

Metal Prints



ChromaLuxe metal is available in a variety of shapes and sizes.

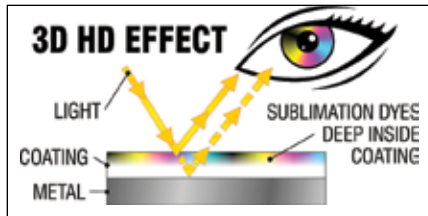
fabric, is perhaps the most widely decorated substrate. Since metal is nothing new to sublimation, it's best to think of ChromaLuxe metal as the new HD (High Definition) version of sublimation aluminum. In short, images simply look awesome. Really awesome.

Several years ago, Paul Neumann of Universal Woods began a paradigm shift by creating a sublimation metal for the photo industry. He did this by leveraging his multi-million dollar coating facility that has been making Unisub brand products for the last twenty years. He created the metal with a combination of several new thicker coatings that, once sublimated, gave the metal unparalleled color vibrancy with an intriguing color depth and 3D look. As I'll explain later, Paul's coatings went way past just looking great—they are extremely durable. Combining the appeal of metal with incredible image quality and durability, it's easy to see why ChromaLuxe metal has proven to be such a worthy competitor to cotton as the new canvas.

EXPLAINING CHROMALUXE

The "secret sauce" is the coatings and how they are applied. Without giving away any trade secrets, here goes: Depending on the type (white or clear silver aluminum with a glossy or matte finish), Unisub applies several layers of cutting-edge sublimation coatings to a high-quality base aluminum. These coatings are then cured. From there, the metal sheets are routed or sheared into a multitude of different sizes and shapes.

Now we are ready to sublimate. The sublimation decorating process uses special dyes that, when heated, turn into gas. During the heating process, the pores of the coatings open to receive the gas. When heat is removed, the gas cools and the pores of



The ChromaLuxe coating provides an amazing 3D HD effect.

the coatings close, trapping the dyes deep inside the coatings. This encapsulation has two advantages. First, because of the toughness of the coatings, it is very difficult to damage/affect the coatings or the dyes. Next, because the coatings and dyes are suspended between the top surface of the coatings and the surface of the base metal, a lightbox-type affect is achieved that gives the dyes almost magical properties.

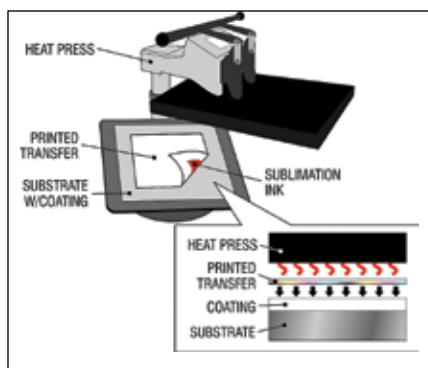
DURABILITY

ChromaLuxe metal is incredibly tough. In fade tests, it lasted two to four times longer than the leading photo papers, and there is no need to protect it under glass. Due to the tough sublimation coating, ChromaLuxe metal is also scratch resistant, stain resistant, waterproof, fire resistant, tear resistant, impervious to damage from tape or glue, and will not yellow with age. An official test report is available by request. I have created a family of torture-test videos for ChromaLuxe products at www.condetv.com. My fire torture video got me in trouble with my wife—she felt like I should not be playing with lighter fluid!

MEET THE CHROMALUXE PRODUCT FAMILY:

Rectangular Panels

The most popular use of ChromaLuxe



The sublimation transfer process.

metal is for producing rectangular photo panels. Precut panels are available in a large number of sizes up to a whopping 4'x8'! Desktop sublimators can easily produce 12"x18" panels with a 13"x19" capable printer and a 16"x20" heat press. These panels can be mounted on a wall individually or grouped into a collage or mural. Displaying panoramic scenes on single or tiled panels has also become popular. Many digital cameras and smart phones support this photo format.

A few years ago, Gaby Mullinex, owner of Fullerton Photo (www.fullertonphoto.com), pioneered "stacked metal". To add value to a flat piece of metal, she stacked one piece of metal on a larger one using a MDF (medium density fiberboard) spacer block. The larger piece was sublimated with a complementing background. Suddenly, you had a work of art! This is now a standard offering in many photo gift shops, but it can be used equally well to make plaques. Some awards shops have been doing this sort of thing for years. Gaby continued the concept and began experimenting with using different materials like galvanized steel and acrylic for the base. The result is a high-value photo print that becomes a work of art.

