Creative Connections Exhibition 2025

How to photograph your artwork

Setting up your photo
-- Place your artwork against a plain and neutral background. The key is to get a soft even light across the whole image, with no shadows, reflections or hotspots.
-- Harsh lighting can cast shadows, so try to photograph your work in soft window light or outside in bright overcast conditions.
-- If your work is not mounted or stretched, fix it to a backing that can be hung or leant against a wall or easel.
-- For smaller work, it may be possible to lay it on the floor and shoot from overhead.
-- If the work is propped up on a table, place black fabric under the base of it to avoid colour reflections and light reflected back from a white surface.

Keep your camera steady
-- To ensure that the image is sharp it's important that the camera doesn't move, so it's best to place it on a flat surface or use a tripod.
-- You can use the self-timer on your camera or, better still, a remote or cable release: the delay between pressing the shutter and the image being taken will ensure that the camera is still.
-- If your camera is on a tripod, make sure that you turn off the image stabilisation/vibration reduction (if you have this function) as it will reduce the sharpness of your image.

Make sure the camera is parallel to your artwork
-- The lens must be parallel to the artwork, so make sure that you tilt your camera to match the angle of the work.
-- The centre of the lens needs to be directly in line with the centre of the artwork.
-- The edges of the artwork must be parallel to the camera frame, or you risk losing some of the image area when you crop it on the computer. Many cameras have a grid overlay on the LCD screen which will help you do this.
-- To maximise the resolution of the image, only leave the smallest of margins around the work – just enough to allow for cropping out the background later.

Focusing & Lens
-- AUTO focus should be sufficient on all cameras. If you have difficulty getting the image in focus you may need to switch to manual focus, if your camera has the facility.
-- It's best not to use a wide-angle lens, as it may make the edges of the artwork appear curved or distorted.
-- If you are using an SLR, choose a focal length between 50-100mm and stand back to fit the artwork to the frame. With a compact camera, zoom in to the middle of the range; with smart phones & tablets, it's best not to use the zoom as it will reduce the quality of your image.
-- If possible, put your ISO on the lowest setting – either 50,100 or 200 depending on your camera model.

Getting the colour right
-- If you are using window light make sure any electric lights are turned off, as they will affect the tones in your work. Turn off the built-in flash and try using the daylight setting on your camera. If the white balance is tinting orange or blue use a pre-set lighting environment, if you have one.

Artworks under glass
-- To avoid reflections from the glass, it's best to remove the artwork from its frame. If this is not possible, a polarising filter will help to reduce reflections.

Take several shots
-- Take several shots and keep checking them so that you can make adjustments if needs be. Check that the image is sharp and make sure that it is as true as possible to the artwork.
-- Before you put away your equipment, check your photographs on your computer as you may spot flaws that weren't apparent on the camera.

Scanning your work
-- With smaller two-dimensional pieces where there is no surface texture, it may be possible to use a scanner to copy your artwork to the computer.

Editing
-- Download your images to your computer and use photo editing software to crop out the background. (There are free photo editing packages such as Google Photos (Windows) and Photos (Mac).) Zoom in and inspect the image for flaws. You may want to boost the contrast to bring out the details of your artwork, but do not over edit your image as you want it to be a true representation of the work.

Resizing your image for submission
-- The file size of your submitted image should not exceed 5MB. There are plenty of free online tools that will resize images for you.

Image formats
-- Images must be in one of the following formats: JPG, JPEG, PNG, TIFF, TIF.