

Tips for photographing 2D artwork

From the Visual Resources Center at the University of Colorado at Boulder

Hanging your art

1. Place or hang your art on a flat surface (like a wall) with a grey, black or white background
2. Make sure the art is level
3. Measure up from the floor to the middle of the art. Take note of that height; you will need it later

Setting up the lighting kit

1. Set up the stands first, and then add the lighting heads
2. Place the umbrellas onto the lighting heads and then face the lights away from the art
3. The lights should be placed at 45 degree angles from the art, half way between the art and the camera, this will give even, diffused light (see diagram below)
4. Note: If you are shooting 3-D or highly textured art you will want a different lighting setup

Camera settings

1. Set the camera to shoot in RAW (this will give you the most digital information)
2. Set the ISO to 100 (this will reduce "noise" in the digital image)
3. Set the camera to "aperture priority" (this will keep the aperture locked)
4. Set the aperture to f/8 or higher (this will put more of the image in focus)
5. Set the white balance if shooting in jpeg or tiff (Tungsten, Fluorescent, Daylight, Custom, etc)
6. If you have mixed lighting you can create a custom white balance or just shoot in RAW
7. Set the camera to timer mode (this is to minimize camera shake)

Setting up the camera

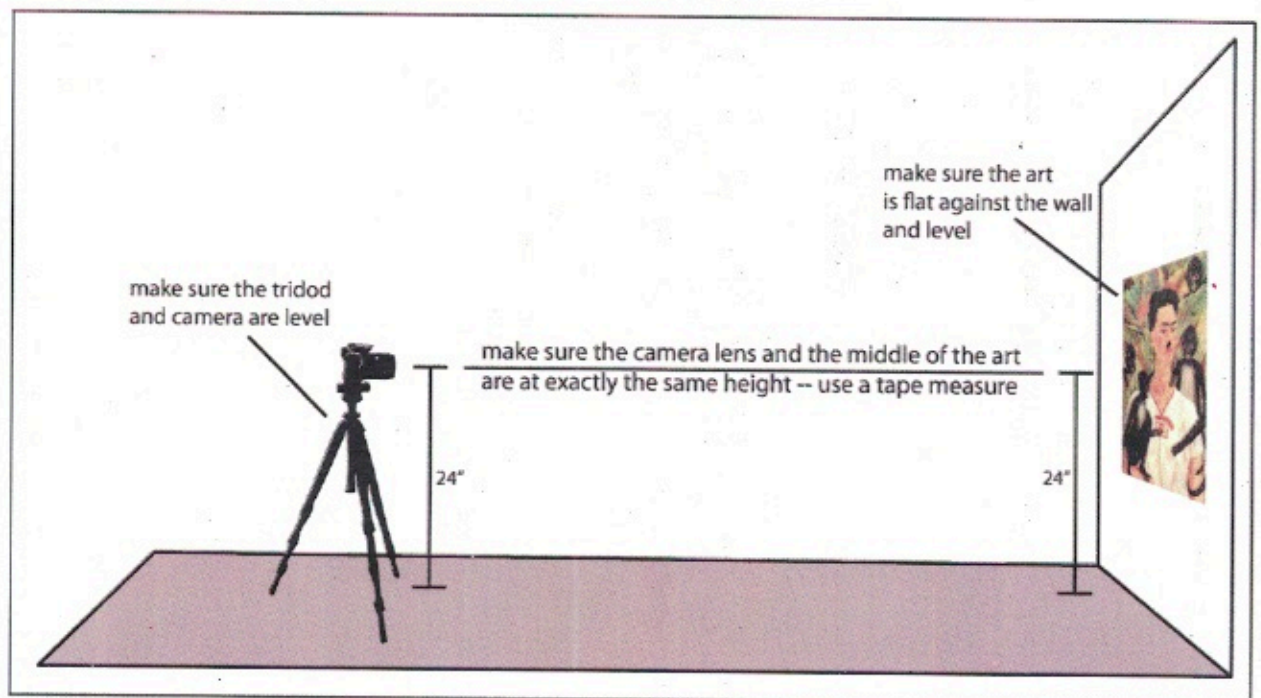
1. Set up the camera on a tripod, make sure the tripod and camera are level

