

Sunflower Saddened

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My design scholarship explores applications of natural dyes on textiles. This particular garment is the result of experimenting with sunflower (*Helianthus maximiliani*) and an iron modifier. Sunflower heads typically yield an acidic yellow-green color when extracted as a dye; however, the addition of iron to the dye bath 'saddens' or grays the color toward a muted green. The sleeveless dress, *Sunflower Saddened*, was the result of combining samples created to explore the use of iron to modify the color of sunflower dye. The dress design resulted from a desire to fully utilize the samples; thus shaping was created through pleating and diagonally cutting the samples to create opposing gores.

The dye process included scouring, mordant pre-treatment, physical resists, dyeing with and without an iron modifier. Bamboo/spandex jersey knit fabric was pre-treated with an aluminum acetate mordant. Fabric samples were physically resisted through folding and clamping (*itajime*) or pole wrapping (*arashi*). Folding was done as square and triangle bundles with rectangle and circle shaped resists. The *bomaki* technique of pole wrapping was done by scrunching a stitched fabric tube onto a PVC pipe.

Fresh sunflower heads harvested from my garden were heated in water to extract the dye followed by the addition of dissolved iron at 1-2% of weight of fabric to be dyed. Fabrics were dyed in the sunflower only bath and/or the saddened baths resulting in a color shifts from yellow-green to gray-green. The orange fabrics were scraps from a prior project that used stitched resist and cosmos (*Cosmos sulfureus*) flowers as dye.



The dress design was created by draping the dyed rectangle fabric samples on a dress form. Fabrics were pleated to create shape at the center front and back. Side panel samples were cut in half vertically at an angle. The angled pieces were sewn to other angled pieces to create the flared side seam. Silk embroidery floss was dyed in the sunflower and iron bath. Hand-stitching secures the pleats at center front and back.

