

# Framing a Photograph

The CONTACT Photography Festival is an annual event in May with well over 1,500 photographers exhibiting at more than 175 venues throughout the Greater Toronto Area. The festival is a very good time to view great photographs in a variety of free venues that are open to the public. My interest, of course, is in the presentation of the photos.

A photographer often has a different answer to the question of how to frame a photograph than does the retail picture framer. When a photo is framed like art, it gains a sense of value. An appropriate frame design can help an average photo look great.

Black-and-white photos should be matted with black, white and/or gray mats. Any suggestion of colour adds an element that is not present in the picture.

The gray tones in black-and-white photos diminish the overall contrast, making them less bold and more susceptible to distraction by the foreign colour.

As much as I am opposed to the introduction of a colourful mat, I would be more likely to use the colour as my predominant top mat and place the accent of black, white or gray below it to serve as a transition into the photo. With all that colour surrounding the photo, it isolates the black-and-white photo, in a sense calling attention to it.

A frame is necessary for any picture because it provides the transition between the picture and the wall on which it is hung. The size of a picture, the subject matter, movement, colour and the medium in which it is done all affect the choice of a frame. One general rule applies to all frames: they must not attract attention away from the picture. Stronger subjects – buildings, for instance – require larger frames than delicate subjects such as children, even though the pictures are of the same size. Simple subjects, such as peasants, require stout plain frames; aristocratic ladies require frames in character; masculine portraits should usually have a plain frame; and close-up subjects generally require wider mouldings than distant scenes, even if the pictures are the same size.

Please go out to enjoy the photography shows throughout Toronto in the month of May. If you are a photographer exhibiting your photos, it is time to take them to a Certified Picture Framer to allow them to be professionally presented. Picture It Framed will be offering an artist discount to photographers that will be displaying their photos for this show. Come into the shop during the month of April for your free quote.

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**Submitted by Pat Schnurr**

*Picture It Framed is located at 3071 Dundas St. West (1/2 block west of High Park Ave.). 416-762-1221. [www.pictureitframed.ca](http://www.pictureitframed.ca)*

