

SILKWORM

The Magazine of Silk Painters International

Volume 18, Issue 3, 3rd Quarter 2011



Marcia Ferris
Love Affair With Shibori

Marcia Petty and
The Art of Shibori

Winner of 2012 Festival Signature
Art Contest Ron Gutman

Jacket by Marcia Ferris

From the Editor's Desk

Welcome to the fascinating world of shibori! We had so many great stories this issue; we had to leave some things out. Including what promised to be a great interview with English shibori artist Anne Selby and some great advice from the MSP® contingent. Check Anne's website as she offers great tools for the burgeoning shibori artist.

Don't worry. We love having extra stories that we can print at a later date. It's always good to have too much material instead of too little, don't you agree?

While doing research for this issue, I came across so many great books about shibori. The books that come most highly recommended are books by Yoshiko Wada. A frequent instructor at the SPIN festival, Yoshiko's books are being used as a handy reference for many artists studying the art of shibori. One in particular, "Shibori: The Inventive Art of Japanese Shaped Resist Dyeing," which she co-authored with Mary Rice and Jane Barton receives particularly high praise.

A few other great books on shibori can be found with an Internet search. A book I found particularly helpful was, "Shibori: Creating Color and Texture On Silk," by Karren Brito. This book is out of print, but I managed to find a used one in the art and architecture bookstore near my home. If you are able to acquire a copy of "Opulence, The Kimonos and Robes of Itchiku Kubota," it will be a treasure in your library. Mr. Kubota (now deceased) created beautiful hand-dyed kimono using thread as resist in a technique called "tsujigahana." This book too is out of print but still available. I acquired my copy back in the 1980s and feel very fortunate to have it.

There are so many great art books that, unfortunately, seem to come and go out of print way too quickly. It would be wonderful if we could somehow preserve them for posterity.

Studying with a good teacher comes highly recommended for learning shibori. Perhaps Yoshiko will again teach at the 2012 festival? Let's keep our fingers crossed!

In the meantime, please enjoy this issue of the Silkworm dedicated to the ancient art of shibori.

Tunizia,
Editor-in-Chief

Message from the President

One cardinal sin is "you don't wish life away." You don't hurry up to the next day; you are to live life to the fullest each day and thank God for it. How hard is this? I am getting so excited about the Festival in 2012. The title is "Silk in Santa Fe... Soul of Silk."

We will be back at IAIA campus. It is a perfect setting for our Festival. Open spaces and great workroom space.

The committee has done an outstanding job in finding the right person for the keynote speaker; our judges have picked the signature painting. Thank you, Jean-Louis Mireault, Lee Zimmerman and Jan Janas for a great job, well done. Congratulations to Ron Gutman for a fantastic piece created just for SPIN. The piece says it all. Thank you, Ron. Be sure to read the interview that is in this issue of the Silkworm. Ron is exciting to talk to.

All of the entries for the signature contest can be seen on our www.silkinsantafe.com website. Ursula has made this website so easy to surf. Thanks, Ursula.

We are planning an extended Calendar for 2013 featuring the top entries. What a treat to have these at our fingertips to encourage us to paint, paint, paint.

We have a great nationally known group of instructors that have committed.

Sorry I can't reveal them at this time, but know that they are the best and well-known instructors.

Do you have any ideas of what you would like to see our workshops offer?

Everyone needs to be thinking about entering the Art Show and the Fashion Show, two separate entries. Suzanne Knight (San Diego) and Judith Roderick (Albuquerque) are co-chairs of the Art Show. They are working on the theme. Stay tuned.

We are sending e-blasts out to keep you informed. Be sure we have your correct e-mail so that you don't miss any of this up to the minute information being sent to our members. Thank you, Stephany for keeping us up to date with our membership. Great Job!!!!

The "Silkworm" is getting rave reviews and the excitement, when you receive your copy, is a big thank you to Tunizia. Did I mention what a great job Claudia Wagemann is doing as Chair of the Festival Planning team? Great job Claudia!!

Blessings,
Joyce, President of the Board of Directors

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Please send Letters to the Editor. Stay in touch. We want you to be involved. If you have comments, complaints or suggestions, please let us know.

If you have photographs of your art that you would like to have used in the Silkworm (as fillers or whenever a picture may be needed or desired) send photos with your name and the name of the piece. The photo size should be minimum 5"x 7" and 300 dpi for best printing.

Please send correspondence or photos to spin@sacredworldarts.com.



