

# Wide-format Inkjet Printers Media, Substrates & Inks Cutters and Laminators & 3D Applications



## SGI 2015, Sign Middle East, Dubai, UAE

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### Wide-format Inkjet Printers Media, Substrates & Inks Cutters and Laminators & 3D Applications

The diversity of brands and product categories make SGI Dubai worth exhibiting and worth attending

For the last several years manufacturers, distributors and print shop owners have frequently indicated that there are too many trade shows. Despite this reality, more and more expos are attempting to gain traction: especially in Brazil and China. So we at FLAAR Reports inspect expos around the world to document which are growing, and which are shrinking (lots of expos) and which have disappeared (VISCOM Spain).

SGI in Dubai is healthy and is growing. FLAAR Reports is proud to cooperate with IEC to showcase this vibrant printer and signage trade show. To document the considerable diversity of products, it really helped this year to have a team of three. The pages which follow show the wide range of brands and products at SGI 2015, aka, Sign Middle East.

Our categories are based on workflow categories plus application categories. Workflow would be printing (which implies printers, inks, media, RIP, color management), then finishing (cutting, laminating, etc).





### UV-Cured Printers: Wide Format and Grand Format Roll-to-roll

EFI tends to showcase the grand format UV-cured roll-to-roll printers, in the booth of SAGA Digital. HP removed itself from this market already several years ago, in order to focus on latex printers. Although 3.2m and 5m Chinese roll-to-roll printers do exist, these are not often offered outside China itself. So for grand format, efi VUTEk is the primary brand for the Middle East in general and UAE in particular.





Two Dilli printers were in the booth of DigiMatrix Technologies:

- dilli NEO TITAN 1604D-WV (combo transport belt Rtr and flatbed potential)
- dilli NEO TITAN RTR 3204D (roll-to-roll).

Dilli has considerable international experience. Korean engineers are knowledgeable and are proud to use good technology and solid manufacturing skills.



## UV-Cured Printers: Wide Format flatbed with roll-to-roll options

There are several ways to have roll-to-roll option on a flatbed printer:

- If the printer has pinch rollers over grit rollers, simply add a flat roller table at the front and back. However grit rollers can't move the last several centimeters of material. So this material is wasted and the unprinted end has to be cut off. Plus some slippery material may slip. So we do not recommend trying to use pinch rollers over grit rollers to pretend this can do flat or thick material. Neolt is the best example of lack of success of trying to package a roll-to-roll printer as a flatbed. Even 50% of the Chinese brands have given up trying to name a retrofitted roll-to-roll as a flatbed.
- A transport belt is significantly better than pinch rollers over grit rollers. A transport belt combination UV-cured printer can handle roll-to-roll or flat material (with add-on tables front and back).
- A dedicated flatbed printer can have a roll accessory across the front. This roll accessory comes in two potential optional structures: Oce has everything across the front. But Agfa and Swissqprint pull the roll media all the way across the flat top area and down the other side.

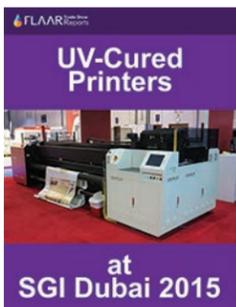
No one system is perfect; and no one system is all bad. Each structure has pros and cons.



### UV-cured printers: mid-sized

UV-cured printers come in sizes from desktop to 5-meters wide. We list and discuss all the UV-cured printers in the TRENDS version of the FLAAR Reports. There is no formal classification of printer sizes or shapes (other than that "grand format" tends to mean over 72"). But it does help to have a least informal categories, and mid-sized is one of these.

There were mid-sized UV-cured printers at SGI 2015 Dubai. It is always helpful to understand the diverse options in size, and in how the material (or printhead carriage) is moved.



### UV-Cured Printers: Desktop

Desktop sized printers exist for

- T-shirts (using pigmented, sublimation inks, or toner)
- Polyester coated aluminum (using special sublimation ink)
- Logo pens; iPhone covers, etc (using UV-cured ink).
- miscellaneous small objects (using eco-solvent inks).

Mimaki, Roland, and Mutoh had their small UV-cured ink desktop models. Brands from Korea and China were also present. So there was a good selection of options here at SGI.



### The situation with rebranding

Rebranding is traditional with many products. The Cadillac Escalade is simply a rebranded Chevy Suburban (albeit with special luxury features). There is a Porsche SUV which is a rebranded VW (but again, the Porsche version has luxury features added).

When wide-format inkjet printers are rebranded, normally the only difference is the color of the exterior shell. It is normal that the distributor will try to point out multiple differences and avoid the word rebranding. But on 90% of the rebranded UV-cured printers the only difference is the color. However there are occasionally factories which do make special versions for some brands. But these are rare.

If you attend D-PES in Guangzhou or APPPEXPO in Shanghai you can easily see which factories made which models elsewhere around the world.

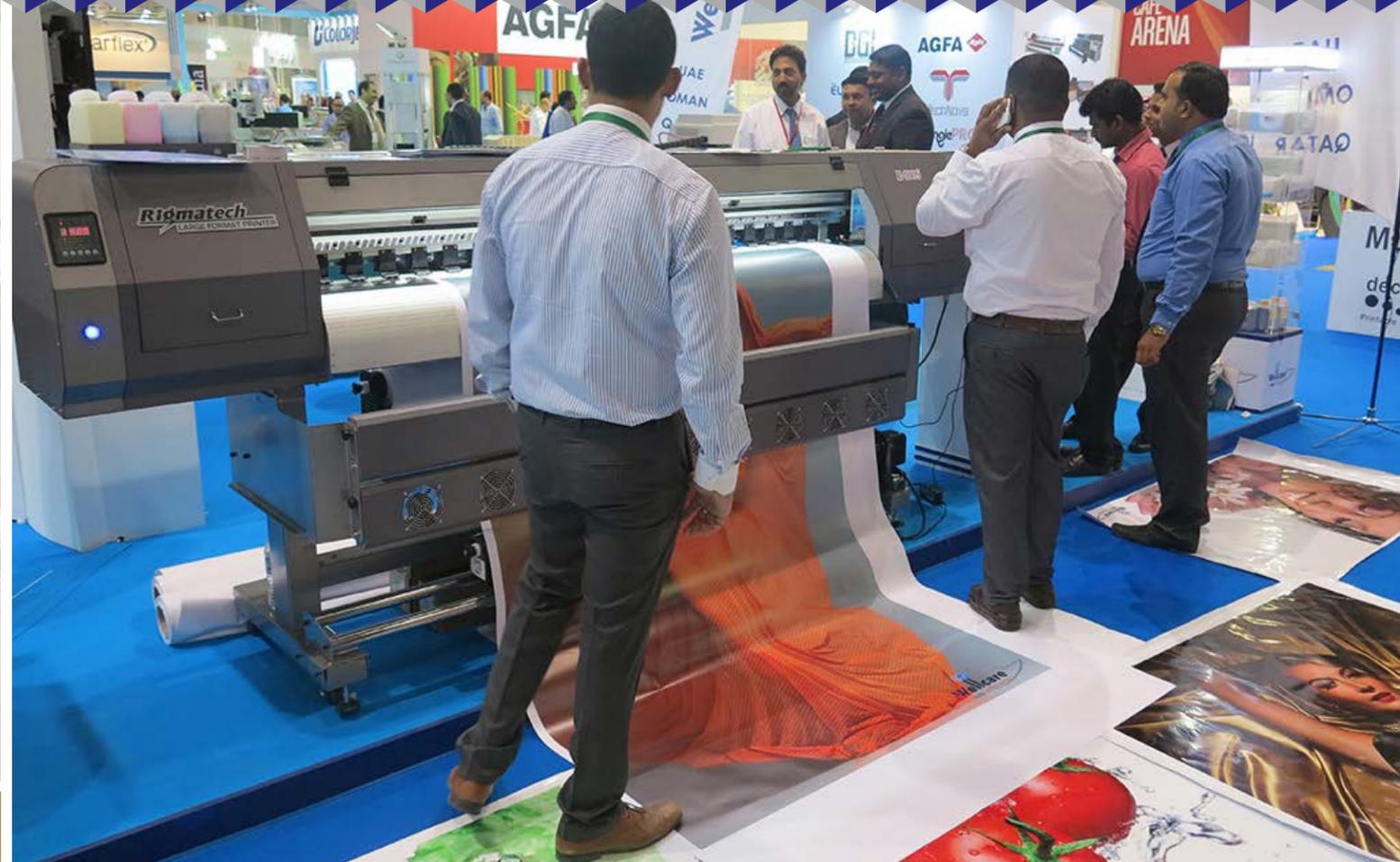
Keep in mind that many Chinese factories make two versions of each printer model: one version for selling in China; a second version for export. The export version is supposed to have more robust engineering and most components are supposed to be from outside China. But in reality, most "export versions" still have many local parts.

But many Chinese brands are improving, since they have learned from losing local distributors that if the product is not adequate the local distributors will not put up with the endless repair costs. So one of our goals during 2015 is to visit more Chinese printer factories to see which companies have improved their quality.

### Solvent printers

I was surprised to see AMPLA printers from Brazil here in Dubai. One of the Ampla sales team (Mohamed Elmasry) noticed me in the aisle and invited me into the booth where he introduced me to Yasser Al Mat-tarawi, Managing Director, based in Cairo, Egypt. With my background in architectural history, art history, and archaeology I am always interested in Egypt.

At most printer expos around the world about 33% to 60% of the solvent printers are re-branded by the distributor. BLUEFIRE, in the booth of HELIOS would be one of many examples. Most of these printers are made in China (as are Epson solvent printers).



## Textile Printers

Lots and lots of textile printers of all sizes and shapes. This aspect of the world of wide-format inkjet is covered by Maria Renee Ayau, though Dr. Nicholas also keeps his eyes and ears open about new trends in textile printers, inks, and printable materials.

Two types of wide format printers were exhibited at SGI Dubai: direct-to-fabric and transfer paper. Though I must say, there were only about two professional textile printers at the show, mostly entry-level.

