

Equine 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 horse 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: Angles such as within the following photos do not translate well to pencil portraits and should be avoided. Camera angle, background and surroundings should be neutral. 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 as within the following example. Photos lose a lot of detail in areas of excessive shadow.



Top tip:

Avoid photo filters as these distort the true colours of your animal.

This includes any "portrait" effects which blur backgrounds. This often removes fine details such as fly-away hairs and whiskers and can blur parts of your animal accidentally.

Angle: The most flattering photos will show your animal at either 3/4, side on or sometimes face on to the camera. The animal's eye level is the best height to take your photos.



Grooming and presentation: As shown within the following examples, the grooming and preparation an animal receives prior to its photo being taken can change the effect of the portrait dramatically. Consider which you would prefer!

