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## Image Transfers with Courtney Cerruti

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### Chapter 1 - Introduction

#### Overview

- Hi, welcome to Image Transfers. Today I'm going to teach you four different methods to transfer found images or texts out of a magazine, a photo copy, onto another surface. So I wanted to start off with showing you some examples of image transfers. This is a little altered book that I made and this guy is a packing tape transfer and that's one of the first methods I'm gonna teach you today. This is an altered accordion and this has a few different image transfer techniques including packing tape and solvent transfer. And a lot of people use image transfers for sketchbooks. This is a sketchbook I kept for a while and it kind of employs a lot of different image transfer techniques. So that's just to kind of start you to get an idea of what you can use image transfers for but really the sky is the limit. Once you learn these few techniques, you can really experiment with all kinds of two dimensional materials.

### Chapter 2 - Transfer Techniques

#### Packing tape transfer

- So we're gonna start with a packing tape transfer, which I love to start with because it's quick, it's easy, you can do it on your kitchen table, you can do it with kids, and it's a good way to start using image transfers in your artwork. So for our materials, we need to start with packing tape. Really, you can use any kind of packing tape. It can be from the dollar store. it can be from the hardware store. The only thing you're limited to is the width of the tape. And this image transfer process works really great with magazines and it's one of the few processes you can use with color, so I recommend recycling catalogs or old magazines, so we're gonna use some old National Geographics, which are fabulous, 'cause they have awesome, 1970s, retro graphics. And then just your standard kind of magazine. The other thing that's great about this transfer is that it doesn't reverse your image, so it works really well for found text. I'm just looking through the magazine to find something I wanna transfer. So I'm actually just gonna transfer this tree, and it's great to use photographs from magazines because with this transfer process, you don't really lose any detail, so even the smallest amount of text or anything detailed like this tree works really well. So first you need a strip of packing tape. And when you first start, I would recommend using a smaller piece 'cause really large pieces can be kind of tricky to work with if its your first time. Just cut the edge off there. So this is about a four-inch strip. And I'm gonna lay the packing tape directly on the image, and I wanna be careful when I'm laying it down to avoid getting any air bubbles or ripples. If you do that, the packing tape can't make contact with the image and you'll get, like, a clear spot. So I'm just gonna lay it down, starting at one side and I can just kind of use my finger to lightly burnish it down. It's pretty good. So it's flat on the paper, but now I need to actively burnish it, which just means rub real hard. And you can use something like a bone folder, if you have that at home, but I like to use just these cheap wooden tongue depressors. You could also use a popsicle stick or the back of a wooden spoon. So now I'm gonna burnish it using my tongue depressor. And burnishing is easy. You're just kind of pressing with moderate force and this really just allows the packing tape to get good contact with the image. Okay, so that looks good. You don't have to over burnish. I'm just gonna tear the image out of the magazine. (paper ripping) so I've got my strip. I'm just gonna tear it down to size so it's sort of more manageable. And next, it needs to go into sort of warm-ish water,

nothing too hot, kind of like bathtub water. So what's great about packing tape transfers is you could do maybe a dozen of these at once and let them soak in water. It's not gonna damage the transfer if you let it sit in here for too long. Some magazines, the paper will come off really easily and some, you might have to work a little. So once we placed it in the water, the paper will be saturated, and we're gonna rub the paper backing off of the transfer. That's our process. So some of the paper's gonna come off really easily. Some of the older magazines, they'll just literally lift right off, and some, like I said, you'll have to work at a little bit. So I'm just kind of using my thumbs to rub in a circular motion the paper backing off. And again, what I love about this transfer process is that it still maintains a lot of detail, so it works really well for text and detailed imagery. It doesn't reverse your image or your text, so you can use something that's found, ready to go, like a magazine page, a catalog, and it's a great way to recycle. Okay, so this just takes a few seconds. So all the paper backing is off and I'm left with this clear piece of tape that you can see has my image and my found text out of a magazine. And like I said, you don't lose any detail. It doesn't reverse the image. It doesn't reverse the text. So it works really, really well with magazines. Depending on the type of tape that you use, once this dries, it will be sticky again, so you can use it like a custom sticker. It looks really cool on pieces of mail, packages, gifts. I use it in books all the time. And I'll show you a sample. So now that you know what a packing tape transfer looks like you can recognize that this is one. And because it's transparent, I drew this underneath, kind of in line with the image itself. And like I said, it'll become sticky again, depending on the brand of tape that you use, so you can use it just like regular packing tape, which is awesome. So it'll take just a minute for your transfer to dry. Once it dries, if there's any white on the back, that's the paper pulp that's left over that you didn't rub off all the way. But not to worry; you can just put it back in the water and rub it again until all the paper is removed. It's not gonna damage it to put it back in the water. If you're not ready to use the transfer right away, you can save it on wax paper. Otherwise, remember, it's sticky, so it's just like a sticker. If you put it on paper, it's gonna stick. You can also use it on windows 'cause it's transparent. You can use it with slides to make jewelry, and really, it looks fabulous in a journal. Whatever you put it over will still show through so it looks really fun to layer with text. It's super quick and super easy.

