Great Photos With What You Have At Home

You don't need a studio. A phone or camera, a window, and a few things from around your house are plenty.

Find good light

- **Work beside a window in the daytime.** Let the light come in from the side. Turn off ceiling lights and skip the flash, which flattens texture and throws off color.
- **Soften harsh sun.** Overcast days are ideal. If direct sun is hitting your piece, hang a thin white sheet or curtain over the window, or move to a shaded porch.
- **Bounce light back.** Prop a sheet of white paper, a white pillowcase, or a piece of cardboard wrapped in foil on the side opposite the window. It fills in dark shadows.

Keep the background simple

- **Use something plain.** A smooth bedsheet, a tablecloth, a large sheet of paper, or a clean wood table all work. Iron out the wrinkles first.
- **Contrast with your piece.** Light items pop against a darker backdrop, and dark items against a lighter one.
- **Clear the clutter.** Keep counters, pets, and household items out of the frame so the eye lands on your work.
- **Keep names out of frame.** Because the jury is blind, leave your name, logo, and watermarks out of your photos.

Set up your camera

- **Hold steady.** Lean your phone against a stack of books or a mug, or brace your elbows on a table. Use the self-timer so tapping the screen doesn't shake the shot.
- **Wipe the lens.** A soft, clean cloth does the job. Fingerprints are the most common cause of hazy photos.
- **Move closer instead of zooming.** Pinch-zooming blurs the image. Step in, then tap the item on your screen to focus and slide to adjust brightness.
- **Shoot at the shopper's eye level.** Go straight on for flat work like paintings, and slightly above for pieces sitting on a table. Include one shot with a hand or everyday object to show size.

Show off your materials

- **Glass, jewelry, and glossy finishes** catch reflections. Move around until you can't see yourself or the window in the surface, and hold a sheet of white paper to one side to soften glare.
- **Pottery and wood** look best when one photo shows the whole shape and another shows the glaze or grain up close.
- **Fabric and soft goods** should be pressed, then laid flat or hung smooth so the pattern reads clearly.
- **Candles and soaps** benefit from a close-up that shows texture and color, plus a group shot that shows the full line.

Photograph your booth display

- **Set it up at home.** Use the same tables, shelves, and stands you'd bring to the show, in a garage or spare room.
- **Respect the footprint.** Our booths are about 80 square feet, and crossbars and canopies aren't allowed. Mark the space with tape on the floor to see how your display fits.
- **Step back.** Capture the whole display in one frame from about chest height, fully stocked and tidy. If your name or logo is on display, cover it or tuck it out of frame.

Choose and polish your best five

- **Take plenty, then edit ruthlessly.** Keep the sharpest, best-lit shots.
- **Show range.** Pick different products, and include at least one close-up of detail or texture.
- **Use your phone's built-in editor.** Crop, straighten, and nudge the brightness. Skip heavy filters so colors stay true to life.
- **Check on a bigger screen.** If a photo looks dim or blurry on your computer, retake it.