Eco Printing on Fabric with CBTV Live

Chapter 1 - Chapter 1
Eco Printing on Fabric
(optimistic music) - Hi everybody, it's Faith from Creativebug coming at you live like we do every Tuesday and Thursday, and I am sharing with you a craft that's been a long time in the making for me. My friend, Monica Medeiros of Brico Press invited me to take a workshop with her and I instantly was hooked, and was like, I have to tell all my Creativebug friends about this! And it is eco printing. Now eco printing is very similar to natural dyeing. You use a lot of the same processes, and we are really lucky to have a two-part class on Creativebug, natural dyeing with Kristine Vejar who is a local dyer, and she is absolutely amazing. She has a book about dyeing with natural materials. So if you have specific questions about mordants, and scouring, and proportions, go check out that class. She knows absolutely everything. What I know I will share with you. For eco-printing you'll need a cotton, or silk, or even wool material. You can use blends, but for the purpose of this instructions we're going to use 100% natural materials. And you'll use a different scour based on the materials, but if you just want to throw everything in one batch, Dawn soap works just fine. My mom's name is Dawn, and I always remember being a little kid and using that soap being like, "Hi, Mom." But the way you do it quietly to yourself so no one notices because I think I knew early on that that was strange. But I still think of my mom whenever I use Dawn dish detergent, which is to say, "Hi, Mom, love you." So scour your materials in some Dawn dish detergent, and that will take approximately one to two hours, and then you'll want to mordant your material. You can use a couple of different substances for that. I used an aluminum, or an alum, excuse me, for these, but based on the materials you're using, you will use that kind of mordant. Check out Kristine's class, it'll answer all your questions. That'll take one or two hours. Now I've done this already, of course, 'cause we don't have that much time. With a cotton gauze, with just 100% cotton bandana, and I have this little silk scarf, and if it looks a little bit blue, that's because I also was soaking a piece of blue fabric and this silk takes dye really well. So it soaked that up. And you'll want to lay it out on your table. Find the halfway point, and you could use two pieces sandwiched on top of another, or you can fold it in half. And I find the easy way to find the halfway point is to plop that off the edge of the table. We're going to be using three different pieces just for fun. This is like a gauzy cotton scarf. And I just had it soaking in this bucket because I didn't want anyone reusing it, and this seemed unlikely that anyone would drink out of. I have a bad habit of using staff pots for my art projects. So this is a good way to ensure this would remain craft-only. Nobody at Creativebug get any fancy ideas about drinking out of this beautiful pewter thing. Now what materials will print? Great question. A whole bunch of things will. Leaves high in tannins, like maple or rose will work really well. For your very first time I suggest using our buddy here, marigold because these always work. Oh, goodness. And we're gonna use some eucalyptus. Now I'm just going to break it up and sprinkle it on the surface like a monster. And I'm going to be doing that for each. Definitely try some onion skins. I think I lost my onions, which is another hazard of working with me. I might poison you, or I might leave my onions on your desk. And you'll just have to find them later. - [Allie] Faith, can I ask you a question? - [Faith] Allie has a quick question. Yeah? - [Allie] What kind of onions? - What kind of onion? So a white onion, or a yellow onion makes some really pretty marks, and they can range from greens to oranges, whereas a red onion will have paler impressions. Counterintuitive, I know. Now I'm using pieces of eucalyptus. You can use seeded eucalyptus, and you can also use the kind of eucalyptus