All the textile printers exhibited at the show are made in Asia except for MTEX, which is technically a Portuguese chassis with a Japanese Mimaki interior. About 40% of the printers are Chinese, 40% are Japanese, 10% Korean and 10% from India.



### T-shirt Printers

The major brands of t-shirt printers were at the show: Anajet, Brother, DMP, Epson. Kornit is also a big t-shirt printer brand; I was surprised not to see them in Dubai. Ricoh has recently come up with a new printer for sublimation, not only for textiles but also for any flat surface covered with a polymer primer. I first saw the Ricoh textile sublimation version at SGIA 2014, and now at SGI I saw the other version.



### Printers for printing on polymer coated aluminum



Textile Inks



Printable Fabrics



## After-market Inks are important

The busiest ink companies at SGI were Sam Ink and STS Inks. One reason for the success of these two ink companies is because they had good locations. There is an idiom in English, location, Location, LOCATION.

No matter how good your product, if your company building is not visible, your product will tend to be not well known.

There were about four brands with their own booth at SGI 2015, and over a dozen ink brands at booths of distributors. Plus several booths had ink but with their own local brand put onto the bottles (so the original manufacturer is not identified). For us to evaluate ink naturally it is essential to know who is the manufacturer, to visit the factory and headquarters, and to speak with end-users.



Here is the booth of Hongsam Digital. We also mentioned them in the Show Daily newspaper (because many of us from FLAAR have been to their demo room outside of Shanghai, and Dr. Nicholas has also been to their factory).

For 2015 we are especially interested in visiting more ink companies from Korea and Taiwan so that we can feature them in future FLAAR Reports. I spoke with Charles Yoon, Sales Director, DURAFOS (ink) of Korea. Another day I met with Nasir Dahbool, Alpha Chem. It seems that several ink companies now have facilities in the UAE.

We can only write about a brand of ink if we have actually been in their headquarters, in their demo room, and seen their factory. Plus we learn from speaking with people who use their ink.

It is understandable that Epson, Roland, etc. prefer that print shops buy the official "OEM inks." The inks selected by Epson, Roland, Mutoh, Mimaki, Seiko are indeed tailored especially for the specific model of Epson DX printhead used by the respective printer model. Or, for Mimaki, for the Ricoh printheads.

So we at FLAAR do recognize and support that these inks tend to be good for the pertinent printer.

But, when we see advertisement claims, and PR blasts, that pretend that all OEM inks are perfect and all after-market inks are automatically of dubious quality, this pretence is not only incorrect but is misleading.

The best proof is that many OEM inks for printer brands around the world are made by companies whose other inks are after-market. If Ink Company A makes inks for Printer brand B, then this is an "OEM ink" and is assumed to be a good ink.

But Ink Company A also makes several other inks, which it sells as after-market.

So why is the after-market ink "bad" and only the OEM ink "good" if both are made by the very same ink factory!

At an expo such as SGI you find the following kinds of ink branding:

- OEM inks, sold by the printer manufacturers.
- After-market inks, but linked to specific printer brands, sold by the local distributor of these printers (usually printers made in China).
- After-market inks rebranded by local distributors: so the original factory, and often the origi-

nal country of origin, are not known whatsoever.

- After-market inks sold by the actual factory which makes them
- After-market ink from ink factories but factories which also sell inks they get from other factories, and they rebrand them. There are also factories of media, which make some of their own media but these media factories also sell media made by other factories.

The increasing number of factories who rebrand ink or media from other factories is a fact which is not widely recognized. But this rebranding is increasingly common.

Distributors and print shop owners and managers often make their buying decision made on the basis of FLAAR Reports, so it is essential that we clearly discuss what is actually happening behind the scenes.

A few companies openly and blatantly do not tell the truth. One Fortune 500 brand in the USA claimed that they made the ink for their UV-cured printers (they also claimed they made the printers themselves). But the printers were made in China and the ink reportedly came from a well known ink company (so allegedly this Fortune 500 brand was telling two lies). It is a shame that this is allowed to happen in our industry.

Every once in a while a printer manufacturer sales rep will claim that their company "we make the printheads also." The only printer manufacturers who makes their own printheads are of course Epson, and Ricoh (the printers are made by Mimaki, but everyone in the industry knows this). And Fujifilm (since they own Spectra Dimatix); though many Fujifilm printers use competing brands of printheads!

STS Inks has continued to expand during the last four years. It is good to see a company from Florida, USA exhibit at international expos. Here are views of the booth of STS Inks and their products.

Dr Nicholas has visited the STS Inks factory and their world headquarters (in Florida). We tend to provide a double-page spread for those companies when we have visited their factory within the last two years, or their main demo room (usually at their factory). So if we know about an ink company from an actual visit, then we can more realistically judge whether they are a good source of inks.



Sam Ink has a new local distributor, Fortune 7. They are setting up a Sam Ink factory for the UAE and rest of the Middle East. To document this continued growth and expansion of Sam Ink we went to see the factory space. Remember, many companies say they make their ink: so the best proof is to visit the factory.

Of course Sam Ink is manufactured in Singapore (we have been to their factory there two or three times over the years). But since the company is expanding they are gradually setting up factories in other parts of the world.

If you interview 100 people who use any brand of ink you will always find several who had a bad experience. It is tough to know whether the printer itself was in lack of maintenance, or whether the print shop was dusty and had dramatic changes in temperature between sunny day and moonlit night. And all ink companies have an occasional bad batch. But as we walked the aisles we met several people who told us they used Sam Ink and they were quite content with this ink.

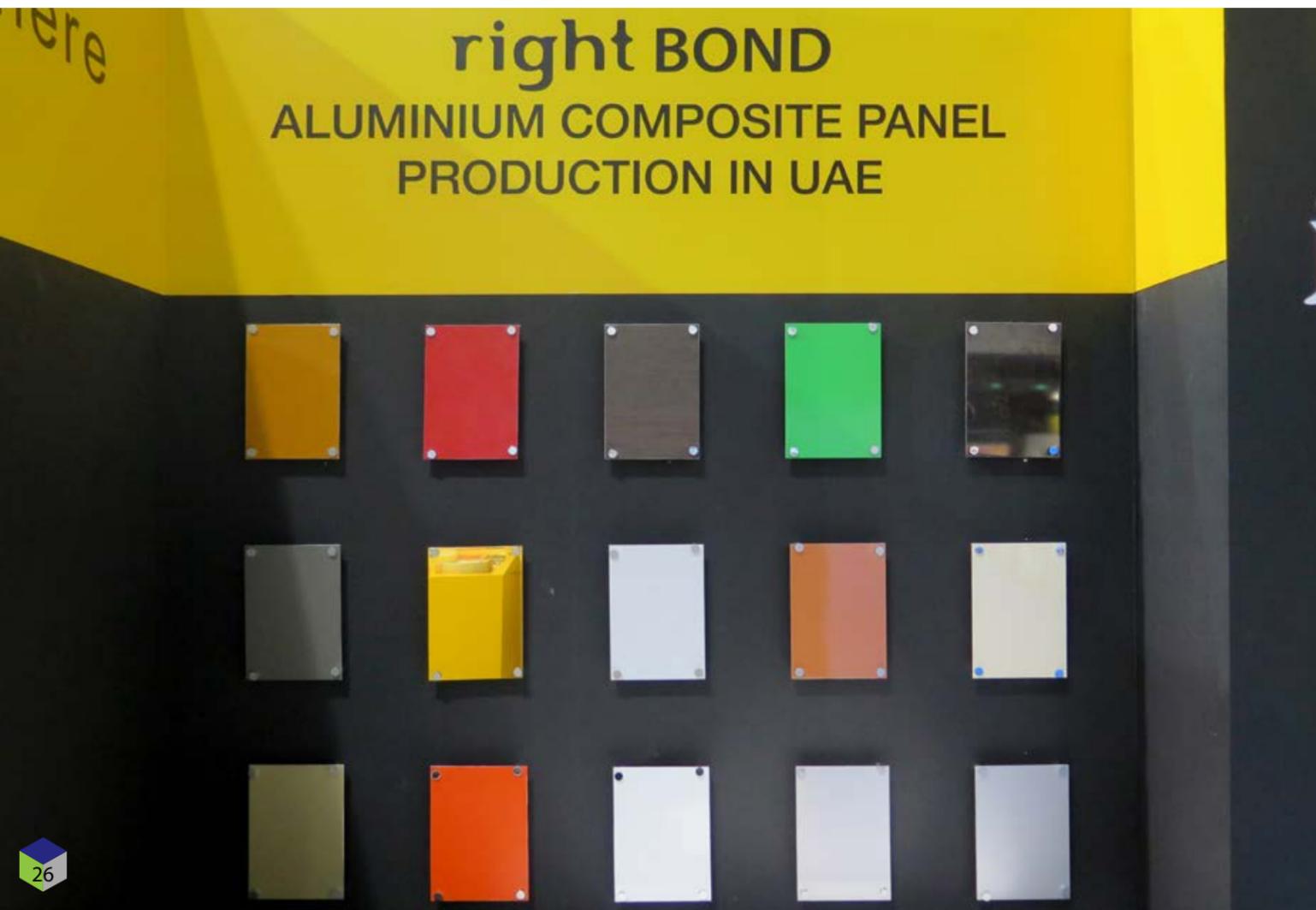
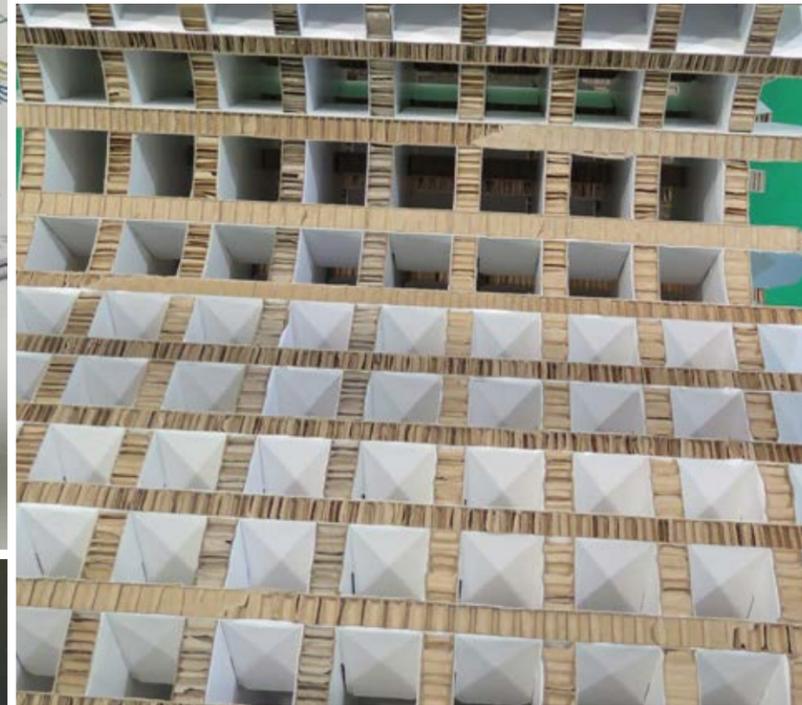


FLAAR team visits new SAM Ink factory facilities in Dubai.

