

# ZEBRA VANDYKE BROWN -USER MANUAL

## 1. Introduction

Thank you for purchasing the Vandyke Brown printing kit by Zebra Dry Plates. This kit will yield approximately fifty 8"x10" prints, producing rich, dark brown images. The final images are highly durable and can be toned in platinum, palladium, gold, or selenium for enhanced brilliance and archival quality. Please read these instructions thoroughly and follow all safety precautions before beginning.

## 2. Kit Contents

- 100 ml Vandyke Brown Solution
- 250 grams Sodium Thiosulfate fixer crystals
- 1x 3ml pipette

## 3. Safety and Handling Information

The Vandyke solution is UV light-sensitive and can be handled under most room lighting conditions. A safelight is not necessary; normal incandescent lighting is suitable throughout the process. Fluorescent lighting can be used, but limit exposure of the chemicals and coated paper to prevent fogging. Work in a windowless room or shade any windows in your workspace.

Always wear plastic or latex gloves when handling Vandyke solution, coating paper, and processing exposed images. Consider the solution poisonous; do not store it in a food or drink refrigerator. It is stable at room temperature and has a shelf life of at least 1 year from the purchase date.

## 4. Preparing Your Workspace and Negative

You will need a negative the same size as your final image, printed in direct contact with the dried, Vandyke-coated paper under intense UV light. Suitable light sources include a 1000 watt metal halide bulb, ultraviolet fluorescent lights, or sunlight.

To maintain proper registration and pressure between the negative and paper, use a split-back contact printing frame, vacuum frame, or two sheets of plate glass. These instructions assume the use of a split-back contact printing frame, which allows for image inspection during exposure.

- **Workspace Setup:** Select a large table with a hard, smooth surface for coating your paper. The Vandyke solution can stain various surfaces, so protect the table with several sheets of newspaper or blotter paper.
- **Brush or Coating Rod:** If using a brush, dedicate it to Vandyke printing to avoid contamination. A glass coating rod can be used for multiple processes if washed properly between uses.
- **Trays:** You will need 3 trays for processing the exposed image:
  - First tray: Tap water for an initial wash.
  - Second tray: Fixer bath (50 grams of fixer crystals per liter of cold tap water).
  - Third tray: Final rinse bath with slow, cold running water.
- **Paper Selection:** Use 100% cotton rag, unbuffered, archival quality paper. For 8.5"x11" paper, ensure a minimum weight of 32 lb. For larger images, hot pressed papers with a minimum 47 lb rating are recommended for better wet processing and image quality.

## 5. Coating and Drying

- **Marking and Taping:** Tape the upper corners of the paper to your coating table using paper or masking tape. Mark the four corners of your negative on the paper with a pencil.
- **Measuring Solution:** Use the supplied dropper to count the appropriate number of drops of Vandyke solution into a small glass or plastic cup. Approximate drops needed for different image sizes:
  - 4"x5" image = 12 drops
  - 5"x7" image = 18 drops
  - 6"x9" image = 24 drops
  - 8"x10" image = 40 drops

### Using a Brush

- Wet the brush with distilled water and blot it on a paper towel to remove excess water.
- Pour the measured Vandyke solution onto the center of the image area. Using light pressure, spread the solution horizontally, then vertically, until fully absorbed. If spreading takes longer than 30 seconds, reduce the amount of solution by 1/4.
- Avoid over-brushing to prevent paper surface abrasions.
- After coating, place the paper in a dark spot to dry for about 1 hour. Do not use a hair dryer.

### Using a Coating Rod

- Pour the Vandyke solution along one edge of the image area. Place the coating rod in the solution and wiggle it slightly to distribute the solution evenly.
- Apply light pressure and pull the rod across the image area. Lift the rod at the edge, skip over the bead of solution, and drag it back in the opposite direction. If more than 6 passes are needed, reduce the solution amount by 1/4.
- Blot any excess solution with a paper towel corner. Dry the coated paper in a dark spot for about 1 hour.

## 6. Exposure

The Vandyke image develops as it is exposed, creating a "printing out" image without a separate development stage. Using a split-back contact printing frame allows inspection during exposure.

- Place the negative inside the print frame, centered on the glass. Ensure the image is not reversed.
- Place the dried Vandyke-coated paper face down in the frame, covering the negative. Install the hinged back and lock the springs.
- Expose the frame to UV light or direct sunlight. The coated area will darken almost immediately.
- Inspect the print after 3 minutes by opening one leaf spring on the hinged back. Vandyke prints darken during washing, fixing, and drying stages, so stop exposure when the image appears half as dark as desired.
- Repeat inspections every few minutes until the image shows sufficient detail in the highlights.

## 7. Washing

- Place the exposed image in the first tray of wash water. Agitate the tray to lift the yellow stain from the paper. Wash for 3-5 minutes, changing the water after 8-10 prints or if washing times exceed 5 minutes. Warm water (90°F) shortens wash times.

## **8. Fixing**

- Transfer the print to the fixer solution (4 teaspoons of Sodium Thiosulfate per liter of cold tap water). Agitate periodically for 5 minutes.
- The image should be approximately 3/4 as dark as the final desired image. Over-fixing can bleach the image, while under-fixing affects archival permanence.

## **9. Final Wash and Drying**

- Move the print to the final wash tray with a slow, constant stream of cool water. Wash for 30 minutes, agitating the tray every 5 minutes.
- After washing, lift the print by a corner to drain water for 15 seconds. Hang it to air dry on a clothesline or place on a plastic window screen. Alternatively, dry on paper towels, ensuring the print does not stick.
- Flatten dried prints in a warm dry mount press and mount them on archival, acid-free board.

## **10. Contact Us**

For assistance or to share feedback, please contact us on: [zebradryplates@gmail.com](mailto:zebradryplates@gmail.com)

**Unlock the creative potential of Vandyke brown with the Zebra Vandyke Brown printing Kit, and let your artistic vision come to life!**

