

unevenly, it only adds to the look of this project. As a matter of fact, I prefer an uneven edge.

STEP 2

Melt the paraffin wax to around 180-200 degrees. **This is very important.** If you allow the temperature to go above 200 degrees, a fire may occur. Also, have adequate ventilation when melting the wax because if the wax gets hot enough to smoke the fumes are harmful. If you keep it below 200, it will not smoke.

When you begin the waxing process, it's possible the wax will stick the rice paper to the surface on which it's lying. To prevent this, place a piece of waxed paper under it. Leave the wax paper in place for the entire waxing process. I also leave underneath while painting.

I've included diagrams to help you in the waxing process. The inked areas in each diagram show where to place the wax. With this in mind, begin by waxing all of the inked areas in Diagram 1. (HINT: The diagrams are 'to size', so you may simply place them under the transparent rice paper and you can actually see where to wax)!

To wax, simply dip the brush into the hot wax and spread it onto the paper. Careful now – too much on the brush and it can surge out onto the paper, so start with just a bit until you get the hang of it. Oops! Did it drip? Great – drips are fantastic and I always put on a few anyway! The wax dries almost instantly on the rice paper. When you're finished waxing, leave the brush sitting in the hot wax, ready to go for the next layer.

After the first layer of wax is on, begin to glaze paint onto the paper as specified on each diagram. Pick up only a small amount of paint. The rice paper has no sizing, so the less wash in your brush, the more control you will have. However, in some cases, the paint will run no matter what you do. Don't worry; expect it to happen. It's OK for soft color to edge out onto other areas – what you don't want is a *sharp edge* of color. When paint edges outward, simply take extra water in your brush and soften the edge. As long as there's not a hard line, it's all right for color to go anywhere and everywhere.

Be sure the paper dries thoroughly after each wash before you put wax on top of it. This is so important. Think of dropping wax into a pail of water – when it hits the surface of the water it hardens instantly. That's exactly what happens when hot wax hits any wet paper – it dries instantly and doesn't actually go into the paper. That means the paper is not protected from the next layer of paint.

You may use a hair dryer, but beware, you could melt the wax! Use a low speed and keep it moving. If the wax melts, don't worry! Keep painting and, at the end, when the wax is removed, you can "tickle" on paint where you need it. It's easy to do.

STEP 3 – FINISHING STEPS

When you've completed through all of the Diagrams, stop and do the following:

When you're sure the paper is dry, give it one more coat of wax over the entire front – to be sure everything has been waxed at least one time. After it has cooled, peel the waxed rice

paper from the waxed paper. Gently crinkle it into a ball. Small cracks may form in the wax. Flatten the paper back out, being careful not to brush or shake off any excess wax pieces that may have loosened. Then apply a wash over the entire paper once more. (I usually use any mix that has already been used in the painting. In this case I used Quinacridone Burnt Orange. The wash will bead up on the surface of the wax. Don't wait for it to dry – go to Step 4 below.

STEP 4

Coat the entire front of the rice paper with wax, going right over the wet beads of wash. Seal them in with the wax!

REMOVING THE WAX

Put down several sheets of newspaper, place your batik on top, then three or so pages on top of that – your batik should be 'sandwiched' in between the newspapers. Heat up the iron to the hot (Cotton) setting and press it down on top of the pile. The heat will melt the wax from the batik and the newspaper will begin to soak it up. When the newspapers are fairly well saturated (you'll see it begin to come thru), replace them with clean papers and continue to iron. Eventually, after maybe three or four times, you'll see the newspapers are mostly clean and the wax has been removed. Don't forget to iron the outer edges!

Surprise! It looks great, doesn't it? It looks more like a fabric than paper. You may now paint any areas that were missed or you feel need a bit extra color. Painting on the rice paper now is completely different than before the wax was removed. A tiny bit of wax remains on the surface, so you must coax the paint into the paper by wiggling your brush a bit.

I also love using Cretacolor Pastel Pencils on a finished piece - anywhere that you may need to clean up an edge, or add a bit of color. These pencils are softer than colored pencils and work well on the rice paper. You can also smudge the color with a finger, to soften it a bit. Fun!

