

How to make a cyanotype at home

By Holly Gray, Carter Community Artist

What you will need:

[The Cyanotype Store](#) is a Texas business that specializes in supplies for making cyanotypes.

- Precoated cyanotype fabric or paper to use as your canvas; *keep the fabric in the black, light-safe bag until you are ready to use it*
- A flat piece of cardboard
- Objects to create your image such as pressed plants, flowers, cardboard cutouts, or even transparency negatives
- Rubber gloves
- A sink or pool and cool, running water
- Optional: a piece of glass or clear acrylic sheet (get help from a grown-up!)
- Optional: a UV lamp



Holly D. Gray (b. 1981), *Ardent Life Expectancy*, 2018, cyanotype, © Holly D. Gray

Let's make a cyanotype!

- 1. Place your canvas:** Lay your canvas on a piece of cardboard to make it easier to carry outside and back in. You can use tape to secure it.
- 2. Arrange objects or negatives:** Do this part indoors! Place your objects, pressed plants, transparencies, etc. on your cyanotype material.
- 3. Sandwich materials:** If you have one available, cover your objects and material with a piece of glass or a clear acrylic sheet to keep everything flat and in contact with the surface. This also creates a sharper outline and keeps your objects from blowing away outdoors.

- 4. Expose to UV light:** Find a sunny spot and set your canvas in direct sunlight (or under a UV lamp if you are indoors) for 5 to 20 minutes, depending on sun intensity and desired contrast. Summer sun will be a quick exposure where winter and overcast days will require a longer exposure.
 - 5. Check the color shift:** The exposed areas of your canvas will start turning a dark blue and then move to a gray-green/bronze color when ready. This is your visual cue to stop exposing.
 - 6. Rinse in water:** Bring the paper or fabric into a dimly lit room and remove objects. You will notice the solid object areas that were hidden from the sun will still be the yellow color of the canvas. Put on your rubber gloves and rinse the print thoroughly in cool running water for 5 to 10 minutes, until the water runs clear and there is no more yellow. *Be careful not to splash the water or cyanotype solution because it can stain.*
- Optional step:** A hydrogen peroxide rinse can instantly deepen and brighten the blue. However, this will naturally happen without the hydrogen peroxide over the next 24 hours.
- 7. Dry flat:** Lay your print flat or hang to dry away from direct sunlight. If there is still yellow visible in the white areas of your canvas, you can re-wash and dry to clear the solution.

The logo for the Amon Carter Museum of American Art is a teal-colored shield-like shape. Inside the shape, the text "AMON CARTER" is written in large, bold, white capital letters. Below it, "MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART" is written in smaller, white capital letters.

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