

Portfolio FAQs and Tips

Is my camera good enough?

- Recent smart phones are capable of taking suitable images of artwork for your portfolio. If you use a smart phone, don't text or email them to yourself on a computer—this will possibly reduce the resolution. Instead, use an app like Dropbox, iCloud Drive, or Google Drive.
- When photographing drawings, paintings, and other two-dimensional work, try to fill the viewfinder with the image of the artwork without cutting-out any of it. You can crop out background elements on a computer. Turn-off the flash when shooting any shiny media (graphite, oils, acrylics, or anything behind glass or plexi-glass).
- The panel of portfolio reviewers sometimes has difficulty viewing the aesthetics of a form if there are distracting background elements. When photographing three-dimensional works, put a large solid-colored paper, fabric, or wall behind and under the form. Try to light the 3D form so the light doesn't come from the same direction as the camera (don't use a flash).

I have a good camera, but how do I keep my pictures from being blurry?

- For sufficient light, take photographs outside on a cloudy day between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. or on a sunny day under cover of a porch. Make sure the image surrounding the artwork is not bright sunlight, or the exposure may be off. Direct sunlight may actually be too much light for many cameras.
- Turn the artwork to face the wall or a dark surface—especially if it has refractive qualities like graphite and oil paints do. Experiment with several directions until the artwork looks good in the captured image.
- If you cannot take photos outside, use a tripod or a sturdy surface and keep the camera as steady as possible.

Can I use a scanner?

- Absolutely! This is often the best way to digitize two-dimensional work. However, many artworks tend to be larger than a scanner bed, so many use a camera instead. It is ok to piece a work together from multiple scans if you know how to do it.

How do I crop my pictures so nothing but the artwork is visible?

- Basic image editing programs are usually factory-installed on your computer.
 - Using **Windows > Paint**
 - Using **Mac > Preview**
 - Using a **Smart Phone or Tablet**, edit images using free downloadable apps. (Try **Genius Scan**--it can not only crop, but it can fix skewed images.)
- "Save-as" to a JPG format to ensure the files are compressed to a small enough file size to upload. If you read the help files for these apps, you can learn how to change the resolution too!

What if the color looks too yellow or too blue on my images?

- This is a white balance setting on your camera. Read the manual to see how to fix it. It should be an easy control.

What are the resolution and file requirements?

- Reviewers need clarity so details can be seen on computer screens when zoomed-in on the artwork. Images of low resolution have undesired jagged pixelation and insufficient detail. The larger the pixel dimensions, the more the viewer will be able to zoom in to see detail.

How do I check the resolution on my images?

- Using **Windows PC**: right-click on the image file and get "Properties"
- Using **Mac**: control-click on the image and "Get info," then show "More info:"
- The pixel dimensions should be around 2000 or slightly greater on the shortest dimension. This will ensure that the image will fill the screen when reviewed.