

# Using the HP Scitex XL1500 super-wide format printer

Buenos Aires billboard sets new Guinness World Record for biggest printed digital image



"We have done even bigger billboards, but this was one photo, one shot. It turned into a huge event and the image became famous throughout the whole country."

Damian Mogilner, Base3



HP customer case study: HP/Large Format Division/ Base3 Success Story

Industry: Graphic Services/Printing

## Challenges:

- Find an affordable solution for printing super-wide format outdoor advertising
- Attempt to win a world record for the largest ever single-image print
- Achieve pitch-perfect color matching for high-profile project by leading photographer

## Solution:

- HP Scitex XL1500 wide format printer, with Onyx® Postershop RIP provides cost-effective, high-speed super-wide format printing with superb quality, ideal for high-volume business
- Competitive cost and flexible HP financing options enabled Base3 to pay for the HP Scitex XL1500 partly with revenues generated by the machine.
- Micro-perforated canvas strips soldered together to create a 60m x 20m (197 x 66ft) billboard, attached to 140 tonnes (154 tons) of structure

## Results:

- Base3 is able to print high volumes of billboards and other super-wide applications, quickly and cost effectively, meeting tight turnaround times, with competitive prices
- High productivity and output quality of the HP Scitex XL1500 enables Base3 to win high-profile and over-sized jobs, including building coverings measuring as much as 50 x 40m (164 x 131ft)
- Cooperation between Base3 and top Argentinean photographer Robert Ruiz resulted in a new Guinness World Record and generated nationwide media coverage



## It's official! Top print service provider, photographer and HP technology create record-breaking combo

When Guinness World Records, the international arbiter of all things biggest, smallest, and anything else that stands out from the rest of the world, announced that a huge billboard printed by Base3 had succeeded in winning a title, all of Argentina had reason to celebrate. The Buenos Aires print service provider shared its jubilation with photographer Robert Ruiz, its partner in creating the world's biggest printed digital image. The rest of the country enjoyed seeing their greatest natural treasure, Ischigualastao, in Valle de la Luna, portrayed to stunning effect in the center of the capital city.

“The XL1500’s image quality is very good. Obviously we only use it for super large images. It’s super fast...faster than our other machines.”

– Damian Mogilner, Production Manager, Base3.



As digital photography and printing systems have advanced over the years, there have been many claims for “the biggest”. What sets the Base3-Ruiz achievement apart is that this billboard was printed from a single photograph, rather than from multiple photos compiled into a single display – winning it the Guinness World Record for the biggest printed digital image.

Robert Ruiz, one of Argentina’s best known photographers, used a 12-megapixel Nikon D2X camera to take a photo of the Ischigualastao, an extraordinary rock formation designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Ruiz got the entire site into the frame by taking a master photo and using it to map 119 shots of the scene. He placed the camera on a satellite-guided moving platform, which enabled him to take exactly the right sequence – a process that took seven separate visits to the site.

“The shots were recomposed into a single image, using software,” recalls Ruiz. “It was important for me not to modify the image in any way because in my experience any change to a digital image ultimately leads to a loss in resolution.” The resulting photograph indeed captured the scale and beauty with high detail, ensuring that once it was blown up to full print size, the natural wonder would look, well, natural.

Ruiz teamed up with Base3 because of its reputation as one of the top digital printers in Argentina.

Founded in 1995, as digital printing was still a fairly new phenomenon, Base3 has grown along with the industry. Today, it offers a wide range of digital printing services, including billboards, building coverings, fleet marking and truck-side curtains, innovative point of sale displays and event signage. With 130 employees in its Buenos Aires headquarters and 70 more in Spanish subsidiaries, Base3’s work includes outdoor and indoor advertising for some of the biggest brands in consumer products, such as Coca-Cola, Samsung, Heineken, Nestlé, Gillette, and many more.

The goal of the Ischigualastao project was two-fold: to print the biggest ever digital image and promote tourism to Argentina. With the backing of the Argentina Ministry of Culture, Ruiz received approval to install the billboard in one of the most symbolic locations in Argentina, the Placa de la Republica (Square of the Republic) in the center of Buenos Aires. The juxtaposition of a stark natural wonder with a busy urban setting created an unforgettable sight that drew attention in print and electronic media nationwide and around the world.

