## the Photographers Formulary

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#### FORD ROBBINS: PUTTING TOGETHER OLD AND NEW



FORD ROBBINS: PUTTING TOGETHER OLD AND NEW

E-Mail: Anthony Mournian, editor Website: <u>Photoformulary.com</u>

Tel: (800) 922-5255 or (406) 754-2891 Fax: (406) 754-2896

Long before Sir John Herschel coined the word "photography," capturing and preserving an image was the Holy Grail of artists and painters the world over.

While it was 1826 before Joseph Niépce made his famous "Window at Le Gras," and not until 1839 that Louis Daguerre announced the process which will ever bear his name, artists, scientists and dabblers in the Black Arts had long been on the hunt for a way to capture a likeness of the human

face or form, and to make a permanent copy of it.

Even Daguerre's process, as revolutionary as it was, didn't give a way to make multiple copies of the exquisitely detailed images he captured and held using polished silver plates exposed to fumes of mercury.

The discovery of how to make a

reproducible image was left to Henry Fox Talbot, who days after Daguerre astounded the world with the



Abiquiu Road © Ford Robbins 2012

Daguerreotype, rushed to publish his own findings and discovery of what he first called the Calotype.

We may sometimes think of photographic prints as the beginning of printmaking, but that's not so. Centuries before, the Japanese and Chinese made wood block prints, using plates of wood carved in relief to reveal the hand drawn image which was then inked and printed on paper or other medium. By carving away the wood surrounding the desired image, the artist left raised areas which were coated with ink, then pressed against a medium to create a copy

of the image on the wood block.
In 15th century
Europe another
method of creating
and printing devel-

oped; carving the

image into the block of wood, then filling the carved areas with ink. This carving of the image into a block of wood, stone or other medium is called intaglio printing. Intaglio, from the Italian for carving or incising, describes what is commonly called engraving.

## REMINDER: THIS IS A "DYNAMIC" AND "INTERACTIVE" NEWSLETTER



Photographers' Formulary in Fog Click on the image to see a larger version

Thumbnail images are "linked" to larger versions. Click on the thumbnail, and the larger version will magically appear. Try it now! Don't forget that BLUE type is hot linked to a remote URL. We don't have enough space in the newslet-

ter for everything we want to show you, so we create links to other websites which might be of interest to you. Enjoy exploring the newsletter and when you are done, call us at 800-922-5255 to place an order for chemistry for your next Alternative Process masterpiece!



Gallery #8 ©Ford Robbins 2012

The photogravure process was developed by Henry Fox Talbot. After the disastrous fading of his Calotype images in the first book of published illustrations, "*The Pencil of Nature*," Talbot and his assistant Nicholas Henneman continued the quest for a permanent printmaking process which would not fade, while also giving the viewer an image with a continuous tonal scale. In 1850 Talbot patented the photogravure process, referred to even today as photoengraving.

To this day both methods, printing images carved in relief, and images engraved or carved into the printing plate, are used by artists throughout the world. Together with photogravure, to these methods of printmaking we can now add polymer platemaking. This uses a metal



Gallery 3B ©Ford Robbins 2012

plate covered with a light sensitive medium in plastic which is exposed to ultraviolet light, developed in tap water, and printed under great pressure using an engraving press. The end product is the polymer gravure, a print with many of the visual qualities of the photogravure.

There's a world of difference between a photogravure and a modern day polymer gravure, however. Often confused as one and the same, and though at first blush the qualities of the image they produce appear much alike, they are different in how they are created. With an extended tonal scale from wispy highlights to somber shadows, both have their



Bernheim Woods #61 ©Ford Robbins 2012

roots in an intaglio process. Both are akin to engraving with its areas of differing densities of ink laid down or forced into paper. Intaglio carries with it a sense of hand cut grooves of varying depth which can result in cirrus-like highlights ranging into the darkness of night shadows.

Photogravure was used extensively by Edward S. Curtis in his monumental *North American Indian* project in the early 20th century. Curtis saw photogravures as a means of preserving images made from large glass plate negatives as he worked his way from tribe to tribe across the Continental United



Ennis, Montana ©Ford Robbins 2012

States and up the west coast of Canada.

The photogravure process was complicated, requiring use of ferric chloride acid to etch polished copper plates.

