



## **Bristol Community Darkrooms**

### **INDUCTION HANDBOOK**

Welcome to Bristol Community Darkrooms at St Pauls Learning Centre. We offer well-equipped, accessible and spacious darkrooms with facilities for developing and printing from film, suitable for beginners or advanced photographers. The darkroom can be booked on a sessional basis by individuals or groups 7 days a week with generous opening hours.

### **DARKROOM FACILITIES**

- 4 black and white enlargers: 35mm, medium format and 4x5"
- 6 colour head enlargers; 35mm and medium format
- Large black & white darkroom
- Black & white film processing / colour darkroom
- Durst Printo 12x16" colour print processor – bring your own chemistry
- Large UV light box for cyanotypes and experimental printing
- Free Wifi – password EPCguestConnect

### **OPENING TIMES**

**Monday to Thursday - 9am to 9pm**

**Friday – 9am to 5pm**

**Weekends - 10am to 5pm**

Please leave the darkrooms 10 mins before the Learning Centre closes to allow staff to lock up.

### **DARKROOM MEMBERSHIP**

#### **Free Sessional Hire and Members Supported Sessions**

Membership is £25 per month available from [Bristol Community Darkrooms](http://BristolCommunityDarkrooms.com) web site; this will give you free unlimited darkroom sessions at times of

your choosing during opening hours. Book your 3 hour session(s) via the web site; you can book any 3 hours within St Pauls Learning Centre opening times. If you require more than 3 hours you are welcome to book more in the same day.

We also offer free Members Supported Sessions which take place on a regular basis for any members who require a little help and advice in the Darkrooms. You can book via the [Bristol Community Darkrooms](#) web site.

We often have special offers on monthly membership fees so look out for voucher codes in our newsletters to reduce your fees!

### **SESSIONAL HIRE for NON-MEMBERS**

Pay-as-you-go sessional hire is also available, at £15 per 3 hour session via the [Bristol Community Darkrooms](#) web site. You can book any 3 hours within St Pauls Learning Centre opening times. If you require more than 3 hours you are welcome to book more in the same day.

### **ACCESS TO THE DARKROOMS**

When you arrive at St Pauls Learning Centre please report at Reception. Show your darkroom session ticket on your phone to a member of staff - you may also be required to show some ID.

Please sign in and out at Reception, this is for your safety so that Learning Centre staff know who is in the building in case of any emergency.

You will be given the key to the darkroom on a heavy chain. Darkrooms are on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and there is a lift.

All sessions are 3 hours including setting up and clearing up time. Please allow time to clear up after your session and leave the Darkrooms clean and tidy for the next person, and ensure you leave the building 15 mins before closing time to allow staff time to lock up. There are no refunds / reductions if you are late and miss any of your session.

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

**All Darkroom sessions must be booked via the [Bristol Community Darkrooms](#) web site. You can book on the same day as your session if availability allows, but St Pauls Learning Centre cannot book you in or accept cash / card payments at Reception.**

Ready to use darkroom chemistry is provided for black and white processes. Please provide your own photographic paper.

### **COLOUR DARKROOM**

Our Durst Printo Colour Printing machine is available for all Darkroom users; colour users are expected to provide their own chemistry, and we will show you how to fill the printing machine. Please email [ruth@bristol-community-darkrooms.co.uk](mailto:ruth@bristol-community-darkrooms.co.uk) for more details.

### **UV EXPOSURE BED**

This is available for all Darkroom users; please arrange a short induction to familiarize you with the machine before use – email [ruth@bristol-community-darkrooms.co.uk](mailto:ruth@bristol-community-darkrooms.co.uk)

### **DARKROOM GUIDANCE**

#### **Light Switches and Ventilation**

Once you are in the darkroom finishing area, you access room lights beside the film dryer on the right of the double doors as you face them. Switches for darkroom lights, safe lights and ventilation fans are located in the switch box on the left of the doors as you face them. Further ventilation fans are located in each Darkroom, with switches inside the Darkroom, and there is a desk fan you can move around as required. Please switch off all lights and ventilation after use.

Film developing and colour printing takes priority in the small darkroom, and there are light switches so that white light and safe lights can be operated independently from the large B&W darkroom.

#### **Darkroom Etiquette**

Please use 'Darkroom in Use' and 'Darkroom Vacant' signs as necessary to show you are in the Darkrooms, and respect the signs when you see

them, don't turn on lights or open doors without asking first when darkrooms are in use.

Please use a tray to take prints out to the finishing area for assessment in white light to avoid dripping chemistry on the floor.

You can lock the doors to the finishing area while you are in the darkroom to prevent theft. Please take belongings, negatives and prints with you when you leave.

**Medium / Large format printing lenses and neg holders** are kept in the safe in the finishing area, this key is on the heavy chain together with a film cannister opening tool. If you use medium format equipment please return lenses and negative holders to the safe afterwards. Refer to enlarger spec. to see which enlargers you can set up for medium format.

There is a black changing bag in the blue safe which you can use, please replace in the safe afterwards.

