Fiber Arts

Fabric Dyeing

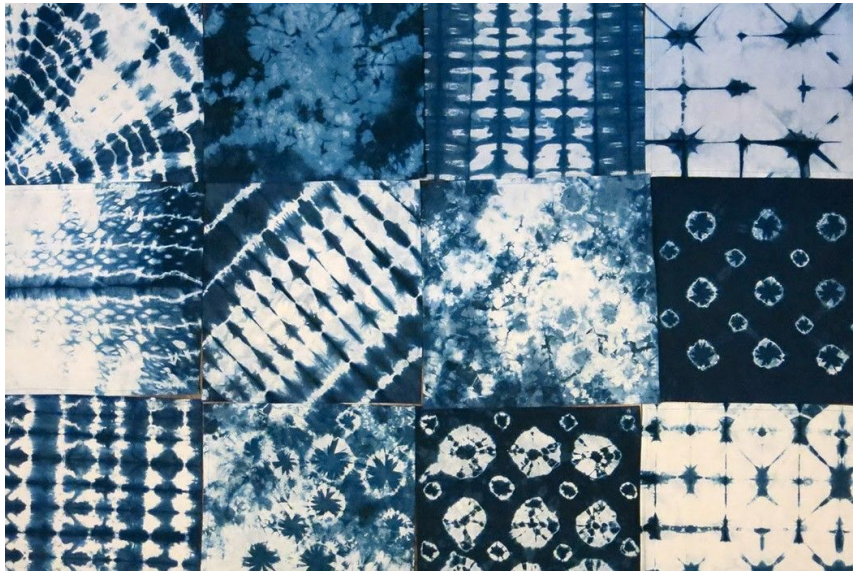
Throughout history and across cultures and continents, dyes have been used for thousands of years to colour materials. Many dyes were originally used to colour textiles – fibre-based materials such as threads, yarns or fabrics that are woven or knitted and made from plant or animal fibres, such as cotton, linen, flax, hemp, grasses, wool, silk, human hair, etc. Dyes were also used to stain wood, pottery, and animal hides.

Dyes are different to pigments because they are soluble (they can dissolve in water) and traditionally were mostly made from organic substances (plants or animals). Dyeing processes can also be more complex than working with paint pigments because the dye must be absorbed and held fast in the material it is colouring. Different techniques were developed over time to bind dye colours with the material to prevent the dye from washing out or fading too quickly.

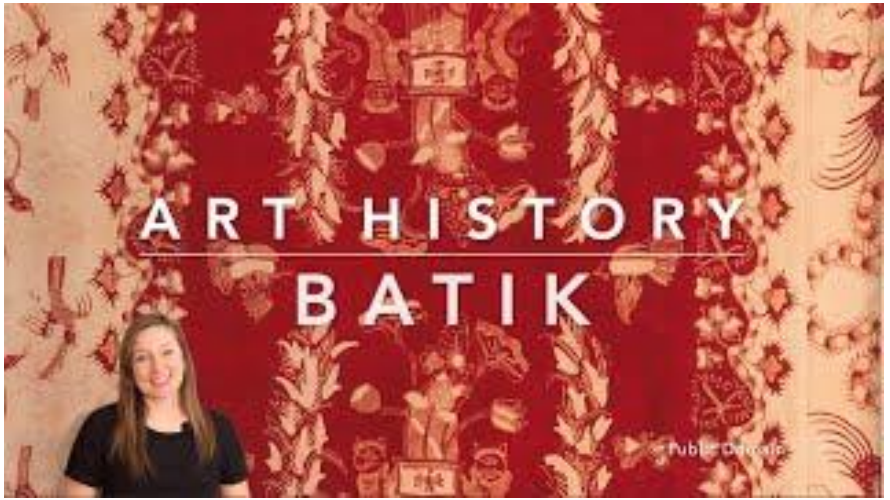
Grinding indigo for fabric dye, Oaxaca, Mexico

Ghana, Adinkra fabric

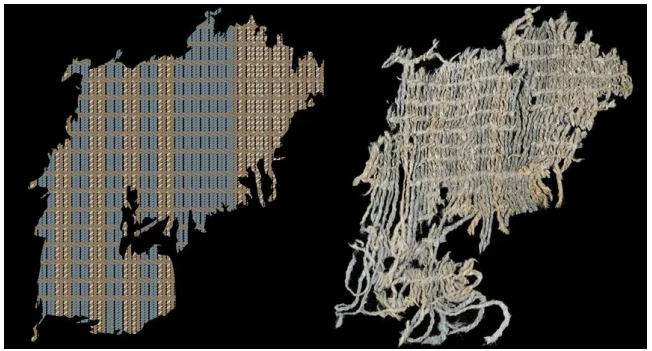
Japanese tie dye - *Shibori*



South Asia - Batik



South America - Indigo



Oldest dyed cloth, about 6,500 years old found in Peru. Central and South America have a rich history of fabric dyeing.

We are going to use a RESIST process

- PUT PAPER or CARDBOARD UNDER YOUR FABRIC
- Glue is our RESIST. You can sketch your design lightly in pencil first.
- When glue dries, we will dye fabric
- When fabric dries, where the glue was will stay white!

Dying fabric

- We will add food dye to shaving cream. The shaving cream with act as a catalyst, meaning it will help evenly distribute the dye over the fabric without changing how the dye works.