

Composition



"There are no rules for good photographs, there are only good photographs."

- Ansel Adams

Think!



- ☞ Taking the time to think before taking a photograph will increase its aesthetics (beauty).



Composition



- ❧ The arrangement of elements in a work of art.
- ❧ All works of art have an order determined by the artist.
- ❧ Composition creates a hierarchy within the work, which tells the viewer the relative importance of the imagery and elements included.

Elements of Art



The building blocks

Elements of Art 1



- ❧ These are the building blocks artists use to create their compositions.
- ❧ They are a set of techniques that describe ways of presenting artwork.
- ❧ The **elements** are
 - ❧ line
 - ❧ shape
 - ❧ form
 - ❧ color
 - ❧ value
 - ❧ texture
 - ❧ space

Principles of Art & Design



Things to consider when creating.

Principles of Art & Design

1



- ☞ Elements of art are combined with the principles of art in the production of art.
- ☞ The principles of art are the set of rules or guidelines of art that are to be considered when considering the impact of a piece of artwork.
- ☞ They are combined with the elements of art in the production of art

Principles of Art & Design

1



- ❧ These are the principles of art:
 - ❧ Balance
 - ❧ Contrast
 - ❧ Emphasis, Movement
 - ❧ Pattern & Repetition (Rhythm)
 - ❧ Proportion
 - ❧ Unity/Harmony
 - ❧ Variety

Note About Terms



- ☞ Different sources will use different terms when describing composition.
- ☞ Some sources use terms with similar meaning while others add their own terms and descriptors.

Rules & Guidelines

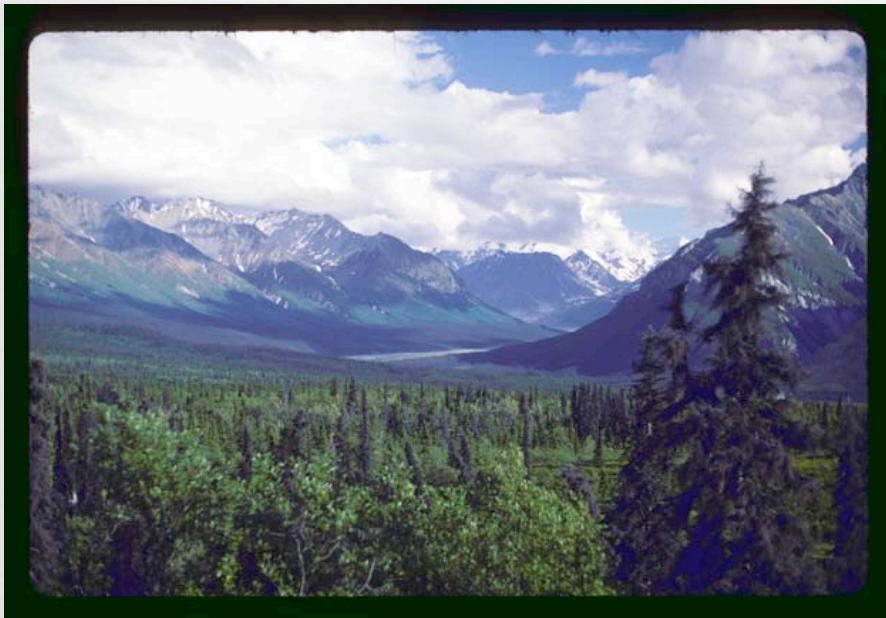


How to make composition work for you.

Basics



☞ Composition is good if an image holds up in black and white



Basic Rules 1



- ∞ Focal Point
- ∞ Simplicity
- ∞ Fill the frame
- ∞ Point of View
- ∞ Perspective
- ∞ Rule of Thirds



Basic Rules 2



- ❧ The Golden Mean
- ❧ Leading Line(s)
- ❧ Balance
- ❧ Framing
- ❧ Avoid Mergers



Focal Point 1



- ⌘ This is the exact point at which the camera is focused at maximum sharpness.
- ⌘ It is also the point at which the eye of the viewer looking at the photo should travel to first.
- ⌘ It is what the photographer wants the viewer to look at and understand.



Focal Point 2



- ☞ Sometimes the photographer may wish to place the focal point off to one side and not have it in the center of the frame.
- ☞ The lack of an obvious focal point is generally the biggest stumbling point found in amateur snapshots.



Simplicity 1



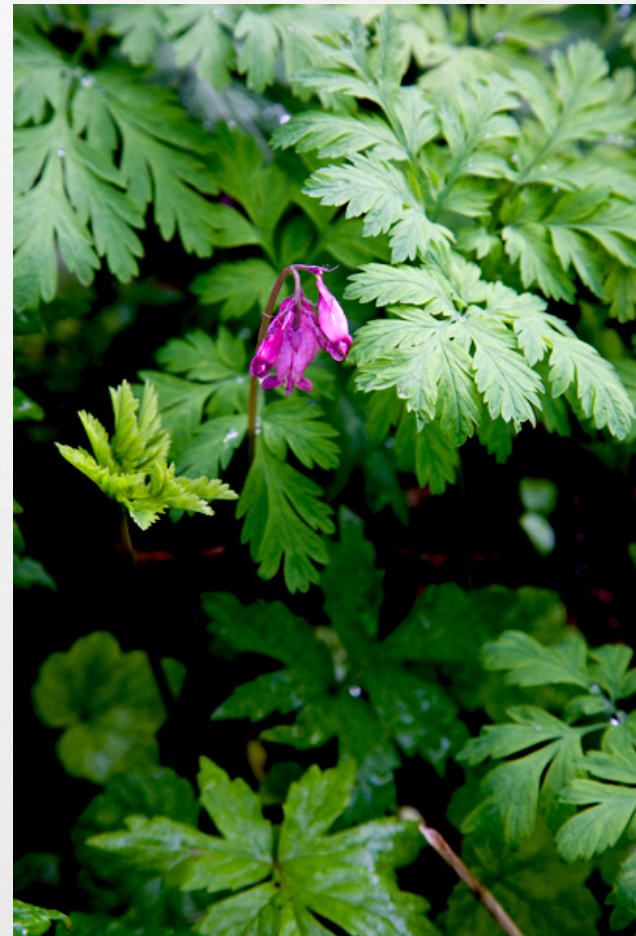
- ☞ **Keep it Simple**
- ☞ **Avoid Distracting Backgrounds**
- ☞ **Isolate subject**
- ☞ **Which of these is better?**



Simplicity 2



- ❧ **Be sure that only the things you want the viewer to see appear in the picture.**
- ❧ **If there are numerous objects cluttering up the background, your message will be lost.**
- ❧ **Difference in tone, texture or color can help isolate subject.**



Simplicity 3



- ☞ Try using **depth-of field control** to keep the background out of focus.
- ☞ This is called **selective focus**.