### **After your session:**

Please return chemistry to the bottles, wash trays, and wipe down surfaces and equipment. Leave used dev tanks to drain on a tray. Use the mop to wipe up any spills.

Please turn off all lights, fans, enlargers and taps, and put extra lenses, neg carriers or glass plates back in the safe. Close all doors as they are fire doors.

When you leave the Darkrooms lock the main door and hand the keys back to Reception.

## **SETTING UP AND DISPOSING OF CHEMISTRY**

### **For Printing**

Developer, stop and fix for printing is made up and ready for use in 2L concertina bottles next to the sink. If the bottles are empty and you need to make up fresh chemistry please follow mixing instructions on the small containers of which are kept on the floor by enlarger 5. Trays are under the sink, select the ones you need according to the size of your paper, always use tongs and keep your hands clean and dry.

## **Exhausted Chemistry**

- Developer goes dark brown when it is exhausted and needs to be replaced.
- Stop goes purple when exhausted,
- Fix will not clear a piece of undeveloped film within 3 mins.

## **Disposal**

Only dispose of used chemistry if you are sure it is completely exhausted, otherwise return to bottles. (see above)

- **Exhausted Print Developer** (when dark brown) – dispose of in 15L containers
- **Print Fix** - dispose of in 15L containers
- **Print Stop** – down the sink as it is a non-hazardous substance (the same weak acid as vinegar)
- **Used Film Dev** – dispose of in 15L containers after developing your film
- **Don't dispose of film stop or fix**, put that back in the 5L containers after use.

You can dispose of dev and fix in the same 15L containers. Please use funnels and jugs and mop up any spills. The containers are taken away and chemistry recycled for silver recovery.

## **Film Processing**

**Ifosol 3** is stored under the sink in the processing room with 5L containers of stop and fix.

### **Instructions for use:**

- **Dilute 1+14 as per instructions (see chart on the door for handy quantities)**
- **Dev temp recommended = 20°C or 24°C (use mixer tap)**
- **Thermometers on window sill**
- **Make up 300mls for each 35mm film / 500mls for each 120 film**

- **Follow instructions on the door to find the processing time for your film.**
- **Dispose of used film dev** in the large recycling containers under the bench.

**Film stop and fix** - return to their original 5L bottles for use again. We check this chemistry regularly to ensure it remains fresh.

### **ENLARGER SPECIFICATION TABLE**

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| <p><b><u>Enlarger 1 – Devere 507 Varicon B&amp;W</u></b></p> <p>B&amp;W only</p> <p>Enlarger usually set up for large format with 5x4" neg carrier, but can also be used for 35mm or medium format. Please ask if you want the enlarger set up for anything other than 5x4" - we will change the condensers for you.</p> <p>Lenses available: 50mm, 80mm, 105mm, 150mm, 210mm</p> <p>Work surface can be let down to the floor for making extra-large prints.</p> | <p><b><u>Enlarger 2 – Devere 504 Cathomag</u></b></p> <p>B&amp;W only</p> <p>Enlarger usually set up for medium format with 80mm lens and 6x6 cms neg carrier unless otherwise requested.</p> <p>Negative carriers: 6x6cms, 6x4.5cms, 6x7cms or 6x9cms available in the blue safe.</p> <p>Below lens filter set</p> |
| <p><b><u>Enlarger 3 – Devere 504 Cathomag</u></b></p> <p>B&amp;W only, 35mm and medium format</p> <p>Below lens filter set</p> <p>Enlarger newly installed and not in use yet. We will make this enlarger available asap.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p><b><u>Enlarger 4 – Durst 370</u></b></p> <p>35mm film format, 50mm lens, B&amp;W only</p> <p>Gel filter set - place in the built in drawer in the enlarger head for altering contrast in multigrade / variable contrast papers.</p>                                                                              |

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| <p><b><u>Enlarger 5 Kaiser VPC 9005</u></b></p> <p>B&amp;W and colour.</p> <p>35mm film format, 50mm EI Nikkor lens,</p> <p>Use dial in yellow and magenta filters for altering contrast in multigrade / variable contrast papers, see table next to enlarger.</p>                                                                                                                                 | <p><b><u>Enlarger 6 – LPL C6700</u></b></p> <p>B&amp;W and colour.</p> <p>35mm film format, 50mm lens,</p> <p>Use dial in yellow and magenta filters for altering contrast in multigrade / variable contrast papers, see table next to enlarger.</p>                                                                                |
| <p><b><u>Enlarger 7 – Durst M670 Colour</u></b></p> <p>B&amp;W and colour.</p> <p>35mm film format, 50mm lens,</p> <p>Use dial in yellow and magenta filters for altering contrast in multigrade / variable contrast papers, see table next to enlarger.</p>                                                                                                                                       | <p><b><u>Enlarger 8 – Devere 504 Dichromat</u></b></p> <p>B&amp;W and colour.</p> <p>Enlarger set up for 35mm printing with 50mm lens unless otherwise requested.</p> <p>Use dial in yellow and magenta filters for altering contrast, see table next to enlarger.</p>                                                              |
| <p><b><u>Enlarger 9 – Devere 504 Dichromat</u></b></p> <p>B&amp;W and colour.</p> <p>Enlarger set up for medium format with 80mm lens and 6x7 cms medium format printing unless otherwise requested.</p> <p>Negative carriers: 6x6cms, 6x4.5cms, 6x7cms or 6x9cms available in the blue safe.</p> <p>Use dial in yellow and magenta filters for altering contrast, see table next to enlarger.</p> | <p><b><u>Enlarger 10 – Jobo / LPL</u></b></p> <p>B&amp;W and colour.</p> <p>Medium format – 6x7cms neg holder with 90mm lens. We don't have other size neg holders for this enlarger.</p> <p>Use dial in yellow and magenta filters for altering contrast in multigrade / variable contrast papers, see table next to enlarger.</p> |

