

## The Author's Fresson Coating Lab



The coater is in the background. The process requires several coatings, ranging from relatively thick to extremely thin. Shown here is the paper drying after the baryta coating operation. Note in the foreground on the floor, a roller-mill used to grind solid pigments. Unlike typical “pigment prints” made by PHOTOMECHANICAL inkjet printers which often rely on dyes, Fresson uses pure pigments resulting with permanent images that are not sensitive to the nature of the support.

This Fresson operation will be looking for a new home in the upcoming years.

### Development



After exposure the pigmented paper is ‘developed’ with an abrasive solution of water and sawdust. The operation takes place in white light, as shown here, and can last from 2 to 20 minutes. It can even be resumed after the print has dried, days later. No other photographic process offers this kind of control.

### The Finished Print

This 20 x 30 cm enlargement illustrating Christ Church Cathedral (Fredericton, NB), was made from a grainy 35 mm infrared negative first enlarged on 9 x 12 cm film, which resulted in a positive that was enlarged again to final size on the same type of orthochromatic emulsion.

The graininess often seen on Fresson prints is adjustable at the coating stage (i.e. the type and weight of the pigment) and at the processing stage by adjusting the development temperature.

### The finished print





**José Ortiz Echagüe Demonstrating the Development Process.**

This photograph was taken by the author one year before Echagüe's death in 1980. Ortiz Echagüe preferred large format prints for most of his Fresson work. The specimen below, from our collection, was typical in size at 42 x 30 cm on 43 x 30 cm paper.

At that time, the pictorialist, born August 21st, 1886, was too old to be active with the process which he had to abandon several years before our meeting because of his poor eyesight. Indeed, the operation of the Fresson coater requires a steady hand and excellent eyes.

[Read more about the Fresson Process .](#)

