

Case Study: Martin Thompson

Description

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Printing pixels

Remember photography? Back in the eighties, Martin Thompson was in the darkrooms of the Royal College of Art, carefully agitating a tray of developer and waiting patiently for an image to appear on a blank sheet of photographic paper. A stop bath, a fix and a wash later, he would usually shuffle back to the enlarger to try again. â??I was never satisfied with a â??straightâ?? photograph,â?• says Martin. â??It just wasnâ??t enough. I was experimenting with multiple exposures, dodging, burning, toning and painting on my photographs. I was trying anything. It was a bit hit and miss in those days.â?• His work was good enough to be used by eighties style magazines â??The Faceâ?? and â??Blitzâ??, but in the darkroom the possibilities were limited. Then everything went digital, and suddenly the possibilities were endless.

Martin embraced the new digital cameras, mastered Photoshop and began producing eye-catching work for magazines and advertising. Digital was great for business (he worked as a professional photographer in London for twenty years), but Martin sensed there was more. â??Digital introduced a whole new vocabulary to art. The boundaries separating the camera, darkroom and paintbrush dissolved. Now I can photograph with pixels, paint with pixels and print with pixels. Digital has made the journey from idea to finished piece so much simpler.â?•

Martin likes to print big and was always looking for better ways to present his work. â??Iâ??ve tried everything. Paper is too fragile above a certain size (and needs protecting behind glass), canvas looks a bit tacky, and Perspex or Dibond aluminium gets too expensive. It was at the 100% Design exhibition four years ago that I discovered Phototex. I picked up a sample at the Landor stand and, impressed with its fantastic adhesive properties, bought myself a roll thinking it could come in really useful. I quickly discovered that I was just as happy with the print quality of Phototex as I had been with more expensive â??fine artâ?? media.â?•



Martin now prints all his large-format work on Phototex. â??I like the finish of Phototex. It has a very fine weave, like a high thread-count linen. It has great colour performance and, coupled with a liquid laminate, is incredibly durable.â?• Because Landor Phototex is so easy to handle and install, Martin has moved beyond hanging a picture on a wall to making the wall the picture itself. He has supplied artworks to a student accommodation development in Whitechapel. â??It was a new build and had a rather industrial feel to it. We needed to create a softer, more relaxed atmosphere and still consider durability in high-traffic areas and health and safety requirements. Phototex worked on all these levels.â?•

Another happy client is Burhill Golf and Leisure (BGL), which owns Birchwood Park golf club, where a large blank wall once dominated the restaurant. Melanie Drake, general manager, recounts: â??Martin worked closely with us, showing us ideas and colour schemes and presenting several visualisations. The tree frieze looks fantastic and our customers are delighted.â?• BGL was so pleased that it commissioned a large, four-panel installation at its Aldwickbury Park golf club.

â??Photography has come a long way since the eighties,â?• says Martin, â??and the pace of change isnâ??t slowing. As technology fuels expectations and projects become more challenging and exciting, I need the best materials to showcase my work. Phototex ticks all the boxes. Itâ??s great stuff. I use it all the time.â?•

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Category

1. Phototex case study

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