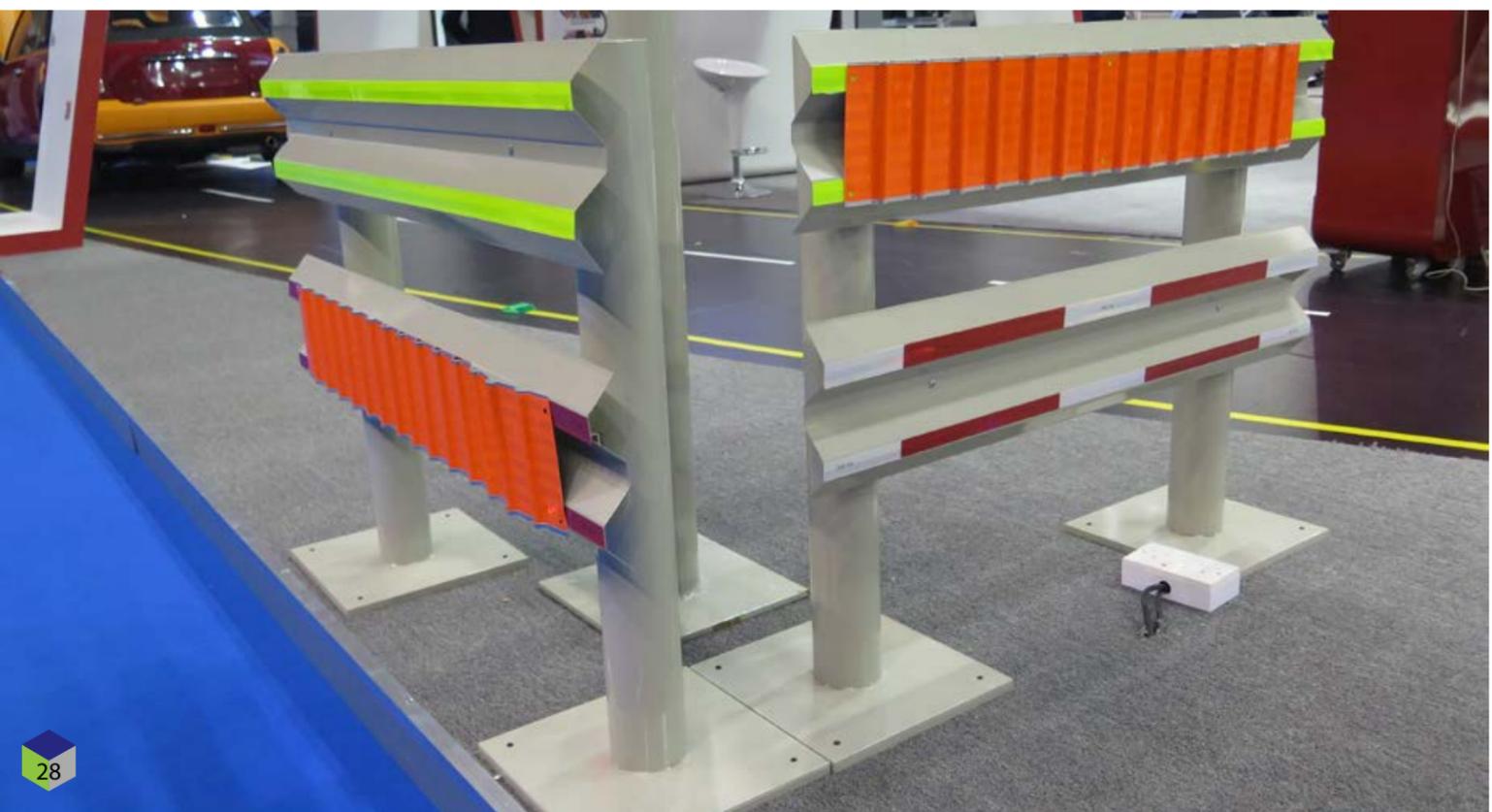
Media & Substrates: Metallic



Media & Substrates: Honeycomb Sandwich Board



Media & Substrates: Reflective (highway and safety)



Media & Substrates: Fine Art Photo and Giclee



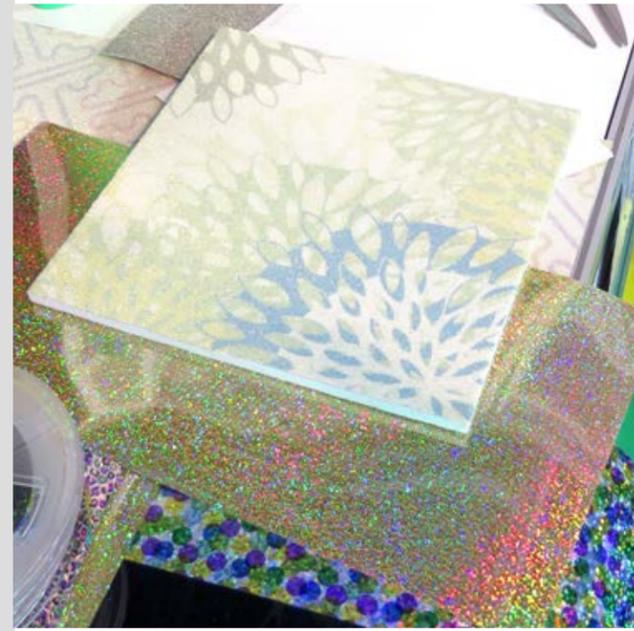
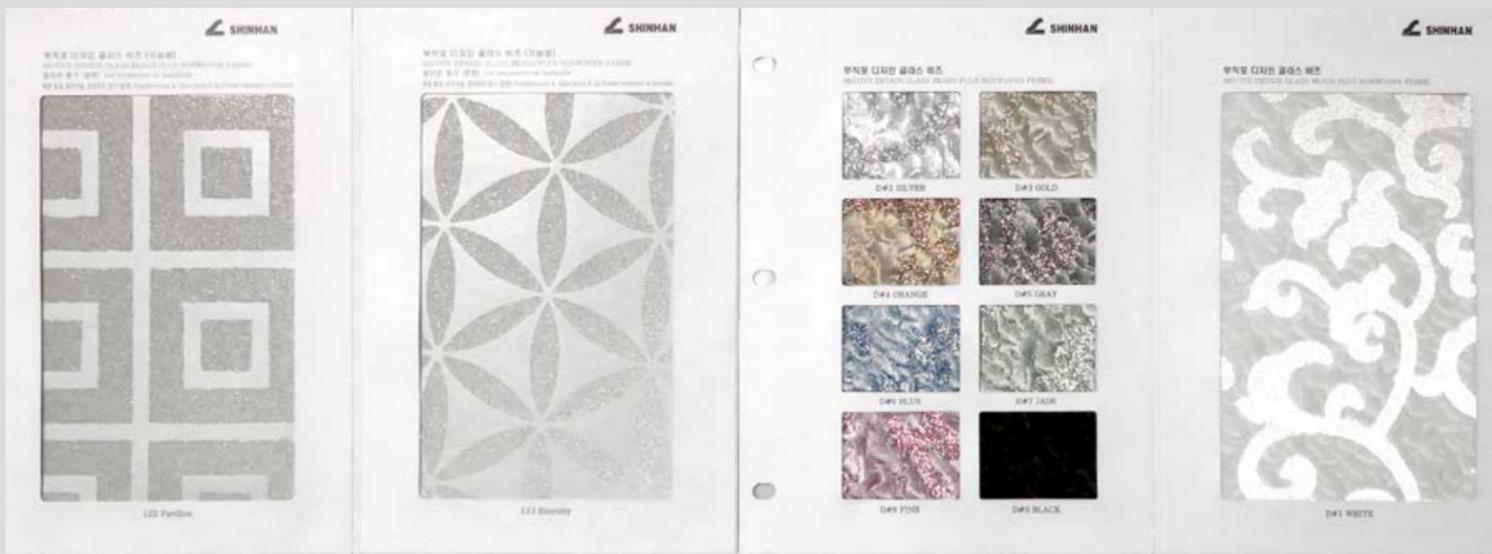
Media & Substrates: Wall coverings, wall paper, wall murals

Media & Signage sub-category: glitter

I see so many innovative materials which glisten or glitter or reflect. But these are not for highway signs or safety signs or for car wrap: these are innovative customized surface textures and surface effects.

