

# Reliable Full Solvent After-Market Inks



# AT Inks



*Nicholas at the booth of AT Inks in SGIA 2009 with manager of this family owned and operated international ink company.*

## Introduction

During the past ten years, when I have visited printshops around the world, I have often been told about after-market inks that clog printheads badly. And in recent years of course you hear about cheap inks from Asia that lack enough pigments to provide adequate color. So as a service to our readers, FLAAR is now doing more evaluation of wide-format inkjet inks.

We do not evaluate inks for desktop printers; only for wide-format, which means 24 inches and wider.

In order to evaluate an ink, first we check out the company. What kind of company is it? Who are the owners? What is their philosophy?

We learn about the company by visiting their world headquarters, but we also learn about a company by asking end-users who use the ink. Plus we check around to learn the reputation of the company within the overall wide-format inkjet industry. The inspection of end-users means finding printshops that use the ink and interviewing the owners, managers, and printer operators.

This obviously involves considerable travel, and time, and staff: more than just Dr Nicholas Hellmuth. FLAAR currently has five graphic designers, five web designers, several Technical Writers, plus a full-time in-house staff to handle Nicholas's field trips around the world to visit the ink labs and end-users. So logically this kind of an evaluation is a professional service with a budget as a research project. We have many years of experience in evaluating inks (and substrates, media, printers, cutters, color management) so can be efficient in evaluating an ink or other product in the wide-format printing workflow.

## Evaluation of AT Inks

At sign expos such as SGIA, ISA, FESPA, DRUPA, VISCOM as well as the signage trade shows in Dubai, FLAAR is there to see what products are being exhibited. Naturally we see lots of booths for ink companies. But many of these companies come and go; we are interested primarily in well-established companies or new companies but ones that have promise and potential.

During the last several years I have noticed the booth of AT Inks, including in past years when their original brand name was Aqua Tint inks. Then one day, in the Delta airlines business lounge in New York, I overheard someone asking for a photo, and I simply loaned him my cell phone. Turned out it was one of the brothers of AT Inks (Rex-Tone, the company, is family owned and family operated).

Then in subsequent years I visited their booth and by now had learned enough about this company's reputation to warrant proposing an evaluation project. So in early 2010, after the Dubai sign and graphics expo, I flew to India to inspect their offices, plus to visit an end-user. It was also possible to visit the Taj Mahal, which I really enjoyed, since architectural history was what I studied at Harvard while a student there.

### Site-visit case study of a print shop in Delhi, India

The first page of photos are snapshots of the visit to Amitoje Creations. It was night in Delhi and my flight left early the next morning, but the owner very kindly kept the company open until I could arrive. It is always nice to meet the people who have been reading the FLAAR Reports for years.



Amitoje Creations printshop site visit, in India. Mr Juneja, Managing Director, said he was pleased with the AT Inks.



