

February 15, 1977

Mr. and Mrs. Alan Goodman
Elegant Images
2637 Majestic Drive
Wilmington, Delaware 19810

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Goodman;

Thank you very much for your letter and the information you enclosed about your "Elegant Images". I have had your address and first folder for some time and I am pleased that you picked up the fact that I am an old platinum printer out of the article in the magazine, "Popular Photography". I have made a great many hand-coated platinum prints in the course of a good many years and I am just about to start on a sizable job now.

I notice in your list of supplies that you have ferric oxalate only as powder. I have never seen this chemical in this form, but have been told by another printer that it is not very satisfactory. There are one or two things I would like to have from you. One camel's hair brush (do you have these in larger than 1") and I would like at least two or three sheets of your Rives paper in the white, cut to approximately 11 x 16 size or smaller. I notice in your instruction sheet that you do not designate the drying time of the freshly coated paper. What I was taught by Clarence White and Paul Anderson was that the coating must dry in not less than 5 minutes nor more than 10. Personally, in this climate, I find it not quite bone dry at 5 minutes or a little over, and certainly under 10, so I finish it off over an electric hot plate just to

make the paper bone dry. I also have kept successfully, coated paper, in a metal tube such as the one prepared paper came in originally with a small ball of silica gel inside to absorb any moisture.

About two years ago Beaumont Newhall came up from The University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, where he teaches photographic history and with the aid of a graduate student of his, whose wife was doing motion picture work, we did a film. It was a demonstration of making a hand-coated platinum. We had great fun doing this and there were many amusing situations. We had no script, so we just got up and did it. Beaumont uses this film at the University, but he told me just the other day that they are going to have reprints for sale for schools or other places that might be interested. I believe they will also rent it.

I am sorry to tell you my Retrospective show in Poughkeepsie which was at Vassar in November and December has come back out to the western area of the country. I had quite a few platinum in this show, but I do not think it is going to travel more than the present bookings, and will close July of this year. It has been on the road for over 2 years. To return to the processing of hand-coated platinum, the whole trouble seems to be in the ferric oxalate. When I used it some years ago, it came in the form of rather olive-green scales. I have never heard of a powder before, until I received your notice; but from all I have been able to learn about contemporary printmaking blacks, rather than dark prints are what I find missing. There is no printing medium that has such a wonderfully long scale as platinum. I have earlier prints of my own that have wonderful blacks, as well as all the light values. I have a feeling I have to prove (through experimentation) the present-day ferric oxalate has something added to preserve it. This I am anxious to solve. I think Lee Witkin still has a few of my platinum. Sometime when you are