

# Creative Drawer

## Price versus Size

We won't score points with most galleries and print makers, but here's the truth: a big print doesn't cost much more to make than littler print. Should a print's worth be based on the square inch, like real-estate? Within reason, we say, no. Let's look at Epson UltraSmooth paper, a high-end, archival, inkjet paper and Ultrachrome ink:

Size	Paper	Ink	UV	Total
24x30	\$11	\$12	\$3	\$26
13x19	\$5	\$5	\$1	\$11
8x10	\$1	\$1	\$1	\$3

(Epson's coated inkjet canvas is 15% less expensive than UltraSmooth paper, and has a shorter colorfast life expectancy.)

None of these figures include time (a 24" x 30" print takes 80 minutes to print, an 8" x 10" takes 8 minutes) or overhead, nor do they include wastage: sheets of paper with imperfections, prints with ink splotches or droplets (at the worst, we reject between 1 in 10 prints, and, more typically, 1 in 20 prints), head cleaning, which on an Epson 7600 can cost between \$5 to \$10 per cleaning. Obviously it costs more to scrap a 24"x30" print than an 8" x 10" print. And everyone who prints has wastage.

When you buy a print, you are buying much more than the paper and ink. Large prints mean large files, 100MB to 1+GB per image. High end printers are expensive. Ink set and paper are expensive. If the batch of paper or ink has changed, if there is more humidity or less than last time a print was printed, the color may change. It can take 10 minutes to 10 hours to test and adjust the setting for one matching print. Ul-

timately, good prints, like good art, require skill, experience, and talent.

Applying a UV inhibiting coating can take 1 to 7 days to dry.

When you pay hundreds of dollars for a Giclée it is by no means out of line with the printer's costs. In fact, he may be losing money. That said, my point is that all things being equal, once the digital files have been changed, a large print doesn't cost much more than a little print.

Understandably, if you want a different size than the original file, there will be additional time and therefore additional costs to adjust the files. A small image takes more time to get right than a large print because of the way we see. After that, however, there is no reason for large prints to cost lots more than small prints. (The same thing is true for B&W and color photographs.)

Charging a lot more for large prints is almost universal among artists and galleries.

(And the artist's price? Other than the size question, artists often invest much more in time, learning, equipment than doctors. Artists make work and work, but sell how many? An work should be priced with all that in mind. And if that work sells through a gallery, the galley usually gets between 35% to 60%.)