Simplicity 4



- ❧ Instead of dwelling on what they can add to the composition, focus on what can be removed in order to strengthen the composition.
- ❧ Fine-tuning through the viewfinder; that is, by moving the camera slightly left, right, up or down with simplicity as a goal.



Simplicity 5



- ❧ Compositions suffer when your message is diluted by unwanted visual distractions.
- ❧ Avoid visual clutter and your compositions will sing.



Fill the Frame 1



- ⌘ Do not ignore any portion of the scene that you frame in your viewfinder.
- ⌘ Make the best use of the entire "canvas" of each photo.
- ⌘ When you look through the viewfinder, think of it as a rectangular picture frame; as you compose, make use of all the available space.



Fill the Frame 2



- ☞ You can significantly strengthen many compositions by getting closer to your subject.
- ☞ Photographic compositions are weakened when important subject matter is too small to see.



Fill the Frame 3



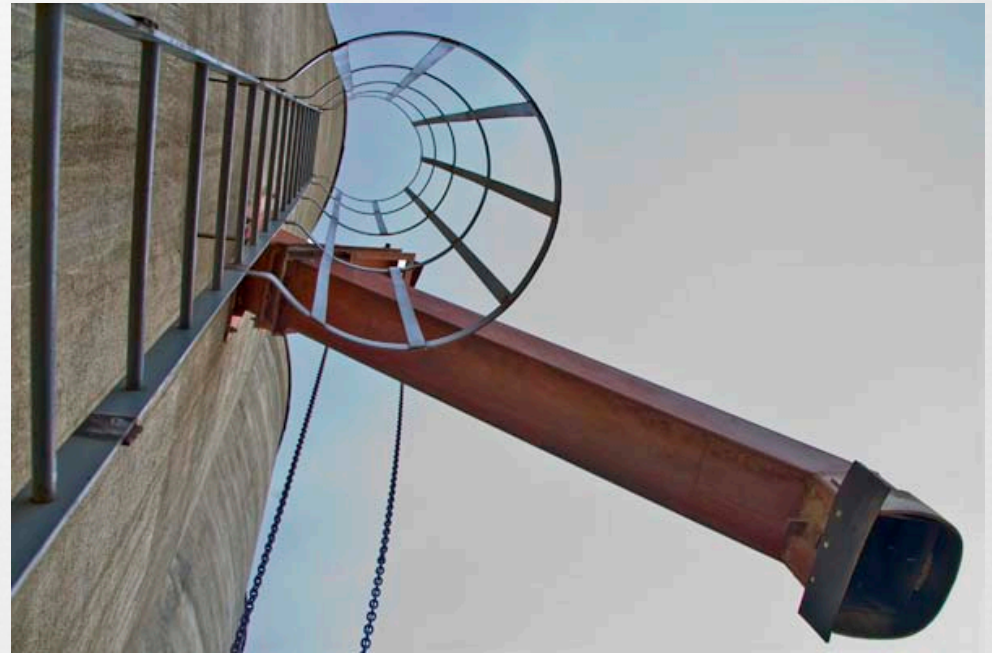
☞ **Fill the frame!**



Point of View 1



- ☞ You can often change a picture dramatically by moving the camera up or down or, stepping to one side.
- ☞ It gives the viewer a location to “stand.”
- ☞ One of the best ways to come up with a prize-winning photograph is to find an “unusual” point of view.
- ☞ Look up



Point of View 2

☞ Get down



Point of View 3



☞ Look down



Point of View 4



☞ Get close



Perspective 1



- ☞ Perspective shows distance and depth
- ☞ A wide-angle lens will cause the perspective to be over-emphasized, while a long telephoto lens will reduce the sense of distance. Most often, distance is portrayed by the placement of objects in the scene.



Perspective 2



- ☞ For example, in a landscape photo, choosing to include objects in the foreground, mid-ground and background establishes distance. Where you choose to place the focal point also establishes distance.



Perspective 3



☞ Note how the fence in the foreground gives sense of size and distance..



Rule of Thirds 1



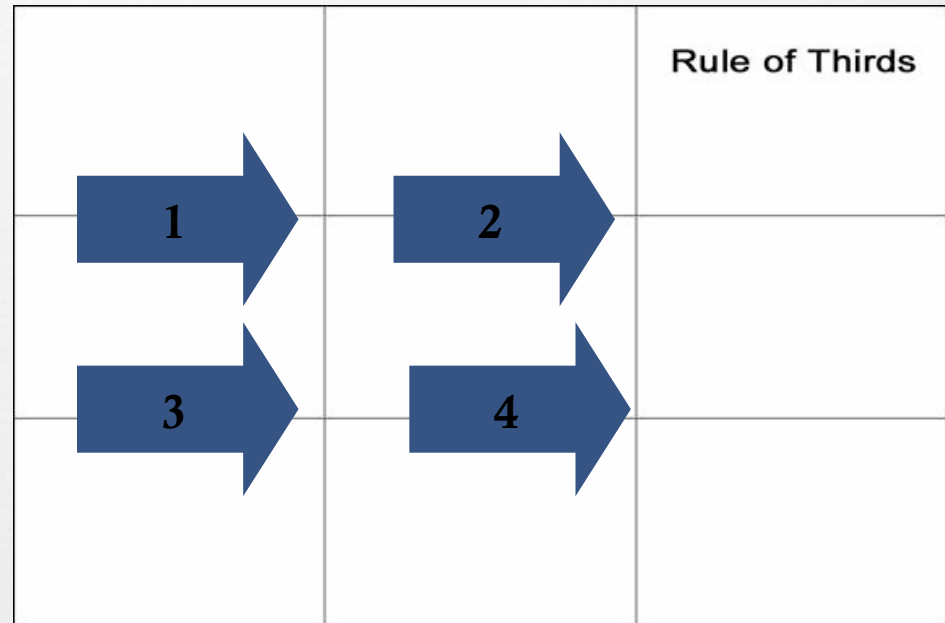
- ☞ **Divide photo into thirds vertically.**
- ☞ **Then divide photo into thirds horizontally.**
- ☞ **Place subject(s) where the lines intersect.**

