

MITOCW | MITRES_10-001S16_Track12_300k

An important part of your image making, mostly small devices, is what you use for backgrounds, or how to view backgrounds.

You know, you can make some very interesting images even more interesting if you subtlety suggest a certain kind of background that works, that's relevant.

Your selection can really change your image.

Sometimes you have to be kind of careful 'cause the background can overtake what you want to say and we'll see that in a moment.

So take for example this image that I made of an assemblage of pieces.

And I took it on a surface against a white wall, which is what a lot of you do and, the issue for me is that even though you don't think that the view sees it, the viewer does see the horizon, where the two pieces of material meet.

You might say, 'Well, what what's the big deal'?

Well, you should start really getting into the habit of trying to edit out anything that is ambiguous or that is not giving the viewer a very clear view of what it is that you want them to see.

So it's much better to just keep a piece of paper handy, and just simply fold it up towards the back and you'll get yourself a very nice background without seeing that distracting horizontal line.

I really do suggest you you start doing these kinds of things.

It's easy with such small devices.

Here's a device that was taken just in the lab, a quick image.

And once again, the researcher knows what it is to look for, but you cannot expect the first-time viewer to see what you want them to see.

And so they do see all the mess behind it.

So, just take that piece of paper that we used before, and just put the device on it.

Lean it against the same background that you had before, but this time with the paper going up; hiding that material in the back, you can see much a much clearing device.

Sometimes echoing what you're looking at, it could be very helpful.

I was asked to take some images of some copper sulfate crystals and so I found a piece of copper - two pieces of copper actually - and just suggested the presence of copper in this material.

And here, with these plastic shapes that were fabricated in a lab, I just thought it would be fun to put it against a grid.

Not a very [laughs] clean grid ' by the way, this was taken quite a long time ago.

But what it did show was sort of helping to define these shapes and how those lines were changed when these plastic pieces were put over it.

Here's an image I took for a book trying to talk about a drop of water, which is very complicated.

And what I did was -- remember we're using a 105 lens focusing on the drop so, as you probably know by now, you can get a very narrow depth of field when you use 105 lenses, which is what we wanted in this case, because the background is blurred.

The next image shows you the background.

I mean, it's something I bought quite a while ago knowing someday I would use it for a background because I like the look of it.

And I also knew that with a 105 lens, it would become a whole different thing, as you see.

Take a real hard look at that drop and you'll see that the drop itself became a lens that has focused the background.

So, it's a little playful thing that I forgot what happened, but it did.

But here's a background that is totally out of focus that you want to be out of focus.

Otherwise it would just be too much of an image.

On this one image of a bacillus in a petri dish, I just decided to layer the petri dish on a particular plastic blue, and then I put the blue over orange and I was having kind of fun.

On this one, we're showing sketches of the CAD that was used to make these devices.

And it's just a sketchy-like idea, which I like very much.

I still like the idea of showing some sort of a human hand to the fabrication of very high technology.

I think that we should use more of these kinds of ideas as my point of view.

And here's another.

It's a wafer made into electronic device with one background.

And I took the same wafer and put it on another background, and then again on another background .

And changing the angle a little bit so you actually see a very different color pallet.

And that's what I'm talking about.

It's all related.

You make one change in one spot and then it's going to change your composition or your point of view, it's just ongoing, the permutations.

For this image, we wanted to show the ability to make these crystals, and I decided to use some weighing paper against a desk and it just happens that the light is coming in from the window and I actually used it compositionally and as part of the background.

And here, we're seeing material that results into a powder.

And again, I'm using weighing paper and make it a sort of interesting overlay of shapes because it's a pretty boring picture otherwise.

I think it's a little more successful.

And these are things that are not easy to photograph, as I'm sure you know.

And on this, I used a reflective quality of glass.

Ah, it might not be as successful as I thought because maybe you can't quite tell where the glass begins in the real slide with these.

These are highly hydrophobic slides, that's why you're seeing the water bubble as it does.

I don't know, it's something to think about.

And here I used, I kind of was echoing the shape of this material, how it coils into these nice scoops and I decided to use a small table to echo the shape of the naturally occurring curves.

Here's an example where I put the device on stick-em's, just a blue post-it onto which on that I put a post-it on a black surface.

I think this works.

I think the next one where I used a crazy background.

Look I got a card that I though was very fun.

It's fun to look at the card, but not with the device on it.

It's just way way over the top and too much with the background, just really gets in the way.

I needed to take a photograph of this very small robot, flying robot, which measures about one centimeter long.

And, used the box that the (the plastic box that it arrived in) as part of the composition which I think fills the background in an interesting way.

In this image, this was a very quick image that I just made just to see how, what kind of depth of field I was gonna get with these devices.

And it turns out that I sort of like the haphazardness of this image.

The background just was accidental.

For me, it works.

Maybe not for you, but for me it does.

Backgrounds should be part of your vocabulary.

There is no question in my mind about that.