



Capturing your Art for Reproduction:

Options and Guidelines

Your goal should be to create the most accurate digital file of your art in the best format to enable it to be reproduced as a giclée print. This is best achieved by either scanning the art or photographing it in a studio. Scanning allows us to compare test prints with the detail and colours of the art original and is always preferred.

Salt of the Earth uses a specially modified flatbed scanner that can take artworks up to 100 x 100 cms. We scan at 'same size' print resolution (360dpi) with multiple passes to 48bit files; this eliminates the need to scale images and captures the maximum information. If your artwork's too big for our scanner, we work in conjunction with a specialist provider whose museum quality Betterlight system can capture artworks up to 7.5m wide.

Scanning the original is always your best option because it can capture significantly more information than even the best camera. Mastering a scan at 48bit, as part of the process, ensures the best match between print and original artwork. Salt of the Earth receives fine art for scanning/mastering from artists throughout Europe and the UK, and can supply special expandable boxes at cost for sending us your art.

Shooting your own artwork? Follow these rules.

- Before the shoot, your artwork must come out of its frame and mount to prevent shadows and loss at the margins, and it certainly shouldn't be shot through glass.
- Your art needs to be photographed with a large - or at least a medium format camera.
- It needs to be shot at the highest possible resolution. This will produce a large digital file that captures the detail of your image.
- The lens your photographer uses should be a prime lens with minimum barrel distortion.
- The camera needs to be positioned absolutely 'square' to the artwork. This is normally achieved with a 'laser through the lens' system.
- Lighting is absolutely critical. To capture a good shot for reproduction requires much more light than for a normal photo shoot. The light should be even across the whole image and, depending on the texture of the artwork, configured to achieve the most realistic image. As most art benefits from shooting with the lens stopped down and a long exposure, 'cold' lighting systems are best. They protect the artwork from excessive heat from the light.
- The artwork image should fill the frame of the camera.
- Your images should preferably be shot RAW and then colour balanced on a calibrated monitor to match the original before saving to an 8bit TIFF or PSD file. Images should not be shot as JPEGs, because JPEG is a compressed file format that omits some colour detail.
- Ideally, your files should carry an 'Adobe RGB 1998' colour management profile; then we will all be looking at the image using the same reference profile.
- Having a printer's colour reference strip alongside the art can help with the colour balancing. However, there's no substitute for having the original here for comparison. That's why scans achieve superior results compared with simply printing from digital photos.
- To scale your image up to the required print size requires specialised software. We recommend and use "Photo Resize", which is a fractal process that doesn't introduce artefacts or degrade the image. Photoshop is great for making things smaller, but not for scaling up.

Finally, if you supply a digital file from a photo shoot, the quality of that file (or lack of it) will determine the quality of your giclée prints. Get the best image capture by following our tips.

Scanner vs. Camera: Which captures your artwork best?

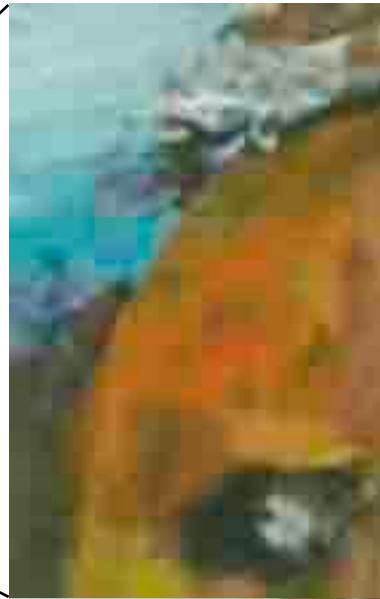


Image shot as
'Low' JPEG

File size: **135KB**



Image shot as
'Medium' JPEG

File size: **1MB**

Digitally scanning your original is always the best option because a high-end scanner captures more colour and detail information than even the best camera. And remember: if we have your original art here as a reference, we can tweak test prints until we reach the optimum match: your Master File. If you want the best giclée prints, start with the best image capture!



Image scanned at
360dpi, 48bit and
saved as 48bit PSD.

File size: **74.9MB**



Image shot as
TIFF, 8bit.

File size: **8.6MB**

Art scanned
Best quality for printing.

Art photographed on Pentax IOS camera with
100mm 2.8 lens, exposure 4 secs @ f22. Tripod
mounted with controlled studio lighting.