

Advice on photographing your work for Steyning Arts

1. Background

- One of the benefits of being a member of Steyning Arts is being able to promote yourself through the Steyning Arts website, and in the publicity materials for the Art Trail and other exhibitions. For this we need high quality photos of your work.
- This note sets out some tips and advice on how to take good photos of your work, and what format to submit them in. Most of it is designed for non-experts, but there is a section at the end for those of you who are more familiar with photography and photo editing software.
- If you would like professional help in taking high quality photos of your work, Steyning Arts member, Frank Bull, is happy to take commissions. His contact details are below.

2. Taking the pictures

Images should be :

- well composed (e.g. a favourable perspective, with all parts of the work included as intended)
- in focus
- properly exposed
- properly colour balanced to ensure the colours of the art work are as intended
- framed (or cropped) correctly to ensure no irrelevant detail, borders etc.
- high resolution JPEG files with a file size of at least 1 MB.

These hints will help to achieve good quality shots :

- a) Choose your best camera. Though modern phones can take amazing pictures it is best to use a 'proper digital camera' with a viewfinder – borrow one if need be! And use a tripod if you can get hold of one.
- b) Set your camera on its highest definition setting – it should be producing .jpg image files that are at least 1 MB per photo (cameras often have a "fine jpeg" setting).
- c) Choose an evenly and well-lit space with a colour of light as close as possible to daylight. If the weather permits, a shady outdoor location around midday can work well (but not dappled shade), especially from Spring to late Summer. If photographing inside or with artificial light, use some form of diffuser to ensure the light distribution is as even as possible – for example a large sheet of white card to bounce the light off.
- d) For 2D work position your camera so that it is as perpendicular to the piece as possible. Photograph work before mounting behind glass, or you will struggle with reflections.
- e) For 3D work create a suitable surface and background for the work - i.e. create a "mini studio" with a simple and neutral surface and background. Photograph one or a few of pieces at a time, rather than a whole collection. That way you can ensure everything is in focus.
- f) Compose the image in the camera viewfinder and rearrange as necessary. Examine carefully to ensure there are no unwanted reflections or distracting highlights, the perspective is as you intend, and there are no irrelevant details cluttering up the shot.
- g) Focus extra carefully before you take the shot, and check the images in the viewfinder afterwards to make sure they are in focus and not too dark or light and that the subject is reasonably evenly illuminated.

- h) Download the images to your computer. To avoid confusion, **it is really helpful if you rename the files** with your name and an image number – so for example, JoeBloggs01.jpg, JoeBloggs02.jpg, etc.

3. More advanced tips

Correcting the colour balance. Because inside light and artificial light will be a different colour to natural light, it is ideal if you correct for this. You can do this by placing a small sheet of plain white card alongside the artwork as a white balance reference point. Take two photos, a test image with the card in place, and a final image without. Send both versions in and the website team will be able to use the test image to correct any colour cast in the final one.

Image editing. If you have access to photo editing software you will be able to crop images to get precisely the framing you want. The best file format is: JPEG, sRGB colourspace.

4. Where to send photographs

Photo's should be sent as email attachments to our website editor, Andie Armstrong, at steyningarts.website@gmail.com

Andie will check photos to ensure they are of sufficient quality, and get back to you with any queries. Bear in mind that it may take a few weeks to update the website. So please be patient!

5. Would you like professional help?

Steyning Arts member and professional photographer Frank Bull would be happy to take commissions to photograph your work, and has a price list specifically for Steyning Arts members.

Please contact him directly at: frank@frankbullphotographer.co.uk. Or mob. : 07914 211888.