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Studio Batik

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Even though the batik process, based on a wax and dye resist technique, is an ancient process, it is quite applicable as a fine craft form today. The various steps of the traditional batik process have been simplified by most of today's craftsmen. In addition to the simplification of the actual process, several variations of the dye application have been accepted as valid and conducive to freedom of expression in the batik process. Some of the variations include the direct application of dye and tie-dye combined with the wax resist process.

Batik lends itself to a wide range of application. Like the traditional use of batik, fabrics for wearables can be very attractive and unique in design. Most contemporary wearable designs tend to be much larger and simpler in pattern than the original batik clothing patterns. Various sizes of batiked fabrics lend themselves to room decoration as wall hangings and accessory pieces in many homes. Batiked fabrics can also be used in three-dimensional forms as soft sculpture. Soft, subtle relief forms can be very effective in quilted batik fabrics. Essentially, batiked fabric could be used as any other fabric could be used. This use is simply determined by the wishes of the artist and how best to achieve the desired effect.

As well as a variety of application for batik, the subject

matter and design work involved in batik can be as varied and equally acceptable as it's many uses. This again depends on the desires and inclinations of the artist.

The fabrics used for the contemporary batiks are still those fabrics made from natural fibers. After experimenting with a variety of fabrics, most batik artists tend to favor a particular fabric over others. Each fabric has it's own characteristics and pecularities as to accepting the waxes and an affinity for dye. Some fabrics also lend themselves to particular purposes depending on how the batiked fabric is going to be used. The appropriateness of the fabric for the intended purpose can be very important.

The most significant changes in the batik method is that of the kinds of dye being used now compared to the dyes and methods of dyeing traditionally used. With the discovery of chemically bonded fiber reactive dyes in 1956, the colors in dyed fabrics became much more permanent to light and washing. Although originally developed for industrial purposes, the manufacturers developed smaller packaging methods and simplified instructions to use the fiber reactive dyes. The smaller packages and simplified instructions became available to craftsmen in the early 1960's. Although a little more troublesome to use than the previously popular direct dyes, the fiber reactive dyes assure a longer lasting color for batiks.

The combination of waxes and the tools used in contemporary batik are determined solely by the artist and the effects that

he wishes to achieve in the finished piece. Many contemporary artists choose to use the traditional Javanese tjanting and a variety of brushes.

The twenty-four examples of batik in this exhibit represent a variety of contemporary batik methods and various applications of batiked fabrics. Several different forms of presentation are also represented. The design work, even though based on natural objects and subject matter like the ancient batiks, is quite different due to my personal intrepretation. The fabrics and dyes represented indicate an interest in exploration of different fabric and dye characteristics and combinations.

The history and exact origin of batik is uncertain. Due to the advanced design qualities and availability of remaining fabrics from the area, Java is credited for the advancement of traditional batik as it is known in the Western world. Other countries of the Orient have been cited as batik producers also, but due to the similarity of the design and color work, it is difficult to determine whose influence was the most influential. The Javanese batiks were introduced to Europe via the Dutch traders by the time of the seventeenth century. Following several periods of popularity, then obscurity, the batik process was revived by Pieter Mujer in Holland during the early 1900's. Batiked fabric as introduced into fashion design in Western Europe and the United States at this time also. The design work was closely related to the Art Noveau movement of that time period. This was followed by another period of obscurity that lasted

until the renewal of interest in crafts in the United States in the early 1960's. Interest in batik was furthered by the availability of the fiber reactive dyes developed in 1956.

This exhibit is a result of an interest that was generated by an exposure to batiks done by a St. Louis artist, Mrs. Lou Arnold. In 1972, Mrs. Arnold gave a presentation to a group of junior high students where I was teaching. This exposure led me to purchase the book Contemporary Batik and Tie-Dye by Dona Meilach, and to begin experimenting with contemporary batik techniques.

The design and pattern work that is involved in my batiks is almost always related to some natural form. I feel comfortable with these forms and yet challenged to present them in unique ways. Also, I have ready access to actual forms for observation and sketching. I have strived to do more than a duplication of the natural form. This has been a developing process for me as I enjoy doing very realistic detailed drawings. During the developement of the designs for the batiks that are in this exhibit I employed a variety of designing techniques to make myself go beyond realistic duplication.

A cut paper shape, repeated in a radial arrangement was used to arrive at the large circular shapes in "Chrysanthemums" (slide 1). The repeated shape gave a stylization or simplification to a natural form. Another example of a cut paper shape being used can be seen in "Tiger Lilies" (slide 2).

