

# COMPOSE YOURSELF

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## Ask yourself before shooting

- What is the subject?
- Is there more than one?
- What is the mood of the moment?
- What's going on in the background?
- Where is the light coming from?
- Is subject moving or is it still?
- Time to pose or do I shoot fast?
- How are others shooting the same?



## Painter



Must Add

## Photographer



Must subtract

# Composition

- What is it?
- Choice and arrangement of the subject matter within the confines of the finished picture
- Subject is what you photograph



# Composition

Why?

- To enhance the finished picture

Guidelines?

- KISS (Keep It Simple Stupid)
- Tools
- Not a rule

# Composition mistakes

- Overcrowded picture
- Large empty area
- Poor arrangement
- No point of interest
- Subjects move away
- Subjects cut off
- Distractions: bright spots, out of focus



## Photographer can

- Control choice of viewpoint
- Control distance to the subject
- Control placing of subject in picture frame
- Control arrangement of elements of picture

## Center of Interest

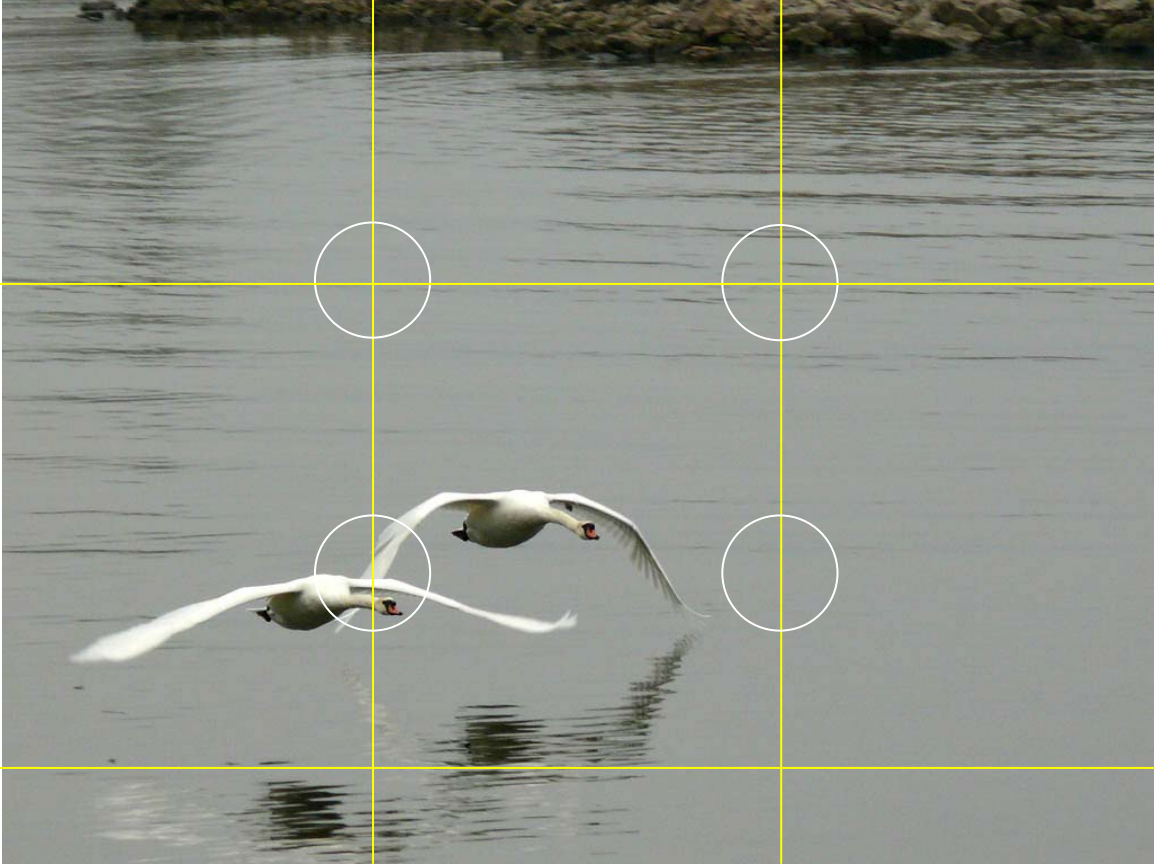
- Decide what is it, as picture can only tell one story
- Give focal point prominence by composing space around it
- Nothing should detract from focal point
- Lacking center of interest makes viewer search through image space

## Bulls eye

- Camera manufacturers are composition killers
- Light sensors in camera, centered
- Auto focus, centered

