

COMPOSITION:THE ARRANGEMENT

BASIC PRINCIPLES

YOU know the subject matter of your photograph, your camera does NOT

COMPOSITION: THE ARRANGEMENT

BASIC PRINCIPLES

In every photograph you take...

- You decide where the boundaries of the photograph will be (cropping through the viewfinder)
- You decide what is the main point of interest
- You choose the viewpoint or perspective
- You can move around your subject (or, if possible, move your subject)

COMPOSITION: THE ARRANGEMENT

BASIC PRINCIPLES

Try to have a **single, dominating point of interest**. The focal point or principal subject may be one person or several, a building or a distant mountain; whatever it is, give that subject proper prominence and have all other elements subordinated.

Pay attention to what is beyond your principal subject - the **background**. How does it serve your principal subject? Avoid competing and busy backgrounds in which your subject becomes lost. It is ideal to have backgrounds that serve as a setting or that frame your subject.

COMPOSITION: THE ARRANGEMENT

WATCH YOUR BACKGROUND!



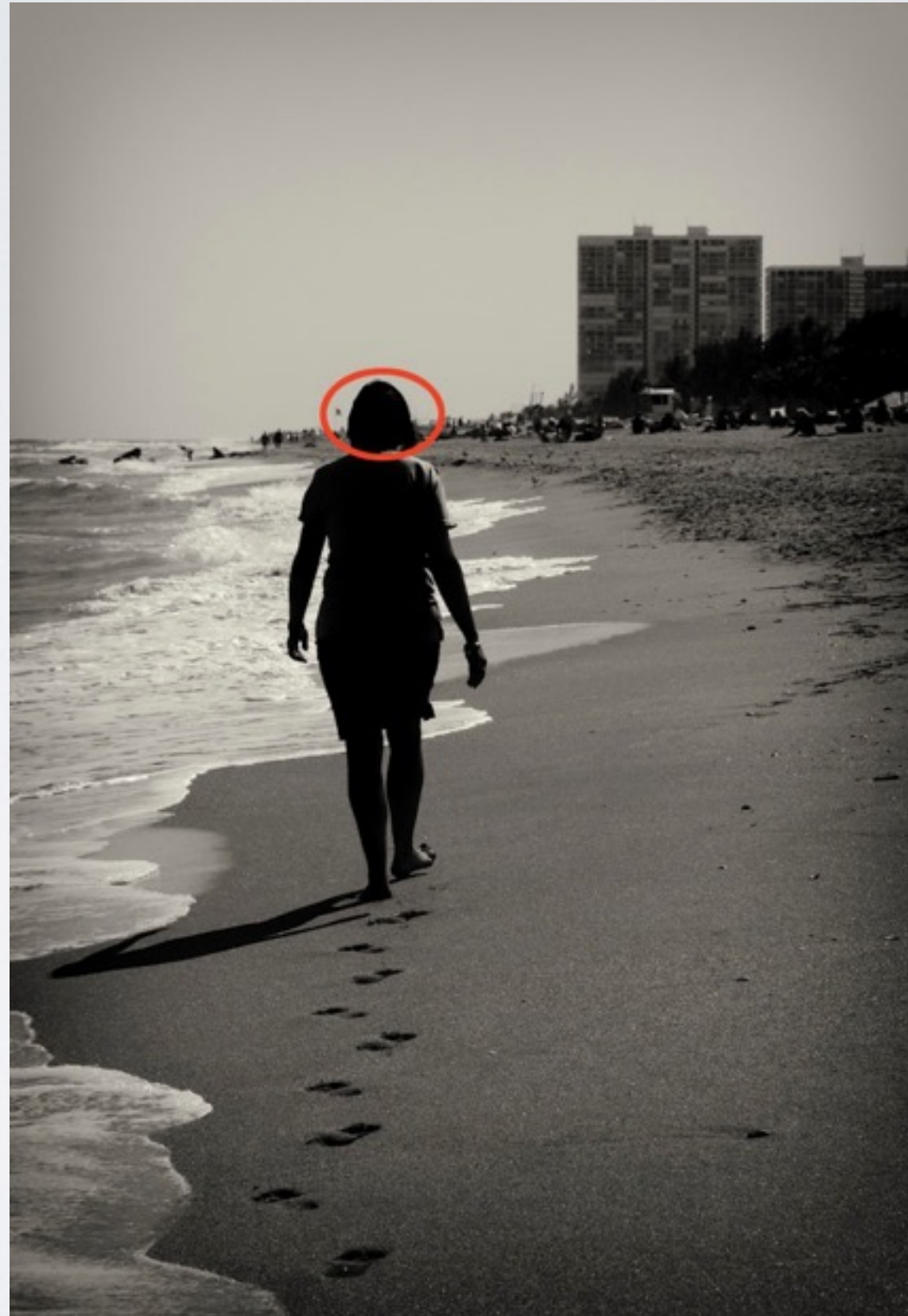
COMPOSITION: THE ARRANGEMENT

WATCH YOUR BACKGROUND!



