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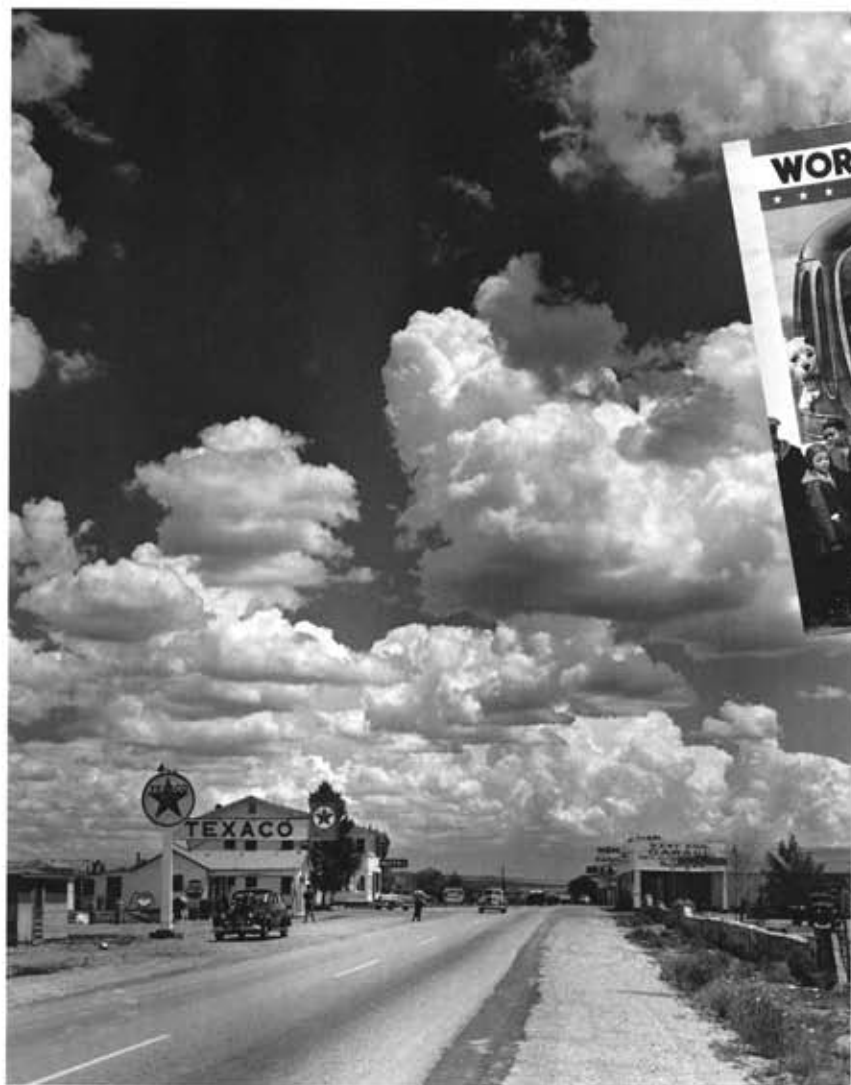


Vision To Visuals

Lasting Images

How we treat important photographs in the 21st century

By Baldev Duggal



Andreas Feininger © Time Inc.



primary silver printing lab for The LIFE Gallery of Photography and iPHOTOART (the sole distributor to the trade for The LIFE Gallery of Photography), we're creating a new breed of fine-art prints at resolutions of 30x40 inches via state-of-the-art technologies.

"We're very excited about utilizing Duggal's drum scanning and fine-art printing expertise to, in a sense, extend the 'life' of the LIFE Gallery collection as it relates to museum-quality fine-art prints," explains Jeff Linton, vice president of sales and marketing at iPHOTOART. "The first 10 images in this new collection are among the most iconic and most popular images from the archives of LIFE."

I asked Regina Feiler, Assistant Director, LIFE Branded Products, at The LIFE Gallery of Photography, what drove LIFE to open up the collection for sale as pigment prints. "The collection was never really

There's a series of photographs that withstand the test of time, forever remaining a part of the American subconscious. Even today, as our country charts a new century of growth, conflict and change, I find myself reflecting on a series of pictures that helped define who we were as people and as a nation during the 20th century. Photographs such as a DC-4 flying over New York City (by Margaret Bourke-White), the Brooklyn Bridge at night (by Andreas Feininger) and soldiers bidding farewell at Penn Station (by Alfred Eisenstaedt) all help me remem-

ber what America used to be and how she has changed over the decades.

In these pages, I've often discussed how artists with unique visions and commercial clients with innovative design concepts have necessitated the application of new printing and display technologies. However, our relationship with The LIFE Gallery of Photography has presented us with a unique challenge: How do we communicate and extend that 20th century creative vision into the 21st century?

