

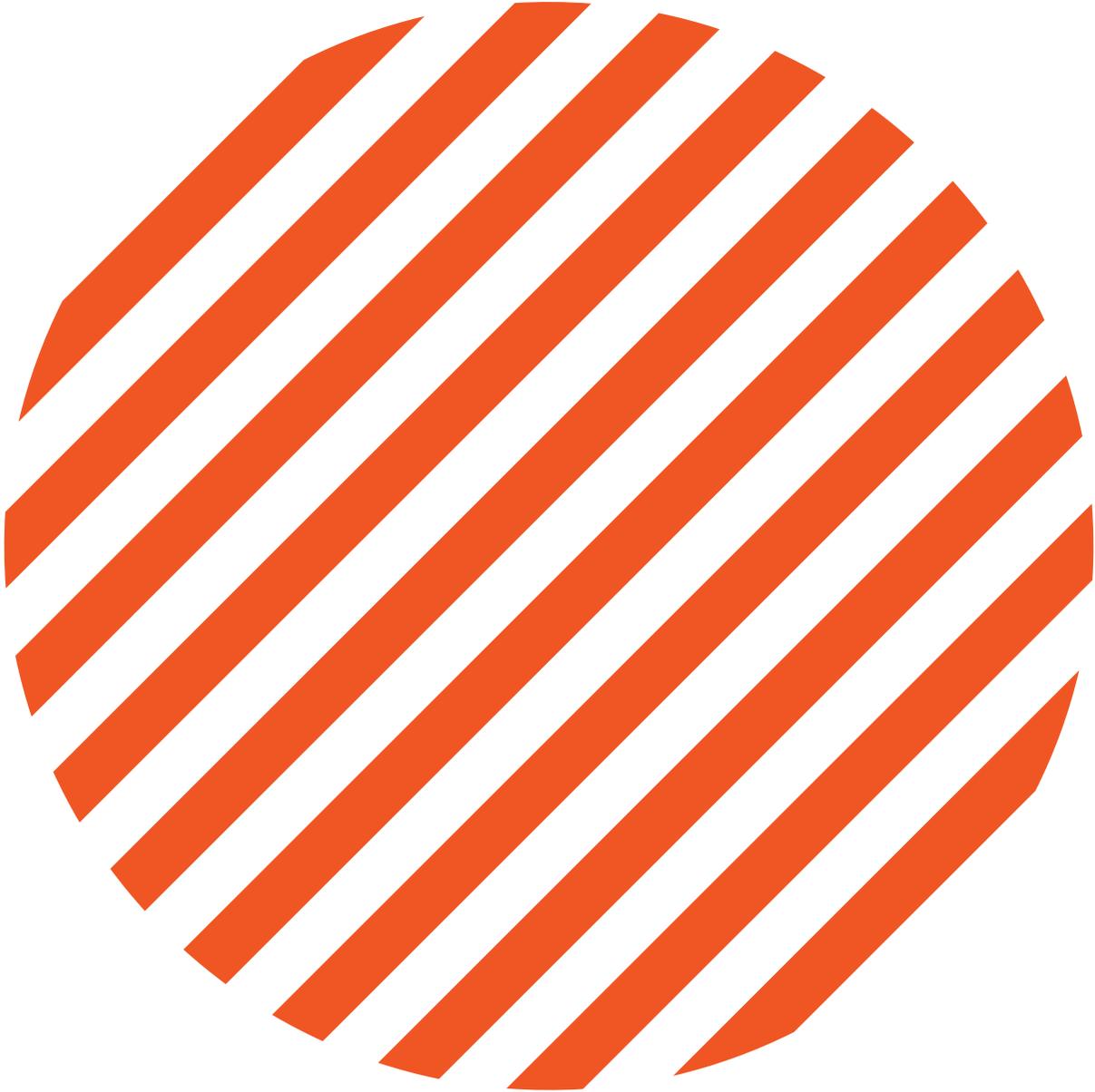
Publication



Shumka Centre for  
Creative Entrepreneurship

Career Development +  
Work Integrated Learning

# How to Document Your Work



# How to Document Your Work

Yvonne Hachkowski,  
Admissions Advisor

Do you have incredible work that you'd like to show off but aren't exactly sure how to best capture it? Are you creating a portfolio that requires professional, immaculate photographs of all of your projects? Check out the following steps to learn how to properly document your work.