COMPOSITION: THE ARRANGEMENT

WATCH YOUR BACKGROUND!



COMPOSITION

THE RULE OF THIRDS

Rule of Thirds

Compositional rule in
the visual arts

image should be
imagined as divided
into nine equal parts
by two equally-spaced
horizontal lines and
two equally-spaced
vertical lines

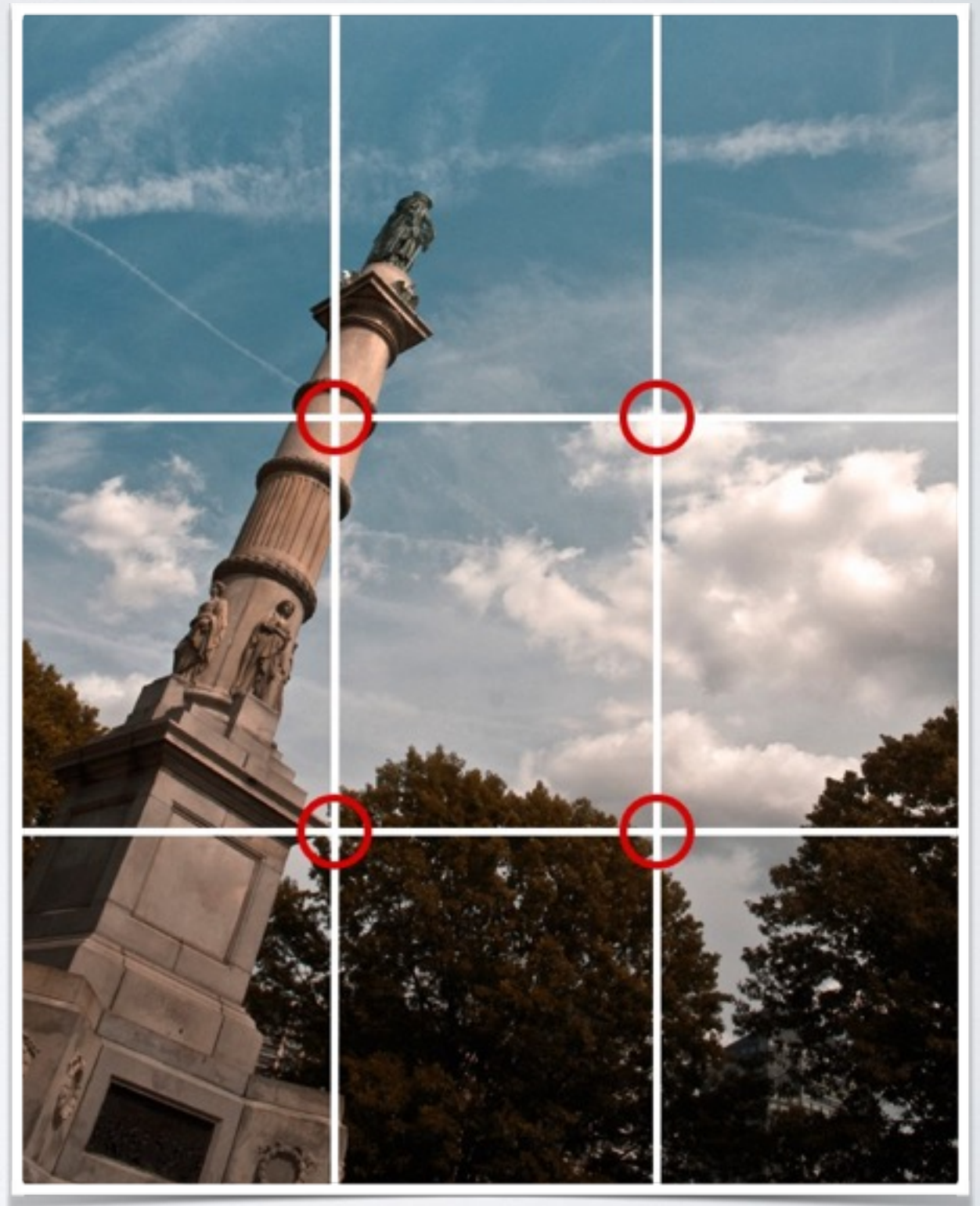
important
compositional
elements should be
placed along these
lines or their
intersections

aligning a subject with
these points creates
more tension, energy
and interest in the
composition than
simply centering the
subject would

COMPOSITION

THE RULE OF THIRDS

Studies have shown that when viewing images, eyes usually go to one of the intersection points more naturally than the center of the image – using the rule of thirds works with this natural way of viewing an image rather than working against it.



