

Talking Points: Anna Atkins

What role did Anna Atkins play in the development of modern photography?

Anna Atkins is considered as the first person to publish a book of photographs. As one of the first to use cyanotype, she played a big role in celebrating the photographs for their beauty as well as scientific observation, positioning herself between art and science.

Explore the cyanotypes using the sources below, then discuss the questions provided.

Please Note:

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AGES 5-8

AGES 9-11

AGES 11-14

AGES 14-16

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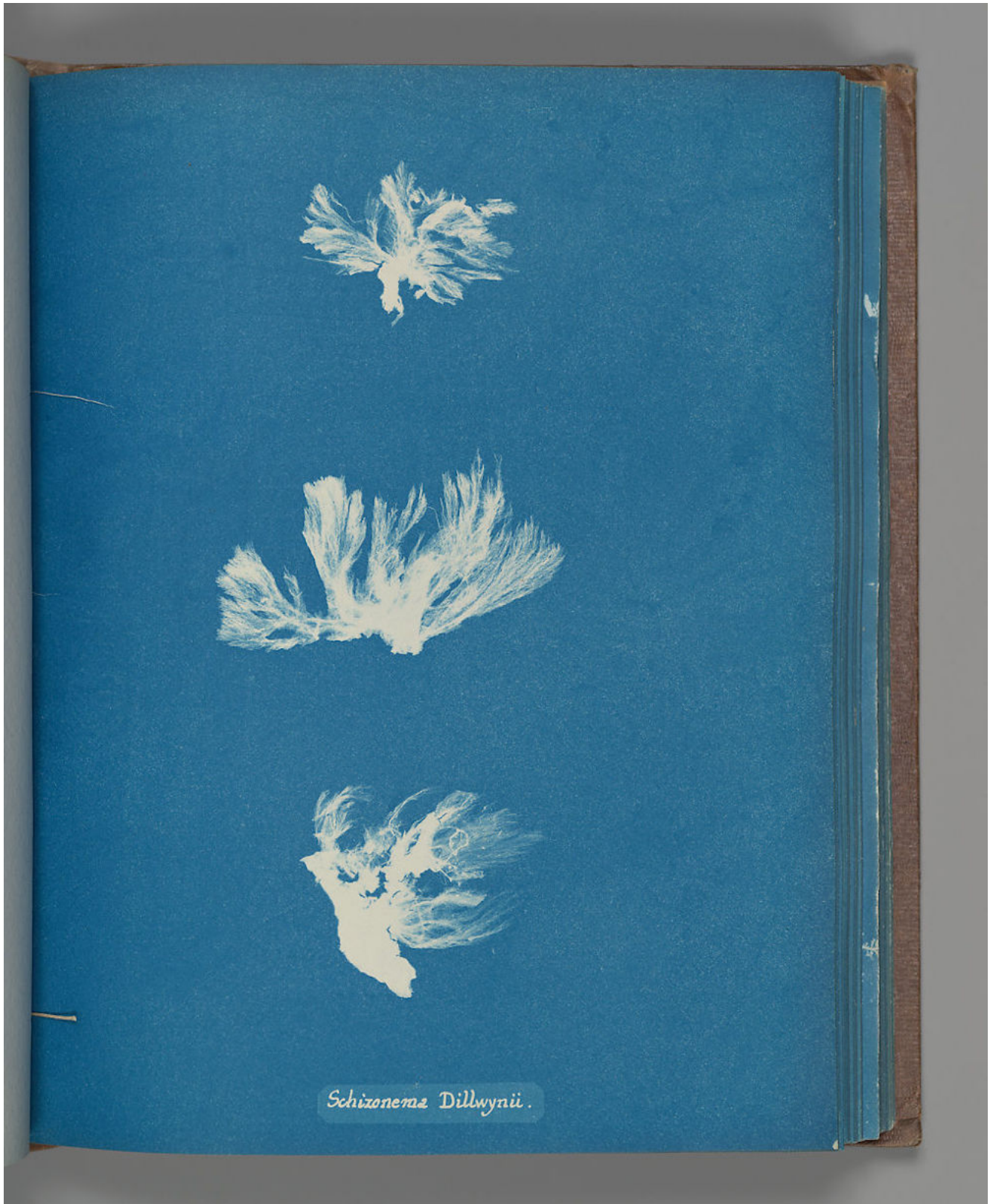
Anna Atkins

Anna Atkins was a botanist and photographer in the 1800s.

