

How to take good quality digital photographs of your artwork

1. Choose your camera

In order to create your own jpgs, you will have to use a digital camera. The more expensive SLR's can take better pictures--crisper, with truer colors--but any digital camera will suffice.

2. Set up lighting

Getting a broad, uniform and diffuse light on an art work is the absolute key to taking good art photos. It usually works best to photograph your work outside on an overcast day. If there is no other choice but to shoot on a sunny day, choose a completely shaded area (such as the north side of your house) or late in the day. For indoor photography, it's best to work between 11 am and 2pm on a sunny day, working in the brightest room in your house. Do not place the artwork in direct sunlight. Turn on all overhead lighting; if this is not enough light, you can set up directional lighting to bounce off the walls near your artwork. Never use a flash. Photograph your work before it is framed behind glass or varnished, since these surfaces reflect the light and will create glare.

3. Position the artwork

For two-dimensional artwork, put a piece of cardboard or a sheet behind your artwork--either black or white, depending on what is best to create contrast. If your artwork is flat and small enough, you may be able to lay it flat on the ground (on top of the cardboard) and point your camera straight down. If not, you will need to place it on an easel or against a wall at a 90 degree angle. For three-dimensional work, it's best to use a heavy white or black paper (or railroad board) that both sits under the piece and bends up the wall behind it. This will create a continuous background behind your work.

4. Position the camera

To prevent blurred images it's best to put the camera on a tripod. If you do not have one, support the camera against something solid, like a table top or a broomstick. Position it so that it is directly inline with (or above, for artwork on the ground) your artwork--not angled up or down which will distort the image. It often works best to put the camera about 3-4 ft from the artwork--not too close, as this will create distortions, and some lenses cannot focus well if the object is very close.

5. Choose your camera settings

Digital camera settings can take some time to learn. In general, F/stops are fractions, so bigger f/ numbers mean smaller apertures (holes) and less light.; shutter speeds

are also expressed as fractions, so bigger numbers mean faster shutters and less light. You may have to experiment with these until you decide what works best for you. Most cameras have some quick settings for different conditions (cloudy days/sunny conditions, close-ups or distance shots) which you can try.

Make sure your camera is set for the kind of light you are using: daylight or cloudy for outdoors, tungsten for indoors. Digital cameras often have difficulty with auto white balance (AWB) so it's best to set this manually.



Incorrect white balance

Correct white balance

It's a good idea to take multiple pictures with different exposures to make sure you get the best shot. Remember to turn your flash off.

6. Crop your shot

For photos of large paintings, zoom in to fill up your screen with the artwork. For smaller pieces, you might try to take a wider shot, and then crop out the background later using a computer program such as Paint or Photoshop. If you do not have any programs to crop your images, just make sure that the cardboard or sheet behind the artwork fills the whole background.

7. Focus, focus, focus

All auto focus cameras focus before the photo is actually taken. Generally, the focusing takes place when you press your camera's shutter release button halfway down, which causes the camera's lens to focus on whatever is in the center of the frame. If your artwork has no clearly defined edges, you need to force the camera to focus on the frame or the edge of the artwork. Do this by initially putting one side of the frame dead center in your viewfinder, and press halfway down on the shutter button. This locks in the focal distance without actually taking the picture. With your finger still holding the button halfway down, reposition the artwork in the center and take the picture by pressing the rest of the way down on the button.

Copy the images from your digital camera to your computer

After you take pictures with your digital camera, you need to copy the pictures from your camera to your computer so you can email them. Some digital cameras come with software that helps you copy pictures from your camera to your computer. You can use this software, but you don't have to. Windows XP can copy pictures to your computer without requiring additional software. (We will have instructions for Apple computers available soon!)

Here's how to copy your pictures using Windows XP:

1. Connect your camera to your computer.



You can do this in two different ways:

Use a USB cable. Most digital cameras come with a cable that connects the camera to a USB (Universal Serial Bus) port on your computer.



Use a memory card and memory card reader. A memory card reader is a piece of hardware that plugs right into your computer. You remove the memory card from your camera and insert it into your memory card reader, a slot usually located in the front of your computer.



Memory cards come in 2 different sizes; you must have a computer with the same size slot as your card.

2. Tell your computer what you're planning to do. Once you've connected your camera to your computer or inserted your memory card into your memory card reader, Windows XP will detect the connection and ask you what you want to do with your pictures. **If you**

connected your camera with a USB cable, click Microsoft Scanner and Camera Wizard, and then click OK.



