



Wide Format Inkjet Printers At ISA 2005 TRADE SHOW



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Caption for front cover:
The ColorSpan 72SR Solvent
printer.

Introduction

The International Sign Expo (ISA) Convention was held from March 30 to April 2, 2005 at the Mandalay Bay Hotel & Convention Center in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The ISA Expo tradeshow is the premier sign industry event. SGIA is the only other trade show in the US that rivals ISA.

When we got to the trade show the first day, we noticed how big the trade show was; there were inkjet printers of all sizes and shapes, as well as UV-cured ink flatbed printers, cutters, trimmers, lamination machines, RIP software, everything that a person may need to start a business or keep their actual business growing.

The trade show was so big that the days that we attend the trade show were not enough to see everything, but we really learned a lot about printers and software. Since we already have 23 inkjet printers at our university facilities, and since we already do site-visit case studies of solvent, eco-solvent, and UV-cured flatbed printers in print shops, we can judge the additional benefits of also visiting trade shows. What we learn here really helps us to answer the people who write FLAAR every day to our websites.

While attending the trade show, we also have a chance to measure the degree to which the FLAAR Reports are considered the de facto source of information on digital imaging hardware and software.

Most of the exhibitors took time to explain us how their products worked and what were their latest products, or when will they put their next generation products in the market. They also answered us the questions that we had about the products that they were showing, except from some booths like HP that did not have too much time because they were always busy selling printers.



The Mandalay Bay Hotel & Convention Center.



The Mandalay Hotel.

Solvent Ink Printers

Charrette was showing a rebranded Mutoh printer as the Duratex SP-64X.

We visited the **Gandinovations** booth to look over all their varied models. Oce is the distributor for the JETi 3300 grand format solvent ink printer. A sign shop near FLAAR at the university has this printer, so a new FLAAR Report has all the pros and cons laid out very clearly.

While visiting the booth of **Gerber** we saw the XRT2500, a compact grand format solvent inkjet printer. This was designed for sign shops. The XRT2500 was described as an affordable way to print durable, outdoor graphics, capable to print widths up to 2.52m or 99.2". One of the Gerber solvent ink printers is manufactured by Techwin, the same company that makes printers for Matan. Gerber's booth also had really interesting printers, like the Sabre that was a flatbed printer that was able to print 3D objects and the Elan XL.

ISI is the company that designed and constructed a solvent ink printer for Gretag circa 2001. This printer was not continued by Oce when Oce bought this printer division of Gretag. A comparable printer was then marketed by ColorSpan and appeared at trade shows in their booth for about 18 months. It would be logical that the ColorSpan version was improved over the version for Oce. At Graphics of the Americas trade show CeluPal, a Mexican reseller, has rebranded this printer also. ColorSpan no longer sells this particular printer. The fact it has been dropped by two companies (Oce and ColorSpan) is worth noting. That does not mean it is a bad printer, but it definitely did not become a best-seller. But since ISI manufactured this printer from the beginning, ISI still sells this printer as their ISIJet 3400

ISI also sells their ISIJet 1840, which is their version of the ColorSpan 72S.

Mimaki offers a 98-inch stretch model, the JV3-250SP as well as the regular 63" version (the original JV3-160SP). Mimaki's ink selections vary between their regular solvent ink and their MS2 mild solvent ink.

Mutoh had a popular booth. The Toucan LT printer is now a standard model. Previously we had seen it featured primarily by one regional dealer. Charrette was showing a rebranded Mutoh printer as the Duratex SP-64X.



The JETi 3300CS Printer.



The Mimaki JV3-250SP



The Mutoh Toucan LT printer.

NUR and Gerber are the only two major producers of a UV-cured ink roll-to-roll printer. The NUR Expedio and the Gerber Solara are only for roll-fed media (at present). The NUR Tempo is a multi-use printer: a flatbed that can also do roll-to-roll.

Roland, Mutoh, ColorSpan, and Seiko all showed stretch-models of their solvent ink printers. These move into the grand format territory formerly occupied by Vutek, the same market being invaded by Chinese printers.

