

## ME Printer

Vol. 13 / Issue 135 / May 2016

Middle East Print Communication Magazine

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Print is no longer about compromise. It's about saying 'yes' to customers, exploring bold ideas and experimenting with innovative new techniques. Whatever your ambitions, our expertise and future-facing technology will help you discover new business opportunities and revenue streams.

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**#UNLEASHPRINT**



**RENDEZVOUS WITH  
THE PRINTING GURU**  
FRANK ROMANO



**DRUPA 2016**  
WHAT'S NEW AT THE  
DEFINITIVE PRINTING  
TRADE SHOW

اقرأ في قسم اللغة العربية

الرقمية مقابل التقليدية في طباعة التغليف  
أصبح الكثيرون من المصنعين والزبائن يدركون  
فوائد طباعة التغليف الرقمية وتطبيق هذه التقنية  
مايكل سيدل

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## ME Printer

ISSN 2304-117X

The Comprehensive Monthly Magazine Dedicated To The Graphic Arts Industry Print Professionals In The Middle East

Vol. 13 / Issue 135 / May 2016

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Printing: Masar Printing and Publishing

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As the definitive trade show for the printing industry gears up for its 16th edition, the focus of drupa 2016 will be on solution technologies, applications, innovative business ideas, and best-practice examples, summed up in its slogan 'Touch the future'. In 19 exhibition halls, around 1500 exhibitors from over 50 countries will showcase products in six main categories: print, packaging, production, multichannel, green printing, 3D printing, and functional printing.

**ME Printer**  
Media Partner





# WHICH TRADE SHOW REALLY HAS THE MOST BRANDS AND PRODUCTS?

The many reasons APPPEXPO is worth a trip to Shanghai

DR NICHOLAS HELLMUTH, FLAAR REPORTS



We start the discussion with UV-cured printers because, along with industrial printers (glass and ceramics) and along with textile printers, I must admit that UV-cured printers are my favorite. The best glass and ceramic printers do not use UV-cured ink; the professional glass and ceramic printers are in-line style and use special inks: one kind for glass and a slightly different range of formulas for ceramics. There were indeed actually glass and ceramic printers at APPPEXPO, but 99% of the brands, models,

and inks for wide-format sizes were for signage. Plus there were desktop and mid-sized UV-cured and some eco-solvent flatbeds for cell phone covers and other small plastic objects to be mass-produced with decoration. Durst, SwissQprint, efi VUTEK, efi Matan, Dilli, Jetrix, Agfa were all present at APPPEXPO 2016 in Shanghai in early March. Their presence documents the international aspect of this trade show. In addition, the big Chinese brands were present: the brands that are known and respected

worldwide: RTZ Flora, Handtop, JHF (and JHF VISTA and JHF Leopard), Anhui LIYU, and many more. All together I counted over 80 UV-cured brands the first two days. Frankly, I am still counting to get the total (based on notes and snapshots). We publish Trends level FLAAR Reports, which list all brands and all models of UV-cured, textile, and solvent printers at APPPEXPO. All together I found about 254 individual UV-cured printers (of the 80+ brands). This sets a world record for a single expo.



I love to read the delirious PR releases of trade shows, saying they are biggest, best, etc. The most bizarre claim was that "90% of the booths at our show are nowhere else." The trade show that used this as a PR release is one of the top three printer and signage expos in the world; so that PR release was unnecessary (because people should attend this expo no matter what: we go every year to publicize their nice exhibits). But the PR release was counter-productive because an expo, which is inherently good, should use its good name rather than having fluffy PR releases sully the brand.

## SOLVENT-BASED PRINTERS

Solvent is not dead by any means, at least not at APPPEXPO, nor at SGI in Dubai. There were dozens, scores, of brands of solvent printers at the Shanghai expo (and more models than any printer expo in USA or Europe put together). Inks for these printers ran the entire range from eco-solvent through lite-solvent to full solvent.