My friend, Pauline McKean at Calgaz, a full-service photo retailer, recently showed me two recognition stacked metal plaques she did for two schools. Notice the art for the back metal panel of the basketball plaque can be reused for many other school awards (page 46). Your imagination is the only limit to the value you can create by stacking metal.

For my lectures this summer, I asked Gaby to make a video on her passion for metal art. I have posted it on our video channel at www.condetv.com. Search for "Metal and Magic at Fullerton Photo". It is amazing, and I think it will forever change the way you look at metal prints.



Large ChromaLuxe panel with two smaller stacked panels.



ChromaLuxe Creative Borders: Fiji.

CREATIVE BORDERS

This is ChromaLuxe's name for non-rectangular shaped panels. There are about 12 different shapes—each available in a handful of sizes. These can be mounted on a wall or punched and hung with decorative ribbons or bow. For punching, I recommend the Accucutter Precision punch. I punch from the backside so that the front stays smooth.

HANGING TILE MURALS

Using a brushed aluminum display bar, individual 6" or 12" panels are con-

Transfer unique textures and colors onto ChromaLuxe backgrounds.



Stacked metal adds value over individual pieces.



Punch holes into ChromaLuxe aluminum to hang from decorative ribbons or bows.

nected together with clips to turn full-color photos and graphics into amazing murals or unique displays. Due to the flexible nature of being able to change and add panels, it can make a very attractive display for real estate offices, churches, employee recognition, and plant safety recognition.

CHROMALUXE ORNAMENTS

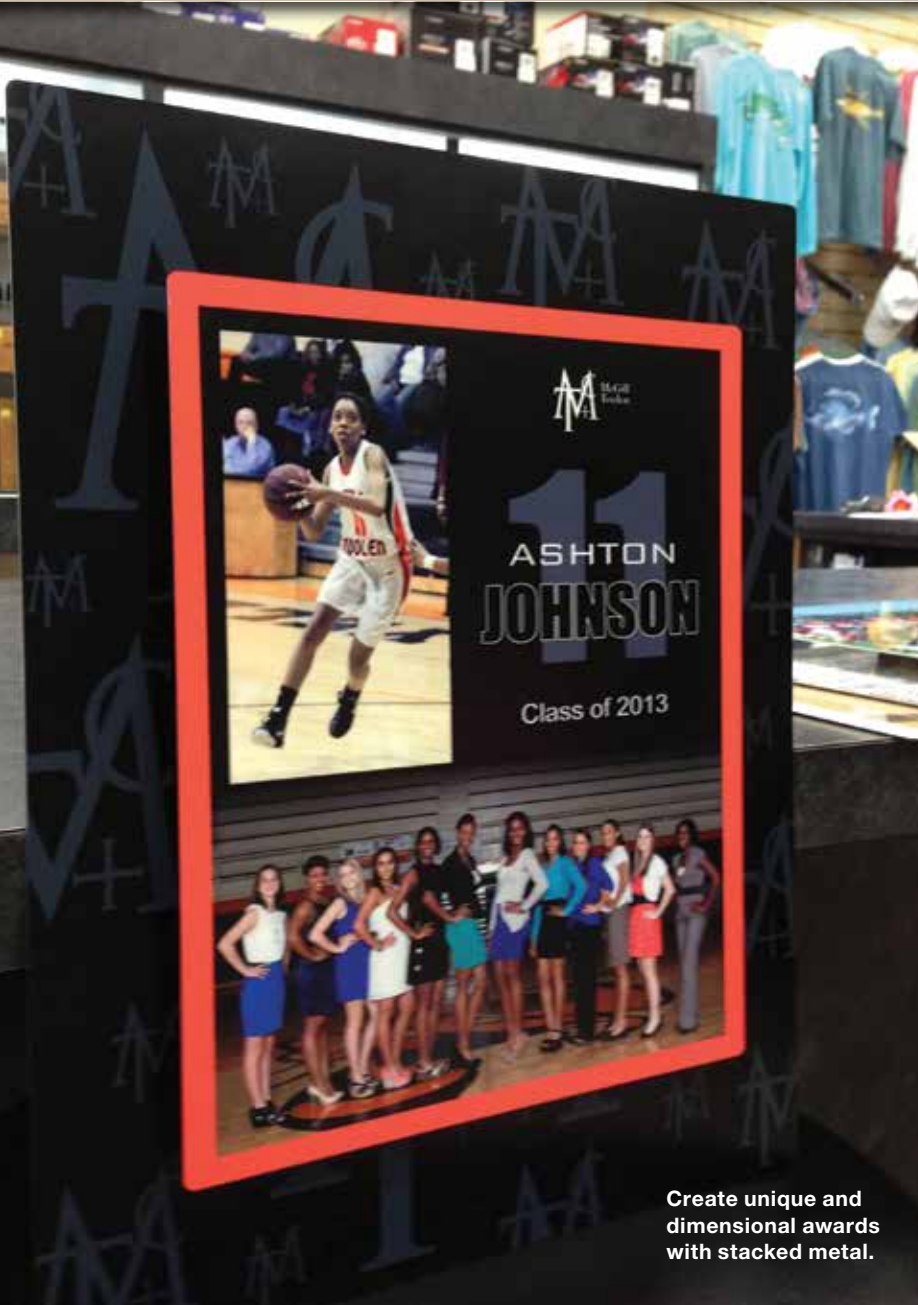
Available in assorted shapes, each unique ornament is a glossy white, double-sided piece of metal with a hole punched at the top to accommodate an attractive red



