

Photo-Recipes: Turmeric Anthotype

The anthotype process was invented by Sir John Herschel in 1842 and is the process of capturing an image using the photosensitive qualities of plants. This is a fun and easy process to experiment with at home that requires no experience or special equipment - just a bit of time and patience!

This is a contact-print process in which your image is formed by laying an object on top of your coated light sensitive material. This creates a shadow imprint (a photogram) which, depending on how dense your material is, will reveal some of the detail of the object. Pressed or fresh flowers and / or leaves from the garden are a fun place to start.

Approx prep time: 15 minutes to mix and coat & 1 hour to dry

Approx exposure time: 2-3 hours (very dependent on sun / light source and what materials you are using)

Materials required:

Turmeric powder – Available from your local supermarket.

91% Isopropyl alcohol – Available from pharmacies or online (or you can use cheap vodka).

Borax - Available from pharmacies or online suppliers.

Paper - Watercolour, craft or photocopier can be used.

Foam brush / paint brush to coat the paper.

Disposable cup for mixing ingredients – this will become stained.

Rubber gloves, apron / old clothes and scissors

Newspaper or cardboard to protect surfaces from staining

Clip frame / old photo frame and sunlight (or UV light source).

How to make your Turmeric Anthotype:

- Cover your work surface to protect from staining and be sure to wear gloves and an apron or old clothes.
- To prepare the emulsion add **one teaspoon of turmeric powder** and **four teaspoons of alcohol** into your mixing container, stir well to release the curcumin.
- Allow the deep yellow / orange mixture to stand for a few minutes until the solids fall to the bottom of your container.

- Pour off the vibrant liquid and coat the paper with your brush. There should be enough emulsion to coat a piece of A4 paper.
- Place away from light (e.g. in a cupboard) until the paper is completely dry and then cut to size you want - you can make several different images from one piece of coated paper.
- **Position your objects on top of your coated paper** and sandwich in the frame or under the glass, so that the objects are held tightly in place. Place outside on a flat surface or on a sunny window sill and leave to expose for **at least 2-3 hours**.

Developing the anthotype

- Add **two teaspoons of Borax** to a **half cup (125ml) of warm tap water** and stir until completely dissolved.
- At the sink drizzle the borax solution over your exposed paper and you will see that the unexposed parts turn a dark brown.
- When the image stops changing colour rinse it thoroughly under the tap to remove any excess Borax. Allow your anthotype to completely dry.

Anthotypes do not require 'fixing' to make them insensitive to light as they have been bleached by the sun. They will naturally fade over time so to prevent this store in a cool dark place or coat with a resin to preserve them. You can also scan your images or re-photograph them on your phone so you have a permanent digital copy and can share with friends and family. They can make beautiful cards for birthdays and just to post to a loved one to brighten thier day!

Share your Anthotypes with us - use #photorecipe2020 on instagram

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