Photographing your work at home

Photographing your artwork is extremely important.
It represents your work and could be the only thing someone will see of your art.
You will need digital photos of your work for your website and for submitting your work to exhibitions, residencies, grants, and many other opportunities.

The better your images look, the better your art will look,
and the more professional you will look!

You can use a digital camera or you can use your camera phone.
It is important that you know *how* to use the camera you are using!

- **Position your work (on a wall or table or lie it down or lean it)**

- **Position your camera (if you have a tripod, this would help with stability, if not, anchor your elbows on something to help with stability - so the work is in focus)**

- **Position or adjust the lighting (or the work or camera depending on your setup)**

- **Take a lot of photos**

- **Look at the photos on a computer**

- **Try again as needed - change lighting, try new lighting, etc.**

- **Take photos of all the work you can since you are now set up!**

- **Edit the image(s) and title the file(s)**
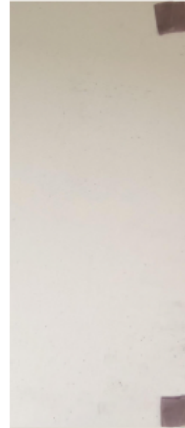
There are different ways to set up your work - on the wall or a table for example. You should try to put your work on a white or light and simple, flat surface. You can put down white paper if you need. But don't put your work on a comforter, for example! You can tack or tape it, or hang it on the wall. It is important not to cover the front surface of the work.

It is important that wherever your work is - the lighting is even and the camera is perpendicular to the surface of the work.
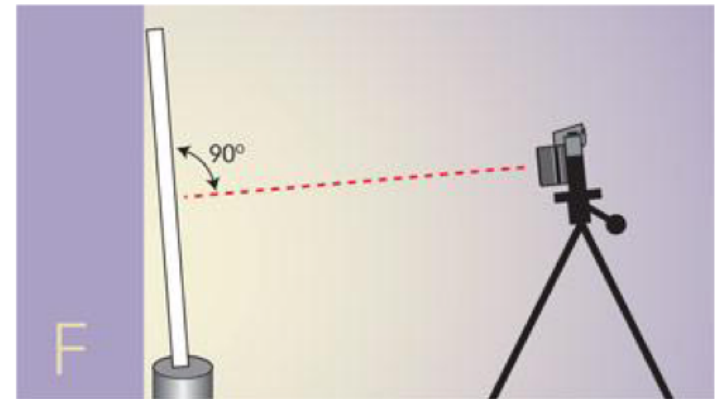
Even lighting is extremely important.
You can get even/nice lighting at home by putting your work in front of a bright open window on a cloudy day.
You could also put your work up outside on a hazy day.
Sunny days offer too much lighting so can wash out the work, create hot spots, or cast strong shadows.

You can play around with the lamps you have, but there should not be any lamp directly facing the work unless it is covered with a softbox or umbrella to diffuse the light.
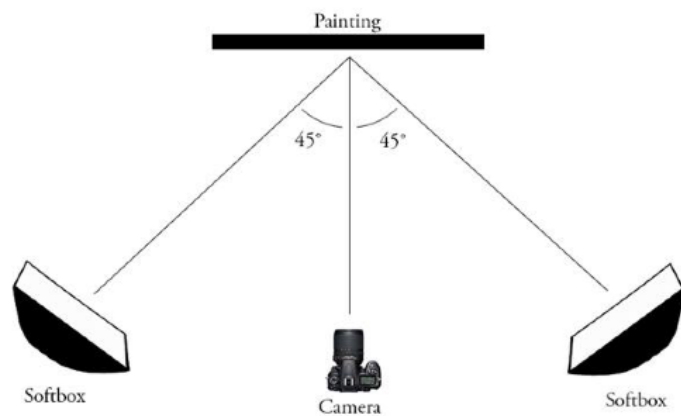
TAKING PHOTOS

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Take a few photos of the work with how you have set it up and then look at them on your computer before you take down the setup or photograph additional work.

This is really important - it is hard to tell what is happening in the image on the small screen of your camera or phone. You might think the lighting is even, or the work is in focus, but it might be hard to see any issues until you see them on the computer.

