

Documenting Your Art Work

Taking Photographs

If you are using a digital camera:

For TLC extramural feedback, or emailing to a third party - keep the resolution small; set the size of picture to the smallest that you can on your camera.

For your own records – set the size and the quality of the image on your camera as high as you can.

REMEMBER THAT WHETHER YOU ARE SENDING WORK TO YOUR EM MENTOR, TO A GALLERY, COMPETITION OR WEBSITE ETC YOU WANT PEOPLE TO BE ABLE TO SEE YOUR WORK CLEARLY AND GET A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF HOW IT LOOKS IN REAL LIFE.

Lighting:

Natural light: Try to use natural light, either on an overcast day or out of direct sunlight, in the shade (direct sunlight will reflect off the surface). If you are photographing in the shade make sure all your work is in the shade and that there aren't patches of direct sunlight. Overcast days are best however, try to wait until you get one then photograph all your work together.

Artificial lighting: If you can't use natural light try not to mix different types of light, especially if you are using a film camera, as it will affect the colour of your photos. This is because different types of light are different colours, Daylight is quite blue, light bulbs are orange and fluorescent lights can be very green. Try not to combine the following:

Daylight

Tungsten light (normal light bulbs, spotlights)

Fluorescent light - This is best avoided altogether.

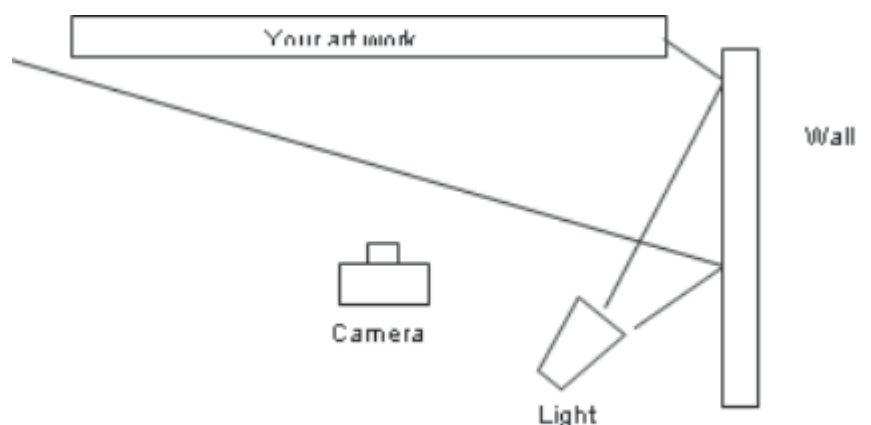
Getting the right colour:

Film cameras - If you are using a film camera, you will need to use a filter to correct the colour imbalance. For tungsten light use an 80B blue filter, or buy tungsten only film. (Tungsten film is tinted blue to compensate for the light being orange). Your camera shop will be able to help you with this.

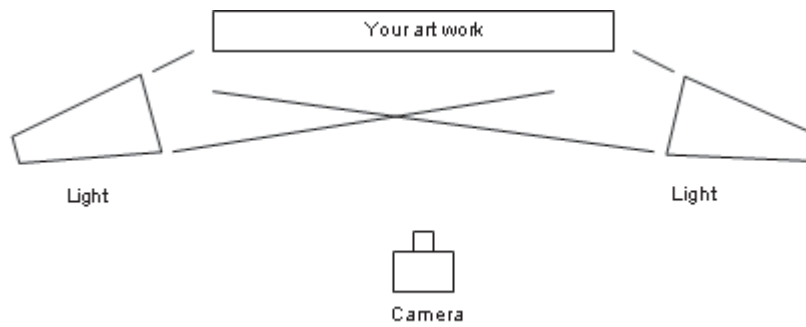
Digital cameras - If you are using a digital camera, either have your white balance setting on Auto, or set it to the type of light you are using.

Using lights: Make sure the light is even across the image. If you find it isn't even or it is reflecting off the paint, try reflecting the light off a white wall, ceiling, or large sheet of white paper, this evens out the light and stops reflection.

See diagram:



If you need to, try putting a light on either side, shining across the surface of the work. Again, make sure both lights are of the same kind for correct colour.



Don't use your camera's flash, as it reflects off your work and causes a 'hot spot' which means you cannot see the whole work.



Framing your work:

Background: Consider the background; try to put a clean white, black or grey background up behind the work.



Scale: Indicate scale. Either include something in the photo, like a ruler for a painting, or a coin for something small – make sure it isn't in front of the work. Or list the scale of all the items you are photographing, keeping a record of this is a good idea anyway, especially if you sell the work.

Framing: Frame your work in the viewfinder or screen so that the sides are parallel to the edges of the screen / viewfinder of your camera. Don't stand side on to the work and shoot it that way, or lean the work against a wall and stand above it, make sure you and the camera are square to your work. Your photo needs to show the whole work, square, as it is in real life.



Correct



Incorrect



Try to leave a little space around the work (as in the above left photograph), so that the whole work can be seen.

Works with glass:

It is very difficult to take photos of works that have been framed with glass as it so reflective. The best idea is take a photo of the image before you frame it.



Focus:

Make sure the photo is sharp. Don't assume that because it looks OK on your camera's screen that it is OK. You can zoom in on the image with most digital cameras but ideally check on your computer before you send it. If you find you are getting blurry pictures you may be getting camera shake because there isn't enough light. Either get more light, wait until you can use natural light, use a tripod, or as a last resort try resting the camera on a table or chair to steady it.



Out of focus



In focus

Close ups:

Take close up shots to show the detail in the work – brush marks, a complex part of the drawing, any area you would like to record particularly well. You will probably find it easier to take sharp photos by getting closer to the work and using the Macro setting on your camera, than by zooming in as using the zoom will cause more camera shake.



Image



Detail



Image



Detail