

Deborah treated us to an extraordinarily detailed demonstration of a seemingly complex process quite new to almost all of us.

It was about making a Batik picture not on cloth but using 'acid free premium quality' tissue papers of different colours. All her materials come from 'Great Art'.

She began by making a lino-cut of a scene - a woodland forest - which she then inked up with a mixture of red and blue ink using a palette knife. The ink she described as 'oil based but water washable'. She used a roller to ink the lino block and laid on it a sheet of pink tissue. She smoothed the paper down on the lino block with a 'baren' - a round hand-held pad - a useful little device, she said, costing about £12. She then dried the tissue with a hair dryer.

Taking this sheet she then treated it in lines with hot wax, using a 'Tjantin'. This was new to us but the effect of the wax was to keep unchanged anything which was underneath it. This would therefore stay pink while the rest became transparent.

A Tjantin



Taking the paper Deborah applied various other treatments to the surface, painting it with other colours - blue, green and yellow, also applying a weak bleaching solution. Having done this she then scrunpled up the paper in her hands in order to crack the wax making it less solid, also spreading the effect of the bleach and the still damp paints.

Working with a kind of mysterious artistic alchemy, Deborah then laid out several sheets of tissue of different colours – purple, blue, yellow and brown, Once again using the tjantin in lines of hot wax, painting the trees and spraying with bleach, she dabbed them to make the treatments go through the several layers of paper.

Steps in the process



Returning to the now dry pink painting she applied some yellow and turquoise dye to parts of it and using a dry iron she ironed it on the other layers of tissue. This resulted in a single mass of paper which she could separate revealing exact copies of the original drawing but all in different colours - some with blue trees and some with yellow.

Separating and Ironing the sheets



Finally Deborah took a sheet of boxboard and glued strips of the various sheets in a sequence to make them into a collage of colour and pattern. Some side by side, some on top of each other, sticking smaller torn pieces from a sheet to make the board complete. In order to reduce the hard lines of any edges, she used a scalpel to cut out shapes from the top layer of tissue to show the next colour underneath. We all marvelled at the end result of the original woodland, transformed in shape and colour.

Deborah and the end result



We may not have followed all the steps in the process, but Deborah offered to send us an Instruction Sheet, and for anyone wanting to take the idea further, a practical workshop was available.