MAKERS MANUAL #28
Team Thursday

PATTERN BLEACHED TABLECLOTH

INTRODUCTION

Tablecloths are usually subtle, neutral surfaces on which festive buffets and intimate conversations can take place. However, the cloth itself could be an expressive present object on the table, part of the atmosphere on the table or perhaps even a conversation starter.

With this manual you will make a repetitive pattern out of 1 letter, that is bleached onto sturdy jeans fabric. This can be used as a tablecloth, picnic blanket or even bedspread.

LIST OF THINGS

→ pen and paper
→ thick kitchen gloves
→ ceramic or plastic bowl
→ bottle of thick bleach
→ sturdy sponge
→ old newspaper or plastic sheet
→ 2000x150mm thick non-stretch black jeans fabric (or any other size that fits your table)
→ flat iron
→ washing machine
→ sewing pins
→ sewing machine

BIO OF THE DESIGNER

We are Loes van Esch and Simone Trum of Studio Team Thursday, a graphic design studio, collaborating as a duo since 2010. We focus on the design of visual identities and books varying in scale and complexity. We also host exhibitions and events in the front part of our studio space: TTHQ. We work with cultural institutions, businesses and individuals. In addition to our daily practice we teach Typography at ArtEZ Arnhem.

FURTHER READING

→ In Praise of shadows by Junichiro Tanizaki
→ The Grammar of Ornament by Owen Jones
→ Interview in Apartamento #23 with Samiro Yunoki

Makers Manual is a collaborative project between exciting makers and STORE STORE. Participation is free and no design background is necessary. You can share your creations using #makersmanual. We will pick our favourite submissions and publish the results in a limited printed edition of all of the manuals. Everyone who makes it into the book will receive a free copy.

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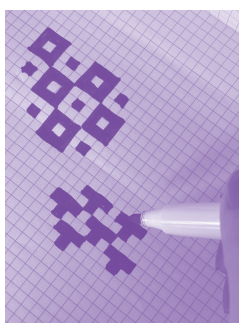
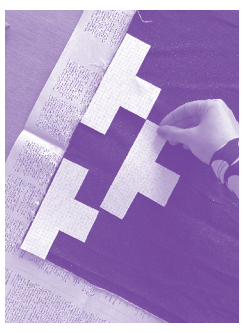
Step 1

Start by choosing a letter from the alphabet. Sketch how this letter can form a repetitive pattern where shape and counter-shape are both letters or where the counter-shape has an interesting form. Sketching on a grid made out of squares helps and straight shapes can repeat more easily than round shapes. Take your time to try some letters and some different shapes for each letter, this might lead to surprising forms (for instance: an O could be round but just as easily square).





Step 2

Decide how big your letter should be and cut it out of (thick) paper, at least 4 times, to the size you want.

If the rest form is different to the letter form, you can also choose to cut out the rest form.

Step 3

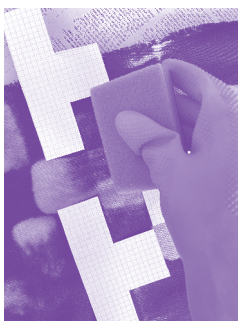
Spread out the newspaper or plastic sheet on the floor. Place the fabric on top of it, make sure it is as flat as possible.

Step 4

Place the cut-out letters/shapes in one of the corners of the fabric. Make sure they are placed straight: this is the basis of your pattern and you will build it up from here.

Step 5

Put on your kitchen gloves and fill the bowl with bleach. Make sure the room is ventilated well or if you can work outside. Cut out the sponge to a size that fits the pattern. Carefully stamp the fabric in between the cut-outs with your sponge. Try out how much bleach you need: start with a modest amount, you can always add more.



Step 6

Once you have stamped all spaces in between the cut-outs with bleach, move the cut-outs to the next empty space of fabric, position them carefully and then continue to stamp.

Step 7

Repeat step 6 until the whole fabric is filled.

Step 8

Wash the fabric to fix the effect of the bleach. Put it under a cold shower first, make sure it's soaking wet. After that, wash in the washing machine. This removes the bleach fumes and prevents the fabric from shrinking after the hems are sewn.

Step 9

Let the fabric dry, and iron it.

Step 10

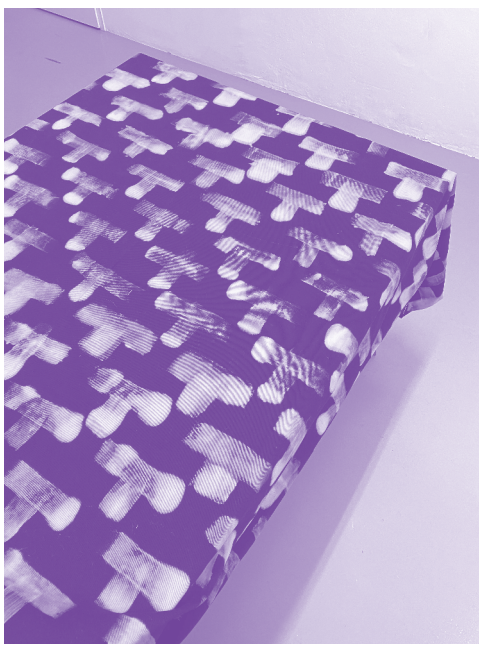
Now you've got your own personalised fabric! We used our fabrics to make curtains, wrap skirts and pillows with the sewing machine. You can use it as it is, as a table cloth or picnic blanket with raw hems, or neatly finish up the hems. Step 11 onwards gives you the instructions to sew the seams for a neat tablecloth.

Step 11

Make sure the sides of your tablecloth are straight. Carefully sew along the edges of the cloth, half an inch from the edge. This will function as a neat folding line, to make sure the hems will be the same size on all sides of the cloth.

Step 12

Use the sewing line to fold the fabric over half an inch. Then fold that over again another half an inch.

Step 13

Pin all of the edges. The fabric should be the wrong side up with the bulk of it away from you and your pins should be stuck in the other way. This makes them easy to pull out from underneath your hem as you sew.