

ART DOCUMENTATION WORKSHOP

Facilitated by Jackson Klie

Hosted by Hamilton Artists Inc. and Factory Media Centre

STEP ONE: When documenting artwork, it's extremely helpful to start with a plan - create a workflow that assesses your needs.

-Questions to ask yourself:

- How many works am I documenting?
- Where are they?
- What kind of work is it?
- What is the final outcome for these images?
- Can it be scanned?

-Ideally, the images you take can be applied to any outcome...this means creating a standard

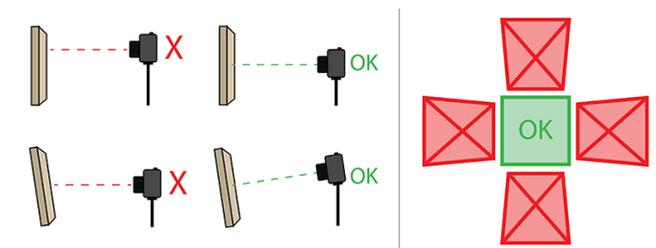
Documenting in Studio / Home

-Set up a work space

- Clean, decluttered
- Wall and a table work well
- If 3D, consider making your own seamless backdrop

-Set up your camera

- Use tripod and do not move it if possible!
- Always be parallel
- Ideally use fixed lens - if a zoom lens, find a spot about in the middle of it's focal range and stick to it (do not use digital zoom)



Avoiding "Keystoning" or Image Skew

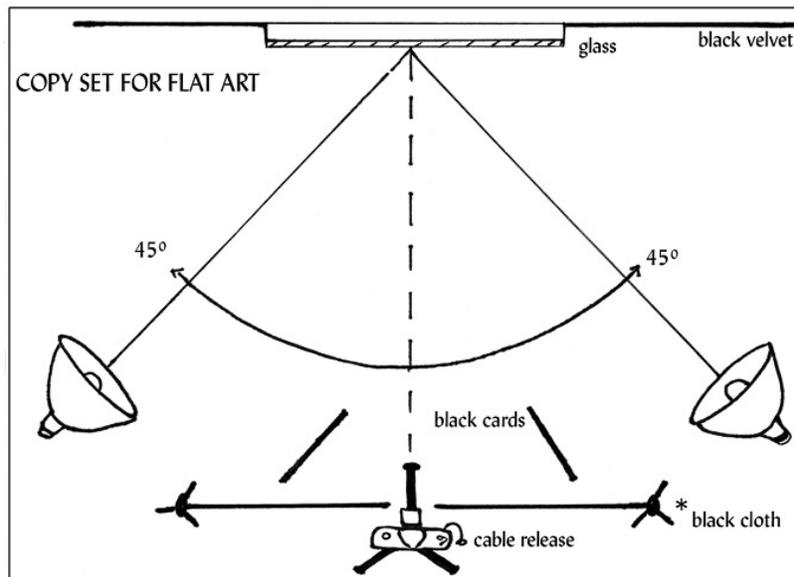
-Camera Settings

- Always shoot RAW and AdobeRGB
- Set your white balance
- Avoid auto!
- Set your exposure
 - general rule: higher(smaller) aperture means more focal range (less important if all works are flat) - f8 is good average

- be aware of bright whites
- check histogram
- Use ISO of 100/200 (no higher)

-Lighting

- Think of: Quality, Direction
- Avoid mixing light types
- Idea light is soft, bright, and even
- Raking light shows more texture



- If using window light, try and shoot on a bright overcast day (avoid direct light as this causes harsh shadows)
- Set up a white board or reflector opposite of window to bounce the light

-Shooting

- Consider the object
- Clean your lens!
- Shooting tethered if possible
 - software such as Lightroom and CaptureOne are good for this
- Use remote or timer
- Take multiple shots
- Do not pack up until you have reviewed images on a computer

-File Management

- RAW Files = Negatives
- Create your “Master files”
- Use subfolders
- Create a standard naming convention
 - ex/ Hamilton_09-21-1.tiff, Hamilton_09-21-2.tiff
- Do not use: periods, spaces, !@#%^^&*() , etc

-Editing

- Open with camera raw
- Fine tune your white balance (note the specific unit of K)
- Adjust for lens distortion and remove aberration
- Crop/adjust if needed (do NOT check “Delete cropped pixels”)
- Save as TIFF (with layers) for Master Files
- Use Levels tool to adjust exposure and contrast (new layer)
- Adjust saturation (new layer)
- Adjust colour balance (new layer)

Documenting Exhibitions

The same general principles apply, but in this context we will be using available lighting, and we will be moving around a space.

-Consider the Space

- Create a plan!
- Contextualize work in the space (show wall/floor)
- Document a variety of angles
- Find your leading lines

Tips 'n Tricks

- Handling glare
 - black cloth / board
 - adjust lights / camera angle
 - polarizing filter
- Works on screen
 - Will Vimeo link or video stills serve your needs?
 - Find an ideal freeze frame for still photo
 - Document the context of the installation