## Step One: The Camera

Choose a 24-70mm lens which will allow you to precisely zoom in and will provide you with wider angle images. The Canon EOS 5D Mark III is a great camera to work with—and if you're an Emily Carr student, it's available along with a lens at Media Resources. If you're checking out a camera from Media Resources, don't forget your SD card (16GB or 32GB will work perfectly). Without one, you won't be able to save any of your photos!

## Step Two: Studio Setup

Not everybody has easy access to a studio, but don't fret! Here are some shortcuts.

- You might require a trolley to carry all of your materials—they are large and can get quite heavy.
- Always keep tape with you to secure cords and prevent them from shifting.

### Backdrops:

You will want to set the piece you are documenting in front of a neutral background, such as a plain white, grey or black wall or backdrop. Remember that you want your viewer to be focused on your work, not a distracting background.

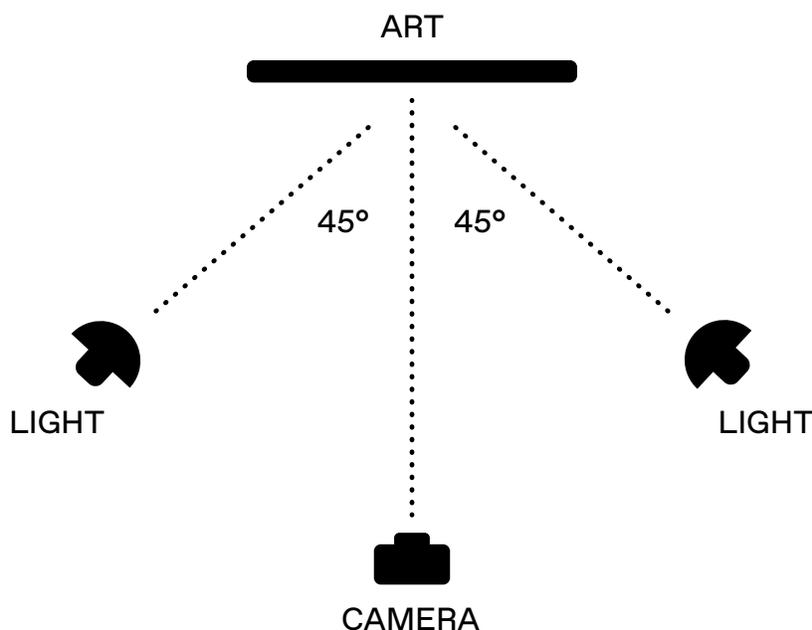
- If you don't have easy access to a backdrop, you can tape up a large piece of white roll paper to your surface.
- If you are shooting a framed work, make sure to remove any plexi or glass to prevent unwanted glare in your photos.

## Step Two: Studio Setup

### Lighting:

If you are not using professional lighting, aim to shoot on a cloudy day with natural daylight. The clouds act as diffusers that will rid your documentation of any harsh shadows. However, professional lighting kits will get you the best results with your documentation photography.

- Even toned lighting works best for documentation.
- Set up two lights with diffusers at a 45 degree angle from the artwork. Position the camera at the centre to create an even source of light.
- There are adjustments on the back of the light source (usually as interactive screens) that can dim or increase brightness. Make sure each light source is set at the same level. Warm tones read better on screens—you can aim for 2700K.
- You can bring the lights in closer for a stronger impact, or bring them back to diffuse.
- Don't forget to plan ahead and charge your portable battery packs, your site may lack power sources!



