**Etsy Success Photography Workshop**: **Make it Work**
by Jessica Marquez//Miniature Rhino

WHY GREAT PHOTOGRAPHY IS SO IMPORTANT….
- Viewers only opportunity to experience your goods: create an experience & answer the viewer's questions
- Great images can widen your audience: Treasuries, Front Page, blogs, press
- Help to brand you:  Creates a stronger presence on Etsy and beyond among the multitude of makers out there.

CAMERA BASICS….
- ISO – references the amount of light needed to expose your images. ISO ranges in stops from 100 up to 3200, depending on your camera. 100 needs more light, great for super sunny days. The higher the ISOs, the more light required to create an exposure. As the number increases so does the "noise" in digital images or "grain" in film. Higher ISOs are great for low light situations.

- AV – Aperture priority. Controls  depth of field, or the range of focus. Use to add or decrease the depth of field. Aperture ranges in stops form 1.4 to 32. Smaller aperture numbers (1.4 – 4) provide a smaller range of focus, or shallow depth of field. Larger aperture numbers (8 – 22) provide a greater range of focus, or great depth of field.  Depends on light. The more light available the higher the aperture you can achieve.

- TV – Shutter priority. When stopping motion is the most important. Use to create blur or freeze action.  Range in stops from Bulb, or open until you manually close shutter, to 1/1000th of a second. Hand held the slowest you want to shot at is probably 1/60th of a second and even that can be a bit blurry. Depends on light. More light available the faster the shutter you can achieve.

- White Balance:  How your camera interprets the color of light. Different light sources have different color temperatures, color casts.  For example, day light is interpreted as a neutral color by your camera, while tungsten light (bulbs) is much warmer and gives an orange cast. There are several presets most likely on your camera (auto, tungsten, sunny/daylight, cloudy, shade, etc.) Most cameras automatically set the WB, but if there are options you can manually change it.

- M –  Manual. You set both Aperture and Shutter speed with help from your camera's built in light meter.
- Auto -  Automatic. Exposures are set by your camera.
- Self Timer – Great for self portraits.
- P&S Popular/Useful Picture Modes – Portrait, Macro, AWB (auto white balance)

KEY ELEMENTS THAT MAKE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS GREAT FOR ETSY

The Fun stuff! Be creative and shoot A LOT! The only way to improve your photography skills is to put them into practice. Digital is free! Remember, to answer your viewers questions, and that you're not just selling a product. You are sharing something personal with your buyer – your story, your passion, your creativity. Use your photographs not only as objective descriptive images but as chance to tell a story and brand yourself as a maker. What visuals support your brand – colors, props, background setting, textures…. Play, shoot & reshoot!

Your Photography Checklist:

- ☐ Images MUST be 570 pixels wide
- ☐ Every listing MUST have at least one image (using all 5 only helps you!)
- ☐ Story / Human Element
- ☐ Is the item shown clearly? Is it in focus? Is it well lit?
- ☐ Define what it is. Are you pictures descriptive showing an overall view of the item and its use and function?
- ☐ Does your lead image create an attractive thumbnail?

Types of Photographs that help Answer your viewers questions & Optimize your listings for the widest audience:

1. FP image!! Something that begs to be clicked.
2. Overall view of every part of your product – front, back, sides, and interior. Imagine how you'd examine an object in a physical retail store that you are interested in purchasing.
3. Scale Create scale through the use of everyday, relatable objects. Including hands does this well and also adds that human/personal element.
4. Detail image I don't know how many times I've seen listings for necklaces that don't show the clasp. I pass that item up immediately.  This could create a sale for you. It not only answers the viewers question, but shows you are professional.
5. Editorial image. A lifestyle or magazine type of image. It gives a sense of the possibilities of the item, its uses, function and allows viewer to imagine it within their own environment. Also, this is the kind of image that blogs love to share.
6. Process This refers back to that human element. Showing a process, or behind the scenes image allows viewers to connect with you.
7. Packaging Shows you're professional and incentives the viewer to purchase from you.

HOW TO GET BETTER IMAGES
All these suggestions are in camera fixes, meaning that they require no digital manipulation, like photoshop. The idea is to shoot the best quality pictures, so that you spend less time "fixing" them in photoshop. Again, the only way to get better images is to shoot a lot! So don't be discouraged if your pictures aren't exactly what you wanted the first go around.

Here are some Common Problems & Easy Solutions:
- Problem: Color shifts // White Balance off
- Solution:  This one can be an easy fix, but may require some post production work. Your camera should have automatic white balance (AWB), so it will do this job for you. Depending on the camera you may have some alternative presets available (tungsten, cloudy, etc.) If you find your colors have a color cast take a sheet or white paper and fill the frame with it. Take pictures as you select different WB options. Which ever option gives you the whitest white is the best option for that specific scene. NOTE: That this setting will change according to every new light scenario. DSLR may have more WB presets and the ability to create a custom WB. See your manual for that.

