

McGreevy

PROLAB
& ProPress

Professional Quality Photo Lab & Press Printing Services

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Color Management

Color management can be complex. There is an entire industry devoted to the subject. Our attempt here is to get you started in the right direction, but by no means is this a thorough discussion of the topic.

Here at McGreevy ProLab & ProPress we operate in a fully color managed environment. Our scanners, monitors and printers subscribe to an ICC calibrated workflow. You will notice that in several areas of the price list we offer a money saving option called "**Print Ready**" where the customer can follow certain criteria to prepare their own files for printing. To take full advantage of this service and to obtain reliable results, it is important that you work in a color calibrated environment and practice proper color management techniques.

The Basics:

Simply stated, what most photographers want from color management is for the image on their computer monitor to match the printer output. To accomplish this three main events must come together.

- 1) **Calibrate and profile your monitor.** Products are available that allow you to calibrate and profile your monitor to a universal ICC calibration standard. We recommend the Datacolor SpyderX Pro or the X-Rite i1Display Studio (approx. \$170). These products include a color sensor puck which plugs into a USB port on your computer and then attaches to your monitor screen; then with the use of the software provided you adjust your monitor until it is perfectly calibrated to the ICC standard. Once every 90 days you recalibrate. With this, your monitor at home matches our monitors at the lab. Everyone who is calibrated to this ICC standard will be talking the same language. Keep in mind that not all monitors are created equal. Laptop monitors are getting more sophisticated, but in general they have never been that accurate or easy to adjust. Professional desktop monitors definitely set the standard and some of the higher end models can get super expensive. We have found that the Dell Ultrasharp with PremierColor is an excellent display at a fairly reasonable price.
- 2) **Srgb is our preferred color space.** You will get the best results from McGreevy ProLab if you provide us with files in a Srgb color space profile. We have found that Srgb has a gamut that most closely matches the output of our printers. For all your basic shooting you should set your digital camera to use Srgb. When editing, always open an image file using its embedded profile. If it is not already a Srgb profile you can convert it after it is open.
- 3) **Printer output profiles** are needed so that images coming off the printer will also match this ICC color standard which in turn will match the monitor. We have custom output profiles written for all our printers and paper surfaces. You don't need to do a thing, these profiles are automatically added to your files at the time of printing so your prints will always match the ICC calibration standard and look their best.

A note of caution to the perfectionist; no matter how scientific or precise you become with your color management, it will never be an exact match; but if you create a properly color managed workflow you can expect consistent results within very acceptable parameters.

Eye Ball Method Monitor Calibration: If owning a monitor calibration tool is not in the cards, you can still get your monitor reasonably close to our output using the trusty old "eye-balling" method. We will provide you with an 8x10 test print and the digital file used to make the print. Open the file in Photoshop, make sure it is in the correct color space, and then adjust your monitor until it looks like the print. We provide these "Eye Ball Method Monitor Calibration" kits free, just ask at the counter.