

# From the Kitchen to the Cloth



## Using Grits as a Resist

Grits fall into the category of “crackle” resists. They produce a distinctive pattern, coarser than flour, finer than oatmeal. They are very easy to use (no cooking!) and easy to wash out. Another benefit of grits is that it is easier to achieve consistency from batch to batch, which is helpful when working on a large cloth.

Grits are a relatively new addition to my resist repertoire. Gay Ousley recommended them, so I started experimenting. This tutorial is the result of my work with several varieties of grits and numerous formulas. The recipe given is only a guideline. Try cooking the grits or changing the grits-to-water ratio for different effects.

### Materials

Fabric, *Note, if working with dyes, choose a natural fiber, such as cotton, bamboo, silk or rayon*

Soda Ash

Synthrapol

Quick cooking grits

Measuring cup and spoons

MX fiber reactive dyes, sodium alginate and urea OR

Textile paint

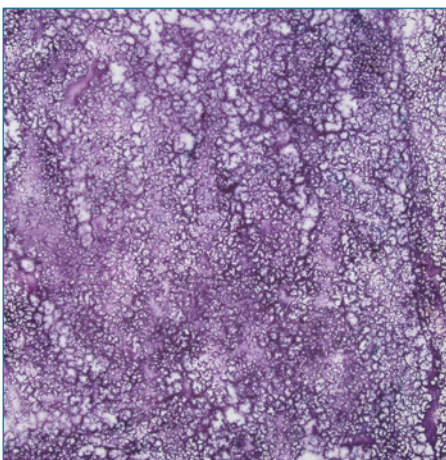
Pins

Heavy plastic drop cloth

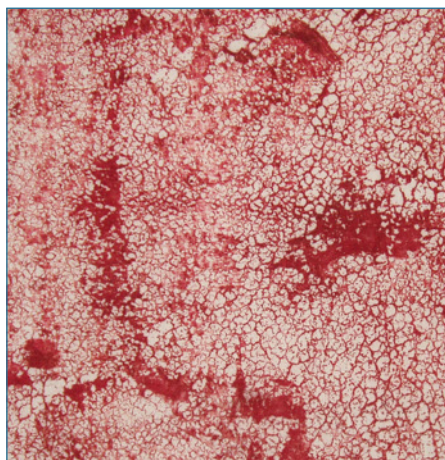
Squeegee or wooden spoon

Flat bristle brush

Grits painted with thickened dye when partially dry



Grits applied with a squeegee



Grits applied with a notched spreader



# From the Kitchen to the Cloth

## Using Grits as a Resist



### Applying the Grits to Your Cloth

Step 1. Pre-wash your fabric in hot water with  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. Synthrapol and  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp soda ash. This step is important, because any sizing on the fabric can make the resist difficult to remove.

Step 2. Lay a piece of heavy plastic over your work surface. Lay the fabric on the plastic and pin it every 8-10 inches.

Step 3. Mix  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of grits with 1 cup boiling water. Let the mixture sit at least 10 minutes before using. Stir occasionally. The mixture may be slightly soupy. This will not affect the results.

Step 3. Spread the grits on the cloth using a squeegee or a wooden spoon.

Step 4. Let the grits dry completely. This can take 1-2 days, depending on the temperature and humidity level of your working environment. If weather permits, place the cloth in the sun to speed drying. If not, hang the cloth on a clothesline or set up a fan to blow across the fabric surface.

### Tip

This recipe calls for quick cooking grits, although other varieties may be used. Adjust the grits-to-water ratio to achieve the desired result if using other varieties.

Add boiling water to grits



Mixture will be slightly soupy



Apply grits to cloth with spoon or squeegee



# From the Kitchen to the Cloth

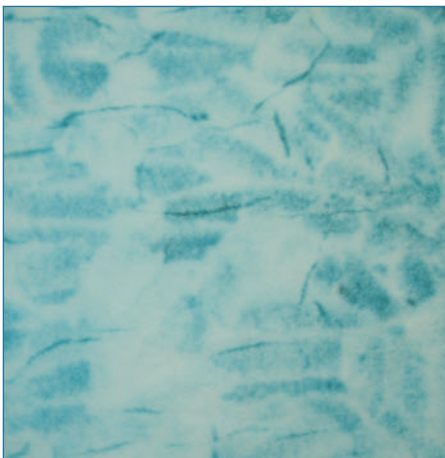
## Using Grits as a Resist



Brush the dye or paint over the dried grits



Paint the grits while still wet for an interesting variation



## Applying Background Color

### Paints Vs Dyes

Either fabric paints or dyes may be used to apply the background color. It is mostly a matter of personal preference. Dyes leave a softer hand on the fabric, but require time for batching. Fabric paints must either be heat-set or allowed to sit for two weeks for passive setting.

Step 1. Roll up the fabric and squeeze gently to crack the resist.

Step 2. Lay the fabric on a plastic or cloth-covered work surface and pin every 8-10 inches. Brush the thickened dye or paint over the grits.

Step 3. If working with dyes, cover the fabric with an old sheet or cloth and let sit for 4-24 hours. This allows the dye time to react with the fibers of the fabric, forming permanent, wash fast color. If working with fabric paint, allow the paint to dry completely. Allowing the fabric to set for 1-2 weeks before washing results in better color retention.

*Tip: If working with dyes, mix up only the amount of thickened dye you will use within your dye session. Once the soda ash has been added to the dye mixture, it starts reacting with the dye. After about 4-6 hours the dye will "exhaust" and yield poor color.*

# From the Kitchen to the Cloth

## Using Grits as a Resist



## Working with Thickened Dyes

Step 1. Mix the print paste with a hand blender or wire whisk. Add 1 quart hot water, to  $\frac{1}{2}$  c urea, stir until dissolved. Gradually add 2 T. sodium alginate, stirring continuously until smooth. Allow to thicken one hour before using. Print paste will keep about a month in the refrigerator.

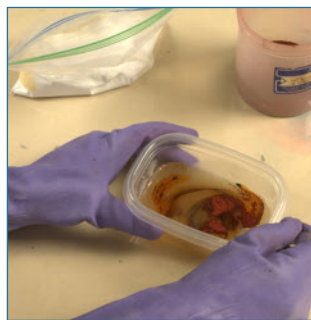
Step 2. Mix the dye by adding 1 tsp. MX dye powder and 1 tsp. soda ash to 1 cup print paste. Stir well. This makes a medium-dark value, so add less dye if you want a lighter value.

**Safety Tip:** Always use a dust mask when mixing dyes and wear rubber gloves when working with dyes

Stir while adding the sodium alginate



Add dye and soda ash to the print paste



## Working with Textile Paints

A medium-bodied textile paint, such as Pebeo Setacolor or PROFab Textile Paint, works best. These paints are easier to apply if they are thinned slightly with water. Aim for a mixture the consistency of eggnog. A thin paint, such as Pebeo Setasilk or Jacquard Dye-Na-Flow, tends to bleed more and breach the resist.

The textile paint must be set before the fabric is washed. Heat-setting, the most common way to set textile paints, will not work well with the grits resist technique. Most textile paint manufacturers have a recommendation for passive setting. Passive setting means that the fabric is allowed to sit for a specific period of time, usually 7-14 days, before washing. If the fabric is washed sooner, there is a greater chance that some of the paint will wash out, resulting in a less vibrant color

## Washing the Fabric

Rinse the fabric in warm water to soften the resist. Scrub with a soft brush and discard the grits. Wash in hot water.