## LATEX PRINTERS

Mimaki has dropped out of this market after two tries (two different ink sets). I would hope they

intend to try a third ink set, but no Mimaki latex was visible at Graphics of the Americas 2016 in Miami. I admire Ricoh for trying to sell their version of the same printer, but to sell one or two or three in USA is not competition for umpteen-thousand sold by HP (worldwide over 30,000). There has not been any more Chinese attempt to make a latex printer. The owner of a company which attempted to manufacture a latex printer said that there simply was not enough market opportunity in China. This may explain why the HP booth in Hall 3.1 had many water-based printers (a low-end version of the venerable HP Designjet 5000

and 5500, but for the low-price Chinese market) and only a few latex printers.

Sepia was nowhere to be seen or heard (as is typical). And no other ink company has dared to try to launch any innovative new ink (other than via PR release, such as several years ago; but none of these "incredible new inks" function adequately outside the R&D lab or outside the factory demo room).

So HP does deserve compliments for being consistent in promoting and improving their latex ink concept. Next step will be a latex ink flatbed, though unless it uses a conveyor transport belt, pinch-rollers over grit-rollers have failed to be acceptable in the world of UV-cured printers. Neolt effectively lost their entire UV printer division because they kept pretending that pinch-rollers over grit-rollers was a flatbed. We call these faux flatbeds (or fake flatbeds, or pretend flatbeds).

To handle thick and flat material in a professional manner you need a dedicated flatbed printer (like Océ, RTZ Flora, etc) or a combo transport belt (like Durst, efi VUTEK, etc).

## WATER-BASED PRINTERS



**Dr. Nicholas Hellmuth** is the Director of the Foundation for Latin American Anthropological Research (F.L.A.A.R.). Dr. Hellmuth and key members of his staff have served as consultants for Fortune 500 companies as well as mid-sized companies who wish to prosper and grow, and also for family-run businesses around the world. Dr. Nicholas has been consultant to museums, national parks, universities, as well as distributors, manufacturers, and end-users of wide-format inkjet inks, media, substrates, laminators, coaters, printers, and cutters.



Eight years ago you could find a dozen brands of water-based Chinese printers. Half of them were knock-offs of an Encad. Indeed in these early years you could find entire booths filled 80% with water-based printer models. Nowadays it is rare to find more than five brands and at most they would have one, two, or three aging water-based printers. So HP is clever to stay in the water-based market with their HP Designjet printers specifically for the Chinese market. These were on exhibit in the HP booth at APPEXPO; these models are almost never exhibited in the USA or Western Europe.

## TEXTILE PRINTERS

Hall Nh at APPEXPO is beginning to become a textile focused hall. It had the booth of a successful textile magazine Fashion Print of Ms Shiny Gu and exhibits of textile applications. And of course, dye sublimation textile printers – both for home furnishings and for signage.

In Halls 3.1 and 5.1 were scores of additional brands and models of textile printers.

Most of the textile printers exhibited at APPEXPO are existing solvent or traditional water-based printers adapted to be used with



dye sublimation ink and print onto transfer paper. But there are also many Chinese brands that manufacture their own printers specifically for direct-to-fabric printing such as SAER, Mingyang, and Century Star; all of these specific three companies are also major heating unit manufacturers. You can find many professional printers for the textile industry, and a handful of industrial type of textile printers.

## T-SHIRT PRINTERS

A reasonable number of T-shirt printers could be found at APPEXPO, of various sizes: single-

shirt, double-shirt, and multiple shirt sizes. But there were not many silk screen printers: mostly inkjet and toner for T-shirt. Although not many t-shirts printers exhibit at APPEXPO, a lot of local heating unit manufacturers are present, such as LOPO, Everbright, and Microtec.

## CALENDERS AND HEATING UNITS

Some of the major international calendar brands exhibit at APPEXPO, and the ones that don't exhibit here are still present in the booths of textile printers. Many Chinese-made calendars and heating unit brands can be found at the show: EastSign, Pengda, Century Star, SAER, Mingyang, Fulei, etc.

