ⇒ Engage in one-to-one and group discussions to help students respond to the cloth as it evolves, review and consider progress of the palette and/or the composition and plan next steps.

As such, whilst this is a hands-on class, the goal is not to teach specific technique. Instead, students will be working to the beat of their own drum to generate the work they wish to create. The class will encourage the evaluation of work-in-progress and the discussion of ideas, concepts, design and composition on an on-going basis. The workshop fee will cover use of the media, although exactly what any student will use will be dependent on individual goals.

ON-SITE SUPPLIES & SUPPLIES FEE

Note: if you're using media other than dye paints (e.g. acrylics or soya and pigments), you must bring it. So, if using dye-based media, please ensure you have plenty of soda soaked cloth ready to use. If using media such as soya milk and pigments, soak some beans on Sunday night! If using acrylics, bring the colours and mediums you wish to use.

In addition to supplying the dye media, the studio has a selection of tools but do think about the tools you may need to use and bring them with you (e.g. thermofaxes). The following media will be available at InStitches and a supplies fee for its use will be charged.

- **Mx dyes;** 11 key colours for thickened and liquid dyes, or immersion.
- **Fabric Paints;** a range of key colours plus extender base.
- **Resists;** string, freezer paper and masking tape (for resist work on cloth or on-screen).
- **Chemicals;** everything needed for dye and discharge work.
- **Tools;** a selection of key tools will be provided, including:
 - ⇒ bristle decorators' brushes and foam brushes in various widths
 - ⇒ a selection of bristle & synthetic artists' brushes
 - ⇒ various rollers
 - ⇒ mono printing plates (large & small)
 - ⇒ scrapers (e.g. old credit cards and small squeegees)
 - ⇒ needle-nose bottles

An ample supply of thickened and liquid dye paints, discharge media, Chemical Water & Print Paste will be ready for use throughout the workshop.

STUDENT REQUIREMENTS - WHAT TO BRING

The Intention

Perhaps the most important element to bring with you. Please undertake planning work in advance of the class, including:

Specific purpose; what are you trying to achieve in terms of specific works?

Personal imagery; giving thought to the marks, lines, shapes and texture you wish to see come alive in your cloth, assembling any reference materials.

Specific tools; give thought to preparing or assembling specific tools in advance.

Journaling, notes, references; any written work or references that may be important to the overall plan.

The Cloth

Choose the fabric(s) you wish to work with and prepare it accordingly. How much you bring is up to you; you know your own work rate and racing is to be avoided, whereas thoughtful consideration will be encouraged. Please feel free to bring work-in-progress, particularly if you're struggling with it.

For dye paints we'll be working on soda-soaked cloth rather than putting soda ash into the media. A soda vat will be available for on-going soda soaking throughout the workshop but please bring at least four metres ready soaked and dried.

General Supplies

- **Tools;** you'll see that some tools are provided but if you have specific tools you wish to use, then bring them.
- **Thermofax screens;** InStitches has the capability to make thermofax screens but this will not be 'on demand'; imagery for thermofaxes must be provided at the end of each day and will be ready for use the following morning.

- **A drop cloth:** if working with fibre-reactive dyes, please consider bringing two drop-cloths. Please bring drop cloths that are sturdy: drill cotton, denim or something similar in a neutral colour are best as they are sturdy enough to flip over and use both sides before washing is needed. Old sheets are too thin and avoid heavy-weight calico or canvas as it tends to hold wrinkles. Please also avoid the plastic-backed decorators' cloths. Your drop cloths need to measure 1.5 x 2.25m, once scoured and shrunk.

If you would like to buy a scoured and ready to use dropcloth from InStitches (£17.25) please contact Hazel: hazel@institchestextilecourses.co.uk

- Rubber gloves (suggest 2 pairs).
- 1 x box of ball-headed or T pins (please don't bring the very heavy/thick T pins).
- 1 x black Sharpie.
- Notebook or sketchbook; handouts on recipes and some process will be provided (I will email once I know who's using what media) but it can be useful to record your order of process on individual pieces, or make notes during general discussions.
- Pen and pencil.
- Cloth apron (or wear the equivalent of gardening/decorating clothes).
- Comfortable, rubber-soled shoes (you'll be standing a great deal and the floor is concrete).
- Headphones if you like to work to music (you will be asked to put your phone on silent and take/make calls outside).
- Anything else you can think of that you're likely to need!

Please contact Claire at cb@clairebenn.com if you have any queries about the class content or supplies. Contact InStitches for queries about the studio facilities or dietary requirements.