Contents

Preface
Foreword by Mac Holbert (Nash Editions) xi

1 Printing Techniques
1.1 Basic printing techniques 1-2
How many pixels or dots per inch do you really need? 1-8
1.2 Offset printing 1-10
1.3 Laser printers 1-12
1.4 Dye-sublimation printers 1-14
1.5 Lightjet printing (digital photo print) 1-16
1.6 Inkjet printing 1-20
Inkjet technology 1-20
Droplet size 1-23
Printer resolution 1-23
Number of inks 1-24
Type of inks 1-24
1.7 Other printing techniques 1-25
1.8 How to pick your fine art printer 1-25

2 Inks, Papers and Print Permanence
2.1 Print permanence 2-2
Light as a factor of print permanence 2-6
Temperature influencing 'dark fading' 2-6
Humidity 2-7
Gases and their influence on print longevity 2-8
How to improve the permanence of your prints 2-8
2.2 Inks 2-10
Dye-based inks 2-11
Pigmented inks 2-12
2.3 Papers 2-14
Paper characteristics 2-15
Paper ingredients 2-16
Whiteness and brightness 2-17
Paper coating 2-19
Paper surface – paper finish 2-22
Paper size 2-23

Matching inkjet technology, subject paper and ink 2-24
Some more characteristics 2-24
Other materials 2-26
Paper handling 2-27
Suitable digital fine art papers 2-29

3 Color Management for Printing

3.1 Understanding different color models 3-2
RGB color model 3-3
LAB color model 3-3
CMYK color model 3-4
Grayscale mode 3-5
HSB/HSL color model 3-5
Color spaces 3-6
3.2 Understanding color management 3-6
Why you need to understand color management 3-7
ICC profiles 3-7
What is a color management system? 3-8
Color working spaces 3-10
Visualization of color spaces 3-12
Color space mapping 3-14
3.3 Creating device profiles 3-16
Camera profiles 3-17
Printer profiles 3-17
3.4 Profiling your monitor 3-18
Calibration by eye 3-18
Hardware based calibration 3-18
Calibration settings 3-19
Calibrating and profiling using Eye-One Display 2 3-19
3.5 Photoshop color management settings 3-23
3.6 Profiles for your printer 3-27
Profiling your printer 3-29
Printer profiling using Eye-One Photo 3-30
3.7 Installing and uninstalling profiles 3-34
3.8 Finding the printers black point and white point 3-35
3.9 Sanity-check 3-37
3.10 Soft-proofing and gamut warning 3-39
3.11 Metamerism and bronzing 3-43

4 Fine Art Printing Workflow

4.1 Basic printing workflow 4-2
4.2 Tuning tonality 4-3
Global tonality tuning 4-8
Local tonality tuning 4-15
Dodge and burn using Layers 4-26
4.3 Tuning colors 4-28
Selective saturation improvements 4-28
More saturation and contrast tricks 4-32
Removing blue shadow casts 4-39
4.4 Sharpening 4-43
4.5 Resizing 4-44
4.6 'Ring around' and Variations 4-45
Ring Around (text by Brad Hinkel) 4-45
Using Variations 4-47

5 Fine Art Printers in Practical Use

5.1 Printer installation 5-2
5.2 Printer adjustments 5-4
5.3 General driver tasks and settings 5-5
Settings that influence print quality 5-5
More settings 5-8
Printer driver settings with Mac OS X 5-10
5.4 Printing from client software 5-17
5.5 Test prints 5-20
5.6 Print quality related issues 5-21
5.7 Main fine art inkjet printers 5-22
Epson Printers 5-22
HP printers 5-34
5.8 Some recommendations for printing 5-46

6 Printing Packages and RIPs

6.1 What is a RIP? 6-2
Why use a RIP? 6-2
6.2 Printing using a printing package 6-3
Qimage 6-4
6.3 Printing using a RIP 6-8
Quad Tone RIP 6-8
ImagePrint by Colorbyte Software 6-12
EFI Designer Edition 6-15

7 Black & White Prints
7.1 Workflow for B&W prints 7-3
From color to Black & White 7-3
7.2 Printers with B&W-enabled drivers 7-6
B&W with Epson UltraChrome K3 printers 7-6
B&W with HP Photosmart 8750/8450 7-8
7.3 Special software (RIPs) for B&W 7-9
Colorbyte's ImagePrint 7-9
QuadToneRIP 7-11
Other solutions 7-11
7.4 Papers for B&W prints 7-12
7.5 Softproofing for B&W 7-13
More information on B&W printing 7-16

