COURSE PURPOSE

This course will expose students to a little-known historical photographic technique that was popular during the 1850s – the Van Dyke Brown printing process. This incredibly easy-to-learn and enjoyable photoprocess can be replicated in nearly any environment without the need for a traditional darkroom or any experience with photography – film or digital. Student will utilize pre-existing personal images (film or digital) printed on transparency film to create handmade photographs made with the power of the sun, a few cheap chemicals and traditional watercolor paper. Acting as a bridge between digital and traditional darkroom techniques, this course will expose practitioners of either photographic path to a blended working method by introducing the element of the “hand” into digital creation and eliminating the necessity of film or darkroom experience in a “darkroom-like” process. This course is geared for either the tenured or novice photographer and aims to provide a creative way to distinguish their work from others.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students will begin this intensive 8-hour course section exploring the historical roots of photography as they’re visually familiarized with multiple early photographic techniques and their famous practitioners. We will focus on the technological leaps that led to the first permanent photograph and how those early advances led to the browntone process of Van Dyke Brown.

After a photographic lineage is established, students will receive instruction on how to create their own “digital negatives”, a process that allows students to utilize digital files with analog processes. Following this discussion, students will learn how to:

- Safely mix photo-reactive chemicals
- Coat regular watercolor paper with chemistry, turning it light-reactive
- Use a contact-printing frame with their digital negatives to create a print
- Effectively and safely process their exposed print to make a permanent image

Our first day will focus on procedure – mostly – working out any procedural or individual issues students may have with the process. The second day, however, we’ll spend the entire day exploring what we learned from the first – printing your own digital negatives, working individually on coating, exposing and processing your prints in a moderated lab session.

COURSE OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES:

By the end of this weekend focus course, student should be able to:

- Be able to understand the history surrounding Van Dyke Brown as a photographic process, name some of its most well-known practitioners and understand its historical significance
- Be able to make basic digital negatives on their own for use in any number of photographic printing-out processes
- Be able to make their own unique, handmade images with pre-existing imagery, adding creativity and a unique signature to their work
- Understand necessary safety precautions surrounding VDB but also be comfortable enough with it to do it safely at home
- Coat paper, mix chemistry, expose and process Van Dyke Brown images
COST
All supplies for the course will be supplied for you at no additional cost. This course is completely supported by a $60 fee for the 2-day workshop.

COURSE SCHEDULE:
(There will be a break on the hour, every hour, for 5 minutes)
January 11:
  Noon-1p – Class introductions, history lesson on VDB
  1p-2p – Digital Negative creation demonstration with Photoshop, Scanning demo for film
  2p-3p – Coating, Exposure and Processing Demonstration
  3p-4p – Demo ends, students use pre-made digital negatives to create their own VDBs
January 12:
  Noon-1p – Review material; construct digital negatives from personal photos
  1-3:30p – Open, Moderated Lab. Help where needed.
  3:30-4p – Group Critique, Discussion on where to go next, Goodbyes.

GRADING
This course is non-graded.

MISCELLANEOUS

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with disabilities – I will fully work with the Office of Disabilities Services (203 WHIT, 474-5655).