

# DEVIL IS IN THE DETAILS SERIES

THIS THREE PART SERIES ASSISTS ARTISTS IN THEIR PARTICIPATION WITH THE FCA, COVERING THE TOPICS OF PHOTOGRAPHING ARTWORK, UPLOADING IMAGES AND PACKING AND DELIVERING YOUR ARTWORK FOR DISPLAY.

## PHOTOGRAPHING IMAGES FOR ONLINE SUBMISSION

By Helen Duckworth  
FCA Gallery Coordinator

*After July 1st the FCA will no longer issue refunds or assist with fixing digital submissions that do not meet FCA presentation standards. To make sure your submissions don't fall at the first hurdle, Gallery Coordinator Helen Duckworth discusses what is expected of artists when photographing your art for online submission.*

The start of 2015 brought with it a happy influx of new Active FCA members, so now is a good time to discuss what is expected from member artists when submitting to FCA exhibitions. Inspired by an article featured in *Art Avenue* Sept/Oct 2004 by Rosalind Rorke, whether you have been submitting for years, or are brand new to the process, it is always worthwhile to take a moment to learn (and re-visit) FCA standards.

You'd be surprised how often I see artists sabotage themselves purely because of a poor photograph or lazy approach to digital presentation. Artists need to remember that the SFCA and AFCA jurors have been submitting for years, and were held to the same expectations throughout their journey with the FCA.

It's not just about compliance for the sake of the conforming, we aren't trying to complicate the process, it's about having respect for yourself and your art and attaining and maintaining a level of professionalism. After all you have already done all the hard work, you've invested time, money, effort and emotion on creating something fantastic. Why do it a miss-service by not presenting in the best way possible?

You do not need to break the bank investing in a top of the line digital camera. We have artists utilising iPads and tablets to take their submission photographs. So long as the images are clear, and do not fall asunder to the presentation

blunders outlined below the photographs taken using them are perfectly acceptable.

The other problem we've been seeing lately is artists having difficulty submitting because their digital cameras memory device is no longer supported or compatible with newer computers. In this case, it might be time to bite-the-bullet and invest in a new (read: NEW not EXPENSIVE!) digital camera. You can pick up happy point-shoot-send digital cameras from drug and department stores. Unless you plan to become the Ansell Adams of the digital age, you needn't spend more than \$200 – \$500 on a camera.

I appreciate that may still seem like a large price tag, however if you are considering participating in art in any way in contemporary society, you'd be wise to consider it an investment as opposed to a setback. Let's face it, the way we create, enjoy and consume art is changing, and digital processes are increasingly becoming a larger part of what artists do, regardless if you're a digital artist or not!

In the following photographs, we have given examples of things to avoid when photographing your artwork ready for submission.

We've used SFCA member Donna Baspaly's mixed media piece "Doorway to the Past" to illustrate how not to take pictures for submissions. We did this fantastic work an injustice to show just how important a good submission photograph is.



**PHOTO 1:** Underexposed with shadow, even if this piece was taken with clarity it would be declined for jury as it includes the matting, frame and background. Make sure your uploaded photographs include only the artwork itself.



**PHOTO 2:** To solve the issue of under exposure, many artists utilise flashes on their digital camera, which as you can see here not only doesn't solve the problem, it creates an additional issue by creating a flash reflection.



**PHOTO 3:** You can solve the under exposure issue by playing with your camera's aperture and shutter speed settings. Be careful though, open them up and extend

them too long and you run the risk of over-exposure. This makes for washed out images that don't reflect content or colours correctly.



**PHOTO 4:** Glare and reflections happen when you leave your artwork under glass and attempt to photograph from a well-lit area.



this problem.

**PHOTO 5:** In addition to the previous issues, we've got a flash going off here. Many digital cameras have auto flash settings, be sure to learn how to adjust and turn yours off to avoid



**PHOTO 6:** Almost, but we can still see the matting and your image is taken at an angle, making the image appear distorted.



**PHOTO 7:** Even without the matting in the shot, if your photograph is taken at an angle there is a marked difference between the image submitted and actual image as it is intended to be seen.



**PHOTO 8:** Accurate colours, good exposure, no extraneous background, no matting, no shadows, glare reflection or frame, this image is ready to be uploaded for jury! See what a difference a good photograph makes? "Doorway to the Past" comes alive and speaks to jurors through their screens fully reflecting the intention and skill of the artist.

*Image Courtesy of Donna Baspaly, SFCA, Doorway to the Past, 29 1/2" x 38 1/2", Mixed Media, \$3000.*

*Available for sale from the Federation of Canadian Artists. Call: 604-681-8534.*