Protecting Inkjet Prints from Water, UV and Abrasion

Description

One of the main difficulties with low-cost desktop inkjet printers is that their inks are invariably not fully resistant to water, are sensitive to UV light and are not designed to last for longer periods. Water will either stain or disperse the inks, especially if your printer uses dye inks. Many inkjet printers sold or marketed as pigment printers actually use a combination of dye and pigment inks: pigments are solids, and as solids they block the transparency that makes print colours vibrant.

Even with todayâ??s high-quality inkjet inks, pure black pigment on its own lacks that extra depth of colour, so manufacturers including HP, Epson and Canon add dye to their pigment inks to enhance it. Some manufacturers compromise further: I have found that the black ink in a number of pigment inkjet printers is either 100% dye or largely dye mixed with pigment.

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This has been proven time and again when we have tested prints from these printers, even where the inks are claimed to be pigmented.

Because we offer both water-based and solvent inks for artists and photographers, as well as for the sign, display and promotions market, we know first-hand that not all pigment inks are pure pigment. Some have greater resistance to water and chemicals than others.

The other challenge is that papers are vulnerable to water: wetting the surface of a print paper will invariably cause it to cockle. This is where our ColourJet inkjet sprays address the issue when you are not printing on film. Today there are some stunning films, mainly polyester and polypropylene, that print excellent colours, well beyond the quality of a gloss-coated paper. Given the choice, I would be just as happy with a white polyester film as with a photo gloss or satin paper. As well as being totally water resistant, it doesnâ??t tear.

Our ColourJet sprays are acrylic, and they are 100% successful on almost any substrate, be it paper, cloth, fabric, film, PVC or board. Their one main drawback is that, being acrylic, they smell quite strongly, so you need to work in a well-ventilated area. Not all sprays are the same, either. Some people recommend hairspray, which in my opinion does not give your print the protection it rightly deserves.

The main reason for using an inkjet spray is that you want added protection for long-term or archival enjoyment of your prints, or for outdoor use. Otherwise, prints will fade over time through the effects of their environment, whether indoors, outdoors, in a public space or even at home, where dust, dirt and the gradual build-up of grime will degrade the ink on the surface. Using our ColourJet sprays will bring some distinctive changes from the original quality you produced.

The life and quality of your prints will depend on their degree of exposure to water, abrasion, dirt, grease and air pollution. With our ColourJet sprays, the best resins and UV inhibitors protect your prints, while the choice of gloss, satin or matt finish also enhances the vibrancy and depth of your print colours, especially with gloss and satin.

Water-based inks will work very well with most films and plastic or non-porous surfaces, and are a lot easier to use. All you need is a paint or varnish roller: as with emulsion paint, the coating will self-level and dry within about 15 minutes. The only disadvantage is that dust particles can stick to and embed in the surface of the coating while it dries.

There are many different sprays and fixatives that will do the job, but if you want a guaranteed bond, quality and longevity for your prints, you really do need to make sure your coatings also contain UV inhibitors, especially if your prints will be displayed or handled in direct or indirect UV light.

ColourJet uses only the best acrylic polymers and UV inhibitors, and works on virtually any material. If your prints are water resistant (both the inks and the material), you can also use ColourJet water-based coatings. These must be applied by hand, as viscosity and the difficulty of spraying water evenly make it technically impossible to put water-based coatings in an aerosol. They can, however, be applied with a compressed-air spray gun.

For more information or personal guidance on the best methods, coatings and media compatibility, please contact us at info@landoruk.com or call us on +44 1252 624411.

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Category

1. Inkjet Spray

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