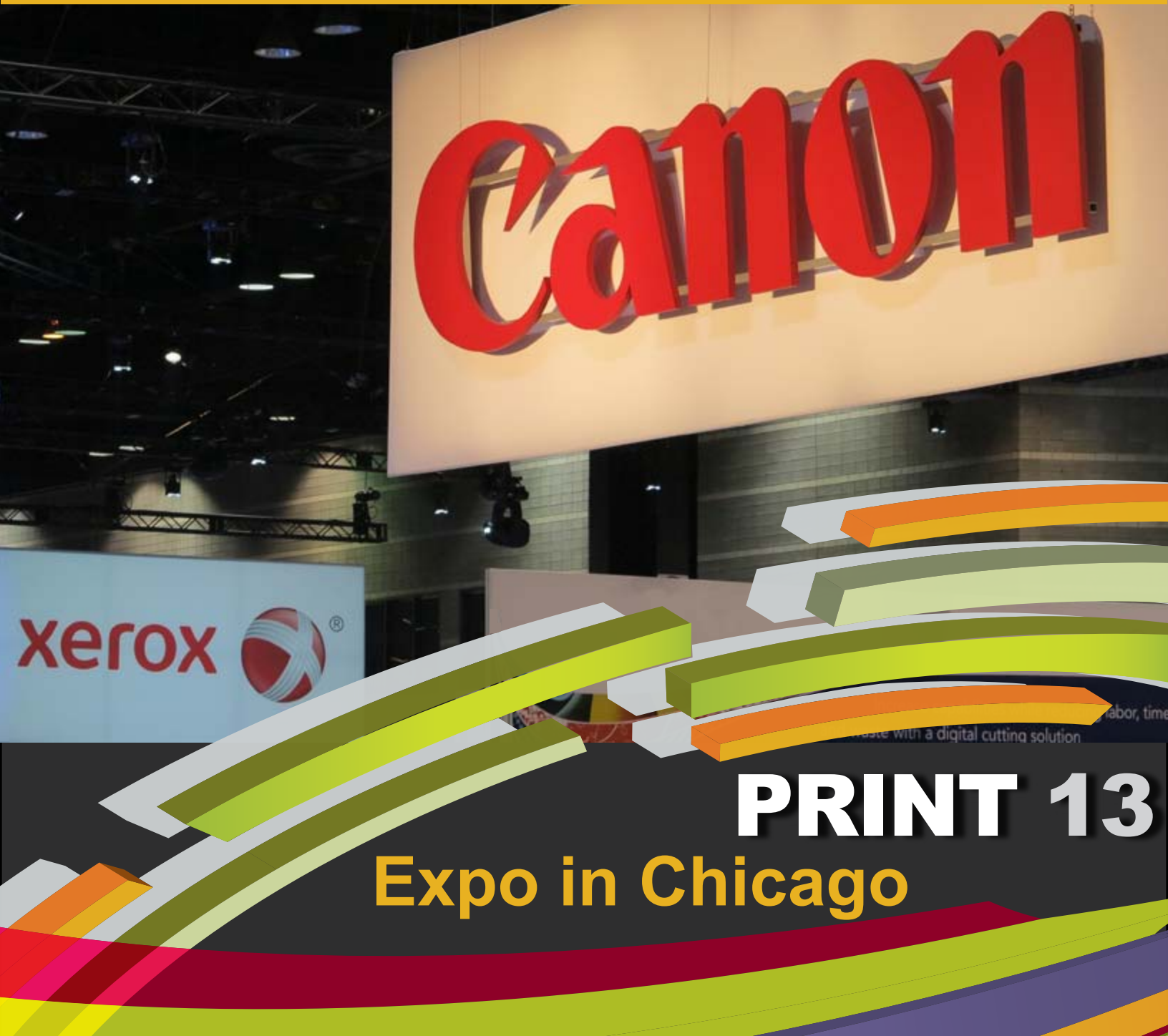


**PRINTERS of every size and application:**  
Short-run Digital Presses (toner AND inkjet)  
Wide-format Inkjet: even T-shirt printers



**PRINT 13**

**Expo in Chicago**



## Print 13: the every-four-year special version of Graph Expo

Every three years in a row it is called Graph Expo. Then it is named Print for one year; then designated as Graph Expo for three years. Then Print the fourth year.

I have attended Graph Expo for over a decade, and Print '01 was my first year. I was back home in Ohio the day the Twin Towers were obliterated by terrorists on 9/11.



## Canon and Xerox dominate the landscape

There were two entrances to the exhibit hall: down the escalators from the upper levels (from the lecture rooms; from the Press Room, etc). These three escalators were secondary entrances.

The main entrance was facing the main hallway. Xerox and Canon dominated this entire entrance area.

Konica Minolta and FUJIFILM were the second row (behind Xerox and Canon). Ricoh was in the third row. HP was in the fourth row.

Efi VUTEk had the largest booth dedicated exclusively to wide-format inkjet printers. There were more grand-format printers in the efi VUTEk booth than all other wide-format booths put together (since Mimaki and Roland exhibited primarily entry-level printers; Mutoh did not exhibit their UV printer at all).

HP was understandably mostly focused on their Indigo printer technology, since Print 13 is not a signage expo but an expo for commercial production printers, office printers, office copiers, and short-run digital presses. However HP did have one UV-cured printer in their booth..

Xeikon is definitely a printer technology FLAAR is interested in evaluating. I especially like the ability of the Xeikon to handle panorama photographs (since FLAAR specializes in evaluating panorama photography equipment for over 14 years).





## Short-run presses for offices

Increasingly we are interested in short-run presses: both toner-based, and digital (inkjet). I have lectured on toner printer technology, and how this differs from narrow-format inkjet (at a conference on toner).



Xerox iGen 150



RICOH booth



OKI booth





## Short-run presses for commercial printing

At Sign Africa in Johannesburg, a few weeks before Print 13 in Chicago, the courteous team at the Xerox booth helped do test prints. We used an A3 sized sheet, front and back, as test sheet. We do not evaluate transactional printers: our focus is on photo-quality production.

We are preparing additional test samples, and will be adding varnish as part of the test for those machines which can also add spot varnish.

Our photographs are taken with digital cameras of 21 megapixels and 36 megapixels, and professional studio lighting equipment. So the quality of the images helps reveal the quality of the printers we will be evaluating.

At Print 13 there were printers for A3 or tabloid size sheets or comparable sizes in the booths of

- Canon and Oce
- HP
- Fujifilm
- Konica Minolta
- Ricoh
- Xerox
- Xeikon

It is not realistic to have print samples done during a large expo the size of Print 13. So we met with pertinent individuals at Canon, Xerox, Xeikon, etc so we can send our samples for printer evaluation during October.

For Konica Minolta we would be interested in testing our print samples on either the KM-1/IS29 Inkjet Press or one of the bizhub PRESS color digital systems (bizhub PRESS C1100 or C8000 were two brochures I have). The 23x29" page size of the Konica Minolta the KM-1/IS29 Inkjet Press interests me.

For Xerox the iGen system is the one I know best, but at Sign Africa about two weeks before, I tested on a completely different Xerox system, Color J75 Press or comparable (and the output was handsome). At Print 13 the Xerox iGen 150 Press was displayed (and lots of other impressive printers elsewhere in their booth). 14.33 x 26" is a helpful print size for our test material.

With Xerox I especially like their booklet, Designing with Clear Dry Ink. All our graphic designers at FLAAR are university trained, but designing jobs for digital presses is new for them.

