

Nature Printing



CREATING 'CYANOTYPES' FROM NATURE

OVERVIEW

Follow in the footsteps of Anna Atkins, the first person to ever publish a book illustrated with photographs, and create your own sunshine-developed plant life print. Explore the natural world and collect materials to create nature prints inspired by Atkins' original cyanotypes.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

<p>INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT</p> <p>[5-10 MINUTES]</p>	<p>Introduce the main focuses of today's session: looking closely at nature, drawing inspiration from it, and capturing it through different artistic mediums – including simple photographic techniques.</p> <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider different art forms and what it means to be an 'artist' - Learn about an early photographic pioneer - Go for a short walk to explore Marriott's Way and collect natural objects - Arrange these objects to plan and sketch our artwork - Create a nature print
<p>1.) EXPLORATION OF IMAGES</p> <p>[20 MINUTES]</p>	<p>Introduce images of algae and explore with questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are these? [cyanotypes of algae – specifically seaweed] - How were they made? [using paper coated in light-sensitive chemicals] - Why were they made? [to share the photographer's interest in botany] - When? [1843 – 1853: the earliest days of photography] - Who created them? [Anna Atkins b. 1799 in Kent] <p>Anna Atkins created the first book illustrated with photographs (<i>Photographs of British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions</i> in 1843) to share her own interest with friends and family. She was influenced by other early photographic pioneers like Henry Fox Talbot – whose own interest in photography stemmed from his inability to paint well.</p> <p>Why use photography? Why did people first start experimenting with it?</p> <p>Optional: create a quick and simple sketchbook to take on the walk – record impressions as people would have before the invention of photography.</p>
<p>2.) COLLECTING NATURAL OBJECTS</p> <p>[30 MINUTES]</p>	<p>Introduce decorative arrangements [from <i>Cyanotypes of British & Foreign Ferns</i>, 1853] and the idea of creating prints of our own, using natural objects found along Marriott's Way.</p> <p>When collecting samples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Think about what will make a good print i.e. a stone will just be a blob of white but ferns and feathers can create beautiful impressions. - Do not <i>pick</i> anything that there aren't at least 50 of. Be clear about what (if anything) can be picked.
<p>3.) ARRANGE OBJECTS, SKETCH AND PRINT</p> <p>[20-30 MINUTES]</p>	<p>Using an A5 piece of plain paper, arrange the objects as you'd like them to appear in your print. When happy with the composition, sketch it out. You could do this with a few different arrangements and choose the best one for the final print.</p> <p>Emphasise the need for speed when arranging the objects on the nature paper, as it will begin to expose as soon as sunlight touches it. Place objects onto paper and lay a clear sheet over it (depending on weight, use stones to weigh down). Allow to expose in sunlight for 5-10 minutes. When exposed, place in water to 'fix' image.</p>

