

## What are Portrait Chocolates?

***By Artisanne Chocolatier***

Portrait Chocolates are basically lithophanes made from chocolate. So, what is a lithophane?

Today's lithophanes are essentially embossed photos generated by a 3D printer. The print results don't show much at first, but shine some light through one and you'll be amazed by the details. The way it works is that light passes through the thin parts while being blocked by the thick parts. In this way, the differences in light bring out the details of the image.

I was so impressed by learning about lithophanes that of course I set out to see if I could make them from chocolate. I was so excited when I realized it was possible with just some special tricks and techniques. I've been a chocolatier for the last 9 years, self taught for the most part and I am particularly interested in new and exciting methods for creating unique chocolates.



It was one of the more unusual and exciting art forms to emerge from the early 19th century. The artworks were an innovation in the art world back then. The invention is generally credited by **Baron Paul de Bourguignon**, of Rubelles, France in 1827.



Today there are a handful of artists around the World who still make lithophanes the slow and tedious way using beeswax and porcelain. It is an amazing art form and one of my favorite lithophane artists is **Hannah Blackwell**. See some of her work here

<http://www.ceramichistorian.com/hannahblackwell/checklist.html>

Ms. Blackwell says that she spends, on average, about 100 hours on large prints and that often making them out of porcelain results in only 40% turning out perfectly. It's a lot of effort to create them that way and I do appreciate her desire to make them using the original method, but am also very thankful for modern technology!



I decided to test the idea with chocolate after seeing a night light lithophane and when I made it work and started making them with consistent results I knew I was on to something really unique, yet based on an antique art form. It really is a magical thing to offer wedding planners, or for special events. I'm really curious to see what you will create and how you'll offer it to your customers.



The word "lithophane" derives from Greek "litho", which is from "lithos" which means stone or rock, and "phainein" meaning "to cause to appear" or "to cause to appear suddenly". From this is derived a meaning for lithophane of "light in stone" or to "appear in stone" as the three-dimensional image appears suddenly when lit with a back light source.



In this course I will show you how to go about creating these as bars for sale, for custom events and for creating chocolate art.

You can do this without a 3d printer of your own and I share the tips and settings to use to get the best quality prints from a contract printer so you can have prints to make into chocolate molds. BUT, I also provide all the things I have learned on how to use a basic home 3d printer to create your own because once you see the reactions from clients, you might want to either buy and learn to use one or hire someone on your team to make these whenever you need. I provided 3d prints for you to use in the lessons to get started and if you have any trouble finding someone that can print them for you, you can order them from me for cost/shipping until you find someone. I looked on Etsy and sometimes larger 3d companies can refer you to smaller printing companies. You might also inquire at a local college. They shouldn't cost very much. I paid \$5-10 USD for each of mine.