

International Quilt Association
Photographing Your Quilt or Garment for Entering the Show

With the abilities of today's digital cameras, you do not have to go to the expense of having your quilt entries professionally photographed. You *can* do it yourself—plenty of quilters do—and you can find out how below. Remember, your quilt's image is all that the jurors see in evaluating your quilt, so the *quality* of the image is extremely important.

1. Submitting images

Digital images must be submitted on a CD-ROM

Be sure to “close,” “finish,” or “complete” the CD so that it can be opened on a computer other than your own. You can check this by trying to open the CD on a different computer from the one used to make it. You may submit multiple entry visuals on one CD. Please label the CD with your name and the title(s) of your quilt(s) and/or garment(s).

You *may not* make modifications (this includes color correction). You *may* crop the background, but be sure not to crop too closely to the edges.

2. Required images

- For quilts, send one full view of the completed quilt and one detail view. Quilting **must** be visible in the detail.
- For garments, send one full front view of the completed garment, one full back view, and one detail view.
- Identify each digital image with your name, the quilt title (or a portion of it, if it is long), and whether it is the full view or the detail view.

Quilt Example:

Smith _YellowDog_DETAIL.jpg

Smith _YellowDog_FULL.jpg

Garment Example:

Jones_BlueGown_FRONT.jpg

Jones_BlueGown_BACK.jpg

Jones_BlueGown_DETAIL.jpg

- Also send one physical print of the full front view of the quilt or garment. This print should be no larger than 4 x 6 inches (10 x 15 cm). Write your name, title of the entry, and indicate the top on the back of each photograph.

3. Taking images

- We recommend using a minimum 4 MP (megapixel) digital camera, on highest resolution setting, and saving as a JPEG file. Consult your camera's instruction manual to learn how to set your camera to take high-resolution photos. (You can probably access your camera's manual online if it has been lost.)
- Each image should be a minimum of 1800 pixels wide on its longest side. (Note: If your image has less than 1800 pixels on the longest side, do not increase it. Instead take another picture that has higher resolution.)
- Lower megapixels and resolution settings can produce poor results that will eliminate a quilt because its color, design, and detail cannot be viewed clearly. It is not uncommon to see a wonderful quilt eliminated as a finalist because the quality of the image submitted is so poor that it is impossible to properly evaluate, especially the details. If you have any doubts, take another photo!

4. Working with your images

If you open your photos in image editing software to crop the background, you will be asked how to save the photo when you are done. Save as a JPEG, RGB color (the default setting in most image editing programs), standard or baseline setting, and set the quality to maximum. *No CMYK images or progressive setting JPEGs will be accepted.*

5. Suggestions for good photography

- Make sure the **entire** quilt is visible in the full shot.
- There should be no objects, people (including fingers holding a quilt), pets, or scenery in the picture. Do not try to take a “pretty” picture with gardens, trees, mountains, etc. in the background. The background will distract from your quilt and be a liability, not an asset.
- Do not drape your quilt over furniture or lay it flat on a bed or on the floor.
- Take photographs on a light neutral wall or background.
- Learn how to crop your picture (in image editing software) so that a minimum of the background shows. Practice first on other quilt images to learn what to do. Remember, there is almost always a way to **undo** a modification such as cropping, if you don’t like the results.
- To take the photo, position yourself *directly in front of the quilt* so that you have a straight-on angle.
- Lighting should be as **even** as possible across the front of the quilt. Sometimes your best lighting is outdoors, but be careful about the time of day. Direct sunlight on the quilt can cause shadows or a glare that obscures details in the photo and can bleach out the color of your quilt.
- Make sure your camera is **focused**. If your hand is shaky, use a tripod or a solid surface for the camera.
- Quilting stitches and design **must** be visible in the detail shot, and it is helpful to choose a section of the quilt that relates to the category entered.
- When shooting a **garment**, photograph the entire ensemble on a dress form or on a person. If a model is used, photograph from the neck down only, but make sure the entire garment is visible in the full shots. Be sure to include some of the quilting in the garment detail shot.

6. Additional resources

We can heartily recommend the following book and website for user-friendly information about taking digital images of quilts. These resources have been developed *by quilters for quilters* to help them take better photos of their work. Both quilters have won awards with their quilts, have written articles or published books, and have had their work published in several books. Much of the information contained here has been developed in cooperation with these two talented and generous women.

- [Digital Essentials](#) by Gloria Hansen
- [“Shoot That Quilt! Digital Photography for Textile Artists”](#) by Holly Knott