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## Studio Craft: Contact Transfer of a Drawing



A contact transfer is made by placing the original face-down on a clean support material, and using a press, baren, or burnisher to apply pressure to the back of the original. Tape the original face-up on a hard, smooth glass surface. Place a clean sheet of paper on top, and tape at the corners to prevent movement. Use the back of a spoon to burnish the paper against the drawing. Make sure to work systematically across the entire back so that every part of the original gets transferred.

Direct contact transfer is a method for making a copy of a drawing in reverse, using the residue of the drawing medium to generate an image. The transferred copy can become the basis for another work of art, or it can be perforated for pouncing to transfer the image to a canvas or panel.

Transfer copies produce reverse images, lighter and more faint than the original, but they faithfully pick up the original lines and tones. This technique is similar to monotype, a printmaking method where an image is drawn in ink on a glass slab, and a single print is pulled. A second, ghost image can also be pulled from a monotype, which some artists use for mixed media works.

Before making a transfer copy of a drawing, it's important to consider that some drawing material will be lost from the original, and the embossing process can affect the flatness of the page. The best drawing mediums for contact transfer are soft graphite and charcoal, which have a lot of excess material on the surface. Hard graphite and ink don't usually yield a very distinct image.



When finished, remove the tape and pull the transfer print from the drawing. The resulting image will be faint and in reverse. Use the contact print as the preliminary image for a new work of art, or perforate the design with a pin and transfer the image to a panel, instead of tracing the original.