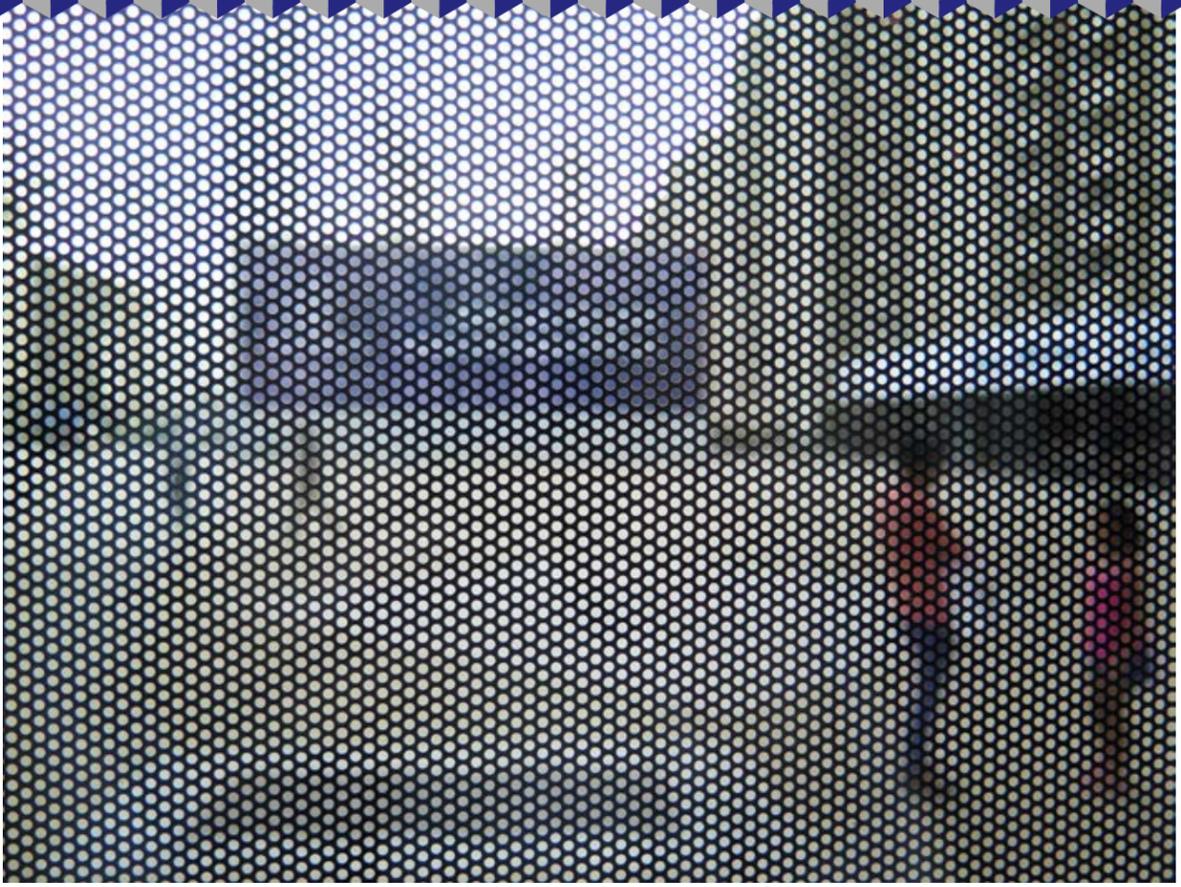
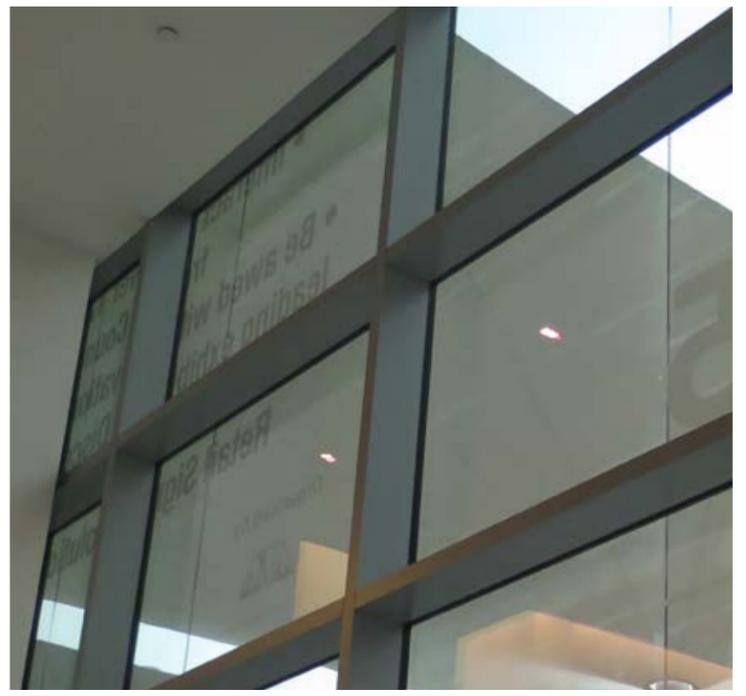
Some are simply glitter material. A more traditional effect was a machine to apply Rhinestones, to women's clothing, but could also be used for wall decoration or signage at POP level. It was called "Automatic Hotfix Spangle Motif" by Yong Nam Engineering of Korea, in the booth of NASEEj.

GLASS BEADS WALLPAPER





Media & Substrates: Signage, Vehicle Wrap, Building Wrap



### RIP Software

RIP software brands tend to be inside the booths of the large international printer brands: EFI VUTEK (so the Saga Digital booth), Océ (Heliozid Océ booth), or Fujifilm.

It would help in the future to have both RIP software brands more noticeable at an expo.

### MIS Software and Web to Print Software

You tend to get booths of MIS and Web to Print and comparable modern software at expos focused on offset presses, in-plant presses, etc. Most wide-format signage trade shows tend not to feature this kind of software. The two largest offerings of MIS which is appropriate for wide-format inkjet would be the diverse array of EFI VUTEK, and that of Esko.

We hope in the future to have both MIS and Web to Print software brands more noticeable at an expo.

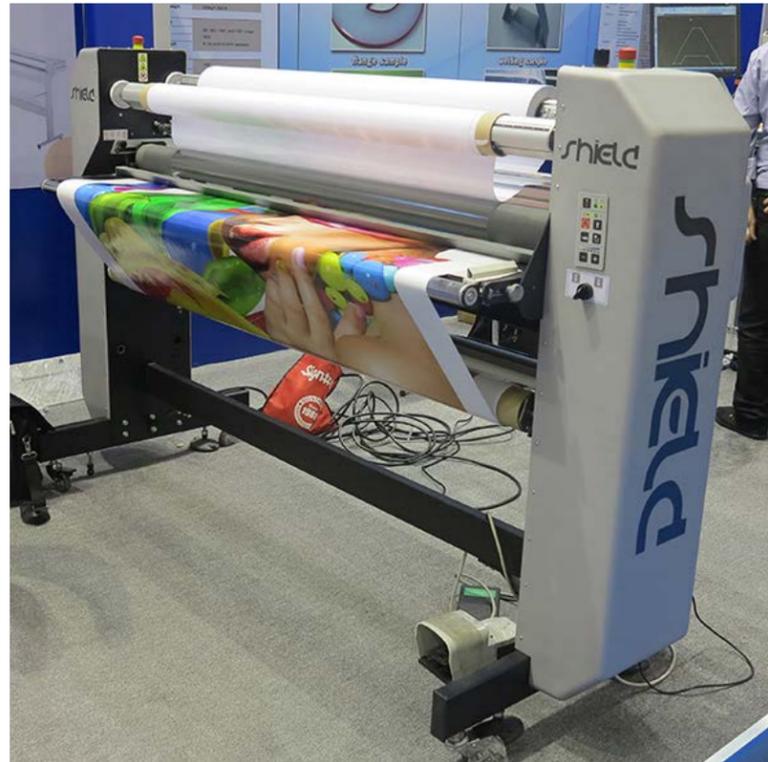


### Color management tools and software

It is common that color management does not have its own booth. One reason is that the large distributors of sophisticated printers would tend to have color management tools and software inside their booth.

It would be good general education for printer operators if color management tools and software were more visible.

