

# Batik-the art of colours

The age-old traditional technique of creating art with layers of hot wax and coloured dyes has come back into the limelight in the recent years, becoming more popular than it ever was. Commonly known as batik, three-pieces and fabric rolls in vibrant batik prints of varying quality are visible even on many street corners. The lusty colours, and the hundreds of possible combinations, have won the hearts of both fashion-lovers and art-enthusiasts all over the world. The specialty of batik lies in its ability to blend modern and traditional art to create unique designs.

Practiced for centuries, the history of batik goes as far as 4th century BC in Egypt. Soon enough, Asia caught up, with China being the pioneer and the Indian subconti-

nent and Japan quickly following. But it was actually in Java, Indonesia, where the art of batik was perfected. In fact, even the word batik originates from the Javanese tik, which means to dot.

Till date, Indonesia produces some of the finest batik patterns in the world and even has a specific day of the week where all officials celebrate the batik culture by wearing batik clothes to work! However, this extraordinary art form would have still been unknown to the rest of the world had it not been for the Europeans. So, with an impressive display at the Exposition Universelle at Paris in 1900, batik's foray in the international arena truly began.

The batik scene has been rather vibrant in Bangladesh since long, with bright hues



such as magenta and sky-blue being dominant. Village-women would spend hours making the perfect batik sari or bedsheet. With the batik business especially being prominent in Comilla, plenty of small factories are quite involved with the tradition, constantly improving to keep up with the worldwide scene.

Over the years, the evolution of batik has been rather extraordinary. Contemporary batik is a mixture of a variety of styles and patterns, with new techniques such as etching and discharge dyeing being introduced on a regular basis. From abstract designs to detailed prints, batik artists have made it a point to produce unique vibrant artworks for their admirers.

In fact, some have taken it up a notch, producing colour-coordinated themes, and even incorporating surrealism and other concepts into their work.

Making batik fabric is actually quite a labour-intensive technique of wax-resist dyeing. While various types of dye and wax is used on natural fabrics such as cotton and silk, the finer weaves work best for detailed work. Skilled batik maestros often go through a rigorous process of repeated waxing and dyeing, which require great aptitude of colour mixing and over dyeing.

Dots and lines of the resist are often made with a spouted tool or by printing the resist with a copper stamp. Finally, the wax is removed by boiling out and you are left with a beautiful masterpiece.

With more and more techniques being introduced, batik art is only going to get more sophisticated. And while designers bring you the best of them, this wondrous art truly has a long way to go.

**By Adiba Mahbub Proma**  
**Photo: Collected**

## KUNDALINI RISING

BY SHAZIA OMAR

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does not change you. The real work out is in the breathing, and in the ability to maintain the discipline of a daily practice.

## ALL AGES

**You wish you had started when you were 20?**

Yoga comes to you when you are ready. In Koh Samui, I met a woman named Dorian (<http://www.becomingunbound.com/>) who was 35 and acted like she was 25 and in love. I asked her what her secret was. To my surprise, she said she was 65! She started yoga at the age of 63. She easily slipped into a headstand, then back to her feet, and beamed a smile. She said, "Next I want to learn ballet."

## ALL FITNESS LEVELS

**Never exercised before?**

No problem. Stamina, flexibility and strength increase with practice. Asanas are modified to each person's own level of capacity. People with back aches, knee injuries and circulation ailments are often recommended yoga as a means of rehabili-

tation. 'Yoga Chikitsa' and 'yoga therapy' have been instrumental in many forms of recovery; physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

Tim Feldmann (<http://timfeldmann.com/>) broke all his bones in a 60 foot fall from a cliff. Doctors said he would never walk again. Yoga changed his life. Not only did he teach himself to walk again, he is now a world-famous yoga teacher who helps others on their own journeys of growth.

## ALL FAITHS

Yoga contains nothing hurtful or contradictory to any faith or creed. It uses most of the methods advocated by the great religions, mystics and sages as a means to God-consciousness and to render the body a fit vehicle for spiritual illumination. In diverse forms, the seers of India, the Taoists of China, the Buddhist arhats, the Sufis of the Middle East, the Zen masters in Japan, the Siddhas of Tibet and the mystics of the West have attained enlightenment through yoga. The Sage Krishna Gopi said, "The aim of Yoga is the elevation of the narrow, fearful, desire-tormented human consciousness to

a state of indescribable beauty, glory and bliss. This is the aim of all religious striving too, this transmutation of the human mind, culminating in its liberation from the chains of ego to a world infinitely vaster and more mysterious and breath-taking than the material universe."

## ALL GENDERS

While glamorous divas like Rachel Brathen may be the Instagram image of yoga today, in the past yoga was a form of training for fierce male warriors! Yoga brings grace and balance but also strength and power. Sometimes women tend to be more flexible and men tend to be stronger; either way, yoga brings to each what s/he lacks. Yoga also helps us balance the male/female energies within ourselves.

**By Shazia Omar**

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## YOGA IS FOR ALL

Contrary to popular misconception, yoga is not only for those who are calm, flexible and strong. While sculpted bodies and enviable serenity may be outcomes of long term yogic practices, one need not have such characteristics to begin with. You can do yoga! Yoga can truly help anyone!

## ALL SIZES

**Are you over-weight, under-weight, too tall, very small, fleshy, bony, round...?**

It does not matter! Yoga postures help all body types. When you are on the mat, there is no competition, no winning or losing. You gently push yourself, slightly past your own limits, to a point where you start to feel challenged. What does not challenge you,