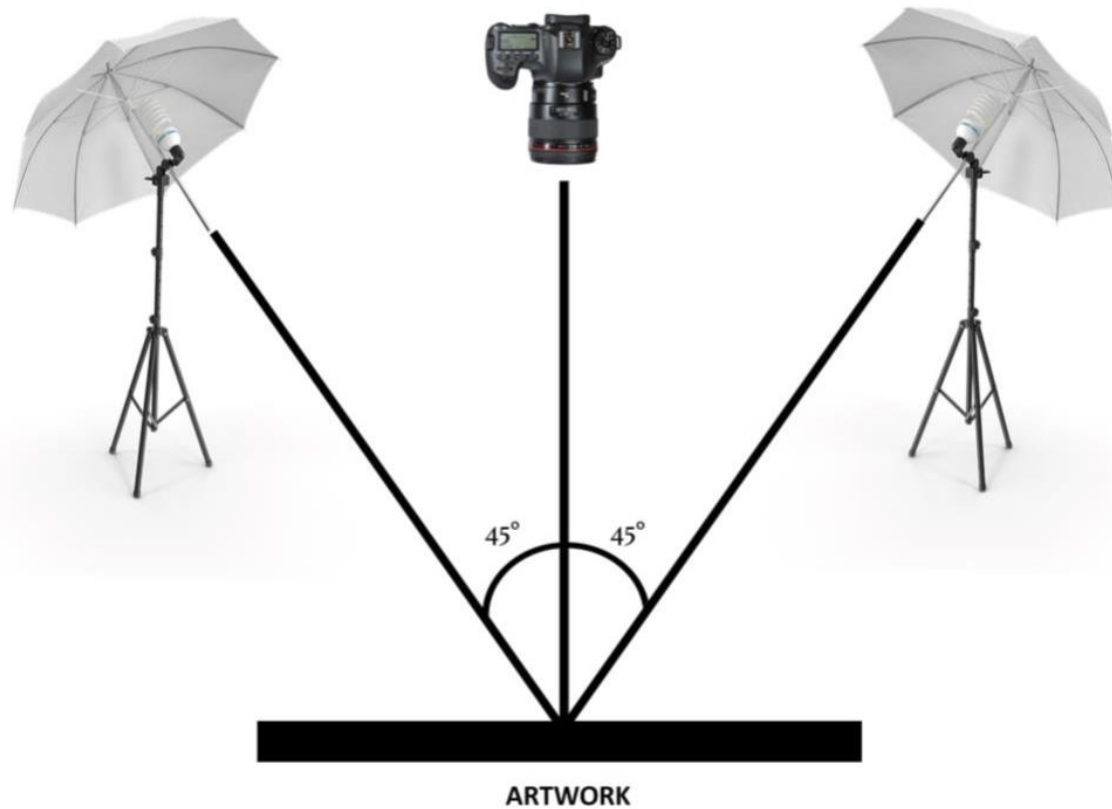


Photo Documentation of Artwork

By Amy Fleming and Jessica Labatte

Basic Set Up



Preparing a Shooting Space

- Find a clean white wall to hang your artwork on.
- If you don't have a white wall, look for the most neutral color wall you can find.
 - Light grey or something similar. No brightly colored walls!
- If you can't find a white wall, place the artwork in front of white paper or foam core large enough to cover the entire background.

Remove all Distractions

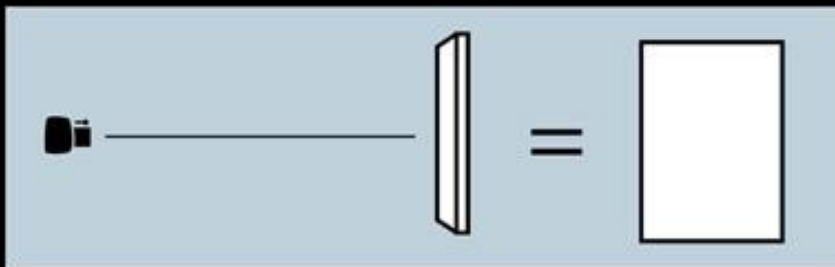
- Make sure there are no other objects in the camera frame.
- Houseplants, cats, lamps, posters, should all be removed.