**Laminators: roll-to-roll**

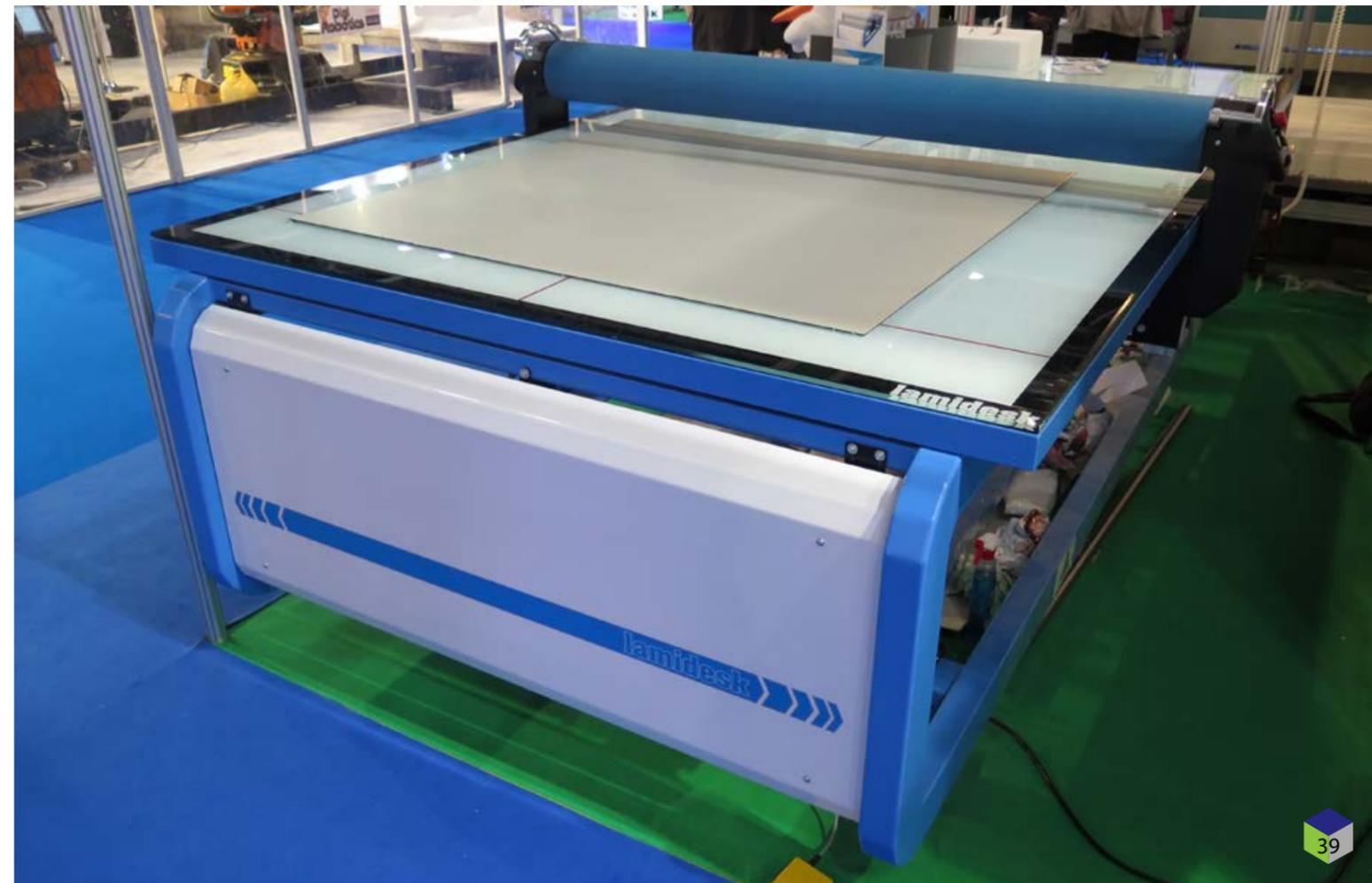


**Laminators: flatbed applicators**

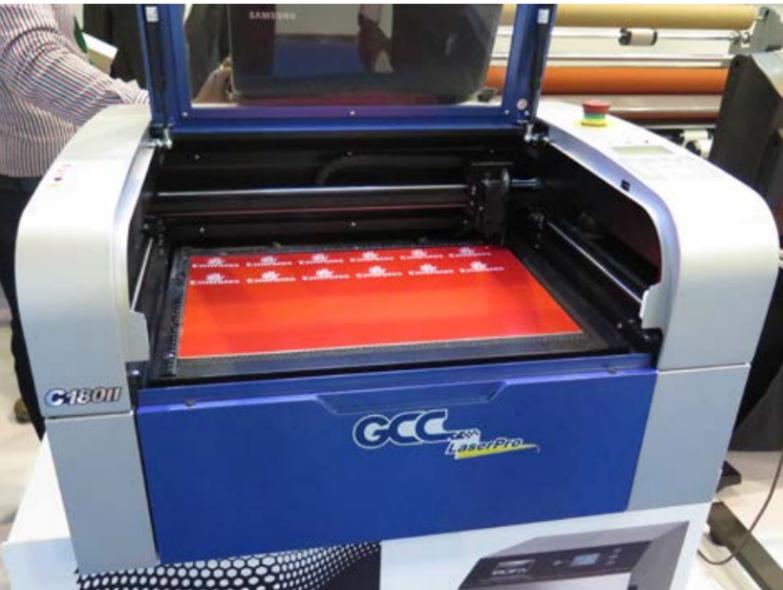
Six years ago there was only one brand of flatbed applicators. Then one by one new brands came out, mostly from Scandinavia, but also from Germany.

Then came brands from China. So today (in 2015) there are many brands and several different manners of positioning the functional parts of the equipment.

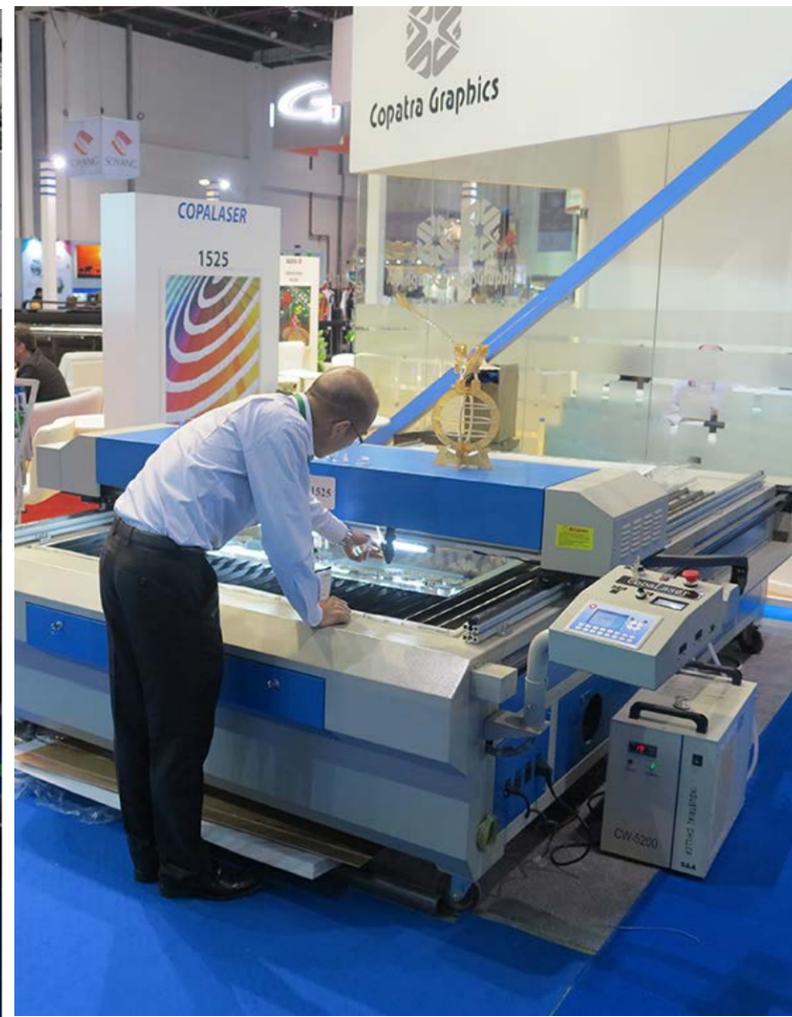
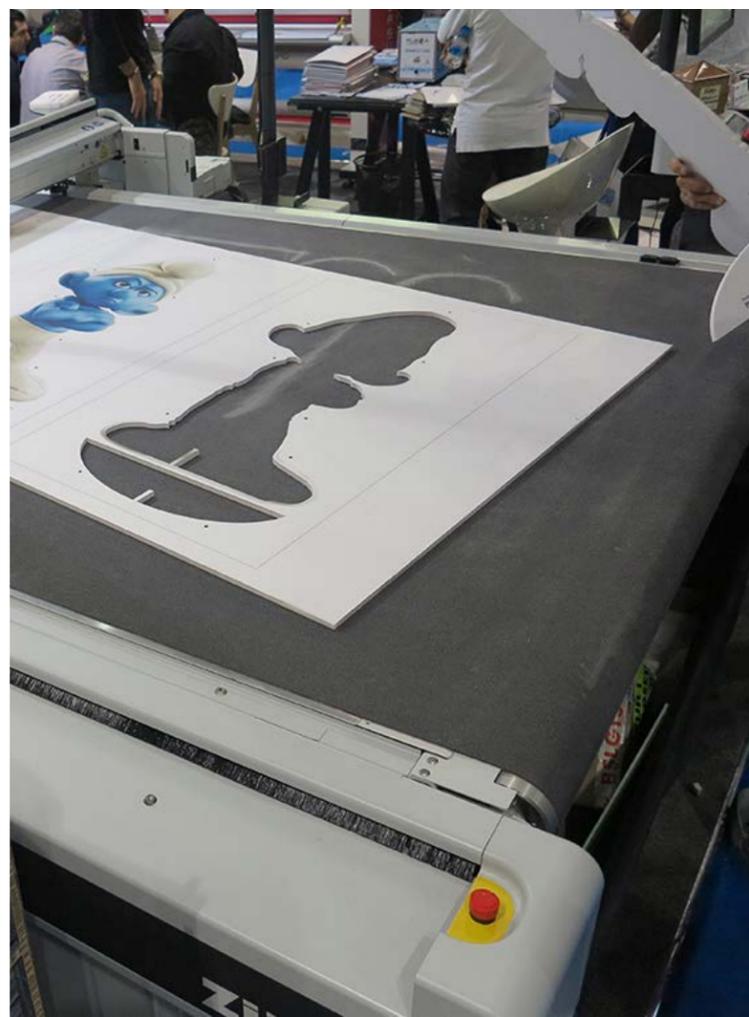
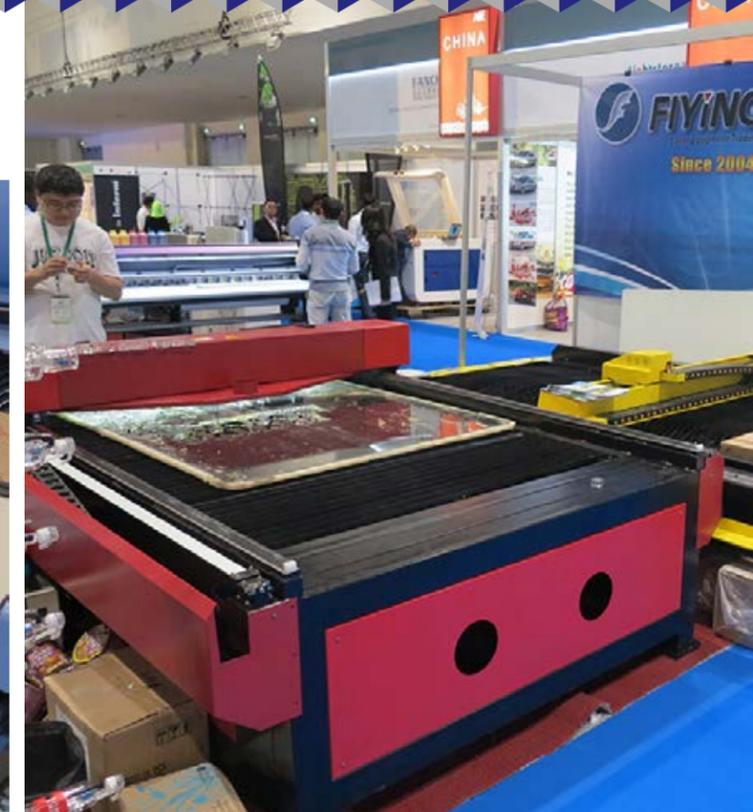
At SGI 2015 there were three brands: all three made in EU. Three is a good range of choices.