Curtis, financed by banker, J.P. Morgan, had a staff of photographers and darkroom technicians to do the work as he made more than 40,000 exposures over a period of more than twenty years. In the end, Curtis lost his copyright and all profits to Morgan who ended up selling the rights to collectors for a pittance of \$1,000.00 plus a share of future profits.

Polymer gravure pays homage to photogravure more by the looks of the final product than by the printmaking techniques involved.



Cottonwoods, La Cienega ©Ford Robbins 2012

Unlike photogravure, polymer gravure does not require the use of acids or chemical etching. Polymer gravure relies on film exposed to ultraviolet light and uses plain water to achieve an etched surface which, like traditional gravure, will be used to make a gravurelike print under high pressure in an etching press.

In this era of digital imaging and inkjet prints, why would anyone go to such great lengths to make polymer gravures? Santa Fe photographer and printmaker, Ford Robbins would say because he likes the process, and polymer gravure plate printmaking requires plenty of it!

Robbins, who began his adult life as a lawyer in the United States Air Force, turned to photog-



Onion River
©Ford Robbins 2012

raphy as a professional career in the 1980's, embracing large format film and cameras as his choice of capturing the image.

Robbins practiced law in Minnesota until he retired in 1988. During his years as a lawyer when summer or other time for recreation rolled around, Robbins would head to Santa Fe, New Mexico and the Great Southwest. It didn't take many of those hunting trips for images to convince Robbins and his wife, Margaret, to move from Minnesota to New Mexico. He's lived there ever since, though he returns to Minnesota once in a while to look at the snow from which he escaped.

As a person well connected with Nature, Robbins developed a substantial body of landscapes and



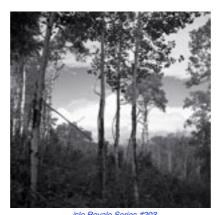
Montezuma, Kansas ©Ford Robbins 2012

nature photography. In 2009 he published "Connections, a Visual Journal," a retrospective volume of his work over the past twenty-five years. Published in the U.S. by Red Mountain Press, and printed in Canada, "Connections" can hardly be called a coffee table book. It's not big enough! It's about 8x10 inches, paper bound and nicely portable. You can order it here:

#### www.fordrobbins.com/bookfoliosprints.html

"Connections" should be browsed slowly over a glass of rich red wine with hearty french bread dripping warm bris.

Ansel Adams had it right when he decided to publish books of his images, thinking it was better to put his photographs in the hands of thousands for a few dollars a book than to hang an occasional image on the wall of those few



/sle Royale Series #203 ©Ford Robbins 2012

able and willing to pay thousands for a single print.

Robbins' "Connections" is on a par with Adams' efforts. Many of the photographs reflect New Mexico's raw beauty, while others remind us a Sunday drive through the midwestern countryside. The quality of printing by Red Mountain Press must come close to matching the original prints because a print like "Merced River," almost glows. It's the last print in the book, and the cover photo, and it's well chosen.

"Isle Royale Series, #203," at



Cañoncito, New Mexico ©Ford Robbins 2012

page 59 was taken in Michigan, but could be easily mistaken for a scene along the road to Cedar Breaks, Utah. A grain silo in "Montezuma, Kansas," (page 47,) is a silent reminder of a vanishing way of life. Arching wooden silos have given way to squatty corrugated steel Butler buildings, leaving us with memories of another time, another place.

For any who have traveled the back roads of New Mexico, of which there are many, the image of a quiet graveyard at "Cañoncito," (page 87) will bring back memories. "Onion River," (page 81,) is reminiscent of Ansel Adams' "Aspens, New Mexico, 1938."

Robbins' commercial photography put food on the table, while



Florence #4 ©Ford Robbins 2012

landscapes and occasional portraiture satisfied his artistic bent. After discovering polymer gravure Robbins saw the potential to merge his film based photography with the technically demanding process. He found, too, he could make digital negatives and positives from relatively small digital images, which in turn could be used in the polymer gravure printmaking process

Using digital images taken years earlier during a monthlong print-making workshop in Florence, Italy, Robbins recently decided to make a series of small polymer gravure prints. He recalls taking the photographs during spare moments from his duties as studio supervisor to master printmaker Daniel Welden in 2001.

For his private work Robbins prefers to use film rather than digital. In his commercial work he has used digital imaging, but had never taken *the next step* of melding digital to an alternative process. His foray into making polymer gravures of digital images taken in Italy brings the process full circle.