Hanging Artwork

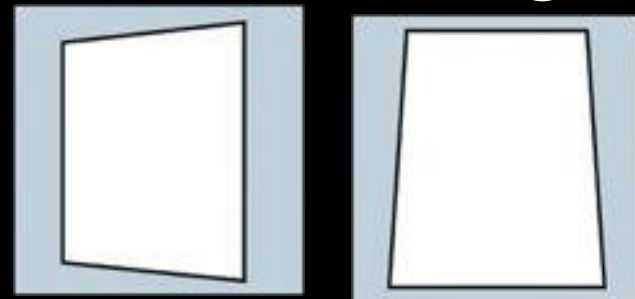
- Hang the art level and flat against the wall.
- Push pins or nails can be used depending on how heavy the artwork is.
- If you because you can't hang the piece, prop it up against a wall.
- Make sure that you center the artwork in the frame of the camera.
- Again, remove any other objects from the frame.

Center Art and Camera

- Position camera and art so there is no distortion.
- Fill the frame with the artwork, leaving minimal white space around piece.
- Make sure all sides are parallel.
- Distortions like these are from not centering artwork and camera.
- If you had to prop the art against a wall, make sure the camera is tilted to the same angle.



Correctly centered image



Images with distortion

Lights

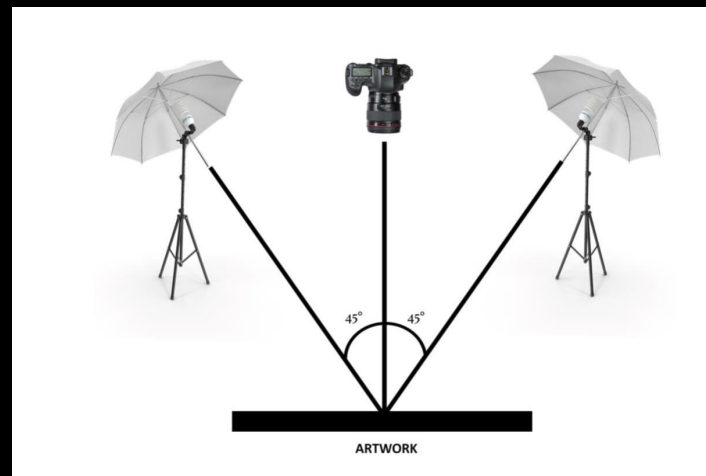
- Best practice uses 2 lights
- Make sure both lights have the same brightness.
- Different types of lights you can use:
 - painting clamp lights
 - desk lamps or floor lamps
 - Shop lights
 - Strobes or tungsten lights designed for photography
- Diffuse lighting is best.
 - This is a soft even light.
 - If you have them, use umbrellas or soft-boxes.

Alternatives to lights

- If you do not have 2 lights of equal brightness, use the sun!
- You can set up a backdrop and the camera outside. Just be mindful of the sun's direction so you do not cast shadows onto the work.
- An overcast day is better for documenting 3-d artworks. This will prevent dramatic shadows that could be distracting.

Light Position

- Lights should be positioned identically at 45 degrees from artwork and camera.
- Lights should be positioned in between artwork and camera but out of the camera's frame.



