



Photographing Your Work - A Checklist

Great photographs are necessary to get your work noticed: on your webpage, show applications, proposals, promotional mailings, print & digital catalogues, postcards, etc. Professional photographers do this best of course, but if you don't have that option or if you are just using photos to keep track of your work, you can take the photos yourself. Some quick guidelines:

Lighting

- Best: diffused natural lighting
- or use two lights, daylight spectrum, each at 45° angle from painting/object
- Use white panels to bounce light (ie foam core) as needed

Staging

- Plain, simple grey/taupe neutral background works for most
- 3D work cannot be photographed behind glass
- Hang or use an easel for 2D, possibly risers for 3D
- Grouping: if you work in series, take a photo of several pieces together
- in situ: include an extra shot or two of your artwork displayed in a home or office setting

Camera:

- Use remote or self timer to eliminate wiggles and your shadow
- Resolution: take photo in raw with highest resolution your camera will take
- tripod = no wiggles, no blur
 - angle camera parallel to the 2D surface
 - tripod set up to cover most but not all of image (allow for cropping— less lens distortion)
- digital—set to take at the highest resolution
- Do not use flash to avoid glare spots

Processing

- Identify the best shot of each piece
 - Crop: for 3D work leave some background space around the piece; for 2D square the image and crop to the edge of the piece.
 - Use limited tweaks of hue, saturation, contrast, distort to just match the piece. Remember that not all computer settings will display the same and when an image is overly processed it is very obvious

Archiving

- Label consistently, suggestion: Title of Work, date, dimensions (H x W x D).
- Save in 3 sizes: raw, edited for print (hi-res at least 300dpi) and web (72dpi)
- Consistently save each in files according to medium, series, or subject
- For easy retrieval use a database or spreadsheet program and enter info according to your needs
 - for example: Title, Dimensions, Medium, Sold/Available, Location, Display history, Price, series, year completed, notes, short description, date sold, credit line
 - Use a consistent credit line when sending photos (for example: ©Your Name, *Title of Work in Italics*. Medium/technique, dimensions (H x W x D).
- There are several good online Art Archiving sites which may meet your needs

- Customize.** Everyone's creative work has unique qualities. What can you do to best present your work in photographs?