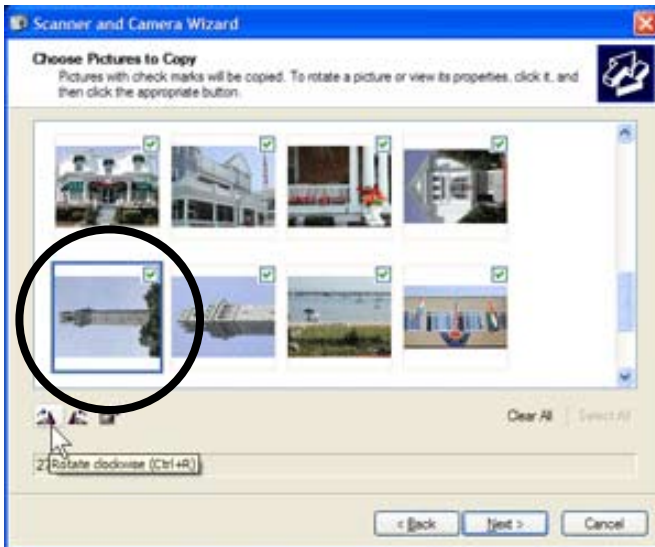
If you are using a memory card reader, click Copy pictures to a folder on my computer using Microsoft Scanner and Camera Wizard, and then click OK.



When the Scanner and Camera Wizard appears, click **Next**.

4. Review and rotate images (if necessary)

All of the pictures in your camera (or in your camera's memory card) are now displayed on the Choose Pictures to Copy page. If there are pictures you do not want to copy to your computer, just uncheck box next to those pictures. You can also rotate pictures that you took while holding your camera vertically: first click the picture, and then click either the **Rotate clockwise** or **Rotate counterclockwise** button on the lower-left side of the page. When you have reviewed the pictures for downloading and rotated your vertical pictures, click **Next**.



5. Create a new folder for the images

On the Picture Name and Destination page, **type a name for the group of pictures**. (This name, plus a number to differentiate each picture, will be applied to each of the pictures you download; for example, if you name the group "Acrylics," the pictures will be named "Acrylics001," "Acrylics002," etc.) Click **Browse**, and **create a new folder** in which to save your pictures.

6. Copy your images into the new folder.

If you want to erase the images from your camera's memory card, select the Delete pictures from my device after copying them check box, and then click **Next**. The Scanner and Camera Wizard copies the pictures from your camera to the new folder and then removes the pictures from your camera's memory card.

(On the Other Options page, you can choose to publish your pictures to a Web site or order prints. If you have finished working with your pictures, click **Nothing**, and then click **Next**.)

7. You're done!

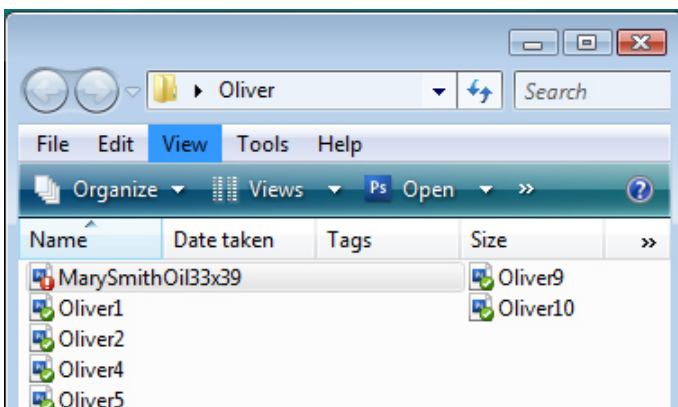
On the final page, click **Finish**. Windows XP opens a window showing the pictures you downloaded. Remember it's a good idea to make backup copies of your photos, in case anything happens to your computer.

Rename and Email your images

It is very important to label each jpg entry correctly before you email them in to be juried. Most galleries require a format similar to ours, with your name, the title of the piece, sometimes the size & medium, and the number of the entry.

1. Rename the jpgs

To rename a a jpg, right click on it and scroll down and click on **Rename** near the bottom of the screen. Your current name will become highlighted in blue, and you can just type right over that title with your new one.



2. Attach the jpg(s) to your email

Open your email program (Gmail, Outlook, etc.) and compose a cover email. Each program has a slightly different method to attach a jpg to the email. Click on an **icon of a paperclip**, or on **Attachment** or **Attach**. A new window will open, probably showing the contents of the folder you just created. If it is a different folder, navigate to the new folder. Then click on **the image you want to attach** and click **Open**. This will take you back to your email. Repeat for each image you want to attach, then click **Send**.