The MAXI-PRESS is a multipurpose large-format heat-transfer press intended for the imprinting of a vast range of different materials.

GO LARGE!

What if you want to offer large ChromaLuxe panels to your clients? Outsource the project or invest in a large-format printer like the Epson 9890 (44" print width) and a large heat press like the 44"x64" George Knight Maxi. This combination will allow you to press 40"x60" panels.



Create unique and dimensional awards with stacked metal.

ribbon. This is one of the best fundraising opportunities available to digital decorators!

GETTING PERSONAL

Several years ago, with the leadership of Gaby Mullinax, we created the ChromaLuxe Photo Bracelet. Now available in three different widths, personalized metal cuff bracelets have become a big hit for photo gift retailers. The unique keepsake bracelets can be produced using individual pictures, a collage of photos, colorful designs, or the wearer's name or monogram letters. We start by sublimating a flat piece of metal that looks very similar to a bookmark. Once imaged, the bracelets can be perfectly shaped with a minimal amount of effort using the available bracelet bending tool. I suggest that you also sublimate the inside of the bracelet with your company logo and information for great referrals and quick reordering. For a list of all my famous 101 tips and tricks for sublimation success, refer to www.conde.com.

INSTAGRAM METAL

With the success of Instagram has come square formats for photos. We provide a family of square format panels from a 4" size and up. Great for everything from the refrigerator to the wall.

CURVED CHROMALUXE

Using a metal column roller and a rectangular panel, you can curve metal to make a beautiful, high-value, self-standing photo panel. I recommend using double-sided metal so that both sides display the same or different image. You of course sublimate before the metal is rolled. I use an Accucutter precision roller that allows the curvature to be adjusted.



ChromaLuxe Photo Bracelets are available in three widths.



These 4" ChromaLuxe pieces are perfect for utilizing favorite Instagram photos.

What image resolution do I need for ChromaLuxe panels?

Images/photos are really just blocks of colored dots. More dots equals better quality! For example, when I take a photo with my iPhone 5, it captures a block of dots that is 3,264 dots across and 2,448 dots down. When I decide to print this block of dots, I will size the photo to my desired print size. Let's say I want to print my photo at a size of 10"x7.5". To calculate what my print resolution is, just divide 3,264 dots by 10 inches to get 326 dots per inch. My rule of thumb is that we need at least 200 dots per inch at print size for good hard substrate quality. Since most web images are 72 dpi, this means they will not print well. So to understand how big I can print my iPhone images, simply divide 3,264 dots by 200 dots per inch and you get about 16 inches across. The other dimension turns about to be about 12 inches. So we can print a ChromaLuxe panel 16" by 12" with good quality using my iPhone. If you must print bigger but cannot come up with a higher-resolution image, then you can turn to special programs like Perfect Resize (formerly Genuine Fractals) from www.ononesoftware.com. That will add more apparent resolution through a process called image interpolation. These concepts are extremely important, especially when producing large murals.

