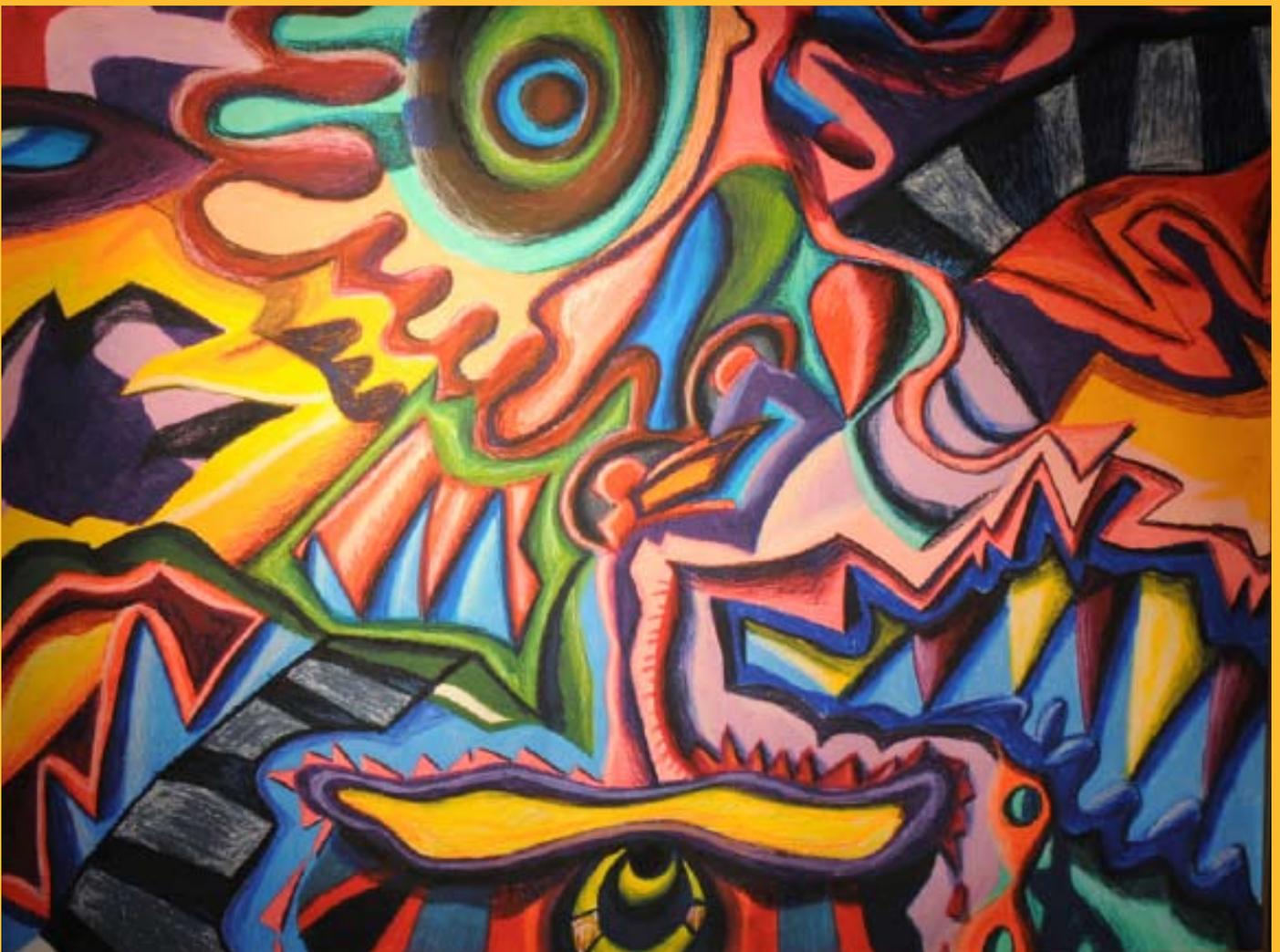




FLAAR Reports

March 2008

Giclee, Décor & Fine Art Photography



By Nicholas Hellmuth

To have your paintings exhibited at ArtExpo is the pinnacle of achievement.