Scitex Vision had a large and popular booth. They make industrial-strength grand format printers. We hope to have some write-ups of their equipment later this year, as soon as we can visit their demo center. At a short trade show, especially with all the people milling around, it is hard to write about everything.

Seiko ColorPainter 64S printers were in many parts of the trade show; it is priced at \$32,995. One source we know and recommend is Scarab Graphics, tel (800) 350-1366. The Color Painter 64s had six industrial piezo-electric heads with 3,072 nozzles that allow the raw printing to go faster. There is also a stretch-model, over 100-inches wide.

Seiko people also described the EG-Outdoor Inks as solvent pigment ink that deliver better color, adhesion and durability to your prints so that signs and banners stand out. They said that this inks also could last over 3+ years outdoors without lamination need. The ink is neither full-solvent nor eco-solvent. We describe the printer and discuss its pros and cons in a special FLAAR Report.

Ocè offers the same Seiko printer but branded as the Océ CS6060. With 720 x 720 Dpi, this printer can also be used for indoors, banners and canvas.

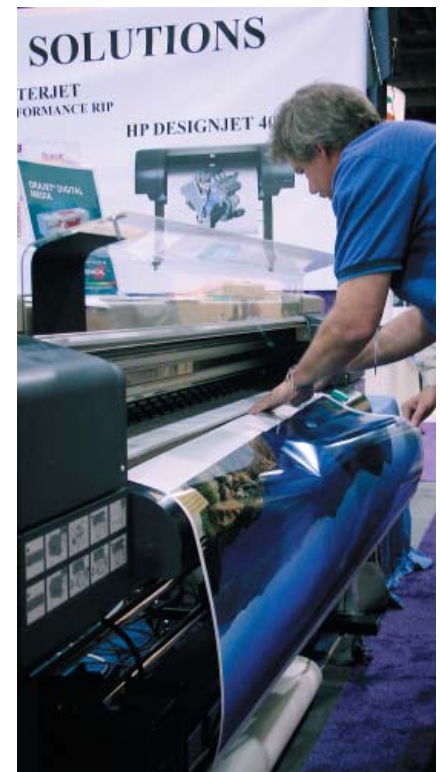
Vutek's had one of the biggest booths, they were displaying the Ultra VU II 3360 that is used to print billboards, point-of-purchase, advertising, banners and signage, posters, exhibition graphics, vehicle graphics, bus shelters, bus wraps, wall murals, flags, stage graphics, long-term outdoor graphics, etc. This printer also includes a two-sided printing, automated alignment system that enables the production of consistent, distortion-free double-sided graphics. And the Ultra VU II 5330 is a five-meter printer. This printer is almost the same as the Ultra VU II 3360 but this printer can also print street furniture and telephone kiosks but doesn't print wall murals and the Ultra VU II 3360 does.

One industry expert asked me if I had seen the Mutoh-like printer in the Vutek booth. He said that the new entry-level Vutek printer (I assume the UltraVu 260) appeared to be a rebranded Mutoh.

At Arlon's booth I saw that they had a Mimaki JV3-160 with a very good color.



The NUR Tempo printer.



The Seiko Color Painter 64s.

Korean Solvent Ink Printers

GISKO is a Korean company I have not noticed before at any US or European trade show. Their brand is the Oberon. A search on the Internet offers zilch. This is the same situation as many Chinese and some Taiwanese printer companies. But you have to start somewhere. Some of these companies will learn, improve their products, and in the future we can see how nice their products have become.

Dilli is the leading Korean manufacturer of wide format inkjet printers. DGI is one of their brand names. Do not confuse Korean printers from Dilli/DGI from start-ups in Korea, Taiwan, or China. Dilli is an established company, as is DGI. They have a presence in the US for years. S.I.M. is a leading distributor of these printers in the US.

Chinese Solvent Ink Printers

Chinese manufacturers change models and specs seemingly every year. There is no way to realistically keep track. Two years ago both Matan and 3M were each selling practically the same Chinese printer, made by Teckwin. Main difference was the printheads. But I did not see that model at either 3M or Matan in 2005. This is the continued problem with Chinese printers. You can't easily keep track of which model is which. The result is a potentially low resale value. And how do you get spare parts for last year's model? And how does a tech support person know how to handle so many confusing models?

