

GRAPHIC OF THE AMERICAS & PHOTO MARKETING ASSOCIATION

Large Format Printers shown at these Trade Shows



ColorSpan's booth at GOA Trade Show.



Kodak's booth at PMA Trade Show

Large format printers

Accuplot is the house brand name of Mile High Engineering Supply Company. They exhibit at almost every trade show. Accuplot rebrands Mutoh printers. They have a Mutoh for fine art, one for screen-printing positives, one for textiles, and one for about anything else you might need. They had a large booth with lots of different printers.

Nice quality output, capable technicians. Mile High has a good reputation in the industry.

Mayen noted *"When I was there, the sales person threw a glass of water on the image to prove it was water resistant and it worked great". It didn't fade or wrinkle. The media that they were using was glossy.*

To finish the heat transfer portion of the overall dye sublimation process they used the Rollo Heat Transfer Machine, it was a very easy to operate machine, adjustable temperature and variable speed. The heat transfer went up to 67" wide for the fabric (the manufacturer's recommendations of fabrics is polyester textiles).



Agfa sells so many products that in a small booth you don't get to see the whole product line. They had their nice model 5000 scanner and an Epson printer relabeled as the Agfa Sherpa 24. I can't remember whether it was the Epson 7000 or the Epson 7500. It was absolutely identical, not even an actual Agfa nameplate, just a plastic stick-on label.

Agfa makes hardly any of their own digital imaging products in scanners or printers. Their low-end scanners are relabeled from Microtek; their printers come from Mutoh and can't even do 1440 dpi as can all other Mutohs (though this may have changed recently). The top Agfa scanner is a relabeled Fuji Lanovia C-550, one of the best scanners available (not visible at the trade show). However your city is more likely to have an Agfa dealer (who can handle this scanner). Most Fuji Film dealers handle only the FineScan 2750; the Lanovia C-550 is a totally different division.

The lack of innovation of Agfa is typical also for Ilford, Kodak, and Oce (none of which had printers at Graphics of the Americas).

Oce did not have a booth at PMA either. This is because Oce is business to business; it sells primarily to large corporations who already have Oce copiers, Oce document scanners (not for slides or negatives). Oce is not a photography company; not a graphics company; therefore not at PMA. Oce will, however, be at ISA sign trade show.

Ilford exhibited at PMA. They showed their version of the Vutek and the Ilford versions of the standard Encad printers. I did not notice any Ilford version of the ColorSpan but one may have been somewhere that I did not see. Nothing at their booth encouraged either of us to spend much time. Vutek is a solvent ink printer, not yet adequate quality for photographs but definitely each model generation is getting closer. Besides, these printers cost over \$150,000 up to \$450,000. That makes a \$32,000 ColorSpan sound like a bargain.

Kodak had a giant booth with large format printers occupying a major section. Kodak knows how to make large format printers look attractive. They showed off their version of the 8-ink Encad. I am sure the Kodak versions of the Mutohs were present as well.

What I noticed however, was a ColorSpan using Kodak EI media. No, Kodak does not sell the ColorSpan printer, but Kodak media made for the Encad also works well on all other thermal printhead printers. Indeed many people consider that the Kodak EI is one of the better media for printing photographs on the HP 5000 and 5000ps. Actually the Kodak booth with the HP 5000 and the handsome photographs it was printing looked much nicer than anything in the lonely HP booth itself. Kodak is a photography company. HP is an office equipment company (at least in laser printers and desktop inkjet printers). Yet the HP 5000 does an outstanding job rendering photographs. Nonetheless the HP booth did not bring out the inherent capabilities of their own products. Kodak did, even Heidelberg booth had a nicer presentation of the HP 5000 than did the mother booth back in the HP area.



ColorSpan DisplayMaker XII

ColorSpan showed all their printers, Esprit 52"; DisplayMaker XII at 72" width, and the FabriJet textile printer also at 72" width. Great quality, actually its amazing what they can produce from the HP thermal printheads they use, namely better quality than the same printhead in an HP printer. You can never say it too often, software can be as important as hardware.