Flatbed cutters: CNC Routers



Flatbed cutters: CO2 laser engravers



**Trimmers (upright)**

Upright trimmers can do some things better than a table-top trimmer. But a cheap upright trimmer may be a waste of money. So be sure that the brand you want is sophisticated enough to handle the kinds of materials you need to cut. Each kind and each thickness of material accepts a trimmer differently.

**Trimmers (for a flat table position)**

The FLAAR wide-format printer testing institute, at two universities simultaneously for over five years, we found that table top trimmers were really helpful (for media from 24" to 60"). But these trimmers are hard to notice at a printer or signage expo.

### 3D Printers & 3D Signage Technologies

One of the topics that is asked of me the most frequently is what I think of 3D printers. But most 3D printers don't "print", they "apply" or lay down, or extrude, or otherwise subtract (carve away) or pile up material (almost never is it ink). So what has happened is that "3D printers" has become a misnomer for a fad (that does not yet exist).

Although there are specialized 3D printers which can print segments of a house, there are not (not yet) 3D printers for advertising creations (only for machine parts, medical body parts, or small architectural models).

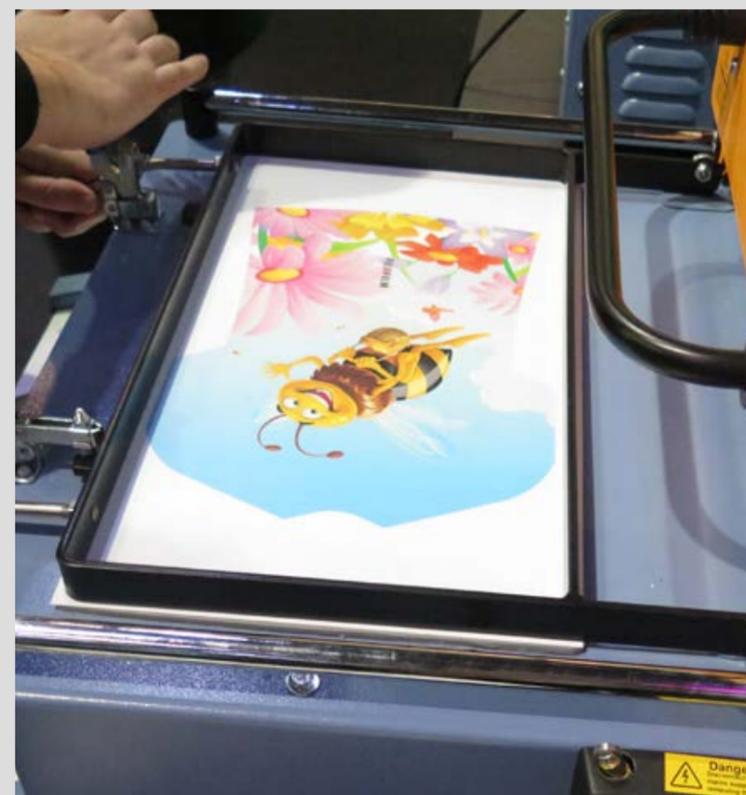
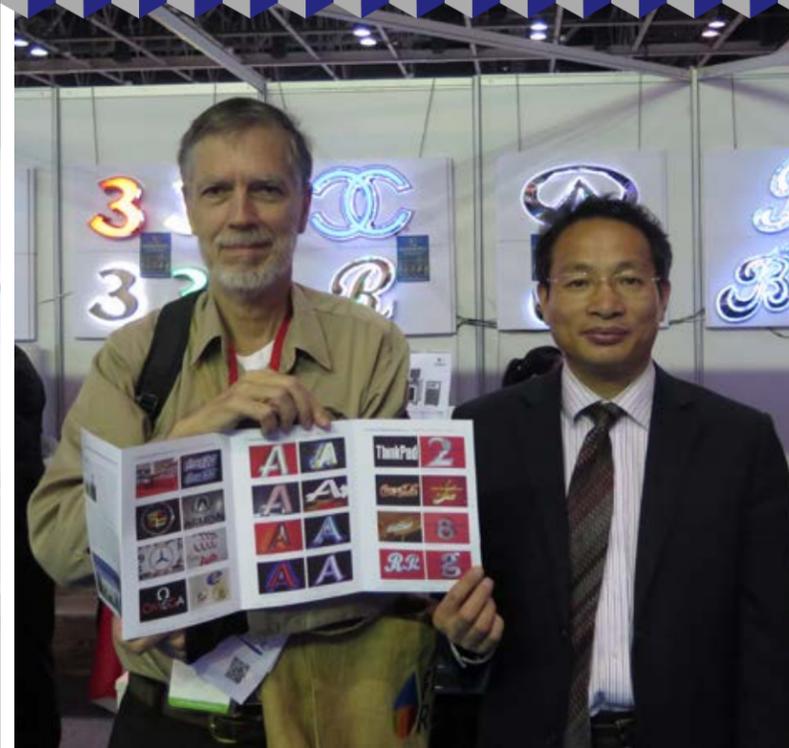
To achieve 3D signage you can indeed "print" but with a UV-cured flatbed printer. Then heat form or otherwise bend the material into a 3D shape. These can be up to 3 or 4 meters in height (the size of the largest flatbed or the largest that thick rigid material is normally available).

The other way to create 3D signage is to print on any foam core, Coroplast, or best, on honeycomb sandwich board. They cut up the segments (on a Aristo, Zund, or Kongsberg) and join them together to create a sculpture the size of a 2-storey building.

If you are in the Dubai area and seek a place to produce 3D signage, the company You and Eye Advertising had a nice booth at SGI. They can be contacted at [info@youAndEye.ae](mailto:info@youAndEye.ae).

At SGI met Shen Xing Hua, of WuJiang YuXing Metal Art Decoration Co., Ltd. He took me back to his booth to show me his raised lettering, especially logos for famous brands. I would need to be brought to the factory to better understand the process and the results.

There will be more FLAAR Reports on all of this over the course of coming months.



### 3D: Vacuum Thermo-Forming

At many expos EFI showcases the entire workflow for vacuum thermo-forming. At this recent SGI 2015 Dubai expo the booth where we found the entire range of equipment was that of Heliozid Oce. The brand manager was also helpful showing me other features in their booth.

### LED and LCD Signage

Mohamed Ghalayini, of media media, was in the SAGA booth. He has moved into the world of dynamic digital signage.

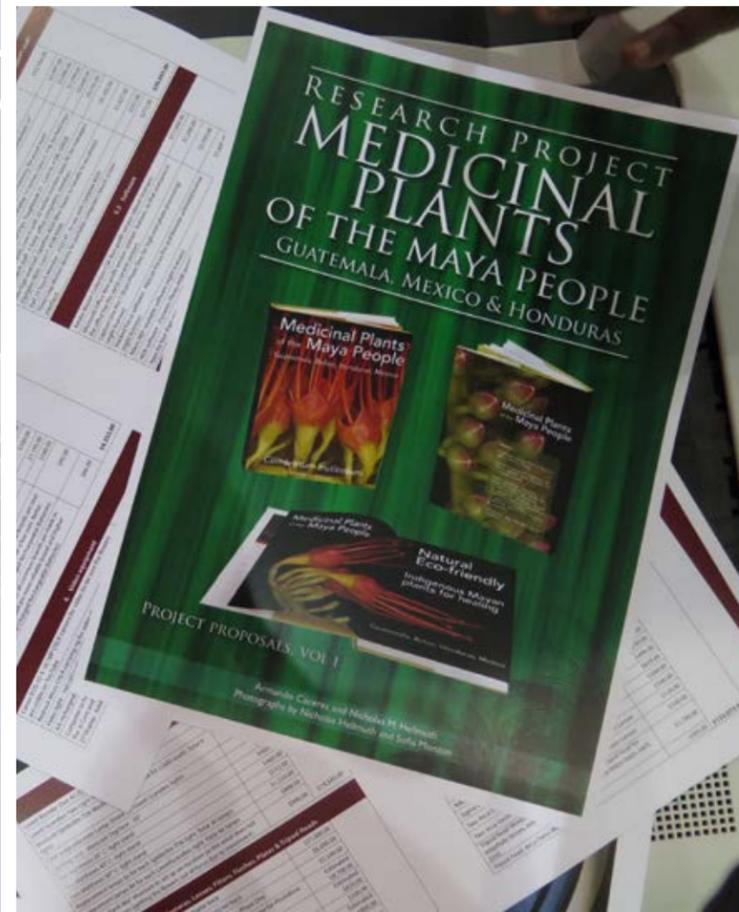
There were about two Chinese booths with “movie screen” size LED displays. One showed the entertaining Minions animated cartoon movie. I must admit I find the Minions movies entertaining, plus Rio and Rio II. But otherwise, SGI is an expo on traditional printed signage plus traditional non-digital signage (carving, letters, etc.).



### Toner-based Printers

Many signage expos lack printers which use toner. So it is nice to see toner-based printers at SGI. There were two booths, both using OKI printers. One booth was intec Printing Solutions; they printed The Official Show Daily. Frankly the quality was great.

Then there was a nice and busy OKI booth. They kindly printed some samples of FLAAR photographs.



## What was new at SGI?

The desktop Ricoh printers that print on polymer-coated aluminum plaques or sheets, were something I have never seen before.

It is surprising to find an expensive Ricoh printhead in a printer that small. Although Epson printheads are not perfect, I would have expected this cheaper level of head in a desktop printer. I can't believe people will pay x-thousand dollars for a desktop printer to have a thousand-dollar printhead (unless this is a test for the new low-price Epson-challenging head of Ricoh).

There was an entry-level Chinese printer, which offered both sublimation ink and eco-solvent ink within the same machine. You simply assign part of a printhead to one ink system. And you need two sets of ink tubing.

