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Digital Pigment Print

Digital Pigment Print Definition

The term "pigment print" is used generally for any type of printed image that uses strictly pigments. Pigment printing processes have been utilized since the middle of the 19th century. The image stability of pigment printing is superior to that of any other method of printing, including traditional silver-halide or metal-based.

Digital inkjet printing has seen a surge in the use of the pigment ink as ink sets have been refined to be compatible with the latest in high-resolution inkjet technology.

Where archival dye-based ink sets exhibit excellent color gamut, pigment inks excel in permanence. A dye is molecularly soluble in its vehicle, but pigment is not. Pigment particles tend to be large enough to embed into the receiving substrate making them water-resistant. The particulate nature of pigment inks ensures their archival superiority. A particle of pigment is less susceptible to destructive environmental elements than a dye molecule.

Many digital papers have coatings which enhance color gamut. However, these delicate coatings are susceptible to scuffing and scratching, and diminish the archival properties of the print. Prints made with coated substrates are not considered true digital pigment prints.

Considering the above factors, TeraJet defines a **digital pigment print**, sometimes referred to as a pigmented paper print, as **a digital image rendered onto an uncoated, natural fiber substrate with pigment inks.**

The Emerging Digital Pigment Print Market

As the nascent genre of digital art and photography gains acceptance in the art community, creative professionals are turning to digital pigment prints to manifest their work. This market has grown rapidly as a function of the elevated quality of digital prints. As a result, a digital pigment print is now a formidable and common photographic and fine art medium.

The major auction houses of Philips de-Prury, Christies, & Sotheby's regularly hold fine art and photographic sales that include digital pigment prints. Notable artists and photographers that employ the medium include Annie Liebovitz, Philip-Lorca di Corcia, Chuck Close, Wolfgang Tillmans, and Catherine Opie.

Recent auctions of digital pigment prints have fetched \$10,800 for Annie Liebovitz, \$9,600 for Chuck Close, and \$22,800 for Wolfgang Tillmans (April 23/24 2004, Photographs, New York, Phillips de Pury & Company.) Catherine Opie photographic inkjet prints demand \$5400 per image (April 27 2005, Photographs, New York, Phillips de Pury & Company.)

The digital pigment print marketplace is emerging rapidly. One of the world's largest photographic print shows (The 2006 AIPAD Photography Show) in New York City included over 15 major galleries that deal digital pigment prints and inkjet prints from the photographers they represent worldwide.

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