		Rule of Thirds

Rule of Thirds 2



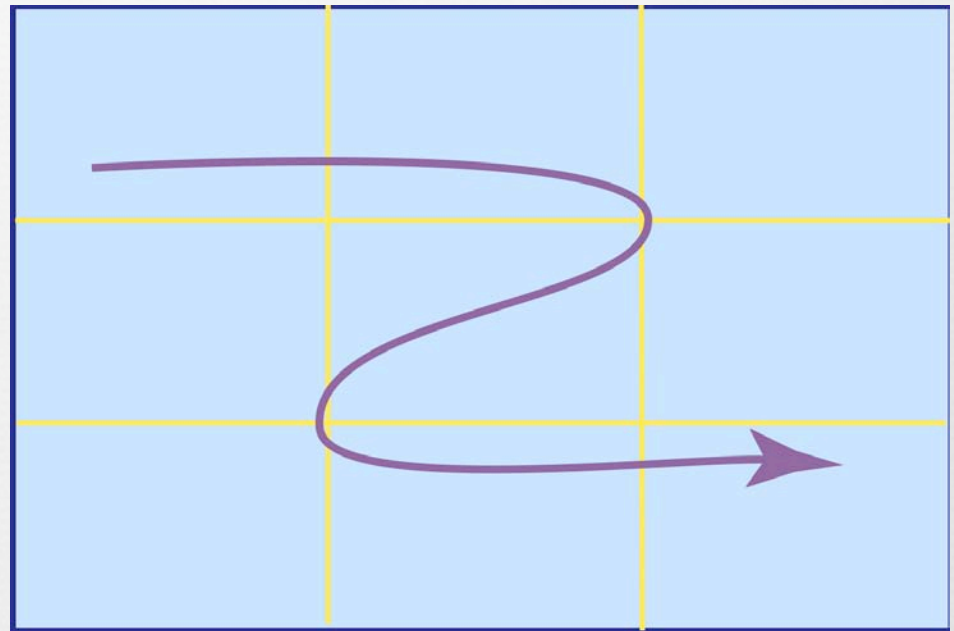
- ☞ **The eye first focuses on intersection #1.**
- ☞ **Then focuses on intersection #2.**
- ☞ **Then focuses on intersection #3.**
- ☞ **Finally focusing on intersection #4.**



Rule of Thirds 3



- ☞ The eye move through the intersection points in the shape of a reverse S.
- ☞ Remember: In nature there are no straight lines.



Rule of Thirds 4



☞ Divide by three

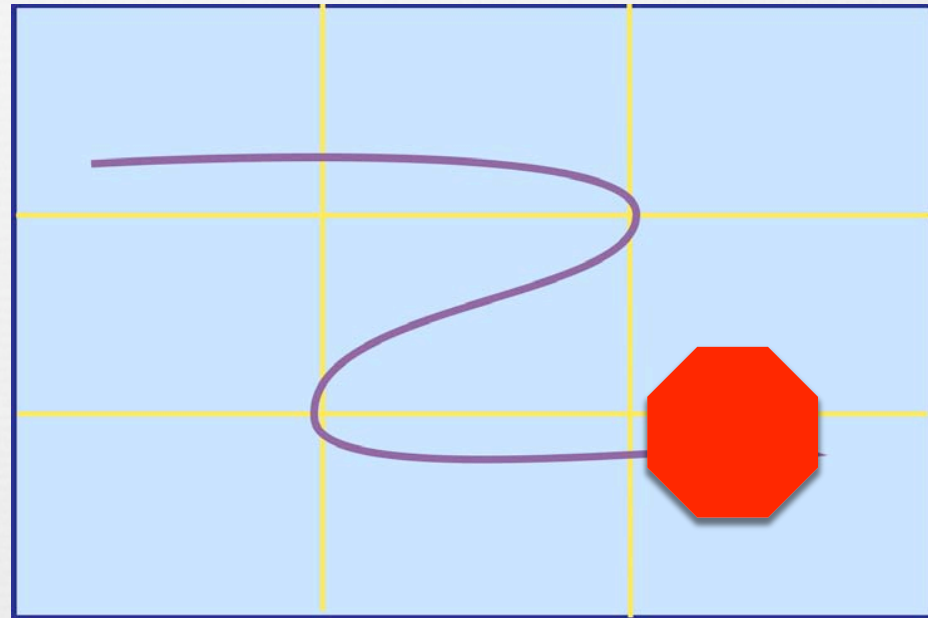


Rule of Thirds 5

“The Stopper”



- ☞ The eye will continue to move out of the picture unless an object or **negative space** is placed in lower right-hand corner.
- ☞ This acts to “stop” the eye movement and can be used to redirect eye into photo.