I saw no banding on any ColorSpan print. That's the difference between piezo printheads (Epson, Roland, Mutoh, Mimaki) and thermal printheads (ColorSpan, HP, Encad). You get less banding with thermal printheads. FLAAR editor Maru Mayen also *noticed the speed the DisplayMaker XII printed and the quality that resulted, you couldn't see much banding (and we examined it with a magnifying glass).*

If you need to do photo-realistic quality then banding is an instant give away that it's not a darkroom print. So photographers abhor banding. Since my background is photography I define a good print as a Cibachrome and a good digital print as from a LightJet or Durst Lambda.

Hewlett-Packard showed their complete range of new models: 500ps, 800ps, and 5000ps at Graphics of the Americas but only one lonely 5000ps at PMA.

The 5000ps was loaded with pigmented inks, which was a world first. They are not yet for sale, and the results have been exhibited before, but this was the first time they had been shown actually in a printer.

The results from the HP 5000ps with pigmented inks were dull, lifeless. The inks are actually much better than that. I had tested the identical inks earlier in January. The color gamut is outstanding. But when you use the basic coated paper (which itself is lifeless) the double combination of that media and pigmented inks is unattractive. Of course you are supposed to laminate the results. Glossy lamination will make the colors pop out and bring the image back to life. But no laminated versions were pictured at the booth.

Why a 44 billion dollar company with millions invested in their beautiful printer will publicly show such a lifeless print is strange. Anyway, a few weeks later, at PMA, HP finally had a more attractive media for their nice UV inks. Problem at PMA was that HP showed only one single large format printer. Every other large format company's booth looked more attractive. The prints had giant HP logos and slogans which did not attract anyone to the booth. People want to see dynamite images, not commercial logos in institutional colors. The stock photos themselves were uninspiring as well.

The HP 500ps and 800ps don't use pigmented inks. Thus their dye-based ink output looked great. I checked out the 800ps especially, since that is the model we ordered for our facility in Latin America. All the areas of dark background were flawless. This means no banding. In this respect this printer is better than the Roland which costs many times more.



HP 500 ps

At the booth of Tara/Fredrix artist's canvas it was noteworthy that all their samples of fine art giclee prints were done on an HP DesignJet 2500cp. Not an Iris, not a Roland, but a Hewlett-Packard. Looked good enough to hang in a museum. Don't forget, you don't need 1200 dpi when you print on a surface texture as rough as a canvas. So if you are just beginning, and this will be your first printer, consider this recent generation, HP 2000 (you provide RIP), HP 2500 (has mini-RIP on board), HP 2800 (comes with EFI Fiery RIP) or for 54" the HP 3000, 3500, or 3800. You can get demo models at great savings; still have original HP factory warranty.

HP makes a wonderful printer. Too bad their trade show exhibits don't show off all the qualities and capabilities. Their booth at PMA had dozens of mini desktop printers that were not attracting many people. Everyone was over at the Epson booth, or at the Kodak booth. The HP 5000 printer at the Kodak booth looked ten times better than the identical printer at the HP booth. Kodak was showcasing its EI media for the HP, ColorSpan, and Encad OEM printers. But, even if they don't do a knockout booth, HP sure knows how to design an easy-to-use printer that does well without a mechanic on duty. That's why FLAAR selected the HP DesignJet 5000ps for when we need to print photographs for exhibit.



Encad had their usual printers on display, actually between Encad itself and a nearby booth of a dealer they had everything but the aged NovaJetPro 50" (which are still sold via the Internet).

The Encad print of the woman whose back was covered with colored paint was such nice quality that several people believed it was a manipulated image (or otherwise done with a printer other than an Encad). One reason was that the background was solid white, with no inkjet dots. This hid the Encad's worse feature, dotty grainy pattern in light colored areas.