In this example, the repeated shape creates a movement of the basic pattern throughout the composition. Cut paper designs were also used to arrive at the quatrefoil, or four times repeated designs in "Avian Quatrefoil" (slide 3) and "Bird Havens No. 1" (slide 4). After the single unit was planned, it was redrawn on a piece of paper folded twice in order to cut the pattern out in a quatrefoil arrangement. These two quatrefoil designs and each of their borders, also comprised of repeated cut paper shapes, gave me the opportunity to achieve an interesting center of interest as well as some intricate detail.

Another method of repeating patterns is shown in "Greenery" (slide 5). After the drawing was done as a single compostion, I subtly repeated the same pattern, super-imposing the second drawing over the bottom edge of the original drawing. I did this directly onto the fabric. This facilitates space in doing a large piece as a huge paper drawing can become very cumbersome to handle in a limited area.

"Floating Forms" (slide 6) represents a natural object, which is normally very small, drawn many times it's regular size. This lends a sense of simplification and abstraction to the original form. "Artifact" (slide 7) is another natural object simplified and abstracted. The drawings for these forms were originally drawn small and then enlarged by graphing. The process of abstracting a form while drawing and than batiking is very interesting, challenging and rewarding when the final results are achieved.

After using a variety of techniques to arrive at designs that were not direct duplications of nature, I find it much easier to translate my ideas into workable, freely drawn designs that are very applicable to batik. When I began thinking of a new piece of work, I find myself very quickly deviating from the actual object and thinking 'design'. "Organic Forms" (slide 8) and "Efflorescence" (slide 9) are good examples of this achievement.

If I reach a point of not being sure of how to best intrepret an idea, I refer to How To Create Your Own Designs by Dona Meilach and Bill Hinz. This reference suggests many interesting approaches to natural objects. After looking through this book, the observed object can take on an entirely different aspect of shape and design qualities. When working with an idea, I try to be aware of all the qualities of good design. I try to be very aware of the use of space, both positive and negative. I feel my use of all of the elements and principles of design has been greatly improved.

In referring to the traditional method of batik, this is to indicate the method used by the Javanese. This process involved the removal of wax between each application of color and re-waxing of areas between each dye bath. The fabrics most commonly used by the Javanese were cottons. The lengths of fabric were processed through several steps to make them more receptive to the penetration of the waxes and dyes. The dyes used

had been developed from natural sources and had been perfected to the point of being fairly wash and light fast. Much of the developement of these dyes was secret, known only to the families who created them. With the discovery of the synthetic dyes in the 1800's, many Javanese batik artists switched to using them. Much of the contemporary Javanese work is dyed with naphthol dyes. Naphthol dyes are fast-color salts that are processed with a lye solution. They can be hazardous to work with because of the caustic quality of the lye solution. (Caustic soda)

The fabrics used in contemporary batik represent a wider range of fibers other than just cotton, but are all still natural fibers. It is very interesting to experiment with a variety of fabrics. The batiks in this exhibit illustrate the use of several cottons, silks, viscose satin, viscose rayon and a cotton and linen mixture. Regardless of the kind of fabric being used, it should be washed thoroughly to remove any finishing substance or sizing that might impede the use the wax and dye.

Each type of fabric has it's own characteristics as to it's acceptance of the wax penetration and dye absorption. The finely woven silks and cottons make it easy to control the wax. This allows for fine line detail and sharp straight lines and edges. "Bird Havens No. 1" (slide 4) is on a cotton woven in India. This fabric is fairly thin and smooth. That allows for the small details and lines. They were not difficult to achieve on this fabric.

Although the application of the wax is not difficult on the

finely woven fabric, there is a problem that one has to contend with when using them. Due to the contraction of the wax when it cools, the thinner fabrics tend to pull and draw up rather than remaining flat and easy to work on. The viscose rayon, which is very soft also has this tendency. Although when the wax is finally removed, the fabrics always retain their original shape and flatness.

Even though the silks give a nice soft quality when completed, it is sometimes difficult to attain a wide range of colors in a batik done on silk. It seems the silk fibers do not have as great a color retention as some of the other fibers. However, the crackle patterns that can be attained in silk can be quite interesting. This is evident in "Sun and Sand" (slide 10). This is shantung silk. The thick and thin areas or slub of the silk fibers also make the dye absorption more interesting.

