

LITH PRINTING MATERIALS UPDATE September 1st 2008

Background

The last published up-to-date list of papers and developers suitable for Lith Printing was in my last book 'The World of Lith Printing' published in 2006. Shortly after that Forte ceased production for the second and final time. This in turn impacted on a number of other labels listed in 'TWOLP' that used Forte emulsions. Since then there have been various other comings and goings of papers and prototypes. I have documented these changes periodically for TWOLP website mailing list (www.worldoflithprinting.com) and archive and as an insert for books ordered directly from me. These evolving updates became increasingly complicated as new material in them in turn became obsolete.

As the market has stabilised somewhat it would seem a good time to draw up a new list. Further changes are expected of course and there is reason to believe too that some good news may be coming for a change and I look forward to reporting on it if and when it happens.

Choosing papers

The various criteria for choosing between the papers that work for lith printing remain as described in more detail in 'The World of Lith Printing'. Below is simply a list of those that do work, together with some of their properties.

PAPERS

Adox Fotoimpex (Berlin) (and Agfa resurrection)

Fotoimpex (Berlin) acquired the formulation rights for Agfa's **Multi Contrast Classic (FB)** and **Multi Contrast Premium (RC)** papers along with the emulsion and coating equipment. Do not confuse with Adox Fotowerke Inc. Calgary, Canada – an unrelated company who market film. Adox (Berlin) also market papers from Fotokemika in Croatia.

- **Adox MCC 110/111/112**

Production target date is late 2008. This is an excellent quality FB paper for B&W that also responds to the lith process. My tests of first run samples last year confirmed this; although coating marks were apparent in lith (the lith process may reveal things that are not visible with conventional processing). Since then further tests and coatings have been carried out and I look forward to testing the final product. Cafe-au-lait colours, bright white base, smooth tones, less 'lithy'/gritty than some. I haven't tested with 2nd pass lith, but would expect it to be good. The RC version MCP is also awaiting production.

- **Adox Nuance Warmtone**

Fixed grade FB papers on 300g support. Grades 2 & 3. **Care:** Red safelight essential. Both grades lith print, my preference being for Gr.3. Good in LD20. If using Arista or Clayton lith developers use higher dilutions for best results.

- **Adox Fine Print Variotone Warmtone**

A newly developed warmtone paper made in co-operation with Harman Technology/Ilford and Wolfgang Moersch. A variant of Ilford's MGWT but with a bright white base. We know that base pigment can and does often affect 'lithability' and given its lineage I would expect this to be not a truly lithable paper for 'straight' lith processing, but to probably be very promising in 2nd pass lith, i.e. on

redevelopment after bleaching. I have yet to sample this brand but Wolfgang informs me that it works nicely with the copper sulphate bleach in my books and high dilution lith developer.

(Bergger)

Following the demise of Forte the new generation of Bergger paper is not well suited to lith printing. I include the name here in brackets simply to alert you to this change – and to say that they might yield results with 2nd pass lith techniques, but this remains to be tested (by me at least).

Foma: (Czech Republic)

Super papers for Lith and also for general printing. All papers in range will Lith print to some degree. The best are:

- **Fomatone MG**
Reputed to be the last remaining paper containing cadmium. If so, the clock must be running for this range of outstanding papers as the Czech Republic acceded to the EEC in 2004 and EU regulations restrict the use of cadmium (as in the case of pre 1999 versions of Kentmere's Kentona). This emulsion has its own very distinctive appearance in lith with the warmest smoothest tonality by far. If that is what you want a superb range of rich colours is available: Beige, yellows, yellow-orange, peach & salmon pink, orange-browns and colour splits with green blacks on early snatch. The colour is largely controlled by dilution and snatch point. Good response to added potassium bromide and especially selenium toning, with tri-colour splits. It is available in the following forms:
- **Fomatone MG Classic 131 (glossy) & 132(matt)**
Variable contrast FB paper on a 235g cream tinted base.
- **Fomatone 532 11 ('Nature 11')**
This is the replacement for 'Nature', which became unavailable when the paper base (same as Art Classic) production was discontinued. Foma have sourced a new base paper and with the same emulsion as 131 above 'Nature 11' is now on an extra heavy base and a lustre sheen finish.
- **Fomatone MG 'Chamois' 532 and 542** had the same emulsion as the Classic paper but the base tint is different; the 532 Chamois being rich cream, the 542 a lighter cream. Production on this base has ceased but some supplies still exist.
- **Fomatone MG.** The same emulsion as above, but in RC form, in glossy and matt surface finishes.

The Fomatone emulsion is very slow, so be prepared for long exposure times.

- **Fomabrom Variant 111 (glossy) & 112 (matt)** A variable contrast FB paper on a 180g base. Lithable, capable of very cold tones or with yellow-red hues.
- **Fomabrom Variant 1V 123.** Although I haven't yet sampled this, it has been reported to me that this new paper 'liths beautifully'.

