Photography Design
Elements

Photography Design
Principles

Photography
Composition

Elements of Art

The Elements of Art form the basic vocabulary of visual design.

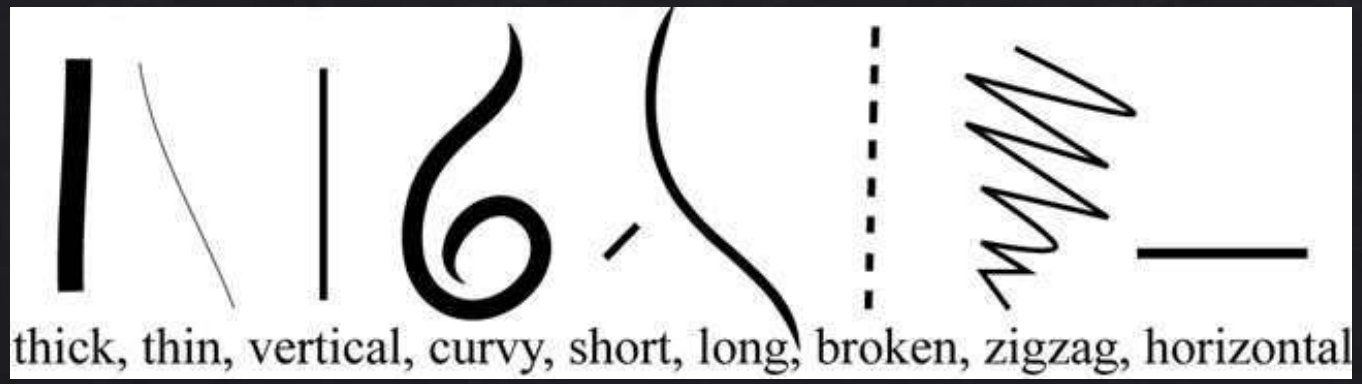
We think of the elements as the basic visual material with which to make art.

"The ingredients"

LINE
VALUE
COLOR
SHAPE
FORM
TEXTURE
SPACE

Line

- **Line is a <u>path</u> between two points...**
  - Line can be *real* (eg. an outline) or can be *implied* (eg. a flock of birds flying in a V formation)
  - It can vary in direction and weight:
    - Line direction: *Curved, zig zag, horizontal, vertical, diagonal*
    - Line weight: *thick/heavy/bold, or thin/fine/light, varied (thick and thin), tapered (thick to thin or vice versa)*



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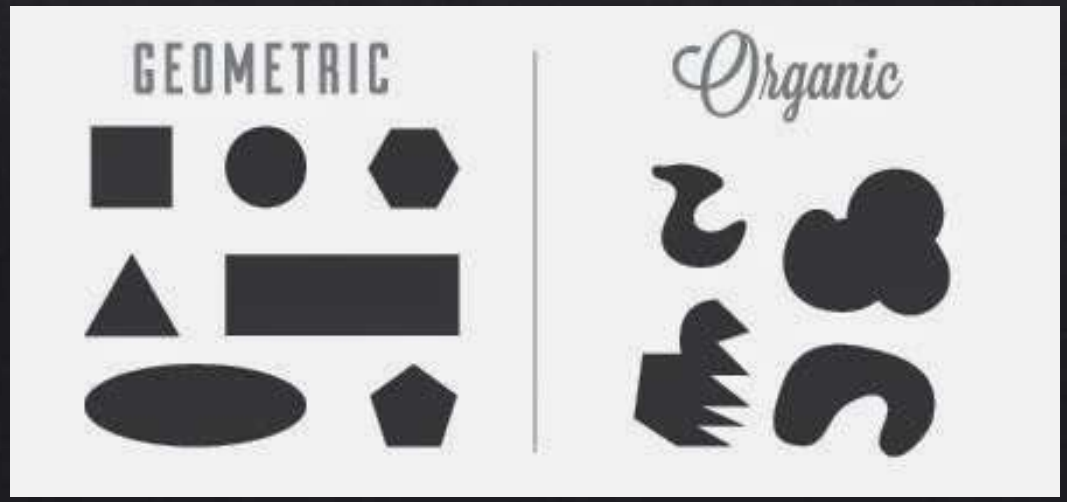
GRAND
CENTRAL
STATION

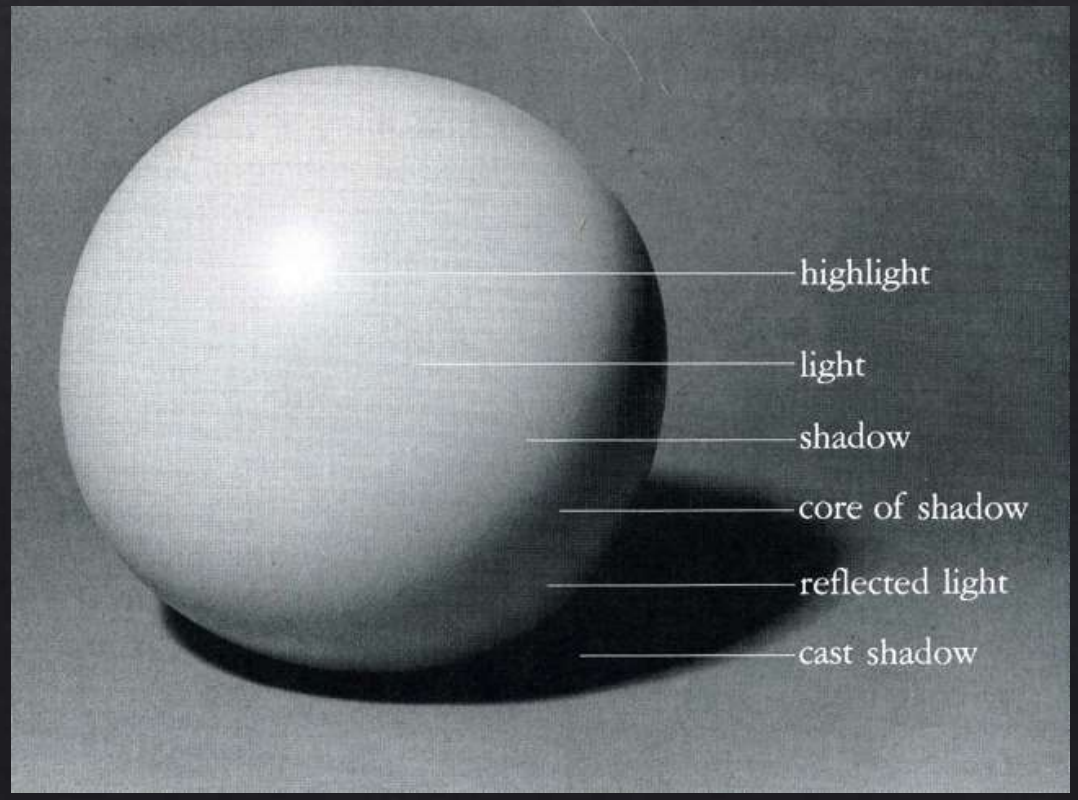
SHAPE

- **Shape is an enclosed 2-Dimesional area**
  - Can be enclosed by an actual line or implied line
  - It can be *geometric* (square, triangle, circle) or *organic* (leaf, puddle, human silhouette, etc).
  - A shape automatically creates a negative space around it.

