

Selecting the Proper Image Size with Brandi B. Photography

Proper Size for your Portrait

In selecting the proper or correct size for a portrait, several factors are important to consider. Head size, type of image, where it is to hang and purpose of portrait.

Let's first discuss the head size, the single most important factor. If the portraits are to be hung at eye level and or by itself, the head size needs to be as close to life size as possible. This allows the portrait to be enjoyed from all areas of the room without dominating the space. For a portrait in full length or $\frac{3}{4}$ pose, this is usually 20x24, 24x30 or 30x40 size.

Should you desire the portrait to be enjoyed only in a small space such as hung low over a table or chest, a smaller than life size is desirable. This is when you want the portrait to draw the viewer over to the area and enjoy it more intimately. Usually 16x20 and 11x14 are the ideal sizes for this.

If you are creating a wall grouping, a variety of sizes is visually most interesting. If all sizes are the same, a stagnant or monotonous flow is created. So in selecting the correct size for a grouping, consider the sizes of the other items in the grouping.

One factor that was not mentioned is the wall space available. Since all sizes from 24x30 down will fit a variety of spaces, this is usually not a factor at all. Going to a 30x40 and larger you might need to consider the hanging space. If the space you want to hang the portrait is above eye level, a size larger is probably necessary. Because you are putting the portrait farther from the viewer, you need to compensate for the additional distance needed for viewing. Should you want a portrait for a specific space, determine the size portrait required and select a pose according to the size limitations.

Look around the studio and see how we have displayed portraits, their sizes and the head sizes. You'll see portraits hung in large and small spaces. See which ones you enjoy from anywhere in the room and which ones you must walk up to enjoy.

Please note: Matting a portrait to make it fit into a larger frame does not create a larger portrait or head size, only a larger presentation. An 11x14 matted portrait in a 16x20 frame is still an 11x14 portrait. You cannot see it from across the room and must walk up closely to enjoy and or see any expressions in the image.

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