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## Easy Indigo Dyeing: Make Indigo Dyed Pillows with Anna Joyce

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### Chapter 1 - Introduction

#### Overview

(fun bubbly music) - Hi, I'm Anna Joyce. I'm a textile designer, artist, and the author of Stamp Stencil Paint, and today I'm gonna show you how to indigo dye cotton into some beautiful patterns to make a really stylish bohemian pillowcase for your home. I'll show you how to set up the indigo bath, how to make patterns using indigo dye, (whirring) and finally we'll sew the whole thing together into a simple envelope-closure pillow for your home.

### Chapter 2 - Materials

#### Materials

- For this project we're gonna be using a Jacquard Indigo Tie Dye kit. This kit is fantastic and contains everything that you need to make an indigo vat. We have a five gallon bucket for making the indigo with a lid please. We've got the Jacquard Water Based Resist, which we'll be using to make some of the pattern. A pallet. Some cotton twine. A wooden dowel. And some white quilters cotton. To make one pillow, you'll need a 20" by 20" piece of quilters cotton. And two 20" by 14" pieces for the back. A rag. Scissors. Some pins. A pillow insert. And an apron for keeping your clothes clean. An iron and ironing surface. And a sewing machine with thread to match your indigo. Whenever you're working with dye, it's probably best to work outside. But if you are going to work inside, have a well ventilated area and a canvas drop cloth to protect your floor or work surface. You'll also need running water such as a sink or hose to fill up your bucket for the indigo dye. And a rack or clothesline to hang up your project to dry.

### Chapter 3 - Dyeing with Indigo

#### Mixing the indigo dye

- I love the Jacquard Indigo Tie Dye kit because it comes with everything that you need to make really really beautiful patterns with indigo. It has two components to create the dye, some reduced indigo so it won't take all day for the indigo vat to get ready, two different types of rubber bands, these little wooden boards, some rubber gloves to keep your hands clean and for this project today, I'm gonna use everything in the kit except for the small rubber bands and the stir stick. I'll set those aside for another project. To set up the indigo vat, we're going to add all three components from the Jacquard Indigo kit into about five gallons of water. You can just add them one by one and discard the plastic when you're done. Now we're gonna add the reduced indigo. And I like to use a wooden dowel to stir everything. You can also use a yard stick that you don't plan to use again. Once all of the ingredients are thoroughly mixed in the bucket, you can set your dowel aside. It's nice to have a rag handy to wipe it off. And you're gonna cover the bucket and let it sit for 15 mins to up to half an hour.

#### Grid pattern

- While the indigo vat is setting, I'm gonna go ahead and prepare my fabric. So for the first pattern that I'm gonna make today is gonna be a simple, clean, geometric grid. To make this pattern, I'm going to fold my 20X20 inch piece of cotton. I'm just using quilter's cotton here that you can find at any fabric store, in white. You could also use cream. I'm gonna fold it in half. I'm gonna use an iron

to have my lines be really crisp. Concentrate on the edge of the fold. We're gonna fold it in half again, this time from the bottom. And iron along the crease. Fold it one more time from the top. Try to keep everything neat. The neater your folds are, the more symmetrical your grid will be. Now that I have this in a neat row, I'm gonna fold it in half one more time. Iron in place. Fold it again from the other side. Give it a little bit more of a press. And then one final time. Tuck everything in to keep it square. That looks perfect. Now that my fabric is folded into neat little square, I'm gonna sandwich it between the two boards that were provided in the Jacquard Indigo Kit. I wanna keep the cotton on the inside perimeter of the boards. So once they're sandwiched, I'll use some of the large rubber bands to bind it tightly. If you can, go around two times. I'm gonna bind each end. We're also gonna bind it here and here. Once your fabric is bound tightly between the wooden boards with the rubber bands, it's ready to go into the indigo vat.