RICOH is obviously a brand we recognize, but I am not familiar with their specific printers. But a 12.7 x 18.9 print area helps, since we prefer to test at slightly over tabloid size. Our photographs in the test documents are such high resolution we like to see them tested at a nice size.



KONICA MINOLTA





FUJIFILM seemed to be featuring their Graphium UV Inkjet Press, which is for packaging and labels. We work in the packaging field and are obviously aware of the label printer market, but presently we are more focused on short-run presses, short-run book production, brochure and pamphlet printing.

Xeikon is a brand I have inspected at DRUPA every four years plus at other expos when it is present. I like their print quality and we look forward to testing our high-res photos on their newer models.

The Canon booth definitely caught my eye. I believe it was there booth which had the best display of short-run digital ly printed books-on-demand. We definitely look forward to testing diverse Canon office and commercial press printers.

Professor Frank Romano, RIT, introduced me to key people in several booths, including Canon. Professor Romano has experience in all printers comparable to what FLAAR does with inkjet (mostly wide-format, but also digital presses, T-shirt printers, and in-line printers for ceramics and glass). We also include toner printers because the Fortune 500 readers of our web sites also ask about toner printers. Most government agencies and a significant portion of Fortune 500 companies actually write us directly to ask our recommendations (for a six year project we kept track and it was tens of thousands of requests).



Canon for short-run printing



KONICA MINOLTA booth



Xerox booth



## Short-run book and photo album production

Normally FLAAR evaluates wide-format printers, but three of us were flown by Xerox to their world headquarters in Rochester NY about six years ago (to learn about their iGen printers).

HP flew FLAAR to their Indigo printer manufacturing factory and to their Indigo ink factory also.

Our interest in printers for short-run book and photo album production is because we are producing a series of trilogies on some of the fascinating neotropical flowers and healthy fruits and nuts of Mesoamerica.

Mesoamerica is the area of Mexico and Central America which was influenced by the Olmec, Teotihuacan, Maya, Toltec, and Aztec civilizations, plus all the local cultures of Mexico down through Costa Rica.

The home operating office of FLAAR Reports is in Guatemala since for about six years our staff initiated, designed, and carried out evaluations in a digital imaging research center at Francisco Marroquin University. Simultaneously the same years we had an inkjet printing and digital photography research, evaluation, and publication center at Bowling Green State University in Ohio.

Ironically, BGSU tore down the building on campus which housed our facilities and UFM needed the space we occupied for a brand new program (not related to digital imaging). Plus we had grown too large and too multi-national in scope to be at a university. So now we are off campus, still independent (as we were before we were asked to come on campus circa 2001). Since we work around the world it is more practical to have our own facilities near an international airport. We write articles for printer magazines around the world.

But since we are in the middle of Mesoamerica, we also study cacao (cocoa, the ingredient of chocolate). We raise and study tobacco and all its ingredients as used by the Maya and Aztec for thousands of years.

And we are especially interested in developing better diets for local people based on the nutritious fruits, nuts, vegetables, and other native plants of Guatemala, Mexico, etc.

So we are using our ethnobotanical book project proposals as test files to evaluate short run digital presses, commercial printers, and comparable machines: both toner and inkjet. On this page you can see some of our samples.

We will send samples out in October since trade magazines have asked us to write evaluations on commercial printing equipment.



*Impressive display of short-run books, digitally printed. If I remember correctly this is the booth of Canon.*



This is precisely the kind of printer that FLAAR is working on evaluating, with samples from our own books on Mayan ethnobotany of Guatemala.



## Toner printers, but wide-format

KIP, Océ (and actually other companies for CAD) use colorants other than inkjet. Here at Print 13 the primary wide-format toner printers (the ones we noticed) were of KIP and Océ.



KIP booth



## Offset Presses

I can still remember the mammoth Heidelberg booth ten or more years ago. In those years FLAAR was evaluating Heidelberg scanners (we still have one; of course there is no computer today whose operating system even recognizes scanners of a decade ago).

But newspaper production has shrunk; people read the news on the Internet. Lots of used printers available. And now offset presses are even available from China.

So not much left for Heidelberg to have a booth at any expo other than Drupa. In the place where the Heidelberg used to be are booths of the more agile companies, Xerox and Canon.

Around Print 13 there were a number of booths of offset printer brands. I show a few (since my focus at Print 13 were commercial printers such as Canon, Xerox, Konica Minolta, Ricoh, etc). I also came to Print 13 to study Memjet printers with MEMS printhead technology (RTI Vortex, Océ, Xerox, Xante).

Nonetheless, here I show at least a sample of the offset printer booths.



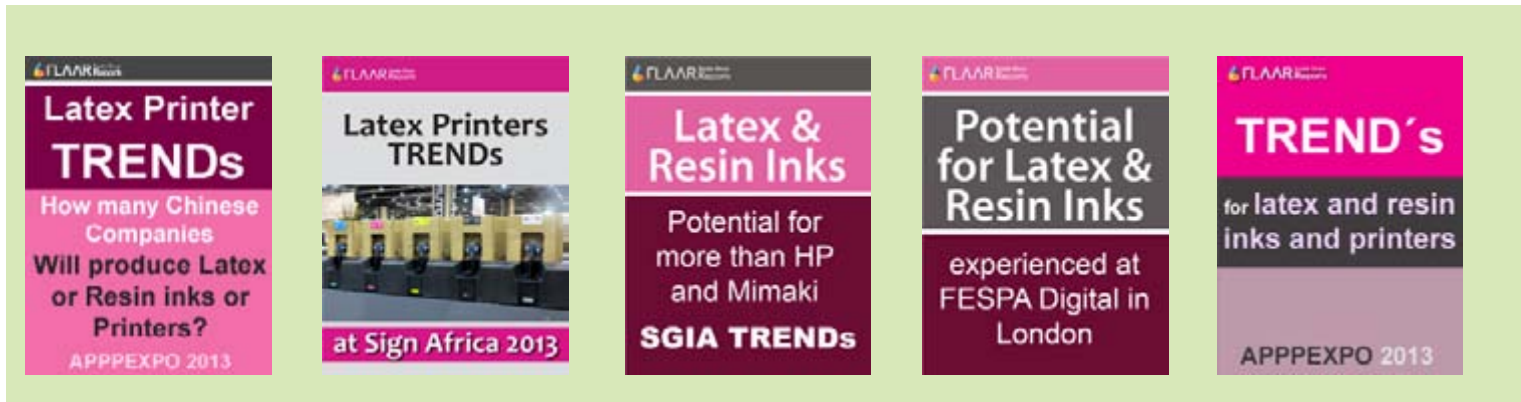
Offset press





## Latex ink printers

We show here the latex ink FLAAR Reports which are available. The presence of latex ink printers was minimal at this expo, so we defer you to the TRENDS level editions of the larger signage expos such as FESPA Digital, SGIA, ISA, APPPEXPO in China, etc.



To order the Latex reports, write [FrontDesk@FLAAR.org](mailto:FrontDesk@FLAAR.org) and ask to be invoiced.



HP Designjet latex printer



HP Latex 850



HP Designjet L26500 latex



## Water-based Printers

Canon had many iPF water-based printers in their booth. Since the booth was filled with attendees and staff, it was not easy to get clear shots of each printer. So we show some general views here.

What I notice about Canon is that they have new models about every year. HP almost never changes their model name.

There was also a double-sided proofer, DJET 700. I had seen another product of this Swiss company in Sign Africa a few weeks before Print 13.



