

## SPOTLIGHT: Bingata An Approach to Textile Design



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Title of Piece: Robe with Bingata (Paste-Resist) Floral Decoration on Yellow Ground

Year created: circa 1950

Artist: Unknown

There are ten labor-intensive steps to producing Okinawan Bingata:

1. Papers are coated with persimmon tannin and sealed together to form a firm sheet. A design is drawn onto the paper directly or traced from another source. The details are cut with a small blade and afterwards it is coated again to keep it from bending.
2. A special rice paste made from boiled rice, rice bran, and water is scraped across the top of the stencil on the cloth.
3. If a large area needs to be painted, a freehand technique is used to apply the rice-paste resist onto the fabric. The paste is put into a bag and squeezed onto the fabric.
4. Paints are painted onto the fabric starting from lighter to darker colors. One design can use from 9 to 18 different colors.

5. To achieve a more vibrant color the paints are added once more and this time rubbed into the cloth with a stiff brush made from human hair.
6. Details around the edges of each object are added to emphasize the image. Next the fabric is steamed so the colors will set into the fabric and then it is washed.
7. To paint the background a separate color, the rice-paste resist is now placed on all the previously painted areas.
8. The entire background of the fabric is painted with a wide brush or dipped in a dye bath.
9. The fabric is set in a steamer for an hour to let the colors set.
10. The fabric is washed and dried.

Possible question themes to use when discussing this piece with museum visitors:

1. Artistic process (compared to woodblock printing)
2. Use of color, line and shape
3. Negative and positive space
4. Gradations
5. Art versus decoration
6. Patterns and repetition

Tour Type: Learning to Look, Explore Asia

Additional Notes and Sources: Example of Bingata in the JSMA Collection:

<https://jsmacollection.uoregon.edu/mwebcgi/mweb?request=record;id=16107;type=101>