



# Best Practices for Photographing Your Artwork

NEAL PIERMAN  
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# Intended Audience

- ▶ Passionate artist wanting to share your artwork with others
  - ▶ Entering juried art shows online
  - ▶ Maintaining a social media presence
  - ▶ Selling your artwork

# All About Me...

- ▶ Colorado “semi-native” living in Niwot
- ▶ Sharing my love of hiking and nature through photography
- ▶ Setup: Sony A7 RIII full-frame camera, Mac Studio
- ▶ Social Media
  - ▶ Web: [NealPierman.com](http://NealPierman.com)
  - ▶ Instagram: [@neal\\_pierman\\_photography](https://www.instagram.com/neal_pierman_photography)
  - ▶ 500px: [500px.com/NeallnNiwot](https://www.500px.com/NeallnNiwot)
  - ▶ Email: [photos@NealPierman.com](mailto:photos@NealPierman.com)

# Assumptions / Pre-Requisites

- ▶ You're familiar with computers, monitors, cameras, photo editing software
- ▶ You have digital camera and are familiar with shutter speed and aperture
  - ▶ Extra Credit: ISO, white balance, raw vs. jpeg, aperture priority

# Presentation Goals / Non-Goals

- ▶ Goals
  - ▶ Understanding the importance of accurate artwork renditions
  - ▶ Providing tips and tricks for capturing your artwork
  - ▶ Exporting Adobe Lightroom files suitable for web use
- ▶ Non-Goals
  - ▶ Addressing all cameras, lighting, and software
  - ▶ Using an iPhone for artwork photography
  - ▶ Using other than Adobe Lightroom for photo editing
  - ▶ Printing your artwork

# The Importance of Accuracy

- ▶ Digital copies of your artwork often more important than your originals
  - ▶ Your online presence depends upon your online images
- ▶ Most juried art shows utilize digital images
  - ▶ Poor copy of great artwork may be rejected
  - ▶ “Enhanced” image may result in rejection at show placement
- ▶ Color accuracy just one aspect of quality digital images



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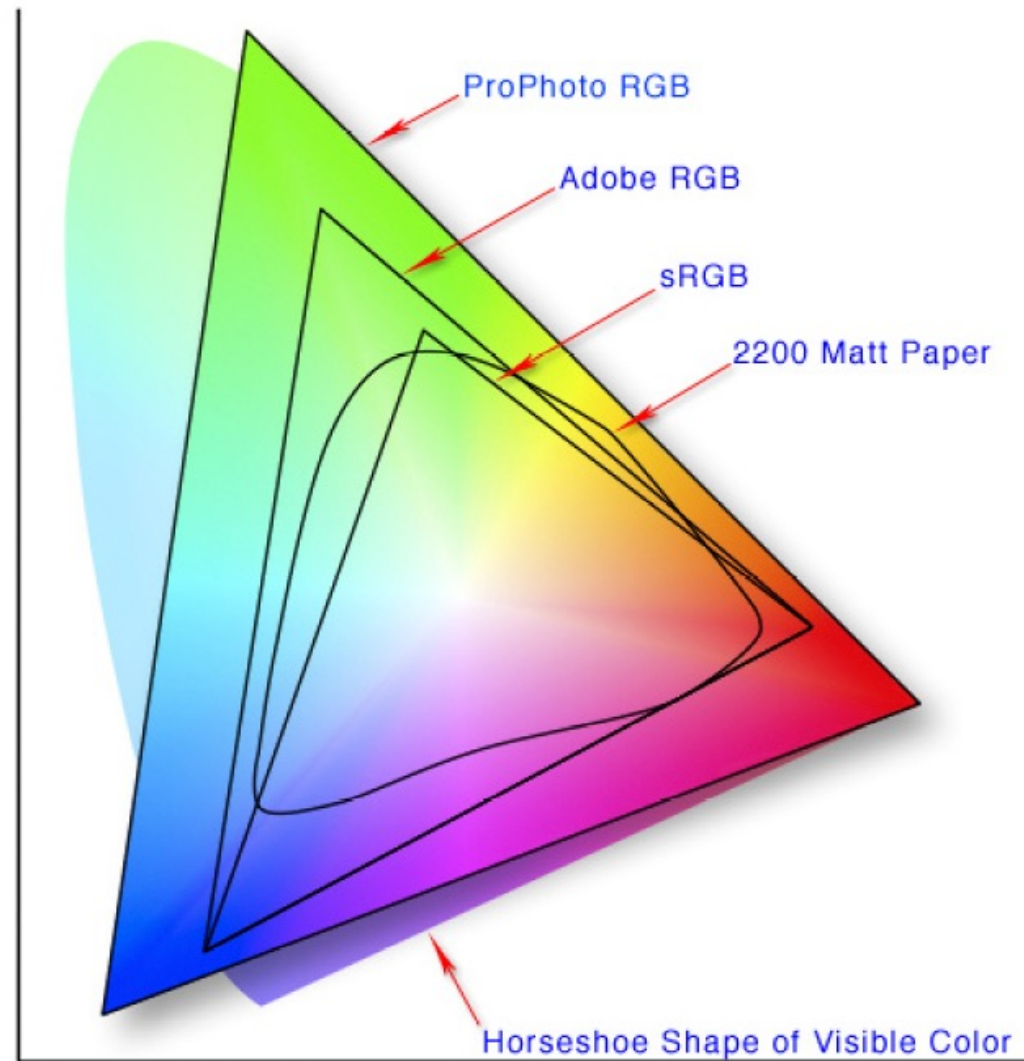
# Color Management 101

