

I began trying divided developers with Cibachromes about 25 years ago when it dawned on me that since Cibas were essentially B&W silver emulsions with azo dyes incorporated, the same attractions of divided developers for B&W printing (lack of time/temp considerations, print to print consistency, automatic contrast control, easy alternative to masking) might work for Cibas, which were notorious for being too contrasty.

After some experimentation, this is the formula that worked for me for many years. CAVEAT: It may not work with current Ilfochrome emulsions; I haven't done this for 6-7 years now, and I know that Ilfos now come in different contrast emulsions. So experiment, but don't hold me to the efficacy of this formula for current materials. Ilford has changed the emulsions and chemistry from time to time. All I can tell you is that while I was using it, I got Ciba/Ilfos that had the color vibrancy one expects combined with contrast resembling C prints. The measurements are all in kitchen teaspoon (t.) or tablespoon (T.) amounts. One other caveat. The formula will work with metol instead of Phenidone equally well, but there will be a significant color shift toward yellow that will need to be compensated for in your filtration. As with most Ilfochromes, once you've established your filtration for a given box of paper, it usually stays pretty much the same for transparencies made from the same film type.

Bath A: (2 liters water)

3 T. Sulfite

1 1/2 t. Vit. C

1/4 t. Phenidone (or 20 ml 1% Phenidone solution)

1/8 t. Hydroquinone (or omit for even lower contrast)

10 ml Liquid Orthazite or 1/8 t. Benzotriazole

1/8 t. Sodium Thiosulfate

1/8 t. Potassium Ferricyanide (or 10ml of 10% solution)

Bath B:

3 T. Sodium Carbonate

2 t. Kodalk (metaborate)

1/2 t. Sodium Bisulfite

1/8 t. Sodium Thiosulfate (didn't know where to put the hypo, so split it and put it in both A and B.)

Depending on how frequently you do Ilfos, you may want to mix in one liter batches, in which case, half of everything above. In any case, I always discard used Bath B after each session. A has very good keeping properties.

Any temperature between 60-80 appears to work well. Colder really slows it down, but doesn't affect results. Warmer works faster, but likewise with no change to results.

With any divided developer process, the volume of Bath A gets used up physically, but does not become exhausted. So Bath A can be used over and over again until it's gone. Bath B can be used as a one-shot or, if you're using a roller drum and only need 1 1/2-2 oz. of chemicals, you can pour out half of the Bath B amount after use and the rest back into your graduate to be topped up with a bit of fresh.

I usually filled two wide-mouthed graduates (grocery store pyrex measuring cups work well), one with A and one with B, each with 500 ml solution. If using a roller drum, pour A into the drum (amount is not critical, so long as you use the minimum required for your drum), agitate for (depending on temp.) 30 sec - one minute, dump back into graduate. NO RINSE BETWEEN A and B.

Then pour in 2 oz. (or whatever your drum requires--again, not critical) of B, agitate for at least a minute (if your room temp is around 70 or above, a bit longer if it's colder). Pour out an ounce or so of B and discard, and the rest back into the graduate. Add an ounce of fresh B stock to replenish. A doesn't need replenishment; it just gets used up gradually. With this method, I could usually get about 10-12 8X10's per 500 ml. of B during a session, but I never save used B solution. Discard it after the session. Don't discard A--just pour it back into the jug of stock.

Follow Ilford's procedures with the rest of the process, rinse, bleach, etc.

From experimentation, I eventually stopped using a drum and instead tray-processed my Ilfochromes. You have to do the developer steps in the dark, but as soon as you get the print into the bleach tray and fully submerged for a few (10-15) seconds, you can turn the lights on. Since temp is not a consideration for bleach either-- it bleaches to completion but no further, so just make sure it's fully bleached (normally 3-4 minutes) before putting it in the fixer-- your ambient room temp will do nicely. You'll know when your tray of bleach is getting exhausted; it won't do the job. If this happens, and it's quite visible when bleaching is incomplete, add some fresh bleach to the tray or throw out the old and put all new in. My experience has been that all the chemicals will process more prints than Ilford says they will.

I may try some Ilfos again one of these days, and if I do, I'll report any changes I've discovered.