Originally I had reported that the Encad 850 had overcome this generic problem with the Lexmark printheads used by Encad. But at Graphics of the Americas I noted that even prints from the 850 had a grainy pattern. Why they can't overcome this with software I don't know.

Encad's newer model is the NovaJet 850 (octachrome inks), it has two simultaneous sets of four inks (2x4) or the 1x8, so if you wish to produce prints for interiors, like or pigmented inks for outdoor signs with just pushing a button you'll be able to exchange the set of inks.

Part of the advertisement suggested that the Encad was very fast and as far as we could see in the exposition floor the only large format printer that went like Duracell's bunny (going and going and going) was the Colorspan DisplayMaker XII.

The grainy pattern of the Encad-Lexmark printheads was especially noticeable on a backlit display. The dots are accentuated by the lighting. This was the new 850 printer. Evidently this results when printed with just four passes (the fast mode). Possibly if you opt for more passes you get better quality. Unfortunately we don't have any of the newer model Encads, just an ancient NovaJetPro, so we can only report on what we see at all the trade shows. Why a printer company chooses such pictures to display their flagship printer is unexplainable. But the other picture revealed what the 850 can do, which is a definite improvement over all earlier Encad models.

Encad NovaJet 500, 300 dpi, very course grainy pattern, so dotty that it's hard to tell of any banding is present or not. Same with NovaJet 505.

An Encad reseller elsewhere at the trade show was offering the EFI Fiery RIP "free," claiming it was a \$5,995 value. Xerox tried to charge up to \$7,000 for that same RIP, but the normal list price is \$4,500, not \$5,995. Actually anything over \$3K is overpriced for that RIP. Of course if it's free then you might go for it. Just remember, you can't upgrade it; you can't ever run any other printer with it. So as soon as your printer wears out or is obsolete, the RIP is useless. With all software RIPs you can upgrade and run dozens of other printers.

The EFI Fiery RIP must really be a dog or else the reseller would not be offering it "free."

Onyx PosterShop is an upgradable software RIP for the Encad. Runs virtually every other major printer every made. Check to see if it supports the V8 Octachrome of the Encad 850 also. That's the downside of any 8-color printer. Virtually no RIP can support more than six colors (and barely more than four).

Otherwise, the Encad booth had friendly capable people; the printer produces really nice color with dye inks. Main negative point is their continued reliance on Lexmark printheads. Lexmark makes desktop printers only; no large format, so the printheads are evidently not designed for the needs of large format enlargements.

Epson had its usual gallery of beautiful images. The Epson product manager definitely knows how to make a nice exhibit display for a trade show.

What I most liked about the Epson booth was their display of several images done in pigmented inks and the identical image done in dye based inks. This was an honest portrayal of the pros and cons of each ink's color gamut.

But elsewhere at the booth was the shameless misinformation and downright false advertising, such as the blatant claim of "200 year archival inks." Not even Wilhelm himself makes that claim any more. Indeed the Wilhelm web site was taken off the

Internet in early January and has been gone for many weeks. It eventually reappeared, but the exaggerated 200 year claim is unlikely be present. Indeed it was specifically the uproar over that claim which was one cause of the momentary demise of the original ink evaluation web site. Judging ink longevity is something we prefer not to get into further than using basic common sense, namely that most printed colors fade if exposed to light.

In a normal room, with normal light, it is highly unlikely that any inkjet print will last 200 years unless sealed by glass, and even then such a claim is dubious. Only recently was it admitted that you have to seal the prints in glass to protect them from contaminants in the air. Whereas its light that destroys dye based inks, its ozone, cigarette smoke and other problems that combine with light to cause Epson hybrid and pigmented inks to discolor. Its absurd to expect a normal photographer or artist to encase every one of their inkjet prints in glass. It's also illogical when even the testing facility bows to critique and backs down on their claims and yet the printer and ink company continue to make the claim in headlines in their exhibit.

