
How to take a Good Photo? & How not to be scared in a Modern Art Museum?

CS180: Intro to Computer Vision and Comp. Photo
Alexei Efros, UC Berkeley, Fall 2023

Announcements

- Exam this Wed in class
 - Closed everything except 2-sided cheat sheet
- Project 4 winners:
 - Alec Li:
<https://inst.eecs.berkeley.edu/~cs180/fa23/upload/files/proj4B/alec.li/>
 - Jyou12:
<https://inst.eecs.berkeley.edu/~cs180/fa23/upload/files/proj4B/jyou12/>
 - Lance Mathias:
<https://inst.eecs.berkeley.edu/~cs180/fa23/upload/files/proj4B/lmathias/>
- Class reviews!

What Makes a Great Picture?



© Robert Doisneau, 1955

*With many slides from Yan Ke and Fredo Durand,
as annotated by Tamara Berg*

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Photography 101: the where and when

- Composition
 - Framing
 - Rule of Thirds
 - Leading Lines
 - Textures and Patterns
 - Simplicity
- Lighting
 - Light Direction
 - Color coordination / balance
 - Sunny vs. cloudy
 - “Golden Hour”
 - B&W to focus attention
 - (sur) realism

Framing

“Photography is all about framing. We see a subject -- and we put a frame around it. Essentially, that is photography when all is said and done.”

-- from photo.blorge.com



Frame serves several purposes:

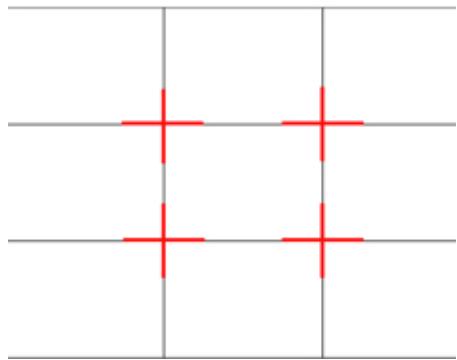
1. It gives the image depth
2. If used correctly, framing can draw the eye of the viewer of an interest to a particular part of the scene.
3. Framing can bring a sense of organization or containment to an image.
4. Framing can add context to a shot.

Examples of nice framing



<http://flickr.com/photos/paulosacramento/226545698/>
<http://flickr.com/photos/chrisbeach/13868545/>
<http://flickr.com/photos/74531485@N00/929270814/>
<http://flickr.com/photos/freakdog/223117229/>
<http://flickr.com/photos/cdm/253805482/>

