



Explore Photography

How do you visually document someone? For centuries, artists have been painting or drawing portraits to capture a person's physical likeness. But portraits can capture more than just someone's appearance. Artists can create non figural portraits--images that show someone's personality and interests instead of their face. Let's explore how portraits have changed over the years, and how it can be done today. This Open Studio discusses artworks in the exhibitions *Treasures from the Collection* and *Rend the Heavens*, which can both be found downstairs.

Go to the *Treasures from the Collection* exhibition



Carl Heinrich Bloch
Portrait of Mrs. Ellen Michelsen, 1887

Commissioning an artist to paint your portrait has been a sign of wealth and status for centuries. People wanted to be immortalized and remembered for the qualities they found most important.

What can you tell about this woman based on her portrait?

How would you want to be remembered if you were to sit for a portrait?

This sculpture portrays a photographer in motion. It captures the rising craze of amateur photography in turn-of-the-century America. Like the stealthy figure in this bronze sculpture, people could be found snapping candid pictures whenever and wherever they went, largely due to the Kodak Company's introduction of personal cameras.



John Septimus Sears
The Kodak Fiend (1/30), 20th century

How did the invention of photography change how people documented themselves and each other?

How can photography enhance or diminish the art of portraiture?

Go to the *Rend The Heavens* exhibition

Let's now consider one of the most influential photographers of the 20th century, Dorothea Lange. She famously documented people across America, and her projects periodically brought her to Utah. In



Dorothea Lange
Hands, Toquerville, Utah, 1953

this photograph, Lange captured a portrait of a woman by focusing on her weathered hands, etched by life's experiences. If the subject's face isn't even seen, how is this a portrait? Just like with a painted portrait, "capturing" an individual is more than just documenting what they look like.

What photos do you have that aren't of your face, but could still be considered a "portrait" of you?

Art Activity: Cyanotypes



You Will Need:

1. Cyanotype solutions A & B (provided)
2. Watercolor paper (provided)
3. Masking tape
4. Foam brush (provided)
5. Cookie sheet
6. Picture frame or glass sheet
7. Large Tupperware
8. Collected leaves, sprigs, or flowers

What is Cyanotype?

Cyanotype is a photographic printing process. A light sensitive chemical that reacts to sunlight is applied to a surface, and objects are arranged on top of it to block out the light. The shadow of these objects creates white images on top of a cyan-blue background. For your cyanotype, try to make it like a portrait: representative of who you are, what you like, or how you want to be remembered.



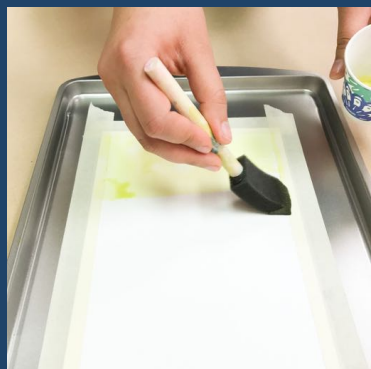
Step 1 - Prepare Paper

Using masking tape, attach the provided paper to a portable flat surface, like a cookie sheet.



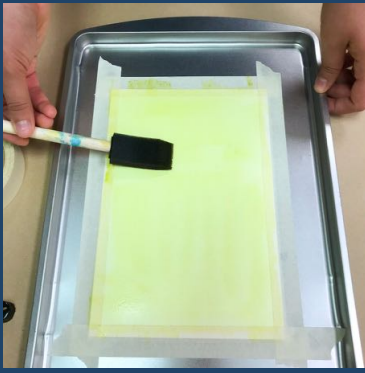
Step 2 - Prepare Solution

Mix both solutions together in a small container. Once they are combined, they are only usable for 2-4 hours, so make sure you're ready to use them!



Step 3 - Apply Solution

Using the foam brush, apply a thin layer of solution over the surface of the paper. You don't need a lot! We were able to make 4 cyanotypes with the contents of the two provided bottles.



Step 4 - Even Out Solution

Even out the solution as best as you can, making sure there are no puddles. If the solution pools, it will dry incorrectly and effect the process.



Step 5 - Let Dry

Turn your cookie sheet upside down while the solution dries, or leave the room and turn the lights off. Too much time in light can effect the chemical.



Step 6 - Arrange Items

Once the solution is dry, arrange leaves, flowers, twigs, silly bands, or even glass plate negatives on your paper. Remember, you want to find objects that you feel represent you.

Important:

Whatever you put on top of your paper will block out the sunlight, so the chemical in those areas will not turn blue, and will remain white.



Step 7 - Place Outside

Cover your objects with a sheet of glass so they don't move (you can use the glass insert from a picture frame). Leave the whole tray outside in an area of direct sunlight and set a timer for 15 minutes. If you leave it out too much longer, it will overexpose the chemical.



Step 8 - Process the Paper

After being in the sunlight for 15 minutes, take the tray back inside and remove the glass, leaves, and tape. Submerge the whole paper in a large container of water and gently move it back and forth beneath the surface. The paper will slowly turn to blue and the green areas blocked by your objects will turn to white.



Step 9 - Let Dry

After just a few minutes of processing the paper in water, take it out and set it on a paper towel to dry. The blue will slowly become more intense as it dries. Now you have a finished cyanotype!

How was this art piece you made a "portrait" of you?

I love nature, so using sprigs of evergreen trees I found on a hike represent me!

Examples

Here are some other ways
you could make your
cyanotype more personal:



Use a film negative
to mimic the style
of a vintage
photograph



Try using black
paint on a sheet of
glass to create an
abstract face



Write your favorite
quote on a glass
sheet using a
black marker.

