

Digital Giclée Prints

Creating a small format giclee reproduction from your fine art original is a multi-step process and involves these steps:

1. Conversion of your art to a digital “master” file

Before your prints can be made, your original fine art has to be put into a form that can be sent digitally to an inkjet (giclée) printer. There are several ways to digitize your art work:

- a. Scan the *original artwork* (I can scan original artwork up to 11” x 17”)
- b. Scan a *4x5 transparency* of your artwork
- c. Scan a *slide* of your artwork
- d. Scan a *glossy 4x6 or larger photo* of your artwork
- e. Photograph your larger art with a high-resolution digital SLR camera

The quality of your final giclée prints will be only as good as the quality of the scan/digital photograph.

If you are not able to photograph your artwork well, have it photographed professionally, then have the resulting image(s) (1) put on a CD at a high enough resolution to make the size print you want (i.e. 12x18 inches) at 200 dpi or better (the file size in this example will be approximately 26 MB). This is the preferred option.

(2) if your originals are 11x17 inches or less, provide the original art for me to scan. This option is preferred over options (3) and (4).

(3) made into 4x5 transparency(ies) that I can scan

(4) made into 8x10 glossy print(s) that I can scan

Out of focus, off-color slides or transparencies, or low-resolution photos from your digital camera will not make good quality prints. Accurate color in your scans, slides, transparencies or glossy prints will save you time and dollars during Step 2 (below).

2. Doing Color/Contrast Correction and Clean-up

Some color correction/value contrast adjustment of your digital image is often needed. Sometimes this is because the color or value in the slide or print did not reflect accurately the colors of the original art, and sometimes color correction/value adjustment is done because as the artist, you want to improve or slightly change the overall look of the image. Color correction and value/contrast adjustment of the digitized master image is labor intensive and requires the artist to be involved in the process to the extent of approving the proof image(s).

In addition to color/contrast adjustments, each scanned image is examined closely, and any scratches, dust marks or other imperfections are digitally removed. If the artist wishes, their signature can be digitally removed from the image so that each giclée can be re-marqued (re-signed) by the artist after printing.

Basic color correction and cleanup is included in the first print price. Additional color correction/cleanup will be billed at \$30/hour in quarter-hour increments.

3. Proofing the digital image

Computer monitors display in RGB color (light) while the final output on canvas or paper is CMYK color (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and black inks used to create “full color” images). While computers and printers can be adjusted so that what you see is on the monitor is close to what you get in print, the final test is how the image looks on the particular paper or canvas the artist has chosen for their prints.

Up to two 8x10 proofs on the chosen substrate (paper or canvas) are included in the base price. Additional proofs cost \$5 each.

4. Printing your Giclée(s)

The printing term *giclée* is derived from the French verb *gicler*, which means *to spray*. That is precisely what the inkjet printing process does.

Your image will be printed on an Epson Stylus Pro 3800 inkjet printer, using pigment-based archival inks applied to the paper or canvas (the substrate) in extremely small droplets. The maximum resolution of this printer is 2880x1440 dpi. These archival pigmented inks printed on archival paper have been tested for lightfastness and are expected to last 76-118 years**, depending on the substrate, when framed and displayed in normal interior conditions under glass or sheet plastic (like Plexiglas). Other kinds of papers and prints on canvas have longer or shorter life expectancies, but none have shorter life expectancies than 25 years*.

The artist must sign off (approve) the final proof before printing begins. Giclées may be printed on a wide variety of substrates; most artists print on standard fine art paper (smooth or textured) or artist canvas. The base price includes printing on any of these standard papers:

Standard papers: *Epson Watercolor - Radiant White* a slightly textured finish – equivalent to “not press” WC paper, which is somewhere between hot press and cold press – neutral off white
Epson Ultra Premium Presentation [formerly Enhanced Matte] a smooth finish, neutral white paper equivalent to hot press WC paper
Epson Premium Luster Photo Paper a low-gloss smooth paper for those who want a non-matte print

Other papers: *Epson Ultra Smooth Fine Art* a smooth, hot-press equivalent paper, heavier than Epson’s Ultra Premium Presentation paper
Somerset Velvet for Epson a velvety surface, warm off white – equivalent to cold press WC paper
Illuminata Watercolor similar to Epson Watercolor - very slightly whiter, but still warm toned
Red River Aurora Natural a natural white, slightly textured paper, heavier than Epson Watercolor
Red River Watercolor Text (an uncoated, antique white, slightly textured sheet. Images are “softer” on this paper because it is uncoated

I have other papers that can be special ordered. Ask to see samples and prices. I do not print on canvas, but will be happy to special order canvas prints for you.

5. Varnishing or Sealing the Print(s)

A giclée on fine art paper should be handled carefully to avoid getting oily fingerprints or dirt on it, and it should be framed like a pastel, watercolor or any other fine art work on paper—under glass or a sheet acrylic like Plexiglass®. Giclées framed under glass or sheet acrylic do not need any additional coating or sealing, but you can add to their longevity by sealing them with a clear acrylic sprayed on varnish prior to framing under glass or acrylic glazing.

*With advertised longevity figures of about 76 years for Epson's *Ultra Premium Presentation (formerly Enhanced Matte)* paper and 118 years for their *Watercolor Radiant White* paper, the **Epson Stylus Pro 3800** makes very long-lasting prints. The 3800's UltraChrome K3 inks are Epson's newest pigment-based archival inks. Pigment inks are not as media-dependent in order to get decent longevity figures. As basically, "ground up rocks" or minerals, pigments are fairly "bullet-proof" to chemical reactions between the coating components found in various media. Most experts agree, that with the exception of newsprint, even the worst non-archival papers or canvas will probably give at 25 - 50 years of longevity with pigment inks. Although pigmented inks do not have as wide a color gamut as dye-based inks do, they reproduce most works of art very well and the K3 inkset, which includes light cyan, light magenta and three levels of black inks in addition to the basic cyan, yellow and magenta, provides a much wider color gamut.

** results from lightfastness testing done by Wilhelm Imaging Research, Inc., www.wilhelm-research.com