To have your fine art photographs shown at ArtExpo is again, a crown of glory in your status in the rarified atmosphere of successful fine art photographers.

Every year, in New York, artists and galleries from Russia, France, Italy, and the nouveaux-riche of Russia, mingle with artists from Israel and half the states in the USA to exhibit their work. Artists from Mexico, Brazil, the Caribbean Islands, African-Americans, all come together.



I attend Art Expo in New York every year, but this year there was a conflict with Graphics of the Americas printer trade show in Miami, so I attended only one day in New York.

What was different this year is the lack of a half-million dollar HP giclee booth. Since HP was not present, neither Epson nor Canon decided to compete either. This is more a result of the internal politics of HP rather than whether ArtExpo is the premier venue.

There are also occasional ArtExpo shows in Las Vegas and a combined ArtExpo + DécorExpo in Atlanta. But the location of New York is clearly the top address for artists, especially those with international backgrounds or aspirations.

Since FLAAR is a research and testing institute dedicated to digital imaging, I evaluate primarily the giclee and fine art photography aspects. I define décor as mass-produced giclee, for decorating motels, cruise ships, etc. Everyone defines décor differently, but mass-produced low-bid giclee is one standard definition: décor is sold in stores; giclee is sold in a gallery is another way to define the difference.

Giclee is produced with pigmented ink on quality artist's materials. Décor is produced with cheaper dye ink on material made in China.

Giclee is intended to last; décor is intended to look good for a short period but no one really worries about "permanence" of décor.



Michelle Gateau Booth

Fine Art Photography

Shelly Lake

Shelly Lake is an accomplished fine art photographer. Her web site reveals her multiple photographic talents.

Shelly uses the same BetterLight Pano/WideVue system that FLAAR uses for its fine art panoramic photographs.

www.ShellyLake.com



Shelly Lake Booth

Christos J. Palios

Panorama photographs are among my favorite, so I tended to stop and concentrate when I saw a booth such as that of Christos Palios.

<http://GiantColorfulRevolution.com>



Frank Dammers

He was one of hundreds of artists from Europe, in this case from The Netherlands.

www.fdammersfineart.com

Cristine Cambrea

Cristine was in the Solo area, which is where many artists make their initial entrance to the tough world of the New York and international art market.

FLAAR encourages young artists (like Cristine) to jump into the bigger world at an event such as ArtExpo. In our own way we try to help by featuring selected artists in this FLAAR Report.

Her web site is www.ccambrea.com

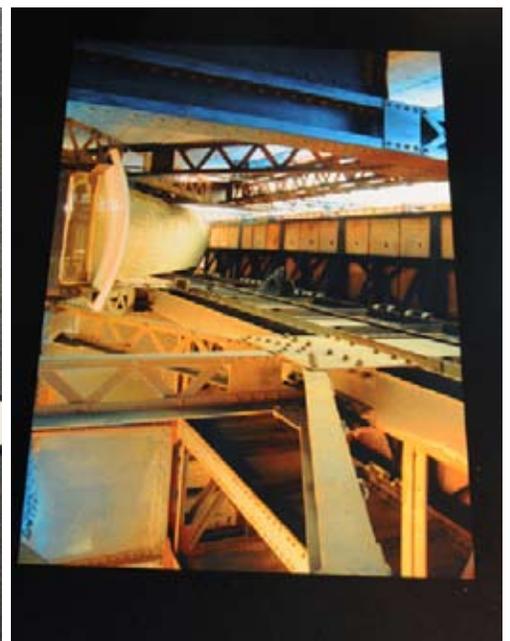


Cristine Cambrea Booth

Linda Lauby

Linda's keywords are "industrial images combining photography, art, and embossing. She is also the owner by Outer Banks Press.

www.LindaLauby.com is a multi-media website, including music.



