



TOP TEN TIPS FOR DOCUMENTING YOUR ARTWORK

1. Use the best camera you can find. If you don't own one, plan ahead to borrow one. Many high schools have a good digital camera (at least 5 megapixels) available for check-out.
 - If your artwork is small enough, we suggest using a scanner instead of a camera. Scan at 300 dpi if you intend to print out the images later. If your images will only be projected, you can scan at 72 dpi.
 - Set the camera to record your images at the highest possible quality level. (You can always reduce image quality/size later, but you usually can't increase it.)
 - Turn off the date/time stamp in the camera.
2. A simple, non-distracting background is important. It should be neutral in color, unpatterned, unwrinkled, etc.
3. Think about lighting. Your work should be well-lit, but without glare or harsh shadows. Use a light source that can be moved around—or plan for how you will move the artwork around a light source. If you plan to photograph outside, a bright, overcast day is best. Shoot in the shade if necessary to avoid noticeable shadows.
4. If you are documenting a framed piece of art, the glass will create distracting reflections—remove it before you shoot.
5. Blurry images are bad. Use a tripod if you can get one, and focus the camera carefully while you're shooting. If you can't get a tripod, plan to have plenty of light.
6. Get close; the artwork should occupy as much of the image frame as possible.
7. Be sure the artwork is exactly square in the image frame; position the camera so the lens/face of the camera is exactly parallel to the work that is being photographed.
8. Always take more than one image of each piece; you never know which one is going to work out.
9. When you photograph three-dimensional work, the same background and lighting considerations apply. Take a few different views if needed to show a piece well; multiple views of three-dimensional pieces are considered to be a single portfolio entry.
10. Make sure to back up your images. It's best to store them in two separate places—like on a hard drive and on a DVD. You may need to rely on that back-up set.

And finally, remember: your portfolio is incredibly important to your prospects for college admission and scholarships. If you find that your digital images don't look as good as the original artwork, take a deep breath and plan to re-shoot them or hire a professional photographer. This is the only way that many people will see your art—it has to look its very best.

Questions? We're here to help—just email or call.

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