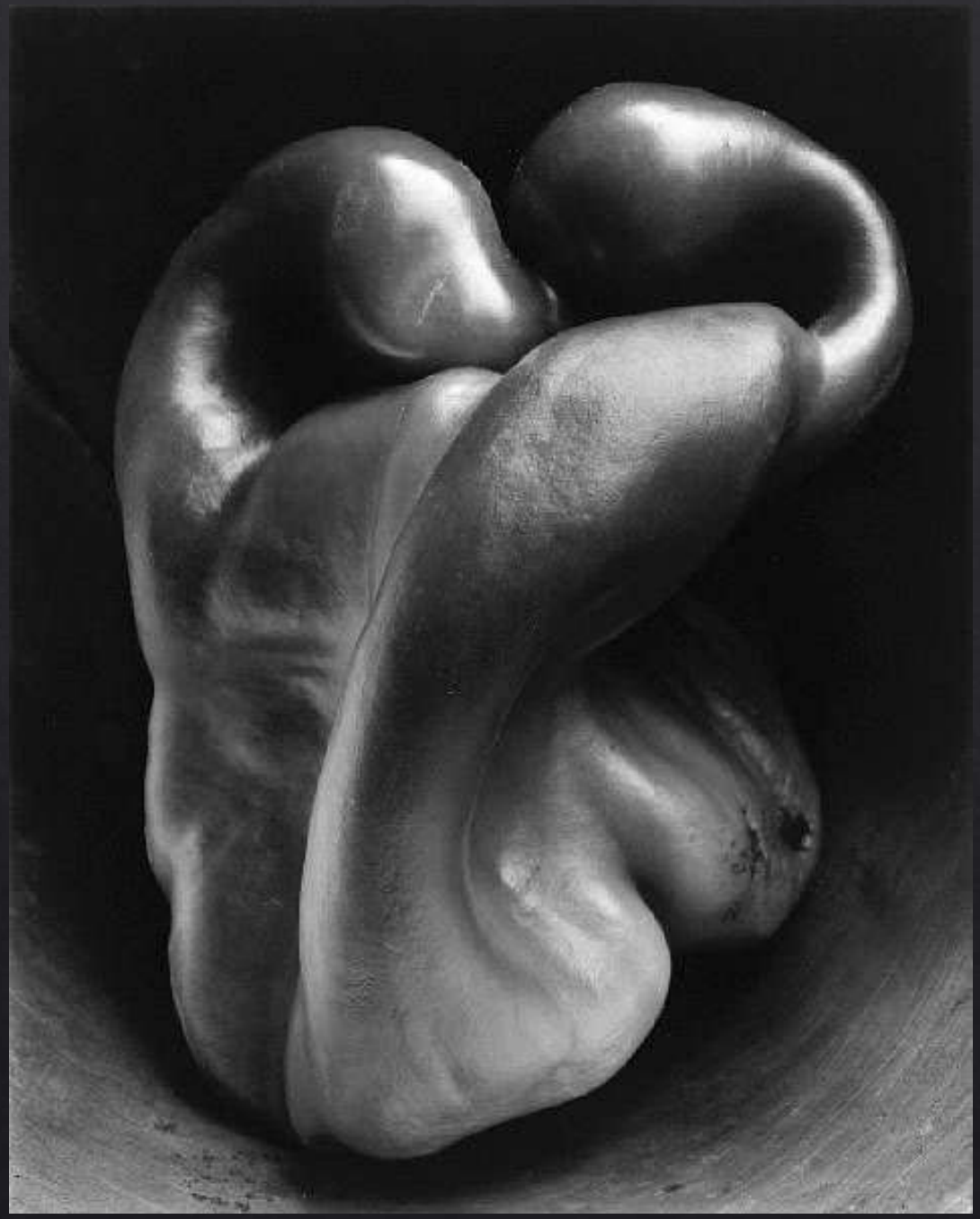


Form

- **Form refers to objects that are/appear 3-Dimensional.**
  - Light is important to perceiving form:

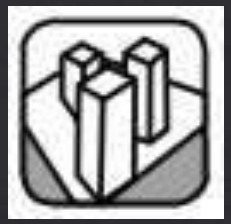


- Forms:
  - Cast a shadow
  - Have volume (LxWxH)
  - Take up space

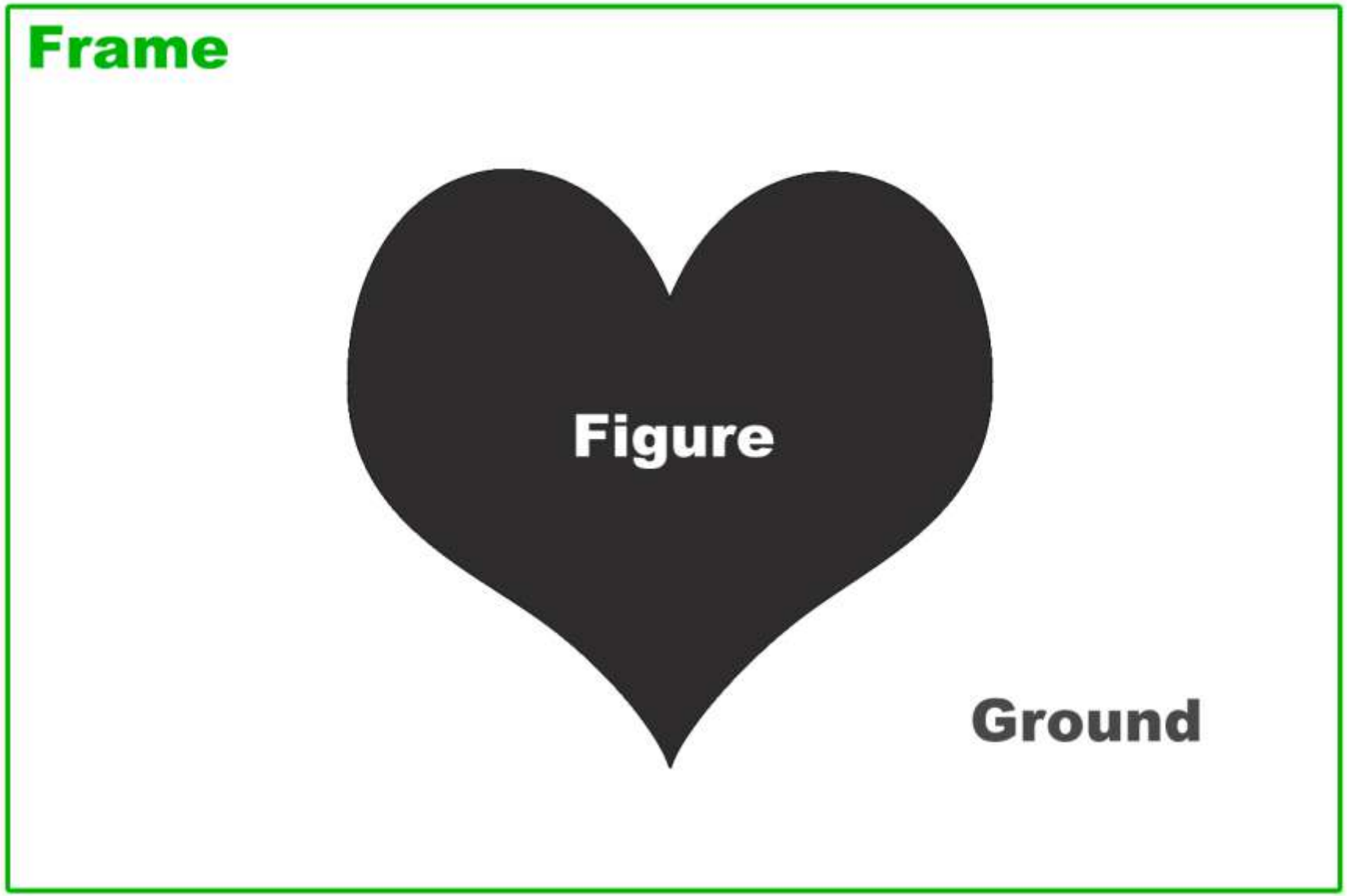


Edward Weston, 1886-1958

S P A C E



- **Space is how positive and negative areas are defined, or a sense of <u>depth</u> is achieved, in a work of art.**
  - The *illusion of depth* on a flat surface can be created through the use of linear perspective, atmospheric perspective, overlapping, size, level of detail, color and value.
  - Space is often categorized as *positive* (figure) *or negative* (ground), with positive space referring to the subject or physical mass of the art, and negative space referring to the background or volume around it.


