



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.

At Salt of the Earth, we use a specially modified flatbed scanner which can take larger artworks up to 33 x 71cms. We also scan at 'same size' print resolution (360dpi) with multiple passes to 48bit files; this both eliminates the need to scale images and captures as much information as possible. If your artwork is too big for our scanner, we work in conjunction with a specialist provider who uses a museum quality Betterlight system to capture really big 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. Also mastering a scan at 48bit, as part of the process, ensure the best match between print and original artwork. Salt of the Earth receives fine art for scanning and mastering from artists throughout Europe and the UK.

However, instead of scanning, you choose to use a photographic studio to capture your art, here are some guidelines to help ensure you achieve the quality required for giclée printing:

- Before the shoot, your artwork must come out of its frame and mount to prevent shadows and loss at the margins, and it certainly can'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 to capture the detail of your image.
- The lens the photographers 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 preferable to protect the artwork from excessive heat/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, as 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 colour reference strip alongside the art can help with the colour balancing, but there's no substitute for comparing and balancing the image to the original artwork.

Finally, remember that if you give us a digital file from a photo shoot, the quality of that file (or lack of it) will determine the resulting giclée prints. So make sure you get the best image capture by following our tips.