The viscose rayon and viscose rayon satin are man-made fibers. However, the basic material is cellulose, thus the fiber is still a natural one. Both of these fabrics accept the dyes readily, but each has it's own reaction to the waxing process. The pulling and drawing of the rayon has all ready been mentioned. The satin, due to the difference of the grain of the fabric from the top side to the bottom side presents an entirely different kind of problem. When waxing the satin from the top smooth side of the fabric, the wax appears to cover the fibers. However, on closer inspection of the bottom side of the

fabric, the fibers of that side's coarser weave will still be exposed. This means that they will pick up color when dyed. When this happens, any designs waxed from the top side and not re-waxed on the bottom side will be lost. So in order to save any distinct design areas, the fabric has to be waxed on both sides before being dyed and would have to be waxed in the same way between color changes from one area of the batik to the next. The petals of the three-dimensional "Sunflower" (slide 11) illustrate an interesting and desirable result of using satin for a waxed area of a batik. The crackle lines tend to run parallel to the grain of the fabric. This is quite different from any of the other fabrics I worked with.

Another fabric that provides a beautiful finished piece but that is a real problem during the waxing stages is the cotton velveteen. Though tightly woven, the nape of the velveteen makes it hard to control the wax. The wax has a tendency to run when applied on the nape side. The nape side is the fuzzy side. And if you wax on just the underneath smoother side, the nape fibers pick up the dye like the underneath side of the satin. Therefore, to create sharp, crisp areas in my velveteen peices, I waxed each side again, with hotter wax, after the initial waxing from the nape side. It takes a much greater amount of time to do a nicer velveteen piece and a tremendous amount more wax than a smooth surfaced fabric.

The choice of fabric should be suited to the final usage

of the fabric. A thin organdy or silk may be suitable for a wall hanging but not practical for a tightly stuffed three-dimensional soft sculpture. The choice of cotton velveteen for a wearable, as the "Quilted Vest" (slide 12) is a fabric that can withstand wearing, dry-cleaning and still lends an aura of "specialness" due to the plush velveteen surface. The combination of fabrics should be considered carefully when combining two or more fabrics in a finished form. The fabrics should work together, not detract from each other. The double layers of thin lightweight organdy for the plant leaves in the "Hanging Planter" (slide 13) add a light airy effect to the more solid looking cotton and linen blend pot. These fabrics share a rather matte looking surface and they needed each other for a contrast in weight and lightness.

The dyeing process of batik is the most intriging and most important part of the total process. The use of color theory is very important if a wide range of color is to be achieved successfully in batik work. It is very easy to find oneself favoring a particular set of colors. This could be very limiting and would deprive an artist of many rewarding experiences if new combinations were not strived for.

Dyes are catagorized as to families or groups of dyes in relationship to how they work and what fibers they are best suited for dyeing. With the exception of one batik in my exhibit, fiber reactive dyes were used most extensively. Fiber reactive dyes, whose trade name is Procion, link themselves chemically

to the fibers, to form a permanent bond. This linkage takes place throughout the fiber, not just on the surface. Salt is used as an assistant for these dyes. An assistant is a substance which aides the dye molecules in entering the fibers. The fiber reactive dyes also require a fixing agent to aide the permanent bonding of the dye and fiber molecules. Sal soda or washing soda is used as the fixing agent for these dyes.

Procion dyes can be purchased in bulk amounts from suppliers specializing in batik and other textile supplies. Procion dyes can also be purchased locally in small pre-measured packaging under the trade or jobber names of Fibrec, Dylon and several others. These packages come complete with the fixing agent, but the salt has to be added according to package directions. These packages are sufficient to dye several yards of fabric. However, it is much more economical to purchase dyestuff in bulk amounts. One advantage of the small packages is that they come in a wide variety of color combinations that produce colors that it might take an artist a great deal of time and wasted dye to produce.

The expense of the pre-measured packets lead me to try some experimenting with them. According to all directions I have read on using fiber reactive dyes, they are supposed to become inactive a short time after the fixing agent or soda has been added. This is due to the chemical reaction between the dye molecules, soda and water. However, I have found in mixing the dye, salt and soda in a very concentrated solution that the dye will continue to take on fabric after an extended period of time.

I use only a gallon of water and keep the mixture in air-tight, opaque plastic jars out of any direct sunlight and in a relatively cool place. When I'm ready to use one of these colors, I stir it up and pour it into a plastic pan or most times with a small piece od fabric I place it in the big jar. I pre-wet the fabric before subjecting it to the dye, just like when I'm using a dye bath mixed by conventional instructions from bulk dyestuffs. Due to the concentrated solution, the dye takes quite readily, so I check it frequently until it reaches the color I'm after. Then I usually rinse the fabric before putting it into plastic sheets to allow time for the dye to set, as in the short-dye method of using fiber reactive dyes. If I don't rinse it before putting it into the plastic, then I'll rinse it before allowing it to dry slowly. I usually let pieces set over-night in the plastic regardless of the the procedure I'm using.