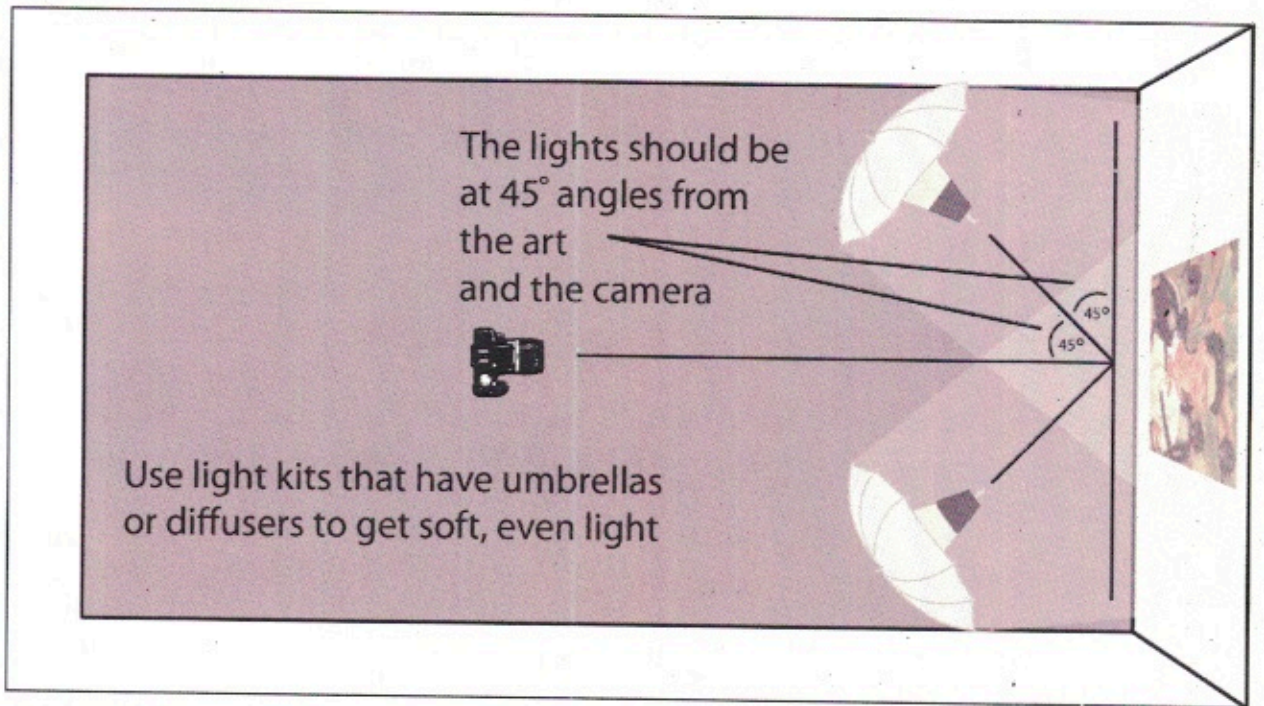
2. After attaching the camera, bring the lens to the exact height of the middle of the art (this is the measurement you took when hanging the art)
3. Place the tripod at a distance where the art fills almost the entire view, yet you are not too close to get distortions (see diagram below)