Linda Lauby Booth



Ken Fischer Booth



Alberto Mathot Booth



Lyubimkin Alexey Booth



Valiant Art Booth



Robert Biessell Booth



Ok Kyung Eom Booth



Jeannette Berndsen

I wish I had more photographs of her art at her booth, but it's a rough job hauling a camera around the world's largest giclee art show, faced with x-thousand paintings but with no assistant (I was on a 12,000 mile consulting trip to Austria and Italy (two printer factories of Durst Lambda, Durst Theta photo printers, and Durst Rho UV printers), so it was not realistic to have an assistant with me).

Great color, friendly happy scenes, would look great in any modern architectural surroundings.

www.JeannetteBerndsen.com very professional website, worth visiting. and www.FerraraCollective.com

Helmut Siegfried

The aisles for solo artists were the first ones that I visited, since these were primarily at one end of the huge exhibit hall. Plus I feel that individual artists deserve some free publicity: they have worked hard to reach the point they can exhibit at the world's largest giclee event.

What I especially like about this artist is that he clearly explains how he accomplishes the art in his booth. I highly recommend, if you like body-painting, to look at www.onemodelplace.com/newsletter_glamour_article4.cfm and www.photofantasies.com/images/prepgallery/gallery2.htm

I do not know which of these are done by Helmut Siegfried and which by other artists, but he was the person who welcomed me into his booth. The credits for PhotoFantasies list Helmut Bother, David Eckerle, Michael DeFazio, and T. J. Hutchinson.

www.PhotoFantasies.com



Helmut Siegfried Booth



Helmut Siegfried Booth

Lilya Kalashyan

Russian artists form a major component at ArtExpo, not surprising for an international metropolis such as New York. There 101 Russian billionaires, and probably a thousand Russian millionaires, and probably lots of them live or at least shop in New York.

Russian women are gorgeous and are well portrayed in the art of Lilya Kalashyan.

www.LikasArt.com



Lilya Kalashyan Booth

Nick Drake

There is almost a genre of bright, friendly art, primarily pastels. Nicholas Drake's art fits in here perfectly. These works of art would be ideal for any modern building.

www.EyeLevelArt.com



Eye Level Art Booth

Fine Art Publishers



Gitter Gallery Giclee Booth

Gitter Gallery

Doug Gitter exhibited a diverse collection of art.

www.AmericanWalArt.com

Major Fine Art Publishers



Blazing Editions Booth

Blazing Editions

Blazing Editions is a well known and respected giclee service provider. Indeed one of my students from BGSU went from the FLAAR giclee lab on our campus to work for Blazing Editions for several years. As you can see from the size of their booth, Alan Blazer has a successful business.

Alan@Blazing.com, 401 885-4329, East Greenwich, RI



Blazing Editions Booth

Somerset Fine Art

www.SomersetFineArt.com



Somerset Booth

Soho Editions

www.SohoEditions.com



Soho Editions Giclee Booth

The trade show, Art Expo

ArtExpo used to be in the same hall, same dates, same city as DecorExpo. Recently they developed separate venues, but are both still owned and operated by the same company. Both are affiliated with Art Business News, the premier art sales magazine, www.ArtBusinessNews.com.

There are two valid ways to define décor. If you go to DecorExpo, you see primarily exhibits of framing companies. If you go to ArtExpo, you see primarily art: original, some lithographs and other mass reproductions, and hundreds of booths of giclee, plus some fine art photographers. In number of booths, giclee is significantly more popular than lithographs and those older forms of reproductions. So the traditional definition of décor is the framing aspect of the art business, which also includes stretching, mats, etc.

In the world of fine art giclee, the word décor has a completely different context: décor is economical giclee. Giclee prints are produced with pigmented ink on the best printers possible. Décor prints are produced with dye ink or cheaper form of pigmented inks.

Décor prints will tend to be produced on media made in China; or even the entire print may be a product of China, where probably they used cheap solvent ink.

Décor prints decorate motels. Giclee decorate corporate offices, casinos, and upscale homes.