DJET 700 double sided

RICOH MP CW2200

Canon ipf





Canon ipf8400s



## Technical Printers: for GIS and CAD

HP is the world leader in wide-format inkjet printers for CAD and GIS applications. But Epson tries every few years to get into this market. So at Print 13 there were two “T” printers in the Epson line: T5000 and T7000.

In the past Epson tried to have their proofing and photo printers tweaked to be basic CMYK technical printers. This was not successful in the USA. Epson tried again occasionally in Europe. But you would see an Epson technical printer one year and then not again for another two years. The presence was not consistent (Epson was only consistent for proofing and giclee and photo printers).

The first generation Epson SureColor printers in 2012 were embarrassing. The second iteration is a bit better, but even some dealers declined to even offer the early versions. By the time a third improvement comes out the new series should be ok. And since HP does not exhibit their HP technical printers very often, Epson may gain a few clients. Of course Canon is also interested in this market.

Ricoh exhibited what I assume was their entry into the world of technical printers, the Ricoh MP CW2200. Ricoh is great with their own printheads; but Ricoh is not well known for printers.



Epson SureColor T5000



Epson SureColor T7000



## Memjet printers, with MEMS printheads

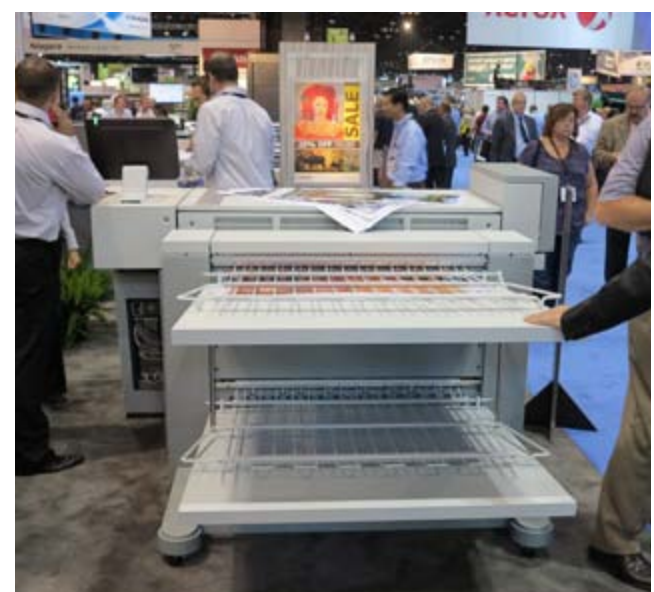
We cover these printers in a separate FLAAR Report on MEMS printhead technology and TRENDS level coverage of the now five brands producing 42" wide-format printers with Memjet technology.

Of these five brands four were at Print 13. Of these four we have increasing experience and knowledge of the pros and cons of Memjet potential. So if you are a distributor or potential end-user, you really need to purchase the FLAAR Report before you buy one of these printers.

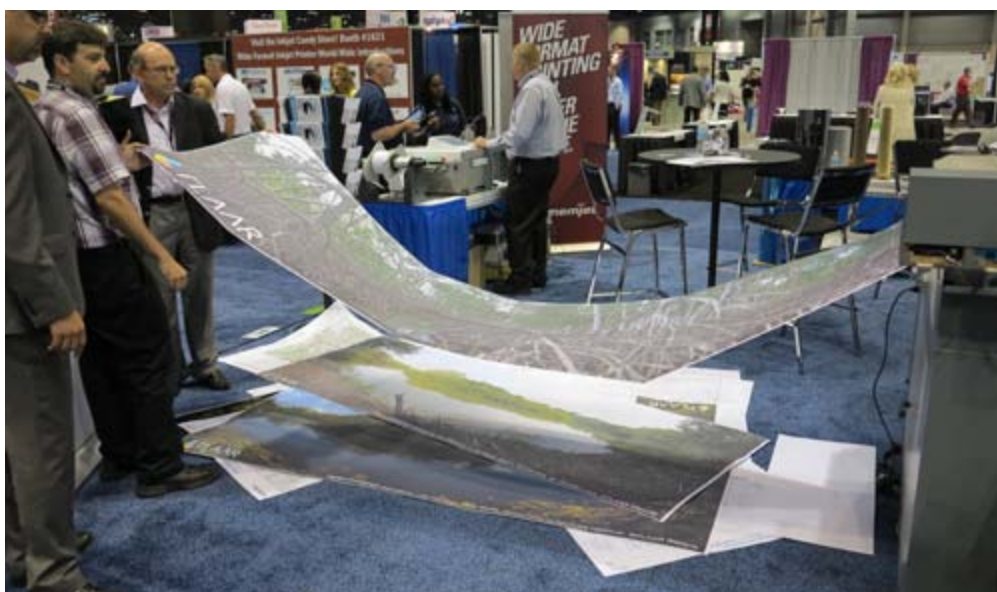


To order this report, write [FrontDesk@FLAAR.org](mailto:FrontDesk@FLAAR.org) and ask to be invoiced.

Xerox IJP2000 Memjet



Oce ColorWave 900 Memjet



RTI Vortex Memjet

## Solvent Printers

Since this is not a signage expo, not many eco-solvent printers other than Epson SureColor S-series.

The model names for Epson often vary by world area. The ones they exhibited here in Chicago were the SureColor S30670, S50670, and S70670. The previous Epson eco-solvent printer was manufactured by Mutoh and rebranded by Epson. This was a popular printer.

The new SureColor series are low-bid from China. The iteration today are better than the first prototypes, but I would prefer to wait for one more generation of improvement.

Mutoh had a modest sized corporate booth. Mutoh exhibited several ValueJet models. These are considered acceptable machines; as are comparable printers from Mimaki (which were not exhibited at Print 13) and comparable printers from Roland (no eco-solvent printers here).

Mutoh is still trying hard with their hybrid printer with a new generation ink (mp ink). Unfortunately this entire Mutoh concept has not been a world success. Part is because a hybrid pinch roller structure can't really handle some thick or rigid material. And the inks that Mutoh selects are relatively unknown elsewhere.

But I can definitely mention that the curing system of the Mutoh ValueJet 1617H is significantly better than previous versions.



Mutoh ValueJet, 1617H

*This model is not really a "solvent printer" but is not any standard designation that is widely used elsewhere, so is included in the "solvent section."*





Mimaki CJV 30-60

## Inkjet Candy Store



When a major company does not book a booth; or books but then pulls out, most expo organizers fill the empty space with a café or a rest area. Both these kinds of spaces are an instant giveaway that a company has cancelled their booth.

So the organizers of Print 13 did a much better job than the organizers of VISCOM Milano (VISCOM Milano puts a café or a triple-width aisle, or adds a diagonal aisle to hide missing booths). Print 13 instead created an "Inkjet Candy Store" to fill the space.

Everyone said this was the space vacated by Agfa. Agfa also pulled out of APPPEXPO in Shanghai (but both Durst and SwissQprint entered for their first time at APPPEXPO so attendees did not worry about one brand pulling out).



Roland XF-640





## Textile Printers

Only one or two brands of textile printers that I noticed. were noticeable, such as a Mimaki CJV30-100 printing on transfer paper in the booth of axiom america (a distributor). The same booth had a brother GT-3 series T-shirt printer.

No calender machines (so how is anyone supposed to turn transfer paper into an actual finished textile).

Since FLAAR covers textile printer expos, plus textile printers at SGIA, ISA, FESPA, etc. it is disappointing not to see any significant textile printers (Epson is not a textile printing system, since this is their first generation; but eventually they will gain the needed experience).



To order the Textile reports, write [FrontDesk@FLAAR.org](mailto:FrontDesk@FLAAR.org) and ask to be invoiced.