Florence #137 ©Ford Robbins 2012

Polymer gravure is an adaptation of photogravure, and the use of digital images as the foundation for the final work is the final touch to the evolution.

Remember the early days of digital imaging? Digital cameras have been around as long ago as the 1984 Olympics when event photographers lugged shoulder units weighing several pounds and costing many thousands of dollars, but with relatively low resolution.

By the time 2001 rolled into view, digital cameras were on the march. Size had diminished, battery life was improving and quality was on the rise in consumer grade cameras. Robbins' camera in Italy only had 5 megapixels of resolution,



Florence #119 ©Ford Robbins 2012

about the same as many cell phones have today.

Those small files limited Robbins as he considered trying his hand at polymer gravure. In retrospect that was probably a good thing because it cut costs dramatically to make a 4x6" print instead of an 11x14" print. Just as it's impossible to make a sharp, crisp 30x40" print using a 35 mm film negative because the image falls apart as the size grows, it's equally impossible to make a large polymer gravure out of a small digital file.

But, as platinum printer Jan Pietrzak says, some prints just look better smaller, so don't even



Florence #136 ©Ford Robbins 2012

try to go bigger. Make people get up close to your print if they really want to look at it, and they will be able to appreciate the image as well as the beauty of the print.

It may not have been by design that Robbins found himself restricted to 4x6" prints from his digital files, but Robbins is clearly satisfied with his efforts. Asked how long it takes to make a polymer gravure he replied, "On average, about three days." He went on to explain the many steps of the polymer gravure process, and the possibility of making a mistake at any step along the way.

It's tweaking the polymer plate that eats up the time. Once Robbins is satisfied with a plate he says he can make multiple copies in a short time. But because any change in the digital file used to make the plate has significant consequences in the actual print, changes must be made slowly and incrementally.

For Robbins, once you have the image, it's all about process in making the print. As one writer observed, polymer gravure allows



Florence #115 ©Ford Robbins 2012



*Isle Royale #212* ©Ford Robbins 2012



Ohio Barn ©Ford Robbins 2012



*Isle Royale #188* ©Ford Robbins 2012

a photographer to elevate a simple print from a negative to a piece of art to proudly hang on the wall, and Robbins has done that.



Fiesole #111 ©Ford Robbins 2012



Fiesole #121 ©Ford Robbins 2012



Fiesole #117 ©Ford Robbins 2012



Kaibab Series #14 ©Ford Robbins 2012



Gallery 2B ©Ford Robbins 2012



Isle Royale #1 ©Ford Robbins 2012

# Photographers' Formulary and Fine Art Photo Supply DECEMBER 2012 NEWSLETTER SPECIALS

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For D-19 is a published formula originally designed for use with X-ray materials and is now recognized as an excellent developer for aero films and plates when high contrast is desired. Compared with Kodak D-76, Formulary D-19 produces negatives with high contrast, slightly larger grain size and a small decrease in sharpness. The life of this developer is in excess of 1 year and will not stain tanks or trays. Click the word Tech Info for the instructions.

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Liquidol is the unique paper developer from Bill Troop and Ron Mowrey. A revolutionary new print developer, Liquidol features exceptionally long shelf life, tray life, and high capacity, along with the convenience of a 1:9 liquid concentrate. Fine printers will appreciate this developer with its greater flexibility in over-and under-development than most print developers. This feature is limited when using papers which in-clude incorporated developing agents, but when using papers which do not have incorporated developing agents, demanding printers will appreciate Liquidol's extra dimension of flexibility and control. Liquidol is designed to replicate the appearance of prints developed in industry-standard Dektol®, yet to provide enhanced shadow separation. Other advantages are full development within 60 seconds at 1:9 dilutions.

We invite users to experiment with different times and dilutions. We think you really will be surprised by the flexibility and dependability Liquidol offers.

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#### TF-5 ARCHIVAL RAPID FIXER, ONE LITRE BOTTLE



Cat. No.: 03-0200 4litre - ships 1 litre Regular \$10.95 Special 20% off: \$8.76 Promo Code: D200

Formulary's TF-5 Archival Rapid Fixer is an extraordinary fixer for both paper and film.

