

Fabrics & Soft Signage for Wide-Format Inkjet Printing



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Introduction

This year the network of FLAAR websites on wide-format inkjet printing will expand to offer more discussion of substrates, materials, media, and printable textiles. A first step is to discuss printable textiles, especially silk, cotton, and polyester.

The reason is due to a growing transition of sign makers from vinyl to soft signage. Gone are the days of billboard installers with their broom-like applications of glue to stick the sheets of stiff billboard material or vinyl to the billboard structure. Now it is so much less cost to ship a billboard made of any number of textile or textile-like materials. Industry analysts comment that it is so much easier to roll or even fold a textile banner than try to ship a long rolled section of vinyl.

For indoor use vinyl stinks, and combined with solvent ink the combination is unpleasant. With most fabrics you can use water-based inks or textile inks (most of which are also water-based). Soft signage is increasingly popular from eco-solvent, mild-solvent, lite-solvent, and full-solvent printers.

Fine art giclee artists have used cotton for decades. But you can also use silk. Guatemalan artist Violeta paints on silk and is now exploring options for creating limited edition giclee prints on silk.

UV-curing printers can also print well on many textiles or fabric like synthetic materials. On several occasions I have tested roll-to-roll printing on the Durst Rho 351R and Rho 320R in Brixen, South Tirol (northern Italy).

FLAAR covers fine art giclee on an appropriately titled web site, www.FineArtGicleePrinters.org.

We cover digital photography on www.digital-photography.org. Many photographers like to experiment by printing their images on canvas.

Solvent and UV-curable ink grand format printers we cover on www.large-format-printers.org.

Water-based and textile printers are read by almost one million people a year on www.wide-format-printers.org.

Over the next several months we will increase our coverage of printable textiles for each ink chemistry on each pertinent web site. But to get started now, in late January and early February, I decided it would be good to issue this initial full-color PDF to document the success in our industry of a good example of market success in printable fabrics, namely 3P Inkjet Textiles. As you can see in the following pages, FLAAR has been visiting their trade show displays for many years (photographs from earlier trade shows have not always survived meltdown of hard drives or deterioration of old CDs).

ISA 2003



In the beginning, many of the printable textiles were developed for fine art printing.



Although back in 2003 most solvent ink printing was on vinyl and traditional materials, banners and soft signage did exist then, and 3P InkJet company was already exhibiting inkjet textiles for solvent inks: NUR, VUTEK, Océ Arizona, Mimaki, Mutoh, Scitex Vision, and Eastech. Although not all these companies listed for 2003 has survived, 3P is still a leading brand in 2009.

PMA 2003



Polyester is an essential material for flags and banners with disperse dye and dye sublimation inks.

SGIA 2003



SGIA started as a screen printing trade show, but increasingly switched to inkjet printing processes, as has FESPA (a counterpart for screen printing in Europe).

Photokina 2004



Since FLAAR itself is an institute that comes from the world of both traditional and digital photography, we like to experiment by printing fine art photographs onto canvas and silk.



As you notice here, 3P is a company large and successful enough to have a significant presence at key trade shows around the world.



Additional views from the history book of 3P at major trade shows.



PMA 2004



SGIA 2004



Thomas Poetz (left) and US manager (above and right) during 2004.



Thomas Poetz at far left, owner and CEO. Behind the printer you can see Markus Fortmeier.



You can print onto 3P fabrics with almost any brand and model, here a “Gator” from ColorSpan (solvent ink, before they went to UV).

FESPA 2005



FESPA is the largest individual signage trade show in Europe (other than DRUPA but DRUPA is only every four years and frankly three days at FESPA Digital 2008 was more worthwhile visiting than 14 days of DRUPA 2008. And FESPA was much better organized.



ISA 2005



At far left, Markus Fortmeier.

SGIA 2005





The HP Designjet 5000 and nearly identical HP 5500.

Viscom 2005



We prefer to photograph the booths before the trade show doors open, because once thousands of people arrive, they are blurred when we take digital photographs. So this is why you do not see many people. It is before the main doors are open.



