

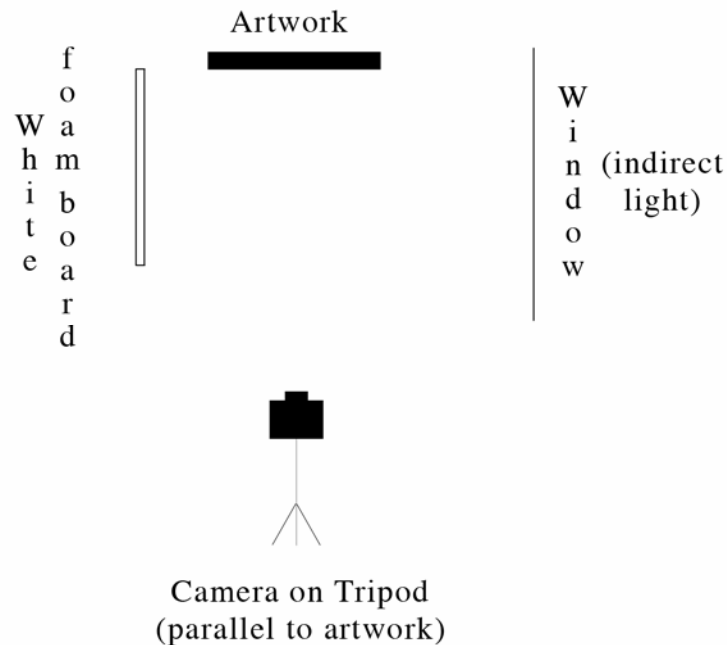
How to Photograph Artwork

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What you need

- Digital camera
- Tripod or sturdy, flat surface
- Window
- White foam board (larger than the artwork)
- Wall 90° from window
- Picture hanger/hook/nail
- Gray card (optional, but recommended)
- White piece of paper
- Level (optional)
- Art!! (NOT under glass)

The Setup



Instructions

1. Hang a picture hook on a wall that is 90° from a window.
2. Make sure you're only getting natural light from the window—NOT direct sunlight.
3. Set up your digital camera on a tripod, directly facing the artwork. Make sure the camera is straight.
4. Place a white foam board parallel to the window and about 90° from the wall, so that the artwork will be in between the foam board and the window (see diagram). You can either place the foam board on a chair, or ask someone to hold it for you, but make sure it is level with the artwork.
5. Set your camera's ISO to 100, or the lowest (normal) setting on your camera.
6. Set your camera's resolution to the highest setting.
7. Set your exposure and check your lighting. Set your camera to aperture priority mode, with the aperture set to f/8. Ask your helper to hold the gray card (or tape it) in the center of where the artwork will be hung. Zoom in so that the gray card fills the entire screen. Take note of the aperture and shutter speed. Now do this again, but with the gray card in the upper left corner of where the artwork will be. Is the exposure the same? If not, then readjust the white foam board until the exposure matches. Now check the exposure with the gray card in all four corners of the artwork area. Once the lighting is even, check the exposure once more in the center, and lock the exposure if your camera has AE lock. If not, then just take note of the exposure.
8. Set your camera's white balance. You can use the AUTO white balance setting on your camera, or even better, you can set a custom white balance. To do this, hold a white piece of paper in the place the artwork will be hung. Set your camera to the custom white balance feature. Focus the camera so the white paper fills the entire frame. Press the menu button to set the white balance. (Refer to your camera manual. The directions may be different.) Note: Your exposure should not change; it should be locked. If your exposure is not locked, it will underexpose the white paper. To fix this, either go back and lock your exposure, or change the exposure in "exposure compensation" by adding +2 stops. Change the compensation back to "0" after the white balance is set.
9. Hang your artwork. Make sure the artwork is straight up and down, not tilted.
10. Straighten up your camera. Remember, you moved it when you checked exposure! It must be parallel to the artwork and perpendicular to the floor (not tilted up or down). The tripod must be raised high enough so that the camera is not tilted. Option: place a level on top of the camera to check if it is tilted.
11. Focus! Make sure you are far enough from the artwork so that you are not using the widest zoom on your lens. Fill the camera frame with the artwork. Do not crop anything out. It's ok to have extra space around the artwork; you can crop it on the computer. If you have the ability to lock the focus on your camera, then do it. Tip: Do NOT use the extended digital zoom, just the optical zoom.
12. If your camera doesn't have AE lock, then check the exposure now, with the camera focusing on the artwork instead of the gray card. Does the exposure match the exposure from the gray card? If not, then the exposure needs to be adjusted with the exposure compensation feature.
13. Set the camera to self-timer mode. This will keep the camera from shaking when you take the picture. Also, if you don't have someone to hold your white foam board for you, this will allow you to hold it yourself.
14. Press the shutter release, and take your hands off of the camera, to avoid shaking. The timer will release the shutter.
15. View your picture on the LCD screen. You can check the exposure with a histogram to make sure it is not too dark or too light. You can't rely on the LCD screen for the proper exposure.

Review

- 1-4. Set up according to the diagram.
5. Set ISO to 100.
6. Set resolution to highest setting.
7. Check lighting and set exposure using gray card.
8. Set white balance.
9. Hang artwork.
10. Straighten camera.
11. Focus.
12. If exposure wasn't locked, make sure it is set correctly.
13. Set self-timer.
14. Take picture.
15. Review image.

Resource List

Art Supplies

Blick Art Materials
7301 West Beverly Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90036
Phone: (323) 933-9284
www.dickblick.com

--or--

Blick Art Materials
11660 Santa Monica Boulevard
West Los Angeles, CA 90025
Phone: (310) 477-0451

Pearl

1250 South La Cienega Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90035
Phone: 310-854-4900
www.pearlpaint.com

Photography Supplies

(for cameras and gray cards)

Samy's Camera
431 S. Fairfax Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90036
Phone: (323) 938-2420
www.samys.com

Calumet Photographic
1135 N. Highland Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90038
Phone: 323-466-1238
www.calumetphoto.com

Office Supplies

(for white foam board or poster board)
Office Max (various locations)
Staples (various locations)