

Slide Basics

Making and Shooting Slides

Shooting the perfect slide

It is absolutely essential that you make the best possible slides of your artwork. Often these slides will be looked at and judged in a split second and, if anything detracts from your art, you won't have a chance.

Making slide duplicates

Shoot a minimum of 3 to 5 original slides of each image. Make one set to send off for duplication, another to put into a slide carousel for giving slide lectures, and a third should never leave your house. A couple of extra sets are not a bad idea, in case of a catastrophe.

Duplicate slides are never as good as the original slides, so if you can afford it, make more than three sets when you shoot. If you do have to get duplicates made, shop around because prices can vary dramatically.

1. Find a plain, white or black, blank wall or surface. Do not include any other objects in your slide except the work of art- no hands, feet, lawn chairs, stray cats or your easel.
2. Ektachrome 100 or Fujichrome 100 works best.
3. Hang the work at eye level, so you aim the camera at the center of the work. Keep camera parallel to the piece. A tripod is a good idea. This eliminates any distortions or trapezoid shapes.
4. Watch for shadows. You must remove any glass coverings. Don't shoot around windows, mirrors, metal or any other highly reflective surface. You can get polarizing filters to guard against glare.
5. Try to fill up the frame with the art work. If you have unsightly space or objects in the final slide, you can get slide masking tape from photo supply store. This is added to the slide around the edges of the image of the artwork thereby blocking light from passing through the slide and displaying unnecessary objects in the image.
6. "Bracketing" is suggested. To bracket, take one shot from exact light meter reading, then one stop over and one stop under. Take more than one set of exposures. It is more expensive to copy a slide than to purchase an extra roll of film.
7. Slides should be properly exposed, blacks should be black, and whites should be white.
8. Include only one work per slide. If the work is a diptych or triptych, shoot the piece as a whole rather than sending separate slides of each half.
9. Take the film to a professional photo finisher who specializes in custom color work. One hour and super-market photofinishers generally do not produce as good of quality.
10. Your slides should look as professional as your artwork. If you can, have your information printed on the slide mount by the duplicating agent. However, it is preferred that the information is not printed on the image itself which is done by some agents. Plastic mounts are preferred over paper because they last much longer. Don't attach paper stick-on labels to the slide mount. They don't fit into carousels, and they fall off rather quickly. If you are unable to find an agent to print the information directly onto the slide mount, use permanent marker and write directly on the slide mount.

Tips for sending out slides

Never send out originals. Some people send out ten sets of slides at a time, and as soon as they return, they send them out again. This is a good way not to dwell in rejection and always be focusing on something positive going on.