Fotokemika (Croatia)

- **Varycon (KG) VC FB** has its followers in the lith printing community. It produces comparatively large coarse clumpy grain in the emerging blacks, with sandy coloured mid and light tones. More colour can be achieved with 2-bath lith techniques &/or by toning.
- **Emaks** These are graded papers (Gr 2 & 3) on a 300g support with a neutral chlorobromide emulsion suitable for lith printing. They paper lith satisfactorily in LD20 but benefit from high dilutions in the newer Arista Lith and Clayton Lith developers (1+1+28 or more).

K=Fibre, G= Glossy, KK = Fibre pearl, KM = Fibre matt.

NOTE: A standard red safelight is essential. OC safelights or a combination of red and OC safelights may result in fogging. Do a safelight test for your own darkroom.

Fotospeed: (UK)

- **Fotospeed Lith** The only dedicated Lith paper. As this is non super-coated, it accepts pencil (e.g. for signing) and carries a 'handle with care' warning. I have never experienced surface damage with my prints and only occasionally seen it at group workshops. Its slippery surface also necessitates careful handling, especially with larger heavier sheets. Coffee colours. Can be soft & delicate with 'early snatch' higher key prints, or gritty and highly 'textured' in the blacks with later snatch & low key subjects. Pinker (on dry down) with smoother blacks and lower Dmax at much higher dilutions. A good standard and its positive lith response also makes it excellent for learning.
- **Fotospeed Bromoil paper** Now discontinued, but as a low demand item, stocks may remain. No super-coating. It lith prints easily, giving warm sandy browns.

Freestyle (USA)

Arista is the House name for selected Freestyle branded papers. From the Arista range:

- **Arista.EDU Ultra RC VC** and **VC FB** These two papers both lith print satisfactorily with cooler tones.

Iford Photo (UK)

- **(Iford Multigrade Warmtone)** Although not my ideal for Lith printing, it will respond to dilute lith developer and I know those who like its somewhat different look, especially with higher contrast negatives. It has less interesting (or perhaps more subtle, depending on your viewpoint) results than the others listed here but yields an ivory colour with rather grudging infectious development. Better in hot lith developer or with added bromide. Recent batches appear to have a whiter base and are trickier to lith. It does however deserve special mention for 2nd pass lith - redevelopment in lith, after bleaching a conventionally processed print. Pulled at the right moment it gives a delicate blend of soft warm browns and cool greys.
- Iford have been looking at the possibility of producing a new lithable VC paper too for a while now and although there is currently no news, watch this space. I'll notify my lists when and if something materialises.

Kentmere (UK)

It is now common knowledge that the Kentmere company was bought in 2007 by Harman Technology (Ilford Photo). Following the acquisition Kentmere's coating plant was closed down and future Kentmere darkroom papers will be made on the more sophisticated Ilford coating plant. These products will therefore inevitably be different. How different and whether they will lith print remains to be seen. Plans are also afoot to develop and bring to market new products to fill the gaps left by the demise of the likes of Art Classic, or Forte's Polywarmtone – a VC Art Classic perhaps? No firm news at this stage, but cautious optimism might be in order. In the meantime, significant quantities of existing Kentmere papers were made in anticipation of the move. Those of most interest to the lith printer now are:

- **Kentmere Kentona Fixed Grade.** Glossy. Lith prints easily and well. Blacks may have comparatively unobtrusive fine grained texture, smooth mid and high tones. Shifts toward salmon pink (after drydown) at higher dilutions.
- **Kentmere Fineprint VC Finegrain Warmtone.** Variable contrast, using Kentmere's unique bromo-iodide technology. Lith prints to pleasing yellow-brown hues with cold blacks that exhibit gritty grain and texture. **Note:** Another Kentmere paper, Fineprint VC, shares the same emulsion as Fineprint VC Warmtone, but on a bright white glossy paper. However, it does not lith print. The surprising thing, given the emulsion recipe, is not that it doesn't lith print, but rather that the warm tone version does. This is thought to be because of some effect from the warmtone pigment used, which is mixed into the emulsion rather than onto the paper. The cold version Fineprint VC does however respond well to bleach and lith redevelopment after first processing in 'normal' developer ('2nd Pass Lith').

The old favourites **Document Art** and **Art Classic** have been discontinued. Their once hoped-for replacements have for now been abandoned. (Details of which can be traced in the WOLP news archive threads).

Rollei (Germany)

Negotiations concerning the new range of Rollei papers listed in WOLP did not progress entirely as planned. However Maco, who own the Rollei brand, have launched 8 Foma emulsion papers under the 'Rollei Vintage' label. Foma emulsions are detailed elsewhere in this list and the warmtone version is especially suitable for lith printing & toning.

