
Chapter 2: COMPOSITION

- A. The Rule of Thirds
- B. Find Your Best Vantage Point
- C. Frame Your Picture
- D. Pay Attention to Detail

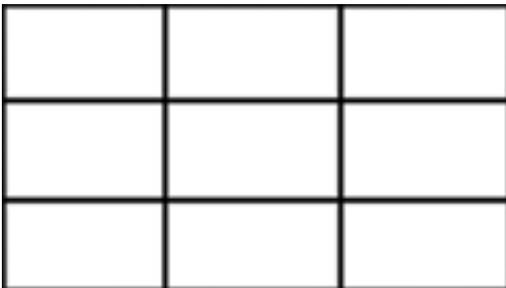
A. The Rule of Thirds

Generally, a photograph with your subject right smack in the middle of the frame makes for a boring static forgettable picture. Keeping in mind the famous “*rule of thirds*” when composing a photograph can make for a photograph that “works.”

It works like this: Imaginary lines are drawn dividing the image into thirds both horizontally and vertically. You place important elements of your composition where these lines intersect.'

It's best to have your subject (human, animal or otherwise) looking IN towards the center of the picture, rather than looking out.

Of course some of the most stunning pictures break this and most of the following 'rules'.



Web resources on the “rule of thirds.”

http://photoinf.com/General/KODAK/guidelines_for_better_photographic_composition_rule_of_thirds.html

Reference pp 92-93 In Learning to See Creatively

B. Find Your Best Vantage Point

'The best photographs are made when the photographer chooses a vantage point to suit the subject, and it is surprising how few subjects are suited by the height of a human standing at their full five to six feet'. -- Neil Turner at DP Review

Changing your physical position can change the dynamics of a picture. Find different vantage points to shoot from, different heights, even try lying on your belly and get a cat's eye view.

C. Frame Your Picture

The use of a frame can turn an otherwise boring picture into a pleasing one. Use a foreground element, such as an overhanging tree branch, a window frame, a door, arches, a fence, and rows of trees to create a frame for your photograph.

http://photoinf.com/General/KODAK/guidelines_for_better_photographic_composition_framing.html

Framing adds depth to a picture or can help identify the size or scale of your subject.

D. Pay Attention to Detail

- ❖ **Watch for clutter**, e.g. telephone poles growing out of your subject's head (step a few feet, and the telephone pole will no longer grow out of your subject's head), and clear off litter that doesn't need to be in your shot.

http://photoinf.com/General/KODAK/guidelines_for_better_photographic_composition_avoiding_mergers.html

- ❖ Consider what you're photographing. Find a **center of interest**, isolate your subject and make your intentions clear. When an image is competing for space on a newspaper page it has to stand out, your subject needs to be clear.
- ❖ **Know your camera's capabilities**—especially the added features many digital cameras now have, so *your vision can be communicated in a photograph* without technical blunders ruining what could have been a successful shoot. With digital cameras, check your play back on your viewing screen and be

certain you “got the shot.” If not, clear out the clutter, change your vantage point, re-compose and start again until you’re satisfied.

- ❖ **Think Design;** Dark on Light and Light on Dark. Using contrast will emphasize your subject. Take a light-colored subject on a dark background to help bring attention to your subject. Be aware of how your background affects your subject.

For more examples of design and composition:

http://photoinf.com/General/Robert_Berdan/Composition_and_the_Elements_of_Visual_Design.htm

Essays on Composition and Design:

<http://photoinf.com/>

Used of leading lines:

http://photoinf.com/General/Russ_Burden/7_Quick_Landscape_Composition_Guidelines.html

http://photoinf.com/General/KODAK/guidelines_for_better_photographic_composition_introduction.html

http://photoinf.com/General/Robert_Berdan/Composition_and_the_Elements_of_Visual_Design.htm

The Golden Ratio

<http://digital-photography-school.com/divine-composition-with-fibonaccis-ratio-the-rule-of-thirds-on-steroids/>

<http://www.apogeephoto.com/may2014/how-to-use-the-golden-ratio-to-improve-your-photography.shtml>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CiS3SU4lk0>

Color Theory

LIGHTING

- A. The Nature of Light
- B. Fill Light
- C. Backlighting

Lighting is the palette you'll be using to paint your photographs. The way you arrange your illumination has a dramatic effect on the mood of a photo. Proper use of lighting can focus interest on your subject, describing a 3-dimensional subject on a flat 2-dimensional plane, your photograph.

Existing light indoors or outdoors is called "ambient light," which you can use to communicate a mood in your photographs. If you have a room with a skylight, you may find that suitable for portraits at certain times of day. Use the soft light that suffuses from a window, giving a feel of a painting from the great masters.

A. The Nature of Light

Light can be hard or harsh, or soft and gentle. Each type of light, and all the gradations in between, has its advantages and disadvantages.

Direct Lighting, a spotlight or lamp or an electronic flash, pointed directly at a subject is highly directional and produces a hard effect. Hard light is harsh because all the light comes from a relatively small source. This kind of light is great when you want to emphasize the texture of a subject, and are looking for as much detail and sharpness as possible.

Some Examples When Direct Harsh Light Works:

Describing the character in a wise face.

Photographing jewelry or prisms

Macro photography, get the details of that bee on a flower

Some Examples When Direct Harsh Light Does Not Work:

Portrait photography. People rarely look their best under a direct light. People also squint and look uneasy in direct light.

Incandescent Lighting, or bulbs indoors give off a warm glow. Digital cameras correct for the color shift caused by the relatively low temperature (when compared to the sun) of incandescent lights. Your camera will have a white balance setting that looks like a light bulb, which will color correct for this type of lighting's warm reddish-orange cast.

Open Shade outdoor lighting gives off a cold blue cast. Most digital cameras correct for this cast in the white balance setting icon that looks like a cloud or a shady spot. You can try to rely on your camera's automatic white-balance control, but know it's not foolproof.

An in-depth look at how lighting dramatically affects a subject:

B. Fill Light

You can fill in dark shadows with either fill-flash (see chapter 3F) or white reflectors, which bounce light into dark areas, eliminating "black holes" where no light is recorded. Fill light is usually the second most powerful light used to illuminate a portrait, lightening the shadows cast by the main light.

C. Backlighting

With a backlit photograph, most of the illumination comes from behind the subject, defining the edges.

Backlit lighting can produce striking effects, adding drama and feeling to a photograph. Choose early morning or late afternoon, when the sun is low in the sky, and shoot into the light. Experiment with fill light to light up the front of your subject.









http://photoinf.com/General/KODAK/guidelines_for_better_photographic_composition_discussion.html