Rules of Thirds



Other examples



Don't center, especially for motion



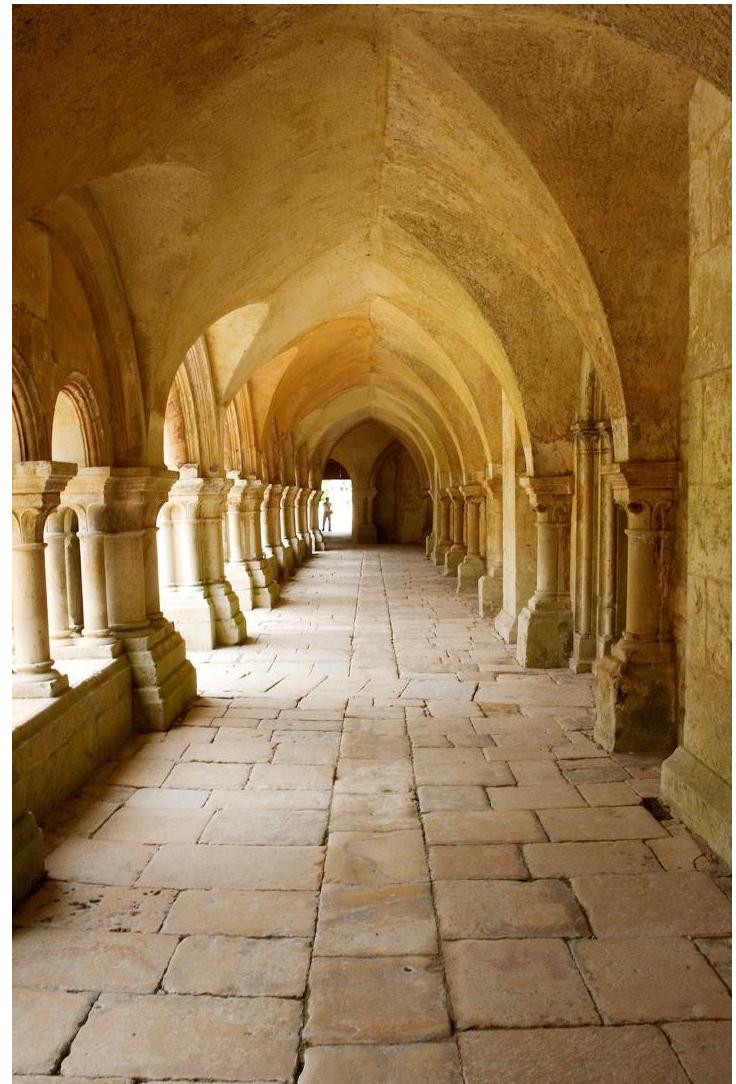
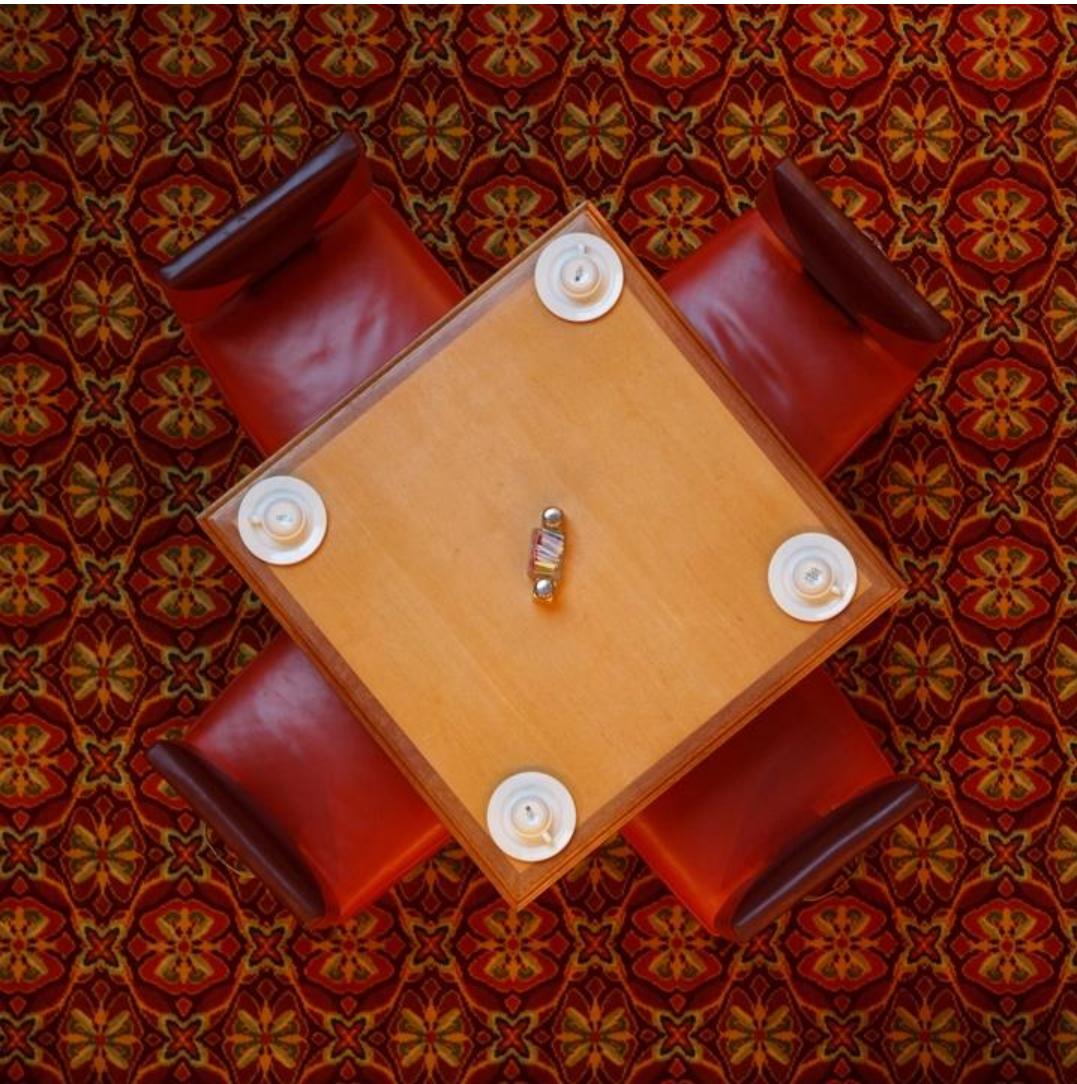
By Fredo Durand