To check the light fastness of using dye in this manner, I did several test strips using Fibrec Red and placed them in a south window for extreme light exposure. The strips were in the direct southern light for three weeks. One of the strips was dyed according to package directions and the other in a concentrated mixture that was several months old. To this date, there was not significant color change in either strip when compared to a twin strip dyed at the same time and kept in a protected area away from direct light. I cut off ends of the two strips that had been in the window and washed them in a mild soap and water solution. There was some color run-off from the strip dyed in

in the concentrated mixture. However, I have had other pieces of fabric dyed in this manner dry-cleaned with no noticeable color change or loss of color intensity. The yellow and brown on the three-dimensional "Sunflower" (slide 11) were dyed in concentrated mixtures and then commercially dry-cleaned. Perhaps if some specific colors that were purchased in small packages were saved and used this way, these batiks could be treated like those done in direct dyes. And, the dyes should be confined to those pieces of batik that would not need frequent cleaning. I wouldn't reccommend the concentrated dyes for wearables.

The reason I first tried the saving of dye solutions was dyeing student work at school and the economics involved. I found in the dyes were left uncovered in open containers they did loose their effectiveness very rapidly. However, when kept covered in plastic containers and concentrated, they could be used over. Of course, at some point, when the effective dye molecules have been exhausted from the solution, I throw the dye away.

I don't know how or why the dye continues to work even as effectively as it does in spite of all the written evidence, but I think the test strips indicate that some usage is possible in this concentrated manner. Thus far, I have used this mixture on only small pieces and with student work at school.

When mixing my colors from bulk dyes, I use the proportions and directions suggested by Robin Grey in The Batiker's Guide. My first order of bulk dyes contains two yellows, two blues and one red and one brown. I find I can achieve a great deal of variety

with very little trouble due to my understanding of color theory.

Another dye family that is represented by the "Cat and Cushion" (slide 14) is that of the direct dyes. Direct dyes are not fiber reactive. Direct dyes position themselves amongst the fibers but do not create a chemical bondage. Because of this, direct dyes are not permanent to washing and light. Even with that disadvantage, with proper care batiks done with direct dyes can last a long time and remain beautiful. The direct dyes also use salt as an assistant and are easy to use and produce vibrant colors.. I used heat through ironing to set the dyes.

The third kind of dye that I used was a vat dye. This vat dye is sold under the trade name Inkodye. Vat dyes are permanent and light and wash fast like the fiber reactive dyes, however they do not form a chemical linkage to the fiber. Their linkage is accomplished by heat application. I used this dye in several small areas of "Winged Dragon" (slide 15) and "Egyptian Flowers" (slide 16). The coloring agents in Inkodye come in a leuco base solution. This is a colorless thickened solution that allows for several possibilities of application.

The three groups of dyes that I used for the pieces in my exhibit are those well-suited to natural cellulose fibers and silk. Some sources also reccommend acid type dyes for silk, but I have found the Procions to be well suited for my purposes. I like the ease of use and the color of the direct dyes and the Inkodye is something I would like to further experiment with and even use with students at the junior high level.

Safety in regard to working with dyes, is something I have become much more aware of after encountering other people involved in batik and reading recent literature on health and dyeing procedures. The aniline, a chemical used in making synthetic dyes, can be absorbed into your system through contact with your skin and through breathing dyestuff particles. The aniline is accumulative in your body and can cause kidney and bladder infections and at worst cancer. The fiber reactive and direct dyes that I have used and will continue to use are in powder form. This powder is very light and dust-like. Therefore, I try to be careful not to breathe any powder particles when handling the dye. I use a paper filter mask when measuring and mixing the dye and always wear rubber gloves when working with the dye in powder or solution form. To cut down on the dusting effect of the dye, I start with some warm water in a jar and add the dye to it rather than the water to the dye. This immediate dampening settles the particles quickly. I have also moved my dye mixing and dyeing out of the kitchen. I now use the bathroom sink and bathtub for dyeing. The porcelain fixtures clean quite easily, and I clean them immediately with a cleanser right after using them. Using the kitchen area for this procedure leaves too much of a chance for dyestuff residue to be picked up on utensils and food preparation areas.

