

# composition

The way your visual elements are arranged within the frame

- Where in the frame you decide to place your subject
- What you decide to include in the background
- How big or small everything is
- Are you pointing your camera straight on, upwards or down at your subject?



- The placement can be smooth and harmonious..





Jarring and confusing...

Not recommended. Too chaotic & confusing





All photos should be about  
something!!

If it isn't, then it looks like a random  
accidental picture with no message.

Never leave your viewer guessing  
why you made that picture

This is better but is there a  
reason you took this picture?

What is the subject?  
Why did you take this picture?





- The more elements in your photo,
- the more care you must take to ensure
- unimportant things
- don't distract from the main subject.



- There are way too many objects, don't you agree? Your eyes wander all over because...



- Every object appears the size you expect
- Nothing is more prominent than the others



# What is composition then?

Making conscious decisions on...

- varying the size of your subject
- its placement in the frame
- and from which vantage point to take the picture (sometimes called VIEWPOINT)





# Consider doing any or all 3

- so that that the subject is shown as clearly
- and strongly as possible.





- Most of us have trouble composing with a camera, because
- THE CAMERA DOES NOT “SEE”
- THE WAY THAT OUR EYES DO!







- red circles indicate distractions competing for attention with the subject





The camera sees things differently *than we do!!!*

We see in 3-D (we have 2 eyes so it's stereo vision), but the camera gives us a two-dimensional product

We can “tune” our awareness into anything we're looking at; the camera is only capable of recording the scene in front of the lens

That means it records everything it sees. It doesn't discriminate like we can



- How do these differences challenge us ?
  - Our eyes easily separate the subject from the background...but the camera can't.
  - That is why the camera captures this image with her head disappearing into the black background





- And what photographer hasn't suffered this indignity?
- Photobombed by plants





- Then there's that other problem..



- We look at the scene, we concentrate on our subject, and everything else melts away...
- But the camera “sees” and records everything in front of it.
- So we end up with photos that look like this...



- We saw the pretty girl, and ignored the car, the guys,
- the building, and the shapes behind her...but the camera didn't!!

