

Special Topics in Graphic Design : Advanced Photography : Alternative Processes

Cyanotype is a 19th century monochrome photographic printing process that gives a cyan-blue print. Because of the nature of the medium, and its low light sensitivity, cyanotype prints can be made without a darkroom. Acrylic gel medium is used to make acrylic paint more translucent, but it can also absorb the ink used in other printing processes.

Cyanotype:

1. Select the photo or collage you would like to use for the cyanotype.
2. Convert to high contrast b&w in Photoshop, invert (command + I) and print onto a laser transparency.
3. Coat the paper or fabric with the cyanotype mixture and let dry.
4. Using the sun or a light table, make a contact print. Check the exposure after about 8 minutes, the yellow coating should turn a dark green.
5. Rinse the paper in the sink until the water runs clear.
6. Dry on a newspaper or with the hair dryer.



Acrylic Transfer:

1. Select a photo or collage to use for the transfer.
2. Print on a laser or inkjet printer, photocopy or use clay-coated magazine images as your source.
3. Coat with the gel medium thinly, drying between coats until the paper feels heavy and plastic-y. The gel should be thicker than the paper.
4. Soak and carefully rub the paper off of the gel medium.
5. With the paper removed, the ink should remain in the translucent plastic.