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VISION TO VISUALS

closed," she explains. "We're always looking for new ways to present the work to the public. With the advent of pigment prints and its appeal to the photographic art collector, we felt now was the time to marry our most compelling imagery with large-scale print capabilities."

Quality is of the utmost importance, says Regina: "The LIFE Gallery of Photography is always concerned first and foremost with providing the highest-quality authenticated photography possible and in expanding our collection in an authenticated fashion. This collection will bear a new emboss and will be produced in a limited edition of 40, which is smaller than editions we've opened in the past."

Jeff expands on Regina's comments by explaining that The LIFE Gallery of Photography has been wanting to open its collection to the fine-art community for some time. "There are two fundamental aspects of this project that have come together over time," he says. "The first was the need to develop a new art form for the archive. In addition, there was an interest in large-format prints by the collector base. The original silver prints sold by LIFE were limited editions sold by The LIFE Gallery. Most of the original photographers are now deceased, and the classic images LIFE printed, which they signed, were limited editions. So we thought, 'How can we extend the life of the archive? How can we create a legitimate, collectible fine-art print using the classic, iconic images that would appeal to the collector base?' The answer was to have The LIFE Gallery create these new fine-art, limited-edition pigment prints.

"One external factor that led to this had nothing to do with The LIFE Gallery," Jeff continues. "It was simply that this product—the pigment prints—had become acceptable and accepted by fine-art and photography collectors and museums around the world. The internal factor is that these

great classic images from the LIFE archives have been selling out or selling down to such small numbers that they became prohibitively expensive for most people."

One last contributing factor to the acceptance of pigment prints over traditional silver prints is that the quality of negative drum scans yield far superior images when compared to traditional wet darkroom (analog) techniques. Explains Jeff, "When you compare a traditional silver gelatin print to a print made from a drum scan, the scan is actually better because negatives often have dust, scratches and other imperfections that can be digitally corrected. The wet darkroom silver print would have to be spotted in order to correct for such imperfections. The digital image potentially offers a perfect printing source in comparison to the original negative used for modern silver prints because Photoshop can be used to correct those imperfections."

In order to ensure print authenticity, says Jeff, "Each print will be embossed with a special LIFE logo embosser that will read LIMITED EDITION PIGMENT PRINT, LIFE GALLERY OF PHOTOGRAPHY. The prints will be hand-numbered and come with a certificate of authenticity, describing the printing process as well as mention that they were printed at Duggal. This will ensure that people will take comfort in knowing that they're getting the real deal, that these prints are genuine, published by The LIFE Gallery of Photography and not a fake.

"These pigment prints have a wonderful tonality," Jeff adds. "They're a different 'animal' than a silver print. They have become their own art form in that they're quite different than a silver print and represent a new way to interpret an image."

In order to satisfy the stringent requirements of both The LIFE Gallery of Photography and iPHOTOART, Duggal used Roland Hi-Fi JET Pro II printers, which utilize special pigment inks that bring a natural classic look to

(Cont'd on page 124)



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(Cont'd from page 32)

images with extended color longevity. The 100% pigment-based ink used is the newest archival ink available, comprised of a unique 12-color inkset consisting of cyan, magenta, yellow, black, orange, green, light cyan, light magenta and four shades of gray. These prints have been rated for a lifetime of 120-plus years by Wilhelm Imaging Research.

According to Mike Vogt of LexJet, "An important defining aspect of the Roland Hi-Fi JET Pro printer is the utilization of piezo printer head technology. It yields consistent ink output, which is ideal for fine-art reproduction."

Explains Mike, "There are two types of inkjet printers currently on the market, thermal and piezo. Thermal inkjet printers provide inconsistent output, meaning that an image printed 100 times will look inconsistent each time. Piezo inkjet printers, on the other hand, create consistent dot patterns during the print process. The human eye can't detect any variations over the course of 100 prints."

A state-of-the-art printer is useless without equally high-quality paper in which to feed it. At Duggal, we use Sunset Hot Press Rag paper because it's the finest archival paper for fine-art photographic prints. It meets the exacting standards that fine-art clientele demands.

This is how we at Duggal bring 20th-century, analog works of art into the digital milieu of the 21st century. DPP

Baldev Duggal, president and founder of Duggal, has been innovating visual solutions for image-makers for more than 40 years. Credited with building and designing the industry's first dip-and-dunk processing machine, Duggal has maintained his status as a leader in the imaging business and is heralded for outstanding service by consumer and trade magazines alike. With digital capabilities reaching worldwide, his headquarters covers a block on West 23rd Street in New York City.