



Tips and Tricks to Using your Smartphone to take photos of your Artwork

Natural daylight away from standard household lamps, will make the biggest difference to almost every aspect of taking a photograph of your artwork, but primarily colour accuracy.

1. Lighting your work with natural light

You can either hang your canvas on a wall outside, preferably not in the glare of direct sunlight to avoid any reflection. You can pick up removable hooks from Coles, Woolworths, Kmart etc that can be removed after, without having to put a nail through the wall.

Or

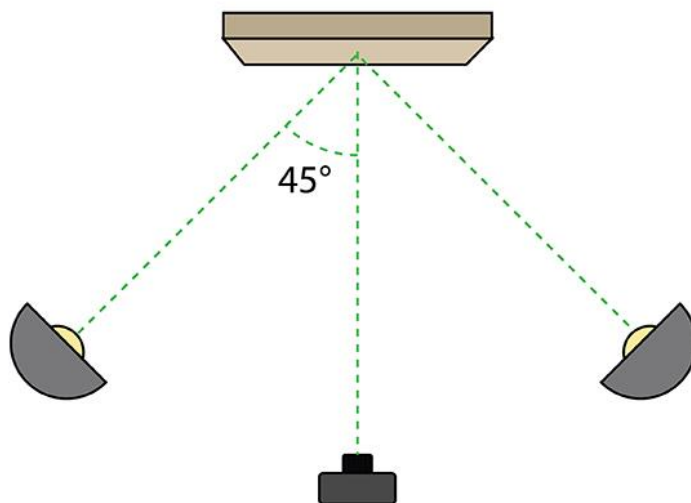
lay your canvas on the floor inside, next to an open door, this will be your light source. Turn off all the other lights in the room and position your canvas roughly 60 cm away from the bottom of the door frame, stand directly over it to take your shot.



2. Light your work properly indoors

Find a neutral coloured wall (white, black, gray) and hang your work at a height where the middle of your piece will be parallel to where your camera will be

All you will need is two lights at a minimum for 2-dimensional work. You can use lighting stands like tripod light stands from Bunnings. Place the lights halfway between the camera and the canvas at a 45-degree angle pointing toward the wall (this will help eliminate shadows and “hot spots” on the painting).



Photographing Your Artwork: Beginner's Tips That Anyone Can Do by Daric Gill
<https://dgillart.wordpress.com/2017/04/05/photographing-artwork/>

If you do not have professional grade lighting kit, you can easily diffuse the light with a white sheet, t-shirt, shower curtain or white plastic between the lights and your work. This helps to evenly distribute the light.



Five DIY Video Light Diffusers You Already Own by Nikola Stojković
<https://filmdaft.com/diy-video-light-diffusers/>


3. Reflections

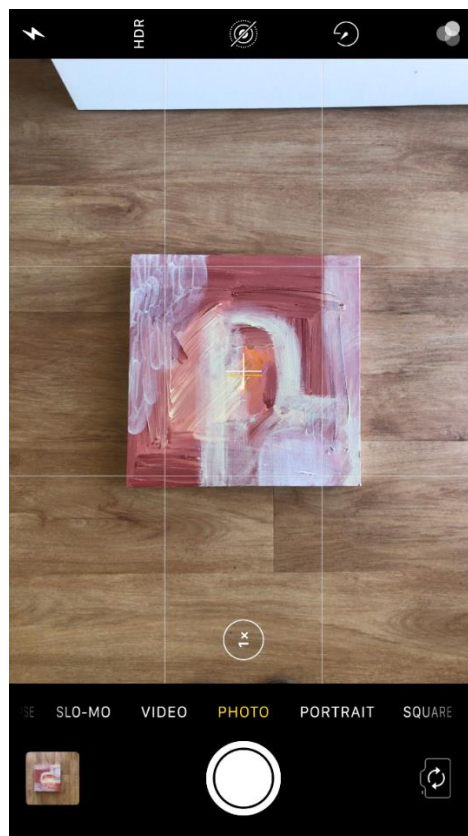
Reflections are the biggest challenge to photographing artwork. The best way to avoid reflections is to take the glass out of the artwork. If that is not possible, then find an angle where there is not a reflection in the glass. You can change the angle to avoid reflection by taking a piece of rolled tape and put it behind the frame to bump it either the right, left, up, down to handle the reflection.

4. Adjust your camera and settings

Once your artwork is secured to the wall, set up your phone on either on a tripod or resting sturdily on a table or other surface. You want to position your camera so that the frame is filled with most of the painting, with a bit of background that you can crop out later. It is important to see the edges of the paintings to get a sense of scale.

