

Photographing Your 2D Artwork for the Best Results

Notes from *Evanston Made* workshop on 4.10.2019

- 1) Using a tripod is a MUST for sharp images. Do not hand-hold your camera. On a tripod still use a remote (either cabled or wireless) or the 2/10 second timer on the camera.
- 2) Hang your artwork on a flat wall with a white or neutral background. The center of the piece should be hanging at the same level as the camera lens with the camera on a tripod. Use a level to level the artwork on the wall.
- 3) Use two diffused light sources (reflective or shoot-through umbrellas or DIY diffusor) using the same type and power bulbs in each. Position lights halfway between the artwork and camera at 45 degrees (or less) angles off the wall that the artwork is hanging on (see diagram). If glare is a problem move the lights slightly closer to the wall, or if needed, *above* the artwork with the light projecting downward and from the sides. If lights are positioned above the artwork, use a large foam core reflector underneath to fill in light if needed. All other light sources should be removed.
- 4) Set up your camera so that you are filling the frame as much as possible with your artwork, leaving a small border of the wall around it. Make sure you are centered with the artwork and shooting straight on to avoid any distortions. Lens focal lengths of 70-100mm are ideal. Stay away from using wide-angle lenses. Unless shooting details, do not position camera too close to artwork to avoid *barrel lens distortion*.
- 5) Ideally, use a photographic Gray Card (or incident light meter, Expodisk, or X-Rite Colorchecker) for both Exposure and White Balance.
- 6) Camera set-ups with Gray Card and Auto Camera Flash Off: a) timer or remote setting b) ISO 100 c) Custom White Balance using image from Gray Card, or synch later if shooting in RAW d) RAW or Highest Res JPEG with Picture Style set to Normal, or Standard e) Set camera Metering Mode to Center Weight Average or Spot/Partial f) Manual Mode, or Aperture Priority Mode, with Aperture set at F8-F10 with shutter speed set to corresponding correct exposure according to the camera light meter with the gray card filling the frame g) Check Histogram if needed h) Exposure Compensate if need in Aperture Priority Mode, or bracket in Manual Mode
- 7) Camera set-ups without Gray Card and Auto Camera Flash Off: a) timer or remote setting b) ISO 100 c) Auto White Balance, or Preset White Balance closest to lights being used d) RAW or Highest Res JPEG with Picture Style set to Normal, or Standard e) Set camera Metering Mode to Center Weight Average or Spot/Partial f) Manual Mode, or Aperture Priority Mode, with Aperture set at F8-F10 with shutter speed set to corresponding correct exposure according to the camera light meter h) Exposure Compensate if need in Aperture Priority Mode, or bracket in Manual Mode

- 8) Check images on the back of camera for Exposure and Color. Make adjustments if needed.
- 9) Check images on the back of camera for Sharpness. Zoom in on the LCD to do this.
- 10) Final editing in Photoshop, Photoshop Elements, or Lightroom. (GIMP is a free software solution)

