

sign

FESPA
DIGITAL 2016
PREVIEW

Feb/Mar 2016 - No.148/9

directions



The Décor Directive

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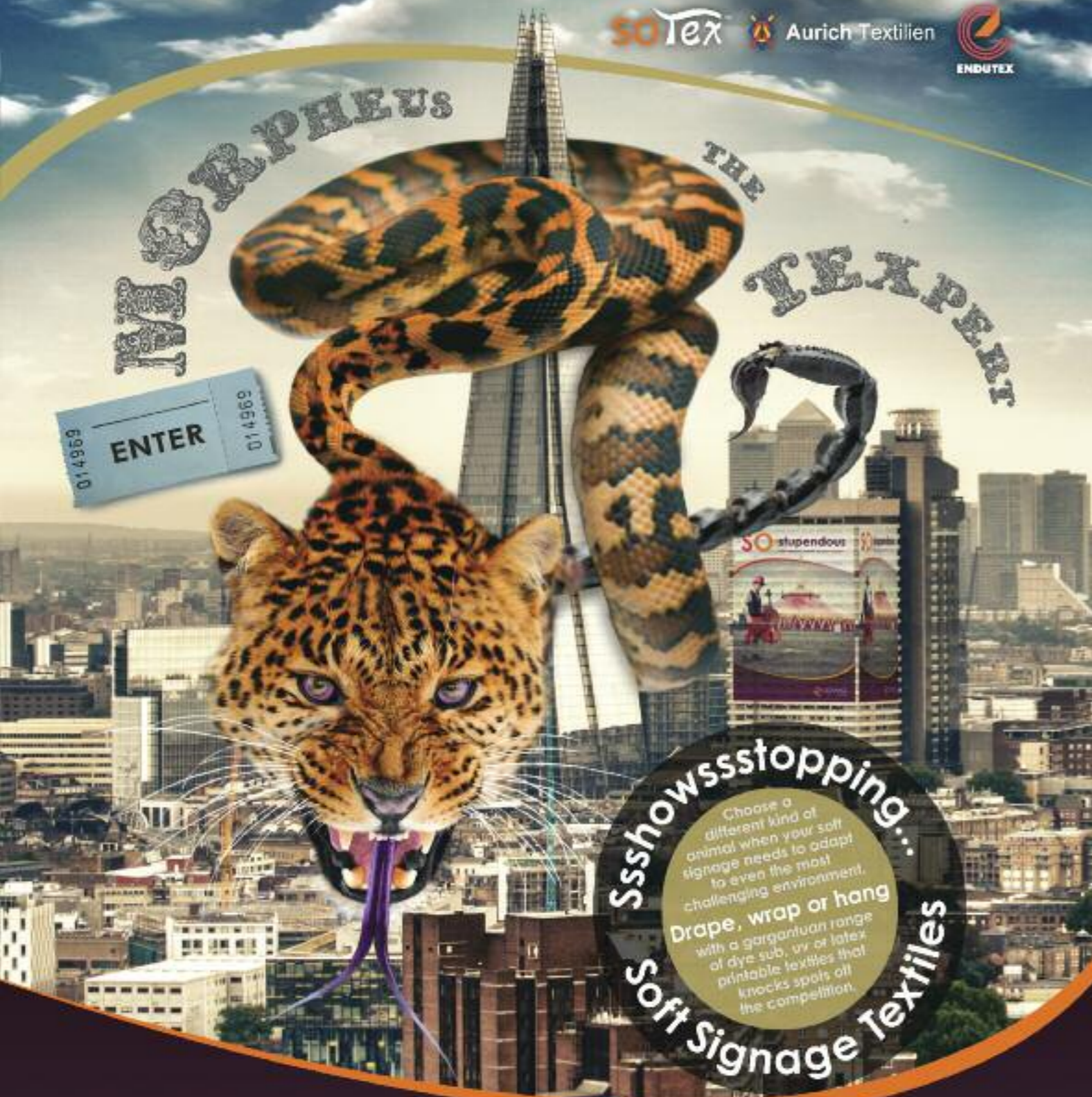


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February/March 2016

signdirections

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Sign Directions Hotline:

If you would like the contact details of any of the companies featured in this issue of Sign Directions, please ring **Tel: 01623 882398** for full company information, or alternatively, e-mail signdirections@btconnect.com for a response by return.

Coming Next:

The next issue of Sign Directions will be the April issue, which will include a comprehensive preview of Sign & Digital UK 2016



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Introduction

setting the scene

Who'd have thought it? In the biggest about turn yet, it seems that in tune with the ever-growing demand for originality and customisation, traditional signwriting is once again enjoying a bit of a moment.

This amazing turn of events is debated in an interesting article that appeared in the Financial Times on 11th February (find it online at: <http://on.ft.com/1XKnzte>), which claims that, although computerised signmaking and digital printing technology has enabled all businesses, however modest, to install professionally made signage, many companies are now hankering after bespoke signs with a more authentically hand crafted vibe.

If this means that the skill of the signwriter is once again being properly celebrated – and remunerated – then I, for one, am all for it. I can still vividly remember a long ago visit to a signwriter who specialised in the application of liveries to curtain-sided vehicles, something he did entirely by hand. Some of the liveries were unbelievably detailed, featuring complex logos and coats of arms, which he replicated perfectly, aided by nothing more sophisticated than a sketch on the back of a business card, coupled with his own his natural artistic talent and encyclopaedic knowledge of typefaces. Every single livery he produced was, quite literally, an original work of art. However at the time of my visit in 2001, when digital printing was beginning to become an industry mainstay, he was afraid that his days as a signwriter were numbered, as he was already finding it difficult to compete with companies harnessing new technology.

According to the FT article though, signwriters can now earn up to £400.00 a day and I'd like to think that if he's still around, my signwriter friend has found a new audience that properly cherishes his remarkable skills.

If signwriting is your bag and you'd like to ensure that your work enjoys a wider airing, then we'd like to hear about it so that it can be included in a forthcoming feature planned for later in the year – contact us on 01636 819375 for a preliminary chat, or e-mail signdirections@btconnect.com

Meanwhile all signwriters should consider entering the Craftsman Award, one of 15 signmaker award categories available in the BSGA British Sign Awards 2016, which is being launched this month and will culminate in a gala luncheon and presentation ceremony on 3rd November, at East Midlands Conference Centre. For details on how to enter, visit page 18.

Signwriters who are researching new markets should certainly consider chancing their luck in the Décor sector, where, I imagine, traditional signwriting techniques and the plethora of effects that they can achieve,

are already going down a storm.

As it so happens, the whole of this issue is very design and décor orientated, with Mike Houghton of the specialist retail display installation and services company CJ Retail

Solutions revealing what it is that retailers want now on pages 22-23, followed by a mini preview of the forthcoming Retail Design Expo, on pages 22 -27. The Décor Directive, which highlights some of the latest decorative materials, equipment and projects, unfolds on pages 28-41 and is complemented by A Soft Touch, on pages 50 -54, which examines the advances made in digital textile printing and how they can be used to provide soft furnishings and homeware.

March is certainly a busy month for shows with Retail Design Expo on at London's Olympia on 9th-10th March and the latest edition of FESPA Digital running from 8th-11th at The RAI in Amsterdam. A small foretaste of the delights that the latter has to offer can be sampled on pages 44-49.

Elsewhere, you'll find our regular news pages, together with news of Epson's latest printer launches on pages 42-43. Finally, on page 54, Mark Godden laments that the future isn't what it used to be.

April of course, will herald this year's Sign & Digital UK exhibition and we'll be providing our usual comprehensive show guide in the April issue, which will be published at the beginning of the month.

Now, thoroughly inspired by all of the décor related imagery in this issue, I'm planning a little decorative project of my own. That is to say that I'll spend ages considering paint and wallpaper samples, before noisily banging around with rollers and ladders, secure in the knowledge that it won't be too long before someone with vastly superior skills will come and relieve me of the responsibility!



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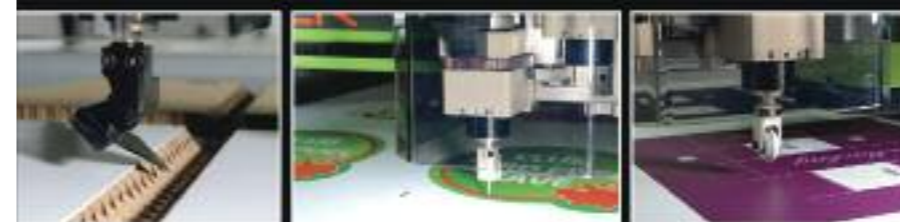
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Apprenticeships are key at Octink



Apprenticeships are high on the agenda for display specialist Octink, which places great emphasis on support for school and college leavers as they start out in their careers.

Always keen to provide young people with work experience and employability skills and to develop staff, the company also backs local initiatives such as Spark!, which helps

to prepare people for a working life and enhances their employability through practical, accredited and inspiring work-related experiences.

Mike Freely, Managing Director at Octink, commented: "The skills shortage and what industry can do to help resolve it, has been the subject of much debate during recent months, and, as a company that prides itself on being active in its support of both young people and its staff, we believe that everyone should have development plans and an apprenticeship is a great way to

kick start them, while also bringing new talent and skills into the company."

Recent examples of the encouragement Octink has provided for its staff to develop their skills, include its sponsorship of a school leaver who has just completed a signmaking apprenticeship, and an office junior, who showed such initiative that Octink had no hesitation in enrolling her as an apprentice to complete an NVQ Level 2 in Business Administration. And its encouragement is not just

restricted to young people. Long-standing staff member Mike Bains is embarking on a higher apprenticeship in construction operations management.

Mike Freely concludes: "We hope that our efforts to develop our staff and young people within our local community not only help them in their career paths, but also set a good example for all companies of our size. With more apprenticeship opportunities opening up in industry, hopefully, the skills shortage will start to resolve." ■

The Print Show 2016 gets underway



Antalis has become the latest major brand to sign up to exhibit at The Print Show 2016, which is scheduled to take place on 11th-13th October, at Birmingham's NEC.

The 2016 show, which will build on the success of the event's inaugural edition last year, will offer visitors even more innovation, and creativity via an expansive exhibitor list and content programme.

Antalis, widely regarded as one of the biggest brands within the paper, packaging and communications products sector, joins a host of other returning exhibitors, including Konica Minolta, Grafityp and Signmaster Systems.

Reflecting on the company's decision to re-sign, Mike Bennett, Marketing Manager at Antalis, cited the level of response it had received following its initial showing as a key factor.

He said: "We had a phenomenal response from visitors to our stand

last year, so we were happy to re-book as it offers us a perfect platform to showcase our offering to the UK print industry and meet with the key decision makers."

Intelligent Finishing Systems (IFS) is another company that has based its decision to participate this year after its successful showing last year. The company's Managing Director, Bryan Godwyn, commented: "Following last year's event when we were co-located with the IPIA, we felt that we needed to have to have a bigger stand in order to do justice to our large portfolio of finishing systems and solutions and look forward to welcoming both current and potential customers."

Chris Davies, Event Director for The Print Show, reported that the organising team expects to announce a number of other equally prestigious sign-ups during the coming weeks, as plans continue to progress for this year's event.

For further information visit: www.theprintshow.co.uk ■

Sign & Digital UK surpasses visitors' expectations



Sign & Digital UK, which has long been regarded as the UK's premier event for the sign, digital printing and display sectors, has, according to a recent survey, surpassed the industry standard for visitor satisfaction, with 85 percent of attendees describing their overall experience as good or excellent, thus outperforming the industry benchmark of 79 percent.

In addition, customer satisfaction has also increased by six percent since 2014.

With a history that stretches back

for nearly 30 years, the show, which takes place annually at Birmingham's NEC, and is scheduled to take place on 19th-21st April this year, has more than achieved its original aim of supporting and reflecting the sign, display solutions and digital printing sectors and continues to evolve in line with the changing pace of modern methods of visual communication.

Thus, the 2016 event will introduce two new features, in the form of live demonstrations and an enhanced free educational seminar programme, together with a new meeting booking facility that will



enable visitors to schedule face-to-face meetings so that they can plan ahead to make the best and most effective use of their time.

Full details and timings of all the new show features will shortly be available to view online.

For further information visit www.signanddigitaluk.com or to enquire about exhibiting, contact the show team on +44 (0) 1342 332000, or e-mail signanddigitaluk@fav-house.com ■

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Appointments



Stanford Marsh Group has appointed **Julian Mennell** as Business Development Manager for the

Print for Profit sector, a role in which he will be responsible for helping UK and Ireland-based print for profit reprographics businesses invest in new technology more efficiently.

Julian, who has clocked up more than 20 years' experience in the printing industry, having previously worked with companies such as Colougen, Xerox and Océ, will be working with customers seeking to upgrade to HP's ever-expanding PageWide XL Technology. ■

Kornit Digital has appointed **Eyal Manzoor** as Managing Director at Kornit Digital Europe GmbH.



In this capacity, he will oversee Kornit Digital's operations in Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA) and replace **Wilfried Kampe** who has successfully completed the setup and initial expansion of Kornit's European entity.

Following employment with companies such as NUR Macroprinters and Scitex Vision, Eyal Manzoor, who will be relocating to Europe, joined Kornit Digital in April 2007 and was appointed as Managing Director at Kornit Digital Asia Pacific in 2012. He has over 15 years of experience in the digital and textile printing areas, in customer support, sales and marketing and senior regional management. ■



EFI has recruited **Sheri Rhodes** as its Chief Information

Officer a role that will see her joining the company's senior leadership team and reporting to EFI Senior Vice President **Toby Weiss**.

As CIO, Sheri, who has extensive experience of leading complex, enterprise initiatives for financial, security software and information management companies throughout Silicon Valley, will enhance EFI's ability to create and provide customers with best-in-class printing technologies, including cloud services hosted in EFI's secure data centre facilities. She will be based in EFI's worldwide headquarters in Silicon Valley and will manage Information Systems and Technology staff located at EFI facilities worldwide. ■

Xaar has recently announced two new appointments.



Chris Morgan, who has been named as Non-Executive Director, brings with him a wealth of

expertise in managing complex international technology businesses, having spent 25 years at HP, Inc. where his career encompassed more than 15 years of diverse senior executive roles, including WW Sales and Marketing leadership for HP's entire printing business and Senior Vice President of Graphic Solutions, where he had end-to-end global general management responsibility for HP's multibillion dollar portfolio of digital printing and packaging press, signage and display, large format design, 3D, and specialty printing solutions and services. ■

Professor Neil Hopkinson, the original inventor of the transformational High Speed Sintering (HSS) technology, will

take on the new role of Director of 3D Printing. He brings with him 19 years' experience in additive manufacturing technology gained at the University of Sheffield, Loughborough University, De Montfort University, 3D Systems and the University of Nottingham.