8 Image Judgement
8.1 Critical image judgement 8-2
8.2 Control tools 8-5

9 Presenting Fine Art Prints
9.1 Presentation options 9-2
9.2 Portfolio binders 9-2
9.3 Matting 9-3
True matting 9-3
The principle matting process 9-4
A mat cutting sample session 9-6
Faux matting 9-10
9.4 Framing 9-11
9.5 Coating 9-14
9.6 Laminating 9-15
9.7 Put your print in its true light 9-15
9.8 Albums 9-17
9.8 Storing prints 9-18

A Glossary / Abbreviations

B Resources
B.1 Recommended Books B-1
B.2 Useful resources in the Internet B-2

C Index

Preface

Camera: Nikon D2X

Digital inkjet printers have been around for several years. Early consumer models provided neither the means for printing photographs with quality similar to common silver halogenid prints (normal photos on photo paper from film or slide) showed nor did inkjet prints offer the lightfastness of silver halogenid prints. For most users, the printers which delivered the desired image quality (e. g. IRIS prints) were rarely affordable. This has changed dramatically in the last few years, with 2005 giving a further push to the inkjet market. With the rise of digital photography, the demand and market for a new breed of inkjet printers arose and is now accommodated by manufacturers like Epson, HP, Canon, Lexmark, Dell and others.

One of the first A3+/Super B printers suitable for both fine art printing and the budget of a broad range of buyers was the Epson P2000, and even more the P2200 (P2100 in Europe). The breakthrough of this printer was based on its quality, reasonable price and its Ultrachrome ink set. A lot of images give the proper impression only when presented at an adequate size – 4 × 6 inches for most good images is not the optimum choice; they just don't impress. For many good shots, even Letter, Legal or A4 is not large enough. This is why A3+/Super B (about 13 × 19 inches) printers, at an affordable price, are important. There was an explosion of new printers of that size introduced in 2005 and it continues in 2006.

For some printing, it may be advisable to go even larger in size. Printer makers, like HP, Canon and Epson, also cover formats up to about 44" wide. There are many more large format printers out there (e.g. from Encad, Océ, Mutoh, Roland), yet most of them are really not designed for fine art printing. For this reason, we mainly deal with moderately sized prints and printers – typically from letter/A4 to C/A2. Most of the aspects we cover, however, will also apply to both smaller and larger printers and prints.

Put your feelings into a print

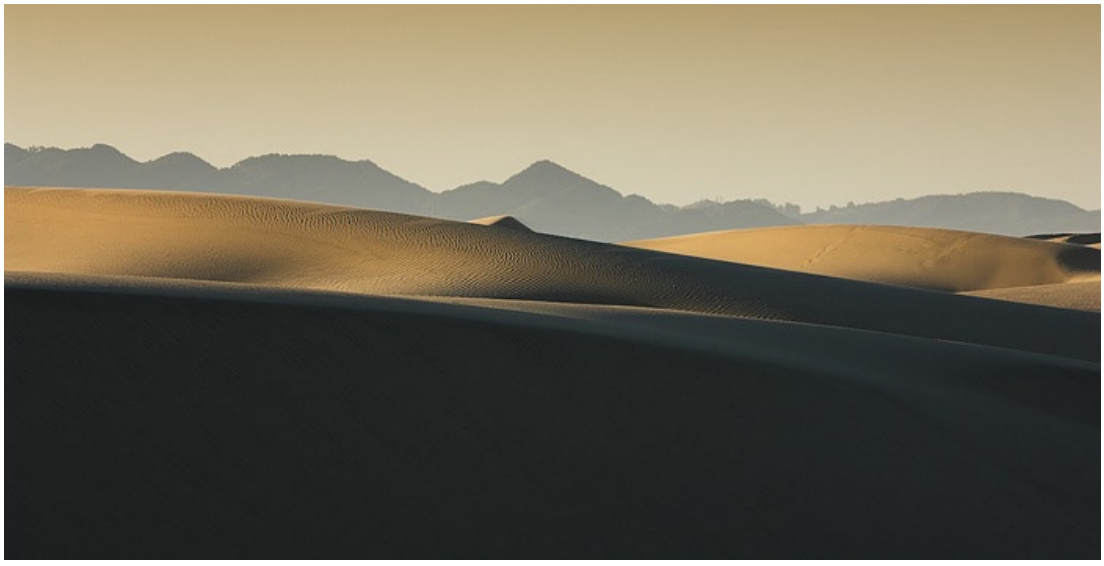
Though fine art printing may seem to be a particularly technical process, it may also be very emotional and sensual. As the term expresses, it is the printing of art and in an art-like manner. It allows you to lay down on paper an image created with your camera, you enhanced with your image application so that is closely represents the picture you had in mind when shooting the original. The print allows you to break away from the often restricting computer and display and recreate your vision to other people, possibly a broad audience – or give it away or even sell it. Today's fine art printing, using a good inkjet printer, allows you to produce a quality equalling or sometimes even surpassing that of silver-halonid prints, and is clearly able to surpass that of offset or rotogravure printing. Done properly, you can achieve a richer color gamut and finer tonal gradations than with traditional book and magazine printing techniques.

