

## Reasons to choose giclée as a printing option:

- Additional revenue for the artist besides the original
- Increases the value of the original
- Setup is much cheaper than producing plates for fine art offset press
- Quality is better than press -More variety of papers than press printing
- Better match than press printing with little to no registration problems and no dot screen
- Easier to market than the original

While the latest Giclée printers use 7 or more colors, traditional printing is 4 colors. Many of the pigments artists choose for their pallets of hundreds of colors simply cannot be reproduced. But the gamut (Range of colors reproduced) is wider with giclées than with standard press printing techniques.

The giclee print of a piece of artwork starts with a scan that is done on a flatbed scanner. (NEVER on a "drum scanner" as that can warp the image and severely damage the valuable artwork original.) Photographs of artwork can be used, but are not preferable as the distance needed to fit a piece of artwork into a lens frame is a cost to the final product - for every inch away, a new level of detail is lost. Scanning picks up even minute details.

Photographers, however, use giclee prints also because the selection of papers is wider than film developing and the lightfastness life of the paper and ink combination is much, much longer.

In the giclee print process, printers add extra pigments such as light cyan, light magenta, and light black, to increase chromatic rendition. Typically it is very hard for a printer to reproduce all colors as saturation increases. Saturation is a measure of the purity of color. As we go toward the edges of the color wheel, where the edges of the wheel have the purest and more saturated colors, traditional mechanical reproduction fails. A giclée printer can capture more colors. Even a 4 color fine art giclée printer such as the Iris has a better gamut than lithographs due to the brilliance of the pigments used. Printers can range from 4 colors up to 12. In addition, the use of specialized software generally called Raster Image Processing interprets curves to simulate color that theoretically would be out of the gamut of any given giclée printer. This is a “trick” that has been used in conventional pre-press for decades.

What surprises a lot of new giclée buyers is to see how thick the pigments are on the papers. The reason is simple: these are not common inks found in low cost inkjets: they are suspended microencapsulated chemicals with extremely pure color characteristics. It is always a satisfaction to go to fine art shows and find out the response of perspective buyers. Even the most skeptical cannot believe the brilliance and close match to the original of professionally made giclée prints as fine art reproductions. Choosing a professional giclée printer is essential; specialization in this field is very important. No sign and banner shops, no large chain that jump on the giclée bandwagon with personnel without any background in color and art. We hear horror stories regarding customer who had bad experiences. If you have, don't be discouraged: once you find a good giclée printing studio you will see how beautiful work this technology can achieve.

## The Giclee Revolution

At the end of the 1980's, Iris printers, originally designed as pre-press proofing machines, had become popular amongst artists and fine art photographers for reproducing their work. The Iris is essentially an early large-format inkjet print-

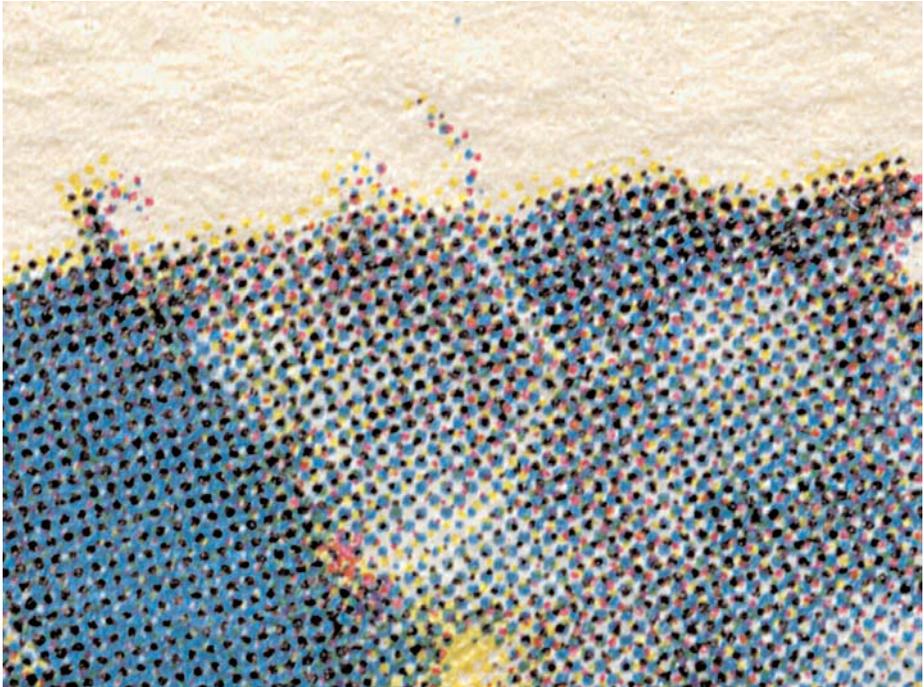
er. This new medium needed a name, especially to distinguish the fine art prints from the pre-press proofs that were also being cranked out of the Iris printers.