Shibori jacket by Marcia Ferris

Marcia Ferris

A Love Affair With Shibori

By
Deborah Younglao

I first met Marcia on Facebook, in the spring of 2010. Besides a love of silk painting, we discovered that we lived only an hour apart and that our birthdays were only days apart. We started corresponding on Facebook and finally met in person at Silk in Santa Fe that year. We are both now part of the only SPIN chapter in North Carolina, which meets in Marcia's studio and of which Marcia is Program Director (she doesn't like the title "President" but she is the de facto president!).

Marcia's studio is a wonderland of painted silks and silk painting materials, toys and gadgets. Racks of painted scarves and jackets line the walls.

Marcia says that she doesn't consider herself an artist. I beg to differ and am sure that after seeing her work, you will too.



Shibori Jacket

Where are you from originally and how did you wind up in North Carolina?

Originally I am a beef cattle and tobacco farm gal from central Kentucky. Still have the farm there along with my sister and brother. I graduated from University of Kentucky with a degree in Education. My husband, Martin, and I moved many times over the years with our son and daughter. Martin was employed in the chemical industry. I taught elementary school in Kentucky, Louisiana, Texas and Florida before moving to Pennsylvania and now North Carolina. We are

now in North Carolina because our two children and granddaughters are close. My husband has retired.

Where/how did you learn silk painting?

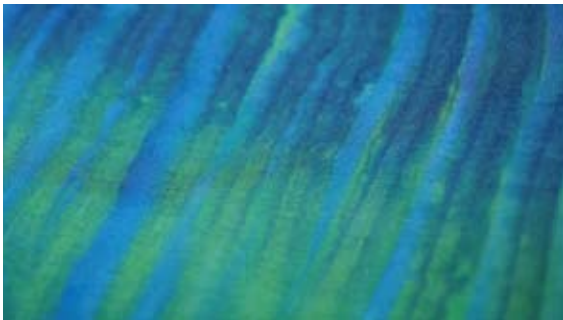
I am self taught. Books mainly. There were a few classes along the way at Peters Valley NJ, and Baum School of Art in Allentown, PA. I have never considered myself an artist. I like the techniques of silk painting. Since I do not have a background of the processes, I read, experiment, read some more and experiment again. Every time I reread about a

process I learn something new and maybe another way to approach it.

What books or teachers helped or influenced you?

Books – So many I hardly know where to start. The first book I devoured was “Silk Painting,” by Susan Louise Moyer. From there, “The Complete Book of Silk Painting,” by Tuckman and Janas. As soon as a book on silk painting was published, I purchased it. I have quite a library of books. One of my favorite ones at present is “Dyes & Paints,” by Elin Noble. Also, “Shibori,” by Yoshiko Wada, has been used many times. All of my favorite books are full of Post-It notes, highlighted and heavily underlined.

My mentor is Kerr Grabowski. I took a class with her years ago at Peters Valley. Until that time I was painting on small pieces of silk. She made us use a piece at least a square yard. I had to come out of my shell and swing my arm to put the dye on the cloth and think BIG for the first time.



Detail from Blue Shibori Jacket

Also Sissi Siska taught a class at Peter’s Valley that she named the Direct Method. This was another technique that I have used many times over the years.

How long have you been silk painting?

It began with the “empty nest syndrome.” The day after our son left for college I discovered there was



Blue Shibori Jacket

an empty bedroom just inviting me to do something with it. So it became a “studio.” That was 1991. My first attempts were small pieces of silk on which I painted Christmas topics and attached to cards. Thus, my first Christmas cards were mailed to friends. I continued this for many years trying to make each card more elaborate than the last by using new techniques each year.

What drew you to silk rather than another medium?



Green Shibori Jacket

Actually I sewed a lot of my own clothes and silk painting seemed to be a good combination with the sewing.

Where/how did you learn shibori and what do you like about it?

I learned the technique through books. At present I have a pile of books about shibori on my desk for reference.

As long as I can wrap a piece of silk around a stick, push it onto a plastic pipe, or into a jar and be happy with the results, I like it. If I am not happy with the results, then I do the same process again, add another process, or just discharge. I am dangerous with discharge. I never throw away a piece of silk.

Where do you get your inspirations for your creations?

While I am mowing the grass on a riding mower, I think. Visions for patterns, techniques, etc., appear in my mind. I manage to arrange the ideas into a plan to be dealt with when I return to the studio. Also,

in my early days, I scoured magazines, newspapers, and the media for photos and ideas for trends.

Your jackets often have several different pieces of painted silk like a collage – why do you do this and what guides your decisions on what fabrics to mix and how they should be placed in the garment?

Every scrap of silk is saved. I have to use them somehow. I am not sure that my decisions on how to place and mix pieces are the best. I am rather impatient and just sort small pieces of silk into color groups and start sewing pieces together without planning. Oh yes, I have exchanged pieces if they seem extremely out of place. Not a fun thing to do.

Do you create your own patterns?

