

Glossary of Photographic Terms



Eugène Atget, [Place du Tertre, Mars](#), circa 1922, Museum Purchase: Elmer F. Pierson Fund, 1986.0072

[Albumen Print](#)

Albumen prints were invented in 1850 by Louis-Desiré Blanquart-Evrard and these prints remained popular until approximately 1890. The word “albumen” references the use of egg white to prepare the paper for printing. Albumen prints are always in black and white, although they may be toned to a monochrome hue (the finished prints range in color from reddish to purplish brown). If the print has deteriorated, the highlights can look yellowish.



Country Unknown (Western), [portrait of soldier](#), circa 1855, William Bridges Thayer memorial, 1928.3727

[Ambrotype](#)

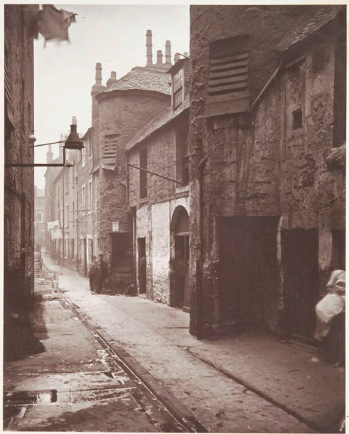
Ambrotypes were developed as negative images on glass. When an opaque coating was applied to the back of the negative, the negative appears to be a positive image. Ambrotypes were used primarily for portraiture and were similar to daguerreotypes in their size and packaging. However, ambrotypes were easier to tint, faster as well as cheaper to make than daguerreotypes so ambrotype photography replaced daguerreotypes in the 1850s. Subsequently, ambrotype was later supplanted by tintypes and carte-de-visites in the 1860s. [Portrait of soldier](#) is an example of an ambrotype with part of its backing removed, thus revealing the negative surface.



Frédéric Flachéron, [Pont à Rome](#), 1850, Museum purchase, 1972.0245

### [Calotype](#)

The calotype was invented by William Henry Fox Talbot in 1840, patented in 1841, and remained popular until the early 1850s. This type of photograph has been identified as the direct ancestor of the modern photograph because of its use of both a positive and negative imaging. Because of the existence of the negative, multiple prints could be made—unlike the daguerreotype and ambrotype which were a singular, unique objects. Because of the use of a paper negative, the positive image can often appear a bit fuzzy due to the presence of paper fibers in the negative. The term “calotype” was coined by Talbot from the Greek *kalos* meaning “beautiful” and the Latin *typus* meaning “image.”



34. Close, No. 139 Saltmarket

Thomas Annan, [Close No. 139, Saltmarket](#), circa 1868–1877, Museum purchase, 1997.0034

### [Carbon Print](#)

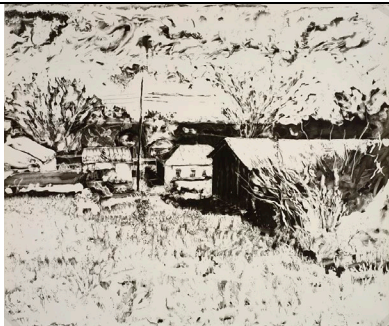
Several people are credited with the development of the carbon print. It was patented by Alphonse Louis Poitevin in 1855, improved by John Pouncy in 1858, and additional developments were made by Joseph Wilson Swann in 1864. Carbon prints derive their name from the use of carbon particles mixed with gelatin and bichromate to form an emulsion. Through the use of carbon and the removal of all chemicals in the washing process, carbon print images are permanent. They are also rich in tonal scale, from black to a deep rich brown. Carbon prints were popular between 1870 and 1910.



Jo Ann Callis, [untitled](#), 1980, Gift of Connie and Jack Glenn, 1986.0233

#### [Chromogenic Color Print](#)

A chromogenic color print, otherwise known as a “C-print,” or Ektacolor™, is a color print made from either a color transparency or color negative. The print paper has at least three layers of emulsion – each sensitized to a different color wavelength. Thus, once the negative image is exposed to the paper, each color layer records different information.



Fred Parker, [Backyard I \(St. Joseph, MO\)](#), 1985, Gift of Fred Parker, 1985.0149

#### [Cliché Verre](#)

Cliché Verre is a technique that refers to the use of a piece of glass as a surface for drawing. Typically this drawing is done on a glass plate coated with an opaque layer (such as paint or smoke) which is then scratched through. Once the image has been drawn, the glass plate is then used as a negative to print onto light-sensitive paper. The process was used by William Henry Fox Talbot as early as 1835, and continues to be used today.



Linda Connor, [Veiled Woman, India](#), 1979, Museum Purchase:  
Peter T. Bohan Art Acquisition Fund, 1985.0108

#### [Contact Print](#)

A contact print is made by interfacing the negative of any material with printing paper, and exposing the two to light (either natural or artificial). The resulting print is the exact same size as the negative.



France, [Building Façade](#), circa 1870, Museum purchase,  
1985.0007

#### [Cyanotype](#)

Invented by Sir John Herschel in 1842, the cyanotype process involves brushing light-sensitive solutions onto a sheet of paper. The item to be reproduced – either a drawing, negative, or three-dimensional object (such as a plant specimen) – is then placed upon the sheet and exposed to direct sunlight. After a long exposure (approximately 15 minutes), the impression forms on the paper; wherever the object blocked the light, the paper will remain white. When washed with water the paper turns blue because of an oxidation process; the name “cyanotype” references this brilliant blue color. Early architectural drawings used a duplication similar process, hence the term “blueprints.”



