

# CATALOGUE PHOTOGRAPHY WORKFLOW

Having used the Victorian Collections *Planning Your Digitisation Project* information sheet, you have planned your digitisation project and are ready to digitise.

Before you begin on a day of digitisation, consider what your workflow will look like. Planning your workflow will increase the efficiency and volume of digitisation and decrease the risk to objects in transit.

Your workflow will vary depending on the availability of volunteers, space and equipment, so use this information sheet as a guide.

## IDENTIFY YOUR TEAM

Before you begin, have a clear understanding of the roles that each team member will play during this process. You will need: a dedicated photographer (or scanner), an object 'courier' who will handle and move the items, and a documenter.

## IDENTIFY OBJECTS & EQUIPMENT

Work strategically. This means identifying a series of objects which have common requirements. By photographing like-objects in one session, you can avoid excessive equipment change or adjustment. Recommendations are below.

## SET UP THE SPACE

Choose a large area with easy access to your store room, as well as sufficient power points for your lights or lightbox.

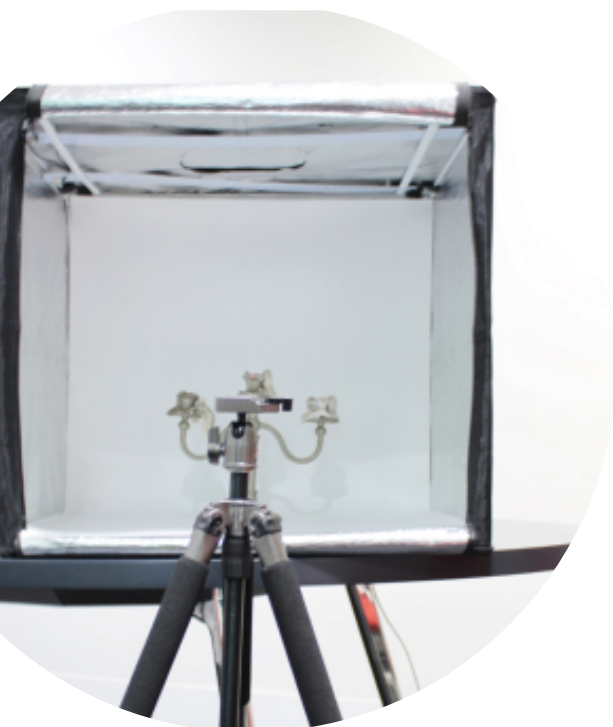
### Recommended set up for costume or textile photography:

You will need:

- White/black backdrop
- Two light sources (windows, lamps, studio lights)
- Camera
- Tripod (optional)
- Mannequin
- Computer



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**Recommended set up for object/3D artwork photography:**

You will need:

- Table
- Light box (or white backdrop with two light sources)
- Camera
- Tripod (optional)
- Computer



**Recommended set up for document/  
photograph/2D artwork digitisation:**

You will need:

- Scanner
- Computer

## START DIGITISING

Your object courier should bring objects to the digitisation space one at a time, using support trays or card backing where necessary. Your documenter should follow behind to record where the item was collected from and ensure it returns to that location.

Your documenter should also keep a list of items in the order they were digitised or alternatively, take a photograph of the label before the formal photography begins. This will aid in the naming of image files.

Ensure that as you take each photograph, you assess the lighting, colour, composition and focus of the image. Once satisfied that the image capture was accurate, return the item to store and repeat for remaining items.



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## TEXTILE TIP

A trick for photographing pants and skirts without a mannequin: pass cotton string ties through structurally sound belt loops and hold the item in front of your backdrop.



## DIGITISING BOOKS

When digitising a book, you may need to create a 'copy stand' with your camera and tripod. Rather than risking damage to your book by squeezing it onto a scanner bed, reconstruct the elements of a scanner (white light, aerial capture) on a table and hold your pages down with snake weights or similar.

It's important to remember that catalogue photography is undertaken for two reasons: to preserve information about collection items, and to make them accessible to the public. Keep in mind while you are working what a photo that meets both purposes might look like.

## MORE LIKE THIS

*Information sheet: Planning Your Digitisation Project*  
*Information sheet: Catalogue Photography Lighting*  
*Information sheet: Catalogue Photography Composition*

## FURTHER RESOURCES

*Collecting and preserving digital materials: A how-to guide for historical societies*, Federation of Australian Historical Societies, <https://www.history.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Collecting-and-Preserving-Digital-Materials.pdf>

Victorian Collections is an initiative of Australian Museums and Galleries Association Victoria in partnership with Museums Victoria. Victorian Collections is supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria.