

WARP PAINTING

Colour up your warps and create richer textiles. Here's How.

Easy ideas for rainbow warps

by Karen Madigan

Warp painting is exciting and the results are stunning and it's so easy. Once you feel comfortable with basic dyeing techniques, try warp painting. The technique of rainbow dyeing is actually easier than the basic technique and only requires an eye for colour. This method can also be used on skeins of yarn instead of prepared warps to produce space-dyed yarns or unevenly dyed mono shaded yarns.

TO PREPARE A WARP FOR DYEING

Wind a warp in the usual manner. Prepare the warp ready to put onto the loom by tying a cord through any loops and raddle and threading crosses that you use. Leave these in position throughout the entire dyeing process.

PRE SOAK THE YARN

Prepare a neutral coloured warp or yarn in skein form ready to dye. Remember to weigh the yarn. Thoroughly soak the yarn in warm water. Remove and squeeze excess water from it.

TO DYE COTTON, RAYON AND CELLULOSE FIBRES

Soak the wet yarn in a solution of water, soda and salt in the amounts indicated in table 2, (see page 5) according to the weight of the dry skein. Stir the solution frequently for 45 minutes. This prepares the yarn to accept the dye. After 45 minutes, remove the yarn from the solution and squeeze the excess from it.

DYEING TECHNIQUE

Place the damp warp or skein of yarn on a plastic sheet. (This can be purchased by the metre from hardware store, and reused every dye session) Select several colours or mixed dye solutions for colouring the skein of yarn. Depending on the depth of colour required, each dye solution will require extra water to be added to them. Don't use the dye solution neat, as this will be too concentrated. A blue dye solution will need more water added than a yellow one. Test each of the diluted colours on the loom waste of the warp.

Begin pouring small amounts of diluted dye solution over the yarn in rows, with a spoon. When the entire skein of yarn is covered with dye, use a damp sponge to blend the colours together. If dyeing a long warp, blend the colours as each section is dyed and rolled up in the plastic. Rinse the sponge clean when needed as you go. When the warp or skein is completely covered with dye.

Roll it up in the plastic and leave it in a bucket for approximately 12 hours. Remove the warp or skein from the plastic and rinse it thoroughly with warm water until the water runs clear. Gently soak in a hot soapy solution, rinse thoroughly and spin dry carefully.

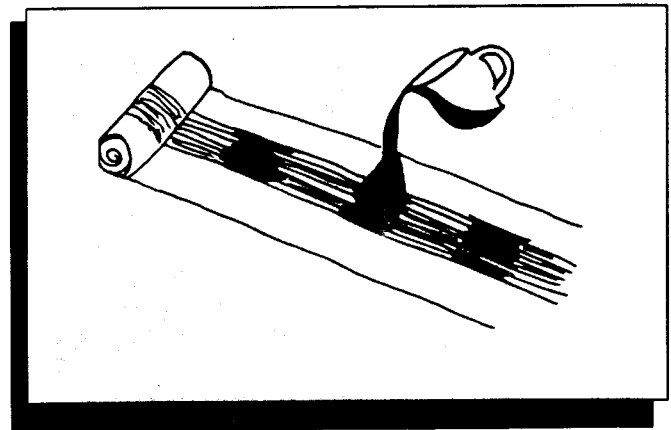
Your sample of warp painted 20/2 cotton. Open out the chain to see the full effect.

Leave to dry in a place out of the sun. When completely dry, beam the warp onto the loom in your accustomed manner or wind the skein ready to use.

VARIATIONS

White or natural coloured yarn is normally used for dyeing to obtain a pure coloured result. However, any pale coloured yarn can be used. A pale grey yarn is a particularly interesting one to try as it is easy to obtain subtle natural shades.

Several skeins of different colours can also be dyed in the same coloured dye bath to obtain a variety of colours in the one dyeing session.



For spinners, cotton fibre can be dyed before spinning and blended at the carding stage to produce many different shades and heathered combinations. *

References:
1988, Blumenthal B. and Kreider K. *Hands on Dyeing*, Interweave Press, Colorado.
1987, De Boer J. (Ed.) *Dyeing for Fibres and Fabrics*, Kangaroo Press, Kenthurst.