



Reversible Silk Wrap Skirt

By: Tanya Alexander

*There are wardrobe staples, and then there are wardrobe **stunners**. Wearable works of art as fashion is something as unique as the individual, and a reversible option makes a piece twice as nice!*



Patterns can be hard to come by and are typically size specific; I wanted to create something that could be loaned out to friends without worrying about size.

This handpainted, reversible skirt is designed to be “one size fits most.”

Thrown over a pair of leggings, you can enjoy a bit of wardrobe versatility by switching from one look to another in seconds!

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Materials:

- Reversible skirt pattern [Click HERE to download full-size pattern](#)
- Qty 4: Jacquard [Hobotai 8mm Silk Scarves 22"x72"](#)
- Silk stretching frame
- Safety pins or tacks
- Rubber bands
- Jacquard's [Auto Fade Pen](#) or soft lead pencil
- Jacquard's [Silk Salt](#)
- Jacquard [Green Label Silk Colors](#) (various colors; I used primaries and custom mixed my colors)
- Jacquard's [Plastic Droppers](#)
- Jacquard's [Removable Water-based Resist](#)
- Jacquard's [Plastic Applicator bottle with 0.5 mm plastic tip](#)
- Paint palette tray & water cup
- Paint brushes (I prefer Royal Langnickel Majestic™ Taklon brushes)
- Roll of unprinted newsprint or craft paper (I source craft paper rolls from IKEA)
- Jacquard's [Stovetop Fabric Steamer](#) or DIY steamer pot [Click HERE for DIY steamer pot instructions](#)
- [Permanent Dyeset Concentrate](#) (optional alternative to steaming for setting dyes)
- [Synthrapol](#) (recommended to wash steamed silk)
- Sewing machine and thread
- Silk pins
- Iron & ironing board
- Scotch tape
- Printer paper & home printer
- Sketch pad and pencils
- Sharp fabric shears

Process:

1. [Click HERE to download the Reversible Skirt Pattern](#)
Print file to home computer printer at 100% size, printing tiled pages with 1/8"-1/4" margins. Overlap the margins and secure pattern pages together with clear tape.

NOTE: If you want a longer length skirt than this pattern allows, the length of bottom hem can be adjusted to extend skirt length; however, more fabric and/or a pattern adjustment may be required.



2. Stretch the first panel of silk on rack or frame.

I created a simple, DIY stretching frame using PVC lengths and corner joints, suspending the silk with safety pins/hooks attached to rubber bands looped on the perimeter. This is a really effective solution: cheap, breaks down for storage, adjusts to different sizes of silk. You can also stretch silk on a simple wood frame using tacks.



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NOTE: I found it incredibly helpful to draw out a rough concept sketch of the project. It can be a bit of a puzzle to lay out the pieces and have the design sync up, and this is especially important when determining how the skirt wrapping will affect the overall design (both sides). Also, be sure to keep critical design elements away from edges to avoid them being hidden in your seams (I learned this the hard way). For my design, I went with a whimsical, Alice In Wonderland-inspired design on one side and an abstract, freeform color burst on the reverse.

- Using an Auto Fade Pen or soft lead pencil, trace outlines of first set of pattern pieces onto first piece of stretched silk. Make note of "CUT 2," "FOLD EDGE" and other references on pattern pieces. Set pattern aside.



- Next, draw your design onto your silk pattern pieces. Using plastic applicator bottle with tip, trace pattern outline and design lines carefully with Removable Water-based Resist - allow to dry overnight.



5. Once resist line work has fully dried, you can begin painting the silk. I used Jacquard Green Label Silk Dyes, for their large array of intermixable colors and bright result with steam setting.

To set up, I used droppers to dispense the base colors (shown right) into a palette. Then, I mixed the tones I wanted and applied to wet and dry areas of silk. I used Silk Salt to achieve mottled, halo effects which are characteristic to silk painting.



I started by painting a multi-color abstract design on the waistband and ties portion of the pattern, alternating applying the color to wet and dry areas of silk. Then, I used water to force areas of color to blend. The pattern piece perimeter of dry resist did a really solid job of keeping the dye from spreading unintentionally to other areas of the silk.