Yes, some. I have taken classes in pattern designing. Mostly the garment will be made from a simple pattern to show off the silk instead of the detailed time-consuming sewing pattern.



Detail of Green Jacket

Do you presently sew the garments yourself?

COMPLETELY. Sewing came before silk painting for me.

What types of dyes and silk do you like using for shibori?

I use Procion MX dyes most of the time. If the project requires a smaller amount of silk, I use Dupont French Dyes. The prettiest silk, I think, is charmeuse. However, most of my work is with Crepe de Chine.

Do you teach classes in shibori?

I have taught a lot lately – to my granddaughters, my church friends and to members of our SPIN chapter, “The Piedmont Silk Painters.”

Do you sell your creations? Where?

They are all for sale. Even have price tags on them. I think I am too elderly (not old) to lug the stuff around for a show. Been there, done that. However just ask me how much something is and I get excited. I may even sell it to you. I have some items in shops in Black Mountain, NC and Kentucky.

I have been thinking lately of maybe trying one more show for “I can’t take it with me.”



Close up detail of shibori work



Jacket with Shibori details



Marcia wearing one of her creations

NEW MEXICO SILK PAINTERS GUILD

STAGE BANNER EXHIBITION

When the last of four events for 2011 opened July 2, the whole Rio Grande valley heard a collective sigh of relief. Yes, we're tired, really tired. But we're proud of the hard work we do. We've learned together how to hone our skills in workshops by sharing knowledge, planning and putting on shows, critiquing and encouraging each other so we grow as a group and as individual artists. Wahoo!

The most recent exhibition can be seen at Albuquerque's Open Space Visitors Center (OSVC), our city owned venue within spitting distance of the mighty Rio Grande. The river's source originating in southern Colorado and bisecting New Mexico, has nurtured all kinds of life for a thousand years. Our theme, "Signs of the Past," was inspiration for our works - banners, wall pieces, garments and sculpture. Thirteen of the 20 New Mexico Silk Painters Guild (NMSPG) members took part. OSVC curator, Josh Willis selected our proposal last summer because of the theme we chose. His interest in fiber work and a desire to stage a "free hanging" show were the tipping points. The following artists are a few who exhibited:

Judith Roderick, a painter of silk for 35 years, created 2 banners, both with crane images for which she is well known. These four foot tall birds with six foot wing spans gather by the thousands each winter in the fields and bosque to feed and vacation in our moderate climate. Judith follows the spring and fall migrations throughout the West.

Emily Holcomb, a creator of tiny jewel-like silk stitcheries, plunged into painting her largest piece ever. An aerial view of the mighty river includes tributaries and land contours in turquoise and gold. Several of us seasoned painters held her hand through the phone wires, answering questions and reassuring her as she dashed to meet the deadline!

New member and painter Millie Sylskar chose Native American symbolic images in an unusual color scheme that worked. Meticulously drawing out her design in several sketches paid off in the end.

Renee Gentz walked the bosque last winter recording the delicate tracery of branches and grass. She selected many photos she took to print on organza, then laid out a design in a patchwork pattern leaving raw edges and dangling threads as finishing touches. Renee is our member who does not draw.

Other events NMSPG's undertook were an exhibition of wall works in the First Unitarian Church gallery space in March and the biennial Fiber Arts Fiesta at Expo New Mexico in May. This event attracted over 3000 visitors throughout the country who came to see works of 17 local fiber guilds. One could watch demos, experience hands on activities, take workshops, shop with fiber vendors, and view children's fiber art. A special exhibition of handwork created in the last 100 years was loaned by private collectors from around New Mexico and was funded by the NM Humanities Council. It commemorated the New Mexico centennial we will celebrate in January 2012 as the forty-seventh state.

Our third annual Silk Road sale, was June 11 and 12 at a local popular yarn, weaving and fiber supply store, Village Wools. Twelve members showed lots of painted garments, accessories and wall pieces. Shibori and silk painting demos caught the eye of visitors. Several asked, "Where do I sign up to learn how to do this?" A married couple's workshop is scheduled for August!

The Silk Road shows in 2009 and 2010 were studio tours all around town. We believe that distances to travel diluted attendance those years.



left to right: Millie Sylskar, Emily Holcomb, Bunny Bowen, Sue Orchant, Judith Roderick, Renee Gentz, Elizabeth Smith, Suzanne Visor

Thus, this year we chose to have one central location where people were accustomed to going for fiber.