Frame
Figure
Ground

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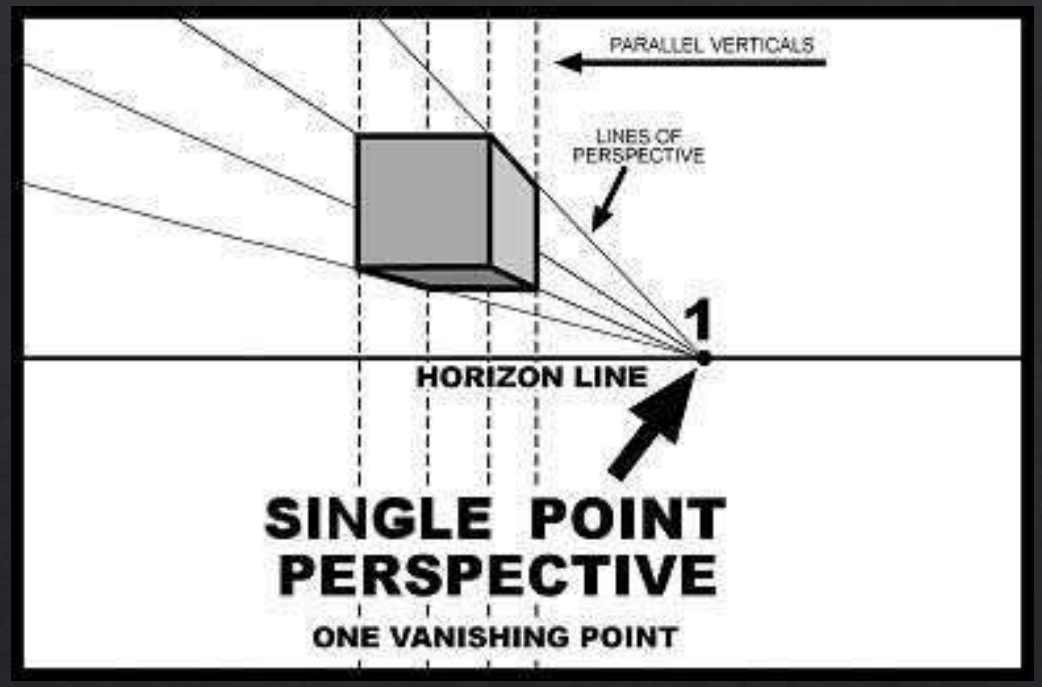
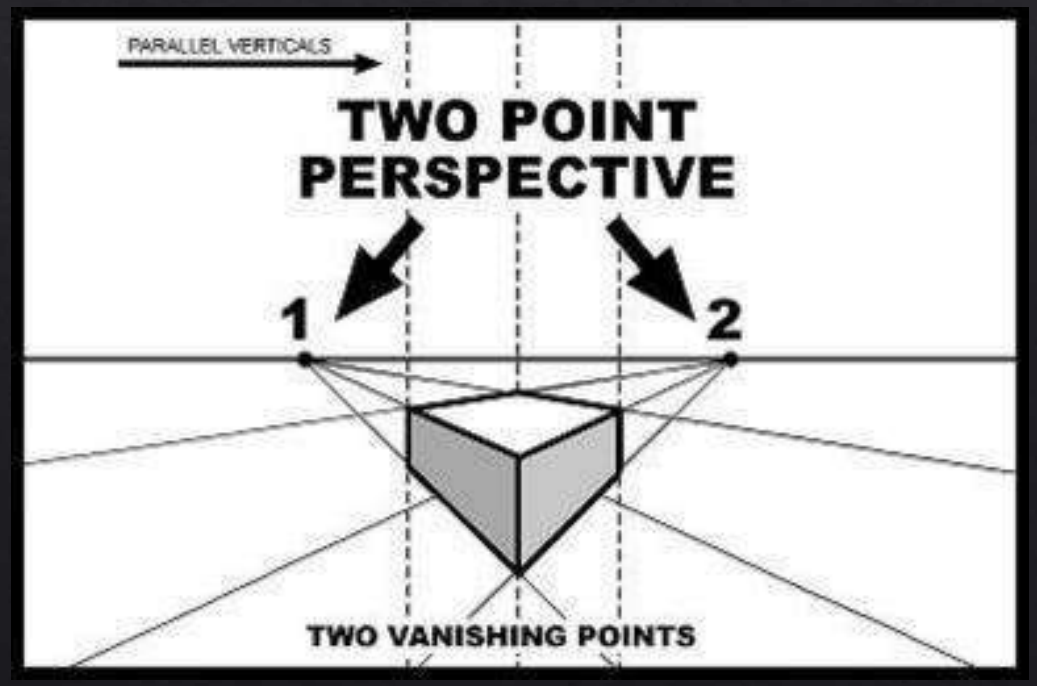

PARALLEL VERTICALS
LINES OF PERSPECTIVE
1
HORIZON LINE
SINGLE POINT PERSPECTIVE
ONE VANISHING POINT


PARALLEL VERTICALS
TWO POINT PERSPECTIVE
1
2
TWO VANISHING POINTS

Atmospheric
Perspective

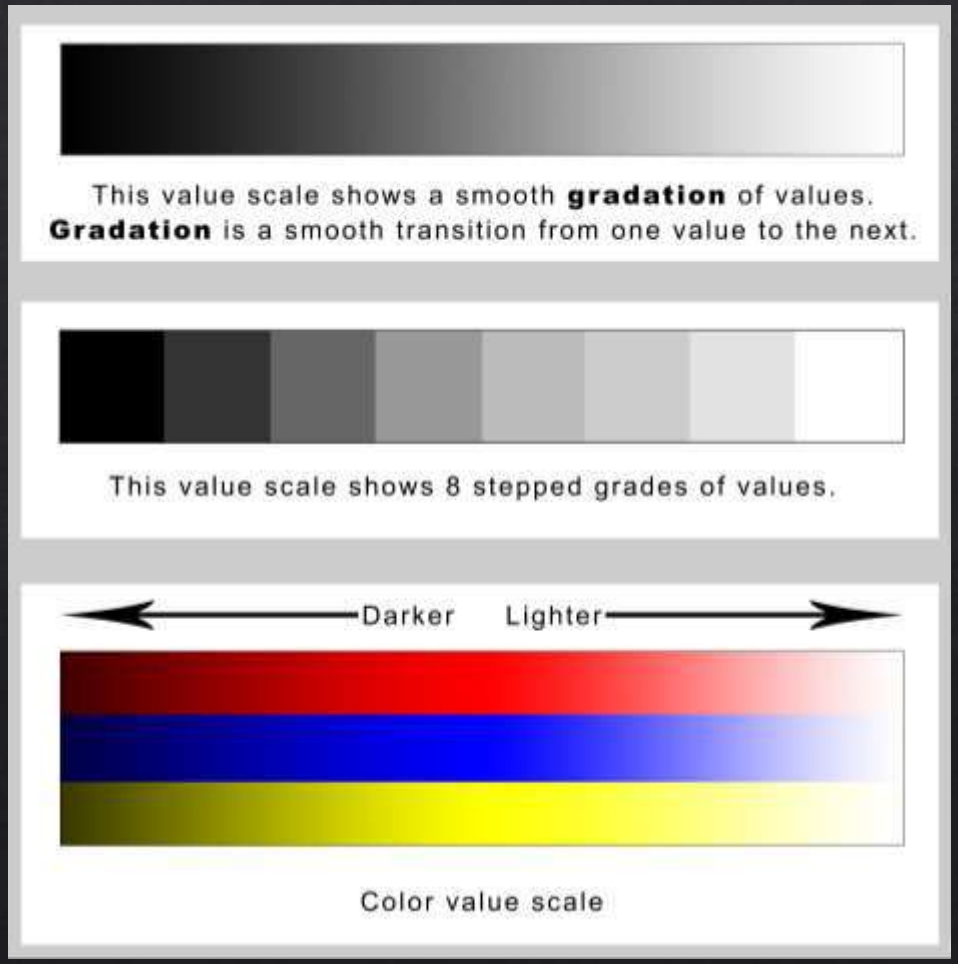
Texture

- **Texture refers to the tactile quality of the surface of an object–how it feels if touched, or how it looks like it might feel.**
  - Texture can enhance the visual appeal of an image, by enhancing tactile qualities as well as creating realism and a sense of three dimensionality.
    - Some examples: prickly grass, bumpy white rocky pebbles imbedded in concrete, dry scaly snake skin.
    - Close up shots in photography convey texture well

Rock Portrait Photography

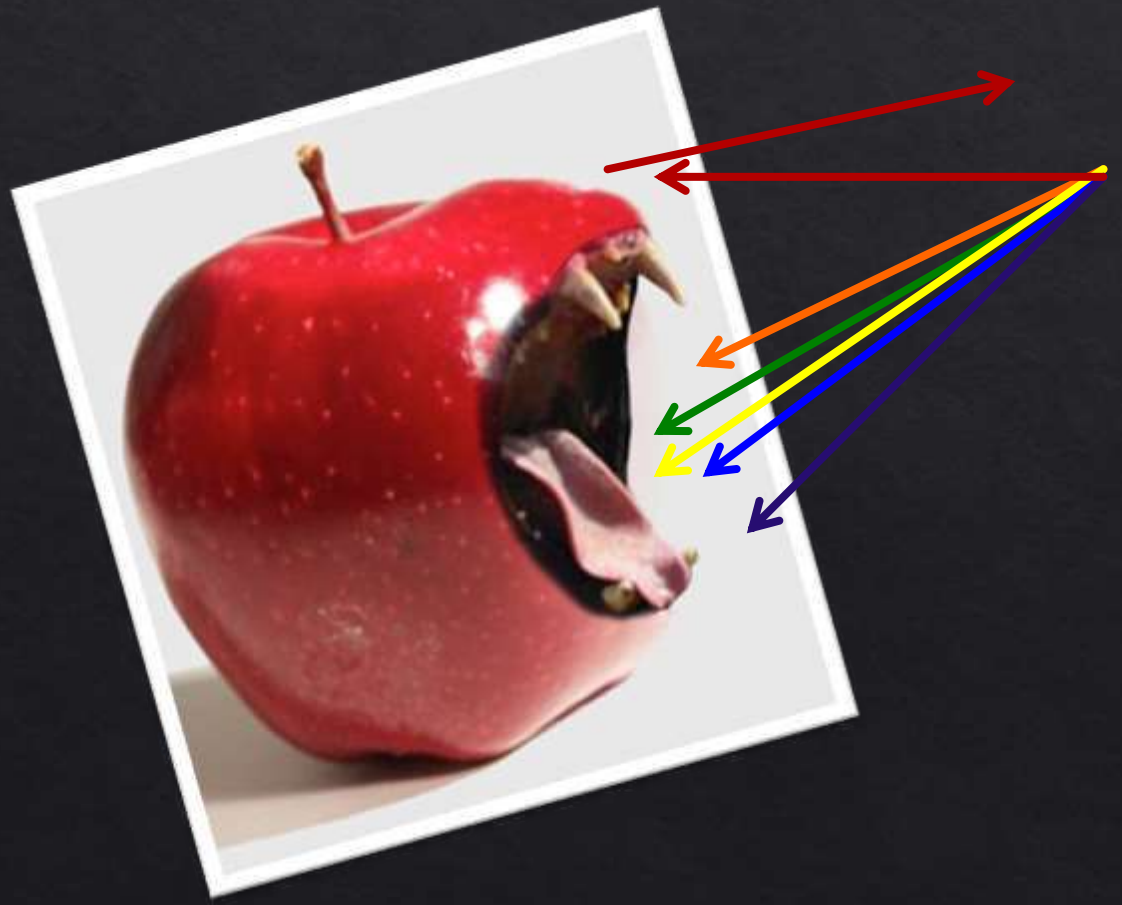
VALUE (TONE)