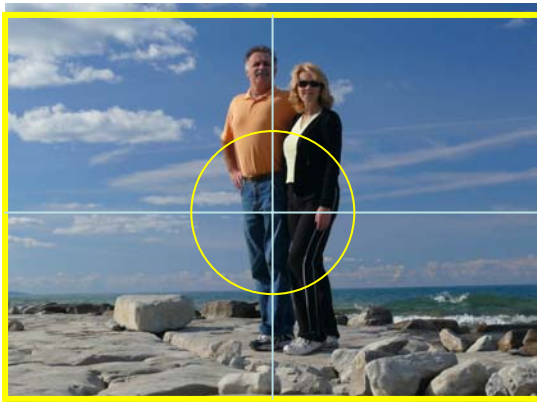
## Rule of Thirds

- What is the point of interest?
- Where is it placed?
- You gain 4 points and 4 lines for composing photograph and making it more pleasing



# ARS

- Aim
- Reposition
- Shoot



## Horizon

### Central

- Dull, uninspiring, avoid it
- Sometimes it does work however

## Horizon

### High

- Accents foreground
- Adds sense of distance

## Horizon

### Low

- Heightens the isolation of the subject
- Creates atmosphere of emptiness

## Horizon

### None

- Sometimes works the best (gray sky)

### Keep it straight

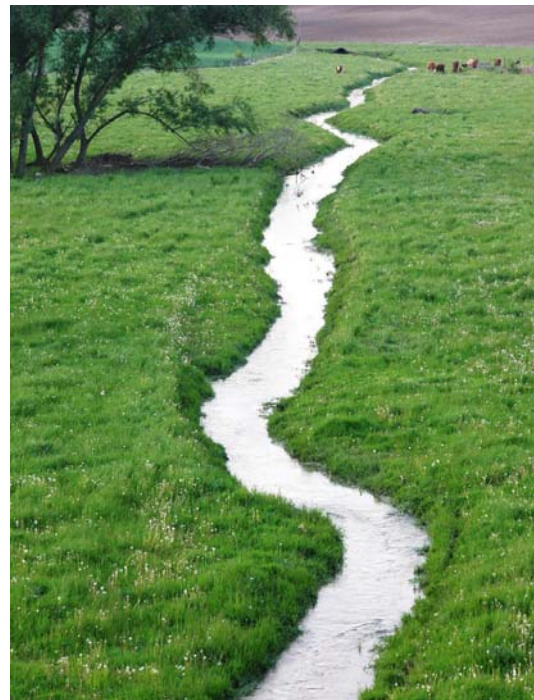
- At all times..... almost

## Empty space

- Give your subjects space to look into
- Give space for the subject movement

## Leading lines

- They lead the eye into the picture
- They add depth



- They are most effective when there is some relationship with the subject

## S curve

- Adds beauty
- Adds feeling of flowing

## C curve

- Adds grace

## Compositional orientation

- Horizontal
- Vertical
- Diagonal

## Horizontal

- Strength, stability
- Stillness, peacefulness
- Width, spaciousness

## Vertical

- Power, excitement
- Aggressive, less stable
- Majestic

## Diagonal

- Dynamic
- Implies movement

## Triangular

- Concentrates
- Contains





## Patterns, texture

- Rhythm
- Commonality
- Zoom lenses are excellent for isolating patterns

## Improve composition, simplify

- Reduce clutter
- Isolate
- Remove all, except the subject
- Defocus background, shallow DOF

## Viewpoint

- It affects relationship between subject and the background
- It changes with zooming level, wide vs. telephoto
- Experiment with it

## Framing

- To focus attention on the subject
- Small aperture to have sharp frame and subject
- Large aperture to have soft frame and sharp subject
- Watch exposure and auto focus

## Balance

Correct combination of:

- Colour
- Size, shape

Classic, symmetrical

Non symmetrical, more interesting

## Cropping

- To improve composition
- To remove imperfect area
- Do not undervalue a space



## Colour

- Determines emotional content of a photograph
  - Red, oranges - hot, exciting, closer
  - Yellow – warming
  - Blues, greens – cool, refreshing, further

## Lighting

- Should be a part of compositional balance
- Viewpoint affects it
- Time of the day does too
- Lighting controls shadows and colour
- It reveals shapes, lines and textures

## Front lighting

- Illuminates parts of subject facing camera
- Few shadows
- Looks fairly flat
- Considered “normal lighting”



## Side lighting

- Hits the subject at the right angle to the camera
- Accentuates texture and form
- Morning and evening provide this kind of light

- Usually “warm” light

## Back lighting

- It is usually behind a subject
- Tricky to use
- Camera may not capture it as the eyes see it (dynamic range)
- High impact, dramatic silhouettes

## Humour

- We all shoot easily accessible landscapes, flowers
- Try something different
- If humour is a part of an image, it tells the story much more effectively



## Why do I care about composition

- Photoshop can fix it
- Sometimes...

## Photoshop to the rescue

- Cropping
- Straightening, perspective
- Contrast enhancement
- Colour balance, black and white
- Image flipping, rotating
- Mood alteration
- Creative control





## Controlling composition

- In the field, in camera
- In Photoshop
- Is there a difference?

## Breaking composition

- It is OK!

## Ask yourself... What am I?

- A documentary photographer?
- or
- An interpretive one

## Images, production

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