Once I achieved the blends I wanted, I added sprinklings of Silk Salt, allowing it to sit for about 30 minutes before brushing off.

I like to “recycle” my Silk Salt; the excess dye it absorbs transfers to new pieces, and leaves interesting color halos in my pieces. If you prefer not to have color transfers, stick with fresh salt.



My design also called for a couple of solid-colored panels, so I brushed dye onto wet silk to achieve a mottled, streaky blend of color, then applied Silk Salt to add texture.

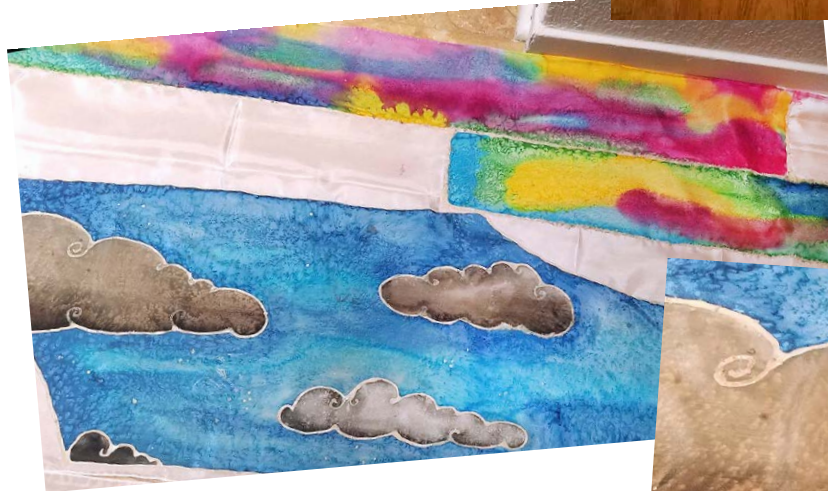
Here's an overview of the pattern pieces for the Alice-inspired side of my reversible wrap skirt project. The pieces shown include all panels needed to construct a single side of the reversible skirt:

- Top waistband and skirt ties (A)
- Waist/Hip Panel (B)
- L/R Skirt Side Panels (C)
- Skirt Hem Panel (D)

Another way to visualize: the flowers panel is the skirt hem, the pink and blue panels are the sides of the skirt on the diagonal, and the "Curiouser & Curiouser" clouds panel attaches to the waistband and sits on the waist and hips.

The photo (right) demonstrates how I laid out the pattern pieces for this side of the skirt on 2 of the 4 required silk panels; the other 2 panels are reserved for the reverse side of the skirt (which will be shown after these two are processed).

Working with a single rack means repeating this process 4 times to prepare the painted silk for assembly into the skirt. Plan for several studio hours to design, prep, resist, paint and process your silk panels.



Here's some close up shots of the elements, to show how I used resist to line out detail work and how the Silk Salt interacted with the dyes.



NOTE: The resist and excess salt shown will be removed in the following processing steps.

Now on to the steaming process!

6. Steaming is best for achieving the brightest colors, but Green Label Silk Color dyes can alternatively be set by submerging in Permanent Dyeset Concentrate.

IMPORTANT: I recommend allowing painted silk to dry and cure for 24 hours prior to steaming. I find I get the best color lock this way, with minimal color release during steaming.

Once the silk has cured, it's time to prep the panels for steaming. I purchase rolls of unprinted craft paper from IKEA (in the children's art section). This is a budget-friendly means of wrapping the silk and does a great job protecting the layers during the steaming process.



If you are using a DIY steam pot method: you'll want to bundle each panel in a layer of craft paper and tie and suspend in the pot, as per [these directions](#). If you are using a Stovetop Steamer (which I very highly recommend if you do a good amount of silk painting and steaming, because it's simply awesome), here's how I handle the prep:



The rolls run a little narrow, so I generally cut two lengths about 18-24" longer than the silk I am steaming. Then, I tape the two lengths together to make a roll that fits into my Stovetop Steamer.