- **Value is the range of light to dark in a work of art or an object.**
  - It depends on how much light a surface reflects. Color also has value.
  - Most black and white images contain a range of tonal gradations. Tone is evident in both color and black and white photographs.
    - An image that is rich in tone can appear much more realistic. Tone provides an image with a certain three dimensionality.



Color

- **Color is reflected wavelengths of light. It has 3 properties: hue, value, intensity**



We see in color because **when** *white light* (a combination of all the wavelengths of color) *hits an object some wavelengths of color are reflected and others are absorbed or "subtracted."* The color we see is the color that is reflected.

- Color can be used to *draw the attention* to parts of the image and can be used to *create visual harmony*.
- Color is used to create *illusion, depth,* and *appeal* to visual senses.
- *Cooler colors recede* (go back in to the distance) and *warmer colors advance* (come forward).
- Colors can also be *contrasting* within an image which can often create *added interest*.

Steve McCurry, American photographer, b.1950-

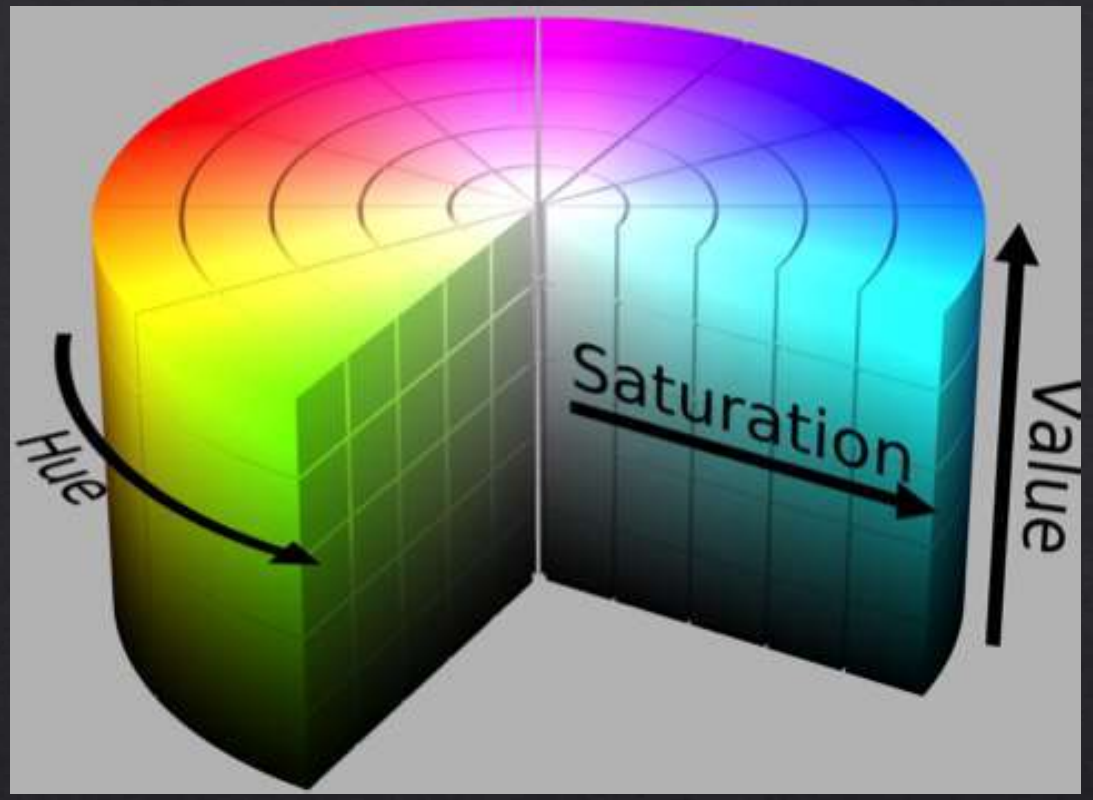
- There are three terms that we associate with color:

Hue: The pure or true color, Red/Blue/Green/Yellow are all hues

Value: The lightness or darkness of a hue

- Tint: A tint is a hue with added white to lighten it
- Shade: A shade is a hue with added black to darken it

Saturation: The purity or intensity of a hue



Primary Colors

(can't be made by mixing other colors)

Red, Blue, and Yellow

Secondary colors

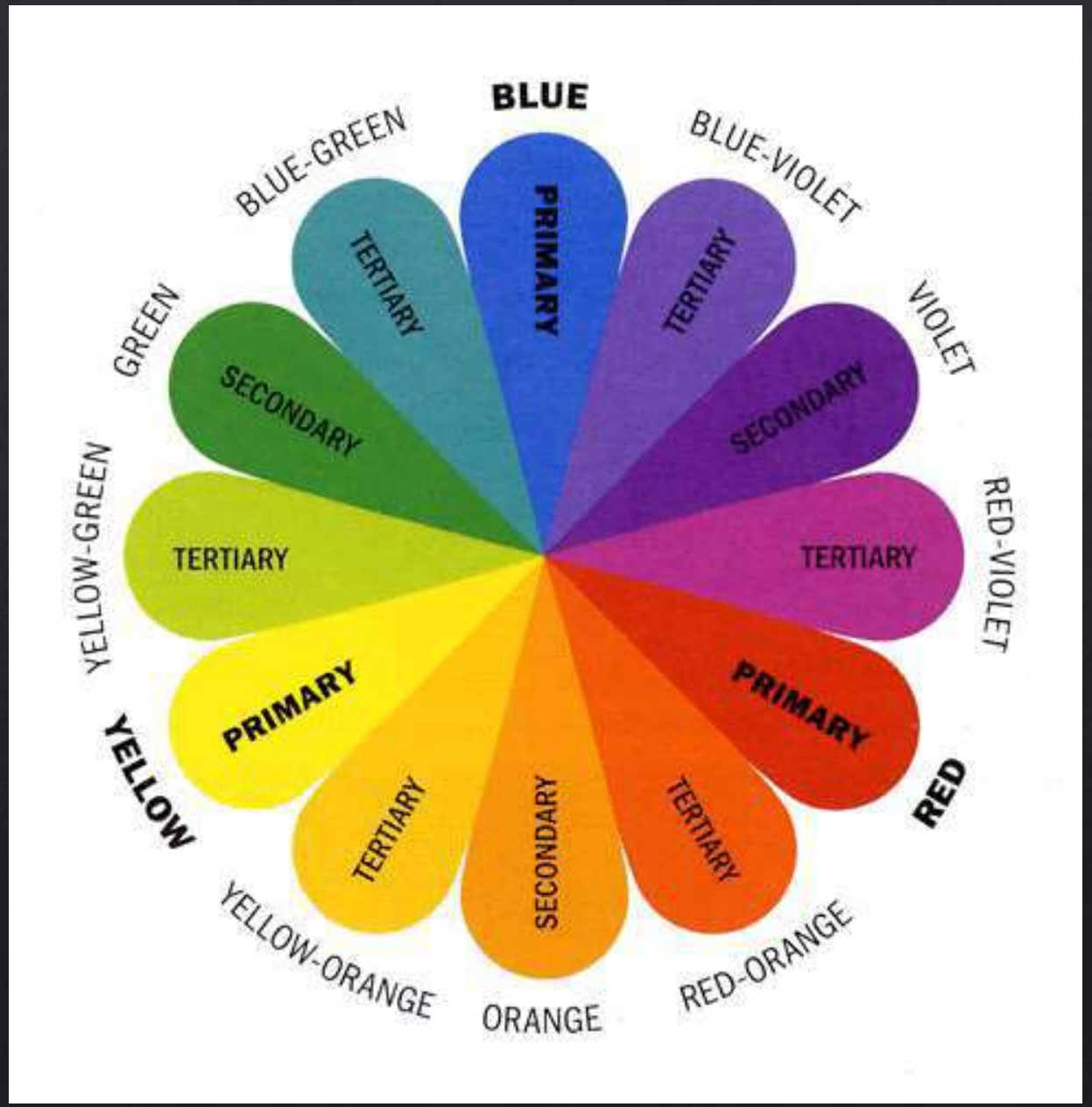
(mix of 2 primary colors)

Orange, Green, Purple

Tertiary colors

(mix of a primary and a secondary color)

Blue-green, yellow-orange, etc.



