FROM FINISHED ARTWORK TO CD

Preparing Digital Entries for Shows

Preface:

As painful as it might be for some of us working artists, we've got to face the fact that we're in the digital age -- slides are going away. Many juried exhibitions accept only digital entries! Pastel Society of America is making the transition from slides to digitals submitted on CDs. While we will accept slide entries into our 2010 exhibition, eventually we have to bite the bullet and go totally digital. To this end, we have prepared the following document, *From Finished Artwork to CD*, as a guideline for those making this daunting change. Each person's computer and its programs may be somewhat different. So in following these guidelines, you may have to hunt for a particular function. This document was designed by a pc user. If a Mac user has the time to work through the guidelines and adapt it for Mac owners, we'd be very grateful and glad to post it on the PSA website.

PAINTING/CAMERA SETUP:

1. Painting flat against a wall.
2. No glass between painting & camera.
3. Digital camera on tripod.
4. Position camera pointed straight at center of painting. The line of "sight" of the camera should be a perpendicular to the canvas.
5. Lighting should be uniform on the surface of the painting and should not contribute a color. Indirect, but broad spectrum if possible. Camera flash is usually not a good idea because it is a point source. (One artist uses her studio ceiling lights which are 5000K florescent tubes evenly distributed in the room. Available at Lowe's.)

DIGITAL CAMERA SETTING:

1. Quality setting at *highest* value.
2. Use white balance if you have it. (This is usually set with a white sheet of paper in the same position and lighting as the painting you are going to photograph.)
3. Automatic settings best for light, focus, etc.
4. Use timer to take the picture. (To avoid camera vibration from pushing shutter release.)

TRANSFER FROM CAMERA TO COMPUTER:

This is an individual process that will depend on what kind of camera, what "media" your camera saves the images on, what computer you have. Sometimes this is done with direct cable from camera to computer. At Office Depot, Staples, etc., you can find card readers that will read most camera media cards and plug into the USB ports on computers. (Make sure your computer has an available USB port before you purchase such a reader.) Newer computers have built-in media card readers.

ADJUSTMENT OF PICTURE FILE ON THE COMPUTER IF YOU ALREADY HAVE SOFTWARE:

If you already have software that will adjust pixels and resolution, and know how to use it, this is the best approach.
Adjust your image file to be 900 pixels on the longest side with a resolution of 300 dpi. (Software that you may already have: Photoshop; Photoshop Elements; two programs that may have come with Windows XP on your computer are Microsoft Photo Editor and Photo Impression 4.) *An explanation on how to use Photoshop Elements follows later in this document*.

ADJUSTMENT OF PICTURE FILE ON THE COMPUTER IF YOU DON'T ALREADY HAVE SOFTWARE:

Picasa 3.6 is a free, downloadable digital photo-editing program that is easy to use.
Go to www.picasa.google.com. If you are a Mac user, look at the bottom of the page and click on "Picasa for Macs." Click on "Download Picasa 3.6," and follow the instructions. When asked if you want to run or save, click "run."
It will take a few minutes for the program to install itself. It creates its own file of all images that are in your computer and presents them as easy-to-work-from thumbnail images. It will not remove your photos from their original files.
When the program has installed, you are ready to use the following "Directions for Preparing Digital Images in Picasa 3.6." These directions were written for PC users.

PREPARING DIGITAL IMAGES IN PICASA 3.6
(All of these instructions use the left mouse button.)

These instructions lead you specifically through directions for editing your image and putting it on a CD. (Picasa 3.6 does more than this, but other functions will not be discussed here.) However, please note that Picasa does not allow you to save you image in 300dpi -- only at 900 pixels. *Open up your computer and use these directions as you perform the various functions*.

GETTING STARTED

1. Insert camera card into card reader.
2. Insert card reader into computer USB port.
3. Open Picasa 3.6.
4. In the upper left corner of your screen, click "import."
5. A new screen will appear. At the bottom, enter a title in "Folder Title."
6. At the top of the screen click "Import From" and select the appropriate source.
7. Back to the bottom right side of the screen, click "import all." (Picasa automatically defaults to your *Pictures* (for Vista users) or your *My Pictures* (for XP users) folder. It makes a back up file there on your C Drive. You will also be asked to give instructions on what to do with the images on your camera card -- save them or delete them.
8. A new screen will show all of your images in thumbnail form.

RETRIEVE THE IMAGE OF YOUR PAINTING FROM THE PICASA "LIBRARY":

Double-click the image of the photo that you want to work with.