Flora Digital Printing System had the HJII 3200/HJII 5000, the HJ 3200.

Infiniti branded printers were shown in the bustling Aeromatrix booth. These Chinese printers are low-budget and not yet quite up to standards of printers in the US or Europe. But each year they get better. Infiniti have the most pleasant people in their booth. But we just can't yet get excited over the Infinity brand of printers. Their quality just does not impress us, yet. We hope they improve so we can upgrade our comments, because their staff work very hard.

Matan is an Israeli company, but their printers appear to be primarily from Techwin, a company in China, so we insert them in the Chinese section. The difference is that Matan is a high-tech company in the Israel arena that has produced all the Scitex companies. So we assume the particular Chinese printers that they distribute are slightly better than others. But how in the world can you really tell. We have no funding to test dozens of Chinese printers. They change models and specs every few months. There is no way to keep track.

Skyair-ship markets Skyjet printers under the Skyjet America distributor. They offer a wide range of printers, such as the Little Fairy. Skyjet America also had the Synchronic Doubleside Printer the S-Series model was a wide format printer that can print simultaneously an image on both sides of media. This printer was first introduced on April 2004, and is able to print backlit sign printing.

Vista advertises that their printheads are made in England. But so are all the other Xaar printheads. Besides, these are not as good as Spectra heads. But even with Spectra heads, without solid construction and adequate firmware, you still do not automatically have an acceptable printer that lasts years and years. I will credit Vista with being honest in their dpi ratings, 185 dpi. 370 is only what you get with multiple passes. Even if 185 is not the base dpi, it is closer to the truth than most other companies admit to.



The Matan JetSet solvent printer.

WitColor is one of many Chinese printer companies working hard to bring their printers to the attention of American sign shops. At least they have a US address. We have no way whatsoever to keep track of which is which. One year Orasign is all over the trade shows. Then PosterJet (no relation to PosterJet RIP from Germany). Then the next year you don't see them at all. Sorry, but we prefer companies like ColorSpan, Gandinnovations, Seiko, DGI/SIM/Dilli that appear year after year and have consistently acceptable quality.

Flatbed Solvent & Eco-Solvent Printers

95% of current flatbed printers use UV-cured inks. But **ColorSpan** and **Mutoh** each also has a hybrid flatbed that uses solvent ink. Western **Graphtec** showed an alpha-stage prototype with eco-solvent, and **BUS** showed their desktop sized model (mild solvent ink).



The Mutoh Toucan flatbed printer.



ColorSpan 72 UVR UV-cured flatbed printer.

Eco-Solvent Printers

Be realistic and check with someone you know and trust who actually uses an eco-solvent ink. Do not rely only on ad claims. This inks are not ecological and do have an odor. In a site-visit case study an owner of a Roland eco-solvent printer indicated that some of their employees were not able to work in the same room.

Roland and **Mutoh** each showed their eco-solvent ink printers. Mimaki had a first generation mild-solvent printer already three years ago, but recognized the ink was not usable on low-cost raw vinyl, so Mimaki, in a move that shows how ethical they are, did not release that JV2 printer in the US market. Now that inks are greatly improved Mimaki is moving back to offer mild-solvent inks as an option.



FLAAR has an entire series of reports on eco-solvent printers, and you need to be sure to obtain the FLAAR Report on FESPA trade show, because there (May 31-June 4) we will be inspecting the newest breakthroughs in inkjet ink chemistry: things that will be shown first in Germany. This new ink was not shown at ISA.



Here are some of the titles in the FLAAR Reports on eco-solvent inks.

Air Purifiers / Air Filtering Equipment

At previous trade shows Island Clean Air was sometimes the only exhibitor of air purifying equipment. Occasionally "Swiss Air" would demo in the Mimaki booth. But at ISA a new company came on strong: **PAT Technology Systems Inc.** Ironically, they, like Island Clean Air, are a Canadian company.

The website for Captivair cleaners is www.PatTechnology.com, toll free 888 655-8455.