## LAMINATORS AND FLATBED APPLICATORS

About 90% of the laminators sold in the USA, Europe, and Middle East are made in China. Kala is hopefully made in France. You can find perhaps a dozen brands of laminators at APPEXPO. They vary from low-end to cheap. It is a challenge to find one that could compete with those made ten years ago in the USA, but at their low price, people take the risk. Most are wide-format size rather than being grand-format size. At grand-format size (3.2m and above) the risk of defects,



shoddy workmanship, and weak components rises to the point it is better to think of only the really good brands.

Flatbed applicators are made in Scandinavia, and elsewhere in Europe. One brand is made in South Africa. Flatbed applicators have not yet been copied very much in China. Yes, one or two brands, but at trade shows in Europe or USA you only see the non-Chinese brands of flatbed applicators. Coaters are different from laminators. Coating provides an aesthetic appearance which you select. A coating does not automatically provide scratch protection and especially no anti-sun protection. After Drytec dropped out of this market, there are not many coaters at expos anywhere. At the most there are one or two coaters, and they are hard to find. There is no one brand in Asia that stands out.

## CUTTERS AND TRIMMERS

Anything and everything for finishing workflow (trimming and cutting) can be found at APPEXPO. In addition, the top European brands are present: from A to Z (Aristo to Zünd). We found CNC Routers; CO2 laser cutters; plasma cutters (rarely seen at signage expos in the USA or Western Europe); upright cutters (the USA brands are usually of triangular shape, 2m high);

in Europe and North America put together. In other words, if you missed APPEXPO 2016, be sure to attend in March 2017.

Since the overall expo was so large, we had no realistic manner of listing every category of traditional signage. But on the day before the expo opened, the FLAAR team of five walked through every hall, so we did get a chance to at least have an overview.

## IMPROVEMENTS AT THE TRADE SHOW IN 2016 OVER 2015

The heating system in the halls was a dramatic improvement. At the corners of the hall where doorways opened to the outside, it was rather cool. But smart booth managers brought floor-level fan-heaters. The Sam Ink booth was at a door-open corner but with three fan-heaters it was so nice that I used the table for my office several days.

For the 2017 edition, there will be more restaurants open inside the trade show complex; people had trouble finding restaurants to eat lunch. Our FLAAR team simply brings Granola bars, cookies,







and comparable snacks, so we can eat while we are walking the aisles taking notes on printer and signage products. We found a hotel within 10 minutes drive of the new expo center. Hopefully there will be new hotels built nearby for 2017.

### SHANGHAI AS A DESTINATION IS WORTH THE ENTIRE TRIP

China in general and Shanghai in particular is one of my favorite places to visit (although I admit it is more practical for shopping in the Dubai malls in the UAE). But nonetheless, you can still go shopping in Shanghai. But the river cruise (in the evening, to see the illuminated buildings) is the most remarkable river cruise I have taken anywhere else in the world. Another benefit of coming to APPPEXPO is that if you are clever, you can also visit the factories where the products you need are actually manufactured. I have been attending APPPEXPO for many years. I have also attended Ceramics China but this year Tecnargilla in Italy is the best ceramic printer show in the world. I have also attended Chinese glass shows. Sadly the one in Beijing was poorly organized and a waste of time. In distinction,

Glasstec, well organized by Messe Düsseldorf GmbH, is by far the absolute best place in the world to learn about inks and printers for glass. For printable inkjet media and substrates, and especially for UV-cured, solvent printers, CNC routers, and CO2 laser engravers, it is essential to attend APPPEXPO 2017 in Shanghai. We also found plenty of brands of textile printers at APPPEXPO.

