



The Pastel Society of Victoria, Australia Inc.

How to Take Photos of your Artwork

Most of us have seen photos of artwork that doesn't always do a painting justice. Caroline Lewallen has given us 3 reference photos that demonstrate what to aim for when photographing your artwork.

Example 1. Not Suitable

This photo shows the matt surrounding the pastel painting as well as areas in the background of the room where the photo has been taken. There are areas of light and shade across the painting, due to the direction of the light from where the painting has been positioned.



Example 2. Not Suitable

This photo shows a smaller area of the matt surrounding the pastel painting and is not acceptable for when entering into Competitions or Awards. Note the dark and light patches of light across the painting surface.



Example 3. Suitable

This photo shows the best outcome for presenting your artwork. The image is free of any frame or matt and is taken 'square on'. There are no obvious changes in light on the painting surface.



VicPastel News magazine article

Some wonderful how-to's, tips & tricks were published in our VicPastel News magazine, June July 2020 edition 'How to take great photos of your artwork', and we include this article for you in the following pages.

Important Information

How to take great photos of your artwork



Your works are high quality, so photographs of them should be, too. Whether you're preparing an entry for a fine art competition, putting together a portfolio to impress gallery directors, agents, or dealers, or gathering images you want to use in publicizing your work, you need to know how to take great photos of your artwork.

If the photo is too small or out of focus, or if there are problems with color, lighting or shadows, then you are not showing a true representation of your work. Your piece will appear poorly constructed, the colors will be misrepresented – you may as well be showing a picture of somebody else's artwork.

Remember, this will often be the first sample of your work that people will see, and if the images aren't good enough, it will more than likely be the last.

Poor lighting can result in dark images. (Keep reading to see a perfect photo)

In many ways, the best approach is simply to enlist the services of a professional photographer. Of course, not everyone has the budget or resources to hire a professional photographer. If you aim to take the photographs yourself, be sure to review the following tips and pointers to make sure that your final products are as true-to-life as possible.

Getting ready to photograph your artwork

Buy or Borrow a Good Digital Camera.

Make sure your camera is fully charged and don't forget the memory card.

Your camera should have a few basic settings:

- Ability to select ISO (always use the lowest ISO setting. The higher the ISO number the grainier the image. Some recommend a setting of 200 ISO)
- Good Auto Focus
- Ability to adjust white balance – The type of light you're shooting in may produce white light with slightly different color tints.

The white balance setting make white objects appear white in your images.

The auto balance setting is the simplest option

Buy or Borrow a Tripod

- A tripod is essential to taking a good in focus photograph of your artwork
- A tripod is the ideal way for you to make sure that your camera is aligned to your artwork
- Using a tripod allows for zero camera movement which in turn will result in the sharpest image possible

Setting the Scene to Photograph your Artwork

Positioning

- Pay attention to the way you're positioning your artwork.
- Avoid shadows and messy framing, by making sure that the piece is level against the wall.
- Whenever possible, you should fill the frame with your work, trying not to show any background.
- When your artwork is non-rectangular or 3-D keep the background simple without distractions.
- Frame the piece against a neutral color – white is the perfect background. Colorful backgrounds can alter the color of your piece by reflecting onto it



Lighting

Lighting is extremely important when taking a high quality photograph of your artwork. It can have an enormous impact on almost all aspects of the resulting image.

- Use bright, indirect natural lighting.
- Natural light fluorescent bulbs can also be a good choice,
- **Avoid** deep shadows and dappling effects.
- **Position the lights** and the artwork carefully before taking the photo.
- **Make sure there are no shadows** concealing parts of the piece, and that there are no problems with high contrast, which will give you an image with very

dark or very light patches that will detract from the impression of the work itself.

- **Soften the glare and intensity** by diffusing the light source. For example: by bouncing it off a white surface such as paper.
- **Avoid direct sunlight;** aside from the fact that it's probably not good for your artwork, direct sunlight can create what are known as 'hot spots' on reflective surfaces.
- **Do not use a Flash;** Flash can also create a reflective "Hot Spot". It is extremely difficult to predict the full impact of using a flash, and you don't want to risk highlighting the wrong areas of your images.
- **Avoid mixing light sources,** as different style bulbs give off different colors.

If the work you are photographing is behind glass, it is best to take out of the glass. If you can't you will need to angle the light and camera to minimize reflection and glare.

You can purchase professional lighting sets at most online retailers, which include light stands and umbrellas to reflect and soften the light.

Setting up your camera to photograph your artwork

An out of focus photo does not show a true representation of your work



Be sure to clean your lens. Having a speck of dust on the glass can mess with your camera's automatic focus in the most annoying of ways.

The tripod should be set so that the camera is the same height as the center of your artwork.

If your work needs to be on a slant to stand up against the wall – tilt your camera to match the angle.

Set the zoom lens so that there is minimal distortion (For two-dimensional art wide angles distort the images).

Position the camera at some distance from the object, and then zoom in as necessary. This might not sound obvious, but it will give you far greater control over the images you can take, and will help you maintain your own perspective.

