

Title:

Giclee Printing: Do it Yourself or Outsource?

Word Count:

520

Summary:

Giclee (High quality inkjet printing) can be either outsourced or done in house. There are technical, time and financial considerations in choosing the best avenue.

Keywords:

giclee, canvas printing

Article Body:

Photographers as well as painters have realized the revenue potential of printing on the variety of papers available for giclee. Giclee is the use of high quality inkjet machines to produce prints that will stand quality and time requirements.

Depending on the number of expected output as well as financial, technical and time resources, a decision to buy a machine or outsource needs to be considered. The positive aspect of going in house is obvious: you can print whenever you wish. Also, aside from the time spent, the cost of producing a giclee is limited to the materials and a service contract after the warranty expires.

On the other hand, there are drawbacks: the obvious investment of purchasing the hardware such as a digital camera, scanner, computer, printer etc. To produce large format giclees, this can translate into tens of thousands of dollars. What is more important is the learning curve, which is steep: I have been a professional printmaker for 15 years and I am still learning. Finally, giclee production is time consuming both with file preparation as well as the printing itself.. Do not believe the hype of salespeople and manufacturers who tell you that color matching software and profiling have made color work easy. It is not easy: exact color corrections require skill such as expert use of color layers and Photoshop masking techniques. If you are striving for precise color matching, expect to invest years learning how to. Of course someone can be hired in house. Skilled color technicians come at a price and are not easy to find. Another consideration is how often the machine will be run.

These printers do not like to sit unused for days. The nozzles will clog and it

will cost money in inks to flush them.

An extreme example is the Iris, which will clog severely even overnight and the nozzles will need to be manually flushed with water.

If you are an artist or photographer with a lot of spare time, willing to invest money and long hours you may be a candidate. I believe that if I was a painter I would rather paint than play around with a mountain of digital equipment. Our clients are all busy professionals who wisely chose to invest their time creating art and going out to market and promote their work.

If you decide to outsource, there are basically two avenues. You can go with a full service giclee printing company that will scan, color correct and proof your work. It is the most expensive road to take because you will pay not only for the printing but the time involved in the color correction and proofing. Set up fees and extras are common place with this option.

If you have ready to print files because you are soft proofing and have good color management skills, express services that cater to skilled customers, will produce prints with the same equipment and materials available from the full service companies.

Many websites offer a lot of information about the giclee printing process. Take the time to explore them and decide which avenue to take.