

Photographing Your Artwork

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Equipment List - as needed

Foam core

Background, if needed – curtain, bedspread, sheet, liner

Chair or bench

Towels

Clothespins or Clips

Lights

Bulb – any type, higher watts or lumens

Ext cord

Camera – Do not use a cellphone

Tripod

White copy paper – blank on both sides

Artwork and Camera Setup

Always use a tripod

Use a contrasting, (relatively) plain background; can be mottled

Camera & Settings (digital b/c it is usually required)

- 10 mpx or higher
- Lens – Do not use a wide-angle lens.
 - Small pieces – macro or normal lens
 - Medium pieces – normal or zoom lens
 - Large pieces – zoom or telephoto
- Software that can control color balance
- Set image at highest resolution

- Remote or set timer for exposures (This will eliminate camera shake.)

Hang or put the work on a stand

- Table
- Easel (artist or plate)
- Chair or bench – a box can be set on it to raise the surface
 - Place rolled towel near seat back
 - Lean foam core, background and piece against back; use clothespins & mat to hold flat, if necessary
 - Use additional towels behind to bring top forward, if needed
- View – Make sure your camera captures the piece with some space around all sides of it to allow for cropping to a particular length/width ratio, especially if this might be printed later.

Camera Setup

2-D

- Straight on camera angle – lens is parallel (barrel is perpendicular) to center of work or edges will begin to converge
- Works on paper, unstretched canvas, textiles and any substrate that might warp, will need support

3-D

- Multiple camera angles – at least 2
- Other equipment might be needed for tall pieces

Lighting

Natural – best, if possible;

2-D

Indirect; over your shoulder; no shadows, unless you need to show texture or other dimensionality (more raking light)

3-D

Indirect to avoid hot spots, especially on horizontal or smooth surfaces, but shadows to define are important; large pieces usually work best with cloudy-bright conditions

Artificial – more control, if needed; large pieces can be more difficult to light because big, strong lighting is needed; any bulb type or combination will work

Photographing

After your artwork and camera are in place, arrange your lighting and test with the camera by taking photographs and reviewing them for the following issues:

1. White Balance – Place a piece of white copy paper (no folds or crumples) in the center of the work and photograph. Adjust the white balance according to your camera's instructions.
2. Alignment – Make sure the edges of your piece are parallel to the edges of the digital image and that you have a little extra space on all sides of the work.
3. Make sure there are no hot spots or shadows on the piece.
4. Check the color. This can be adjusted somewhat with your software but should be close. You can adjust the Lighting and/or White Balance, if needed.
5. Take 6-12 exposures.
6. Repeat steps 1-5 for each piece you are documenting. If you are shooting 3-D work, repeat for each view of each piece. However, we recommend that you check the first set of images to make sure you have something to work with before taking down the piece.

Post-Production

7. Download your images to your computer and Delete any that are obviously bad. Pick one that looks good and enlarge it to 100%, looking at important sections to make sure they look good, especially the focus. (Minor color corrections can be made in editing.)
8. Edit – Select the best-looking image. Others can be deleted and/or saved in a 1st Cuts folder. Edit a copy of your image file for Color Correction, Contrast, and any other issues you feel need

attention. Save any cropping for the last step, as it can clip some of your information. This is your Edited File, which can be copied for any size changes you make, since they're always different.

9. Image Size – If you need a specific size for submission, make a copy of your edited file; crop your image, if needed; and edit the image size. You cannot make your image larger without losing quality so make sure you check the numbers. It's easier to make note of the existing size, which is usually shown in this mode. (EX: 72 px / in; width = 6000 px; height = 4000 px) When you change the px / in, the others will adjust. If either of the other two numbers is less than is needed, your file will not meet the minimum size requirement and you should get help with this copy work. If your file is larger than the maximum, change the one that is closest without exceeding and the other will adjust. If these both meet the parameters, save this edit.
10. Save File – If you need to change the file type, you will select it in the File > Save As process. Changing the file type automatically makes this a copy of the file.