

# Silk Painting

## using PRO MX Reactive Dyes

Please read directions carefully before starting.

*Use PRO MX Reactive Dyes for Traditional Silk Painting with a resist, on silk fabric only. This process will not work on cotton, rayon or linen. Always do test samples before working on a large project. For additional information, visit our web site at [www.prochemicalanddye.com](http://www.prochemicalanddye.com)*

- ✘ Wear rubber gloves, apron or old clothes.
- ✘ All utensils used for dyeing should not be used for food preparation.

### Supplies

PRO MX Reactive Dyes  
Urea  
Citric Acid Crystals  
Synthrapol  
Gutta or Sabra Silk Resist

### Procedure

- 1. Scour the fabric** by machine washing in HOT 140°F (60°C) water, or by hand in a pot on the stove with ½ tsp (2 gm) PRO Dye Activator or Soda Ash and ½ tsp (2.5 ml) Synthrapol per pound of fabric (454 gm, or 3 to 4 yards cotton muslin, or 8 yards 8mm China Silk, or 3 Medium T-shirts, or 1 sweatshirt). Rinse thoroughly. This step does not add the dye fixative to the fabric; it prepares your fabric for dyeing by removing any dirt, oil or sizing.
- 2. Transfer the design** to your fabric using a soft pencil. You may want to draw your design freehand or use a light table to help you transfer the design. You can also use a window or sliding glass door. Tape the pattern to the glass surface; then tape the fabric over the pattern and lightly trace the design onto the fabric.
- 3. Stretch the fabric.** Use a lightweight silk for your first attempts, as the resist penetrates easily on light weight fabrics. There are several frames available on the market to stretch fabric for silk painting. You can also make your own using an artist stretcher frame and stainless steel pushpins. First pin the corners, then the middle of the sides, pulling the fabric taut. You can avoid stretch lines by staggering the placement of the pushpins and not placing them directly across from one another. Continue placing pins every 2 to 3 inches around all four sides, always pinning from the center to the corners.
- 4. Apply the resist** by pressing the applicator tip firmly against the stretched fabric. It is important to maintain an even flow and continuous line as you trace the design. Dye paint will flow through any gaps in the resist line. Check the back of your fabric to make sure the resist penetrated through. If you see any gaps, fill them in from the front. You may need to apply the resist on both sides of heavy fabric. Once you've outlined your design, let the resist dry.

**5. Prepare chemical water** by mixing together the ingredients below. Allow chemical water to cool to room temperature before using. This should be stored in a covered container, when not in use. **Discard it if you detect an ammonia smell.**

¾ cup (188 ml) warm 120°F(49°C) water  
5 tsp (20 gm) Urea  
1 tsp (6 gm) Citric Acid Crystals  
¼ tsp (1.25 ml) Synthrapol  
Water to equal one cup (250 ml)

**6. Make the Dye Paint.** Thoroughly dissolve the desired amount of dye powder, from the following chart, with just enough chemical water to make a lump free paste (approximately ¼ cup or 60 ml). Then add chemical water to make 1 cup (250 ml) of Dye Paint and stir until thoroughly mixed. Dye paint will retain maximum color yield for 4-5 hours.

For each cup of Dye Paint, use the amount listed below of PRO MX Reactive Dye powder for the desired shade.

	Pale	Medium	Dark	Black
Dye Powder	½ tsp (1.5 gm)	2 tsp (5 gm)	4 tsp (10 gm)	8 tsp (20 gm)

**7. Apply the dye.** Fill a wide mouth container with water; use this to rinse your brushes. The size of the area you are painting determines the size of brush you need. Use a small brush for small areas and a larger brush to cover bigger areas. Dip the brush into the dye paint and lightly touch the brush to the center of an enclosed area. Allow the dye paint to spread out to the resist line. Continue adding dye paint and blending brush strokes or colors while dye is still wet and until the enclosed area is filled. Work quickly to prevent the dye from drying before you have all the color applied to an area. Be careful not to flood the fabric with too much dye, or the resist lines will break. Use a cotton swab or dry brush to mop up extra dye that pools in an enclosed area. Do not paint over the resist line.

**8. Fix the dye,** by covering your silk with plastic (a black plastic bag works great) to prevent the silk from drying out. Allow the dyes to cure for 24 hours or longer. The temperature of the room must be above 70°F (21°C). The warmer the “cure” temperature, the darker the final color.

**9. Rinse the fabric.** After setting the dye, rinse fabric thoroughly in a bucket of room temperature 75°F to 95°F (24°C to 35°C) water. Change the water 3 to 4 times. Then wash with very HOT 140°F (60°C) water adding ½ tsp (2 ml) Synthrapol per pound (454 gm) of fabric. Rinse well and dry. Black and very dark colors may need a second HOT Synthrapol wash.

By the way, this technique works well on lightweight cotton, linen, and rayon fabrics. Follow the methods for mixing chemical water and for fixing the dyes as outlined in our Direct Application directions.
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