
What's a Digital Painting?

I create digital paintings on my computer by drawing/painting on a digitizing tablet using an electronic pen instead of a traditional pencil, marker, ink pen or brush on paper. I'm calling these digital paintings, because they have a more painterly "look" than the photo or drawing I start with. When I'm happy with my image, it's printed on a professional inkjet printer using archival pigmented inks on archival paper or canvas. After the prints are made, I may alter them further by adding traditional mediums (watercolor, ink, acrylic gel mediums, collage, etc.) to create unique pieces.

Sometimes I print just ONE image, and this is a UNIQUE PRINT, because it's the only one. Sometimes I print 100 or fewer copies of an image, and these LIMITED EDITION PRINTS are signed and numbered just as traditional editions of prints are. Sometimes the image I create is conceived as an open edition, with no limit on the number of copies that may be printed.

Digital art is a relatively new medium, and has its detractors, just as photography did in its early years. But I consider the computer simply another tool, just as my paintbrush is a tool. Instead of pushing paint around, I'm pushing pixels. Until I dip the brush in paint and apply it to paper, or until I touch the pen to my digitizing tablet and start to draw, nothing happens. Art originates with the artist, not from the tools used to create it.

Giclées are just a fancy (French derived) name for high-quality digital prints. A true giclée must be archival - that is printed with an ink set that has undergone rigorous lightfast testing* on the substrate (paper or canvas) on which the print is made. Obviously, the paper or canvas must be archival too. Digital or giclée prints that meet this criteria can be expected to last 75-80 years (canvas) or 100 plus years (archival papers) based on accelerated lightfast testing.

* Wilhelm Imaging Research, Grinnell, Iowa

– Ellen Fountain

