



How to Take Proper Pictures of your Pieces

by Sol Brien - Quebec



We have all tried, sometimes without success, to photograph porcelain. Porcelain, because of its high light reflection, is somewhat difficult to photograph unless it is done by a professional (and expensive) photographer. I am giving you a few hints and ideas I have discovered in the course of my porcelain years. Because this new magazine requires that we send the best quality photography as possible, these will be valuable information:

- Porcelain looks best on a plain matte background – not a lace tablecloth, stone or grass or carpet or wood. While these might be attractive to you, when it is printed the work of art becomes too busy and the background distracts from the beauty of the work. So, make a habit of photographing on a solid, basic ground and your pieces will stand out much better.
- If you have a dollar shop or an art supplier nearby, get three large sheets of poster paper: one white, one gray and one black. You will also need some blue tack putty that you can use to set your piece on a slant and hold it in place. White tissue paper or some very thin white silk fabric will be useful too. You will also need two lamps; Ott-Lites™ are pretty good because their light is so close to natural lighting and you can always direct their rays, and of course, most importantly, use a good digital camera.
- What colour background best emphasizes your painted piece? If your piece stands out better on a black ground, use the black cardboard. Place it as pictured here; do not fold it, just curve it by putting some heavy books behind to hold the vertical part erect. Place your piece in the middle, either alone, on a transparent stand, or use the blue tack to place it the way you need to avoid reflection.
- Now for the lighting. Place two daylight lamps in front and to each side of the piece, cover the lamps with the silk or the tissue paper. You might need to layer these to eliminate most of the glare. Try it until you get the right density of light. You will not lose all reflection, which is a good thing because a little light hitting your piece gives it life and dimension.

- Move the lamps around and play with them until you find that perfect position. Place a chair in front of this set-up – the chair back will support your camera and prevent those shaky pictures. Then sit on it, rest your camera on the chair back, and take as many pictures as you need, moving your piece around to slightly different angles.
- Photograph in the highest resolution your camera will give you; take as many pictures as possible in different positions; save your photos, do not reduce them and email them to us. We will do the rest. We will crop them, reduce the reflections, and enhance the colours if necessary to make a beautiful picture.
- Here is another light box that can be made if you are slightly good with your hands. All you need is a large cardboard box, an Exacto™ knife, some white opaque plastic bags from the supermarket, and masking tape.
- Here is a picture of the set up I use and the picture I took using it.

Note: A French version of these instructions will be on P.A.C.'s future website.

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Editor's Note: To submit your pictures to the Porcelain Artists of Canada magazine, photograph in the highest resolution your camera will give you; take as many pictures as possible in different positions; save to your computer, do not reduce their size, and email them to us (editor.pac@gmail.com).

Remember, a cellphone camera does not take high resolution pictures.