How To Photograph Right Way

As an artist (other than a photographer) you are required to take pictures of your art in order to submit your art digitally for exhibitions, presentations and for promotional purposes. We see a lot of submissions by artists that have photographed their paintings and due to their sloppiness, the end result simply does not translate into what the artist originally had intended. A good photograph of your art may mean the difference between getting into an exhibition or making that important sale. It is worth it to take the time to get this aspect of your art presentation done the right way.

Here are some tips and pointers that will help you improve your art presentations the next time you are photographing your 2 dimensional art.

1. Photograph your art outside when it is cloudy or with an overcast sky. Indirect light will show your art better than any other light. I prefer that the artwork is facing north when this is done. Shooting inside with a flash is very difficult to do the right way. Outside is a "natural" light and will provide the best representation of your art. Just make sure that it is indirect light.

2. Use a tripod or any other device (boxes, table or ladder) to hold the camera steady.

3. Match the angle of camera with the tilt of the art that is propped against the wall and make sure the camera is focused at the exact center of the art. Do not use a "wide angle" lens. If you have a zoom lens, then use that.

4. If at all possible, when shooting do not have your art framed or with glass in the frame. It is very hard to get away from any reflections in the glass. Also, if the art is frame-less this will help in post production. If it is framed with glass or plastic make sure it is absolutely clean.

5. Make sure that the flash is off the camera. If not, the flash will produce "hot spots" on your art and there is practically nothing that you will be able to do about this.

6. When your art is leaning against the wall and you have focused your camera lens in the manner previously described, the thing to look out for are any distortions of the art and that your edges are straight and parallel. In the view finder match the edges of the art with the inside edges of the frame. If you cannot get it perfect, this can be taken care of in post production.

7. If your camera has different settings like SLR then try different shutter speeds and ISO settings. Try to bracket the camera's settings from high to low and you should be able to produce an image somewhere in the middle of the settings that matches the depth and color of your art. Slower shutter speeds will help with your colors. Experiment with the exposures and shutter speeds if you are doing this for the first time. Better yet, if you have a photographer friend see if they can help you with this.

8. You will need photo editing software to crop the image in order to eliminate any distortions and lines that could not be made exactly parallel. If you do not have an editing program, 2 good free programs can be found at www.gimp.org or at www.sumopaint.com/app I also suggest that you eliminate the frame when you crop the image. Also, use the editing software to balance your colors and contrast. It will never be perfect, but you will be able to get pretty close representation of your art. Make sure that you are producing a jpeg image for the submission process as this is the accepted standard.

Overall, an image of your art will never be perfect but with trial, error and experimentation you should be able to present your art in a better manner than you were previously doing. Remember, you are competing with other artists that are sweating over this aspect of presenting their art, as they know how important it is. It is time for you to take your art presentation to a higher level. Good luck!

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