Island Clean Air (ICA) are the best known brand because they are at almost every trade show for the last several years. In distinction I had not seen the Pat Technology Systems team before ISA 2005. Their CAPTIVAIR gets most of the stink before it leaves the printer to get into the room air. Island Clean Air is not a hood, but instead grasps the air in the room.

UV-Cured Flatbed Printers

The two trends of the last three years are commercial grade printers using either solvent or UV-cured inks. More than 25 different companies offer these kinds of printers. For water-based inks, only ColorSpan, Encad, Epson, and HP sell a significant number. Canon, Mimaki, Mutoh, and Roland have smaller market shares. So for every water-based printer model there are three different solvent or UV-curable ink models.

Five years ago our FLAAR Reports covered only water-based printers. Today we have over 33 reports on UV-cured inkjet printers and about two dozen on solvent or eco-solvent printers.

GCC was a new company, at least to us; I have not seen them at DRUPA or any European trade show, nor previously at ISA or SGIA. Yet they had laser printers, cutters, UV flatbed 7 color machines made in Taiwan, Their UV flatbed can print on metal, UV, glass, basically everything. We cover the GCC printer in a new FLAAR Report.

The Jet 200UV inkjet printer was described by the GCC staff as a maximum printing width of 79" (2000mm) across rigid or flexible media up to 2" (50 mm) thick that allows for infinite printing applications. It also has a UV-curable inkjet solution that included a software package with RIP capabilities. This printer is able to print on tiles, clear acrylic (white undercoat), glass (white overcoat), Banners, Cloth Textile, Acrylic, and Foam Board.

We telephoned the GCC office recently, twice in one day, and did not yet receive any answer back. This sort of problem is exactly why most European and American print shops are uneasy about buying

expensive printers from companies they do not know much about.

Dilli is by far the most sophisticated of the Asian printer manufacturers. Their products consistently look better designed and definitely better constructed than printers from China. DGI appears to be the marketing arm for Dilli. Dilli now appears to have three different models of UV-curable ink flatbed printers. We cover these to varying degrees in current and upcoming FLAAR Reports.

DuPont is still working on improving the UV-cured ink flatbed printer that they are co-developing with Flora. We have an updated second-look report. We spent additional time at FESPA trade show checking out the DuPont UV printer, now named the ChromaPrint 22UV.

Durst still shows their Rho 160 model but they tend to feature the newer Rho 205. We have a site-visit case study of the Rho 160. At FESPA (about 2 months after ISA), Durst came out with two still newer UV-cured ink flatbed printers. We describe them in separate individual detailed reports.

Eastech has not exhibited in the US recently. The last time I saw Eastech was at Photokina trade show, autumn 2004. But Eastech had a nice booth at FESPA in Germany (June 2005), so the company, and its UV-cured flatbed printers, are alive and well.

Flora is one of the larger Chinese companies. They make printers for DuPont. The Flora FUV 2200 is probably the prototype for what DuPont is trying to improve enough to make it sellable in the US.

But Flora also makes a smaller printer, LJII 1800, 1.85 meters wide (I would guess this is roughly 5 feet give or take a bit). The question is how this compares with the Raster Printers RP-720 UV, which is also made in China. We have a FLAAR Fast Facts on the Flora printer and a second look at the Raster Printers in our UV-series.

Gandinovations had a popular booth to show their updated UV-curable ink flatbed printer. We consider printers from James and Hary Gandy as definitely worth looking at.

Gerber was exhibiting their Solara UV that is a roll-to-roll, large format ultraviolet (UV) inkjet printer that accommodates a variety of affordable, uncoated materials up to 60" wide. The Solara UV was described as ideal for shops specializing in durable outdoor/indoor signs, point-of-purchase displays, banners, and backlit signage, producing prints that are instantly dry and ready to cut and apply. This printer is made in USA.



Flora LJII 1800 printer.

L&P (Leggett & Platt) appears to have a new model, the Virtu 7200. It has 72 printheads to achieve speed. We will take a closer look at FESPA, in Munich in late May.



A sample print off the L&P UV Flatbed Press.

