how to make an image transfer to fabric, paper, and other photo transfer techniques

presented by cloth paper scissors®

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image transfer techniques can be used in just about any form of fabric and mixed-media art to create artistic visual imagery. All you need are the right tools and the know-how.

In *How to Make an Image Transfer to Fabric, Paper, and Other Photo Transfer Techniques*, a free eBook from Cloth Paper Scissors Today, you’ll learn how to create an inkjet transfer, photo transfer, emulsion transfers, and transparency transfers using gel medium, transfer paper, caulk, water, and more.

In “Transfer Master Class” by Lesley Riley, you get the benefit of Lesley’s years of experimentation refining the process of image transferring techniques, even before she developed TAP™ Transfer Artist Paper. In this two-part tutorial, she offers advice on how to scan and prepare your image for a digital image transfer, tips on fabric and paper choice, and options for adding color to the image transfers before and after transferring.

Zentangle™ drawing specialist Sandy Steen Bartholomew gives a tutorial on this fun doodling and art journaling technique plus shows how to incorporate photos, text, and drawings in your art journals using Sheer Heaven™ image transfer paper in “Add Pattern to Journals with Zentangles and Transfers.”

Tiffany Teske offers a new twist on an old medium, creating photo emulsion transfers from vintage Polaroid cameras and new film cartridges, in “Twice the Fun with Instant Film.” In this process, you’re combining your own composed photographs with the image transfer process, creating a unique piece of art each time.

With this free eBook, *How to Make an Image Transfer to Fabric, Paper, and Other Photo Transfer Techniques*, you can bring a new level of personalized imagery to your artwork—experimenting and combining image transfer techniques to make them your own.

Warmly,

Cate Prato
Online Editor, Cloth Paper Scissors Today
Fortunately for artists, technological advances have made it possible for us to scan, copy, and print photos in the comfort of our homes. Images printed on personal inkjet printers are much safer and easier to transfer. Inkjet printers have turned my transferring experience from frustrating to fun. But I do know that for many, inkjet transferring can still be frustrating. There are so many ways to transfer images that it can be hard to know where to begin. Toss in the many different printers, inks, papers, and transfer media available, and you can end up totally confused with more questions than answers.

To ensure your success, I will share my tried-and-true methods and materials with you. But there are two things you need to know before you begin: 1) not every transfer will turn out the way you want it to; and 2) like any technique, the more you practice, the better you will be. With that said, it is also important that you be open-minded whether your transfers are good or bad. If you want perfection, forget transfers and print the image directly on paper or fabric.

Above, from left: Transparency transfer onto book page with Soft Gel Medium; transparency transfer onto fabric (Epson); transparency transfer onto rust printed fabric (HP printer).

BY Lesley Riley
The beauty of transfers lies in their imperfection.

In URGENT 2ND CLASS, author and artist Nick Bantock says, “There is something too complete about most photos...They need a dose of controlled eccentricity that will alter and personalize them... The picture surface needs to be broken up to give it breathing space.” The way I see it, as long as my focal point transfers well, then I have a successful transfer. All of the other lost parts of the picture are what makes it art. Each transfer process has a different look to it. Some may be easier for you to do than others. Try them all if you can and see which one you fall in love with.

tips
- You want to use a smooth-surface fabric. Any bumps or ridges will break up the transferred image as the ink will hit the high spots of the fabric but not the low spots.
- Patterned fabrics and papers can be used. The pattern will show through the transfer; place your image wisely so it won’t interfere with the details of the image.
- Some papers will come apart when you try to transfer with acrylic media, sticking to the transparency or photo paper when you lift it up. Practice on watercolor paper to get the technique down before you experiment with other papers.

getting started
For all methods, you will need to get your photos into your computer. The easiest way is to scan them. I like to scan all of my images in at 300 dpi (dots per inch). That way, if I want to enlarge the image I will not lose any details. Depending on how small your original is, you may even want to scan it in at 600 dpi if you plan to enlarge it to 8” x 10”. (Most printers won’t handle paper larger than 8.5” x 11”, so this would be the largest size you’d need unless you have a wide-carriage printer.) If your computer can’t handle large files, you will have to settle for smaller images or upgrade your system. If you have purchased a CD of copyright-free images, just put the CD into your computer drive and select the images you want to transfer.

At this point I evaluate each image for color and contrast quality. If you have photo-editing software such as Photoshop, Paint Shop, or software that comes with your digital camera, you can adjust the contrast, the color saturation, and the brightness of each photo. A freeware program, Irfanview, is available online and performs many of the same functions as Photoshop.