Décor is sold in malls and chain stores. Giclee is sold in art galleries and at ArtExpo exhibits!

Both definitions of décor are valid; it depends whether you come from the world of screen printing and offset printing (mass production of reproductions of paintings) or whether you are a giclee atelier that dedicates itself to sophisticated reproduction of limited editions.

Exhibitors at ArtExpo included

- Acrylic painting
 - Some animation art (but not much this year)
 - Colleagues
 - Drawings
 - Etchings and engravings (but this is not a show of Old Masters)
 - Mixed media
 - Oil paintings
 - pastels
 - Watercolors
-
- Giclee is one of the largest categories
 - Lithographs are falling out of favor more and more each year
 - Serigraphs/silk-screen (screen printing) are also falling out of favor
-
- Fine art photographs can be found, but are not a major category, and I noticed dramatically fewer this year than in other years.

- Art books
- Art glass
- Jewelry is sort of out of place, albeit acceptable since it is artistic
- Bas relief (but this show is mainly painting, not multi-dimensional art)
- 3-dimensional sculptures were more often exhibited than bas relief
- Some ceramics
- woodcuts

Gothic or fantasy art is not often found, other than one booth that I list in my main area.

The audience is mainly sophisticated collectors, experienced art buyers, and some industry analysts and consultants (such as FLAAR). Not many students; some, but not as many as at Photokina in Germany (held every two years) or VISCOM Italy in Milan each year.

The exhibitors included artists and art publishers from around the world: lots from Russia, Israel, Europe, and naturally most from the US. But also from Mongolia and many from Armenia. Latin America was represented but was not a substantial presence. Not much Italian presence either. I noticed more booths from Korea than from Italy. Japan had some entries too, but the Koreans stood out with the size and number of their booths.

China has been flooding the décor market, and several Chinese companies were present.

During the last two years, when Squirt Printing and Andy Wood were working with HP's giclee fine art teams, there were substantial HP booths. This caused Epson and Canon to also stage a booth. But now that HP has gone more into industrial and signage printing, there was no HP booth. So there was no Epson or Canon booth; only two local resellers. I could not help notice that there was no giclee digitization booth or information on this crucial aspect of the workflow. The premier methods of digitization are with large-format tri-linear scanning systems: BetterLight and Cruse are the best known. BetterLight tends not to exhibit at trade shows. Cruse is a German company, and although their reprographic systems for giclee are readily available via Mike Lind in Texas, they did not exhibit this year. FLAAR has all three digitization systems: Cruse (from Cruse Digital in Germany), BetterLight (as beta tester since the 1990's, direct from the inventor Mike Collette) and medium format (Phase One P25+ via Global Imaging).

What printers do the Giclee Ateliers use?

In the 1990's, giclee ateliers used a \$110,000 Iris giclee printer. FLAAR had one several years ago. It is now landfill or a doorstop somewhere. Downsides were two: it could use only dye-based ink so print longevity was not adequate in a sunny room; and the technology was "continuous inkjet" which means that it jetted ink continuously: morning to noon, 24 hours a day, all week, all month.

You perhaps can get the picture.

Once you shut it off, it was difficult to get it calibrated again. Besides, today, why bother. The premier giclee atelier in the West Coast uses all HP printers and the premier giclee atelier in the East Coast (Fine Art Impressions) uses Canon and Epson. Blazing Editions uses an HP Z6100. FLAAR itself is now using an HP Z3100; our university uses a Z2100 in the College of Technology and an Epson 9880 in the College of Art.

Between 1999-2001, most giclee printshops used a Roland. Then Epson told Roland, Mimaki, and Mutoh that

they would not use Epson printheads if they tried to focus on the giclee, photography, or proofing market. So Epson took over this market and Roland, Mimaki, and Mutoh moved into eco-solvent. So between 2002-2003 Epson muscled into the world of giclee. By 2004 Epson had most of this market to itself.