- \* Processing time 30 seconds for resin-coated prints, 60 seconds for fiber-based prints; no hypo clearing agent necessary.
- \* Little or no odor if mixed with distilled water.
- \* No stop bath necessary. Just use water rinse after developing.
- \* Non-hardening. Excellent for use with prints to be toned or re-touched.
- \* A near-neutral fix that changes the pH of the film or paper from alkaline to near-neutral, unlike TF4 in which the film or paper stays at an alkaline pH value.
- \* The only rapid-fixer system that allows the print to be completely fixed without impairing the rapidity of the wash.
- \* No image bleaching. All conventional fixers act as reducers. This means that the longer the material is left in the fixer, the more image silver is destroyed. This can only have bad effects on the image, whether it is a print or a negative. Conventional sodium thiosulfate (rapid) fixers suffer from this defect especially. The problem is eliminated in TF-5, which may offer slightly richer maximum blacks as a result.

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#### **SEPIA SULFIDE TONER**



Cat. No.: 06-0035 Regular \$12.95 Special 20% off: \$10.36 Promo Code: N35

#### **FORMULARY SEPIA SULFIDE**

**TONER 221** is a classic bleach and redevelopment toner that produces rich permanent sepia-brown tones. Most types of paper tone well with this process, including resin coated paper. The bleach contains potassium ferricyanide that changes the metallic silver to a silver salt. After bleaching, the print is then redeveloped in sodium sulfide.

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#### FORMULARY COPPER TONER



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THE FORMULARY'S Copper Toner contains copper sulfate, potassium ferricyanide, and potassium citrate which results in an image toned with copper metal. The toner produces a variety of colors ranging from warm brown through coppery hues to chalk red. The exact color obtained depends on the length of toning time. The process is rapid and progressive. It is possible to remove the print from the bath at any stage of its toning. Although fiber based papers work best, resin coated papers will work nicely also. The chemicals contained in the kit are used to make two stock solutions, which are mixed in equal volumes to obtain the working solution. The stock solutions are stable for a reasonable period of time, but the working solution should be discarded after use.

httphttp://stores.photoformulary.com/-strse-190/Coppe r-Toner/Detail.bok

#### Art Intersection - About the Juror

Katherine Ware is Curator of Photography at the New Mexico Museum of Art in Santa Fe, where she recently organized the exhibition, book, and website Earth Now: American Photographers and the Environment. She previously served as Curator of Photographs at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and Assistant Curator in the Department of Photographs at the J. Paul Getty Museum.

She is a frequent juror and reviewer of contemporary photography and has written essays on the art of the twentieth and twentyfirst centuries. Ms. Ware is particularly interested in work that pushes the boundaries of photography.

#### About Art Intersection

The space at Art Intersection encompasses Galleries and Photographic Arts Lab for learning, creating, and exhibiting photographic art while embracing the intersection of related art forms.

The Photographic Arts Lab offers a fully outfitted facility for the beginning, amateur, and professional photographer to practice the art of photography. This is the *Learn* and *Create* space for photography at Art Intersection.

Wood floors, brick walls, and metal ceilings blend to create an inviting environment welcoming visitors to enjoy curated exhibitions in the Galleries at Art Intersection. This is the Exhibit space at Art Intersection serving to support the gathering of artists and art enthusiasts for exhibitions, lectures, seminars, and meetings.

#### **Submission Guidelines**

- · Work accepted for review must utilize media that is based in analog photographic processes. The final print must be produced in a manner other than digital printing. Prints may be created from digital negatives.
- Three-dimensional work and artist books will be considered if they have an analog photographic basis.
- All two-dimensional work must be framed and ready to hang. We have pedestals without covered protection for three-dimensional work. Please include instructions on displaying your work.
- The works submitted must be the sole creation of the exhibiting artist(s). Submission of collaborative work is encouraged.
- Artists must be at least 18 years old.

#### What to Submit

- Up to 5 images in JPEG format, 300 dpi, 5inches on the short side. Work that is not submitted in JPEG format will not be reviewed. JPEG filenames should match the titles as they appear on the title list and include the last name of the artist.
- A registration fee of \$40 (non-member) or \$30 (Photographer or Patron member).
- Submitting artists must include a short artist statement about the submitted piece(s), a short bio, and an abbreviated process/ method description of the manner the print(s) were produced.
- A title list in a separate document that includes contact information along with the title, date, media, and dimensions of submitted work.

