



PHOTOGRAPHY TERMS

Albumen print - Albumen printing is a positive process using egg whites in the emulsion. It was introduced in 1850 by L.D. Blanquart-Evrard and was in wide use until 1900. Albumen prints were often toned in gold chloride to cool the brown color and improve the permanence of the photograph.

Alternative processes - This term covers at least 35 distinct processes, some historic and some not; most having to do with processing the final print for unconventional effect.

Archival processing - Archival processing involves a series of procedures in photographic printing. The objective is to chemically fix the image and remove superfluous metals and chemicals to insure the permanence and longevity of the photograph. The processes may include multiple fixing baths, toning with gold chloride or selenium, and extensive washing.

Autochrome - This ancestor of the modern color transparency was invented in 1904 by Auguste and Louis Lumiere and was in use until the 1930's. The color emulsion of the autochrome is on a glass support and is covered by another piece of glass. Autochromes are viewed either by projection or in specially made cases which are held up and viewed by backlighting. Because of the configuration of the dyed potato starch grains on the glass, the photograph has the grainy diffused quality of a pointillist painting.

Bromoil - A highly involved process than can generate one print or, in a transfer variation, many copies. Its chief quality is a delicate painterly/etcherly look. Lithographic ink is applied with a special brush to a gelatinized paper surface that selectively resists or attracts the ink.

Calotype - The calotype (Talbotype) was patented by William Henry Fox Talbot in 1841 and was used for about a decade until it was gradually superseded by the collodian process on albumen paper. The calotype, a paper negative process, was revolutionary because multiple positives could be made from a single negative. It is distinguished from the Daguerreotype which is a direct process yielding a single positive image.

Carbon print - This photomechanical process, discovered by the French inventor Alphonse Louis Poitevin, is a close relative of the Woodburytype process, but does not usually have the same relief surface. Although both Woodburytypes and carbon prints could have been made with any pigment then available they were usually made in the color that closely resembled that of the photographs being reproduced - usually gray and black for carbon prints. Carbon prints may be more difficult to identify than Woodburytypes. Under magnification there is no visible grain or half tone pattern of regularly spaced dots, but the surface may appear speckled with particles of pigment or dust. When viewed at an angle the surface appears glossy, more so in the shadows than in the highlights.

Carbro Print - A carbro print is a combination of the carbon and silver-bromide process. The trichrome or color carbro involves superimposing three color carbro prints in primary colors made from three separate negatives, on each other to produce a full color print. The carbro print has a slightly raised and waxy surface.

Cibachrome Print AKA Ilfochrome- A Cibachrome print is noted for rich color, brilliant clarity and

unprecedented archival quality. It is a photographic print is made directly from a color transparency. This is a silver dye-bleach process and it forms an image by selectively bleaching dyes already existing within the paper. The high-gloss paper is most stable, but the matte surface Cibachome is much less stable due to its RC base. (See Ektacolor RC Print.)

Collodion - The collodion wet-plate process was invented by Fredrick Scott Archer in 1848, published in 1851, and practiced as the most popular negative process from the mid 1850's until the 1880's, when it was superseded by the gelatin dye plate. A glass plate was evenly coated with collodion, made light sensitive, exposed, and finally developed, all before the emulsion dried. The resulting negative, after being fixed and washed, was ordinarily varnished to preserve and protect it. Although the glass was fragile and the process was awkward (having to be performed quickly and in the dark while the plate was still wet) the advantages greatly outweighed the disadvantages. Unlike the Daguerreotype, the collodion process produced a negative from which multiple prints could be made. Also the exposure time was considerably less than that demanded by other processes. Collodion wet-plates were most often printed on albumen paper.

Contact print - A contact print, always the same size as the negative from which it was made, is produced by placing the negative in direct contact with the paper rather than projecting the image onto the paper through an enlarger. Contact prints have extraordinary resolution, that is, sharpness of detail. All early photographs were made by contact printing, since successful enlarging became possible only in the 1890's.

Copy print - A copy print is made from a negative that is produced by photographing an existing print. A photographer may choose to make a copy negative of a master print if the original negative has been lost or damaged, or if the master print was the product of numerous exposures and/or manipulations not easily replicated. In the case of a manipulated print, the photographer is likely to consider a copy negative his master negative since it alone produces the desired final print. The term is also sometimes used to describe a publicity print which is not a fine art print.

