

## DIGITIZING YOUR ARTWORK Toolkit

### What is my intention?

Is this documentation for:

- A proposal
- A website
- Social media
- Items for sale (i.e. prints and product shots)

Not all documentation needs to be done the same way. Knowing your intention for documenting your work can help you decide the best way to do it. Some types of documentation require more time and effort than others. Knowing *why* will help you figure out *how*.

### Things to consider

For proposals and websites:

- Artwork should be evenly lit and presented on a clean white backdrop.
- Work should hang flat against a wall or stand upright for structural/3D work.
- Never lean your work or shoot from dramatic angles.
- Highlight the work. Do not stylize your images.
- Take images that show the whole artwork.
- Use additional images to show specific details, if necessary.

For social media:

- Good lighting is still important. You always want your work to be the star of the image.
- It's okay to show work in process (i.e. a started painting on an easel).
- Square or 4:5 ratio images work best for Instagram.
- Videos and time-lapses are great ways to add extra documentation and bring engagement to your social media platforms.



Prints and product shots:

- High resolution photos of your art are a great way to create prints and other merchandise with your artwork.
- For art prints, your work should be well lit and captured head on and in high detail (the same as shots for your website or proposals). Crop and remove the background.
- Product photography can be more playful (i.e. t-shirts or ceramics).
- Consider lighting and background, and make sure your item is still the main focus of the image.
- Highlight details.

**What tools do I need?**

<b>Equipment</b>	Tripod
	Phone stand
	Lights with daylight bulbs
	Smartphone, DSLR or Scanner
<b>Apps/software</b>	Adobe lightroom
	Snapseed
	VideoShop (iPhone)
	Squaready/SquareadyV
	Later app



### DSLR vs Smartphone vs Scanner

Professional art documentation is typically done by a professional photographer with a pro-model DSLR camera. This will give you the very best results, but it can also be quite expensive. However, it is possible to get excellent results with a less expensive DSLR or even your smartphone. The main things to keep in mind are:

- Set up and light your artwork properly.
- Make sure your images are the right resolution.
- Edit your photos using a program like Adobe Lightroom.

	Pros	Cons
<b>DSLR</b>	- Best image quality	- More expensive - Harder to learn how to use
<b>Smartphone</b>	- Convenient - Easy to use	- Lower image quality
<b>Scanner</b>	- High detail/image quality	- Can only capture 2-dimensional objects - Only works for small artwork

### Scanning

- Scanning is a great option to capture professional, high detail images of your work. Most neighborhood print/copy shops will offer a scanning service, and it is relatively affordable (usually \$1-2 per image).
- The downside is that this doesn't work for 3-dimensional work, and most places can only scan work up to 11" x 17" in size.
- For small, 2-dimensional works scanning can be a great option, so keep it in mind!

### Video Documenting Artwork

There are certain times where you may want a video of your artwork. Video can be a great way to highlight dynamic aspects of your work, show scale or dimension of 3D works, or record your creative process.



### Things to keep in mind:

- Your video doesn't need to be "artsy". Keep it simple.
- Lighting and background is important. Make sure your work is well lit and choose a simple background that will not take attention away from your work.
- A simple formula to follow for your video is start with a wide shot that shows the whole work, move in closer to get shots that show details or dynamic elements, and end with one more wide shot that shows the whole work again.
- It is a good idea to use a tripod when shooting video to avoid shaky video. You can also use a selfie stick or a small phone stabilizer if you are recording on a smartphone.
- Always try to record video in 1080p when possible. This is the ideal resolution for viewing on the web or social media.

### **Digital Image Quality**

Image resolution is an important thing to consider to make sure you are presenting the best quality images of your work. Typically, digital image quality is measured in "Dots Per Inch" (DPI).

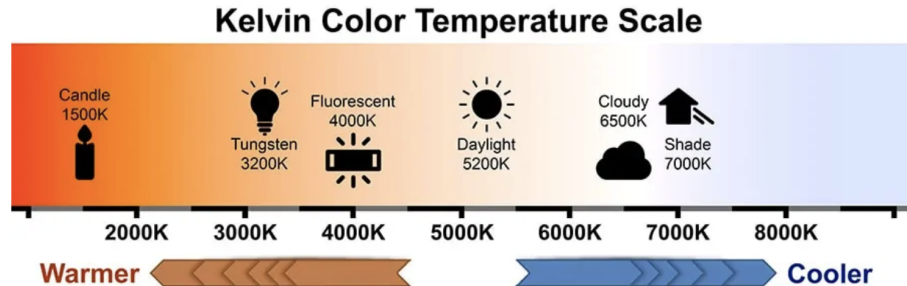
- For websites and social media 72 DPI is the standard quality.
- For any print materials your images should be 300 DPI.

Most smart phones produce images that are 72 DPI while DSLR cameras will usually produce images that are 300 DPI.

***Tip:** If you want to print an image from your smartphone, you can use a program like Adobe Lightroom or Photoshop to increase the DPI of your image.*

### **Light Temperature**

When setting up lighting to document your work, you need to consider the type of light you are using. You want to use "Daylight" bulbs that give off light that is close to what we experience outside on a sunny day. This is considered the most natural type of light so it will not have any effect on the colors in your artwork. Color temperature is measured in "Kelvins" (K). Daylight bulbs have a temperature of 5000K.