But then Canon invested a billion dollars in thermal printheads and launched a 12-ink system. This encouraged HP to step up its development program. They invested 1.4 billion dollars and launched first an 8-ink system (Z2100) and a 12-ink-line system a few months later (Z3100).

So today Canon and HP have taken over much of the photo (labs and commercial photographers), fine art photography, and giclee business. These printers are faster than an Epson, don't waste as much ink with endless purging, and the HP offers on-board color-management.

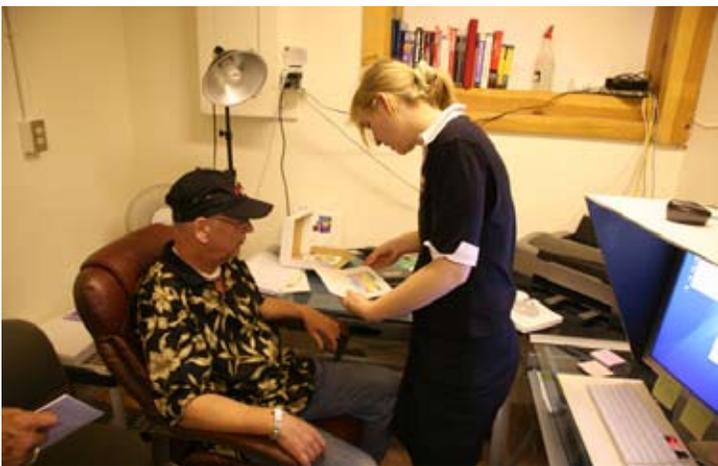
If you are an artist, and wish to figure out which printer to buy, look for a knowledgeable resource that knows all three brands: Canon, Epson, and HP. This way there is no pressure to select one brand over another. We obtain both Canon, Epson, and HP printers from Parrot Digigraphic, www.ParrotColor.com. FLAAR has all three brands, otherwise we could not comment on the pros and cons of each.

Site-Visit Case Studies of Giclee Studios

FLAAR does site-visit case studies of giclee ateliers: so far we have reports on Squirt Printing, Fine Art Impressions, the original giclee atelier from the man who invented the word giclee, and the Maalea Press giclee atelier of Peter Sieg, in Hilo, Hawaii. In some cases Hellmuth is a consultant to these companies, either informally, or formally.



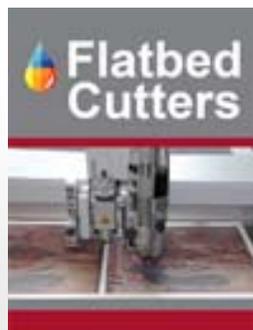
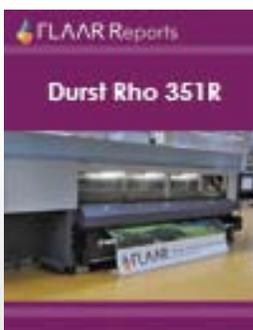
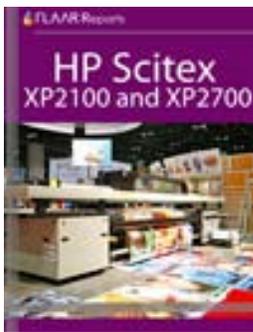
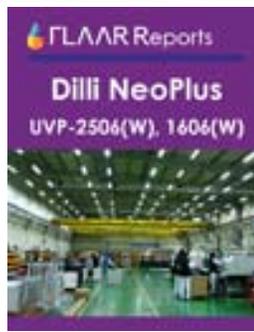
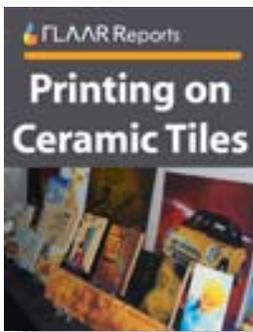
Squirt Printing Visit



