

GUIDELINES for PRINT SIZING and PRESENTATION

When you enroll in an Intermediate level Photography class you are expected to produce work on a more professional quality. To this end this document presents some guidelines for printing and exhibition archival quality art prints.

Archival Quality

Fiber-based paper has higher image quality than RC paper because it has a better coating that will hold more ink with better resolution. Fiber paper is also more archival than RC.

Paper degrades from the outside edges in, so borders are needed to keep the image safe and the print archival.

Cut paper degrades faster, so **never trim down cut sheets**. A guillotine cutter is used at the factory to cut the sheets. This device exerts such pressure on the paper that the edges of the sheets are sealed and resist degradation. If paper is hand-cut on a roto-trimmer the edges open up and become exposed and will degrade. This was explained by one of the owners of Inkpress paper who addressed our students a few semesters ago.

Fingerprints from handling also speed up the degradation so a certain amount of handling space is required to protect the image from damage. Hold a print by the diagonally opposite corners, especially when handling prints larger than letter size. This will avoid any dimpling of the paper.

Always have borders that are at least 1" wide, and preferably closer to 2" wide. Larger prints can get away with the smaller borders.

Visual Aesthetics

The purpose of a border is to give the viewer a clean uninterrupted view of the image. This is why mats are made to be as neutral as possible. Uneven or unusual borders distract the viewer's eye away from the photographic image and are avoided. It is not 'artsy' to have some kind of off-center border. [Anyone who uses the term 'artsy' knows nothing about art anyway.] Small ¼" borders are from drugstore print aesthetic, and are generally considered unprofessional.

When prints are placed in a portfolio to be viewed by a gallery, museum or a collector, these prints are put in an archival print box with no mats. In this instance the borders function as mats, so they should be of a size that emulates a properly cut mat. note: A gallerist will use cotton gloves when viewing portfolio prints.

When matting, there needs to be enough border so the plastic corners do not overlap the image area.

Preview

The drawing on the next few pages are exactly to scale and they will give you an idea of how certain sizes will look on certain size papers.

Disclaimer:

There are always exceptions to any rules. If a piece of work has a visual aesthetic that requires prints have borders different from what is prescribed here, please discuss this with your instructor to learn the best way to achieve the desired aesthetic. But making things that are 'off' in an effort to make it look like art usually makes it look more like a lack of craftsmanship.

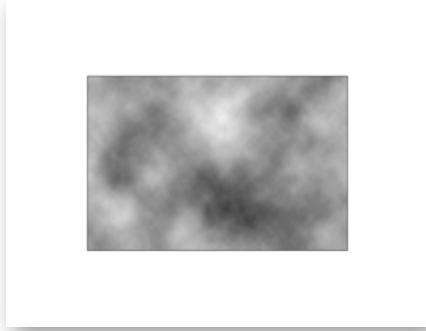
RECOMMENDED PRINT SIZES

Print Sizes

paper size
8.5 x 11"

optimum print size
4.5 x 6.75"

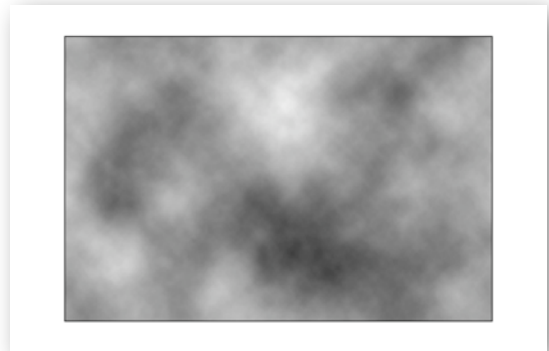
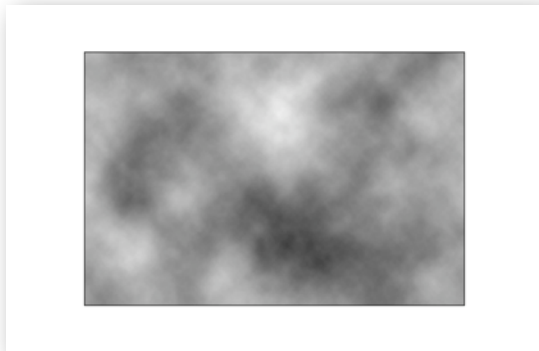
maximum print size
5 x 7.5"



paper size
11 x 17"

optimum print size
8 x 12"