I almost always adjust the color and contrast of my images. Vintage photos fade with age. Scanners can wash out color. The color in your own digital photos can be “off.” Since the transfer process itself usually darkens the original colors of the image, I usually increase the brightness and saturation of the photo.

Color and contrast adjustments can also be made from the Print menu, before you actually click OK to print. When the Print box opens after you click on Print, you will see a box called Setup. Click to open this box and choose Properties. Depending on your printer model, there will be a tab or box labeled Color or Advanced. Clicking on these boxes will enable you to access areas where you can make adjustments.

Once your photos are adjusted, create a full page of images for printing. While you are learning, it’s a good idea to have a page full of the same image to practice with. I use Photoshop, but a similar photo-editing program or even your word processing software can be used. Use the Help function of the program to find out how to place several images on one page.

The next step is to prepare the document for printing. The Properties tab is also the location where you will find the option to Mirror Image. Transferring an image results in a mirror-image of the original print. If you want the

MATERIALS
- Copyright free photos, drawings, or your own pictures
- Inkjet printer
- Scanner
- Golden acrylic medium, matte or fluid matte for fabric only; soft gel for fabric and/or paper (most versatile); regular gel medium for copy paper transfers
- Burnisher (spoon back, bone folder, optional straight edge or rolling pin)
- 1" foam brush
- White fabric or paper (You can use almost any good quality paper, book pages, watercolor, journals.)
- Smooth, firm work surface (Cover work area with wax paper or plastic to protect surface.)

optional
- Dorlands or Gamblin Art Wax Medium

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end product to look exactly like the original, you must tell your printer to Flip or Mirror Image before you print. If you will be transferring text, you must always mirror-image the original in order for it to be readable after transferring.

**tip:** Start with small images, about 2” x 4”. It takes more time to apply medium to and burnish larger images, and the medium may dry out before you finish. Make several successful small transfers and work your way up to larger ones.

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**transparency transfers**

**using matte, fluid or soft gel medium**

**Additional materials you’ll need:**
- Transparencies for inkjet printer (not “quick dry”)

1. Print your image onto your transparency. It is important to note that transparencies have a right side and a wrong side. On most brands, the side you print on will be rougher or look less shiny than the wrong side. Load your transparency into your printer with the correct side facing up. To determine which side your computer prints on, check your printer documentation. If you are still unsure, mark an X onto a sheet of paper, load it into your printer with the X facing up or towards you, and print something. If the X is on the side with printing, then you will load your transparency with the printable side up or towards you. If the X is on the side without any printing, then you will load your transparencies with the printable side down or away from you. Print the image.

2. Cut out the image and determine which side has the ink. I hold my cut image up to the light to see which side is more reflective. The more reflective side is the one that goes up and the ink side goes down. Set it ink-side-down next to your work area.

3. Starting at the top of the fabric or paper, brush medium onto an area about the same size as your image. The trick is to apply just the right amount of medium for each surface and to do it evenly. To test for even application on your surface and to smooth out the brush strokes, lightly run your index finger over the fabric or paper, feeling for very dry or very wet areas. Apply more medium where needed. Be sure to brush in all directions as the medium will dry or soak into the fabric fairly quickly and you want all areas to be evenly wet. Smooth the medium to an even application large enough for the image. The smoother you get it, the less streaky the transfer will be. It’s OK to apply more layers of medium until you get it feeling just right. With practice, you will be able to keep the medium application time to a minimum because you will work faster and know what you are aiming for.
note: The key to successful transfers is putting just the right amount of acrylic medium on your paper or fabric. Too much and the inks may smear, too little and they won’t transfer. The surface should be wet—not sticky or tacky, not slippery, but like running your finger over a cold stick of butter. While you are checking for the right amount of medium, you can also smooth out any brush strokes that will cause a streaky transfer.

4. Pick up your image (ink-side down) and place it onto the medium-coated surface. The transparency should stick to the surface. If the surface is too wet, it will slide and smear when you begin to burnish.

5. Immediately begin to rub the entire surface with a burnisher using some pressure. I start on my focal point and work in a circular motion, widening my circles and expanding out into the rest of the picture. Once you have gone over the entire surface in this manner, you can switch to a side-to-side motion. Be careful not to burnish too hard in one direction as you will get a streaky transfer.

note: To get a soft, “lost” edge effect, use less pressure as you work out to the edges. This will result in less ink transfer and a softer transition.