As with other kinds of art, without the proper knowledge and experience, the resulting print may not be totally predictable from the image on your computer monitor, and you may have to try sev-

eral techniques, papers, sizes, borders and matts to achieve an optimal result.

Though most prints are either presented in frames behind glass, often reducing the visual appeal of a truly fine-art paper, you should very carefully select that printing paper. Take your time, and do some experiments to select the right paper for your prints. Paper with its tactile essence can be very sensual.

Try to match your paper, its color, surface, texture and gloss to the kind of print you make, to the subject of your image and the kind of feeling you wish to express. An architectural shot may want a different paper than a photo from nature, a black and white print a different paper than a colorful print, a print displayed without glass covering and a framed print behind glass.



Camera: Nikon D2X

Both authors use digital cameras – Uwe Steinmueller in a very professional way and Jürgen Gulbins as a serious amateur. They were both led to fine art printing by the desire to control their workflow from start to finish, from the shooting of photos to the finished print. Printing with a fine art printer, for them, is no simple, tiresome task, but the final step – a very important one – toward a pleasing image.

Planning for printing and printing itself takes time, but, in most cases, only a perfect, finished print gives full value to a good shot. Normally, only very few of all the photos you take will make it into a perfect, fine art print, but in many cases, this print will be the ultimate crowning of your photographic shooting. With the techniques shown in this book (together with others books we have published), you should be in complete control from the start to the very end of the process.

We hope that the control of this process and the creative tasks along the way, give you the same satisfaction and relaxation we found while doing it. Producing a satisfying print from your work has similarities to Christmas: the work is finished, and the present is unwrapped. You must still find a place to keep or present it, a place where you it can be enjoyed for years to come.

Matting, framing and hanging of prints is its own subject, and we go into it only briefly. We do, however, give some advice on how to keep and store your prints

Acknowledgments

Thanks to our many influencers and friends like Bill Atkinson, Jim Collum, Charles Cramer, Brad Hinkel, Mac Holbert and Ben Willmore.

Last but not least we want to thank Bill Horton for correcting our texts.

Uwe Steinmueller, San Jose (California) April 2006
Jürgen Gulbins, Keltern (Germany)

Foreword by Mac Holbert (Nash Editions)

In 1989 my partner, Graham Nash, and I embarked on a search for a way to save a large body of his photographic work. The original negatives had been lost while being shipped from Los Angeles to Graham's home in San Francisco. All that was left was a box of "jumbo" contact sheets. Graham had been offered a show at the Parco Galleries in Tokyo and without his negatives he was unable to put together an exhibit. In solving the "problem" we ended up creating a method and a studio that has been recognized by many as the first fine-art digital photography studio in the world. With the help of our friends David Coons and Charles Wehrenberg, Jack Duganne and I experimented with hardware and software and by 1991 had developed a product that we felt was ready for the world. As it turned out we still had much to learn.

The only source of information in those days was from the few individuals that were involved in the technology. When I opened the door to Nash Editions in July of 1991 I had basic working knowledge of word processing and database management but I didn't have a clue what the difference was between a pixel and a raster. I asked a lot of questions, nurtured a lot of friendships and slowly I began to develop an overview of image processing and image output. By the mid 1990's the Internet had become an excellent source of information exchange and I began to frequent the online forums that focused on imaging and printing. I can't remember specifically when I first saw the name Uwe Steinmueller but I believe it was either 2000 or 2001. Suddenly I noticed his name appearing everywhere. Not only was he in quest of information but he was, more importantly, sharing it with anyone and everyone who would listen.

I finally got to meet Uwe in 2003 when he and his wife Bettina visited my studio. Their enthusiasm for the digital photography revolution was obvious. I have seen many "experts" come and go over the past 16 years. Uwe's expertise and his openness have gained him a high level of respect and admiration in the evolving world of digital photography.

I am very impressed with the book you are about to read. It's information like this that has helped to raise the quality of digital output and reduce the traditional art world's resistance to the use of digital tools in art. It is a book written by someone who KNOWS fine art digital printmaking. Uwe's style is concise and to the point. This

comprehensive and complete guide to fine art digital printmaking should be included in the library of anyone who is serious about making fine art digital prints.

I only wish that all this excellent information had been available to me back in 1989 when I embarked on my digital journey. The hours I wasted … The ink and paper I wasted … The late nights … The cold suppers …

Mac Holbert April 2006

Read our brief introduction to Nash Edition in our Printing Insights #22: "Digital Printmaking & Printmakers".