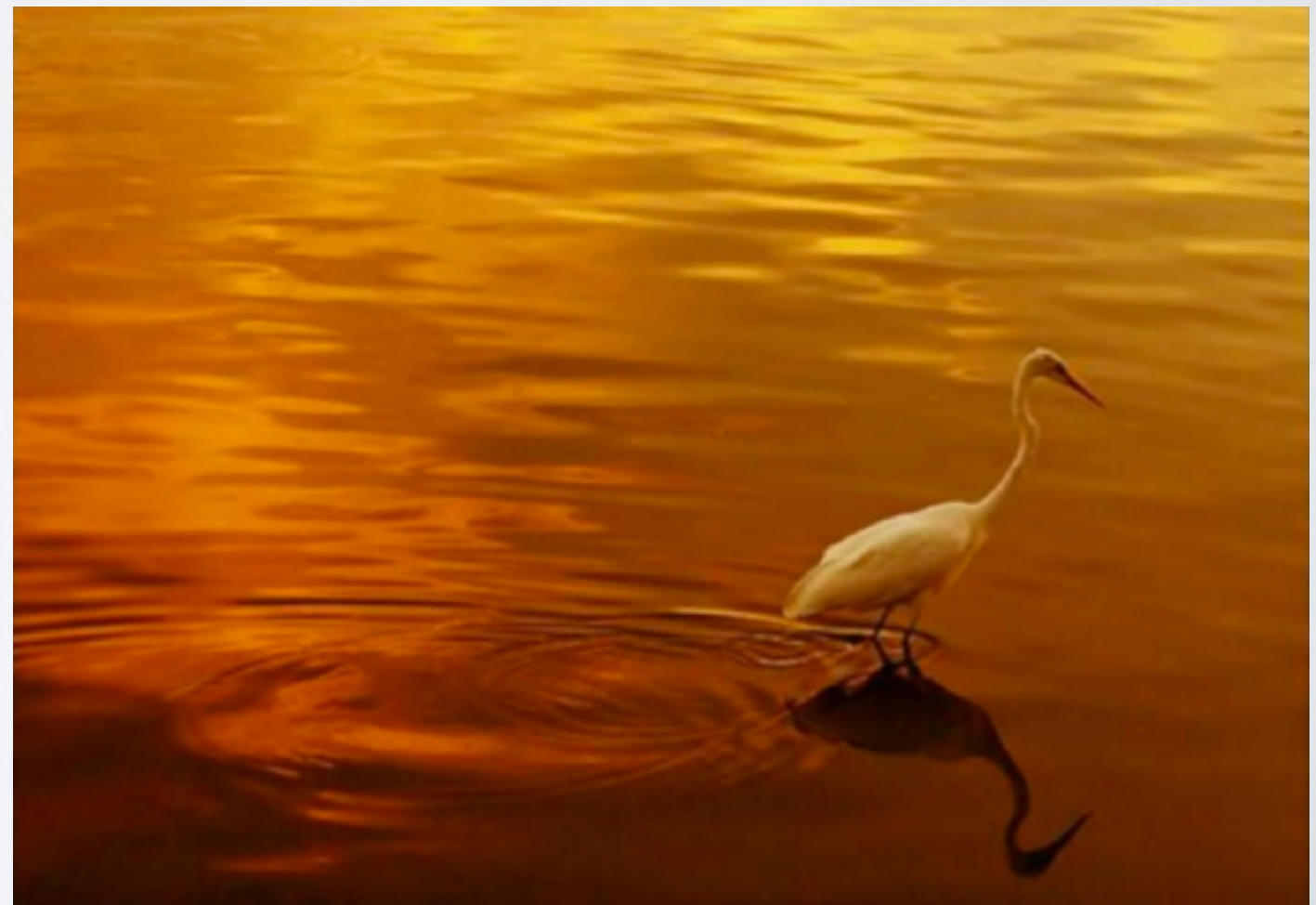
COMPOSITION

THE RULE OF THIRDS



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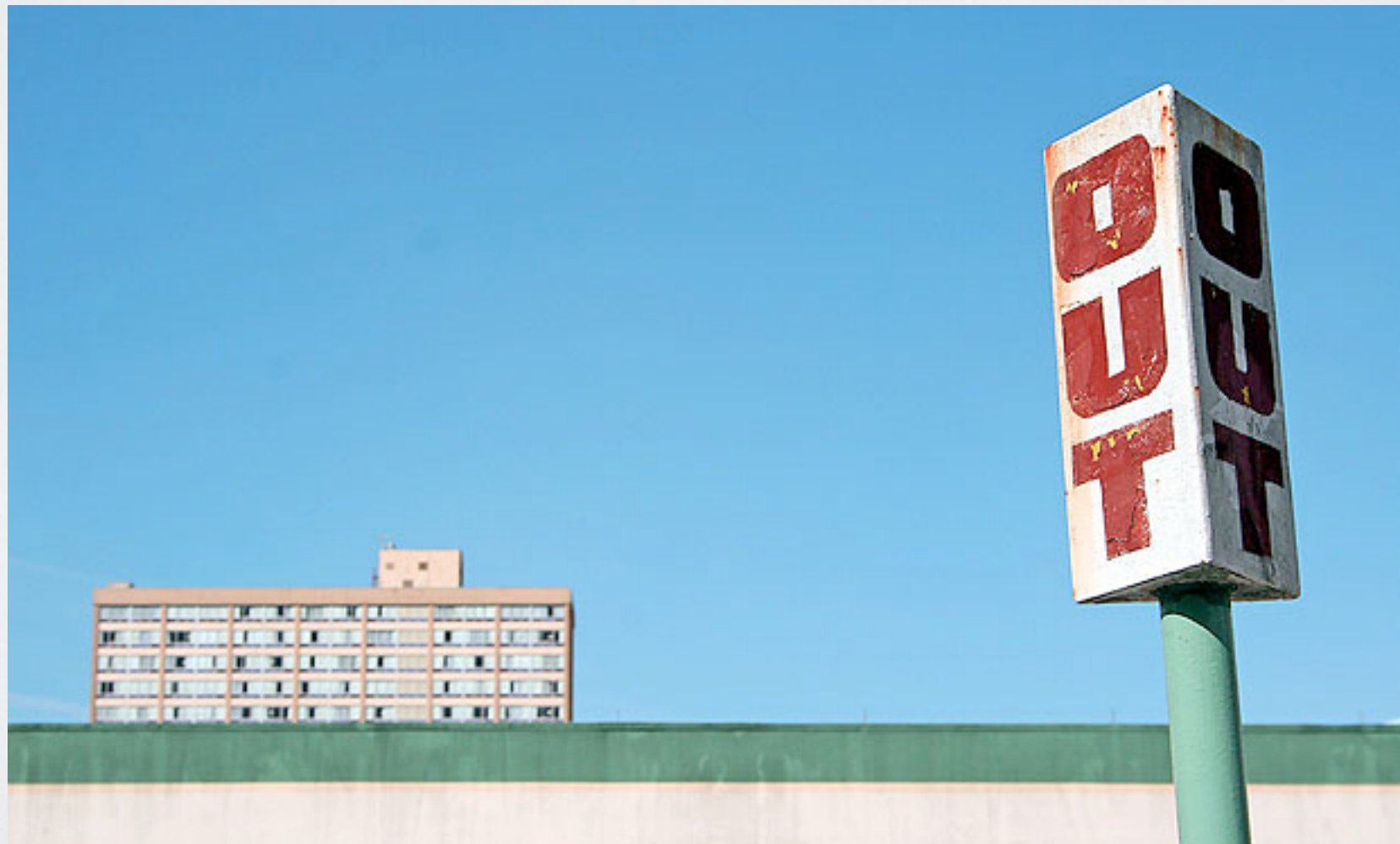
Do leave some space around your focal point. But don't over compensate by putting your focal point too close to the edge of the frame.



COMPOSITION

THE RULE OF THIRDS

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 can balance the "weight" of your subject by including another object of lesser importance to fill the space.



ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION

PERSPECTIVE

Perspective or Viewpoint

Before photographing your subject, take time to think about where you will shoot it from. Viewpoint can greatly affect the message that the photograph conveys. Rather than just shooting from eye level, consider photographing from high above, down at ground level, from the side, from the back, from a long way away, from very close up, and so on.

