

CROPPING

Medium format film has always offered numerous formats, from 6X6cm square, to 6X4.5, to 6X7, to 6X9, to 6X12, to 6X17. Large format sheet film similarly has different aspect ratios, with 5X7" being much more rectangular than is 4X5".

Go to the movies and you'll see a wide variety of formats on screen, as you also will on your new wide-screen TV. Visit an art gallery, and you'll see painting, etchings, lithographs and silk screens in formats from squares to circles to extreme panoramas. In China and Japan traditional scroll paintings are done in the form of extreme wide aspect ratio horizontals as well as verticals. And yet, there are photographers who insist on only printing their image "full frame". In other words, maintaining the supposed sanctity of the manufacturer's aspect ratio. Then there are those who insist on printing exclusively to match standard paper sizes. *What are they thinking?*

There is no magic bullet when it comes to cropping. It is an esthetic decision and therefore will be based solely on the photographer's creative judgment. Nevertheless, there are usually factors which can be considered and discussed somewhat objectively.

When I provide print critique sessions with students on my workshops and seminars, the first question that I ask is – "*What is this photograph about?*" I often find it remarkable when the photographer doesn't have a clear concept of this.

When looking at a new raw file of my own the first thing I ask myself is that question – *What is this image about, and what do I want it to say about the subject?* Only when I have a satisfactory answer to this can I proceed to crop and otherwise interpret the image. When this is in hand I then find it easy to arrive at a cropping because I simply remove everything that isn't relevant to my conceptualization.

Sometimes there is no clear answer, and I then have to honestly ask myself whether the shot in question is worthwhile. More often than not, it isn't. It's only when all the pieces hang together and an image makes a clear statement, that it's worthwhile pursuing on-screen and then in a print.

My feeling is that cropping isn't something that we do to an image. It does it itself – demanding to be constrained in certain ways. Sometimes there's more than one way, but it eventually becomes obvious what the photograph itself wants. This isn't metaphor. The best photographs demand to be a certain shape. The rest make no such requests, and that's what separates the winners from the also-rans.

LIGHT SENSOR BREAKTHROUGH COULD ENHANCE DIGITAL CAMERAS

ScienceDaily (June 22, 2009) — New research by a team of University of Toronto scientists could lead to substantial advancements in the performance of a variety of electronic devices including digital cameras. Researchers created a light sensor – like a pixel in a digital camera – that benefits from a phenomenon known as multi-exciton generation (MEG). Until now, no group had collected an electrical current from a device that takes advantage of MEG.

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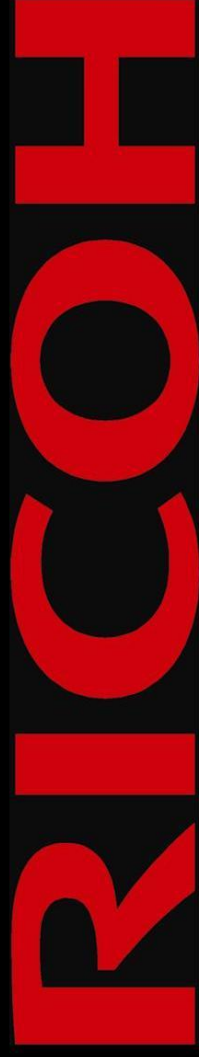
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