



HOUSTON ART SOCIETY JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER



President's Message

Dear HAS Members,

Happy New Year all!!! Well it is the start of 2024 and here's hoping for a wonderful productive new year.

Our Christmas luncheon at Cafe' Benedicts was a great success and lot of fun thanks to Terry Allen and Sandra Matejich. They really know how to put on a party!



If you have any suggestions on what you would like to see, have an announcement or have information you would like to put into this newsletter, please let me know. You can contact me at Marcie.ONeall@gmail.com or text me at 832-661-3646 with any suggestions.

Keep on painting and let the creativity flow,

Marcie O'Neill, HAS President

Houston Art Society 2024 Program

Demos are from 10:00 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. and Workshops are from 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. Demos and Workshops are held at the Memorial Church of Christ, 900 Echo Lane, Houston, TX 77024 in the Family Center unless otherwise noted.



<u>Date</u>	<u>Demo/Workshop</u>	<u>Artist</u>	<u>Medium/Subject</u>
January 8, 2024 General Meeting January 22, 2024	Demo Workshop	Cheryl Evans	Watercolor over a colorful background
February 12, 2024 General Meeting February 26, 2024	Demo Workshop	Dianne Zimmerman	Water Color Playtime
March 18, 2024 General Meeting March 25, 2024	Demo Workshop	Nancy Paris Pruden	Oil – Color Mix for Landscapes
April 15, 2024 General Meeting April 22, 2024	Demo Workshop	Sherry Killingsworth	Pastel Landscape
April 27, 2024	HAS Spring Open Show	Judge TBA	
May 20, 2024 General Meeting	Demo No workshop, Memorial Day	Dianna Gordon	Collage



Cheryl Evans, Demo Artist for January 8, 2024:

Houston Art Society is proud to present Cheryl Evans as its Demo Artist for January 8, 2024. She will be demonstrating Watercolor over a colorful background. There will also be a Workshop January 22, 2024.

Cheryl Evans is a producing artist and art educator. She received her BFA at Stephen F. Austin State University where she concentrated on drawing and painting and began her long love affair with watercolor. She received a Master of Arts degree from University of Houston Clear Lake. She was named Art Educator of the Year in 2012 by the Texas Art Education Association. She spent 32 years teaching in the public school system and continues to teach watercolor at Alvin Community College. Evans is passionate about sharing her work and knowledge in workshops and demonstrations. She is a signature member of the Watercolor Art Society- Houston, and continues to show and exhibit in Texas, nationally, and internationally. Her work is in numerous public, corporate, and private collections the United States, Norway, England, Mexico, and Japan.





Diann Zimmerman is the Demo Artist for February 12, 2024:

Houston Art Society is proud to present Diann Zimmerman as its February 2024, Demo Artist. She will have Playtime with Watercolor. There will be a workshop February 26, 2024 .

Diann Zimmerman is an educator, artist, and founder of one of the largest and most active watercolor groups on Facebook.

As the Education Director on the Watercolor Art Society of Houston Board of Directors from January 2021 through June 2022, Diann played an integral role in teaching, planning, and growing the education program at WASH. Her passion for creating opportunities for students to learn, explore, and develop their skills is evident in her work.

Diann's vision for growth-centered environments has earned her a reputation as a dynamic and inspiring leader. Her Facebook group, Watercolor- Beginners and Beyond, boasts an impressive 185,000 members from over 100 countries and all 7 continents. By facilitating a community of artists dedicated to sharing their knowledge and expertise, Diann has created a space where artists can thrive and grow.

Beyond her role as an educator and community leader, Diann is also an accomplished artist. She embraces the spirit of fearlessness in her work, using her art to inspire others to do the same. Her positivity shines through in everything she does, whether she is creating art herself or encouraging, teaching, and inspiring others.





Eric Kirkpatrick- Western Skies

HAS OFFICERS 2023 – 2024

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2nd VP./ Program Co-Directors	Sally Hoyt and Linda Breedveld
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Tips for taking better photos of your art with a smartphone



If you're an artist who wants to photograph artwork for display on social media or your website a smartphone may be all you need. Smartphone cameras have come a long way in the last few years; under the right conditions they can produce results that rival more expensive digital cameras.