In review of our 2011 efforts, members report the following:

- We are being proactive in finding venues and participating in shows. We're good at sharing information with each other, i.e., techniques and happenings. We're supporters and problem solvers when someone feels a project might fail.
- We are weak at detail planning of events this year, maybe due to too many events squeezed into only 4 months. The Silk Road sale was too crowded with silk items for the space we selected. We needed a designated sales manager and limits on how much each member could display.
- The art market is still very weak and may not have hit bottom in NM yet. Many galleries have gone out of business; nonetheless new ones seem to take their place. Santa Fe is high end and caters to collectors with disposable income. Albuquerque, at

half a million people has a very large per capita artist population that must make their living outside of New Mexico. There is lots of support among artists here, but there is lots of competition as well.

- Fiber art is growing exponentially in New Mexico and Colorado. Both are vibrant with information, workshops, experimenting with new techniques and materials. New Mexico retains its status as a large art market.
- Goals across the board are that we continue to improve our skills, seek out new venues with new bodies of work and to take an active part in the 2012 SPIN Conference in Santa Fe. Member, Marcia Petty put it well when she said, "As an artist I need to work harder, longer, and trust my own vision more. Trying primarily to satisfy economic need leads to suffering in artistic quality. I want to know better how to address these seemingly two opposing sides of being a non-independently wealthy or non-supported crafts person."



Bunny Bowen, 3 piece banner

Millie Sylskar, new member with banner



Emily Holcomb's Rio Grande banner along with others

Judith Roderick with crane banner

Renee Gentz with organza bosque banner



WINNER OF THE 2012 FESTIVAL SIGNATURE ART CONTEST RON GUTMAN

By Claudia Wagemann
Member 2012 SPIN Festival Team

A family of artists, an inspiring high school art teacher, and the persistence to research, study and explore whatever he wants to learn, all combine to put Ron Gutman where he is now. His father, a sign painter, and two artist uncles encouraged Ron's creative abilities at an early age. James Musselman, his high school art teacher was predominately instrumental in Ron realizing his innate potential to becoming a "working" artist. The emphasis was on the commercial/design aspect...pursuing art as a problem to solve. Ron admits he is a compulsive seeker in mastering his techniques. Can you see how these traits are intertwined in his winning piece?

Think, see, explore, simplify, & practice, practice, practice were part and parcel to Mr. Musselman's teaching style. He taught at William Allen High School, which was consistently recognized as having one of the premier high school programs in the United States. "I didn't teach about art, per se. I taught about life," was Mr. Musselman's philosophy along with a strong work ethic. Jim Musselman wanted students with a passion for art and he pushed his students to succeed with hundreds going on to become commercial artists, designers, educators etc. Ron's first exposure to a museum exhibit was on an art class field trip to the Whitney Museum in New York city. The showing celebrated the works of Toulouse Lautrec and the art of Toulouse left its impression on Ron.

Although born and raised in Allentown, Pennsylvania, he left right after high school to tour and skate (another love) his way through the United States, Canada, and Mexico with both the Ice Capades and Holiday on Ice. Besides performing, he developed his skills in theatrical design going on to later design both sets and costumes for many productions and venues. This also led to Ron becoming a display director/designer for a department store chain.

Textiles came next, designing for a ladies' garment screen-printing firm. Out of this, Ron's love of textile and fashion design took him in the direction of Philadelphia then New York city. There, with a staff of artisans, he produced several distinct lines of "Batik" women's fashion accessories sold in the finest of boutiques & department stores. His unique accessories were done on both cottons and silk using Procion dyes and wax. Another sideline was creating silkscreened textiles and framed art for interior designers. Still another stint had him in the position of sketch artist for a prominent men's clothing designer.

Ron started silk painting in the 80's. As an avid researcher he found a book on textiles that included a snippet on silk painting and he felt that would open more avenues for creativity than just batik and screening. The only source of supplies that he could find then was a silk painting supplies store in Maryland run by...our own Diane Tuckman!!! To start, he purchased French dyes, gutta and other supplies plus the first of Diane's books. He was off and running! At that time most of the information about silk painting was in French, so he was delighted to have found Diane's book and so close to home. Silk painting became an instant and gratifying fascination for Ron.

Ron's artistic style is graphic and stylized with a bit of the decorative and having broad appeal. Bright colors, line and cheery captivating subject matter have always attracted him. Along with silk painting, Ron works in clay and glaze producing and teaching ceramics. He also sculpts Thai-style clay orchids and flowers. Having more than 10 years working with silk, working in an advertising agency as well as freelancing as a graphic and theatrical designer put him in the right place at the right time to win



the 2012 SPIN Festival Signature Art Contest. Ron's future plans include going into production of his silk designs and possibly "how-to" books on his many artistic interests. He is also planning to design a new website showcasing his Silk Painting work.