Ruiz explains the goal of the project: “I wanted to do something important, that was different. The idea of inserting a landscape billboard into the urban landscape seemed an exciting way to both promote tourism and create a strong, contrasting image. The size was to amaze, and grab attention. The Guinness Book of Records was just an extra.”



**HP Scitex XL1500 wins for speed, quality, affordability**

To meet the demands of the job, Base3 turned to its HP Scitex XL1500 super-wide digital printer. Installed in early 2006, the roll-to-roll printing system prints on a wide range of flexible media up to 5m (16.4ft) wide, in eight colors.

“The XL1500 offers speed at a very competitive price,” says Damian Mogilner, Production Manager at Base3. “And the financing services allow you to improve production capacity and productivity of your business without committing limited financial resources that can be used in other areas.”

**Cooperation gets a record-setting job done... in record time**

Ruiz had saved his original photograph in TIFF at 36 dpi on a 1:1 scale, creating a 1.5GB file. However, Base3 reduced the size to 1GB because the mesh substrate and final print size did not warrant such high definition. The Onyx Postershop RIP that comes with the HP Scitex XL1500 divided the TIFF file into strips, calculating the overlap needed for soldering the strips together.

Mogilner notes that the Onyx RIP offers compelling cost and productivity benefits. “It’s very complete and works very well. It allows us to manage queues and optimize substrate usage by adjusting the file according to the media width. You can add files of different widths and the RIP organizes them to minimize wastage.”

From RIP to install, the whole job ran quickly and smoothly. Even meeting the photographer’s exacting color standards proved easy. “Obviously the photographer wanted to achieve very specific colors,” says Mogilner. “We did various tests and they were all fine. You could see the screen to print match perfectly, which simplifies it. So it only took a couple of hours to achieve the desired colors.”

The photograph was printed in strips measuring 4.8m wide, the maximum width of the perforated mesh. The strips were soldered together until the giant print was in two halves, each measuring 30 x 20m (99 x 66ft), to create the final 60 x 20m (197 x 66ft) billboard.

"We did the whole thing in record time – two days for printing and installation. We printed 1,200 sqm [editor note: 12,900 sqft] in 15 hours, including changing and loading the media. We loaded the media so that there were no interruptions between printing the strips and we didn't have to replace inks."

The HP Scitex inks provide excellent flexibility, which meant that Base3 could fold the giant mesh prints and take them in a pickup truck to the installation site. "The printed image is very robust, so you can fold it and it's easy to handle," says Mogilner.

The structure was erected by the city council. The two pieces of the printed image were raised on ropes by 10 people and attached by grommets to the structure. Then a Base3 staff member was lowered down the middle, from the top of the structure, and he attached the two halves together. Installation took one day, and the billboard was left up for four days.

"It was incredible," says Ruiz. "Once the billboard was installed, and you stood back, it was really exciting. The image quality was amazing. It was so realistic. It was really successful. Tourists stopped to take photos in front of the billboard. It was mentioned on at least 126 different Internet pages and there were news reports, TV programs all over Latin America, and elsewhere. It was an outstanding success."

### **Planning more HP purchases**

The Robert Ruiz photo was Base3's most high profile job, but not its biggest. "We do facades of buildings, such as a hotel in Spain that was 50m high by 40m wide (164 x 131ft). We did two of these displaying a digital composition for Samsung."

The HP Scitex XL1500 was the first HP Scitex printer installed at Base3, but, according to Mogilner, it won't be the last. "The machine is excellent. It's very productive and we use it a lot."

"Having a company with HP's organization means we have more reliable and fast delivery, availability of stock and downtime is reduced to a minimum... Now we are evaluating HP Scitex for future purchases."

### **Going for even bigger achievements**

Following his successful collaboration with Base3, photographer Robert Ruiz is also setting his sights on the next big thing. "We've already started planning something even bigger: seven billboards in seven strategic locations around the city, about 7,000 sqm [editor note: 75,350 sqft] each."

To learn more, visit [www.hp.com](http://www.hp.com)

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