### A FINAL REASON TO CONSIDER ATTENDING APPPEXPO: TONS OF OPTIONS FOR MEDIA

Probably over 60% of the printable media and substrates sold in Europe and North America and the Middle East are made in China. Some nice printable materials are also made in Korea. APPPEXPO probably has exhibits of 95% of the major media and substrate factories and major local distributors of China. If you are clever, before or after APPPEXPO you can also visit the actual media factory. We of FLAAR have been to the factory of ARIA (Yeong Jeou) and another company's factory a block away, of Guangdong GLM Digital technology Co, Ltd. (Globally Loved Media). These two brands have the experience, knowledge,

and factory equipment capability to produce good media. More importantly, these two separate companies are examples of companies in China realizing that trying to produce low-bid products is self-defeating. Just look at the UV-cured and solvent printer brands which rose high and then lost most of their distributors around the world since their printer products were not good enough to hold up to actual use out in the real world.

Once your company loses its distributors, then distributors (and print shop owners) jump to better brands. So ARIA and GLM are examples of brands that do not want to fall into the "low-bid junk" kind of manufacturing. They prefer to make good media and earn the respect of the distributors and end-users around the world.

We at FLAAR look forward to visiting other factories and finding other brands, of inks, of media, printers, laminators, and flatbed cutters, who wish to build a corporate reputation for reasonable quality at a reasonable price (but still a lower price than products produced in other countries).

I will not attend Drupa 2016 because I have already attended Drupa 2000 (incredible), Drupa 2004 (amazing), Drupa 2008 (useful) and Drupa 2012 (not what it used to be). I prefer the compactness of FESPA (this means that everything is where you expect it). Trade shows which splitter splatter wide-format printers, inks, and media into too many unrelated halls simply waste your time.

At APPPEXPO 90% of the cutters are in one hall; 80% of the media and substrates are in Halls 4.1 and 3.1; 95% of the UV-cured printers are in Halls Nh, 3.1, and 5.1.

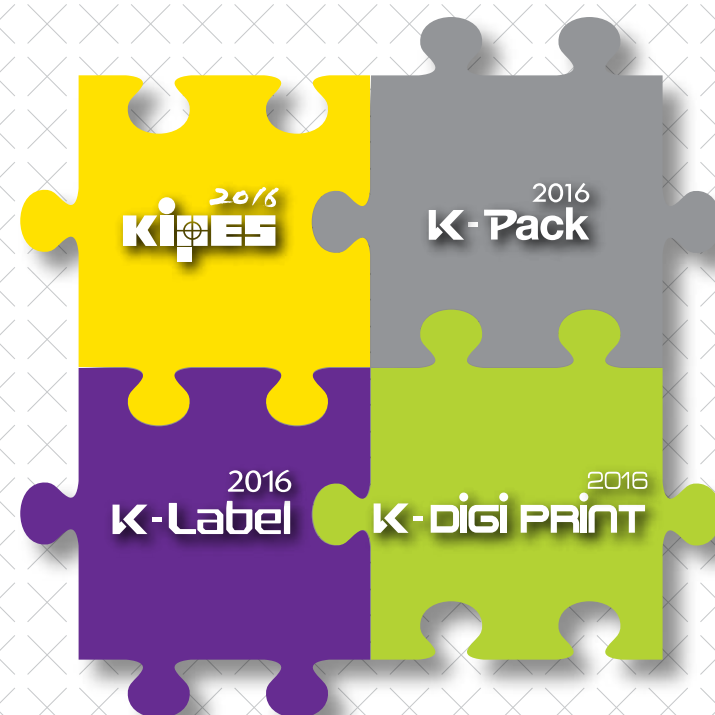
In other words, not only is APPPEXPO umpteen times larger than any and every other expo (especially for UV-cured printers, solvent printers, media and substrates, CNC routers), but APPPEXPO has products organized in a manner which is easier for the attendee.

# K-PRINT WEEK

31 Aug. - 3 Sep. 2016  
KINTEX, GOYANG, KOREA

K-PRINT week 2016 will be held concurrently with

upcf World Print & Communication Forum



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21st Korea International Printing Machinery and Equipment Show

**K-Label 2016**

Korea Label Show

**K-Pack 2016**

Korea Print Package Show

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Korea Digital Print & Solution Show

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