

Photography Composition

Using the Elements and
Principles of Design

Elements of Art

The Basic Building Blocks

- Line
- Shape/Form
- Space
- Value
- Texture
- Color

LINE

- A mark made by a moving point.
- Has greater length than width.
- Directs the eye – horizontal, vertical, diagonal, curvy, zig-zag, etc.
- Can be actual obvious lines or the borders or edges of shapes.

LINE



LINE

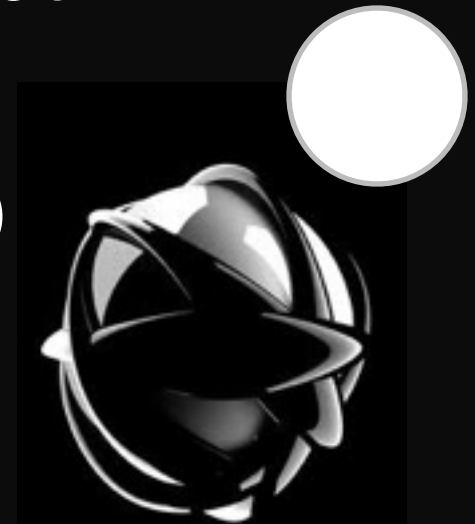


LINE



SHAPE / FORM

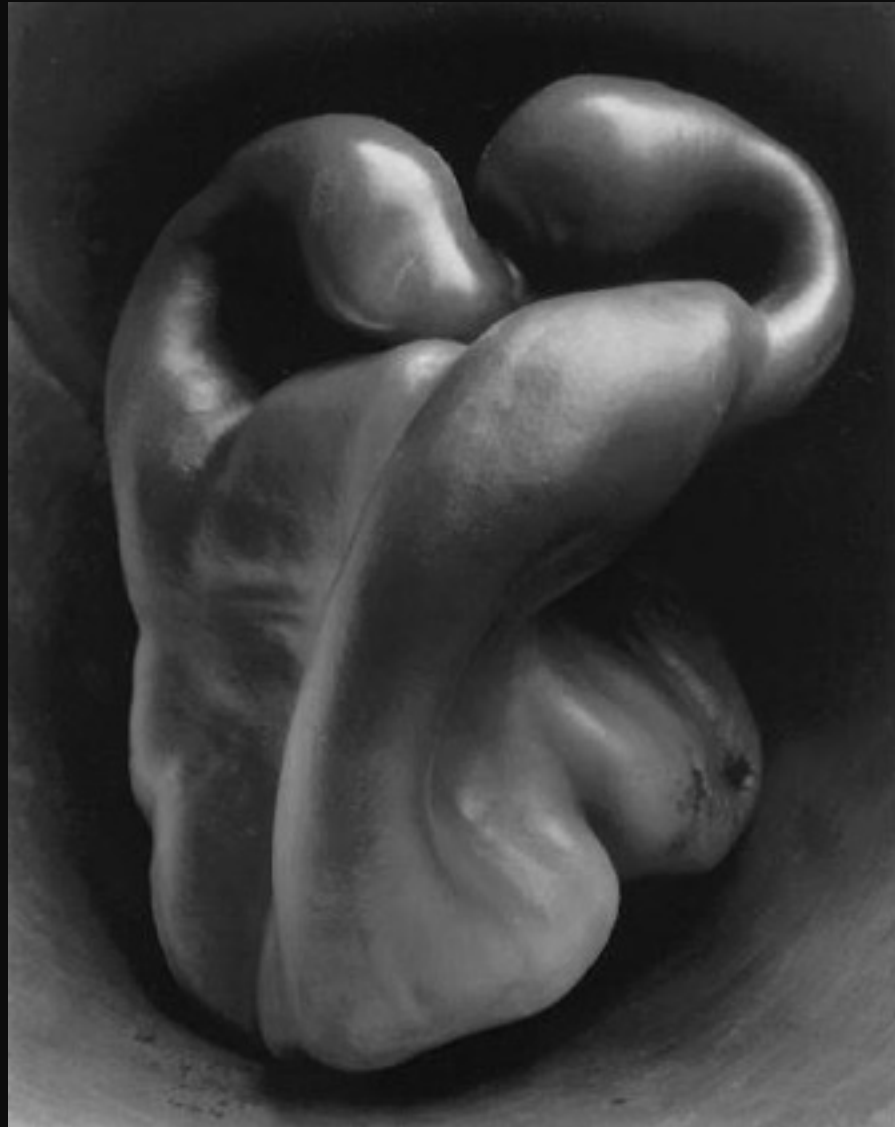
- A contained area.
- Can be GEOMETRIC (man-made) ex. Square, triangle, circle, etc.
- Can be ORGANIC (natural) ex. Leaves, humans, puddles, etc.
- Shapes are 2-Dimensional and flat. (circle)
- Forms are 3-Dimensional with height, width and depth. (sphere)
- Used to create a sense of space and substance.



SHAPE / FORM



SHAPE / FORM



SPACE

- The area used or unused in a composition.
- Positive space (occupied space) – the area the objects/subject takes up.
- Negative space (unoccupied space) – the area around, under, through and between.
- Gives the photo a 3-dimensional feeling - Depth of Field
- Foreground (closest) bottom
- Middle ground – middle
- Background (farthest) – top
- Can be open, crowded, near, far, etc.

