

Your Photographer's Eye – Key Learnings 1

Composition

“An arrangement of the parts of a work, so as to form a unified, harmonious whole”

The Elements of Design

Elements of Design bring order to your photographic composition. These can have tremendous symbolic value. One or more may be present in your image. Using these will help make your images stand out over the rest!

- **Points** - Multiple points form the image, or can be design elements in their own right
- **Lines** - Very strong. Leads the eye in and around the scene. Achieve a certain mood or feeling. *Leading Lines*. Horizontal, Vertical, Diagonal, Curves, S-Curves.
- **Planes** - Can be distinct with clear boundaries, or infinite. Sides of buildings, tables, walls. book covers, etc.
- **Solids** - [**Shapes** are in three-dimensions, **Forms** are in two-dimensions]. Can extend off-frame. Defined by lighting and texture. Side-lighting is best.
- **Texture** - can exude deep emotion. Highly dependent of side-lighting.
- **Pattern** - emotions of stability, consistency, belonging. Pattern can be *disrupted* to attract viewer's attention.
- **Color** - Different colors evoke different emotions. Color itself can be a compositional element, i.e.; Color First, Content Second!

A Great Photograph ...

- Has a central theme or idea.
- Focuses attention to a single point-of-interest
- Simplifies

Week 2 – Photographic Composition

Knowing **where** to place your elements within your photo frame is what really determines the impact of your image.

- **Crop In-Camera** - Don't count on *Photoshop* for all your cropping.
- **Inspect the Viewfinder/LCD Edges for clutter, “poles-out-of-the-head”, etc.**
- **Fill the Frame** - One of your best allies for great photography!
- **The Rule of Thirds** - Balances your photo, leads the eye, delivers the message.
- **The Rule of the Right Third** - Western culture viewers read in from left; your subject is placed in the right quadrant for best effect and maximum viewer attention.
- **Horizons** - Place in top-half or bottom-half of frame depending on what you want your viewer to see; a foreground object or scenery? or the beautiful sky?
- **Frame Your Subject** - The object framing your subject should not distract.
- **Orientation** - Some subjects favor the *horizontal*, others *vertical*. Always try both!
- **Focal Point** - Use *selective focus* techniques via *depth-of-field* to guide viewer's eye.
- **Symmetrical vs Asymmetrical** - Mirror images are symmetrical and very effective, but Asymmetrical is most common.
- **Harmony vs Dis-Harmony** - Harmonious images; objects are related; Dis-Harmonious compositions feature “chaos,” but chaos might be the theme of your image.
- **Work Your Subject** - Arrange your composition as necessary. Move & look around!
- **Break the Rules!** It's alright to break the rules! It's *your* photography; *your* message!