- ▶ The human eye is an incredibly wonderful organ
  - ▶ Wide visible spectrum (between ultra-violet and infra-red)
  - ▶ Eye and brain compensate for lighting conditions
- ▶ Visible light spectrum surpasses device spectrum
  - ▶ Different characteristics for each device
  - ▶ Common subsets: sRGB (display), Adobe RGB (edit), Pro Photo RGB (edit)

# Monitor Best Practices

- ▶ Perform color calibration and recalibrate as needed
  - ▶ Accurate device profiles critical for color accuracy
- ▶ Optimally select monitor capable of 100% of sRGB
- ▶ Utilize “neutral” viewing conditions (no reflections, neutral lighting)

# Color Space Coverage



The original uploader was Cpesacreta at English Wikipedia.  
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# Color Temperature & White Balance

- ▶ Color Temperature
  - ▶ Physical property of light
  - ▶ Direct sunlight at noon is “normal”
  - ▶ Usually measured in Kelvin (“degrees K”, such as “6500 K”)
- ▶ Camera captures “reality” including color casts from other than normal light
  - ▶ White balance adjustments remove unnatural color casts

# “The Process”

- ▶ Prepare artwork with good lighting
- ▶ Setup camera with optimal parameters
- ▶ Import and process with photo editing software
- ▶ Export file for web use

# Preparing Your Artwork

- ▶ Lighting setup
  - ▶ Best: Two lights at known temperature at 45% angle with no other lighting
  - ▶ Ok: Shaded natural light
- ▶ Prefer unframed artwork taped to gridded board
- ▶ Photographic gray card / white card helps ensure proper white balance
  - ▶ Critical if you cannot control color temperature of your lighting environment

# Sample Lighting Setup



# Optimal Camera Setup

- ▶ Minimize camera shake
  - ▶ Mount camera on tripod and use delayed shutter release
- ▶ Minimize distortions
  - ▶ Set camera parallel to centered artwork
  - ▶ Capture artwork with extra space
  - ▶ Select appropriate focal length lens (ideally 50mm or longer)
  - ▶ Select aperture two stops above maximum (e.g., f5.6 for f4.0 lens)



# Optimal Camera Setup (continued)

- ▶ Ensure color fidelity
  - ▶ Use raw file format (cannot change the white balance of a jpeg file)
  - ▶ Manually set camera white balance to match lighting
  - ▶ Select lowest possible ISO to minimize noise
  - ▶ Disable creative styles such as “vivid”
- ▶ Fallback: use “auto” mode

# Photo Editing with Adobe Lightroom

- ▶ Import without altering color parameters
  - ▶ “Apply During Import” → “Develop Settings” → “None”
- ▶ Crop to extent of artwork (adjust with “Transform” if necessary)
- ▶ Use neutral color profile (Profile → “Camera Neutral” or “Adobe Neutral”)
- ▶ Set white balance to match camera white balance
  - ▶ Fallback: “Auto”, “As Shot”, eye dropper with white card
- ▶ Tone: set “Whites”/“Blacks” to maximize exposure range
  - ▶ Enable “Show Clipping” and adjust for no over/under exposure
- ▶ Enable “Lens Corrections”
- ▶ Verify rest of develop settings are neutral (Tone Curve, Color Grading)
- ▶ If necessary, tweak settings to match artwork

