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“Dichotomies in Silk: Crisp and Soft”

by
Ana Lisa Hedstrom

Shibori, a compression resist dyeing technique, has increasingly become part of our textile vocabulary and for over 25 years, I have explored these techniques in my own production of fabrics for clothing and interior wall pieces. The opportunity to work with silk greige goods (untreated fabric) and the possibilities with shibori – together, this combination expands the shibori vocabulary with exciting possibilities for the studio artist and designer.

In my application, I use *arashi* shibori, *itajime* clamp resist, and *nui*-shibori stitch resist on the raw yardage. The cloth is simmered in a solution of 10% (of dry weight of silk) soda ash. The resulting fabric emerges with patterned areas of soft silk where scoured, flat crisp areas where resisted. Through experimentation I have found that certain dyes take differently to scoured and non-scoured areas, thereby further enhancing this difference. Textural contrasts add to the dynamics of the finished cloth.

While silk organza may be resist-scoured, the Japanese crepe from Gunma prefecture is the one fabric that has given the most subtle and complex results. The scoured crepe shrinks radically, the resisted areas remain flat, and as a result the fabric will pleat conforming to the resist method -- it may be ironed flat but will re-pleat under water!

I propose to share slides of my working process and finished fabrics and clothing, and to concisely describe my scouring and dyeing methods. Through this, I hope to share my experience and enthusiasm for this new approach to shibori and silk.