

Light the Artwork

notes

One's Not Enough

Another mistake many artists make when photographing their art is to light it from a window, an overhead light, or a single lamp. But one's not enough.

Uneven Lighting

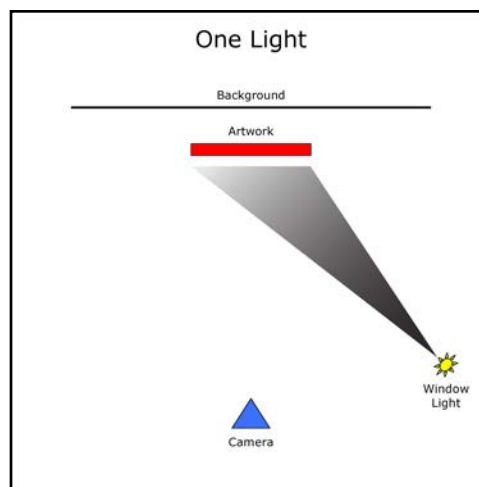
The problem with using only one light source is that the art looks evenly lit. But you can't trust your eyes.

The reality is quite different. This illustration shows a typical one-light setup, in this case using window light. Without going into the physics, the fact is that the intensity of light falling on an object diminishes with its distance from the source. The art is well lit on the right side, closest to the window. But the light is not as bright on the left side, farther from the window.

Our brains compensate for this variation in brightness, but the camera only captures what it actually "sees". And so, the art is unevenly lit—darker on the left versus the right—as you see here.

Think you can solve the problem by turning the artwork to face the window and moving the camera in front of it? Oops, you'll have the same problem with reflection that I talked about with the flash.

What's an artist to do? Start by accepting that you cannot evenly light your work with only a single light source—regardless of whether it's a window, an overhead light, or a single lamp. But don't despair...I have the solution for you.



Have you tried photographing your art using one light? Yes No

If yes, was the lighting satisfactory? Yes No Why? _____