ABSTRACT

TITLE:	Textiles, Natural Dyes, and Sustainability
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ABSTRACT: Until the mid-19th century textile colors came from plants, insects and sea life. In 1856 William Perkins, a teenage English chemist, accidentally discovered a purple synthetic dye he called mauve. This discovery led to an explosion of synthetically produced colors. Today we know about the detrimental impact to our ecological systems from textile processes. For example, an article in Tech Science states: "The wastewater from textile plants is classified as the most polluting of all the industrial sectors. The increased demand for textile products and the proportional increase in their production, and the use of synthetic dyes have together contributed to dye wastewater becoming one of the substantial sources of severe pollution problems in current times." Developing, refining and disseminating sustainable textile practices are presently widespread. These methods range from growing fibers such as cotton without pesticides, to the humane care of animals that provide fiber, to obtaining color from natural organic dye materials. Currently I am exploring the traditional and innovative processes of this dynamic natural dye movement as a medium for my artwork. This presentation will offer a window into the resurgence of natural dye practices and techniques. Via examples of my work as well as other textile artists I will show the beautiful palette and designs that can be accomplished with natural dyes.