



Ikat

Then and Now

CREATING MATERIALS
THE
WEAVER'S STUDIO

MARY ZICAFOOSE
ikat

The Essential Handbook to
Weaving Resist-Dyed Cloth

Ikat is a textile patterning technique in which the warp or weft yarns are dyed prior to weaving the fabric.





Silk ikats of Central Asia – curator introduction

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pCa2-EMiHE4&t=81s>. (3:30 min)

Uzbekistan_Traditional Ikat Making in Uzbekistan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AzYwTqTER9Y>.
(39 min)




In the beginning:

- Perhaps created as early as the 6th Century.
- The word 'ikat' comes from the Malay-Indonesian word for 'tie'; it was introduced into European sources of textile technology and history in the early twentieth century when Dutch scholars began paying attention to the rich textile traditions of the Netherlands Indies, the present-day Indonesia.



Simply Put:

- Ikat pattern is a term that refers to a resist dyed weaving technique.
 - **Resist dyeing is a technique that keeps the dye away from selected areas of the fabric or yarn in order to create a pattern or shape.**
 - Probably the most familiar resist dyeing is Batik, where wax is the resist.
- 



Ikat pattern is a term that refers to a resist dyed weaving technique.


- **Resist dyeing is a technique that keeps the dye away from selected areas of the fabric or yarn in order to create a pattern or shape.**
- Ikat pattern is a long resist dyeing process that ultimately ends up as a piece of beautifully woven cloth.
- It initially begins by tightly binding bundles of yarn in specific patterns. Then these bundles (hanks) are dyed over and over to achieve the desired colour tones and pattern. In some patterns these ties are untied and then retied and then dyed again in different shades. It can be a very elaborate process to create the base of an ikat pattern. Areas that are tied will not absorb the colour, this is known as “dye-resist”.
- The dyeing process varies in different countries. Patterning cloth by combining the design into yarn before weaving.

Process Photos



Single and Double Ikat Weaving





How It's Made:

- Prior to weaving, **warp** (lengthwise yarn) or **weft** (crosswise thread) or *sometimes both* are tied off with fiber knots that resist absorbing color and are then dyed.
- To facilitate the pattern tying, the threads are set up on a frame.
- They are then grouped into bunches of several threads to be tied at once; this results in the creation of knot units from which the overall pattern is built up.
- Resist ties are removed or new ones added for each color; their combinations create the design.
- After dyeing is completed, all resists are opened, and the patterned yarns are woven.



Warp Ikat



Weft Ikat



Warp Ikat



Weft Ikat



Ikkat is classified into single-ikkat and double-Ikat styles

Single Ikat fabric is created by interweaving tied and dyed warp with plain weft or resisted weft yarns are inserted in plain weft.

Double Ikat involves the process of resisting on both warp and weft and then interlacing them to form intricate yet well composed patterns.

In warp Ikat the dyeing of the threads would be of the warp (lengthwise lay of threads) on which the weft (feed of thread woven breadth wise across the warp) is woven. In weft Ikat it would be vice versa. In double Ikat both the warp threads and the weft threads would be dyed separately and then woven together.

In warp Ikat the patterns are evident on the warp lay even before the weft is introduced. Ikat created by dyeing the warp is simple as compared to the making of either weft Ikat or double Ikat.



Ikat pattern is very different from other forms of resist dyeing such as shibori, batik, tie-dyeing and paste resist dyed textiles in general.

Types of Resist dyed textiles:

BATIK – applied resist. This resist is in the form of hot wax and can be applied by brush or more intricately with special spouted metal applicators that give the designer greater control in creating pattern.


This form of resist can be traced back to the 17th Century. And in Japan known as ‘tsutsugaki’ where rice paste is used instead of hot wax. In both cases the wax or rice paste is allowed to dry and then added to the dye pot of color. Once the cloth has dried after dyeing the resist is removed. The wax is removed by heat and the rice paste by washing.



RICE PASTE RESIST DYED DESIGN BY INDIGO BLUE FIELDS



VINTAGE RICE PASTE RESIST DYED INDIGO



SHIBORI – Shibori is the Japanese collective word for various types of resist pattern dyeing produced by manipulating fabric – securing it with stitching, binding or AND clamping – before dyeing. The name comes from the Japanese ‘shiboru’, which means to squeeze or wring out. The earliest examples of this technique date back to the 8th century. Fabric is drawn up and either bound, stitched, gathered, pleated, folded, clamped or wrapped, compressing the fabric before dyeing.

The beauty of shibori is that fabric can be dyed repeatedly, using different shaping methods, building up colour and pattern. Any pressure on the fabric that doesn't destroy it will make a mark. The shibori process works in a three dimensional way on a two dimensional surface and can use positive and negative, the front and the back of the fabric. The interaction between the manipulated and plain areas and the proportions of dark and light produce dynamic, subtle effects.

The word ‘Shibori’ is a big umbrella for a lot of different methods of creating this type of resist dyed pattern.

Shibori Examples



Some Ikat Examples from History

An Indian textile fragment (Fig. 1) shows the ikat technique in practice with the design of alternating stripes of red and white, and yellow, green, and with the dark brown brocade weaving on the red cotton weft.

Fig. 1 - Artist unknown (Indian). *Ikat*, Early 20th century. Silk; 13.5 x 29 cm (5 5/16 x 11 7/16 in). Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 25.488. Gift from Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, July 16, 1925. Source: [Boston MFA](#)



Detail of a classic Gujarati *patola* of double ikat from the early 19th century.

LACMA textile collections.



Indonesian funeral shroud or hanging,
(porilonjong), Central Sulawesi (Celebes),
Rongkong, Toraja, cotton with ikat patterns,
Honolulu Museum of Art



Ikat *abr*, silk and cotton, mid 19th century.
Uzbekistan. Smithsonian collections.



Double ikat Sambalpuri sari, India



Ikat in Polymer:

- Debbie Jackson: (Shibori) - [_debbie@debbiesadornments.com](mailto:debbie@debbiesadornments.com).
- Art by Nell: Polymer Clay Ikat (Zig zag) Cane in 3 Colours Tutorial - Turn Cane into Slab / Sheet Tutorial – YouTube
- Jessama: Polymer Clay Ikat (Zig zag) Cane in 3 Colours Tutorial - Turn Cane into Slab / Sheet Tutorial – YouTube
- Archidee: Ikat Eye Cane | Polymer Clay Tutorial | English Version – YouTube
- [Ikat – Polymer Clay Tutorial \[Sub\] | Ana Belchí](#) - YouTube
- [Philip Wiegard: How to make an Ikat Rope Cane from polymer clay](#) - YouTube
- Kathleen Lucille: the "tie dyed" polymer clay cane tutorial or IKAT – YouTube
- Iris Mishly:
http://www.polypediaonline.com/image/users/133688/ftp/my_files/ikat_millefiori_tutorial_irismishly.pdf
- Lindly Haunani: <https://www.lindlyhaunani.com/workshops/workshop-descriptions/rainbow-ikat-inspirations-two-day-workshop/>
- Katie Oskin: Diamond Pattern Ikat Cane | Polymer Clay Tutorial
- Julie Eakes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pmeHhDDKqws&t=6s> - YouTube
- ...with a lot of inspiration from Donna Kato
- Philip Wiegard: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HN6ww2cdu9o>