Maalea Press giclee atelier of Peter Sieg, in Hilo, Hawaii

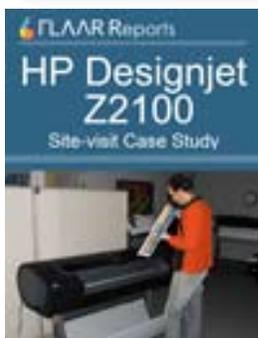
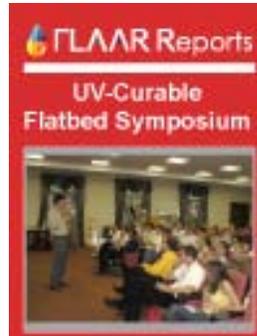
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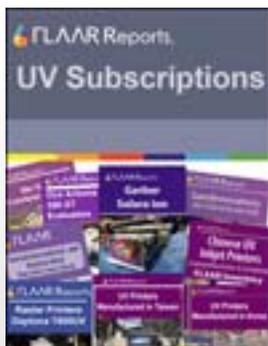
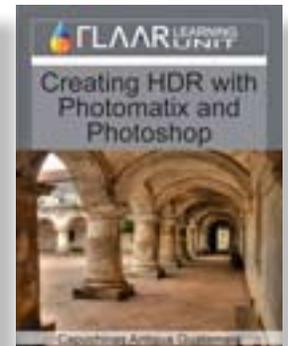
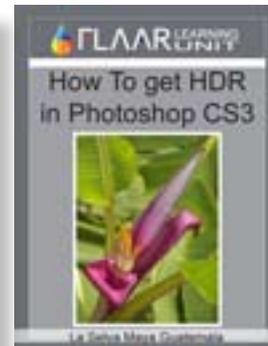
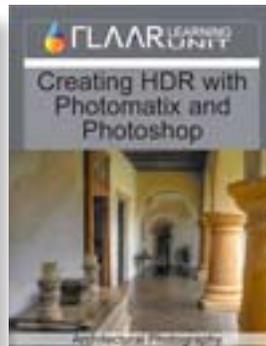
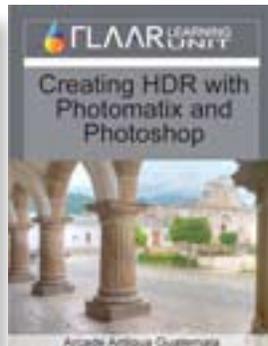
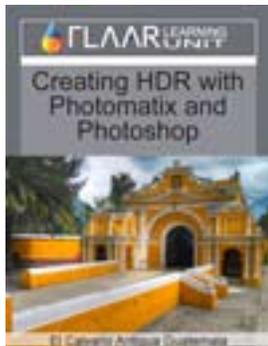
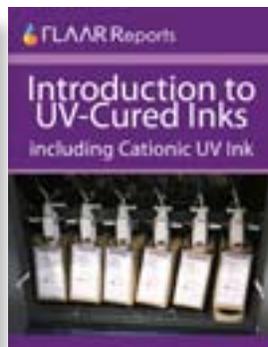
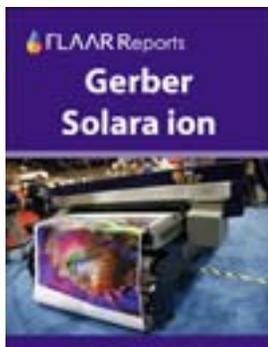
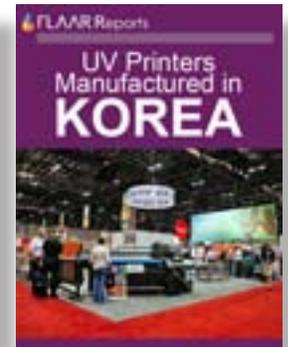
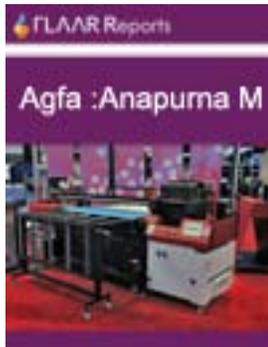
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