### Wabi Sabi pattern

- The second design that we're going to create is a little bit more organic and abstract. I really love doing this one because you never know what you're going to get but it's always beautiful. So I'm going to fold this in half, use the iron to keep it crisp, and half again from the bottom, and half again, and then in half one more time until you have a long, skinny fold. I have some cotton twine here and I've cut several lengths into about 10 inch pieces. Use the end of the dowel that you've already used to stir the indigo bucket, and place it in the middle of your fabric and fold it over. I like to use a rubber-band to keep everything in place while I'm tying my cotton; makes it just a little bit easier. So I'll take these lengths of twine and begin tying them tightly, starting at the top. I'm tying mine at about three quarter to half an inch intervals. You can experiment with tying closer or further apart using more or less twine. I'm using twine instead of rubber-bands because it gives a little bit more of a natural effect; I really like the way that the twine looks on the cotton. The rubber-bands can have a tendency to give a little bit more of a jagged look, and the effect of the lines that come off of this cotton twine is really really nice. That twine absorbs a little bit of the indigo and gives a really really nice effect. Now that I've finished tying all the twine I'm gonna trim these ends so they don't drip indigo when we pull it out of the bath. Alright, now it's ready to go in the dye bath.

### Resist pattern

- For this design we're gonna do something a little bit different, I'm gonna use jacquard water based resist, and it's gonna resist the indigo dye. So any place that you put the resist will remain white. One of the things that's really important when you're using this product, is to make sure that you stir it really well. When you stir it it will go from being this amber color to a more opaque cream. I'm just going to use the end of my paintbrush but you could also use a chopstick. I'm gonna keep stirring until I see that the product is really well mixed and the color begins to change, it's really important that this is mixed thoroughly or else the product won't work. You can always pour more out as you need it. I have a rag here to clean off the end of my paintbrush. And I'm gonna dip the bristles in and pick up some of this resist. I'm just gonna do a simple brushstroke pattern. My lines are about two inches long. And about an inch apart. And pick up a little bit more of the resist, you wanna put it on pretty thick. And just be really loose when you're painting, I love the quality of the brush strokes and it looks really great in the indigo when it comes out, if there are little smudges and you can see the quality of the line and the brushstrokes. We're just gonna continue this pattern all the way down the front of this piece of cotton. And also experiment with using different patterns, you could do polka dots, you could even push this material through a stencil, or use a stamp with it,

you just are gonna have to experiment. It's really, really a fun product. Now that I've painted my pattern over the entire surface of the cotton, it's ready to go into the indigo vat. The water resist doesn't really dry so you just put it in when it's already glossy and wet.

#### Placing fabric in the dye bath

- Now our fabric is ready to go into the dye bath. You can see here there's a little bit of a substance on the top of the dye. Sometimes when you prepare an indigo dye bath you'll get something called a flower. It'll bubble up and create these kind of large glossy bubbles. So, you'll want to move those aside before you start the dye process. I'm going to put on some gloves to protect my hands. These come in the kit. I'm going to take this and just put it inside the dye. Make sure that it's fully submerged. Then, I'm going to let it float right here. I've got the cotton that's been wrapped around the end of the dowel. You can just put that inside the bath. And then I'm going to take the piece that we added the water based resist to and just slowly put it into the indigo and press it down with my hands. I also have the two pieces of fabric that we're going to use for the back of our envelope pillow. We're going to leave these just a solid indigo color. So, they provide a really nice contrast to the back of our pillow. You want to leave these in for about 15 to 20 minutes. Set a timer because if you take it out too soon you won't get the results that you like and if you leave it in too long things might dye and erode the pattern that we created.

### **Chapter 4 - Remove Fabric and Rinse**

#### Remove fabric and oxidize

- It's time to take everything out of the indigo bucket and I'm so excited because you never know exactly what you're gonna get but it's always really, really cool. So, the first thing I'm gonna take out are the backs of the pillow and as you can see when it first comes out of the indigo bucket, it's this incredible bright neon green. Now, normally you would have a drying rack or a clothes line handy, but today for the purpose of this class I'm gonna let everything oxidize. Which is the process of letting the indigo turn blue onto the canvas. This one's actually, now that I'm seeing it in the light, is the one that we put the resist on. So that's right there. I'm gonna use my dowel to fish out the backs of the pillow. I'm using my hands to squeeze out the excess dye so I don't make too much of a mess. This is also a great project to do outside. Open this one up and set it aside. And now we're gonna undo the grid. I like to take my hands and squeeze out any dye. Undo the rubber bands. Try to be careful not to splatter yourself with indigo. For this part I'm gonna take my gloves off and put them back on, I don't want to transfer dye from my gloves onto the front of the pillow. You un-sandwich the cotton. It's nice to have a rag handy to clean up any spills. I love watching this fluorescent green oxidize in the air and turn the dark indigo blue. It's really magical. Look at that perfect grid that we have. For the last one that we wrapped around the dowel I'm gonna put my gloves back on to take it out. I'm really excited to see how this turned out. I'm gonna squeeze it to get any excess dye out of the fabric and place it on a rag. Alright for this part I like to take my gloves off your hands are gonna get just a little bit blue but you have so much more control. I have a pair of scissors and I'm just gonna gently snip the twine. Be careful not to cut your cotton. Alright, I'm gonna discard my snipped twine. And unwrap. Put your dowel down. Oh this is cool. This technique has a little bit more of a subtle effect. There will be a lot more variations in the blues that you get as opposed to stark white. Not quite as much contrast but I think it's really really cool. And you can see the lines starting to appear where we tied with the thread. So you can definitely experiment with this. Use more twine to get a different effect or wrap at a diagonal instead of straight across if you want to

