

Natural Dyeing With Turmeric

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Introduction:

In recent years the textile industry has seen an uptick in consumers interested in simpler and cleaner products. Many small businesses have capitalized on this growing market. Now, naturally dyed garments and cloth items can be easily purchased through online shops and local boutiques and markets. There is vast wealth of knowledge available on this process from cultures and experts all around the world. Both my research and past experience from tie dye projects led me to explore the shibori resist method. Heading into the summer season, bright yellow is one of the prominent trendy colors. I choose turmeric as an attempt to recreate this color at home. I have used turmeric in the kitchen many times. So, I was intrigued to work with the spice in a different capacity. For this project I used a natural fiber shirt and some basic pantry items to create my design. It is interesting to compare and contrast the natural dye to stuff to its store bought counterpart. In this paper, I explore the history of natural dye stuff with a focus on turmeric, share some thoughts on color in the fashion industry and explain my experimentation process including the observations.

History:

In India, natural dyeing was first used during the vedic period (1750-500 BCE), a highly experimental age. During this time, many spices, including turmeric were explored for both their medicinal and dyeing properties. Turmeric was particularly popular because of its ability to produce a significantly more vibrant color in comparison to other natural dye stuff (Bucci, 2019). Because of its vibrancy, achieving a range of colors is difficult. The proportion of turmeric to water can affect the color intensity if just a smidgen of dye stuff is used. This is important considering the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on spice prices. Many spices have seen a significant increase in price. Specifically, powdered turmeric has seen a 80-85% pierce increase going into 2021. Its medicinal properties made it a high commodity as people

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searched for home preventatives to the adverse effects of Covid-19. Despite this significant price increase completing this project was relatively inexpensive. Turmeric's aforementioned color intensity allowed me to use a small amount and still achieve the intense color I wanted (Pandey, 2021).

Although I was unable to find any information regarding sumptuary laws against turmeric, I did research a different legal battle. In December 1993, University of Mississippi Medical Center received a US patent for the use of turmeric in medicine. Various Indian organizations contested this patent. By definition, a patent can be granted if the invention is a new and novel idea. As discussed earlier, turmeric has been used in India for its medical properties since the vedic period. The Indian organizations feared the cultural repercussions this patent could potentially cause. They believed this patent was cultural misappropriation as it disregarded thousands of years of Indian culture and invention (Johnston & Webb, n.d.). After a long legal battle, the patent was removed in August of 1997 (Jayaraman, 1997). This legal action was symbolic. It represented a respect to ancient and indigenous cultures and their knowledge.

Color In Fashion Today:

1. Think of your favorite color. What mood/ feeling does it represent? My favorite color is navy. To me, it represents the formality expected in a business environment with a youthful flair. When I wear navy, it evokes a sense of confidence.
2. What is your favorite garment? Is it your favorite color? My favorite garment is a navy cashmere turtleneck sweater.
3. What associations does this garment hold for you? It is very soft and comfortable while appropriate for business and other formal settings. It is also

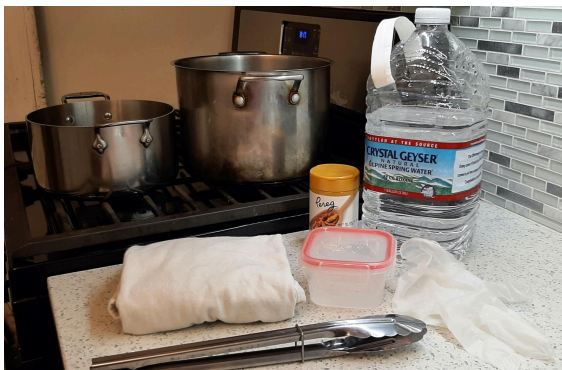
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a sweater my mother wore when I was young, and I always looked forward to when I would fit into it.

4. Do you dress the way you feel? Absolutely. Unless I intentionally choose to dress otherwise, my outfit will be strongly affected by my current mood.
5. Is there a role model whose color style you admire? I admire the fashion of the women in my family. My great-grandparents worked in the garment district in NYC and had impeccable fashion taste. Today, a lot of celebrity fashion is focused on pushing boundaries and making statements. I prefer classical designs and simpler outfits.
6. Does that affect your fashion choices? Yes, I love wearing vintage family heirloom pieces or classical styles they wore throughout their lifetimes.

Tutorial:

Supplies:



- 2 stock pots
- Water
- Vinegar
- Cloth
- Rubberbands
- tongs
- Turmeric

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- Gloves
- Scissors

Step 1:



Fold the cloth into your desired pattern (I folded the shirt in a horizontal accordion style). Tie your cloth with rubber bands. Ensure the bands are tight.

Step 2:



Fill the first pot about two thirds with water (make sure there is enough to generously cover the garment). Bring to a simmer.

Step 3:



Add the vinegar, simmer for an additional two minutes. Turn off the heat.

Step 4:



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Add your garment and let it soak in the warm water for about 20 minutes. Remove and squeeze out excess water.

Step 5:



Fill the second pot with about two thirds with water (make sure there is enough to generously cover the garment). Bring to a boil.

Step 6:



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Add 2-3 tablespoons of turmeric. Boil about 5 minutes. Turn off the heat.

Step 7:



Using tongs add the garment. Soak for about 20 minutes.

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Step 8:



Using tongs remove the garment. Rinse under cold water. Wearing gloves wring out the garment until the water runs clear.

Step 9:



Using scissors, carefully cut the rubber bands off.

Step 10:



<Wet garment



<Dry Garment

(Results)

Hang dry.

Findings:

I combined two tutorials to complete this project. I was pleased with the results. The color and pattern turned out as expected. My results reflect the different aspects of each tutorial. I loosely followed Carrie Joy Beachey's dyeing method and achieved similar color results. My shibori method was inspired by Turmeric Australia's post. My pattern appears similar to theirs.

Conclusion:

I enjoyed this project and the opportunity to engage with common pantry items in an alternative form than cooking. I was pleased to find how simple yet interesting the process of natural dyeing was. Although this project was focused solely on turmeric, I look forward to experimenting further with other ingredients.

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