Shooting the work

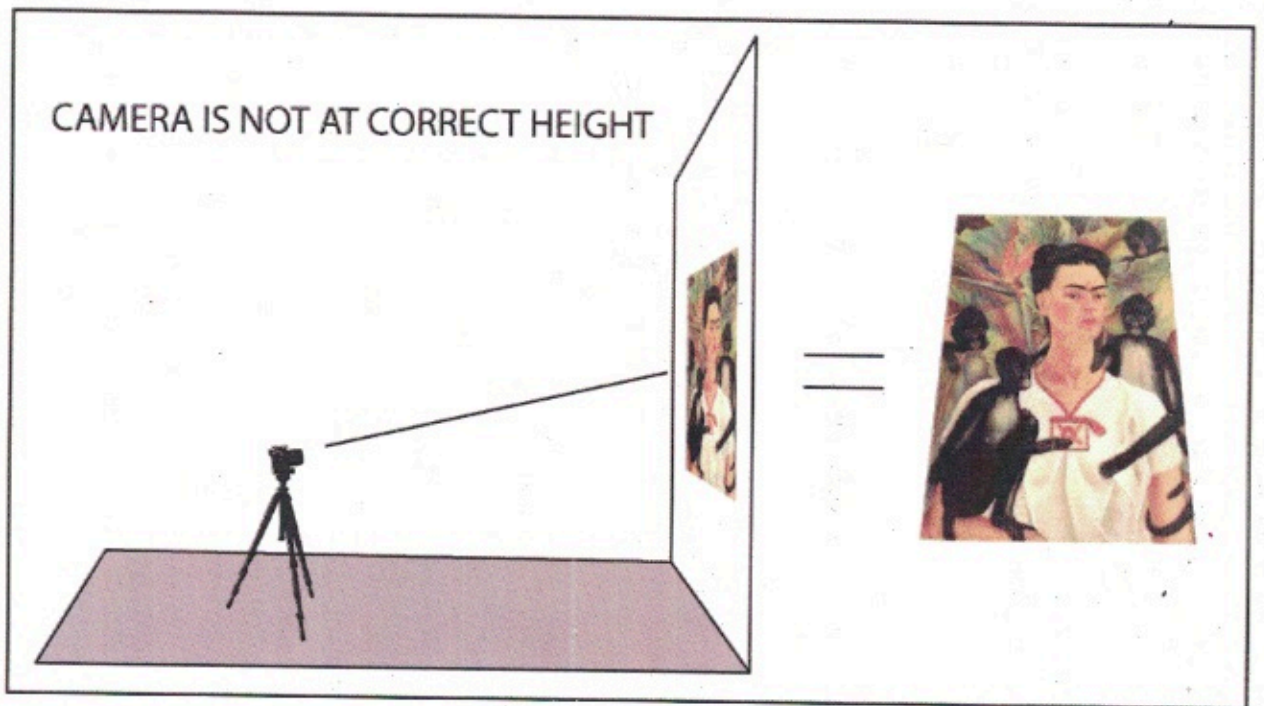
1. Clean the camera lens with a lens cleaning cloth
2. Turn on the light kit
3. Get the entire image in the frame with a bit of background (you will crop it out later)
4. Focus your image (manually or with auto focus)
5. Press the button and let go of the camera, the timer function will open the shutter and take the shot
6. Bracket your shot by going up and down one stop with the shutter speed
7. Leave the tripod in place in case you need to come back and shoot more images

Proper set-up of camera and lights

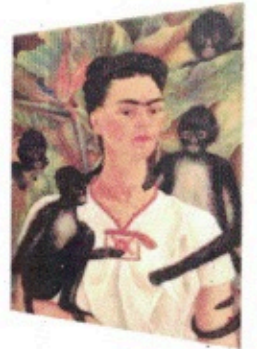
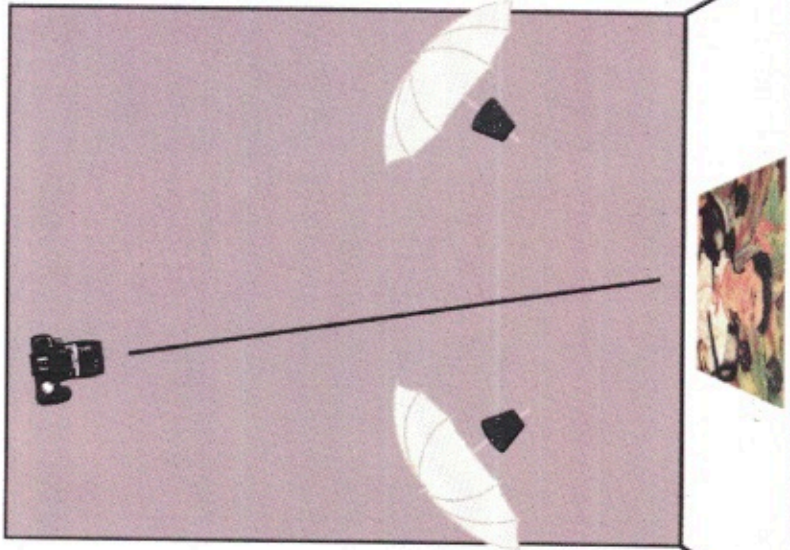




