

Re: Preference for field of view

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mc wrote:

One place to look would be the fascinating book "Optics, Painting, and Photography," by Pirenne, published around 1970. I don't have it handy.

I seem to recall reading that most artists prefer to do drawings and paintings with a FOV comparable to an 80-mm lens on a 35-mm camera (24 x 36-mm film), which is narrower than normally considered a "normal lens."

It isn't rocket science—portraits are usually of the head and shoulders, perhaps 24 by 30 inches at life size, or thereabouts. The most natural perspective is at a distance of 60–70 inches or so—like sitting across the table. That perspective gives a sense of intimacy without making you feel you're sitting in the subject's lap.

So the focal length you want is somewhere around 3 times the small dimension of the film frame, i.e. about 75 mm. You can argue about the image size you want, which will change the focal length you choose, but the main thing is the viewing perspective.

Cheers,

Phil Hobbs

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