How to take great photos of your artwork continued

You can try different levels of zoom for different shots. However, note that when your camera switches over from optical zoom to digital zoom, you may be risking the sharpness and overall quality of the image.

Set the ISO to the lowest setting (200 ISO is often recommended).

Using the RAW setting of your camera. You can read more about the different options here, but essentially RAW will mean that you have all of the information saved, in as high a quality as possible. From there, you can work with the images and re-size them or make other changes, if necessary.

Photographing your Artwork

Make sure the camera is firmly attached to the tripod.

It doesn't matter how steady your hand is, or how nicely the photos from your mobile phone come out, you need to ensure that the camera stays particularly steady if you want to get a really good photo of your work.

Use the timer so that the shot is taken shortly after you've pressed the button, so that you won't accidentally cause the camera to shake.

The best way to ensure consistency throughout your portfolio is to take the

photographs of each piece in the same photo-shoot. It may be tempting to snap your pics the minute each piece is complete, but when you aren't taking each photo under the same conditions, you'll find a noticeable inconsistency throughout. Similar exposure, contrast, lighting, and color correction means there's less to distract the person leafing through your portfolio, so that they can concentrate on the works themselves.



Take lots of shots – and choose the best.

With digital photography, you can take many images without adding to the expense or even the difficulty of the session. It's a good idea to take a lot of photographs, so that you can choose the best ones later. You might have

thought you got the perfect shot, but it could turn out to be overexposed, or perhaps a movement somehow ruined the image at just the wrong time. Don't trust the preview on your camera's screen – this preview is often too small to show some of the most important details.

Label Your Photographs

Make things easy for yourself; label each image clearly, consistently and with full detail while you still know all these things without having to think about it. Title, medium, dimensions and year are all pieces of information you're likely to need attached to these images at some point, so if you include them in the image title or description now, you'll save yourself time and effort later.



Guidelines for the PSVA advertising

Eckersley's Members' Encouragement Awards(MEA)

Members vote for their choice. Each General Meeting, members are invited to bring one pastel painting, framed or unframed, for entry into one of these categories:

EMERGING: for artists who have not won any major prize in any exhibition or have been a student of less than two years.

INTERMEDIATE: for artists who have not won a major prize in any PSVA exhibition or have won the Emerging Section two years in a row.

ADVANCED: for artists who have won the Intermediate section for two years in a row, or who have won major prizes in any exhibition.

PROFESSIONAL: those who teach, demonstrate or earn their income from showing or selling. Their art will not be judged by the members, but they are encouraged to bring along their work to give inspiration to others. They are also invited to give their opinions or appraisals when asked, for those less experienced.

PLEASE ADDRESS all correspondence to:
PSVA President: Isabelle McKenzie:
psvapresident@gmail.com

PSVA Secretary: Lyn Leine: lynleine@bigpond.com
Sponsors/Commercial Advertising:
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Membership Secretary: Linda Finch,
PO Box 1274, Doncaster East, Victoria, 3109

Newsletter deadlines

VicPastel News is produced bi-monthly and is delivered either by post or electronically. For an electronic copy of this newsletter send your request to the Editor via email: annetay1@msn.com

Deadlines for articles and advertising is the 10th of the month prior to publication:

January	–	(February/March)
March	–	(April/May)
May	–	(June/July)
July	–	(August/September)
September	–	(October/November)
November	–	(December/January)

Copy is cordially invited from anyone on subjects suitable for inclusion in the magazine – such as: artist's profile with pictures; art books you have read; your studio – how it is arranged, etc.; exhibitions you are in or have seen, or reports on anything you would like to write about.

All members may advertise up to a ¼ page format once a year, free of charge, in the *VicPastel News*; or (on a first come first served basis), you may have your printed DL size invitation card included within the newsletter.

You may have your own printed flyer inserted into the magazine.

Both these options can only be used once per year, then normal advertising rates will apply.

General Advertising Guidelines

Please supply artwork as a high quality PDF to the editor, via email or on disc. Artwork **must** comply to one of the following layout sizes:

General Advertising

An advertisement must meet minimum depth of 40 mm and a max depth of 269 mm. Maximum width of 186 mm and minimum of 57.5 mm.

- 1 Column is 57.5 mm wide
- 2 Columns is 121 mm wide
- 3 Columns is 186 mm wide

The following rates apply:

- 1/8 page \$25
- 1/6 page \$30
- 1/4 page \$40
- 1/3 page \$50
- 1/2 page \$60

Sponsors Classifieds

1/8 page	W 94.5 mm x H 64.5 mm
1/6 page	W 94.5 mm x H 87.5 mm
1/4 page Landscape	W 186 mm x H 62 mm
1/4 page Portrait	W 94.5 mm x H 134 mm
1/3 page Landscape	W 194 mm x H 87.5 mm
1/2 page Landscape	W 194 mm x H 134 mm
1/2 page Portrait	W 94.5 mm x H 273 mm

Please note the Editor reserves the right to refuse any advertisements that are not art related.

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