Epson is renowned as having among the best dithering patterns of any printer. The dithering pattern controls the scatter pattern of the dots. With an Epson you get somewhat closer to continuous tone. An Epson print is considerably better than that of an Encad for example. There are only two ways to get this pattern, according the Epson. One is to use the Epson printer drivers, that is, to print a TIFF file straight from Photoshop, no RIP whatsoever. This way Epson itself provides the dithering pattern.

The second option is to use the EFI Fiery RIP. Epson has licensed its dithering software only to EFI. Downside of this is the excessive cost, the fact the RIP is not upgradable (at least none of the EFI Fiery RIPs that I have so far are upgradable). EFI does not provide nesting or tiling. On the two EFI RIPs that I know you can't even rotate an image (a TIFF file, for example). Considering the price of their RIP the paucity of options is inexcusable.

I have been told that the EFI may be responsible for green banding on black and white prints. I have no further confirmation of this, though I received the information from a source that ought to know first hand.

When I first looked at all the printers I wrote in my notes "none of the printers are actually printing." But I subsequently noticed that a few were, it's just that they are so slow it appears that nothing is happening.

Epson has definitely increased the number of kinds of media that work with the 7500 and 9500. The new media looks very nice. An Epson 7500 recently arrived at the FLAAR office in Latin America. The office staff say the output is very nice.

Epson is also aware of the color problems such as the green glow and bronzing effects and is making efforts to overcome those increasingly well-publicized glitches. Unfortunately the green glow is still a problem as documented by Maru: ... *while I went*



to their booth they took me to print with the Epson Stylus Photo 1270, I was astonished by the vibrant colors, the reds were really nice but now that I'm back home and after unpacking I was disappointed because when I saw the picture, it wasn't as nice as before, it had a greenish glow, it looks like an instant photograph from Polaroid. So perhaps they haven't accomplished yet what they are bragging about "archival inks". But the quality was good it had no banding and no grainy dot pattern.

Overall the Epson booth made a good impression. The models 7500 and 9500 are now a mature product. The output is handsome. At long last there is adequate variety of media. The price of the 9000 and 9500 have dropped substantially since the new Epson 10000 has already been released in Japan and will be released in Europe and the USA shortly.

Roland did not have a company booth at PMA but rather was exhibited by a local Florida reseller. Moderate banding across the image. That now makes ump-teen trade shows in a row where banding was noticeable (Seybold San Francisco August 2000, Photokina (Cologne, Germany), SGIA sign trade show, PhotoEast trade show November 2000, and still today in 2001.



Mayen noted: *The sales person that was running the Roland was very content with it although it was very slow and it took her forever to print the images. We saw a little banding.*

It was specifically the V8 model this time. I had thought perhaps the banding was primarily the older 6 color models, but no, it seems to be generic. I do not know whether its faulty printer driver, bad RIP, poor paper feed mechanism, or just an inherent defect of the Epson piezo printhead concept. This is because Epson and Mutoh printers have banding defects also, but nowhere near as often as noted for Roland.

If anyone knows the technical reason why this printer has this systematic flaw, we would be interested in knowing. You can sometimes avoid the banding by using the top quality slowest options (32 pass on the V8, takes two hours to do a print). You can avoid banding by having fresh clean printheads. We hear that banding may only start after about an hour or so into the print, as though the piezo head picks up dust and ink clots during this hour and can't clean itself adequately during the printing process, so towards the end of the print the banding begins. Or worse, one color on the printhead stops printing all together. Either way, the print is ruined.

The general consensus is that inkjet printers in general and the Roland in particular are dust sensitive. You may need to filter your air or otherwise not attempt to situate your printer in a dusty environment. I must admit that our HP printers are in a very dusty environment, indeed there are two erupting volcanoes nearby. Seriously, this is our office at the university in the highlands of Guatemala, Central America. The HP printer does just fine.