Every smartphone has a grid feature, which you should always use to help compose your image correctly. To display a grid on the camera screen that can help you straighten your shots, go to

Settings  > Camera, then turn on Grid.



Be sure you tap the screen of your smartphone to focus the camera on your subject -- that will help to ensure that it is focused and the lighting is optimized.


When you take a photo from a distance, it is tempting to zoom in on something specific you are trying to capture. But it is actually better not to zoom in -- doing so can make the photo appear grainy, blurry, or pixelated.

Take the photo

5. Crop and Adjust


Photos of paintings in books or gallery websites are almost always cropped to clean edges. Use the crop tool to crop and frame your picture to avoid the distraction of background.

1. In Photos, tap a photo thumbnail to view it in full screen.

2. Tap Edit, tap , then do any of the following:

- *Crop manually:* Drag the rectangle corners to enclose the area you want to keep in the photo, or you can pinch the photo open or closed.

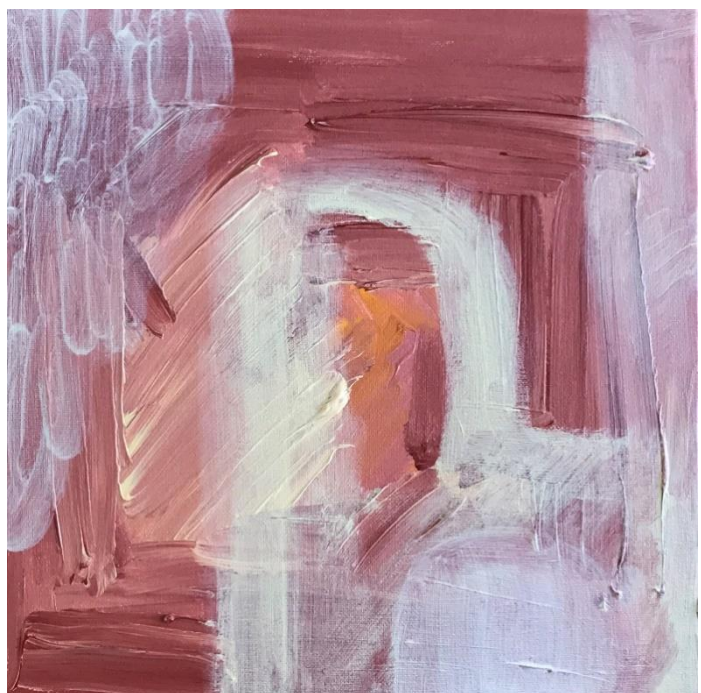
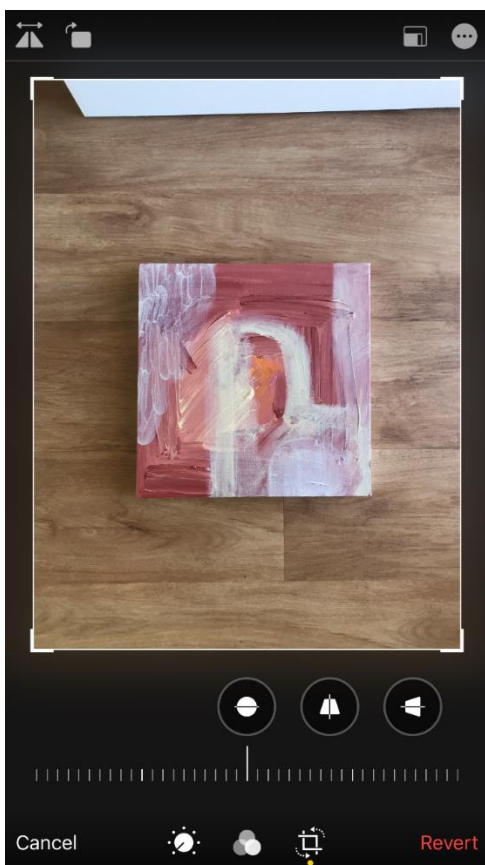
- *Crop to a standard preset ratio:* Tap , then choose a ratio like Square, 2:3, 8:10, and more.

- *Rotate:* Tap  to rotate the photo 90 degrees.

- *Flip:* Tap  to flip the image horizontally.

3. Drag the corners around the edge of the image to crop the image.


4. Tap Done to save your edits, or if you don't like your changes, tap Cancel, then tap Discard Changes.



Final cropped image of the artwork.