A favorite quote from Thomas Merton, "Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same

time," fits Ron's current life. He is delighted with the warm reception from the 2012 Festival Team and the Facebook SPIN group, and feels honored to have been chosen – especially from amongst such celebrated entrants. "When I am immersed in painting on silk everything else fades away. It is my own little slice of heaven."

Remember to see all the Signature Art contest entries at the Silk in Santa Fe website www.silkinsantafe.com.

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MEMBER INFORMATION

POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR 2012

March 2012 – Batik and Roketsu-zome
June 2012 – Festival Instructors
September 2012 – Festival Highlights
December 2012 – Quilting and Sewing

If you would like to contribute to any of the above issues and are interested in submitting work to be reviewed by the magazine, please query spin@sacredworldarts.com.

SIGNATURE MEMBERSHIP

The MSP® is a designation that SPIN created to acknowledge silk painters who have achieved a level of mastery with the art of silk painting.

To apply for the Master Silk Painter designation, the artist must be a member in good standing in SPIN for a year and they must have exhibited in two national or international juried SPIN events.

The deadline for the next induction round is **October 1, 2011**. Please see the website for further details on how to apply.

Newest MSP® Karen Sistek

Congratulations to Karen Sistek, the latest member to gain the official title of Master Silk Painter. Karen was featured in our Spring 2011 issue. Her beautiful art demonstrates that she has certainly mastered her craft. Visit her website at karensistekstudio.com.



Karen Sistek, MSP® painting flowers

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CALL FOR ENTRIES

Ratner Museum in Bethesda, Maryland.

Ongoing display of 45 inch wide x 42 inch long silk panels. Open to SPIN members only. Next rotation, **September 19, 2011**. Even if you've missed the current deadline, contact Aileen Horn at: argh@att.net to find out the next deadline date.



The Road Less Traveled . . . New Silk Visions

The 2012 SPIN Festival "Silk in Santa Fe" juried Art Show Exhibit, "The Road Less Traveled. . . New Silk Visions," is challenging silk painters to "dream with your eyes open" and "turn the world of silk painting upside down."

Art Exhibit coordinators are Suzanne Knight and Judith Roderick.

See the SPIN website for details and the official call for entries happening sometime in November.

CLASSIFIEDS

Grantwriter wanted. Looking for a volunteer with experience in successfully writing a grant. SPIN would like to acquire a grant and is looking for a member with grant writing skills and experience. If you are qualified, or know someone who is, please contact spin@sacredworldarts.com

Writers, editors, proofreaders. Looking for Silkworm staff. Good way to get writing credentials. Volunteer position, no pay. If you have excellent English and Grammar skills and are interested in writing, editing or proofreading, please query at spin@sacredworldarts.com. Non-SPIN members receive an electronic contributor's copy of magazine in which their work appears.

The Art of Shibori

by
Marcia Petty

I can't remember when shibori first sparked my interest. It was probably in the 80's. Living in San Francisco and shopping for ikat at Kasuri Dyeworks in Berkeley probably was the source. Also, Sandra Sakata's shop Obiko on Sutter Street near Union Square was a constant source of inspiration. I didn't shop there – too expensive (but I sure wanted to). The great local wearable art was there, and I say "art" with a hefty respect for the garments and accessories that flowed through those doors. It was a great loss when Sandra (born in 1940) died of breast cancer in 1997. A mover and shaker in the "Art to Wear" movement at Obiko, Sandra Sakata showcased textile artists whose works were unique artistic statements.

By the mid to late 80's I was the proud owner of Yoshiko Wada, Mary Kellog Rice, and Jane Barton's ground-breaking book, "Shibori, The Inventive Art of Japanese Shaped Resist Dyeing: Tradition, Techniques, Innovation." This, for me, is a bible cum primer of shibori techniques. I still don't find it all easy to understand; nevertheless, consider it a "must have" reference for those wishing to acquire this art. It addresses the technical aspects of shibori in the classical Japanese tradition at a very high level. To be familiar with its content would be a great accomplishment, providing a platform for infinite artistic departure and improvisation. Today there are many diverse interesting texts delineating old and contemporary interpretations of shibori. There are also YouTube videos, some of which are very useful.

Shibori is not for the faint of heart if one wishes to use the entire alphabet and not just a few letters. For years I have carried around a little tool not realizing how it



Acoma, Ancient Sky City*

worked. This tool substitutes for the classic Japanese stands that serve as a third arm creating tension. With shibori one often wishes one had at least 3 if not 4 or more arms. Only recently it dawned on me that it's simply a clamp with a screw-in arm with a needle on the end that I can adjust to fit on any flat surface. I'm not sure why it took so long to comprehend, but it surely is a stunning example of my distraction and an experience I often have of being impeded by something, that once understood, I recognize as absurdly simple. Like the clamp, some of the techniques in Yoshiko's book are similarly "simple" and "obvious." Yet they remain impenetrable to me. So

after many years I still feel like a "beginner" with a quite modest shibori vocabulary. If and when I do understand, I will mourn the loss of the years - literally decades - I was in the dark. Much of my "blindness" has to do with studying alone, and being unable to devote myself entirely to dye-work. For those who can take the time and pay the price, I strongly recommend taking workshops with shibori teachers of high standing. Studying with a master willing to teach is always a great short cut.

