

Tips for Photographing 2D Art

Judging is based on the photograph(s) of the artwork rather than the physical work. The care and time spent capturing good representational images of your work helps judges focus on the merits of the work. A quick internet search provides in-depth guidance on photographing art with a camera or phone.

1. Hang the artwork. Frequently images are submitted of art leaning against a wall or furniture this results in the artwork appearing warped or distorted.
2. Keep it simple. Avoid busy, cluttered or distracting backgrounds. If the artwork is framed be sure there is no glare or shadowing from the glass or frame.
3. Proper Lighting is essential. Take your work outside, or find a room with indirect, natural daylight or use professional lighting. Avoid direct sunlight, a cloudy day or a south facing window can provide excellent filtered light.
4. Skip the flash.
5. Eliminate shadows. Shadows dull colors and distract from the art. Look for, and eliminate anything casting a shadow on the art (including the photographer!)
6. Tripod. When possible use a tripod to eliminate camera shake and distortion.
7. Avoid distortions. Ensure that your camera or phone is aligned with your artwork. A tilted camera or phone results in distorted images. Likewise holding the phone or lens too close to the art may cause the image to appear warped.
8. Lower film speed (ISO). An ISO of 100-200 is best. If shooting manually, with proper lighting, set your aperture (f-stop) between f-8 and f-11. Or, set your camera to Program Mode.
9. Select the correct white balance. Incorrect white balance will result in inaccurate colors.
10. Shoot head on. Position the camera so the lens lines up with the center of the artwork. Ensure the back of the camera is parallel to the artwork.