Don't center, especially for motion



By Fredo Durand

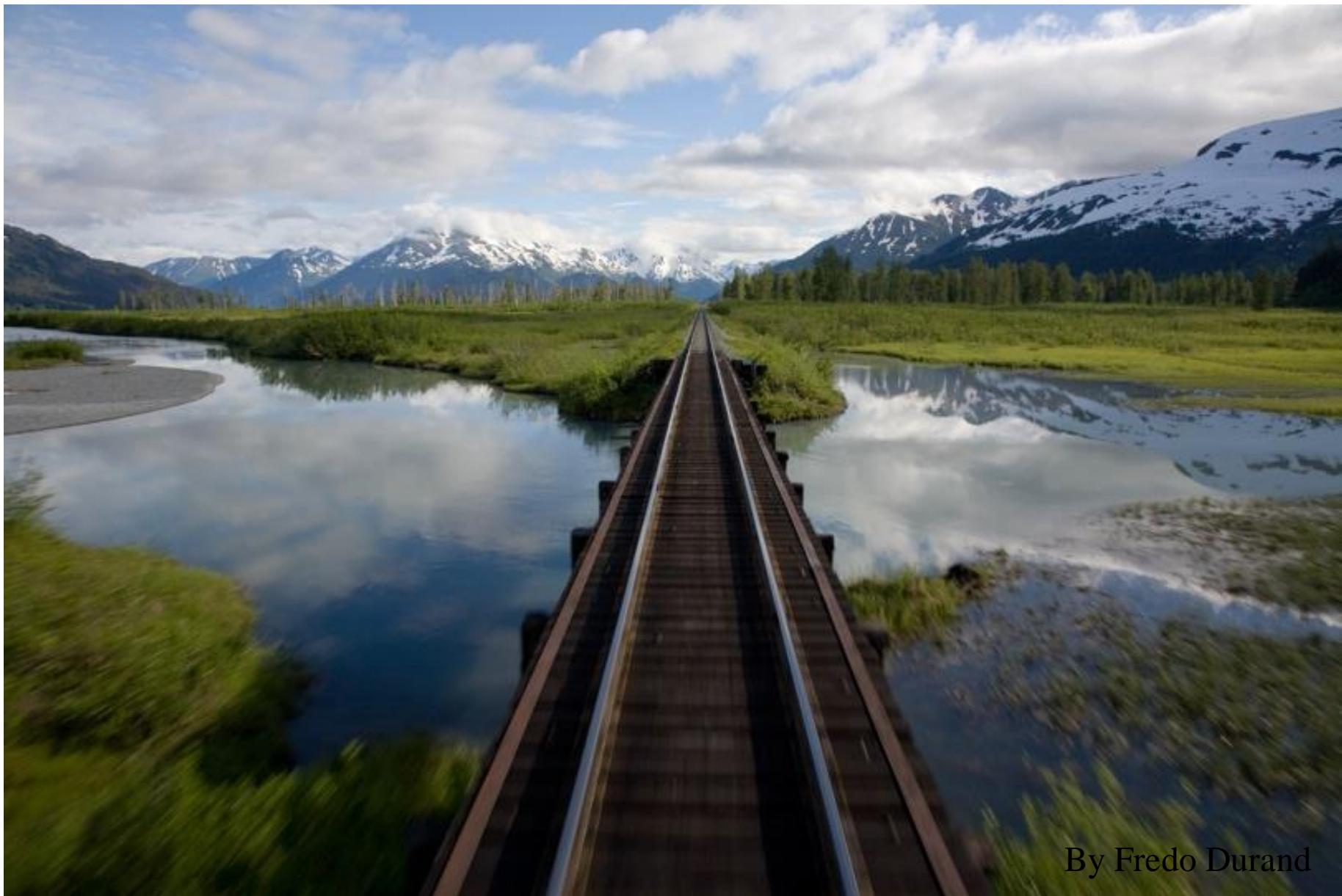
... or do center



By Fredo Durand

Leading Lines





By Fredo Durand

More examples



Textures and Patterns

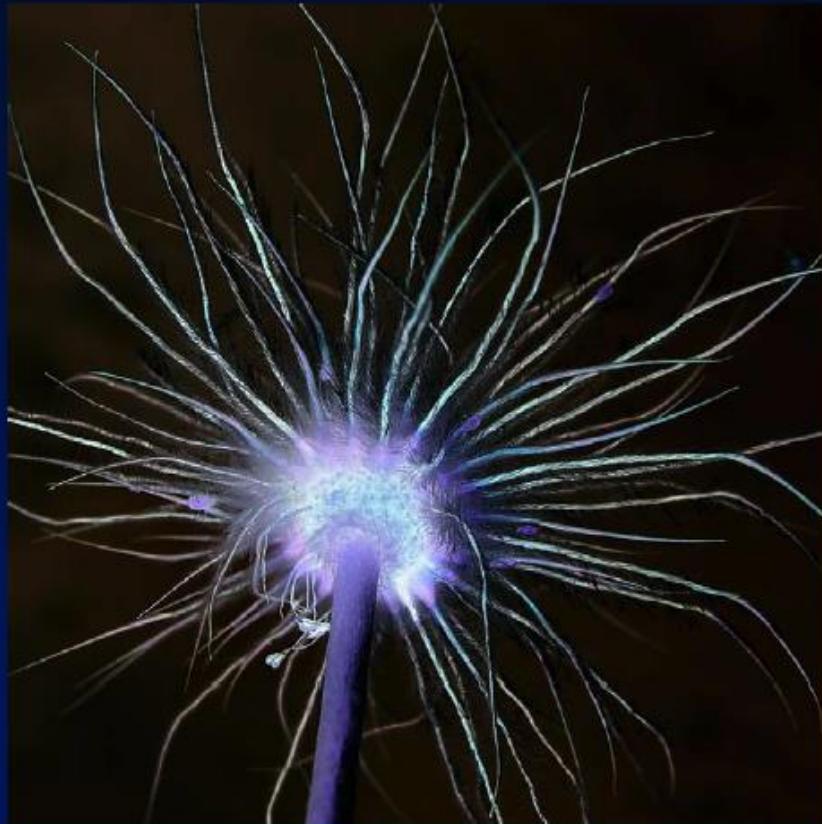


Simplicity



Prof - Obvious what one should be looking at
ie easy to separate subject from the
background. Snap – unstructured, busy, filled
with clutter.

