



digital photography

composition

[composition]

*no composition rule is universal.
no rule will work for every case.*

*there are trends in composition
that can be summarized
as "rules of thumb".*

- john harvey
johnharveyphoto.com

[composition]

"consulting the rules of composition before taking a photograph is like consulting the laws of gravity before going for a walk."

- edward weston
(1886-1958)

[composition]

"the so-called rules of photographic composition are, in my opinion, invalid, irrelevant and immaterial."

- ansel adams
(1902-1984)

[composition]

- strong vertical
- strong horizontal
- diagonal
- perspective
- rule of thirds
- field
- golden spiral
- s-curves
- point of view
- frames
- cropping

[strong vertical]



- eye moves from bottom to top and back
- create an impression of height, power and permanence

[strong horizontal]



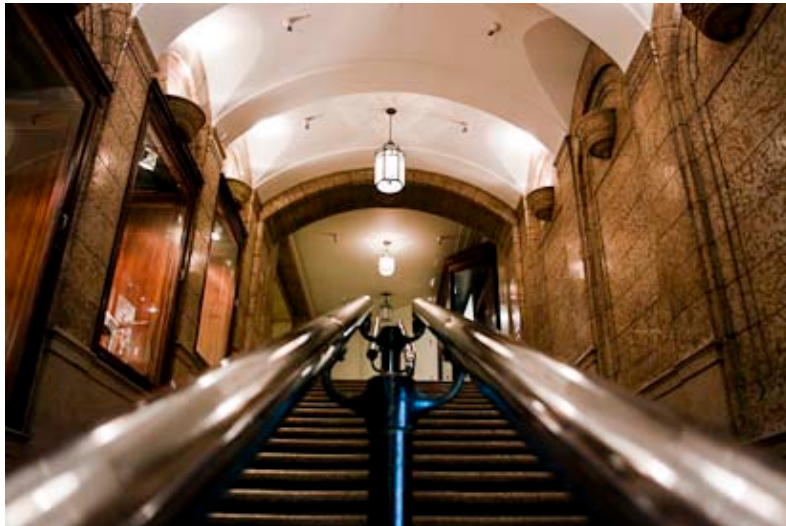
- eye tends to stay centered
- creates a sense of place, of calm and tranquility

[diagonals]



- eyes focus at ends of diagonals near centre point
- creates a sense of movement or tension

perspective



- eye moves along angled lines from “front” to “back”
- creates a focal point; a sense of place and of movement

rule of thirds



- eye tends to focus on intersections
- creates a sense of strength and of place

“don’t put the interesting things in the centre of the frame”

field



- eye searches for a focal point
- creates a sense of calm, of place

golden mean



golden spiral
golden triangle

- eye moves inward toward the centre
- creates a sense of pleasure; occurs frequently in nature

s-curves



- eye follows along curve from bottom to top and back
- creates a sense of flow; pleasing to the eye

[point of view]



- close up,
from above or
from below
- influences
viewer's
interpretation of
the subject
- creates a sense
of drama

frames



- eye moves from frame to subject
- strong sense of place, of depth or layers

cropping



- can change intent or context of image

- original image shows American soldiers helping a group of children fleeing the South Vietnamese village of Trang Bang after an accidental napalm bomb was dropped there by South Vietnamese planes

[cropping]



- can be used to deliberately deceive viewer

- in this cropped image American soldiers appear to be pursuing the children rather than rescuing them
- this famous image was deliberately modified by the anti-war movement to forward their cause

[thanks to]

- johnbishopimages.com
- johnharveyphoto.com
- digikamera.com
- Nick Ut, AP

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