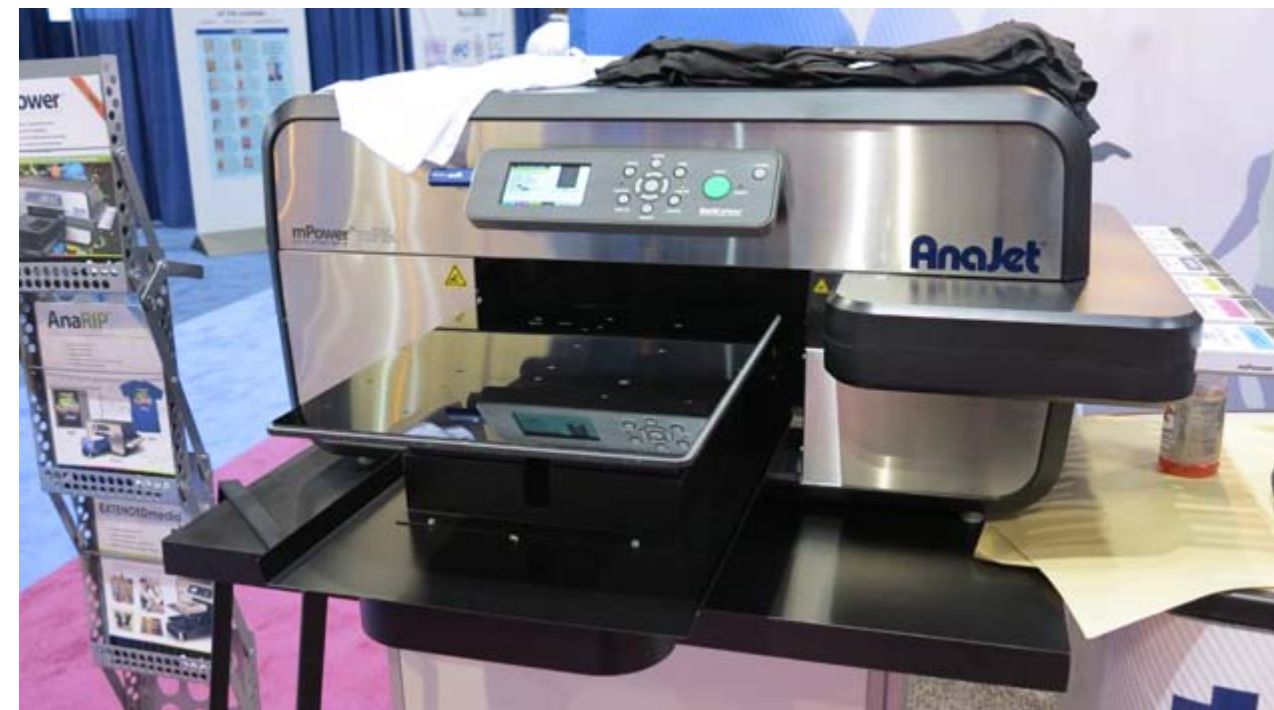
## T-shirt printers

SGIA is the place for T-shirt printers. Actually there were lots of T-shirt printers at Sign Africa two weeks before Print 13. I was pleasantly surprised to see three booths with T-shirt printers at Print 13 (which is an expo primarily for office printers, and printers for commercial print shops (offset and digital presses)).

We have separate dedicated reports on textile printers and are preparing additional reports on T-shirt printers, but only for the larger expos such as SGIA.



Brother GT-3



Anajet MP5i





Anajet MP5i



Epson F2000W



## UV-cured printers

CET, HP Scitex, Fujifilm Acuity, Inca, Mimaki, Oce, Roland, Teckwin, and efi VUTEk all exhibited UV-cured printers for signage.

The largest booth for UV-cured printers was efi VUTEk. They exhibited

EFI VUTEK HS100 Pro  
 EFI VUTEk GS2000LX Pro

Plus an EFI Jetrion 4900ML digital press for labels. I am curious about learning more about the EFI GlossControl system.

Buy reports together for only \$ 1200

Buy reports together for only \$ 3200

To request an invoice for UV cured reports, write us at [FrontDesk@FLAAR.org](mailto:FrontDesk@FLAAR.org)

Since we have the UV-cured TRENDS report for ISA, for the Chinese expos, for FESPA and upcoming for SGIA, there is no need for a TRENDS report on the small sample of UV-cured printers at Print 13.

But we do show snapshots of the UV-cured printers which we noticed.