SPACE



SPACE



SPACE

- Atmospheric Perspective
 - Objects close = detailed, bright, sharp
 - Objects far = blurred, dull/gray
- One point perspective
 - One vanishing point
- 2 point perspective
 - 2 vanishing points

SPACE



VALUE

- Black and White and all the Grays in between
- Dark to Light
- Can add drama and impact to composition.
- Can give a sense of timelessness
- Train your eye to read color as Black and White!

VALUE



VALUE



TEXTURE

- The surface quality.
- How an object feels, or how it looks like it feels.
- Rough, smooth, bumpy, gooey, sharp, etc.
- Adds interest! Sense of sight and sense of touch involved.

TEXTURE



COLOR

- Artistic term is HUE
- Need light to see color.
- Primary, Secondary, Intermediates.
- Use color schemes to enhance appeal or make impact.

COLOR



COLOR



COLOR



Principles of Design

The different arrangements – or *compositions* - of the ELEMENTS of design to create artistic, interesting, more visually powerful photographs.

Principles of Design

- Emphasis / Focal Point
- Balance
- Unity
- Contrast
- Movement/ Rhythm
- Pattern/Repetition
- Economy

EMPHASIS / FOCAL POINT

- Emphasis in a composition refers to developing points of interest to pull the viewer's eye to important parts of the body of the work.
- Size, shape, color, placement, contrast, etc.

EMPHASIS / FOCAL POINT



EMPHASIS / FOCAL POINT



VARIETY

- Variety is all of the different elements in the photograph
- Variety adds interest to the work and keeps the viewer's eyes moving around the piece

VARIETY



VARITEY



BALANCE

- Balance is a sense of stability in the body of work. Balance can be created by repeating same shapes and by creating a feeling of equal weight.
- Symmetrical
- Asymmetrical

BALANCE



BALANCE



BALANCE



BALANCE



UNITY

- Unity is seen in a composition when all the parts equal a whole.

UNITY



CONTRAST

- Contrast refers to the opposites and differences in the work.
- You can achieve variety by using different elements in your work, such as:
 - Shapes
 - Textures
 - Colors
 - Values

CONTRAST



CONTRAST



MOVEMENT / RHYTHM

- Movement adds excitement to your work by showing action and directing the viewers eye throughout the picture plane.
- Rhythm is a type of movement in an artistic composition. It is seen in repeating of shapes and colors. Alternating lights and darks also give a sense of rhythm.

MOVEMENT / RHYTHM



PATTERN / REPETITION

- An element that occurs over and over again in a composition.
- Can repeat the element in a consistent pattern.
- Can repeat the element in a variation of the pattern.

PATTERN / REPETITION



PATTERN / REPETITION



ECONOMY

- Economy takes into account that less is more.
- Using minimal ingredients to convey the concept.

ECONOMY



Photography

Compositional Concepts

Rule of Thirds

Vantage Point

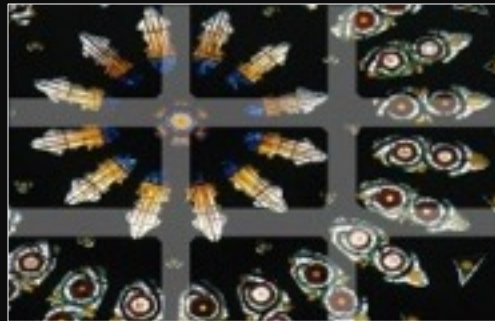
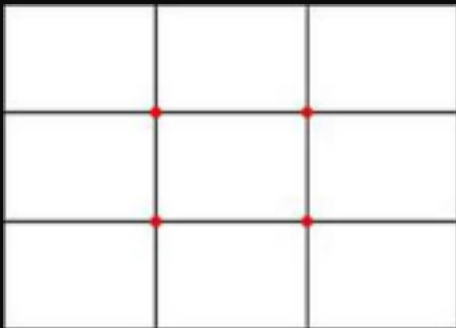
Framing

Silhouette

Dutch Angle

RULE OF THIRDS

- Natural tendency to be drawn to certain portions of an artwork/composition
- Adds a great deal of interest when placed:
 - At the 4 intersecting points
 - One section of the Thirds
- Oppose the direction a figure is facing





VANTAGE POINT

- Gives your photograph a unique/more interesting view
- Drastically different than the usual 5-6 feet off the ground
- Bird's eye view
- Worm's eye view
- Direct approach
- Angled approach
- Close up
- Long view



FRAMING

Direct the viewers attention to the primary subject

Creates the illusion of depth

Can obscure unwanted objects in foreground/
background

Can be naturally occurring

Tight framing

Wide framing

Using an object as a frame



SILHOUETTE

- Conveys drama, mood, mystery
- Simplifies a busy composition
- Place your subject(s) in front of an interesting light source



DUTCH ANGLE

- Horizon line is angled
- Creates a more dynamic composition
- Creates feeling of disorientation
- Canted, Oblique, German, or Batman angle

