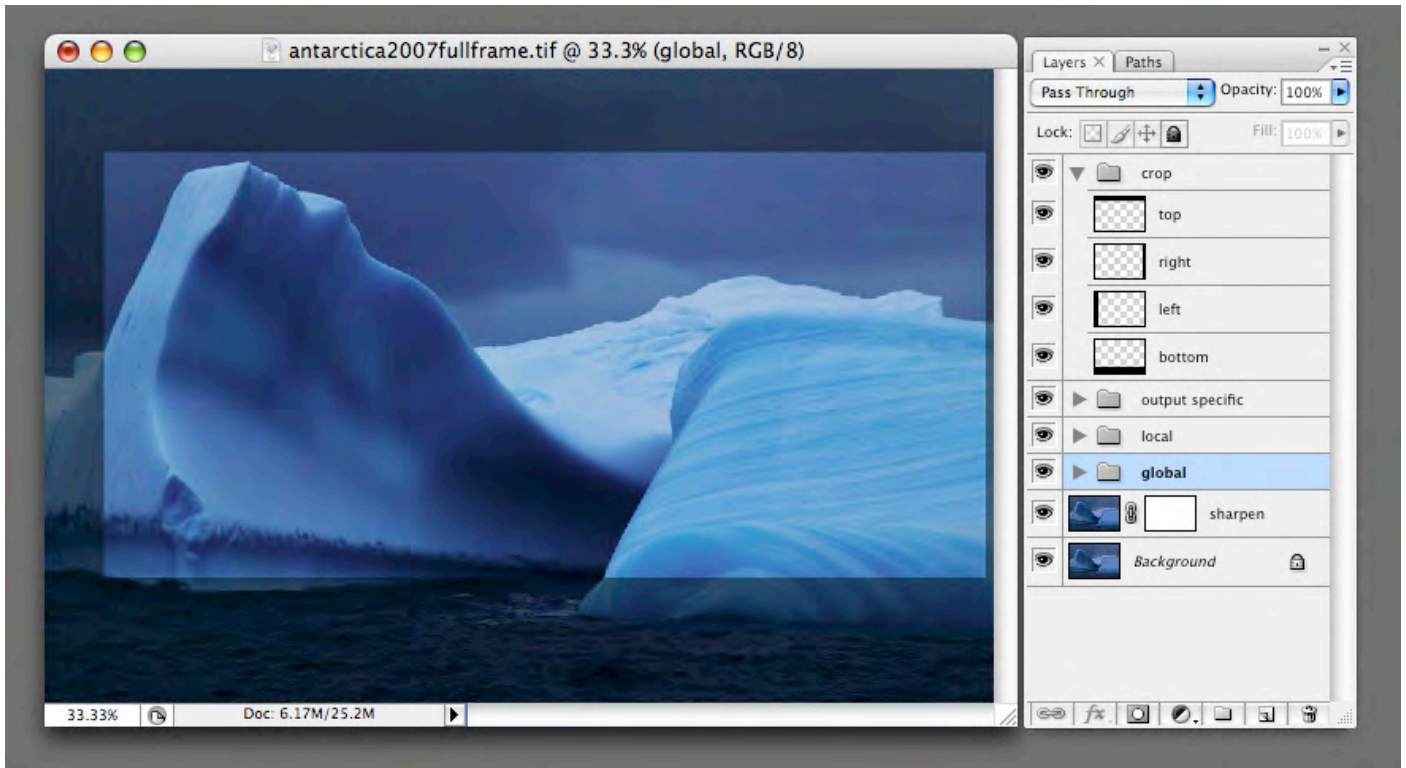


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TECHNIQUE



The master file with crop indicators and layer stack.

FRAME LOOSE, DON'T CROP

Good framing makes or breaks an image. It can turn a good image into a great one. You have two opportunities to frame an image; in camera before exposure and by cropping after exposure.

When you fine-tune the cropping of a layered master file in Photoshop, don't use the Crop Tool. Instead, use layers to help you determine where to crop an image. This way you'll always be able to view and recover previously excluded image information. You keep your options open for future improvements.

There are several ways to do this.

This method offers the most control. Create a new layer; use the Rectangular Marquee Tool to select an area and fill the area with black. This layer can be repositioned (using the Move Tool or arrow keys for fine positioning) or made longer/shorter and thicker/thinner (Edit: Free Transform). Make four appropriately titled layers: top, bottom, left, and right. File them in a Group. You can reduce the Opacity of the Group (thus effecting all four layers simultaneously and equally), partially or entirely, to view the areas you decide to exclude.

Why black? For easy viewing. Photoshop offers several screen modes. Standard Screen Mode (you see the Desktop), Maximized Screen Mode (the image window

fills the screen up to available Palettes), Full Screen Mode With Menu Bar (the image is displayed surrounded with gray and no Desktop), and Full Screen Mode (the image is displayed surrounded with black, no Desktop, and no menu bar). You can use the Change Screen Mode feature at the bottom of the tool bar or press the F key to cycle through the various modes.

When you use Full Screen Mode and surround the image with black, the black crop indicators are no longer distinguishable from the background. Press the Tab key to make the Tool bar and Palettes disappear. Now you see only your image. You can still move any crop indicator by using the Move Tool, pressing the Command/Control key, and clicking on it. This way you can fine-tune a crop without distractions.

(While the Crop Tool does have a Hide feature, which will allow you to recover eliminated image areas, it

does not allow you to easily preview those areas or remind you that you have information available to recover.)

It's unlikely that you will want to leave an uneven black border around your images when you present them. Don't leave these crop indicators in derivative files – the ones you display. Use the Crop Tool on these copies to crop the black border out.

When you crop a film-based image, do you cut the film? No! So, indicate crop marks in your master file and use the Crop Tool only on copies of your master file.

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