Tips on photographing your work

The quality of the image you submit does make a big difference to your chances of successful shortlisting. If the image is blurred or too low resolution or colour degraded it is very hard for the judges to feel they are giving your artwork a fair assessment.

Here are a few suggestions:

Set up - Use a neutral background with soft even light and no shadows or reflections.
Ideally fix to a wall or lean against a wall or easel. Smaller works may be possible to lay on the floor or table and shoot from overhead.
If propped on a table, black fabric underneath avoids unwanted colour reflection.

The Camera
To maximize sharpness place the camera on a flat surface or use a tripod.
Avoid zooming in if you are using tablets or phones as this will reduce the quality.
Self timers can help ensure the camera stays still.
The lens should be parallel to the artwork so tilt it as necessary to match the angle of the work.
The centre of the lens needs to be in line with the centre of the work.
The edges of the work must be parallel to the camera frame, some cameras have a grid overlay which helps.
Leave a small margin around the work for cropping out later.
Auto focus should be fine and avoid wide angle lens as it distorts the edges.
If using SLR choose a focal length of between 50 - 100mm and stand back to fit in the frame.
With compact cameras zoom in to the middle of the range.
If possible put your ISO on the lowest setting either 50,100 or 200 depending on your camera model.

Colour
If using window light turn off electric lights. Turn off built in flash and try using daylight settings on your camera. If the white balance is tinting orange or blue use a preset lighting environment, if you have one.

Artworks under glass - Ideally remove from under glass to photograph but if not possible a polarising filter will help reduce reflections.

Take several shots
Take a few shots and check them for sharpness and tonal likeness to the original artwork.
Ideally check the images on the computer before putting camera equipment/artwork away so any potential problems can be spotted.

Scanning artworks - With smaller artworks without surface texture it may be possible to scan your work into the computer.
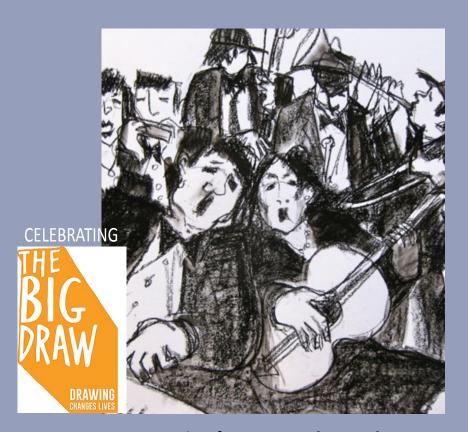
Editing - Download your image and using photo editing software crop the artwork from the background. Picasa, Photoshop or iPhoto for macs are all fine. You may want to boost the contrast etc but be careful not to over edit your image.

Resizing the image - The file size should not exceed 3MB and the quality should be at least 96DPI. JPEGs are the best format to send the images in.

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