Cyanotype - Sir John Herschel invented the cyanotype process in 1840 and patented it in 1842. (Herschel, an astronomer and inventor, was the first to use the terms "negative" and "positive" to describe the manufacture of a photographic print.) Cyanotype was the name Herschel gave to a print made from the action of light on iron salts. This was among the very earliest permanent process which in the 1870's became known as "blueprint" and is still widely used to reproduce architectural plans. The name cyanotype does not refer to the blue color (cyan) of the prints, but rather to the use of ferrous cyanide in the emulsion.

Daguerreotype - A Daguerreotype is a photograph taken by the method published by Louis J. M. Daguerre in France in 1839. It is a positive image formed by mercury vapor on a polished coating of silver on a copper plate. The highlights of the Daguerreotype consist of a milky deposit of mercury amalgam and the shadows of plain polished silver. The plate was exposed in the camera for as long as twenty minutes in daylight which explains the often stiff posture of the sitter. Further, the Daguerreotype camera produced an image that was reversed right to left unless the lens was equipped with a reversing mirror. Each is an original since no duplication process exists. This along with its early date in photographic history, accounts for its desirability as a collectible. Portraits are relatively common while

outdoor scenes are rare. The larger full-plate Daguerreotypes were more expensive to make as well as to but at the time, and therefore are scarcer today than smaller Daguerreotypes. The making of Daguerreotypes went out of fashion after the introduction of the wet collodion process of the 1850's.

Dye transfer - In this method of color printing, an original transparency or negative is projected or contact-printed onto three separate sheets of film through red, green and blue filters. This method allows for the maximum control of color, balance and contrast. These separation negatives are then projected or contact-printed to make three relief matrices dyed in cyan, magenta and yellow dyes. Each of the matrices is then brought into registered contact with a sheet of special transfer paper which absorbs the dye. The finished print is therefore made up of a combination of dye images. Dye transfer is one of the most permanent color processes.

Ektacolor RC Print - Ektacolor RC Prints are photographs from color negatives printed on paper coated with a resined plastic. Although the permanence of RC prints has been questioned, the beauty of the final print makes it still preferred by many contemporary photographers. It is worth noting that manufacturers claim in recent years to have improved and enhanced the longevity of these papers.

Gum bichromate - Often called "gum." This early process dates to the Pictorialist period many photographers used this process, alone or in combination with other processes. These colored prints were made by printing on paper coated with layer(s) of sensitized and pigmented gum arabic. Gum prints can be identified by a softness and graininess and somewhat resemble lithographs. This process has been used to make full color prints, but accurate registration (the alignment of one pigment printed over another is difficult to achieve. The process is especially suitable for obtaining painterly effects. Gum printing is being revived by some contemporary photographers.

Gumoil - A recently discovered process which has the look and feel of some of the ancient processes. In combination with unpigmented gum, etching bleach and oil pigments, it is possible to build monochrome or polychromatic images.

Ink or Pigment processes - These photomechanical processes flourished in the later part of the nineteenth century, and were developed largely to improve upon the early photographic processes that had a tendency to fade. Photomechanical processes are often able to produce rich tonal values and are therefore sometimes the most admired prints of a particular image, prized by the photographer and the collector alike. The principle photomechanical processes are carbon printing, collotype, carbonyl, photogravure, and Woodburytype.

Limited edition - As applied to fine art photographs, the term "limited edition" is usually understood to mean a stated number of prints of an image in a particular size and in a particular format. When no additional photographic prints in any size or format will be made from a particular negative, that concept is usually communicated by a phrase such as "the negative has been retired" because negatives are rarely destroyed.

Modern prints - Prints made recently from the original negatives are called modern prints. Most often modern prints are made by the photographer, or directly under the supervision of the photographer. Modern prints may also be made posthumously and are specifically noted as posthumous prints often

identifying the person who printed the photograph. The date of a print can usually be determined by the paper used, the quality of printing, the presence or absence of a signature and/or stamp, and the condition of the paper surface, which develops a kind of patina with age.

Old prints - A print that was made in the past, but after the period of time in which they would be considered vintage, is known as an "old" or a "later" print. The date of a print can usually be determined by the paper used, the quality of printing, the presence or absence of a signature and/or stamp, and the condition of the paper surface, which develops a kind of patina with age.

Orotone - An image printed on glass then backed in gold; also called **gold-tone** or **curt-tone**. It is often found in ornate, molded or gilded frames.

