



Guidelines for Photographers

Thank you for your interest in Art Gallery Originals! The following pages provide information to assist our photographer partners in capturing the ideal shots for oil portraits for our clients. The information is organized according to the following steps:

Lighting

- Natural light only
- Rembrandt lighting

Facial Expression

- Eyes wide open
- Hint of smile on the mouth
- No tension on the face

Body Composition

- 1st pose seated on an armless chair
- 2nd pose is kneeling

Please read on for more details. We have also included a few helpful hints that some of our other photographers use to achieve a successful photo session. Thanks again for your interest and we look forward to working with you!

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Guidelines for Photographers

Below is a bullet point summary of the Art Gallery Originals photography process. This process is designed to aid the professional photographer in readily achieving the ideal shot in order for the Art Gallery Originals client to commission a free-hand oil portrait. The following pages provide more detailed guidelines and helpful hints from professional photographers that we have worked with over the years.

1. **LIGHTING** Utilize Rembrandt lighting from a NATURAL light source. Preferably, the photo should be taken indoors in front of a window or open doorway.
2. **FACIAL EXPRESSION** The subject's eyes and facial expression are the MOST IMPORTANT feature in selecting the best photo. There should be no tension lines on the face and a neutral expression or a hint of a smile.
3. **STAGING THE SESSION** Begin with the subject in an ARMLESS dining room chair sitting near the front end of the seat (chair is angled into the light). The body is directed one way, and the head is directed the other way. For children, the second pose would be to have the child kneeling in a chair or kneeling on the floor. Here it is important that the camera be on the SAME plane as the child's face. If the child is on the floor, the photographer is on the floor. Every session should include these two poses. The over-arching goal here is to look through the camera lens from the perspective of a portrait painter...with the arms and legs in full view (not hidden behind furniture, doors, etc.); hands near the center of the body – avoid hands outstretched in front of the subject (such as resting on the knees) which often does not translate well in a portrait as the hands look enlarged and out of proportion to the rest of the subject. After these two poses, be creative and feel free to try different poses and situations.

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Below is a compilation of what we have learned based on the experiences from countless professional photo sessions with Art Gallery Originals clients. The cumulative learning from all of these sessions has allowed us to define a specific but easy process that will enable the photographer to capture the most desirable photos of human subjects for the portrait artists to use. Until now, the vast majority of commissions have been for young children, and so the guidelines are written from that perspective. The selected results from the photo session become the reference point for our artists to render original works of art that are the most pleasing to our clients. By following the process, the photographer will be able to produce the desired result in the least amount of time. Our goal is to avoid re-shoots which can be frustrating for the client as well as time consuming and un-productive for the photographer. The guidelines fall into three general categories: 1) Lighting, 2) Facial Expression, and 3) Staging the Session.

LIGHTING Utilize Rembrandt lighting from a NATURAL light source. Preferably, the photo should be taken indoors in front of a window or open doorway. The best times for the photo session are before 10:00am and after 4:00pm. If the session is in the morning, the window / doorway will have Eastern/Northern exposure. If the session is in the afternoon, the window / doorway will have Western/Southern exposure. The artists are able to "paint the light", and the image of the subject will be three-dimensional (this is the real genius of the portrait artists and something that few artists are able to accomplish.) The photo should have significant shadow on the face (Rembrandt lighting). The photographer should not fill in the shadows with a flash.

FACIAL EXPRESSION The subject's eyes and facial expression are the MOST IMPORTANT feature in selecting the best photo. The background and other criteria are a distant second in importance as they are typically painted out by the artist. Even if a client wants a garden background, take the photo indoors, and the artist will create a garden background. We will work out the background with the client so that the photographer can focus on the photo subject. 95% of the viewer's impression about a portrait comes from the FACE--the life in the eyes and the expression. How much of a smile is going to be determined by what is most aesthetically pleasing to the child. There should be no tension lines on the face. The bigger the smile, the smaller the eyes...therefore, we strongly recommend a neutral expression or a hint of a smile (think "pleasant boredom"). The eyes should be in the general direction of the camera...never looking down or too far to the side.

STAGING THE SESSION At the beginning of the session, the client should specify if they desire head and shoulders, three quarters, or full length. A three quarters portrait will show BOTH HANDS COMPLETELY but no feet. A great starting point is to have the child in an ARMLESS dining room chair sitting near the front end of the seat (chair is angled into the light, or a variation is to have the chair angled away from the light). The child is sitting up straight with hands IN THE LAP clasped together loosely; legs crossed at the ankles with the foot closest to the photographer crossed over the other; the body is directed one way, and the head is directed the other way; the head is tilted slightly with a pleasant facial expression. One issue to avoid with young children is having them seated to one side of the chair. Sometimes the child feels crowded by the back of the chair almost touching their shoulder which causes them to hunch forward. The second pose would be to have the child kneeling in a chair or kneeling on the floor. Use the same format as before with angling toward and away from the light with the head and body directed opposite of each other slightly. Here it is important that the camera be on the SAME plane as the child's face. If the child is on the floor, the photographer is on the floor. Avoid outstretched arms or legs in the pose. If a three-quarters or full-length portrait is desired by the client, please make certain that both hands and feet are showing. Make sure that shirt collars aren't riding above the neck and shoe soles should not be visible in the photo. For girls with long hair, some hair should be in front of the shoulders. After the armless chair pose and kneeling pose are completed, be creative and have fun with the session! Remember to keep lighting and facial expression in mind with each pose. Also, something to keep in mind with the freestyle poses: if the child is leaning

against an object (door, furniture etc.) that object will become a part of the portrait by necessity. Similarly, if hands and fingers are wrapped around an object (banister or chair arm for example), those objects will have to become part of the portrait. If the child is in a standing pose, have the arms raised to waist level with the hands clasped together in a relaxed manner without stiffness or tension. If the client desires two or more children in the same portrait, both the children and the camera need to remain in stationary positions throughout that session. For example, if two children are seated next to each other, the only variation should be in the position of the face, hands, and arms, with the children remaining seated in the same spot throughout the session and the camera in the same location. The reason for this is that with varying poses and camera positions AND two or more children, the client is often confronted with too many choices. When that happens, the client may ask the photographer to “Photoshop” the face from one photo with the pose from another photo etc. It is in the photographer’s best interest to avoid this!

A Few Final Tips from Other Photographers

1. A practice session with a young child is extremely helpful before visiting your first portrait client. Practice the two standard poses described on the previous pages.
2. View photo sessions from our veteran photographers to get a sense of the desired end result. Contact us at info@artgo.us for photo sessions to view online.
3. If a child is nervous and / or tense, ask him to think of his mother.
4. Have the child hold a coin to remove visible tension in the hands and fingers.
5. Telling the child to “relax” usually does not work. Ask the child to stand up and sit back down again. Repeat as necessary.
6. Pretend to “check the light” while taking actual photos to create a more relaxed atmosphere.

We love new ideas, so please let us know what works best for you!