Otherwise the Roland is a beautiful machine. Roland is a capable company with enough money to fix something like this unless it's inherent in those piezo printheads. It's notable that the worst banding of all are the Xaar and Spectra printheads, all of which I believe are other forms of piezo-electric printhead technology. Epson is only one of several companies that have this piezo printhead technology.

Printhead mis-alignment is another possible source of potential banding. This may explain why some Roland users never experience the banding defect. These users don't understand why we don't absolutely love this printer (we do, just that it has generic problems that other users constantly write us complaining about the banding and color dropping, especially since other printers, which offer comparable quality, may not suffer these problems to the same degree).

One of many solutions to the banding problem is to adjust your printheads once a month. You do a test print then adjust the heads. With a ColorSpan you need to do cleaning and calibration every day. People complain about that but it's precisely this preventative maintenance that results in such top quality with the ColorSpan printer. The message is, if you don't clean and maintain any complex printer, it may fail. I must admit, however, that I never clean and maintain my Hewlett-Packard printer. It seems to have auto-cleaning and auto-calibration that works on its own quite well.

The Roland has no self-monitor sensors, or if it does, they don't prevent the buildup of gunk that clog the printheads. The printer can't tell when it needs to clean up its act. The operator must press the cleaning option. This evidently squirts so much ink out the nozzles that it forces out the gunk. Of course in the process it uses lots of expensive ink. The Roland technician said this really ought to be done twice a day. Yet whenever I ask they say the printer does indeed have a self-cleaning system. My question would be, why does this system not actually clean the heads then?

You also need to clean the cleaning station. Most people treat these printers as though they were a TV set, turn it on, and turn it off. Who ever thought of cleaning the insides of a TV set in order to get better reception.

We saw another Roland at the booth of Scanvec-Amiable RIP. Banding as well as dotty grainy pattern. This was the Roland CAMM-Jet.

The sales rep was very honest on one aspect, however. We overheard a sign shop owner come up and say they needed a production printer. The Roland person said, "This is not for printing 1000 copies." At an hour per print, what a true statement.

At PMA trade show Roland DGA had their own booth. Their 8-color Pro V8 model was producing flawless images. Especially noteworthy were solid blacks, pure black (not a mixture of CMY). No color glow; no banding. The printer was set at Super mode. No banding at all.

At the Rollei (camera) booth a Roland was installed but it was not turned on. The one print they had hanging down from the printer was an attractive image; no banding.

GretagImaging bought several companies that make wide format printers. The Bellise Plus uses pigmented inks. The regular Bellise (no plus) uses dye inks. You have to buy one or another; you can't switch back and forth. Print quality is grainy, gritty, and distinctly unimpressive. The same or possibly worse than an Encad 300 dpi of five years ago.

Vutek exhibited one of their "baby grand format" printers, their model 2360 SC. The first day I visited the quality was impressive, only a little banding. Actually they

were printing impressionistic paintings to show how good it was. Looked almost as good as output from a 300 dpi Encad. Unfortunately the media itself seemed to have a pattern to it.

What impressed Maru Mayen about the Vutek was the size of the printer (*I had never seen it before, and I saw their little one Ultra Vu 2360 SC digital press*), they were printing in vinyl. The resolution was very neat and the colors were consistent, you can match the speed of the production performance with the quality desired.

The next day Vutek had a tiger or jaguar image; lots of banding, the downside of a fast printer with piezo printheads at low dpi. Of course you can't see the banding at billboard distance. Vutek uses a 360 dpi Spectra piezo head. These are made for speed, not for photo-realistic quality.

I did not notice an offensive odor of the solvent-based inks. Either they had it extremely well vented or the smell was dissipated in the huge space of the trade show building.