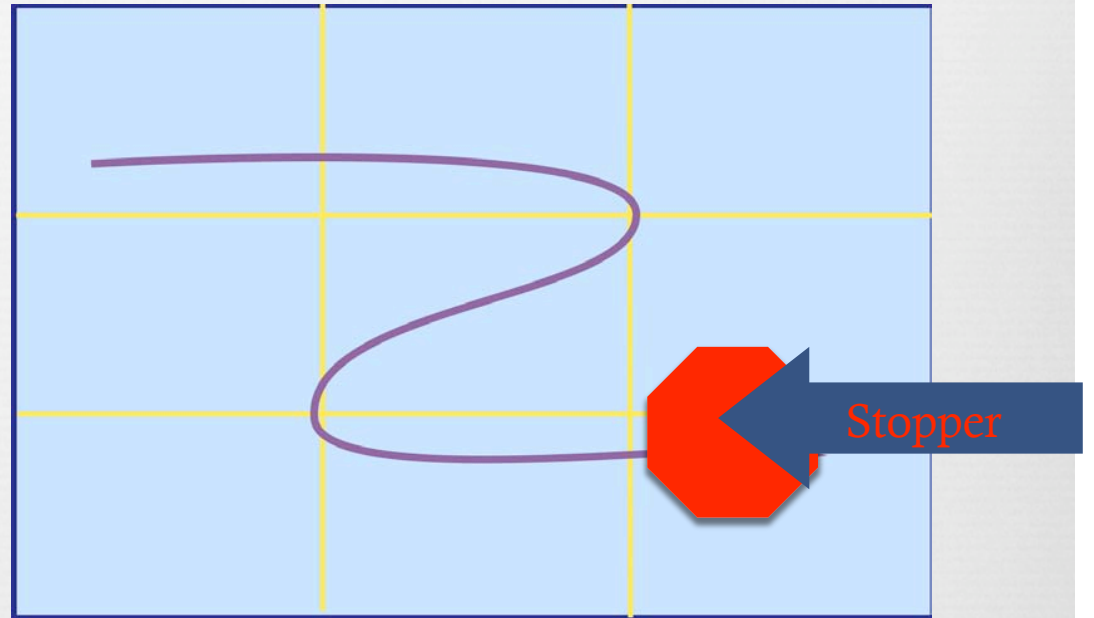


Rule of Thirds 6

“The Stopper”



☞ Divide by 3

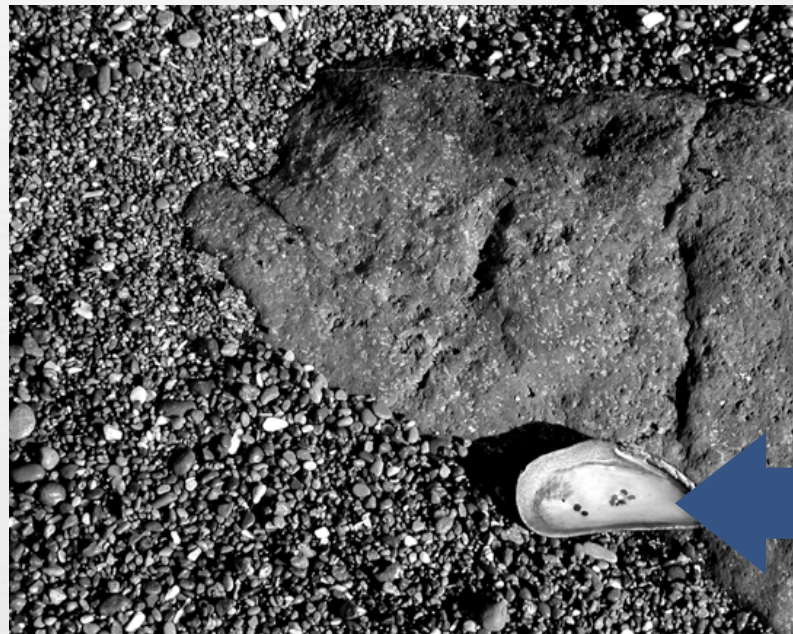


Rule of Thirds 7

“The Stopper”



☞ Divide by 3



Stopper

Rule of Thirds 8

“The Stopper”



- ☞ Stopper can be negative space



Rule of Thirds 9

“The Stopper”



☞ Stopper can be object



Rule of Thirds 10 Depth

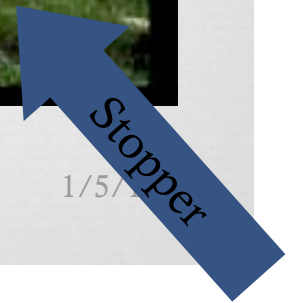


Don't forget to divide the image into thirds by depth.

