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A Guide to the World of Book Arts, for Readers with Conviction

CENTRAL BOOKING MAGAZINE

Béatrice Coron

*Paper Cities:
Shadows on the Brain*

Miriam Schaer

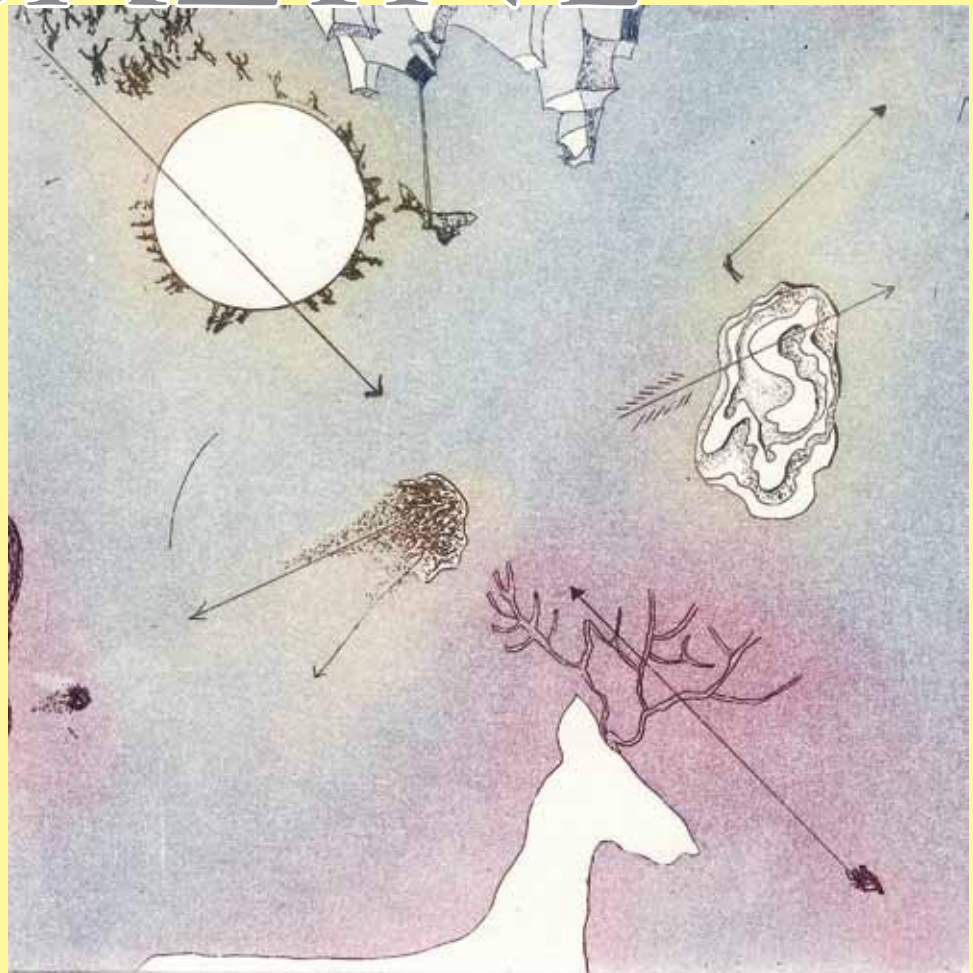
Xerox Transfer Tricks

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TRANSFER TRICKS

Xerox Transfer Techniques Help Artists Burnish Their One-of-a-Kind and Small-Edition Books

Miriam Schaer

Call me eclectic. I am by nature a scavenger, a magpie, and a book artist. I use numerous techniques to acquire the texts, images, materials and objects I use in book projects. A favorite, the one about which I am most often asked, is Xerox Transfer, a bag of tricks named after the company whose electronic copy machines were once synonymous with the process.

Xerox Transfer refers to a family of techniques that rely on the toner-based pigments found in copy machines (preferably by Xerox and Canon) and all laser printers. These techniques include Acrylic Transfer, Solvent Transfer, Heat Transfer, and Iron-on Transfer. They're especially useful for artist books, enabling artists to add luminous images or blocks of text from a vast variety of sources. The techniques are great for one-of-a-kind books or small editions, and less ideal for larger editions, although possible.

Some of the techniques can be executed with virtually no equipment, while others work best if a lot of pressure, such as an etching press provides, is available. Most are easy, direct, inexpensive, versatile and interesting to work with. They'll help you burnish your artwork in unexpected ways. Used well, they can transform your work, and take you to a new level of creativity.

Acrylic Transfers are especially easy. First, run the text or image thru a copier, then coat the face of the copy with white acrylic paint, or matt or gloss gel medium. You can attach this to fabric by placing the copy wet side down on the fabric, or allow the acrylic to dry on its own and keeping the image as a decal. The most important thing: allow the acrylic to dry completely.

Once the acrylic is dry, dampen the paper side of the copy with a water-moistened paper towel. The image will appear as you use your fingers to begin to remove the paper. Be careful with this step, as it is easy to unintentionally strip the surface of the image right off the paper. When done, you will have a photographically accurate image of your original. There will be a little thickness to it, but that is just the nature of the approach.

Chartpak Blender pens are another great way to transfer text (or images) into books. First reverse the type or it



Miriam Schaer demonstrating Xerox Transfer to the Faculty of Fine Arts, Belgrade, Serbia, during a residency funded by the Trust for Mutual Understanding, 2003.

From top down:

Miriam Schaer
*Of The Errors of My Heart Too
Numerous To Count*, 2009.

*Batter My Heart (A Wall Street
Valentine)*, 2009.

The Poisoner's Kiss (detail),
2009.

will be backwards when you transfer it. Then place the copy facedown on the surface you wish to transfer to. Rub the Blender pen with a bit of pressure onto the back of the copy. Pick up one end of the paper to see the progress of the transfer without completely removing the original copy. If you need to get more toner down, replace the copy, as long as you have not yet lifted it completely off the paper, and rub the pen on it again.

As a rule, the more recent the copy machine, the better the transfer. Also, as a rule, the smoother the surface of the receiver sheet, the more photographically accurate the transferred images will be. The receiver sheet is what I call the surface onto which you want make the transfer. It is important to remember that transfers are not photographs. Each type has unique qualities that may not be appealing to all users, but which need to be embraced, as they are inherent in the process.

If you have type that needs to read correctly or an image that needs to face a certain direction, you will have to mirror, or flip, it because the type or image will read backwards without flipping, as Xerox Transfer is a direct contact process. The flipping can be done in any of several ways, including: directly on the copies by pressing a "Mirror Image" function button on the copy machine, usually found under the "Image Creation" menu, or on a computer followed by printing a copy.

However you use it, Xerox Transfer can be both enormously helpful in making and enhancing artist books, not to mention a good deal of fun.

