PIGMENT TRANSFER – recipe

It is possible to transfer the pigment ink from an inkjet print directly to another surface or receiver. This process is to print to a medium that does not accept ink. Applying pressure to the back of that print can then transfer the wet ink to a receiver. The controlling factors are the amount of ink applied and the degree of wetness of the receiver.

Materials

- an enhanced digital photo file
- transfer film — cheap LASTIC film, the back side of Transparency Film, or any kind of plastic sheet that ink will not stick to
- receiver material — printmaking paper, cloth, balsa wood, other porous materials
- a spoon or roller — to transfer the print with pressure
- a tray and squeegee — to soak the receiver

Prepare The Photograph

adjust the digital photo — with higher contrast (curves), more detail (sharpening), more saturated tone (color), add grain (filter)
note: the yellows and oranges transfer the least
flip the image — horizontal

Prepare the Receiver

mark — the back side of the paper on all sheets (smoother side)
soak the receiver — just enough to receive the ink
if the receiver is too porous (like wood), just dampen the surface
squeegee the print — until the receiver is 'medium wet'

Print the Print

print the print — onto the plastic film

Transfer the Print

place the print face down — onto the receiver
roll the print flat — using a spoon or roller to exert even pressure
or drop a Seal Weight on top (next to the Mounting Presses)
remove the clear film — from the receiver

Finishing

the finished print can be allowed to air dry
the transfer film can be cleaned and used again!

Options

Make a pigment transfer over straight print, combining hard and soft images.
Make a straight digital photograph where some parts of the image are removed. Then make a pigment transfer print containing only the removed part on top of the straight print. It is easy to see through the clear sheet to position the picture.
Transfer multiple images onto a single larger piece of receiver material.

Credit to: Marni Gellman who did this first, Brian Nadav for researching ink flow control, Mike Landers for printing on a chicken, Warren Morrison for discovering 'medium wet', and Sean Hudson for doing the first multi-prints.