6. Once you have gone over the entire image, lift a corner of the transparency and check to see that everything has transferred to your liking. You can continue to burnish some areas more, or remove the transfer if it looks good to you. This should all be done in about 10–15 seconds, depending on the size of the image. If there was not enough medium or it was not smooth in certain areas, you may find that these areas did not transfer as well. Too much medium or too vigorous burnishing will cause the inks to smear.

paper transfers

with JetPrint Multi-Project Photo Paper in matte, using soft gel medium

Additional material you’ll need:
• JetPrint Multi-Project Photo Paper in matte

Follow all of the steps for the transparency transfer above, but once your receiving surface is prepared, you will also need to add a layer of soft gel medium to the image side of the paper before commencing the transfer. Apply a thin layer over the image and immediately place it on the receiving surface and burnish.

With paper transfers, your working time is reduced as the paper and medium will begin to dry as you work. You may find that some of the paper separates when you remove it. Wait until the transfer begins to dry a little and then gently rub away these paper bits from the transfer. Once the transferred image dries, if you see paper fibers, try wetting your finger and gently rubbing the fibers to remove them.

Paper transfers are trickier to accomplish than transparency transfers because of the differences in the bonding processes. I recommend mastering the transfer process with transparencies before trying paper transfers.

paper transfers

with plain copy paper using regular gel medium

Additional materials you’ll need:
- Plain copy paper
- Dorlands or Gamblin Art Wax Medium (optional)

This is one of the easiest and cheapest transfer methods. It requires the use of regular gel medium and plain copy paper. The disadvantage is that there is almost always paper residue remaining.

1. Prepare photos as outlined above and print on inexpensive copy paper.
2. Cut out the image you want to transfer.
3. Apply a layer of regular gel medium to your receiving surface.
4. Quickly apply the image, printed-side-down, and burnish.
5. Let the paper sit for just under a minute and then remove the image.
6. Cover remaining paper pieces with Dorlands or Gamblin Wax Medium. The wax will be absorbed by the paper fibers and they will become translucent. This is a quick way to add images to an altered book.

water transfers

Additional materials you’ll need:
- JetPrint Multi-Project Photo Paper in glossy
- Fine mist spray bottle (from craft store)
- Fixative spray (matte or glossy)

This is another very simple method. Because it does not use any acrylic medium, the images are not lightfast or permanent (unless you are using Epson DURAbright® inks) so transfers must be sprayed with a fixative.

It is good for use on fabric as it does not change the hand of the fabric and is easy to hand stitch. Transferred images tend to have softened, blurred edges due to the inks spreading in the water. Use as little water spray as possible to keep edges sharp, or use more water for a much-softened photo.

1. Print images onto JetPrint glossy photo paper.
2. Cut out image for transfer.
3. Spray receiving paper or fabric until just damp, run finger over surface to ensure even wetness.
4. Holding image upright and spray bottle about 18” away, give the image 2 to 3 sprays of water.
5. Lay image onto receiving surface, being careful not to move it, and burnish with some pressure. You can

Right, from top: This is the remaining image still on the paper after the transfer; color water transfer onto watercolor paper; glossy photo paper after water transfer.
even substitute a balled-up paper towel as your burnisher, as the ink will easily separate from the glossy paper.

**note:** There is often enough ink remaining on the paper to do another transfer. Naturally the second (and sometimes even third) transfer will be fainter.

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**caulk transfers**

**Additional materials you’ll need:**
- Elmer’s Squeez’N Caulk Clear
- Stretched canvas, canvas board, or wood
- Plain copy paper
- Heat gun (optional)

This type of transfer must be done on a surface that can get wet and take some punishment, like a painter’s canvas, 300-lb. watercolor paper, fabric, or wood. It is not intended for transfers onto paper. Note: This process can also be done with toner/laser copies.

1. Prepare and print images onto regular copy paper.
2. Apply Elmer’s Squeez’N Caulk to your chosen surface spreading a generous but thin layer where you wish to place your image.
3. Trim image to size and apply it ink-side down to caulked area. Be careful to keep caulk off the back of the image.
4. Burnish gently to ensure that all areas of the paper have adhered to the surface.
5. Set it aside to dry completely. You can speed up the process by using a heat gun.
6. Once the paper and caulk are completely dry, remove the paper by wetting it and gently rubbing with your finger so that the paper balls up and drops off, revealing the inked image below. You must rub gently or you will rub away the inked areas. Once you think you have all the paper off, set it aside to dry again, or dry it with your heat gun. As the paper dries, tiny little paper fibers (also known as “bloom”) will appear on the image. Re-wet the area and rub again until the all fibers are removed. (You may have to repeat this a third time.) An option is to coat the image with Dorlands or Gamblin Art Wax which will soak into the remaining paper fibers and make them translucent. If you apply the wax, it should be the last process so it does not repel any water-based coloring you may want to add to the image.

