



Retouching made up jeans articles

The retouching of finished articles is a delicate subject in the textile industry, if people talk about it at all. The textile literature touches this issue only marginally, as do the textile universities.

The reasons for this is more or less apparent: textile universities focus on teaching their students how to produce first quality fabrics and garments; to teach them to produce faulty articles on purpose obviously cannot be their issue. On the other hand it is a well-known fact that goods retouching experts guard their knowledge like a precious treasure, not wanting to share their experience or recipes with third persons. We self once produced a retouching recipe for a textile company, which worked quite well, but when we asked the people in charge to let us see the practical application of our recipe, we received the classical answer: "Your recipe works well, but you don't have to know how we apply it."

On retouching itself two different opinions exist:

1.) Retouching in itself is completely condemned and faulty fabric or garments are sold as second or third quality.

This surely is the correct and legal way. Reality, however, often is quite different. A retailer orders for example 100 pairs of jeans in first quality and suddenly receives 80 pairs in first quality and 20 pairs in second quality, the latter for a cheaper price.

A supplier with such an attitude surely will wait a long time for a follow-up order from this retailer.

The competitors don't sleep!

2.) The producer tries to retouch faulty articles in a way that he can sell them as first quality in the end.

Let us now talk about retouching. I would like to call retouching the "make up of a finished article". Every lady used lipstick, nail varnish, cream or lotion etc. to be Cosmetically up to date, the gentlemen applies the razor and after shave ect. Therefore it is only fair to allow a pair of jeans trousers the same chance.

Fastnesses

The retouched places of the article mostly will not have the same fastness properties as the rest with original dye. It is really strange that often the part of an article, where faulty retouching was performed, has better fastnesses than the original article. Why this is the case has not been investigated to the present day. Basically, however, experience has shown: The retouched part of the article has lower fastnesses than the rest of the original article.

Our personal opinion is: If you retouched for example 1000 pairs of jeans trousers, and it 50 or 100 of those were rejected, you still should always bear in mind, that nevertheless the retouching enabled you to sell 900 or 950 pair of trousers in such a way that they were accepted as first quality without any problems. Nevertheless, retouching always is risky, difficult process. Of course we take for granted that only really good retouching agents are used.

Pencils, pen inks, felt pens, as they are used in school, will do optically, their fastnesses, however, are more than bad. If there is no other choice than retouching left for saving an article, then at least the agent with the best fastness properties should be chosen.

Although we have had forty years of experience on the field of retouching and ardently support is, I nevertheless want to stress: Retouching still is a process which can bring you very closed to being illegal.

However, to the present day, we have not found a reasonable method to substitute it, apart from producing first quality fabrics and trousers already in the first run, of course. This however, still is not possible.

Retouching

It is of utmost importance that the person responsible for the retouching has a strong interest in his or her job and an "easy hand". We thin it would be a good idea to grant a special "price bonus" when an article has been saved by efficient retouching. Retouching can be compared to the work of an artist, and an artist, too, expects a good salary for good work. A small extra bonus furthermore will increase the initiative, the efficiency and the working speed.

The better the person responsible for retouching is, the easier he or she can work with dark colours. Then usually he or she can easily retouch even the most obvious, light coloured faults with a relatively hand, however, we will find that an unexperienced person will need many more different colours to achieve the same effect.

Retouching agents

Usually the Textilan pen with a very fine tip is used for retouching. A Textilan pen more or less looks like a felt pen.

The advantage of this pen is that it can be disassembled. When the dye has been used up, the filter can be easily refilled with ink by means of a pipette, and the pen is ready for use again. As the wearing parts, like writing tip and filter, can be easily removed and replaced, a fast and efficient working process becomes possible.

When refilling, not more than 3.5 to 4 ml. in should be used to prevent blotting after refilling.

For all Textilan pens the suitable Textilan ink is available in 250 ml. cans, moreover a Textilan diluting agent V3. As all Textilan inks can be mixed amongst each other or brightened with diluting agent, it is relatively easy to produce even intermediate shades.

It is more difficult to brighten dark faults. For this the valve pen no. 1 and 200 – white is available. Its ink is a dye pigment. The pen has to be pressed (that is pumped) about 10 to 20 times before the first use to make the dye pigment flow into the tip.

Retouching

Retouching should be performed after washing. It is relatively easy to darken light stripes. Care has to be taken that no long strokes are made, as this will invariably produce new faults, even with exactly the right Textilan ink.

It is always recommended to "fracture" the faults a bit, thus producing a more even article appearance. A desired effect is a slight penetration of the Textilan ink into the surrounding fabric to create the even apart with the flat hand.

Often we found that holding a pumice stone in the other hand will increase the positive effect of this action.

It is more difficult to brighten dark spots.

For this the valve pen no. 1 or 200 is needed. The application is more or less as described before. For especially difficult dark faults the following method has proved successful:

With the valve pen mentioned before a bright fault was produced. This fault then was dried by using a hairdryer and then retouched with a darker textile pen.

The causes for faults in washed jeans articles

The weavers usually supply only first quality fabrics to the garment makers.

Only after stone washing the faults occur. The reasons for this are unknown, there are, however, many theories for what happens during washing. Unfortunately, none of these theories have been proven to the present day. Our personal opinion is that several pumice stone collect at a specific place in the washing machine. This high amount of pumice stones, of course, washes more intensively, thus causing the fault.

Environmental consideration

A really good Textilan pen resp. Textilan ink has to have the following properties:

- a solvent that is compatible with water and dries quickly
 - a binding agent which is easily and quickly dissolved in this solvent and which Especially guarantees all fastnesses
 - a completely environmentally friendly dyestuffs with the necessary fastness
- Properties, which is easily degradable

All these demands are very difficult to satisfy by other commercially available pens and inks.

The solvent is a combination of hydrogen chains and rings, which guarantee the relatively fast evaporation and drying effect which is so important for retouching. Moreover, these solvents easily dissolve the various binding agents and dyestuffs.

The Textilan pens and inks have been on the market for more than 30 years, always in more or less the same form.

As supplier of large amounts of these pens and inks our private opinion is: if these pens and inks are stored well closed there is no storing risk.

If the products are used often, it will be enough to care for sufficient airing of the rooms and to keep the windows open. In our company we have not encountered any cases of allergic reaction or any other damage to health during the last 30 years, in spite of a relatively large amount of Textilan pens and inks produced. This, however, does not mean that the pens and inks used are the ultimate end of the development. New solvents and binding agents, new dyestuffs and new insights will of course be translated into new ideas and products from our side.

