

Picture Selection as a System

Photo 40 - Spring 2018

1. A picture has to read to be enjoyed – This is a marketable tool and one most people overlook.
 2. How big does the quality and content of this picture require it to be?
 3. Does this picture need more cropping to improve impact?
 4. Who is the audience for this picture?
- Sizing not only applies to how large the picture is, but the size of the content as well –Cropping for clarity – cutting away the fat!

Do you have all elements of the picture you want represented?

Does a tighter or looser crop improve or hinder the communication?

This works for landscapes, still-life, sports, news; anything.

You don't need to crop all the time however never cropping is equally as destructive.

- Passing up an opportunity to improve composition, achieve clarity and heighten impact must be taken advantage of at all times.
- When working your portfolio each picture needs to first be analyzed independently and later as a body of work.

This first self-examination of your motive, impact and clarity of a picture is critical to frank, objective picture selection and improvement.

STEPS –

- Forget whatever you have done with the print in the past. Make the best work print possible where all tones are represented, but the overall feel of the print comes across. For instance if the print is high contrast with moody blacks and subdued white, then print it. (The key is not to spend mountains of time working on work prints. You don't know if this print will make the cut).
- When you have a body of work assembled. Lay them out on the floor and work through each print in your mind marking the work print with a grease pencil in the areas you want to improve. (Important, don't work ahead, work one print at a time). Also don't do this on the screen. The computer fools you on readability and clarity. *Nothing substitutes for a hardcopy print in your hand. That is what the customer/client will ultimately buy.*
- Some prints will require massive change, others may only subtle change, however, be open to changing your mind on how you want the print to appear. Perhaps the heavy contrast effect you thought was so cool initially is not as important now. REMEMBER – time changes your perspective. A really good print will be a good print no matter what, but your interpretation of that print may change as your ideas, skills, or in some cases, technology changes.
- When you have completed working through all your prints, go back and assemble the images in an order that makes sense to you. These may random images with no central theme or contextual relevance. However, if your work is more documentary or journalistic in nature there may be an obvious flow to it.