

## Photocopy Transfer

In the 50's and 60's Robert Rauschenberg began to use solvents to transfer found images from newspapers onto paper. Since then artists have been fascinated by the lure of the found image and photocopy transfer is just one of the ways that images may be transferred to alternative substrates.

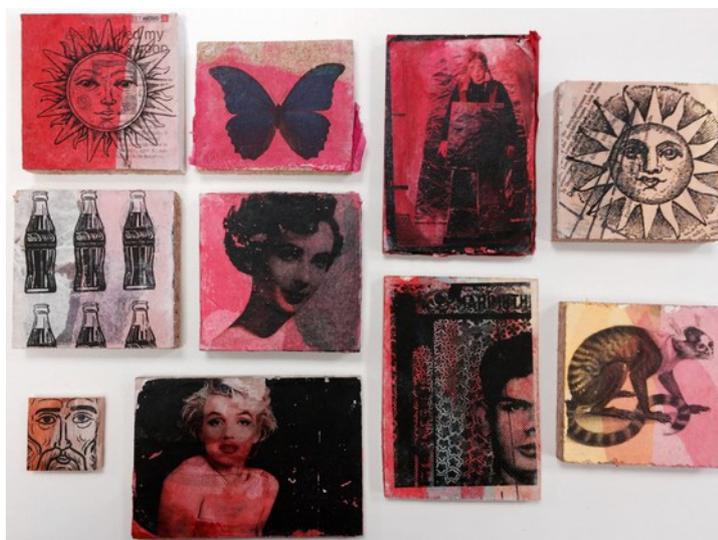


Robert Rauschenberg, Transfer Drawings from the 1950s and 1960s

There are two principle techniques for transferring photocopies:



*Solvent transfer*



*Adhesive transfer*

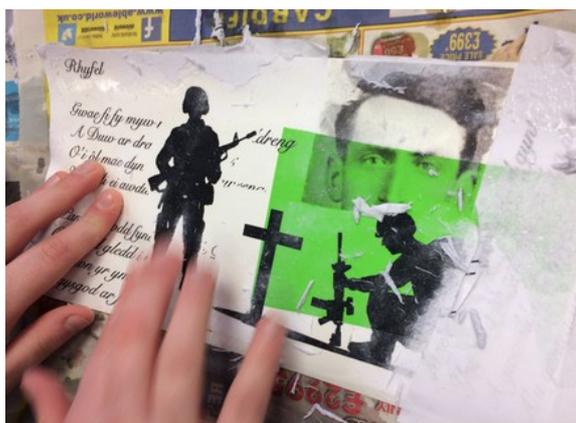
Both rely on a typical **laser printed** image (though books, newspaper or magazines may be used with the adhesive transfer process). Laser print should not to be confused with *inkjet print* which will not work with either technique.

## Adhesive Transfer

Adhesive transfer works by gluing the image face down to the substrate then wetting the back and carefully rubbing away the paper. This will work with a wide range of printed imagery except for inkjet prints that are water-soluble and therefore cannot be wetted. **Photocopies or laser prints** are ideal for this because the image occupies the top surface of the paper making it easier to separate. Adhesive transfer will take to most surfaces including **wood, fabric, card, paper and stone**. The surface to be transferred to needs to be robust enough to withstand gluing, wetting and rubbing!



### *What Glue?*



The type of glue is crucial to the success of this technique. PVA will not work because it is reactivated when wet as are other types of glue. Use **clear or coloured acrylic** because this sets solid when dry and is impervious to water. The glue on most **sticky tapes and sticky backed plastic** make these materials ideal for transferring to and excellent results can be obtained on sellotape,

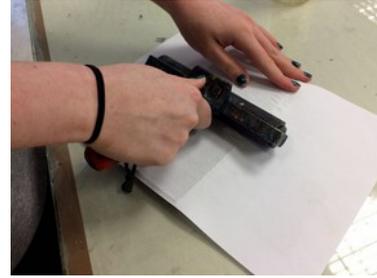
parcel tape, silver plumbers tape, masking tape and insulation tape.

If using clear acrylic varnish then the background surface will show through the image. The surface therefore may be prepared with a painted or collaged background or chosen for its inherent quality such as wood grain.

### *Instructions:*

1. Make sure that the photocopy or printed image is on paper that is larger than the surface to which it is to be transferred. This will ensure that glue does not seep around the edges of the image and get on the back of the paper. (This is not necessary when using tape or sticky backed plastic).
2. Coat the surface to be transferred to with a generous amount of acrylic and place the image on top face down.

