

How To

Cliché Verre

The art of cliché verre was popularized in 19th century France by etching artists like Daubigny, Millet, and Corot. In French, cliché verre literally means “glass picture.” Although the glory days of this glass-enabled art form are long gone, it remains a fun project, even if a tad difficult. Technically, it’s a photographic contact-printing technique that is made using a negative which is the same size as the objective print. You’re literally painting on film.

Jaromir Stephany, an artist now based in Maryland, is one of the better known modern cliché verre masters. During the 1950s, Stephany worked as an army photographer and first experimented with the process before attending Indiana University to study the art. He has taught in his home town of Rochester, NY, as well as at several colleges in Maryland.

Do Try This at Home!

1. Hold a piece of flat glass over a low and not-too-intensely burning candle. Let it blacken on one side of the glass.
2. With a sharp but delicate instrument (like a needle) etch an image into the soot.
3. Cover the glass on the non-soot side with a piece of photosensitive paper and keep in a place where the sun shines, positioned so the light passes through the glass.
4. The light will trace the etchings on the photosensitive paper, and the image you have etched will have been captured on film!