Tripod

- Use a tripod for your camera.
- Tripods prevent camera shake which causes blurry photographs.
- If you don't have a tripod, set camera on
 - a stack of books
 - a box
 - a table
 - anything that can keep the camera stable



Mobile Phone tripod



Stack of books tripod



DSLR Tripod



Stack of books tripod

Camera Options

Use the best camera you have available

- DSLR Camera
 - Most settings
 - highest quality
- Digital Point and shoot
 - Next best for quality
 - less manual settings
- Mobile phone
 - Easiest to access
 - Lowest quality

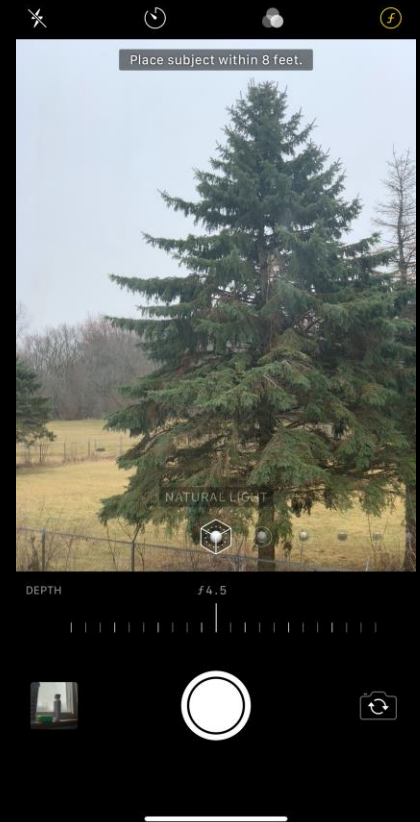


Cellphone Camera

- If you do not have access to a DSLR camera, you can use your cellphone!
- Most cellphones have great picture quality.
- Here are some tips:
 - If you can adjust your aperture (Most iPhones can do this), set it to f/8 or higher.
- Focus - With the camera app open, tap the screen in different spots to focus.
- For up close and detail shots, try using portrait mode.

Cellphone Camera

- How to change the aperture on an iPhone:
- Open up your camera and select "portrait mode"
- Once in that screen, tap the icon on the top right. After that is selected you can slide between different apertures using the bar above the shutter button.



DSLR and Point and Shoot Camera Settings

- Camera: Use a DSLR camera that you can set Manually
- It is important to choose all the correct settings for documenting your art.
- If you don't have any of the following settings, don't sweat it. Choose as many as are available to you.

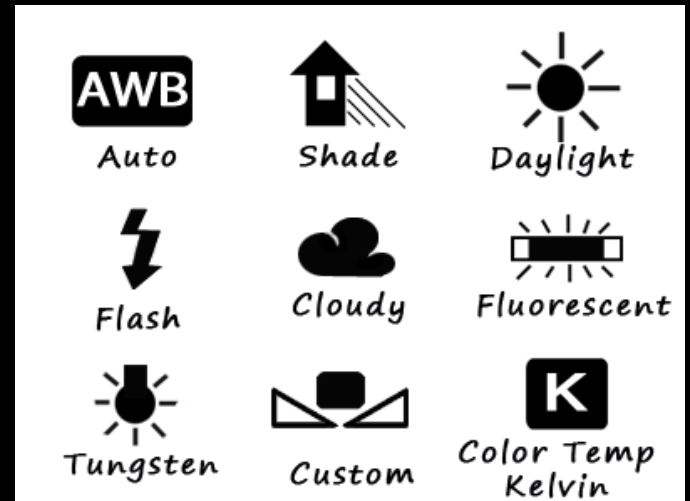
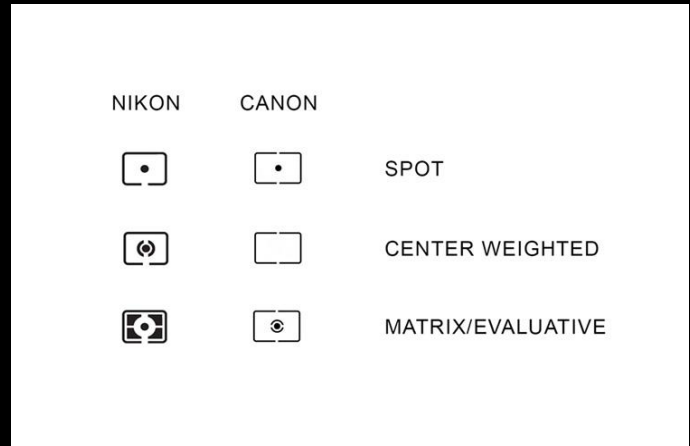


DSLR and Point and Shoot Camera Settings

- Note: If this next section is overwhelming, shoot everything on **Auto**
- Most Point and Shoot Cameras can be used on Automatic settings to shoot good quality pictures.

