How to: Photograph Your Artwork

- PAFA Students - reserve time in the Media Lab (Photo Studio - Hamilton 512) to photograph your work: *www.pafa.org/education/library/photographing-editing-work*

- *So why do you even want to use a camera to take photos of your work?*
  - Using a camera gives you a high quality image, with the ability to accurately edit, zoom in, make prints, and more! Your phone is great for quick snapshots, but is limiting.

2-D Artwork

Paintings

-hang on the wall, place on a pedestal, or place on a table with a paper backdrop

Prints

-Hang/tape on the wall

-Scan up to 12"x17" on scanner in library or labs.

-**Downshooting:** Shoot downward with the overhead stations in the Media Lab, or into the "Studio In a Box" (both options have lights already set up), or onto the floor.

-Make sure that camera is **centered** and **parallel** to your work (especially for 2D work)!

3-D Artwork

Sculptures/3D Work

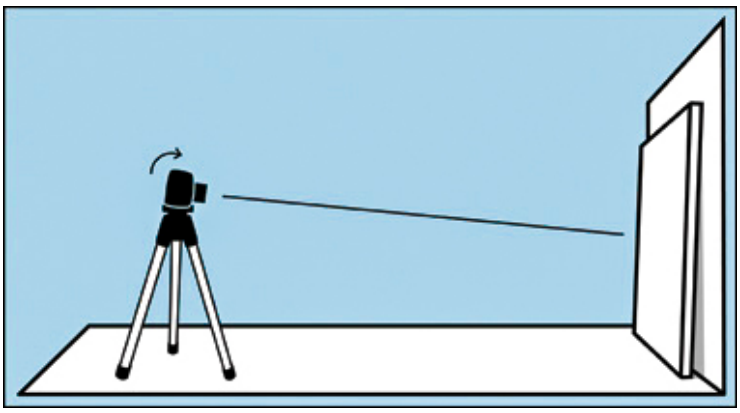
-set up on pedestal or table with a paper backdrop

-For small/medium sized objects you can use the "Studio in a Box" in the Media Lab, which already has a backdrop (white, black, gray, or blue) and lights. This is also great for reflective objects.

-Take multiple shots from various angles

-We offer multiple colors of large paper backdrops: *White, Black, Gray, Green-Screen*

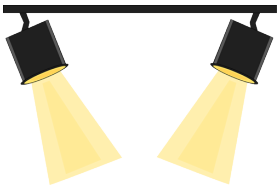
You can take advantage of dramatic/ uneven lighting to accentuate sculptures



Installations

-Have a wide-angle lens handy so that you get wide shots with multiple walls in frame

-If you bring lights to the space, try to match the color temp (cool, warm, etc) of the light already in the space.



How to: Photograph Your Artwork

Lighting your work

Now that you have your work set up, it is important to have great lighting! Turn off overhead/extra lights and use a light kit:

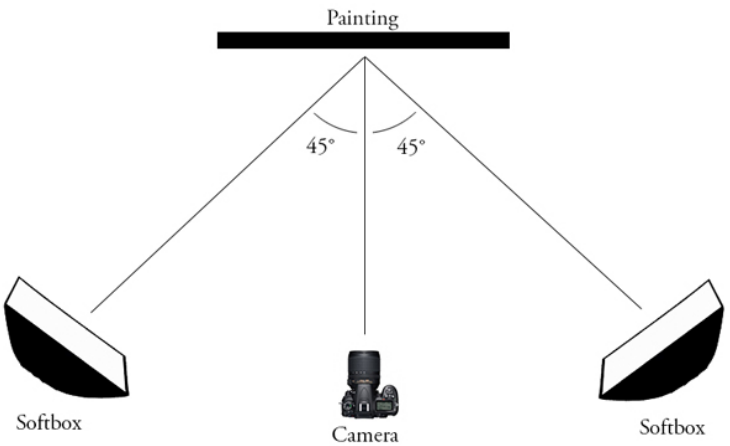
-**LEDs** - (aka Continuous Lighting) We offer LED lights that are easy to control and stay on constantly. They can also be used with filters to change the colors.

-**Strobes** - (aka Monolighting) We also offer strobes (flashes of light) in the Media Lab that can give you more control over your image, because with more light, you can have a sharper and less grainy image. These are also great to use for oil paintings because you can bounce the light, providing much less glare.

-**Hot Lights** - We offer hot lights that can provide you with bright lighting that is continuous. However, watch out, they can make it toasty!

-We offer *LED lights* and *Hot Lights* to check out from the library for studio & home use!

