

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE USE OF FA-1 SENSITIZER

General Information: Rockland Sensitizer FA-1 is an iron-silver process that produces a silver image of archival quality. It can be used on both paper and cloth.

On paper, it is known as the classic Van Dyke process, also called Argentotype and Kallitype. On cloth, it produces a permanent image that leaves the fabric flexible and wearable. FA-1 is a "daylight" process-- it does not require a darkroom, but does need a full-size negative and source of bright light, usually sunlight, for exposure. The image is an attractive warm black and can be color-toned with Rockland Polytoner or other photographic toners.

Obtaining a full-size negative: A convenient way to make a full-size negative is with Rockland Liquid Light or Ag-Plus emulsion on glass or prepared (also known as treated) acetate, available at art supply stores. Another method is with sheet film, which is available in a variety of types and sizes. (Although intended for high-contrast or "line" images, Kodalith film can be used to make continuous-tone images by developing it in standard paper developer instead of Kodalith developer.) Finally, a photogram can be made with an image can be drawn on transparent acetate with black ink, in place of a negative.

To prepare the stock solutions: For the stock solutions, you will need two pint bottles and one quart bottle. FA-1 consists of 3 parts: iron salts in the greenish bottle, silver salts in the oval bottle, and fixing solution in the large bottle.

Caution: The silver salts contain silver nitrate. Avoid getting on the skin or in eyes.

Under dim incandescent light, dissolve separately the contents of the iron salts and silver salts each in pint (500 cc's) of *distilled or deionized water*. These solutions are light-sensitive and should be handled accordingly. Dissolve the fixer contents in one quart (1000 cc's) of water. All the solutions should be stored in containers of glass, stainless steel or plastic. Do not use other materials.

Keep all containers out of the reach of children.

Preparation: Under dim *incandescent* light, avoiding fluorescents or daylight, mix equal quantities of the iron and silver stock solutions to make a sensitizing solution. Mix only as much as you will need for a period of several days, as the shelf life is limited when the two stock solutions are mixed together. (Kept separate, out of light, they will last indefinitely.)

Coating: Coat on any absorbent paper or cloth. Paper should be absorbent, with little sizing. Cloth should be a natural fiber, preferably 100% cotton. Saturate the material with the sensitizer solution, blot away excess solution, and dry in a dark place, preferably with a fan to circulate the air.

Exposure: Expose with sunlight, sunlamp or other blue-rich light source, using a full-size negative held in contact with the sensitized surface by a pane of single-weight window glass. Usually, 2 to 5 minutes will be the correct exposure. You can watch the image turn brown under the clear portions of the film as exposure takes place.

Development: Back in dim light, place the exposed material under cool running water for one minute. Drain, then place in the fixer solution for 5 to 10 seconds, until the image turns from orange-brown to gray-brown. *Do not extend fixing time, or the image will fade.* Pour the used fixer back in the bottle for re-use. Rinse thoroughly to remove all processing chemicals. The fabric or paper can then be dried and pressed, if necessary, with a warm iron.

Cleaning up: Remove stains from hands by using a dilute laundry bleach followed by rinsing and applying some fixer. Household bleach plus fixer can also be used to remove an FA-1 image from the material it is printed on. For other questions, please consult Rockland Colloid or visit our website.

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