

MAKING SHIBORI DYED PAPER

What you need:

- Lightweight calligraphy paper or other absorbent, 'strong when wet' paper like Japanese washi paper
- Silk ink /silk paint (iron fixable)
- Plastic covering for table and plastic sheet to lay wet paper out on

What you do:

1. Cut pieces of calligraphy paper to the size you want. Fold the paper into triangles, squares, or concertina to end up with a small folded piece approx 3cm x 3cm.
2. Prepare three pots of silk ink or dye. Used margarine tubs would be fine for this. Put a couple of tablespoons of ink into each put then add a little water to each pot –maybe about 30% water would be fine.
3. Dip the folded paper into each colour pot in turn, starting with the lightest. Dip one corner into the first colour, lift out and squeeze gently to stop it dripping. Turn the paper bundle around and dip a different corner or side into the next colour pot and squeeze again if need be. Finally dip a side or a point into the third colour and squeeze the excess off. (if you want you could re-dip one of the points into a contrasting colour. So if you have a yellow point you could dip it quickly into blue and the very end of it will start to colour green.) Wrap the whole bundle in kitchen paper and squeeze gently.
4. Remove from the kitchen paper and carefully unfold the dyed paper taking care not to tear it while it is wet. Lay it out to dry and finally iron the paper between sheets of plain paper resting on an old towel or sheet that you don't mind getting colour on. The ironing helps to fix the colour (although most silk ink colour seems to fix well when it is airdried at normal room temperature.) However, you may want to iron the paper to straighten it out for use in craft activities.