Ready to give it a try? Follow these tips to get the best results:

Getting ready

Use — or create — soft light — The best light for photographing art without glare and shadows is soft and even. That's why you'll find some of the best light outdoors on an overcast day. If you must work inside using artificial light, or if you have bright sun pouring through a window, soften it by hanging a white sheet over the window or light. And be sure to place your painting against a wall or dark background to be sure no light comes through the canvas from behind.

Stick to smaller paintings — For best results, shoot only paintings that comfortably fit in your frame. Why? If you need to move back significantly to fit a large painting in the frame, you'll likely be left with a lot of empty space on the sides or top of the image. This means you'll need to crop most of the photo to isolate the image of your artwork leaving you with a low-resolution file. Photographers solve this by shooting large paintings in pieces, then stitching them together using image-processing software. That's beyond a smartphone's capabilities, however...and don't even think of using the panoramic photo option!

Use a tripod and smartphone holder — Smartphones are good at image stabilization but for the best, sharpest results always photograph your art using a tripod. You don't need a fancy professional tripod — a table-size model will do. If you do have a tripod, a smartphone adapter costs only a few dollars and is well worth the investment.

Camera Settings

Turn off the flash — The flash on a smartphone can create annoying hotspots and glare on your artwork. Be sure to turn it off before photographing your artwork.

Turn on your camera's grid option — Most smartphones have an option to superimpose a three-by-three grid on the phone's screen. This is useful for ensuring your artwork is properly centered in the frame and square to the camera.

Don't use HDR — HDR stands for High Dynamic Range. Using it, your camera takes several exposures then blends them to create a single photo that preserves details in both the scene's dark and light areas. This works best in high-contrast situations such as landscapes, where the sky is bright, and the ground is comparatively dark. When photographing art, however, it can unnaturally darken and lighten areas and affect color. Best to leave it turned off and ensure you have good even light instead.

Skip the fancy filters — Smartphone camera apps allow you to apply filters both when taking a photo and when editing it after shooting. Neither is good when photographing art. Your goal is to produce an image that resembles your original work as closely as possible. Filters look cool, but they won't help you create faithful reproductions.

Turn on "do not disturb" — This tip is included just for the sake of your sanity! There's nothing more frustrating than setting up art, getting everything just-so and being interrupted by a text or a phone call.

Technique

Use the back camera — Smartphones have two cameras — one on the back and the other on the front. The lower-resolution front camera is used mainly for taking selfies or making FaceTime calls. For the best results, use a higher-resolution back camera.

Don't use zoom or wide angle — Zooming too tightly or backing the camera out to capture a wide angle can both introduce undesirable distortion in your photo.

Don't completely fill the frame — Usually we advise filling the camera's frame with your artwork. For smartphones we don't, and there's a good reason: Smartphone cameras have small, relatively wide-angle lenses; if you move close enough to fill the frame you risk producing a distorted image. So back up a bit, make sure the artwork takes up a good portion of the frame without distorting, and shoot.

Use the self-timer — A tripod helps, but using the self-timer removes all camera movement and produces a sharp image. Use the 10-second timer for best results.

Keep your painting upright — To avoid distortion (such as the bottom of your image being wider than the top) make sure your painting is upright — either by hanging it on a wall or propping it on an easel. If you can't achieve a perfect upright position, ensure your phone and painting are at the same angle.

Processing

Process using Snapseed or similar — All smartphones come with built-in image editing apps; on an iPhone it's as simple as opening the image in Photos and pressing Edit. Doing so offers options to change the photo's orientation, correct distortion, change color, contrast, exposure and apply filters. While the built-in app is powerful, Snapseed (a Google product) is even better, with more options and controls — and it's free to download and use.