COLOR WHEEL

Color schemes

Complementary colors:

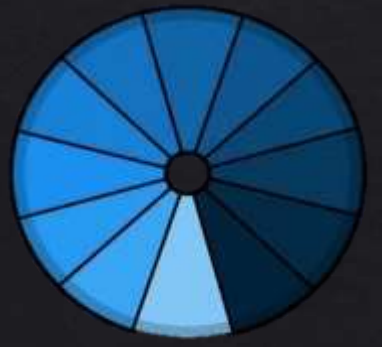
Colors that are opposite each other on the color wheel

Analogous colors:

Colors that are next to each other on the color wheel

Triadic colors:

Colors that are evenly spaced around the color wheel.

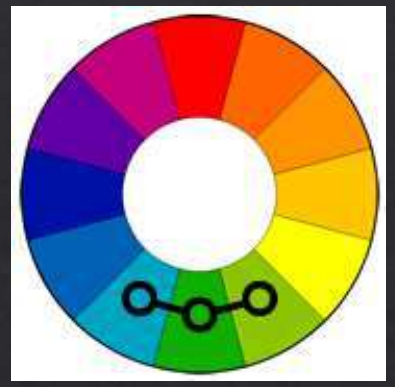


Monochromatic:

Different values (tints, tones, shades) of one color.

Colors that recede (cool) and advance (warm)

Complementary Colors



Analogous colors:

At least *3 colors next to each other* on the color wheel
- Create *unity and harmony*

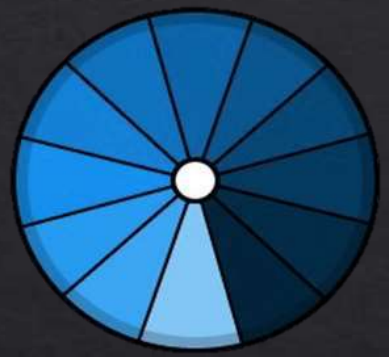
Analogous Warm Colors

Analogous cool colors

- **Monochromatic Colors**

  (Monochromatic schemes have *only one color*). In Greek *mono* means only one and *chroma* means color.

  - For instance blue



- **Achromatic colors**

  (Achromatic color schemes *only include, black, whites or greys*). In greek *a* means none and *chroma* means color.

  - For instance an image made up of Greys, Dark Greys, Blacks and Whites and Light Greys

Design Principles

The Principles of Design are *how we arrange and apply the Elements of Art*

"The recipe"

Balance
Variety
Emphasis
Unity
Movement/ Rhythm
Proportion
Pattern/ Repetition

BALANCE

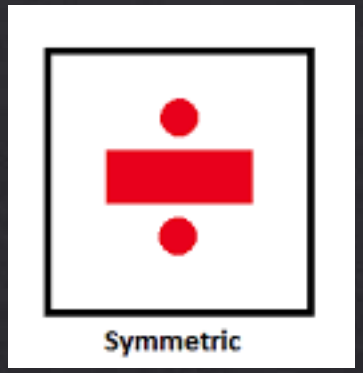
- **Balance in art** refers to the **sense of distribution of perceived visual weight in a work of art.**
  - Three main types: symmetrical, asymmetrical, radial

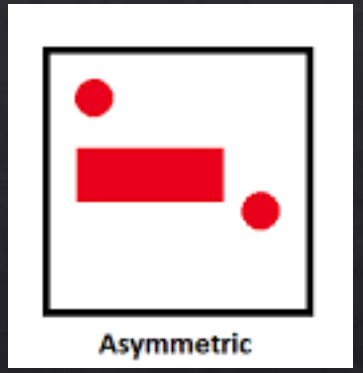
Visual weight can be created/influenced by:

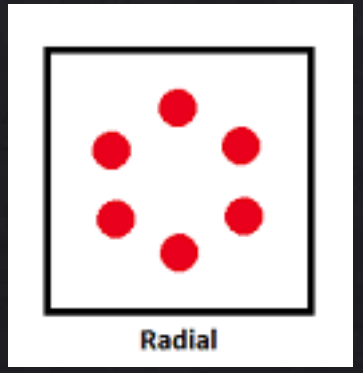
- *Value contrast* - the higher the value-contrast, the heavier the weight
- *Quantity* - multiple small objects can balance one larger object
- *Orientation* - a diagonal orientation carries more visual weight than a horizontal or vertical one
- *Shape* - elements that have more complex shapes feel heavier than those with simple shapes
- *Color* - the brighter and more intense its color, the heavier the element will feel
- *Position* - the further out an element is from the center, the heavier it will feel; a large object placed near the center can be balanced by a smaller object placed near the edge
- *Size* - larger feels heavier
- *Texture* - an element with more complex texture is heavier visually than one with a simple texture or no texture at all
- *Isolation* - an isolated element has more visual weight
- *Value* - darker feels heavier

Types of Balance

- **Symmetrical balance** occurs when an image is split in to two and both halves are identical.
  - Symmetry creates a visual sense of balance within an image.
  - Formal – exact mirror; Aformal; equal visual weight
- **Asymmetrical balance** occurs when an image is split in to two and both halves are not identical.
  - Asymmetry is designed to create a visual interest and variety. It can often cause an image to appear imbalanced.
  - Asymmetry can also create a juxtaposition of objects within the frame pitting one side against the other.
- **Radial balance** occurs when all objects radiate from a central point