In 1991 Jack Duganne of Nash Productions (the pioneers of fine art inkjet printing) came up with a word to identify and set the process apart from the rest. He wanted to stay away from words like "digital," and "computer," due to the negative view the world had about digital quality of the time. He focused on how the ink is laid down by the printer, and borrowed a french word, "giclée," which literally means "that which is sprayed."

Today the term has become synonymous with fine art inkjet printing, and is accepted by most artists and photographers.



*This is an example of a standard "litho" print using the 4 color print. This process uses a dot screen of cyan, magenta, yellow and black to make up all colors. The problem with this process is that the color screens were hard to register and were visible to the naked eye. A "moire" pattern due to mis-registration is seen here.*



This example clearly shows the inherent problems with standard lithograph prints that were the industry standards for many years. The print industry is still attempting to sell this as the best possible method of duplication. However, because of its obvious drawbacks, the museums, galleries and the artists themselves are quickly turning the market to giclee printing technology.



Above is an example of a giclée print at more than 300% actual size. Notice that the lines are still clean and the color transitions are gradual and there is no "outlining" or degradation of the image. There is no clear dividing lines of color. You can also plainly see the brush strokes which with standard lithography are usually highly degraded or entirely lost to the print. This difference is what gives the giclée print it's dimensional quality.

### THE DEFINITION

Giclee (jhee-klay) - The French word "giclée" is a feminine noun that means a spray or a spurt of liquid. The word may have been derived from the French verb "gicler" meaning "to squirt".

### THE TERM

The term "giclee print" connotes an elevation in printmaking technology. Images are generated from high resolution digital scans and printed with archival quality inks onto various substrates including canvas, fine art, and photo-base paper. The giclee printing process provides better color accuracy than other means of reproduction.

## *(From Digital Fine Art Magazine)*

Famous artists, leading galleries, world-class museums as well as unknown artist use the revolutionary process known as giclee or digital printing to create, show and sell original works of art, multiple originals and extraordinary accurate reproductions. These giclee prints are a far cry from the earlier iris prints developed for posters and proofing. Printed on the highest quality substrates and inks, the new giclees have all the continuous tone characteristics and color saturation of the original work of art. In a total fine art print market that's increasing by about 3% a year, the market for giclees is growing at more than 60% a year. From the beginning, giclee prints have been under the critical microscope, more so than any other medium. And probably for good reason. The inks used in the early days of iris printing were beautiful but highly fugitive, meaning that within a couple of years noticeable fading occurred. Unfortunately, some printers used these inks when printing fine art prints, which led to the perception that giclees, as a rule, tended to fade. That was then. Now, thanks to the efforts of Henry Wilhelm of Wilhelm Imaging Research and the I A F A D P, standards are being developed and accurate information about the archival characteristics of inks and papers is being published. This new information and the explosive growth of the industry has spurred the development of a new generation of fine art inks that offers all the permanence expected of a work of fine art. It has also infused the art community with confidence about giclee prints and rendered ink permanence a non-issue. For traditional artist, the giclee process yields beautiful prints as reproductions or multiple originals that are hand embellished. If acceptance of giclee prints by artists, galleries, and museums everywhere is any indication, giclee prints could be in your future.