- Problem: On Camera Flash/ harsh lighting
- Solution:  Turn off your flash! Create a setting with diffused light. Use available window light with reflectors (poster board, foam core, even tinfoil covered card board) to enhance available light. Arrange a table top setting with reflectors propped up with clamps (or books) around your product. This is a diy light cube. You can experiment by arranging the reflectors at different angles, and leaving the window uncovered or tapping a sheet of tissue paper over the window to further diffuse the light.  What kind of surface are you shooting on? fabric? colored paper? Experiment!

- Problem: Distracting backdrops
- Solution: Control your surrounds, meaning create a backdrop or blur out distractions using depth of field. DIY your own backdrop– using material, butcher paper, or painting a sheet of wood.  You can also purchase seamless (thick paper backdrops) in various sizes. If you are creating your own backdrop - think about the colors/textures/ and such that help to build your brand.
A shallow depth of field will help to blur out distracting backgrounds. Creating distance between the subject and background will also help.

- Problem: Low Light / Camera blur
- Solution: The most DIY solution is propping your camera or elbows on a table while you shoot, but even that can create some blur for long exposures. Invest in a

tripod. Table top tripods are great for small products. Try the scenario above with reflectors too! Avoid on camera flash! If you really need lights try clamp lights with day light bulbs and lots of diffusion (vellum, tissue paper, tracing paper). These lights get really hot and can burn you or your diffusion medium to make sure you rig something where the diffusion is at least 10" away.

RESOURCES

- Post Production Work:
  - Photoshop Elements. Free 30 day trial from CNET. $100. http://download.cnet.com/Adobe-Photoshop-Elements/3000-2192_4-10057110.html
  - Picasa. free
  - Picnik. free version and an upgraded $25 version.

- Equipment:
  - B&H www.bhphotovideo.com/
  - Calumet www.calumetphoto.com/
  - Adorama http://www.adorama.com/

- Photography basics:
  - http://whiteonricecouple.com/category/photography-tips/
  - http://blogs.sitepoint.com/photography-for-the-web-exposure/
  - Aperture Series on Pioneer Woman's Blog: http://thepioneerwoman.com/photography/2008/05/what-the-heck-is-an-aperture-part-one/
  - http://www.digital-photography-school.com/

- Etsy Success Photography Posts from the Seller Handbook
  - http://www.etsy.com/storque/search/title/seller-handbook-photography/

- Creating DIY Photo setups:
  - http://viauphotography.blogspot.com/
  - DIY soft box: http://blog.makezine.com/archive/2006/07/diy-light-box.html
  - DIY soft box: http://www.macworld.com/article/60804/2007/11/dec07digitalphoto.html
  - Using a reflector: http://www.prettygeeky.com/2010/03/04/photography-tips-reflector/

YOUR ASSIGNMENTS

+ Take 100 photographs experimenting with the different functions of your camera. Try these:
- ❑ AV, Aperture Priority mode
- ❑ TV, Shutter Speed Priority mode
- ❑ Fully Manual
- ❑ Changing your ISO (how does that effect your exposures?)
- ❑ Macro mode
- ❑ Portrait mode
- ❑ Diffuse window light with tissue paper, vellum, or tracing paper
- ❑ Bounce light onto your subject (do a before & after shot. How does the light change?)
- ❑ Shoot a portrait in direct sunlight & open shade (compare how the light changes. )

+ Branding! Write down a few descriptive words that illustrate your personal aesthetic for your brand and the type of products you make:

_____

_____

_____

_____

+ Thinking about the words above, how can you create photography that reflects your brand & products?  Consider your location, lighting, props, background, the mood you wish to create. What colors do you image? Are the images clean white backdrops, or on weathered wood, light and airy or more moody scenes?  Are you out doors, in doors, who are you including models?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

+ Create your own Photography Set-up:  Create 3 different set ups for yourself, playing with light and different props, backdrops, models, etc. Which had the best results? Perhaps you've found your own photography setup! Make sure that it's something easy & fun and that you can recreate it. Setting up a go to photography set up will simplify the listing process for you!  Write down the specific of the set ups you took and make a sketch of the set up. (What time of day was it? location? props used? where was the light coming from? did you use a reflector? was it white or silver? etc.)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

**Etsy Success Photography Workshop**: **Make it Work**
by Jessica Marquez//Miniature Rhino

+ Share your progress in the Etsy Success forum:
   http://www.etsy.com/teams/5002/etsy-success

❏  Share a before and after image

❏  Share your new photo setup behind the scenes image- maybe that can help someone
   else or you can learn a new trick too

❏  comment on others photography!

+  Buddy up with another Etsy Success  member and give each other's  shop a
   photography critique.

❏  Offer constructive criticism, rather than negative criticism (I don't like it.)

❏  Some examples of constructive criticism:  You can improve your pictures by x,y,z.
   This element is working well, this element ___ is not working as well. Try ___ .

❏  Ask questions of each other.  What feel are you going for? Do you think certain
   images work better for you? Why?

❏  Challenge them to make any needed changes.

This was made for you, by me, Jessica Marquez of Miniature Rhino
http://www.etsy.com/shop/MiniatureRhino
tweet me your pics! @miniaturerhino