4. Edit your photos to perfection

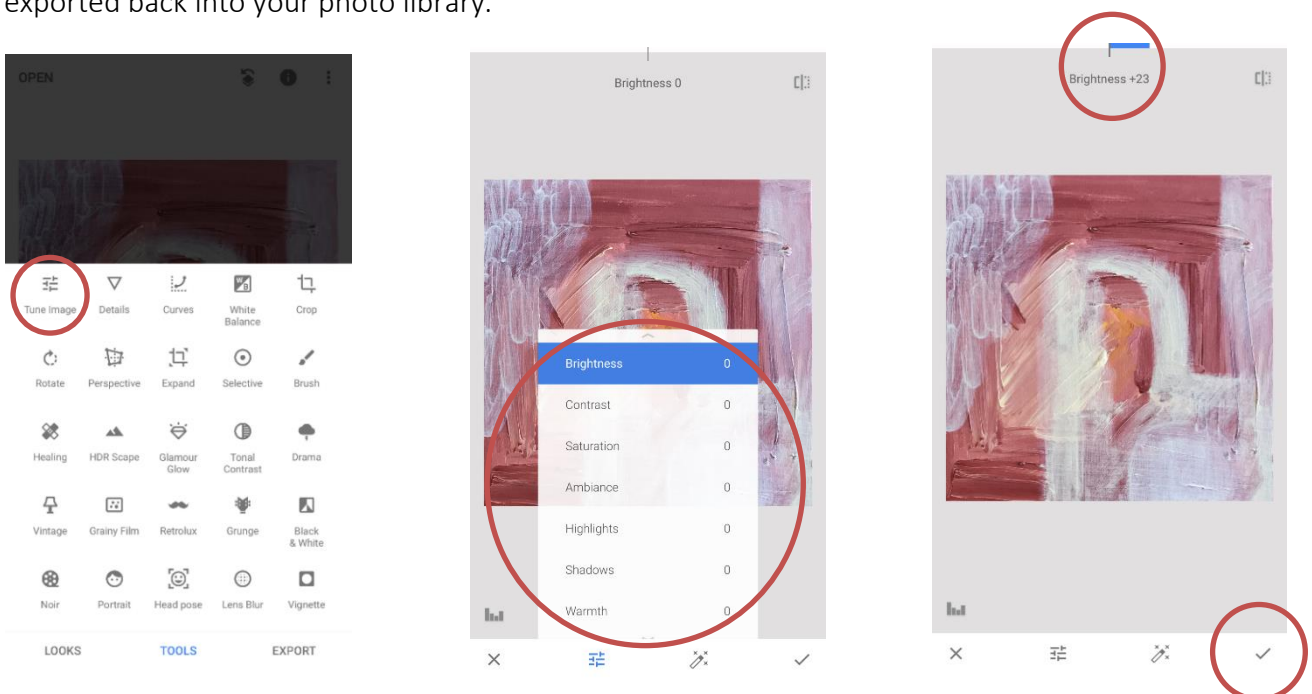
Taking a photo of your work in natural light and cropping accordingly will usually be enough, but there are plenty of free or inexpensive photo editing software alternatives out there that will help minimize any inconsistencies including Snapseed.

Open Snapseed  on your device. Snapseed will prompt you to open an image from your photo library on your device.

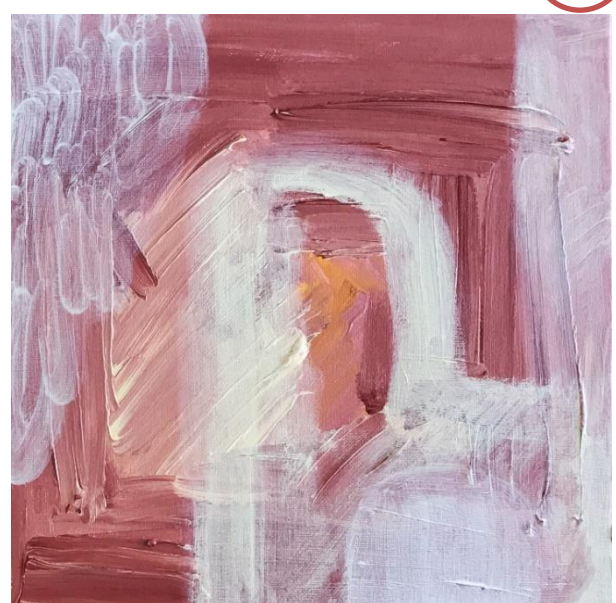
Click on “tools” in the middle of the screen and then “tune image”. Click on one of the options and move your finger across the bar at the top of the screen to adjust the image accordingly.

Remember: You do not want to apply filters or tune the image of your work to the point that it is not an accurate reflection of your original artwork. In the example below, I added a little bit of brightness to the image of my work.

Once you are happy with the adjustments, click the tick, and press export. The image will then be exported back into your photo library.



Final edited image of the artwork using Snapseed.



Untitled work by Steph McIntosh.