Driftless Area Art Festival

An Event of Community Development Alternatives, Inc., a 501 (c)(3) Organization
315 E. Cedar St./P.O. Box 72, Prairie du Chien, WI 53821
(608) 326-7333 ● info@DriftlessAreaArtFestival.com

Four (4) images are to be submitted that are representative of your work, **done in the last three years**. A fifth image representative of your booth set-up is also required. The jury will consider the photo of your booth as part of the judging process. The photo should represent how your booth will look at the DAAF. **Quality photos are essential as the jury only uses your brief description and images during the selection process.** Do not crop photos tight. If an artist has work in more than one medium, four (4) images of each medium must be provided to the jury, and your booth photo should show both medias displayed. Only two media per artist will be accepted.

High quality photography is very important when documenting your work, applying for art festivals, approaching galleries, or selling art via the internet. While you may choose to engage a professional to do your photography, it is becoming increasingly easier to achieve high quality photography on your own. And if the camera still intimidates you, you probably have a friend who can help you out.

Tips on Photographing Paintings and 2D Artwork

1. Take your photographs before a painting is varnished, matted or framed. Unvarnished oil paintings are less reflective. If a painting is already behind glass, take it out of the frame to avoid glare. Do not photograph the mat or the frame around the artwork. Let the artwork itself be the focus.

2. Diffused daylight (bright, overcast skies) is best for photographing art outdoors. Natural light, near windows admitting north light, is fine if you are indoors.

3. Set the camera to capture the most pixels possible (the largest type of files). If you know how to work with RAW files, choose this setting. If not, use the next highest setting.

4. Set the white balance for the light you are shooting in. If you are unsure, set the camera on "sunlight." If your image is not the right color when compared to your original art work, try another white balance setting.

5. Don't use a flash. It is your enemy when photographing art. It creates hot spots and evens out contrasts.

6. It is very important to shoot as straight as possible, so a painting appears square and not distorted. Place artwork on an easel that is positioned straight up, or lay the artwork on the ground and shoot it from overhead. Make sure that there are no shadows cast on your art from you, your camera or your surroundings.

7. Use a tripod to keep the camera level and steady. Position the camera 2-3 feet away from the artwork, depending on your lens. Make sure you can frame the whole piece in your viewfinder. Fill the frame. Hold the camera horizontally to photograph horizontal work, and hold it vertically to photograph vertical work.

8. Focus on the center of the art. You need a sharp focus.

9. Increase and decrease the light settings so you have a varied amount of light. This is called bracketing. Vary either the f-stop or the shutter speed slightly over and slightly under the correct amount. This will give you several photos from which to choose.

10. If photographing your work with a phone, be sure to set it to the largest file size setting and take photos in a varieties of ways (angles, lighting, etc) to get the best shot.

11. Use photo processing software like Adobe PhotoShop or Elements to adjust your images. Nearly every photograph needs post processing, as you want your photograph to reflect how your art actually looks.

Tips on Photographing 3D Artwork

1. Clean backgrounds for three-dimensional art are extremely important. Many artists use backgrounds of solid or graduated shades. Whatever background you choose, make sure all pieces are photographed on the same background to show a uniform body of work.

2. Seamless paper can be ordered in white, black and neutral gray from most camera stores. Graduated backgrounds in reusable vinyl, such as Veritone, come in three sizes. Good choices are Veritone #9 (black to white), Veritone #39 (dark gray to white) and Veritone #28 (light gray to white). If you do not have access to something such as Veritone, try using a solid, light colored sheet.

3. Unroll the paper from above the art object, providing a backdrop that curves into a flat surface. When placing your artwork, leave as much space between the object and the background as possible to avoid harsh shadows.

4. Place the camera level with the middle of the piece. Position the camera horizontally to photograph horizontal work, and vertically to photograph vertical work.

5. If using one light source, position it close to the camera, but higher. An umbrella on the light source is a softening device, and will diffuse the shadows.

6. Use a piece of white foam core as a bounce surface, which helps to alleviate the lack of detail on the unlit side of the object. Move it around the object until you achieve a pleasing set of shadows.

7. A second light can be used instead of the foam core board.

8. Refer to Nos. 3, 4, 5, 7 and 9 under “2D Art” above.

9. Take multiple points of view, such as a potential viewer would see if your artwork was on display.

10. If photographing your work with a phone, be sure to set it to the largest file size setting and take photos in a variety of ways (angles, lighting, etc) to get the best shot.

11. Use photo processing software like Adobe PhotoShop or Elements to adjust your images. Nearly every photograph needs post processing, as you want your photograph to reflect how your art actually looks.

Tips on Photographing Your Booth

Your booth image is extremely important. In 10 to 20 seconds, the jury sees the body of your work and how it is presented to the public. The booth image must be representative of how you will look at a show.

1. Your booth shot should NOT include any signs or people that would identify your booth to the jury.

2. It is best to photograph your booth on a slightly overcast day. This provides even lighting.

3. Ideally, your canopy is white, and all three walls can be seen in the picture.

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4. The sides and back of the canopy should be in place behind the walls of the booth so that nothing distracting draws the jurors' attention. Shoot wider than the canopy.

5. If you are a 2D artist and use bins for unframed work, be sure to include them.

6. If you are a 3D artist and use tables, consider hanging large photographs of your pieces to take up wall space and make your booth more inviting. Make sure the table covers are wrinkle free. Table height should be at least 40 inches.

7. When photographing your booth, use a tripod if possible.

8. Bracket your shots by increasing and decreasing the light settings. It's better to use a photograph that is slightly too dark than one that is too light as detail can be brought out in post processing.

9. If photographing your work with a phone, be sure to set it to the largest file size setting and take photos in a variety of ways (angles, lighting, etc) to get the best shot.

10. Every image can be improved in post processing. Use a post-processing program like Adobe PhotoShop or Elements to crop and square up the outside walls.