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Onion Skin Dye project

Natural Dyes are dyes found in nature. There are three different types of dyes, the one specific to this paper is the Mordant dye. Mordant dyes are dyes that require the use of mordants to set the colors, the final color is dependent on the mordant used. Some mordants are harsh or toxic chemicals which may require a person to be extremely cautious. In this Project vinegar was used as a mordant to help reveal the color of the fabric after dyeing. Not any vinegar can be used as a mordant, it's good to make sure the individual uses White Vinegar instead of balsamic. Throughout this paper you will see my own process of doing a natural dye using vinegar white and onion skin to dye a white t-shirt.

According to Iran Pazirik article , In the middle east and Europe onion skin as a dye was a tradition during spring holidays, and also used for hair lighting. Onion skin dyes provide a broad range of colors. You do not need to use mordant to see color, but mordants are used to get different shades. Depending on the mordant used, yellow-skinned onions will yield burnt and bright orange, yellow, brass, and brown colors, while red-skinned onions will yield reddish-orange, pink, salmon, gold, tan-brown, and dark tan dyes (*Onion Skins*). Many years before onion skins were used for multiple things, especially decorating.

Furthermore, onion skin was not expensive then and is not expensive now. You can literally walk into a supermarket and grab the onion skins from the onion area that is scattered everywhere for free or use the ones in your kitchen. Evenmore, onion skin was not subjected to sumptuary law. According to the next gurukul article, Sumptuary laws were made to regulate and reinforce social hierarchies and morals through restrictions on clothing , food , and luxury

expenditures. From 1294 to 1789, people of France were expected to follow Sumptuary laws. The law tried to control the behaviour of those considered socially inferiors, Preventing them from wearing clothes, consuming certain beverages and hunting game in certain areas (*What was the main objective of Sumptuary laws?*). This is not the case in today's society unless there is a hint of cultural appropriation on a group of people that follows a certain culture/religion/way of life.

Process of The Dye:

Needed Items: White- t shirt, White vinegar, rubber bands, orange onion skins, cooking pot (Try silver), a spoon or spacular, strainer, water, stove, Mobile device/camera

Step 1- select your onion skin, put it in an empty bowel and rinse the skins to remove any dirt.

Step 2- Take out a pot, put water inside of it at least 3 full cups of water to help the fabric flow

Step 3- Take out another pot (pot 2) This pot will be used to boil the mordant, put 3 cups of full water in this one as well, after 3 minutes of boiling pour vinegar inside of the pot (did not measure the quantity, I guessed how much I needed).

Step 4- After several minutes of the mordant boiling (vinegar), I took the t-shirt out with rubber bands to do my twisting technique to create my own pattern, After tying the shirt with rubber bands I put the t-shirt in the vinegar pot for 1hr.

Step 5- In the first pot (onion pot) since the onion skin is already rinsed, I boiled the water for 3minutes and then put the onion skin inside to boil for 1 hr as well.

Step 6- After both pots boiled for 1 hr I turned them off, I took the t- shirt out of the vinegar pot and rinsed it with cool and warm water.

Step 7- After rinsing with cool and warm water, I squeezed the water out to ready it for the onion skin pot for dying.

Step 8 - I put the t-shirt inside the onion skin pot to dye overnight.

Step 9- around 6 am in the morning I checked on the fabric and saw my first mistake was not letting the shirt get enough mordant the day before, Instead of tying it and then putting it inside of the pot I should have let it loose and then after tie it for the dying part. I saw a pattern but it was not complete so I tied it again and left it in the pot for more hours then took it to see the complete dye, and after I let the shirt dry.





To conclude, even though my tie technique did not work out the way I wanted, and gave me a different pattern than I expected I was happy completing it because it was my first time dying a shirt. I never knew onion skins were worth something other than peeling it to get the real onion so I can cook, to see what I can do with onion skin really impressed me. I followed the two videos on youtube which helped me complete this process, but my shirt did end up coming out darker than the lighter color that I expected since I added a lot of vinegar. I learned that if I would have let it dye only for a couple of hours instead of overnight I might have had a lighter color dyed shirt.



References

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