

Documentation Photography Creative & Practical Handout

A practical guide to photographing artwork, 3D models, garments, and design projects in the CSL Documentation Photography Space for portfolio and website use.

1 WHY GOOD DOCUMENTATION MATTERS

High-quality photographs showcase your creative work on websites, grant applications, and social media portfolios. The CSL Photo Studio provides professional continuous lighting, softboxes, and backdrop sweeps to make your work stand out.

- **Camera Settings Made Simple:** Keep ISO low (100–200) for sharp images without grain. Use an aperture of f/8 to f/11 so your whole object stays in sharp focus. Mount the camera on a tripod so you can use slower shutter speeds without blur.
- **Soft Daylight Lighting:** CSL studio lights match natural daylight (5500K), giving true-to-life colors without yellow cast.

2 ESSENTIAL SAFETY & STUDIO RULES

- **ALWAYS USE SANDBAGS:** Heavy light stands, boom arms, and backdrop frames **MUST** be weighed down with sandbags on the legs so they don't tip over.
- **TAPE DOWN CABLES:** Route power cords along walls or cover walkways with rubber cable ramps so no one trips.
- **PROTECT PAPER BACKDROPS:** Don't step on paper backdrop sweeps with outdoor shoes (wear clean socks or shoe covers). Roll up paper sweeps neatly after your session.
- **PACK AWAY EQUIPMENT:** Turn off all lights, place camera lenses back in protective cases, and leave the room tidy for the next member.

3 CREATIVE SETUPS, SCENARIOS & PRACTICAL TIPS

Documentation Scenario	Lighting Setup, Backdrop & Practical Camera Tips
3D Sculptures & Physical Models (Products, Ceramics, Woodwork, CNC Parts)	• Creative Setup: Use a 3-point softbox light arrangement (Key Light at 45° high, Fill Light at 45° low to soften harsh shadows, Top Light to highlight edges). • Backdrop: Smooth white or neutral grey paper sweep curved seamlessly into an 'infinity curve'. • Practical Tip: Mount camera on a tripod and set a 2-second timer trigger so pressing the button doesn't shake the camera.

Documentation Scenario	Lighting Setup, Backdrop & Practical Camera Tips
Flat 2D Artwork & Prints (Paintings, Prints, Drawings, Textiles)	• Creative Setup: Place two softbox lights at matching 45° angles on left and right to illuminate evenly without glare. • Backdrop Setup: Hang artwork flat on the magnetic or clip wall. Make sure camera lens is directly parallel to artwork to avoid skewed angles. • Practical Tip: Position lights further out to eliminate reflections on glossy paint or glass.
Garments & Fashion Projects (Apparel, Costumes, Draped Fabric)	• Creative Setup: Soft diffused lighting on both sides plus a reflector board to show off fabric texture, seam stitching, and garment drape. • Backdrop Setup: Full-length white or grey paper sweep using a dress mannequin or ghost mannequin. • Practical Tip: Steam garments before photographing to remove creases and wrinkles.
Portfolio & Social Media Close-ups (Detail Shots, Material Textures)	• Creative Setup: Move one softbox close to the object to create dramatic side lighting that highlights carved wood grain, metal polish, or fabric weave. • Practical Tip: Take both wide full shots and detail close-ups so prospective clients or judges can see your craftsmanship.

Note: Keep this handout as a practical workshop reference. All physical machine access must be booked and supervised through CSL staff.