

# Griffith University awards top honours to Epson large format printers

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## case study



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**David Lloyd**

**Senior Lecturer and Head of Photojournalism  
Griffith University, Queensland College of Art**

### **Griffith University, Queensland College of Art (QCA)**

Queensland's oldest and premier visual arts training institution, QCA has graduated some of the world's leading photojournalists.

#### **Challenges**

- Provide students with a higher quality on-site alternative to external print bureaus
- Meet high quality colour and black-and-white print requirements for approximately 400 students

#### **Solution**

Epson Stylus Pro 3800  
Epson Stylus Pro 4800  
Epson Stylus Pro 7800  
Epson Stylus Pro 9800

#### **Benefits**

- Greater control over workflow and finished product
- Colour consistency between all models improves workflow
- Dramatic reduction in time and costs incurred by students
- "Phenomenal" speed improvement

For an increasing number of leading Australian and international photojournalists, a Bachelor of Photography from Griffith University's Queensland College of Art (QCA) was the starting point for their career. In 2003, for example, the prestigious UK Picture Editor's Guinness Award for the Best Black-and-White Photograph was won by a QCA graduate who had also won the Fujifilm Photographer of the Year in 2002. Current students, though, have a definite edge over their predecessors – a range of Epson Stylus Pro large format printers with Epson UltraChrome™ K3 Ink.

According to Senior Lecturer and Head of Photojournalism, David Lloyd, the demand for skilled and highly competent photojournalists is constantly on the rise. "We live in the 21st century; and it's a visual century," he says. "In fact, it's estimated that the majority of the information we absorb is taken in visually. So providing our students with the range of tools they can use to help improve their skills is regarded as a top priority."

To better meet that priority, in mid-2007 the university and Epson entered into a sponsorship agreement, which saw Epson provide a 17-inch Stylus Pro 4800, a 24-inch Stylus Pro 7800, a 44-inch Stylus Pro 9800 and 12 17-inch Stylus Pro 3800s, as well as an ongoing reduced price on Epson inks and papers.

"Funding is an ever-present challenge in tertiary education," Lloyd explains, "so the role of industry leaders, such as Epson, play a crucial part in ensuring our students have access to the very best facilities."

#### **A decision for quality**

The decision to approach Epson for sponsorship was one based primarily on print quality and improving student skills. Lloyd explains: "We already had a couple of earlier generation Epson large format printers – a Stylus Pro 9600 and 7600 – which have given us consistently very high quality large format printing over the years.

"But when I saw the quality of colour and black-and-white prints that can be achieved with the Stylus Pro 800 Series printers and UltraChrome K3 ink, it was fairly obvious that digital photography printing had reached a new level of excellence. And, with the

extra black [Light Light Black], reduction in metamerism and increased archivability, the decision to approach Epson for support was absolutely straightforward.”

Adding even greater emphasis was the goal within the university to provide photojournalism students with ready access to large format printers for hands-on photo print production. “For major works,” Lloyd says, “it used to be the case that our students would have their photographs printed commercially. The downside to this was that as soon as it was out of their hands and with the photo lab, they gave up all control over the output.

“Now that Epson has made it feasible for us to deploy the 12 17-inch Stylus Pro 3800s, many of the lecturers are already stipulating that major works must be done using the Epson printers. Hopefully, next year there will be no allowances at all for commercial printing.

“A black-and-white print created using the UltraChrome K3 ink has all the hallmarks of a professionally produced high quality print.”

David Lloyd  
Griffith University QCA

“Apart from gaining incredibly valuable skills in producing their own photographic prints, instead of relying on a third-party, students will have total control over the finished product. And in this environment, striving for perfection and total control is critical.”

#### **Chalk and cheese**

In commenting on the value of the Epson UltraChrome K3 Ink, Lloyd says: “The fact is, Epson has established itself as a very serious research and development company in the field of inks. When the company releases a new ink, claiming that it delivers noticeably improved quality over earlier inks, we take it seriously. With the UltraChrome K3, we’ve witnessed significant developments.”

One such development is the dramatic improvement in black-and-white prints.

In photojournalism, black-and-white photography still plays an important role in the discipline; and the Light Light Black (LLK) ink of UltraChrome K3 is regarded by Lloyd as one of Epson’s most significant advances in recent years. “A black-and-white print created using the UltraChrome K3 ink has all the hallmarks of a professionally produced high quality print,” he says. “The Light Light Black Ink gives it an incredibly smooth gradation, and the crossover effect evident with prints generated using printers with limited black ink range is virtually non-existent.”

#### **Colour consistency and speed**

With Epson Stylus Pro 3800, 4800, 7800 and 9800 printers in almost constant use throughout the QCA Department of Photography, the exceptional levels of colour consistency achieved across printers and models is a major advantage, especially with the forthcoming stipulation for all works to be printed on-site.

“I can manipulate an image for output on a Stylus Pro 3800, then take that file across to either another 3800 or any other 800 Series printers, and there’s no discernable difference in print colour,” Lloyd says. “For our students, this means they can fine tune their works on a smaller large format printer, get it to precisely where they want it and

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know, without doubt, that when it's their turn to print the final product on one of the larger printers, they'll get precisely what they wanted."

Speed is another issue that came down in favour of the college's decision to adopt the Epson Stylus Pro 800 Series printers; and Lloyd is quick to point out the one-inch wide Micro Piezo print head as one of the key contributors to a vastly improved print speed.

Once again comparing the Stylus Pro 9800 with its 9600 predecessor, Lloyd states: "Quite simply, the speed improvement is phenomenal."

A major factor in the speed of the Stylus Pro 800 Series printers is the 180 by 8 ink nozzle configuration, nearly double the number of nozzles per colour of earlier models. This gives the printers almost twice the vertical coverage per pass of the print head.

"Speed is probably more important in this environment than in many commercial printing environments," Lloyd says. "When you consider that there are approximately 400 part-time and full-time students who will be using these printers, the demand is going to be enormous. Already, we're finding that as the students recognise and embrace the benefits of the Stylus Pro 800 Series printers, the level of demand is quickly reaching the level of supply."

One of the many students eagerly embracing the new Epson large format printers is Claudia Baxter, a Year 3 Bachelor of Photography student majoring in journalism. "When we're undertaking a major piece of work, such as a graduate exhibition or major assignment, access to the Epson printers gives us the ability to focus on quality without having to cut corners," she says.

"For example. Typically I would have used an external bureau, which would take two days for me to receive the prints. If there was something not quite right, it meant having to go through the process again...another two days. On top of that, the printing costs would be constantly mounting and I'd be falling behind in my schedule.

"With the Epson printers, instead of two days it takes me half-an-hour – and I'm only paying for the paper I use. Importantly, if I do notice an error, I can quickly rectify it without impacting on time and without costing me too much. Essentially, it's now a case of being able to get brilliant quality prints and no more hit-and-miss, which was the case when using a bureau."

For more information on Epson Large Format Printers please call 1300 131 928 and quote reference 40052.

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## A bigger future

The success of the Epson Stylus 800 Series printers at the university is seen by many as just the first stage of what is expected to be a substantial increase in Epson large format printer prevalence. "We have another campus on the Gold Coast, which is running photojournalism courses," Lloyd says. "Already, we've implemented additional Stylus Pro 3800s there.

"We're very serious about using only the best large format printers and inks," Lloyd continues. "That's precisely why we have introduced – and will maintain – an Epson standard."