

Capturing High Quality Photos of Your Art for Online Gallery Shows

OAKLAND ART ASSOCIATION

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Our Mission: Improve Photo Quality

The scope of this lesson is limited to capturing photos with your cell phone.

For more tips, especially on editing photos, please watch the following videos:

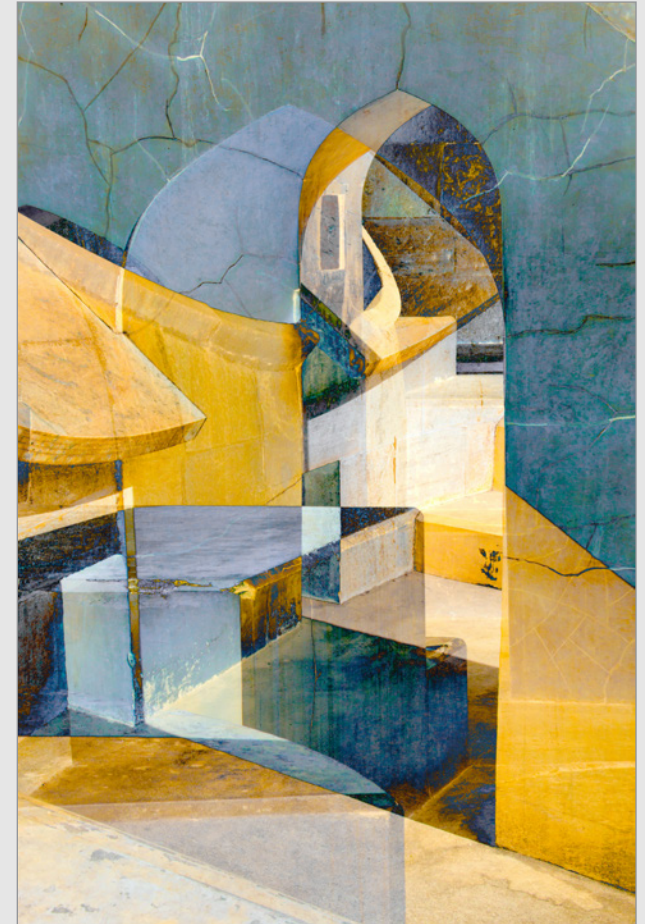
- [Capturing & Editing Using Snapseed on Your Phone](#)
- [Capturing Small Art and Cropping with Your Phone](#)
- [Higher Level Photography and Editing](#)

The following slideshow will be available on the OAA website along with the above videos. You can download it for future reference.

To avoid this...



...and produce accurate representations of your art



The Set-up

Try to get as much correct as possible so you don't need to fix the image so much in the computer.

- **Neutral room colors**
- **Even window light**
- Capture the photo **BEFORE FRAMING THE ART**
- **A tripod to hold your phone is highly recommended.** A tripod is not required but it makes it much easier to properly align the phone and keep it steady while capturing the image. Turn on your phone camera.



Alignment

If your phone is not properly aligned to your art, the art will be distorted and not rectangular.

- Your phone should be:
 - Parallel to your art.
 - Pointed exactly at the center of your art.
 - At a distance that allows just a little space at the edge of your phone screen around your art.
- If your phone has multiple lenses, use the one with the highest amount of zoom. (But do not use the other zooming functions.)

Not Optimized



Better



Lighting - Natural Window

Not Optimized

Better

- **Turn off the flash** on your phone camera
- **Avoid glare and reflections** on your art. Do not have a window or light directly behind the phone or behind the art.
- **Try to make the light falling on the art be as even as possible.** A overcast day is best. Do not allow sunlight to fall directly on your art or your phone.



Lighting - Natural Window

- If one side is a little darker than the other, you can use a pure white reflection card as shown. A piece of foam core board that is at least as big as the art works well for this. Lean it against something sturdy.

Not Optimized



Foam core board reflector
used to even out the light



Better



Lighting - Artificial

If you don't have a suitable window set-up, you can use artificial lighting. This set-up is also useful if you must photograph a framed piece.

- If possible use bulbs that are “daylight” color temperature (available at most hardware stores)
- Use one ceiling light OR two floor lamps at 45° angles to the art. The light should be even coming from both sides. Adjust the distance between the lamps and art to make the light even.
- Do not allow lamps to shine directly at your phone lens.



Capture the Image

After you complete all the previous steps, you can capture the image.

- If your camera is on a tripod, you can set your automatic timer to take the photo. This will allow your phone to be perfectly still when the image is captured.
- Prior to capturing the photo, tap once on the center of the phone screen. This will focus the camera on the art. You can also adjust how light the image is by sliding the yellow light bulb up and down.
- If you are hand-holding the phone, try to hold the phone as still as possible by resting it against a stable surface, while pressing the shutter release button.
- Especially if hand-holding, capture several photos so you can pick the best one.