Mimaki has brochures for two different UV-cured ink printers but seemingly only one is being featured. Mimaki had a large and popular booth at ISA.

NUR offered a wide range of printers; among them they were the high throughput wide-format UV production presses, the modular flatbed inkjet presses, mid-range wide-format, and they also offered the multipurpose inks for the Nur Tempo wide-format inkjet presses.

The NUR Tempo flatbed inkjet printer accepts a range of rigid and roll-fed substrates, including vinyls, corrugated boards, foam-core boards, fluted polypropylene, styrenes, polycarbonates, glass and wood.

They NUR Expedio has a multi-roll printing capability, that was capable to handle up to 3-rolls of media simultaneously. NUR and Gerber are the only two major producers of a UV-cured ink roll-to-roll printer. The NUR Expedio and the Gerber Solara are only for roll-fed media (at present). The NUR Tempo is a multi-use printer: a flatbed that can also do roll-to-roll.

The **Raster Printers** RP-720 was still in alpha stage at SGIA last year. Now it has passed into beta stage. For a printer to reach our rating for being considered fully functional it has to print the entire time, all three days, at the trade show, without breaking down or requiring a factory technician to keep it going. We are



A sample print off the L&P UV Flatbed Press.



The NUR Tempo UV printer.



The RP-720 printer.

updating our first look to a second-look report this month. At FESPA trade show in June 2005 we spent time to take a deep look at the Flora printer which is the chassis on which the RP-720 is modified. The results (which are in a complete separate report) surprised us.

Scitex Vision does not always show all their printers due to the huge size of their class of equipment. But this time they had the VEEjet+ system, that allows printing on almost any substrate (rigid and flexible). The VEEjet+ was a sheet-to-sheet wide format piezoelectric digital printer that prints both rigid and substrates.

Skyjet America Inc presented their flatbed printer. The spec sheet was, most politely described, minimalistic. Nonetheless we have a FLAAR Fast Facts report on their UV-cured ink flatbed.

Yet at SGIA 2004 a manager in the **Vutek** booth explained, in exquisite detail, precisely why white ink did not work, at all, in any other printer. He described all the downsides of white ink, and explained these were all the reasons why Vutek was not using white ink.

At ISA Vutek had finally added white ink to their printer, after Mimaki, Durst, and others had white ink already for over a year.

Zund now has two models of UV-cured ink printer:

- Entry to mid-range, model 215
- mid-range, model 250

Zund itself is selling their model 215-Plus, an entry level flatbed.

Sericol was promoting the Zund UVJet 250-Combi, that I had seen at several previous trade shows. This printer ads suggests it can print equally well on smooth, uneven or perforated substrates up to 3.9" thick. Printing on uneven surfaces is something we will have to check.

Sericol (now owned by Fuji), suggests it has the fastest flatbed UV Digital Press the Inca Columbia Turbo it had UV curing, instant drying of Uvjet inks means that press speed and print drying are not compromised, prints direct to substrate without special coatings, and offered minimal post press processing - no mounting, laminating or overcoating required.



The Vutex UV printer.



Zund UVjet 250 printer.

Usually ISA and SGIA are the big trade shows for UV-cured ink flatbed printers. But this year it was FESPA trade show where all the new flatbed printers were introduced. So we have a separate FLAAR Report based on being at FESPA for five days.

Thermal Dye Transfer Printers

Since the large Matan wax/resin ribbon had a few glitches that resulted in them not surviving in the market (we cover their glitches in other reports), Matan now has the dye transfer technology only for smaller size label printers. This leaves the **Summa** DC3 Plus as about the last of this technology in wide format size on the marketplace (other than smaller Roland printers and other brands at the size for labels).

When these can do continuous tone, we like the output, but when there is a pattern to the print (such as from Summa printers), as a photographer we find such a pattern disturbing when viewed at close distances. Most labels are viewed at close distances.

The Summa cutter SummaCut SE was exhibited as the cutter that can cut software and long-plot media rollers. The Summa DC3 Plus delivers a superior output on a wider range of materials. When printing on low-cost-media, and image flaws are reduced dramatically.