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**variables**

**printers and ink**

There are several variables that can also affect the quality of your transfers; the main one is printer ink. The brand of printer you use does not matter as much as the inks that your printer uses. The inkjet printers on the market today use two types of ink: water-based dye inks and pigment inks.

Printers are designed with either a single slot for a tri-color cartridge (containing all three colors of ink) or three separate
cartridges, one for each ink color. Both types always have a separate cartridge slot for black ink.

When making a transfer from a transparency, sometimes the colored ink printed from a tri-color cartridge will transfer in layers, and your first transfer will have a greenish cast. There is often enough ink left on the transparency for another transfer and this second transfer will come out with correct coloration. If you are having this problem and the coloration bothers you, make a first, lightly burnished transfer to get rid of this green cast and then make a second one using regular pressure. This “green problem” does not occur with any of the other transfer methods.

Printers with separate cartridges for each color tend to work better when making transparency transfers whether they use dye- or pigment-based inks. For fool-proof transparency transfers, my printer of choice is an Epson printer that uses Durabright™ inks. Currently, Epson is the only manufacturer of printers that use pigment ink. Not all of their printers use pigment inks, nor do they all have individual cartridges for each ink color.

The advantage to using DURAbright® inks for transfers is that they are waterproof and fade resistant. They seldom smear during burnishing, and when making a transparency transfer, all of the ink transfers off of the transparency onto the paper or fabric, resulting in great transfers. The waterproof feature is a plus for artists. While dye-based inks are mixed with acrylic medium to make them waterproof and more fade-resistant, you can be assured of those two things if you use a water- and fade-proof ink to begin with.

note: You will often find that the original image remains on the transfer paper and on some transparencies (depending on your printer inks). It has an altered appearance and is great to use in other artwork.

transparency and paper brands

Logically speaking, all brands of transparency, photo paper, and acrylic medium should work the same, but that is not always the case. If you are consistently having less-than-perfect (and remember, “perfect” is relative) results and you are sure you are doing everything correctly, perhaps the brand of medium, transparency, paper, or ink you are using is the problem. Ask a friend if you can use their printer, or try one of their transparencies, or their Golden medium. Keep eliminating variables until you discover the one that was causing your problem. Often you will find that you made successful transfers in a class yet when you got home, the results were not as good. Perhaps it is because one of the variables is different.

humidity

If you live in a very dry or very humid climate, the moisture in the air can affect how much medium your paper or fabric will require. Don’t be alarmed if your fabric or paper “drinks up” a lot of medium before you begin the transfer process. This is especially true when working on fabric.

burnishing

The best analogy I can give is that you want to apply as much pressure as you use to scrape off one of those stubborn price tags. If you are having difficulty determining the right amount of pressure to use, try a practice transfer, burnishing from left to right and increasing your pressure as you go. Lift the transfer and see at what point the inks look their best.

Another problem is uneven burnishing. Some areas will look great, while others just miss the mark. A solution to this is to do a once-over burnishing and then rotate your transfer 90° and do another allover burnishing. This way you are sure to catch all of the areas you may have missed.

frequently asked questions

What setting do you print on when using a transparency?

I have tried setting my printer on both the “Transparency” setting (in the Properties menu, Paper Options) and the Plain Paper (Default) setting. I have seen no difference in the quality of the transfers, so I now just use the Plain Paper setting for all of my transfer printing.

Does it matter how long ago you printed the images that you want to transfer?

I have transferred images that were printed over a year ago. They do still transfer, but I think the inks were not as
vivid. I would suggest making transfers from images printed anywhere from the same day to six months prior for best quality.

*Can you use a transparency more than once?*

Once you have applied the transparency to an acrylic medium surface, some medium will dry on the transparency and you can no longer use it in your printer. Some people have experimented with printing on the wrong side of the transparency and taking the very wet print and carefully placing it down on the receiving surface, gently burnishing, and then washing and reusing. Directions for this and many other experimental methods are discussed on the Inkjet Transfer Yahoo Group. (See Resources)

*Can you transfer onto surfaces that have been painted, watercolored, stamped, etc?*

Yes, most definitely! Just remember that anything that you do to the receiving paper, fabric, or wood that reduces its absorbency (like applying paint), will create a slicker surface and the acrylic medium you apply to it will stay slippery.

