

Fine Weim

Weimaraner Fine Art

Giclee Printing (pronounced – “jhee-clay”)

“Giclée” benefits to artists & photographers – “Giclée” prints look better, last longer, and are more affordable than most other fine art prints. Just like digital sound re-invented the music industry... “Giclée” digital printing is revolutionizing the fine arts business. This new technology offers unsurpassed image quality in fine art color reproduction. Now, artists and photographers can affordably reproduce their work in stunning colors that rival the original on a wide variety of papers and canvas. “Giclée” lets you make museum quality prints one-at-a-time “as you sell them”, vs. “before you sell them”.

What is “Giclée” printing?

“Giclée” is French meaning “to spray-on”. “Giclée printing” is a term being used in the fine arts industry to describe a high end, digital, ink-jet printing process that reproduces museum quality prints that, in some instances, are rated to last up to 200 years. “Giclée” printers use specially formulated archival inks that produce exceptional color results on a wide variety of acid-free, fine art papers, canvas, and other materials. These large format, ‘Giclée’ printers can print on flat sheets, or roll fed stock, and print sizes ranging up to 70” wide by over 100’ feet long.

What does the term “true Giclée” mean?

Nothing. In recent years, the term “true Giclée” has been used by some who try to differentiate “Giclée” prints made on IRIS® printers, from “Giclée” prints made on other manufacturer’s printers. This term only confuses the industry and serves no constructive purpose. In truth, there are no “industry standards” defining “Giclée” printers. “Giclée” is NOT a brand name, NOR is it a proprietary technology tied to any manufacturer. “Giclée” simply means “to spray on”, and it describes a wonderful museum quality, digital printing process. Lots of companies make great “Giclée” printers.

Who makes “Giclée” printers?

In the early 90s, IRIS® printers, using water-based dyes, introduced the technology as a high end color proofing process for commercial printing. Today, many industry leaders like Epson®, Hewlett Packard®, Roland®, ColorSpan®, and others have introduced exciting products that raise the bar in “Giclée” printmaking, making it more affordable, and offer more choices than ever before. For example now ‘pigment’ vs. ‘dye-based’ inks and an ever increasing variety of print media are available to increase print quality and longevity.

What are “Pigment” vs. “Dye” based inks?

Different “Giclée” printers use different types of inks. Some use “pigment” inks, and some use “water-based dyes”. The first IRIS® printers used water based dyes because the color gamut was better. The disadvantage is, water-based dyes fade much faster and bleed when exposed to water. Pigment inks are more stable, last for generations, and artists can over-paint on them without bleeding. Today, newer pigment inks like Epson’s UltraChrome® inks provide the best of both worlds... color comparable to dyes, with the stability of pigment inks.

Are “Giclée Prints” and “Pigment Prints” different?

No. “Pigment Prints” are simply “Giclée Prints” printed with pigment inks. However, some are beginning to use this term to differentiate “pigment prints” from “Giclées” made with “water-based dyes”. Because “pigment inks” last much longer than “water-based dyes”, it’s reasonable to assume they have greater long term value. Understandably, people using “pigment inks” want people to know the difference. As pigment inks keep improving (like with Epson’s UltraChrome® inks), and consumers become more savvy, the “pigment” vs. “dyes” distinction will likely grow.

How long will a “Giclée” print last?

Archival “Giclée” prints are rated to last longer than photographs. Displayed properly, they can last from 25 years (water based dyes) up to 200 years (pigmented inks). Always be sure your “Giclée” is printed with archival inks, on acid-free materials, not displayed in direct sunlight, and conservation mounted under glass or plexi-glass to minimize contact with atmospheric contaminations. Any reputable artist, gallery, or printer selling a “Giclée” print should be both able and happy to answer questions about the archival properties of the print they’re selling.

About lightfast ratings & print longevity

The best, most objective information available comes from Wilhelm Image Research (www.Wilhelm-Research.com). Since the early 80s, Wilhelm has been testing materials for the photography and printing industries. Few manufacturers provide “fade-factor” guarantees because there are too many variables (light exposure, ink / substrate chemistry, atmosphere, etc.) that could affect them. However, most notable manufacturers refer to the Wilhelm estimates on their products. Also, Wilhelm publishes white papers, books and reports on their findings from their web site.

Proper storage & display conditions are critical

Your fine art “Giclée” prints need to be treated with the same conservation care of any other original print or fine art piece. Be sure it is conservation mounted, protected by glass or plexi-glass, and avoid display in direct sunlight. Remember that ALL prints, original paintings, or photographs degrade over time because the chemical properties of pigments, emulsions, and substrates shift with age, and all are affected by atmospheric conditions including humidity, dust, and other airborne contaminants. More information can be found at www.Wilhelm-Research.com .