

Digital Photography Tips

from Handweavers Guild of America classes given by Gregory Case, notes taken by Cheryl Riniker

1. Read the camera manual.
2. Use a tripod. This keeps the camera from moving.
3. Use a dual axis spirit level and place the camera in the middle center of the object to be photographed to ensure a 90° angle.
4. There should be a border around the textile to show the entire work. The border should be a high contrast. A white sheet is an inexpensive option to provide this. The background should be neutral without texture.
5. Do not mix lighting sources. If you are outside, do not use flash. If you are inside and are using flash, do not turn on any other lights. You should ideally have day light balanced lighting or ALL tungsten lights. If shooting outside, shoot on a cloudy day.
6. Use a WhiBal® card to set the White Balance before taking a photo. White helps to define other colors. A WhiBal® is specially created to let the camera determine what is white and how other colors compare to the white accordingly.
7. For 2-D objects, if shooting in a studio, use two lights set slightly in front of the tripod and at a 45° angle from the work.
8. For 3-D objects, if shooting in a studio, use one light set slightly in front of the tripod. Change the angles until you are emphasizing the piece you want. A diffuser can help soften the shadow. Make the backdrop run behind and underneath the 3-D object (e.g. basket) for continuity.
9. Look at the histogram in your digital camera. If shooting a .jpeg format, ensure there is space on both sides of the histogram. If shooting in .raw format, leave space on the left hand side of the histogram, and get as close to the right hand side as possible without still a little space.
10. Calibrate your monitor and printer. Calibrate and profile your monitor, using a colorimeter such as Spyder 3 Express (<http://spyder.datacolor.com>) or the PANTONE huey (www.pantone.com). This allows the colors on your monitor to more accurately reflect the colors you have taken. Calibrate your printer to print the appropriate colors based on the type of printer, paper source, and ink cartridges. A service that will do this is at www.digitaldog.com.

Right: Judi Arndt dyeing fleece straight off the sheep at Rock Ledge Ranch's shearing day demo. Photos by Peggy Doney.