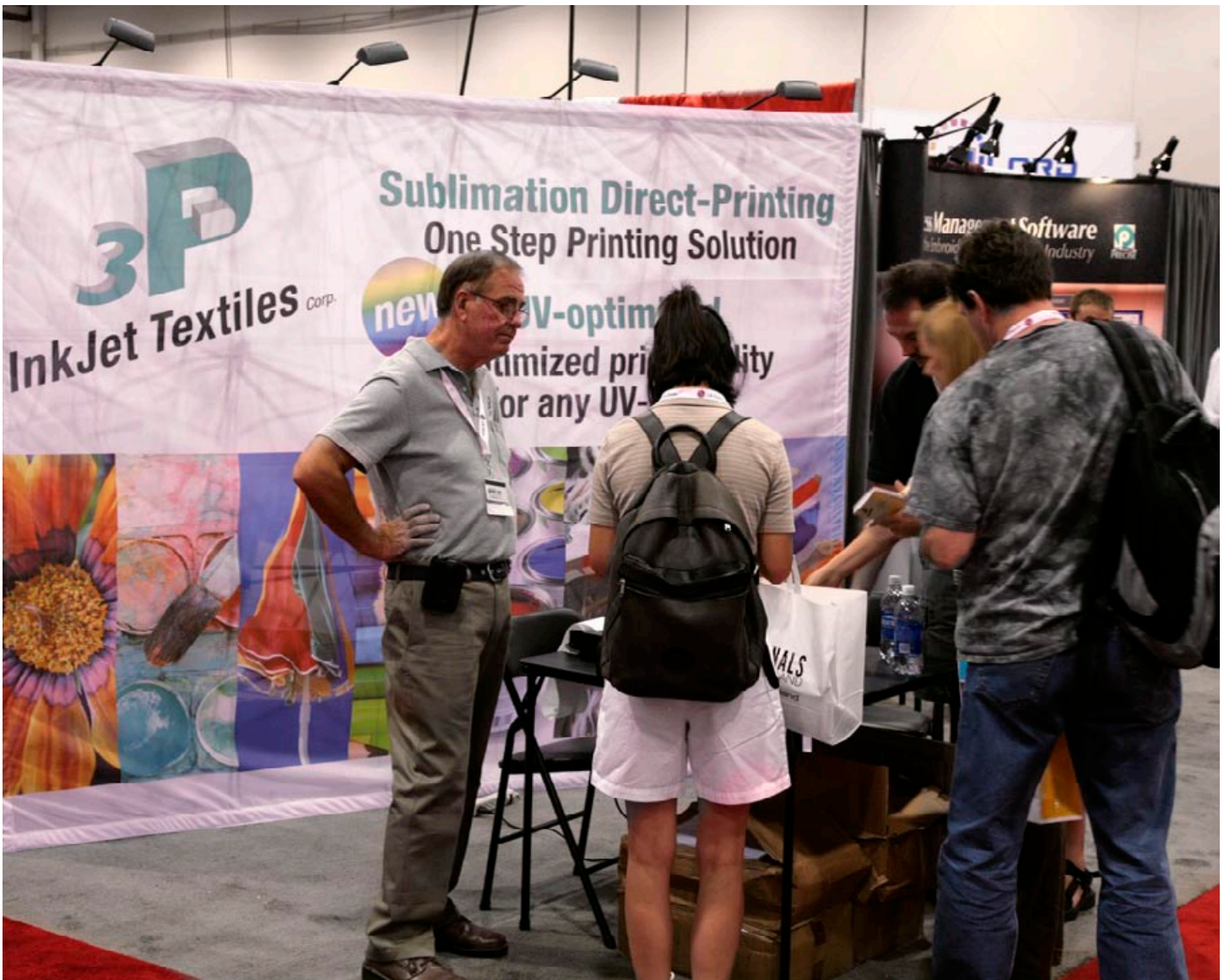
ISA 2006



PHOTOKINA 2006



SGIA 2006



There are two ways to sublimate: direct on the fabric inside your printer, or send your image on transfer paper to a heat press calendering machine. One process uses disperse dye ink, the other uses similar but slightly different dye sublimation ink (dye-sub ink is low energy; disperse dye is high energy; I thank Dr Tim McCraw of DTP Link, Yuhon-Kimberly for pointers from his years of experience in textile inks). 3P can assist you to learn all this also: namely to understand which ink, which printer, and which fabrics are best for your needs and the preferences of your clients. So be sure to visit their stand at a trade show in your part of the world.

ISA 2007



Here is Nicholas two years ago at ISA 2007 in the 3P booth.