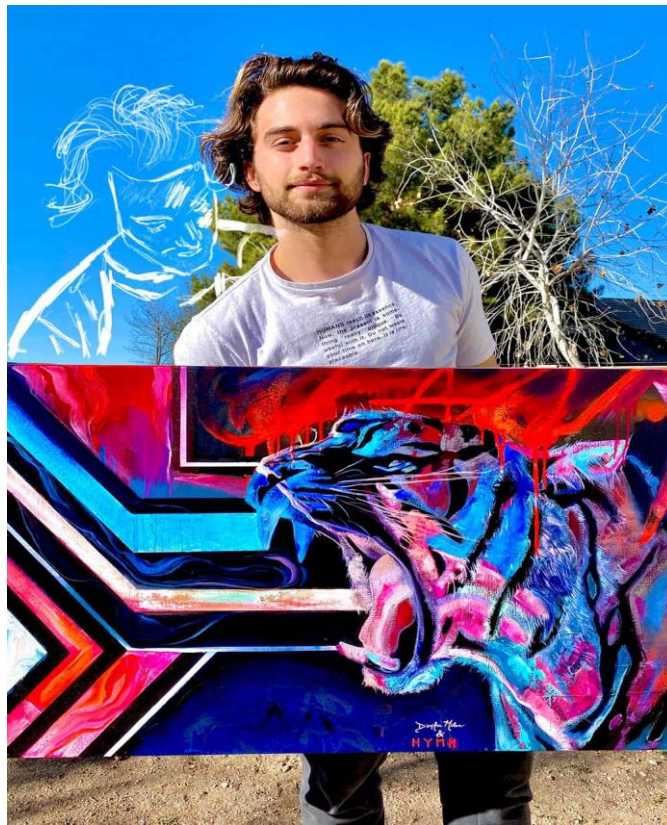
Straighten, crop and check colors — You shouldn't need to do a lot of processing if you have good light and good technique. But at minimum, check to be sure your image is straight, crop out the background and make sure your colors look the same on-screen as they do in real life.

Give these tips a try the next time you shoot your art with a smartphone. And let me know if they helped you or if there are other tips you'd suggest!

If you'd like to keep these tips in a handy format, [download this tip sheet I created!](#)

How to Photograph Your Art

After working with professional print manufacturers and having our own Epson Surecolor p8000 for professional prints, we found the best way to photograph artwork for prints. Many artists are intimidated to get professional photos of their art because they feel it is either too expensive or too confusing. We are here to tell you that anyone with a little know-how and determination can figure out how to photograph paintings professionally. As artists learning artwork photography will empower you to create prints of your artwork. This is a great way to get another stream of income while offering a product that has an attainable price point for a lot of people. **We put together a couple of tips to help you take high-quality photos of your art just like the professionals without having an expensive photography studio.**

