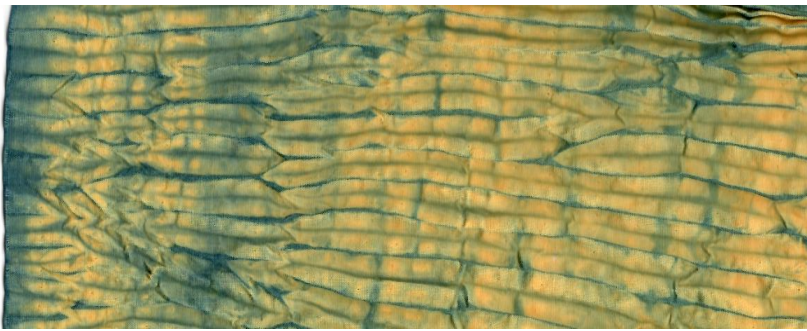


Shibori is a centuries-old surface design technique where cloth is shaped from 2D to 3D and secured by various methods to develop patterns when dyeing – usually with indigo. The Japanese verb *shiboru* = to wring, squeeze, press. Each method results in a particular pattern. Yoshiko Iwamoto Wada, artist and scholar, documented Japanese artisans¹ and shared shibori with the world. Wada is a leading authority, teaching workshops, leading tours globally, and making vital connections via the World Shibori Network, the Slow Fibers movement, and natural dye networks.²

Stitching Methods – A great variety of designs are possible with **simple stitching techniques** (e.g. running stitch). The names of the stitches typically refer to the resulting pattern/imagery. The stitching is worked with strong thread and long needles, then drawn up snugly and secured in preparation for the dye process. Shibori developed hand-in-hand with indigo (oxygen-reactive). Tight bundling of the cloth prevents dye from entering into the bound areas, creating a resist. Shibori techniques are also referred to as “shaped resist”.³

hira-nui - a single line of running stitch in a single layer of cloth

mokume - multiple parallel rows of *hira-nui* worked in a single layer of cloth, usually from selvedge to selvedge across an entire piece of cloth (yielding a woodgrain pattern).



Mokume – Sample 1: Rows of hira-nui were worked vertically resulting in a horizontal pattern perpendicular to the rows of stitching. Yellow cotton, dyed with indigo.



Sample 2: rows of stitching being worked diagonally. Rows on the right have been drawn up, forming “ridges”.

Surface Design Development – While studying with Ms. Wada years ago I became intrigued with *mokume* in particular. While it is labor-intensive, it is low-tech and highly portable. The organic nature of this technique can be manipulated to resemble various textures or patterns found in nature. Working with earthy color palettes led me to experiment with paint instead of indigo. After the cloth has been stitched and the threads drawn up, ridges are formed. Using various methods these ridges can be painted.

For dyeing in indigo, the threads must be tied up with maximum compression, without breaking threads. The bundle gets “wet out” before dyeing with indigo. For painting, one may use wet-into-wet or wet-into-dry techniques as desired. Use your favorite paints or thickened dyes and set per directions. When the dyeing/painting process is complete snip the threads carefully and pull threads out completely; long thread tails facilitate this. Press as desired. Paint may be heat set before or after removing threads.⁴

¹ For a video excerpt see <https://shop.slowfiberstudios.com/collections/video/products/arimatsu-narumi-shibori-dvd>

² <https://shibori.org/> Their Slow Fibers Studio Shop offers traditional shibori tools and supplies.

³ <https://shop.slowfiberstudios.com/collections/print/products/shibori-japanese-shaped-resist-dyeing>

⁴ Paint/Dye Suppliers:

<https://www.meininger.com/product-information/> (locations in Denver area)

<https://www.dharmatrading.com/>

<https://www.dickblick.com/>