Lay a panel of painted silk on the double-wide length of craft paper, making sure the paper extends well past the edges of the silk. Next, roll the silk into a tube with the paper, making sure at the end that the paper wraps a couple of times around the roll to ensure the silk is protected.

Repeat this process for the next panel of silk, and use the first roll as a guide to roll the 2nd silk around it. You should end up with a single paper roll, with both silk panels well within the paper edges.



ABOVE: Silk panel being rolled into double-wide paper. Keep the roll moderately loose (not tight).

LEFT: Both silk panels wrapped into a single roll and closely guarded by my napping crafty retriever, Princess Leia.



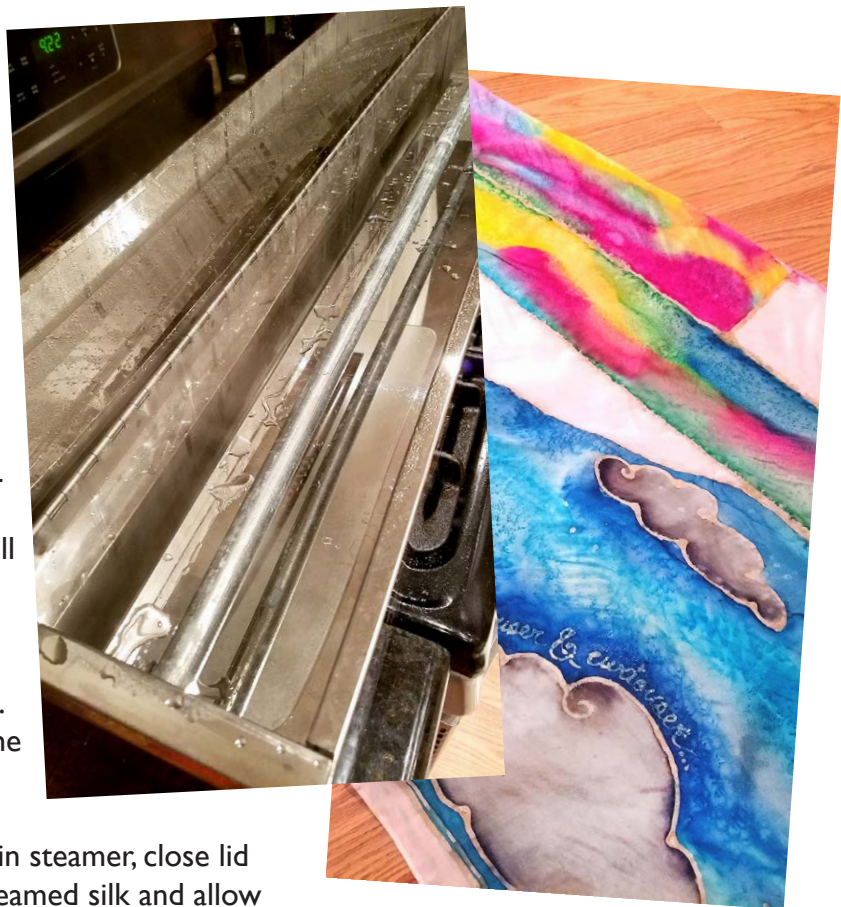
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7. Pre-fill the steamer with water in the base. Run the steel rod through the center of the paper roll and suspend inside the steamer, making sure the roll is NOT in contact with water. Close the lid, and steam on med-high heat for 1 hour (use a timer). The water should be at a low, audible boil the entire time to generate adequate steam to set the dyes.

IMPORTANT: DO NOT LEAVE PAPER ROLL IN STEAMER TO COOL! The condensation that builds up during the steaming process will drip onto your paper roll and cause irreversible bleeding and much silk painting sadness.

Once the timer goes off, turn off the burners. Using oven mitts, carefully and swiftly open the steamer lid (to prevent condensation drops landing on the paper roll inside). Remove the paper roll from the steel rod, place rod back in steamer, close lid and allow unit to cool thoroughly. Unwrap steamed silk and allow to set up for 24 hours (I find this really is the best way to ensure vivid color results with minimal bleeding on rinse).