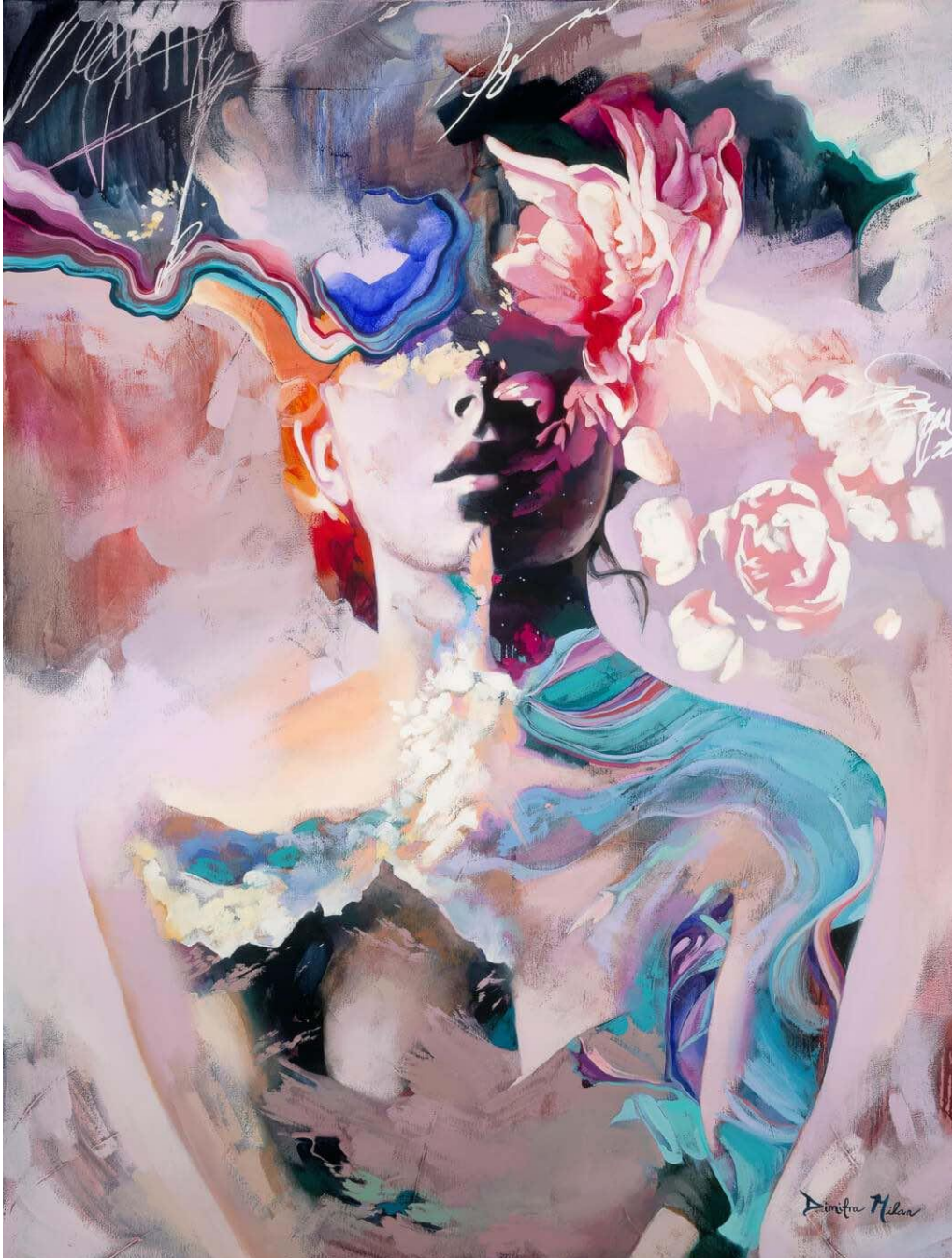


Why taking photographs of your artwork is better than scanning it

The first problem with scanning your artwork is some paintings are too large to scan. You can scan and stitch paintings digitally but this can be quite a time-consuming process. Also, finding a scanner that is big enough to fit your large paintings can be very expensive and difficult.

Another problem you might run into when scanning your artwork is getting an accurate representation of the colors. If you don't have access to high-quality scanners, photographs are a more accurate and cheaper solution.

Why natural light is better than artificial light



Colour is formed on a surface by specific wavelengths. Some wavelengths are absorbed and others get reflected. If your light source does not contain all of the visible colors (also known as full-spectrum), you will not get an image that fully represents your painting. Daylight contains all color wavelengths, which is why it is the best for getting a high quality photo of your artwork. Most artificial lights do not contain the full color spectrum or are missing important parts of the color spectrum that are necessary for taking high-quality photographs of your paintings. Taking your photographs indoors with normal household bulbs is even worse! Most of the time the lights in your house will not properly expose your artwork. This will make your artwork look unprofessional. We have been taking photos of our art in direct sunlight for years and there is no better way that we have found. In the next section, we will share our experience with various ways we tried to capture high-quality images of paintings.

Camera Requirements & Settings



Taking photos of your artwork doesn't require the most expensive lights, all you need is to take your art out on a sunny day! We have tried scanning, renting studio equipment, & shooting in direct sunlight. Then we sent these photos to the print manufacturer to see which photo would be the best for making fine art prints. To our surprise, they told us the highest quality image was the photo taken in direct sunlight.

Using the right camera is important. Most newer smartphones have great cameras perfect for posting on social media, but not for prints. When you are needing to photograph your artwork for prints, you will need a higher quality DSLR camera. The camera we use for prints is a Nikon D750. **At the bare minimum, you will need a 12 megapixel camera for shooting your artwork.** Without this, your prints will get distorted if you want to adjust the print size.

The ISO and aperture are two important settings that enable you to get a crisp, bright, and clear photograph of your artwork. ISO is the setting on your camera that controls how long the sensor is exposed to light. The longer the shutter is open to absorb light the brighter your photo will turn out. Since we don't want to blow out the highlights we recommend your camera to a low ISO setting. When you do this to your photo it will be properly exposed and you will not have any glare.

