

Photographing Three-Dimensional Artwork with Natural Light

- Step 1. Find a location to photograph your artwork outside. Make sure that your background is free from trash. Try to find a background that won't blend into your artwork. If your work is going to be placed on the grass, make sure there aren't any bare spots.
- Step 2. Load the slide film in the camera. If you have kept the film in a cold location such as the refrigerator, make sure that the film has been out of the refrigerator for at least an hour. Set the film speed on the camera to the speed of the film you are using and set the shutter speed of the camera to $1/60^{\text{th}}$ of a second.
- Step 3. Mount the camera to the tripod and center the lens to the center of the artwork. Try to get as close as possible to the artwork and center the image within the viewfinder of the camera. Make sure the sides of the artwork are parallel to the sides of the viewfinder. Allow some of the background behind the artwork in the composition. This will allow room for the slide mount. You do not want the slide mount to cover up any portion of your artwork. Make sure to pay attention as to whether your composition should be vertical or horizontal.
- Step 4. Take a light reading with your light meter or take a light reading with your camera by gently pressing on the shutter release button (the button you press to take the picture). If you look in the viewfinder you will see a series of numbers representing the aperture size of the shutter and a red light. Your goal is to change the aperture setting on your camera until the red light rests at the setting for $1/60^{\text{th}}$ of a second. Once you have this reading you are ready to start taking slides. Focusing three-dimensional artwork creates challenges in accurately showing depth. To focus three-dimensional artwork, first focus at the point that the closest to you. Look at the reading on the lens. Then focus on the point furthest from you. Look at the second reading on the lens. Then, split the difference between the two settings and set your lens in between the closest focal point and the furthest focal point. Make sure everything is in focus and take a picture. In addition, take a picture at one f-stop below and one f-stop above what the camera is telling you to. This is called bracketing and this way you will be sure to have at least one good exposure.
- Step 5. Clean up everything. Be sure to turn your camera off. Bring your film to a photo shop to be developed. Daylight slide film can be processed anywhere, but tungsten film must be processed at a reputable camera shop. The chemicals used to process tungsten film are different from those used to process daylight film.