-Tip: make sure your lights are the same distance from your work as the camera, the same distance from the wall, and angled 45 ° towards your work to minimize glare.

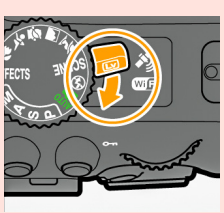


Set Up your Camera

- Use a Tripod!
- Careful Shake Test - while holding on, making sure everything is steady
- **Camera Strap** - Use when moving the camera around
- **Battery & SD Card** locations are on the side or bottom of the camera
- Use Remote **Shutter Release** to prevent motion blur while using tripod
- Delete Everything Off SD Card: If you are using a shared camera, you should do this **before** you start, so you don't run out of space halfway through the shoot. Do this in *Menu > Setup Menu > "Format Memory Card"*

- First thing - Make sure you are shooting in **RAW** image quality. You can do **RAW + JPEG** if you would like to have a thumbnail to view. RAW gives you the best quality and least amount of compression - making editing easier because will not lose the detail in those highlights or shadows, and can zoom in with high quality. Do this in *Menu > Image Quality* or *with the "i"/"Q" button*

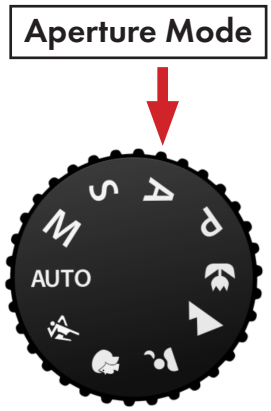
- If you are using a zoom lens, ZOOM into your image. Leave space for cropping.
- Use "Live View"/LV to view your image through the Camera screen

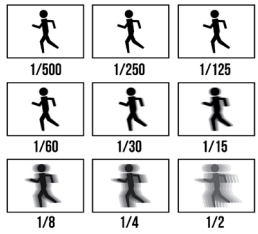


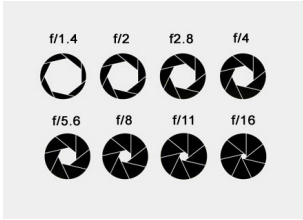
How to: Photograph Your Artwork

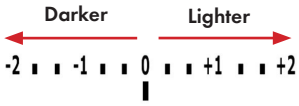
Camera Settings

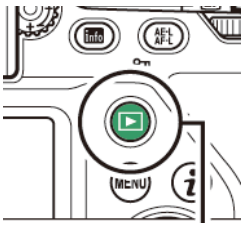
- I suggest **Aperture (A)** mode for shooting work. Manual gives you full control, but you can choose Aperture mode to select your aperture and ISO, and then the camera will adjust the shutter speed.
- These settings (*The Exposure Triangle*) control the light in your image: **Shutter Speed**, **Aperture** (f-stop), and **ISO**.
- **Shutter Speed** is how fast your camera takes the picture: How fast the shutter opens and closes. Faster = Less Light. Slower = More Light. *With a Tripod and Shutter Release or Timer, you can go slower without motion in the photo.*
- **Aperture** is how large the diaphragm in your camera opens. Just like your pupil! The smaller the hole (larger the number), the more of your image that is in focus. This is why the best Aperture for Flat 2-D work is f/8 to f/16. For 3D Objects, aim closer to f/16.
- **ISO** - the sensor in your camera - tells it how much light to absorb. Best ISO is 100-400. The lower the number, the less grainy your image will be. Try not to go over 1600 ISO or else details will be fuzzy when you zoom in.
- If you are shooting **Manual Mode**, check your **light meter**! You want the marker to be in the middle: Left - Darker. Right - Lighter. If you are using Strobe, you will need to underexpose - (light meter - left).
- **White Balance** - AUTO. White Balance is how the camera corrects for different temperatures of light. Take an extra picture of your work with a **Gray Card** in front of it - this is for Accurate Colors.
- **Focus** - Use Auto Focus (AF) (change this on the Lens) and press the shutter button down halfway to focus. Then, you can switch to Manual Focus (MF) so it doesn't keep trying to refocus. You can also zoom in on the Display to make sure it's focused! **Check** the focus every time you move the object, the camera, or start shooting a new object.
- Shoot your image! Use the Playback button to make sure that it looks how you would like. You can zoom in on this image as well.
- *Tip:* If you are using **Aperture mode** and your image is looking too dark or light, you can use **Exposure Compensation** to override the Camera's Automatic Settings.











Contact • PAFA Library • library@pafa.edu • (215) 972 - 2030 • www.pafa.org/education/library