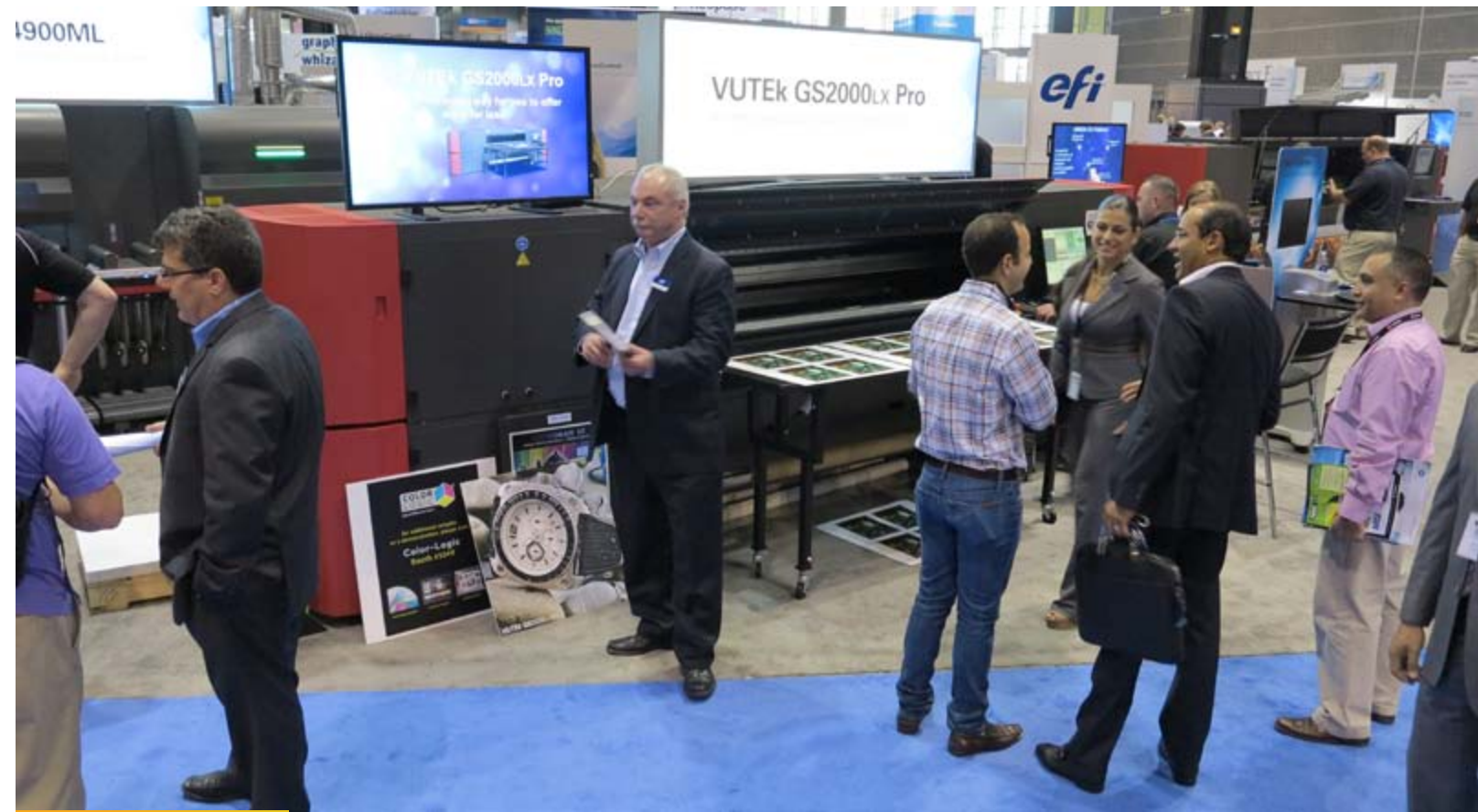




EFI R3225



VUTEk HS100



VUTEk GS2000LX



## Flatbed cutters

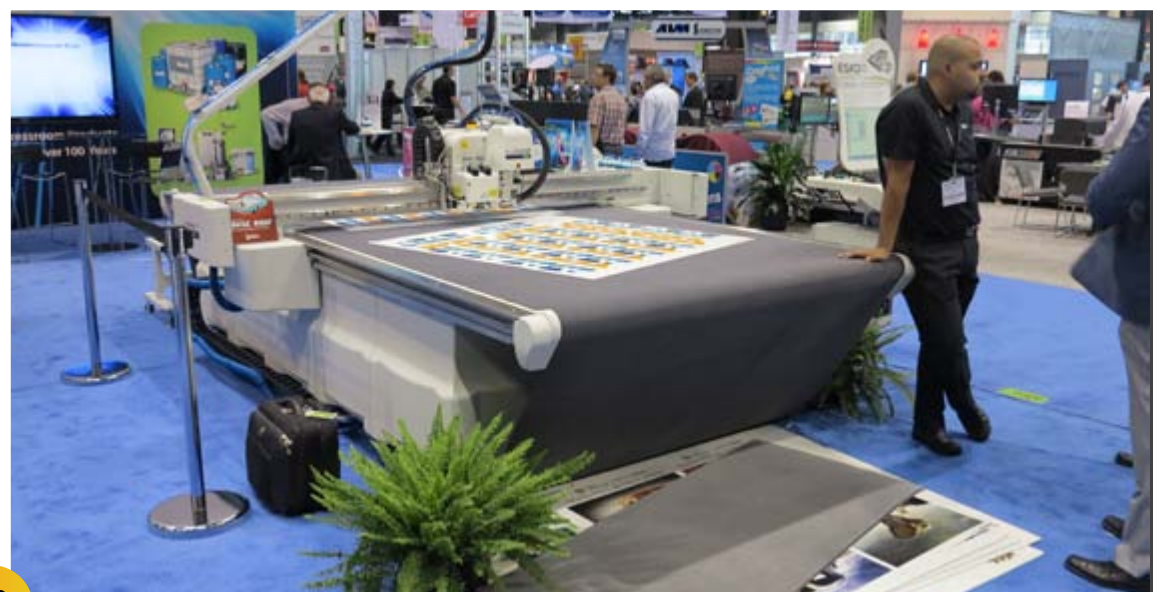
You mainly find flatbed cutters at expos focused on signage, but also on packaging. Thus it was a pleasant surprise to find the two top brands: Zund and Kongsberg, at Print 13. MultiCam and one brand from Asia (Samurai) were also present.



MultiCam digital express



ZÜND ProCut



Kongsberg XN

## Media and Substrates

There were two Chinese booths of laminate material (more likely for offset or other commercial printing; not really for wide-format).

In the entire expo I did not notice one single booth dedicated to wide-format inkjet media. There was one paper company (International Paper) and probably others that were not as noticeable.



To request an invoice for Media & Substrates reports, write us at [FrontDesk@FLAAR.org](mailto:FrontDesk@FLAAR.org)

But inkjet media and substrates are a field that FLAAR has been studying for many years. We know most of the key companies. Our FLAAR staff has been to expos where over 125 booths of media and substrates can be found (now you see why we recommend APPPEXPO is a crucial printer trade show in Shanghai every July).

Nonetheless, Print '13 was still worth visiting and Graph Expo 2014 also (though I will admit I stopped attending Graph Expo after they cut their wide-format inkjet lecture program where previously I had presented every single year).



## After-market inks

Most ink companies were after the offset market here. So even if a company (such as Triangle or Toyo) also makes inks for wide-format, their focus at Print '13 was on ink for offset presses.

The booth of Sun Chemical was somewhere, but in two days of hiking up and down and back and forth the entire expo hall, I never once noticed their booth (hint to their logo and booth design team). If their booth was a small size that would be embarrassing for such a multi-national company. In distinction INX had a booth of appropriate international size.

The kind of ink company we are considering evaluating is sts inks. Five years ago they were barely at the printer expos, but by 2012 I began to notice them; by 2013 they were at more international expos than most other brands. Plus sts inks are Made in the USA. As soon as their new factory is finished we are considering visiting it.

At past expos the booth personnel of VanSon indicated clearly that their wide-format inkjet ink was rebranded (I estimate most likely from Korea or comparable). But at Print 13 one person in their booth stated that VanSon made their inkjet ink themselves.

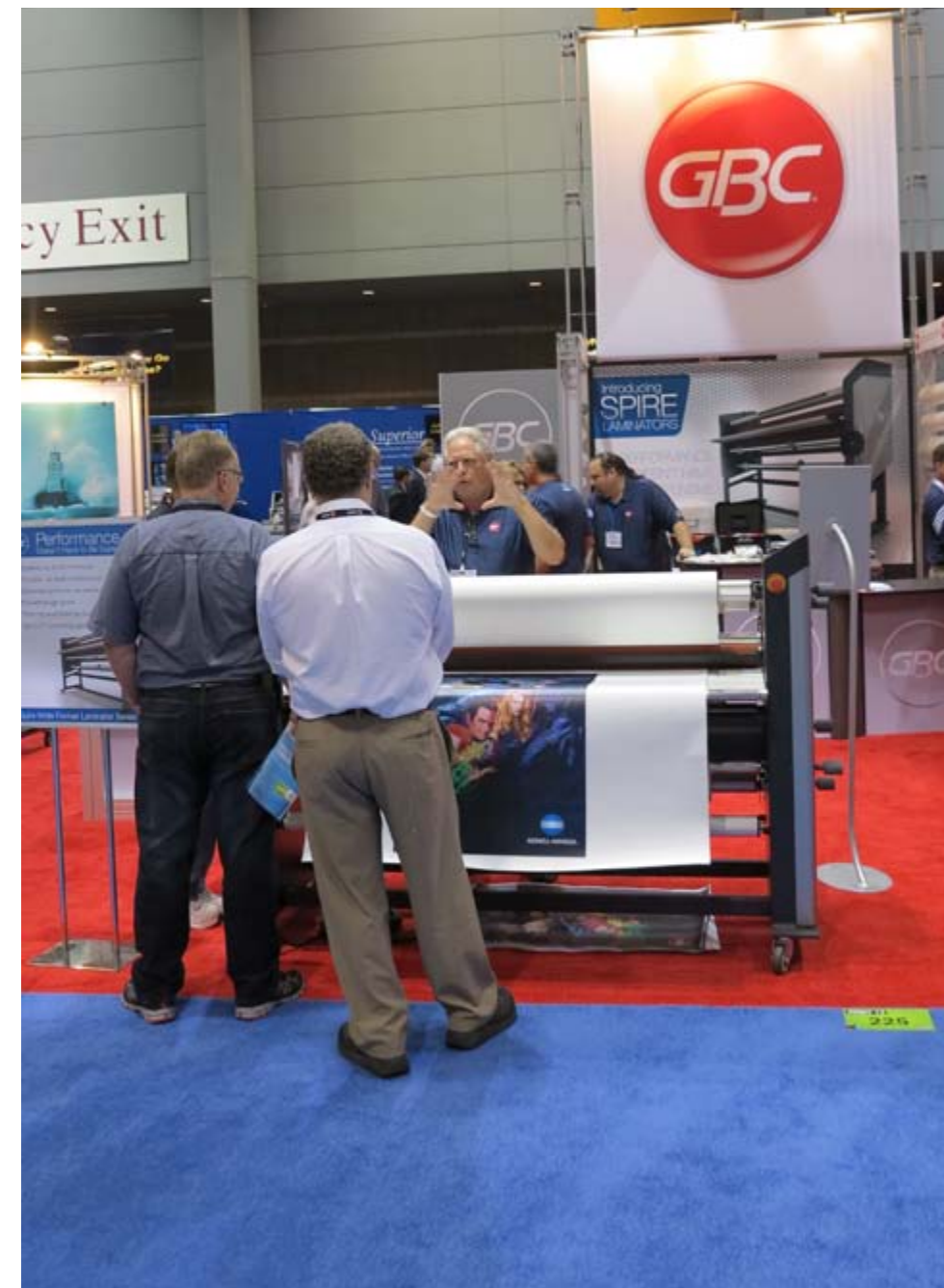
After what others indicated earlier, I would need to see a VanSon factory to be sure. What I have learned in the past 10 years is that almost everyone (understandably) claims to make their own ink. But most is actually manufactured offshore and rebranded. This is why manufacturers fly FLAAR to their factories, so we can document that they themselves actually develop, and manufacturer, their own ink. STS is a good example; I will most likely be flown to their factory this year.

