

# Cover Story: A Week of Glorious Colour

by Barbara Harrodine

At the end of June, I spent a week at Studio Preniac in South West France doing a course tutored by Ruth Issett. Ruth, a member of the Textile Study Group, is renowned for her use of colour. I knew of Ruth as I have a book written by her and had done a Zoom course with her from Bobby Britnell's studio in June 2021.

We brought bundles of fabrics made from silk and from plant fibres with us to the course. I took a variety of cottons and linens including old sheeting, organdie, lawn, some viscose satin plus some silk noil and organza. We spent the week with those fabrics, Procion dyes, Manutex, devoré paste, sponge brushes, mark making tools, stencils, printing blocks, acetate sheets, gloves and white bin liners.

Our first task was to dye strips made up of a number pieces of our different fabrics tacked together (below). We laid them on the bin liners, painted the dyes onto them and rolled them up together with the bin liners, leaving them overnight to allow the dye to penetrate. The following day we rinsed and dried them. (Photo opposite, below.)

We each chose our colour palettes and I began with a range of reds: scarlet, carmine and magenta and the same three reds with jet black added. I was curious about how the black would change them. After those, I moved on to use antique gold, orange and black followed by lemon yellow, golden yellow and magenta. In all, I finished with 32 pieces of brightly dyed fabric (see cover).

I had gone to the course with a mission. Last September, after I had booked for Studio Preniac this year, I began an online City & Guilds Level 3 Certificate course with Gillian Cooper Studios ([gilliancooperstudio.co.uk](http://gilliancooperstudio.co.uk)). The first project is an interior design item and I decided to make a lampshade using appliquéd silk noil.



Left: Applying the dyes

My inspiration came from Gaudi's red and yellow stained glass windows in the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona; I had been there last November. The week with Ruth was an ideal opportunity to spend time (long overdue) developing my ability to create strong red shades on silk noil.

Then we moved on to devoré using silk/viscose satin and georgette fabrics. I had never used devoré paste before so my results were hit and miss, largely because I adopted a 'what if I try...' approach. Some things worked and others didn't. Importantly, I learned. Others, more experienced, produced beautiful work. Finally, we did some monoprinting with thickened dye. I used the time as a chance to push myself out of my comfort zone, again learning much.

Ruth is a great teacher and, on the last morning, gave us individual feedback about our work. Really valuable. I am very happy to have had the opportunity to be taught by her and to spend a week dabbling with dye.

I have been to courses given by various textile artists at Studio Preniac [studiopreniac.com](http://studiopreniac.com) over a number of years and would recommend it highly. Nicki and Chris, the owners, are great hosts and the accommodation and studio facilities excellent. I believe that they are about to begin advertising in 'The Quilter' so look out for it!



Above right: Experiment with devoré by Jackie Rose



Left: Samples drying

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS ON THIS PAGE ARE BY NICKI BOSWELL.