

Photography Composition using the Elements and Principles of Art

Elements

The basic building blocks



- Line
- Shape/Form
- Space
- Value
- Texture
- Color

Lines



- A mark made by a moving point.
- Has greater length than width.
- Directs the eye – horizontal, vertical, diagonal, curvy, zig-zag, etc.
- Can be actual obvious lines or the borders or edges of shapes.

Lines

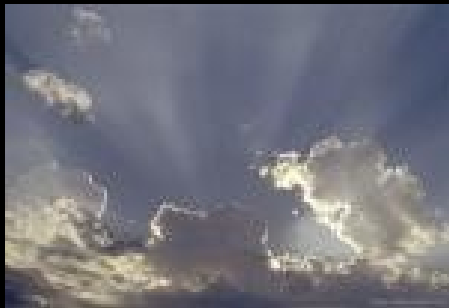


Shape/Form



- A contained area.
- Can be GEOMETRIC (man-made) ex. Square, triangle, circle, etc.
- Can be ORGANIC (natural) ex. Leaves, humans, puddles, etc.
- Shapes are 2-Dimensional and flat. (circle)
- Forms are 3-Dimensional with height, width and depth. (sphere)
- Used to create a sense of space and substance.

Shape/Form

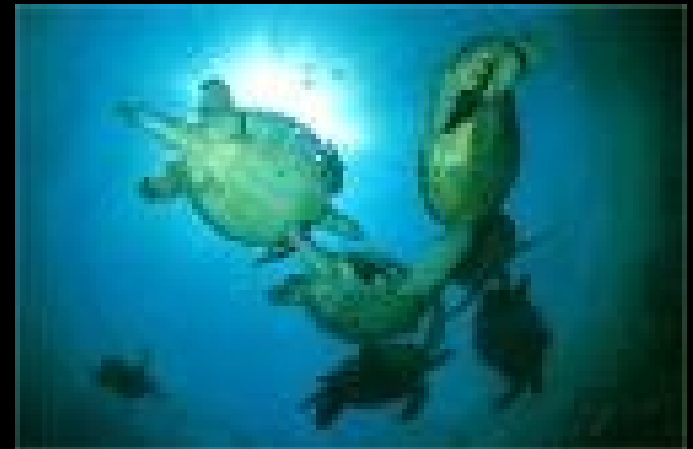


Space



- The area used or unused in a composition.
- Positive space – the area the objects/subject takes up.
- Negative space – the area around, under, through and between.
- Gives the photo a 3-dimensional feeling. (Depth)
- Foreground (closest), Middle ground, and Background (farthest).
- Can be open, crowded, near, far, etc.

Space



Value



- Black and White and all the Grays in between
- Dark to Light
- Can add drama and impact to composition.
- Can give a sense of timelessness
- Train your eye to read color as Black and White!

Value



Texture



- The surface quality.
- How an object feels, or how it looks like it feels.
- Rough, smooth, bumpy, gooey, sharp, etc.
- Adds interest! Sense of sight and sense of touch involved.

Texture

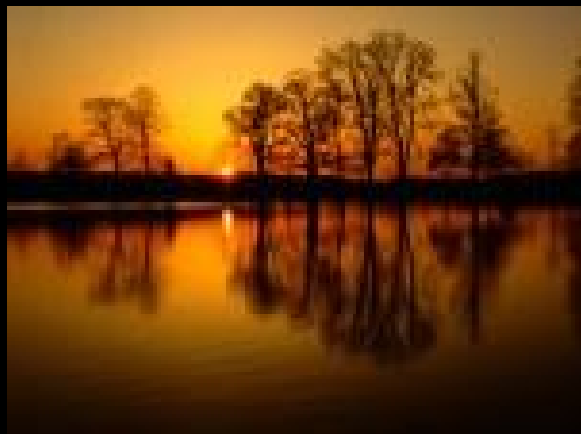


Color



- Artistic term is HUE
- Need light to see color.
- Primary, Secondary, Intermediates.
- Use color schemes to enhance appeal or make impact.

Color



Principles

- The different arrangements – or *compositions* - of the ELEMENTS of design to create artistic, interesting, more visually powerful photographs.
- Principles

What are the Principles of Art?