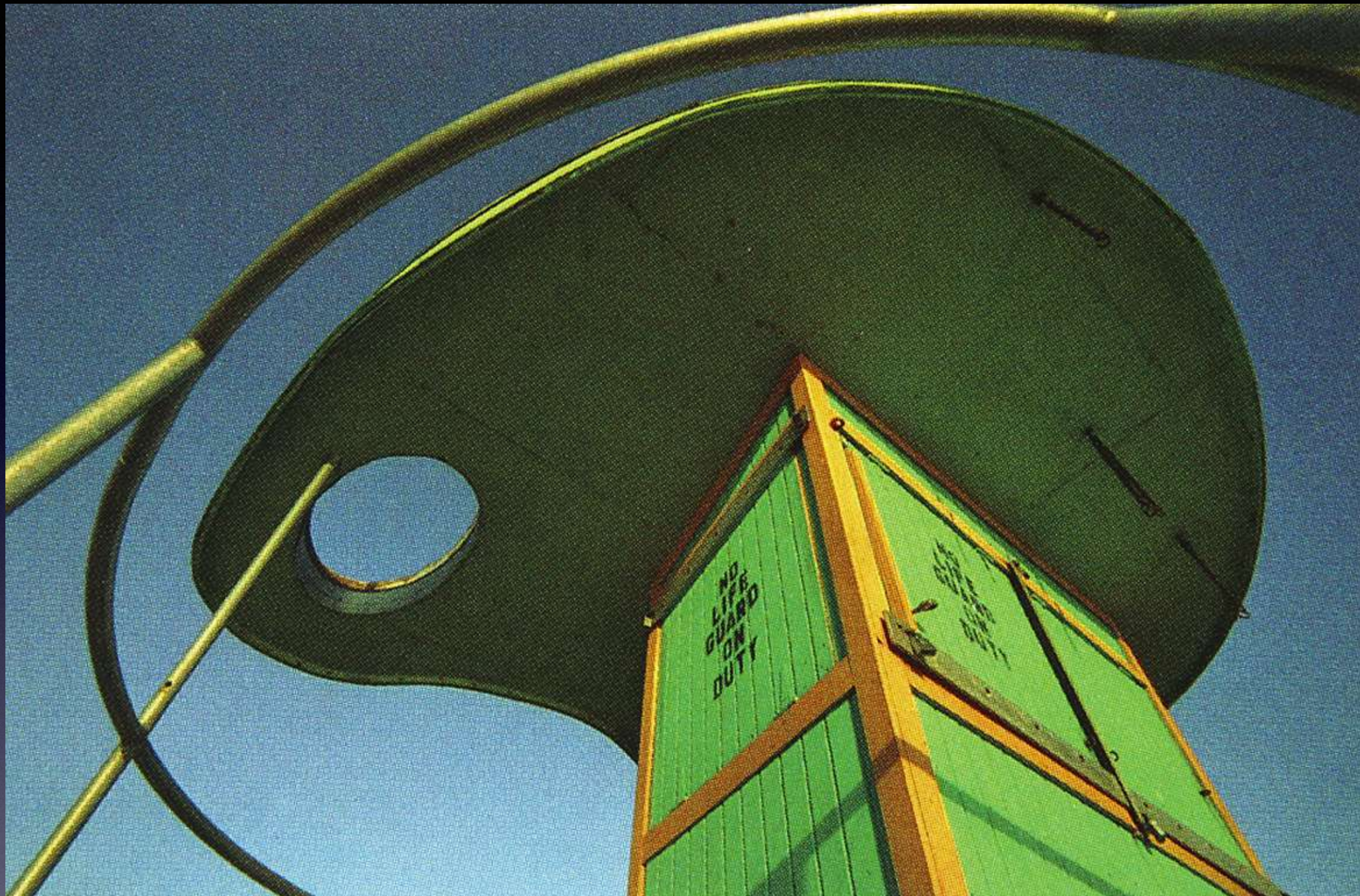




- Consider this Lifeguard tower



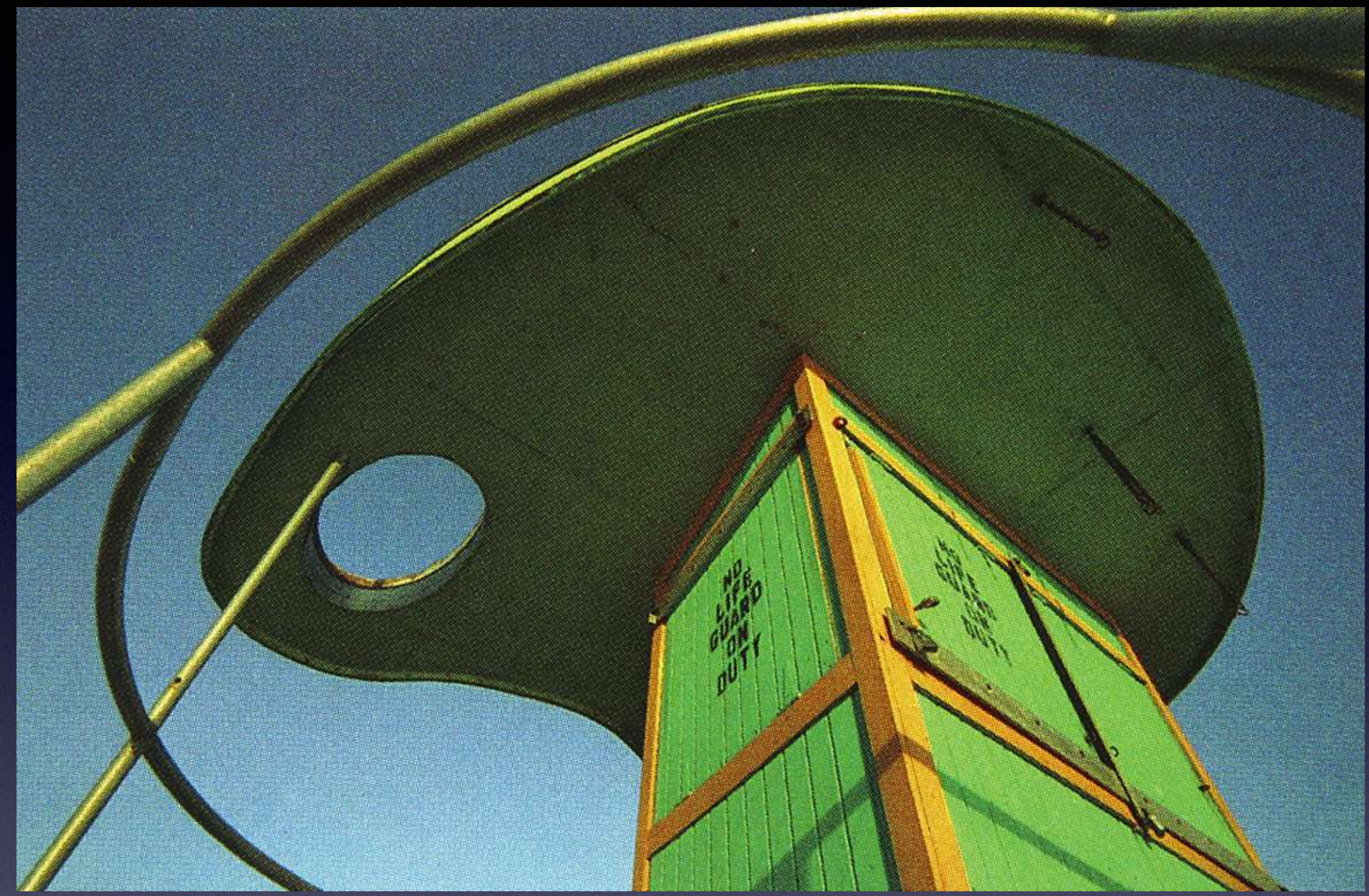




- Now let's look at another shot of the same subject



- Which photo has the better composition?



- This one documents the subject

- This one interprets the subject



- Photos that interpret the subject -- rather than merely documenting it:
  - Have stronger composition
  - Are more interesting
  - Communicates your idea or message better
  - Captures your viewer's attention



- Here are three “secrets” to good composition...



- 1 -Don't put anything in your photo that doesn't relate to your visual statement or support it







- 2 - Get as close to your main subject as you can, without compromising your visual statement



- 3 - Simplify your visual statement as much as possible; make it as direct as possible





- “Good Photographs Can Be Thought of as Exaggerations”



- Want to get your message across?
- Then don't beat around the bush!
- Peter Phun Photography