Symmetrical

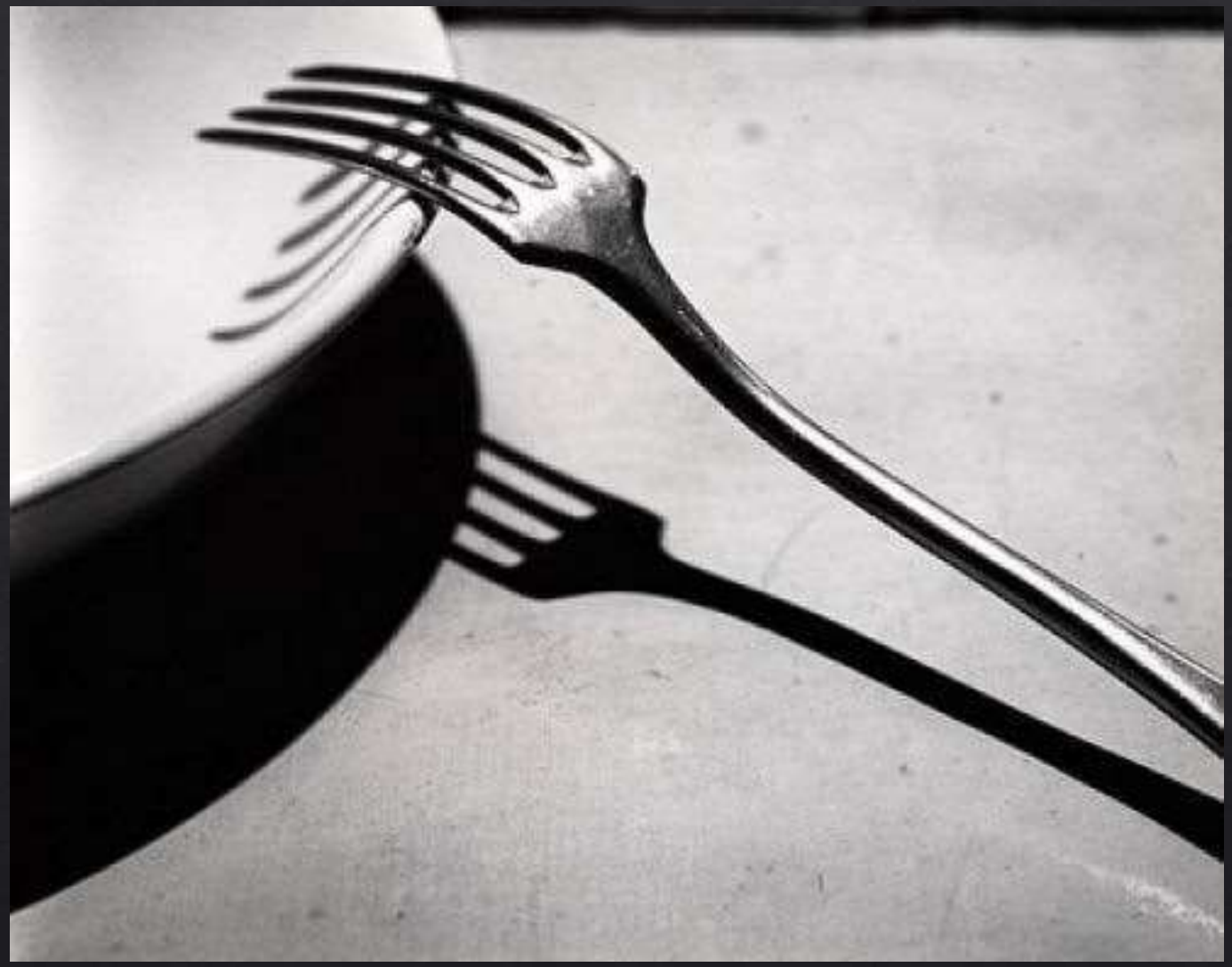
Asymmetrical

Radial

Emphasis

- **Emphasis** in a composition refers to developing a **focal point or center of interest** to pull the viewer's eye to the subject/important parts of the body of the work.
  - It can also be created many ways – a pop of color, size difference, etc.

Emphasis: Contrast



Emphasis using contrast (difference between light and dark)

Emphasis: Framing

- *Framing* is a technique used to bring the viewers eye to a point of interest, also known as the focal point.
  - It involves the idea of composing your subject with a frame around it. A photographic frame is something that acts as a border or frame for your subject.
  - The use of framing can also create perspective and depth.
  - An example of framing would be a subject standing in a doorway. The doorway would be acting like a frame to the subject.

Emphasis: Cropping

- The idea of cropping is to focus in on an area. An image can often be filled with objects that are unimportant to the overall message or meaning of the image.
  - Cropping is either done when taking the photo (how you frame the photo or zooming in) or in post-processing.

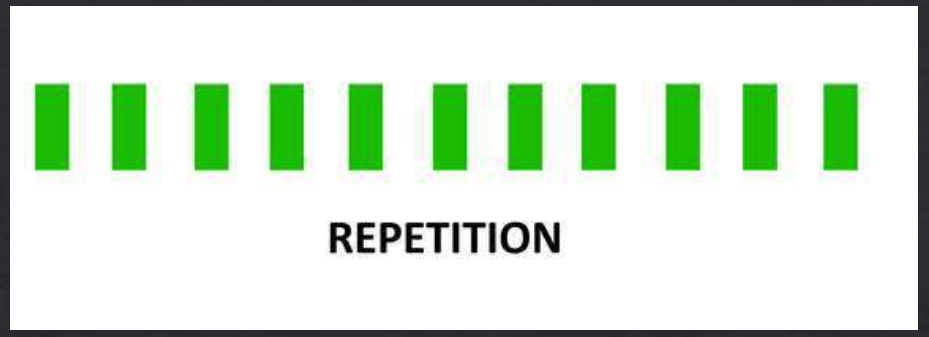
Cropping can be used to simplify

It can provide a closer and much more intimate view of the subject.

Khatleen Minerve

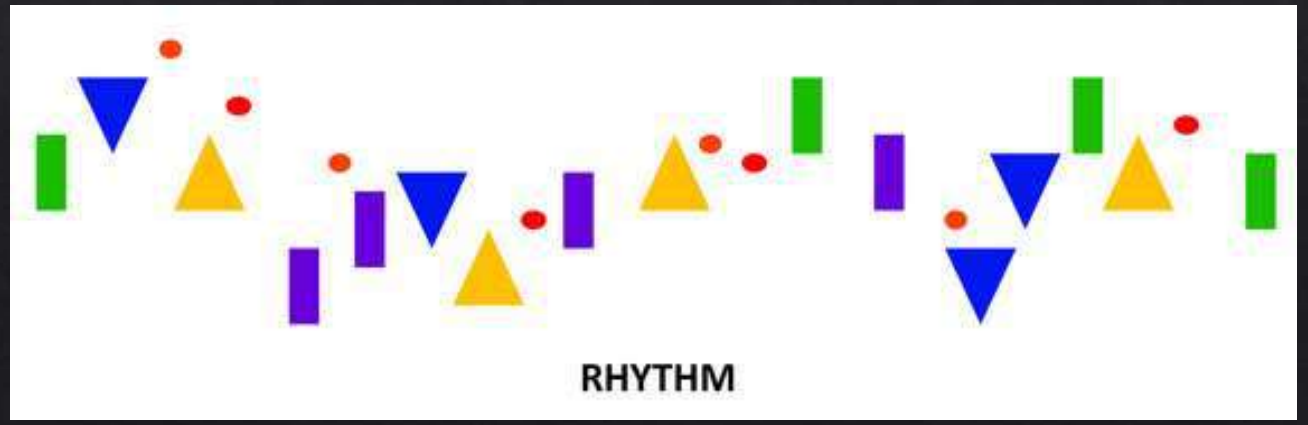
PATTERN / REPETITION

- **Pattern uses the art elements in regular repetitions….**
  - Patterns can occur in nature or be manmade
  - In photography the secrets to finding patterns are:
    - Explore potential subjects from a variety of angles
    - Close-ups are also filled with pattern
    - Key to emphasizing patterns is to isolate them from their surroundings



Repetition refers to ONE object or shape repeated…

Pattern is a SERIES of repeated elements or shapes



Rhythm--is a combination of elements repeated, but with variations.
(See movement)

Deepak Ghosh

Dasa Wharton

Movement

Movement adds excitement to your work by **showing <u>action</u> and directing the viewers eye** throughout the picture plane.

It can be captured in a photo with slow or fast shutter speeds…

But also can be shown with strong diagonal leading lines

UNITY

- **Unity** refers to the **sense of cohesion or visual linking of various elements (of art) into a related whole** in a work of art

Color Harmony/Unity

Color Harmony/Unity

Rhythm to create unity

Stephen-Flores

Rhythm and repetition to create unity

VaRiETY

- **Variety is <u>difference</u> or contrast in the visual elements** of art in a work**.**

- Variety can be achieved in many ways. For example:
  - By opposing opposites and strong contrasts
  - Changing the size, point of view, and angle
  - Breaking a repeated pattern

PrOpOrTiOn

- **Proportion is the size relationships between different elements in a work of art.**
  - Some proportions, such as the golden ratio and the rule of thirds, are thought to be more naturally pleasing.

Chris Johns

© Vadim Trunov / Barcroft Media

COMPOSITION

IN PHOTOGRAPHY

Composition

- The term composition refers to **the way in which the elements and principles are arranged within the frame.**
  - Think of a landscape photograph as a jig saw puzzle, with dozens of different pieces demanding your attention.
  - If you arrange all those pieces in the right order you'll end up with an organised, structured image that makes sense and looks good.
  - But if you put them together in any old way it will look like a muddled mess, and will become difficult to make sense of.

Composition

- **Composition is all about arranging the elements of a scene in your cameras viewfinder so they form something visually interesting to look at.**
- Every time you raise the camera to your eye you are composing a picture – the very act of deciding about what you want to include and what to exclude in the picture.
- As a photographer ***take the time to think about the composition*** before shooting away.

Think about your composition!

Compositional Structures

- Compositional structures help create a sense of order within your images.

- There are generally three compositional structures that make up most of the images we see in the media.