RIPs

The two Raster Image Processor companies that were in the list on the trade show web site were not actually present: PhotoScript from CADlink nor Pixa Arts. Instead there were two other RIP companies from companies that I had not noticed in the exhibit list, BEST and Scanvec-Amiable. CADLink did exhibit at PMA, cheek to jowl with Mile High Engineering Supply Company, as I have noticed at other trade shows. Photoscript seems to be a nice RIP but we have not had an opportunity to try it out yet.

BEST is a company with German efficiency; their product has German quality. Their booth had the largest presence of any RIP company at the trade show, everyone from the head of their USA office to their technicians.

BEST is the RIP to consider if you need color management. So if you do proofing, fine art giclee prints, or anything where precise color is important, then consider BEST.



Contact for BEST has been Richard Dannenberg, e-mail: rd@bestcolor.com

To get the most out of a product such as this you need color measurement tools. If you work out of your home you can avoid these at first but eventually you will want them. High end is Gretag, the Swiss company. But actually the market leader is an American company, X-rite, and X-rite products cost less too.

Contact: X-Rite, color management, color tools: William M. Owens, Jr, Product Manager, e-mail bowens@x-rite.com

Scanvec-Amiable RIP Pleasant capable people at the booth. Helpful, and ready to provide whatever information people needed.

We have not used Scanvec-Amiable RIP, but do have lots of user comments an earlier version last year, mostly a bit negative.

The new version is improved (can hardly be anything but better). However with so many

other really good RIPs around, there is no need to put up with a RIP that is merely okay. Price wise, however, it is a low-price software, but if you need a rock solid RIP its safer to pay more and get more (with another brand).

Because Scanvec-Amiable has a relationship with Roland they get access to all its inner secrets (though unfortunately that has not resulted in a sterling result). With other printer companies there is no special relationship, so it's just another RIP doing its best to run them, on an Encad for example.

Scanvec-Amiable is the company that makes the OEM RIP that you automatically get when you buy a Roland. If I had a printer as nice as a Roland I think I would prefer a better RIP. BEST works on a Roland as do many of the other leading RIPs.

PosterJet did not exhibit, possibly because they do not have an American office. This is the problem of many of the better European RIPs. No service center for technical help by phone in the USA.

Desktop sized inkjet printers

The various models of Epson desktop printers are riddled with defects, problems, and color headaches. We do not recommend any of them. People who got a lemon with the Epson 1270 can demand their money back. Actually Epson is relatively honest about returning your money. Just document that the ads for the printer promised performance or features that it did not deliver. Such a practice is potentially false advertising if you can show it (which is relatively easy with most of their ads with shameless exaggerations).

The only desktop inkjet printer that we consider acceptable (colorwise) is the Canon 8500. We have a nice HP Color GA; I like the color but it has banding on solid black background and can't do 4 pt typeface well. Most people prefer six colors. The Epson desktop printers are better in both respects (but we don't recommend the Epson due to lousy printer drivers, too slow, excessive price of inks; fading and color shift problems).

Epson, though, now has a new desktop printer, the Model 5500. This is aimed at portrait photographers. The inks are the same or similar to those used in the Epson 7500, namely pigmented.

Laser Printers

Hewlett-Packard had several color laser printers on exhibit. QMS (Minolta) had an entire exhibit. It's hard to keep up with the various models that are being introduced each year. FLAAR has a general survey of laser printers which describes what you need to look out for, such as duplex, shiny vs matte surface, and other considerations. It's best if you ask specifically for that report.

Drum and flatbed scanners

Scanners were not well represented by manufacturers. It was mainly resellers who specialized in Latin America who showed scanners. Several dealers were selling Creo-Scitex EverSmart scanners (my favorite for flat work). One dealer had a Fuji

Lanovia C-550 (my favorite for objects with relief and even 3D objects). Did not see many Heidelberg scanners.

Imacon was supposed to have a booth but did not see it. We dislike their continued attempt to confuse people into thinking it's a drum scanner. Imacon is not a drum scanner, neither in design nor in function nor in quality.