Simplicity



"alien flower" by Josef F. Stuefer @ Flickr

Simplicity



B&W for Simplicity



B&W for Simplicity



Photo by A. A. Efros





Photo by A. A. Efros

...but not always



Photo by A. A. Efros

...but not always

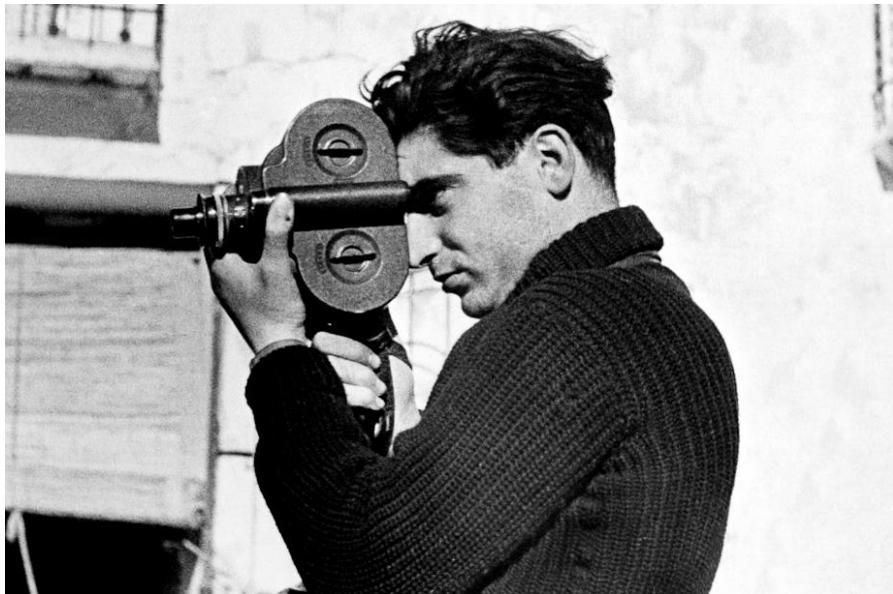


Crop for Simplicity



By Fredo Durand

If your pictures aren't good enough,
you're not close enough" — Robert Capa



By Fredo Durand

Simplicity for Portraits – just move



<https://vimeo.com/29722267>

Get low

Try to be at eye level



By Fredo Durand

Bad

Better



By Fredo Durand

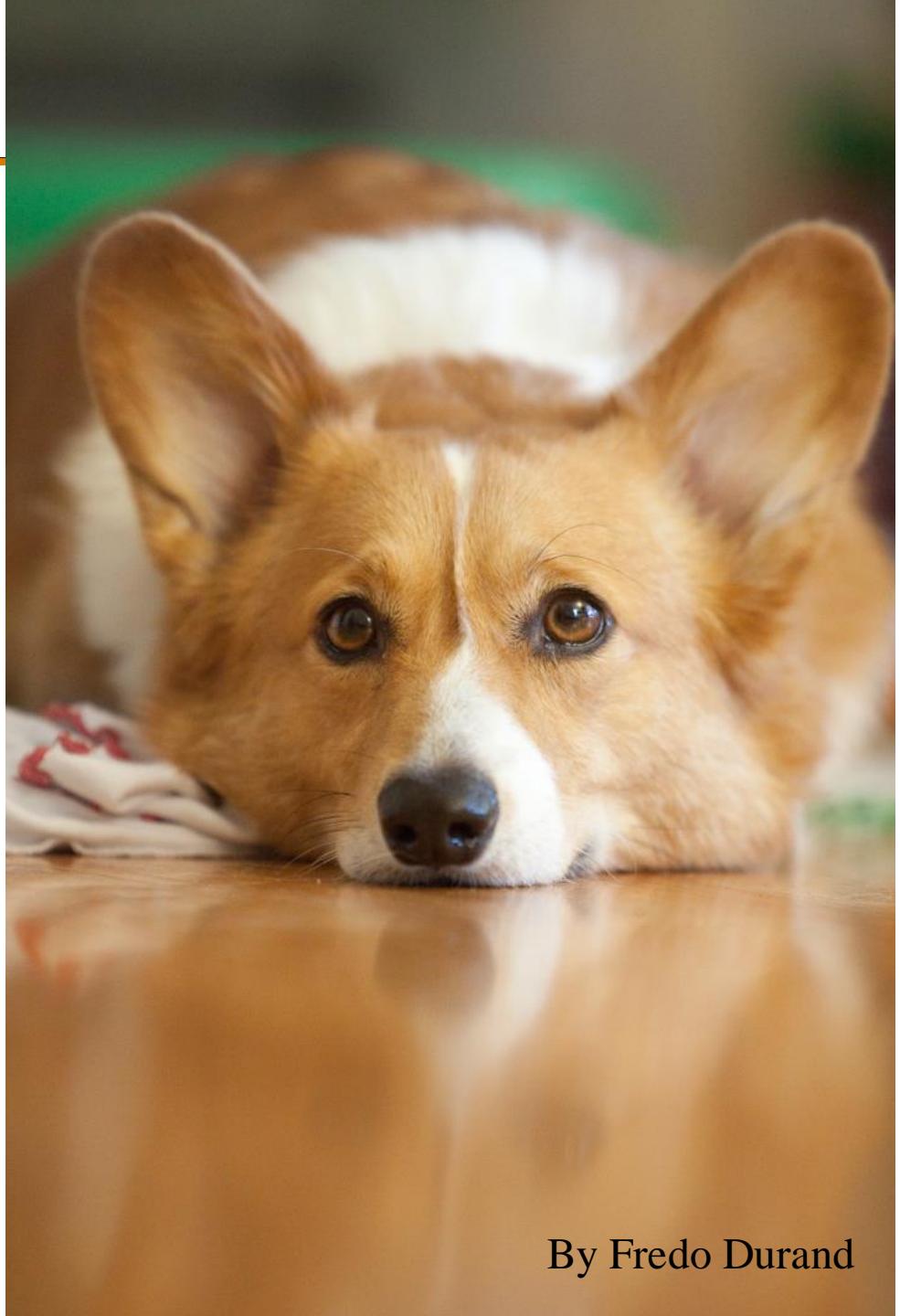
Bad angles

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8EmRZO9fwvk&feature=youtu.be>



