

Canine Reference Photo Guide

Art by Evelyn Gibbs

This guide is intended to support clients with taking or selecting appropriate photos to be used for a fine art pencil portrait of their animal(s).

All photos featured within this guide are of the artist's own dogs for illustrative purposes and are © Evelyn Gibbs.

If you have further questions, please direct any messages through Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/FineArtByEvie>), or email (evelynaofegibbs@gmail.com) .



Please read the following advice carefully:

Key points to consider:

1. **Perspective.** Avoid harsh camera angles. Photos taken on the animals eye level are always preferable.
2. **Summer or winter coat.** A summer coat is more likely to look brighter, sleek and shiny - whereas a winter coat is more likely to be darker and longer.
3. **Blemishes.** Scars, lumps and bumps can be removed if you wish. Some clients opt for this in order to portray a younger version of their animal, although this is solely down to the owner's preference. Please make your choice known where applicable.
4. **Grooming.** Was your animal recently trimmed or clipped before the photo? Is it an accurate representation/how you would prefer them to be portrayed?
5. **Expression.** Does your photo accurately show the personality of your animal?
6. **Quality.** The better the photo, the better the portrait I am able to produce. I should be able to see details such as the animal's fur direction, whiskers and small markings when zoomed in.
7. **Lighting.** Harsh and strong artificial lighting should be avoided. Overcast is best!
8. **Camera.** Most modern cameras and smart phones are suitable to take your reference photos, providing that all filters are turned OFF. Avoid "portrait mode" and other distorting effects.

Further examples:

Perspective distortion/camera angle: Angles such as within the following photos **do not** translate well to pencil portraits and should be avoided. Camera angle, background and surroundings should not interfere with your dog. I need to be able to see your their neck and shoulders to give context for head portraits. Fish eye lenses are also to be avoided.



Lighting and contrast: Natural daylight is always best, although please be aware of over exposure on sunny days which can make your animal's colours appear distorted or washed out. Photos lose a lot of detail in areas of excessive shadow. Black dogs are especially hard to photograph accurately - aim for consistent soft lighting!



Angle: The most flattering photos will show your animal at either 3/4, side on or face on to the camera. The animal's eye level is the best height to take your photos. They should not be looking up or down at the camera.



Face on. Soft lighting, looking directly forward at camera. Nice expression.



Three quarter view, looking past camera. Nose lower than eyes. Nice eye reflections.



Side profile. Natural head carriage.



Lovely expression and dramatic (but not overwhelming) lighting.