

SALT, UREA AND WATERMARK TECHNIQUES

TECHNIQUE COMPATIBILITY		
	WITH HEATFIX DYES	WITH STEAMFIX DYES
A. Salt T.	YES, FAIR	YES, V.G.
B. Urea T.	YES, FAIR	YES, EXC.
C. Watermark T.	YES, FAIR	YES, EXC.

A. SALT MARKING TECHNIQUE

One of the most popular natural patterns in fabric painting is that produced by dry salt on freshly dyed wet fabric, salt being a humectant attracts moisture and also has a negative effect on dye solubility. These two characteristics yield all sorts of 'comet tail' flowing patterns, when dry salt is left strewn over dye wetted fabric. **Measures that enhance the salt effect** are as follows:

- Oven **dry the salt** just prior to usage.
- **Add a few drops of DIFFUSANT to the dye** so spreadability is enhanced.
- The **fabric should be unevenly wet with dye** (not flooded and not too dry) so that the dye itself is still in the process of spreading to even out the wetness all over the fabric's surface. Quickly apply the dry salt before this dye spreading has fully subsided.
- **Choose days for the salt technique, when the humidity is not, too high or too low:**
 - if the humidity is too high then the air moisture will be competing with the dye moisture to satiate the salt's appetite for moisture and you can find your salt granules sitting in puddles of moisture. The effect is a washout!
 - if the humidity is too low then the dye on the fabric dries too quickly before the salt design has taken effect properly.

SALT TECHNIQUE DETAIL LOSS DURING STEAM FIXATION.

Some dyes in the Procolour Range take longer to fix than others, during steam fixation. Because the salt residue on the fabric is hygroscopic it attracts excessive moisture from the steam which can slightly mobilise the dye before it is stopped immovably due to steam fixation. So understanding salt's moisture hungry nature, it is easy to see why some dyes, that are not quick to fix, have more time to mobilise and loose detail during steaming. A salt marking effect evaluation for each dye colour is given in column 12, on Table II, 'Procolour Dye Usage and Performance Guide.'

Notes

- Procolour STEAMFIX DYES are not unique in their susceptibility to salt induced detail loss, simply, no other dye ranges bother to deal with performance aspects in such depth.
- Different size salt granules give slightly different effects. Usually salt comes in three easily procurable sizes:

fine	=	table salt (grains up to ½ mm across)
medium	=	rock salt for salt grinders (granules up to 3 mm across)
large	=	salt lick (used as a farm corn food supplement sold in 10 kg blocks which can be broken up with a hammer)
- Whenever any of these salt, urea, sugar or run techniques reach their optimum effect, there's no need to wait for the painting to dry naturally and risk having the desired effect dissipate. Freeze the image instantly by quick drying it on the blowheater table face down (the downward side always turns out brightest).

B. UREA MARKING TECHNIQUE

Like salt, urea is a humectant and thus has a powerful effect on fabric paintings freshly wet with dye, however the pattern it produces is uniquely different from that produced by salt. Though **urea marking is performed in the same way as the salt technique** and it is mostly subject to the same parameters, but listed below are key differences:

- the outcome is more reliable than the salt technique
- the patterns produced are more dramatic than salt technique
- the technique is much less susceptible to detail loss during steam fixation
- urea is used commercially as farm agricultural fertilizer and comes in granular form. These granules are difficult to control because they roll out of place easily on the fabric surface during marking.
- as a marking technique it is not nearly as common as the salt technique.

Sugar is another similar marking agent for fabric painting however its effect is less dramatic than either salt or urea.

C. WATER MARKING TECHNIQUE

This fabric painting technique involves building up layers of the pattern produced by the dark periphery left as wet dye or water spots spread to their limits, before succumbing to surrounding dryness. It is paramount, to the success of this technique, that each new layer of dye or water is overpainted onto bone dry fabric. For this to be time wise practical it needs to be done on the blowheater table explained in TECH. INFO. SH. 3. However, when using the blowheater, it is important to remember that the heater will attract the dye to the under side of the fabric, rather than the top side, so the bottom will appear brighter after fixation. The sequence, in which the colours are applied, is also important. Apply the dark colours first and finish with the pastels or water. A

water marking effect evaluation for each dye colour is given in column 13, on Table II, 'Procolour Dye Usage and Performance Guide.'