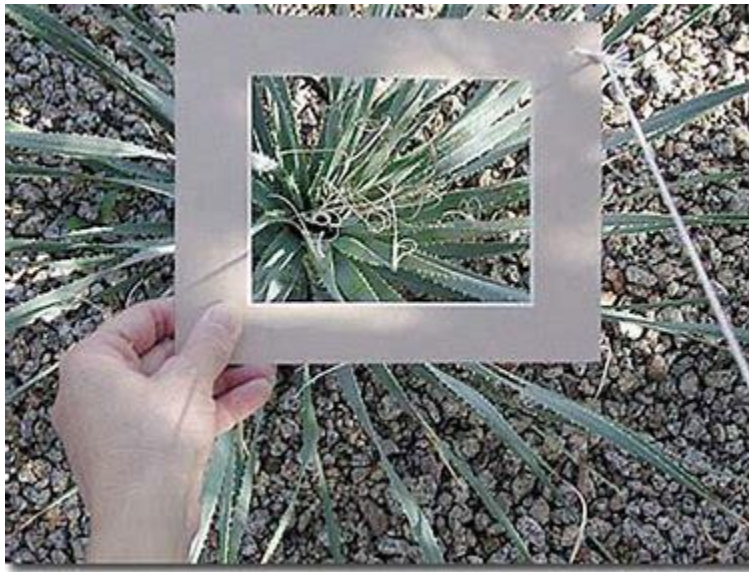


Viewfinder Art Work



A viewfinder is a simple yet extremely useful tool which helps you to select and isolate particular elements in a scene to get the best composition.

What You Need to Make a Viewfinder

- A piece of rigid card (Ideally black and matt as this doesn't distract your eye from the composition nor reflect light into your eyes.)
- A ruler
- A pencil
- A pair of scissors
- A pair of paper clips

How to Make a Viewfinder

- Use the ruler and pencil to mark two L shapes on the card; they should be the same size.
- Make the L's about five centimeters (about two inches) wide so they don't flop or bend when you use them.
- The length of the L's will depend on the size of your card.

- Cut out the L's (don't stress if you don't cut exactly along the lines you've drawn; it's not crucial).

How to Use the Viewfinder You've Made



Image: © Marion Boddy-Evans. Licensed to About.com, Inc

- Hold the one L in your left hand, the 'right' way up and the other L in your right hand 'upside down'.
- Now place the one over the other so they overlap, forming a frame.
- You'll see that by moving the two L's, you change what you can see. It can be square or a landscape or portrait format.
- Hold the two L's at arm's length and move them across the scene looking at the potential compositions. Take a look at the photo of the paraglider above and consider how the different cropping influences the overall feel. A vertical or portrait composition emphasizes a feeling of height, whereas a horizontal or landscape composition gives more of a feeling of wide-open spaces.
- Once you've decided how you want to view or crop your scene, use two clips to keep your L's in place. This stops them moving accidentally, which can happen if you're holding them in one hand, and enables you to put the viewfinder down.
- Get into the habit of holding the viewfinder at arm's length, rather than with your arm bent, so you get a consistent view through the viewfinder.
- Alternatively you may place your viewfinder on grass or against wood and focus on smaller details in one object or area.