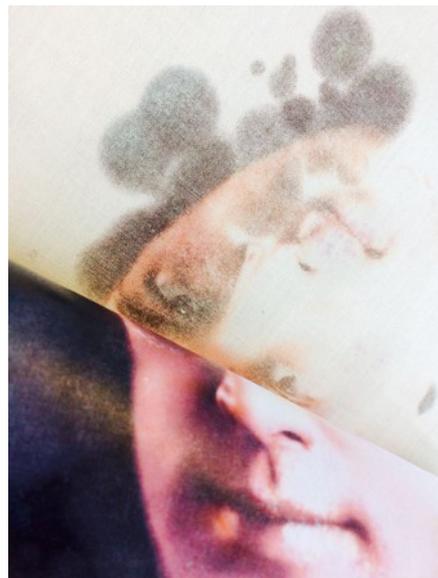
3. The sticking process is crucial to the success of this technique and how well the image is stuck down determines how well the transfer comes out.
4. Press the back of the image with the flat of your hand and roll over the back with a dry roller to ensure a close adhesion.
5. As the water in the acrylic soaks into the paper the transfer image paper will stretch and ruffle. The first few minutes of sticking should therefore be devoted to ensuring that the two surfaces stick properly to each other.
6. Allow the acrylic to dry completely before going to the next stage.
7. Wet the back of the transfer image with a damp sponge.
8. Start rubbing the dampened paper until it starts to peel off the back and reveal the image underneath.
9. As it becomes clearer rub lighter just in case it starts to come away.
10. Allow the water to dry off. The image becomes cloudy due to residual paper fibres.
11. Varnish with oil based glossy varnish to clear the image of cloudiness or alternatively rub a little oil into it.

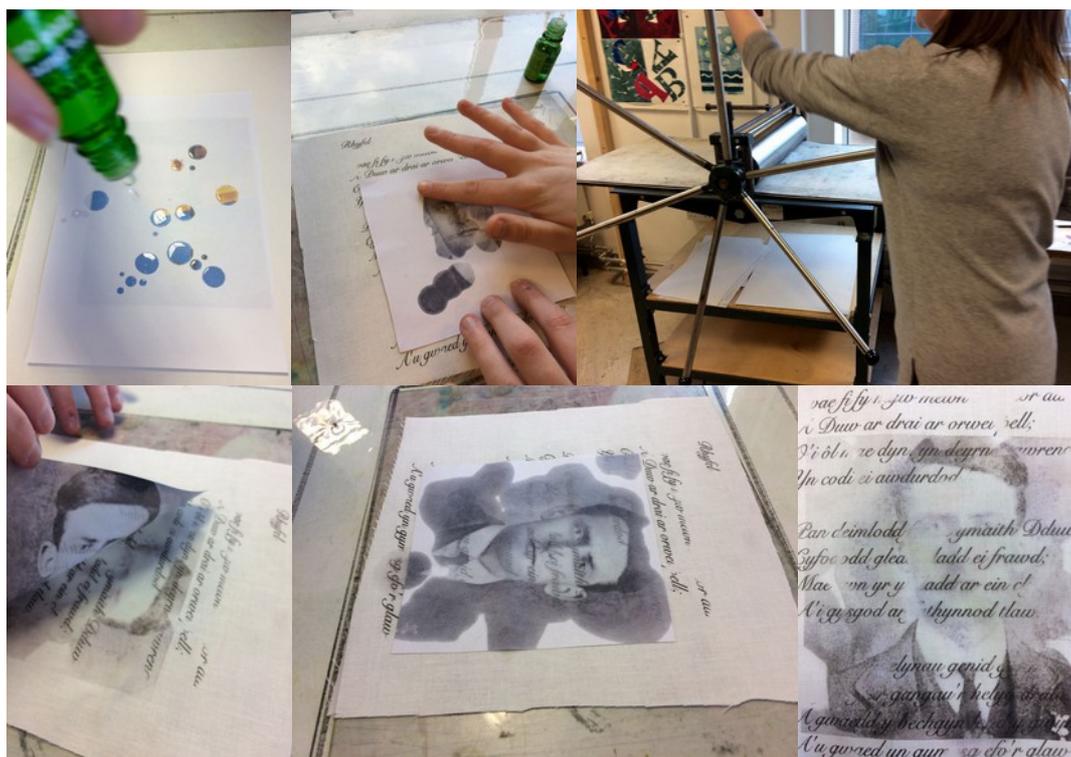


### Solvent Transfer

In these more enlightened days a non-toxic alternative to the powerful solvents that Rauchenberg used can be found in the form of **tea tree** or **eucalyptus oil**. However, given the many various types and makes of photocopier or laser printer and the habit of manufacturers to update and improve the printers and toners that they produce, it is wise to do a quick test on the print to see if it works before investing too much time and money. Simply dab a printed sample with the tea tree or eucalyptus oil and see if it rubs off.

Unfortunately ready printed material such as newspapers books and magazines yield disappointing results. The type of substrate that you choose will also have a significant effect. Generally the more absorbent the surface the better the result so **paper** is best and **cotton fabric** slightly less so.





### Instructions:

1. Lay the copy face down on top of the surface to be transferred to.
2. Sprinkle the tea tree or eucalyptus oil on the back of the copy. The oil may be left in drips or spread around with a finger or tissue.
3. If you have a press do all of this in situ on the press bed then carefully lay the blankets over the top and run it all through.
4. If you do not have a press follow stages 1 and 2 then hold the copy still whilst scribbling on the back of it. You will need a HB pencil and a firm grip to keep it still.

