



Hurtwood Press and *Miró: The Masonite Series*



MOHAWK
MOHAWK FINE PAPERS

Hurtwood Press, Oxted, Surrey, UK, is a specialist printing consultancy with a focus on the production of fine books.

“We make books for people who care what they look like,” says Francis Atterbury, founder and partner. “Each project that we take on has its own special requirements, and each needs careful consideration, including how it relates to other aspects of the process. Our projects can be for books with a run of one or of tens of thousands.

“Projects are aided considerably by having a team behind them who are determined to make it work, and Hurtwood will help create this team – and when I have good team members, I stick with them. This includes designers, printers, paper suppliers and binderies.”

Atterbury likens his business to that of construction: “We’re not the architects, we’re the engineers who have the challenge of realising a vision, and sometimes we have to help the customer adapt that vision to make it feasible,” he says.

Indeed, the challenges Atterbury faces are unlike those that confront other print professionals:

“This is not a sector for ‘good enough,’” Atterbury explains. “In fine art printing, there are other elements that contribute to the look and feel of authenticity. For example, one project involved creating a facsimile of a wartime ID card. We thought about printing it on what would have been the original weight paper, it wouldn’t feel credible, so we printed it on card, which conveyed a more acceptable feeling of authenticity.”

The work that Hurtwood Press does is not for ordinary customers. Most of them share Atterbury’s passion for well-made books. It is a market where the result is usually more important than the cost, though he aims to price fairly. It is also a market where all the other aspects are considered as carefully as the actual printing.

In 2007, Atterbury produced his first book using digital printing. He had been recommended to try it for a short run of a book for a private collector.



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Francis Atterbury, founder and partner,
Hurtwood Press



“The concept was for top quality design and a special fine binding within a lined slip-case, so the quality of the print had to match the overall high standard. I looked at the print samples from the HP Indigo digital press and was staggered by how good the result was.

“Printed conventionally, to get this result might have taken several machine proofs and high intensity inks, but the HP Indigo digital press just did it with its normal CMYK set.”

Miró on Masonite

Last spring, Hurtwood Press was contacted about preparing a book to accompany an exhibition of Joan Miró paintings at the Helly Nahmad Gallery, in London. These works were done at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War on Masonite, a hardboard material made of compressed wood fibres.

“I’d been working to produce the book offset litho but, despite everyone’s best efforts, just wasn’t getting the result I wanted,” Atterbury explains. “The job was now urgent so I had to work out how to deliver the result I wanted quickly and cost-effectively.

“If possible, we will always manage the scanning,” says Atterbury. “In the transition from RGB to CMYK, a large amount of information can be lost, including those things that made the image special. This is in part because in the fine art end of printing, the whole nature of what one is looking for is different.”

The switch from offset litho to digital also meant a retaining the paper stock. To create something of the sense of the solidity of Miró’s paintings, we had already decided upon Mohawk Superfine 270g/m², a heavy stock, but now it had to be one that could be digitally printed and only the new HP Indigo 7000 Digital Press could meet the challenge.

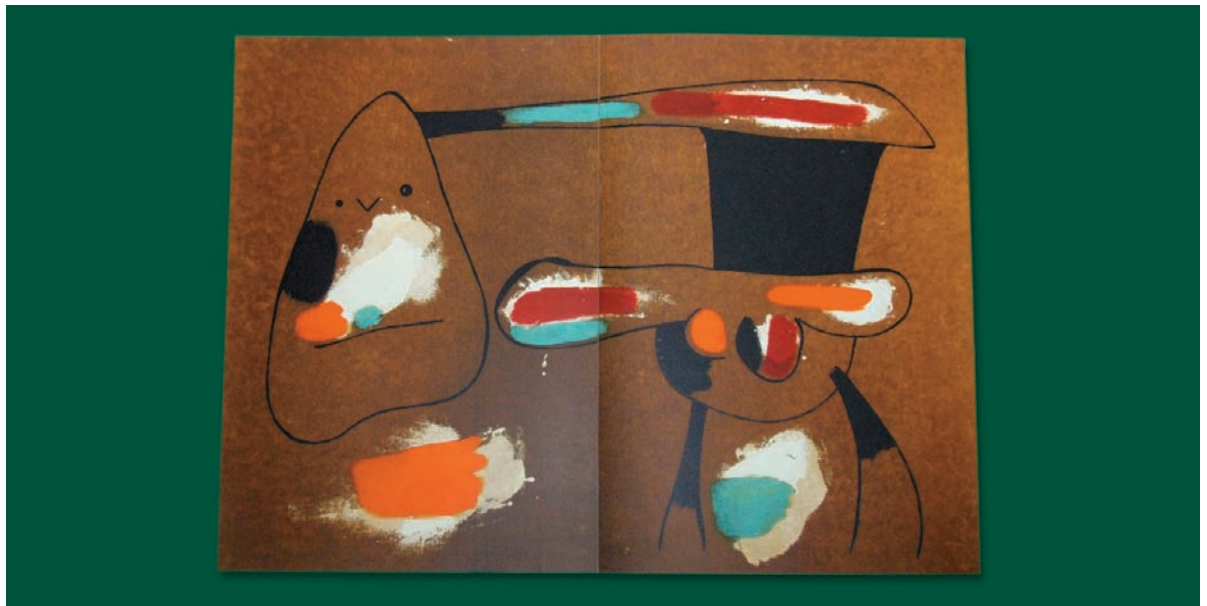
Atterbury had worked with Chris Harrold, vice president of market development at Mohawk Fine Papers, on previous jobs and knew that he was also a real enthusiast for books.