#### Photocopy transfer

- So we just did a packing tape transfer with a magazine, but there's another way you can use packing tape transfer which is with a photocopy. So when you make a photocopy you have to think about what your source image is. You can use a family photograph and you can use clip art. Clip art is a really great way to introduce retro graphics, interesting fonts and texts, and cool imagery. So one of the places I love to find clip art is in *Crap Hound* magazine and it's cataloged by sort of type of clip art. This one is "Hands, Hearts and Eyes." And as you can see, it's exactly that. Hands, hearts, and eyes. Another good source for clip art is Dover. They publish copyright-free books full of imagery. You can find medical imagery, animal imagery, transportation imagery, and most of it's taken from 18th century wood engravings so you have really great detail. Remember for packing tape transfers I said you don't lose any detail. So this is an excellent source for packing tape transfer. Last but not least, is your own imagery. You can use family photos, any paper ephemera that you've collected. So no matter what imagery you need to use for the packing tape transfer and for the other methods I'm about to show you, you need to make a photocopy first. The photocopy is really important. It has to be a laser or toner-based copy, so just out of your standard copy machine is fine. Usually your home printer is not going to work. It's probably inkjet. So you need to start with

just a black and white, I cannot stress this enough, a black and white photocopy. Okay not a 50 cent copy, not a dollar copy, a ten cent black and white copy. So, I've got my photocopies. You can see they're well loved and used. This is from Crap Hound and I'm going to do a packing tape transfer of some telephones. So I'm going to use exactly the same process. You need to start with a piece of packing tape. So just like we did with the magazine, we're going to place the packing tape directly onto, this time, our photocopy. Let's find a good spot here. Remember I said the packing tape transfer doesn't reverse the image, it doesn't reverse text, so it's great for a regular photocopy where the text is read from left to right. Remember I need to burnish it next. So using my tongue depressor I'm just gonna burnish the packing tape onto the photocopy. I kind of laid this packing tape right in the center of my photocopy. I'm actually gonna cut it out before I put it into the water because I don't really need to get all of that paper wet. We're gonna use exactly the same process we did with the magazine, which is next, place it in warm water. So you can do this in cold water. I prefer warm water because it sort of expedites the process a little bit. You don't want to do something that's too warm, but you can leave them soak in the water. So if you want to do four, five, six, and leave them in the water for awhile that's totally fine. You're not gonna damage your transfer. I'm using the same process, which is just rubbing the paper pulp off the back. And you can use cold water for this, but the warm water kind of facilitates the process a little bit better. Kind of speeds it up. You want it to be warm, not scalding. I want to show you what it looks like when I've only removed half of the paper backing. You can see on the top of the transfer all of the paper backing is gone and it's transparent. This bottom I still have to work on removing the paper pulp. Like I said before with the magazine transfer as well, if once this dries, you can see when it's wet it's clear, once it dries if there's white on the back that's the paper pulp that you forgot to remove or you didn't see. It's fine, you can put it back in the water and keep rubbing off the paper pulp. This is with our photocopy. This happens to be with these clip art images of telephones, but you could do exactly the same thing with a family photograph. So there it is, our transfer. It looks awesome. I actually really like doing something right in the middle of the page because it looks like commercially produced tape. We have all these images going off the edge. It looks pretty cool. If you can see, the backing is gonna show through which makes it great for altered journals and book making, et cetera. So we just made our packing tape transfer using our magazine image and then we made one using our photocopy. These guys are from fashion magazines, and until you're ready to stick down your packing tape you can save it on waxed paper like I've done here. If you make a packing tape transfer, you know exactly what you want to stick it on, then you can go ahead and do that immediately. So this is a book that I made and this is a packing tape transfer here. This guy I showed you already. This is a little, altered accordion using lots of different packing tape transfers. Those are just some of the ideas that you can use to create packing tape art. So packing tape is great because you can layer it on top of other packing tape transfers. So I have my black and white photocopy and I can just lay it on top of some other kind of background and burnish it down. So it's great for making collages as well. So you can just layer packing tape on top of packing tape. Because it's transparent you kind of have things that peek through. I love packing tape transfers because they're quick and easy and it's a great introduction to image transfer techniques.

