1. Why use a camera?

There are two reasons for the camera the Interactive Art School wants you to use if you sign up for the paid-for art course but even if you don't - few people understand how powerful and necessary the use of a camera is to artists and has been to some of the greatest artists who ever lived:

a. To send images of your assignment drawings or paintings to the school as e-mail attachments (this makes the entire process of teaching and learning totally WEBcentric) – no trips to a brick and mortar art class or the Post office, no time limits – send your assignment photos and view your critiques 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Learn in your pajamas, get your teacher's opinion in India, England, Bosnia, Canada or Grenada. Classes are every day every where.

b. The camera as an art tool: Stand and watch a mountain or a street for ten minutes – they change. The light changes, the clouds move and darken or lighten areas, people move, the shadows lengthen or shorten. I don't understand how anyone stands and paints a scene for four hours. What's there at the beginning of the four hours ain't there at the end of the four hours! Better to do some quick sketching and notes and take a bunch of photographs.

2. Isn't using a camera cheating?

[Leonardo DaVinci](#) didn't have a camera, so he took TWO easels and a large sheet of glass and placed the glass saddling the two easels and he TRACED the landscape to better understand the perspective.

[Jan VerMeer](#) used a ["Camera Obscura"](#) (click on the words Camera Obscura to see more about it). VerMeer may have TRACED the image produced as part of his painting process. The odd perspectives and the strange and characteristic highlight or "light pings" in his paintings are characteristic of the Camera Obscura. There also is substantial evidence that Vermeer may have use another optical device: the "Camera Lucida". See the books listed below and buy them or get them from your library to follow up this fascinating story about how these great painters used cameras and pre-camera used other optical and mechanical means to build great pictures.
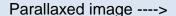
The camera arrived just in time for Edgar Degas. He became an expert photographer and the camera influenced his vision in his paintings. Prior to Degas, the figures in paintings were essentially totally contained inside the picture rectangle – Degas CUT OFF the figure in imitation of the camera. Look at his work

A book on the use of the camera or camera obscura at Amazon.com:
[Vermeer's Camera : Uncovering the Truth Behind the Masterpieces](#)
[by Philip Steadman](#)

For more on all then uses of the camera and other aids to painting; also at Amazon.com is: [Secret Knowledge: Rediscovering the Lost Techniques of the Old Masters by David Hockney](#)
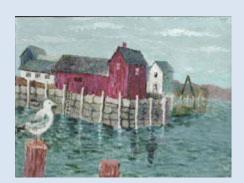

3. Registered students - some camera issues when taking photos of your assignment drawings or paintings: Parallax and distortions in your photos of your drawings or paintings

When you photograph your assignment drawing or painting, you may have a parallax issue. Parallax means that the image plane (the film plane and the drawing or painting are not parallel, you will have an "unsquare" image.

Parallaxed image ---->

Don't worry about it - I'll square up the images for your critique.

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You just need to make the sharpest in-focus image you can.

Also - if your image is too dark or too light, but in focus, send it via e-mail and I should be able to correct those problems.

A little too dark, but sharp or a little light, but sharp - I will adjust at the school.

4. Again - registered students: E-mail attachments of your digital image of your assignment drawings or paintings.

Unless you have compression software (like "Stuffit" for the Mac or "WinZip" for PCs) you could try sending multiple images as attachments. If we have problems with that, send your images one at a time with multiple e-mails - just make sure you identify yourself and tell me how many images you are sending.

5. Again - registered students: Turn off your camera's flash!

When you use the flash, you:

5a: "Burn" the center of the picture or subject and have darkened areas to the outer edges of your image.

5b: Create an artificial "snapshot" looking image ...natural lighting will reveal the form and cast shadows more realistically.