NOTE: If the craft paper is pretty dry and doesn't have a lot of color bleed, I will sometimes lay it out flat overnight (to ensure no moisture is left) and reuse for other projects. However, if there is dye bleed or it gets wet, it is best to recycle it (to avoid overbleed on future projects).



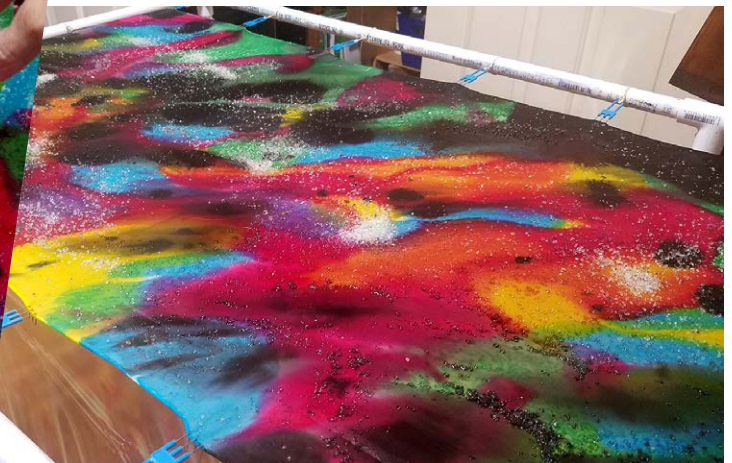
8. Once the silk has set 24 hours, wash it in warm water with a couple capfuls of Synthrapol. Agitate the silk to remove all resist residue and remaining Silk Salt, rinsing thoroughly in cool water. As shown above, color bleed is pretty minimal with the set times I recommend after painting and steaming. After a lot of trial and error, this is my method of madness to get the most vivid colors with the least amount of bleed. Plus, you can always work on the 2 remaining panels while you wait!

9. After washing and rinsing, air dry your silk panels over a shower rod (works great for this panel length). Once dry, use shears to cut out your pattern pieces from the main silk panel. Lay flat and set aside. You can save any excess silk for color tests or smaller projects for later.



10. With one half of the panels created, it's time to repeat the entire process for the other side of the skirt. This side was a bit easier, as I opted to skip any resist work and just dye the full panels in a colorful abstract.

I stretched the panels and created a colorful abstract, working wet/wet with dropper and brush. I used water to blend and Silk Salt for effects. I cured, wrapped, steamed, washed, rinsed and dried the abstract panels as before. I used the pattern pieces to cut out the needed panels for the reverse side, and retained excess silk pieces for future projects.



For visual reference, here's an overview of all of the finished processed pieces from all 4 of the silk panels needed to create the complete project:



ABOVE (L to R): waistband and ties, abstract side panels and Alice side panels.



ABOVE: Alice and abstract skirt hem panels.



ABOVE: Alice and abstract skirt waist/hip panels.

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11. With all of the pieces designed, processed and prepped, it's time to assemble the skirt. Before getting crafty, you'll want to take the time to iron all of your pieces. Cleanly ironed pieces ensures the pieces seam together well and reduces your chances of meticulously seam ripping later.



Silk is a surprisingly hardy natural fiber; most irons have a “silk setting” just a couple dial clicks below high heat.

I like to start by using the steam setting to smooth out any stubborn wrinkles, followed by the “no steam” setting to ensure the dry, smooth surface locks in.

Place a clean paper towel or some parchment paper over the silk, and firmly press to ensure a good press. Be sure to keep your iron moving to avoid scorching your masterpiece.

12. Now I know that some DIYers think pinning is a waste of time, but there are two very good reasons not to “wing it” on this project: pinning the panels together will provide a pre-sew opportunity to visualize how everything goes together, and pinning your panels as you go ensures clean, 1/2” seams (silk can get a little squirrely under the needle). Both really help in avoiding the oh-so-fun seam ripping experience.

13. With all your pieces cut and pressed, you're ready to jump into assembly. For this project, you are basically assembling two skirts and then sewing them together (joined at waistband, sides and hemline). The order of assembly depends on how you want your finished skirt hem:

For a traditional/hidden skirt hem: Sew the waist/hip panel to the side panels, then attach that combo to the bottom panel (done for both skirt sides). Next, sew skirts together along the bottom hem, and then sew the waistline into the waistband.