I would estimate you need to purge which you switch from sublimation ink to solvent ink (unless the sublimation ink is solvent based). Purging wears out Epson print-heads very rapidly, so if purging is required this kind of a dual-ink printer is not very practical out in the real world.

A new Flora printer for dye-sublimation was exhibited at the show in the booth of Flex-Europa. An entry-level textile printer for transfer paper, with a curved platen, but nothing significantly new or different from the rest of the printers.

## What did we learn at SGI?

I learned a lot about media and other printable substrates. Last year (2014) I kept seeing the sheer quantity of media coming from China. I also noticed many kinds of frankly very remarkable media, kinds that no article or anyone was speaking about.

Every year I see the DIGIMatrix Technologies at SGI and see the robotic machines chiseling away to create busts and statues. But this year it was possible to meet with ... and learn a lot about what Digi Robotics offers via the KUKU robotic units. I was especially interested in the Artec Eva 3D scanner. We have experience with a Creaform scanner five years ago. But it could not work during hot tropical weather (of Guatemala and Honduras) and had a few other quirks. In an ideal setting it did fine, but was not very flexible.

Then one of our students realized that you don't need a \$25,000 laser light scanner at all. In fact you don't need a scanner: a normal DSLR camera is fine. You don't even need two on a pole! Just a single camera. Wander around the take snapshots of the object (which can be of any size, even a 400-year-old tree trunk (Ceiba pentandra). The software joins all your photos together.

But if you have a budget, the Artec Eva 3D scanner looks great.

## Other Printer Trade Shows in the UAE Area

### Gulf Print & Pack 2015

This expo is totally different; not a wide-format expo. Canon Middle East flew Dr. Nicholas here about seven years ago. But since FLAAR focuses on inkjet more than toner, and on wide-format more than narrow format, we have not returned to Gulf Print & Pack. But we attend SGI every year since for wide-format this is the leading expo.

Packaging printers are of interest to us, since wide-format inks and printers are moving into this application. But SGI keeps is busy, so we focus on SGI.

### Print Pack Arabia UAE

This new expo is not in Dubai, it is in the adjacent emirate, Sharjah. I was in Dubai the same week as Print Pack Arabia UAE in 2014 so I took a look. Two booths had small inkjet printers.

### Printer expo in Abu Dhabi

IPEX Digital Middle East was to be launched in Abu Dhabi in 2011. This expo was not successful and I doubt if it continued. IPEX itself in the UK went into dramatic decline in the last several years (DRUPA is working hard to survive, but tough to beat FESPA in Germany).

In their launch PR blast for Abu Dhabi IPEX claimed they were the largest print show (in the UK). Sorry, the largest printer expo in the world is not IPEX and not DRUPA; the largest printer, media, inks, and related expo in the world is probably APPPEXPO in Shanghai (even though it is wide-format inkjet, and not toner nor narrow-format inkjet).

Companies which use PR blasts to proclaim their hoped for success should be more realistic about pretending to be the largest expo, because in the last five years APPPEXPO has grown (Dr. Nicholas Hellmuth and FLAAR is a prime consultant for the last several years). We had hoped DRUPA and IPEX could break their fall, and we have reached out to them, but even in Brazil IPEX has resulted in a downward spiral.

## Summary and Conclusions of other expos in the Middle East

We at FLAAR Reports would enjoy attending expos in Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and other countries in the Middle East. It always helps to have local expos, but equally it is absolutely essential to have printer expos of international status. For the Middle East in general and the UAE in particular, the pertinent international expo is SGI in Dubai.



## IEC deserves mention for providing booths to other expo organizers

It is courteous of IEC to provide booths for signage, printer, and LED expos in other parts of the world. It is a courtesy to the industry when an expo organizer provides hospitality to other expo organizers.

- APPPEXPO and co-located LED expos (Shanghai, in March)
- Sign Istanbul (this autumn)
- IPMEX Malaysia (Kaizer Company, Belle Yam, Managing Director)
- Taiwan International Sign & LED Expo
- Sign & POP World LED Expo, Thailand
- Sign China 2015 (Shanghai)
- D-PES and co-located LED expos
- CIEC China Electronics International Exhibition
- and the usual two Korea booths (trade magazine booths but each also focuses on KOSIGN)

If I remember correctly, the CIEC booth was not occupied by CIEC staff.



## Comparable International Expos elsewhere

Sign Istanbul is for the countries around Turkey comparable in status for SGI in the Middle East.

In Europe the printer expo with international status is FESPA (2016 in picturesque Cologne, Germany).

For North America, ISA in the Spring and SGIA in the autumn are leaders in this part of the Americas. FLAAR also attends Graphics of the Americas (GOA) in Miami every year.

We would be interested to attend KOSIGN 2016 and expos in Malaysia, Indonesia and The Philippines, but we attend printer expos primarily when hosted by the organizers.

FLAAR also attends start-up expos, new expos, such as Panamá Expo Graphica. Their organizer flew a FLAAR team there for 2014 (and Dr. Nicholas also lectured there).





### Trade Magazines available at IEC

Considering the competition among trade magazines, it is nice that IEC provides booths for all the pertinent trade magazines, even when they are competing with each other. Competition helps make companies stronger.

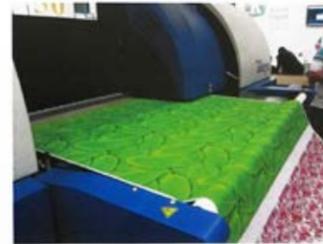
Every two or three years the magazine, which handles the SHOW DAILY, changes. This year (and if my mind remembers correctly, also last year) the SHOW DAILY was organized by ME Printer, Eskandar Jahanbani, Editor in Chief.



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**Pigment Ink for Printing Onto Textiles**

Maria Renee Ayau-Flaar Reports



Direct-to-fabric textile printing can be achieved by using four different kinds of inks: acid, reactive, disperse dyes and pigment inks. Pigment ink is mostly used to print onto cotton and cotton-blended fabrics and cannot be absorbed by the fabric, they adhere to the surface but do not penetrate it. Pigment is a kind of insoluble colorant ground into fine powders and added to a liquid carrier. For the past decade everyone commented how unimpressive the color of pigmented textile ink was. This was one of the main issues with pigment ink that the colors were not quite as bright and intense as compared with the results of other printing methods. The only reason people used it was to avoid all the pre-printing workflow and post-printing washing, drying, etc. But every year the color has gotten a lot better. At drupa 2012, I overheard experienced textile manager from Europe comment on how pleasantly surprised he was to see the remarkable quality of the new pigment ink from Hologram. A few years ago, I noticed that Hologram's pigment ink produced more intense and brighter colors than the rest of the other brands. Pigment ink in general is characterized for not producing the brightest colors compared to other kinds of textile inks. At SGI in Las Vegas, Digitalb introduced new inks, also with an improved color. Now a Fortune 500 company has also released a new pigmented ink, so it's crucial to learn about all this before your competitors do. So attending the first international signage and printer expo of the year (SGI) is a good idea. The main problem is the limitation of the amount of pigments, the background, you print using only CMYK inks. On the other hand if you print onto a T-shirt with a dark background you need to print a silhouette of white ink (ghost) and then you print using CMYK on top of the ghost. After printing, you need to fix the color using a heat press, to avoid ink from peeling or scratching. Whether you use a heat press or a more sophisticated heat curing process will influence how the color comes out on your T-shirt or other applications. A heat press is made for sublimation ink. People use it for pigmented ink (and toner-based ink T-shirt transfers also). But you may get better results using a curing system made specifically for pigmented ink.

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**Altech And Intec Launches A Revolutionary Label Printing And Finishing Solution**



The Intec LP215 Label Printing and Finishing System is aimed at anyone looking for an affordable professional label production system - whether it be a label printing company looking for a great in-house demand full color label production system with optional variable data - or an organization looking to bring their label production in house and on demand.

Working in synergy with the Intec LP215 Label Printer, the finishing system provides an affordable roll-to-roll solution using the latest high speed contour cutting systems running up to double the speed of previous solutions, and capable of cutting at up to 160mm. The Intec finisher also provides laminating and on the fly contour cutting as well as optional matrix removal. Label printing solutions for short to medium production runs, into die cut matrix removed or entered and continuous roll media, and its new label finishing equipment to digitally die-cut any shape label, laminate, matrix remove and slit rolls of labels at over 3 metres per minute.

<http://www.signmiddleeast.com>

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**3D "Printers" For Signage**

Reality Check for Clearing up Misunderstood Product Names



Dr. Nicholas Hellmuth  
FLAAR Reports

Increasingly trade shows have been featuring "3D printers". But 90% of the equipment that is mentioned are not printers whatsoever; they are rapid prototypers. Since my Hellmuth family background is architecture, I have worked with actual 3D printers (which are used to make architectural models). Some use gelatin photolithography (or Canon). But all the others use stereolithography of various kinds to create additive manufactured objects. Drupa 2014 press releases kept repeating that they were going to change their focus and move to innovative technology (a great vague and smoke and mirrors concept). Drupa exhibitors kept mentioning 3D printers, but it was unclear whether they really understood what is a printer and what is a manufacturing device or a prototyper? So if even the major trade show organizers misunderstand what we would like to show what is really 3D printing and what is really 3D signage or graphic display (and 3D printers are not in this list, they are too small and best for producing scale models or comic characters at tiny size). Sorry, you can't make a billboard with a 3D printer and for a mall or airport you would need a fortune to have enough 3D models to catch someone's eye. So let's look at true, realistic 3D signage: vacuum heat formed is one. Thermoformed is the usually jargon word. At expos around the world occasionally the booth of Canon/Oce has examples, especially at Sign Africa in Johannesburg (now EASA Africa). Fujifilm occasionally has examples in their booth. But consistently you can see more in the booth of EFI VUTEk, which would be the nice SAGA booth here at SGI 2015. Most UV flatbed printers can handle this application, but you need a special ink which can be stretched without the design disappearing. Ink and an ink company in South Africa are the best known sources of such an ink. You also need a vacuum forming heating machine, and a mold over which you press the flat plastic like material. Since the experienced Medha Benada, Rabby, Marouf Saad, and Abdallah Chalaby and their capable team members at the SAGA booth can answer your questions directly, and since Fujifilm and Canon Océ all have booths, you can also ask them directly (I would estimate that 50k and compatible brands can also produce 3D signage with vacuum thermoformed workflow. I look forward to doing a future article for ME Printer magazine on step by step how to create 3D signage from directly thermoformed ink and work flow, but since you are at SGI today and reading this article, I wanted to mention in which booths you can find real 3D signage potential, since you won't find it in a 3D printer!