Actually rebranding ink is not bad (as long as a company states clearly this is the reality). Several ink companies who make ink for others do an excellent job. But what is important is for a brand name to correctly indicate whether they really make it themselves, or whether they are rebranding.

## Laminators

Not really much WIDE-format laminators. Laminator booths tended to be small, and mainly narrow format. GBC has a modest booth. To cover signage adequately you need more major brands of laminators.

We know the GBC brand but have never been brought to their company headquarters nor their factory. We have more experience with other brands of laminators.



GBC booth



STS booth



## RIP Software

People from Caldera RIP and Onyx RIP came up to say hello. I saw a RIP brand banner on the FUJIFILM booth area (but the booth was too large and too busy to navigate (which is a compliment in a way).

There is a whole new opening for RIP software nowadays, for powering images for MEMS printheads (Memjet). We discuss this in our work-in-progress on the four printer brands using Memjet.

There are also proofing RIPs, such as ORIS CGS. This is a known and respected proofing software which has a long track record. Although we have not been to their USA or European headquarters we know their presence in the industry.



Gti Color



ColorHQ booth

## Color Management

There were more booths dedicated to color management than there were dedicated to RIP software.



ORIS booth



## MIS Software

One of the better MIS Software packages is actually in the efi VUTEk booth. We have a comment from the owner of two efi VUTEk printers who indicated that the overall MIS software bundle of efi is more effective than other brands because efi has all the software in-house (so part of the same company as the printers).

Other MIS software comes from the world of offset (so not developed with an in-depth knowledge of wide-format inkjet signage).

Other MIS software comes from the world of flatbed cutters (closer to signage than offset), but there are clearly benefits of having your MIS come “built into” your printer from the ground up.

In general MIS software is not as easy to list and evaluate as is RIP software. With RIP software already over a decade ago FLAAR had lists (and comments about) each one of over 70 RIP manufacturers. Today there are only six significant signage RIP companies and we recommend only four of them. We have been to the world headquarters of two of these: Caldera and Wasatch.

To evaluate a RIP it is essential to be at the actual company to learn about their corporate philosophy and how they handle print shops and partners (the printer manufacturers). So the first step of having a FLAAR Report on a RIP (or MIS) software is being present in the company demo room.



## Distributors

- Some expos are primarily manufacturers: Drupa, D-PES, Sign China, APPPEXPO Shanghai, ITMA, ShanghaiTex, Ceramics China, Glasstec (Duesseldorf).
- Some expos are mostly manufacturers but also distributors: FESPA Digital (Europe),
- Some expos are evenly balanced distributors and manufacturers: SGIA, ISA.
- Some expos are a few manufacturers but mostly distributors: Sign Africa, SGI (Sign Middle East), VISCOM Paris, VISCOM Milano, VISCOM Germany, expos in Australia, and others.
- Some expos are primarily distributors: Serigrafia, Sign, Future Textil (sic) in Brazil.



Prisco booth

Print 13 is primarily for manufacturers. Of course, obviously, there are also distributors (about four for wide-format, with the largest being Prisco). It was possible to meet the Steve Zunde (President), Mike White (Vice President, Digital Sales Eastern Region) of Prisco, plus we know Paul C. Hostelley (Vice President, Digital Sales Western Region).





DGS booth



GRIMCO

GRIMCO is in the home city of the Hellmuth architecture family, but it is ironic that we have not been to their facilities (primarily since our main operating office is in Central America, since we also have really capable university students here).

FLAAR reports on distributors

\$240.00	\$240.00	\$240.00	\$350.00	\$420.00

\$220.00	\$350.00	\$420.00	\$260.00

To request an invoice for Distributors reports write us at [FrontDesk@FLAAR.org](mailto:FrontDesk@FLAAR.org)

We provide lists of distributors for several major world areas: these are primarily for manufacturers, analysts, and people in the industry. You can ask to be invoiced by writing FrontDesk "at" FLAAR.org



## Chinese booths

It is the norm at most expos nowadays to have one or more sections of the booth space to be Chinese manufacturers. They come to look for distributors, as well as direct sales to major print shops. There are at least three major Chinese companies who bring these groups (as an entire group).

Since FLAAR attends the three largest Chinese wide-format printer expos:

- D-PES in Guangzhou
- Sign China in Guangzhou
- APPPEXPO, the largest wide-format printer and signage expo in the world (yes, for wide-format printers perhaps twice the size of Drupa (about 400% more printer brands than Drupa); for media, substrates, CNC routers, CO2 laser engravers five times the size of Drupa; sorry to be blunt). But if you need offset printers, Drupa is still King in that department.



## Booth Design (for trade shows): How Best to Handle your Outside Wall

The outside wall of Zund and several other booths were really well done.

The outside walls of one very large booth wasted the area by not having any message.

The outside walls of several other booths were also either wasteful, or otherwise done poorly.

We also occasionally find outside booth walls which are simply terrible graphic design. This is why we show the wall of the Zund booth, since they did a good job with their graphic design.

If you wish to order FLAAR Reports which show all the really bad booth walls (so you know what to avoid) plus photos of many excellent booth wall designs (much more than what we show here), write FrontDesk "at" FLAAR.org to be invoiced for the cost of the reports.



ZÜND booth, nice wall design.



## Silly and often rather inadequate fonts for your logo

It is ironic that a country such as Italy, known for great art and excellent graphic design (plus good fashion design for clothes) has the highest number of absolutely awful fonts in corporate logos (which you can see at every VISCOM Milano trade show).

But there were several companies at Print '13 which tried hard to win "Worst Font Style" award, for a logo with such awful font that the brand name was not legible (and hence not recognizable).