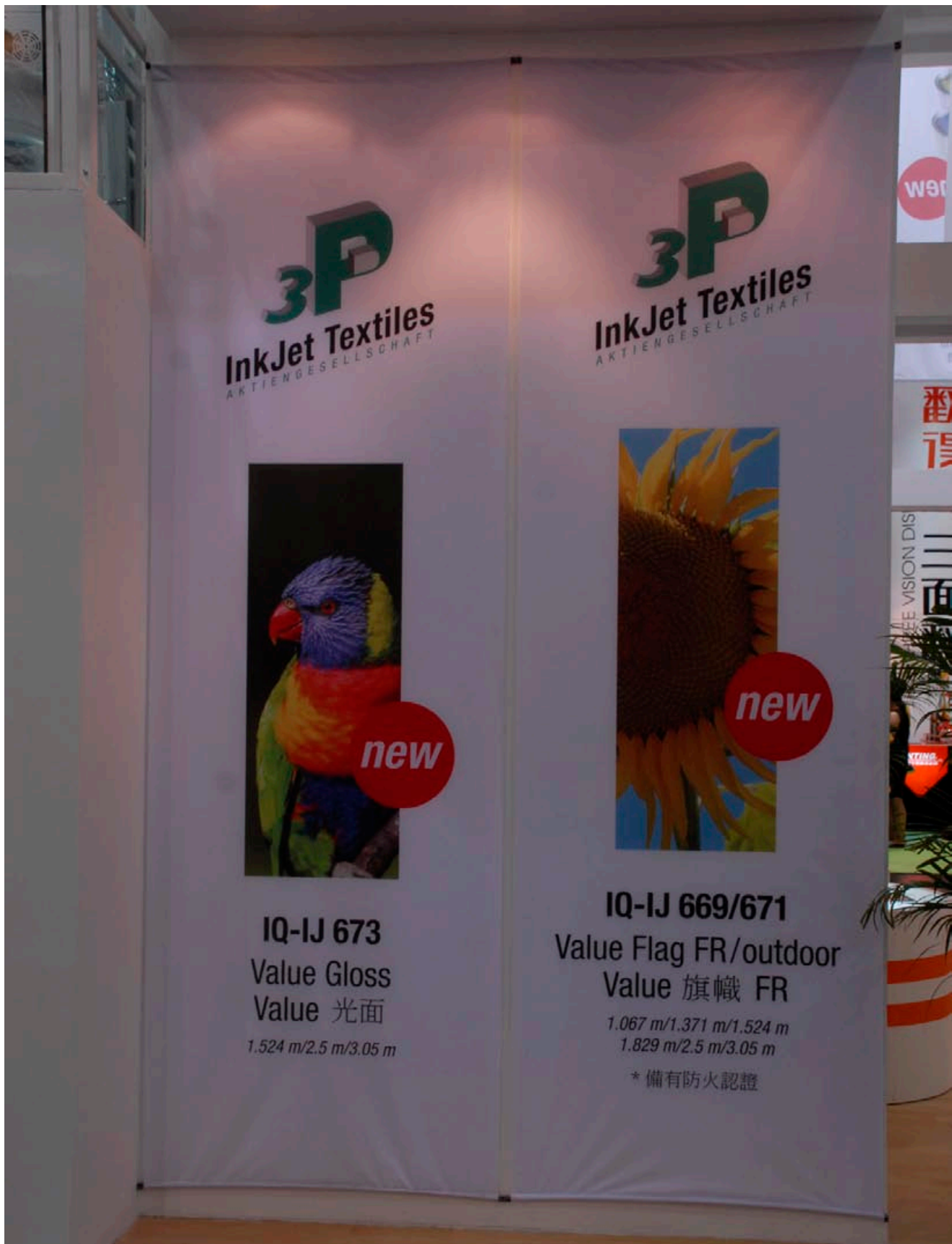


Nicholas and Thomas Poetz.



Nicholas Hellmuth and Markus Fortmeier.

Shanghai 2007





FESPA 2008





Shanghai 2008



ISA 2008









Nicholas Hellmuth and Markus Fortmeier at ISA 2008.

As for textile equipment, our suggested brand is DigiFab. Besides the inkjet printer for textiles, the StampJet, DigiFab has several related products such as heat transfer sublimation equipment and RIP software especially for textiles.

