

Thursday, February 16, 2006

2006.02.16: Canvas issues

I opened a new box of 44" Breathing Color Chromata White canvas and look what I found. The box was in perfect condition and the other box that it was strapped to contained a roll in perfect shape (luckily). I couldn't find anything around the studio that would have caused a rippled dent like this. Some motherfucker damaged this roll before it got into the box or something.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Epson Stylus Pro 9600 at 03:11

Monday, August 29, 2005

Printing Gamut Mumbo Jumbo

As a connoisseur of mindblowing colour brilliance and accuracy in digital workflows I am the proud owner of a GretagMacbeth Eye-One Pro UVcut and ProfileMaker 5. I use these tools, sometimes in combination with a production raster image processor (RIP) to realize colour accuracy and colour gamut beyond what is available with a manufacturer's standard printer drivers and canned ICC profiles. I recently built profiles for Epson's PremierArt Water Resistant Canvas, Breathing Color's Brilliance I, II, and Chromata White canvases using the Eye-Pro UV/PM5 combination for my Epson 9600 Ultrachrome. I have been extremely happy with Breathing Color's Brilliance I and Brilliance Chromata White canvases and my eyes told me that colours are much more brilliant and contrasty on the Breathing Color canvases than on the PremierArt canvas. However, I wanted to check to be sure that this was the case. Using PM5's gamut viewer I compared several profiles including those above. A three dimensional (L*a*b) representation of three different medias for comparison purposes. The translucent blue is the PremierArt Water Resistant Canvas, grey is Breathing Color Brilliance I, and the red is UNCOATED, non-inkjet specific Fabriano fine art paper, profiled for professional graphic artist and printmaker Rina Chan. Oddly, Breathing Color's canvas which is advertised to have wider gamuts than many other canvases, sometimes with special note to PA's WR Canvas, actually has a noticeably smaller gamut and, at some points, even smaller than the uncoated Fabriano! PAC profiled with gloss black on an Epson 9600. The other two profiled with eboni (Matte) black. Qualitative tests seem to show completely different results. Could be the glare from the PAC. The widest gamut, strangely, came from my Premier Art's Water Resistant Canvas profiled followed closely Bill Atkinson's PA WR Canvas profile and then by Chromata White and then by Brilliance II and then Brilliance I. There were some points at which a high quality fine art paper which came uncoated and not designed for inkjet use actually demonstrated wider gamut than the special canvas with special coatings. If I showed you a series of prints of the same image varying only in substrate printed (and the associated printer colour profile), I'm sure that you'd very easily pick out one of the Breathing Color canvases as having the most vibrant colours, deepest blacks, and highest contrast and most detailed shadows. What's strange is that the plots show a very different picture. My inference is that all of the Breathing Color products profiled were matte finished and the Premier Art canvas was glossy and exhibited glare under most lighting conditions which reduced visual contrast. In short, the Breathing Color substrates look really awesome and much better than the Premier Art canvas even though the Premier Art canvas produces a profile with a wider gamut. I still have some Premier Art Canvas on which I'll print your work for a ridiculously low price. Check out my new large format printing service website. It's ugly right now but it has the information that you need to get accurate colour on a variety of papers in widths of up to 44" and unlimited lengths. For accurate colour in your digital workflow check out GretagMacbeth. I recommend the Eye-one Display and Eye-one Pro line of products for display and printer profiling. If you'd like a demonstration or would like to purchase GretagMacbeth products feel free to contact me as I am currently using some of their products in my workflow and I am also an authorized reseller.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Epson Stylus Pro 9600 at 05:12

