

USE OF PYROFOTO

Pyrofoto is a process for firing photographic images and drawings onto ceramics and glass. Handle Pyrofoto under dim room light, avoiding direct daylight. A safelight is not necessary, but for long periods of time while it is drying, near-darkness is preferred.

Pyrofoto sensitizer works together with any liquid ceramic glaze. If using powdered glaze, first re-constitute the glaze with water to a thick consistency. Avoid overly-watery glazes since they will be too thin for adequate coating, and glazes with a low pigment concentration as they will make a weak image. A high-quality majolica glaze works well.

Before use, mix one part of Pyrofoto with one part of liquid glaze or a smaller amount of dry powder glaze if preferred. To easily pour, heat in hot water a few minutes. Stir the mixture often during use. Avoid skin contact.

Coat only on glazed ceramic or on glass, as non-glazed surfaces like bisqueware will not develop cleanly. First scrub with powdered laundry detergent, rinse with hot water and dry. Brush or flow on a thin coat of sensitizer. After drying, apply one or more heavier coats. (Tip: also coat a few scraps to use as exposure test strips.) Dry thoroughly at room temperature, with a fan or hair dryer.

Expose through a high-contrast inkjet or laser transparency made on the "best" setting (see our website on making transparencies). As an alternative, a solid object such as leaf, key, etc. can be used to make a "photogram". Expose with a high-wattage halogen bulb (see bulb FAQ) or a strong "work light" like those sold at home supply stores, or with direct sunlight.

Starting exposure time is 5 to 15 minutes. Ordinary household-type incandescent bulbs will not give the needed wavelength and should not be used.

To develop the image, wipe or sponge gently with cool tap water to gradually dissolve away the unexposed areas. Do not rush this step by harsh brushing, as it may take several minutes for the image to appear. When fully developed, blot and dry. If desired, a second color can be applied and the process repeated before firing. Fire to the temperature appropriate to the glaze you are using.

TROUBLESHOOTING:

If the unexposed areas do not dissolve during processing, it indicates over-exposure. If the entire coated surface washes off, it is because of under-exposure. For best results with Pyrofoto, observe these 3 H's: a high-contrast subject, a high-density transparency and a high-intensity light for exposure.

MAKING TRANSPARENCIES:

Pyrofoto is a high-contrast process that works best with bold designs and limited intermediate tones. Original artwork should be chosen with this in mind.

Full-size transparencies can be printed with an inkjet printer, laser printer or photocopier on 8½ x 11" transparency film, available at office supply stores or our website.

Start with any kind of original such as a photograph or book illustration. A high-contrast or "line" print will give the best results with Pyrofoto. Note: Even if you are working from a color original or planning on printing in color, you will be using a black & white transparency.

You can also take the artwork to an office-supply store like Staples or Kinko's and order a transparency. (Transparencies can also be made on photographic film by traditional methods. See the FAQ.)

Use the "best" quality printer setting in order to get opaque blacks for the required contrast.