

Viewing Frame

Purpose

A viewing frame or viewfinder helps you to isolate a potential image from the extraneous elements of the entire scene.

The viewing frame enables you to judge angles and perspective in relation to the rectangle of the frame.

How to Use a Viewing Frame

Close one eye and look through the frame. Move it toward you and farther away from you, move it up and down and move it left and right until the subject matter is framed in a pleasing way.

You can also rotate the frame to view the scene in landscape format or portrait format. (Or somewhere in between the landscape and portrait format.)

Study the whole scene within the frame and consider balance between shape and mass, tone and colour.

Constructing a Viewing Frame

To make a viewing frame, cut a piece of black Bristol board or cardboard to 20 cm x 25 cm. Cut an aperture in the centre which is 10 cm x 12.5 cm. This will provide you with a view that is in the same ratio as an 8" x 10" piece of photographic paper.

The following chart provides dimensions for the aperture which correspond to the various standard sizes of photographic paper.

Photo height	Paper width	Aperture height	Dimensions width
4"	6"	10 cm	15 cm
5"	7"	10 cm	14 cm
8"	10"	10 cm	12.5 cm
8"	12"	10 cm	15 cm
11"	14"	10 cm	12.7 cm
average		10 cm	13.6 cm

Although the chart is applicable to various sizes of photographic paper, you can cut the aperture to a size which reflects the dimensions of the art paper or canvas that you use.