Wednesday, March 23, 2005

Lexjet Canvas and other media follow up

After trying out Lexjet's Instant Dry Satin Canvas on a friend's Epson Stylus 7600 w/ ImagePrint 6 I discovered that it was probably just Lexjet's profile that wasn't very good. Nonetheless, the purchase of ImagePrint (\$3000US-ish for the Postscript version, which I'd need for signage and stuff) is taking a back seat to the prospect of purchasing a GretagMacbeth colorimeter, densitometer and some profile making software like their ProfileMaker 5 Photostudio. I haven't looked up the pricing yet but I've heard rumours that it's around \$3000US as well. Problem is that it won't process PostScript. =P The reason why I'm interested in this profiling system is because I'm looking at a bulk feed system from Lyson for their Cave Paint/PhotoChrome ink sets. These ink sets are supposed to increase colour gamut and reduce bronzing and also reduce running costs of the printer as ink can be purchased in jugs. :-P Problem is that they only have colour profiles for their own media and not for anyone else's. There may be value in making my own. Anyhow, my Lexjet rep has begun the refund process. He's been incredibly helpful and tolerant with my "greenness" with this giant piece of Epson printer and his recommendations for media so far have been excellent (yes, Lexjet's Professional Semi-matte 10mil prints much nicer and has lower glare than Epson's Premium Lustre and my customers have noticed this difference). He's also been very responsive with the interesting quirks of this printer, like how it doesn't like rolls of media which aren't exactly 44" or 24" or some of the smaller sizes . . . The problems arose with two of my rolls of media from LexJet: LexJet's water resistant printable polypropylene and 3p's FlagTex fabric printable translucent stuff. Both of these rolls come as 42", a couple inches short of the standard 44" rolls. As such, the Epson 9600's photo detector told the printer that the paper wasn't loaded properly as it couldn't detect anything around the last two inches of the roll. My Lexjet rep promptly e-mailed instructions on how to bypass the photo detector sequence so that the printer would print on non-standard rolls. Here's how you do it (copied directly out of his e-mail =): LCD Screen-->select type-->printer setup-->select type-->hit paper feed down button til paper (ppr) size check-->select type-->it will say on*-->set the asterisk to off by pressing the cut eject enter button-->press pause-----done. Looks simple? You're right, it is. =) If you are running an Epson 9600 and have trouble following these instructions feel free to drop me a line asking for help . . . so that I can mock you! =P j/k Seriously, if there's something you don't get as part of these instructions or need more info on how these problems came about feel free to drop me a line or give me a call. =)

Posted by Klyment Tan in Epson Stylus Pro 9600 at 02:06

Sunday, March 13. 2005

Canvas Trouble

I think I received a bad roll of canvas. I use two different types of canvas at the moment: Epson's Water Resistant Canvas by PremierArt and LexJet's Instant Dry Satin Canvas. The prints on the LexJet ID Satin Canvas look fine right after being printed but within a couple of hours they all seem to exhibit a green shift and the blacks lighten up noticeably. For example, the print of Leanna that I'm "posing" with in the photo to the left now appears to have a yellow-green cast to it and the blacks are nowhere near as black as they appear in this photo. BTW, I accidentally had my camera set to "high colour" so everything looks a bit more saturated than it should. Anyhow, this colour shift doesn't appear with Epson's Water Resistant Canvas. Lexjet's canvas was recommended by a Lexjet sales representative and though I remembered asking him to drop this canvas from the order as Epson was giving away free cutter blades with every two rolls of their PremierArt canvas purchased that was 17" or larger, the canvas still managed to stay in the order. I guess I wasn't as explicit as I could have been when saying that I didn't want to even try the Lexjet canvas at this time. Anyhow, I was shipped and billed for the canvas. Beyond this colour shift, the canvas is great but that's a pretty big exception. I'll wait until Monday to see what my sales rep has to say about this colour shift. I received a call last week from LexJet regarding one of my media rolls having a fault in the coating. It was about the ImagePro Satin 8mil paper. Being kind of curious, I thought I'd try the paper anyway. It worked great . . . no colour shifting, excellent colour and touchability, nice gloss. Perhaps they got the two "satins" confused. =P Perhaps that's the case . . . hopefully. Because the landed cost of this roll of canvas was actually higher than Epson's Premier Art water resistant stuff and it's definitely not performing as well. More about the print: it's a 20 x 26-ish inch print with 2" borders on canvas. It's a very late Christmas present for Leanna. I intend to stretch the final print once I figure out what's up with this canvas. Sorry for the delay, Leanna.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Epson Stylus Pro 9600 at 18:23

Tuesday, March 8, 2005

Big new printer

The Epson Stylus Pro 9600 arrived today. A full blog entry is on its way but I'm posting this interim entry as I am very excited about this new piece of equipment. :-) There are two other similar printers that are available for hire in Edmonton but I am going after a different market than either of these companies. In addition, my cost of materials allows me match pricing with the University of Alberta's Computer Network Services large format printing service which is only available to staff and student and prints on plain paper for prints on rolls wider than 36" and basic coated glossy poster paper for prints 36" wide and narrower and they are using machines which are not designed primarily for true photographic reproduction. My 9600 will be driven by Colorbyte's ImagePrint RIP (raster only) which will allow me to achieve a wider gamut and better colour accuracy (I think), than Epson's driver while using the same archival-quality UltraChrome pigment inks and photographic substrates. It will also allow me to quickly gang and next multiple images for printing and proofing on pieces off larger rolls of paper. More on all of this later and hopefully with some photos.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Epson Stylus Pro 9600 at 12:41