Another health safety factor that seems to bother some people are the fumes given off when ironing the wax out of the fabric. I always turn the exhaust fan on in the kitchen and iron

the batiks on layers of paper on the kitchen table. If it is warm weather, I also open the windows for additional ventilation. Microcrystalline wax fumes seem more potent that parafin and beeswax. Some people tend to get headaches while using it for waxing and when ironing it out of the fabric, Microcrystalline is a synthetic beeswax that is a petroleum product.

Wax is the block-out media that creates the unique crackle line effects in batik. The wax also resists the dye to create the basic batik technique. The crackle lines in a batik create a unique feature for each batik. There is not way to duplicate those lines.

In order for the wax to penetrate the fibers, it must be applied in a molten state. A small size electric skillet is ideal for melting the wax and keeping it at a workable temperature. The temperature control can be set and relied upon to keep the wax at a proper temperature. I usually keep my wax temperature between 250 and 280 degrees. The variance depends on the room temperature.

Parafin used by itself can produce a great deal of crackle. This is because parafin tends to be quite brittle. The degree of crackle desirable depends on the wishes of the artist. Most of the batiks in my exhibit have been done with a mixture of parafin and beeswax. The addition of the beeswax, which is more flexible than the parafin, cuts down on the amount of crackle taking place. This is especially true as to the amount of accidental crackling that happens during the dyeing process and handling of the fabric.

I also feel that the addition of the beeswax cuts down on the amount of erosion or breakdown of wax due to salt in the dye solution. I think that this is possible because of less crackle, thus fewer lines or areas for the salt to penetrate. I usually use an approximate fifty-fity ratio. Obtaining beeswax from two different suppliers has caused me to vary my ratio slightly. I've used slightly more parafin than beeswax the last several months. I can feel a difference in the last order of beeswax that makes it literally feel more flexible than the previous beeswax used. It actually lays thicker on the fabric, so I have added more parafin. This allows me to control the amount of crackling that I want. When I want a lot of crackle in a batik I will put it under cold water and crackle it intentionally before dyeing it. If I don't want so much crackle, I will handle the fabric more carefully so as not to crack the waxed surface any more than might happen in careful dyeing. This is not saying that I control all the crackle lines that appear. The accidental crackling always adds an element of surprise and usually pleasure due to its uniqueness.

The microcrystalline wax is cheaper to use than real beeswax, however, it doesn't seem to go on as easily as beeswax. And I find that it seems harder to remove from the fabric during the wax removal processes. After having tried it in the beginning on my batiks, I much prefer the parafin and beeswax combination.

During the dyeing and waxing process of batiking, I find that many times I like to save some the lighter crackle colors that first appear in a batik. In order to do this effectively,

I re-wax over those areas on both front and back of the fabric. To insure the sealing off of these crackle lines, I raise the temperature of the wax so that it re-melts the wax on either side of the crackle lines to enable it to once again penetrate the fabric. Another reason for raising the temperature is that the newly applied wax would set very quickly on top of the previously applied and cooled wax. If I didn't re-wax the lines I want to retain as lighter colors, they would all turn darker as the batik proceeds through the dye baths. This use of re-waxing is quite evident in "Sun and Sand" (slide 10), "Chrysanthemums" (slide 1) and "Avian Quatrefoil" (slide 3). Each of these batiks show at least two definite colors of crackle.

If the wax is applied quite hot (300 degrees) to the fabric the first time it is waxed, the wax spreads very thin. This allows for some of the fibers on the back of the fabric to be exposed. When the fabric is then dyed, dye will pick up on and cling to those exposed fibers. This is sometimes referred to as creeping or shading. Many times this effect can be used to good advantage and used intentionally. The textural quality of the leaves in the "Christmas Cactus" (slide 17) was achieved in this manner.

After the batik is completed is an many dye baths and waxing steps as necessary for an effective design, the greatest portion of the wax is removed. In some cases, it it removed entirely. The Javanese scraped the wax carefully from both sides of their fabrics and then boiled the fabric several times to remove the

wax residue. Doing the wax removal this way allowed for the wax to be collected, re-melted and used again. The method that most contemporary batik artists use is not so economical. I first iron the fabric between layers of newsprint paper or brown paper bags on top of a pad of newspaper. I change these papers several times as they become soaked with wax and can no longer absorb it. This process does take time and of course, the wax is disposed of. During the summer months when it is warm outside, I can then put the batiks into a solvent such as white gasoline. This immediately cleans out the wax residue left from ironing. I usually put each piece through two diffrent pans of cleaner. A can of white gasoline can be used several times before it contains too much wax to be effective as a cleaner. After the gasoline evaporates, I wash the batik in a mild soap solution, rinse it several times in cold water and then hang it in the shade to dry. During the cold months, when it is not feasible to work outside, I take the ironed batiks to the local dry cleaners for final wax removal. The cleaning people were rather dubious with the first batch, but with familiarity they do not hesitate at all to clean batiks for me.