RIP Software

The Wasatch crew are friendly and they make a great product. We use the Wasatch to run all our printers except the Canon. PosterJET (not to be confused with Onyx PosterShop), is more in tune with the Canon printers, in part due to a close working of PosterJET and Canon in Germany. PosterJET is fully available in the US including with tech support. The Wasatch SoftRip Light is used for RIP & Print management software, and the Wasatch SoftRip TX is used for textile printing.

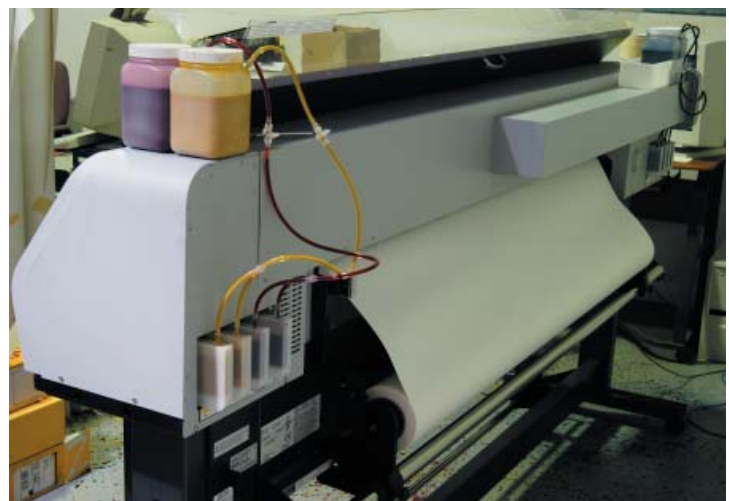
Wasatch was showing a first, a variable data feature on their RIP. We find this a great idea and congratulate them for being so innovative.

Studio Print RIP of ErgoSoft enables photographers to maximize their picture quality by achieving and maintaining the highest level of control over the printing process. Earlier this year ErgoSoft had taken a dual-6 color Roland printer and turned it into a 12-color printer. At ISA they showed their same capability with a dual-4 Mimaki JV22-160, turning it into an 8-color printer.

Onyx PosterShop had their capable people in many booths at ISA.



Wasatch booth displaying RIP software.



The Mimaki JV22-160 printer.

Printers for Photos, Giclee, Signs (Water-based Inks)

At their booth **HP** also had their HP Designjet 90 Printer series, this printer is mainly for professional photographers and graphic designers which uses the Vivera HP Inks. The HP exhibitors described the HP Photosmart 8750 Professional Photo Printer as the ultimate 9-ink photo printer designed for the social and portrait photographers who want finished, professional-quality photos up to 13 x 19 inches.

Epson does not tend to exhibit at ISA because this is a sign trade show. Epson printers are too slow to print signs, and are not wide enough either.

Canon tends to exhibit their printers with their big brother, Canon cameras, so there was no Canon printer booth at ISA.

The **ColorSpan** DisplayMaker X+ is ideal for printing trade show banners and every other kind of signage. Some artists use a ColorSpan printer to do their giclee. Indeed the capable artist who made up the word giclee in the 1990's uses a ColorSpan (and an HP 130).

Kodak/**Encad** had a modest booth and showed their signage printer, the NovaJet 1000i. FLAAR has two reports on this printer, including a comprehensive site-visit case study.

The first booth that we visited at ISA was of **Scarab Graphics**. In their booth they were exhibiting the HP 4000 for CAD, GIS, and graphic design. The HP 4000 is made of industrial strength plastic and this printer did not shake like some other cheaper brands. Scarab Graphics offers tech support, something you don't get if you buy low bid on the Internet from a box-pusher (jargon for a place that just sells the box: you don't get tech support or any help operating the printer, inks, media, or color management). David is the main tech support person for the printers that Scarab Graphics offers.



The Scarab Graphics booth.

You can download (at no cost) a profile of Scarab Graphics from several FLAAR websites.



The HP Designjet 4000 Printer.

Textiles & Soft Signage

Printers for Textiles

Stork gave up on printers for textiles (at least in the US) several years ago. At Photokina 2004, in their former European area of strength, the person at the Stork booth did not know anything about textile printers, or even whether his company made them (I realize there are many divisions, but surely he would have known).

