



## How to photograph your work for SEOS

Every year we receive a large number of images that require improvement before they can be published. Many of the problems could easily have been avoided if only a little more care had been taken at the outset.

Before you photograph your work, think carefully about the 4cm square space it will occupy in the guide. At this size fine detail will not be seen, simple images and bold areas of colour or tone will have more impact. If your work is very tall or letter box shape, consider showing a square shaped detail to make maximum use of the space.

### What you will need

#### Camera

No surprises there! This can be a digital or film camera, but a digital camera does have the advantage of allowing you to see the result immediately. You can then re-take the shot if it's wrong. It also stores the picture in a digital format ready for uploading to our website. Set it to take a high quality jpg file. Ideally, your camera should have a remote control, self-timer or cable release.

#### Tripod

This is essential! If you haven't got one, borrow one! It will allow you to get the camera properly positioned and improve the sharpness of your picture. Even the most modest of cameras can be fitted to a tripod.

#### Lighting

Unless you are a professional or keen amateur photographer, you are not likely to own studio lighting equipment. The easiest (and cheapest) option is to use natural daylight outdoors.

### How to take the photo

#### 2D artwork

Photograph your work BEFORE it is mounted under glass or varnished. Choose a bright day and place your work in the shade, avoiding direct sunlight. Around midday in the shadow of a north facing wall would be ideal. Do not use a flashgun and make sure the built-in flash on your camera does not fire.

It's most important to place your tripod-mounted camera as square as possible to your painting. Be prepared to take your time about this. If you need a guide, mark a chalk line or stretch a length of string between two pegs on the ground at right angles to a wall. Place your painting against the wall with the line at its' centre. Support small paintings with an easel or chair. Then place your tripod a few feet away centred on the line.

If your camera has zoom lens, extend it forward to reduce distortion. Move the tripod along the chalk line or string until the artwork is as large as possible in the viewfinder. You may need to adjust the tripod to get the image level. Then adjust the height so the sides of the painting are square and parallel to the sides of the viewfinder. To take the shot, use your camera's remote control, self-timer or cable release if it has one. Otherwise press the shutter very gently to avoid camera shake.

### **3D artwork**

Most 3D objects look better if they are casting a shadow. A simple way to achieve this is to use direct sunlight when it's at a low angle. Subdued winter sun is ideal but not too early or late in the day. If the shadows are too strong, reduce them by using a 'reflector' made from a piece of white card. Position this on the shadow side so it's just out of shot

Small items (ceramics, jewellery etc) can be supported on a table positioned against a wall. Lay a large sheet of white or neutral coloured paper or cloth on the table and gently curve it up the wall to create a seamless background. You may need sticky tape or pegs to keep this in place. Larger pieces of work will need to be placed on the ground but try to keep background objects as far away as possible.

Position your tripod-mounted camera at the desired angle and compose your picture. This should include some empty space around the artwork and any shadows cast from it. To photograph two 3D objects with a space between them, leave the tripod's panning head loose. Point the camera directly at one object and press the shutter button half way down. Holding the button in this position, swivel the camera to include both items and gently press the button all the way down. This will force the camera to focus on the objects and not on background behind them.

**Lastly, never underestimate the importance of a well-chosen, good quality image. It will have a major effect on the success of your open studio.**