



Solar-Powered Pictures

Family Art Day
Project



Peninsula School of Art

What is a cyanotype?



Cyanotype is an old photographic printing process that produces prints in a distinctive dark blue. The word cyan comes from the Greek, meaning "dark blue substance."

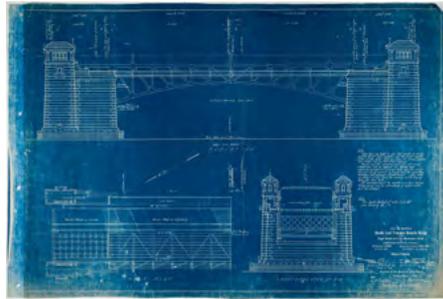
The process was invented by Sir John Herschel, a brilliant astronomer and scientist, in 1842. (His father was the astronomer Sir William Herschel, who discovered the planet Uranus. Interestingly, Uranus, due to mostly methane gas in its atmosphere, appears cyan blue.)

However, Herschel did not use cyanotype for photography, but for reproducing notes. It was a family friend, the botanist Anna Atkins, who used

the cyanotype printing process in 1843 to create an album of algae specimens. She created the images by placing objects directly on photosensitive paper; this process is called a photogram. She is considered the first female photographer.

For a long time, the cyanotype was used as a copying technique for large architectural and mechanical drawings, which is why they're called blueprints.

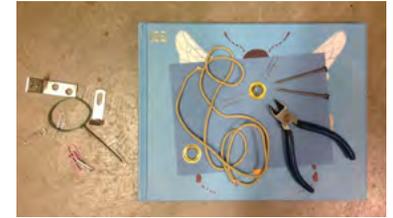
Source: PhillipsCollection.org



Let's get started...

The paper in your kit is coated with light-sensitive chemicals. When placed in the sun or under UV light, a chemical reaction will occur, causing the chemicals to change and become permanent. When placed in water, unchanged chemicals in areas that were shielded from the light will wash away, while the changed chemicals will absorb oxygen and turn a dark blue.

- 1** In a room without daylight, place one piece of paper blue side up on something hard and portable like a book or clip board. Arrange objects on top of it to make your design.
- 2** Move your arrangement into a patch of strong sunlight. Leave it there until the paper turns very pale blue—about two minutes. If the day is overcast, you may need to leave it longer.
- 3** Rinse the paper in water for one minute. The blue will wash out of the areas that were covered but not the areas exposed to sunlight. Lay your print flat to dry. The image will sharpen while it dries.



Artist Spotlight: Tomiko Jones

Almost every summer, my father would pile us into the car and take us to explore the treasures of the nation, our public lands. In the most classic of touristic gestures we would set forth in a camper. We visited "feats of human engineering"—dams, bridges and buildings were favorite stops on our way to admire "feats of nature" such as Yellowstone and Niagara Falls. Many miles of open land lay between our destinations, and watching the American landscape pass by had a profound effect on me over the years. I would want to stop and explore, but it seemed like there was never enough time. This created in me a longing to return. —[Tomiko Jones](#)

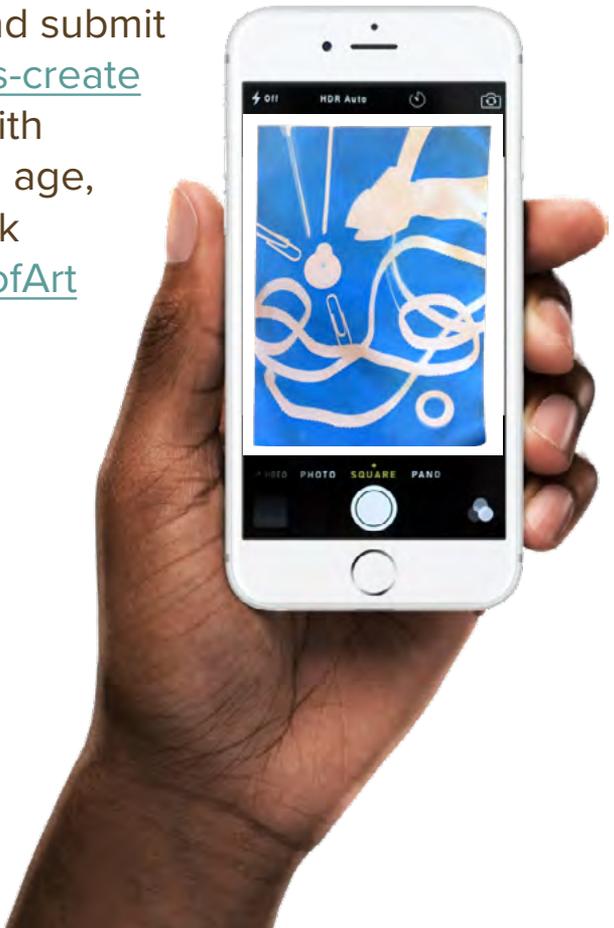
Today, Tomiko photographs the landscape, trying to capture a sense of place through her art. Here is a photogram she made using a fox she found by the road.



Share what you made!

This winter, PenArt is having an online exhibition of work inspired by Family Art Day projects! *Kids Create* will go live on PeninsulaSchoolofArt.org on March 1, 2021.

To be part of it, take a picture of your creation and submit it at bit.ly/enter-kids-create or share it, along with your first name and age, with us on facebook [@PeninsulaSchoolofArt](https://www.facebook.com/PeninsulaSchoolofArt)



www.PeninsulaSchoolofArt.org

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