

Tutorial: Dyeing Silk Scarves with Permanent Markers

Supplies:

- Silk Scarves. I used chiffon from [Dharma Trading Co.](#)
- Sharpies. This project will ruin your sharpies, but it's worth it!
- Droppers. I found these at Rite-Aid. They're about a buck a piece.
- An Iron. (Optional. But if you layer colors, you can speed up the drying process between each pass)
- Alcohol. It helps to decant it into a small plastic cup.
- Paper or plastic covering. I used paper because I have a glass table. But if your table is wood, I'd use a plastic tablecloth to protect your table.
- Paper towels for blotting.

Step One: Folding

Iron your scarf as best as possible. It doesn't have to be perfect, the alcohol will get rid of most of the wrinkles. Begin by folding the scarf in half and then fold a partial triangle starting at the loose ends side. Leave about 2" at the edge.

1. Then fold the same fold going in the other direction, leave another 2" on the other side.
2. Repeat this fold until the entire scarf is folded.

Step Two: Add Color

1. Select 2-3 colors that work well together. Staying in color families will keep your scarf from looking muddy when you are finished. Hold the pen on the scarf and really let the ink saturate the fabric. Work in small sections.
2. Working in prime numbers helps. Geo suggests 2, 3, 5, and 7 are best: "The human mind can see and understand these numbers so the pattern they make is appealing." (This is what happens when engineers craft!) Abstract designs tend to work well with this medium.
3. Load your dropper with alcohol and place the tip of the dropper in the center of your design and slowly release the alcohol. This takes a bit of practice, but the more you add alcohol, the more the colors will meld and saturate the layers below. Keep adding until you're happy with the effect.

Step Three: Alcohol and Blotting

1. Using your fingers massage the color into the fabric.

2. Turn the triangle upside down and add some alcohol to the back of the pattern. This will help spread the color.
3. Repeat the process until you have nearly covered the scarf. Leave a bit of white space. You can always go back and add detail in the white areas as you feel it's necessary. When you're done, you can blot with a paper towel to absorb any excess dye. But the alcohol will dry very quickly.