#### Art Intersection

207 North Gilbert Road Upstairs on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Downtown Gilbert, Arizona



**Gallery Hours** Tuesday - Saturday 10am-6pm

> 480-361-1118 artintersection.com info@artintersection.com

207 North Gilbert Road Suite 201 Gilbert, AZ 85234

#### How to Submit\*

By email:

- Go to artintersection.com and locate: "Light Sensitive" on the Events page. Pay your registration fee using a credit card, debit card or PavPal.
- Include all the items in your email (see "What to Submit") and in the subject line please write "Submission to Light Sensitive"
- Send the email to info@artintersection.com with all required items attached.

- By mail or hand delivery:
   In a proper envelope address your submission to: Art Intersection Submission for Light Sensitive 207 N. Gilbert Rd, Suite 201 Gilbert, AZ 85234
- Include a check or money order for the registration fee made out to Art Intersection,
- or pay through the website. Include a CD/DVD of JPEGs (see "What to Submit") and pdf files with your artist statement, short bio, process description, and title list.

\*Submission materials will not be returned. Do not submit original artwork.

#### Important Dates

- 28 January 2013: Submissions due at Art Intersection.
- 8 February 2013: Notification of artists selected for exhibition by email.
- 2 March 2013: Selected work due, ready to hang/install at Art Intersection.
- 9 March 23 April 2013: Exhibition dates.
- 16 March 2013, 5-8pm: Opening reception. 10 May 2013: Work shipped back to artist with shipping paid by the submitter.

#### Call for Work

#### Light Sensitive

A National Juried Exhibition of Analog Photography 9 March - 23 April 2013



#### **Exhibiting Artist Information**

- Delivery: Artists selected for exhibition must be able to deliver work in person or ship the work to arrive in a reusable container by the deadline date, 2 March 2013. Work that does not arrive by the deadline or is not ready to install will not be included in the show. Art Intersection will return work that is not sold at the expense of the submitter. Art Intersection is not responsible for the loss or damage of work(s) while in transit.
- Presentation: Artists are responsible for framing or other professional presentation. Artwork must be ready to install upon delivery.
- Sale of work: We encourage work to be for sale; however, we will accept work that is not for sale. The split of the artwork sale price is 60% to the artist and 40% to Art Intersection.
- Labeling: All work must be labeled on the back with artist name, title, year the work was created, media, and the price or "Not For
- Insurance: All work will be insured at fair market value for the duration of the exhibit.

#### Awards

Up to three photographers will be selected by the curatorial team at Art Intersection to show work at a future exhibition in 2013-2014.

#### Liability

Art Intersection is not responsible for the loss or damage of works while in transit. Art Intersection reserves the right to reproduce accepted works on our website and in any marketing. Submission of work and application indicates acceptance of conditions stated above.



Terri Vincent



Joan Bowers



Susan Huber



Keith Field



Ken Osthimer



Robert Fukura



Ken Nelson



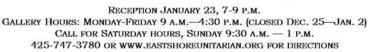
Sally Kim-Miller

## GROUP F/5.6 AND THE PACIFICA CHAPTER OF THE CENTER FOR PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY AND TECHNOLOGY

PRESENT A SHOW OF PHOTOGRAPHS BY SIXTEEN ARTISTS USING POLAROID IMAGE TRANSFER, POLAROID LIFT, PALLADIUM/PLATINUM, WET PLATE, CYANOTYPE, VAN DYKE, DAGUERREOTYPE, LITH, CARBON TRANSFER, CHRYSOTYPE, AND GUM BICHROMATE. CRAIG ALAN HUBER, CURATOR.

AT THE CLARRIDGE GALLERY IN THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING EAST SHORE UNITARIAN CHURCH, 12700 SE 32ND ST, BELLEVUE WA 98005

#### DECEMBER 3, 2012 TO JANUARY 25, 2013





Andrew O'Ne



David Pitcher



Bruce McCaughey



Lillian Sly



Amanda Breitbach



Tom Kirkendall



Marcy Merril



Meghann Gilligan

## Photographers' Formulary, Inc.

Voice: 800-922-5255 406-754-2891 Fax: 406-754-2896

Email: formulary@blackfoot.net www.photoformulary.com

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It's All Over at Midnight, December 28, 2012

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