

INTRODUCTION TO PLATINUM/PALLADIUM PRINTING

A brief description of creating a handcoated platinum/palladium contact print using large format negatives.



Step 1: A sheet of 100% Cotton Rag paper is laid on a sheet of glass in preparation for being coated.



Step 2: a scrap sheet of paper the same size of the negative is laid out to mark the size and area to be coated.



Step 3: The specified amount of ferric oxalate chemicals are measured out using eyedroppers in a small medicine cup.



Step 4: An equal measurement of palladium and platinum solution is added to the ferric oxalate mixture to create the sensitizer.



Step 5: The sensitizer solution is quickly poured out along the length of the paper.



Step 6: Quickly and gently the solution is evenly spread throughout the area to be coated.



Step 7: The key I've found with coating is to as evenly and carefully "push" the solution around the paper.



Step 8: All puddles and bubbles are smoothed out and the coated area is as even as possible.



Step 9: The paper is left to dry in the dark (usually around an hour). The paper has a bright orange appearance.



Step 10: It's important that the paper be completely dry to the touch and free of any dust or dirt. As any debris will create white areas in the print.



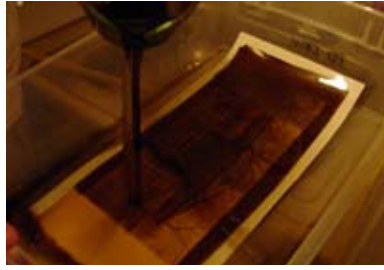
Step 11: The negative and coated paper are placed in a contact printing frame to create even pressure between the negative and coated paper.



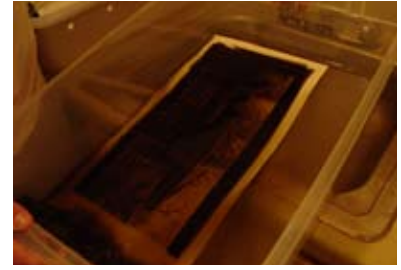
Step 12: The coated sheet is exposed to UV light in an exposure unit with 8 blacklight fluorescent tubes. For a specified amount of time.



Step 13: The undeveloped test strip after exposure. Darkest area = longest exposure time. Lightest area = shortest exposure time



Step 14: The exposed test strip is placed in a tray and heated potassium oxalate developer is poured evenly and quickly over the paper.



Step 15: The test strip is agitated in the developer for 3mins and then rinsed in water for a few minutes.



Step 16: After developing and rinsing the paper is immersed in a clearing bath to remove any residual ferric so that all that remains is the platinum/palladium image.



Step 17: After the 3 successive clearing baths the prints are placed in a large tray and rinsed for an extended period of time to remove all residual chemicals and to help the archival nature of the print.



Step 18: After the final wash/rinse the prints are hung up to dry (usually overnight). After the prints are dried they are flattened and smoothed out using a drymounting press. Mounting and presentation can be done in numerous ways. I prefer to corner mount and then cut the window mat larger than the print (as was done with the Umlauf series).

Final: After the test strip has been coated, exposed, developed, and cleared, the judgement can be made as to what is the proper exposure time for the particular negative. Then another sheet is coated and the image is printed in its entirety. Often times, many iterations are needed to get to a final print as dodging and burning can be done and subtle tweaking of the exposure times. You are then left with the final print as shown below.

