

Creative Solarization

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What is Solarization?

Solarization, or the Sabattier Effect, was discovered as a lucky fluke. In the 1920's Man Ray (né Emmanuel Radnitzky) was experimenting with different chemistries and processes for black and white photography. Why he decided that it might be a good idea to take the print from the developer and expose it to bright light and then continue developing the print is anyone's guess. The result of this crazy idea is the Sabattier Effect. Black and white are reversed.

The extent to which the tone reversal occurs is determined by how complete the development was before exposing the print to light and the duration of the exposure. Man Ray's finished prints varied from almost line drawings to complete negative film on print.

Man Ray: Rayographs and Solarization

<https://www.inthein-between.com/man-ray-before-digital/>

Technical Info

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sabattier_effect

Solarization Today

That was yesteryear in the wet darkroom. Today we use the digital darkroom,

There is no specific recipe for solarization. As you can see by studying Man Ray's and other photographer's work, many renderings are achievable. Although the Sabattier Effect applies only to B&W prints, many of the ideas can be translated to colour prints thanks to the advent of digital photography.

Applications

Personally, I use the Nik Collection software to experiment with solarization. Photoshop has similar tools. I presume Topaz, Luminar etc also have similar tools.

"Automatic" Black & White Solarization

Nik and Photoshop both offer "automatic" conversions.

Step 1: Convert to B&W:

- a) desaturate, or
- b) Nik Silver Efex or
- c) in Photoshop: Image / Mode / Grayscale

Step 2: Solarize:

- a) Nik Color Efex: Filter: Solarization or
- b) Photoshop: Filter / Stylize / Solarize

