



TOP TIPS FROM GRAHAM BERRY

NO.1 - TAKING GREAT PHOTOS OF YOUR ART

Understanding photography seems easy.

Just click and go, right ?

Professional photographers keep learning all the time, and that's what we're going to do here.

The smartphone revolution made taking photographs to a good standard easy for the novice.

So here's a little iPhone (or any smartphone) tips and advice to help you take great artwork which will show off your artwork to best effect.

Follow these few pieces of advice and you'll be proud to share your artistic achievements with your friends, fellow artists and beyond...

TOP TIPS - TAKING A GREAT PHOTO

Here is an example of what we are trying to achieve:

This was taken on an iPhone 11 but most phones deliver similar results when taking a photo outside.



OBJECTIVES:

How we want our photos to look:

- Bright
- Saturated colours
- No shadows
- Head on shot
- No colour shifts
- Cropped
- Highlights are white

This isn't too hard to achieve. It sounds daunting but it's easy to achieve if you follow this simple 1-2-3 process:

1. **Light it right**
2. **Photograph it head on**
3. **Crop and edit, using your phone**

Before we go straight into 'how', let's look at a few examples of why we're doing this.



THE ISSUES

Before we get to our 3-step plan to solve the issues, let's look at them first.

Here are some examples of common issues when taking a photo of your artwork; remember these are all supposed to be wrong.

1 - LIGHTING



This is a common mistake. Indoor lighting is probably the worst place to photograph.

That's why all of these have bad colour balance.

It's why galleries have large windows with lots of light. So, daylight gives us the best possible way to photograph our work.

2 - PERSPECTIVE



Second is perspective. We know that if we look at something at a strange angle it will feel 'off'.

This usually happens when people are trying to avoid the third issue of shadows which is what's happened here.

Keeping your shadow (or your phone's shadow) out of shot creates a strange angle.

3 - SHADOWS



Shadows. We've all had shadows ruin that perfect photo.

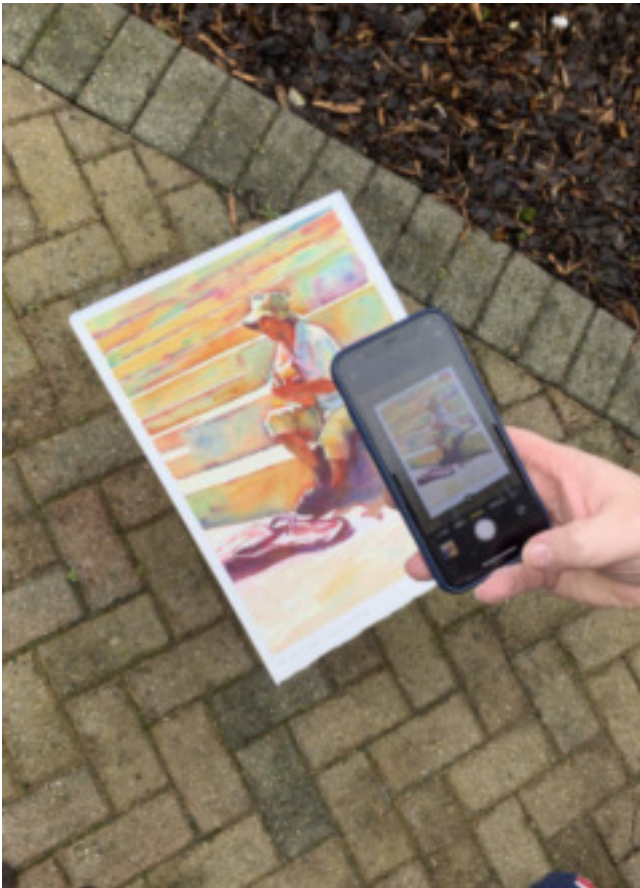
But when we are in control of the subject, like our artwork, we can get rid of them. Here my arm and phone are casting an extra shadow onto the painting



STEP 1 - LIGHT IT RIGHT

1.1 - THE OUTSIDE METHOD

If you can, lay your painting on a stool, chair or small table outside. All we're doing here is setting up our shot.

