

Hand-Crafted Photography

In this modern age of digital cameras and highly representational imagery, it is fitting that a growing number of artists and photographers are rediscovering the art and craft embodied in vintage techniques from the early days of photography.

This exhibition features three artists and photographers using vintage techniques to create work that is distinctive and very different from the photographs typically seen by the public. Working independently to explore the boundaries of creativity made possible with these “alternative” processes, they have brought together in one exhibition a wide variety of photographs to demonstrate that hand-crafted photography has a vibrant future in the digital age.

About The Processes

Each photograph typically starts with a digital image that is printed on transparency film to create a contact (or full-size) negative. In a separate step, a chemical solution is applied by hand onto fine art paper or another material. Once the coating is dry, the negative (or various objects, in the case of a photogram) is laid on top of the coated paper and exposed to ultraviolet light. This causes a chemical change in the coating, which is then processed in water or chemical baths to create the finished photograph.

Cyanotype

Discovered by Sir John Herschel in 1842, the cyanotype was the first practical iron-based photographic process. It produces images in an elegant range of cyan to blue values, which are the result of the reaction of ferrous ions from the photo reduction of ferric ammonium citrate in combination with potassium ferricyanide. Anna Atkins was the first to use the process in photography a year later, thereby becoming the first woman photographer.

Platinum/Palladium

The sensitivity of platinum compounds to UV light was first observed in 1804, but it was not until 1872 that William Willis developed a practical technique using potassium chloroplatinate and ferric oxalate to produce prints with rich black and gray tones. The similar palladium process was introduced during World War I, and the two metals are often used in combination. Beginning in the early 1900s, commercially available platinum and palladium papers (some even made by Kodak) were the most popular way for both photographic artists and amateurs to make prints.

Gum Bichromate

William Henry Fox Talbot, in 1854, was the first to observe the ability of potassium bichromate to harden a gum arabic or gelatin coating upon exposure to UV light. By adding a watercolor or other pigment to the coating, the color of the pigment remains where the emulsion has been exposed to UV light (the un-hardened emulsion is washed away). The process can be repeated with different pigments to produce a multi-color

print. And because the emulsion is applied by brush, gum bichromate is one of the few photographic processes in which painterly expression is possible.

Van Dyke

The original brownprint process was developed in 1889 and produces lush sepia prints from the reaction/reduction of ferric ammonium citrate in combination with tartaric acid and silver nitrate during exposure to UV light. It became known as the van Dyke process during the early 1900s, perhaps because of the similarity of the sepia hues to the paintings of the Flemish artist van Dyke.

About The Artists

Candace Law is a visual artist and photographer. After degrees and work in other fields, she earned a BFA in Architectural Illustration from Lawrence Technological University in 1998 — but found herself drawn to fine art. Her current work blends an interest in the natural world with the abstract, expressed through media that tends to be monochromatic — drawing or encaustic. She has exhibited at the Flint Institute of Arts, the Scarab Club, the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center, and other local and regional shows. Her works are in private collections, including Detroit's Historic Trinity Church. Candace is a Detroit native and works from her studio in Berkley, Michigan. Visit CandaceLaw.com to see more of her artwork in a variety of mediums.

Eric Law is an award-winning fine art photographer, and his photographs have been exhibited in many area galleries, including the Anton Art Center, Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center, CCS Center Galleries, Detroit Artists Market, Paint Creek Art Center, and the Scarab Club. In 2010, he won the prestigious Gold Medal award for his photograph "Cattail" in the 97th Annual Gold Medal Exhibition at Detroit's historic Scarab Club. The award is the Scarab Club's highest and most esteemed prize presented to its members, and this marked the first time it was given for a photograph. Eric also is a professional photographer, lecturer and consultant specializing in the digital imaging of artwork for artists, galleries, and exhibitions, as well as the founder of ShootMyArt.comTM which provides a wide range of digital photography and media services for the visual arts. He is a member of Professional Photographers of America and works from his studio in Berkley, Michigan. Visit EricLawPhotography.com to see more of his photographs.

Anne Storm van Leeuwen has been a hand papermaker for 25 years. During the last twelve years, she has incorporated alternative photography, finding that the two media complement each other. Anne received her BA in Art from UCLA. She trained in Italy under a papermaking master at Fabriano, where paper was first made in Europe and quality paper for artists is still made today. Additional study includes Instituto Allende (San Miguel de Allende, Mexico), Carriage House (Brookline, MA), Taos Paperworks, La Societe Francaise de Photographie (Paris), IAPMA (international papermaking association) workshop on paper and pigments (France), and papermaking workshops (2002, 2008) with Lynn Sures and Roberto Manino at Abbazia dei Spineto, Sarteano, Italy. Anne resides and works from her studio in Lakewood, Colorado.