



The
Sustainable
Darkroom

COMMONING BETHLEM: ART, CLIMATE CHANGE AND MENTAL HEALTH

WORKSHOP TOOL KIT

ABOUT THE SUSTAINABLE DARKROOM:

The Sustainable Darkroom is an artist-run research, training and mutual learning programme, equipping cultural practitioners with new skills and knowledge to develop an eco-friendly photographic practice. We aim for a total transformation of the way photographers work, think, and exist in the living world. Engaged with a present understanding of ecology - the Sustainable Darkroom is one of the most contemporary forms of photography to date.

Taking its form in workshops, talks, symposiums, training sessions, publications and residencies, we are currently leading the movement in challenging the environmental impact and sustainability of photography. In 2021, we launched the world's first physical darkroom space run on the principles of our movement. This year, we also opened Hot Compost, the first exhibition space exclusively for sustainable photographic works.

The Sustainable Darkroom has given talks and workshops both online and in person across the world including: The Photographers Gallery, The Royal College of Art, Slade School of Art, University of The Arts London, The Science Gallery Bengaluru, The Photography and Video Show, Centre for Creative Photography of Finland, North East Photography Network, Experimental Photo Festival Barcelona, Filmwerkplaats Rotterdam, and Endangered Species Coalition Washington DC.

We have been featured in numerous international publications and podcasts, including The Lissom Berlin, Amateur Photographer Magazine, Photoworks Photography+, 35mmc, New Classic Film Podcast, Texture Magazine Berlin, and The Photo Ethics Podcast.

Founded by Hannah Fletcher in 2019, and run in conjunction with Ed Carr and Alice Cazenave.

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TOOL KIT 1: ANTHOTYPES



MATERIALS:

- PESTLE AND MORTAR OR BLENDER
- A HANDFUL OF FRESH PLANT MATTER - THIS COULD BE LEAVES OR PETALS, CHOOSE JUST ONE PART OF THE PLANT EG. SPINACH LEAVES OR POPPY PETALS
- A MUSLIN CLOTH
- WATER COLOUR OR ANOTHER ABSORBANT PAPER
- A BRUSH OR SPONGE
- A HIGH CONTRAST PHOTOGRAPH PRINTED ON THIN BASIC WHITE PAPER OR A FLAT OBJECT EG. A LEAF OR FEATHER

STEP 1:

COLLECT A HANDFUL OF PLANT MATTER

Think about the colour that will be released from that plant. This will be the final colour of your Anthotype.

PLANTS THAT WORK WELL:

Green plants - spinach, chard, chickweed, coriander, parsley

Pink plants - poppy petals, beetroot, red tulip petals, red geranium petals

Purple plants - purple petunia petals, mulberries

Yellow plants - daffodil petals, turmeric, dandelion petals, butter cup petals

Blue plants - red cabbage, spirulina powder, blue violet petals, blue pansy petals



STEP 2:

GRIND DOWN THE PLANT MATTER USING A PESTLE AND MORTAR OR A BLENDER.

You should smooch it until you have a released juices from the plant. The coarser your chosen plant, the longer this will take



STEP 3:

STRAIN THE JUICE FROM THE PLANT MATTER USING A MUSLIN CLOTH.

Do this step over a bowl to collect all of the juice from you plant matter. This is what we are going to use to make our images with!

Wring the muslin really tight with the plant matter inside to release as much juice as possible. You will get the coloured plant juice on your hands at this stage, don't panic, it will just wash off later.

STEP 4:

CUT YOUR PAPER TO FIT IN YOUR FRAME

Whether you are using a clip frame, contact frame or an old photo frame, you need to make sure that your piece of paper will fit within the edges.

STEP 5:

COAT YOUR PAPER WITH THE PLANT JUICE

Dip a paint brush or sponge into the vegetable juice that you just strained and apply it all over the surface of the paper, making sure to cover all areas evenly.

Leave your paper to dry and then make a second coat to make the colour stronger .



STEP 6:

SET UP THE FRAME

Once your second coat of plant juice has dried, place this on the back of your frame with the plant juice facing out to the glass.

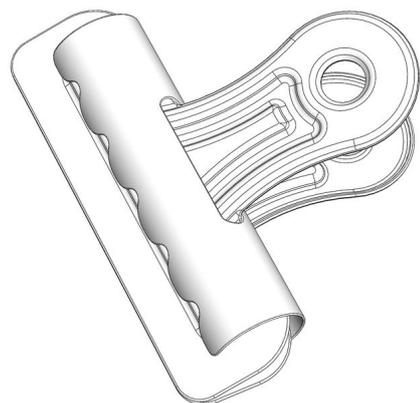
Next, place a flat object or a photograph printed onto basic, thin paper on top of the plant juice coated paper.



STEP 7:

SECURE THE FRAME

Place the glass on top of the assembled backboard, plant juice paper and flat object. The clip it all in place with the edge of the frame or with pegs and clips.



STEP 8:

PUT THE FRAME IN A SUNNY WINDOW TO EXPOSE

Depending on how sunny it is where you are, the print can take anywhere from 2 hours - 2 months to expose. You are looking for the areas that do not have an object on them to go very pale coloured: almost white.

Keep checking your paper every few days to see how it is progressing.

STEP 9:

THE FINISHED PRINT

Once the background has gone pale from the sun, disassemble the frame and you will have a finished print. A photographic image printed entirely from plant juice!

To keep the image from fading quickly, store in a box or between the pages of a book.

