

Engineering Technology Department

Digital Photography

Point of View In Photography

In relation to photography, **'point of view'** refers to the position the camera is in when viewing a scene. Are you laying on the ground, looking up at your subject? Are you flying in a helicopter, looking down at the landscape below? Or are you simply standing and looking straight-on at your subject? Whether you're looking up, down, or straight-on changes the scene dramatically, and changes the way that the viewer interprets the final photograph.

Bird's-eye View

When photographing a subject from above, it is known as a "bird's-eye view". This could be taken from up in the sky, such as when flying in a plane, or could simply be taken by standing on a ladder, slightly above your subject. If the subject is an inanimate object, it can sometimes make the viewer feel as though there is a separation between them and the subject.

Photographing from a bird's-eye view can be especially effective if shooting landscapes from a helicopter (if you get so lucky). What seem as normal landscapes from the ground turn into beautiful, abstract works of art when seen from above.



Becoming the Subject

This point of view tends to be the most effective, especially when photographing human subjects. To use this technique, photograph your subject from the point of view of the person interacting with the subject. For instance, if you were to take a shot of someone making dinner, take a photograph of the food as if you were the chef – perhaps even including hands in the foreground for reference. These sort of images make the viewer feel as though they are experiencing the scene themselves, and makes it easy to put themselves in the photographer's place. An image from this point of view can be



captivating, heartwarming, or even slightly disturbing depending on the subjects you decide to photograph.

Eye Level

This is the most common way to photograph a subject. After all, it is typically the way we regard most subjects in our day to day lives, especially other people. While photographing humans from eye level is fairly common, what would happen if you photographed other subjects from eye level, such as an animal? While we interact with people on the same level every day, we hardly get face-to-face with a fox, or a bird, or a snake. Since we often don't interact with these sort of subjects at eye level, photographing them from this perspective allows viewers to feel more connected with them – especially if the subject is making direct eye contact with the camera. It evokes a sense of familiarity and empathy, even with animals that we would be frightened to find ourselves face-to-face with in real life.



Worm's-eye View

Photographing from below is sometimes referred to as “worm's-eye view”, as if you were a worm looking up at the world around you. As you can imagine, this makes all subjects look very large, even if they are very small in reality. As opposed to images shot from above, subjects presented in this way look as though they hold power over the viewer, and can seem very intimidating. By photographing a subject from a worm's eye view, you automatically make the viewer feel vulnerable, even if the subject itself isn't frightening.