By Fredo Durand

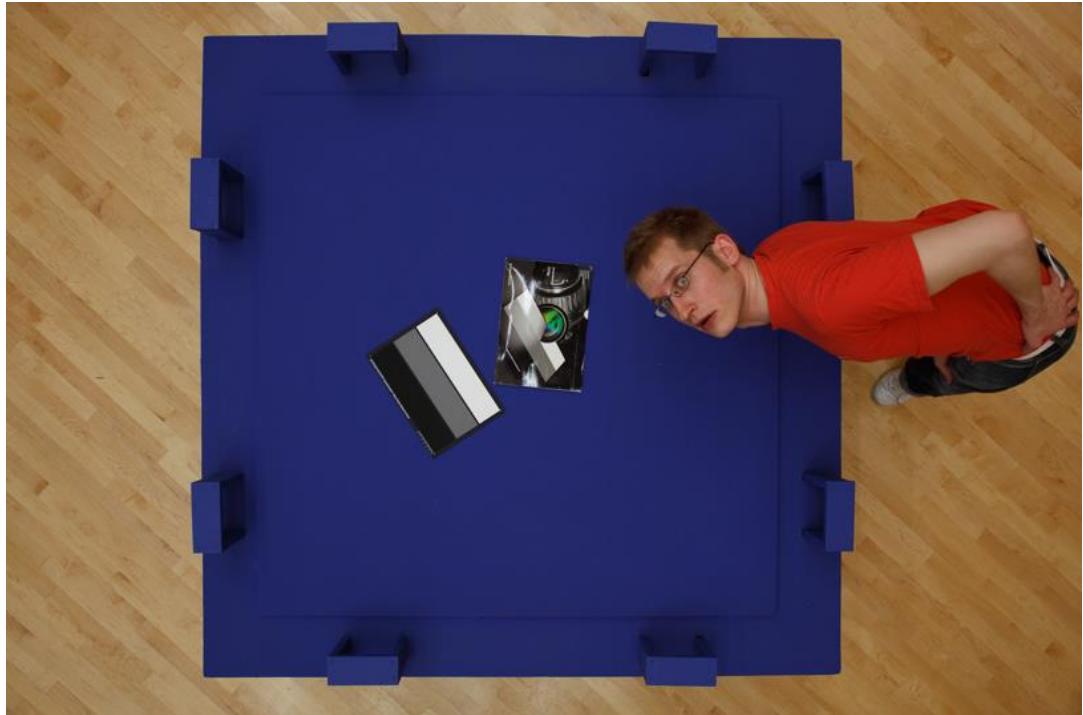
Eye level



By Fredo Durand

Or really get high

As usual, follow a rule
or really break it.



