

Inkjet vs Photographic



Photographic prints have traditionally been a preferred option for several quality related reasons. However, with today's high-resolution digital technology, for many situations, inkjets are an appropriate alternative. There are pros and cons for both, therefore choosing between the two is a matter of assessing the features and benefits particular of each.

The HP 5000 inkjet printer leads the market in high and consistent inkjet quality. With accurate calibration and selection of suitable media, the results are stunning.

One of the main advantages of using inkjet technology is the variety of printing media. Some of these include silver and gold foil, drafting paper, backlit material, clear vinyl self-adhesive vinyl, polyester and other textiles. This opens up an array of creative possibilities.

Although photographic prints are limited to solely photographic materials, there are several variations available. Some of these include clear, metallic, reflective and plastic-based.

In regards to cost, photographic is more economical for high volume runs. However, for a small number prints, inkjets can work out to be more cost effective. For example, for a small number of lightboxes, especially if they are only for short to medium term use, an inkjet is an economically viable and quality comparable alternative.

Since inkjet printing is water-based and subsequently is sensitive to heat and moisture, a laminate is always recommended, however, when doing so keep in mind the effect the laminate will have on colour and clarity.

For a long-term lightbox, Kodak Professional Duratrans™ is recommended. These too may eventually fade, but at a much slower rate than that of an inkjet. What's more, the fading will be even for all colours, unlike an inkjet print where the yellow and magenta fades first leaving an blue/green image behind.

Further to its archival advantages, the photographic Kodak Professional Duratrans™ gives an accurate and continuous tone portrayal of food and skintones. This is why we strongly recommend Kodak Professional Duratrans™ for lightbox menu boards and cosmetic images, especially when the image is in use for a period exceeding twelve months and if your lightbox tends to get hot.

When choosing between the inkjet and photographic, do not hesitate to examine new possibilities. As long as you understand your needs in terms of cost, look and quality, an appropriate choice between the two will deliver on your objectives.



Kodak Professional

Warning: New, more cost effective inkjet materials are continually being released, reducing the price of inkjet prints. Not all materials are suitable for longterm use as their archival quality can be questionable, or not yet proven.

At Flash Photobition we supply both inkjet and photographic Lambda prints. Ask us of which we think would most suit your next project.

If you have any questions after reading this document or would like some more information please contact us. We know that an informed decision will benefit us both.



Photographic Durst Lambda

Quick pros and cons

Inkjet pros

Many materials to choose from
Can produce a high quality result
Cost effective short to medium term backlit images

Inkjet cons

Will fade faster than photographic
Will fade unevenly between colours
Sensitive to moisture and heat
Normally requires laminating

Photographic pros

Continuous tone photographic quality
High archival properties
Lower print price for high volumes
Superior longevity of backlit and frontlit materials
Even colour fading

Photographic cons

Less printing media available
Higher price for backlit prints



Lambda archival prints are commonly used for museums (above: Maritime Museum)



Faded Inkjet print