

Cyanotype Postcards

Overview

Short description of the activity, with any background that would be helpful for instructors to know.

"Ingredients"

- [Sunprint paper](#), cut into postcard-sized sheets
- Cardstock, cut into postcard-sized sheets
- UV light box
- Materials for making prints - below are some sample materials, but you can use anything available or let students bring in their own materials:
 - Tissue paper
 - Leaves, flowers, other organic materials
 - Tracing paper and black markers
 - Pipe cleaners
 - Felt/foam shapes or cut-out letters
 - Other household objects
- Binder clips for hanging prints
- Packing tape and/or glue sticks for assembling postcards
- Hair dryer for drying the prints
- [Optional but recommended] a sheet of plexiglass, to make sure materials lay flat
- [Optional] large plastic tray for rinsing the prints (you can also use a sink if it's available)

Notes on the UV light box:

- We will provide one pre-built UV light box, but instructors can make more using this [light kit](#) and a cardboard box to enclose it
- Having more light boxes makes the process go faster - for example, if there are 8 students and the goal is for every student to make 4 prints (each with a 5 minute exposure time), this can be done in 20 minutes if you have 4 light boxes

Learning Goals & Objectives

Learning Goal:

Students will be exposed to ideas about the electromagnetic spectrum.

Objectives:

- Students will be able to define UV light.
- Students will be able to differentiate between light emitted from the UV light box and the sun.

Learning Goal:

Students will experience and learn about the process/history of image making through cyanotypes.

Objectives:

- Students will be able to identify a historical or modern use of cyanotypes.
- Students will recognize cyanotype as a form of camera-less photography.
- Students will be able to explain the UV light reaction to create cyanotypes at a high level.

Learning Goal:

Students will explore how different materials change the outcome of the cyanotype in reaction with UV exposure.

Objectives:

- Students will be able to identify differences in outcomes when using opaque vs. translucent vs. transparent objects.
- Students will be able to identify differences in outcomes when layering objectives.
- If there is more time in the lesson:
 - Students will also be able to predict differences in outcomes for both objectives above.
 - Students will be able to identify and predict differences in outcomes when exposing prints for different amounts of time (2 min vs. 10 min vs. 20 min etc.)

Learning Goal:

Students will engage in self-expression and personal meaning-making.

Objectives:

- Students will be able to intentionally choose objects that reflect their community and their place in it.
- Students will be able to arrange objects in an innovative or unexpected way.

Outline

[Overview / History] - Timing 5 mins

Literacy, STEM, or Leadership Skills Developed:

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Performance Goals

- Students know what a cyanotype is
- Students start to think about what they can do to create their cyanotypes

Description:

- **Format: a slideshow**
- Describe what a cyanotype is very briefly
 - What is a cyanotype? Explain different methods (exposure, surface, setup, etc) cyanotypes can be made and how we will be making them
- Explaining materiality and reaction to UV light
 - Explain what UV light is
 - Explain what kinds of light the sun emits (electromagnetic spectrum)
 - Show other examples of how UV light is used (plant lights, blacklights, tanning beds, nails, etc.)
- Show examples of cyanotypes
 - Show historical cyanotypes (Anna Atkins; botanical prints)
 - Show a blueprint
 - Show modern artsy cyanotypes

[Designing the Postcards] - 10 minutes

Literacy, STEM, or Leadership Skills Developed:

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Performance Goals

- Students will visualize their design and think critically about how to execute it based on the materials they choose

Description:

- Explain the project - making postcards
 - Describe the place where you are, your community, etc.
 - Can also design based on an imaginary world; how they're feeling at the moment; etc.
 - "Imagine that you're sending a postcard to your friend or family member"
 - **Ask them to think of someone to send a postcard to & make a design around that**
- Showing examples of postcards made and materials available
- Explain how our setup works and how we will use it for the activity
- Students can look at the examples and choose materials laid out to use in their designs
- Students can choose prompts or themes for their postcards to work off of
- **While postcards are drying - get them to write the postcard message**

[Exposing Cyanotypes] - 30 minutes

Literacy, STEM, or Leadership Skills Developed:

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Performance Goals

- Students will make cyanotype postcards (2-4 each, depending on time)

Description:

- Students expose their designs with the UV light, wash, and dry
 - Exposure time for each print: 2 minutes
- Reflect and discuss on expectations/results of cyanotype
 - What surprised them?
 - What reactions happened with materials and UV exposure?
 - Why did they choose the materials that they did?
- Mounting dried cyanotypes on board to make postcard

Exit Ticket

Students will leave with one or more prints that they have created. The students' prints can also be compiled into wall art for the classroom.