If you need more information about **DigiFab textile printers**, please contact:

Los Angeles - Main Office - Factory

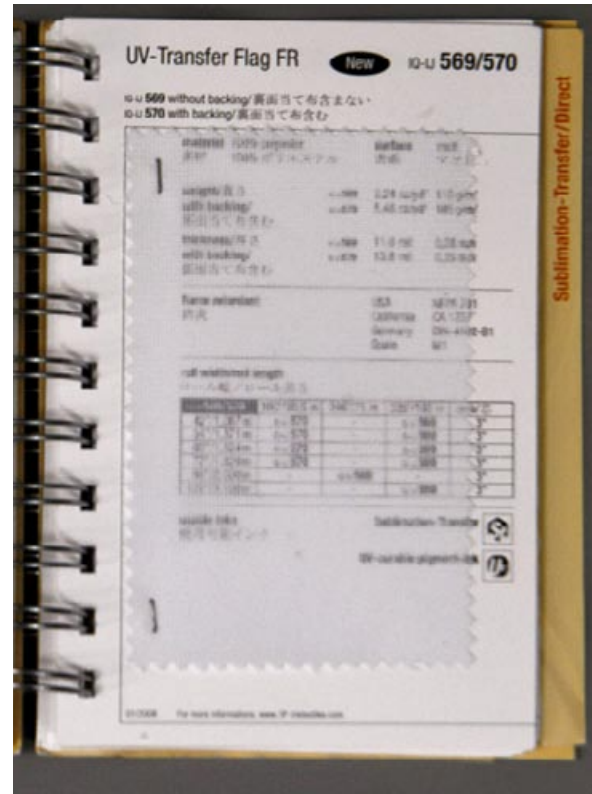
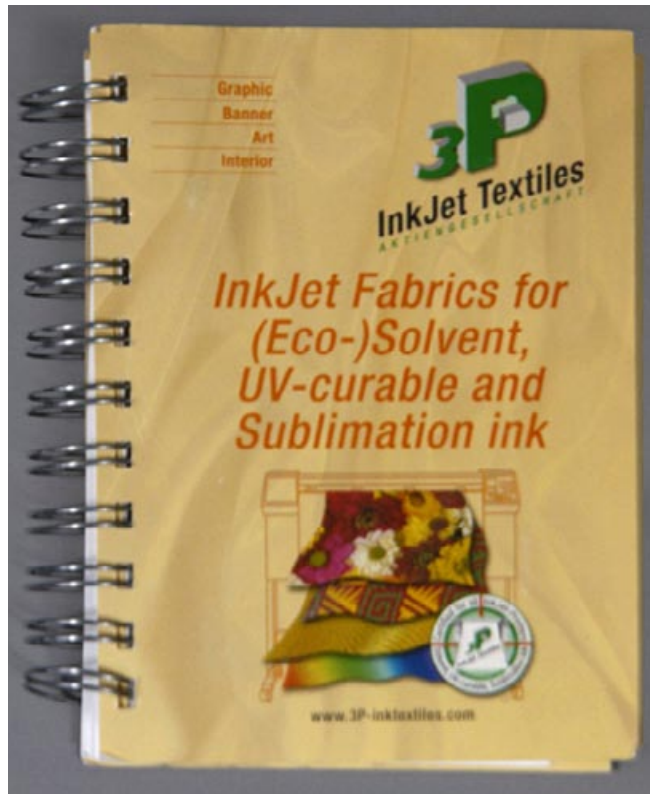
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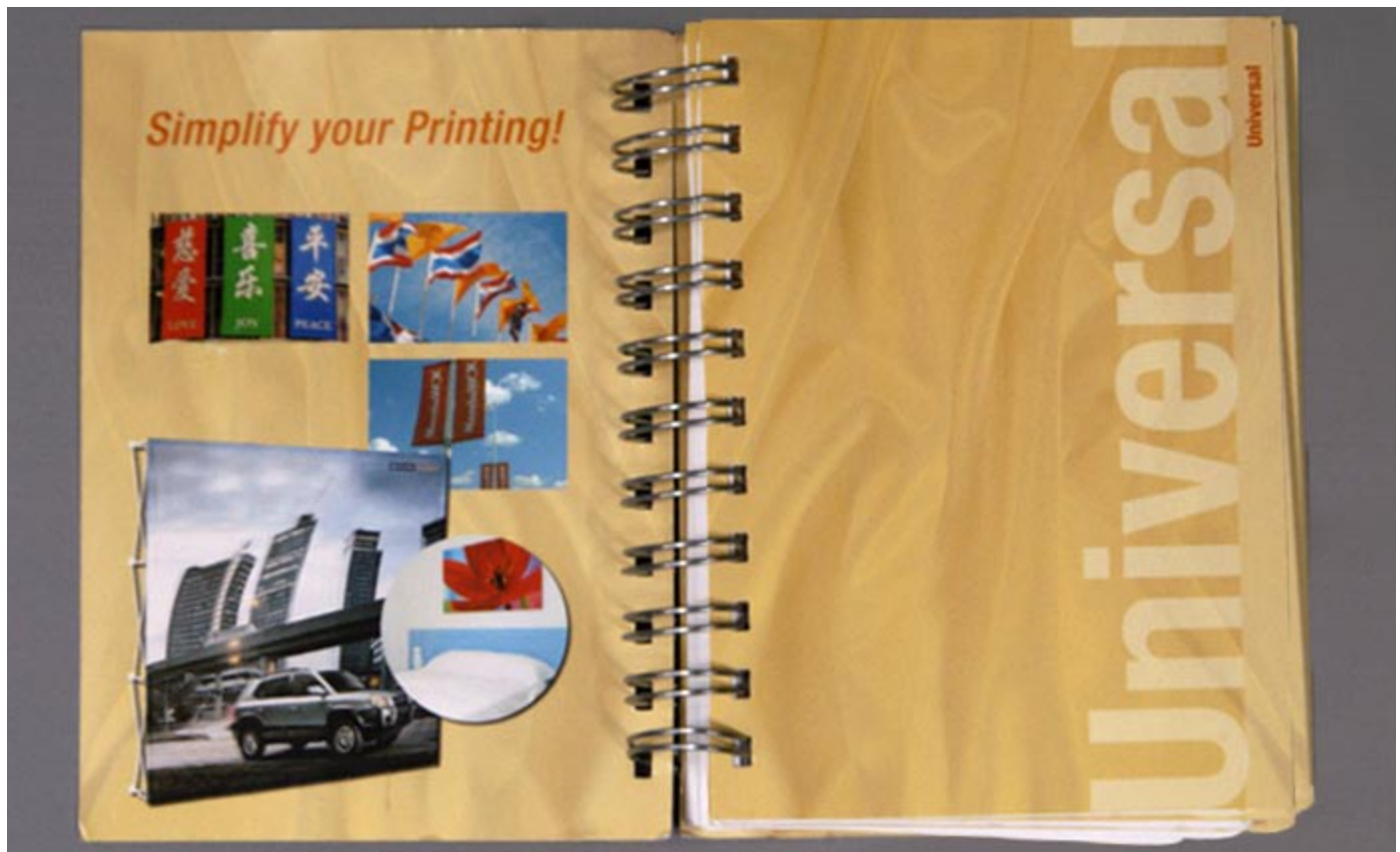
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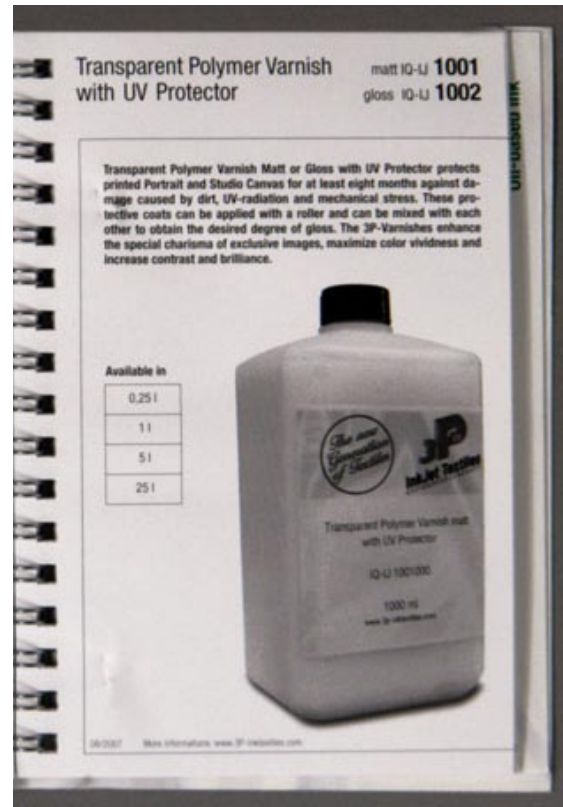
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Ask for a swatch book by contacting info@3P-inkTextiles.com. If no answer call 1 866 3PIJTEX (1 866-374-5839).





We show here only a fraction of the swatch books. 3P offers printable textiles for just about all major kinds of inkjet inks.