In some instances, I choose not to remove the final wax residue. In some cases this lends to an advantage. The wax will give a hanging more body and also tends to brighten the color. This is especially true on a cotton that has a soft surface. I think that the kite shaped batik "Efflorescence" (slide 9) needed the

body provided by the wax. The stiffness helps to hold the curved sides of the kite in place. Also, when viewing the kite with the light coming through it, it has a very stained glass color effect. The wax adds an effect of translucency.

The traditional tools of the Javanese were the tjanting and a dauber, that was used as a brush. A stamp device called a tjap was also used, but the designs produced by the tjap were not as acceptable to the true batikers as the hand waxed batiks. The tjanting consists of a small hollow bowl attached to a wooden handle. The bowl has a small hollow needle attached to the bottom front end opposite the bowl from the handle. The tjanting is used by dipping the bowl into the hot wax, like a ladle, and then drawing it across the fabric. As it is drawn across it fabric, the melted wax flows through the hollow needle creating thin, free-flowing lines. It takes some practice and a great deal of care to use it. Once accustomed to the weight and balance of a tjanting, they are nice to use and I can create line patterns much more freely and quickly than using a brush. However, it is easy to have an accident with them if extreme care is not taken in handling them. It is very easy to tip the bowl to the side and thus spill unwanted wax onto the fabric. Tjantings of various sizes can be purchased from batik suppliers. I used a tjanting for some of the smaller detail work on several of the batiks in this exhibit. The most obviously noticed use is probably on "Cat and Cushions" (slide14). The small circular patterns were done with a small tjanting, as well as the

long series of small looping lines. The tjanting allows for pattern work difficult to duplicate with a brush.

The lines of the larger pattern of strips in that batik were done with a brush that I had cut sections out of to create evenly spaced lines. This was one of several brushes that I use for most of my work. I use a brush most of the time. I feel more comfortable with a brush and can control the wax to allow for small evenly spaced lines of fabric to be kept open for the darker dyes to penetrate. This allows for shapes to be emphasized and for details to show up clearly. I use a variety of hair brushes ranging in size from a number two to a brush approximately one inch in size.

The basic processes of the Javanese batik that have been referred to were much lengthier than the steps used by contemporary batik artists. The accepted contemporary process starts with the lightest dye colors and progressively covers more of the batik design with wax as each dye bath darkens areas left unwaxed. With this process, the wax is removed only one time; when the batik is finished and as many colors as the artist wishes have been achieved. This method of dyeing from the lightest to the darkest is referred to as over-dyeing and is usually accomplished by dipping the entire piece of fabric into the dye bath. The number of colors possible in the over-dyeing is determined by the artist and his knowledge of color theory. Many color variations and combinations are possible. Closely related colors are easy to work with, as in "Greenery" (slide 5).

However, using a set of complementary or opposite colors can be very effective. A good example of this is in the kite batik, "Efflorescence" (slide 9). The complementary colors here are the yellow and purple. To arrive at colors that result in this effect, much care must be taken in the early stages of dyeing to insure colors that can result in the opposites in the last stages of dyeing.

There are other methods of dye application that are now considered valid and acceptable in batik work. One of these is the direct application of dye to the fabric. The dye can be applied by brushing it onto the fabric in its liquid state. A soft, subtle effect and change of colors is possible using this method. In "Tiger Lilies" (slide 2) the light colors were brushed onto dampened pongee silk and thus fused together. The darker colors of dye were applied by over-dyeing. The dye can also be applied by brush or even a squeeze bottle in a thickened state. A thickening agent can be mixed by the artist and the dye mixed with it to reach the desired consistency. This thickening agent is sodium alginate. When mixed in proper proportions it makes a gelatinous solution that is easy to control on fabric. It can be applied with ease and very little bleeding into the fabric. Of course the amount of control is determined by the consistency of the alginate mixture. The Inkodye, previously discussed can also be applied directly with a brush or mixed with water and used as a dye bath.

Another method of applying color by dyeing for batik is using the resist method of tie-dye. The dye is resisted in some areas of the fabric due to the fabric being bound and tied tightly. It is interesting to use a tie-dyed piece of fabric to create a design for a batik. The varied patterns that result due to the binding and dyeing of the fabric automatically creates a challenge. The tie-dye pattern can serve as the basis for a very freely developed batik. "Tie-Dye and Batik" (slide 18) is an example of tie-dyeing used as a design for a batik. In this piece, I also employed the use of discharge dyeing before the dyes had a chance to set and become permanent. While the fabric was still wet, I dipped it into a bleach solution to discharge or remove the dye that I didn't want. By doing this, I was able to take away the unwanted colors and re-dye the fabric. If viewed closely, "Tie-Dye and Batik" shows a wide variety of color. This was possible due to the tie-dye and discharge dye techniques.