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**CREDITS**

I wish to thank the following artists for sharing their transfer processes with me:

- Lisa Cook
  - paper transfers
- Nina Bagley
  - water transfers
  - ornamental.typepad.com/ornamental/
- Claudine Hellmuth
  - caulk transfers
  - www.collageartist.com
- Karen Michel
  - copy paper transfers
  - www.karenmichel.com

You must be more careful with your burnishing. (See sample above)

*How about adding color to the image after it has been transferred?*

Adding color to your finished transfer is an excellent way to tone down those white spots where the inks did not transfer. Join me next issue to discover a variety of tips and techniques for adding color to transfers.

lesleyriley.com

Color added by transferring onto a surface colored with Portfolio Oil Pastels.
Transferring images using the methods and materials I shared with you in the previous article is a wonderful way to add an artistic touch to your work. Transfers are beautiful all by themselves, but what if your artistic vision calls for a little color and all you have are black-and-white images? No problem! Adding color takes your transfers to a whole new level and adds more fun to the mix.

One of the simplest methods of adding color to black-and-white images is to do it right on your computer, before you even print your image. First, scan in your photo. Many older photos have yellowed with age. Using your photo-adjusting software (I use Photoshop®), you can increase the saturation of the image color. When you over saturate the image color, you will often end up with a rich overall color to the image. Once you have full-color saturation, you can then adjust the hue. My software has a sliding scale that I play with to find a color I like. In the first sample shown here, I increased the original image saturation to +100 and then played with the hue to get a rich magenta color. The image was then printed and transferred.

If you haven’t yet played with adjusting saturation and hue, you are in for some great fun. (See sample 1.)

Below, from left: Sample 1—color added with hue adjustment in photo-editing software; Sample 2—Inkjet transfer done on decorative patterned paper; Sample 3: Inkjet transfer on painted paper towel.
If you are a whiz with photo-editing software or are patient and willing to work at it, you can also color images before printing using the paint tools found in those programs.

**adding color before transferring**

The next method for adding color is to transfer onto a colored, patterned, or painted surface. These techniques work with both acrylic medium and water transfers.

I have a huge stash of fabric, so I can easily find a piece to complement the image I am transferring or add to the message of the piece. I also love to transfer onto decorative artist papers. The better quality papers are excellent for transferring onto using soft gel or, in some instances, matte medium. *(See samples 2 and 6.)*

**tip:** If you are a whiz with photo-editing software or are patient and willing to work at it, you can also color images before printing using the paint tools found in those programs.

Painted papers are another excellent surface for transfers. After reading Tracy Bautista’s article on dyed paper towels (*Cloth Paper Scissors* Summer 2005), I raided my own little stash of these gems. They really are strong and absorbent, and I had no trouble making a transfer using matte medium. The results feel like fabric. *(See sample 3.)*

I also like to prepare a spot on a painted surface that I can transfer an image onto. Depending on the look I want, I may add some white or off-white paint before the transfer so that the details do not get lost against a darker painted background. In my sample, I used Lumiere and Golden fluid acrylic paints to prepare a background. I added off-white acrylic to a small area to make the transfer pop out from the background. *(See sample 4.)*

One colorful and fun technique when working with a transparency is to lay it down onto the surface you will be transferring to and make note of the areas you want color. In this sample, I used Portfolio oil pastels to add areas of color. I heat set the oil pastels and then transferred the image over them. When using this technique, don’t strive for exact placement and/or colors. It is harder to make something look perfect than to intentionally be free with the outcome. The end result is much more appealing and fresh looking. *(See sample 5.)*
adding color after transferring

It is just as easy and fun to add color after you have transferred your image. I use a variety of methods, depending on the look I am after. I like to give a transferred image another layer of age to add to the timeworn surface a transfer usually generates. One of my favorite tricks is to mix instant coffee granules with a bit of water and selectively add “age spots” to an image. This gives a warm brown tone. Try the same technique with walnut ink crystals or a highly saturated fluid acrylic paint used either full-strength or watered down to give a yellow, aged effect. My favorite is Golden quinacridone nickel azo. (See samples 7 and 8.)

For soft color, I use Prismacolor pencils or decorating chalk pastels that come with tiny foam brushes to color in the image. It is easier to control areas of color with these small-tipped brushes than with the larger Portfolios, especially on fabric. Both the pencils and chalk should be heat set or sprayed with a fixative when you are done. (See sample 9.)

If it is brilliant color you are after, try the Portfolio oil pastels over an image transfer onto paper. Again, don’t try for picture-perfect results. Take artistic license with your coloring. No one is going to criticize you for coloring outside the lines or making your sky pink. (See sample 10.) Rubber stamp ink pads or Tsukineko Duo-Daubers®, which have a small tip, also work well at adding color. And don’t forget markers!

