

V&A Academy

# NATURAL DYEING: A HERITAGE OF COLOUR

Monday 27 July – Friday 31 July 2026

10:30-16:30





## Introduction

Discover the beauty of nature's palette in this five-day natural dyeing experience. This course uncovers the history of natural dyeing in the V&A's collections, giving you private tours with V&A textile conservators and exclusive object handling sessions bringing the history of natural dyeing to life through hands-on learning experiences with V&A curators.

Each day you'll be guided through a practical workshop led by natural dye experts Moderneccentrics. The course will cover all the classical traditional dyes; Madder, Weld, Logwood and Indigo as well as the use of modifiers to extend your palette and shift tone. You will learn how to prepare fibres for dyeing and create your own sample sheets of fabrics and threads.

# Information

Monday to Friday, 27 July 2026 – 31 July 2026. In person at V&A South Kensington.

## Your course leaders

Moderneccentrics are a creative collaboration between artists Jonathan Dredge and Ross Belton. Their practice is based around nature in an urban environment, utilising and repurposing found, recycled and redundant materials. Local and seasonal resources inform Ross' work in particular, part of his attempt to keep their carbon footprint as small as possible. Looking at the urban environment they examine our relationship with the nature that surrounds us. Identity, personal history and experience informs their concerns, as does a desire to reuse, recycle and repurpose.

Ross has worked directly with Jenny Dean, author and renowned natural dyeing expert, for five years, initially as a student in 2018, on the first year long Natural Dyeing Course at Ditchling Museum of Art and Craft, and subsequently as her assistant and co-tutor. Ross continues tutoring at Ditchling and has applied his dyeing skills to his own work, developing further techniques for his own practice, building his reputation as a generous and effective tutor. Together as Moderneccentrics, they have delivered three years of extremely successful courses at the V&A South Kensington and recently a natural dyeing masterclass 'In Search of Red'. Ross has led successful natural dyeing courses at Stepney City Farm, and continues his residencies with the Florence Trust. Jonny has a background in training, having honed his skills as a 'Creative' tutor for Apple and delivered bespoke workshops for a variety of creative groups.

*Note: V&A Academy programmes are subject to change without notice.*

## **Day 1 – Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July**

### *Introduction and Preparation*

- 10.30 Natural dyeing: a short history  
Dye groups, fibre preparation; scouring. Resource preparation and extracting colour.
- 12.00 Prepare the Substantive dye baths and extract colour ready for dyeing (Buckthorn bark, Buddleia and Walnut hulls and Oak galls)
- 13.00 Lunch
- 14.00 Dye Buckthorn bark and Buddleia sample sets and create a combined dye bath with Walnut hulls and Oak galls. Dye Rhubarb Root samples using cold water overnight
- 16.00 Set up Marigold Solar Jar (cold water dyeing)

## **Day 2 – Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> July**

- 10.30 Mordanting (Alum Sulphate, Alum Acetate, Tannin) and Modifying Fibres (Acid, Alkaline, Copper and Iron), Modify substantive sample sets (Buckthorn bark, Pomegranate rind, Rhubarb Root and walnut & oak galls)
- 13.00 Lunch
- 14:00 Textile Conservation Visit and Tour
- 15.00 Set up tannin and iron complex experiment using exhaust oak gall dye. Demonstrate the process to create lake pigments with exhaust dye baths. Steep Sappanwood overnight.

## **Day 3 – Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> July**

### *Adjective Dyes*

- 10.30 Prepare the Adjective dye baths and extract colour ready for dyeing (Sappanwood, Madder, Weld and Logwood)
- 13.00 Lunch
- 14.00 Dye and modify Adjective sample sets. Use exhaust dye baths to create lake pigments. Assemble Substantive dye sample sets.

## **Day 4 – Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> July**

### *Vat Dyes: Blue*

- 10.30 Introduction to indigo dyeing including the 1,2,3 vat. Indigo / Woad / fresh Japanese Indigo
- 12.30 Lunch
- 13.30 Curator talk with Jess Harpley – African Adire
- 15.30 Indigo over-dyeing yellow for greens

## **Day 5 – Friday 31<sup>st</sup> July**

- 10.30 Contact printing, the Art of the bundle Create contact bundles for steaming
- 13.30 Lunch
- 14.30 Sample collation and recap Q&A