

The Amazing Art Of Screen Printing

Printing is a process of producing images and text, normally utilizing ink, paper and a printing press. Printing has changed considerably and improved over time. Screen printing is among the most common printing techniques.

Screen-printing, also referred to as silk screening, is a method that is best for surfaces that are relatively flat. In this process, fine mesh or a screen is tightly stretched over a rigid frame, with the screen masking areas which will not be printed. In order to make a print, the screen is placed atop the item that is to be printed; then a blob of thick ink is applied. Next the ink is pressed through the screen with the assistance of a squeegee. The ink sticks to the unmasked area, thereby creating the print, and the masked area is protected from ink incursion. After this, the printed item goes through a heated tunnel that dries the ink so that items can be stacked or put into packages.

When more than one color is involved, the process is repeated, utilizing different screens. So, four screens would be necessary for a four-color print; they can be placed on a rotary press or done by hand, allowing each color to print in its proper place.

There are different methods of masking a screen. The simplest thing to do is to employ masking fluid right onto the screen. This process works very well for two-color graphics, while a photosensitive emulsion procedure is utilized for jobs involving multiple colors.

If you don't specify what you want when you order a custom shirt, you may end up with your design printed in a sticky, plastic-containing ink. Water-based inks work best for the worn, vintage-looking shirts. If you want the look of a stark and heavier print, request an ink that contains plastics and is applied by a hot press.

Inks containing plastics are used by many screen printers because often they last longer, are brighter, heavier and more easily seen, not to mention being easier on the screen printing equipment. Within a short time frame, plastic inks can begin to crack up, though. Natural inks last longer and they look better too.

About the Author

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