Almost any combination of paints, pastels, pencils, inks, markers, and surfaces can work. Making art is always a learning experience. If one attempt does not work you have not failed, you have made a discovery. You know what not to do next time. And sometimes, when the stars are in alignment, you can end up with something much better than you originally conceived.
tip: Don’t always think about coloring the whole image. A little spot of color can go a long way. (See sample 11.)

note: Tracy Bonkers was also a contributor to the matte photo paper transfer technique in the Transfer Master Class article in CPS #3 (Summer 2005).
I first stumbled across the word “Zentangle,” a term coined for drawing repetitive patterns as a way of meditation, almost two years ago while surfing the blogosphere. I found the official website, ordered a kit, and played with patterns for months. But my real addiction started when I attended a short workshop taught by the originators themselves: Maria Thomas, an artist and calligrapher, and Rick Roberts, a musician and former monk.

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Zentangle is a perfect fit with journals. It eliminates the horror of the blank page by setting up a ritual of steps to follow. I warn students in my classes that once they start to practice Zentangle, patterns will appear everywhere. As your mind relaxes into the flow, the words come easily and blend with the patterns.

**traditional zentangles**

A traditional Zentangle has a very simple ritual.

**DIRECTIONS**

1. Make a pencil dot in each corner of your paper tile. Connect the dots to form a frame.

2. Draw “strings” or guidelines. Imagine you are holding a piece of thread and then drop it onto the tile. The random shape it forms is your guideline. Draw the string with pencil. (It will not be erased. The pencil lines become part of the drawing.)

3. Switch to a pen and draw patterns into the various sections formed by the string.

4. Continue to fill in patterns while rotating the tile.

This very simple process can be easily applied to art journals. The journal page becomes the tile. Start with the four dots, one in each corner, then sketch in a frame. If you prefer to work right up to the edges of the page, then think of the page itself as the frame. The string comes next with a random zigzag or other sources of inspiration

(see image above right)

- A stack of firewood: The ends form a crescent moon pattern.
- Stones, bricks, tiles: All form very simple shapes repeated over and over.
- CDs: Fill a section with circles. Put a small circle in the center of each big circle, then outline each small circle.
- Calendar: Grids can inspire an endless number of patterns.
- Lined paper: Lines, that’s easy!
- Lampshade: Random lines on a slight angle.
- The back of a hard drive: Mine has a crazy pattern of dots and dashes.
- A huge pile of books and manuals: This looks like the tangle “BB” on its side.
loopy line to break up the page. I like to add my text lines as part of this string, or at least consider where the text will go. The text is really just another pattern, so it can be added now, or after other tangles have been drawn. It really depends on whether or not you know what you want to write about.

**tip:** If you have a topic, do the text first because it will inspire your patterns. If you are at a loss as to what to write about, start tangling, and the ideas will come as your brain relaxes.

### where to find patterns

In the image “How to Create a Zentangle” there are instructions on how to draw a few patterns. (More directions can be found at zentangle.com in the Newsletters section or at my blog where I post a Tangle of the Week.) Also look at pattern books, your rubber stamp collection, the bottoms of your shoes, your clothes, the dining room chairs, fancy woodwork, your pantry, garage...great patterns are everywhere. For example, I have a water bottle in front of me. When I squint at it, I see the basic shape of a rectangle with horizontal lines repeating where the grips are. The lines are all slightly curved. That’s a Zentangle.

### make patterns with text

Text can inspire many beautiful, easy patterns. The tangle “Eke” is rows of interlocking, cursive, lowercase “e’s.” Pick a section of the string to write in and start writing in cursive. When the section is filled, turn the journal 90° and keep writing, right over the first lines of text. This forms a very pretty pattern and you cannot read the writing. Feel free to rant and curse, it’s very cathartic and no one will ever know.

For a playful pattern, fill a section of your journal page with lowercase block letters. They can spell something, or not. Put an “aura” or an outline around each letter. Keep adding outlines until the space is filled.

If you have a theme, a quote, a few words, or another idea that you want to mull over and meditate on before starting to write, you can turn those words into a tangle. Simply write the words, in pencil, in your usual handwriting, but exaggerate the size a bit. Then outline the letters with a Micron® pen, erase the pencil lines, and fill in the background.

**tip:** In traditional Zentangles, there is no color other than gray from shading.

Fabric, Paper, and Other Photo Transfer Techniques presented by clothpaperscissors.com
But, also, there are no rules! So you can use Zentangles any way they suit you. In the piece shown below, I used Inktense watercolor pencils because, when wet, the colors are super bright and juicy, and after they dry, they are permanent. That means that if you color something blue, add water and let it dry, and then wash yellow over it, the yellow will stay yellow and not turn green.