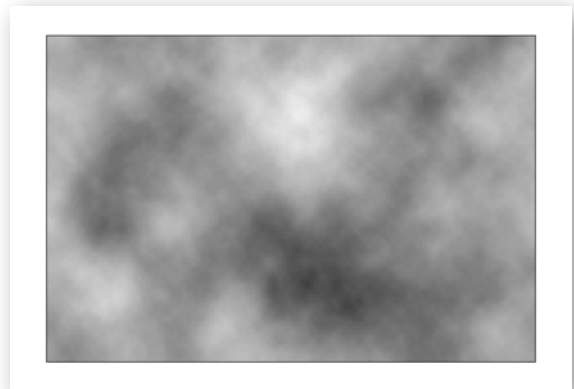
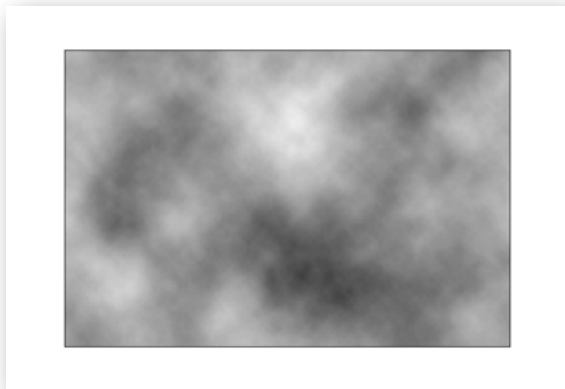
maximum print size
9 x 13.5"



paper size
13 x 19"

optimum print size
10 x 15"

maximum print size
11 x 16.5"

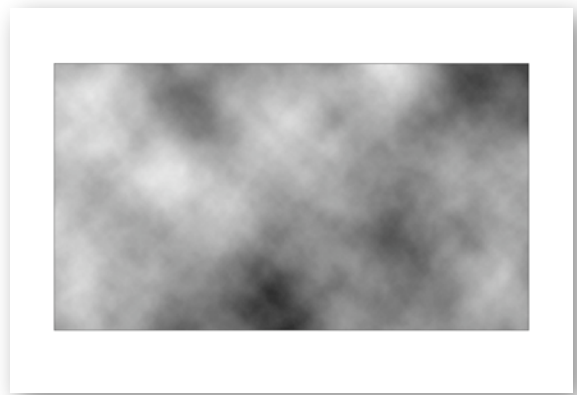


note: these sizes above are for cameras with aspect ratios of 2:3. If you have a 4:3 camera the prints will be shorter on the long edge. If you are shooting at 16:9 the prints will be longer.

PRINT SIZES, cont'd.

Recommended Print Sizes for 16:9 photos:

paper size	optimum print size
8.5 x 11"	4.2 x 7.5"
11 x 17"	7.88 x 14"
13 x 19"	9 x 16"



For all prints the bottom border should be slightly larger than the top.

SQUARE & VERTICAL PRINTS

Square prints are traditionally printed on a vertical page with a top border slightly larger than the sides, and the remainder all at the bottom.



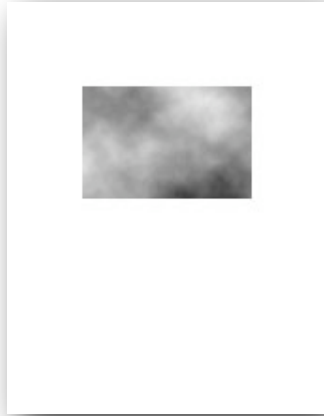
paper size
8.5 x 11"
optimum print
4.5 x 4.5"
maximum print
5 x 5"

paper size
13 x 19"
optimum print
9 x 9"
maximum print
10 x 10"

PRINT SIZES, cont'd.

SMALL HORIZONTAL on VERTICAL

A small horizontal can also be printed on a vertical sheet.



paper size
8.5 x 11"

optimum print size
3 x 4.5" (or smaller)

maximum print size
4 x 6"

MAT SIZES

Mats are typically cut with at least 3" borders, with an even larger border on the bottom.

Generally, larger borders look even better. Mat sizes are typically determined by the size of the paper printed onto. Usually one size larger is appropriate. Use the same guidelines as above for square prints or small horizontal prints on a vertical mat.

paper size

8.5 x 11"

11 x 17"

13 x 19"

mat size

11 x 14"

16 x 20"

20 x 24"

