

CATALOGUE PHOTOGRAPHY

COMPOSITION

In photography, composition refers to the relevant placement and framing of the subject. This framing and placement is important for catalogue photography, which aims to capture a complete and accurate representation of the collection item captured. A well composed catalogue photograph ensures that the collection item is depicted in its entirety, with minimal visual distraction.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This information is designed to be read in conjunction with the following information sheets: *Planning Your Digitisation Project*, *Assessing Risks in Your Collection*, *Catalogue Photography Workflow*.

As part of planning your Catalogue Photography Workflow, you will have made decisions about what methods and equipment to use, based on the type of collection items you intend to digitise. Whether photographing or scanning your items, the basic principles of composition apply. These principles are:

FILL THE FRAME

The item is the subject being documented – it should fill the frame as much as possible, should be in focus and the photograph should capture it in its entirety. You can take additional detail photographs to document inscriptions, markings, fixtures, damage or parts.

How to ensure the item fills the frame:

- Frame your photograph according to the shape of the object – a tall object is best captured in portrait format, whereas a wide object is best captured in landscape format.
- Move your camera closer to the item or use your camera's zoom functionality
- Use simple image editing software to crop the image



From the collection of Tennis Australia

THE OBJECT, AND ONLY THE OBJECT

Remove any labels or registration numbers from the item. For public viewing on an online CMS, and also for publication purposes, you should capture an image of the item without a scale bar or registration number.

You may wish to take additional photographs of each item which include a scale bar and registration number for in-house collection management purposes.

Where necessary use supports or display mounts for the objects you are photographing. Do not hold the items as they are being photographed.



From the collection of Montmorency-Eltham RSL Sub-Branch

CATALOGUE PHOTOGRAPHY

COMPOSITION

BACKDROP

Make sure the backdrop is a) consistent and b) not distracting from the item you are documenting. There should be no distracting detail or colour behind the item. Use a clean monochrome background, preferably white. To achieve this you can use a backdrop created from white cardboard.

If the item you are photographing is large, a cardboard backdrop may not be sufficient. An alternative solution is to create a consistent, monochrome background using white fabric as a backdrop.



From the collection of Mission To Seafarers Victoria

MORE LIKE THIS

Information sheet: Planning Your Digitisation Project
Information sheet: Catalogue Photography Workflow
Information sheet: Assessing Risk In Your Collection

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.