



How to Photograph Decorative Furniture Panels

A simple setup that reveals texture, depth and detail.

1 SIDE LIGHTING IS KEY

Place your main light source (natural window light or a soft lamp) to the side at about a 30–45° angle. This raking light creates shadows that reveal the relief and carving.

2 CAMERA POSITION

Position the camera level with the panel and parallel to the surface to avoid distortion. Use a tripod for stability and sharp detail.

3 CLOSE ENOUGH TO MATTER

Move in close to fill the frame with the panel or the detail you want to emphasize. This removes distractions and highlights texture.

4 USE THE RIGHT SETTINGS

Aperture: f/5.6 – f/8 for good depth of field
ISO: 100 – 400 for clean detail
Shutter: adjust for proper exposure
Use manual focus for critical sharpness.

5 LOOK FOR THE BEST LIGHT

Soft, directional light shows texture best. Avoid harsh overhead light and direct flash, which flatten the detail.



REMEMBER

The goal is to let light skim across the surface, revealing the story in every carve, edge, and grain.



NATURAL WINDOW LIGHT (IDEAL)

Position near a window so light comes from the side, not from behind or directly in front.

30–45°
ANGLE

CAMERA LEVEL WITH THE PANEL

Keep the camera level and parallel to the surface.

USE A TRIPOD

Stability ensures sharp detail, especially in lower light.

ALTERNATIVE: SIDE LAMP

Use a shaded lamp or softbox positioned to the side to mimic window light.

COMPOSITION TIPS

- Fill the frame with the panel or a strong section of it.
- Watch the edges—straight lines add strength.
- Look for natural repeating patterns and rhythm.
- Include a small slice of surrounding wood for context if desired.



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