∞ Foreground

∞ Mid-ground

∞ Background



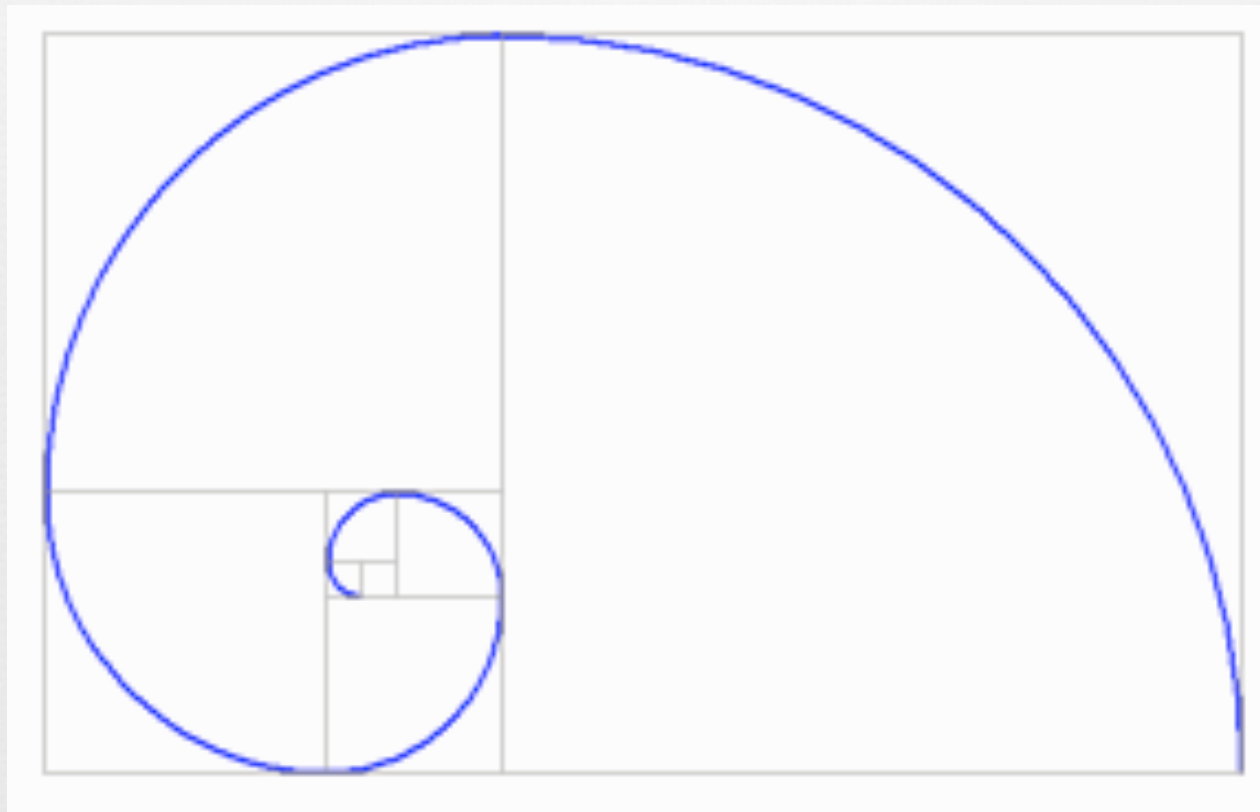
Rule of Thirds 11



☞ Note how fireworks are on vertical thirds.



Golden Mean 1



Golden Mean 2



- ☞ Sometimes called incorrectly called “The Rule Of Thirds.”
- ☞ The artists of old discovered it and good photographers always use it to improve their photo-composition.
- ☞ It is a ratio.

Golden Mean 3

“Golden Ratio” – Fubibaccu’s Number



- ❧ **The Ratio is 1:1.618**
- ❧ **Golden Ratio:** 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34 etc.
- ❧ What would the next number in the series?
- ❧ How did you find that number?

Golden Mean 4

“Golden Ratio” – Fubibaccu’s Number



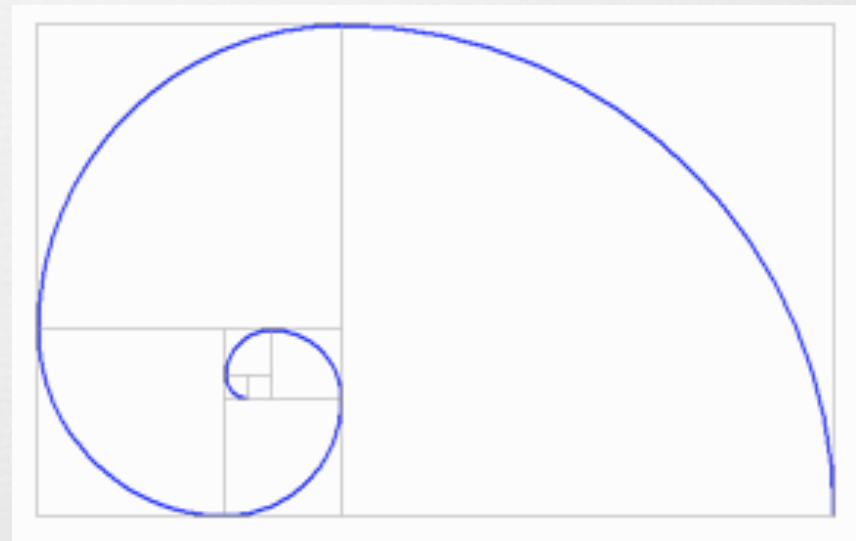
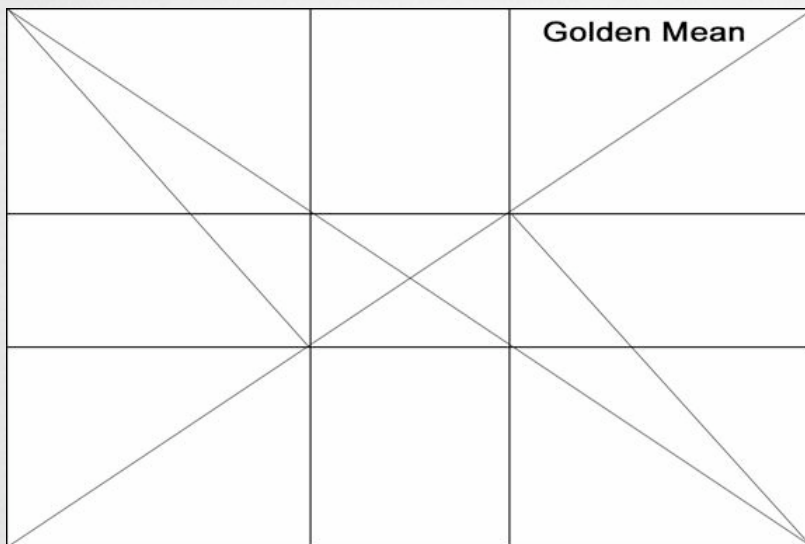
- ☞ **Golden Ratio:** 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34 etc.
- ☞ 55, 89, 144, etc.
- ☞ Each succeeding number after 1 is equal to the sum of the two preceding numbers.

Golden Mean 5

“Golden Ratio” – Fubibaccu’s Number



- ☞ If you divide each smaller window again with the same ratio and joining their corners you end up with a logarithmic spiral.
- ☞ This spiral is a motif found frequently throughout nature in shells, horns and flowers.

