



PICTO Benelux

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Chromotype photographs

Roger Kockaerts – December 2017

(Roger passed away on 13 September 2019 – this text, unpublished before, was found in Picto's archives)

A chromotype is a colored silver-gelatin film print which is permanently fixed onto a paper base. The system of coloring is more than two centuries old, and, before the days of photography, engravings and prints were used as a base, the process being known generally as "mezzotinting" paper. At the dawn of photography, the photographs colored to give the appearance of direct paintings on glass were named "crystoleums".

The advent of photographic prints on paper did much to revive the interest in coloring processes. A crystoleum print properly finished looks like a painting on glass, but it is actually a transparent photograph in the form of albumen paper made semi-transparent by rubbing off most parts of the paper support.

At the beginning of the 20th century Edward Curtis introduced the "Orotone" photograph which consisted of a positive silver-gelatin image on glass, backed by a gold medium and sealed in a wooden frame. Under specific lighting conditions the orotone glitters like a solid golden object. The orotone process (goldtone, Curt-tone, dorotone), has not been fully documented in the past. It is well known that different American photographers (Edward Curtis, Norman Edson, Arthur Pillsbury) used the orotone process between 1900 and 1920.

The general bibliography mentions that the gold tone was obtained by putting gold leaves on the back of the silver-gelatin glass plate. A commercial brochure from 1903 however describes that the backing consisted of a combination of banana oil and bronze powders. Curtis mixed a combination of banana oils and bronzing powders to create a sepia or a gold tone effect, and then spread this mixture onto the dried emulsion.

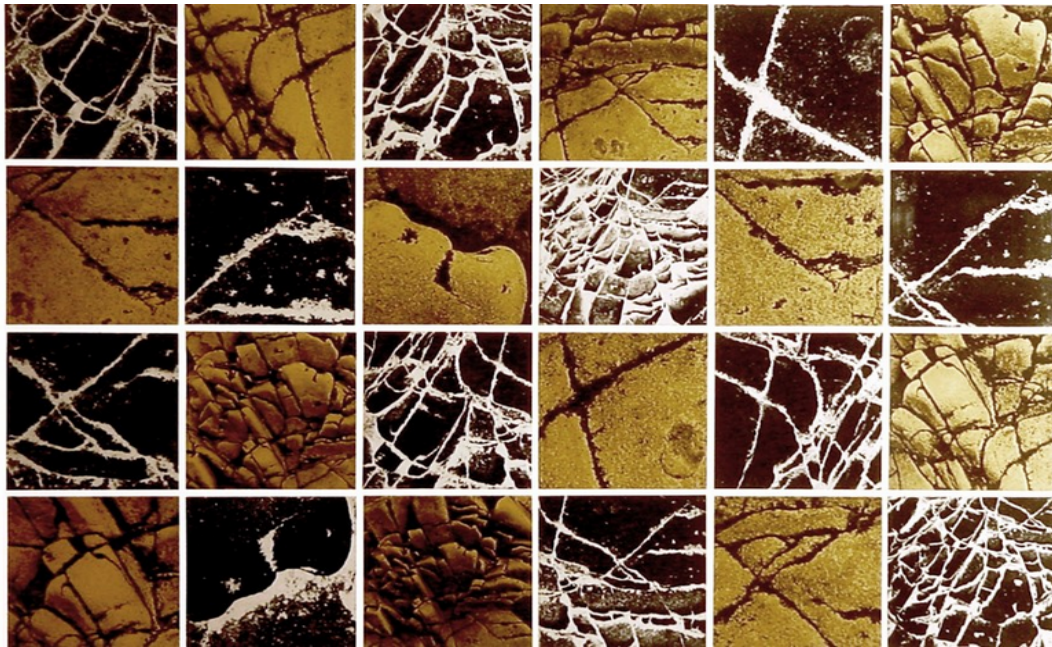
The term "Chromotype" was coined in the 1960's by Roger Kockaerts, whose name, in the United States, is simplified to Roger Coqart, to designate a multi-colored film print, fixed onto a high quality paper base. The film based positive prints are hand- or spray colored on the emulsion side and permanently fixed onto high quality paper of archival quality by double-sided tape. Chromotypes are essentially stable because no air can react with the silver emulsion and induce image deterioration.