In his new role with Xaar, Neil will build a world-class team to continue the development of HSS technology, as well as other additive manufacturing processes. The team's focus will be to accelerate the success of Xaar's OEM partners in the area of additive manufacturing. ■



(l to r) UK Managing Director John Davies, Senior Vice President of Marketing Drue Townsend and Business Consultant David Callister at the new UK Headquarters of FASTSIGNS

near Stafford, **Fastsigns International** has announced the appointment of **John Davies** to the role of UK Managing Director.

John has an extensive background in business development, gained during a twenty year career working within the franchising, retailing, manufacturing, construction and consultancy sectors for some of the UK's leading businesses. ■

Following the relocation of its UK Head Office from Chesterfield to the Staffordshire Technology Park

showtime

DIARY DATES FOR 2016

FESPA Digital 2016
8th-11th March
The RAI, Amsterdam
Organiser: FESPA
www.fespadigital.com

Retail Design Expo 2016
9th-10th March
Olympia, London
Organiser: Legend Exhibitions
www.retaildesignexpo.com

Sign & Digital UK
19th-21st April
Halls 17 & 18 The NEC, Birmingham
Organiser: Faversham House Group
www.signanddigitaluk.com

ISA 2016
20th-23rd April
Orange County Convention Center, Orlando
Organiser: International Sign Association
www.signexpo.org

If you would like your event to feature on this page, please send full information via e-mail to Val Hirst at signdirections@btconnect.com

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new projects



► **Esign Media's** team of 3M Approved Vehicle Wrappers used **3M's IJ180Cv3** wrapping film, supplied by **William Smith**, to demonstrate how first impressions can be changed in the 'blink of an eye'. When challenged by Managing Director, Zak Pickering, to produce a really original and eye-catching wrap design for one of the company's own cars, the team transformed a brand new BMW 4 Series into a rusty beaten up old banger!

Although Zak hadn't expected something this radical, he had to admit that it was a transformation that perfectly illustrated the efficacy of both the company's wrapping and creative capabilities, while also demonstrating just how realistic an impression a well executed wrap can convey. ■

► **Hollywood Monster** created a stunning 15m x 4m wall graphic for **Cineworld** Birmingham Broad Street to help launch the latest, highly anticipated oeuvre in the Star Wars series, **The Force Awakens**.

It used a Utack removable textile, supplied by **CMYUK**, which it then printed in sections measuring 4.6m x 1.3m, using its **VUTEk H2000** printer. Utack media was the perfect choice for this installation, as it sticks directly to the wall, thus eliminating the necessity of providing a frame and ensuring ease of installation. Furthermore, it will remain firmly in place for the six-week period required, but can be easily removed when the promotion has finished, without leaving any unsightly residue.

To watch the installation visit:
<http://www.cmyuk.com/showroom/?video=utack-hollywood> ■



▲ The **Byōdō-in** is a Buddhist temple near Kyoto, Japan, which is registered as a Japanese National Treasure and World Heritage Site and, as such, appears on the backside of the Japanese 10 yen coin. Its most famous part, and the only remaining original building, is the Phoenix Hall or Hōō-dō, which was constructed in 1053.

As the paint on the original west doors to the Hōō-dō was fading, Monsho Kamii, Chief Priest of the temple, directed a special team to collect the remaining small paint particles, a painstaking process that took around 10 years, in order to accurately reproduce the colours and the image using the latest digital printing methods. He then contacted **Agfa Graphics** Japan, where experts carefully matched



the colours using in-house colour management technology and used an Anapurna 2050i wide-format inkjet printer to print onto two new doors crafted from 400-year old Japanese cypress wood.

However, the project proved to be far from straightforward. As the doors, each of which measured 1.2m x 2.5m, weren't



flat, a new technique was developed to print on to the curved surface of the frames using a specially adapted tool that was created on a 3D printer. In addition, a particular kind of white ink was used to imitate the original white parts of the doors.

Now, to the complete satisfaction of all concerned, the replacement doors have been successfully mounted on their new hinges and their replicated beauty can once again be properly appreciated by both the monks and the many visitors to the temple. ■



The search starts here!

The BSGA British Sign Awards will return to Nottingham's East Midlands Conference Centre on Thursday 3rd November this year, when Bill Turnbull, presenter of the BBC's Breakfast for 15 years, will host the proceedings.

The competition, which is organised by the British Sign and Graphics Association to celebrate the best in British signmaking, is now in its third year and, according to David Catanach, Director of the BSGA, the Awards have already made a major impact in the industry.

He reported: "Our aim was to introduce an awards scheme for the industry that had real meaning and credibility and the feedback from businesses that have been successful during the past two years has been excellent, with many reporting that their win has had a very positive effect on both customers and staff."

The 2016 awards scheme is once again being supported by 3M as the principal sponsor and many of the sponsors of last year's individual awards will also be

sponsoring again, including Atlantic Tech (Wayfinding), Blackburns Metals and Plastics (Architectural), Epson (Innovation), Soyang Europe (Wide Format), Trade Etching Direct (Craftsman Award), William Smith (Commercial Vehicle Graphics) and Nationwide Platforms (Roll-out).

In addition, Pyramid Display and Metamark have already confirmed that they will sponsor this year, together with Roland DG, who supported the 'Apprentice of the Year' in 2015 and this year will sponsor 'The Young Sign Maker of the Year', a much broader category designed to recognise the important contribution that young people make to the UK sign industry.

David Catanach continued: "We also have the support of the sign industry's two leading journals – Sign Directions Magazine and Sign Link, both of which are supporting the awards through editorials and their web sites. Sign Link will also bring their particular video expertise to the party and Sign Directions will publish a commemorative brochure featuring all this year's award winners."

"Our aim is to make the event bigger and better than ever. The award categories represent virtually every aspect of signmaking, and, because we recognise that many sign companies are small businesses, we also have a special Small Sign Maker of the Year Award."

Every sign business in the UK that has produced work of which it is genuinely proud is invited enter. Entry is free and easy – simply visit the awards website at www.britishsignawards.org where guidance is provided on the entry requirements and judging criteria for each award. All that's necessary is for entrants to complete the online form and attach some images of their completed project.

Entries can be submitted at any time from March 1st to the closing date of Friday, September 2nd, 2016.

David Catanach concluded: "Last year we received over 320 entries across all categories, so it would be nice to top this number and remember, if you're not in it, you can't win it, so start planning your entries now!" ■

Young Sign Maker of the Year

With the support of Roland DG, a brand new award will be presented to the 'Young Sign Maker of the Year' in November.

Entries for this award should be submitted by an employer or supervisor and should include a brief resume of why a candidate should be considered for the award, together with examples of work undertaken or projects completed.

However, formal training and qualifications are vital to young people and all candidates should have undertaken - or be undertaking - a formal training programme such as a Signmaking Apprenticeship or equivalent. Alternative training or education courses are also acceptable and graduate entrants to the industry can also be entered for the award.

Where applicable, an endorsement from a college attended or from a training provider should be submitted.

Entries will be assessed by the judging panel and a shortlist drawn-up. Shortlisted entrants will be visited, by arrangement, at their workplace by our assessors.

Entries can be submitted from March 1st. The closing date will be August 19th to allow time for site visits.

For full details visit the awards website at www.britishsignawards.org. ■

New host for the Awards

Bill Turnbull, who stepped down this year after 15 years on the BBC Breakfast sofa, has been a fixture on our early morning television screens since 2001.



O.J.Simpson murder trial and the Monica Lewinsky scandal.

In 1997 he became one of the main presenters on BBC News 24 and joined the Breakfast show in 2001 as a weekend presenter. In 2008 he took over as the main weekday presenter of Breakfast.

His career started in 1978 on Radio Clyde in Scotland and he then freelanced for a number of years in the USA before joining the BBC as a reporter for the Today programme in 1986. He became a correspondent for BBC News in 1990, reporting from over 30 countries, including the USA where he covered a number of major stories, including the

As well as presenting programmes in the studio, Bill regularly worked on location and reported from New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, anchored the coverage of the 2005 London bombing live from Kings Cross, and fronted coverage of US

Presidential Elections in 2008 and 2012.

He was also a contestant in the third series of Strictly Come Dancing, where despite a serious ankle injury suffered in the second week and the scathing critiques of Craig Revel Horwood, Bill stayed in the competition for seven weeks, finishing sixth out of the 12 contestants.

In his spare time he supports Wycombe Wanderers FC and keeps bees and chickens. He also enjoys long distance running and has participated in the London Marathon on several occasions. ■

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Supplier News

Vertically Challenged

In order to optimise its packing and storage operations, Ashby Trade Sign Supplies has purchased three, nine-metre Kardex automated storage units, which have enabled 5500 square feet of shelving to be condensed into just 200 square feet of floor space.

Commenting on this new innovation, Gareth Jones, Ashby's Production Manager, said: "Since we have such a high order volume, it is essential that we can pack the correct component in the shortest time possible and the new Kardex system, each of which comprises 70 shelves that are accessible over two



levels, not only facilitates this, but also easily enables us to see when, and how quickly, we need to replenish stocks."

He added that prior to the systems

purchase, Ashby's staff spent a large amount of their time walking between the different products before packing, saying: "The 'stock to person' system has not only cut down on this time but has also



increased productivity and decreased operator stress, as the right stock now comes to them in seconds and can be out of the door within minutes of the operator inputting the product shelf number into the Kardex's control panel."

Following the installation of the system, Ashby Trade Sign Supplies has been able to expand its available factory space by over 10 percent, thus making room for further new machinery, while also devoting more man hours to other crucial areas, such as fabrication. In addition, component packing errors are at an all-time low. ■

ArtSystems puts safety first

As part of its ethos of continuous development in order to achieve excellence in every aspect of its business, ArtSystems has developed an ongoing programme of improvements to all its health and safety activities.



To further underpin this initiative, Simon Cooksey, Operations Director; Armando Carvalho, Technical Manager; Norval 'Nobby' Cree, Logistics Manager and Chris Chadburn, Warehouse Manager, have all successfully completed the Institute of Safety and Health (IOSH) 'Managing Safely' course.

A four-day, nationally recognised and respected, certified training course for managers and supervisors, IOSH Managing Safely is designed to provide attendees with all of the resources they need to help handle health and safety in their teams.

Explaining its importance, Simon Cooksey said: "Every manager should have an understanding of their responsibilities when it comes to health and safety and this flexible course equipped us with the skills we

needed to tackle health and safety issues in the workplace and also enabled us to refresh and re-examine the protocols we already had in place."

As a result, the company's managers are better able to plan, implement, monitor, measure and continuously improve the risks within their departments. They will also have a wider remit as part of the Art Systems' Safety Management team.

Simon concluded: "Our approach to H&S is fully aligned with ArtSystems' Quality and Environmental Certification, which is founded on risk-based thinking rather than reactive correction. We have always put safety at the heart of management, and after completing this course we are better placed to do so with clarity and conviction." ■

NovaDura acquires Durable Signs

NovaDura, the recyclable sign specialist, has taken over Bridlington based Durable Signs. The move combines the two industry specialists in the anti-graffiti and vandal resistant market and has safeguarded a number of jobs at the Carnaby Industrial Estate site.



This news is announced following the successful launch of NovaDura's 100 percent recyclable ecoDURA high-pressure laminated paper brand eighteen months ago

As a result of the acquisition, NovaDura will have the greater in-house flexibility required when undertaking high street signage projects, plus commissions involving railway and underground signage. Its flagship product already meets the BS EN 45545-1: 2013 vehicle category specification and the

requirements of LUL1-085: Issue A2 as stipulated for signage on the London underground.

The deal was negotiated between Glenn Dunleavy, Managing Director of NovaDura, a sister company of sign-bonding experts, Innova Solutions, and Sam Fraser, Director of Durable Signs.

Following the liquidation of Durable Signs, its property and assets were acquired by NovaDura, which will now integrate the Durable Signs' product into the NovaDura's 'primaDURA' range. Durable Signs' Sam Fraser will continue as Technical Director with Kevin Fraser as Production Manager. ■

Trade Signs increases capacity and efficiency

Hertfordshire-based Trade Signs has kicked off 2016 with a major investment in a 170-tonne, state-of-the-art folding machine, which is capable of handling materials up to four metres in length.

According to the company, the new machine will improve efficiency and capacity at its Tring plant and the intention is to continue to invest to further improve its capabilities, and the service it offers to customers.

The new machine is capable of multi-folding along the full length utilising an Amada AMNC 3i control unit, while offline software allows programmable work to be office-based, effectively reducing the need for skilled operators. It is also equipped with Amada Digipro, which



enables angle measurement to be automatically adjusted.

Automatic tooling selection from the NC tooling library eliminates the need for time-consuming tool choice and


front-end installation of tooling also saves operator time.

The new machine is also equipped with an eco-drive system that continually monitors bending



requirements and self-adjusts to consume less energy, as well as reducing maintenance costs and increasing reliability.

For further information visit: www.tradesignsuk.com ■



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Equipment & Material

It's a frame-up!

Doro Tape UK has launched ArtWrap, a brand new and innovative framing system for use with canvases.

Framing a canvas the old fashioned way, using wooden stretchers, wedges and specialist tools, has always been a labour intensive exercise, but now ArtWrap enables sign and display companies to create stunning wall art in two minutes, using just a pair of scissors and a stapler.



The finished canvas is lightweight, tough and completely supported to prevent sagging and, when fitted with the special backboard, it is easy to hang or can even be used as a stand-alone display on a shelf or dresser. For ease of printing, a



template can be downloaded for each available size, while a useful demo video provides further help and assistance.

photograph and achieves perfectly folded corners every time.

The ArtWrap system, which can also be used for mounting paper prints, ensures a professional finish to any artwork or

To view the tutorial video visit: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Urm7X-3EAJ8

Colourful, commemorative Corian



Brunel Engraving's latest collection of Quartz, Slate, Granite and Marble effect Corian plaques are now available with the additional optional feature of photographic imagery.



The introduction of Corian Photo Plaques to Brunel's extensive range offers a further bespoke design option for this versatile, solid, hard wearing acrylic based material, which is made from a mixture of acrylic resin and natural minerals, and comes in a variety of natural stone finishes.

looks for much longer. Ideal for commemorating events and buildings, the celebration of new constructions with relevant imagery and for topping out ceremonies, Corian Photo Plaques can feature full colour photographic company logos for use in business premises, while also providing the perfect surface for attractive and original house nameplates.

However, although it looks like stone, and is comparable in price, it is non-porous, stain resistant, seamless, repairable and renewable and heat resistant, thus retaining its good

Products are available to the trade in a range of different sizes and are supplied complete with screw fixings and domed caps. Brunel Engraving also provides a bespoke sizing service, and each individual piece is cut, finished and polished.



