Batik has come to be used as a generic term, which refers to the process of dyeing fabric, by using a resist technique. Areas of the cloth are covered with wax or other dye resistant substance to prevent the cloth from absorbing color. Cloth decorated with this technique was in use as many as 1500 years ago in Egypt, Africa, the Middle East and in several parts of Asia. Many people think that batik was brought to Asia by travelers from the Indian subcontinent. Most people believe that Batik reached its highest artistic expression in Indonesia, particularly in Java. Batik has become a very central means of artistic expression for many areas of Asia and a deeply integrated facet of the Asian culture.

Some experts think that batik was originally reserved as an art form for Javanese royalty. Javanese royalty were known to be great patrons of the arts and provided the support necessary to develop many art forms. Others disagree and think that batik was prevalent with all people and an important skill for young women to learn, just like cooking and other housewifery arts to Central Javanese women.

Natural materials such as cotton and silk are used for the cloth. Wax is applied with a canting, sometimes called a wax pen. It is a funnel like pen that has a bamboo handle and the wax comes slowly out of the tip as the artist draws onto the fabric. They come in different size spouts to make different thicknesses of lines. Wax must be kept melted while the artist is working and is kept in a wajan, a little pan that sits on a small charcoal stove. Beeswax and paraffin are the most common waxes used for batik. Because batiked fabric grew to be so popular, a method of making the fabric more quickly developed. This made the fabric more affordable to the masses and much quicker to make. A copper stamp called a cap (pronounced chop) was made of copper strips bent into the shape of the design. Then it was dipped in wax and stamped onto the fabric.

Traditional colors for Central Javanese batik were made from natural ingredients and consisted of mostly beige, brown, blue and black. For lighter colors, the fabric was left in the dye bath for short periods of time and darker colors would be left in the dye for days. The batik patterns are usually drawn onto the fabric with pencil or charcoal prior to waxing. Men are usually in charge of drawing the design onto the fabric. Traditional batik designs are handed down from generation to generation. Once the pattern is drawn, the waxing can begin. The wax is first applied to the parts of the cloth that will remain the color of the cloth. The waxed fabric is immersed in the dye bath of the first color and when the right color has been achieved it is hung to dry. When dry, wax is applied to the parts of the fabric that will remain that color and the process continues until the entire cloth has been waxed and dyed and all of the desired colors achieved. Sometimes the wax is cracked before the last dye bath to produce a crackled effect of lines throughout the batik. In early times, this was a symbol of an inferior batik more recently the cracks are made intentionally. Once the dyeing process is complete, the wax is scraped off and the fabric washed in hot water and usually ironed to get the remaining wax out of the fabric. Then clothing or other items are made from the batik.

[www.asia-art.net/batik.html](http://www.asia-art.net/batik.html); [www.expat.or.id/info/batik.html](http://www.expat.or.id/info/batik.html)

Traditional patterns of Asian cultures:
“Fake” Batik Lesson Plan
By Kirby Meng
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Essential Questions:

• How can you use nature as a source for ideas to create an expressive design?
• Can you recognize and use an analogous color scheme?
• What is the function of art?
• Is your batik Art?
• Why or why not?
• How could technology make the production of cloth like you designed easier?
• Would fabric designed and made by machine still be art?
• Is it as valuable as that done by hand?

National Content Standards:

#1 Understanding and Applying Media, Techniques and Processes: Students use different media techniques and processes to communicate an idea.
Local Standard: Demonstrates proper care and safe use of materials and tools.
Creates artworks in the area of…fiber arts.

#2 Using Knowledge of Structures and Functions: Students use visual structures and functions of art to communicate ideas.
Local Standards: Creates a separate work of art that …expresses a feeling or emotion.
Recognize analogous color relationships.
Illustrate how art elements and principles are used to create contrast in artwork.
Recognize how artists use selected subject matter, including symbols and ideas to communicate a message.

#4 Understanding the Visual Arts in relation to History and Cultures: Students know that the visual arts have both a history and specific relationships to various cultures, times and places.
Local Standards: Supports a personal position on the big questions about art…are our pillows art?
Explains the way technological advances change the way an artist works.
Understand the basic history of Batik and its importance in the cultures that use this form of fabric decoration.

Materials:

12 X 12 white paper, 14 X 14 muslin, pencil, Sharpie, tape, alum and flour mixture in squeeze bottles, diluted acrylic paint and brushes. Additional muslin to back the pillow. Volunteers to sew the pieces together! Polyester fiberfill to stuff pillows.

Procedures:

1. Discuss the history of Batik and the process itself. Discuss the fact that we are not really doing Batik but making a piece of fabric look batiked through a similar resist process.
2. Talk about the idea of design vs. a complete picture. What is pattern? How can you use symbols in design? How can natural objects be repeated to make a design? How can you create emphasis in your picture? Movement? Come up with a 12 X 12 design based on something from nature: water, wind, plants, animals, leaves, etc. Nothing man-made should be included. Keep it fairly simple. We look at Hokusai’s painting “The Great Wave” and talk about the movement seen in the wave and the power as well as the way the water is drawn and how the color is used. (We ignore the boats this time!) Trace with a Sharpie on 12 X 12 paper.
3. Tape muslin onto paper (center). Trace the lines you see through the paper with the alum mixture and let dry thoroughly.

4. Discuss analogous color schemes and have each student decide what color scheme he/she will use. A purely analogous scheme may be used or there may be ONE small area of a contrasting color added for emphasis. Students will add color to the batik using dilute acrylic paint. Students may crack the resist and paint over it to achieve some of the crackled effect.

5. When the entire piece is painted and completely dry. Place the fabric in soapy water and scrape the paste off. Rinse. Let dry. Sew each painted to piece to an unpainted one inside out. Leave an opening for stuffing. Turn right side out and stuff and then sew the stuffing hole closed!

6. Enjoy your pillow. Display them in a large pile in a spot where people will not be able to play with them or lay on them. We have a huge line of windows in the library that face the front of the school that works nicely.

**Assessment:** Did the student:

Create artwork in the area of...fiber arts.
Create a separate work of art that ...expresses a feeling or emotion.
Recognize analogous color relationships.
Illustrate how art elements and principles are used in combination to create contrast in artwork.
Recognize how artists use selected subject matter, including symbols and ideas to communicate a message.
Support a personal position on the big questions about art...are our pillows art?
Demonstrate proper care and safe use of materials and tools.
Explains the way technological advances change the way an artist works.

**Recipe for paste (From Hands-On Asia by Yvonne Y. Merrill)**

Mix in a blender or a bowl. ½ cup water, 2 teaspoons alum, ½ cup flour.
Mix thoroughly and get the lumps out because they clog the tip of the bottle.