



# Batik

---

Although the word batik originated in Java, the beginning of this ancient folk art is not really known for certain. Archeological evidence of batik dates back 2,000 years and includes not only Central and Southeast Asia, but also Japan and Africa. In Indonesia, batik was originally done by the women of the aristocracy who created many beautiful and symbolic designs worn by both men and women during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Also, at this time, batik was introduced to Europe and Java by the Dutch.

This exciting craft is a simple wax-resist technique for producing designs on white or light-colored fabric. The wax is applied hot to the fabric following a preconceived design or idea. Then the fabric is dipped in a cooled solution of dye and water, where only the un-waxed parts are dyed. Sometimes the wax is deliberately cracked to form fine lines of color where the dye penetrates these cracks. When the wax is removed, the design appears. The process may be repeated for number of colors desired.

## Materials and Equipment

### a) To transfer the design

- Large sheets of paper to plan the design
- Tracing pencil, charcoal pencil or carbon paper

### B) Wax

- Paraffin wax usually cracks in the dye so you get interesting “spider webby” designs within the waxed area.
- Beeswax (from craft shops, etc) does not crack so you get a perfectly shaped design with no spider webs.
- Beeswax and paraffin may be mixed together to prevent some, but not all, crack from forming.

### c) Brushes

- Various sizes depending on the type of design
- Use an old or inexpensive paintbrush or art brush because it’s nearly impossible to remove the wax.

### d) Dyes

- Special dyes are required which will dye fabric cold.
- Regular household dyes must be applied hot and the hot dye dissolves the wax.
- Batik and aniline dyes are available from craft stores or online.
- Some dyes may require mordants to set the dye. Read the instructions carefully. Salt is sometimes used as a mordant.

#### e) Fabric

- Thin fabric works best -cotton organdy, real silk, thin unbleached muslin, etc.
- Be sure to choose fabric which will take a good dye -most of the synthetic fabrics (polyester, acrylics, etc) won't absorb dye.

#### f) Frame

- For large pieces of fabric, a frame to stretch material tight while applying wax is essential.
- For smaller articles, it's handy too.
- You can use a quilting frame, curtain stretchers, picture frames -or improvise with anything that's handy.

#### g) Iron, paper towels and newspapers

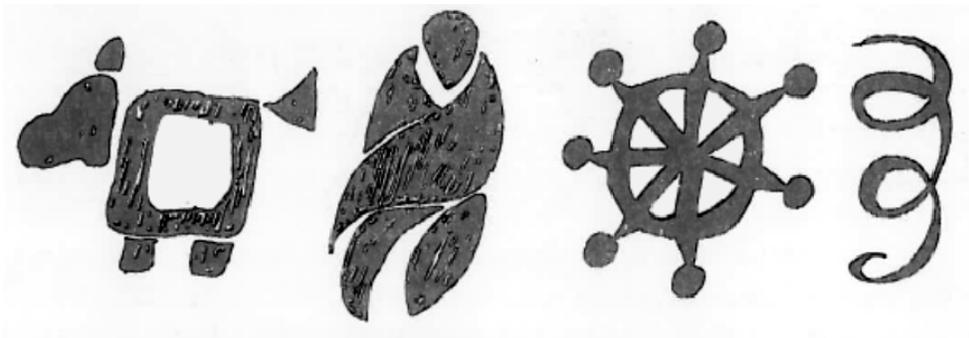
- To remove the wax

#### h) Work area and clean up

- Protect your work area with newspapers and/or a plastic drop cloth
- Rubber gloves
- Wear old clothes, an old apron., or large garbage bag to protect clothes.

## Designs

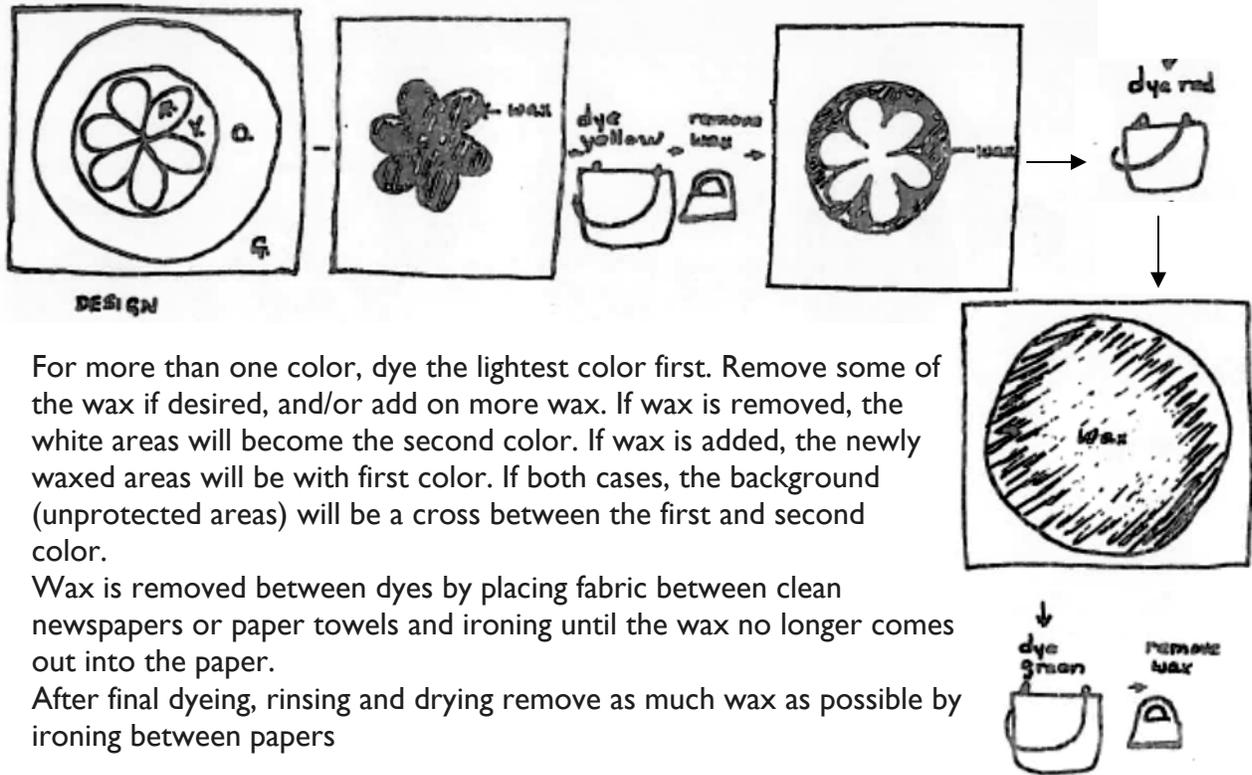
- Any design can be done in batik.
- It is best to create a design which is solid rather than intricate lines.
- However, abstract doodles can be quite interesting when done in one color only.