By Fredo Durand

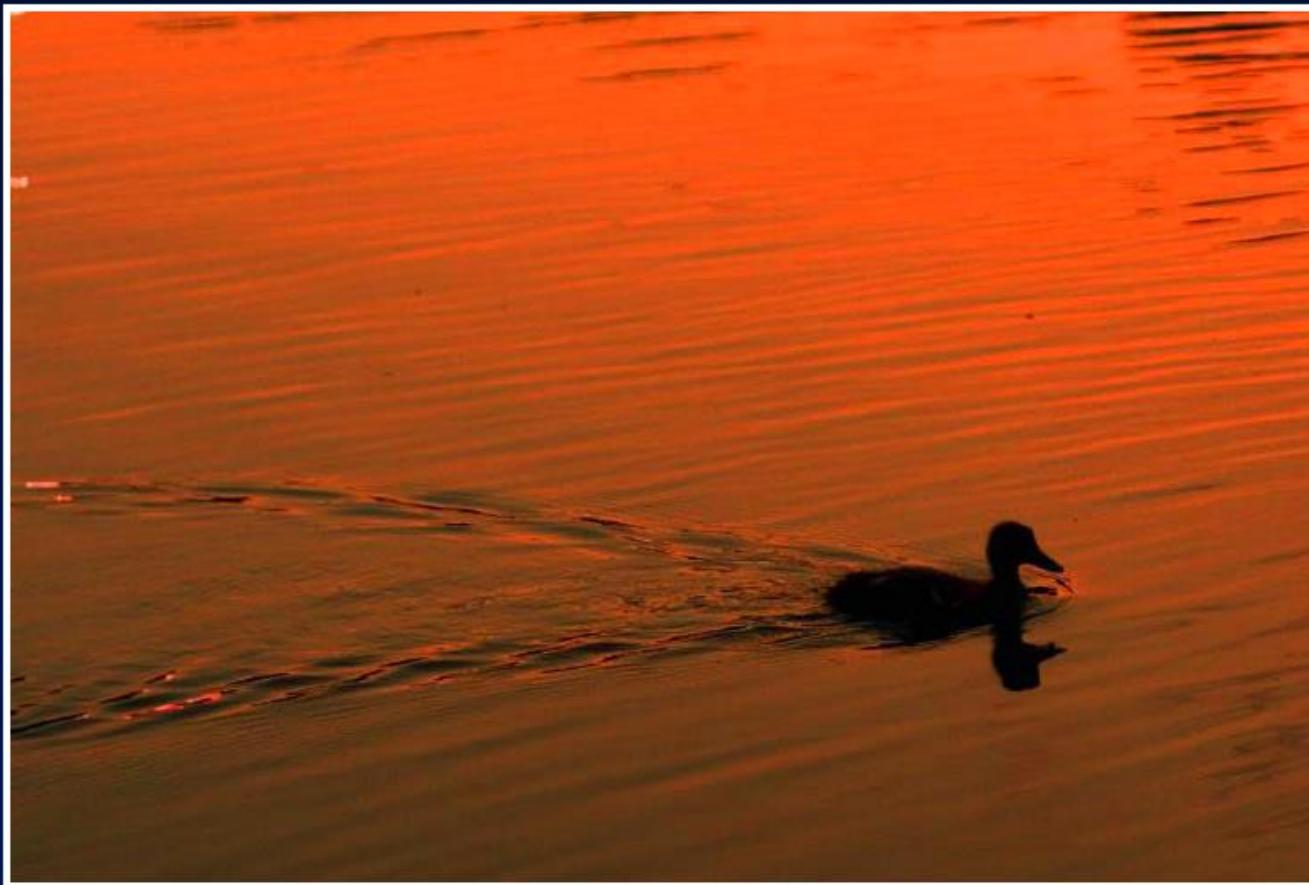
Front Lighting



Side Lighting



Back Lighting



Color Coordination



Complementary colors (of opposite hue on color wheel)

Go in the shade

Light is more diffuse

Bad



Better



Overcast days are the best

Just don't put the sky in the frame

The weather conditions



The pictures



Other overcast-day pictures



By Fredo Durand

Bottom line

**Don't get married
on a sunny day!**



Cloudy day





Best time of day: sunset & sunrise

+/- 1 hour

“Golden hours”

Night photography: always near sunset/sunrise

- because of nice diffuse light

Mid day:
often not great



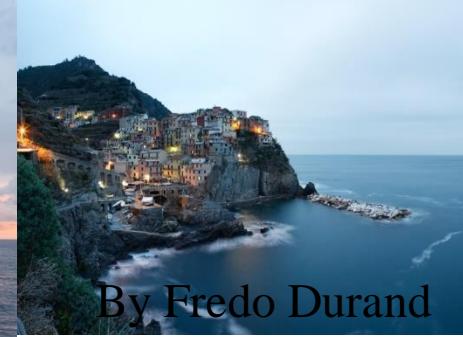
less than 1 hour
after sunrise/
before sunset