Every lens lets in a specific amount of light. Less light passes through the lens with higher f-stop ranges. So for example the lenses that work best for photographing artwork on a DSLR have an f-stop between f-8 and f-11.

Your camera should always be pointed parallel to your painting. If you do not make sure your camera is parallel to your photograph will turn out distorted. Use the same process to photograph drawings.

Using a grey card will help you find the right exposure. This tool is used by professional photographers to get the perfect white balance. Include this card in the frame when you take your photographs. Then when you edit your photos after your photoshoot you will have a reference point and eliminate any color cast present. Using the eyedropper tool will allow you to select a reference point from your grey card. When choosing your reference point click on the white square for an accurate white balance.

Things to keep in mind when photographing your artwork

- Capture an inch outside the canvas/painting. By doing this it gives you a little room to crop your image just in case there was an error.
- Photograph your artwork in batches! Since the sun moves fast or you might live in a rainy environment, plan ahead, and have lots of painting ready to go.
- Turn off in camera flash. When you do this it will avoid any extra glare coming from your camera.
- Take lots of extra shots of each piece and remember to *refocus* the lens! This will ensure that you have backup pictures to use just in case your main shots don't work out.
- You don't need the best lights for photographing your artwork. Sunlight is the best light source you can use since it contains the full color spectrum.

Editing Your Photos To Perfection



Now that you know how to photograph paintings you can begin editing those photos to get the best representation for what the painting looks like in person. Adobe Photoshop and Lightroom are the digital tools you will need to edit your photographs. They do have a small learning curve, but adjusting color is super easy to learn with time. If you don't have Photoshop or Lightroom there are free tools you can use that provide similar functionality. It's important to remember that you do not alter your artwork too much in editing. The goal is to get your artwork to look exactly how you saw the colors when it was painted.

When you export your photo do not use small file formats. Your image should be around 20 megabytes. TIFF, PNG, & Large JPEG formats will work for printing your artwork. Do not export your photos in RAW format because the file is too big for most printers to handle. Here are some tips for editing your photos.

- Make sure your photo is cropped perfectly. Look for any unwanted dust, tape, paint boogers, or shadows.
- Compare your contrast, vibrancy, and brightness to accurately represent the original painting
- Shooting RAW format will give you much more flexibility when you edit your photos.
- Print a sample before you sell it to customers, that way you know that you're providing high quality work.
- Your computer monitor might not show an accurate representation of colors in your artwork. Doing a test print will show you the true colors and eliminate any guesswork.

Final Product



Now that you know how to photograph art with a digital camera, you're ready for prints, posting a beautiful photo on social media, or saving these photos for your personal archive. These are the steps we learned from trying multiple photography setups to find the best, most cost effective, and easy ways to get high quality photos of your artwork. Say goodbye to hiring an expensive photographer to photograph paintings professionally.

HOW TO CREATE THE BEST DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF YOUR ARTWORK

by *Josephine Zentner*



At various points in your artistic career, you will find yourself in need of digital photographs of your artwork. From uploading work to your website or Instagram, to entering an art competition like [Jackson's Painting Prize](#), digital copies always come in useful. This guide takes you through the process, from how to photograph your artwork on a budget to getting the right file size and resolution.

Preparing to Create Digital Photographs of Your Artwork

1. Tools

Big SLR cameras are great quality but not always necessary – you can take a good enough picture on a phone, as long as you're aware of the aspects below.

2. Angle

It's important to be directly square-on to the artwork. If you have a tripod, use it to get directly above or in front of the work.

If you don't have a tripod, it can be hard to keep a phone straight and still when photographing from above, so one tip is to find a chair, and gently rest your artwork on it at an angle. Make sure it is secure and won't slip off the chair onto the floor. From here, you can position yourself square-on while standing or crouching.

