

Sublimation Markers: No Computer or Printer Required

By David Gross



David Gross is the president of Condé Systems, Inc. For more than 25 years he has developed and built the Mobile, Alabama based company into the premier source for printers, substrates, and consumables serving the graphic art, photography, prepress, and desktop publishing industries.



Artesprix's new markers extend the power of dye-sub transfer to those artists wanting to transfer hand-drawn sketches and illustrations onto personalized products. IMAGES COURTESY DAVID GROSS



The markers are approved for creative minds nine years old and up and are perfect for individual works of art or for craft parties wanting to produce a variety of personalized products.

If you've attended THE NBM SHOW recently, you may have noticed an unexpected site... a booth on the show floor devoted to providing attendees a place to color with markers and paper. Stress therapy for a busy show? Nope. It's just the latest advancement (or maybe a retro step back?) in sublimation decorating technology.

WHAT ARE THEY?

Artesprix's new 1-4mm chisel tip markers extend the power of dye-sub transfer to those artists and crafters wanting to transfer hand-drawn sketches and illustrations onto personalized products. Available in a 10-count box of classic colors (and at a price of \$35 per pack), each marker is filled with sublimation dyes capable of decorating a variety of traditional dye-sub substrates including T-shirts, aprons, tote bags, mugs, ornaments, coasters, and more — with no computer or printer required. The markers are approved for creative minds nine years old and up and are perfect for individual works of art or for craft parties wanting to produce a variety of personalized products.

HOW ARE THEY USED?

Although some artists prefer to draw free-hand works of art on blank paper, others like to have pre-made designs that can be colored to their liking. I've found a few ways to approach this difference in preference that will suit even the pickiest of artists.

One of the two methods that does not involve a computer or printer is to simply

color directly on a substrate that has a texture (e.g., sandstone coater and fabric). The second is to have someone draw an image on plain paper that is correctly sized for their chosen product (e.g., a drink coaster, bag tag, or T-shirt). Like traditional sublimation, the artist needs to "mirror" their artwork and text (except when transferring onto glass or acrylic) so that it reads correctly once transferred onto the product.

An alternate method that does involve a computer and printer is to create a design that includes a blank coloring area for personalization. Using a sublimation printer, the transfer can be printed on plain paper and then colored. No matter which method is chosen, the artwork needs to be transferred in a heat press using the blank product's standard pressing instructions.

PROFIT OPPORTUNITIES

I've found that coloring with markers is an awesome way to attract (and please) a group of customers. What can you do? How about hosting a sublimation party for kids and/or adults. Pick a few products to decorate and then hand out paper and markers. If possible, bring a small heat press to the event so that the items can be immediately produced — they'll be able to take their personalized product(s) home with them. If you'd like to take it to another level, consider fundraisers for schools and organizations. All of this adds up to some interesting new profit opportunities and a whole new meaning to the words "personalized keepsakes."