

# Workflow to photograph art and prepare it for the web

Cal Rice 12/30/2013

## \*\*\*Positioning the art\*\*\*

### \*\*Flat Art \*\*

1. Hang art so it is level in all three directions
2. Light it with soft light - two lights at 45 degrees or in the shade - be sure there are no reflections
3. Be sure no light is being reflected off a colored surface
4. Align camera so it is perpendicular to the art and the lens is aligned with the center of the art
5. Be sure the camera is level in all three directions
6. The image should now look absolutely square in the camera viewfinder
7. Put a white or gray card in the scene beside the art and take the picture including both the art and card in the image

### \*\*3D Art\*\*

1. Place art on surface (small table is good option)
2. Assure the surface and background are complimentary to the art (may want to use fabric)
3. Select the camera position to best convey the 3-dimensions into a 2-dimension image.
4. Walk around or turn the art piece
5. Raise and lower your viewpoint
6. Select the light locations to best convey the 3-dimensions into a 2-dimension image.
7. Consider highlights and shadows
8. Should the light be harsh or soft
9. A dark background (black cloth) will remove shadows from the surface but may let shadows on the art blend into the background
10. Reconsider the camera position.
11. If you are displaying multiple views, select the other camera and lighting positions

## \*\*\*Camera - Taking the picture\*\*\*

### \*\*General\*\*

1. Place camera on solid support (tripod)
2. Set White Balance for whatever light you are using (incandescent, cloudy, etc)
3. Set ISO, 100-200 is best

### \*Exposure\*\*

1. Use Manual, if it is available on your camera (and you figure out how to use it)
2. Use a gray card or cloth to take a meter reading and put it into your manual settings
3. With flat art you can usually get along okay by using auto exposure (P, T, A)
4. 3D art is more challenging as there may be highlights and shadows
5. A fail safe method is to take 3 pictures one for the "correct" exposure, one about one stop overexposed and one about one stop underexposed (this will allow you to select the best exposure on your computer.

## **\*\*Focus\*\***

1. With 3D art decide where you want the focus and force the focus to that plane
2. Decide on desired depth of field and adjust the aperture (large aperture, small number, eg f4, gives least depth of field)

## **\*\*\*Computer\*\*\***

### **\*\*Preparing the Picture\*\***

1. Transfer the pictures into your computer
2. Access a picture in your photo program (Picasa, IPhoto, program that came with your camera, Gimp, Photoshop Elements, Corel Paint, etc)
3. Use the eyedropper (assuming you have one), click it on the gray/white card (this should correct any color variance)
4. Crop the picture so you include only the art work
5. Adjust brightness using the histogram
6. Adjust contrast by eye (and histogram)
7. Adjust the size
  - a. For the Web, your picture size must be in a 4:5 ratio with a maximum size of 1000:1200 pixels
    - i. BCG File specifications for images:
    - ii. Image type = jpg
    - iii. Resolution = 72 (pixel dimension is the most important)
    - iv. Main item image: maximum height or width = 1200 pixels
    - v. Detail images: maximum height or width = 800 pixels
    - vi. Saving jpg files with the pixel dimensions above (72) or slightly larger will provide for the most reliable and efficient uploads. The larger the initial file size, the longer the upload.
8. Save the picture as jpg
  - a. Use SAVE AS (or EXPORT – depending on your software) and assign a new name to the picture if you want to retain the original image separately.
  - b. Make note of the name to assist in identification and sequencing when uploading to your gallery pages.