If you are using an iPhone, you can turn on the 'grid' feature to guide you:

Settings > Camera > Grid should be toggled on

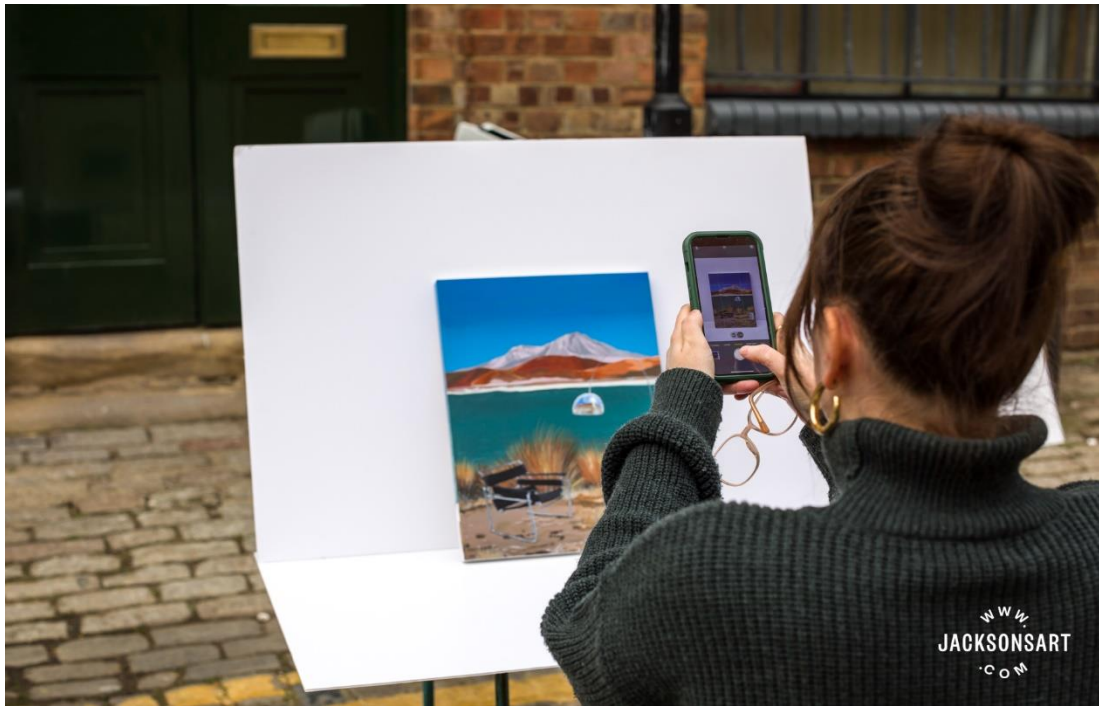


White foam board can provide a great backdrop, as well as a reflector if necessary.