Umax won the award for the "most misleading advertisement" at the trade show, an ad claiming their model 3000 was a flat drum scanner. First it's slow, very slow. Second you only get 3000 dpi down the narrow sweet spot. Third, the scanner software is not popular. Binuscan consistently receives mediocre ratings. The other offering is an OEM of Trident from Howtek, not a winner of many awards. The best scanner software is SilverFast.

The Umax admits to a lowly 3.6 Dmax. That is rather low. Certainly nowhere near the quality of a true drum scanner.

The Umax PowerLook III is a workhorse. We have three of them (one an OEM from Heidelberg, which at least gives you the superior Linoscan software).

No new scanners at the Graphics of the Americas trade show. At PMA the Fujifilm FineScan 2750 was presented. Since this product is new and Fuji scanner dealers are hard to find, we recommend sending an e-mail to Fuji's main scanner headquarters mike.mcgill@ffe.co.uk He will then put you in touch with the scanner dealer appropriate for your part of the USA. The USA telephone number for the Fuji FineScan 2750 is (800) 755-FUJI. The advantage of tabloid-sized flatbeds is that they can scan 40 slides together as one batch, one after the other automatically.



FujiFilm scanner

Fuji must make so much profit on film and other products that they don't care whether they sell their scanners or not. Too bad, since the Fuji Lanovia C-550 is one of the best scanners in the world. One reseller had that model but it was not fully exploited. If you prefer heavier artillery such as the 5000dpi Fuji Lanovia C-550, you can telephone Fuji USA, (630) 773-7200.

Nikon had their new scanners locked up in a cabinet and no one to explain them.

Polaroid had all their scanners on exhibit but the new Nikon's definitely have more impressive specs.

Wide format scanners

Contex showed a scan which had been printed and then scanned again. The results looked impressive.

Laminating

Hunt Graphics and **Seal**; I can never remember which is which, so I just call them Seal laminators. We have been so busy evaluating printers that we are only now

moving up to laminators.

GBC is the other big name in laminating equipment the USA.

CODA was a company that I see in trade magazines but this was my first opportunity to see their actual equipment.

USI offers entry-level laminators. USI has a great catalog of all the products they offer. If you want to buy everything at one location, here is where to go.

Media

Most of the media companies in the exhibitor list claimed by the trade show company were either not present, or not represented by the actual company, but instead only by a local distributor. I did find, however, Arkwright, Sihl, and Tara/Fredrix.

Arkwright is evidently a source for media resold under other labels.

Sihl is a major paper mill in Switzerland and Germany. They offer a wide range of inkjet media. Mayen noted that *Sihl had it's own research and development at the SpectraPrint University (were they give you training in all variety of medias. The seminars consist of an overview of the inkjet and electrostatic industry, and a comprehensive hands-on training on the technologies of wide format digital printing for inkjet and dielectric technologies.*

Fredrix is the world's largest producer of artist's canvas. It is sold by Tara.

Hahnemuehle had a nice booth for their watercolor papers.

IJ Technologies had a booth at PMA.

Hawk Mountain Art Papers displayed their fine art giclee watercolor paper. E-mail sales@hawkmtnartpapers.com for information.

Since we cover media in separate reports it's easier if you write and ask for the media+ink reports. Be sure to specify what kind of things you need to print, since there are 5 different kinds of ink.

Inks

There were several re-sellers of inks, such as Van Son, but this was not really a trade show that featured inks. The after-market ink we like the best is from Staedtler.

Accessories

La Cie and Barco Graphics monitors were shown at several resellers.

Desktop publishing: hole punchers, binders

I saw more companies selling desktop publishing equipment at Graphics of the Americas than at DRUPA printer trade show. Most of the hole punchers and spiral binding

equipment looked like it was made in Taiwan and then simply relabeled. In other words, a dozen different companies were all selling the same equipment.