## How to Set Up Your Artwork

### Hanging Artwork (2D)

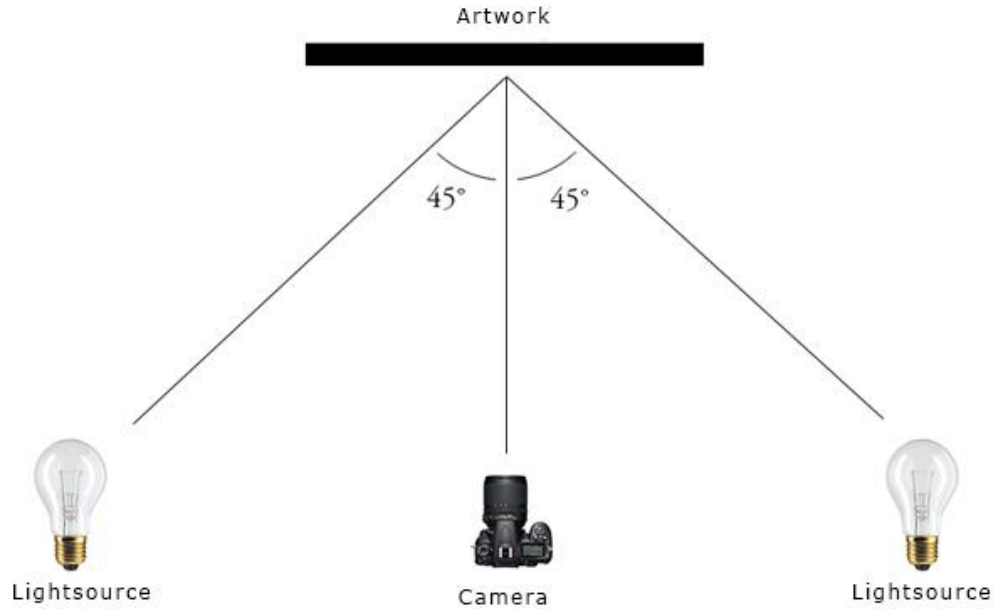
- Place or hang your art on a flat surface like a white wall, avoid easels and surfaces where you lean artwork.
- Make sure the art is level (please use a level!).
- Measure up from the floor to the middle of the art. Take note of that height.
- Set tripod height to the middle of the artwork.
- Position the camera to line up with the center of your artwork; do not shoot on an angle.
- Clean up white wall, take out pins, clean wipe with Windex, etc.

### Setting up 3D artwork

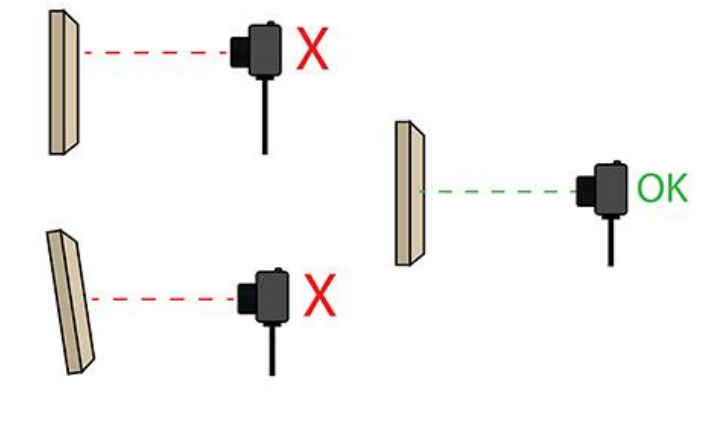
- Use a seamless backdrop (either blank paper or fabric, in white, grey or black).
- Don't place your art too close to the background; give it some space.
- Set up one or two light sources, then move around one of the lights to start creating shadows.
- Once you have reached a desired shadow, leave the light and begin shooting.
- Some art pieces need reflectors, bounces or modifiers to create dimensionality. If needed, add a third light.

### Avoiding Glare and Distortion

To avoid glare on your artwork, make sure your artwork is evenly lit. You can do this by using two equal lights placed on a 45 degree angle from your work.



To avoid distortion of your artwork, it is important to have your camera lined up directly with the center of your artwork. Your artwork should also be level and hang flat against a wall. If you are documenting 3D or sculptural work, make sure that it is on a level surface and try to line your camera up with the vertical and horizontal center of the object you are photographing.





## Workflow

- Decide what type of documentation you are doing (website/proposal, social media, or product shots).
- Set up your artwork.
- Set up your lighting (daylight bulbs are best!).
- Take your photos (be careful to avoid distortion and glare).
- Select your best images.
- Edit the selected images using an app on your phone or computer.

## Additional Resources

Editing a photo on your phone with Lightroom:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Ru2PSSvYmg>

Documenting artwork with a phone

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0g4a1Ge-Ds>

Recording a timelapse of your painting with your phone

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U477Ey6kxao>

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*This guide was created by [Adeyemi Adegbesan](#) and [Samar Hejazi](#) for Making A Living Making Art, presented by Toronto Arts Foundation's [Neighbourhood Arts Network](#) in partnership with [STEPS Public Art's CreateSpace Residency](#).*