Double visibility

APA has further enhanced its product range with the addition of an exclusive TWO-W micro-perforated film, for use with windows and other glass surfaces.

guarantees brightly coloured prints that are visible on both sides, even when viewed under artificial light. In addition, as the film can be reverse printed for application to the interior of the glass the exposure to vandalism is minimised. TWO-W is exceptionally easy to remove, even when the graphics have been used long term, and doesn't leave any unsightly residue on the glass surface.

TWO-W is ideally suited to the decoration of shop windows, thanks to its exclusive micro-perforation, which enables viewers to see through it, together with its outstanding translucence, which



AP/TWO-W is the evolution of AP/ONE-W, the gloss micro-perforated self-adhesive film, which is designed for application onto vehicle windows and ensures good driver and passenger

visibility. Both films are compatible for use with solvent, eco-solvent, Latex and UV digital printing technologies.

Stand out from the crowd

William Smith has added QuickStand, a new edge-lit POS display system to its sign and display portfolio, which offers an alternative to traditional pop-up systems.

First seen at FESPA 2015, Quickstand features LED technology that facilitates individual illumination of each display panel to maximise visual impact. The QuickStand controlled animation software, which enables light animations to be pre-designed, is used in conjunction with a sequencer to create a dynamic light show.

The modular system comes in a

range of options, including Dual Display, a two-panel unit, which can be set up in either portrait or landscape format and combined in multiples of up to eight units to create a really eye-catching large format image.

Other options include Single Display with Literature Holder, a single display panel, plus A4 and A5 acrylic and aluminium literature holders and Display Desk, a sleek, glossy desktop, mounted on a single ultra slim illuminated display panel

In addition, a robust QuickStand Case transportation box is available for each model within the range.



Corian Photo Plaques

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Making an impression



As a fledgling company in its seventh year of operation, the pace of growth at Bolton-based Impression has been nothing less than remarkable.

The large format display, PoS, event and signage company produces a wide range of graphics and digitally printed products including everything from leaflets to store window displays and outdoor signage to exhibition stands, a level of diversity that has delivered year on year growth in excess of 20 percent.

To maintain such growth levels, the company has invested heavily to meet the demands of its disparate customer base. Initially, it acquired Roland solvent printers and Konica Minolta machines, but it was the installation of its first Océ Arizona Flatbed digital printer in 2011 and the addition of an AG/CAD KM627R digital cutting machine that really helped to propel itself to the next level.

Commenting on the reason for the purchase Carl Webster, a Director at Impression, explained: "At the time we wanted to increase the productivity of the large format PoS department on such materials as acrylic, DiBond, Foamex and fluted boards, as well as introducing white and clear inks. But whilst this portion of our business has grown since 2011, we have also seen an increase in enquiries for sign related work and as a result, we are cutting ever more challenging substrates. Whilst the KM627R machine was ideal for many materials, it wasn't best suited to cutting Dibond, plastics and acrylics

at higher speeds, and, because it was a fixed bed, it wasn't designed for the continuous cutting of roll media either."

With business booming and the pressure of seasonal peaks, such as 'Black Friday', Christmas and the January sales, Impression, which now employs 11 people, reviewed the available cutting solutions and once again turned to AG/CAD, selecting the latest DYSS X7-1624C Superhead Digital Cutter, which was delivered last November.

Carl Webster continued: "Since the installation of the KM627R cutting table we had introduced a second Océ Arizona and the variety of materials and products we were using was increasing massively. It was clear therefore, that it wasn't going to keep pace with the daily amount of output produced by two Arizona's and four roll-fed machines that run day and night. As a result, we still had two staff manually cutting for four hours a day.

"Happily though, the new X7 is at least 40 percent faster than its predecessor when processing roll media and flat sheets, due to its high-end drives and controls that move the head around the table at impressive speeds. In addition, it features a more powerful oscillating unit that drives the knife tool, plus a much more robust, high precision router spindle. This not only provides more efficient cutting, but also provides a the completed output with a superior, high quality edge finish too."

With its diverse workload, Impression needed a cutting machine that could process roll media as well as sheet materials, which is why AG/CAD also supplied a conveyerised X7 machine with a roll feed system. Carl reported: "Previously, we spent up to eight hours a day hand cutting posters,



window decals and banners out of 30 to 100 metre long rolls, but now we simply load the rolls onto the DYSS roll-off unit and can run off a 60-metre roll of posters in a matter of minutes. The machine bed is 1.6m wide and 2.45m long, which is well suited to both our flexible and rigid media and, since we operate a two-shift pattern, it is running over 12 hours a day and has no problems keeping pace with our printed output."

Whilst The X7's power, speed, productivity, build quality and flexibility were all key attributes that contributed to Impression's purchasing decision, a further clear benefit was the KASEMAKE CAD software. Carl remembered: "Software is always a major factor for any company offering design and creative solutions and, as AG/CAD develops its own software, we realised that the service and support it could offer was far superior. Our designers now have two suites of KASEMAKE and have also undergone training on the software's 3D

rendering aspect, which has helped them to create 3D store environments in which to virtually display PoS material and signs, something that has proved to be a great sales tool."

Not only has the company been delighted with the level of software support and training, but also the overall ethos of AG/CAD with regards to customer service. Carl concluded: "AG/CAD understood our concerns regarding lost production time and to minimise the impact, it removed the KM627R on a Wednesday afternoon and the following afternoon, our team was up and running on the X7, meaning that we literally only lost a couple of hours. It really went the extra mile to provide outstanding service, so suffice it to say we are more than delighted with every aspect of our new purchase!" ■

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cutting, routing and engraving

Cut and dried

When a company is established on the basis that its founder sees an opportunity for a service-led revolution in a thriving market, then its primary attraction to its customers is certain to result in diverse and very interesting work. So the story begins for Hertfordshire based Projects and Print.

Richard Barrett, Projects and Print's Managing Director, turned on the lights in 2010 and has since had his intuition and research confirmed. Today, his company manages a portfolio of blue-chip customers and undertakes a range of projects that reflect the true scope of today's printing technologies when placed in the company's capable hands.

Customers return time and again to Projects and Print, impressed by its ability to meet tight deadlines and its command over the production processes it maintains in-house. And the company is well equipped to say

the least. An Agfa Anapurna printer rubs shoulders with a complete suite of production hardware, amongst it, a newly installed and fully specified Tekcel EXR router, supplied and maintained by Complete CNC Solutions.

The Tekcel EXR is a highly productive system that has the legs needed to keep up with the high standards of service that define Projects and Print. It's versatile too, as its 3 x 2 metre bed accommodates the largest workpieces, whilst its Opticut system elevates its capabilities into precise, top-quality print finishing. What's more, the system works in perfect tandem with the busy Anapurna printer.

Having recently completed installation and training, Projects and Print is already stretching the Tekcel EXR's legs and applying it to some challenging projects, one of which was undertaken on behalf of a hotel chain and involved over 1,100

individually designed, manufactured and manually finished number signs for bedroom doors.

The Tekcel EXR, together with Complete CNC's cutting tools, were used to cut the profiles from a mix of 12mm thick Corian and Acrylic, and then engrave the detailing required for the numbering. The acrylic was then printed on the Agfa Anapurna and the Corian was buffed and polished. Thanks to the Tekcel's auto tool changer and indexing, the job involved only minimal operator intervention.

Post cutting, the very high quality engraving and edges achieved by the Tekcel router played a valuable role when the signs were further developed using Projects and Print's diamond polisher and hand applied infilling for the numbering. The results are crisply rendered and radiate quality.

Producing over a thousand individual



Pacer provides cutting edge solutions

Part of the wide range of CNC routers supplied by AXYZ International, heavy-duty Pacer routers continue to command a strong presence in the key markets for which they were designed, including the sign, plastic fabrication and panel processing sectors.

The machines, which are renowned for their outstanding build quality, continuous and reliable performance and ultimate cutting accuracy, offer a choice of three models, ranging from the 4008 with a processing area of 1524 x 1219mm, to the top-of-the-range 6020 with a processing area of 2159 x 6096mm. All of the routers are built on a single-piece, stress-relieved heavy-duty steel frame incorporating a fully-zoned aluminium vacuum bed with either manual or automatic switching.

The steel gantry runs on high-quality linear bearings and is driven on both sides of the machine by servomotors coupled through planetary gearboxes and the latest helical rack and pinion drive system. This particular key design feature facilitates a more even distribution of the workload via the multiple gear teeth configuration as well as enhanced cutting accuracy, reduced material wastage and ultimately a longer machine life.

Pacer CNC routers are ideal for 2D and 3D routing, engraving and cutting of a wide range of materials to accommodate multiple applications. The materials include solid and composite woods, acrylics and plastics, aluminium sheet and aluminium composite materials (ACM) and other non-ferrous metals and foamed boards.

For a limited period, AXYZ International is offering a huge discount (up to £7,500) to owners of Pacer routers who want to upgrade to a new Pacer or AXYZ router. This enticing initiative will also provide access to a host of new production tool enhancements. These include a radically expanded (up to 33 stations) Automatic Tool Change (ATC) facility, the new AXYZ Auto Zone Management facility that ensures the material being processed is always held securely throughout the cutting cycle and the latest A2MC machine control system that greatly reduces or even eliminates 'bounce' and vibration caused by sudden acceleration and/or deceleration often experienced with other control systems.

A further option on all Pacer machines



is the new AVS (XYZ Vision System) that is fully compatible with all of the cutting tools used on AXYZ International machines and which greatly enhances their cutting accuracy.

Pacer machines, complemented by those in the AXYZ and Z series, can be seen at the new and expanded showroom and demonstration facility at AXYZ International's new UK and Continental Europe headquarters on the T54 Business Park in Telford. ■



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The Retail Detail

Following the inaugural event last year, Retail Design Expo 2016 will take place at Olympia on 9th-10th March, where it is designed to showcase the best in retail design, marketing, visual merchandising and shopfitting.

The show is expected to attract visitors drawn from the ranks of retailers, designers, marketeers, visual merchandisers and shopfitters, all of who will be searching for inspiration and new innovations. Conveniently co-located with Retail Business Technology Expo (RBTE) and Retail Digital Signage Expo, the event also offers a full conference programme.



A total of 250 exhibitors will be participating, including CJ Retail Solutions and here, Mike Houghton the company's Group Marketing Director, and provides sign and print companies with some very useful insights about working with retailers and major brands.

First established in 1995, CJ Retail Solutions has a real handle on what it takes to keep retailers happy. Based in Runcorn, the company offers a comprehensive menu of services that includes retail display installation and maintenance, together with store/brand auditing, backed up by a huge logistical operation, real-time reporting and a fully fledged retail operations training academy. In addition, it also has a digital POS division that manages planning, installation, maintenance, content creation and management, plus analytics to provide consumer behaviour data.

All of this means that Mike Houghton is in an excellent position to assess how, with the increasing popularity of internet shopping, brand owners and retailers' needs have changed over the past decade.

He muses: "Despite the trend for experiential retail, the majority of us still want to get in and out of store as quickly and as efficiently as possible, which is why the value of carefully considered wayfinding and signage systems can never be underestimated. Despite the fact that retailers can now send targeted offers to shoppers via

their mobile phones during their in-store journey, and also direct them to the appropriate counter, the need for 'traditional' wayfinding remains."

He adds however, that here, as elsewhere in-store, digital technology is making its mark saying: "Wayfinding signage is certainly becoming more interactive and engaging and is being customised to suit the needs of individual shoppers."

He also feels that the growth of Click and Collect and online retailing is having an impact on in-store signage needs, as many Click and Collect purchases are collected by shoppers from third-party retailers who may be entering the store for the very first time. He says: "Click and Collect is throwing up a whole new dynamic. For example, John Lewis customers are offered the option to pick up their goods from their local convenience store, with which they may not be familiar and as many 'Click and Collect' points have simply been bolted onto retailers' existing store layouts, clear signage is required to help shoppers navigate their way to the right location in-store.



Mike agrees that most retailers have found the continued growth in the popularity of online sales challenging, not least of all because it has left them with too much space to fill.

He continues: "Some retailers have dealt with this by granting concessionary spaces, such as the tie-ups between Sainsbury's and Argos, and the Homebase/Argos/Habitat offering, and this also provides signmakers with a great opportunity to extend their signing remit, as there is a clear need for effective signage to help shoppers effectively navigate multiple, and often very different, in-store brand spaces."

CJ Solutions, often works directly with retailers, but also collaborates with brand owners, designers, manufacturers and agencies too. However, according to Mike, the most important element of any successful project is the provision of effective in-store communication.



He observes: "Get it wrong and it can negatively impact the whole shopping experience and by association, devalue the brand, which is why retailers are always on the lookout for suppliers who can ensure complete consistency of operation, in terms of both manufacture and installation.

"Just as important, but often overlooked, is the ability to maintain a corporate look throughout each outlet, which is sometimes tricky when a retailer has hundreds of stores – it's important to audit the in-store environment to ensure that the brand remains cohesive throughout the whole estate and also to exert effective budget management, which, in a nutshell, means producing precisely the right type and size of signage, in the right quantities, for each store."

He makes a crucial final point when he says that retailers should, but don't always, pay attention to how signage is designed. He says: "When you consider signage from the logistics/transportation/sustainability

viewpoint, an awful lot of money is wasted, simply because signage is not designed in a way that optimises packaging for delivery to store."

He then wryly describes how signage – and what he describes as some semi permanent display stands that are chiefly used for seasonal promotions – often need to be packed, unpacked and repacked multiple times during their lifespan, leading to many wasted man-hours and oceans of discarded packing materials, including the dreaded bubblewrap.

Mike's solution to this vexing problem is for signmakers to design durable and permanent housings for their products, so that they can be safely transported and easily liberated once they have reached their destination, and just as easily re-packed for any further onward journey. Although he admits that this would increase the initial cost of signs and rigid displays, he feels that most retailers would recognise that this could be profitably offset against the costs necessitated by the current constant round of unpacking and repacking.

As well as appreciating signmakers who can provide solutions to the practical problems his company faces everyday, I ask Mike what other qualities he and his retail customers are looking for when selecting suppliers.

He responds that it very much depends on the nature of the project, in terms of whether it requires either national or regional coverage, or out of hours working and whether the company concerned has relevant previous experience, but also remarks that nowadays many retailers demand specific accreditations relating to health and safety and construction site attendance.

He says: "It works best for us if we act as a 'lead supplier' and put our sub-contractors through our own training programmes prior to the start of the project, so that we can be sure that everyone knows precisely what is expected of them and is working to the same standard."

When I ask for a few tips regarding future trends, Mike replies that more and more, retailers are providing consumers with the opportunity to choose how they interact with in-store communication so that it suits their own specific needs.

He reports: "I think signage is likely to become more tech reliant and dynamic, but the watchword will continue to be 'integration'. Too often retailers and brands view different elements of in-store communication in isolation, whereas they should consider the overall shopping experience and

tailor the many different ways of communicating, which includes signage, retail POS, digital and interactive screens and mobile alerts, so that they all work together to deliver and reinforce the desired information and promotional messages. When this is done well, it can really improve the whole shopping experience."

