



Newsletter Questions Limiting Fine Art Giclee Prints

Visual artists who market reproductions of their original art in limited editions do so to create higher prices. Ironically, the income they lose by limiting editions of their most popular images can overshadow initial higher prices.

Scottsdale, AZ ([PRWEB](#)) August 17, 2005 - The August issue of Art Print Issues, a newsletter reporting on the print business, questions the practice of using limited editions as a marketing strategy for sales of fine art digital prints, commonly known as giclées. It argues more artists have greater chances of selling a few images in large numbers than a large number of sold out limited edition prints.

While demand is artificially created by numerically limiting edition sizes, it comes at the cost of sales from images with potential to sell well for years. Income lost by capping sales of proven images can be substantial even for artists who manage to sell out editions. Imagine selling thousands of giclées over many years rather than a few hundred in the typical edition. The difference in lifetime earnings to an artist can be dramatic.

None of the other arts, including films, recordings and theater intentionally limit sales of their work. Limiting giclées sales is a flawed marketing practice partly borne from tradition. Older fine art printing techniques such as serigraphs and etchings are limited by high production costs or by printing plates degrading with use. Giclées, which can be pristinely reproduced forever, are solely limited for marketing purposes to create demand.

Sophisticated art buyers realize digital printing poses no limitations on giclée edition sizes. Since the primary buying motivation is the desire to own the work for buyers, selling at a fair price for open edition giclées can be achieved. With open editions, artists avoid time-consuming and differing compliance for Certificates of Authenticity required by various state regulations. Those regulations were enacted to combat art fraud centered on limited editions that open editions avoid.

A suggestion is for visual artists to use a pencil signed and numbered convention to add cachet and demonstrate they touched and approved the image post printing, rather than to certify limited availability. Lower numbers appeal to early adopters, while larger numbers offer comfort to buyers who seek popular prints. The challenge is to move away from the crutch of limited editions as a marketing tool and find new exciting ways to market open edition giclées.

Barney Davey edits Art Print Issues and authored, *How to Profit from the Art Print Market: A Practical Guide for Visual Artists*. Subscriptions are free and archived issues can be downloaded at: www.ArtPrintIssues.com

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