

Fruma Markowitz Photography



A Blue Thread: Across the Universe – work-in-progress; Cyanotype using native plants on cotton squares; 5" h X 20" w
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A Blue Thread Artist Statement

I've recently stepped away from "traditional" photographic practice to experiment with one of the first photographic processes invented in the early 19th century - Cyanotype. I've been working with both paper and cotton cloth substrates, making what are essentially "sketches" using small pieces of light-sensitized materials to make images of naturally growing weeds and wildflowers close to my home in Weston, CT. The results look like ghost images of white on a deeply rich blue background. I also add stitching to the pieces, by hand and by machine, often composing the plants to extend over several squares forming a pre-printed diptych, triptych or patchwork.

I'm planning next to coat my own paper, wood, aluminum, stone and cotton cloth substrates with the necessary light-sensitive chemicals, which will give me more control over the light-sensitive solution and to add texture from brush strokes and the inherent nature of these surfaces. I'd like to dispense with cutting pieces of wildflowers to sandwich between glass and the light-sensitive substrates, and leave them to continue growing where they are. Instead I have an idea to weave the larger cloth in and amongst the thick growths of the weeds/wildflowers, stabilized by two narrow wood poles that I could plant in the earth, and let the sun and breeze work to create the images at a much larger scale.

The images are "developed" simply by immersing the cloth in cold water with a drop of hydrogen peroxide to bring out the blue color, and letting it wash away any chemical that has not been touched by the sun. As the pieces dry, they take on a much deeper shade of blue. It is then possible to tone them using coffee, tea, wine and other liquids that change their color from blue to green, brown, purple or black.

I find endless possibilities for my art practice in this process, and am very excited to keep exploring and experimenting with it.