For an exposed bottom seam: Sew the waist/hip panel to the side panels, then attach that combo to the bottom panel (done for both skirt sides). Next, sew skirts together at waistline, and then attach the waistband, with the final skirt hemming done last. A visible hem seam is less traditional, and is what my finished project has.

The provided pattern clearly notes what pieces join together (the bright pink lines mate up with corresponding pieces). I highly recommend printing out a copy of the intact pattern on a letter-sized sheet, to use as visual reference for laying your fabric panels out on a clean surface in the same configuration. This strategy will really help in keeping track of the puzzle of assembly. I've included a letter-sized pattern copy on the last page of these instructions for easy printing.



SOME IMPORTANT TIPS:

- Most seam allowances are 1/2” (as noted on pattern) - exceptions are the Waistband/Tie top (3/8”), bottom (1/4”), and skirt hem (by preference).
- Be sure to pin panels with right sides of fabric facing one another (unless otherwise noted).
- Keep silk pins perpendicular to the sewing foot to avoid broken needles.
- Straight stitch used throughout entire project.
- Sewn on standard sewing machine with lightweight fabrics needle.

14.

Assemble Skirt Side A:

- First, sew the bottom edge of *Skirt Side Panel L* to top left edge of *Waist/Hip Panel*.
- Next, sew the bottom edge of *Skirt Side Panel R* to the top right edge of the *Waist/Hip Panel*.
- Last, sew the bottom edge of *Waist/Hip Panel* to top edge of *Skirt Hem Panel*.

Assembled Skirt Side A shown below for visual reference.



15.

Assemble Skirt Side B:

- First, sew the bottom edge of *Skirt Side Panel L* to top left edge of *Waist/Hip Panel*.
- Next, sew the bottom edge of *Skirt Side Panel R* to the top right edge of the *Waist/Hip Panel*.
- Last, sew the bottom edge of *Waist/Hip Panel* to top edge of *Skirt Hem Panel*.

Assembled Skirt Side B shown below for visual reference.



16.



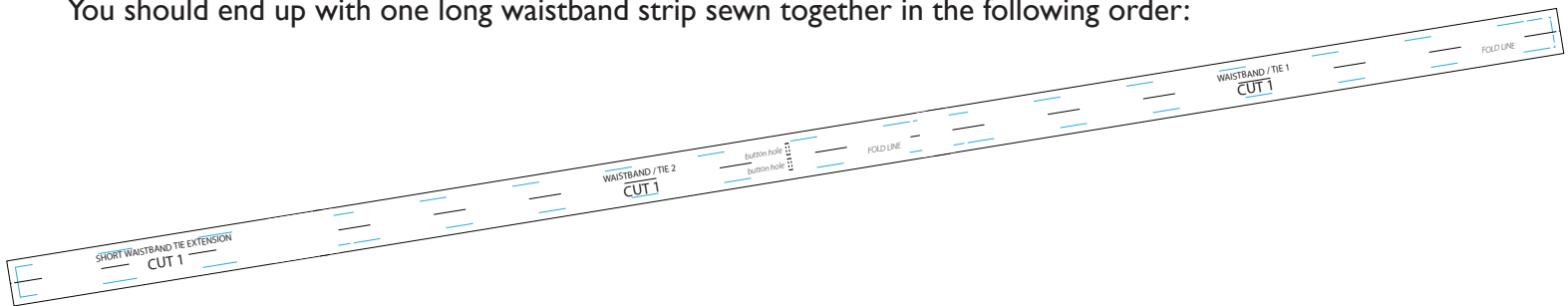
Next comes waistband/tie prep and assembly. Using your iron on silk setting (no steam) with a piece of parchment paper or paper towel on top, press the waistband seams 1/2" on all sides, then fold together and press a center fold, as shown below.



Waistband Assembly:

- Sew the right end of *Short Waistband/Tie Extension* to the left end of *Waistband/Tie 2*.
- Sew the right end of *Waistband/Tie 2* to the left end of *Waistband/Tie 1*.
- Fold *Waistband/Tie Assembly* closed along pressed fold, then straight stitch 3/8" inside of fold on outside. This will force the top edge of the finished band to lie flat.

