

TIPS ON PHOTOGRAPHING QUILTS – UPDATED*!

by Delyse Upton

These can always do with repeating but can become a complex subject if digging too deep into the settings of the device you are using, but the basic guidelines are:



1. GET IT STRAIGHT: The quilt must be photographed straight on, with the device held vertically and horizontally straight at 90° **to the centre of the quilt**. Look at the screen image – any tilting of the device will create a lozenge shaped quilt which is not good, especially if you are submitting the photo to have it accepted for an exhibition. You need to present your quilt in the best possible way after all the trouble you have taken to make it.

2. DEVICE: The hardest way to get a good photo of a quilt is with a tablet, whatever make it is, as the screen is large and makes holding it as above more difficult. These often produce images that are not really sharp to show the quilt in good detail. Phones are now as good quality as cameras and better, with smaller screen/lens and higher definition.

Did you know if you have an iPhone and you touch with a finger the area of the screen where the main subject you are taking is, the camera will adjust the focus and aperture?! You can actually see it adjust.

3. USING A CAMERA: Cameras are often the best way, even if it means going back and reading the book of instructions! Technophobes need to conquer their fear of technology. If you conquered the quilting, you can conquer the techie stuff! If you have a camera, you may well have access to a tripod or unipod which will ensure you get no camera shake, especially if you use a cable to activate the shutter. It is not surprising that many of you, with my more advanced years, struggle to take a really sharp photo so this will help. Make sure your camera is set to 'best quality' image if it's a basic type; the little logo usually has a smooth curve – do not use the stepped one! See 6.

4. LIGHTING: Non-directional lighting is best, especially on cloudy bright days without strong sunlight. Do not use flash; this 'flattens' the details of quilting and can affect the colour balance too. To show quilting at its best, lighting from the side improves it if you can rotate the hanging area. Over-the-door hangers will allow the door to move if it's not too large a quilt. Give yourself time, do not leave it till the last minute, then you can choose the right light. See the video at 10 – it is recommended. This is what I have used in my summerhouse – see photo.

5. SITING: Make sure your quilt is hung without any objects interfering with the borders or bindings, such as pegs or hands! Use the sleeve to hang the quilt with a rod and if you are going to do it again, consider how to create the best set-up. I had no decent sized clear wall and the lighting was not good anywhere, too directional, so I adapted my little 6'x8' summerhouse by having one wall rigged to support over-door hooks which hook on a crossbar and hold the ends of the hanging pole (see photo). I then stand in the doorway and use

my camera, taking time to get it really straight. I guess you could also use this system hung over a door if you do not have an appropriate wall.

6. TECHIE STUFF!

(a) Beware emailing photographs! I know with a Mac computer the Mail app can send images in actual size/large/medium/small sizing and of course it will diminish the quality of the photo if it is not sent best quality. PCs may perform similarly.

(b) Minimum required quality for printing is at least 300 dots per inch (dpi); you can usually find this by opening up the image in a photo-editing app. These apps are also very good for cropping out

the extraneous parts of the photo and, of course, will also soon show whether you have tilted the device or did not have it opposite the centre of the quilt. There are a number of free to use apps on the Internet which will give basic photo editing facilities. Again – fight that fear of technology and get stuck in; it will pay off in the long run.

(c) Cameras can produce images in RAW format (original size impractical to send anywhere), tiff which retains all detail on saving, PNG which is lossless and really good for Internet and JPEG which loses detail on each saving. These are the most common formats. PNG is by far the best as it does not diminish the quality of the detail (it is called lossless as it loses nothing). Have a read of this article which explains it simply and clearly; I do not have room here. This site is good and explains well, will bring up the article written in an easy to understand way. Type this in exactly as shown, without a stop at the end.

<https://blog.hubspot.com/insiders/different-types-of-image-files>

(d) I know a lot of members use tablets more than computers now and this can present its own problems with composing, editing, saving and sending images. It is horses for courses, but using a camera or a phone is best, believe me.

7. OPTING OUT! If you cannot bear having to think about techie stuff, have a look at this video on YouTube, produced by our own The Quilters' Guild; it covers virtually all my comments with appropriate images and demonstrations.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IsuqeWlq_7Q

If you are having a real problem with getting good quality photos of your quilts and you want to do it yourself, perhaps if you emailed me with the problem giving full details of the device and set-up and I will see if I can help you over the hurdle. I can only do so if I have the details as that affects the outcome as explained in the article.

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