



Smithsonian Associates

Hands-On History of Photography – The Cyanotype

with Pat Howard

Materials Needed:

- Cyanotype paper - order from B & H Photo: (\$18.95)
 - [Cyanotype Store Cyanotype Paper \(8 x 10", White, 12 Sheets\)](#)
Please make sure to get the WHITE paper (makes blue and white images). NOT the colored.
- a piece of clear glass or plexiglass that is larger than the cyanotype paper (8" x 10")
- approximately 10 objects to use to make cyanotypes (see below for suggestions)
- access to running water
- access to sunlight
- a tray that the paper will easily fit into - it should be larger than the cyanotype paper
- hydrogen peroxide - one 32ounce bottle
- flat surface or hanging surface (like clothesline) for prints to dry. If you use clothesline, you'll need clothespins or clips to hold the prints
- cell phone or digital camera
- kosher or any other coarse type of salt (1 cup)
- turmeric (one small size spice container)
- paprika (one small size spice container)
- coffee grounds (1 cup)
- white vinegar
- small spray bottle

This process which results in blue and white images will involve placing objects upon light-sensitized paper to make outlined or silhouette-like designs.

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Please have 10 objects ready for class that you would like to work with. When considering objects, think about outlines that are detailed and interesting and whether the objects are transparent or opaque. Each effect is different. Also think about objects that you'd like to group together.

I will show examples of finished cyanotypes during class, but the following are objects as that I have seen work well for this process:

Clothespins	Eyeglasses	Paper clips
Lace	Doilies	Old negatives
Sheer fabrics	Feathers	Buttons
Leaves	Pressed plants or flowers	Slinky
Keys	Doll Clothes	

To print photographs with cyanotype (this is optional, but we'll go over it in class) you'll need some sort of negative such as:

Old film negatives the bigger the better)

or

To make your own digital negative: a computer, inkjet printer and photo editing software. The negative will be printed onto transparency film. Staples and Office Max will also print them on transparency film if you send them the image. Image needs to be in black and white and to be a negative not positive. (I'll demonstrate this in the first class so you could wait and decide whether you want to try this then).

If you'd like to print your own digital negatives, transparency film is available at both Staples and Office Max, or some more professional types of transparency film are available at B & H Photo:

Pictorico or Inkpress are both suitable:

[Inkpress Media Transparency Film \(8.5 x 11", 20 Sheets\)](#)

[Pictorico Pro Ultra Premium OHP Transparency Film - Letter \(8.5 x 11", 20 Sheets\)](#)