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Using Lazertran Regular and Lazertran Silk to Transfer Image to Polymer Clay by Deirdre F Woodward [print version](#)

[Editor's Letter](#) | [Letters to the Editor](#) | [Beginners' Corner](#) | [Montreal Polymer Clay Guild](#) | [Book Reviews](#) | [Lazertran](#) | [Using Cake Cutters](#) | [A Better Dremel Polishing Wheel](#) | [Inlay Mokume Gane](#) | [Surprise Canes](#) | [E-Mail Us!](#) | [Home](#)

I spent the last several days playing with Lazertran regular and Lazertran silk transfer products.

These products are very exciting for doing transfers, mainly because once you copy your transfer onto the Lazertran, you are guaranteed the transfer will work.

Well, almost guaranteed. Let me back up for one minute. [Lazertran](#) , whether regular (backed with light blue paper) or silk (backed with white paper), is a relatively new product for transferring images onto almost anything.

It comes in large sheets -- 11 x 17 -- and is relatively expensive: a package of 50 sheets costs \$100. It is possible to purchase 8 x 10 sheets, which will run you \$20 for 10 sheets.

Of the two types, regular and silk, silk is made to be used with polymer clay. However, as you will see, I had much better luck with the regular.



I started my experiments with two sheets of images, some bone colored-clay (for best results, use white), a bowl of water, and my convection oven (which I just got and I encourage **everyone** to buy one. I got my refurbished-by-the-company Welbilt for \$82 including shipping off of e-bay) .

Since Lazertran **cannot** be used with an ink jet printer, I first printed images onto photo quality paper (to get the best color), then took my images and two sheets of Lazertran to Staples to use their color copier.

At Staples, the people had never heard of Lazertran and refused to run it through their copiers. I can fully understand why -- normal transfer paper, run through a copier, will melt and jam the copier. Lazertran, however, is specially formulated to work with color copiers. It is water, not heat, activated, so it doesn't melt when run through the hot copier.

I did write to the company that supplies copiers to Staples about Lazertran, but they never wrote back to me, so I don't know if Staples ever will allow Lazertran to be run through their copiers. I finally had to go to Kinko's.

To proceed with my experiment, I decided to set up a system. I would transfer images using the following chart:

reg = regular Lazertran

silk = Lazertran silk

before = I'd soak the image off the paper and place it on the clay before I cured the clay

after = I'd soak the image off the paper and place it on the clay after I cured the clay

glue down = I'd place the image glue side (the side next to the paper) against the clay

glue up = I'd place the image glue side facing up



I decided to start with the Lazertran Silk, which was created with polymer clay in mind. I cut two pieces, then soaked them in water. They crumbled immediately, so I decided to read the directions. According to the directions that come with the package, Lazertran Silk is actually heat activated and needs to be ironed onto the polymer clay.

So I decided to get the Lazertran image onto the clay in two ways: first, I'd put the Lazertran silk on a piece of clay and cure it to see what happened, and second, I'd cut a square of clay, cure it, then heat gun the Lazertran silk onto the clay.



Here's the result of both experiments. To the far left, you can see the image didn't transfer totally when I peeled back the paper. I did soak the paper first, but that didn't help.

To the left, you can see the image didn't transfer in any acceptable way on top, and didn't transfer totally on the bottom. I also soaked the paper after I heat gunned it.

I suppose I should have used an iron, but by this time, I was pretty fed up with Lazertran silk, and besides, I was having great results with regular Lazertran.

To get the images the left, I first soaked the images,

reg - before - glue up



removed them from their paper backing, and placed them on the raw clay, glue side up. I cured the clay for 25 minutes in the convection oven and these lovely pieces came out.

However, they have two problems. First, because they are glue side up, I see some of the glue on the images. Second, these images were tacky coming out of the oven and are still tacky now. I'm not sure how long they intend to stay tacky, but I have a feeling they will never dry completely.

For another experiment, I soaked the image in water, removed it from its paper backing, and slipped it onto raw clay with the glue side down.

reg - before - glue down



After curing for 25 minutes, I removed it from the oven and found that the images were tacky, had cracked mightily and had faded.

Very strange.

My next experiment was to cure the clay first, soak the image off the paper, and slide it onto the clay, glue side up. Since there was neither heat nor glue to secure the image to the clay, the image fell off the clay after it dried.

I decided to repeat the same experiment, but this time, after curing the clay, soaking the image, and placing it on the clay glue side up, I cured the piece for another five minutes. It came out very well, as

you can see, except for the bubbles.

The bubbles, I think, are caused by moisture on the image. If I dried the image well -- leave it sitting for about five hours -- I doubt I'd get the bubbles.



Also, some of the bubbles disappeared several hours after the piece came out of the oven.

I also did not get the same glue problem as I had with other pieces I cured glue side up because I rinsed all the glue off before I placed it on the clay.

Even better, this image wasn't tacky out of the oven and still isn't tacky.

My next experiment was to cure the clay first, soak the image off the paper, and place the image glue side down.

reg - after - glue down



This is without a doubt the best result. The image is good and not tacky. This is also the only way I got a matte image. In every other combination I tried, the heat caused the image to become shiny.

However, it takes a good 24 hours before the glue has dried enough to form a strong bond with the clay. Also, the image need to be protected with some kind of varnish (or translucent clay or TLS) or it will be damaged. The other disappointing thing is that I can see the edges of the transfer paper.

Since I liked these results the best so far, I decided to follow this track for a while.

I cured some clay, soaked the image off the paper, placed the image glue side down, and recured the piece. I expected the images to become tacky, crackle, and fade as they had done in earlier experiments, but oddly enough, they didn't. I don't know why.

Instead, the following happened.

reg after glue down
baked again
5 min



I cured this piece for five minutes and didn't get very many bubbles. I was happy with that! However, I can still see the edges of the transfer -- it hasn't totally melted into the clay (and won't -- Lazertran melts thoroughly at 410 degrees F).

reg - after - glue down,
baked again
for 10 min



I cured this piece for ten minutes and started to get bubbles. Also, I can still see the edges of the transfer.

Ok, to summarize so far:

Lazertran silk, before and after: I didn't like the results at all.

Lazertran regular, soak image off paper and apply to raw clay glue side down, cure: faded, cracked image, can see transfer edges, tacky.

Lazertran regular, soak image off paper and apply to raw clay glue side up, cure: excellent image, no bubbles, can see glue and transfer edges, tacky.

Lazertran regular, soak image off paper and wash glue off well, apply to raw clay glue side up, cure: excellent image, no bubbles, can see transfer edges, tacky.

Lazertran regular, soak image off paper and apply to cured clay glue side down: excellent image, no bubbles, can see transfer edges, needs a protective finish.

Lazertran regular, soak image off paper and apply to cured clay glue side down, cure again for five minutes: excellent image, some bubbles, can see transfer edges.

Lazertran regular, soak image off paper and apply to cured clay glue side down, cure again for ten minutes: excellent image, lots of bubbles, can see transfer edges.

My final evaluation:

pros: a thoroughly transferred image every time, with great color.

cons: tacky most of the time, can't get rid of transfer edges unless you cut the clay slightly smaller than the transfer image, expensive

However, even with the cons, I really love the color I get with Lazertran regular, and I will continue to use it. I just need to find someone to split the cost with me!

Let me leave you with several really large images, so you can really see the results I got:

reg - after - glue down
on white





glue down - reg-
before
on white w/ gold
leaf



req - ~~after~~ - glue down
before

on white - light





reg - before - glue
down
glue well mixed off
dry
- 0



reg before glued
down wet



reg before glue up
wet