You will be amazed at the ideas that will come into your head! The left brain is thinking the words over and over while controlling where the lines go. The right brain is making artistic choices about coloring in and thickness of line, and feeling satisfaction with contrasting colors. The worry part of the brain is pushed out completely, leaving space for new thoughts.

**zentangles and transfers**

Another technique I use in my journals is Sheer Heaven™ transfers. Sheer Heaven feels like a thick sheet of tracing paper. It works well with many materials and techniques, but it is pure magic for transfers. I have used photos, text, and even my daughter’s drawings. The images can be edited on your computer and printed out onto the Sheer Heaven transfer paper, or you can draw directly onto it.

**note:** The back side is silky smooth and the front (transfer side) is slightly textured, or “toothy.”

**DIRECTIONS**

1. Reverse your photos, text, or other images in your computer photo program and print onto Sheer Heaven (toothy side) using your inkjet printer. Or, using colored pencils or Micron pens, trace or draw the image you want to transfer onto the toothy (rough) side of the Sheer Heaven.

2. **note:** Keep in mind that the image will be reversed.

3. Trim the images closely, but leave a tab to hold onto.

4. Fill a small spray bottle with rubbing alcohol. Hold the image by the tab over a sink or a protected surface with the printed side up. Spritz lightly with the rubbing alcohol until the entire surface looks slightly shiny.

5. Quickly place it face down onto your journal page and burnish the back with a bone folder or the back of a spoon.

6. Carefully peel up the tab a little to see if it has transferred. If not, rub some more. Once you are happy with the transfer, peel off the Sheer Heaven and reveal your transfer.

**transfer tips**

- Applying the right amount of rubbing alcohol takes practice. Too little and the transfer will be spotty; too much and it will bleed.

- The transfer will work on any absorbent material like uncoated paper, cloth, and on some wood. On textured papers and cloth it will only transfer to the “high points.” It will not work on gesso, acrylic paints, or slick papers.

- Certain inkjet colors have a tendency to bleed through certain papers, so do a test first, and don’t make transfers onto the back of a piece of art that you love.

- Once the transfer is completely dry you can draw, paint, and add any embellishments.

- Many art materials will transfer with this method. Make a test strip of your favorites.

- A used piece of Sheer Heaven cannot be used as a transfer again, but it makes a great stencil for chalks or inks. It won’t tear or wrinkle.
At the age of seven, I was given a 110 camera to record a family trip. From that day forward I was captivated by freezing time with a click of the shutter. In high school, a patient science teacher taught me, the sole member of the photography club, how to process my images in a black-and-white darkroom. I was soon addicted to the rush of watching a print appear in the processing trays.

BY tiffany teske
Fast forward to university where I majored in photography and studio art and could work in both a color and a black-and-white darkroom. I learned to change the same negatives into very different final prints. Outside of the darkroom, I became obsessed with the instant Polaroid processes of transfer and emulsion lifts. The way my images transformed from modern to painterly with a vintage feel made my heart sing. Polaroid processes allowed me to put my own mark on my images, without a darkroom.

When my friends and clients heard that Polaroid had quit making instant film they thought I would be devastated. But I have always welcomed change and quickly made up my mind that I would embrace new ways of working. When I met Fuji FP-100C, I fell in love all over again.

If you’re the adventurous sort and think you’ve tried it all, then this instant film workshop is especially for you. Tracking down a camera might be a challenge, but it’ll be worth it.

directions
Both transfers and emulsion lifts can be made with Fuji film.

working with the film

**note:** A film pack is an individual photograph that includes the positive and the negative part of the image.

1. Load your camera with the film cartridge. ([Figure 1](#)) Pull the black tab that is outside of the camera to ready the film. ([Figure 2](#))

**note:** The black tab is attached to a strip of paper that keeps the film from being

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**MATERIALS**

- Fuji FP 100C pack instant film cartridge
- Vintage camera that takes Polaroid 100 series pack films (I use a 1969 Polaroid Colorpack II.)
- Watercolor or printmaking paper, 90–140 lb, 4" x 5" pieces, hot press (smooth surface) (I use Arches™ watercolor or Rives BFK printmaking papers.)
- Clipboard, plastic
- Water tray (I use 8" x 10" darkroom trays.)
- Plexiglass, 5" x 7"
- Squeegee
- Brayer, 4", soft rubber
- Cardboard box with flaps at the top, up to 12" deep and wide

**optional**

- Finely woven fabric such as silk; clamshells; metal; wood; canvas; handmade paper; rice paper; or glass
exposed to light. Once the black strip is removed there will be a series of white numbered tabs showing. This means the film is loaded correctly and ready to be exposed.