#### Gel medium transfer

- So we just did packing tape transfers and I'm gonna show you another image transfer technique using gel medium. So our materials for this transfer process are gel medium, this one is matte and it's a medium weight and it's an acrylic based medium so it's something you that you could find just

at your local craft store, glue brushes, our laser photo copy, this one is clip art from Dover, it's an image of a cat and it's a laser based photocopy, and our heat tool is kinda a handy extra thing. This is just to speed up the process which I'll talk about in a little bit but you don't have to have this, if you don't already have an embossing pen or heat gun at home, you can also use a hair dryer. So you're gonna start with your photocopy. And next you need your gel medium. And what we're gonna do is layer the gel medium on top of the photocopy to create the transfer. You really need a minimum of five coats for this process. You can go anywhere up to 10 coats and I can not stress that enough. No cheating, you really have to have five coats. So like I said before this is a matte version of gel medium, you can also use a glossy version if you prefer. The gloss tends to be a little thinner, and so you might need more coats, like around seven minimum but I prefer the matte version, so we're gonna go with that five. So I'm just gonna brush the matte medium across my image and if you have a really small image you wanna leave a lot of space around it. This is already a fairly large image, so I'm not gonna worry too much. But the gel medium transfer, unlike the packing tape has really fragile edges and it can be torn easily. So if you're worried about that leave yourself a lot of space. So I'm actually gonna put something underneath this cause it can be a fairly messy process. So I'm just spreading the matte medium across the image. You want a really even coat, nothing too thick or too thin. I'm just going from the middle out to the edges. Make sure you spread it evenly. Okay, so that looks pretty good. That's just my first coat. So like I said you need to let this dry and if you're really impatient, like I am, you can expedite the process a little by using, like I said earlier, a hair dryer or this is an embossing gun or a heat tool. You wanna make sure if you're gonna use a heat tool or a hair dryer that you don't burn your gel. And you can do that by getting too close. And this just kind of expedites the process. We'll heat it up a little bit, let it dry and then we'll start on the next coat. The gel medium does dry fairly quickly on its own so for your brush you don't want it to dry out and harden, and I like to just wrap it in kind of a damp towel. You don't wanna put it in water because then when you go to brush on your next coat, you'll introduce water and that's bad news. So I'm just gonna go ahead and just dry it. (humming of heat tool) Let me get my brush. So if I did horizontal brush strokes for the last coat then I'm gonna do vertical ones for this coat, or just alternating whichever way you start. So brushing from the center, all the way to the outside. It's the same for every coat. Gel medium, in general, does dry clear but as you start to build up layers, you're gonna get a little bit of opacity. It's not gonna be entirely transparent. So that looks pretty good. Again I'm impatient, so I'm gonna expedite the drying time. Try to make sure this doesn't stick down to whatever paper you might have it on top of. because basically gel medium is like a type of glue. So I'm gonna dry this coat. (humming of heat tool) So that looks pretty good. Sometimes with the matte medium it can be hard to tell if a coat is dry or not. Obviously you don't want it to be tacky, if it's tacky then it's still wet. Another way to tell is if the back feels cold, then it's probably damp from the gel medium. It's not dry all the way. This is pretty good. I'm on my second coat. I'm gonna on to my third coat. So for my last coat I did horizontal brush strokes. This time I'm gonna go vertical cause I want to alternate each layer. We need to do five coats minimum. I'm gonna keep saying that to you. (humming of heat tool) So I've done my fifth coat. I'm gonna close up my gel medium, so it doesn't dry out. And I've got my all five coats on here and I'm ready for the next step. So just like we did with our packing tape transfer, the next step for this guy is to put it in water. And this guy should be sort of warmish, not super hot. And just like we did with the packing tape transfer, we're gonna rub the paper backing off of the gel medium and what's gonna be left is just the ink on the medium. You do have to be careful though, the gel medium is much more fragile than the packing tape transfer and you need to rub very gently at first. It's very easy to stick your thumb

