

Cyanotype for paper and cloth

Cyanotype is a photographic printing process that produces a cyan-blue print. Engineers used the process well into the 20th century as a simple and low-cost process to produce copies of drawings, referred to as blueprints.

Recipe:

1. 20 grams of Ferric Ammonium Citrate.
2. 10 grams of Potassium Ferricyanide.
3. 200 mls water, split into 2 x 100mls.

Method:

Cyanotype is mixed by the Technical Demonstrator and can be found in the exposure room.

1. Gather Cyanotype chemicals, mixing pots, measuring cylinder and stirrer.
2. Switch on the extraction, positioning in line with your mixing pot.
3. Slowly and carefully add Ferric Ammonium Citrate to 100 mls of water and stir until dissolved.
4. In a separate mixing pot slowly and carefully add Potassium Ferricyanide to 100 mls of water and stir until dissolved.
5. Mix both dissolved chemical solutions in a third container, that is light resistant, to activate the cyanotype.

Creating cyanotypes:

1. The cyanotype solution works well on range of materials – paper and card, reasonably fine cloth, wood, etc – so be experimental and innovative in your selection of materials.
2. Coat your chosen substrate with the cyanotype using either a brush or soaking fabrics in a shallow tray.
3. Dry substrate in the exposure room drying cabinet.
4. Arrange masks and stencils (e.g. objects or acetate positives) to create your cyanotype artwork.
5. Expose cyanotype:

Exposure unit: Arrange objects or acetate positives onto the glass of the exposure unit. Place your cyanotype coated substrate on top of the objects/ positives with the coated side facing the glass of the exposure unit. Close lid and start vacuum. Expose for 40 – 50 light units for paper.

Direct sunlight: Exposing your cyanotype will vary from day to day and can take anything from 10 – 15mins during high summer to 40 – 50mins during winter. Arrange objects or acetate positives on top of the coated cyanotype substrate. Place a sheet of glass on top of the cyanotype and objects where possible, a clip frame is great for this, to keep them in place during exposure. The sunlight will slowly begin to expose your cyanotype, which you

will need to monitor by eye. You can check progress by carefully peeling back the stencil and returning it if it's not ready.

6. After exposure your cyanotype should be rinsed thoroughly, to remove all unexposed chemicals, until water runs clear.
7. Hang to dry.