## **CHOOSING AN ENLARGER FOR YOUR SESSION**

We have black & white and colour head enlargers – all are capable of black and white printing.

We usually set up a couple of enlargers for large / medium format printing with appropriate lenses and neg holders. Usually these will be the De Veres, no.s 1, 2, 9 and 10, and are clearly labelled. Choose one of these if you are doing medium / large format printing.

The smallest / simplest enlargers are no.s 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 which are set up for 35mm only with 50mm lenses. All our enlargers have timers, of different degrees of simplicity of use, some also have transformers. Please switch enlargers off at the wall after use.

### **Contrast**

If you prefer using colour gels for contrast control in B&W printing then use enlarger 1, 2, 3, or 4. Enlargers 2 and 3 uses below the lens filter gels which you slot into a special filter holder, the other B&W enlargers have filter drawers.

If you like to dial in yellow and magenta, use colour head enlargers 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, or 10, also suitable for variable contrast B&W printing. See tables next to these enlargers for contrast values.

**0 = Low Contrast, 5 = High Contrast**

### **Format**

If you are printing from medium / large format negs please choose enlarger 1, 2, 9 or 10 which we have set up for med / large format and labelled as such. You shouldn't need to change the lens on your enlarger, but you may require a different negative holder according to the size the camera gives you.

Negative holders are available for: 6x4.5, 6x6, 6x7, 6x9cms 5x4inches - if the size you require is not already in the enlarger they are stored in the small blue safe in the darkroom finishing area. Glass plates are also available. The safe key is on the big chain.

**Making large prints** - If you want to make extra large prints in any format, we recommend using one of the De Veres, as you can raise the enlarger head further. Enlarger 1 has a work surface that can be lowered, enabling a maximum print size. If you want us to show you how that works, please ask. Large size trays are available under the sink in the main darkroom.

## **FINISHING AREA**

In the finishing area you will find a lightbox, with lupe, scissors, etc. film dryer, 2 x print dryers, UV exposure bed, and the blue safe with extra negative holders and a changing bag you can use,

### **Refreshments:**

You can use the kettle, mugs, coffee and tea bags etc. from the Darkroom finishing area, but please wash up afterwards and bring your own milk. Feel free to bring your own refreshments and food if you wish, you can eat and drink in the finishing area. Please clear up after yourself and recycle where possible using the recycling container in the corridor. No food or drink to be taken into the darkrooms.

## **COURSES AND WORKSHOPS at BRISTOL COMMUNITY DARKROOMS**

We run photography workshops, courses, and 1:1 tuition in darkroom techniques and processes including developing film and making enlargements from your negatives. Colour printing tuition coming soon!

We also specialise in workshops and projects working with many aspects of experimental photography including cyanotypes, pinhole techniques, and using plants to make developers and light sensitive materials. See our web site and social media for details:

[www.bristol-community-darkrooms.co.uk](http://www.bristol-community-darkrooms.co.uk)

[www.facebook.com/StPaulsDarkrooms/](https://www.facebook.com/StPaulsDarkrooms/)

[www.instagram.com/bristol-community-darkrooms](https://www.instagram.com/bristol-community-darkrooms)

or email us with any enquiries: [ruth@bristol-community-darkrooms.co.uk](mailto:ruth@bristol-community-darkrooms.co.uk)

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

All general health and safety advice is posted up on the walls, throughout the Centre.

Fire alarms are tested at 9.30am on Tuesday morning. If the fire alarm sounds at any other time, please leave the building immediately via the

back stairs, meet on the Green outside and report to Learning Centre staff.  
Do not use the lift.

There is a First Aid box in the finishing area. If you have an accident please alert a member of the Learning Centre staff and write details in the incident book at Reception.

You can use vinyl or plastic gloves provided to protect your skin from chemistry.

Thank you and we hope you enjoy using the darkrooms.

Induction Handbook Updated by Ruth Jacobs 3/10/25

For further info and enquiries email [ruth@bristol-community-darkrooms.co.uk](mailto:ruth@bristol-community-darkrooms.co.uk)