

Trends for 1997: The Four C's Copiers, Computer Art, Canvas and Certificates

by Chris A Paschke, CPF

Having completed my travel year, I feel ready to discuss the trends for the new year. As classes are offered around the country, one question keeps pouring in by way of FAX, phone and e-mail. What do we do about computer generated art?

Last January I challenged the adhesive manufacturers to create a cold, roll or sheet adhesive that is dry (non-sticky) yet bondable by pressure. I feel there is a growing need for cold adhesives since the heat-questionable market continues to grow.

Giclees and Color Copies

Giclees are currently not a mounting question or issue at all. We already realize, or should already realize, that these limited editions are collectible art, often signed and numbered items, and therefore will be framed as conservation pieces. But what of the other computer Iris prints that are not considered giclee?

Fine art publishers are currently using the term giclee to describe images created with Iris inkjet printer technology on 100% cotton rag papers and canvas. Outside the fine arts, when printed on regular materials, they are generally referred to as Iris prints or proofs.

They look like a cross between a top-line four-color copy and a photograph and although their value may not be as limited edition art, until further research is compiled, it is best not to subject them to heat.

Copiers Vs. Printers

Aside from Iris prints, four-color copiers and color printers fall into two separate categories. I am currently working on a long-term project (funded by Seal Products, Naugatuck, Connecticut) concerning the



mastering mounting

lightfastness and heat sensitivities of digital images. Copiers are phase one of the project, printers phase two.

The deeper I research this project, the more complex the information becomes. Ideally, I hope to come up with a suggested listing of equipment types and their general reactions to moisture and heat. I'm also working with some of the large computer companies and attending digital imaging shows to access as much information as possible.

Does all this really matter to the framer of 1997? You bet it does. A giclee may be self explanatory, but what about a photocopy? Will heat effect or alter the toner colors? Will UV rays fade the image? Will wet or spray adhesives cause buckling because of thinner laser paper stock?

I don't have these answers just yet, but currently the mounting trend for the future is, "If you don't what it is...you better hinge it." Digital imaging is here to stay. The inks are more lightfast than ever before and advancement occurs almost monthly.

Again, the question for 1997 will be not "can this be mounted" but rather "Should this be mounted?" Although we know giclee art will be stretched or hinged as a limited edition, what about computer generated art?

True computer generated art is original art created with a computer through manipulation and editing by an artist or photographer. Outside images may be scanned into the computer, such as an RC photograph, then manipulated and mechanically altered, creating an image

Now you can really crank



anew. Art? Perhaps. One of a kind? Not with a computer memory. This is original art, though it may be produced through the printer as a limited run. As the negative remains the original photo rather than the photo print, the original of computer art remains actually in the computer's memory and the print is a copy. I suggest handling them all as originals...for it's too soon to tell.

Copier Reproductions As Limited Editions

Now what about original art that is copied by the artist, calligrapher or photographer for limited release? If a fine art calligrapher takes their original image and personally creates a limited run of 25-50 pieces using a high quality four-color copier (at an average price of \$1.50-\$2.50 each) on 100% cotton rag, 90# paper stock then markets

them at local galleries for \$25.00 each as limited editions, how are framers to handle these?

Granted, the artist has beat the financial costs of a limited edition offset run of 500 which could retail at \$150.00 each, but the others are still photocopies. The original might still sell for \$750.00, but are the copies art? The artists think so, as well as the buyer/collectors. They should be handled as any collectible with preservation methods, hinging and UV glazing. If an artist has signed and numbered an image they require framer respect.

Copyright and Canvas

Last January (PFM 1996, "What's Wrong With This Picture?") I disassembled a 25-year-old project of my

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Certificates

Okay, certificates are not a new trend for this year, but what to do with them just might be. I'm currently promoting the preservation approach for all educational and professional certificates. Diplomas, continuing education and professional documents are probably best presented with hinges, corners, or edge wraps. A certain degree of professional judgment will need to be exercised when speaking of perfect attendance awards and honor roll certificates.

There is more than one reason for this trend. Not only are many of the major universities issuing animal skin certificates (sheepskin or vellum) but some have computer generated lettering issuing the name and date as part of the certificate. Often the bulk of the diploma was professionally run but the computer additions could very well be heat sensitive. The actual lettering could transfer from the certificate during mounting to the release paper. Better to be safe than sorry.

In closing

Enough to ponder for another year? I guarantee to print updates throughout the year on developments in the digital imaging, canvas and anything else that might impact our business. What's the trend? Copier and computer art, canvas transfers and certificate handling.

Do we need new adhesives? We have terrific spray, wet, pressure-sensitive and heat tissues already, but what's new for the future? I repeat my challenge for a cold, non-tacky, tissue adhesive to fill the gap in the market. We need a clean, easy-to-use roll that bonds under the pressure alone of a vacuum or locked mechanical press. Not possible? What about putting a man on the moon, or computer generated art? We're gearing up for the year 2000, don't you think? After all, we are a state-of-the-art industry. ■

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Chris A. Paschke, CPF, owns Designs Ink, Oxford, Connecticut, featuring commercial and retail custom framing, product consultation, design and education. Specializing in mounting, matting and design creativity, she works with numerous industry leaders including Beinfang, Crescent