“Francis knew Mohawk Superfine paper since studying in the United States,” Chris Harrold explained. “It’s an acid free archival paper⁽¹⁾, much admired by fine art printers.

“For this project, we were able to supply him with just the stock he wanted,” Chris Harrold continues.

“Mohawk began optimising papers for digital printing about ten years ago, and our i-Tone optimised papers included Mohawk Superfine i-Tone in the 270g/m² weight and eggshell finish that he wanted.

Stunning A2 spreads convey a real sense of Miro's paintings at nearly 25% their original size.



"We knew that the paper would run smoothly through HP Indigo digital presses, but there was one final specification that needed attention," Chris Harrold says. "The size of the book was to be just under A3, but it was also to be portrait in orientation. A3 sheets for printing are usually cut short-grain (with the paper fibres running across an A3 portrait sheet) so that resultant A4 pages will be long-grain (with fibres running down a portrait page). Supplying the sheets he wanted was no problem, but it was just another one of those details that contributes to excellence."

"To me, this project with Francis was about technology and craft meeting to solve old problems and to produce an excellent result," Chris Harrold concludes.

"When it came to the HP Indigo digital press handling the heavy stock, there was no problem at all," Atterbury confirms. "I went on press to supervise the run. We checked the files on the monitor and began the printing. The press handled the job brilliantly; I got exactly what I wanted from the first copy. It was almost unbelievable."

The print run of *Miró: the Masonite Series – Spain 1936* was 350 copies, but while the challenge of printing had been successfully overcome, the final challenge, binding, remained. Atterbury wanted the book to lie flat. Forty-eight pages of 270g/m² A3 pages was a sizeable volume, and with each of the paintings filling a double-page spread, not having the book open flat wasn't an option. The solution was to use cold glue, and Atterbury found a bindery that could achieve what he wanted.

Objective:

- To produce high quality fine art books using the best combination of design, paper, print and bindery crafts and technologies.

Approach:

- HP Indigo 7000 Digital Press
- Mohawk Superfine i-Tone paper optimised for HP Indigo digital presses

Business benefits:

- Memorable books of distinction, the reputation of which is Hurtwood's premiere marketing tool

Industry:

- Fine art and high-end book production



“Digital printing is a wonderful process, and it’s one that deserves a better reputation at the high-end of the print market.”

Francis Atterbury, founder and partner,
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The result was stunning A2 spreads that conveyed a real sense of Miró’s paintings, and represented them at nearly 25 percent of their original size.

“We had messages from many people about how much they admired the book,” Atterbury says. Those praising the book included art critics and Miró’s own descendants.

“Digital printing is a wonderful process, and it’s one that deserves a better reputation at the high-end of the print market,” Atterbury says. “It’s only a question of attitude because the results are excellent, and the ability of HP Indigo digital presses to print on a wide variety of substrates is an enormous advantage.

“HP says that an HP Indigo digital press can print as well as offset litho, but I believe that on uncoated papers, it can deliver a better image than litho,” Atterbury says. “In the fine art market, image and perception are extremely important. Large format inkjet printing has solved that problem by calling fine art prints and photographs produced on inkjet printers giclée – a word that comes from the French meaning squirt or spray.”

Francis Atterbury’s attitude towards digital printing is one that respects the results. “I haven’t used many of the special features of digital printing – like variable data and extra or special colours – yet. When I have the right job for them, I’m sure I will,” he concludes. “The democratisation of printing that digital technology has enabled is a wonderful and exciting thing, but there is no reason today for not doing the best job possible.”

⁽¹⁾ Mohawk Fine Papers’ Mohawk, Strathmore and Beckett brands have the distinction of being manufactured in 100% wind-powered facilities and are Green-e certified by the Center for Green Solutions, San Francisco, California.

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