Photogram - A photogram is a photograph made without a camera by placing objects directly on photosensitive paper and exposing the assemblage to light. Depending upon the opacity or translucency of the objects used, the photogram usually has a shadowy image of various tones, gray to white, on a black background.

Photogravure - The hand-pulled gravure is one of the most beautiful ink processes for reproducing photographs. Alfred Stieglitz and other Photo-Secessionists photographers used it for the illustrations in the early photographic journal *Camera Work*. Photogravure is particularly suited to reproduce platinum prints and could be mistaken for platinum by the untrained eye. They are intaglios made with a copper plate which often leaves a indented or debossed plate mark around the image.

Photomontage - A photomontage is a photographic composition assembled from pieces of different photographs or of different negatives, closely arranged or superimposed upon each other. Sometimes graphic material is added to the combination.

Pinhole - An old, but currently popular way of taking pictures using a simple box without a lense, but with a tiny hole and a sheet of film pinned inside opposite the hole. Produces unique perspective and dreamy focus.

Platinum and palladium prints - This contact printing process was used primarily from 1873 to 1914/1916, when platinum paper was replaced for the most part by palladium. Both processes are extremely permanent and have delicate rich tones and ranges of grays that are unobtainable in silver prints. Palladium was introduced in 1916 when platinum became expensive and difficult to acquire as a result of World War I. As no gelatin emulsion is used, the final print has a matte surface with a deposit of platinum and/or palladium absorbed slightly into the paper support. This process is enjoying a revival today, with a number of contemporary photographers coating their paper supports with specially prepared platinum and/or palladium emulsions.

Polaroid/ SX-70/ Polacolor 2 - Edwin H. Land invented the Polaroid process or instant photograph in 1947, and in 1963 his discovery was extended to encompass color. This new process allowed for the development of the print within the camera just seconds after exposure, using rollers to squeeze together the negative, positive and the developing chemicals. In color Polaroid, the emulsion on the film is composed of layers of yellow, cyan, and magenta dyes that are sensitive to blue, red and green light. In

the development of the film, these dyes are diffused onto the positive sheet, which becomes the print. Since the chemicals needed for the development remain within the print, the stability of the Polaroid prints has been questioned. Depending upon the care given to storage and display of these photographs, there may or may not be fading, yellowing, or cracking of the emulsion.

Portfolio - A portfolio is a group of photographs published together, usually in a limited edition and usually presented in a custom-made box with or without accompanying text. It is used to distribute a body of a photographer's work, often at a more favorable price than would be asked for individual prints. A portfolio may have a particular theme, illustrate a particular time period in the photographer's career, or give a retrospective overview of his or her best images.

Salt print - A salt print is made on fine quality writing paper, coated by hand with light-sensitive chemicals. This is the earliest form of a photographic positive paper print and was used for printing calotype negatives. The tones of a salt print are generally shades of brown and purple, and, because the emulsion soaks into the paper instead of resting on the surface, the prints have a matte surface quality.

Silver print - A generic term referring to all prints made on paper coated with silver salts. Most contemporary black and white photographs are silver prints.

Type C Print - The type C was a color printing process that was replaced in 1958 primarily by Ektacolor, and has not been available since that time. Type C is an archaic term which is commonly used generically to identify an Ektacolor RC print.

Vandyke - A process similar to the Cyanotype. It is made from metals combined with their ferric salts (platinum, palladium, gold, copper, etc.) and can produce infinite monochrome variations with capacity to convey special moods.

Vintage prints - A photograph printed within a very few years of the date when the negative was made is considered vintage. The date of a print can usually be determined by the paper used, the quality of printing, the presence or absence of a signature and/or stamp, and the condition of the paper surface, which develops a kind of patina with age.

Woodburytype (AKA "permanent photographs") - Named for its English inventor, Walter B. Woodbury, this process produced prints that were highly regarded as excellent facsimiles of the original photographs. Patented in 1864, the process was used primarily for book illustrations but single images were sometimes issued in this process, especially portraits of celebrities and royalty for sale in quantity. The method is based on the principle that layers of any semitransparent material seen against a light ground produce differing degrees of light and shade, according to their thickness. Woodburytypes actually have a relief surface. A thickness appears in the dark areas where the concentration of pigment is greatest; blurring often occurs in the lighter areas. Woodburytypes are most often purplish brown.

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