Lavoisier Color Process

By Guilherme Maranhão

I got quite amazed during my first Fall in Canada. All that birds flying over our house at the end of the day. In one of those October weeks I ended up shooting 7 rolls of color film: 3 rolls of Velvia (EI 64 for cross processing), 3 rolls of some movie film a friend loaded from bulk (I still don't know which film it was) and one roll of that marvelous SO-279 from Kodak (that Vericolor film for slides from color negatives, EI 12).

In the lab, a little bit forgotten, stayed a box of Agfa Color Process 70. This is a C-41 compatible film's process, coming in many small bottles of A, B, C parts, that kind of stuff. According to the instructions, it would make 500ml of each solution and be able to develop 6 rolls of 36 exposures. I had 7 rolls of 36…

Why not?

To develop the 7 rolls I diluted all baths (developer, bleach, stop) with 2 parts of water, so final volume of each bath came to 1500ml. I knew slide films would accept better the very diluted chemistry, but I wasn't sure about the other ones.

Temperature was classic 100F. But famous 3' 15" became 6'. Not so bad. I agitated the big stainless steel tank non-stop for all this time. Wash and stabilizer afterwards.

The movie films were probably underexposed. I tried EI 200, but EI 25 would have been better. Too late. A few frames overexposed by mistake turned out beautiful.

The Velvias gave a good response. And the SO-279, which is the only film really supposed to be used with this chemistry, came out pretty reddish. It is balanced for tungsten lighting: I used it to take pictures of those birds, remember? Against blue skies.

Why not keep the used chemistry?

After the films dried, I started wanting to see some of those frames in paper. I had some really old and expired Supra II paper from Kodak. And the only color chemistry I had was that one I'd just used. To make it more challenging, I decided to spread the chemistry on the paper with the help of a painting brush.

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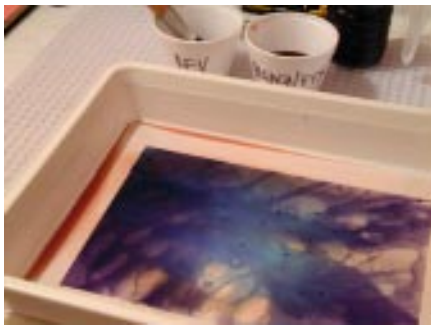
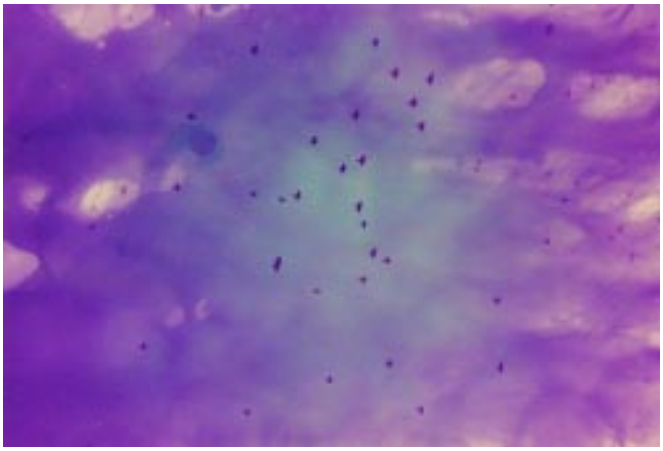


I exposed the paper on the enlarger (b&w enlarger, no filtration at all). Times were around 5 and 12 seconds, f/8, 75W lamp. Then I would pass the paper onto a dry tray and start spreading chemistry in the dark. After some developer had been applied to the paper's surface I'd wait a couple minutes in the dark before turning the safelights (OC) on for 2 seconds max., just enough to see if something happened.

If the print wasn't dark enough I'd spread a little more developer and leave it a couple more minutes. If it was ok, then I'd throw in some bleach-fix, just on some areas of the image and turn the lights on, to mess the rest of the paper. When I felt it was time, I'd pass the print to another tray with only bleach-fix, to stop everything. And after that the usual wash and dry.

At the end of that weekend, that small 500ml kit was able to develop 7 rolls of 35mm film, eight 8x10in prints and another five 12x16in prints. Just to prove that Lavoisier was right, nothing is completely lost or useless.



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