## Method

- Wash fabric to remove sizing. The sizing if left in will prevent dye from penetrating into the fibers. Dry and iron fabric.
- Stretch fabric over stretcher, attaching it with pins or tacks. Place newspapers underneath fabric to catch wax drips. Design can be drawn onto the fabric lightly with a pencil.
- Melt wax in a can which has been set in a pan of hot water.
- With paintbrush, paint with wax the areas of the design you don't want dyed. Be sure the wax penetrates through the fiber and onto the wrong size. With heavy fabrics with come closely woven fabrics, the wax must be painted on the underside as well. Let wax harden. If you want lots of spider webs, crunch the fabric up in your hands to crack the hard wax.
- There are two methods of dyeing:
  - Paint dye on with big paint brush. This doesn't make the dye as intense but prevents wax from cracking.
  - Remove fabric from frame and dip into dye. Leave it in the dye until it is darker than you want it (it will dry to a lighter value). Paraffin wax may crack so you get the spider webby dyed lines running through the design.

- Rinse the fabric in warm water. Cool/cold water will cause the wax to harden and crack.
- Hang to dry.



- For more than one color, dye the lightest color first. Remove some of the wax if desired, and/or add on more wax. If wax is removed, the white areas will become the second color. If wax is added, the newly waxed areas will be with first color. If both cases, the background (unprotected areas) will be a cross between the first and second color.
- Wax is removed between dyes by placing fabric between clean newspapers or paper towels and ironing until the wax no longer comes out into the paper.
- After final dyeing, rinsing and drying remove as much wax as possible by ironing between papers

## Fake Batik

Fake batik is done by drawing the design on the fabric with wax crayons. Color heavily all the areas you want colored. Then you simply put the fabric between newspapers or paper towels and iron till the wax comes out. The color stays in the fabric.

## Cleaning Batik Prints

Most of the time, you make batiks into things that don't have to be washed like lampshades, screens, wall hangings, etc. However, if the dye is fast, they can be gently hand washed (separate from the rest of the wash of course) and hung to dry.

## Evaluation

- Is the article well-designed according to the standards of good design?
- Are the color areas (where the wax was) clearly defined outlines?
- If spider web lines are present do they make the design more interesting?
- Is the article completely free from wax (stiff areas indicate wax was not all removed).
- Is it used for something that won't need cleaning too often ?

## **Project Resources:**



### **Pinterest – The Visual Discovery Tool**

Pinterest is a social media bulletin board for you to virtually pin pictures of things that interest you to your own personal boards – Pin-Explore-Discover! 4-H Manitoba has a Pinterest account. Each project series has a board full of fun and interesting ideas.

There are also boards for 4-H Awesome, Community Service, Volunteers, Communications and Building Blocks. Check it out at [www.pinterest.com/4hmanitoba/](http://www.pinterest.com/4hmanitoba/).

The following links may be of interest:

<http://www.batikguild.org.uk/whatisbatik.asp> Batik Guild website

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wylWYSHkzoQ> Youtube video that describes batik.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ohjxPCte\\_FM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ohjxPCte_FM) How to Do Batik video

Sections of the Batik Fact Sheets were adapted with permission of MAFRD from the publications *Creative Craft Techniques* - Manitoba Department of Agriculture and the Manitoba 4-H Project: *Crafts Around the World* - 2004.

## **Manitoba 4-H Contact Information**

---

1129 Queens Avenue Brandon, MB R7A 1L9

Ph: (204) 726 - 6613 Fax: (204) 726 - 6260

[4h@gov.mb.ca](mailto:4h@gov.mb.ca)

[www.manitoba.ca/agriculture/4-h](http://www.manitoba.ca/agriculture/4-h)

[www.4h.mb.ca](http://www.4h.mb.ca)