

DESCRIPTION

Capturing high-quality photographic evidence of Cultural Goods is critical for cultural heritage experts to provide the best assessment. When photographing, Law Enforcement may focus on minute details like color, light, texture, and ornamental details or inscriptions which allows experts to authenticate and determine an object's provenance. This focus on detail significantly increases the reliability of the evidence and its usability in legal proceedings.

IDEAL SCENARIO

An investigator uses a high-resolution camera and a tripod. They use raking light (light at a low, oblique angle) to create exaggerated shadows, which highlights faint inscriptions, tool marks, or surface texture. A neutral grey card and a color checker (RGB legend) are included in a reference shot to ensure accurate white balance and verifiable color reproduction for experts.



Figure: LEA photographing a CG

TIPS

Do

- Focus on fine surface details, textures and inscriptions.
- Include a grey/color card in a reference shot
- Photograph the object from multiple angles

Don't

- Don't use direct flash or reflective backgrounds, which may cause glare.
- Don't allow external shadows (e.g., equipment) to fall across the object.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- Caple, C. (2020). *Photographing archaeological objects: A practical guide*. London: Routledge.
- Canadian Conservation Institute. (2017). *Digital photographic documentation of cultural objects*. Ottawa: CCI.