After having done quite a few strictly two-dimensional batiks, I find myself more and more interested in adding some variety to my work. I feel I have been able to successfully include several other techniques being used in contemporary batik into my work. One of these is the decorative quilting. I have done both hand quilting and machine quilting. "Bird Havens No. 2" (slide 19) is hand quilted. With the velveteen as the background, the quilting through it, the polyester

batting and the muslin backing, it gives a relief quality to the forms of the batik. The rayon fabric of "Artifact" (slide 7) was much easier to hand quilt due to the soft and thin quality of the fabric. Hand quilting the "Velveteen Vest" (slide 12) posed another problem other than the weight of the fabric. That problem was quilting through the satin lining without creating pulled fibers in the lining. Even though the velveteen and satin are difficult to work with, the finished effect is very nice. The vest is also an example of batiked fabric being used for a functional purpose as well as being decorative.

I used the sewing machine to quilt "Fan of Shells" (slide 20) and "Floating Forms" (slide 6). The machine quilting is faster, but I prefer the hand quilting for finished effect.

Soft sculpture is another way in which I employed a contemporary technique to my batiking. The three-dimensional forms were all constructed from batiked fabric. Like the quilted vest, all of the forms were started from patterns. After deciding the form I wanted by doing small sketches, I than planned the form as to pattern pieces and cut them from the fabric. After all of the pieces were cut according to the patterns, I than batiked it according to technique. In addition to constructing the forms, I also included some machine quilting on the "Sunflower" (slide 11) and stitchery and beadwork on the forms of the "Goldfish Bowl" (slide 21).

Something that I feel is rather innovative to my work is

the use of "wrapping" techniques as on "Desert Landscape" (slide 22) and "Organic Forms" (slide 8). I feel the sculptural quality of the wrapped "found object" combined with the design of the batik and the finished method of presenting the batik was quite successful in "Desert Landscape". The dyed jute was used to help emphasize the round and curving lines in "Organic Forms". I would like to do more of this kind of combination of media. Also, I plan to do more dyeing of the wrapping materials as I dye the batiks.

The including of the wrapping techniques also gives another way of presenting a finished batik. Finishing a work for presentation can enhance the batik or if not finished carefully, it can detract from it. Decisions have to be made as to whether or not the batik should be framed, hemmed, quilted and self-hemmed or lined for presentation. I try to finish and present each piece to its best advantage. Most of the quilted pieces are free-hanging to allow the quilting to be seen at best advantage. By leaving the hanging pieces free to move, it adds to the sensual and tactile quality of the fabrics.

The smaller pieces I presented framed. Framing calls attention to the small batik and by grouping them together it calls attention to them as a unit. Also, the framed batiks I had mounted on top of the backing so that the raw fabric edges could be seen. This calls attention to the fact that they are fabric.

The three-dimensional forms were presented as they are intended to be used in someone's home. The "Sunflower" standing in a pot, the "Hanging Plant" hanging from a wall hanger, the "Goldfish Bowl" and "Christmas Cactus" as table top pieces. The vest was displayed as it might have seen shown in a window or store display.

The kites were suspended in large open spaces in order for them to move and be seen to their best advantage. By being suspended, this also allowed the light to show through them which always shows a batik to nice advantage.

In planning the use of the available space for the exhibit, I tried to place a batik in regard to the impact of viewing from the spectator's standpoint and the proportions of batiks next to each other in their respective spaces.

This batik exhibit demonstrates the basic use of an ancient craft done with contemporary methods. Some things are still very much the same, such as using the wax, dye and natural fibers to achieve a unique decorative fabric. However, the addition of permanent dyes and the acceptance of other techniques being included with batik have added new dimensions and possibilities to the craft as an expressive art form for today's batik artist.

From a personal standpoint, I find batik to be very well suited to me as a form of artistic expression. I find the process allows me to include the deatil work I enjoy as well as continuing to be a challenge to develope my sense of contemporary

design using the natural forms I feel familiar with. I believe that I have reached a point in personal expression that will continue to grow and develope as I continue working in the area of batik.

