



Cyanotype Prints

Supplies

The supplies included in this kit are:

- Paper coated with special chemicals

The supplies you need to provide are:

- Small objects you want to make a print of

Invented by Sir John Herschel in 1841, this simple process gives an image of Prussian Blue using a non-toxic sensitising solution of Ammonium Ferric Citrate and Potassium Ferricyanide. These iron salts, when exposed to natural (from the sun) or artificial UV light create a highly contrasting blue image. The original “blueprints” used for engineering and architecture utilized this process

Each envelope has a piece of paper coated on one side with the solution, which will appear green/yellow. This side should be faced up and exposed to the light. By placing an object or photo negative on top of the coated paper, an image will be imprinted on the paper after being exposed to the light.

Creating a cyanotype print is best done on a sunny or partly cloudy day between 10am and 3pm, when the UV index is the highest. I recommend doing one piece of paper at a time so you get a sense of the process and make any adjustments that you need after each one is done.

Instructions

1. Prepare a workspace outside and ideally in direct sunlight (making a cyanotype inside does not work very well because the light of the sun is what creates the image).
2. Choose an object or multiple objects you want imprinted onto the paper. Example: feathers, leaves, flowers, letters, bits of string, shapes cut out from paper.
3. Have a timer or stop watch ready.
4. Open the envelope and place the paper with coated side (green) up.
5. Immediately place your objects on the paper. Let them remain in their position absolutely still for 8 minutes if it's direct sunlight, or 10 minutes if it's cloudy. OPTIONAL: if you have a flat piece of totally clear glass or acrylic, placing it on top of the objects can help hold them on the paper.
6. Remove objects and rinse paper for 10 minutes with cool running water.
7. Hang dry the paper inside.

What next?

If you'd like to read more about cyanotypes, try visiting any of the links below. The first link also has instructions on how to make your own cyanotype paper, including a list of the materials you need. You can buy the chemicals online or in art stores, such as the Artist & Craftsman Supply store located downtown on Chapel Street. It is also possible to purchase kits of cyanotype paper that is already prepared, so you can make more prints right away.

- <https://www.alternativephotography.com/cyanotype-classic-process/>
- <https://blog.phillipscollection.org/2012/05/04/what-is-a-cyanotype/>
- <https://mymodernmet.com/cyanotype-photography/>