He cautions though, that all too often retail technology is poorly applied – something he describes as 'technology for technology's sake'.

He insists: "Technology, including digital signage should be used to solve 'real' problems and improve the overall shopping experience by making it easier and more enjoyable, not more complicated!"

As far as suppliers and sub-contractors are concerned, Mike believes that the most important trend will be a greater focus on the maintenance and compliance of visual communications, especially when it comes to signage/digital signage.

He explains: "There is a perception that digital solutions put an end to compliance issues, but unfortunately, they don't! Technology can fail just as much as manually installed signage, if it's not properly monitored and maintained. What's more, technology is



becoming ever more complex, which deters retail teams from attempting an in-store fix themselves. If the speedy resolution of maintenance issues isn't championed in-store, then problems often go unreported to the third party specialists with the skills to put it right, which not only represents wasted investment for the retailer/brand – it also results in a poor shopping experience for the customer too."

When pressed to provide the best single piece of advice for sign and print companies with retail aspirations, Mike offers this: "The best and most successful projects are those where all the parties involved are able to collaborate effectively to deliver the best possible result, so I'd say that taking the time to build good working relationships with retailers and all of their influencers will pay dividends in the long run!"

CJ Solutions will be promoting its services on Stand F40 at Retail Design Expo 2016. Further information on the company can be found at: <http://www.cjretailsolutions.co.uk>

Signwaves creates the POW! Factor

Exhibiting on Stand Y2 at Retail Design Expo, Signwaves will introduce the new POW! Sign, for which a patent is pending.

Complementing other signage products in the impressive Signwaves' portfolio, this large and visually commanding sign will grab public attention, increase footfall and improve sales for retailers through a versatile and cost-efficient brand positioning solution that combines vibrant colour and shape.

Due to its size, the POW! Sign provides long-range visibility, while the easy-to-change printed sleeve enables tactical and impactful marketing campaigns to be carried out at many different locations, including those in the retail, leisure and forecourt sectors. ■



POW! Sign by Signwaves
Patent pending 1520080.1

POW! Sign by Signwaves
Patent pending 1520080.1

See-thru Contra Vision

Contra Vision will be exhibiting at the show for the first time this year, reflecting the growing interest in see-through graphics from architects, contract interior designers and retail specialists.



Contra Vision see-through graphics have long been used in retail applications, for building wraps and on public transport, particularly on London buses and taxis, but now the ability of Contra Vision materials to be used for a

wide range of advertising, decorative, solar glare reducing and privacy purposes on glass, while also maintaining visibility to the outside, is extending the market even further. It also provides the option to use different



images on either side of a window.

Contravision has been used on structures as diverse as the Coca-Cola London Eye, where it was used to promote the recent Rugby World Cup,

and Stratford Station as part of Lloyd's TSB's sponsorship of London 2012. Visitors to Stand S1 will be able to see a number of different applications that feature Contra Vision Performance perforated window film. ■

Durable has it framed



On Stand N22 at Retail Design Expo, Durable UK will launch its new Duraframe Poster Sun display unit. It has been developed specifically for the retail sector and, in particular, for window display applications.

A key attribute of the system is the high level of protection it provides against UV degradation to ensure that promotional displays are retained in their original pristine condition for up to two years.

The latest addition to the Duraframe range that also includes the new Security, Note and Custom models, Poster Sun is available in a choice of three sizes and in



silver and black formats. The full range is available in a choice of 11 colours (including metallic silver, gold and red) and in sizes up to 50 x 70cm. ■

Daw doubles up

Daw Visual Marketing Solutions has booked an exhibition stand for the second year at Retail Design Expo, following on from a very successful show last year when the company attracted visitors from B & Q, The Body Shop, Boots International and Tesco.

Accordingly, it has doubled the size of its stand for this year's event and expects to attract equally illustrious names with its wide array of POS and display mediums.

Visitors to Stand P24 will also learn that it has reached another milestone in its 25-year history by achieving ISO9001 Quality Assurance Accreditation and it is looking forward to further expansion across the UK, following the launch of its new Point of Sale and Trade Large Format Printing Service (dawpointofsale.com). This new division will offer a direct to substrate and roll-to-roll printing service across the sign, display and print sectors at real trade prices. ■



Doro puts on the glitz

Doro Tape will be showing its growing portfolio of decorative and specialist films on Stand L20.

Visitors will be able to see its selection of

metallised decorative films, which include gold, silver and mirrored options in a wide range of attractive colours, as well as its Vinyl Efx range which includes holographic sparkles, mosaics and lenses in a variety of classic designs.

Other products on show will include the Aslan ranges of transparent and translucent self-adhesive vinyls, which come in a selection of 25 and 22 colours



respectively and help to transform any bland area of glass into a vivid graphic display. ■

Go natural with HI-MACS

Materials company LG Hausys will be making its show debut on Stand Q9, where it will be showcasing its HI-MACS range, including its newly launched Lucia collection, which features tone-on-tone colours.

A solid surface material with an acrylic stone finish that is composed of natural minerals, acrylic and pigments

and can be thermoformed into any shape required, HI-MAC is ideally suited for retail interior applications, where it can be used to create sculptural shapes and wall-cladding.

It is highly durable, thus suitable for use both indoors and outdoors and can be further customised or engraved to feature corporate logos etc. ■



Unique lightbox solution

A bespoke LED-illuminated lightbox shelving system, supplied by Unibox, has featured in a major branding project undertaken by high street retailer River Island.

The Unibox Kontakt is capable of providing both movement and light simultaneously. In contrast with other illuminated systems that offer this facility, there is no requirement for cabling or connections, with illumination instantly provided via integrated LED luminaires once the system is installed.

The system was developed to realise River Island's brand vision across its nationwide outlets. However, for the new-concept store in Gateshead, something a little different was required.

Working with River Island from the outset, Unibox designed, prototyped and delivered a bespoke system with new components and connectors. The system has subsequently been installed at the retailer's flagship store in Birmingham's Bullring shopping



centre and at the Trafford Centre in Manchester.

The Kontakt system won the Interior Luminaire Product of the Year award at last year's Lux Awards and has been shortlisted for the Innovation Trail and Awards event at Retail Design Expo, where the company will be showing its products on **Stand G31**. ■



A new retail experience

As the retail sector becomes ever more competitive, companies need to look at solutions that will help enhance operational efficiency, boost revenue and optimise the customer experience.

One of the biggest issues to be addressed is that of queuing and the problems that it can create. One of the UK's biggest fashion and homeware retailers, Matalan has adopted the Tensator Electronic Call Forward System to improve the

queuing experience at its stores.

At two of its main stores in the centre of Cardiff and on Oxford Street in London, Matalan has added a unique display unit to the system. Designed to complement the ambience of the stores, the cube-shaped units were placed above every cashier desk. They are used to manage queue flow as well as indicating which cashier desks are open. When the till is open, the display unit is illuminated, allowing customers to quickly and easily



identify purchase points. When a cashier becomes available, the display unit will flash above the relevant till, guiding customers to where they should make their purchases. ■

3A offers market-leading materials

As a market-leading supplier of sheet material, 3A Composites offers a unique range of branded products including Dibond, Forex, Kapa, DISPA, Smart-X, Foamlite and Lumex, to the sign, display and digital printing sectors.



Following its integration of the Polycasa Group in April last year, the company has extended its product portfolio with



a wide choice of plastic sheet to strengthen its position as a diverse manufacturer of materials for sign, display and industrial applications. Visitors will be able to see 3A on **Stand E61**. ■

Perfect packaging

The recent Irish Print Awards saw Addprint win the Luxury Packaging Printer of the Year award for its cosmetic beauty box project for Bourjois Paris, which it printed on its recently installed Mimaki CJV300 printer/cutter.



Based in the Dublin area, Addprint, a company that has excelled in the cosmetic PoS market, crafted the cosmetic beauty box it produced for Bourjois Paris by printing the box's exterior with its recently acquired Mimaki CJV300-160 printer-cutter. Managing Director, Robert Doyle explained that the Mimaki CJV300 was selected due to its exceptional print quality, a vital consideration as the company specialises in the production of Point of Sale displays.

He said: "The CJV300 also provides a great colour vibrancy and the colour matching from one print to another is superb, which is crucial when you are working with the major cosmetic brands. We also wanted a printer that was easy to use. Our previous machine required two people to load and unload, but the CJV300 is a one man job and we can leave it

unattended, which makes great business sense."

Authorised Mimaki reseller Reprocentre, which supplies the CJV300 printer and was also involved in the Irish Print Awards through sponsorship of one of the categories, was naturally delighted that one of its own customers won an award.

However, its win isn't the only reason that Addprint is celebrating – it will shortly be moving into new premises where it will be able to showcase its wide array of point of sale products and materials to best possible advantage. ■

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Design and picture(s) are made in cooperation with Studio Edward van Vliet

The Décor Directive



Although the retail sector provides rich pickings for sign and print companies that want to extend their repertoire to include creative new areas, many traditional signing projects can also be further enhanced with the addition of digitally printed wall coverings and textiles, photographic murals and special window treatments, while wrapping doesn't just have to be confined to vehicles – it can be imaginatively used to transform everything from furniture and furnishings to white goods in both commercial, public and domestic interiors too.

Nowadays, the scope for providing interesting and novel decorative effects is virtually limitless.

Over the next several pages, Mike Connolly highlights some of the latest materials, hardware and ancillary products that can be used to capitalise on the many opportunities offered by this increasingly popular new marketplace.

Making a mark on Décor

Affordable print production hardware is now widely available and produces truly amazing results that would not have been possible only a few years ago – results that are colourful, durable and universally accepted by customers.

Inks too have developed. Today's inks perform brilliantly and extend the reach of the hardware that uses them beyond the horizons of four-colour printing and into specialist colour-spaces where there are gamut-boosting special colours, white and even metallics. Some systems even offer clear components that can be used to deliver 'spot-varnish' or create a manageable texture on a sign or graphic.

Material manufacturing has also risen to capitalise on the creative potential yielded by ever better printers and ink systems too. Highly evolved face-film variants, technical and functional adhesives and performance enhancing formulation all put a rich creative reserve at the disposal of print producers.

Thanks to the pioneering inventiveness of hardware manufacturers, ink chemists and material engineers, digital print is always finding new application niches.

One niche in particular though, is transcending its very niche status. It's already more of a new market than a niche and some sign and graphic industry insiders are predicting that it's going to be even bigger than vehicle wrapping. It's a new market that's growing, that's relatively easy to access, that is receptive to new ideas and great design and which is centred around

digitally printed and applied décor.

Metamark, is supporting its technical and commercial development and application opportunities with the introduction of a new range of materials, named appropriately enough, the DécorMark range, which has been expressly designed and formulated to help companies already experienced in the production of signing and commercial graphics, to take their practical, creative and application expertise, together with the hardware they're now using, and develop new income streams and find new customers.

The DécorMark range will also help such companies extend the scope of the services they offer to existing customers.

Any sign or graphics production business serving the needs of an existing customer base has a ready and waiting audience for applied décor. Within and beyond that customer base is a latent demand that is developing as word spreads and opinion leaders open doors.

Metamark anticipates that the DécorMark range is going to find a role in a very diverse range of décor, and subsidiary decorative markets, which are at the very beginning of their development arc. For example, arguably all businesses can make use of décor applied to both structural and temporary walls and other surfaces.

Casting that powerful idea forward, there's the nature of the content the décor represents, from the purely ambience setting designs, to functional



décor bearing a message, or reflecting the products or trade of a business. In addition décor can be used to counterpoint surrounding architecture or even function in lieu of wayfinding signage - the creative interpretations are endless.



Metamark also sees a role for its new DécorMark products in domestic and other non-commercial interiors too. Sales of magnolia coloured emulsion paint are very likely to head south now there's an affordable and practical way of applying virtually any image, pattern, colour or design to any sound surface in such interiors.

Seen from a sign and print company's side of the counter, the markets opened by the DécorMark range are both huge and hugely attractive.

The Décor market is likely to be best served by creative companies, those with an expertise in design and although interior design, and design, for example, fleet livery, are two very different disciplines, the underlying muscle that gets the job done is a very flexible and powerful one. Creativity will find a way and, when it does, it has tremendous value attached to it. Getting into the décor market is clearly going to return more than just costs-plus.

The potency of the DécorMark formula is a clear signpost to an area that waits to

be exploited. Among the other attractions it extends to the end-user, is the minimal disruption experienced in return for what could be a total transformation of an interior space. Add to that, the potential to make such transformations on a long or short-term basis and valuable, repeat business is indicated.

With its wide selection of textured materials, specialist laminates, non-wovens with application specific adhesive systems, The DécorMark range places a versatile palette of materials at the disposal of sign and graphic producers who are prepared to look beyond their current client base and harness their resources to capitalise on the exciting new opportunities it offers, the sky really is the limit.

Metamark has produced a print brochure and specification guide, available by emailing sales@metamark.co.uk, which fully details the DécorMark range. Metamark is also backing its DécorMark range with a full programme of technical and application support and making samples available. ■



The Light Fantastic

The retail display arena is evolving rapidly with new textile substrates taking centre stage thanks to the tangible advantages they offer over traditional alternatives. Leading material manufacturer and distributor, Soyang Europe is perfectly positioned to supply and support print providers, thanks to an ever expanding line-up of products, with its textile offering enjoying significant uptake in the retail sector.

Its backlit textile materials have really taken off in the last twelve months, as forward thinking retail chains are now specifying textiles for substantial elements of their point of sale substrates, of which lightboxes are a mainstay.

With considerable benefits in terms of

the final print, in terms of evenly diffused distribution of the lighting element and a vibrant and detailed graphic, there are myriad other factors that offer even greater advantages.

Textile wins in so many areas, as it is easier to install, cheaper to transport and has a solid environmental provenance all of which means that it's a better all-round solution - hence the rapid adoption by so many leading retail brands.

With a range that sees European manufactured products sitting alongside those produced in its Far East facility, Soyang Europe offers solutions at a variety of price points and for different ink technologies, which can be used in conjunction with flexible UV as well as dye sub and latex printers, while widths of up to five metres help to open up markets for print companies that didn't



necessarily believe that they had dedicated textile print capabilities in-house. This focus on providing a range of textiles to suit multiple ink types has seen demand increase substantially, and its not just retail point of sale that's seeing an explosion in textile; light boxes and the ability to produce large expanses of seamless graphics are also ideal for use in the exhibition and event

sector too. Soyang Europe's backlit textiles account for just some of the 1.4 million metres of the company stocks in its UK warehouse that can be delivered on a next-day basis, enabling retail outlets to refresh textile graphics to suit promotions quickly and easily. ■

Inspiring a vision

Inspiration can come from many sources for retail interiors, as a visit to any retail park or shopping mall will testify. For many designers, material choice may be seen as simply a means of realising a vision, a 'vehicle' for achieving the desired end result.



