

# Photographing Tapestries

As artists, we spend a ton of time perfecting our craft. But we can often be let down by one of the last parts of the process: photographing the work. Since artists are required to submit work digitally for exhibitions, publications and grants, talks and public profiles, or even sharing on social media, good photography offers the first impression of our art and professionalism. If you are struggling to present your work through photography, then this non-technical comprehensive guide can help.

- ❖ Choose your best settings
- ❖ Shoot in natural light when possible (subdued daylight)
- ❖ Frame the whole image
- ❖ Breathe and shoot

## Camera Settings

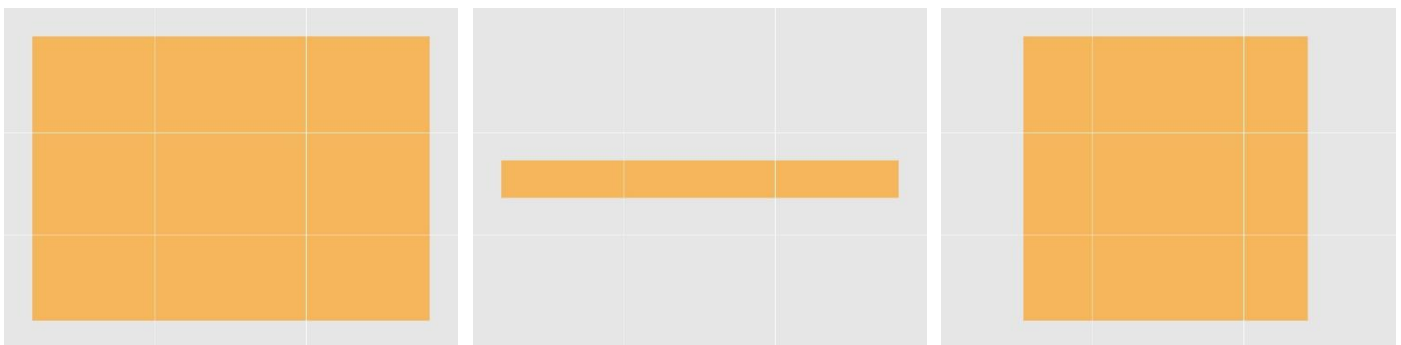
Whether you are shooting on a phone or a camera, the best place to start is Settings. Be sure to have it on the highest resolution possible for optimum quality. More pixels mean more information. Professional photographers will often shoot in RAW format as it is the most common file format for uncompressed images captured by digital cameras. RAW files are generally larger in size because they contain minimally processed image data with lossless quality. If your camera or phone does not have this option, send your image on the largest setting using TIF or JPG which will suffice. Turn off Flash. Flash photography definitely has a place in the world but not when photographing artwork, unless you can control the strength and diffusion of light. In most circumstances, you won't have this option, so just turn it off.

- ❖ Choose Highest Quality and Resolution
- ❖ RAW (for camera users), TIF or JPG format
- ❖ Turn off flash

## Lighting

For best representation of colour in your tapestries, photograph your work in natural daylight, avoiding direct sunlight as it can cast strong shadows and create stark contrasts. If it is a bright sunny day, you can afford to shoot your artwork in a shaded area or try bouncing the light with a white sheet or paper. Photographing outside on an overcast day or by a large window with diffused natural sunlight is ideal as you will get a more even spread of light.

## Framing









Many phones and cameras have a grid that you can switch on and align your artwork to. Whatever size your tapestry may be, include the whole piece in the frame. This allows you to later crop edge to edge in post-processing for a cleaner presentation, if required. Try to keep your camera or smartphone parallel to the artwork so there are no distorted perspectives.

## Focus

All cameras and smartphones are set to use auto focus. As a tip, try taking 3 - 4 shots at several distances from the tapestry to allow the autofocus to do its work. It may work better at a certain distance. If you have issues with auto focus, it is usually due to low lighting situations. Where there is not enough light, your device will probably struggle to focus. If this is the case, then you may have to switch to manual focus if available.

## Photographing indoors

Occasionally you may want to photograph a piece of work that is in an exhibit; lighting can usually be a challenge in these environments. Either the artwork is dimly lit, with not enough overall light, or it is lit with either tungsten or warm light affecting the colour of the artwork. Adjusting the white balance can help in compensating in colour inaccuracies. Most indoor environments are lit with warm light (or tungsten). Use the Tungsten setting to remove excess orange from your image. If it is lit with fluorescent light, you may find a green tinge in your image; adjust the white balance accordingly to compensate. Try to avoid using a flash; in some cases there are no alternatives but to use it - if you must - then try diffusing the flash with a thin piece of paper (cigarette rolling paper is ideal for this), or try bouncing the light if you can redirect the flash as in some cameras.

<div>AWB</div> <div>Auto</div>	<div></div> <div>Tungsten</div>	<div></div> <div>Fluorescent</div>	
<div></div> <div>Daylight</div>	<div></div> <div>Cloudy</div>	<div></div> <div>Flash</div>	<div></div> <div>Shade</div>

## Breathe

Many people when they are ready to shoot, generally hold their breath to be as still as possible to avoid camera shake. I often find I'm steadier when shooting on the out breath, after breathing in. So if you find your images still have some visible camera shake when holding your breath, try this technique on shooting just after breathing out, when you are most relaxed.

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