especially metal foils are expensive, foil imaging processes are relatively high cost methods, as typically a roll of foil can only be used once and, when discarded, only a small fraction of the coating will have been used.

OBJECT

The present disclosure seeks *inter alia* to provide a printing method and system that represent an effective alternative to foil imaging but that is more cost effective and environmentally friendly, possibly providing different physical properties to printed matter. Additionally, the method herein disclosed may be used for the preparation of coated substrates.

SUMMARY

According to a first aspect of the disclosure, there is provided a method of printing onto a surface of a substrate, which comprises providing an endless donor surface, cyclically passing the donor surface through a coating station from which the donor surface exits coated with a monolayer of individual particles after each passage, and repeatedly performing the steps of:

(i) treating the substrate surface to render the affinity of the particles to at least selected regions of the substrate surface greater than the affinity of the particles to the donor surface,

(ii) contacting the substrate surface with the donor surface to cause particles to transfer from the donor surface only to the treated selected regions of the substrate surface, thereby exposing regions of the donor surface from which particles are transferred to corresponding regions on the substrate; and

(iii) returning the donor surface to the coating station to render the particle monolayer continuous in order to permit printing of a subsequent image on a substrate surface.

It will be appreciated that as in the present printing method the particles form a monolayer on the donor surface, the particles transferred therefrom also form a monolayer on the selected regions of the substrate surface. The regions of the substrate suitably treated may be said to have a receptive layer.

The above method can be used repeatedly to create multiple copies of a same image or of different images on the relevant surfaces of one or more substrates. A series of identical images printed on a same substrate is typically referred to as a “print job”.