

HOW TO BUY AND CARE FOR YOUR PRINTED FABRICS (43)

The fashion trend and styling for summer and spring fashions is print fabrics. The printing of fabrics is similar to dyeing. Instead of color being applied to the whole cloth as in dyeing print color is applied only to specific areas of the cloth to obtain a planned design. Many of the garment styles may remain the same but a new fashion look is achieved by the manufacturers print patterns.

PIGMENT PRINTS

One of the most popular methods of printing is using insoluble coloring particles held to the fabric by an adhesive binder. It is an easy and inexpensive printing process. Any fabric can be printed with any color using the pigment print process. Pigment prints are also referred to as surface prints, lacquer prints, paint prints and gilt (gold prints).

IDENTIFICATION

It is easy to identify a pigment or a surface print. Examine the reverse side of the fabric which denotes less penetration of color on the back.

PROBLEMS

If the pigment prints are not properly applied or set on the fabric in manufacture it will easily lose color from the friction and abrasion in normal wear. Color loss that occurs from friction and abrasion of normal wear is referred to as crocking. When purchasing a new pigment printed garment check the folded and creased areas such as the cuffs, hem and collar for color loss which denotes poor print application. Poorly printed fabrics will not hold their color under conditions of normal wear or any cleaning process.

DRYCLEANING

If you have a pigment printed suit make sure you have both pieces sent to the drycleaners at the same time. The drycleaning process will produce some loss of color that may not be noticeable unless compared to the uncleaned item. Based on my experience and laboratory testing it is unlikely that any pigment printed fabric can be cleaned without any color loss. It would be better if you request of the drycleaner that they use a professional wetcleaning process to clean your garment. Most drycleaning solvents will cause a loss of print because the solvent dissolves the adhesive binder which holds the print to the fabric.

SPOTTING

Do not rub pigment printed fabrics because the color will crock off. Do not use any grease cutting detergents such as Simple Green because the ingredients that are present will loosen the adhesive binder. When working on a stain spot from the opposite side of the fabric if possible. Use an up and down tamping action inside of a rubbing action to loosen the stain.

WASHING

Do not use grease cutting detergents in the wash and avoid the use of fabric softeners which also tend to loosen the adhesive binder. A mild detergent such as Tide is suitable for washing pigment print fabrics. Turn garment inside out and wash on a gentle cycle. Pigment printed fabrics can be dried in a routine manner.