This range is a permutation of fibre based, resin coated, premium weight, standard weight, warm tone and neutral tone, glossy and matt papers. They are also labelled to match the Foma coding as follows:

- Vintage 311: fb; vc; warmtone emulsion; premium weight; cream; glossy
- Vintage 312: fb; vc; warmtone emulsion; premium weight; cream; matte
- Vintage 331: rc; vc; warmtone emulsion; standard weight; cream; glossy
- Vintage 332: rc; vc; warmtone emulsion; standard weight; cream; matte
- Vintage 111: fb; vc; neutraltone emulsion; premium weight; white; glossy
- Vintage 112: fb; vc; neutraltone emulsion; premium weight; white; matte
- Vintage 311: rc; vc; neutraltone emulsion; premium weight; white; glossy
- Vintage 312: rc; vc; neutraltone emulsion; premium weight; white; matte

Slavich (Russia)

- **Unibrom** A cold-tone, fibre-based silver bromide emulsion, available in both single-weight (150 microns) and double-weight (250 microns) base thickness and available in Glossy & Matte surfaces, Grades 2, 3 and 4.
By far the most graphic and the coldest of all lithable papers with a look all of its own. This paper with average strength lith processing gives very high contrast images almost like charcoal drawings. It is the trickiest paper to control with accelerating infectious development around the edges and often random spots and patches. Higher dilutions using EasyLith, Arista Lith, Clayton Lith or using added potassium bromide can help to tame and control it. Smoother tones are obtained with redevelopment after bleaching and copper sulphate bleach (see my books) can be particularly useful.

DEVELOPERS

- **Fotospeed LD 20:** (UK) 2 x 500ml and 5L A&B kits. Very effective for Lith printing, the smaller packs are popular with low volume users. Instructions are for use specifically with Lith printing. Since pepper fogging has largely disappeared from current papers, except in the mildest of forms, these Fotospeed packs no longer contain supplementary anti pepper fog additives.
- **Freestyle Arista Liquid Lith:** (USA) Various sizes available. In my limited experience of it, this developer is better suited to lith printing than the pre-2007 version. It works particularly well in higher dilutions (from 1+1+28).
- **Maco LP-Superlith:** (Germany) 2x500ml A&B kits. These kits also contain detailed instructions for Lith printing, for which they work very well. Depending on the desired effect try diluting higher than the recommended 1+1+12. I prefer the results at 1+1+20 or 24, but this is a matter of personal taste. This product is being transferred to the **Rollei** label (see below).
- **Moersch:** (Germany) An extensive range of Lith printing kits based on formaldehyde-free lith developers. All have detailed Lith printing instructions.
 - > **'Easy Lith':** This is made with inexperienced lith printers in mind; a higher bromide (a restrainer) level facilitates easy assessment and convincing infectious development for a strong lith effect.
 - > **'SE 5 Master set':** Intended for the more experienced user: 2 additional additives C and D are included, based on potassium bromide and sodium sulphite (see 'additives').
 - > **Additional additives: D,** extra strong potassium bromide, **E,** for increasing grain at the expense of colour, and **F,** for shifting colour from traditional yellow/brown towards red.
 - > **'Polychrome' kit:** This might be described as a 'hybrid' lith kit for creating colourful image tones with greater or lesser Lith effect. The kit consists of the lith and 'siena' developers as well as several additives which are used to control the final image colour. Described in WOLP under Two-bath lith processes.
- **Nacco Naccolith:** (US) This comes in a variety of sizes. In my limited experience of it (not available in the UK), this developer easily produces warm brown Lith prints,

but may be more suited to those who like brown prints with less extreme 'lithy' properties.

- **Photographer's Formulary Kodalith:** (US) Different to the discontinued Kodalith products, this is similar to the Ansco 70 formula listed below and is probably better suited to film development (its intended purpose) than Lith printing.
- **Rollei:** (Germany) Maco LP-Superlith developer has now been renamed **Rollei Vintage Creative developer**. The product is unchanged.
- **(Speedibrews Lithoprint):** (from Silverprint, UK) I have included this in parentheses, as it is not a true Lith developer. Originally formulated to circumvent the problem of pepper fogging with the old Sterling lith paper, it is a 2-part powder kit to make single solution concentrate for dilution and it requires a different technique: As there is no infectious development rush, the highlights need to be watched approaching the snatch point. It can produce very colourful toner-responsive prints with some papers. Being essentially a super-warm working developer, blacks can be a little 'soft' at high dilutions for maximum colour, but the 2-bath technique described in WOLP will get around this easily and effectively if required.

Products will continue to change and there are currently a number of indicators that new papers may be brought to market before long and possibly even a new Lith paper sourced abroad, but that is far from certain.

I hope to be able to provide updates on these and other products to everyone registered with my mailing lists and www.worldoflithprinting.com and my new personal website, which is still evolving at www.timrudman.com

Registration to my list is free and your details will never be passed to any third party.

Tim Rudman