

## BLUEPRINTS AND CYANOTYPES

**General Information:** Rockland's Blueprint is a classic process for producing a blue image on paper or cloth. The process requires a source of bright blue or actinic light for exposure plus a full-size negative.

It is very easy to expose and develop blueprint paper. You do not need a darkroom. The blueprint solution is coated on the paper in dim room light by dipping, brush, or spray. The wet surface can be dried with a hair dryer, also in room light. A photographic negative is then laid over it, (or a drawing in black ink on clear plastic or tracing paper can be used in place of a negative).

**Making a full-size negative:** A convenient way is with Rockland Liquid Light or Ag-Plus photographic emulsion on glass or prepared acetate. Another method is with Kodalith film, by developing it in standard paper developer instead of Kodalith developer. The easiest method is by scanning or using a digital camera and printing a full-size transparency with an inkjet or laser printer. Or you can order a transparency from an office store like Kinko's.

**To prepare the stock solutions:** Rockland Blueprint consists of 2 parts labeled A & B; iron salts in one bottle and activator in the other. The stock solutions should be stored in their original containers. Keep all containers out of the reach of children.

**Preparation:** Under dim incandescent light, (not fluorescent or daylight), mix equal quantities of the A & B solutions to make a sensitizing solution. Mix only as much as you need for a period of several weeks, as the shelf life is limited after the stock solutions are mixed (kept in separate bottles, the stock solutions can be stored indefinitely). If convenient, let the sensitizing solution ripen by aging overnight, to improve the contrast.

**Coating:** Use with any absorbent paper or with cloth. Saturate the material with the made-up sensitizer solution, blot away excess solution and dry in a dark place, preferably with a fan to circulate the air.

**Exposure:** Expose with sunlight, a high-power halogen bulb (see website) or other bright blue-rich light source, with the transparency held in contact with the sensitized surface by a pane of single-weight window glass.

The length of exposure determines how light or dark the tones of the blueprint will be. The longer the solution is exposed to light, the darker it gets. About five minutes of bright sunlight in the middle of the day, or an equivalent time exposed to a bright actinic source should yield a strong, rich print. Standard tungsten light bulbs lack adequate radiation and are far less effective.

You can see the tones of the print become darker as exposure proceeds. It is generally a good idea to let the print become darker than you ultimately want it, as the washing process will lose some contrast.

**Washing:** Running tap water is all that is needed to develop and fix the blueprint image. The exposed print is washed until the yellow solution that remains has been washed away and the image is pure blue and white. The fabric or paper can then be dried and pressed, if necessary, with a warm iron.

**Rockland Colloid LLC**  
www.rockaloid.com