## Step Two: Studio Setup

### Tripod:

A tripod is recommended if you want best results with your documentation. To set the camera up on a tripod, make sure the lens is centred to the work you are documenting. It is important to make sure the artwork surface is parallel to the lens of the camera, this will minimize any distortion. Additionally, this placement allows for a natural view, meaning viewers of your documentation will feel that they are viewing the pieces themselves right in front of them. If distortion does occur, you can adjust and correct it during post-production.

Emily Carr students can access tripods of various sizes at Media Resources. Tripods also come in different weights, so if you're looking for a lighter one in particular, let the technicians know—the large tripods can weigh up to 30 pounds!

## Step Three: Camera Setup

### 1. Choose your file type.

It's best to set your DSLR to shoot RAW images. Camera RAW gives the best access to all colour ranges, which will help you during the post-production process. One drawback to this is that raw image files are also the biggest image file size, so make sure you have enough space on your SD card!

### 2. Set your white balance.

You should set your camera's white balance according to your light source. Rule of thumb: it's better to aim for warmer tones than cool tones. Images with warm tones are easier on the eyes and comfortable for the audience to look at.

Your camera will have various white balance button functions:

- Daylight → for natural light sources
- Shade → for indoor photographing
- Cloudy → for shooting outdoors
- Tungsten lighting → for natural balance
- Fluorescent lighting → ex. overhead lights
- Flashes or strobes → daylight balance; the same temperature as the sun
- Custom → special lighting; adjust accordingly
- Automatic → ideal only when you're short on time or feel more comfortable on automatic instead of manual

## Step Three: Camera Setup

### 3. Set your ISO.

The ISO is the speed of light that is being received into the camera's sensor. The lower your ISO, the less sensitive your camera will be to light. Higher ISO settings will work better in darker environments, but will result in grainier images. Anywhere from 25, 50, 80, and 100 ISO is ideal for documentation photography.

### 4. Set your aperture.

The aperture is the opening in the lens that allows a certain amount of light to enter the camera, working hand in hand with both the lens and the ISO. Set your aperture between f8 or f11—this will provide you with a quality sized image ideal for print or digital representation.

### 5. Set your camera focus.

It's better to work with manual focus - using autofocus can sometimes cause the camera to pick up on an area that you don't want to focus on, such as the corner frame instead of the actual work itself. That said, if your eyesight isn't that great, it's better to rely on auto focus.

## Step Four: Take Your Image

With your white balance, ISO, and aperture set, it's time to document your work!

- It's good practice to make multiple images adjusting your ISO and aperture each time. This will provide you with multiple images to choose a preferred file to work with.
- Move your light sources around to remove any unnecessary shadows or fix uneven lighting.
- When photographing reflective surfaces, you will want to reflect the glare into a different space (outside of the picture). Move the lighting above the item that is reflecting back at you.

## Step Five: Edit and Save

### Post Production

Now that you've shot photographs to best capture your work, you are ready to edit and prepare the files for your intended audience. Using Camera RAW and Adobe Photoshop, you can make minimal adjustments to finalize and present a full tonal range image. Opening a Camera RAW file will automatically open it in Adobe Camera Raw.

### Temperature

If you're working with a cooler (or warmer) toned image, adjust the temperature.

### Contrast

You can bring up the contrast to create a crisper image that functions as a better representation of the work itself.

### Highlights + Lowlights

Adjust the highlights (the lighter parts of an image) and lowlights (the darker parts of the image) to get your whitest whites and blackest blacks.

### Opening your Image

Click the "Open Image" button to bring the image right into Photoshop.

### Rulers

It's always good practice to have your rulers set in place on Photoshop so you can see if your lines are aligned (or off). You can access these by going to View > Rulers.

### Fixing Distortion

To fix the most common problem of distortion, highlight the area you want to work with. Go to Edit > Transform > Warp, which will allow you to move each corner respectfully to where it should be.