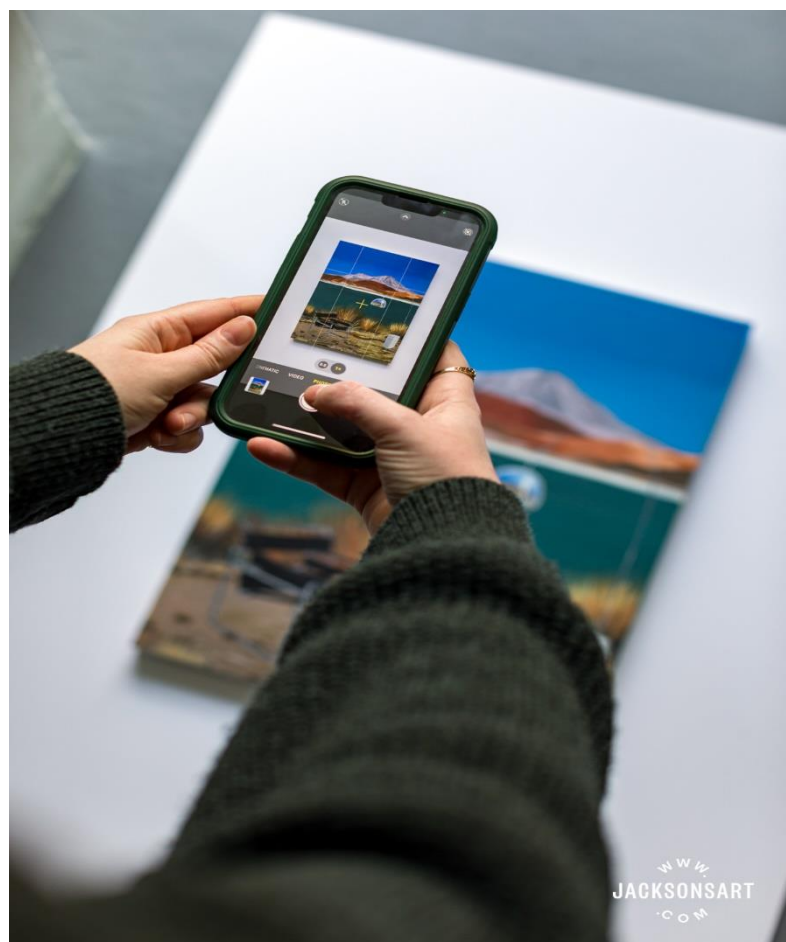
3. Lighting

Don't photograph your work in direct sunlight; you're looking for diffused natural light. There should be no dappled light or sunbeams across your work.

For optimal lighting, take photographs of your artwork outside on a bright but cloudy day. Artificial light has fall-off, which means that it halves in power with every doubling of distance. This makes it hard to get even lighting across your work and the image can appear brighter on one side. Natural light, on the other hand, has no fall-off outdoors.



Probably the truest depiction of the painting, with no fall-off, and an even overall appearance. If you're unable to get outside, find a spot indoors with good natural light. Being too close to the window can increase the fall-off due to the brightness of the closest end. If this is the case, try moving away from the window and place your artwork facing, or 90 degrees to it.





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Flat setup next to the window, with a reflector. The result is good but has some fall-off and a stronger shadow underneath.



If you do notice brighter light on one side than the other, get a piece of white card and hold it at right angles to your artwork on the shadowy side to reflect some of the light back onto it. If your artwork is large, you can try asking a friend to hold up a white sheet in the same way.



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Further from, and at right angles to the window, with reflector on the opposite side. There's a lot of shadow on the right-hand side of the background, despite the reflector, however the light is quite even over the painting. Tightly cropped, this would also work well.

Inevitably, high-gloss artworks will catch the light somewhat, so experiment with turning the surface to try to minimize reflections before taking any photos.

How to Take Photographs of Your Artwork

Rest your arms against the sides of your body (or something else) to keep the phone / camera still while you're taking the picture. Keep it steady, even after pressing the shutter – don't pull the camera away as soon as you've pressed the button, as even with a short exposure you can still accidentally blur it. The better the lighting, the less likely it is to blur.

In between shots, keep looking with your eyes rather than through the camera – you will spot flaws in lighting / angle / etc. that you wouldn't see through the lens.

Look closely at the picture you've taken – check you've have even lighting with no shadows. This is even more critical with high-gloss paintings – look for reflections.

When you're happy with the image you've taken in terms of composition, it's time to prepare the file.

Preparing a Digital File of Your Artworks

Optimizing your artwork for digital use or to be viewed online (social media or art competitions) is essential to make sure that it remains as true to life as possible.

1. Software for Digital Photographs

Using editing software such as Adobe Photoshop or Lightroom would be ideal. However, if you don't have access to these, there are also photo editing options on a smartphone which can allow you to do things such as crop, rotate and adjust the contrast, brightness and saturation of an image. The main goal of photo editing is to get the image as visually close to the real artwork as possible, as if you were viewing it on a gallery wall.

2. Resolution / File Size

Web images generally need a lower resolution than if you were to send them to print, as images with a really high resolution end up loading really slowly and taking up a lot of space.

You'll also need to make sure that the size of your image is not too large or small so that it doesn't become pixelated and shows your artwork in the best possible light. Ideally, you'll want to save your image at the highest quality setting, without it being a huge image. Jackson's Painting Prize has a maximum upload limit of 3MB for images, which is roughly 1182 x 887 pixels with an aspect ratio 4:3.

3. Digital File Types (JPGs / PNGs)

Images are best saved as either JPGs or PNGs as most website hosting platforms or competition software will accept either of these file types. Try to avoid saving as TIFFs or HEIC (which is what photos sometimes save as on Apple devices) as you'll find that these are not fully optimized for web use.

4. Color Profiles (RGB / CMYK)

In terms of color space/profiles, for the web you'll want to save your image as an RGB. CMYK is generally used for printing, whereas RGB is best for digital images that will be displayed on a screen. You can convert your image from CMYK to RGB fairly easily when editing your photo in Photoshop.