To request an invoice for these reports write us at [FrontDesk@FLAAR.org](mailto:FrontDesk@FLAAR.org)

The other common issue with overhead banner graphic design is having too much text (and at a font which is too small). FLAAR has several reports on how to improve your booth design: both the walls, and especially the overhead design.



Booth Design (for trade shows):  
Good examples of bad overhead logo banners



For three years we have been recording overhead logo banners for hundreds of booths at dozens of printer expos. We will be issuing special reports to assist exhibiting companies to see the differences between a well designed and effective banner, and a well-intentioned but a design which is either inadequate or simply not a good idea.

If your company exhibits at trade shows it is definitely worth the investment to purchase these FLAAR Reports on booth design. Write FrontDesk "at" FLAAR.org.



Booth Design: Good examples of excellent design of overhead banners



The OKI banner was very well done.



## University Presence

Print and Graph Expo do a really good job of attracting universities and colleges to exhibit. Understandably most of these are for offset, flexo and screen printing studies.

This trade show also does well in attracting students. SGIA and ISA do not attract as many students. Expos in Italy are the best at encouraging students to attend.

Many exhibitors have said they prefer not to have students at their booths, since they mainly beg for permission to take away print samples. But these same students are the potential future print shop managers or printer operators. So it would be a good investment for manufacturers and distributors to welcome students to their booth.

What might be good would be to have students mainly on the last day, since attendance is usually weak the last day.



## Booths of trade magazines

It is a tradition of trade show organizers to provide complimentary booth space to trade magazines who promote the expo. Just that it was ironic that every trade magazine at Print 13 was featuring a substantial insert for SGIA. Frankly SGIA has done a lot of work to improve their brand.

The magazine of **DIGITAL output** had an informative article on cast compared with calendered vinyl. I look factual articles which are fair and neutral to all sides. The article on awnings is good for covering applications. However it would have been useful to add a comment about PE as an alternative to PVC, and on ARIA brand in particular.

**SIGNS OF THE TIMES** actually had more articles on wide-format inkjet than I would have expected.

**THE BIG PICTURE** (The Business of Wide Format) had helpful articles on lamination, a nice article on packaging and a good list of wide-format inkjet media.

**WIDE-FORMAT IMAGING** had good articles on finishing (overlaminates) and on flatbed printing. However not one single PDF which they offer in the magazine could be found on their web site. However I will say, this magazine has sure gone a long way beyond their origin as a reprographic magazine: they are now fully in the real world of large-format inkjet.





## Booths of other trade shows

It is a tradition for trade shows to provide complimentary booth space to other trade shows around the world. So there was a booth for IPEX, for Drupa 2016, for a large printer expo in Mexico, and a few other venues. Nothing for any FESPA, at least not that I noticed.

It was worth pointing out that 100% of all the trade magazines being handed out at Print 13 had a clearly visible insert for SGIA. In some ways SGIA is a competitor, since SGIA is much more wide-format, plus some remains of screen printer products also.

ISA sign expo had a presence at Print 13, not such much as a specific booth, but as organizers of the first attempt of Graph Expo and Print to return to the days when Sonia O'Donnell organized the Wide-Format Pavilion each year. These were the years when FLAAR had a booth; FLAAR was a co-sponsor, and Dr Nicholas was a speaker in the lecture program. I hope some day the BIG pavilion can return to the clout it had in earlier years. But as long as Graph Expo is just a few weeks before SGIA, SGIA will continue to win the vote of the wide-format inkjet community.

To return to the glory days of Print '01 and Graph Expo filled with large booths of wide-format printer manufacturers and distributors will require a systematic revitalization of the entire Graph Expo concept. I hope they can revitalize their expo, but from what I heard, and from the dates I see for the future, the organizers prefer to keep everything as it has always been (which is what caused wide-format ink and media manufacturers to switch to SGIA and ISA and even to GOA in Miami).



## Lectures

Print 13 had more lectures than most other expos. Some other expos have primarily “motivational” topics: the same topics every year, simply phrased differently. And understandably many lectures are provided by the manufacturers themselves. So there were not many independent evaluations of products. Nonetheless, if you looked at all the Pavilions, and all the lecture rooms upstairs, you could find enough presentations which were useful.

It would be good to have more presentations on the entire wide-format inkjet workflow, but at least the presentations which were available covered commercial printing better than any sign expo.





## Conclusion

Print 13 was worth attending if you need to study Memjet-outfitted inkjet printers, digital presses, digital label printers, office copiers, toner printers, binders, (everything for the workflow of a commercial printer) and if you want to speak with a few offset printer manufacturers.

If you need exclusively wide-format you would tend to visit FESPA, ISA or SGIA. But Print 13 (and Graph Expo 2014) does also offer at least a sample of wide-format signage printers: you had Fujifilm, Oce, HP, two Chinese brands, and the large busy booth of efi VUTEk.

The days of the sizeable booth of Gandy Innovations and Agfa are bygone memories. Agfa pulled out at the last minute and it was rumored that the “Inkjet Candy Store” area was a last-minute filler concept to occupy where Agfa would have been.

Agfa also no longer exhibited at APPPEXPO 2013 in Shanghai in July. But since Durst exhibited at APPPEXPO for the first time, as did SwissQprint, there were plenty of replacements in Shanghai for the two missing brands (Agfa and others).

I commend the organizers of Print 13 for not turning the Agfa booth area into a café or meeting area: the organizers of VISCOM Milano have not handled the dramatic downsizing of their Italian signage expo very adeptly (VISCOM simply made all the aisles extra wide; added diagonal aisles, and put lots of café and meeting-table areas to cover over the massive amounts of space no longer being rented for exhibitor booths).

We have a separate FLAAR Report on the full pros and cons of GraphExpo: how the size and content have evolved in the last ten years. This you can order by e-mailing FrontDesk “at” FLAAR.org

This report on the reality of Print 13 compared with its last several years, and compared with ISA and SGIA, is available at no cost to all printer expos where FLAAR is a speaker or otherwise hosted to visit and/or is a consultant to those expo organizers. Or you can simply ask to be invoiced. We also have reports on the pros and cons of many of the other printer expos around the world. It sure helps to have an outside person making the effort to be realistic, because most expo organizers prefer to rely on their own internal staff (since outside ideas might be too realistic!).

The present free download is the photo-album edition; the TRENDS edition is direct and to the point about what is great about Print 13 but what was missing, what was shared with all VISCOM expos in Europe (most of which are collapsing one after the other). It is unfortunate that some expo organizers repeat their same old style. So they fail wake up to reality: the world today is not what it was in 2004 or 2007).

Fortunately Print 13 was a good expo; despite not as much exhibit space at the far right end; less exhibit space than even Graph Expo years ago. But Print 13 was still worth visiting (assuming you wish to learn about more than wide-format inkjet).



For commercial printing (offset and digital presses) Professor Frank Romano of RIT gave lectures at multiple sessions. He is probably the single best known analyst and speaker of these kinds of printers



## Venue: Chicago

Chicago is better than Atlanta (Atlanta downtown is too abandoned after 6 pm; hence dangerous to be on the streets late).

Chicago is better than St Louis (my home city but not a major international destination).

Chicago is easy to fly to as the airport is a large international facility (albeit not much of a hub for any particular airline). I flew on COPA via Panama, as that was the most economical.

As an American I would myself never consider visiting Chicago as a tourist. Yes, it has the Art Institute of Chicago, but New York has more (not to mention Paris, Rome, London, etc). But somehow Chicago does attract tourists. In the hotel and along Michigan Avenue I heard dozens of languages and saw lots of tourists.