right through your transfer. And again, unlike the packing tape, you don't want to let this sit overnight or even for 20 minutes. You don't want to walk away from this. The gel medium is a lot more fragile than the packing tape, so just be careful. And the gel medium, when you put it back in the water, it will sort of turn a little bit whitish but it will go back to being fairly transparent, once it dries all the way. Just wanted to show you, you can see this is where I haven't rubbed off the paper backing and this is where I have. You get this really crystal clear image of the kitty face. I rubbed off my paper backing. This guy's kind of wet, I'm gonna put him down on the table over here. So I have a little bit of tearing here at the corner and that's because I either didn't have a thick enough coat there or it might have rubbed off the paper backing too hard. But that's okay because I'm mostly focused on the kitty's face. I have two sides to my transfer. This is the side that had the contact with the ink, and so it's really smooth and clear. The other side where I applied my brush strokes have more texture. Right now it's fairly opaque but it will dry clearer. And you can use either side of this transfer. Just gonna wipe him off. You do want to let these guys dry flat because if they're curved or crumpled they'll dry that way. Usually takes overnight to dry. So we're gonna let the kitty transfer dry and I wanted to show you three other examples of image transfers that have dried with the gel medium. This is another kitty. And as you can see, the nice thing, with the gel medium transfer is you get this really soft deckled edge which is a different look than the packing tape transfer is glossy and has this hard, finite edge. People like to use these in collage, in acrylic painting because it's an acrylic gel that you wind up with so it layers in really nicely. And this guy's slightly shiny. I used a gloss medium on him. So that's just another example of a gel medium transfer. This guy's a little bit thicker. This is with the matte medium and I think I did eight coats on this one, so it's a heavier bodied skin and you can sew right through this. So it's great for cards or altered journals. You can even use it on wall quilts but nothing that's washable. And here's just another sample. This is using a 1920s fashion clip art. You can see both sides. And you can also use both sides of this transfer which is really great. And like I said, it can be stitched. If you wanna glue it down to something like paper or wood, you can use more gel medium directly as an adhesive. You can also use something like a spray adhesive or a PVA, you just want to make sure that it's gonna dry clear what ever you use. And that's how you do a gel medium transfer.

### Solvent based transfer

- So next I'm going to show you how to do a solvent-based image transfer. And first, I wanted to show you some examples. These are from an artist sketchbook. This guy here is an image transfer using solvent, as is this, and what's great about this process is it's also good for fabric, and so this is another image transfer using fabric. Also wanted to show you this card, this is a canvas and this was a solvent-based image transfer that I did onto the canvas. So for a solvent-based transfer, you need to start with a black and white laser photocopy. It's important that you have a laser-based or a toner-based photocopy. An inkjet will not work for this process. So I'm gonna take my toner-based photocopy, I've cut him out because remember I said anything that the solvent touches will transfer. And unlike the packing tape or the gel, when I do this transfer process it's gonna go directly onto whatever I want the transfer to be on. So, in this case, I'm gonna show you on graph paper. And I'm just using a paper that already has a pattern so you can see how it's just the ink that transfers. So I'm gonna put my photocopy face down onto the page. So you wanna hold down your photocopy because it might have a tendency to move around. So I left a little space, or a little bit of room, for my fingers to hold down the photocopy. For the solvent-based transfer the solvent that we're using is actually called a blender pen, and it's sold in craft stores with like the fine art markers. It's kind of



basically like a clear solvent; it doesn't have any color. And this is what's gonna allow us to transfer the ink from our photocopy onto the paper. So I'm gonna hold down my photocopy, and I'm just basically coloring the back of the photocopy. And you'll see that the paper will sort of become transparent from the solvent. So once I finish coloring it I need to burnish it, so that the ink makes good contact with the paper. So I'm just gonna use my tongue depressor, and I'm just rubbing on the back of the photocopy. I just wanna say a couple of things while you're doing this process. You wanna make sure to really burnish evenly. If you don't burnish evenly you can wind up with kind of a faded transfer. If you're really tempted to see if you're doing an okay job, you can just lift up the corner, but you wanna try to avoid moving the whole photocopy because you'll get a blurry transfer. So I'm just gonna lift up the corner, and it looks like the transfers taken, so I'm gonna remove my photocopy. Looks like there's still ink on there, but once you do one transfer you can't really do a second transfer; most of the ink has been lifted off. There's my transfer! What I love about the solvent-based transfer is it's quick, it's immediate, and because you're only transferring the ink, whatever's underneath like this graph paper pattern, old wallpaper, ledger paper, notebook paper, it'll show through. So it's a nice way to layer image and text. You do need to remember though the solvent transfer, because you've put it face down, will reverse your image and or your text. So you need to make sure to accommodate that before you make your photocopy. So if you're using text, make sure you do a mirror image or it backwards before you do the transfer so it'll wind up right-side up. I wanna show you another example of an image transfer using the solvent method, but with a photograph. So the second type of solvent-based image transfer I wanna show you is using a photocopy of a photograph, like a family photo or something that you have just in your photo library. And this is an image that I took. The best types of photographs that work for a solvent-based transfer are high contrast images. And this is really important, because sometimes an image transfer, if you're doing a photograph, when you make the photo a copy it can be sort of all gray and you'll wind up with a transfer that's like a big gray blob. So you need a high contrasting image. So I've got my bunny, it's fairly high contrast. Usually the photocopy process will do this for you. And it goes face down onto my graph paper, or whatever surface I'm transferring onto. So if you wanna do an image transfer onto fabric, the solvent-based method is the best method for that. And if you're gonna do it on fabric you wanna choose a fabric that has very little nap or texture. So something like a fake satin, even a canvas will work as long as it's fairly smooth. But we're just gonna go ahead and transfer this photograph onto our graph paper. So again, I've got my blender pen, my photocopy is face down on the graph paper, and I'm gonna color the back. When you're transferring a photograph, it's best to work with smaller images. Using your pen on a really large image all at once can dry the pen out. And if it seems that the paper isn't really becoming transparent, you can do several passes of coloring. So that guy's fairly well colored, I'm go ahead and burnish next. So I'm just burnishing the image. I'm gonna peak and make sure that it's fairly well burnished. And that looks pretty good. There's a little bit of like leakage or smudges right here, and that's because there was too much solvent, and that can happen when you're using a new pen. But overall it looks pretty good, I didn't lose any detail in the face or anything. So that's a solvent-based transfer and it's my favorite type of transfer because it's so mobile, and it's easy to do. It's quick, and it's fast, and you don't need water, all you need is your pen and you can do it on fabric.