Edit and Crop the Photo

The goal is to only show the art with no border at all.

Find your photo in your photo library and click “Edit”

Note that there are several controls to make the photo lighter or darker, correct overall color shifts, and adjust the saturation of the colors.

To access the cropping function, press the “Crop” icon.

In library select Edit



Then select Crop



Crop the Photo

Crop the photo so nothing but the art shows. Do this by sliding the corners.

If you are hand-holding the phone when capturing the image, you will probably need to rotate the photo to make the sides of the art parallel to the sides of your screen prior to cropping.

Slide the corners to crop



Then click Done



Possible Problems - Color Shift

There are several possible causes.

- Your light source is not pure daylight.
- Your room has objects in it which are colored and are reflecting those colors on to your art.
- If you can't fix the above, you will need to correct this with the edit photo functions of your phone.

Better



Not Optimized



Possible Problems - Too Dark/Light

Most phones have an option to make your photo lighter or darker prior to capturing the image.

As previously mentioned, tap on your screen. A yellow box will appear with a yellow light bulb to the right. Slide the light bulb up and down to make the image lighter or darker.

It's a good idea to capture several photos with different levels of dark and light. Later, you can pick the one you like most.

Too Dark



Too Light



Possible Problems - Uneven Light

Solutions to this problem are:

- Move painting farther from the light source.
- Turn the art so you get more even light, being careful to not allow glare.
- Place a reflector card as shown previously on the dark side to even out the light.

Not Optimized



Better



Possible Problems - Blurry Photos

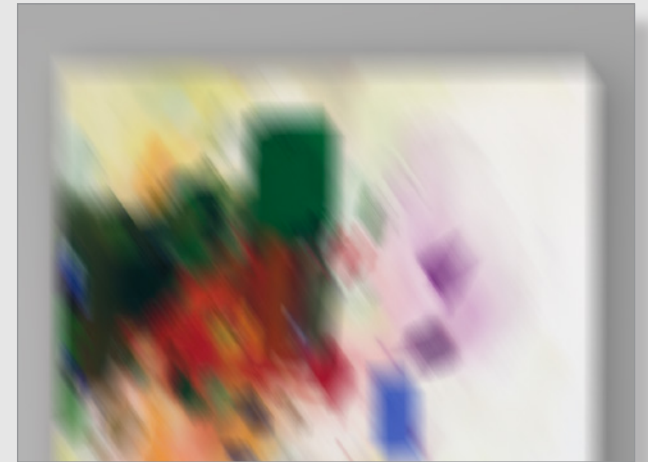
If your image is not sharp, there are three possible reasons. These need to be corrected and the image recaptured as there is no way to fix this problem with editing.

- Your phone camera lens is dirty. Carefully clean it with a soft cloth. Also clean your screen as the photo can appear blurred if the screen is dirty.
- The phone camera moved while capturing the photo. Use the timer feature. This will give you a few seconds to stabilize the camera after pressing the shutter release button. If you are hand-

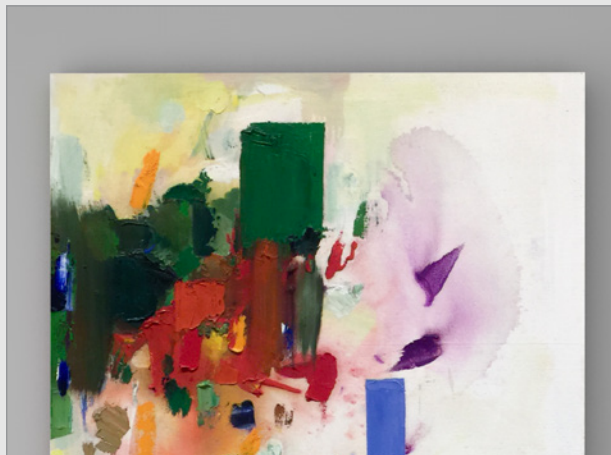
holding, you can stabilize the camera by holding your breath as you press the capture button, or by leaning on something stable. You can also prop the phone up on something stable.

- The phone camera is not focused on the art. Tap the screen just prior to capturing the image to focus.

Motion Blur



Sharp Image



Focus or Dirty Lens Blur



When complete, this is the kind of image that you would send to OAA for an exhibit.

This may seem like a lot of work. However, remember that you don't need to frame your work unless it sells.

Once you have a good set-up, photographing your work will save both time and money!

This painting was created by Hans Hoffmann and can be seen at the Berkeley Art Museum.