However, the Amari Plastics' Signs, Display and Graphics team has a different perspective and believes that inspiration can come from the properties and characteristics of the materials themselves.

As a leading UK supplier of sheet materials to the sign and display sectors, Amari Plastics offers designers an exciting palette of materials for applications as diverse as POS and signage to display furniture, partitioning, counter tops and much more.

These include KAPAtch, which combines the PUR foam core of the KAPA family of foam boards, with coated aluminium cover sheet layers to create a unique, ultra-light and ultra-rigid foam board with a European class Bs2D0 fire rating that makes it suitable for both interior and exterior applications. With a surface that has been specifically developed for digital printing KAPAtch delivers outstanding results when used in conjunction with all current digital printing technologies. Its unique construction provides it with excellent stability and stiffness and it can be easily processed using conventional metalworking and woodworking machinery.

Greencast, a 100 percent recycled and recyclable acrylic offers the clarity and glass-like smoothness of cast acrylic sheet. Used by leading high street brands for all kinds of display applications, it now provides a whole new level of sustainability and is available in wide range of clear, opal, solid colour and frosted finishes in a huge range of sheet sizes and thicknesses.



DISPA is the new all-paper board with a unique structure of embossed formed paper, which provides strength and rigidity. The perfect material for short-term promotional campaigns, it offers a smooth bright white surface, excellent printability, extreme flatness, rigidity and stability, while the 100 percent cellulose fibre construction ensures that it's fully recyclable. It can be both digitally and screenprinted and is easily cut, laminated or glued, using conventional adhesives.

Kerrock is a composite material that looks and feels like stone but is actually acrylic based. It is made by mixing acrylic polymer with aluminium hydroxide, both of which are completely safe to both humans and

the environment and is available in an almost infinite range of colours and finishes. It meets fire classification class B s1-do according to EN 13501-1, the new European standard norm.

Made from mixed 'upcycled' plastics, new Stormboard offers similar application opportunities to familiar wood-based board products, but as it is moisture resistant it's suitable for both exterior and interior applications.

Other equally efficacious products from the Amari Plastics range include Ex-Cel rigid foam PVC and Dibond aluminium composite panels, plus many other innovative materials. ■

A clear winner

Germany-based specialist manufacturer of self-adhesive films, ASLAN has added the digitally-printable WindowClear DFP transparent window graphics film to its portfolio.

The flexible PVC film has been developed specifically for graphics to be applied to flat and/or curved glass surfaces and in particular those requiring a high level of transparency. Easy to apply and purposely remove as required, the film also obviates the

need for images to be plotted, weeded and cropped as well as allowing the printed graphic to be applied as a single-piece manifestation.

ASLAN DFP 18 is available in a roll width of 1.37m and can be printed in reverse using a choice of digital ink technologies, including solvent, eco-solvent, UV-curable and Latex. The film has a minimum outdoor durability of seven years and is therefore suitable for longer-term applications. ■



Walled excellence

New wallcovering materials from Coala and Graham and Brown are now available from Antalis UK. They are suitable for both residential and commercial building applications and can be applied instantly to transform any interior space.



Available in three easy-to-apply formats and offering a wide variety of creative embossments and finishes, the wallcoverings meet the highest standards of fire resistance and lightfastness as well as being easy to keep clean with normal washing. An anti-bacterial coated option is also available for clean environments such as hospitals.

Graham and Brown's FSC non-woven wallcovering utilises cutting edge 'paste the wall' technology with which the wall itself and not the wallcovering is applied with paste and reputedly cutting application time in half and with no requirement for pre-soaking of the substrate.



Design and picture(s) are made in cooperation with Studio Edward van Vliet



To assist product specification, Antalis provides an Easy Reference Guide that includes the full range of wallcoverings from both manufacturers, together with swatches and product samples. ■

A composite solution

A new addition to the Premium range of aluminium composite materials (ACMs) from PPB, proBOND is said to be ideally suited to retail display and shop-fitting applications.

Said to already be in use at a major high

street retailer, proBOND is made from the highest quality 5005-grade alloy. It can be printed direct or supplied in a range of finishes that includes the new Premium metallic silver for high-impact displays, mirror silver, a brushed-effect option and an extensive range of gloss/matt colours. ■



A glass act

As the largest UK stockist and distributor of 3M graphic films, leading trade-only supplier William Smith offers a number of highly innovative materials for retail design and interior décor markets. Other similarly positioned products from Arlon and VION are also available.



For application to glass surfaces, 3M Fasara Glass Decorative Films offers a choice of special effects, including acid-etched, sandblasted and rice paper. In application, the films are capable of blocking 99 per cent of UV light, thus enhancing their suitability for use in retail and commercial décor environments.

Complementing these films are the five-year 3M Scotchcal 5525-300 and 10-year 3M Scotchcal 7725SE-300 series of window graphics films offering a choice of special-effect finishes, which are supplemented by the five-year VION Crystal 5500 and the Arlon 5400 series of translucent films, both of which provide similar special effects.

A particularly innovative glass decorative film from 3M and available from William Smith is 3M Dichroic. This film faithfully replicates the visual effects and brilliance of genuine dichroic glass but at a fraction

of the cost. Available in two versions, Chill and Blaze, the former shifts colours from the transmitted cool tones of blue, magenta and yellow to the reflective colours of gold and blue, while the latter shifts colours from the warm tones of cyan, blue and magenta to red and gold.

An equally innovative 3M product from William Smith is 3M DI-NOC Architectural Finishes. Available in over 700 distinctive colours and patterns, DI-NOC can be applied to a wide range of commonly used substrates to replicate, for example, the appearance of genuine wood grain, stone, metal, stucco, leather and carbon fibre but at a fraction of the cost of renewing furniture and associated fittings.

For wall décor applications, William Smith offers 3M Textured Wall Film U8624. This has been designed to produce



photographic-quality imagery for application to textured surfaces as diverse as brick, breeze block, stucco and cement. It can be used for both internal and external applications and to convert surfaces that might otherwise appear dull into eye-catching graphics or art manifestations.

The Arlon range of decorative-effect films includes two further wallcoverings, DPF 206 and DPF 206. For indoor and outdoor graphics applied to 'hard to stick' low-energy surfaces, William Smith supplies DPF 8000. The high-tensile film is available in a white satin or clear format

and features a strong permanent adhesive.

The latest 3M innovation, 3M Envision Print Film 48/48C, is a non-PVC 'green' film that can be used for retail design and interior décor applications. The complementary 3M Gloss Over-laminate 8048G provides enhanced scratch-resistance and UV protection. Envision 48C incorporates 3M Comply and Controltac adhesive technologies, enabling perfect conformability with the substrate, easy repositioning of the film until perfect registration is achieved and a bubble- and wrinkle-free finish. ■

A move to textiles

According to Fujifilm, there has been a noticeable migration by customers from self-adhesive vinyl to textiles within the retail design and interior décor markets. This has been underpinned by an increasing demand by retailers for bespoke wallpapers.

Within its euromedia range of products, Fujifilm offers the LightTex FR and FloTex FR textiles. Flexible and easy to apply, they can be used for a wide range of interior décor applications, enabling powerful colours to be achieved. LightTex FR has the added benefit of having no visible

texture show through when backlit, while FloTex FR can be folded and easily transported and therefore ideal for pop-up displays.

For wallcovering applications, Fujifilm offers SmoothWall FR, SmoothWall II Sticky and StarWall II FR. All three products can be printed using UV or Latex ink technologies and will enable near-photographic quality reproduction. In contrast with the other two products, StarWall II FR features a textured surface, while SmoothWall II Sticky can be applied without pasting or soaking. ■



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Brilliant wallcoverings from ADS

As a leading UK stockist and distributor of signage and graphics materials from MACtac, Amari Digital Supplies (ADS) can provide a wide choice of retail design and interior décor solutions. These include a series of wallcovering products in the IMAGin and decart ranges of media.



Key wallcovering products include the WW100, WW200 and WW300 series. They can be printed using any of the popular ink technologies and have Class 0 FR ratings.

WW100 outdoor/indoor wall graphics film is a highly conformable PVC film that can be applied without edge-lifting direct to brick walls. If required, the film can be laminated with a choice of complementary gloss and matt laminates. The WW101 clear version of the film allows the natural colours of the substrate to show through.

WW200 can be applied to and easily removed from flat smooth surfaces and is especially suited to home décor and retail display applications. WW300 is

especially effective on difficult substrates. The film incorporates a high-tack aggressive permanent adhesive and when used in conjunction with the PF6000 slip-resistant over-laminate film is also ideal for commercial-grade floor/carpet graphics.

The MACtac decart series of interior wallcoverings includes DecoMural in vinyl and DecoCanvas in canvas. The former is a heavily textured wallcovering, the scratch-resistance of which is said to be greatly enhanced when the applied graphics are printed using flexible UV inks, while the latter is a 100 per cent cotton-based fabric with similar application capabilities but also ideal for the reproduction of art prints



as well as for professional décor applications.

Supplementing these products is the PERMAfun range of wallcoverings and interior graphics materials. These are available in a choice of finishes, including crystal gloss, brushed metal, coarse grain wood, fine grain wood and leather.

In conjunction with Amari Plastics, ADS has also added the AMedia range of print and finishing materials. These have been sourced from many of the leading European manufacturers and offer a mix of self-adhesive materials, many of which are suitable for retail design and commercial décor applications. ■

And now for something different

Included in the wide range of signage and graphics and vehicle wrapping materials from Grafityp UK are those that can be used for retail design and interior décor applications.



Of special interest will be the GEF range of printable materials that are intrinsically more environmentally aware in view of the new EU regulations affecting VOC's. The

company also carries one of the largest collections of Auto/Deco films.

In addition to their core application in the vehicle wrapping sector, these can also be effectively applied to retail design and interior décor applications by providing a host of colourful special effects in, for example, carbon fibre, leather and sparkle, for retail counter and general shop fitting design requirements.

All of the films are compliant with the European REACH requirements. ■



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Bringing beauty to the surface



Inspired by the simple beauty of nature, Perspex Distribution has launched its Perspex Naturals range of cast acrylic sheets. Offering a wide colour gamut of natural colours, it is ideal for the retail design and interior décor markets.

Based on research into popular colour trends, Perspex Naturals simulate the earthy tones and velvets of natural materials like stone. The range also includes a cast acrylic sheet with a double-sided matt texture that meets the requirement for a simple and more natural-looking material that will



perform well in the most demanding environments.

Offering a 10-year performance guarantee, the Perspex Naturals range is available in six standard colours, with bespoke colours available via the Perspex Distribution colour-matching service. As with all Perspex acrylic sheet materials, they are strong, durable and

hard-wearing, easy to shape and style, light in weight and easy to handle and install. Significantly, the matt surface textured version retains its appearance after thermoforming.

Perspex Naturals is available in a sheet size of 3050 x 2030mm and in a thickness of three and five millimetres as standard. ■

A year of opportunity

Leading global manufacturer of self-adhesive signage and graphics materials, Avery Dennison predicts a year of golden opportunities for the retail design and interior décor sectors.

Self-adhesive materials are rapidly replacing natural materials used by designers and architects serving these sectors, as a result not only of the huge costs savings they can provide over expensive natural alternative materials but also the speed and ease

with which they can be applied and the outstanding print quality achievable.

Typical of these self-adhesive materials is the range of wallcoverings from Avery Dennison that makes all of this possible. The films provide not only high-impact and colourful imagery but also a host of special textures and finishes such as stone, marble, wood, stucco and canvas to faithfully replicate and cost-effectively replace more expensive natural alternative materials. ■



A brighter future

The new Super Orbis LED Gen2 range of LED modules from Oshino Lamps (UK) claims to deliver enhanced illumination for signs and graphics whilst using fewer than normal modules to greatly reduce power usage and overall running costs.

The next-generation of LED modules is

said to be capable of delivering 290 lumens, enabling the use of just four modules and nine Watts of power per square metre to uniformly light a large flexible- or acrylic-faced sign box. Significantly for retailers and interior décor specialists, the modules have been independently tested and approved to the internationally recognised ENEC 16 F1 standard. ■



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Nova cuts the mustard



In-store point-of-sale illuminated display systems that enable promotional graphics to be frequently changed and easily installed are now a common feature of many retail environments, thanks to the offerings available from leading suppliers like Nova Aluminium.

Whilst traditional signage remains the most popular for these systems, their application has been broadened significantly due primarily to developments in materials technology that has led to their suitability for new markets, such as interior décor. Included in the wide choice of systems available from Nova Aluminium are the NovaTex, NovaDisplay and SoftComp models, each of which offers common as well as individual design and performance characteristics.

NovaTex is available as both a single- and double-sided back-illuminated system and in sizes ranging from 40 to 175mm in depth. It uses a 'passive wedge' to tension and secure into position the textile face. A discreet pull-tab is located in one corner of the system to allow the graphic to be easily removed, while an anti-tamper screw device is also available.

Aimed primarily at the exhibition sector, NovaDisplay incorporates an internal gripper device that eliminates the need for any face preparation. Images are inserted using the special installation tool provided, while the system's 'soft nose' design provides a more visually appealing appearance. The 90mm-deep single-sided model can be surface-mounted and the 100mm-deep double-sided model can be used for freestanding and/or hanging applications.



With a depth of just 32mm, SoftComp is an ideal solution for slim non-illuminated applications. No face preparation or on-site trimming is required, with the skin simply pressed into the internal grip strip within a plastic 'cosmetic' perimeter cover that is snapped into place. This removes the need for any finishing to the aluminium frame. ■

Brick reality



Retail design specialist Wrights Plastics has developed an ultra-realistic 3D brick-effect panel for interior display and décor applications.

Called Wonderwall, the lightweight Class 1 fire-rated and easily-applied panels simply slot together to create a traditional 'stretcher bond' manifestation on any surface. The system claims huge savings over alternative brick-effect wall coverings and is ideal for producing an exposed brick or 'loft style' effect on interiors. ■

To the letter

Marquee Letters from Locomocean facilitate the creation of brilliant personalised features for interior décor applications.

Just two or three AA batteries, contingent upon the letter type and size power the letters, which incorporate on/off switches and automatic timers. The letters can be wall-mounted and are available in a height of up to 220mm, a depth of 57mm and a width of up to 190mm.

Also available from Locomocean is the Cinematic Lightbox, which is supplied with 69 black, white and coloured letters and symbols (extra letter packs are also available) powered by six AA batteries. The lightboxes fit neatly into



any size of room and can be customised to display random messages. ■



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Glass gives glamour

A new collaboration between Southern Counties Glass and specialist British photographer Richard Osbourne, coupled with the print capabilities of the Mimaki JFX200 and JFX500 printers as supplied by CMYUK, is resulting in some stunning, yet practical interior art installations.