Freshen up the angle you are photographing from. Try unexpected or unusual viewpoints.

Move around your subject.

ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION

PERSPECTIVE



ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION

PERSPECTIVE



ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION

PERSPECTIVE



ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION

FORCED PERSPECTIVE

Forced perspective is a technique that employs optical illusion to make an object appear farther away, closer, larger or smaller than it actually is.



ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION

FORCED PERSPECTIVE



ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION

LINE

Line or Leading Lines

When we look at a photograph our eye is naturally drawn along lines. By thinking about how you place lines in your composition, you can affect the way we view the image, impacting the way in which the eye reads or travels a photograph's composition. Lines can **lead** the eye to key focal points - pull us into the photograph, towards the subject, or on a journey "through" the scene. There are many different types of line - straight, diagonal, curvy, zigzag, radial, horizontal, vertical, converging, diverging, etc. Each can be used to enhance composition.

ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION

LINE



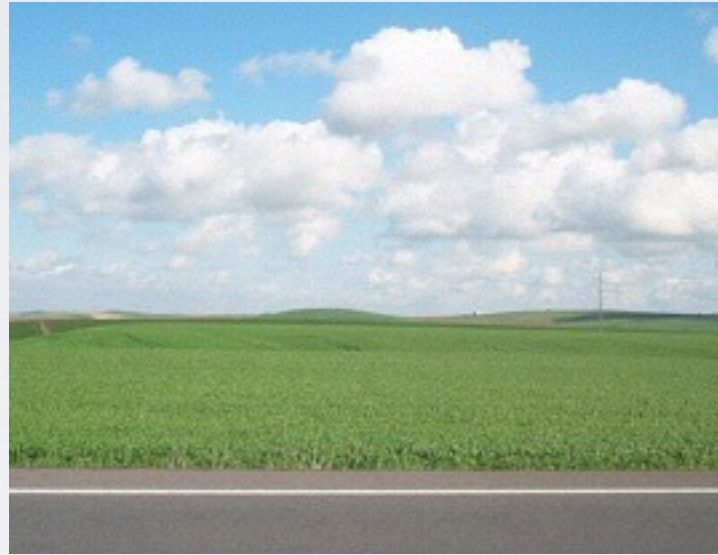
ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION

LINE



ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION

LINE



ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION

SYMMETRY AND PATTERN

Symmetry and Pattern

We are surrounded by symmetry and patterns, both natural and man-made. They can make for very eye-catching compositions, particularly in situations where they are not expected. Another great way to use them is to break the symmetry or pattern in some way, introducing tension and a focal point to the scene.

ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION

SYMMETRY AND PATTERN



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SYMMETRY AND PATTERN



ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION

TEXTURE

Texture

Texture helps to emphasize the features and details in a photograph. Look at a close-up photo of a weathered old barn board and you almost wince at the imagined pain of catching a sharp splinter. Our memories of how things feel are so ingrained in our consciousness that the mere sight of them brings a vivid sensation of touch. By exploiting textures you can bring a **tactile** dimension to your photographs.

Texture particularly comes into play when light hits objects at interesting angles. (More on lighting soon...)

ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION

TEXTURE



ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION

TEXTURE



ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION

COLOR

Color

Perhaps nothing can compete with color as a tool for creating mood in a photograph. Cool colors (blues and greens) can make your viewer feel calm, tranquil or at peace. Warm colors (reds and yellows) can invoke feelings of happiness, excitement and optimism.

A sudden spot of bright color on an otherwise monochromatic background can provide a strong focal point. How you use color can dramatically change a viewer's perception of an image. Pay attention to the colors in everyday scenes and use them according to what you want your viewer to feel when looking at your image.

ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION

COLOR



ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION

COLOR



ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION

LINE + PATTERN + COLOR



COMPOSITION:THE BASICS

IN SUMMARY

- Try to have a single dominating or main point of interest.
- Pay attention to what is beyond your principal subject - the background. How does it serve your principal subject?
- Chose interesting angles. Don't be afraid to get on the floor, to step up on a chair, and aim your camera at your subject in interesting ways. This is a major component to making a great image.
- **Take the picture you instinctively want to take; then think of at least 5 (if not 10!) different ways to photograph that same subject.**
- Don't rely on editing! It's true, computers and software can sometimes perform miracles, but never assume that you can fix any problem with software. The software interprets the image as a bunch of pixels and is unaware of the subject matter. **Take the best picture you can every time.** It will make your life much, much easier in the aftermath.