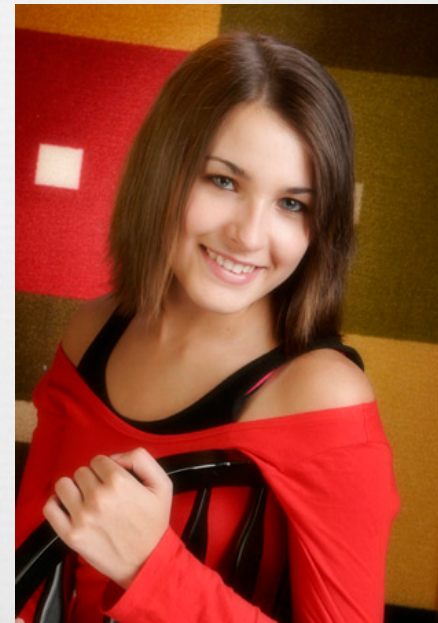
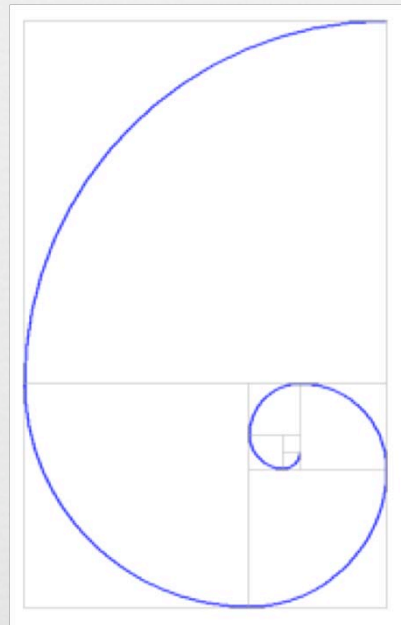


Golden Mean 6

“Golden Ratio” – Fubibaccu’s Number



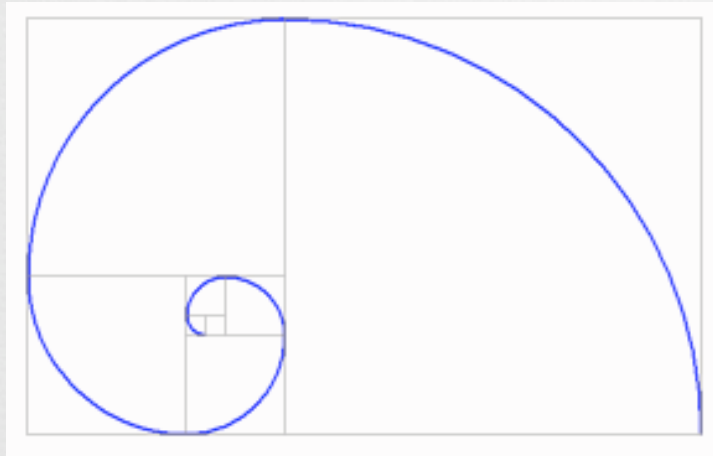
- ☞ **The Golden Mean** or **Phi** occurs frequently in nature and it may be humans are genetically programmed to recognize the ratio as being pleasing.
- ☞ Studies of top fashion models revealed that their faces have an abundance of the **1.618 ratio**.



Golden Mean 7



∞ How does this picture fit the golden mean?



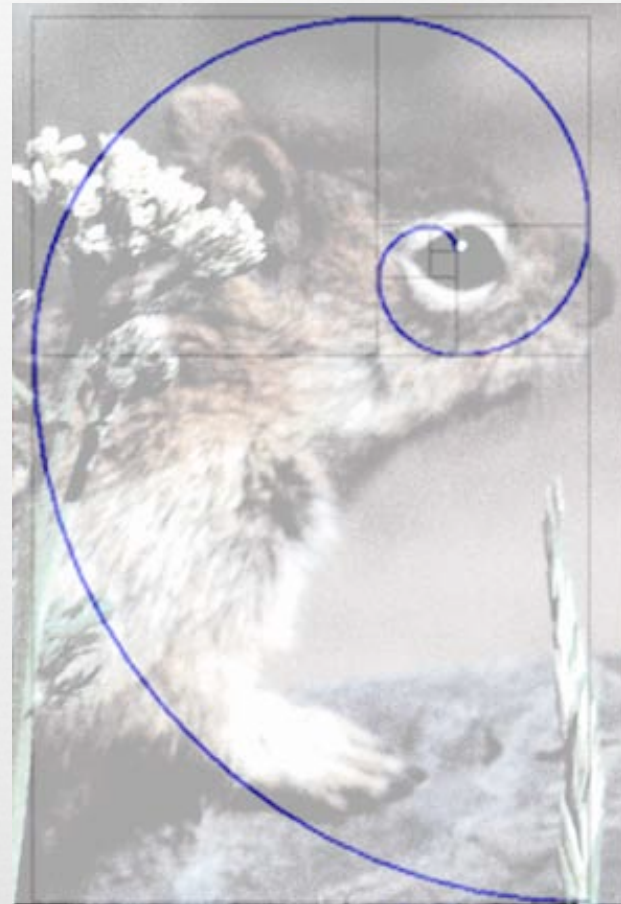
Golden Mean 7



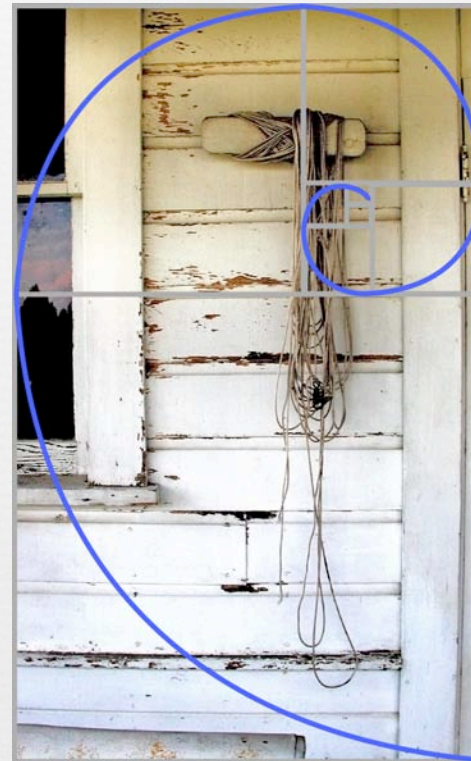
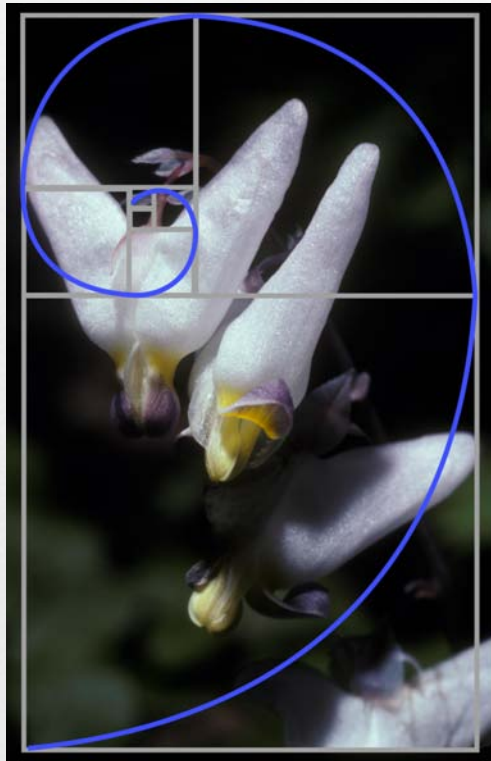
∞ How does this picture fit the golden mean?



