

16 Ways of Looking at a Photograph

Class Exercise: Chapter 8, The Frame

A photograph, on the one hand, represents with great verisimilitude (accuracy and truthfulness) the scene it depicts. But on the other hand, it entirely and abruptly cuts off that scene at its edges. Unlike a painting, a photograph that does not use Photoshop to create images has no way to visually represent an imagined plane or space beyond the frame. It can only metaphorically suggest such. A photograph is, in this sense, a foreclosed vista, without peripheral vision. For this exercise, take out your iPhone or cell phone and take a quick photograph looking straight ahead. Now, holding that image on your screen before you, list what is *not* in the photograph that is visible in the room. In other words: what did the frame of the image cut off, what was taken away by creating a photographic representation?