

Digital Interiors

Jeanelle Dech is a self-taught seamstress who began creating quilts and doll clothes at just eight years old. In 1995, her long-time hobby turned into a career with the opening of Crab Apple Interiors, an interior-design business she led for 12 years. However, limited textile selections, lengthy backorders, and discontinued designs pushed Jeanelle and husband Larry to pursue digital printing of fabrics. In 2004, the duo opened Adaptive Textiles in West Chester, Pennsylvania.

They started the company with a direct-printing DuPont Artistri 2020 machine, which they still have in-house. It's equipped with pigment-based textile inks and prints onto cotton, linen, and silk blends. After printing, the fabrics are treated with pressure/heat to set the inks. Some fabric finishing is completed by the in-house staff, but other customers ask Adaptive Textiles to ship the fabric to other workrooms for fabrication. Turn around times for print jobs range from 24 hours to 2 weeks, depending on the job and customer.

The biggest challenge for the business, says Jeanelle Dech, is color management: "The inks are consistent, but the cotton and linen grounds [backgrounds] vary so much from bolt to bolt," she points out.

Working with interior designers, the company focuses on custom fabrics for residential home interiors, short-run products for artists, and on-demand printing for interior design firms with private textile collections. Typical print runs average five to 15 yards and final products include window treatments, slipcovers, and banners. In addition to producing textiles for interior designers, the company also images store displays for high-end apparel manufacturers.

One recent job had the company producing art banners for Philadelphia-based artists Shelly Lependorf and Stan Shire that were to hang in a permanent installation at Haru restaurant in Philadelphia. Adaptive Textiles produced three images as 10 x 4-foot banners of Lependorf and Shire's images. In total, the company produced 150 square feet of printed Silk-Linen Blend from Plumridge Silks using its Artistri with OEM pigment inks.

In addition, Jeanelle and Larry have opened a new direct-to-consumer online store—Step on Art (www.steponart.com) to sell the modern versions of 18th-century English floorcloths (hand-painted canvas rugs) with designs from several talented artists. "The artistry and durability of historic floorcloths



are combined with state-of-the-art digital production, resulting in a mix of tradition and innovation," says Dech. Complete with a non-slip rubber backing and three coats of Minwax Polycrylic (a clear water-based sealant), these new canvas-based floorcloths are digitally printed and range from 20- to 64-inches-wide up to 120-inches long.

Working in a 2500-square-foot facility, Larry Dech oversees the daily operations including production and printer maintenance and is supported by a creative team of four graphic designers and seamstresses. While the company still uses its original DuPont Artistri printer, it's prepared for growth, "We're equipped to install another printer as soon as demand calls for it," says Dech.

ADAPTIVE TEXTILES
www.adaptivetextiles.com