### Acrylic paint transfer

- So next we're gonna do an acrylic-based image transfer. And we're gonna need for this acrylic paint and just your standard, water-based craft store acrylic will work just fine. And I like to do this

type of transfer on chip board or wood, anything that's kind of more solid than the other methods that we've been using, which we've been transferring on to mostly paper. It's great on the top of cigar boxes or on the cover of a book it works really well also. So we need our craft paint, and we need our black and white laser-based photocopy. And again, I'm gonna do an image for this one photograph. So first we need to put down a layer of acrylic paint. I chose pink. And as far as thickness, you just kinda have to feel it out. It shouldn't be so thin that you can see the cardboard or the wood underneath, but it shouldn't be so thick that it's really gloppy. So I'm just going to spread my paint out, and I'm just using an inexpensive craft brush for this. You don't have to have anything fancy. But you do want to get a nice, even coat. I need a little bit more paint because I can see the chip board through there. Okay. So we're almost there. Just kind of building up a surface of paint on the chip board. And that's pretty good. Now I'm gonna take my photocopy and place it face down in the paint. Now you have to do this while the paint is wet. And I'm just gonna kind of tap it down with my fingers and this part can be a little bit tricky because I'm gonna burnish next, but you don't want to press so hard that you wind up pushing all of your paint out. Okay so that's pretty good. If you want to use something like a bone folder or your popsicle stick to burnish a little bit, you can use that too, but I mostly use my fingers. Now this is the part where you have to wait because this has to dry completely before we do the next step, so I really tend to do this before bed and let it sit overnight so that I'm not tempted to do it before it's fully dry. But luckily, I have another one that is dry, so we can go ahead and show you the next step. It's gonna be a different image. So unlike the packing tape that we put fully in water, we do need water for this next step but I don't want to put this entire piece of cardboard or wood into the water. Instead, I'm just gonna use a rag or a sponge with a little bit of water on it. But it's basically the same process. I'm gonna get this wet and rub the paper backing off. I can also just spritz this with water and use my fingers if I like. You don't want to rub too hard because you can start to take off the paint as well as the transfer, but this is looking pretty good. So I'm just gonna keep rubbing the paper pulp off. Once it dries, if you still see there's white paper on there, you can go ahead and add more water and keep rubbing it off. It's not gonna damage the transfer, just don't press too hard. (swishing) So almost all my paper is off. And that looks pretty good. Our ink is down on the paint. This will dry. If anything is a little bit white I can go ahead and add more water to rub off the rest of the paper, but that's pretty good. And I could use that on a cigar box, a book cover. Anything that I can't really dunk into water this is the perfect type of image transfer method, this acrylic method. And I'll show you a few other examples. It works really well with photographic or really detailed images as well. So for the woman's face, you can still see all this nice, fine detail here. This is another version of an acrylic transfer and it's on Masonite, which is a type of wood. You could do it on recycled wood, anything that has texture will work fine also and it's a great type of transfer for anything that's like a harder surface.