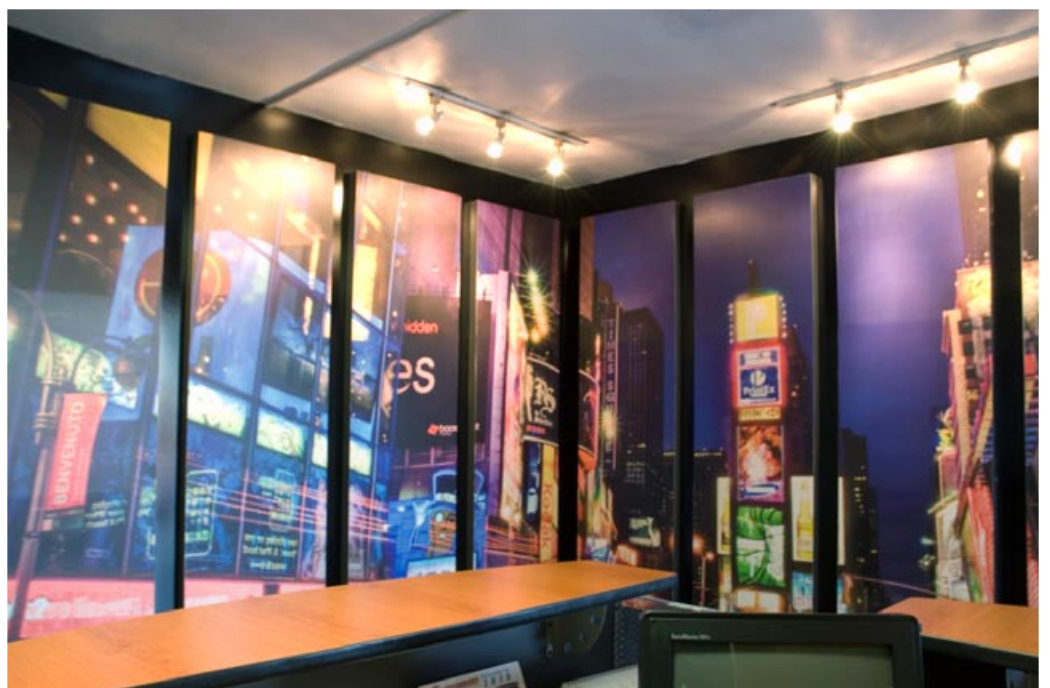
Gandinnovations solvent printer at Amitoje Creations.



DGI PS-3204D solvent printer at Amitoje Creations. The managing director said the AT Inks worked better than the original ink that came with the printer (from Toyo, a respected Japanese ink company).

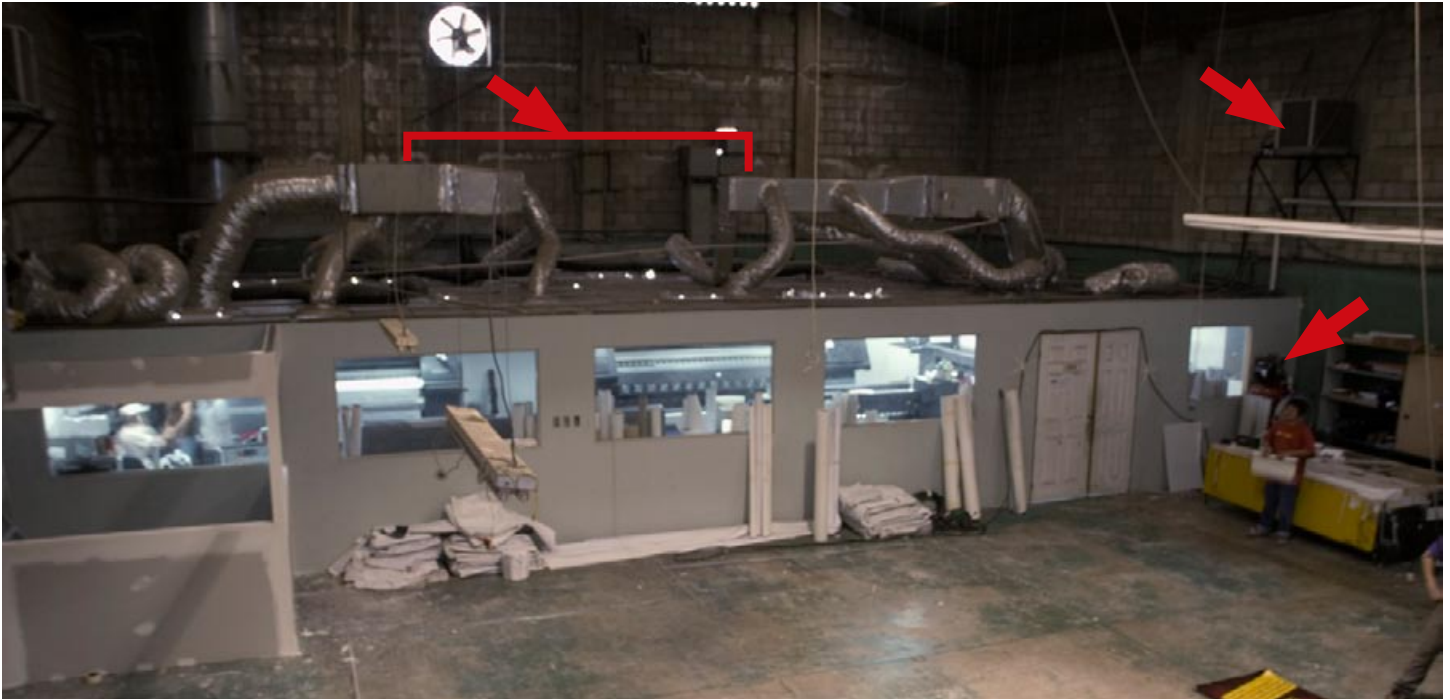
### Site-visit case study of a print shop using AT Inks in Guatemala