Renz America is a bit different. Renz is a large and well-known corporation. They sell desktop bookbinding and lamination systems. The person I have seen at several of the trade shows is John Murphy, their president. Their phone # is (413) 789-7700; his e-mail jmurphy@renz.com

Rilecart of America was listed in the trade show web site but I sort of lost track of whether they actually had a booth. A dozen other similar companies did.

Books and Training

Agfa publications was represented by Legasse, see below.

MacAcademy + Windows Academy was at the trade show. One **contact** we have is Suzanne Scheiber, suzanne@floridamt.com

The largest book distributor which was at Graphics of the Americas was Legasse. They distribute the nice books by Agfa as well as other books on printing and digital imaging. **Contact:** David Legasse, e-mail dave@legasse.com

The other key source of books is GATF, Graphic Arts Technical Foundation, e-mail csweeney@gatf.org GATF sells books on color management and printing (traditional printing, not inkjet).

Color Management

There were too many products at such a large trade show to review completely. But I will mention X-Rite. They make the instruments to measure color, especially for proofing. If you need color management or color matching, then you need X-Rite tools.

X-Rite, William M. Owens, Jr, Product Manager, e-mail bowens@x-rite.com

As for their helpful 49-page booklet, "The Color Guide and Glossary." Its free and well worth the effort of getting a copy.

Monaco had a nice booth. We cover theirs and other color management products in a brief FLAAR Fast Facts report on color management.

GretagImaging and **GretagMacbeth** both had stands. They make the kind of professional product you would expect from a European company with headquarters in Switzerland.

Summary

Of the two trade shows PMA was far superior to Graphics of the Americas. The Graphics of the Americas had a misleading list of exhibitors on its web site. Dozens and dozens were not in fact exhibiting. Whereas it is true that a few companies cancel at the last

minute, the quantity that were no-shows was suspicious. My impression is that the list on the Graphics of the Americas web site exaggerated shamelessly and maybe was not at all an honest list of who was really intending to have a corporate booth

Visiting a Tradeshow with Nicholas Hellmuth as your Guide



If you would like to visit a tradeshow and get personal consultation from Dr Hellmuth, this service is now available. You can walk the floor with him, meet key people, or have a more leisurely breakfast, lunch, or dinner and learn about printers, RIPs, inks, media, scanners, and/or digital cameras.

One option is just to attend any IMI seminar which Hellmuth may be also attending. Several of the IMI lecture conferences have a small tradeshow area attached. There is no additional charge for meeting and

speaking with Professor Hellmuth at any IMI conference (unless you need detailed technical consulting or marketing information or seek his assistance to design new products). IMI seminars are usually attended by between 40 and 70 people; there are plenty of times at breakfast, lunch, cocktail hour, or dinner to meet informally. Indeed that,s why these are the best conferences in the industry.

IMI web site is <http://imi.maine.com>. Just ask Al Keene which would be their most appropriate upcoming seminar.

The other option for learning directly from Nicholas Hellmuth is signing up for any of the courses offered by FLAAR at Bowling Green State University or FLAAR at Francisco Marroquin University. These courses are listed on www.digital-photography.org as well as www.wide-format-printers.org. Or you can just write info@FLAAR.org and say, please send me the PDF format syllabus on Dr Hellmuth’s training courses.

Most of the courses include the option of a tradeshow visit with Nicholas such as Photokina (photography tradeshow) in Cologne, Germany or PhotoExpo East in New York (early November). It is also possible he will be available during the first two days of SGIA in St Louis the last days of October.

www.wide-format-printers.org	www.fineartgicleeprinters.org	CLICK HERE TO VIEW EACH FLAAR NETWORK SITE
www.digital-photography.org	www.flatbed-scanner-review.org	
www.laser-printer-reviews.org	www.cameras-scanners-flaar.org	www.large-format-printers.org
www.FLAAR.org	www.ctpid.ufm.edu.gt	www.wide-format-printers.NET

NOTE: If you have trouble printing this pdf please [click here](#) for tips and help