Southern Counties Glass had focused on manufacturing painted glass splashbacks for the kitchen industry for the last 15 years, when Director Derek Churchill realised that by digitally printing high resolution images instead, not only would the company be able to offer more exciting and innovative designs for kitchen use – it could also expand into other decorative areas too.

Accordingly, Southern Counties Glass has now extended its reach into the production of printed glass for use in shower enclosures, wall cladding, corporate signage and even wall art in public buildings!

Derek explained: "We were already spray painting the panels and using solid colours, but I saw that we had the

opportunity to create something completely bespoke if we made the move to digital printing. We've been in business for 70 years now, so our glass working skills are exemplary and, as we also wanted to ensure a perfect print by producing that in-house too, we spent two years looking for the right printer and working out the best pre- and post treatment methods to ensure a hardwearing, yet beautiful result."

He continued: "After considering various options, we purchased a Mimaki JFX200 and, once we had mastered the technical requirements, we focused on the photographic element, as we wanted to offer a complete solution. To this end we teamed up with Richard Osbourne, a British photographic artist whose work widely features in domestic, commercial and public spaces, and have a licence to use 4,000 of his works. In addition, we can also use a customer's own high resolution image or, alternatively they can pay to use a stock image from a library if they prefer."

To take full advantage of this new opportunity, Southern Counties Glass



made a further investment in a Mimaki JFX500, which enables it to print panels measuring anywhere from 2400 x 1400mm up to 3100 x 2100mm.

Derek observed: "Printing photographic images onto glass offers a high class finish with shine and definition, but to achieve the best effect, you need the fewest number of joins possible, which is why the JFX500's bed size is such a benefit."

He added that the company's skill in handling glass, has provided it with a great USP, and as well as working with

the country's four largest kitchen suppliers, it also now produces show-stopping pieces as a trade service for other print companies too.

He concluded: "A panel with a printed image costs just 20-25 percent more to produce than a painted panel and also provides a wonderfully original centerpiece for any decorative scheme and, although we have already expanded into many lucrative new areas, we feel that there is still a wealth of potential left to realise – its definitely one area where the sky really is the limit!" ■

Design inspiration

Sign and display companies who are looking to add a little creative impetus to their floor graphics, could do worse than study the latest innovation from the web-based print specialist Pixartprinting, which aims to make high-quality, exclusive cultural content available to sign, display and print companies, free of charge.



The first stop is Venice, but seen from an unusual viewpoint: with eyes cast firmly downwards. Using photographs taken by the well-known German photographer Sebastian Erras, the focus is firmly on the city's lavish floors, with the shots immortalising a unique collection of techniques and colours, plus a range of materials, including stone, marble, mosaic and glass.

Visitors to the dedicated web page, (<https://www.pixartprinting.co.uk/content/venetian-floors/>), which is adorned with Pixartprinting's usual captivating graphics, can acquire a true sense of Venice and bags of inspiration via a series of quotations, stories, interesting facts and, of course, the photographs.



This project is starting out in Venice, Pixartprinting's home city, but it will expand to encompass equally arresting floor designs in all of the European countries where Pixartprinting operates, with the next stop planned for Barcelona.

Décor appeal

Many of Agfa Graphics' customers are to be found in the retail design and interior décor market, due primarily to the ability of its wide-format printers and inks to faithfully match the brand imaging requirements of some of the biggest names on the high street.

One such customer is Graphica Display, which will be exhibiting on Stand F1 at Retail Design Expo. The company has recently installed a 3.2 metre-wide Jeti Mira six-colour printer that now works alongside a

router/cutter supplied by Blackman and White to provide an integrated print and cut production solution.

The printer, incorporating a white and varnish capability, can output at 227 square metres per hour, with the varnish facility enabling a raised Braille-like finish to be applied to printed graphics for special effects. The compatible Mira ink enables printing onto a wide range of transparent materials, including acrylic, commonly used in the retail design and interior décor sector. ■



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When it comes to the ultimate in engineering innovation and skill, you won't do better than the Brackley home of the Mercedes AMG Petronas F1 team. Here over 800 people, including engineers, designers, scientists and materials specialists, are dedicated to keeping the 'silver arrows' on the front row of the grid.

So it was an appropriate venue for the UK unveiling of the latest innovations from Epson - a trio of new 64-inch printers for the sign and display markets.

Every component used in a Mercedes F1 car is designed, developed, produced and tested at the Brackley facility. Mercedes even develops its own fuels and lubricants.

Similarly, Epson, now a global partner for Mercedes F1, designs, develops and produces every single component used in the new range of SureColor SC-S wide format ink printers, including the PrecisionCore printheads and new formulation Ultrachrome GS3 inks.

"We even build the robots that build the machines," said Phil McMullin, Epson UK's Sales Manager for ProGraphics.

"We are proud to be associated with Mercedes AMG. Its innovation and consistency of performance personifies what we are about."

The new SC-S series includes three machines, the S40600 entry level four-colour printer, which features a single printhead and can deliver up to 58.4 square metres per hour and the S60600, which is equipped with dual printheads and can produce high quality vinyl output at 29.4 square metres per hour, banner materials at 52.3 square metres per hour and can print up to 95.3 square metres per hour for single pass applications.

The third machine is the top of the range S80600 that is equipped with dual TFP printheads. This machine offers nine to 10 colours including CMYK, Lc, Lm, Lk, plus red and orange, and can also be configured to use white or metallic silver. Output ranges from 95.1 square metres per hour in single pass banner mode, to 12.5 square metres per hour in eight-pass film mode.

The new printers replace Epson's previous models, the S30600, S50600 and the S70600 and, according to Martin Johns, Product Manager, Epson UK, they have been produced based on customer feedback about previous printers.

"We set about developing the new range to meet their requirements and the result, we believe, is a class leading series of printers that are loaded with advanced engineering to deliver the ultimate in accuracy, quality and productivity."

According to Phil McMullin there were four principal drivers behind the development of the new printers - print speed and quality, reliability, ease-of-use and total cost of ownership.

All feature the latest generation PrecisionCore TFP printheads with variable size ink droplet technology which, according to Epson, produce consistent 1440 x 1440 dpi output at 'best in class' print speeds. Clever new hardware enhancements also offer greater resistance to 'head strikes' and the new Precision Dot screening technology helps to deliver high quality output, even on difficult media such as cheap monomeric vinyl. The machines also feature automatic printhead cleaning, including a newly-developed printhead wiper system that reduces printhead maintenance by 80 percent.

Epson has also developed a new motorised roll-to-roll media handling system with advanced



auto-tension control for extremely accurate media feed and take-up. Anti-static, wide diameter pressure rollers help optimise grip and feed accuracy for unattended roll-to-roll printing. Productivity is further optimised by automatic media alignment and set-up that enables fast switching between media types.

Other enhancements include a newly designed one-piece stand to simplify installation, a large clear inspection panel and LED lighting system to enable inspection at the point of printing, a newly designed after-heater for smooth, overall heating and a re-designed dryer bar.

In the UK and Ireland, the new machines are supplied with an Onyx RIP as standard and users also receive the Epson Control Dashboard, which provides the facility for greater control and management of projects as well as access to firmware updates and a range of print profiles. Over 120 materials have already been tested and the profiles are available via the dashboard.

Complementing the launch of the

new SC-S printers is the introduction of the new formulation Ultrachrome GS3 inkset. Quick drying and low odour, the new inks are available in CMYK plus light colours (Lc, Lm and Lk), as well as, by popular request, red, orange and metallic.

With an RRP of £74.07 (+VAT) for 700 ml, the inks are very competitively priced and Epson expects users to see significantly lower ink consumption as a result of the improved chemistry of the new formulations.

The new SureColour SC-S60400 and SC-S60600 are available now and cost from £9,995.00 (+VAT). The SureColour SC-S80600 is priced at £16,135.00 (+VAT) and will be available from March.

The new machines and inks are designed to enable users to produce a wider colour gamut with outstanding results on a range of both coated and uncoated substrates. The energy efficient SC-S range will, says Epson, deliver fast drying graphics with high abrasion resistance that are durable outdoors for up to three years without lamination. ■

Photobox provides a test drive

The Photobox Group, one of Europe's leading B2C photo-based printing companies, includes brands such as Moonpig, Hofmann, Papershaker, Stick9, posterjack and PosterXXL, and provided a tough beta test for Epson's new SureColor printers.

Operating from five factories, Photobox turns digital photos into over 600 different products, including photo-canvases.

"Our manufacturing challenges are unusual," explained James Lawrence-Jones, Group Technical Innovation Director. "We have to be able to print, finish and despatch a large number of canvases in a day. At Christmas time, for example, we can have over 12,000 individual canvases every day.

"We thus wanted an ink-efficient printer that would deliver great quality at higher speeds with maximum reliability, and the SureColor SC-S60600 from Epson ticked all the boxes."

Photobox invested in five of the new machines and installed them alongside the existing 16 SureColor SC-S50600 printers in its UK factory.

"The new machines deliver improved print quality at reduced pass rates and offers improved ink efficiency which, when combined with the almost 20 percent

increase in print speeds, means lower overall production costs," said James.

"The automated maintenance feature maximises printer uptime and frees our operators to focus

on other tasks and the improved media loading means accurate media set-up is easier and quicker, which allows us to do long run, unattended printing with the confidence that quality will be consistent throughout." ■



Epson unveils its new aqueous ink printer

Epson has also announced the launch of its new 64-inch aqueous ink printer, the SureColor SC-P20000.

The new machine is the next generation of the Epson Stylus Pro 11880 and is targeted at any company that is looking for a cost-effective printing solution.

Designed to deliver rapid printing speeds of up to 17.5 square metres per hour, plus high quality output, the printer is equipped with a permanent PrecisionCore Micro TFP printhead for producing outstanding results up to 2400 x 1200 dpi, even at the fastest speeds.

It uses the new Epson Ultrachrome Pro, 10-colour inkset, which includes four shades of black, including new high-density Photo and Matte Black inks. This, combined with Multi Size Droplet Technology, provides better gradation and reduced graininess.

The SC-P20000 also features new high precision media feed technology, including a newly developed camera-based paper feed stabiliser and media inductive roller system. Handling and changing media is quick and effortless.

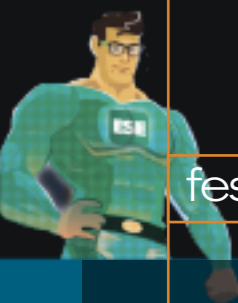
A clearly illustrated user guide



and colour LCD panel makes set up simple and straightforward and ongoing operation and maintenance is also hassle-free.

An optional Adobe postscript

module can help improve user efficiency and workflow and an optional HDD enables jobs to be reprinted direct from the printer panel without the need for a PC. ■



Not only, but also...

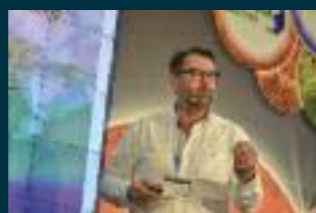
Returning to Amsterdam's RAI Exhibition Centre on 8th-11th March, where it will celebrate its 10th anniversary, FESPA Digital 2016 will not only reflect the astonishing pace of development and diversification that has taken place in the area of digital printing technology since its first outing in 2006, but also seek to highlight how sign and print companies can take full advantage of the many new opportunities on offer.

This year's show, which will provide visitors with plenty to see, do and explore, will cover the largest floor space yet, with 450 exhibitors occupying 42,000 sq.m over seven halls.

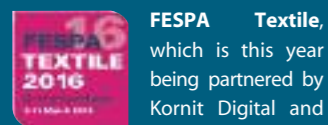
It will also offer the high calibre level of educational content with which the FESPA brand has become synonymous, via a series of Digital Seminars that will cover every aspect

of digital printing. Seminars already confirmed will include sessions focussing on industrial printing and label printing, as well as those covering a range of topics, such as colour management in the cross media printing world, standardisation and the necessity to deliver accurate colour in retail applications.

In addition, FESPA Digital 2016 will



incorporate FESPA Textile and European Sign Expo, plus the Printeriors conference, which will examine the growing demand for digitally printed interior décor. ■



FESPA Textile, which is this year being partnered by Kornit Digital and DGen, will seek to highlight one of the fastest growing sectors in the digital wide format arena. As well as being able to see all of the latest equipment and materials available from leading suppliers, visitors will be able to enjoy a daily programme of seminars delivered by industry experts, together with a special one-day conference that will take place on Tuesday 8th March, which is designed to provide them with the tools they need to further develop their expertise within this increasingly



important and lucrative area. Printeriors 2016 will this year offer visitors a unique visual and interactive experience. Presented in the format of a hotel, it will showcase the possibilities for print in 16 room sets, ranging from lounges, bedrooms and bathrooms, through to cafes, bars, meeting rooms and shops. This will be supported by a one-day conference on Thursday



10th March, which will be dedicated to printed interior design. Visitors will be able to hear from industry experts, including editors from some of the leading interiors magazines, branding suppliers, large format kitchen designers and ceramic printing specialists, who will cover such topics as design for the workplace, vinyl applications for interiors, printed furniture and how to bring images to life with large format printing.



The co-located European Sign Expo will this year expand into a second hall, in order to accommodate a 48 percent increase in the number of companies signing up to showcase



their wares. Exhibitors, many of which are participating in the show for the first time, will be fielding a wide range of products, including software, channel lettering, illuminated LED/neon displays and architectural and dimensional signage. In addition, visitors will also be able to enjoy a series of sign related seminars, expert panel sessions and practical workshops.

Over the next several pages we've provided a run-down on what some of the leading exhibitors will showing on their stands, while a full exhibitor list, plus detailed information on the extensive seminar programme can be found on the FESPA Digital 2016 website as detailed below.

For further information on FESPA Digital 2016 and to register to attend, visit: www.fespadigital.com and enter code ADOZ0702 for free entry. ■

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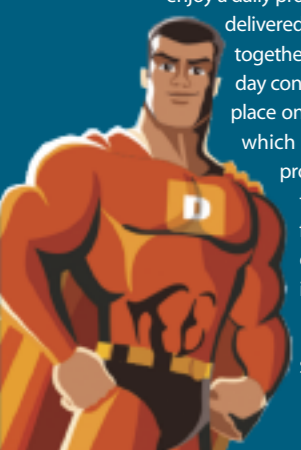
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materials



APA will be using the show to introduce UNICI a pioneering series



of cutting-edge films, together with its enhanced range of vehicle wrapping options, including the Candy Color and Chrome series.

Other attractions on **Stand S30, Hall 7**, will include the APA Digital

Print range, which features easy to use films that can be printed/or thermally transferred to fabrics, plus the exclusive Wall series, which can be used to personalise walls and partitions and the Creative and Cover series that is ideally suited for use in interior décor applications. The company will also present its RepoTack Air Free System, which ensures easy application, safe removal and excellent repositionability, without leaving unsightly

residue.

