

Digital Art Guild: Kali and the Inkjet Printer

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The monthly Digital Art Guild meetings always begin with the charm, delight, good wines and the food of the moment. Not unlike the salons of centuries past.

Sometimes the discussion turns to mounting an exhibit or showing new art. Tonight, provoked by JD Jarvis's new HP Z3100 printer – from which he sent some new prints to DAG for this April meeting – we matched the output of Renata Spiazzi's Epson 9800. The digital files were the same, but everything else was up for grabs. As those familiar with such comparisons, this moment may have been a fool's errand, but with enough good cheer and good spirits, the evening illustrated how art and good company merge. If nothing else, we saw that these printers were within the same ballpark, making for a healthier competition and more choice for print-making.

As proof of this moment, Renata Spiazzi emerged as the hostess with the mostess. Jim Respass's image framed her exuberance and gracious presence.

Commentary

Some comments from those who attended follow (leaving in the speculative which reflect the conversations we have):

LZ My take on the Epson 9800 versus the HP Z3100 was basically the same as most of the others, I think. Basically, taking into consideration that the canvas JD used in his HP printer was a brighter white, the color luminosity and depth was markedly better for the HP output. Obviously, as Renata pointed out, the subtle difference in the canvas color and the way the printers were calibrated would make for brightness and contrast differences too. For me, it would be a matter of experimenting with thin color strips printed on various and sundry surfaces using the same profiles if possible and seeing what shows up.

Greg Klamt examining inkjet prints - HP Z3100

What I also found fascinating was the discussion sparked by Pasha's comment about what is digital. I think it's one of those words nowadays that's bandied about a lot without any deeper thinking on the part of the general public. For a lot of people, mention digital camera and/or laser printer and they consider that digital. For me, it's using the digital tools of the camera and the software to manipulate, compose, color shift and consider all the possibilities in the eye and mind and heart of the artist. Creating a piece using digital "tools" is a digital artwork for me. Merely using a digital camera and/or a laser printer wouldn't classify as digital in my world. Jim Respass, conceptual artist and printer for many San Diego artists

One last thing: Jim mentioned that San Diego is considered a real hotbed of digital artwork because of the many really good digital artists enjoying the San Diego lifestyle. Maybe we can put together a show that celebrates that theme. A title something on the order of: San Diego Sun - San Diego digital artists celebrate. Since so many of us are San Diego Art Institute members, Tim might be interested in a show. I would also imagine the Chamber of Commerce would get a kick out of it. Just some morning thoughts.

KM I really had no comment about the printer comparisons for I have never been excited about that kind of printing. Personally, I think paint, chalk and water colors look much better on paper than digital output furthermore, at the risk of contrary; I think printing on paper is an inferior way to use the digital medium. I have been pretty much silent in this arena due to 95% of the work done by the group follows the paper trail and I would rather not shake the trees. In addition, I find printing on plastic, glass or metal as well as lenticular printing a much more interesting example of using digital muscle. On another more savory note I found Renata's strudel to be absolutely fantastic!

JV The last DAG meeting is another illustration of Renata and Mario's continued selfless support of DAG. In my estimation, they have been an indispensable element of whatever successes DAG has experienced since its inception. Without their ongoing active encouragement and support I doubt that DAG would exist with the cohesiveness and unified sense of purpose that it currently possesses. Renata's willingness to be depicted as Kali is both illustrative of her humor and an accurate depiction of the Kali's Mother Goddess aspect - she provides not only monthly physical nourishment to DAG members but, more importantly, also fosters their artistic development.

Before the DAG Meeting

SG Reflecting on the media output discussions last night, I think Renata said it best: 'it is basically meaningless because there are so many variables.' A nearer thing to a real test would be to have a color expert take JD's print and try to match it on a 9800. It doesn't have to be on the same canvas, just the best canvas for the

job. DAG could commission this work with Jim and I would provide a mini fee of a bottle of non publicly available wine from the [--] Winery Advanced Tasting. Program.

As usual our meeting last night was a great success. The camaraderie, the sharing of ideas, the showing off of new images and new ways of doing them it all contributed to the joy that comes from associating with people of the same interests.

RS Mario and I are very happy of our decision of hosting DAG. It gives the membership a home base, a place to come home to, a family reunion! And last night it felt like the family is really growing!

Besides the samples of our local artists we had samples from outside California! Yes, JD Jarvis from Las Cruces New Mexico became the proud owner of a new HPZ3100 printer and wanted to compare the output with my new Epson 9800. During the past month we have been exchanging prints on different substrates, and last night we all had a chance to see what they both can do.

Of course there are many factors involved in a comparison of this kind: The difference in substrate, the calibration, and the learning of all the tricks that will make our printer perform to its finest. But as a whole both printers seem to be tops!