DSLR Manual Camera Settings

- Image Quality: File Format: RAW
- Color Space: Adobe RGB 1998
- White Balance: Use presets for color temperature of lights or Auto White Balance
- Custom White Balance is the most accurate, if you know how to do this, use this option.
- Metering Mode: Matrix or Evaluative, Grey Card, or Incident reading



DSLR Manual Camera Settings

- ISO: 100, for best image quality.
 - Never use anything higher than 400 or your image will be crunchy and full of digital artifacts.
- Aperture: f/8 or higher; f/22 is preferred, most depth of field possible
- Shutter Speed: Set according exposure meter reading.
- Use camera timer or remote to reduce camera shake.

DSLR Manual Camera Settings

- Exposure: Incident light meter is the very best and can make sure light is even. Reflective in-camera meter. Bracket- intentional over and underexposure.
- Lens Focal Length: 50mm is standard for DSLR, no lens distortion. Leave extra space around the image so you can correct distortion in Photoshop.

DSLR Manual Camera Settings

- Focus:
 - Manual or Auto or both
 - Use printed text to help focus
 - Check focus playback with zoom

Editing Photos

- After you have shot your photos, you will want to do some basic editing to make sure they are ready for publication online or in print.
- Your goal should be to take the best pictures you can in the first place, editing cannot save a bad picture.

Basic Editing Steps

- Import photos into a computer.
- Select the images you would like to use.
- In Photoshop or other editing program follow these steps.
 - Crop image
 - to the edges of 2-d artwork.
 - 3-d artwork leave an appropriate amount of white space around artwork so the piece does not feel crowded in the frame.
 - Adjust Brightness and Contrast as needed.
 - Save file according to file requirements.

Editing for Cellphone Photos

- Use the editing software in your camera app to adjust cropping, brightness, contrast, sharpness, etc.
- Do not "over edit" your images.
- You want a realistic image of your work.
- Do not over saturate colors or add too much contrast.

Advanced Editing of Photos from a DSLR Camera

1. Import RAW images and save as DNG or TIFF
2. Use Camera RAW plugin for White Balance
3. Crop Image – crop to edge of painting or leave a small amount of white border.
4. Levels Adjustment layer for black point and white point
5. Curves Adjustment layer for contrast or refined color correction.

Advanced Editing of Photos from a DSLR Camera

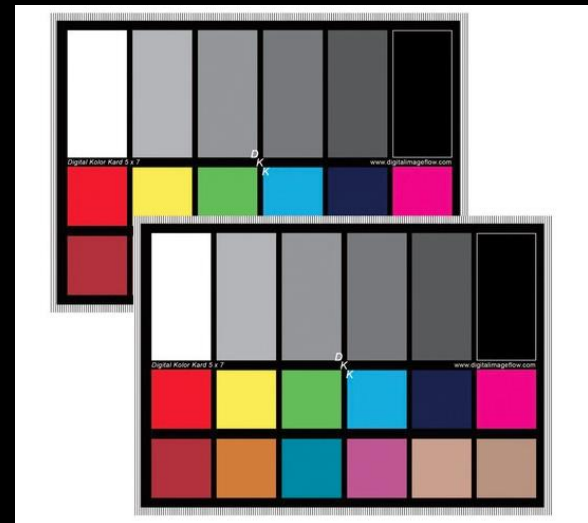
6. Lens correction filter to remove distortions if necessary
7. Zoom to 100% and check for imperfections-clone stamp/heal them out
8. Save master file with layers, save flattened file for print or easy resizing, save as jpg

Other tips

- Artwork behind glass - use a polarizing filter on lens to remove glare.
- Use a color checker card to ensure color accuracy.



Polarizing filter



Color Checker chart