

DIGITALLY DOCUMENTING YOUR WORK

For all works:

1. Rotate your images so they are correctly oriented (no images on their sides or upside down).
2. Use the guidelines below to ensure you take a quality photograph of your work.

2D work

(drawings, paintings, collages, etc)

1. **Set your camera to the largest size it can take and at the finest picture quality setting** before shooting. This will utilize your digital camera to the maximum of its megapixels capability. If necessary, refer to your camera manual and look for where it talks about size of image in pixels for further assistance. Choose the largest size possible, usually ranging from small to large.
2. Find a setting to **adjust the quality of the picture**. Sometimes referred to as the compression of the image, there may be settings such as normal, fine and superfine. Select the setting for the finest picture quality.
3. **Indirect lighting is good and natural indirect lighting is even better.** A room with windows can offer indirect sunlight, even on an overcast day. You do, however, want to avoid sunlight striking your object directly, as this will cause glare.

Now, if you haven't got windows or are stuck in the gloom of monsoon season, artificial lighting will work. In this scenario, two or more light sources – preferably of similar wattage strengths -- should be set at about 45° angles to the piece, off to either side. "Off" as in: out of the peripheral vision of both you and the camera lens. Your goal here is to light semi-naturally but not, I repeat not to cast shadows. Manipulate wisely with an eye toward even lighting. Lighting is extremely important in producing correct color. If you find you need lights, hardware stores often sell clip lights or construction site work-lights for less than those at a photography store.

5. **Set your artwork up to take the picture from its centermost point.** You don't want to be at an angle where you are higher or lower than the center of the artwork, as this will cause your photograph to be distorted.

Get your camera at a right angle to the piece being photographed. If it is hanging on the wall, center *yourself* in order to point the lens squarely – not a degree clockwise or counter-clockwise of square. It's also important that the lens and the work of art are on parallel planes ("plumb") when you

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shoot. Tilting your viewfinder up, down or sideways is not going to achieve the best result.

If the work is a large painting or drawing, lay it flat on the floor and shoot from above looking down (use a chair or step-ladder to obtain ample distance if it's really large). Tilting it against the wall from the baseboard or the edge of a table -- however slightly -- will distort the view.

Additionally, if you are taking a picture of a three-dimensional object that is sitting on a flat surface, position yourself at eye level with the object. This may mean kneeling.

6. Make sure to **use a tripod**, because still photography is best done with a tripod. Lacking this piece of equipment, however, you can do the following to minimize any motion:

- Use both hands to hold the camera.
- Draw both elbows in to your midpoint until they're close to touching one another, then firmly hold elbows and as much of your forearms as possible to your torso/chest. Your hands will be free to aim and shoot, but your arms won't be moving. Much.
- Hold your breath just before and while hitting the shutter.

7. Make sure you **have a solid background**. If your art work is in a frame, remove it from the frame to photograph it. Make sure nothing is in the background of your images - do not take photos of your work against the garage, or sitting atop your couch.

8. **Take many photos of your work using different lighting and settings** to get the best possible results.

9. **Turn OFF the Flash!** Please, unless you know how to "bounce" flash from the camera to a middle surface and then to your object, turn this function off. A flash aimed directly at the piece is, 99 times out of 100, your enemy when photographing art.

The flash function also has an amazing talent for leveling tones, evening out contrasts and wiping away shadows. You -- and anyone else who's looking -- want to see the piece the way the artist composed and executed it, not as your flash decides is optimum.

To illustrate this point, here are two pictures of a drawing of a shoe. The piece was lying on the floor, I was standing on a chair shooting down, and natural light was coming in windows to the top and either side of my drawing. Here are the shots with flash (top view) and without (bottom view):

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Shelley Esaak (American, b. 20th Century); Shoe, 1981, Graphite on heavy paper, 13 x 16 1/4 in.,
© Shelley Esaak; licensed to About.com

In summary, to take the best possible shot of your work of art you need to:

- Make sure your view is square, plumb and level.
- Use indirect lighting.
- Keep your hands steady.
- Turn off your flash

http://arthistory.about.com/od/collecting_and_appraising/l/bl_photoartqt.htm

Here are more quick tips from https://www.callforentry.org/image_prep.phtml

Focus/ Clarity:

* Your images should be clear and in focus. This is especially critical with artwork that has fine detail.

* The more textures and nuances the jurors can see, the more your craftsmanship will be appreciated and noticed.

Size:

* Crop the image so there is not any unnecessary negative space surrounding the piece in the image.

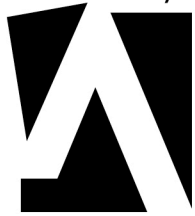
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Consistency:

- * Make sure that all of your images have a consistent feel and look.

Backgrounds:

- * Steer away from distracting backgrounds.
- * If using a background, gradients and neutral colors work best.
- * People, pets, banners, etc., can take away from your work.
- * Each image is your chance to glorify your work. Remove any distracting elements.

Video tutorials:

Photoshop 101: Basics! Learn about the Tools Palette

<http://youtu.be/h8xcuT48QzA>

Photoshop All about Brushes; Editing, Loading, Using

http://youtu.be/7MzW3_SQRcU

Curves :: Photoshop Tutorial Learn the Power of Curves

<http://youtu.be/ORM6AZY19pw>

Photoshop Tutorial Create Stunning Black and Whites

<http://youtu.be/vAEq2idIn-E>

3D work

(sculpture, ceramics, etc)

Anytime you photograph sculpture, you should shoot each piece from a variety of angles and distances.

The purpose of allowing 3-D artists to enter up to three images of their work into art competitions and only allowing 2-D artists one, is so 3-D artists can show more sides and details. Detail images need not render the entire piece in sharp focus, and one of the better ways to show which detail is important, is to concentrate focus there.

Sculptors do not give the whole story away from just one view. To fully enjoy sculpture, we need to see it from different angles. The same goes for photographing it.

Video tutorials:

<http://vimeo.com/48004954>

Email:

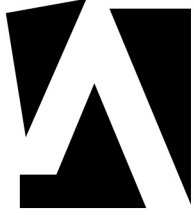
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4D work

(videos, animations, etc)

Please upload any time-based work to YouTube.com or Vimeo.com and send us the link to your piece. Both sites provide simple step-by-step instructions for uploading videos.

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