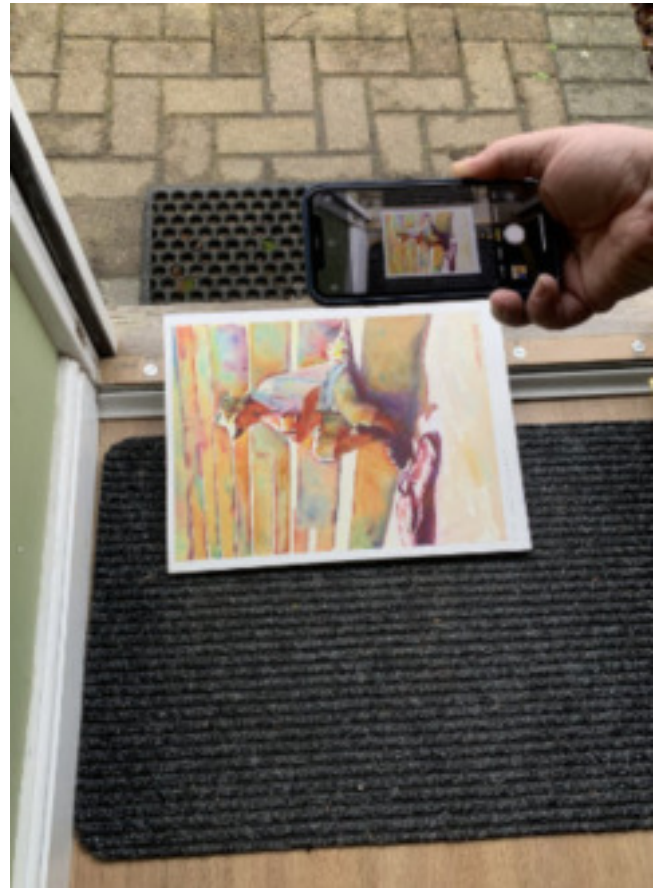


If you can't lay it flat, or your table is too small, then add a piece of card underneath; here we've used a piece of foamboard.

**If it's raining obviously
don't do this!**

1.2 - THE 'IN BUT OUT' METHOD

The next option is lay it just inside your front door or on a table near a window; we don't want direct sunlight, but natural daylight.



**As long as water isn't
hitting your painting this
is great for a rainy day**

NEXT: STEP 2



STEP 2 - FACE IT HEAD ON

2.1 - THE OUTSIDE METHOD

If you can hover over your painting outside it's now simple to just take your photo. Just make sure you are 'head on' with as little angle change as possible.



This will give your phones small sensor the best possible chance of getting lovely vibrant colours. We're not after sunlight, just daylight to show your paintings truest tones. There that's another issue solved!

2.2 - THE 'IN BUT OUT' METHOD

To get head on here you'll need to do a bit of manoeuvring using the doorstep method. If you can't angle that way and your step has a lip on it that can help you angle the painting to the same plane as your phone (see 1.2)

Failing that, pin it to your fence when it's dry outside or use some masking tape and tack it to the window of an open door like here. This is a much easier position to photograph in, and as you see its not a bright day.



NEXT: STEP 3



STEP 3 - THE CROP AND ADJUST

3.1 - THE CROP

The photo is there, but we haven't quite finished. If you want that 100% professional look, then try the next two steps - 'crop' and 'edit' (if needed).

BEFORE THE CROP



1. Using your iPhone, open your photo and click [edit] at the bottom.
2. Next, we're looking for this symbol which is the crop action.
3. Press the crop button and you will get a box around your image. (See picture on left)
4. If you hold your finger on any corner you can crop into the image, and remove any distractions from the photo. We are looking for the painting to have no lines around it if possible.
5. Now we're pretty much finished. If you took it outdoors or 'out but in' you're good to go. If you had to take it under household lighting, the next step should help you balance those colours. Even indoors, the brighter light the better!



3.2 - ADJUST THE COLOUR

If you still want to tweak the colour a little, here's the next step.

WARM OR COOL?



1. Using an iPhone, open your photo and click [edit] at the bottom.
2. Next we're looking for this symbol which is temperature control, you'll have to slide along to find it.
3. When you have that symbol in the centre, just below you will see vertical dashed lines. Hold your finger on these and slide each way until you see what you think truly represents white in your white areas. Here I've moved to -15 but if you're under normal bulbs it really can vary. Adjust until you feel happy with it.



RESULTS

You'll see the things we've discussed in our two actual photos taken indoors, the outdoors and out but in methods give similar but not identical results. The outdoor is slightly cooler but both are so much brighter and more vibrant.

Happy painting (and photographing!)

✗ Perspective cropped



✗ Indoor cropped



✓ Outside cropped



✓ Doorstep cropped