Most important, Michigan Avenue is safe. Indeed I did not see one single policeman the entire time I was hiking back and forth to the Apple Store (a several kilometer round trip hike).



Yes, as in most US cities there are homeless people on the streets; more on the north side of the river; fewer along South Michigan Avenue. But most were simply begging (fortunately peacefully). San Francisco has more beggars, so Chicago is not out of line with large cities around the world: most European cities have plenty of beggars. Worse, the rate of pickpockets is probably worse in Paris than in most cities in America.

Overall Chicago is a pleasant location; not Sin City like Las Vegas, but I am too cheap to pay for such entertainment (and have to work in the evening preparing the reports anyway).

Orlando has dozens more attractions than Chicago, and is definitely more family oriented.

But I asked the FLAAR teams what their thoughts were on Chicago as a destination. Pablo said he really liked Chicago to visit because it was safe, plenty of space in the park to run for exercise. He also felt the public transit was safe (at least to the areas he visited). He also liked Navy Pier.

Maria Renee said the food of Chicago was famous: every kind of food.

My feeling is that many people at FLAAR would really enjoy visiting Chicago in the future to write about future Graph Expo events. In the past the organizers flew us up to provide lectures; but this program was cut about three or four years ago. A university was made co-organizer and understandably most of their lectures were on offset or flexo.

I went this year at my own expense; only for two of the days, and specifically to study short-run digital presses (both toner and inkjet). And to take more notes on Memjet printers.

The last time I was at Graph Expo was 2011, when Xante showed their Memjet printer for the first time at an international expo. This year (2013) I focused mostly on Océ, Xerox, and RTI Vortex (OWN-X). The teams in these booths have always been hospitable and helpful in teaching me about their products.





## Venue: McCormick Place (Convention Center)

### Pros:

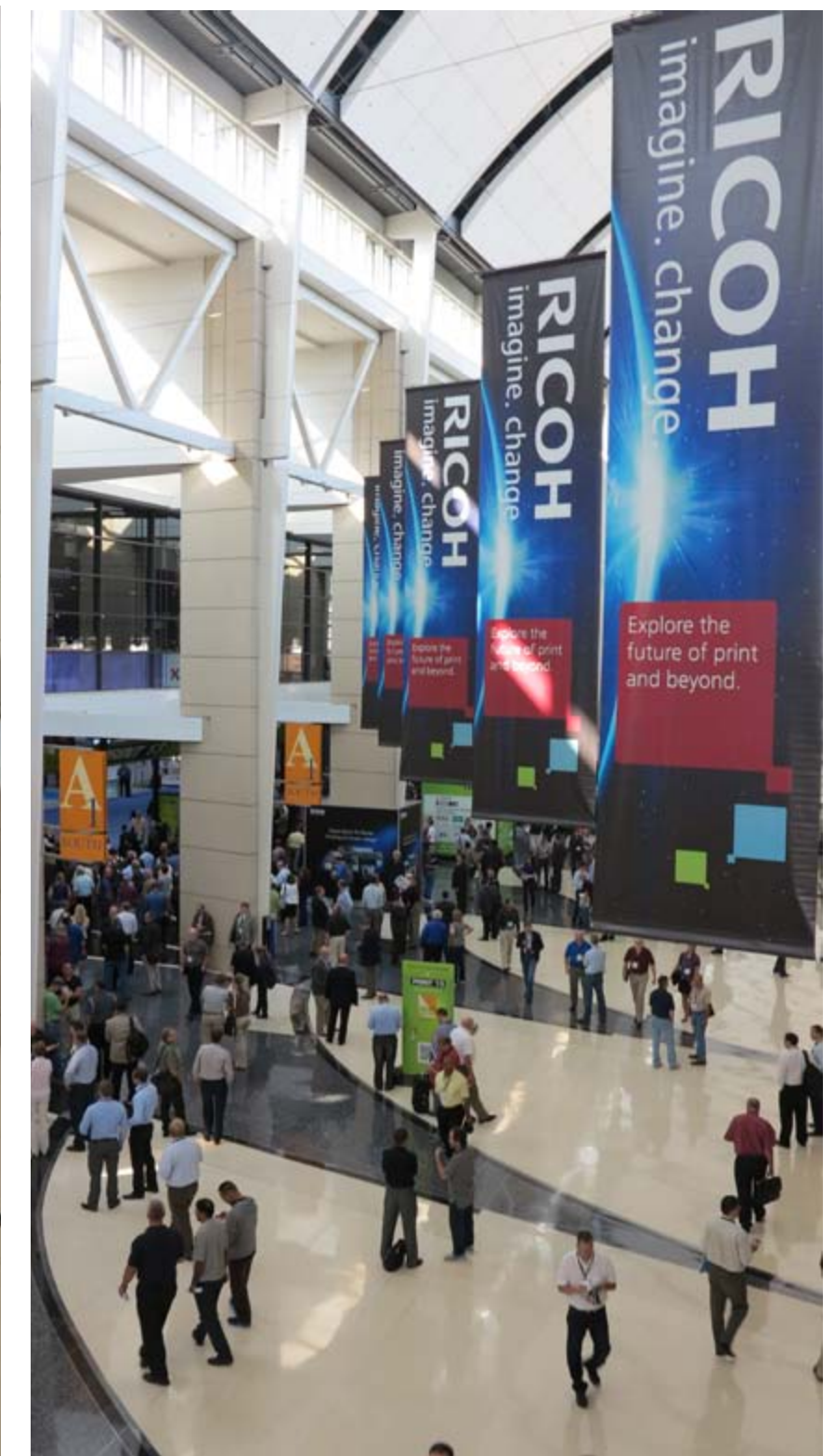
- only an \$8 cab ride from most major hotels.
- Print and Graph Expo provide shuttle
- Plenty of hotels along Michigan Avenue
- Area around expo center has been spruced up year by year over the last ten years.

### Cons:

- only one single hotel adjacent to McCormick. All other hotels are 10 minute drive away.
- McCormick is not within walking distance of the hotel area (unless you don't mind being worn out by the time you arrive, since once at McCormick you will be hiking several kilometers in the aisles every day).
- If you try to get a cab or bus at closing time, the waiting line is too long (and you waste huge amount of time). There simply were not enough buses or cabs between 5 pm and 6:30 pm.
- Hotels not as reasonable price as Las Vegas or Orlando. It is much more expensive to attend an expo in Chicago. But hotels not as bad as in Duesseldorf for Drupa.
- No shuttle from the airport specifically for the expo (only commercial shuttle vans). Drupa beats everyone on this aspect; Drupa provides shuttle from airport (realizing that the airport is less than a 10 minute drive from where Drupa is held).
- no noticeable "Welcome to Print '13" in the airport (at the Duesseldorf airport Drupa welcomes you).
- Although airport is not as far as Heathrow is from the main London expo center, O'Hare Airport is rather far away, and hence tough if your flight leaves at morning rush hour or evening rush hour. Las Vegas and even Orlando have more convenient airports.

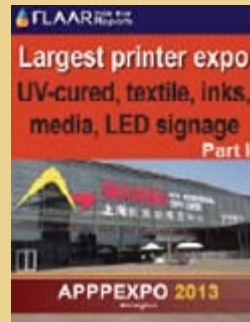
Despite the list of minor downsides, McCormick is so much more practical than the London convention center that there is no comparison.

I call it McCormick Convention Center, but evidently the official name is McCormick Place (clearly someone was trying to hard to be different). "Place" is totally meaningless. So I still consider it McCormick Convention Center.





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