Common distortions when shooting 2D work

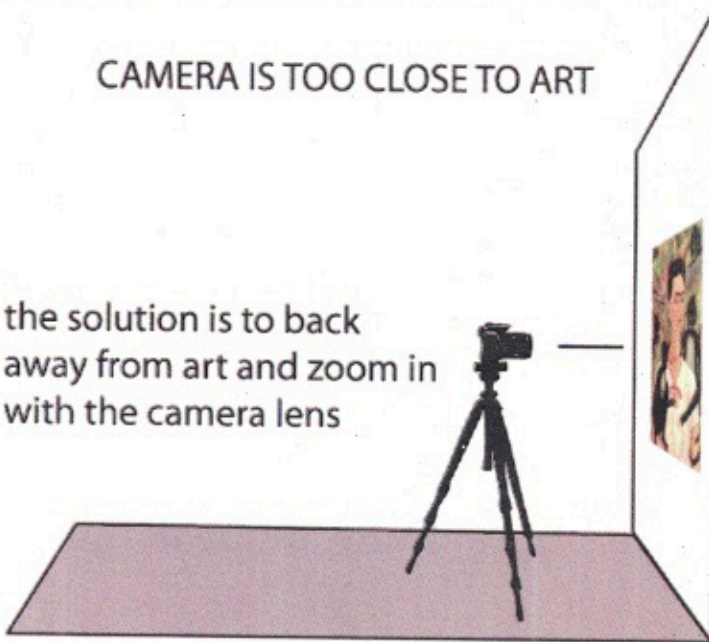


CAMERA IS NOT PERPENDICULAR TO ART



CAMERA IS TOO CLOSE TO ART

the solution is to back away from art and zoom in with the camera lens



Tips for photographing 3D artwork

From the Visual Resources Center at the University of Colorado at Boulder

Positioning your art

1. For smaller sculptural work, place your art on a flat surface with a neutral colored background
2. Don't place your art too close to the background, give it some space
3. Note: If your art is small enough and you want even diffused light, use a tabletop soft-box

Setting up the lighting kit

1. Set up the stands first, and then add the lighting heads
2. Place the umbrellas onto the lighting heads and then face the lights away from the art
3. At first place the lights at 45 degree angles from the art, half way between the art and the camera, this will give even, diffused light
4. Then move around one of the lights to start creating shadows, once you have reached a desired shadow leave the light and begin shooting
5. Some pieces of art need three lights to create dimensionality. If needed, add a third light.

Camera Settings

1. Set the camera to shoot in RAW (this will give you the most digital information)
2. Set the ISO to 100 (this will reduce "noise" in the digital image)
3. Set the camera to "aperture priority" (this will keep the aperture locked)
4. Set the aperture to f/8 or higher (this will put more of the image in focus)
5. Set the white balance if shooting in jpeg or tiff (Tungsten, Fluorescent, Daylight, Custom, etc)
6. If you have mixed lighting you can create a custom white balance
7. Set the camera to timer mode (this is to minimize camera shake)

Setting up the camera

1. Set up the camera on a tripod, make sure the tripod and camera are level

2. Place the tripod at a distance where the art fills almost the entire view, yet you are not too close to get distortions

Shooting the work

1. Clean the camera lens with a lens cleaning cloth
2. Turn on the light kit
3. Get the entire image in the frame with a bit of background (you will crop it out later)
4. Focus your image (manually or with auto focus)
5. Press the button and let go of the camera, the timer function will open the shutter and take the shot
6. Bracket your shot by going up and down one stop with the shutter speed
7. Leave the tripod in place in case you need to come back and shoot more images
8. Make sure to capture your piece from multiple angles if needed

Image editing in Photoshop

1. Import the set of RAW images
2. Open an image in Photoshop and set a white balance
3. Save as a tiff
4. Crop the image
5. Correct any distortions if necessary
6. Adjust color and contrast if necessary
7. Zoom to 100% to check for imperfections
8. If you have the storage space, save both your tiff and RAW images
9. You can now make derivative jpegs from your tiff to match the requirements that are needed