I would wager that the techniques the Japanese call shibori originated in the Indus Valley, the Eastern "mothership" of most textile crafts; and probably also existed in the "West" (i.e., Mesopotamia and South America). Like archetypal symbols, "archetypal techniques" arise out of a human consciousness not bound by nationality, and generally are eventually discovered worldwide. Due to their perishable nature,

**Gathered running stitches on evenly pleated fabric with the spaces between the stitched pleats bound with thin rope*

ancient shibori textiles have not come to light. Some of the oldest shibori examples we see (in the Todai-ji Shōsō-in in the city of Nara) date primarily to the Tang Dynasty (618-906 CE). Some scholars support the claim that shibori is a technique native to Japan from pre-history, practiced by the Japanese before it entered Japan from China through Korea via the Silk Road (sometime during the 6th CE), and via the Philippines from Indonesia from the South. Both Indonesia and China received it from India.

The Shōsō-in or “Treasure House” attached to the Temple in Nara dating back to 756 CE, contains a large number of treasures, including textiles, tribute received by the Court and powerful monasteries. The Todai-ji Shōsō-in has been in existence for over 1400 years and is a fabulously extensive, deep and rich Japanese cultural resource. Although the temple has burned down several times, the Treasure House has not. The Shōsō-in collections are not open to the public. Selections are shown at Nara National Museum once a year in autumn.

The oldest examples of resist dyeing found in the Todai-ji Shōsō-in, include rakish (resist using wax) and kyōkechi (clamped wooden blocks) and are continental in origin.** Strangely enough, the oldest examples of Chinese resist dyeing (jiao-xie) excavated from Astana, an oasis town along the Silk Road, are several centuries older than those found in the Shōsō-in. And interestingly, “The Chronicles of Japan (Nihon Shoki) published in 720 CE lists nineteen bolts of resist-dyed cloth (kechi) among items presented by the Japanese emperor to foreign ambassadors.”“This is clear indication that Japanese resist-dyed textiles reached a high technical and aesthetic level at an early date.”***

Japan’s appropriation of things Chinese, begun in the 6th CE with the coming of Buddhism, flourished for two centuries, most notably among the aristocracy and the monasteries who both imported and copied the lavish textiles and intricate techniques of the mainland. By the 9th century, Chinese cultural influence had waned significantly, and the resemblance of Japanese garments to Chinese clothing had slowly transformed into the “osode” (a kimono with large sleeves).

The use of shibori in garments and household textiles was commonly associated with the poor during the centuries preceding the rise of the shoguns and during the early to mid-shogunates. This certainly did not hamper their stunning artistic abilities, a quality also seen in their brilliant ikat or kausuri dye-work. This ability to make beautifully crafted garments and household textiles working in the midst of constraints and limited choices (cloth or fiber of “poor” quality and typically only one color) reminds me of Amish quilts and tribal rugs.



The actor Ichikawa Monnosuke in the role of Yao-ya Oshichi by Toyokuni Utagawa



The young maiden Oshichi by Kunitaru Utagawa
The above images are in the public domain in the United States.