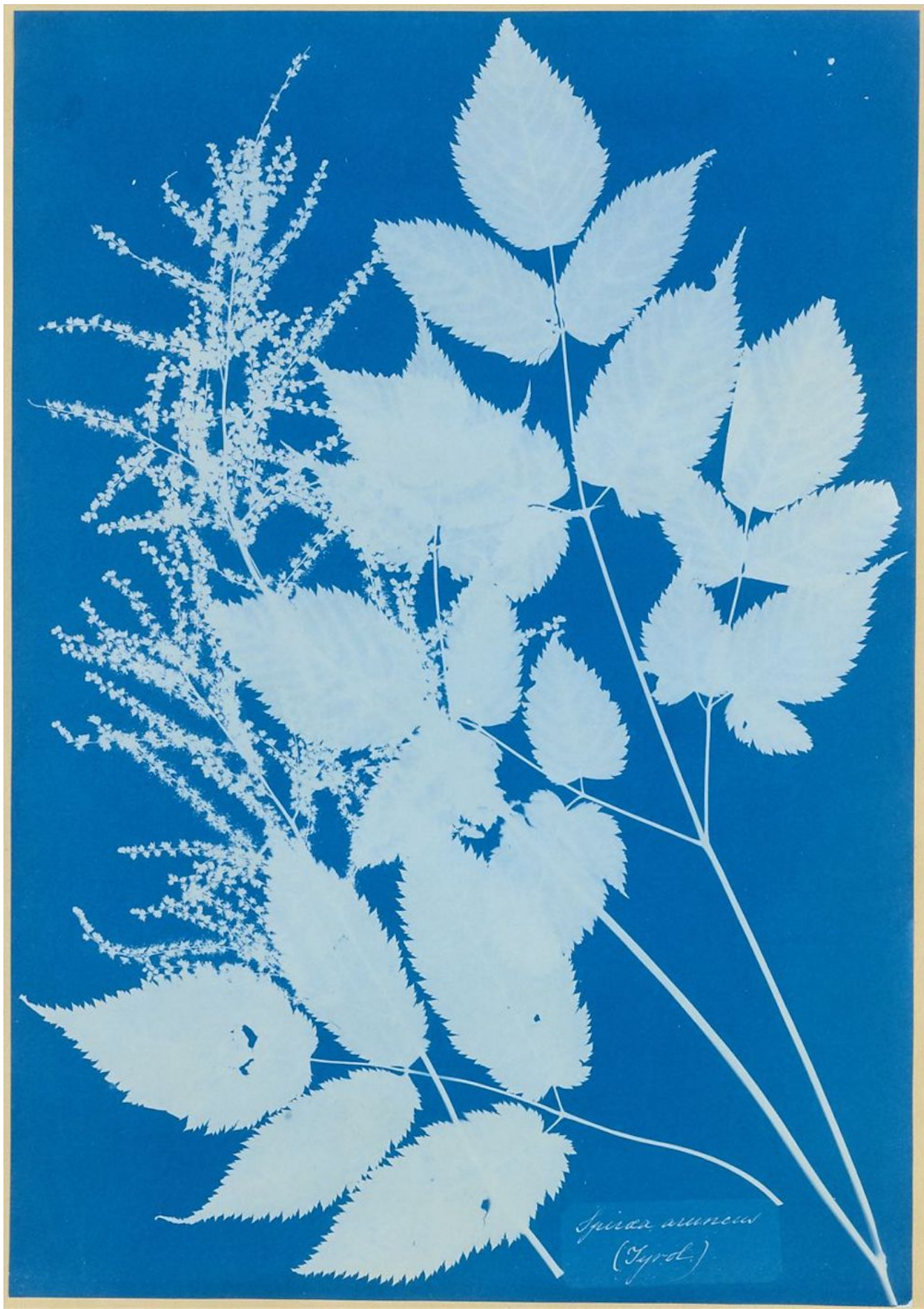
The process she used was called cyanotype. This used light exposure and a simple chemical process to create blueprints of botanical specimens.

To read more about the invention of photographs explore this [Google Arts and Culture resource](#).

Explore the images and sources below and use the questions to inspire classroom discussion.



Schizonema Dillwynii by Anna Atkins, Gilman Collection, Purchase, The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation Gift, through Joyce and Robert Menschel, 2005



Spiza arvensis
(Tyrol.)

Spiraea aruncus (Tyrol) by Anna Atkins, Purchase, Alfred Stieglitz Society Gifts, 2004

Questions to Ask Children

What do you like about these images? How are they different from photographs you see today?

Can you think of a plant/flower that would create an interesting cyanotype?

Can you draw the outline of an Oak leaf? What about a Holly leaf?

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Pathway: using natural materials to make images



This is featured in the 'Using Natural Materials to Make Images' pathway

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