

Method

1. Crumpled cyanotype-coated rice paper is exposed in direct sun.

The peaks of the crumpled paper cast shadows which remain unexposed (i.e. white in the print). The paper is washed and hung to dry. (This is traditional cyanotype.)

2. Gum emulsion (1-3 colors) is painted on unexposed areas or over entire print. Colors can also be blended together on the paper.

The paper is again exposed, developed, and dried. (A cliché verre negative can be used in this step.)

3. The paper is recoated with cyanotype emulsion and exposed under a cliché verre negative. (This adds a pattern over the gum color, but this step can be omitted.)

The paper is again washed and dried.

N.B. This is a process for those who like to experiment and enjoy happy surprises.

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I call these prints "skiaographs" from the Greek 'skia', shadow. There are any number of variations. While there is some control, the initial cyanotype leaves a lot to chance and will strongly influence the final outcome.

The paper I use is Loew Cornello's "Oriental Rice Paper". It comes in rolls of different widths and is quite cheap. It is thin but strong.

I hope you find these prints interesting. To be honest, I have some I like better, but they are either ones that are going in an exhibit next spring or are ones I really like and want to keep for myself. With this process every print is unique.

#1 This is probably the most typical of the three prints in the portfolio. The first cyanotype coating was exposed for 5 minutes and then the paper was turned over and exposed for an additional 5 minutes.

#2 For this print the first cyanotype coating was exposed on only one side. The second cyanotype exposure was too long resulting in a very dark print with the gum scarcely visible. I bleached it back in sodium carbonate which removed some of the cyanotype covering the gum and also lightened the background cyanotype.

#3 The initial cyanotype emulsion was exposed on both sides as in print #1. The entire print was coated with green and yellow gum emulsion blended together. I liked the image after the gum printing and didn't add the second cyanotype exposure.