Sublimation Color Management

To produce stunning color, you must use a great ICC printer profile. A printer color profile is a file you install on your PC or Mac so that when printing, you can select it from the color management section of the Print screen. This profile acts as a color filter to adjust the colors for the sublimation process so that your colors will be accurate. At Conde, we have our own color department that creates profiles for a particular printer, paper, ink, and substrate combination.

SMALL BUT MIGHTY!

New from LRI – the versatile, efficient, user-friendly **3D heat press**. Fits on a desk or counter and handles multiple products of different shapes and substrates. Shot glasses and shooters, jewelry, lighters, mugs, plus more – now that's a well-rounded press!

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Use INFO # 61



Create beautiful curved photo panels using a metal column roller.

REINVENTING THE NAME BADGE

Another great personal product is the ChromaLuxe name badge. I think the results are just stunning! I particularly like the clear version that we use at all our events like tradeshow and open houses.

CUSTOMIZING CHROMALUXE: DO IT YOURSELF

A metal shear is one of your best investments, as it provides you with flexibility to create your own custom ChromaLuxe products and sizes. We provide all four ChromaLuxe metal types in the traditional 12" by 24" sheets. Make sure to keep your blade sharp, as ChromaLuxe is thicker and therefore harder to cut. A corner cutter is also recommended for creating radius corners. And last, I recommend a heavy-duty punch for hanging ChromaLuxe with attractive ribbons and bows.

MOUNTING CHROMALUXE PRODUCTS

How do you display metal on a wall or desk? Wall mounting kits contain MDF (Medium Density Fiberboard) blocks with



Name badges available with a white or clear aluminum finish.

a pre-applied adhesive strip and keyhole for easy mounting. Care should be taken when mounting large and heavy stacked metal panels. There are also self-adhesive metal easels for table, desk, or mantle display. Do you prefer a standard photo frame? ChromaLuxe metal can also be inserted into a traditional photo frame for a traditional look.

WHOLESALE FULFILLMENT

The way I see it, there are two ways to grow your business. You can sell more stuff to your existing clients or you can find new profitable ones. A great source for new clients is wholesale fulfillment (selling to folks that are then reselling products to their customers). With ChromaLuxe products, I recommend you call on builders, decorators, architects, photographers, artists, galleries, framing shops, museums, and tourist attractions. I have often seen metal art for sale in restaurants. These customers will usually provide the photos or art needed to produce the metal art. Show them what you can do and make connections! They become your sales force, and you become a partner to them. As mentioned earlier, providing sublimation products as part of a fundraising project is a big winner! You make the entire organization your sales force! And my favorite wholesale idea for sublimation, in general, is to sell through pet groomers. Every pet owner would love to have his or her pet on a beautiful piece of metal art!

David Gross is president of Condé Systems Inc., of Mobile, Ala. He can be reached by email at dgross@conde.com.



How To Press ChromaLuxe

Based on feedback from thousands of customers and our many years of experience in our Print Services Department, my recommendations have changed as to the best way to press ChromaLuxe panels. Today, I recommend the following: Set press to 400 degrees F. Set manual presses for medium to heavy pressure (two hands are required to close the press, with effort). Set automatic presses to 80 psi. Place a piece of plain paper on the bottom of the press. Remove peel coat from metal and tape the transfer to that side of the metal using heat tape. Place metal in press with "metal imaging side face up" and "printed transfer side face down" (transfer on top and metal on bottom). Next, place another piece of plain paper on top. For larger pieces of ChromaLuxe (12"x18" and larger), I recommend placing a piece of polyester fabric on top. This fabric will act as a vent to allow steam to escape during pressing. Your press time will be determined by the size of the piece of metal and the heat output of your press. Typical times for desktop presses are about 1:30. Call 800-826-6332 or visit www.conde.com for our latest set of detailed instructions.

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