If there are issues, then try a new lighting situation, or make sure you are able to focus your camera correctly. Sometimes autofocus won't work well with soft or abstract work.

Once you are confident with your setup, take photos of all your work! Setting things up is the hardest part, so it makes sense to photograph everything you can to take advantage of the time you took to get this far.

Take details of your work if there are areas that further show your work, mixed media for example.

Make sure the photos are large files, it is easier to make them smaller when you are editing, but more difficult to make them larger.

IMPORTANT

- **The work needs to be in focus!**
- **There should be no shadows** (for example we don't want to see your camera shadow on the work)
- **There should not be any hot spots or reflected light**
- **The image should consist only of your work, no background visuals** (we don't want to see a table or a couch for example)
- **You should not crop out any of your artwork** (unless necessary to crop out a corner because you are cropping out the background)
- **The work should be perpendicular to your camera lens**

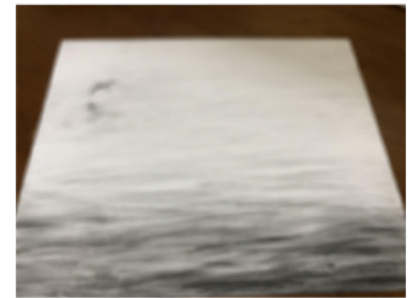**Here are what some of the mistakes look like:**

Camera is not perpendicular

Cast shadow on the surface

Blurry

You can use the following programs among others:

- Photoshop
- Lightroom
- Preview
- Editing software on your phone

You will need to edit your photos and this is an important step. Even using Preview, a basic program, can make a huge difference!

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OK

Better

Here, I opened the image up in PREVIEW, and went into TOOLS, ADJUST COLOR:
Then I cropped it, brightened the exposure a little, reduced the saturation a little, and increased the sharpness

OK

Better

Here, I opened the image up in PREVIEW, and went into TOOLS, ADJUST COLOR:
Then I cropped it, brightened the exposure a little, reduced the saturation a little, and increased the sharpness.
I had to crop out a little of the drawing because of how it was shot. This is an example of it being shot as a trapezoid, which means you'd have to
crop out some of your drawing to crop out the background which is preferred.

OK

Better

Here, I opened the image up in PREVIEW, and went into TOOLS, ADJUST COLOR:
Then I cropped it, brightened the exposure a little, reduced the saturation a little, and increased the sharpness

