

A free project, compliments of...

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Shaving Cream Dyeing by Sue Bleiweiss

If you're looking for an unusual and fun way to dye your fabric just head to the beauty supplies section of your local store and pick up a couple of cans of shaving cream! This technique always results in an interesting and unique piece of fabric. I like to use this technique to dye silk but try it with other fabrics such as cottons and velvets.

All you need for shaving cream dyeing is some fabric, some paint and of course some shaving cream. Be sure to choose the white foamy shave cream for this and make sure it's unscented. Trust me on this, the scented stuff may smell nice for a few minutes but after several hours you'll be wishing you bought the unscented.

You can do this on a flat plastic covered surface or in a plastic tub, the choice is up to you. For these examples I am working in a clear plastic tub. Here's what you do:

Step 1

Spray some shaving cream onto the surface or into the plastic container.



Step 2

Level it out using a plastic scraper or a spatula. The shaving cream should be about 1/2" thick or so. A bit more or less is ok.



Step 3

I like to use Dye-Na-Flow paints for this process but experiment with other textile paints if that's what you have on hand. Drip and drizzle some of the Dye-Na-Flow paint onto the surface.



Step 4

Now swirl the paint around using a fork, knife or even a hair comb with wide teeth.



Step 5

Gently place a piece of clean dry silk onto the surface of the shaving cream. Once it's on the surface of the shave cream don't try to pick it up or move it around. Gently pat the silk onto the surface to make sure that the entire surface of the silk is in contact with the shaving cream. You'll have some air bubbles and that's ok, it will add some more interest to the results.



Once the fabric has been on the shaving cream for 12 hours or overnight take it off by grasping two of the corners and lifting it off. Lay it down with the shaving cream side up on another piece of plastic and set it aside to dry. This can take 24 to 72 hours depending on the weather conditions.

The shaving cream will dissipate while it sits and the longer you leave the silk sitting on it the better colour transfer you will get. If you want a more muted or pastel shade then carefully lift off the silk after a couple of hours instead of overnight.

Once most of the shaving cream has evaporated, it will still be a bit sticky and you need to heat set the paint before you can rinse the residual shaving cream off. Using a press cloth (I use parchment paper) on both sides and a very hot iron, press both sides for a long time. The heat has to penetrate through the thin layer of shave cream that's still on the surface so you need to make sure that you hold the iron on the fabric until the fabric gets good and hot.

Even after ironing you may still get some colour run off when you wet the silk down to rinse off the rest of the shave cream. Rinse it in cool water and then squeeze out the water and leave it to dry. You'll want to press it again to make sure that the rest of the colour is heat set before you launder your fabric.