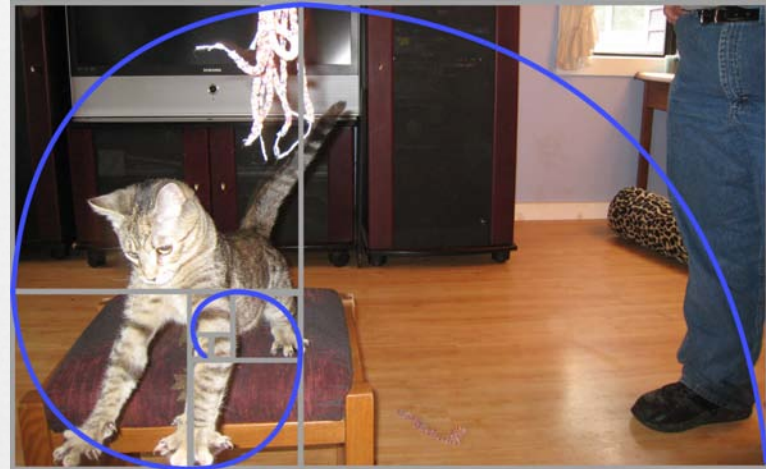
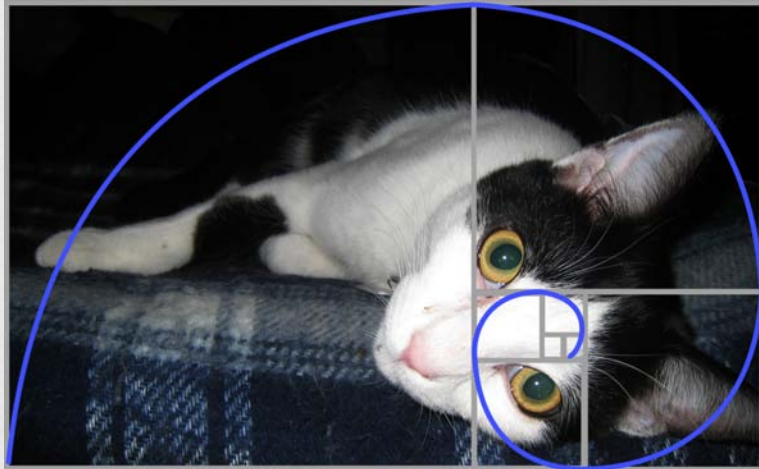
Golden Mean 9



Golden Mean 10



Golden Mean 11



Leading Lines 1



- ☞ May be real or implied (imaginary).
- ☞ It leads your eye in to the picture area easily like a road or fence, a shoreline or river, a row of trees or a pathway.
- ☞ A successful “Leading Line” will lead your eye in to the picture and take it right to the main subject or **center of interest**.



Leading Lines 2



- ☞ Leading lines can be good or bad.
- ☞ Poor leading line will take the eye in to the picture but will continue out of the picture if there is no **stopper** to hold the eye in the picture.
- ☞ A tree, house or other large object on the right hand side of the picture frame which will **stop** the eye from going out of the picture.
- ☞ The **Center of Interest** or Main Subject will act as a Stopper and hold the eye in the picture frame.



Leading Lines 3



- ❧ The best Leading Lines will start at the Lower Left area of the picture frame but not in the exact corner.
- ❧ Again, the eye likes to enter a picture frame at this point and the Leading Line will help it get in to the picture easily and swiftly.



Leading Lines 4



- ❧ A leading line may extend from the proximity of any of the four corners of a photo toward the middle of the image or toward a significant feature in the image.
- ❧ You can find many leading lines in the landscape such as riverbanks, borders between field and forest, and fallen trees.



Leading Lines 5



- ❧ A leading line often enhances a photo because it leads the viewer's eye into the picture.
- ❧ It visually links the foreground and background, creating continuity and an added element of depth.



Balance 1



- ❧ **Achieving Balance:** There are a few basic approaches to this technique.
- ❧ You can have a very large dominant foreground with a complimenting background, such as a fence complementing the smaller appearing buildings in the background.
- ❧ This tends to add drama or a unique quality to an often-photographed subject.



Balance 2



- Or, you can balance the foreground and background subjects by keeping them similar in size.
- This technique is used when there is not an overpowering, dramatic subject, even though you find the overall scene pleasing.
- You can also build that drama or emotion in your photograph by looking for smaller foreground subjects that lead to that large dominant background such as when a stream gently leads your eye back to the much larger and more dominant mountains in the background.



Balance 3

Equal Balance or Classical Balance



- ☞ Sometimes called **Equal Balance** or **Classical Balance**.
- ☞ It elicits feelings of dignity and repose but makes static, unimaginative photo images as the objects in the picture area are of equal size, one balancing the other equally like two children of equal size on a playground seesaw.
- ☞ The seesaw will not move up or down. It stays horizontal with each child balancing the other on the board.