## Step Five: Edit and Save

### Saving (File Options)

Click Image > Image Size and adjust accordingly. Then proceed to File > Save As.

### DPI (Screens)

For on-screen platforms such as social media, 72dpi is adequate. This creates low-resolution images that are perfect for submissions, quick references, and online sharing, but never for print!

### DPI (Hi-res)

Hi-resolution images at 300dpi are great for photographs in your portfolio. You can also send them to the press and your clients. Sharing hi-res images enables your work to potentially be printed outside of your control. Don't give out hi-resolution images freely!

### File Types

JPEG images provide full tonal ranges, but cannot be printed at full quality, meaning your images are not able to be stolen or used without your permission. TIFF files are perfect for publications.

## Documenting With Your Phone

Oftentimes, your phone camera can do a quick but precise job of taking photos. Phone snapshots are great for quick documentation, but be considerate of intruding backgrounds or shadows. Note that all photos taken by your phone are at 72dpi and will not print.

To get the best image using your phone, follow the same measures as you would with a DSLR.

- If applicable, turn on your HDR option in the camera app.
- Bring it in close—you can physically move closer to the artwork you're photographing.
- On most smartphones, you can bring down the exposure and aperture by sliding down the meter with the sun icon (available when you tap the screen).
- Focus on the lighter parts in the frame. Everything will be adjusted automatically according to that area.
- Like images you take on a DSLR camera, you can also edit photos taken by your phone on Photoshop for perfect colour/white balance.

## Resources

### Equipment Rental and Supplies:

Beau Photo

1401 W 8th Ave

### Local Photo Processing Services:

The Lab

295 E 2nd Ave

A professional photofinishing service dedicated to the processing and post-production of professional photographic imaging.

ABC Photo

472 W 15th Ave

One of the largest professional colour labs in Western Canada.

West End Dark Room

870 Denman Street

A registered non-profit society with a darkroom located at the West End Community Centre.

# Appendix

This document is based on the Skill Up Session taught by **Yvonne Hachkowski**, Artist and Admissions Advisor at Emily Carr University of Art and Design in Spring 2020. Skill Ups are co-hosted and co-produced by Career Development + Work Integrated Learning Office and the Shumka Centre for Creative Entrepreneurship at Emily Carr University of Art + Design. These resources are produced with the generous support of the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills & Training.

Based in Vancouver Canada, **Yvonne Hachkowski** is a creative, a snacker and explorer. She is an artist using photography as a means of sharing her relationship to the environment and her documentation of inevitable change. Her creative process prioritizes self-directed research, fieldwork and hands on experiences in the outdoors which is reflected in the subject matter and thematic direction in her ongoing projects. Her work is inclusive of her land base, the people, their stories, culture, community and awareness of critical environmental issues.

Yvonne is typically found everywhere she says she is not.

**The Career Development + Work Integrated Learning Office** connects students and alumni with local, national and international employers in the creative industries and beyond. We offer career advising, clinics and strategy sessions, drop-in and individual advising, access to work integrated learning opportunities such as co-ops and internships, co-curricular programming, and industry networking events, as well as the Arts-work career portal.

**The Shumka Centre for Creative Entrepreneurship** launched in 2018 to create programs and partnerships that help artists and designers realize their ideas in the world. The Centre is a place where creative practitioners can find the community, knowledge, and resources they need to launch, fund, and organize projects across the spectrum of contemporary art and design activities- products, projects, curatorial initiatives, platforms, companies, organizations, and more. We believe that tactical support specifically designed for the needs of artists and designers is the first step in achieving a systemic change to empower creative people. The Centre is operated by Living Labs.



The Shumka Centre for Creative Entrepreneurship  
Emily Carr University of Art + Design

[shumka@ecuad.ca](mailto:shumka@ecuad.ca)  
[@shumkacentre](https://www.instagram.com/shumkacentre)

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**EMILY  
CARR**  
UNIVERSITY  
OF ART + DESIGN