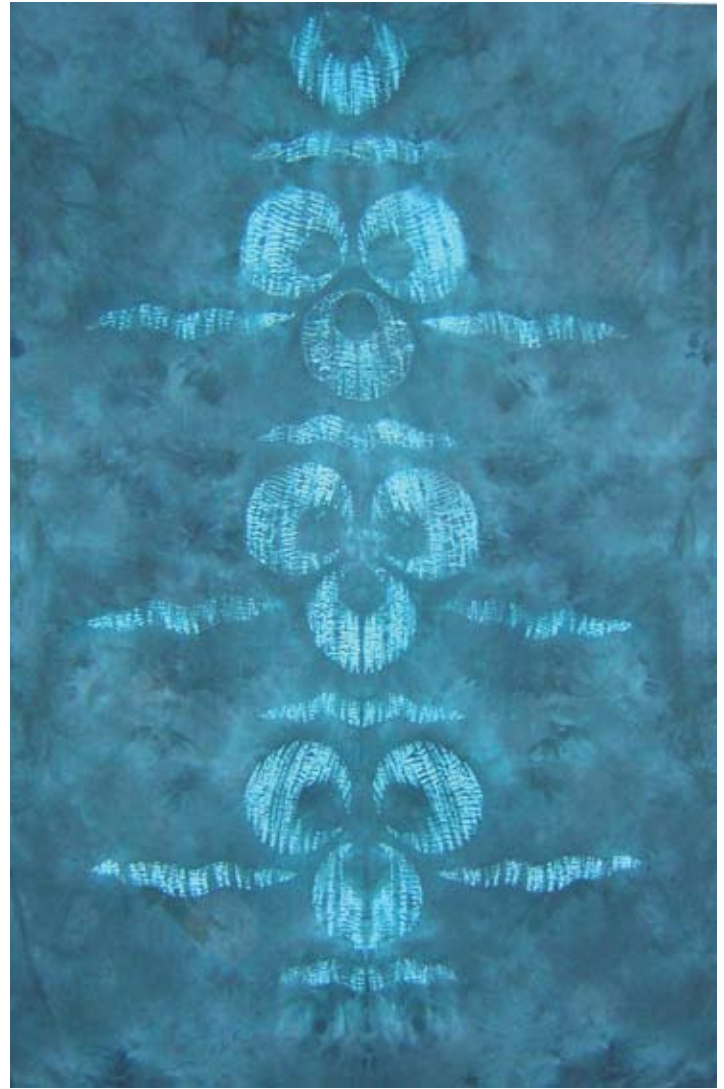
**Wada, et. al, *Shibori: The Inventive Art of Japanese Shaped Resist Dyeing: Tradition, Techniques, Innovation*, p.12

The Japanese aesthetic runs deep and the most ordinary of folk wore the most exquisitely executed garments no matter how mean the fabric/fiber serving as the ground. With the advent of the shoguns, ruling from the end of the Heian (1185 CE) through the end of the Edo (1868 CE), sumptuary laws forbidding the lower classes from wearing certain fabrics, using certain techniques, designs and colors gradually faded into oblivion. By the early Edo the appearance of multiple colors and the use of shibori can be found in the garments/household textiles of all levels of society. Kimono books and art history books displaying the art of Japanese woodblock prints are full of shibori textiles. Of course, the Courts, the Noh Drama, courtesans and actors sported the fanciest of these incredible textiles. They had the big bucks.

Today, after having leapt across the centuries, we have a vibrant worldwide shibori community. Japan has a whole village, Arimatsu, visited by masses of textile tourists, where, for several hundred years, shibori has been and is still being created in a traditional fashion by master craftspersons. From beginner to expert, hundreds, if not thousands, of textile enthusiasts are trying their hand at this antique textile art.

As I said early on, it's not for the faint of heart. One can struggle with a piece for days, even years, and be disappointed with the outcome. Or, one can stumble upon the most wonderful unintended effects that far surpass anything the artist had in mind.

I have had both of those experiences. I endeavor to live my shibori life somewhere between the known and the unknown, ever increasing the intentionality of my work, developing the ability to segue from one technique to another, and to improvise, knowing all along that I may fail, I may succeed, and also may be pleasantly surprised by some unintended outcome. Unwrapping, untying, unclamping my resist work is the most important moment as it will bring me joy and/or sorrow. If I am not able to take disappointment, I better do something else. I deeply respect the spirit of the kami or the Japanese craft gods (especially familiar to potters) who reside in the materials. We are their servants and if we persevere they will show us the way.



"Cintimanni"
Used stitched woodgrain shibori pattern (mokume). This is a very ancient symbol, pre-Buddhist, appropriated by the Ottomans and used largely on royal and aristocratic regalia.



"Rock Shibori" - fabric tied with small rocks

ASK ADDIE

Shibori



Vest with Shibori Lining by Addie

This technical article is the eighth in a series I am writing about painting on silk. Several SPIN members have asked about shibori. I have used shibori techniques to create linings for “art to wear” garments, as backgrounds for paintings, as wall hangings plus yardage. I hope you will enjoy reading and learning about Shibori.

Shibori is an ancient Japanese Surface Design art form. Some techniques use folding, sewing, pole wrapping, or tying bands in the silk to act as “resists.” Dyes can partially get into the resisted areas. This creates “pattern surprises.” Shibori is full of surprises! Try combining techniques, changing dye color and value. How tightly the “tools” are pulled can change the effectiveness of the “resist.”

Common materials used for Shibori are: PVC pipe, wood dowels, strong thread, cords of various diameters, small rubber bands, spray bottles, eye droppers, sewing thread and needles, masking tape, paint brushes, steam set dyes plus silks of different weights and weaves.

