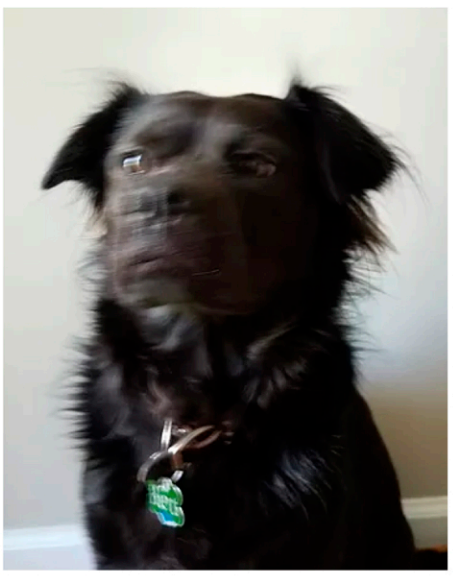
TAKING THE PERFECT PHOTO—A PHOTO REFERENCE GUIDE

Perhaps the most important part of the custom portrait process is capturing the photo reference that will be used for the painting. If you think you have a great photo that will work for a painting, that's great! Depending on the medium and style chosen, it may be perfect. However, in the event you don't have a picture, here are some tips for capturing the perfect photo that will translate to the perfect pet painting.

YOUR TOOL OF CHOICE

Using a digital camera, preferable a DSLR, would be the optimal choice. If you have one, chances are you have some experience which will certainly help. If not, any digital camera will do. Nowadays, most newer cell phones come with very good cameras that will work just fine, as well. The key is to have a good enough camera to capture an in focus detailed photo.

Try again!

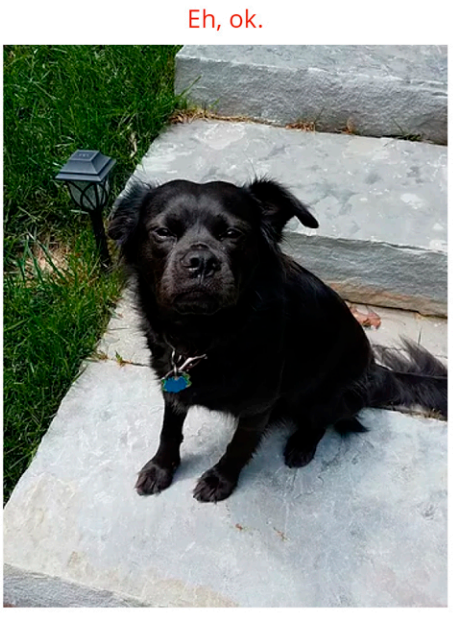


Crisp!

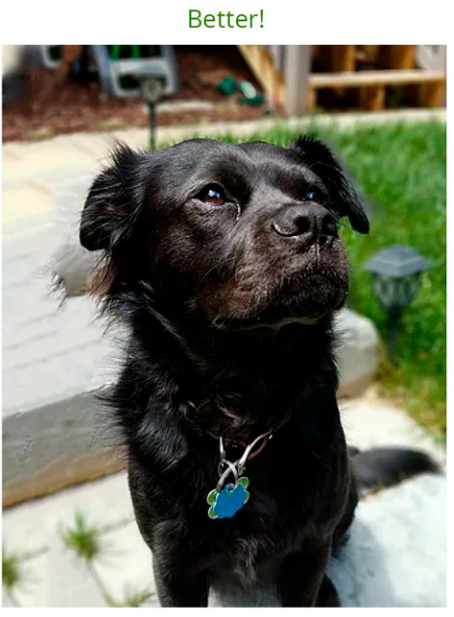
ANGLE OF ATTACK

One of the more common mistakes I see is the angle at which the pictures are captured. To make a great painting, it is essential that the camera and animal are on a similar level. Most animals are smaller than us, so the angle of the camera tends to be pointed down towards them. The solution—get on their level! Take a knee, or lay down and capture a shot straight on.

Eh, ok.



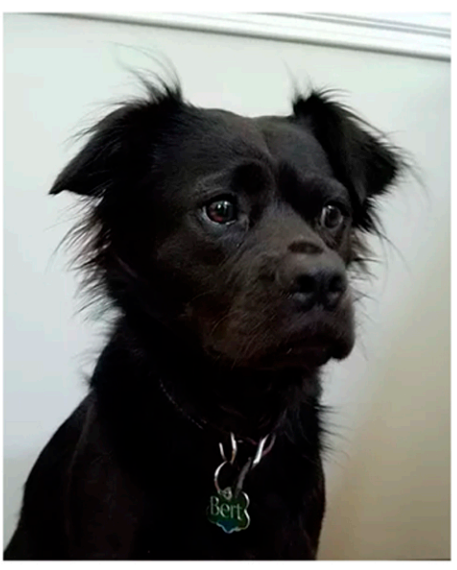
Better!



THE PERFECT LIGHTING

The lighting in your photo will either make or break it. Don't take a picture at night or in poor lighting. A strong light source is essential. The solution—take your pictures either by a window (when it's light out) or outside, **and avoid using the flash on your camera**. That natural light source will make beautiful shadows which will bring your portrait to life!

So so sad.

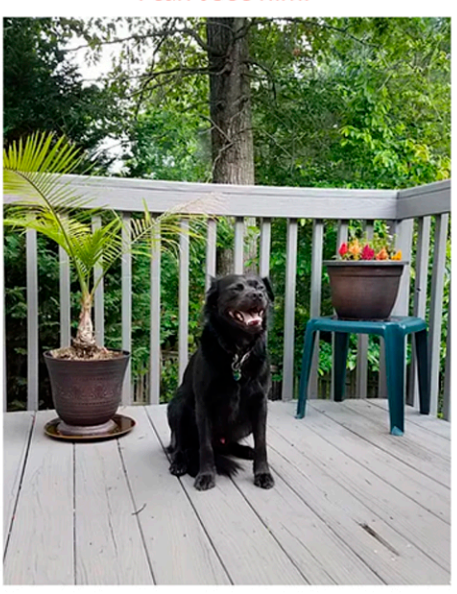


Dramatic light!

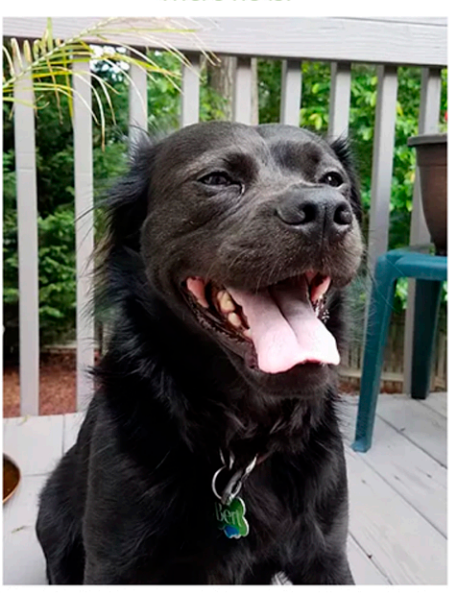
GET CLOSE AND PERSONAL

Another common mistake is an unfilled viewfinder. In other words, you need to get up close and personal with your furry friend. I need as much detail as possible to paint realistically and this is the best way to get that detail. Stay close and you capture a shot that will ensure a detailed painting with more likeness.

I can't see him!



There he is!



FILL YOUR SD CARD AND HAVE FUN

Take lots of photos! Better to have too many choices than not enough. With these tips, you're sure to capture a shot that will make a perfect painting. Most of all, though, have fun! Everyone involved will benefit!!