Country Unknown (Western), [portrait of a man](#), circa 1850,  
Museum purchase, 1928.3730

#### [Daguerreotype](#)

The daguerreotype's invention by Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre in 1839 was popular until the 1850s, when it was replaced by the ambrotype. The direct-positive images are highly detailed and were most popularly used for portraits. Because of the delicate nature of the daguerreotype's surface, the images were stored in protective cases made up of a metal mat, a glass cover, and book-like binding made of leather or plastic and lined with colored velvet.



William Helburn, [Sharon Tate](#), 1967, Gift of Esquire, Inc.,  
1980.0485

#### [Dye Transfer Print](#)

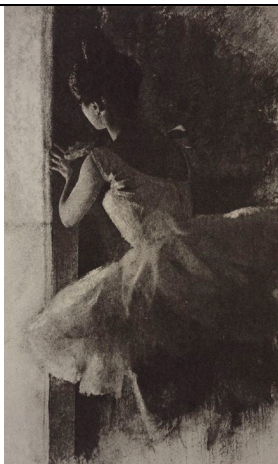
This is a method of making color prints or transparencies that gives control of color balance and contrasts. Although in strong light the colors will fade, dye transfer prints are longer lasting than color prints. The original color image is divided into its primary colors by making separation negatives, three black and white negatives individually exposed through red, green, and blue filters. The negatives are used to make separation positives, or matrices, which are gelatin-relief images that soak up dyes in proportion to the thickness of the gelatin. The dye-soaked images are transferred to exact alignment onto another sheet to reproduce the original color image.



**Harry Callahan, [Trees, Chicago](#), 1950, Museum purchase, 1970.0057**

**[Gelatin Silver Print](#)**

Gelatin silver prints are prints on papers coated with a gelatin that contains silver salts. The paper is used to make black-and-white prints. The paper was first invented in 1873, but did not come into general use until the 1880s, and is still generally in use today. Because of the variety of papers on the market, the tones can range from a neutral black to a bluish black or a brownish black.



**Robert Demachy, [Coulisses de l'opera](#), late 1800s/Nearly 1900s, Museum purchase, 1975.0053.13**

**[Gum Bichromate Print](#)**

The gum bichromate process was favored in the latter part of the 19th century because the level of control over the final print available to the artist. A sheet of paper was brushed with a coating of gum arabic and potassium bichromate, which was then allowed to dry, and finally the paper was exposed to a negative. Because the gum arabic hardened in accordance to the amount of light exposure, the artist could either brush or wash away portions of the gum that remained, thus altering the contrast of the print. The resulting prints often resemble crayon or charcoal drawings because of the broad areas of diffused detail.



**United States, [portrait of three Union soldiers](#), 1860s, Gift of Miss Stella W. Aten, 1972.0075**

**[Hand Coloring](#)**

Hand coloring is a method of applying color to the surface of a black and white photograph utilizing watercolor, paint, or dye. It has been in use since the time of daguerreotypes in the late 1830s.



Alvin Langdon Coburn, [The Fountain at Trevi](#), circa 1908, Museum Purchase: Peter T. Bohan Art Acquisition Fund, 1988.0015.12

#### [Photogravure](#)

A means of printing a photographic image by the intaglio process, developed in the 1850s and used through the middle of the 20th century. The photographic negative (which may be of an artist's drawing) is projected onto a sensitized gelatin emulsion or carbon tissue that is transferred to a copper plate. After washing, the plate areas that correspond to the image on the negative are dissolved, and the plate can be bitten by acid as in routine etching. In hand photogravure, which is most commonly used in printmaking, the copper plate is first prepared for aquatint etching. The end result can closely resemble a traditional linear etching or soft ground etching.



Fredrick Henry Evans, [Feather Bog](#), circa 1890, Museum Purchase, 1970.0012

#### [Platinum Print](#)

Platinum prints were invented by William Willis in 1873. These prints became commercially available in 1878, and were widely in use until the 1920s. Platinum prints have subtle tonal ranges, usually silver-gray.



**Andy Warhol, [Caroline Ireland](#), 1978, Gift of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. © The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc., 2008.0069**

**[Polaroid™ Print](#)**

Polaroid™ is a brand of camera and film which produces self-developing pictures. Available for commercial use by 1950, Polaroid™ instant film remained popular through the remainder of the 20th century, and was discontinued from production in 2008.



**England, United Kingdom, [The Nave from the Eastern Dome of the Crystal Palace](#), 1862, Anonymous Gift, 1978.0025**

**[Stereograph](#)**

Especially popular during the Victorian period, stereograph images are taken with a two-lens camera. The resulting print is a double photograph of the same image, and when viewed through a stereoscope, a three-dimensional view of the photograph appears, that approximates human binocular vision. The popular children's toy, the View-Master™, is another example of such technology.





United States, [untitled \(three musicians\)](#), circa 1855, Gift of Mrs. Kay Westgate, 1977.0129

#### [Tintype](#)

Tintypes were patented by William Neff and his son Peter in 1856 and were popular through the end of the 19th century. A tintype is composed of an iron surface upon which a light-sensitive emulsion is applied and then exposed in a camera—hence the term “tintype” is actually a misnomer. Tintypes quickly replaced ambrotypes because of the cheap cost of the metal used in tintypes. In addition, tintypes appealed to consumers because they were not fragile and thus could be sent through the mail, unlike images on glass like ambrotypes or daguerreotypes.



Etienne Carjat, [Charles Baudelaire](#), circa 1863, Gift of the department of French and Italian, 1980.0078

#### [Woodburytype](#)

The Woodburytype was patented by Walter Bentley Woodbury in 1864 and was popular until around 1900. It is a photomechanical means of reproducing a photograph that uses both intaglio and relief techniques. The resulting prints are often highly luminous and continuous in tone. Woodburytypes were often used to illustrate fine books of the late 19th century.