## All Giclées Are Not The Same

1) **Droplet size** Giclée is a very sophisticated printmaking process that produces near continuous-tone printing. The secret is the 3 pico liter size of the droplets. No other printing process produces such a small droplet. This enables the Giclée process to produce superior detail and subtle shades. There should be no noticeable dot screen or color variation along edges in a true giclee print. Such anomalies would signify that the print was press printed, or color copied.

**2) Color Gamut** Giclée printmaking produces the widest color gamut available today. Color quality is vital to reproducing a print as close as possible to the original. True Giclee technology uses a archival Ultrachrome 7 color ink process providing the producer to capture even the subtle variances in color. There are however more difficult colors to capture such as the colors that are fluorescent or close to fluorescent. Surprisingly, certain black & white images are harder to capture than color because of the variances in grays and black. Some blacks are warmer than others and are not made up of pure black inks. The quality of a true giclee print will far surpass the quality of a 12 color press print process, which would be an extremely expensive alternative to the giclee process.

**3) Inks** Archival “Ultra-Chrome” inks used by high end Epson and other specialized printers are the highest rated inks on the market. Some providers are representing their prints as giclee prints using standard home printer quality inks. These do not have the lightfastness rating to provide the archival quality necessary to qualify them as giclee prints and should be marketed as color copies.

Giclee prints are created typically using professional 7-Color to 12-Color ink-jet printers. Among the manufacturers of these printers are vanguards such as Epson, and MacDermid Colorspan. These modern technology printers are capable of producing incredibly detailed prints for both the fine art and photographic markets. Giclee prints are sometimes mistakenly referred to as Iris prints, which are 4-Color ink-jet prints from a printer pioneered in the late 1970s by Iris Graphics. Iris prints have a low lightfastness rating (similar to lindseed and soy based press inks) and should also be sold as color copies. The quality of the giclee print rivals traditional silver-halide and gelatin printing processes and is commonly found in museums, art galleries, and photographic galleries.

## THE ADVANTAGES

Giclee prints are advantageous to artists who do not find it feasible to mass produce their work, but want to reproduce their art as needed, or on-demand. Once an image is digitally archived, additional reproductions can be made with minimal effort and reasonable cost. The prohibitive up-front cost of mass production for an edition is eliminated. Archived files will not deteriorate in quality as negatives and film inherently do. Another tremendous advantage of giclee

printing is that digital images can be reproduced to almost any size and onto various media, giving the artist the ability to customize prints for a specific client.

## THE MARKET

Numerous examples of giclee prints can be found in New York City at the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Chelsea Galleries. Recent auctions of giclee prints have fetched \$10,800 for Annie Leibovitz, \$9,600 for Chuck Close, and \$22,800 for Wolfgang Tillmans (April 23/24 2004, Photographs, New York, Phillips de Pury & Company.)

An example below:

Kotwali Bazaar, was painted from photographs and memories of Susan Mayclin Stephenson's trip to Dharamsala, India.

The original oil painting of Kotwali Bazaar is 9" x 12" and sold for \$3,000. The giclee print is 8.5" x 11.5" and the price is \$150. This Limited Edition print is limited to 60 giclees. That means there will never be more than 60 in existence. It is printed on archival German rag paper, with archival inks And is as lovely as the original. Each print is individually prepared to order, numbered and signed by the artist, and comes with a certificate of authenticity.

Renowned Giclée artists include Andrew and Jamie Wyeth, David Hockney & Robert Rauschenberg and many other well known artists.

## Giclee print certificate of authenticity

One of the selling points when marketing a giclee print is to provide a certificate of authenticity. It lends credibility regarding the limited edition production of art. The publisher and maker of the giclée print provides a document detailing the title, size, medium, number and date of printing of the LE.

Together with the signing and the giclée print, a certificate is released at the request of the artist and signed by the printmaker as well. Another benefit of using an independent publisher instead of doing the printing in house is third party verification. This assures the buyer of 2 different business entities in existence which can verify the authenticity of the giclee print. A relief stamp can be used to mark such certificates to prevent tampering. Holographic serialized

holograms are another value added option. A phone number should be included as well to allow the buyer to call to verify information.