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that has the long, thin leaves. It's actually really gorgeous, and super-interesting, and also, depending on the mordant you use, will affect the color. So if you are using an iron mordant, or some people like to bathe their fabrics in soy milk, which I have not tried yet, but that sounds very interesting. Apparently, the best methodology for that is to soak it in the soy milk, and then let it dry, and then repeat that up to five times, which sounds like a really messy process. But obviously, we love that kind of stuff here at Creativebug. I've found this to be a really stimulating jumping-off point. I had never done neutral, natural dyeing before, and then realizing, like, it seems like the plants are very excited to spend time with the fabric. Like you just get this feeling of ooh when you're doing the process. Like all the materials are really jiving. And as a very obviously woo woo kind of crafter, I thought this is really an exciting feeling to participate in. Like the alchemy thing, right? Sometimes you don't even feel responsible for it, it's just something that happens. So I'm just doing an all-over pattern. We're kind of experimenting here. And if you have done natural dyeing please feel free to comment. - [Allie] Yes, so Jessica Bauman not only took the Creativebug natural dyeing class, not only read the book from Kristine out of her from (mumbles), but she also hand-dyed using natural dyes, but she did the whole thing. - Amazing! Jessica, thank you so much for your enthusiasm. She reports that she has taken the class, she has read the book, and she has dyed stuff using Kristine's amazing, awesome class. And I hope that you shared your images in the class galleries. That's one of my favorite parts of Creativebug, that is, in my mind, like the unsung hero is our gallery section so you can see what everybody else is doing. So I hope you posted those projects in there. Thank you so much for your comments. This last wacky little plant is, (mumbles) reports to me, amaranth. And it is has a really waxy texture, and it'll make some really vibrant, pinky prints. So we're just going to spread these out here and see what the heck happens. - [Allie] So to your point about onions, Jessica says, she didn't get much from red cabbage but the onion skins gave her great results. - Jessica reports that she didn't get much color from cabbages, but the onion skins were rad. Also, we do have the Easter egg dyeing class I did this past springtime, and that had similar results where like the things like that would be super vibrant, were a little underwhelming, and the things that I was like, oh gross, onions, were actually astounding and amazing. And that's part of the magic of natural dyeing. Also you can do this same process on paper, like a thicker watercolor paper will hold up really well. You don't have to scour the paper, but you do have to mordant it. Okay, I'm shredding up the last of our amaranth and is there anything else in this wacky bouquet? I think we're good, unless anyone in the office has found my onions. We're gonna go ahead and wrap it up. So you'll fold the unmarked fabric over, and we're going to wrap it around, beginning with this open edge, we're going to wrap it, and you'll want to make sure that you have some twine at the ready, and some people use like a copper pipe. And this can affect how the dye is received. But just for starters, go easy on yourself and use a wooden dowel. And also, wrap it to one end. So you might be tempted to wrap it in the middle, but this'll make it easier when it comes to submerging our little piece. So we're gonna wrap it as taut as we can. This really depends on a nice, even bond between the plant material and the surface. So we're making this as tight and taut as possible. If you're good at making blintzes, you'll be good at doing this. And then we're going to wrap it tightly with our string. And we're going to leave a little bit up top so you can tie it. We're going to wrap it around every half inch, or so. And once we get to the bottom, we'll come back up and tie it off. Ooh, this kinda reminds me of those lollipops, those unicorn horn lollipops. And cut off the excess thread. Now if you're doing this with a bunch of people, you'll want to mark whichever one is yours. It looks like, oh yes, this is my child, I would recognize them in a crowd, until you boil it, also applicable to children, and then suddenly it's very difficult to tell them apart. So go ahead and

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make sure you write your name on the dowel with permanent marker, and also if you have a little bit poking out, go ahead and tuck it back in. The material that is exposed will end up kind of getting in to the dye bath. It's pretty potent, and so then it might make it a little bit murky, or a little less crisp. So see, we're just rolling this nice and tight. Oh, and I did not obey my own advice about getting it to the edge. Put it back on the edge. Oh, it's so fun. And before I tie that I'm gonna move on to this buddy. And because this one's a bit bigger, I'm gonna fold it in half. I coulda done that with this one. And I'm gonna fold it in half again just so that I can keep it well below the water. And of course our fabric is a bit damp. That'll help it print. And if there are some buckles in it, that's totally fine. This process, also, the more you do it the more you'll be able to predict your results. But it's still fairly unpredictable, and exciting, and a little bit random. So don't get too attached to any patterns you might have, or if you decide it's going to look a certain way, it might turn out entirely different, which is one thing I love so much about it. It's really good for the, I feel like, as the secret--or maybe not so secret, I think I talk about it almost all the time-- control freak, I find that these exercises are very good for me to get over myself, really, if we're being honest here. So I have my last one. And they look like drumsticks. Like big Japanese drums. This is all leading up to the grand reveal of things that I haven't even seen yet that you will get to see with me for the first time. So I'm pretty stoked for that. And scared. What if it's terrible? What if it doesn't work out? I mean, it will. But like, that's where I get my kicks, my natural highs, is seeing what happens on our live shoots. Okay, so we've got these guys and we're putting them in our lukewarm pot. And we want them to be submerged. So this guy is not submerged. I will have to add more water, and I'll probably flip it over halfway through. And we're gonna put this on high heat. This burner does not get very hot, so this'll be at like a hot simmer. But you really want it to hit about 180 degrees, and do that for up to two hours, and once you've done that, here I have some of my testers from earlier today. I also used, I was like too into the groove to take three steps and find the actual twine, so I used this scrubby kind. And we're gonna see how this came out. So I used the exact same materials, except for this was back when I knew where my onions were. And you're gonna see exactly what can happen. - [Allie] Faith, while you're doing that, can you remind me, please, what type of fabric are you using? - Allie was reminding me to explain what type of fabric we're using. This is 100% cotton, and I also have a silk. This is a cotton gauze, and I have a silk, and another piece of cotton. It also smells like a spa. It smells absolutely delicious because of the eucalyptus. So here we have, oh my gosh, it's so cool. So this is just plants. And you'll see the onions. So here are our white onions, and the onions are the most vibrant. The eucalyptus was just like a cheery yellow. So in some, if you use a different mordant it can get up to like a black shade. But these are really sticking with yellows, and here's that super-vibrant amaranth, which is just like the lightest possible shade. So sometimes it's easier to pluck the pieces off one at a time. Other times it's easier. Oh, see, isn't that cool? I was gonna say to flick it off, but look. So this was like a bright purple, and now it is brown. And who even knows where the purple went? Probably right there. Also this is not really sunfast. So if you do have a beautiful piece of eco printed fabric, try to keep it out of the sun. But wouldn't this look amazing as, like, just the fabric? Like to do this and then to make something else out of it? Let's see how our cotton bandana did. I suspect that it'll be quite similar. And this is also, I'm sure you can see already, a little bit messy. A great project to do outside. Ah, here's my amaranth. Look at those pink shades. They're so much more vibrant in this one. - [Allie] Can I share an amaranth? - [Faith] Allie has an amaranth-- - [Allie] An amaranth fact. - [Faith] A fact about amaranth. - [Allie] It's edible. - [Faith] It's edible! I had no idea. - [Allie] Yep, amaranth seeds. You can use like wheat. - [Faith] What do they taste like? - [Allie] Wheaty? - [Faith] Allie says they're wheaty. Can you make a bread? - [Allie]

