



A tradition of quality since 1957

Giclée Reproduction Overview

We receive many calls from artists and photographers who are unfamiliar with the process of reproduction in the digital world, so we are providing overview of the process to help educate the community of artists and photographers who are interested in having their work reproduced.

If any part of the process as we describe it is unclear, please contact us and we will be happy to help clarify any area and answer any questions you may have. Keep in mind that the process we are describing below is our own. Other companies may use different methods to complete each step.

Step 1: Photography and Scanning

The first step is to photograph your artwork. We prefer that a professional photographer photographs your artwork and supplies us with a 4" x 5" transparency for us to scan with our high quality drum scanners. 2 1/4" or smaller transparencies, depending on the output size, may not reproduce to your expectations. We can recommend a photographer for you. If you are already working with a photographer or company to have your artwork photographed or transparencies scanned we can give you specifications to pass on to them. We cannot over-emphasize the importance of quality photography and scanning. Once the image has been digitized, we then carefully review it for flaws that were introduced in this phase and remove them. Next we compare the color to the transparency or original and make any necessary preliminary color corrections.

Step 2: Proofing

Once the scan is completed, the next step is to print a first color proof, usually at a reduced size to keep the cost down. This proof is printed on the actual media that will be used for the final reproduction so that any impact the media has on the color can be taken into consideration. We evaluate this proof compared to the original, if present, and if there is significant variance in color, we perform additional color corrections and reprint the proof. If we don't have the original or some other type of proof reference from the artist, we will usually send this first proof as is. There can be significant color, saturation, and contrast variances with transparencies, so we prefer to not adjust the image until we have artist's feedback. The artist either approves the proof as is, or requests additional corrections. If corrections are requested, we perform them and send another proof. This process continues until the artist is satisfied with the color.

The need for additional corrections and proofs depends on many factors and is difficult to predict. Some artists and photographers are more particular about precise color matching than others, and some originals use colors, such as fluorescents, that are very difficult, if not impossible, to accurately reproduce. Certain medias make it difficult to achieve some colors, and some colors don't scan or photograph accurately which requires more work to correct. For an exact match, we may go through six or more proofs, and sometimes the artist is happy with the first proof. It is most common for the first proof to be very close and require only minor corrections.



Step 3: Printing

Once the proof has been signed off, we can begin printing. Some medias come in sheets, and most are available in rolls, so we try to match the size and quantity of the prints to the correct size of media in order to use the media most efficiently and cost effectively. It is important to consider any margin/border for framing purposes as part of the print size when calculating the cost of the print. Once the prints are completed we trim them to your specifications and examine each one for quality.

When deciding on what quantity to print, keep in mind that the greatest financial advantage to digital printing is the ability to print on demand. The artist or photographer can print as few or as many of their limited edition at one time as their budget allows. While there are price breaks on printing larger quantities, it isn't necessary to print more than what is needed for immediate sale. Some artists print their entire edition at once to save money, but most print as many as they feel they will sell in a 3-6 month period. Some artists just keep one print on hand and order prints from us as they sell. Because of this, the artist doesn't have to make a large investment to make reproductions of their work, which opens up the reproduction market to artists who couldn't afford the financial risk of printing a large edition. It is also perfect for artists who want to test the sales potential of a particular piece.

Step 4: Archiving

Since most limited editions are not printed at one time, we keep the finished files ready to print in a state where they can be easily printed again and match exactly to the previous prints. In order to do this, we archive the files in their ready-to-print state and also make duplicate copies for additional safety. We can also burn the finished file to a CD for you.

At this point, we can continue to print as requested until the entire edition has been printed. We hope this overview has helped clarify the process. Again, if any areas need further clarification or you have more questions, please contact us and we will be happy to help.