

When you submit artworks to the Young Artists' Summer Show, we ask you to share images of your work. They'll be seen by the judges and be shown online if the artwork is selected for the exhibition, so it's really important that you take a good photo that is a true representation of how the artwork looks in real life. Here are some guidelines to help you capture a good image.

Photographing drawings, paintings and prints (2-Dimensional works):

Place your artwork against a neutral background. If photographing a painting or 2D work of art the key is to get a soft, even light across the whole image with no shadows or reflections. Harsh lighting can cast shadows, so photograph your work in soft natural daylight. It is better to photograph your artwork unframed as the glass or plastic covering can easily distort the image and create unwanted reflections.

Make sure the camera is parallel to your artwork. Try to position the artwork as upright as feels safe, on an easel, hung, or lent against a wall. This will make it easier to photograph.

The lens should be parallel to the artwork, so make sure that you tilt your camera to match the angle of the work. The centre of the lens needs to be directly in line with the centre of the artwork and the edges of the artwork should be parallel to the camera frame. Many cameras have a grid overlay on the LCD screen which will help you do this.

Here are some good examples:

Drawing



Dog 11, Isobel, Year 4

Painting



Cultural Appreciation, Josephine, Year 13

Print



Amber, Henrietta, Year 7

Photographing sculptures and models (3-Dimensional works):

A neutral background usually works well when photographing sculpture because it ensures that the attention is focused on the sculpture itself. However, you may also wish to consider photographing your sculpture in an environment that compliments the artwork, or within the context of the space that the sculpture was created for.

If photographing a sculptural or 3D work of art, lighting can play a key role in adding depth to your photo. If you can, take a couple of shots with different lighting and check them. This will allow you to make adjustments and get the best shot. Make sure to get shots from a variety of angles and positions.

Here are some good examples:

A sculpture against a neutral background



Wood 'n' Rocks, Ben, Year 11

A sculpture in situ



Alien, Clara, Year 13

Other things to think about when you are photographing your work:

Keep your camera steady

To ensure that the image is sharp it's important that the camera doesn't move, so it's best to place it on a flat surface or use a tripod.

Focusing

AUTO focus should be sufficient on all cameras, but if you have difficulty getting the image in focus you may need to switch to manual focus, if your camera has the facility. If you are using an SLR camera or compact camera, zoom in to the middle of the range; with smart phones & tablets, it's best not to use the zoom as it will reduce the image quality.

Getting the colour right

If you are using window light make sure any electric lights are turned off, as they will affect the tones in your work. Turn off the built-in flash and try using the daylight setting on your camera. Light bouncing on the surface of a framed piece will cause glare, so avoid using a flash.

Take several shots

Take a couple of shots and check them so that you can make adjustments if needed. Check that the image is clear and in focus and make sure that it is as true as possible to the artwork.

Image resolution and format

Images must be in one of the following formats: JPG, PNG or GIF. The file size of your image should not exceed 5MB. This is so that, if your artwork is chosen for the online exhibition, it will be of a good enough quality for us to use on the website.

Contact details

If you would like further support in photographing your work, please contact the YASS team by emailing YASS@royalacademy.org.uk