You should end up with one long waistband strip sewn together in the following order:



17.



Place *Skirt Side A* and *Skirt Side B* together, **with right sides facing AWAY from one another**, lined up at the top "U" (waist line). Pin, then sew *Skirt Sides A/B* together along waist-line edge (1/2" seam allowance).

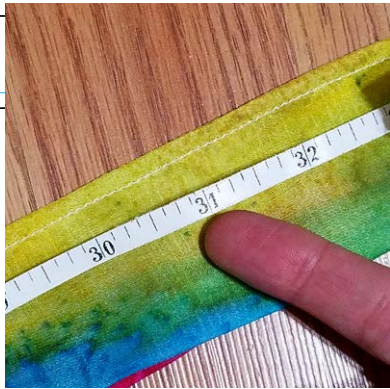
NOTE: I stitch this line a couple of times (*left*) to ensure a very secure attachment; these seams are hidden within the waistband, so no worries if they aren't perfectly aligned.

Turn skirt assembly so the right sides face together. Pin and sew *Skirt Side Panels* together along the outer *Skirt Side Panel* edges. Turn skirt assembly right side out.

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18. You'll need to create a "button hole" in the waistband tie, so that one end can slide through as a sizer adjustment when wearing. Create a wide button hole 31" from the edge of *Waistband Tie 2* (shown circled on pattern piece below).



I'll admit, my button hole skills on my "new-to-me" machine are not awesome, so I went a bit rogue. I used small shears to snip a rectangle of fabric from the folded tie. Then, I stitched around all 4 sides multiple times and trimmed out any excess fabric bits. I'm sure you more experienced sewers will get a cleaner end result, but this gets the job done (and it's pretty hidden when worn).

19. Pin the left open edge of the *Waistline Tie Assembly* to the top waistline edge of the *Skirt Assembly*.

NOTE: Seam allowance on this is 1/4". Straight stitch to attach. Repeat this with the remaining open edge of the *Waistband Tie Assembly*. Tie ends can either be straight stitched closed, or slipstitched by hand. You should end up with a waistband attached to your skirt, with the right sides facing out.



20. As noted earlier, I did go against standard convention with an exposed stitch on the bottom hem of my skirt. It wasn't for any particular reason, it was just how things landed when I was working through the process (however, I really like the defined edge it gives).

Here's how I handled my skirt hem seam:

Hang skirt and assess lower skirt hems (the only remaining open edge of the assembly). Trim if necessary. I went with a bottom hem seam allowance of 1/4", mainly because I like a little longer skirt and I wanted to retain more of the Alice-inspired design to show along the bottom edge. Press desired seam allowance under with iron, then pin bottom hems of *Skirt Assembly* together, re-hang and make any necessary adjustments. Straight stitch along the bottom skirt hem to finish the project.

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How to Wear



Get yourself wrapped up in your artsy new skirt in five easy steps:

- 1 - Select which skirt side you want to wear and face it outward.
- 2 - Find the buttonhole, and place it where you want your bow to end up (I like mine offset front right).
- 3 - Grab the waistband tie on opposite side and feed through the button hole from the inside.
- 4 - Wrap loose tie around behind you, lightly pulling to tighten the waist.
- 5 - With both ties together, tie a simple bow and you're all set!

ABOUT THE ARTIST: Hello, my name is Tanya Alexander. I am a Graphic / Web Designer at Jacquard Products. I'm also a lifelong fine artist working in a variety of mediums, including: traditional acrylic canvas work, pen and ink, ceramics, textile art, face/body painting, large format muraling and artistic neo-traditional tattooing. I've enjoyed experimenting with a wide variety of new mediums while working at Jacquard, including Silk Colors, Piñata Alcohol Inks, Textile Color, Lumiere, Neopaque, Pearl Ex Powdered Pigments, Cyanotype, Indigo, Procion MX, Versatex and more! You can find me and my work on Instagram: @artbytanyaalexander. —

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