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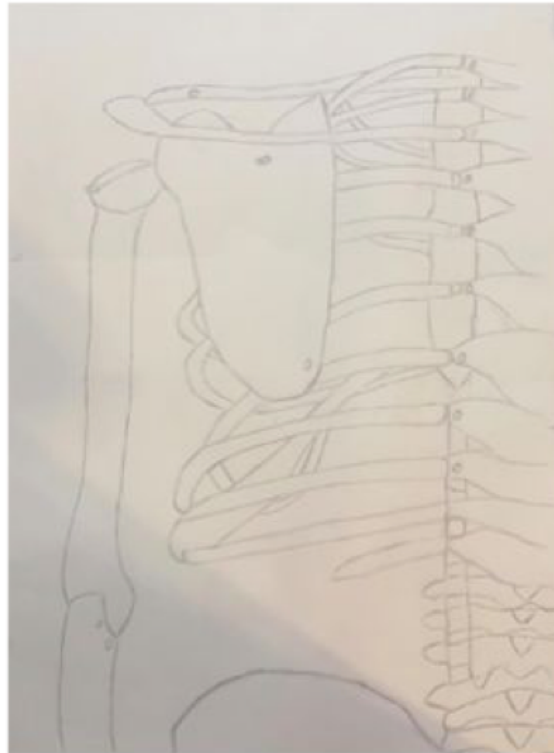
This image is very small, so I can't open it larger – it'll look out of focus.
It also has a very large cast shadow that is not possible to easily edit.
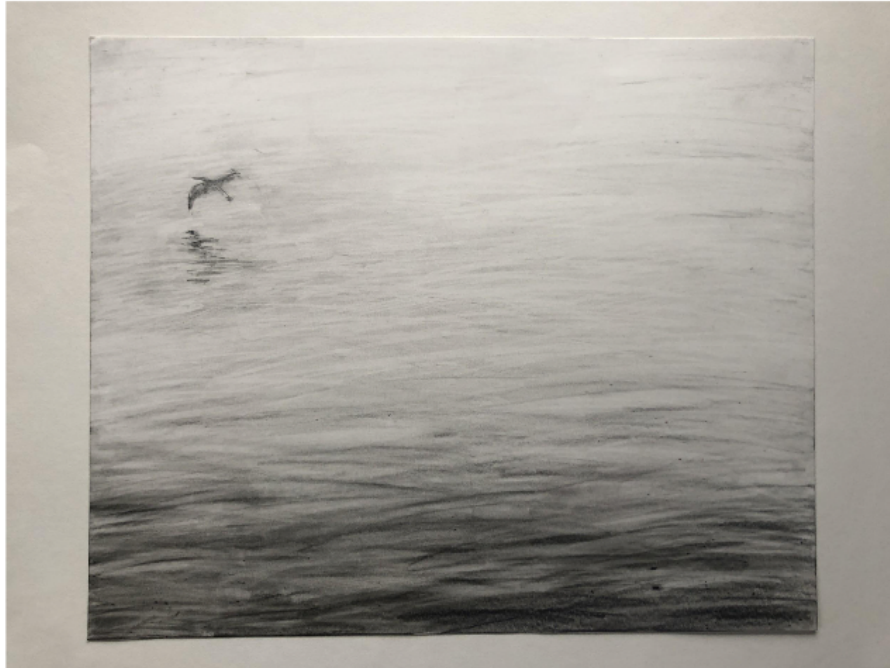If you have drawings like this you should reshoot them if possible.

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Some helpful links:

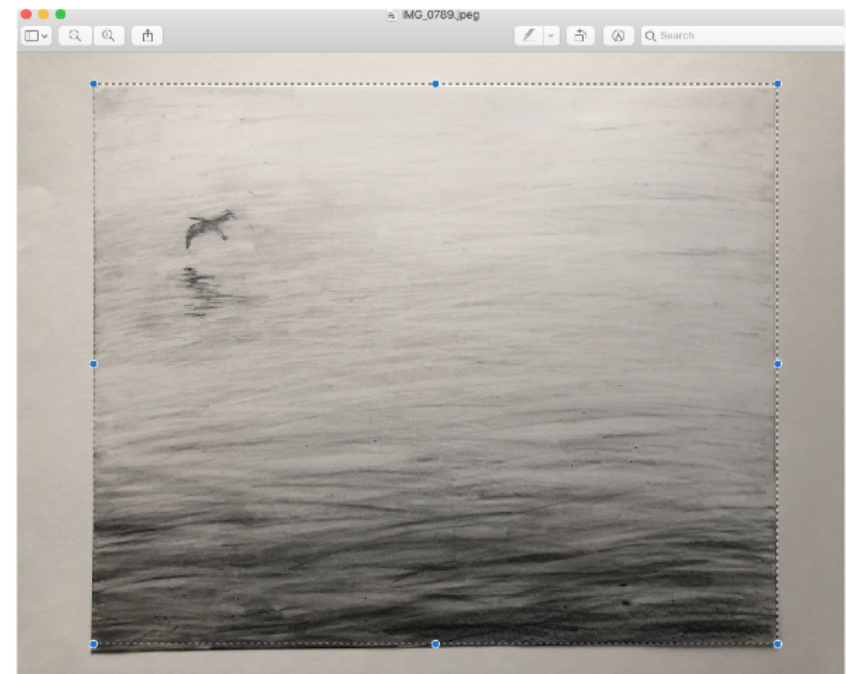https://willkempartschool.com/how-to-photograph-your-paintings-with-your-iphone/

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FKgWlzvm3Hs

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Here is the image I took.

Here I am cropping it in Preview

After I cropped it,
I clicked on Tools, Adjust Color.
Then I lowered the Saturation, adjusted
The contrast/exposure/highlights.