try that as well. So we'll just let this oxidize which can take up to 20-30 minutes depending on the piece of fabric. You're gonna want to rinse it in a sink until the water runs clear. You can do this in your kitchen sink just make sure to clean it thoroughly when you're done. Or outside with a hose. You can even throw these into the washing machine on a normal cycle.

### Rinsing

- These have all be rinsed, but I also suggest that you put them through a cycle in the washing machine so they don't transfer any pigment onto your clothing or upholstery. You can use the indigo vat for up to three days. It will start to be a little bit stinky after a couple of days, and the first day you're gonna get dark intense colors like the ones that you see here. The second day, the colors are gonna be a little bit less intense. And by the third day, you're gonna get lighter more watercolory colors like you see right here. But you can still use it for quite a while. When you wanna dispose of it, simply pour it down your sink, and then rinse your sink well with soap and water.

## Chapter 5 - Pillowcase

### Sewing an envelope pillowcase

- I'm gonna make my pillow. I chose the grid pattern that we dyed because I really like the way that it turned out. I'm gonna press it flat before I start sewing and then set it aside. And now I'm gonna prepare the back of the envelope closure pillow. This is a really fast and easy way to make a throw pillow in just a few minutes. You're gonna take one of the edges and fold it over about a quarter of an inch, and press it flat. Fold it one more time over on itself, and press again. This'll create a nice, clean edge for the back of our pillow. Pin it in place. Iron and pin the other half of your pillow back. I already have mine here, and we're gonna stitch down this hem. I'm trying to get as close to this folded edge as possible, so we have a nice clean line for the back of our pillow. (thumping) Then a back stitch here at the end. Go ahead and sew along the edge of the other one as well. (thumping) To make our pillow, I'm gonna put the right sides together, although there's really no right or wrong side to the indigo 'cause it's been dyed all the way through for the back. You wanna place this stitched edge face down onto the front side of your pillow, with these raw edges lining up. And repeat with the second piece. Now we're gonna pin everything in place. Now stitch around the entire perimeter of your pillow with a half-inch seam allowance. (thumping) Now I'm gonna turn my pillow right side out. I like to start at the corners and use my thumb to flip out the corners, so it's nice and crisp. And I'm loving the contrast of this dark indigo blue with the grid pattern on the white. Really, really happy with how it turned out. Now you can see here on the back of your pillow you have a nice envelope closure. Makes it really easy to remove the pillow form. I have my pillow form, and I'm gonna place it inside the case that we just made. I like to make sure that the corners are stuffed in. Now, you have a beautiful throw pillow to decorate your home. Now that you've fallen in love with indigo dying, here are a couple variations that you can try. I used the water-based resist from Jacquard with a stamp to create this triangle pattern. You can also see that it's just a little bit lighter than what we did today because this was on the third day of my indigo bath before I poured it out. So, I really like this one a lot. You can also use the resist through a hand-cut stencil. I just did some simple leaf shapes here and then rotated it a little bit to get this motif, and I like this one, too. This one here I placed a quarter; you could also use any coin or round object, even a square piece of wood, something like that, in the center of my fabric and then wrapped tightly with twine down. So it was kind of like this wrapped with twine with a quarter right here. Put it in the indigo bath, and it turned out like this. I think this is a really fun one. It's a little bit more of a

traditional tie-dye look. And I also like this grid, which I turned into a pillow. I folded this on the diagonal, so instead of folding it into the grid like we did today, I folded from one corner to the other diagonally, and it made this beautiful pattern. I really hope that you'll try indigo dyeing; it's a really fun thing to do with a group of people. Everybody can bring over t-shirts, fabric, handkerchiefs, and kids really, really love it.