Dyeing Laces and Trims

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Why is Hand-Dyeing Laces and Trims Important in Intimate Apparel Design?

- As functional garments, intimates typically involve MANY different components (straps, elastics, multiple lace trims, etc), which need to match one another.
- Limiting yourself to only using stock trims and components limits your designs
- Production dye minimums for various components are high, and local/sample dyeing is expensive, and typically is charged per component
- So, in the sampling/prototype stage, many design rooms will dye their own components to match.
- Dyeing laces and trims is often part of the job for design assistants/entry-level intimates designers

Health and Safety

- When using powdered dye, be sure to wear a mask
- Gloves and a rubber apron or DIY trash bag smock will protect your clothing and skin from being dyed
- Use dyes in a well-ventilated area
- Dedicate a non-reactive bowl or plastic tub for dyeing (no metal)

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Step 1: Dyes and Fiber Types

- Determine the fiber content of your trims, if possible.
- Cellulose Fibers like Rayon, Cotton, Linen all dye relatively easily with standard RIT-type dye
- Nylon also takes dye easily and can be dyed with either RIT-type dye or dye for synthetics (iDye)
- Animal Protein fibers like Silk and Wool dye best with acid dyes (Jacquard brand)
- **Due to its tight molecular structure, Polyester is extremely challenging to dye, even with dyes formulated for synthetics. Avoid trying to dye polyester trims deep or bright colors.**

Step 2: Color Analysis

- Look at the color you are attempting to match, to determine the starting point for your dye bath
- Keeping a palette of basic colors in liquid dye will give you options to create a variety of colors (IE RIT Lemon Yellow, Scarlet, Fuchsia, Royal Blue, Aquamarine, Cocoa Brown, Tan, Black etc)

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Step 3: Wash your fabric/trims

- Before dyeing, wash your fabric/trim in warm water (by hand is fine!)
- Washing your fabric/trim will remove any finishes that could interfere with the dyeing process
- Never put dry fabric/trim into a dye bath--it will be splotchy and look very bad

Step 4: Find your dye mix

- Add a small amount of your starting dye to your basin of warm water
- Using small swatches of each component to be dyed, make tests to create the exact shade you're matching. Different trims may require slightly tweaked dye baths
- Check your color matching in multiple types of light (sunlight & artifical light)
- Wet items look different when they're dry, so drying your swatches between paper towels with an iron can speed up the process (BE SURE TO USE A DEDICATED CLOTH TOWEL TO IRON ON AND PROTECT YOUR IRON/IRONING BOARD)
- Keeping a dye swatch reference notebook to reference different dye mixes will help you improve and learn, and replicate colors later.
- Keep in mind your color wheel when mixing--to grey out a color, add the complementary color, etc.
- Light colors can be dyed quickly, dark colors may require more time in the dye bath, diluting the bath with water can help make light colors dye more evenly.

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Step 5: Dye

- Place your wet, clean fabric/trim to be dyed in the bath.
- Make sure it isn't too crowded--dye needs room to penetrate evenly
- Gently agitate by hand for an even color

Step 6: Rinse Thoroughly

- Rinse by fully submerging the dyed trim into a basin full of clean, warm water and agitating gently by hand.
- Keep adding more clean warm water to the basin until it runs clear
- Hand wash the dyed fabric/trim with gentle detergent to remove all remaining dye residue

Step 7: Dry

- Hang or lay flat to dry
- To avoid spotting, separate the trims while drying

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Resources:

- **Rit** https://www.ritdye.com/

  All Purpose Dye: Cotton, Rayon, Nylon

  DyeMore: Polyester, Acrylic, Acetate

- **Jacquard Dyes** https://www.jacquardproducts.com/

  Acid Dye: Animal Fibers: Silk, Wool, Feathers

  iDye Poly: Polyester, Nylon, Poly/Cotton, Plastic Buttons/

Coated Hardware