

## EFI-VUTEK QS3220 helps Artworks Solutions extend its creative capabilities...

As part of its ongoing development, design and production of an unusual range of digital generated applications, Bristol based Artworks Solutions has invested in an EFI-VUTEK QS3220 wide-format printer.



Already a highly skilled and experienced company producing a wide-range of digitally generated output, Artworks Solutions extends its portfolio of print-related services far beyond the normal remit offered by most wide-format display specialists. Now in its thirteenth year, the business has used a sensible path of investment fuelled by its growth and the demand made by its ever increasing customer base which includes architects and designers.

As well as providing a full range of digital print and display services, Artworks Solutions has literally lived up to its name by using its resources and skills to generate an astonishing range of additional capabilities. Many of these can only be manufactured using specialist processes and materials, and experience has shown the company that a standard piece of equipment or material can be stretched beyond its original boundaries to create truly innovative and unusual applications.

Mixing fabrication techniques with wide-format digital output has added an extra dimension to the company's talents and many of its end applications serve more than one purpose. For example, in addition to providing functionality, a large percentage of the jobs produced by Artworks Solutions incorporate highly creative elements; as a result, it is not surprising that, for end users wanting visual appeal combined with practicality, clients nationwide turn to the company knowing it can transform an original idea into a novel, practical and creative result.

John Sulzmann founded Artworks Solutions having gained considerable experience with the sign and display industries, both within the production and distribution sectors. He realised, wisely, that to succeed in a fast growing industry sector his company needed to be prepared to diversify in order always to bring fresh ideas and results to his client base.

Today, Artwork Solutions specialises in producing high quality output onto unusual materials, with creative combinations of finishes and effects providing both useful and innovative results. Typically the company can turn its hand to producing digital wallpapers, printed storage walls, acoustic panels and tensile structures which combine functionality with eye-catching designs and features.

As wide-format digital printers have evolved, so Artworks Solutions has been able to diversify further and the use of UV-curable ink technologies has broadened the company's capabilities for printing direct to unusual substrates. Combined with sand blasting, etching and kiln forming, Sulzmann and his team have established a method of mixing processes and substrates to produce coloured textures for interior design and display projects. This extends onto glass, a medium which is growing in demand for a range of projects where stunning visual results are essential and where the combination of print and the use of light can blend effectively.

Although Sulzmann had experience of UV-curable inks, he knew that Artworks Solutions was reliant on well-tested technology in a device which was proven across the market yet which would allow the company to continue on its path to greater creativity. When the time came to invest in a new printer, he investigated the options available and chose the EFI-VUTEK QS3220 because of its reliability and its ability to work with a vast variety of rigid and flexible materials up to 3.2 m wide.

"The combination of speed and quality was important to us," Sulzmann states. "We cannot compromise with the types of application we produce and, for one-offs and longer runs, we needed to have absolute consistency in results. Working with many unusual, premium and specialist materials, we need results which are right first time and, with unconventional surfaces and coatings, good ink adhesion is vital."



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The EFI-VUTEK QS3220 is a sophisticated, yet tough unit which, whilst suitable as a work-horse on standard display and industrial materials, can be configured to be compatible with surfaces that aren't flat and contain deeply etched textures and shapes. Unlike many machines on the market today, with a skilled operator this printer has the ability to be set up manually to enable the print-heads sufficient clearance to produce accurate droplets on uneven elements, such as reverse etched designs, logos and text.

Following the success of its forerunner, the QS3200, the EFI-VUTEK QS3220 maintains many of the same features but adds a high definition print capability, known as HDP, which increases the types of material onto which it can print. Its refined vacuum and revised input and output tables are designed to enhance media handling, performance and throughput, also complemented by an improved UV-curable ink formulation. Along with its efficient UV-curing system, this combination has improved adhesion and durability preventing cracking, chipping and crazing when difficult materials are used.

EFI-VUTEK's Series 2 UV-curable inks are also formulated to deliver better performance, essential with jobs where an element of flexibility is required in the end application. This feature has extended the range of materials which are now suitable for production using this ink chemistry, with greater durability and high resistance to scratching and scuffing. The QS3220 benefits from a CMYKLCm configuration with a white ink option for additional versatility, and these are supplied in generous 3.25 litre containers.

Driven by the EFI Fiery XF RIP, also supplied and installed by CMYUK Digital, the software works closely with the throughput requirements of the printer, enabling users to combine images and jobs to optimise material usage. Output speeds of up to 84 square m/hour are complemented by fast change-over from rigid and roll-fed media and back again.

CMYUK's Robin East comments: "This installation of an EFI-VUTEK UV-curable solution at Artworks Solutions is a typical example of how these printers excel in situations where variety and versatility are the key. Increasingly we are finding that users are wanting to produce unusual applications with complex effects and finishes and, in the past, these jobs wouldn't have been possible.

"Now that workflow, media handling, inks and curing have been refined along with the actual design and construction of the printer itself, our users are constantly putting new demands on their machines," East continues. "Inventive and innovative companies want to be able to experiment with different effects across a range of materials, and the EFI VUTEK QS and GS families are designed to cope with taxing and difficult projects and applications whilst still retaining their unwavering ability to print longer runs, day in and day out, in both flat-bed and roll-fed modes."

For Artwork Solutions, the investment in the EFI-VUTEK QS3220 means that the company can extend its creative ideas and applications to a wider range of clients. Sulzmann concludes: "Today's display producers are becoming fiercely competitive but, for us, our experience means that we concentrate on market areas which so far remain virtually unchallenged. This latest investment will enable us to stretch our creative skills and attract new business from architects and designers as well as from our other customers who simply want well-produced and executed graphics for a variety of end uses."



Printer showcased in this study:  
**EFI VUTEK QS3220**

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