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Yeah, you can. From their seed. - [Faith] A tea cake. - [Allie] Like millet, or anything else. - [Woman] I feel like I've seen amaranth (mumbles). - [Allie] Yep. There is (mumbles) - [Faith] I like to, how when you roll it up, it immediately becomes pretty geometric. Oh, it does not look as pink to me on the monitor as it does to my eyeballs. Can you see that? - It's pretty pink. - It's pretty pink. - [Faith] It's so pink! Oh my gosh, it's exactly what I wanted it to do! Good job, bandana. 'Kay, we're gonna see our silk now. This could get weird because that silk was a little bit blue, remember, to begin with. And the silk also, it absorbs material a little bit differently. - [Allie] Lucinda says, "Oh my God, that is so amazing!" - [Faith] Lucinda says, "Oh my God, that is so amazing!" Lucinda, I know! You have to try it, it's so cool! And it is the kind of thing, too, where the instant you do it, you're like, I have to tell someone! So people need to know. So the silk looks like much of the same, except for we have some more detail of those onion skins. - [Allie] Uh, couple of questions about setting the fabric. Is this something that you would want to set the fabric so the colors don't run, or is it part of the natural dyeing that you just kind of let them be? - The question was do you set it afterwards. You can. You're probably going to be hand washing this anyway, though, and keeping it out of the sun. You can try to set it, but one thing that I love about eco printing, or natural dyeing, is it can be, different materials respond differently. So at the very least, hand wash your fabric in cold water, but if you are really committed to your project, you can try setting it, which will be different depending on the kinds of plants you're using. Here's the last one. This one's a real risk-taker, because you may not be able to see anything at all. This was fabric from a garage sale. Oh my God, it's even cooler than I imagined. Okay, so what I did with this one was, when I wrapped it up, I didn't want this backside to be nude, so I added some marigold, and look how amazing that looks with this fabric. Good job, you, is how I feel. So it's a totally different effect, and also this is going to, the blue will lighten up. Ew, that was gross. The blue will lighten up a lot once it has dried, but you can see it makes like a really vibrant print. Oh, I love that. This I'm keeping for me. Sam says it looks like the ocean. I agree. So let me show you some examples, some past examples. So this is basically what our bandana is going to look like when it's dried. This is marigolds, this is onion. I added some things that didn't work all that well. Some little pieces of avocado peel. I know avocado pits can make a great natural dye. This was from my workshop with Monica. This is cochineal, are these bright pink spots. Those are bugs. So it's cochineal and marigold. Here is a bandana with, oh gosh, I'm gonna get yelled at for not being able to pronounce it. Coreepsis? Corepsees? There's some C's in there, there's some R's in there. It's a gorgeous flower and it prints really well, and then this in the background are those eucalyptus leaves. And then we have this smoke bush, which also I was very committed to getting you some smoke bush for this class, but then the neighbors saw me in their front yard and I got nervous and I ran. I should have just asked them, right? What are neighbors for if not to give you some of their smoke bush plant? But for once in my life I had some dignity and left without stealing from my neighbors. And this is-- - [Allie] That's beautiful. - This is another onion print, which I think is so magical. I think this is the one where I started yelling, and was like, people need to know! Which people do know. Like Monica. Monica's telling people all the time. And how like it's almost photographic, the way it prints. I think it's so astounding. You can see this had been soaking for a really long time, so this is where the string was, and it made some, there's some relief printing going on there. So that doesn't bother me much. I don't think it takes away from the astounding magic of the printing. If you do try this out, please upload your photos. We would love to see them. Definitely go check out Monica Medeiros' Instagram. It's @bricopress is her Instagram handle, and thank you so much, as usual, for joining us. We'll see you on Thursday. (optimistic music)

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