

Cyanotypes

Unit 1: 20 Min Microteaching Session





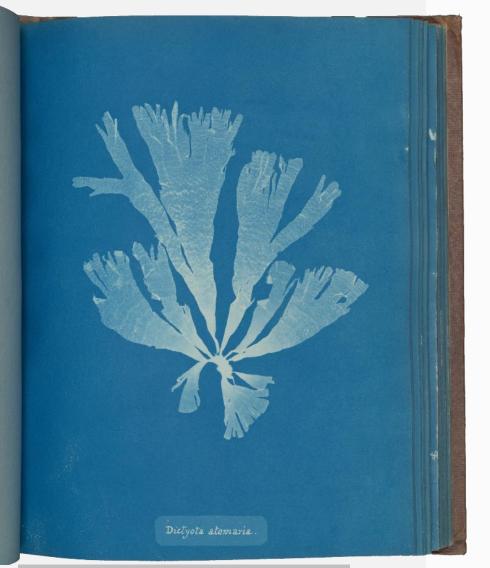
What is a Cyanotype ?





Lady with Harp, John Herschel, 1842

- John Herschel (1792-1871) an astronomer & scientist - was looking for a way to copy his scientific notes. In 1842 he invented the cyanotype.
- Otherwise known as a blueprint, the cyanotype produces striking blue toned imagery
- Process uses a mixture of light sensitive iron salts, coated on paper or material.
- When exposed to UV light, a chemical reaction turns the salts into a rich blue colour.
- Anything blocking the light remains white
 - Contact print process



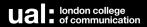
A specimen from Photographs of British Algae, Cyanotype Impressions, 1853. Atkins, Anna

- The cyanotype was widely used for creating engineering blueprints. It was also quickly picked up by botanists as it allowed for detailed forms to be replicated.
- Botanist and photographer Anna Atkins (1799-1871) used the process to produce what is regarded as the world's first book of photographs – *Photographs of British Algae, Cyanotype Impressions,* 1853.
- Book made of specimens collected from around the British Isles and British Territories across a ten year period.



<u>Royal Society - Turn the Page - Photographs of</u> <u>British Algae, Cyanotype Impressions, 1853.</u>

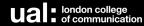


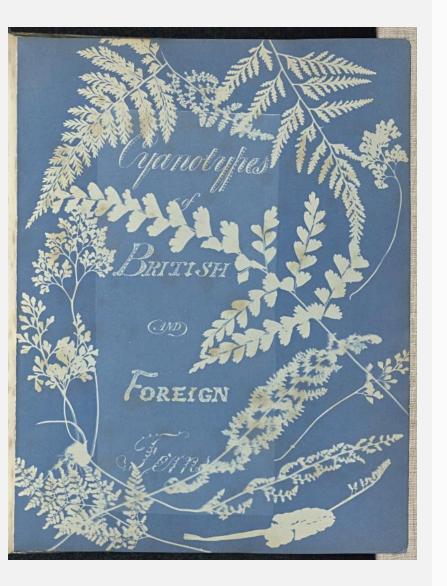






Make your own cyanotype!





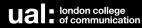
- As soon as her first book was published, Anna Atkins began work on her second...
- Cyanotypes of British & Foreign Ferns, 1853





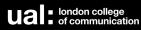
While your cyanotypes expose, research into Anna Atkins and her work.

Consider the following question...





How might Atkins's cyanotypes fit within the context of colonial expansion during the 19th Century?





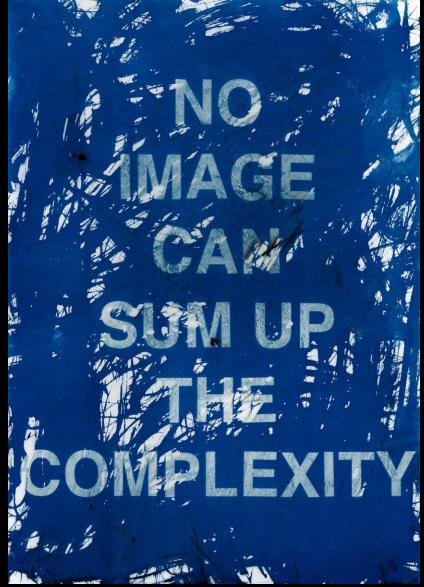
What did you find?



https://forma.org.uk/projects/almost-nothing-but-blue-ground







Tom Pope + Matthew Bennington. Almost Nothing But Blue Ground

