

# What we do...

Our business has always been Fine Art *Giclée* printing, and until now we have maintained the principle of preparing digital printing images at no charge - providing that we do the printing. There has been a growing demand, however, for photography and preparation without going to print. There has also been a demand for printing direct from ready prepared images and photographs.

So, for 2009, we have worked out a systematic pricing policy that should satisfy the new demands without any disadvantage to our existing regular customers.

There will now be only one price for prints. We will charge a standard amount for photography, preparation, and proofing – but this charge will be fully credited against print orders placed within the following three months.

We believe that this is fair to everyone – and also simple and straightforward.

## *Giclée* Printing

*Giclée* refers to a new method of creating prints. The *giclée* process begins after a digital image is produced from the original painting, or the painting is scanned directly by a high-end scanner, or even photographed with a high-quality digital camera. Special software programs are used to manipulate the attributes of the digitized image to achieve the artist's own desired requirements. The approved image is then output to a sophisticated printer while the printmaker verifies the colour management elements. The word '*giclée*' itself is French, and means 'spurt' or 'squirt', however the spray is more like mist, each droplet being no more than the size of a red blood cell.

Modern *giclée* prints, made on special fine art paper, are expected to show no sign of fading after 100 years, provided the prints are kept in suitable conditions; for example, out of direct sunlight. It is worth remembering that the materials commonly used by artists survive no better than that.



## Photography



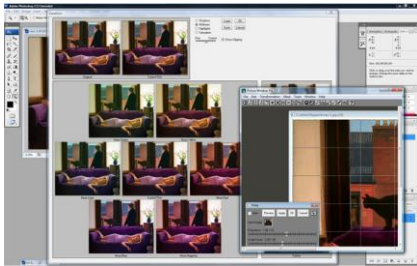
Andy has been a photographer for more than fifty years! Beginning with the traditional "Box Brownie", he has worked with half plate, 5x4, Speed Graphics, Pentaxes, and Leicas. He has been involved with digital photography for about fifteen years – as a user, and more importantly as a hardware and software developer.

He was in an almost unique position to judge the

moment to switch from conventional to digital photography, and has been solely using digital ever since. It's not just about the number of megapixels. It's about image depth, image quality, and the best lens. We update our cameras on a regular basis, of course, but our current lens has stayed with us for three generations of cameras, and we do not expect to change for a while yet.

## Digital Image Preparation

We work hard on the digital image—color matching, distinguishing artifacts that have to be removed from painterly characteristics, and the like—so that the end result is something that is beautiful in its own right. We have found that preparing the digital image for printing is always a long and complex process because simply switching the systems to “automatic” just doesn't work. It is at this stage that our skills are required and at this stage that the quality and accuracy of the final print is defined. We pride ourselves on our printmaking skills. In our view, the best *giclée* prints have a definite quality of their own; we would argue that a really good *giclée* could be considered a work of art in its own right, in the same way that a work created using traditional print methods is considered a work of art. This may seem a very radical statement, and there are some who will disagree, because *giclée* printing involves machines, but for us, you see, the process of printing is by no means a purely mechanical act. Even though we use computers and machines, printing, for us, is never simply a question of putting a digital image into the computer and then pressing the button that says 'Print.' There is heart in everything we do.



## Colour Proofing

Sometimes, after an artist gives us a transparency or we have photographed their work, they tell us to just go ahead and make the print without even worrying about seeing a proof. They know the finished product will be right. Now, that's trust. Often, the artist will approve the very best print we can make, even though it may be different from his/her original. As for our working with the artists, these are relationships built up over time. Andy has gotten to know even the brush strokes of individual artists. He has to know. For one thing, when he works to clean up an image he's got to be able to figure out which are artifacts to take out and which are not. One artist might typically spatter paint; another might never do this. We have to know which artist does what. We have to be able to distinguish art from artifact.

## Lighting for Proofing

We have found that cheap modern “energy saving” light bulbs are almost useless for proofing and displaying artworks. It is unfortunate that little else will be available by the end of this year.

We use, and can recommend, the much brighter, very expensive, scarcely available, and less energy efficient daylight balanced version.

