

Original copies? New technology in Cumbria

PhotoSightDesign owner Tony Riley recently returned to university to update his professional photography skills with new digital technology. He was surprised to find how much cutting edge scientific research was relevant to Cumbria's creative industries, in particular art reproduction and museum collection archiving. Renewed interest in the digital preservation of heritage has provided extensive research funding, resulting in laboratories now being able to produce copies which are almost indistinguishable from the originals.

In the real world the only problem was cost! Artists cannot realistically fund a research programme to measure the individual pigments they use, when the original art may only be on sale at a few hundred pounds. However, by understanding the pitfalls involved in art reproduction and the archiving of photographic collections, PhotoSightDesign has evolved workflows that resolve many problems met by artists in having their work reproduced. This makes limited edition fine art print reproduction and collection archiving cost-effective. Although around £20,000 worth of technology is involved, the charge to the artist is £50 per painting plus a charge per print. (For museum collections and archives, an individual assessment is needed.)

Two Cumbrian artists already benefiting from this service are Sundar Kanta-Walker of Grange, and mountain painter, Jim Curran, both of whom have recently exhibited at Kendal's Brewery Arts Centre. Sundar comments "People who can't afford the original can have a quality print, and I can have as few as one or two printed avoiding the cost of a long print run". Jim also points out that "my large scale work cannot easily be displayed in Cumbria's typical small gallery, so it enables many more venues for exhibitions".

For museums and photographic archives, accurate copies and illustrations of works too fragile for public display can be exhibited electronically and in print for the first time, and a record of their current state can be preserved.

Modern professional digital photography is offering clients a whole new underlying colour management science; leading to a new way of providing imaging services to clients. For further details, contact Tony Riley at PhotoSightDesign on 01539 723837.