

## ***Artists File Online Revised***

Artists Space Survival Skills Workshop

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### **Overview**

- Walkthrough of new website, explanation of new features
- How to create digital images of your artwork
- Basics of digital imaging and file types
- Slide scanning – tips and overview
- Photoshop – touching up images to look good
- Demonstration of uploading images to new Artists File site
- Trouble-shooting
- Demonstration of other aspects of updating your Artist File Online page
- Question and Answer session

### **How to create digital images of your artwork**

There are a few ways to get images of your artwork onto your computer. Here are some of the ways:

- Take a digital photograph of artwork
- Scan a slide
- Scan from 4 x 5 transparency
- Scan a photograph of the artwork
- Scan of actual artwork
- From regular 35mm film - Kodak or other film processing companies can provide you (for a fee) with a Photo CD containing digital images from your regular camera film.

### **General rules**

- Almost all scans or Photo CD images need to be touched up or altered to look good. A straight scan is rarely perfect, so it is good to have access to imaging software such as Photoshop to get great looking images.
- You should always keep a copy of your digital file in its original form then make copies from this one. It is always best to make copies smaller, and avoid making images larger as this can result in pixelization of the digital image.

### **Basic image file types**

- TIFF = higher quality, less compression, larger file size. Best for printing from this file type and for saving original scans etc. For printing a good rule of thumb is that you want the image size to be 300 DPI and the inches to be the actual size you are printing (i.e. 4” x 6”).
- JPG or JPEG = compressed image that is smaller in file size, and loses some quality. Ideal for viewing on computer, emailing, but not best for printing. When saving as a JPG there are a range of compression levels from 1 – 12 (1=most compressed and smallest, 12 = largest, highest quality) You can test with different compression levels of JPG to see how they look if you are unsure – generally we use compression level 9 or 10.
- PSD – Photoshop format, saves layers and can be used for originals, largest file size.
- GIF – similar to JPG, a small compressed image type, but better for simple graphic images with large areas of color. Not ideal for images of artwork, in most cases.

## Scanning tips

There are slide scanners that are dedicated to scanning only slides or flat bed scanners that have attachments allowing you to scan slides. Usually you cannot scan slides on a regular flat bed scanner. Try to avoid scanning printouts of your work as they have a print line pattern that will show up in the scan, however scanning a photograph is fine. 4x5 transparencies are best scanned by a professional lab.

Scanners usually come with own software - sometimes this can be helpful for a beginner as they have pre-set 'automatic' settings that automatically adjust the colors and exposure levels of the scan. As you learn more, it is best however to save your adjustments for after the scan as Photoshop can outperform these programs.

- A good standard scan size setting would be 300 dpi for resolution, and 4" x 6" as the final size. Touching up a scan –
- Save the original scan as a TIFF file, and then adjust this image and save as a copy so you won't have to re-scan in case you are unhappy with your changes.
- It is always best to have a good quality slide to scan from. A bad slide is much harder to make into a good image, although it is possible to adjust and make it look better.
- When scanning slides, it is helpful to buy a can of compressed air (available at Staples or any photo store) and use it to lightly dust off slides as this dust will appear in the scan.

## Photoshop Basics

Some tools to help make your image look better:

- Rotate (under Image > Rotate Canvas)
- Crop (in tool bar)
- Image size (under the Image link) - *Note: before you make your image smaller, check the specifications for where you will upload it. For the Artists File Online the file should be 72 dpi, and a minimum of 450 x 350 pixels. See Uploading Files in the next section for more details.*

## Colors and Levels:

1. Auto levels (Image > Adjust > Auto levels)
  2. Brightness/Contrast (Image > Adjust > Brightness/contrast)
  3. Curves (Image > Adjust > Curves)
  4. Color Balance (Image > Adjust > Color balance)
- Clone Stamp Tool (in tool bar, to help get rid of dust spots and scratches)
  - Save As – always keep a separate copy of your original if possible. When saving as a JPG, you can choose the level of compression at this point.
  - Undo – (under Edit in top menu) good to see before and after you make a change.

Sometimes easiest just to play around with settings and see the difference. Practice with files just make sure to keep your original separate so not to lose or ruin it.

>> Keep in mind – images look different on different computer monitors! Each monitor has slight differences from computer to computer. Generally images look better on Macintosh monitors as they have

a better range of color and more capacity for detail. Images on PCs look much darker. Keep this in mind and if you are concerned, try looking at your images from another computer. Ultimately however, you cannot control how each person may view the image, so don't worry too much!

### Uploading Files

- As a general rule it is good to save file names with no capital letters, strange characters, spaces, or that are too long (more than say 20 characters).
- Keep all images in place together or remember where you put them
- Usually a site will post requirements for size as a guideline, check these first before you upload the image. (For the Artists File Online the suggested size is 72 dpi, JPG file, and a MINIMUM of 450 pixels wide by 350 tall. Fortunately the Artists File database will automatically re-size your images so you don't have to worry as long as your image is bigger than this, and ideally smaller than 1MB in file size) As a rule making an image smaller is not a problem, but attempting to make small images larger could cause them to become pixilated and look bad.

### Trouble Shooting

Check these if a problem arises as you upload files:

- Is it the right File type? The file name should have the file type as an extension (i.e. 01artwork.jpg)
- CMYK vs RGB – a common problem usually if an image comes from another source. For web use and JPGs all files should be RGB, and if it is CMYK could cause a problem. To check, open the file in Photoshop, go to Image > Mode and be sure it is on RGB.
- File size might be too large – check the specifications of the website. If there are no specifications a good general size would be 72 dpi, and 4" x 6".

Added Note: Since this workshop Artists Space has received a generous offer from US Color Labs, a photography and digital imaging lab in SoHo, that they will give Artists File members a 25% discount off of scanning services through August 2006. Please visit their website at [www.uscolorlab.com](http://www.uscolorlab.com) or call them at 212-254-7100 and when you go in mention Artists Space to receive the discount.