Balance 4

Equal Balance or Classical Balance



- ∞ It makes an image uninteresting and boring after the first look.
- ∞ Be sure to avoid it whenever possible, unless you have a definite reason to use it.



Balance 5

Informal Balance



- ❧ Gives **uneven** or **unequal** balance in the picture area.
- ❧ If you have a large object in the picture it should be **counter-balanced** with a smaller object or objects.
- ❧ Pictures the seesaw again with a 5-year-old boy on one side and his father on the other side.
- ❧ The balance will be uneven as the father is larger and will make the seesaw heavier on his side.
- ❧ The boy will be high in the air and the father will be at the ground level.



Balance 5

Informal Balance



- ∞ In a photographic scene, if you have a Large tree on the right side of the picture frame then you must try to balance it with a smaller object such as a house, a small tree or even the figure of a person on the other side of the picture frame.
- ∞ The way you balance the objects in your picture frame will determine the success or failure of the image. Many times you will have to resort to the use of different types of lenses in order to create the balance you want.



Balance 6

Informal Balance



- ⌘ A 24mm wide angle lens can create unbalanced composition very easily by taking the objects in front of the lens at close range.
- ⌘ This will make the front objects appear very large in the picture frame while the rear or distant objects will appear smaller even though they are actually larger.



Balance 7

Informal Balance



- ☞ Another way to create unequal balance is to find a position that will cause one object to appear larger or smaller because of the angle you took the photograph.
- ☞ The next time you are out creating photographs be sure to keep these rules about Balance in mind and try to incorporate them in your work.



Framing 1



- ❧ What is meant is to frame the center of interest with objects in the foreground.
- ❧ This can give a picture the feeling of depth it needs to make it more than just another snapshot.



Framing 2



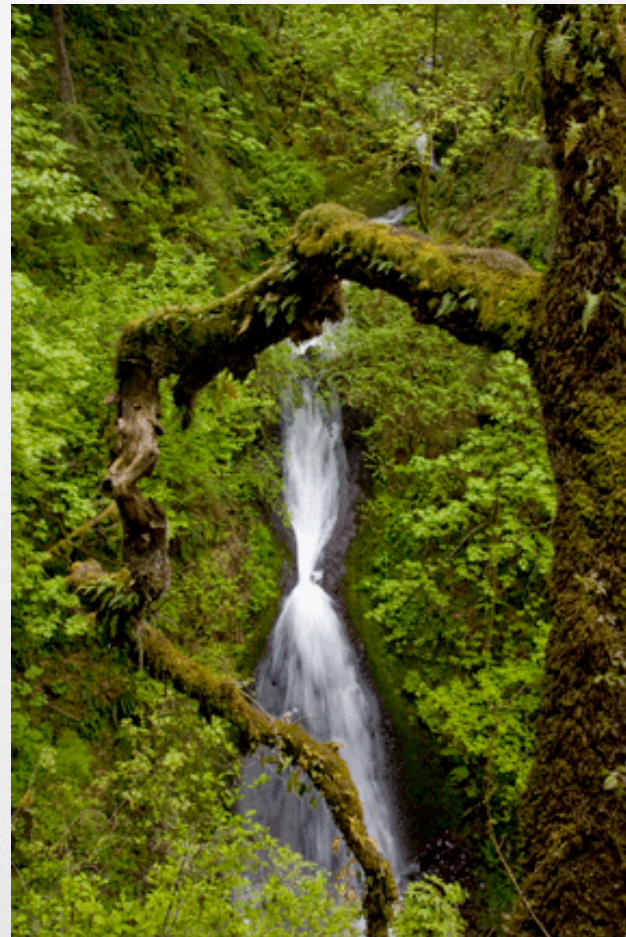
- ☞ Scout around for things that can be used to frame the subject in order to direct the viewer's eye towards the main point of interest.
- ☞ Framing devices help to keep the subject contained within the photo.



Framing 3



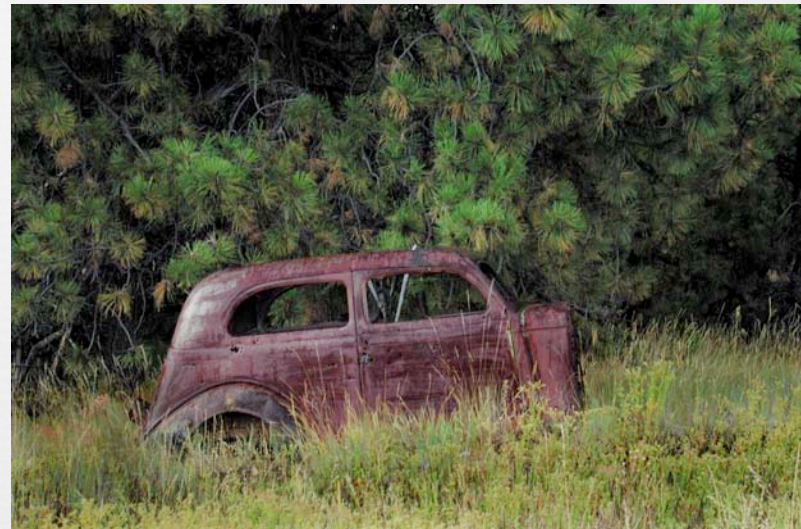
- ∞ A "frame" in a photograph is something in the foreground that leads you into the picture or gives you a sense of where the viewer is.
- ∞ The "frame" doesn't need to be sharply focused.
- ∞ In fact if it is too sharply detailed, it could be a distraction.



Framing 4



- ❧ Patterns are often used as framing devices to help contain the subject within the photo.



Framing 5



- ∞ Depth of field can also be used as a framing device to isolate the subject.
- ∞ Using a very shallow depth of field can blur the background creating a frame that surrounds the subject.



Avoid Mergers 1



- ☞ Watch the background.
- ☞ There is nothing worse than a tree, telephone pole or other object coming out of a person's head.
- ☞ Horizontal items will look like an arrow coming out of the head.



Avoid Mergers 1



- ⌘ Watch the background.
- ⌘ Look at the distracting light in the background.
- ⌘ Look what happens when it is no longer in the background.

