

PHOTO COMPOSITION

Major Rules, Tools & Techniques

Rule of Thirds: The main point of interest should be two thirds of the way up from the bottom of the photo. Photographs generally have three distinct areas of interest.

1. Foreground
2. Middle Ground
3. Background

Golden Section. horizontal sections and the vertical lines intersecting where points of interest exist. The places where the horizontal and vertical lines intersect are the so called golden points.

Diagonal Rules: three sections diagonally, from lower left to upper right. Important elements of the image should be contained by the middle diagonal section. Lines of image are more dynamic if they are moving diagonally.

Dominant Foreground: any element placed in the extreme foreground of an image acts as an entry point. Provides a sense of depth and scale, acts as a visual magnet that pulls the entire image together.

Perspective: Where an image is taken from can be as important as how it was taken. Perspective adds interest by giving viewers a look at something from a place they have not seen before, and what is new is interesting.

Contrast: Contrast is one of the most simple tools, but also one of the most powerful. It is putting a light subject on a dark background, or a dark subject on a light background. Large contrasts with small, wide, contrasts with narrow. Use contrast control their images and determine where the audience will look when they view the picture.

Tone: The human eye naturally gravitates to the lightest, brightest part of the photograph and away from the darkest sections of a given image. Use these tendencies as the means to direct the attention of the audience.

Color: The eye is attracted to colors that are bright, vivid, and saturated, and drift away from colors that are dull, faded, and unsaturated. Use color to control where in the image the viewer's attention will be focused.

Texture: texture is a function of light. Strong, directional light from one side creates texture by illuminating one side of an object, and creating shadows on the other side. Texture gives an image depth and detail.

Framing: Using one compositional element to frame, or emphasize another. The framing element focuses the viewer's attention on the main subject.

Background: By definition, the background of a subject is anything behind it. By controlling the background; keeping it simple both in terms of elements, color, and tone, the viewer is directed towards the main subject.

Horizon: Human beings have an innate sense of balance. It tells us what is up and what is down. In any photograph, a horizon that violates that sense of balance creates dissonance, or a refusal to believe what is seen.

Lines:

- Leading Lines bring the viewer's eye from the entry point of the image to main subject.
- Vertical lines emphasize power, strength, and height.
- Horizontal lines express stability, and width
- Diagonal lines express energy and movement
- Curving lines add flow and emotion, movement, calm.

Balancing Elements: Placing your main subject off-center, as with the rule of thirds, creates a more interesting photo, but it can leave a void in the scene which can make it feel empty. You should balance the 'weight' of your subject by including another object of lesser importance to fill the space.