2. Compose your image in the viewfinder and push the button to expose the film.

**note:** The more contrast in your image, the better.

3. Remove the film from your camera by first pulling the smaller white tab, with a number on it, straight out of the camera. (Figure 3) This will cause a white tab with arrows to come out of the camera.

4. Completely remove the film pack by pulling the white tab with arrows straight out of the camera, in one fluid motion. (Figure 4)

**fuji transfer**

To prepare to make a transfer, gather your supplies. You will need to complete Step 3 of the transfer in either a darkened room or inside the box. Fill your tray with water and have your paper, clipboard, plexiglass, squeegee, and brayer near your tray.

1. Take your photograph, and bring your camera to your work station. Do not remove the photo from the camera. Wet your paper in the water by turning it over 8–10 times. Place it on the plexiglass and pull the squeegee over the paper to remove the extra water.
Flip your paper over so the wetter side is facing up and lay it down on the clipboard.

**note:** The next step must be completed within 20 seconds so that the chemicals needed to make the transfer have not overprocessed.

2. Remove your image from the camera and rip the tab with the arrows off of the film pack leaving two tabs, one above the positive (gray) side and one above the negative (black) side of the pack film. Prepare for a transfer by folding the paper with red writing back so that it is touching the gray side of the film pack. Flip the pack over, so the black side is up, and clip the tab above the black side under the clip of the clipboard against the wet paper. (Figure 5)

3. Immediately take the clipboard into a darkened room or place it in a cardboard box. Hold up the film pack between the thumb and forefinger of one hand, and find the tab with the writing that is not clipped to the clipboard with the other hand. (Figure 6) Hold the printed tab in the middle and pull it straight back, parallel to the clipboard, until it comes apart from the pack. (Figure 7) Press the negative against the paper, and burnish with the brayer in all directions for 30 seconds. (Figure 8) Let the negative and paper sit together for 90 seconds.
4. The clipboard can now be moved to the light. Remove the negative from the paper by holding the paper against the clipboard with your fingertip and peeling back the positive with the other hand. Peel back at a sharp angle; do not just lift it off. Let dry. (Figure 9)

**fuji emulsion lift**

1. Take a photograph and remove the film from the camera.

2. Let the photograph sit for 2 minutes and then rip the tab with the arrow off of the film pack and peel apart.

3. To start the emulsion lift, place the positive side of the film pack (the one that has the image) in a tray of hot water. (Figure 10)

4. Once the emulsion has started to loosen (2–3 minutes), remove it from the water.

5. Use an old credit card to scrape the emulsion off the surface of the film in one direction, using a continuous motion. (Figure 11)

6. Place the completed emulsion lift into a tray of cold water to straighten it out. (Figure 12) It is quite strong, much like thin acetate. It is easiest to work
with when it is still wet and pliable, before it has dried completely. To use, remove from the water, pat dry, and immediately attach to paper, wood, shell, ceramic, metal, mirror, or any other non-porous surface, using gel medium. If the lift has dried it can be placed in water again to soften.

I never know exactly what will happen when I work with Fuji transfers and emulsion lifts. I accept that this process is difficult to control and always produces different results. This element of surprise is part of the magic that makes each image a unique element in my mixed-media pieces. Take a chance and see how these processes can inspire you.

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Finding Film, Cameras and More

The least expensive way to get started with Fuji processes is by using a Polaroid camera. Fuji created this particular film for their passport camera systems and they do not make a consumer model camera that uses it. Look for a Polaroid camera that takes two-part, 100 series pack film, which differs considerably from the classic Polaroid camera that automatically spits out an image as soon as it is taken. You can find these cameras for sale at thrift stores, yard sales, in photography forums, and on eBay. To find out which cameras use this specific pack film check out the Land List (landlist.org), an online archive of all products by Polaroid.

Daylab Corporation (daylab.com) makes several photo processing machines that allow slides and digital prints to be exposed onto Polaroid and Fuji pack films. This allows the flexibility of working with images that have already been created and of creating many transfers and lifts using the same or variations of the same image.

Fuji FP 100C can be purchased at camera shops and online. Polaroid is no longer making pack film, but you can buy expired film online through Impossible Project (the-impossible-project.com) or on eBay. The process of making a Polaroid transfer or emulsion lift varies from Fuji processes. Expired film can be difficult to work with because of chemistry issues, but the uncertainty of the results can be half the creative fun.