You can choose to provide an individual certificate from the publisher or give a copy of the master certificate identifying the whole edition. As an artist you are free to provide individual custom certificates with signature and edition number. You can sign and number the giclée print either on the bottom right corner or at least in the back. Certificates get lost; the signature and number on the print will stay with the artwork. It is a good idea to put a authenticity certificate on the back of the canvas stating the publisher and other information. It is perceived as added value.

## MARKETING

In the past lithography and traditional printing methods were used if the artist wanted to market reproductions of original artwork. While effective, these methods had serious drawbacks: First and foremost, a high output number would compromise the value of any reproduction. Second, the quality of 4 color copies limited the color rendition of such reproductions. Also, the choice of substrates was dismal compared to Giclée.

On a pure marketing standpoint, artists who have shows and lectures can now suggest giclees to potential buyers. Collectors in particular want to buy art that is not made in mass quantities. When buying a giclée they are assured to possess something rare and exquisite.

Giclees are well established in the art world; they are bought and sold in world class auctions as well as in galleries. Many museums display giclees.

*Example:* A portrait artist has a business where customers come to her for family portraits she makes on watercolor paper. She had a few inquiries regarding making copies so that more than one household could have the portrait of their loved ones. At the same time they asked for a quality print, possibly on the same paper. Reproductions of the original were virtually impossible to distinguish it from the original. Now the artist is happy to make additional income and the families had as many portraits as they wanted!

No matter what the market is, whether it consists of commissioned art or not, high quality reproductions can generate an additional stream of income given the proper marketing.

## DO THE MATH

Offering giclee prints of a popular original multiplies the economic value derived from the artists' effort. An original may sell for \$1000 (for example). 200 giclee prints that are well executed and sell for \$250 will return an additional \$50,000 when they are sold. Since they are printed as needed (one-at-a-time printing), there is no need for a huge monetary output to accomplish this figure. They can pay for themselves and then some!

## How can you increase the value of your artwork?

One proven method is to create posters (It has been done for a long time by artists and photographers) and sell the posters at art shows. This creates a buzz and facilitates the selling of your work in a poster format to be displayed in various locations. A well designed poster is one of the best advertisements! Consider approaching the greeting card market or creating miniatures of your work. These can be sold for a price that is considered minimal and can be printed with contact information and other information to increase visibility. These also can be created in limited edition as a separate offering than full sized giclees.

Create art and make high quality giclée reproductions without ever selling your originals. Make for example an artist edition of 25, sign it and release it as the only art available.

If you wish to be able to sell your original you can do so and still increase the value of your art. Start with small limited editions. As soon they are sold out the value will increase. Always always always establish and maintain a personal relationship with every past, current and future buyer of your art! Buyers connect emotionally with the art as well as the creator. They will be more receptive to collecting more work if they feel a bond.

## Use the Internet

Create a website or include yourself on a site with a portfolio so people can see the art. Add the URL to business cards, posters, postcards etc. Optimize the site for keywords you want to target (i.e. abstract paintings, oil paintings of flowers, portraits on oil etc.) Make sure to add your own name to the keyword listing so that your name will come up on a search.

Links are important to circulating your site. Find as many sites that will allow you to place a link to your site as you can. Sometimes that is a matter of reci-

pricating the links. That does not decrease your impact - so do that.

## ADDITIONAL TIPS

- Keep track of who your buyers are and contact them from time to time about new works or limited editions, whether you are beginning a new edition or selling out of an addition. This creates a following of your work over time.
- Send out your own press releases to local newspapers. They are always looking for local stories and fillers.
- Get your work onto a net site and add that to your business card and resume.
- Get on a listing to find out about local exhibits and opportunities.
  - Join an organization that is active in marketing
  - MOST IMPORTANT: If you don't believe in yourself, no one else will either! Approach your market with as much confidence and the most cheerful attitude you can muster!

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