

VAN DYKE ADDITIONS

PAPERS

Use a hot press printmaking paper with a smooth surface, such as Fabriano Uno, Arches Platine, Crane's Platinotype, or other high quality paper. These papers are properly sized and will withstand extensive washing. Try a cream base as well as a white paper.

Tear the paper to size, do not cut. It is best to score and bend the paper, and then tear away from the edge. Do not pull up, the edge will not look as nice. The edge can be dampened to give a softer edge, if desired.

Fabric should be free of any impurities, namely 100% cotton or linen. Torn edges are probably better than cut.

MIXING

The following materials are needed:

3 - glass mixing vessels are needed for preparation

1 - non-metallic stirrer (glass or plastic)

1 - small brown glass or opaque plastic bottle with a non-metal cap,
for the final sensitizer

1 - small brown glass or opaque plastic bottle with a non-metal cap,
for contrast controller

1 - small brown glass or opaque plastic bottle with a non-metal cap,
for the fixer

Distilled water (the iron in normal tap water is not good)

WARNING – SOLUTION C contains Silver Nitrate that is extremely toxic and can cause blindness. Do not get it on your skin or into your eyes.

GLOVES and SAFETY GOGGLES should be worn when preparing this chemistry! If silver nitrate gets onto your skin, wash with lots of water and treat the area as a burn. The stain it will cause will not wash off. It will only go away when new skin replaces the old.

Mix in very subdued ambient tungsten light or red safelight. Daylight or fluorescent light, high in the ultraviolet spectrum, will destroy the solution. Follow the directions that come with the Van Dyke kit from Photographer's Formulary.

Label the bottle and include the date. Keep in a cool dry place. Do not keep this in your family refrigerator, as it is toxic.

COATING

Use a 'hake' brush if you want the brushstrokes to show, or a foam brush if not. Avoid any brush with metal parts, as they will chemically interact with the van Dyke chemistry in an adverse manner.

Coat only an area that is slightly larger than the actual print area. The 'look' of the brushstrokes is a matter of taste, and makes van Dyke prints truly personalized.

Use a minimum amount of sensitizer. Too much will create puddles of chemistry and will require longer exposure and the image will not look as good. The sensitizer must be spread before it stiffens up.

VAN DYKE ADDITIONS, cont'd

EXPOSING

Expose the coated paper under ultra-violet light until moderate over-exposure is achieved. Make some test strips with 'step wedges' to determine the proper time for your negatives.

PROCESSING

Follow the directions from Photographer's Formulary. Contrast can be increased by adding Potassium Dichromate to the solution. If the first wash is too alkaline, a splash of lemon juice can be added to make it more acidic. If the water is too acidic, sodium carbonate can be added to the fixer to make it more alkaline.

CONTRAST CONTROL

There are two ways to control contrast with Van Dyke Printing – the traditional way, through chemical control or the new way by generating digital negatives with far more control than with litho film negatives.

Potassium Dichromate in 10% solution added to the first wash cycle can increase the contrast. This solution is also toxic and all utensils should be rinsed well after use. GLOVES and SAFETY GOGGLES should be worn when preparing this chemistry!

The better way to control contrast for any particular print is to alter the curve when making the digital negative. Negatives that would print well on grade 1 or 2 silver paper will work well. See the Digital Negatives handout for more details.

TONING

Selenium can be added to the process *before* the fixer to tone the print. Use a very weak solution (1:30 = half strength of what is in the Darkroom). Gold toner Photographer's Formulary 231 Gold Toner is another typical pre-fix toner, but is more expensive than the class budget can afford. Tim Rudman, however, says that Van Dyke prints can be toned after being finished, much the way we do silver prints.

FIXING

The fixer is a very weak 3% solution of Sodium Thiosulfate. Mix using Distilled Water as well, because overly acidic tap water can cause 'bleach-back' and deterioration. This solution only has a capacity to fix 2 – 3 prints. The prints should be fixed for 5 minutes maximum, otherwise the print will start to bleach back.