The "Orotype", a chromotype because of its golden tint, introduced in the sixties, uses a chemically inert polyester film with a silver-gelatin emulsion instead of the traditional photographic glass plate. The positive image is treated with standard archival techniques. The gold tone is realized with the aid of a gilding medium containing bronze powder. Orotypes are permanently mounted on 100% cellulose paper. A silver tinted chromotype is generally known as a «Platatype».

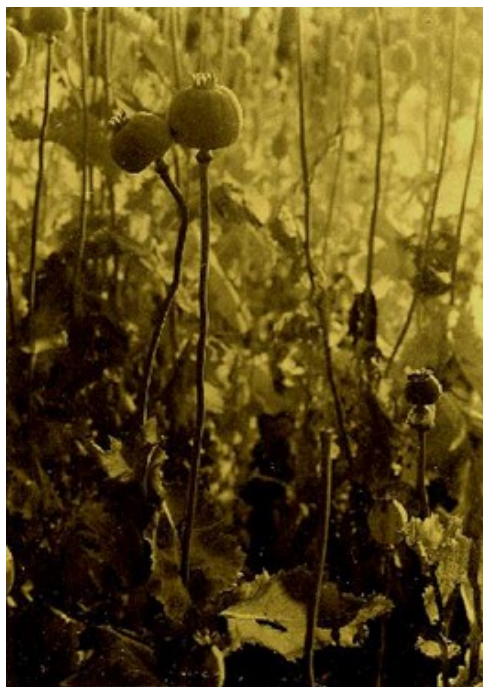
CHROMOTYPES – OROTYPES

The orotype, an alternative process derived from the historic "orotone" has been experimented by Roger Kockaerts around 1968.

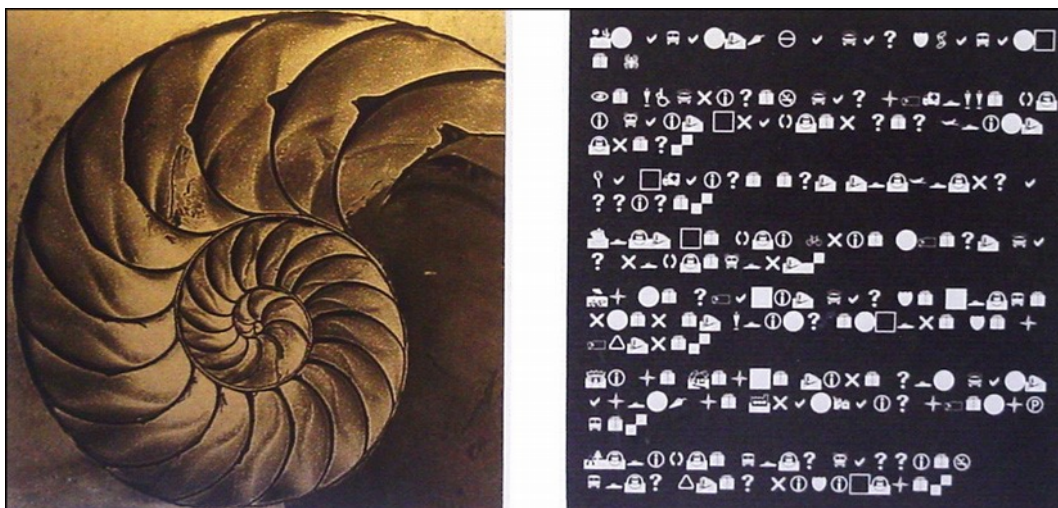
Today this process integrates perfectly into the contemporary movement of alternative photography processes. In this optic Roger Kockaerts applied the orotype process to a series of pictures where the gold tone creates a surrealistic mood.



Chromotypes », 40x50cm, orotypes + platatypes, 1968.



« Opium field » - 24x30cm, orotype, 2007



« 7 commandements de la pensée Bûl en langage informatique codé » - 31x15cm,
orotype + imprimé d'ordinateur, 2013.



«Landscape », 58x23cm, colored cromotype, 2014.

Roger Kockaerts († 2019)

texts written in 2017

collated by J. Kevers