ColorWings sort of disappeared from DRUPA and Photokina both, but is listed for FESPA 2005, so perhaps they survived. All these companies were casualties of the totally unrealistic concept of mass



Nicholas Hellmuth talking with Dr Ken Stokes, owner of Scarab Graphics.



Nicholas interviewing Ken Stokes to learn from his experience with Mimaki, Tiara-Lyson, Seiko, and HP printers.



Nicholas holding up a print off of one of the printers at the Scarab booth.

customization, that everyone in the world would want customized fabrics and therefore print shops could earn millions by buying textile printers.

No one told these self-appointed prophets that printing, and finishing, textiles is a royal pain. Unless you are 100% dedicated exclusively to printing on textiles, it is not easy. As a result lots of small companies wasted time, resources, and some probably went bankrupt. But if you have savvy in printing on textiles, if you understand this market, you can probably do okay. Printing on textiles is something I enjoy seeing, but it is not easy unless you do it full time and have a highly trained person with lots of experience.

Nonetheless, there is obviously some market for inkjet printing of short-run designs on fabrics. But most of it is still in dye sublimation, not always in direct printing. Yet DuPont believes there is enough market that it has partnered with other companies to market a direct to textile printer, the Artistri. If I remember correctly, this or some other textile printer is manufactured by Vutek.

And for the ones who are interested in making fine art, we found a booth named **Fisher** textiles, a seller of fine artist canvas for the artist. They also offer a line of cotton, polyflax, and polycotton canvas where you can print on. They also have dye sublimation fabrics, that is a printing method for imaging polyester fabric with dispersed dye. In this process, the design is transferred from preprinted paper onto the fabric by contact heat, which causes the dye to sublime.

Otherwise dye sublimation was sort of subdued at ISA. One reason is because one company is prone to litigate. The lawsuits are sad, keep ink prices artificially high, and are not a good way to make friends. The US patent on dye sub ink is not accepted by any European company so in Europe there is more freedom to explore dye sub printing. Sawgrass exhibited as usual, but there were not the host of smaller companies that you get at the regional sign tradeshows.

If you print textiles, and wish a special RIP to handle this, you might check out the RIP offered by **Digifab Systems**. Contact Avedik Izmirlian, avedik@digifab.com. The nice folks here know how to produce beautiful inkjet textiles.

3P Inkjet Textiles is the company which FLAAR depends upon for our inkjet fabrics. We recommend their textiles, canvas, and other fabrics. Contact is markusfortmeier@3p-inktextiles.com.



3P InkJet Textile printing.



3P InkJet Textile printing.



DuPoint Artistri 2020 textile printer.



Samples of the IQ-IJ TruColor canvases at the 3P booth printed on the Durst Rho 205 with UV-curable ink.



ColorWings textile printing booth.



ATP Color Textile from Mutoh.



A sample print of the ColorWings textile printer.



D-gen Heracle textile printer.

Cutters & Trimmers

We visited the booth of Keencut they were only exhibiting rotary cutters, cutter bars, and sheet material cutters, while Graphtec had FC2230 Series of Flatbed Cutting Plotters. Keencut people said that the cutter bars offered a standard of straight, square and clean cutting that is impossible to achieve with a craft knife and straight edge.

If you need any help with cutters and trimmers, contact the place we obtain our cutters and trimmers. The person there is Michael Lind: malind@msn.com.

Laminating Equipment

On the lamination side, we found the Nazdar Source Zone. They were exhibiting the RSC-1650C, RSC 1650H that laminates individual or multiple copies of posters prints, POP signs, training aids, rigid or flexible signage, inkjet, photo, floor graphics and much more. Its use is by one simple button operation, plus remote control and foot pedal that allows hands-free operation. They also had the RSH-1050, RSH 1650 that is designed for mounting, laminating and encapsulating individual or multiple copies of posters prints, POP signs, training aids, rigid or flexible signage, floor graphics, tradeshow displays etc., its use is the same as the one I mentioned before.