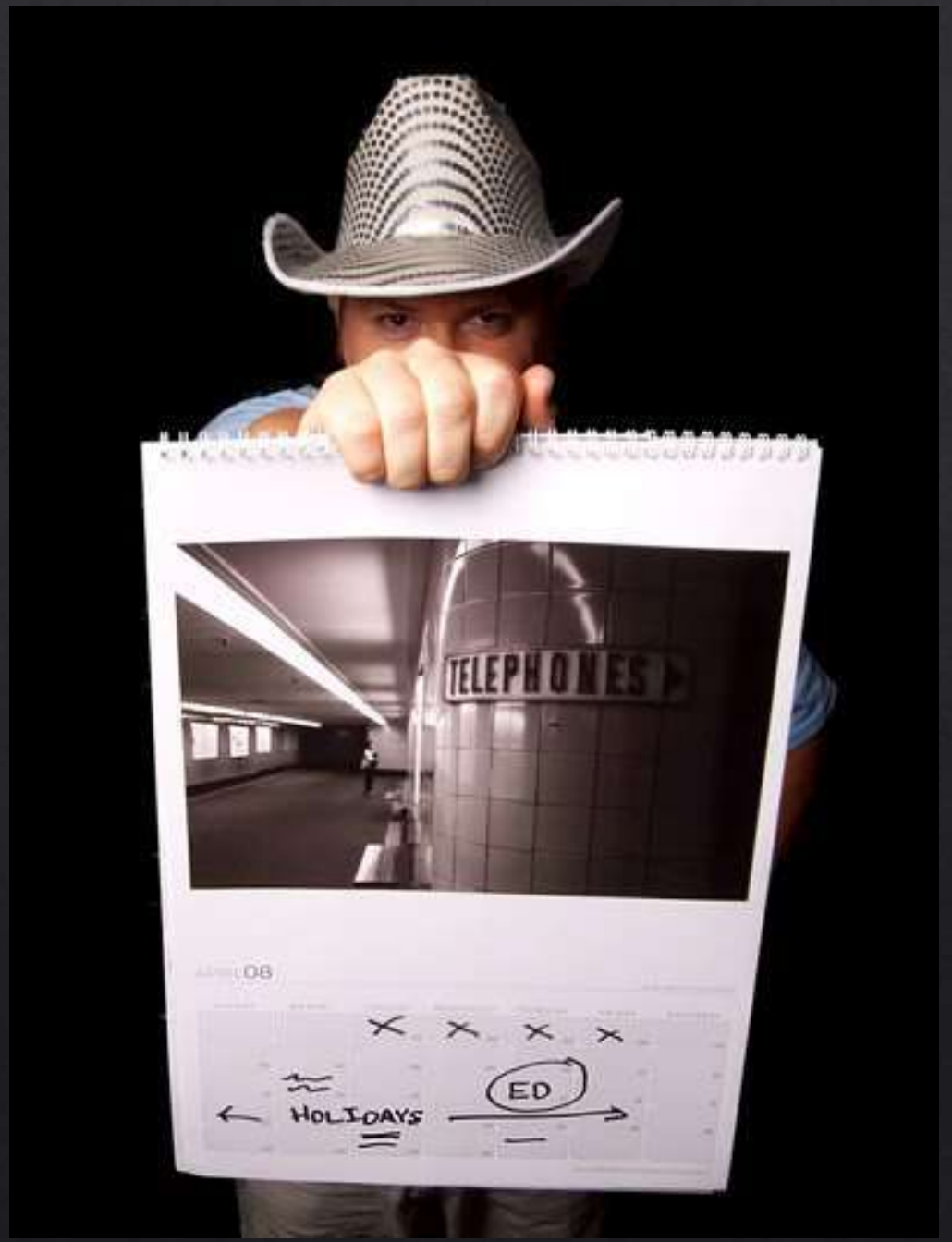
1. CENTRAL COMPOSITION
2. RULE OF THIRDS
3. GOLDEN SECTION

Central Composition

- **Placing an object in the center of the frame** is perhaps the most powerful compositional structure.

- Central composition is said to have the most visual impact when looking at a photograph because *all the focus is drawn in to the center* of the frame.

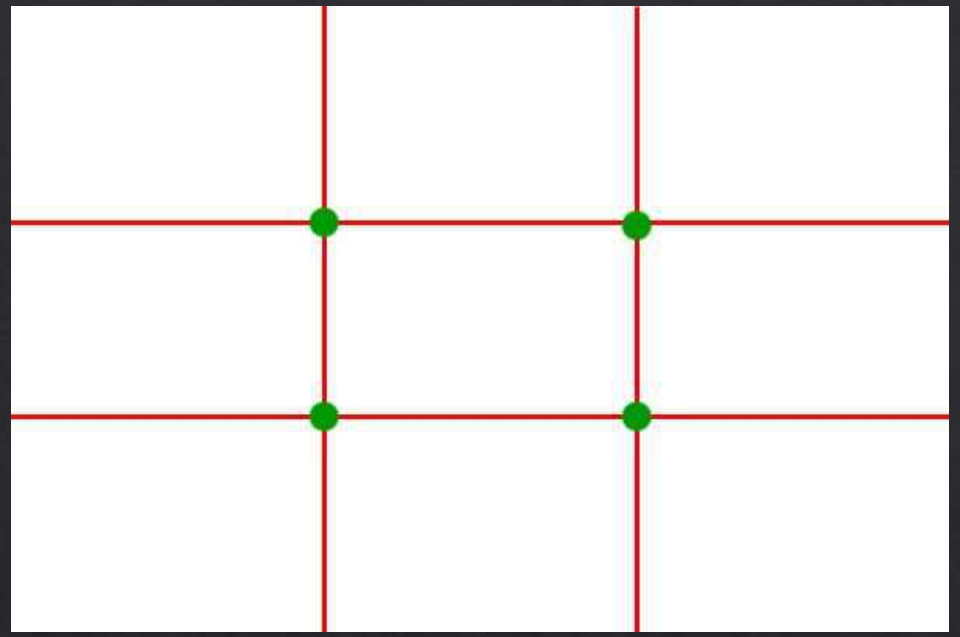
- Having an object placed in the centre of the frame demands the viewers attention, but *can also lead to a "static" photo.*

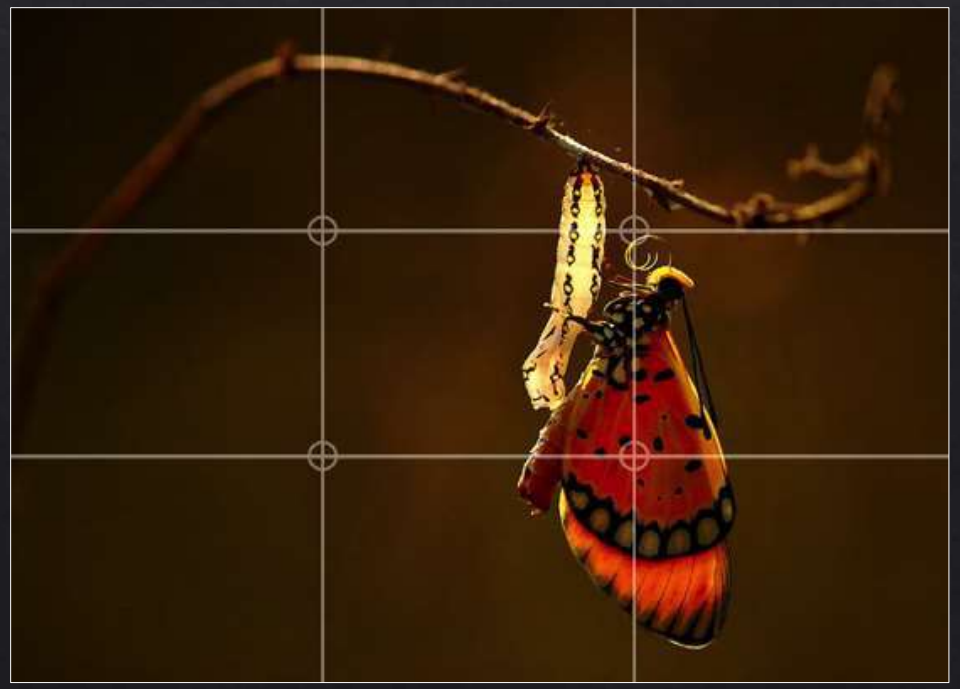

TELEPHONES
HOLIDAYS
ED

Rule of thirds

- Imaginary lines are drawn dividing the image into a 3x3 grid. You place important elements of your composition on the intersection points of these lines.

