

### Documentation

It is worth hiring a professional photographer who is experienced in documenting artwork, either in situ for an exhibition or in studio, as there are particular requirements you should keep in mind about composition, tonal range, colour balancing, reproductions and file conversions.

Similarly, when converting image files for online use, the colour range drops substantially, so check it is as close to the original colour as possible. There are lot of resources online for how to best photograph your work if you are doing it yourself. Always shoot on a tripod, preferably on a timer to avoid any camera shake. Keep the background as plain as possible, preferably a white wall that you can use to set your white balance before shooting.

Use good lighting without any shadows, achieved by setting up directional lights facing either side of your work. If your work is sculptural or textural then you may want to set up extra angled lighting to create shadow and capture the depth in the work.

Photography of your artwork for print reproduction (in a magazine or catalogue for instance) needs to be high resolution, at least 300dpi (dots per inch) and 15cm2 minimum. Hiring a professional will give you the best results, plus the larger and higher quality your images are, the more likely they will be used large format in print.

Shooting on slide will still give you the best quality for artwork reproduction, but there are extra costs involved and you'll need to get them scanned before they can be submitted online or for publication, as many companies and organisations sadly no longer handle slides.

### Images

Only use professional, clear and good resolution images of your work. If you only have a blurry image from an old exhibition and you can't get any other images, it may be best to simply list it. Having bad quality images only says you either don't care enough, or that you're not professional about your work, either way it sends a bad message.

Chose one or two high-quality images of your work to use as your 'marketing image'. It should be your own artwork, i.e. you should be both the creator and copyright holder, which allows you free license

to send, post, reproduce and distribute that image anywhere. A major work from your most recent or forthcoming exhibition is an ideal choice as it builds currency around your name and your work.

Having one or two strong, easily identifiable images of your work that you can use across the web and send to people will also provide a point of visual recognition, and help gain the interest of people unfamiliar with your work. Once you know someone is interested in your work then you can pull out your whole folio and wow them.

For online use, always ensure your images and texts are multiplatform and multidevice friendly (.jpg format is universal). Also ensure your file sizes are small enough to download quickly without losing overall image quality. Use as much detail as possible in the captions, and copy the details into the file information (metadata/alt tags), so people can get a better understanding of the dimensions, material, etc.

### Archiving

Always keep image records of sold work and note where the works went, and where your work is being held, including at any commercial or public galleries.

Archive your work in both hardcopy and digital formats where you can. Slides and slide scans stored on external hard drive are arguably the highest quality form of archive but (like photographs and regular film negatives) have a limited lifespan. Keep everything in duplicate where possible, and properly store your work. Regularly check your archive to prevent any damage from moisture, mould, chemicals, heat or dust. And finally, don't travel with your archive unless you are moving studio or home.

Digital storage (including hard drives, USB, CD/DVD) also have limited lifespans, so upgrade any old archives every few years, (such as updating computer discs to newer formats), as later you may not be able to access them, the technology may become redundant, or the manufacturer may stop supported the product.

You may want to consider keeping your archive on a cloud or dropbox, or even using your website hosting storage as another place to back up. There are some free services, but again check them regularly in case they plan to take their services offline, or the terms and conditions change.

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In all these cases, remember that nothing last forever, and often hardcopy is the most permanent, though most fragile, form of archiving.

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