# Develop Basic Settings

Basic

Treatment : Color | Black & White

Profile : Camera Neutral

WB : Custom

Temp 5,700

Tint +11

Tone Auto

Exposure 0.00

Contrast 0

Highlights 0

Shadows 0

Whites +48

Blacks -24

Presence

Texture 0

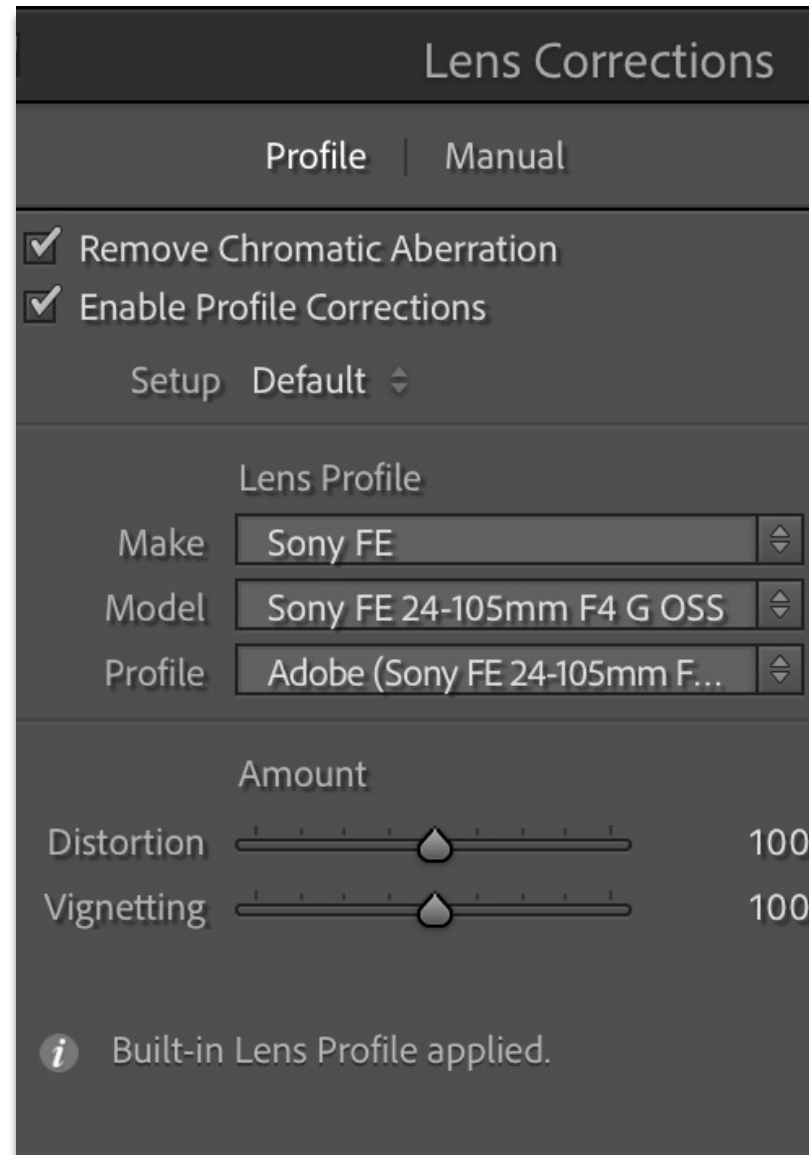
Clarity 0

Dehaze 0

Vibrance 0

Saturation 0

# Develop Lens Corrections





# Lightroom Export for Web Use

- ▶ Most sites (CaFÉ, Online Juried Shows, social media) require sRGB color space
- ▶ Exporting image using other than sRGB may look horrible
- ▶ Set other export parameters as needed


# Sample Export Settings



**▼ File Settings**

Image Format:   Quality:  100



Color Space:    Limit File Size To:  K

**▼ Image Sizing**


Resize to Fit:    Don't Enlarge

 Resolution:   

**▼ Output Sharpening**

Sharpen For:   Amount:  

**▼ Metadata**

Include:  

Remove Person Info  Remove Location Info

Write Keywords as Lightroom Hierarchy

# Summary

- ▶ Presented overview of color, white balance, and its importance
- ▶ Emphasized color calibration of monitor
- ▶ Described recipe for photographing artwork, performing simple editing, and exporting image file
- ▶ "Your mileage may vary"
  - ▶ Optimize your own process for intended use
  - ▶ Tweak image parameters to improve accuracy
  - ▶ Hire a professional when necessary

# Additional References

- ▶ Monitor Calibration
  - ▶ <https://robots.net/ai/how-to-calibrate-monitor-color-display-for-windows-mac/>
- ▶ Essential color management
  - ▶ <https://www.amazon.com/Essential-Colour-Management-photographer-Photographer-ebook/dp/B00HM81GOW>
- ▶ All about white balance
  - ▶ <https://www.cambridgeincolour.com/tutorials/white-balance.htm>
- ▶ Fine Art Reproduction Services
  - ▶ Reed Imaging (<https://reedphoto.com/photography-of-paintings/>)
- ▶ Alternatives to Adobe Lightroom
  - ▶ Photos (macOS, iOS), DarkTable.org (macOS, Windows)
- ▶ Web Search: “photographing artwork with an iPhone”



Questions?