**Altech And Intec Launches The 'Best Cost Per Copy In It's Class' Digital Colour Printer; The Intec CP3000**



Known for their innovative and unique range of print solutions, Intec are incredibly proud of this new range of digital colour printers that offers high quality and large volume printing at a fraction of the cost of other systems in the market today.

Not only does the CP3000 offer significant usage cost savings, which was the key development driver for the range, but the printer also offers fantastic print quality, glossy, rich and vivid colour output onto 75 to 400gsm/ micron media, meeting all the expected media requirements, which makes it ideal for marketing departments, graphic arts professionals, photography studios, advertising agencies and print companies where managing cost is paramount to the creation of accessible high quality print. The CP3000 can be tailored to their needs, eliminating the outsourcing of these print. Users can easily and quickly create booklets and print that require folding, hole punching, saddle stitching, collation, offset stacking and multi position stapling from A4 up to SRA3 and banner lengths up to 1.2 metres long. Available in all the popular languages for 23 countries worldwide the CP3000 is compatible with Mac OS X and all Windows environments and is available from Intec's exclusive partner for Middle East & Africa, Altech International FZE. Anesh Fak, business development manager at Altech International FZE states, "Every company is trying to reduce their in house print and making costs. We conquered over 10 different A3 laser printers used in a selection of different print environments and this system came out top of the range; above the rest in terms of print quality and is unbeatable in imaging costs! With the drive towards low cost print, this is an unbeatable combination for any company requiring print". For further details on Intec Printers, contact Anesh Fak at his email: anesh@altechuae.com or on his mobile: +971558836230

<http://www.signmiddleeast.com>

**SIGN Matters** (Print, Outdoor, Digital) is a new magazine. Their colorful Issue 1, January 2015, focuses appropriately on SGI Dubai 2015. Suresh Thayil is Publisher; Dennis Daniel is Editor; Naseef Chenath, Assistant Editor. As stated above, competition helps each competitor to improve.

**PrintWeek** (the regional version for Middle East & Africa) has a booth every year. This magazine covers all aspects of printing, not just wide-format.

**SIGN & P.O.P. WORLD** covers the side-format inkjet printing industry of India.

Every year **global SIGNS** (of Korea) has a booth. The editor must travel even more than Dr. Nicholas, since we see him and an assistant in printer expos around the world every year, year after year. This magazine is primarily a platform for promotion of Korean brands of printers, inks, media, and LED signage.

**KSI, Korean Sign Industry** is a magazine, which also focuses on Korea. Having visited dilli world headquarters and D.G.I. world headquarters several times, plus Inktec, JETRIX, and Keundo each at least once; I have experienced the capable engineering and capabilities of Korean manufacturers of printers, inks, and media. Thus we at FLAAR Reports look forward to additional cooperation with Korean companies in the future, including potentially writing articles for one of the magazines here.



FLAAR provided several articles for the SHOW DAILY. Because space is limited to A3 double sided (folded to make four pages) not everything could be included. We show here the two articles, which got in.

Dr. Nicholas Hellmuth has been writing articles for **ME Printer** for many years. We have enjoyed interacting with the head editor, Alex Jahanbani, over these years. This magazine publishes in Arabic and English. There is also a related magazine for the printer market in Iran.

### Signage Awards program associated with SGI 2015

Enthralogy is now in charge of the Signage Mideast Awards. FLAAR was asked to be one of the judges, so we spent time on evaluating the submissions. Plus the FLAAR team attended the awards dinner and ceremony.



Here is Dr. Nicholas on stage to open the envelope to see which company won one of the awards.



From left to right: Mr. Sharif Rahman (CEO), Mr. Abdulrahman Falaknaz, Pablo Martinez, Maria Renee Ayau and Dr. Nicholas Hellmuth.



One thing which was very clear was the significant amount of new construction, more new giant buildings than in the past. A lot of this is focused on the surge in everything to be brought on by Dubai winning the year 2020 expo venue.



For two days after the expo, while being driven around literally almost all Dubai, it was possible to see many of the actual signs in-situ. Seeing the signs out in the real world was helpful, since from the Internet it's tough to judge the local setting.

Signage in Dubai is of a size and scale not present in other countries around the world.

## Dubai is worth visiting for itself, in addition to attending the international SGI expo

There is a separate FLAAR Report on "visiting Dubai." This year (2015) Dr. Nicholas spent an additional two days, courtesy of IEC and Enthralogy, being taken around the entire emirate to do additional photography. Now, after seven or so years visiting Dubai, we have seen much more of what is available for visitors, and we can definitely say, "bring your family, bring your colleagues, suggest that your friends visit impressive, friendly, and safe Dubai."



## Concluding remarks on SGI 2015 Dubai

One of our interests in the wide-format printer industry is to keep track of trade shows and to assist manufacturers, distributors, and print shop owners to see which expos are worth attending. We informally classify expos as local, regional, and international. Most expos in Brazil are regional or local. There was one expo which aspired to be international but it has shrunk the last two or three years. We enjoy visiting Brazil and thus hope that an expo there can become more international.

We also like local and regional expos. Two of us from FLAAR enjoyed visiting Panama Expo Grafica. And we hope to be invited to visit regional expos in Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Egypt, Jordan, Taiwan, and Korea in 2015. A regional expo also has international brands, and most regional expos have aspiration to become even more international.

Several expos in China are international but more than half the other expos there are regional. For example, if only distributors exhibit, that tends to document this is a regional or local expo. If manufacturers, outside the country, exhibit or send their key managers to the distributor booth, this normally signals a fully international expo.

Epson, Roland, OKI have brand-name booths at SGI in Dubai (though obviously the local distributors are in the booth). And there are Korean, Chinese, and Taiwan companies with their own booths also. Both EFI VUTEk, Swissqprint, Mimaki, and Mutoh had keep people from their European offices flying here to SGI in Dubai. Plus people from many countries attend SGI, hence we consider this an international expo, in addition to naturally being a regional Middle East and local UAE expo. So SGI offers all three classifications of coverage.

## Exhibition catalog

The book-sized exhibition catalog had all the necessary content. This was professionally printed on good quality paper.

### SGI is organized by IEC, Dubai

Mr. Abdul Rahman Falaknaz is Chairman of IEC. Mr. Sharif Rahman is CEO of IEC.

The capable staff is pictured in this photograph.

[www.signmiddleeast.com](http://www.signmiddleeast.com) and [www.iecdubai.com](http://www.iecdubai.com) are two pertinent web sites.

IEC also organizes DEAL, Dubai Entertainment, Amusement and Leisure Show. We at FLAAR Reports are growing our coverage of the amusement park and theme park business. We attended DEAL 2014 and IAAPA 2014 in Orlando (where DEAL and IEC had their booth). For DEAL 2015 we at FLAAR Reports look forward to providing significantly more coverage.



Enthralogy team from left to right: Carlene Rosales, Nikhil Gupta, Suresh Thayil, Dennis Daniel, and Naseef Chenath.

**Enthralogy** is a new company. Their managing director is Suresh Thayil, with a capable team for each aspect of their new assignments.

[www.Enthralogy.me](http://www.Enthralogy.me)

## Acknowledgements

First and foremost we appreciate the help of the IEC team in arranging our flights and hotels plus all the arrangements made by Enthralogy.

We thank the hospitable people in the booths of printers, inks, and media for answering our questions and their telling us about their products.

I thank **Chanchal Samanta**, Director, The Retailers Investment LLC, for two days of showing me more of Dubai than I have seen in the last six years.

It was educational to learn from Charles Yoon, Sales Director of DURAFOS (ink) about health products, since FLAAR also has research divisions (in addition to wide-format printing), namely projects on medicinal plants of Mesoamerica (Mexico through lower Central America).



IEC staff from left to right: Mohamed Nizam, Cristy Caluya, Abhishrey Neereshwalya, Tibhil Mathew, Shahan Sultan, Ms. DonnaBelle Reyes, Shakoor Saban, Mr. Sharif Rahman (CEO), Rahim Abdul Majeed, Jona Castroverde, Shah Nawaz Buddu, Aimelyn Marzon, Some Lahiri, Nithyananda Karuppan, Balu Devadasan, Sajumon Pallam Narayanan.



Océ had nice informative displays and we appreciate the hospitality of Philippe G. Husni and his team in their booth.

### SGI Dubai 2016

Will be held from January 10th to 12th in Halls 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 at the Dubai World Trade Centre.

Since the expo grew about 20% in 2015, and will be this size or larger in 2016, we at FLAAR look forward to again having a team of three to cover everything, since Sign Middle East is now larger than in past years.

Plus we provide text for several magazines about SGI, in addition to the coverage on Sign Middle East throughout our FLAAR Reports web site network.

We recommend attending SGI Dubai 2016 for

- Print shop owners and managers, from the entire Middle East and all neighboring countries
- Distributors of all product ranges
- Manufacturers of all product ranges

SGI is in a friendly international city (Dubai). This is the first major printer and signage expo of the year, so gives you a head start on your competition to visit and learn what is new, what is old but still valid, and what is simply not being exhibited or featured any more (sadly, latex other than HP).

HP definitely has succeeded due to endless perseverance. Merely showing another latex ink is not enough unless you have diverse coverage by enthusiastic sources (commercial PR releases are simply not convincing, sorry).

I am glad that I attended SGI because I learned a lot about media, inks, printers, cutters, and applications, especially what is "3D signage" and what definitely needs redefining: namely 3D "printers."

So we hope to see you at SGI 2016, to learn even more.

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Dr. Nicholas Hellmuth

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