STRAIGHTEN THE IMAGE:

1. Click "Basic Fixes" tab on left of screen.
2. Click "Straighten" button.
3. Click and hold while sliding button at bottom. Slide right or left until image is straight, then release button.
4. If image isn't yet straight, click "Cancel" and repeat steps 2 and 3. If image is straight, click "Apply."

CROP THE IMAGE TO REMOVE ALL FRAME, MAT, ETC.:
(You want *only* your painting to be showing.)

1. Click the "Crop" button on the left.
2. Select the Manual option.
3. Place the cursor at the upper left corner of your painting. Left click the mouse button, hold it down, and drag the mouse to the lower right corner of your painting. Release the mouse button. You should have formed a rectangle of brightness that exactly encloses your painting.
4. If you make a mistake, click "Cancel." Click the "Crop" button and follow 2 and 3 again.
5. When you have cropped the photo so that only your painting shows (no mat or frame), click "Apply."
6. If the result shows that there is still more cropping needed, click "Re-crop" and follow 2 and 3 again.

SAVE THE RESULTING IMAGE OF YOUR PAINTING:
(You will rename the file here so that your original photo will still be available if you need it.)

1. Click "File" in the upper left of the screen.
2. Slide the cursor down to "Save As" and click.
3. Delete the file name and type in the full name of your painting, with appropriate capitals and spaces. *For PSA 2010 entry, use abbreviated format described in prospectus*.
4. Make sure the file type shown is JPEG.
5. Click "Save."

SET THE PIXEL WIDTH OF YOUR IMAGE:

1. With the image you have created above on the screen, click "Export" at the bottom right of your screen.

2. In the window that appears, there is a bar with the location and name of the exported folder. Use the "Browse" button to the right of this if you wish to locate the image in a different location. You will need to find that file to retrieve your re-sized image. You can also change the name of the exported folder by simply deleting what is there and typing in a new name.
3. Choose "Resize to" and make sure the pixel value is 900. (You can change the pixel value by typing in a new value.
4. Choose "Maximum" Image quality.
5. Click OK.

PUT YOUR EDITED IMAGE OR IMAGES ONTO A CD:

Digital images submitted for PSA 2010 Annual must go onto one CD and must be labeled in abbreviated format as described in the prospectus. CD must be mailed in same envelope as usual entry form filled out with complete, not abbreviated, information. (Unless told otherwise in the prospectus, you should put all images you are submitting to a competition onto one CD.) There are several methods to burn a CD with your images: using Picasa and using your computer's CD burning program. Both are outlined here.

Burning your images using Picasa:

1. Blank CD's can be purchased at many stores -- Office Depot, Staples, Wal-Mart, even many drug stores and grocery stores. You want to get CD-R's (Recordable Compact Discs). Do not buy DVD's unless instructed to.
2. You will now need to find the images you have edited and exported. Return to the "Library" of Picasa by clicking on "Back to Library" at upper left.
3. Go to the Folder Files on the left and find the "Exported Pictures" section in the list of files on the left. You may need to scroll down the list.
4. Find the folder that was created when you set the pixel width.
5. If you have your images in more than one folder, you need to move them into just one. To move an image from one folder to another, click, hold, drag and release (Position the cursor over the image you want to move, hold down the left mouse button while dragging the cursor to the folder you wish to move to, then release the mouse button. You can either drag to the left and release over the folder name – the folder name will change to dark grey when you are in the right position, OR you can move the cursor to some point among the thumbnails that are in the folder you're moving to, and release.).
6. Highlight all of the images that you want to put onto the CD. (A single click highlights an image. You know it is selected when it has a blue line around it.) If you are highlighting more than one image, hold the control key down while clicking the image.
7. When all of your images are highlighted, go to the top of the page and click "Create." Then click "Create a gift CD."
8. At the bottom of the page in Selection and Settings, choose photo size "original."
9. In Box 1, make sure you uncheck "Include slideshow," and in Box 2 uncheck "Include Picasa."
10. Click "Burn Disc." Progress of the burn is shown in the lower right of the screen.
11. When the burn is finished, you will be asked if you wish to eject the disc or show it. Click "show" and then click "import" in the upper left of the screen. If the disc was

properly burned, your images will all appear in the Import Tray on the left. You can click on individual thumbnails to see the enlarged image, or can click the arrow at the bottom to go forward or back.

