

HOME

The Manchester Open

A guide to photographing your artwork

This document provides a guide on how to photograph your artwork for your submission, including how to set up your artwork ready to be photographed, setting up your camera, taking the photograph and editing the photograph.

Setting up your artwork

- Place your artwork against a neutral background.
- If your work is not mounted, attach it to a backing and hang or lean it against a wall to photograph. For smaller artwork you could place it on the floor and shoot from overhead.
- If your artwork is under glass, remove it from its frame. If this is not possible try using a polarising filter to reduce reflections.
- Make sure the whole artwork is under a soft and even (diffuse) light, for example next to a window, or under an overcast sky if you are outside. You want to avoid shadows, reflections or bright spots.
- If you are using natural light, make sure all electronic lights and your camera's built-in flash are turned off.
- If using electric lights try putting a white sheet in front of the light to make it less harsh. Be careful and don't do this with hot lights.
- If your camera has a daylight setting, use this when photographing in natural light.

Setting up your camera

- Use the best camera you have access to; this could be a professional camera or the camera on your phone.
- The camera or phone should be steady to make sure your image is sharp. Place on a flat surface or on a tripod with the camera parallel to your artwork.
- Align your camera (or artwork) so that the centre of the lens is directly in line with the centre of your artwork.
- To make sure you don't get any shake from your hands, use the camera's self-timer mode or a remote or cable release.
- Make sure the whole artwork is in the frame, but only leave a small margin around the work to ensure you get the maximum resolution.
- If you have the option, put your camera on the lowest ISO setting (50, 100 or 200).

Taking your photographs

- Use auto-focus.
- Avoid wide-angle lenses as these may distort the edges of your artwork.
- If you are using a DSLR, choose a focal length between 50-100mm and then move your camera closer or further away from the artwork as needed.
- If you are using a compact camera, set the optical zoom at a middle range.
- If you are using a smartphone or tablet, avoid using the zoom as it will reduce the quality of your image.
- Take several photographs and check them so you can adjust the light, ISO, focus or distance to get the best image.
- Before packing away your equipment, check your images closely on your computer.
- With smaller pieces, where there is no surface texture, you could use a desktop scanner.

Editing and saving your photographs

- If using a smartphone, please don't add any filters to your image, including any black and white filters.
- If using a computer, download your photographs and use editing software to remove the background around your artwork. Zoom in and check your image for any flaws or focus issues.
- There are lots of free editing software options: for Mac use Photos; for Windows use Google Photos; or use online editing software such as PicMonkey or Pixlr.
- Do not over-edit your image. We want to see a true representation of your artwork.
- The file size of your submitted image should not exceed 20MB and should be at least 96dpi.
- Images must be submitted in one of the following formats: JPG, JPEG, PNG, TIFF, TIF