

PRINT - How to make sun-powered artwork with your pressed flowers

What is a cyanotype print?

Cyanotype is a photographic (meaning sun-sensitive) printing process that produces images in a dark blue colour and is named after the Greek word 'cyan' which means 'dark blue substance'. It was discovered almost 180 years ago by astronomer and scientist Sir John Herschel who used it for reproducing his notes. However, his family friend - the botanist Anna Atkins - used the printing process to create an album of algae specimens by placing the objects directly on to the coated photosensitive paper. She is regarded as the first female photographer! Cyanotype coated paper uses the UV rays from the sun to react with the Ferric Ammonium Citrate and Potassium Ferricyanide in its cyanotype solution. Together the two components plus UV light make something called Ferric Ferrocyanide, also known as Prussian Blue (named for the colour of the Prussian military uniforms.) It's this blue that sticks to the paper once the sun hits it and makes the lovely shadow prints you will use to make your artwork today!

Cool huh?

Kerry Lemon

Artist Kerry Lemon has been commissioned by South Gloucestershire Council to transform some of your cyanotypes into beautiful outdoor sculptures and integrated artworks. This means the work you create as part of Press and Print might become a permanent part of your neighbourhood! Kerry is inspired by local plant life to create public artworks that many people can enjoy and will be using some of the cyanotype prints sent in by participants like you to create incredible outdoor art pieces around the area that you can sit on, touch, and enjoy. SO... when you have made your cyanotypes, use the instructions in the pouch to email her pictures of your wonderful work!

How to make cyanotype prints!

You will need:

Clear Perspex sheet

Cyanotype papers (keep them in the bag)

Your pressed flowers

A sunny day outside!

The sink

1. Locate a nice sunny spot outside, one that will be in the sunlight for a fair bit.
2. Select the pressed flowers you're going to use and have them ready to place.
3. Peel off the protective film from BOTH SIDES of the plastic Perspex sheet so that it's see-through.
4. Remove one sheet of the cyanotype paper from the black bag and place it on a flat surface outside (use a bit of cardboard as a base if you can) *as soon as the cyanotype paper is shown the sunlight it will start exposing – yay! Make sure the next steps are done calmly but quickly*

5. Quickly place your pressed flower specimens on top of the cyanotype paper and arrange them how you would like them to look on the page.
6. Now flatten them (and hold them in place) by lowering the Perspex sheet on top of them and use it to press down and keep the flowers in place on your paper.
7. This is the patient part – leave them for 20-30 minutes in the bright sunlight. No moving them!
8. When you feel that you've left them for a good amount of time, pick up the whole plastic – flower – paper – card sandwich and bring it indoors and out of the sunlight.
9. Next to the sink, carefully and quickly lift off the plastic sheet and the flowers (make sure you save these) and then begin rinsing just the cyanotype paper under cold running water.
10. Rinse for a few minutes until the water is running clear and you can see your designs. Try not to rub or scrub the paper, but you could always gently agitate the part where your flowers were with your finger. You'll see your flower impressions start to magically appear as the un-exposed cyanotype solution washes away. If you'd like to be sure your design has rinsed as clearly as can be, you could always leave it to soak in a plate or tray of water for a few minutes too.

Now you can leave your cyanotype out to dry flat on a tea towel and repeat the process with a different flower and piece of coated paper! Over time as they dry your impressions will remain white but the cyanotype solution around them will get darker and stronger leaving you with a lovely clear shape and a striking blue print.

Send a picture of your fantastic blue flower images into our artist Kerry Lemon! Kerry, who we met on the other side of this booklet, is going to be making wonderful public art pieces using some images of the cyanotypes. Help her by emailing in a high-resolution picture of yours to pressandprint@kerrylemon.co.uk There's more info for how to do this in the little white packet included in this kit.

Need advice? We've got handy videos to watch on pressandprint.org

Share your creations!

Don't forget to share your brilliant blue artwork with everyone taking part on [@pressandprintart](https://twitter.com/pressandprintart) using the hashtag [#pressandprint](https://twitter.com/pressandprint)