

Luscious Layers – Workshop Outline and Preparation

This five day workshop is aimed at those with experience of using Procion MX dyes to add colour to fabric using a range of techniques such as dyeing, screen printing, mark making, monoprinting etc. It is not suitable for beginners as it assumes prior knowledge of multiple surface design techniques.

At the end of the five days you will have a series of samples that combine different techniques, exploring the impact of scale of marks, colour value and colour proportion (these may be little works of art in their own right!). Based on these samples you may also choose to create two or more larger pieces of beautiful, multi-layered art cloth.

Day 1:

- Colour studies - extract colours from your own source(s) of inspiration, using colour families to determine if those colours can be used together or must be kept separate.
- Creating 'backgrounds' - working quickly, use a range of techniques on 3 - 5 small pieces of fabric focussing on the type of mark, line or texture that works with your source of inspiration.
- Create small breakdown screens, washable pva screens or flour paste screens if appropriate.

Day 2:

- Creating 'backgrounds'- continue to make sample backgrounds on small pieces of fabric using screens made on day 1 and other techniques.
- Second layers - consider scale, colour value and different techniques to enhance your sample backgrounds. You may want to introduce focal points or some form of perspective. You may want to use masks on your fabric to add the 2nd layer to defined areas only.

Day 3:

- Third layers - focussing on composition, add more defined line and shape, either by using more dye or by using discharge media.
- Start work on larger pieces of fabric, selecting combinations of techniques from your samples to create background.

Day 4:

Fourth layers - asking the question 'does this need more'? More could be added using thickened dyes, discharge media, textile inks and other media. It can be the addition of a single mark or some words. This can be where you start to think about adding stitch, manipulating your fabrics, collaging your fabrics with other media although you may run out of time within the workshop to start some of these.

Continue to work on larger pieces. Think composition as you add additional layers.

Day 5:

You can choose to continue to work on your larger pieces or to create more samples. You will be encouraged to assess your work and make a plan for how you might want to take some pieces further at home.

This is just a rough outline. I will work one-to-one with you throughout the week to support your design decisions and we will review progress as a group on Wednesday and Friday morning – you will learn as much from each other as you will from me!

Preparation

The workshop does assume you have a working knowledge of various techniques and of using dyes. If it has been a while you might benefit from reading through the class notes that I will send you before the workshop especially the little one on colour as we will be exploring the opportunities that come from layering and combining different techniques.

Ideally try to have two different sources of inspiration to work from that feature different colours and different types of marks, lines or shapes. You may choose to print larger pieces of fabric from both sources or from just one.

Your source of inspiration may be an image or collection of images, or it may be a physical object. It may be a poem or an historic event. It maybe something which contains colours that excite you, that you love! Or it could be that you take your colour inspiration from something else. Your inspiration may be industrial or man-made leading you to seek more linear or graphic marks. Or it may be inspired by nature and suggesting softer marks or textures?

If you want to create an exact replica of an image, then you have signed up to the wrong workshop! We will be interpreting our source of inspiration creatively – and remember that nobody need ever know what that source is!

Please feel free to work on your ideas as part of your preparation for the workshop. If appropriate you could make stencils or stamps or you could gather suitable objects to embed in breakdown screens. Bring suitable thermofax / thermal screens if you have them. Or consider having one made if there is some very specific fine line imagery that you want to use (<https://www.screens4printing.com/>).

But please do not get stressed over this! I have been there and, believe me, serendipity (plus a bit of thought about colour) can give you the most beautiful pieces of printed cloth!