Since the FLAAR offices have been in Guatemala for decades, it is convenient to undertake evaluations in the print shops here. It is always a pleasure to spend time with the print shop owners and managers, providing them with tips, in appreciation of their hospitality of opening up their printing company to our evaluation and inspection team.



Front desk Imagen Visible printshop.

This company produce signage in different substrates, using for this five different solvent printers. Unfortunately they didn't have a UV flatbed printer for rigid media but their EFI Rastek H700 will arrive within a few weeks.



Print room general outside view.  
 You can see the complex air supply and extract system needed to keep the fumes from five active solvent printers under control.



Print room inside view.  
 In a solvent printer environment, it's necessary to have an air injection and extraction system, in order to have a controlled environment, free from the strong odor produced by the ink solvent.  
 As the operators of these printers comments, since they made the change of ink, the solvent odor that AT Inks emit is not as strong as that previously used.



Pablo Martínez from FLAAR, interviewing the printer operator about the ink performance. According to the comments of the printer operator from this printshop, one benefit of this ink in addition to its price and consumption economy, is the higher quality than the previously used since it doesn't clog the nozzles as often as the other.



Eduardo Camacho (CEO), Javier Gamez (Manager) and Dr. Nicholas Hellmuth discussing about the ink quality.



The printshop managers are very pleased with the ink quality, they said that the ink can achieve better brightness and color accuracy than the ink they previously used, which was from Triangle (a well known and respected ink company).



In containers on the HP Scitex Grand ink. The HP printer is the only one of the five solvent printers in which the company is using the AT Inks. They are using Triangle inks for their Infiniti printers, though indicate that on one of these printers with Triangle ink there are serious ink issues. My personal opinion is that it is not always a good idea to use an ink made for an antiquated Xaar printhead in a newer more productive Spectra Skywalker head. If they had a Triangle ink for this specific print-head (or an AT Inks for the Skywalker), I estimate they would have better results.

Maria Reneé from FLAAR, holding AT Inks bottles used in the HP Scitex Grand printer at Imagen Visual printshop.



To achieve a complete study of the inks, the FLAAR team intends to keep visiting additional printshops that use this ink to collect information from end-users.

The people of Imagen Visual in Guatemala tell us that with the use of the AT Inks they improve the capability of the HP Scitex Grand printer. Not just in the print speed and image quality, also in the ink consumption and economy. This ink is 10% more affordable than the other they used before.



This printshop also has four other solvent printers (SID Signs printer, Mimaki JV33-160, Infiniti Fina 3360SW and a Infiniti Fina 320B) which could in the future change improve from a changeover to different inks.

### How to find AT Inks

AT Inks has a booth at many international trade shows around the world. At other trade shows the key managers are present even if there is no booth.

In many countries there are distributors: in Guatemala it is NovoColor. We will update this section with names of other key distributors. In America there is an office of AT Inks in Charlotte, telephone 1 704 542-2103. The telephone for the European office is +33 (0) 624 031027.

The e-mail for contacting the head office is [info@ATinks.com](mailto:info@ATinks.com).



Dr. Nicholas Hellmuth taking some notes of the HP Scitex Grand performance with AT Inks.