

Super Easy Contact Prints from Photos

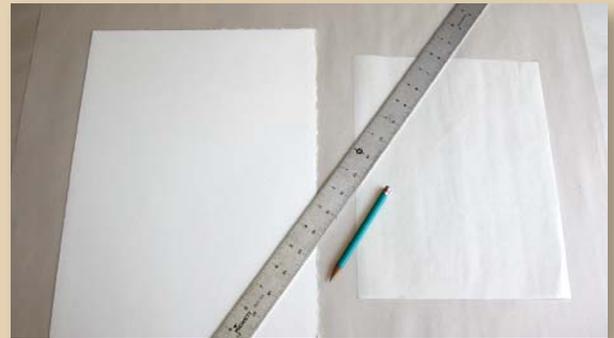


Top: An assortment of contact prints

Bottom: This close-up shot shows the textured ink coverage.

****Disclaimer**** I used an Epson StylusPhoto printer to print onto the waxy backing sheets and didn't have any problems. However, not having tried any other printers I can't guarantee how it will work with your individual printer. There is always the chance that there could be smudging or ink build-up.

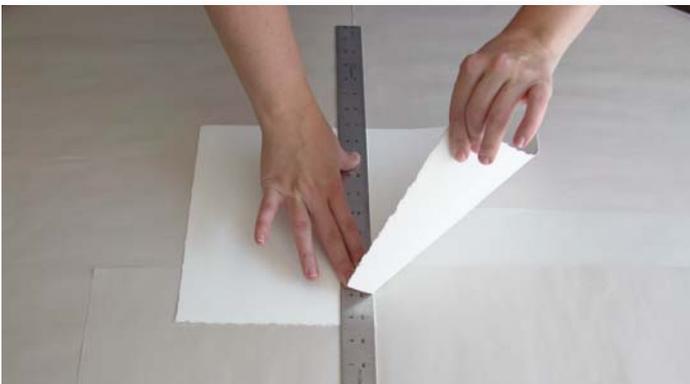
This is a really fast and easy way to give your photos a unique, hand-printed look by using a method called contact printing. All you need is an inkjet printer, your digital photo files, watercolor or printmaking paper, and one of those waxy backing sheets that hold stickers or address labels. So here's what will happen...when you print onto the waxy sheet, the ink from your inkjet printer will sit on top of the waxy coating, it won't be absorbed into the paper like it would be with normal inkjet paper. Because the ink droplets will be sitting on top of the paper, you will be able to make a contact print by pressing that ink onto an absorbent paper, such as watercolor paper or printmaking paper, and transferring the image.



Supply List

- digital images
- inkjet printer
- metal ruler
- watercolor or printmaking paper
- waxy backing sheet

Step 1 - Prepare the paper



Get out your watercolor paper or printmaking paper. For this example we're using Arches Cover in white. You can cut it to the size you



need with an x-acto knife or use your metal ruler to tear it down to size which will give you a nice hand-deckled edge.

Step 2 - Print the image



On your computer, choose the digital photo you want to use and open the file. The contact print won't hold a lot of detail so pick something that will still read well with larger dots of ink as well as the texture of the paper showing through. Because the contact print is a reverse of the original you'll want to flip the image horizontally in the digital file before printing if it includes type or if the orientation is crucial.

Load your waxy backing sheet into your inkjet printer and print the photo. (In this example of a print on a waxy backing sheet you can see that I have some white lines at the top of the print which were most likely caused by a clogged head.)

Step 3 - Transfer the print



Holding the waxy backing sheet by the edges, carefully remove it from the printer. With the ink side facing down toward the printmaking paper, center it and press it down in one smooth motion being careful not to smear it. Lightly burnish the image with your

fingers. If you want heavier ink coverage put it onto the printmaking paper as soon as possible. If you'd like the ink transfer to be a little less concentrated let it dry for a minute or two before pressing onto the paper.



That's all there is to it! Here's a shot of the finished print. Notice that the contact print holds enough detail to show the white lines we saw

on the printed waxy backing sheet in Step 2. The photo on the right is a close up of the finished print on the printmaking paper.

Notes

The waxy backing sheet can be reused for more than one print. Wipe off the excess ink with a paper towel before reloading into your printer. Any ink that doesn't wipe off is permanent and won't show up in the subsequent prints.

You can also use different colors of paper (you can see we tried one image on a piece of tan BFK Rives) or hand-tone your white paper beforehand with inks or even tea or coffee. If you used a good paper with some tooth you can also use paints or colored pencils to hand-color or paint on top of your image.

You can get some interesting effects by experimenting with different types of paper such as rice paper or handmade papers.