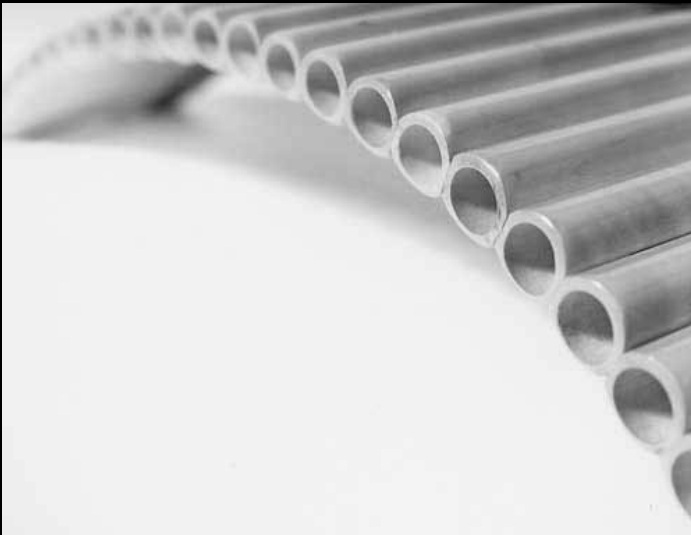
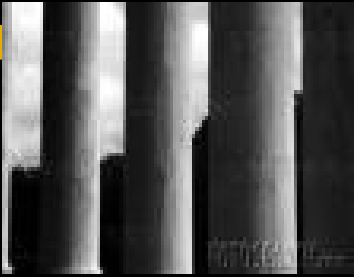


- Emphasis
 - Balance
 - Unity
 - Contrast
- Movement/ Rhythm
- Pattern/Repetition

Pattern/Repetition

- An element that occurs over and over again in a composition.
- Can repeat the element in a consistent pattern.
- Can repeat the element in a variation of the pattern.

Repetition Examples



EMPHASIS or Focal Point



Emphasis in a composition refers to developing points of interest to pull the viewer's eye to important parts of the body of the work.

EMPHASIS EXAMPLES



Balance



Balance is a sense of stability in the body of work. Balance can be created by repeating same shapes and by creating a feeling of equal weight.

Balance Examples



Unity



Unity is seen in a painting or drawing when all the parts equal a whole.

Unity Examples

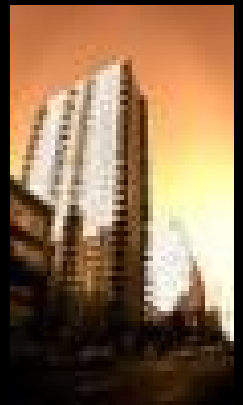
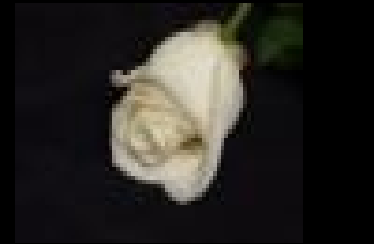
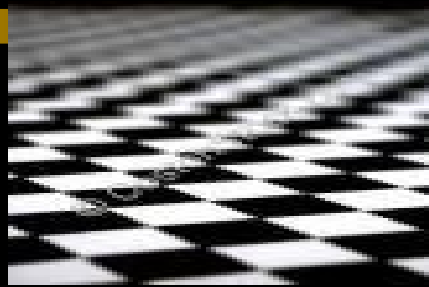


CONTRAST



Contrast refers to the opposites and differences in the work. You can achieve variety by using different shapes, textures, colors and values in your work.

CONTRAST Examples



Movement



Movement adds excitement to your work by showing action and directing the viewer's eye throughout the picture plane. **Rhythm** is a type of movement in drawing and painting. It is seen in repeating of shapes and colors. Alternating lights and darks also give a sense of rhythm.

Movement



Elements and Principles in Photographic Composition

- The Elements and Principles are used in *making* photographs – not just taking photographs.
- You have to know and understand the elements and principles of art to *see* them all around you and capture them in your photos.
- Good luck!