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THE FABRIC OF YOUR LIFE: TEXTILES IN FINE ART, FASHION, INTERIORS, TRAVEL AND SHOPPING

# Digital inkjet fabric printing

Digital inkjet fabric printing has achieved technological advances that have revolutionised the process since it was first used in the carpet printing industry in the 70s. Typically those using it range from a few corporations. to individuals in textile art and design. Unlike conventional methods, digital inkjet printing works directly onto fabric. not requiring intermediate transferring devices. It uses digital images displayed on a computer monitor and transmits directly onto the textile. The new imaging possibilities of this technique offer immense scope and flexibility in textile design.

Two of the advantages of digital printing are the availability of almost unlimited colours on cloth and the reproduction of smooth and clean tonal effects. In mass production rotary screen-printing, skilful engravers are required to create intricate specially galvanised screens to achieve the finest tonal effects. Inkjet printing with high velocity nano litre ink depositions enables the successful production of fine dithering tonal effects on cloth every time.

Photographic Images can be scanned, saved onto video cameras, then manipulated and printed on cloth to create 'simulated and camouflaged fabrics', or modern trompe l'oeil fabrics. Image editing software provides digital effects using filtering and distorting tools. This could be controversial as far as the authenticity of the original image is concerned.



In 2003's International Textile Machinery Exhibition, machinery, dye, and chemical manufacturers exhibited the latest developments. One of the highlights was the high-speed production digital inkjet printers, capable of a speed of 2.5 metres per minute, a dramatic increase. It is clear that digital inkjet textile printing will dominate textile printing technology, and will contribute greatly to creative innovation in textile art and design.

**Hitoshi Ujije**