12. When you have checked your images on the disc, click "cancel" at the bottom right.

13. Eject your CD. Label the CD in permanent ink with your full name and names of the paintings (unless the prospectus gives other directions).

Burning your images using your computer's CD burning program:

1. Blank CD's can be purchased at many stores -- Office Depot, Staples, Wal-Mart, even many drug stores and grocery stores. You want to get CD-R's. (Recordable Compact Discs).

2. Go to your *My Pictures* or *Pictures* (as it's called in Windows Vista) folder on your C drive.

3. If you are submitting more than one image to the competition, you will need to burn them on to *one* CD. Make sure they are in one location on your computer, a task which can be accomplished by creating a special folder and copying your edited images into that folder.

4. Once you insert a blank CD in your CD drive, you will get popup windows and you should follow your computer prompts to burn the image(s) to the CD.

5. Be certain to check the CD to see that the images were burned correctly.

6. Eject your CD. *For PSA 2010 Annual, label the CD in permanent ink (marker) with your full name plus the name(s) of your image(s) in the abbreviated format described in the prospectus*. Label the CD in permanent ink with your full name and names of the paintings (unless the prospectus gives other directions).

Photoshop Elements 7

A good way to crop and size your digital image can be accomplished with software called *Photoshop Elements*. Version 7 is available on *www.amazon.com* for under $75. *Photoshop Elements* is a product of Adobe. They periodically upgrade the program but the functions are essentially the same. Element 8 is available, but the author of this document only has version 7 on one computer and version 4 on another computer. It's all pretty much unchanged. These directions are written for Photoshop Elements on a pc.

You can view an introductory tutorial on *Photoshop Elements 7* by pasting this link in your browser:
http://www.adobe.com/designcenter/photoshopelements/articles/lrvid2309_pse.html

When installing the program, it is recommended you uncheck all of the installation boxes unless you want Elements to be your photo default. After you've installed the program, here is how to prepare your digital image for submission to PSA:

- A welcome screen will appear. Click the "*edit*" button.
- A new screen will appear. At the top is a ribbon. Click the word "*file*." A drop down list will appear. Click the word "*open*."

- A new screen will appear. It will probably default to your Pictures Folder on your C drive. If you have saved your digital image elsewhere, navigate to the image you wish to edit. Click on that image. Then click "*open*."
- Your digital image will fill the Photoshop elements screen.
- Next, on the ribbon at the top of your screen, click "*image*." Your will get a drop down list. Click the work "*crop*." Manipulate the broken line by pulling the various little squares located at the corners and on each side of your image. When you have eliminated the extraneous parts of the digital picture, leaving only the image of your painting, click the little green check at the bottom right of the image.
- Next, go back to the ribbon at the top of your screen and click the work "*image*." This time on the drop down list, click the work "*resize*." Another drop down list will appear. Click "*image size*." In this window, first set your pixel dimensions, changing the longest side to 900 pixels. Under Document Size, change Resolution to 300. Make sure the three boxes at the bottom of this window are checked: Scale Styles, Constrain Proportions and Resample Image. Next click "*OK*" in the upper right hand corner.
- Go back to the top ribbon and click "*file*." In the drop down box, click "*save as*." A new window will appear. At the bottom, you will be asked for the file name. Rename it according to the instructions on the prospectus. Make sure the Format box displays JPEG. Then click "*save*."
- You will get one last window which says JPEG Options. Make sure the quality is 12. Then click "*OK*."
- You can now find your edited jpeg in whichever folder you saved it. This is what you should copy to the CD to enter *Pastels Only*.

IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A DIGITAL CAMERA OR A COMPUTER

The website *www.gammatech.com* (link: *https://www.gammatech.com/html/convert.htm*) will prepare your image -- crop it, size it, save it at 300dpi, burn it to a CD if you wish or email the jpeg image back to you for you to burn to a CD-- your choice.

Digital cameras are available for less than $100.00 – at least one is available for $79 on Amazon or Wal-Mart's websites. If you purchase a digital camera, some copying services will not only download your images to a CD but will also size them to your specifications. These services are found in your phonebook under Copying Services. Some camera shops also have this capability.

This guide was originally prepared in February, 2008, for the Appalachian Pastel Society by Kay Gordon (kgordon@main.nc.us, 828.649.3363). Much of it was copied, with permission, from a guide written by Sallie Atkins for the Southeastern Pastel Society. Many thanks go to Kay and to Sallie for their research and generosity in sharing the fruits of their labors and for consulting with Pastel Society of America in updating this guide in January 2010.