ARASHI

Arashi is a Japanese word used to describe how the patterns on silk look after they have been wrapped around a pole and dyed. The fabric looks like a “storm,” – waves in the ocean, rain pelting down, wind blowing and snow falling as the flakes are pushed by the wind.

This process is vast and complex. The basic Arashi techniques consist of pole wrapping with and without string, folding and twisting fabric.



Examples of Arashi Shibori

POLE WRAPPING

You can use a PVC pipe which is an inch smaller in diameter than the width of your fabric. Sew the fabric together down one side and slip the circled silk over the pole. Push all the fabric to one side of the pipe, hold in place with masking tape. If you spray the silk with water you can push the fabric tighter together. Secure with masking tape. You may decide to let the silk dry before adding dyes (otherwise your colors will be lighter). As to color choices, they are yours to decide. Keep in mind the colors will mix on the silk. Dye can be sprayed, applied with an eye dropper, painted abstractly or in patterns or a combination.

Let the dyes dry; they will take more time to dry because of being tied. Once dry, you may see a need to enhance the color by adding more dye or rewrapping the silk and adding more dye for complexity. Do not put the PVC pipe in the steamer for it will let out poisonous fumes.

POLE WRAPPING WITH STRING

The silk is wrapped around the PVC pipe without sewing the fabric together. Use making tape to secure the top and sides. There are many different sizes of strings, ropes and cords you can use to create "resist" lines. Wrap the string around the pipe, spacing ¼ to ½ inch as you turn the pole. Every now and then stop and push the fabric to the top of the pole. You have to pull the line very tight and keep it tight until it is tied off. All the fabric and line are now pushed tightly together at the top of the pole. The silk can be sprayed with water and pulled tighter. Apply the dyes in an abstract or pattern.



PVC pipe with cords and string

A variation of this technique is to wrap the silk, but do not push up to the top. Then create an "X" with the strings and push it all to the top. Wet with water and push tighter to the top of the pole. Add color.

STITCH RESIST

Stitch Resisting is another Shibori "resist" technique. Some techniques of Stitch Resist are: concentric circles, running stitch or your choice of sewing pattern. Stitch Resist does not use a pole. The fabric is stitched with a strong contrasting thread, threads are pulled tight, silk is made wet with water from a spray bottle. Threads are then pulled again and knotted. Then add dyes. Apply the dye with an eye-dropper, brush, dip or spray. Undo threads when silk is dry, iron and steam. The silk can be steamed with the threads.



Examples of Stitch Resist



Concentric Circles



Running Stitch



Sewing Patterns

TWISTING FABRIC

Twisting fabric is a good job for two people. One can hold the silk (for example a scarf) and the other twists the silk until it resembles a long pencil. You can also tie the silk to a door handle and twist. After the silk is twisted it is tightly rolled on a wooden dowel (1 ½" wide) and tied off. Dyes can be applied in a pattern (easy to see). Let dry and add more color if needed. When completely dry, remove dowel, iron and steam. If you steam without ironing the creases will stay.

FOLDING FABRIC

The fabric can be folded and ironed, before it is pole wrapped. More folds create greater complexity. Folds can be diagonal, vertical, horizontal or combinations.

"ADDIE SHIBORI"

My students call this rubber band technique "Addie Shibori." You can use any size silk. The small rubber bands are tied in various groups of bandings (1-3 or more) all over the silk. Flower shapes appear as the finished product. The whole silk can be banded or done in sections. I enjoy this relaxing process while watching a good movie.

I use an eyedropper to apply color. Sometimes I wet the silk with a spray bottle and the dyes are tinted. Saving whites by avoiding the area or wetting with water is efficient. Always let the silk dry before seeing if more dye is needed. The silk takes more time to dry because of the banded bundles.



Examples of "Addie Shibori"

When the silk is thoroughly dry the bands can be removed and the silk ironed. Steaming is next, then washing and ironing. A variation is to steam the silk with the bands in place. This produces silk with the wrinkles imbedded in the fabric.

The rubber bands work well in "resisting" the dyes. I love the "flower" shapes which magically



Painting with Eyedropper

appear. I have used "Addie Shibori" fabric as lining for "art-to-wear," yardage, doll clothes, teddy bear bodies, book covers and linings, backgrounds for paintings or wall art. Magic!

If you have questions, or want to share your shibori experiences, please "Ask Addie" by e-mailing her at: addiesilkart@aol.com or visit her website: www.addiesilkart.com.



Fabric with Rubber Bands

SILKWORM

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Bog Coat using the woodgrain (mokume shibori)
stitch and circles created using marbles, stones
and rubber bands

All Photographs of Marcia Ferris, Addie Chernus
and Marcia Petty, and/or their works remain the
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this a great issue.

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Arashi Shibori On Scoured Silk Organza
by Marcia Petty

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