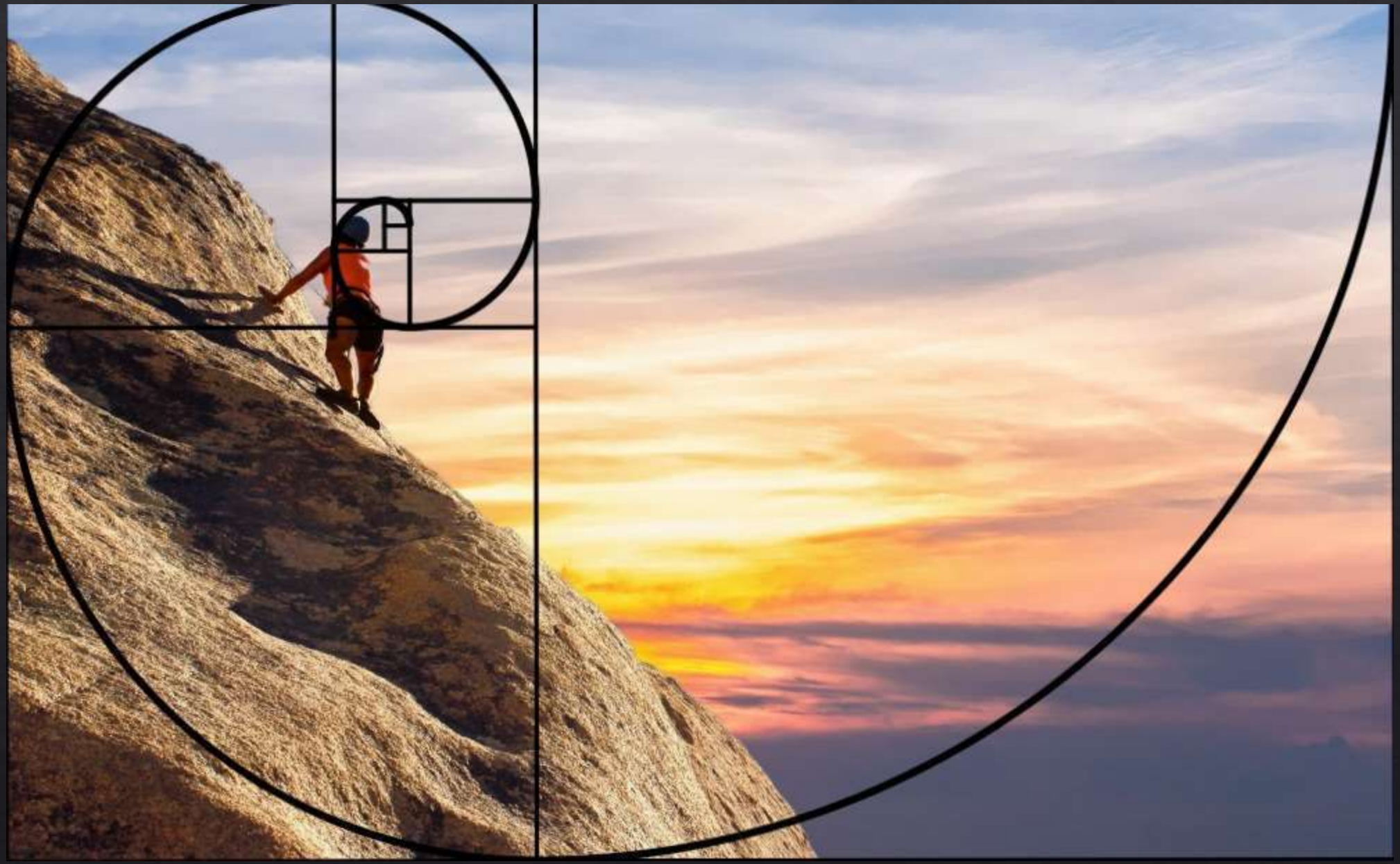
- The rule of thirds is one of the most popular ‘rules’ in photography.





Golden Ratio

- Rule of Thirds … with more math!
- Aka: Golden Mean, Phi, Divine Proportion, Fibonnaci sequence
- 1200 AD - Leonardo Fibonacci noticed that there was an **absolute ratio that appears often throughout nature**, a sort of design that is universally efficient in living things and **pleasing to the human eye**
- Since the Renaissance, artists and architects have designed their work to approximate this **ratio of 1:1.618.**



Rule of Odds

- **Having an odd number of subjects in the frame** makes an image more visually appealing because it keeps the eye moving through the work.

Leading lines

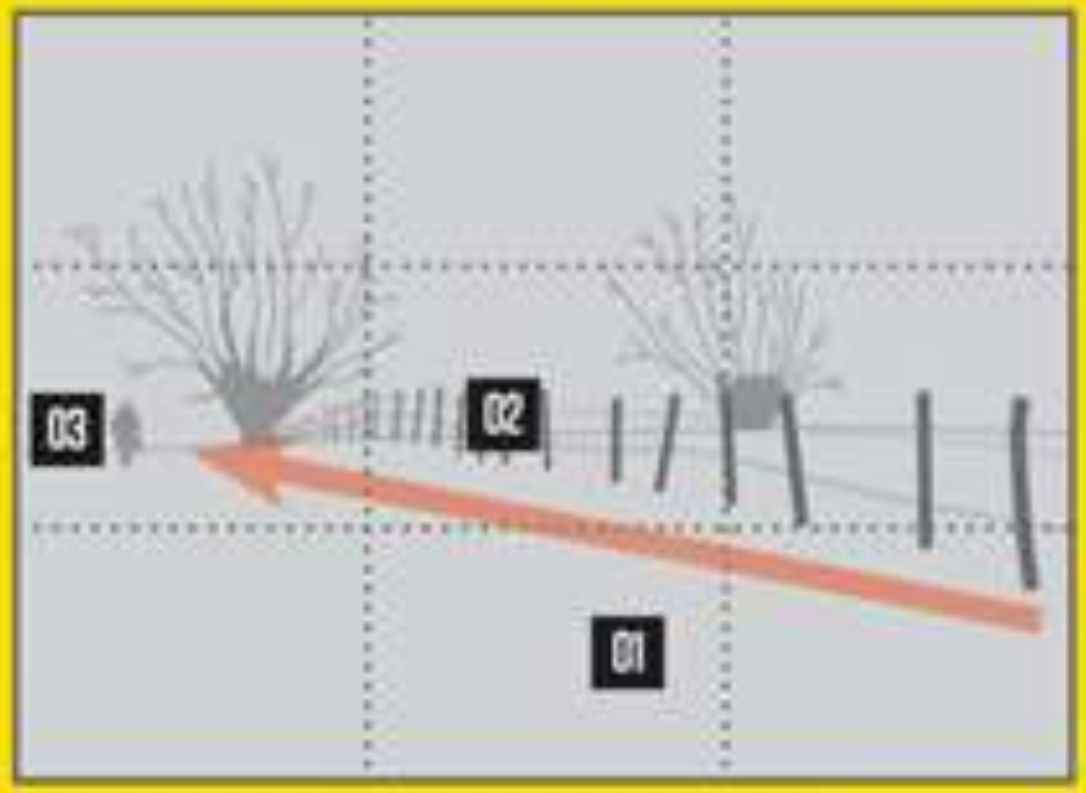
PICTURE POINTERS

Lines can be important compositional devices

01 When pictures like this one contain a strong line, it's almost impossible for your eyes not to follow it.

02 As the posts in this shot get further away, they create a converging effect that pulls you in.

03 The fence leads you straight to the focal point – the small figure in the distance.



Framing (Frame in Frame)

- **Framing** is a technique that **uses elements occuring within the frame of a photo to create a secondary frame and emphasize or enhance the subject**. (ie. Frame in a frame)
- It:
  - Can give the viewer more context.
  - Gives images a sense of depth and layers
  - Lead the eye to your main focal point.
  - Add intrigue and capture curiosity of viewer.
- *Examples*: eg. shooting through overhanging branches, shooting through windows, using tunnels, arches or doorways – you can even use people (for example shooting over shoulders or between heads) etc.

Avoiding mergers

- **Mergers** are created when **key parts of the main subjects overlap, touch another key element, or touch the sides of the frame** in an unintentional way.
  - Accidental mergers are generally not desired.
    - Eg.: a tree growing out of someone's head, animals standing close so that one looks like it has multiple legs/heads, etc.

Simplicity

- **Simplicity** is the technique of **reducing a composition to only the most essential elements** that support the visual statement.
  - It can create a very calming effect in your images and also be very powerful.

Fill the frame

- **Filling the frame of your photo with your primary subject** is one way to keep from including too much extra, distracting information.
  - Filling the frame from edge to edge leaves little doubt about what your intended target was.
  - It involves the viewer more intimately with the subject.

Room to move

- **Objects that can move,** like people, animals, or cars, **should be given room in the picture space to move *into*.**
    - If you put your frame boundary right in front of a moving object, it either looks like it's going to "hit a wall," or that it's moving right out of the picture.

Point of view

- **Point of view** in photography refers to the **position from which the camera sees the scene.**
  - Are you looking down on the subject? Are you looking up at the subject? How close are you to the subject?
- Every decision you make about point of view will change how your viewer sees the photo.
- We tend to shoot level with our subject, but changing it up can add interest and tell a different story.
- Change your angle of view:
  - Shoot from above – “birds-eye”
  - Shoot from below – “worms-eye”

Point of view – Bird's Eye/From Above

Point of view- Worm's Eye/From Below

BREAK THE
RULES

Breaking the rule… of thirds

Breaking the rule… of thirds

Breaking the rules… mergers

Breaking the rules… subject in focus

Breaking the rules… subject in focus

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