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SLIDE LIST OF EXHIBIT

Slide Number	Title of Batik
1	Chrysanthemums
2	Tiger Lilies
3	Avian Quatrefoil
4	Bird Havens No. 1
5	Greenery
6	Floating Forms
7	Artifact
8	Organic Forms
9	Efflorescence
10	Sun and Sand
11	Sunflower
12	Quilted Vest
13	Hanging Planter
14	Cat and Cushions
15	Winged Dragon
16	Egyptian Flowers
17	Christmas Cactus
18	Tie-Dye and Batik
19	Bird Havens No.2
20	Fan of Shells

21 Goldfish Bowl

22 Desert Landscape

23 Orange and Brown Geometrics

24 Friends


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20 AUG 79
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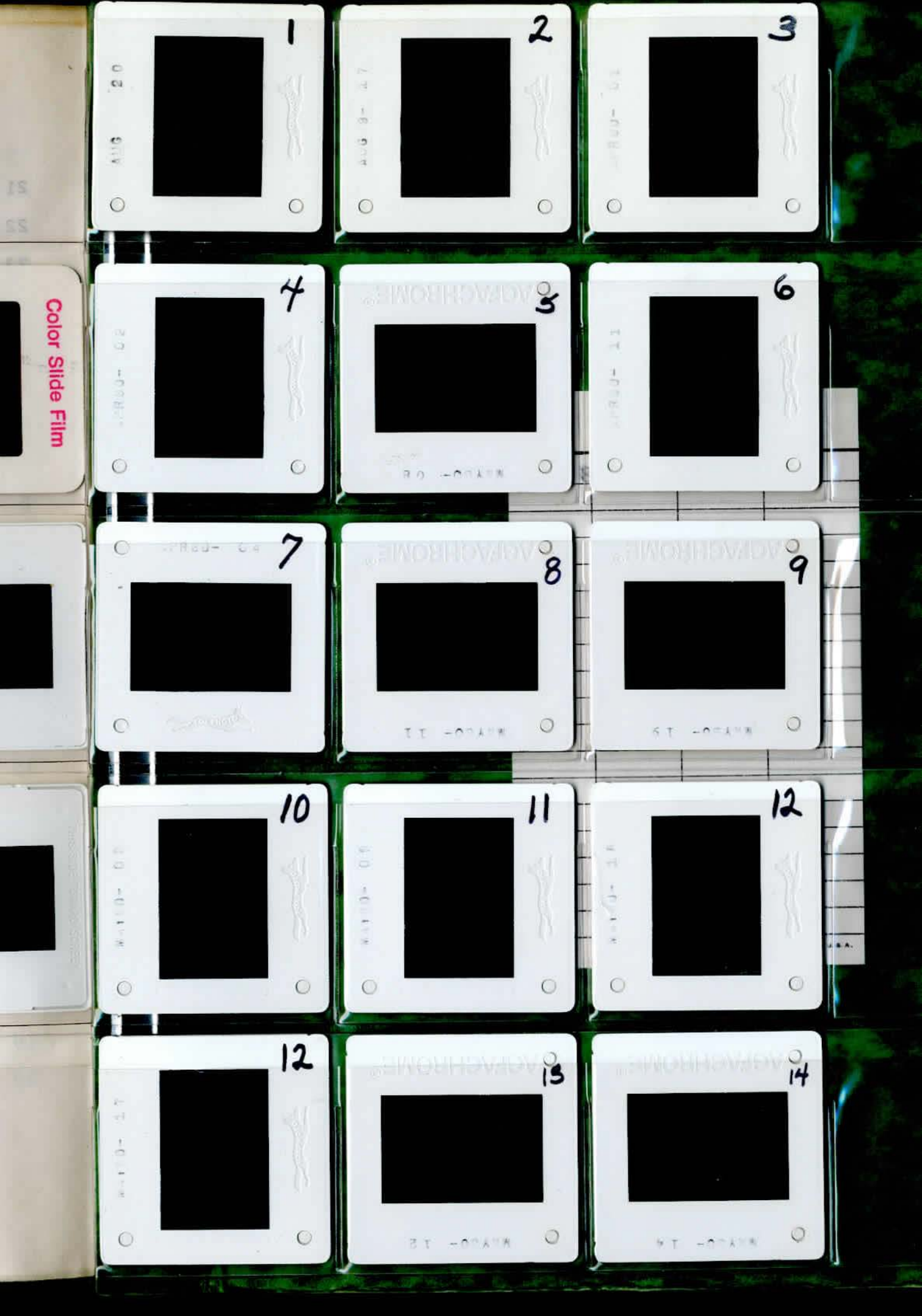
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