On **Stand T110/Hall 7, ASLAN** will showcase its new Treadline 2016 matte colour range of films that incorporate 10 trendy Pantone-based colours. The company will also demonstrate WindowClear ASLAN DFP 18, a transparent digitally printable PVC film that is ideally suited to the printing of large-format graphics for application to glass surfaces. ■



In addition to being one of the sponsoring companies of the World Wrap Masters competition that will take place during FESPA Digital, **Avery Dennison (Stand E30/Hall 1)** will demonstrate the new MPI 1104 range of cast films, a new digitally printable wall graphics film and its latest training and workshop facilities.



The **Guandong stand (A240/Hall 3)** will take the form of a virtual real-time in-store Spot Deco promotion featuring a wide range of graphic products. These range from Nano-Tack Technology options to different types of 'cling' and floor graphic materials, including those for

application to specific surfaces, such as asphalt, developed by the company's R&D division. Also on show will be the Print&Go range of materials that are especially recommended for temporary installations.

On **Stand 7-R50/Hall 7, ORAFOL** will be showing a full range of digital printing, car wrapping and general graphic vinyl films, supported by its range of adhesive tapes. It will also be showcasing, for the first time, a number of new and exciting products, as well as encouraging visitors to take part in a live car wrapping demonstration carried out by a professional vehicle wrapper.



FESPA 2016 will provide **Antalis** with the opportunity to showcase its latest its visual communications solutions on **Stand G20, Hall 1**, where visitors will be able to see Coala WallDesign, a new collection of wall covering materials and DISPA, a 100 percent ecological



Drytac Europe's show offerings on **Stand E130, Hall 1**, will include the new ViziPrint Illuminate, a durable 100µ translucent matte PET film that has been developed for use with backlit window graphics and backlit displays for high-end retail advertising applications. Another new introduction is Polar HiGrab vinyl, for use in floor graphic applications, which can be used in tandem with Protac ScuffGuard laminate to provide superior anti-slip qualities and scuff resistance.

The company will also be showcasing its widest yet range of Polar Matched Components System (MCS), self-adhesive vinyls and matching laminates for numerous medium-term indoor and outdoor graphic applications together with DecorTac printable wallpaper for customised interior design applications; ReTac peelable films in a variety of thicknesses and finishes and SpotOn spot-adhesive films for easy, bubble-free application. ■

display board, which is both lightweight and robust. In addition, the company will show its range of Coala floor covering, laminates, easy-apply substrates and car wrapping solutions and also promote its ICC profiles database.

ink



On **Stand S150/Hall 7, Bordeaux Digital Print Ink** will showcase a new water-based digital pigment ink for the textile printing market. Visitors will also be able to evaluate the company's UV and solvent-based ink solutions.

A portfolio of inks, solutions and innovative ink chemistry platforms for the digital wide- and super wide-format markets will be shown by **Sun Chemical (Stand C110/Hall 3)**. It will include the global launch of SunTex, a new range of inks developed specifically for textile printing and soft signage applications.

The company will also present other digital ink solutions, including the next-generation of Aquacure T aqueous inks that have been developed in partnership with SunJet. Also on show will be Streamline, a solvent-based

Stand G50/Hall 1, J-Teck3 will showcase its digital disperse inks range for textile and general graphic printing applications. The J-Teck3 portfolio comprises five different ink formulations that include the next-generation water-based J-Cube

range that is fully compatible with printers equipped with Kyocera, Ricoh, Konica Minolta and Panasonic printheads and the J-Next range that has been designed specifically for use with Epson printheads. ■



alternative ink for wide- and super wide-format printers, such as Epson, VUTEK, Roland, Mutoh and Mimaki and the Streamline SGX eco-solvent and low-odour ink series developed for the Epson SureColor 70600 printer.



Nazdar Ink Technologies will be debuting a number of new inks on **Stand J120 in Hall 1**, where visitors will be able to see the new Nazdar 203 Series, a plug and play

alternative for Roland Eco Max 3 inks, which have been reformulated to omit several raw materials currently facing regulatory restrictions in many EU countries, plus the new 130 Series inks, which are specifically designed for use in Mimaki JV33, CJV, JV300 and JV150 printers using Mimaki SS21 inks.

Also on show will be three new sets of inks for the UV plug and play inkjet market, namely the Nazdar 702 Series, Nazdar 703 Series and Nazdar 705 Series, for use on Océ Arizona, Fujifilm Acuity and HP FB500/700 printers respectively and the TX650 series of water-based dye-sublimation inks for use with a wide range of wide format printers. ■



On **Stand K20/Hall 5, Kilian Digital** will demonstrate its 12 specially engineered dye-sublimation inks printing onto a range of textiles. The inks are compatible with printheads incorporated into printers such as Epson, Ricoh, Kyocera and Panasonic.

The Digistar AIR ink formulation that will also be shown, is compatible with

Ricoh piezo-electric printheads and has been developed specifically for sublimation transfer printing onto synthetic fabrics, such as polyester. ■

software

On **Stand J20/Hall 1, Onyx Graphics** will be demonstrating its latest production and colour management workflow solutions. Making its European debut will be Onyx Thrive as an addition to the Onyx 12 software suite. This is based on the Adobe PDF print engine and optimised for all sizes

of print service providers (PSPs).

An optional module for Onyx Thrive that will be demonstrated at the show will be Onyx Connect JDF (Job Definition Format), while for the textile printing market, Onyx Textile Edition will also be shown in action. ■

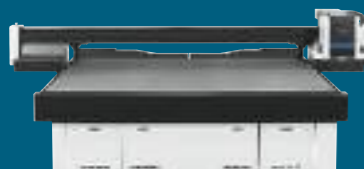


printers



On **Stand E15/Hall 1**, Mimaki, in association with its exclusive UK and Ireland distributor **Hybrid Services**, will be showing a wide range of printing and cutting systems for both general graphics and digital textile printing applications.

The company will also be sponsoring the World Wrap Masters competition in association with Avery Dennison.



Claiming up to 35 percent savings in energy consumption costs, the **JETRIX LX5 LED UV** printer will be showcased by **InkTec (Stand J71 and J50/Hall 1)**. Using the company's specially formulated UV inks, the printer delivers a wide colour gamut, high colour vibrancy and fast ink curing capabilities.

Visitors to the InkTec stand will also be able to see the latest solvent-based and dye-sublimation inks, which have been developed specifically for the Mimaki JV300.



The latest large-format **SureColor aqueous**, solvent and dye-sublimation printers will be shown by **Epson (Stand F50/Hall 1)**. The four new 64-inch printers include four- and 10-colour printing options and incorporate a number

of new features to enhance their production capabilities. Throughout the show, live demonstrations of high-speed four-pass printing will take place on banner-grade, monomeric vinyl and blueback poster materials using the new SureColor SC-S60600 platform.



A wide range of hardware and their print applications will be demonstrated by **Fujifilm (Stand H70/Hall 1)**. The range includes the new **Acuity LED 1600** roll-fed printer that offers print speeds of up to 33 square metres/hour, a maximum printing width of 1,610mm and a print resolution of 1,200dpi.



Canada-based **Gandy Digital (Stand H21/Hall 1)** will launch its new super wide-format **Fascin8tor five-metre** roll-to-roll printer that combines eight Richo Gen4 printheads to enable printing directly onto mesh without a liner for applications such as outdoor billboards. Other new or recently introduced roll-to-roll printers on show will include the Gandy Digital Softjet, the hybrid Gandy Digital S18te and the Gandy Digital Termin8tor machines.



On **Stand J140/Hall 1**, **SWISSQPRINT** will be demonstrating its range of large-format inkjet printers. As with a Swiss pocket knife, the machines claim to have all the necessary production tools combined within a single unit.



A key attraction on the **Roland DG stand (E120/Hall 1)** will be demonstrations in the Personalisation Zone of the new and fastest addition to the popular VersaUV series of print & cut machines, the LEF-300. The printer can be used to transform a wide range of ordinary objects such as mobile 'phone covers, USB sticks, pens and golf balls into high-profit customised items.

Within the Print Zone of the stand, Roland DG will demonstrate the latest 64-inch SOLJET EJ-640 eco-



Durst will be showcasing its latest innovations and developments on **Stand H100, Hall 1**, where the focus will be on water-based printing systems. Visitors will be able to see the Rhotex 500, a five-metre wide dye sublimation printing system for seamless and extra-wide soft signage/fabric applications and the Rho WT 250 HS for the production of

solvent printer, while in the Textile Zone the latest addition to the Texart dye-sublimation transfer range, the 64-inch XT-640, will be seen in action.

Further developments to its Truepress Jet 3200UV flatbed printer will be shown by **Screen Europe (Stand K40/Hall 4)**. They include roll-to-roll and flatbed models for the printing of both rigid and flexible substrates. The Roll2Roll printer can be purchased as a factory-installed option on either a new Truepress Jet W3200UV HS or Truepress Jet W3200UV ST printer or retrofitted to an existing machine. Once the flatbed machine is locked, it will effectively convert into roll-fed mode. ■

sustainable and odour-free advertising media and POS displays. Also on display will be the Alpha 190, a new digital textile printing system that combines one-step pigment inks and automatic material pre-treatment for the production of home textiles, clothing and upholstery coverings. ■

cutting, routing & engraving



Leading supplier of CNC routing, engraving and cutting solutions, **XYZ International (Stand J92/Hall 1)** will be demonstrating the recently launched XYZ Trident 4010 hybrid combined routing and knife-cutting digital finishing system. Trident, which incorporates a router

Esko will showcase the flexibility of its modular solutions on **Stand H20, Hall 1**, including its Kongsberg C64 digital finishing system, which is designed to address the every-day challenges faced by sign and display companies. It features a carbon-composite traverse beam that assures precision and supports high speed and fast acceleration.

Its performance is also supported by Esko's ever-evolving software suite that includes the highly flexible i-cut Production Console (iPC) that drives all functionality on Esko Kongsberg tables. In addition, visitors will be



Blackman & White (B&W) will be promoting its range of cutter/plotters, routers and laser cutters on **Stand S15, Hall 7**, while also highlighting its servicing, online supplies ordering system and customer support services.

As an incentive for attendees to make its stand their first port of call, the company will be offering 10 percent discount vouchers to the first 50

spindle and oscillating and tangential knife units in a single powerful production workhorse, claims to resolve issues frequently encountered by digital print finishers and in particular the need to process an ever-increasing range of both flexible and rigid substrates that require a wider, longer and deeper processing capability.

It comes with a radically expanded (up to 33 stations) Automatic Tool Change (ATC) facility as standard, as well as a range of optional production tool enhancements.



able to see demonstrations of ArtiosCAD and Studio structural design software for the 3D design of displays and other structures, together with Esko's Automation Engine, which manages prepress workflow automation.

visitors to the stand each day, which can be redeemed against the purchase of blades, bits and other consumables from its online store from B&W's online store www.cuttingresources.com. Furthermore, anyone registering their interest in a Blackman & White cutting system will automatically be entered into a free prize draw to win a Parrot Quatrocopter AR Drone 2.0 Elite Edition.



Cutting tool specialist company, **Industrial Tooling Corporation (ITC) (Stand T61/Hall 1)** will be presenting the new 2016 edition of its Folio Product Catalogue that features a wide range of new and established products. These include the popular range of balanced cutting tools for use with high-speed spindles on routers and cutting tables.

ITC will also be promoting its market-leading Clearcut range of

routing tools that have an extended eight-millimetre diameter by comparison with the previous six-millimetre model. The company's range of knife and blade tools has also been extended with new cutting geometries for processing vinyl materials. In addition, it will be promoting its re-sharpening and re-grinding facility that enables significant cost savings and obviates the need to purchase replacement tools. ■



Summa will be using the occasion of the show to introduce several significant new developments and upgrades for its F Series flatbed cutting machines, including the Rotary Module, a decagonal tangentially controlled knife, which is driven by an electronic motor and is specifically targeted at the cutting of single layered textiles, such as flag and banner materials, felt, technical textiles and foams. The module is compatible for use with all existing installations of the F1612 and the F2630.

Visitors to **Stand J135, Hall 1** will also be able to see a more powerful vacuum cleaner for use with the routing module of the F2630 flatbed

cutter. Powered by three individual motors, which are intermittently cleaned during operation, the optional 3000W vacuum cleaner is designed to facilitate a continuous workflow.

The third new innovation is designed to limit noise nuisance during the operation of the F2630, with Summa now providing two vacuum pump extension kits, which will facilitate the installation of the pumps in different rooms/spaces.

Finally, visitors will also be able to see the company's DC5sx thermal printer/cutter and its wide range of vinyl cutters. ■



A Soft Touch

In common with digitally printed vehicle wraps, digital textile printing has emerged as one of fastest-growing sectors of the sign and graphics industry, and is now being supported by the availability of specially engineered hardware, compatible ink technologies, dedicated software and a vast range of different specialist media. Mike Connolly reports on some of the major developments that have taken place and are fuelling the demand for digitally printed output for applications as diverse as soft signage such as flags and banners, exhibition backdrops and graphics, sports and leisure wear, fashion accessories and interior commercial and home décor.

A single-step solution



At the recent Heimtextil event, Kornit Digital collaborated with Israel-based international design house Turnowsky to show samples of furniture textiles printed on Turnowsky's 'Flowers of Grace' media using the dedicated Kornit Allegro printer.

The Allegro has been designed specifically for the digital textile printing market and claims to offer a single-step solution for the printing of textiles and fabrics using the company's NeoPigment inks. Kornit Digital claims that the printer eliminates the need for all pre- and



post-treatment processes via a single-step integrated solution, whilst also addressing important external issues, such as end-to-end costs, pollution, health and safety and machine footprint. ■

Redefining dye-sublimation

According to Stephen Woodall, National Sales Manager for Textiles and Apparel at Hybrid Services, Mimaki's exclusive UK and Ireland distributor, there are many reasons why textile printing is becoming so prominent within the area of signs and graphics.

As he explained, textiles are easy to transport, damage-resistant when compared to other media and very lightweight, thus facilitating ease of installation and lowering transportation costs. What's more, because textiles can be renewed more frequently to suit the demands of seasonal and promotional requirements, their use also helps to create additional revenue streams too.

Stephen added: "There are also the environmental benefits to consider, as the water-based inks used in direct to polyester printing tick a lot of environmental boxes and textiles are easy to recycle when no longer in use."

He then went on to extol the virtues of Mimaki's latest digital textile printer, which was introduced last year at FESPA. The TS300P-1800 is a dye-sublimation printer, which complements the earlier Mimaki Tx300P direct-to-textile printer and the latest MTEX Blue integrated direct-to-polyester printer that is now exclusively available in the UK and Ireland through Hybrid Services' authorised textile reseller network.

