

FUNDAMENTALS OF COMPOSITION:

IMAGE COMPOSITION DESCRIBES HOW DIFFERENT SUBJECTS AND VISUAL ELEMENTS ARE ARRANGED INSIDE OF THE IMAGE FRAME. THE PURPOSE OF IMAGE COMPOSITION IS TO CREATE A VISUALLY COMPELLING PICTURE, A PICTURE THAT EVOKES THE INTEREST OF THE VIEWER. A SUCCESSFUL SHOT ATTRACTS THE EYE FOR A WHILE. VISUAL ELEMENTS THAT A PHOTOGRAPHER USES IN THE COMPOSITION ARE FOR EXAMPLE LINES, FORMS, TEXTURES, BALANCE, SYMMETRY, DEPTH, COLORS, PERSPECTIVE, SCALE, AND LIGHTING.

THE MEANING OF IMAGE COMPOSITION

OFTEN ONE THINKS ONLY ABOUT THE SUBJECT OF THE PHOTO AND FORGETS THE MEANING OF COMPOSITION ALTOGETHER WHEN TAKING A PHOTO. OFTEN A PHOTO IS TAKEN FROM FAR AWAY AND THE SUBJECT IS PLACED INTO THE MIDDLE OF THE FRAME WITHOUT THINKING OF THE OTHER VISUAL ELEMENTS THE FRAME MIGHT INCLUDE. THIS KIND OF APPROACH ONLY SELDOM YIELDS TO THE BEST POSSIBLE COMPOSITION. IT IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT TO PAY ATTENTION TO THE COMPOSITION OF THE IMAGE EVERY TIME TAKING A PHOTOGRAPH. COMPOSITION CAN HAVE A DRAMATIC EFFECT ON THE RESULTING IMAGE AND IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT WITH THE SUBJECT ITSELF. WHEN COMPOSING AN IMAGE ONE SHOULD ALWAYS THINK ABOUT WHAT HE WANTS TO TELL WITH THE PHOTO.

LEARNING IMAGE COMPOSITION

THE FIRST STEP IS TO BE AWARE OF THE MEANING OF THE COMPOSITION ONE CREATES. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THAT IF A BORING SUBJECT IS COMBINED WITH THE RIGHT COMPOSITION, THE RESULT CAN BE A VERY COMPELLING IMAGE.

THERE ARE SEVERAL RULES AND ESTABLISHED PRACTICES ABOUT IMAGE COMPOSITION THAT HELP TO CREATE BETTER RESULTS. THESE RULES CAN BE BROKEN AND MANY TIMES THEY SHOULD. HOWEVER, IT IS SUGGESTED FIRST TO KNOW THE RULES ABOUT IMAGE COMPOSITION AND ONLY THEN TO BREAK THEM ON PURPOSE IF IT PROVIDES BETTER RESULTS.

SOME PEOPLE CAN NATURALLY CREATE COMPELLING COMPOSITIONS. HOWEVER, IMAGE COMPOSITION CAN ALSO BE LEARNED FOR EXAMPLE BY EXPLORING PHOTOS OF PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY ARTISTS AND ANALYZING WHAT MAKES THEM GOOD?

IMAGE COMPOSITION TAKES TIME. WHEN THE SUBJECT MATTER IS CHOSEN, ONE MUST STILL DECIDE HOW TO PLACE IT INSIDE THE FRAME AND WHAT OTHER ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE. USUALLY IT TAKES A LOT OF TIME AND EXPERIMENTING TO FIND THE BEST POSSIBLE COMPOSITION.

ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION:

THINGS TO AVOID

SIMPLICITY

RULE OF THIRDS

LINES

BALANCE

FRAMING

GET CLOSE

SIMPLE TIPS FOR BETTER PHOTOS:

- DECIDE IF YOUR SUBJECT IS HORIZONTAL OR VERTICAL.
 - LOOK FOR A SIMPLE BACKGROUND.
 - USE DYNAMIC LINES TO LEAD THE VIEWER'S EYE INTO AND THROUGH THE FRAME.
 - LOOK FOR BALANCE IN THE SHAPES, POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE SPACE.
 - KEEP HORIZON LINES LEVEL.
 - HOLD YOUR CAMERA STEADY. USE A TRIPOD WHEN NEEDED. WHEN HAND-HOLDING YOUR CAMERA, BRACE YOUR ARMS AGAINST YOUR CHEST AND PRESS THE SHUTTER RELEASE BUTTON SLOWLY. AVOID JERKING YOUR CAMERA WHEN TAKING THE PHOTOGRAPH.
 - DON'T PUT YOUR CENTER OF INTEREST IN THE CENTER OF THE FRAME.
 - DON'T STAND TOO FAR AWAY FROM YOUR SUBJECT. GET CLOSE TO YOUR SUBJECT. WHEN YOU THINK YOU ARE CLOSE ENOUGH, GET CLOSER. FILL YOUR CAMERA'S VIEWFINDER WITH THE SUBJECT YOU INTEND TO PHOTOGRAPH.
 - TAKE MULTIPLE SHOTS OF YOUR SUBJECT. EXPLORE DIFFERENT ANGLES AND "BRACKET" YOUR EXPOSURES IN DIFFICULT LIGHTING CONDITIONS.
 - KEEP YOUR CAMERA AND LENSES CLEAN. USE A SOFT BRUSH OR COMPRESSED AIR.
 - CARRY YOUR CAMERA'S INSTRUCTION MANUAL WITH YOU ALWAYS. REFER TO IT WHENEVER YOU ARE IN DOUBT ABOUT HOW TO DO SOMETHING, OR YOU ARE UNSURE ABOUT SETTINGS.
 - LOOK AT PHOTO MAGAZINES AND BOOKS. EXAMINE HOW PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHERS HAVE HANDLED DIFFERENT SUBJECTS.
 - WHEN PHOTOGRAPHING PEOPLE, AVOID HAVING THEM STAND STIFFLY STARING INTO THE LENS. HAVE YOUR SUBJECT DO SOMETHING OR POSE IN A WAY THAT THEY LOOK COMFORTABLE.
- LEARN TO SEE THE LIGHT. SOME OF THE MOST STRIKING PHOTOGRAPHS ARE TAKEN WHEN THE LIGHT IS AT A LOW ANGLE, SUCH AS DURING EARLY MORNING OR LATE DAY.
- CARRY YOUR CAMERA WITH YOU ALWAYS. THE BEST AND MOST INTERESTING OR EXCITING IMAGES ARE USUALLY SEEN OR DISCOVERED WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE YOUR CAMERA WITH YOU.