Clear Star Coatings Corp. was introducing the Star Lam 1.6 that applies its water-based ClarShield outdoor durable coatings on a variety of substrates for different applications including vehicle graphics, architectural signage, POP, tradeshow displays, photographic output and fine art Giclee.

Seal, GBC, and other well known laminator companies exhibited.

The booths described above were the ones that provided Michelle the main information that she needed to make of her everyday work a success. Michelle said she really learned more about the printing field, which really helps her in answering the people who write us at FLAAR.

Laser Cutters

Epilog offered laser cutters that can accomplish detailed engraving and cutting. They were displaying the Epilog mini laser that although the laser will fit on a standard tabletop or desk, if you would prefer to have a freestanding system, you can add the Mini Floor Stand to this machine. With this wheeled cart specially designed for the Epilog Mini, you can easily move the laser throughout your office or home, or the place where you have it. This printer was also able to engrave bottles, glasses, flashlights, and other cylindrical items using the Epilog Mini's Rotary Attachment. This rotary design is built to accommodate a wide variety of shapes and sizes, and will even rotate cylinders with different diameters on either end.

The laser cutter/engraver we have at BGSU is from Universal. It works great and we recommend it for decorating.



Laminator.

Variable Data Short Run Digital Presses

HP exhibited the Indigo Press s2000 that had the ability to add a 5th or 6th color. This particular model printer was used to print ID documents such as credit cards etc. With this printer you can print on a wide variety of substrates. We cover variable data presses on our new www.variable-data-digital-press.org.

The Trends

White ink was definitely the big surprise at ISA 2005. But more than for UV-curable inks (now even Vutek offers white UV-inks). Where white ink surprised people is in eco-solvent: both Roland and Mimaki were showing solvent-based white ink.

Chinese printers were still everywhere, but several players have momentarily disappeared, such as Orasign. I can't believe that many people are buying these Chinese printers. The manufacturers must have eternal patience to exhibit year after year. But established Korean companies such as Dilli/DGI are way ahead.

Western Graphtec had a large booth but I wonder whether their sales are that high. Graphtec rebrands the Canon dye-based printer, which is a strange offering for a sign company. The Canon dye ink only lasts a few months. Graphtec also sells a really nice cutter-printer manufactured by HP, a reincarnation of the old 2000-series, but with a cutter. However I doubt they can compete with Roland's cutter-printer's advertising budget. Roland advertises very heavily.

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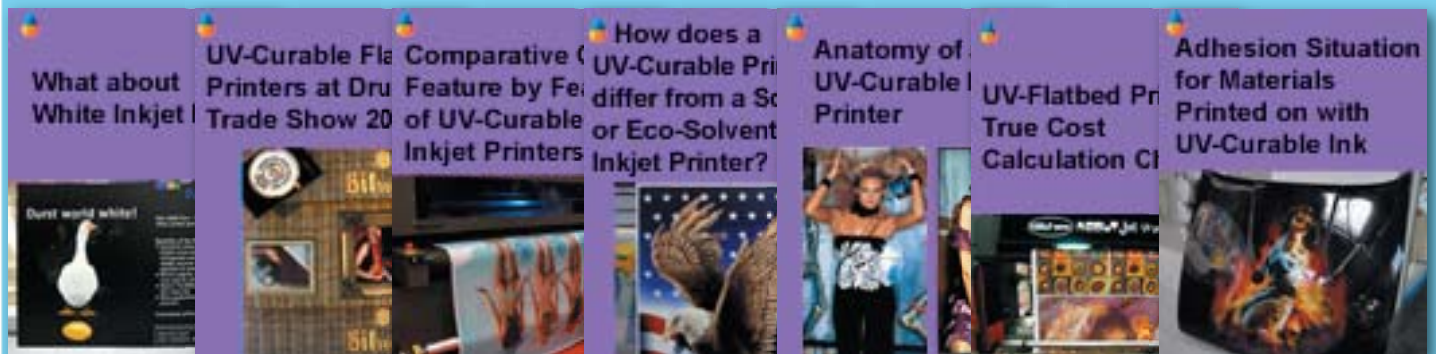
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