Commenting on the huge impact that Mimaki has made on digital textile printing, he said: "This new dye-sublimation machine further demonstrates both Mimaki and Hybrid Services' knowledge of this sector and their experience in providing what is required by sign and graphic producers who are now adding digital textile printing to core manufacturing activities. Significantly, the TS300P-1800 offers a huge production capacity but at a very keen price point at under £22,000 by comparison with more expensive industrial-grade printers."



He continued: "With this machine, we're not just looking at redefining the mid-size production sector, we're also determined to help companies who are considering an investment in dye sublimation hardware to reconsider their options, with a solution that works out best for them and home-grown manufacturing."

The TS300P-1800 features the latest generation of printheads and is capable of output speeds of up to 115 square metres per hour. It also has the ability to handle large rolls of transfer paper up to a width of 1,940mm, while the two-litre bulk ink containers facilitate long unattended print runs as well as keeping ink costs at around 30 percent lower than any comparable machine in its class.

A recent addition to Hybrid's Mimaki offering is the MTEX Blue, a dye-sublimation machine that prints directly onto polyester and offers an easy, all in one alternative for sign and

display companies who wish to make an immediate impact in the textile printing market. Exclusively distributed in the UK and Ireland by Hybrid Services, the MTEX Blue is based on Mimaki textile technology, and features an in-line fixation unit that ensures that fixation is part of the printing process and thus eliminates the need for specialist heat fixation equipment, such as heat presses. In addition, its compact footprint enables it to be easily incorporated into even the most modestly sized premises.

It is ideal for the production of the broad gamut of polyester printing, such as flags, all types of soft signage, and retail PoS, including lightboxes and offers impressive results. The soft finish created with the Mimaki inks adds depth and texture to graphics and canny sign and display companies can also maximise the potential for profit by offering such ancillary items as flag poles, display stands, framing and fixing systems. ■

Sublime solutions

The latest additions to the range of dye-sublimation printers from Roland DG are proving extremely popular with digital textile printing companies. The new Texart XT-640 printer, which was launched last year, claims fastest set up times and low fixed costs by comparison with any other machine in its class, while the complementary and earlier Texart RT-640 is described as the perfect entry-level solution.

Key features of the XT-640 include a reinforced rail and frame structure and advanced print control technology that enables highly detailed printing with precise ink droplet placement. The printer enables digital textile printing specialists to create different

colour variations within the same print run and this, in turn, facilitates simultaneous completion of multiple print jobs and represents a distinct production enhancement for companies operating in a busy manufacturing environment with a high throughput requirement.

The dual print heads on the XT-640 provide output speeds of up to 63 square metres per hour, while the new feed adjuster at the front and rear of the printer ensures even tensioning, as well as preventing skewing of the media during printing. Optimised for the dye-sublimation process, the complementary Texart inks deliver bold and vibrant colours with deep rich blacks through an extended colour gamut, while Roland

DG's proprietary Ink Switching System enables both printers to automatically switch to a supplementary ink container to ensure continuous unattended printing.

Similar in design to the XT-640, the RT-640 is described as the ideal solution for those companies entering the dye-sublimation market. It provides a highly stable performance, including vivid colours and subtle gradations, even at print speeds of up to 22 square metres per hour.

Serving as a perfect finishing partner for the RT-640, Texart CS-64 is a professional-grade heat transfer system used to transfer dye-sublimation prints from paper onto a wide range of polyester media. The



system will appeal equally to digital textile printing veterans and those new to the technology.

Supporting both printers is the Roland DG edition of the ErgoSoft RIP software, which has been developed specifically by ErgoSoft for the digital textile printing market. ■



Textiles on a roll

Under the Mediatex brand, a range of digitally printable textiles manufactured by Germany-based JM Textiles is available from Amari Digital Supplies (ADS). The materials can be processed using virtually all of the most popular specialist digital textile printers and compatible ink technologies.

All of the materials are PVC-free and have individual, as well as common, design characteristics to broaden their application. According to their

designated use, they also carry recognised international fire resistance certifications as well as offering low ink consumption to enhance their cost effectiveness. The materials are water, stain and tear-resistant, with no curling or creasing in application.

Key products in the range include the 200gsm Presto FR for backdrops, trade show graphics and tensioning and framing systems, the 180gsm Light Fabric FR for light banners and graphics and the 140gsm



Illuminance FR incorporating a special micro-porous polymer coating for use in internal backlit displays, light boxes and tensioning and framing systems. Completing the range are the 290gsm Grey Back Textile and the 370gsm Botticelli Textile that has been developed primarily for canvas prints, but which



can also be used in tensioning and framing systems. ■

Opening up new vistas

Soyang Europe has announced the launch of further textile products as it bolsters its already substantial range of display graphics and soft signage substrates.

This has resulted in the launch of new Vista Display, Venus Backlight and even a new black back display product from Soyang's manufacturing facility in China.

Soyang Europe's Sales Manager, Tim Egerton outlined the reasons behind the company's expansion. He said: "As major retail brands look for ever more arresting ways of promoting their wares, the use of textile in lightboxes, textile tension frame systems or suspended displays has increased dramatically. As a consequence, the development potential of textiles is now being acknowledged in many other sectors, with demand rocketing and many print suppliers reporting

greatly improved turnover as a result." He added that this shift is also being fuelled by the ease of installation, which increases the frequency with which displays are changed, thus creating additional repeat business for suppliers.

As one of the UK's largest print media suppliers, Soyang Europe is well placed to observe and influence this change in focus. Tim explained: "Travelling around the country, I meet companies that are put off by what they see as the complexities of textile printing and a lack of understanding about the processes involved. But nowadays, any such doubts are fast diminishing with many companies initially opting to use their existing equipment to print onto textiles."

With this in mind, Tim Egerton challenges the common misconception that textile printing is expensive and requires investment in costly equipment, saying: "New machinery isn't necessarily required to access this market. Soyang has materials that are printable with latex, solvent and UV

inks, so yes, you'll get a great result using dye sub, but it's not imperative and we have many fabrics that can be printed using other ink technologies too."

The new textile products feature a highly competitive display fabric in the form of Vista Display which is ideal for the production of frontlit graphics that are becoming ever more commonplace in retail environments. Added to this, Soyang Europe has launched a new backlit material, Venus ST109, which benefits from outstanding crease recovery allied to excellent light dissipation and is also planning to introduce another black back textile under the Eclipse umbrella, which is ideally suited to applications where zero show through is desired.

One of Soyang Europe's key European partners, Endutex has also added three innovative new backlit textiles, all of which are available up to five metres wide and aimed specifically at UV printers. These are complemented with a corresponding 3.2 metre width product in each case, with the range including Terra Light, Terra Heavy and the most recent addition, Terra Premium.



Tim Egerton is also confident that the need for new finishing skill-sets and resources for certain types of applications can be addressed with a little lateral thinking; He observed: "If companies don't want to bring every aspect of textile production in-house, there are plenty of suppliers who specifically offer such services; sail makers who can sew, seamstresses who can cut and stitch and apply zips or pockets... it's surprising what can be achieved with a bit of imagination!"

Soyang Europe is confident that as demand continues to grow so will the appetite for new and different products. In turn, this will see further developments driven by the market to satisfy demand.

Tim Egerton concluded: "We genuinely believe that the boom in demand in the retail sector is just the tip of the iceberg. As word spreads, we're witnessing an inevitable 'snowball effect' with other sectors waking up to the unquestionable benefits of printing to textile." ■

Adding value with Mutoh

Belgium-based Mutoh has added three new digital textile printers to its portfolio. They are the desktop ValueJet 1938TX direct-to-textile and the direct-to-garment ValueJet 404GT CMYK and ValueJet 405GT CMYK + White platforms.

Key features of the 75-inch VJ-1938TX include a print resolution of up to 1440dpi, a production speed of up to 40 metres per hour, variable drop printing and a head gap of up to six millimetres to accommodate thicker materials requiring higher ink loads and a dual staggered head design based on the latest drop-on-demand piezo inkjet technology. The printer can use both Mutoh's DD series of direct disperse inks and the DS2 series

of universal sublimation inks for direct printing onto polyester.

Other noteworthy features include a new high-end fabric-feeding facility, a front and back tensioning and take up system for media weights of up to 100kg to accommodate closed, open non-stretch and two way-stretch fabrics that enables printing of both face-in and face-out roll media, special textile inks and a 'green' solution using heat fixation. No post-treatments, such as washing or steaming are required and the printer is ideally suited to handling a wide range of materials that includes cotton, silk, rayon and mixed fabrics.

The VJ-404/405 1200dpi printers are Mutoh's first ever direct-to-garment



solutions incorporating, respectively, CMYK and CMYK + White ink technologies. Both printers can be equipped with different sizes of interchangeable print platens and use Mutoh's water-based pigmented textile inks to enable printing onto high cotton blends and 100 per cent cotton or polyester. To ensure fabric compatibility and/or improve wash fastness, different Mutoh pre-treatment liquids are available.

Complementary dye-sublimation printers in the Mutoh digital textile printing solutions portfolio include the 64 inch-wide VJ-1638WX, the 42 inch-wide RJ-900XG and the VJ-1624X, an eco/mild solvent printer and successor to the best-selling VJ-1624 model. All of the printers are supported by Mutoh's proprietary 'Layout and Print' software for fast and easy print production. ■

Interior décor solutions



The latest range of SureColor dye-sublimation printers is now available from Epson. The printers have been developed specifically for the production of interior décor manifestations and are suitable for small-to-medium print runs.

The SC-F6200 and SC-F9200 printers feature Epson's PrecisionCore technology TFP print heads for optimum performance and reliability, with the 64-inch SC-F9200 model more suited to larger volumes of

home textiles. The printers utilise Epson's high-density HDK Black ink formulation to produce deep, neutral blacks and dense shadows, with the added benefit of two high-capacity ink supply systems to assist uninterrupted printing and the need to replenish inks. The 44-inch SC-F6200 is ideally suited not only to the production of high-quality printed home textiles but also to domestic products such as table tops, mugs, cutlery, vases and coasters based on hard substrates. ■

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This month, **Mark Godden** opines that

The future isn't what it used to be



That sounded so profound when I penned it as an advertising headline launching the Gerber Edge when I was Marketing Director at Spandex. In its time, I suppose that headline was a bit of a eye popper. It just happens that my tense-twisting advertisement was prescient to say the very least. Did digital printing catch on and change a few things? It certainly did. That all happened in the late eighties.

Happy New Year, everyone. Mark Godden here - and in the here and now. No longer Spandex VP and Marketing Director. Instead consulting, as I have been for a quite few years, with a few very fine companies in the industry, from my bases in France and the UK. From those perches I have the luxury of a thirty-thousand foot view of the signing and allied industries and the time to consider what I see coming. I've always liked future-gazing but I no longer get told off for looking out of the window.

2016 is some way past the year I once had slated as the one when the future would actually kick off leaving the past choking on its dust and small pebbles. 2000. That's THE year. That's when it'll ALL happen, or so I thought when I was wearing short trousers and reading Just William.

I think what I've since learned is that the future is in a constant state of redefinition thanks to chance twists and turns right here in the present. I've also learned that the pace of change mandates that everyone should keep an eye on the future's ever-mobile horizon, because, unlike the sentiment behind the words I penned in the late eighties, the future really is closer than any of its clichés might tell.

You run a sign company. Will you still be running a sign company when 2016's last sun sinks beneath the horizon and 2017's pops up and spits a new year into your party-worn face? Nothing guarantees you will, given the pace of development and the tantalising opportunities that will likely emerge in the coming year and present themselves to you.

Here for your delight and consideration are a few signs that signs may indeed be the very last thing on your mind come 2017.

(1) You're thinking about micro-sites.

You're concerned that the sign you yourself made and put above your own door all those years ago no longer properly reflects your talents and the reach of your capabilities. You rather hastily appended 'and Graphics' to it, relatively recently, in order to have it get its arms around more than just signs, but even that no longer seems enough. What about the vehicle customisation and wraps that have risen to dominate your order book? Then there's the little specialisation you drifted into with etch effect window graphics and you've also been amazed how far and fast word has travelled that promotes you as the very best in the game for anyone looking for backlit poster transparencies and domestic canvas wraps. And so on.

It's time, you've decided, to serve the needs of those who do exactly what you do when you're looking for something. You're going to have a concerted attempt at getting yourself propelled to the fore when interest comes looking. You're going to get yourself positioned behind an internet search strategy that means Google loves you and puts you at the head of the queue when people come hunting for the things you do so well. Suddenly, you think, being known as a 'signmaker' doesn't seem so important. Being known as someone deeply creative, very capable and able to take on anything is where it's at. You need dozens of websites. You'll do half that.

And you'll thrive.

(2) You've practically forgotten how to spell 'Sign'.

It's so long since you've been asked to make anything that doesn't have a more precise definition of its being than 'sign', that 'sign' is rapidly slipping from your vocabulary. You wonder how it happened but you don't care. You're more manifestation man than signmaker these days and the work plays to your printing, cutting and application talents. Difference is, you're indoors, you're dry and warm and the market you've uncovered really values design quality and service. Word seems to travel on the wind and the work is piling up in your order book. You may say XYZ Signs when you answer the 'phone but it's an age since anyone asked for what your name promotes. Events have overtaken you and you like it.

(3) Success looks different to you these days.

Once upon a not too distant time, you measured success in terms of the number of people you could occupy at a weeding and application bench. Then things changed and you looked at getting more and more invitations to quote so that you could buy the jobs you wanted to do. Now, success looks more like a London design studio and, when you look out across the 'factory' floor all you see is a collection of Macs and a couple of shiny new printers. All sorts of stuff comes out of those printers. Banners - is a banner a sign you wonder? PoS and that stuff that the long-departed photo-lab down the road used to do for the local council offices. And then there's that contract you whipped out of the cold dead fingers of the

screenprinter two towns away. You like your printers. You like your business. You just don't like its name.

(4) You're interested in seeing your material supplier's rep.

Time was when you'd chat (if you liked him and had the time) about footie over a cup of tea and send him on his way with your best wishes and an order for a roll of that vinyl you use so much of. These days, you welcome him in much the same way you would if he'd hacked his way across the universe from another planet and was bringing back amazing, other-worldly souvenirs for you to look at. No time for tea. These days he has all manner of things that your printer loves and that your customers (the new ones) love even more. There are materials that you can print and apply to walls to transform any space. You applied a bit in the kids' rooms at home and suddenly you're the best decorator in town. Now, retailers want murals. Mums want nurseries prettying up. Restaurants want theme-defining ambient décor, but can't find the theme-defining-ambient-décor bloke they need to do it. Somehow, they find you. You amaze them with the magic you can perform and forget to mention that you can make signs too.

There's more, but my 1200 word ration is exhausted.

We'd like to hear from you if your own experience bears me out or if you think that deep specialisation will always define you as a signmaker. Remember, Directions is as much your voice as ours. Ten out of ten for spotting I left the 'Sign' off.

Mark Godden
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