



The colour darkroom is very different from a nostalgic image of a photo laboratory where the black and white picture is gradually and evocatively revealed in chemical bath. Instead of working in sensual red light hue, printing colour photographs is characterised by a slow cycle of prolonged periods spent in complete darkness exposing test strips and feeding the machine, followed by assessing the results under glaring daylight tubes. The colour developing process is a closed industrial system, its magic is concealed and its toxic chemical solutions are hidden inside the automatic processing machinery.

Images from artist-run colour laboratory Värinä in Helsinki, the 2010s.



In recent years, artists have become increasingly concerned with reflecting various processes involved in the production of art. In photography, too, the material conditions of the medium have shifted towards the centre of focus. Light-sensitivity of the photographic material can appear simultaneously as the foundation of producing works and their conceptual point of departure – the subject of the work is the material properties itself, the physical and chemical phenomena which enable the image to be taken. In general, there is a certain confusion over what is understood by photography and photography as art in the digital 'post-photographic' world.

Wolfgang Tillmans: Lighter: Blue Convex
C-print in plexi glass, 2010