During sunset or
sunrise

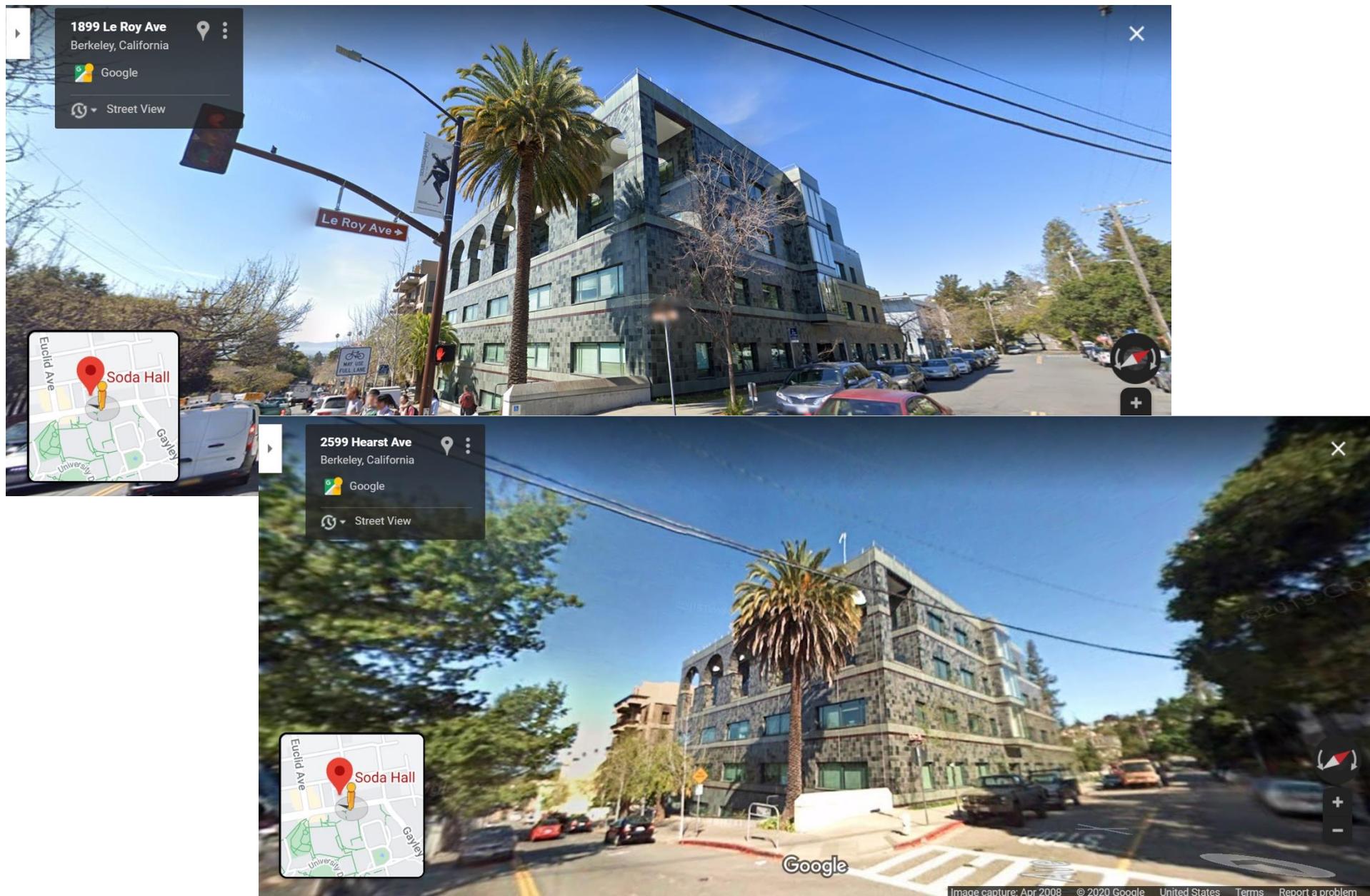


After sunset



By Fredo Durand

“Golden Hour”



less than 1 hour
after sunrise



During sunset/sunrise



After sunset



By Fredo Durand

After sunset: blue hour



Blue Hour (Russian River)



Photo by A. A. Efros

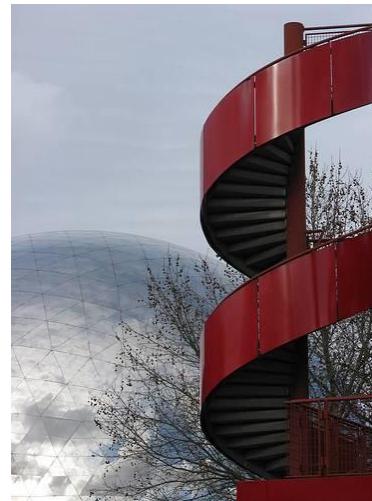
Anyone can take great pictures...



I am a sucky photographer...



...but I am a pretty good photo critic!



<http://flickr.com/photos/aaefros/>

of my Paris photos on Flickr: 32
Total # of my Paris photos: ~1250

~2%

The Postmodern Photographer

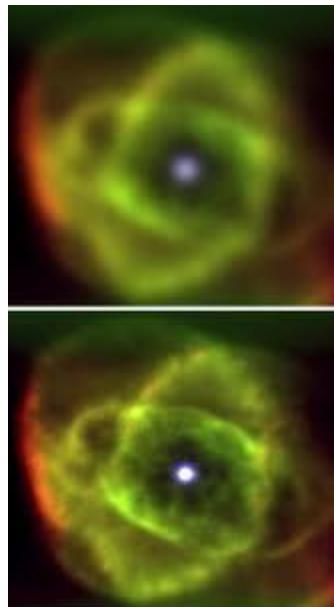
The Old Days: a pre-process

- Load film
- Find subject
- Position camera
- Set all the settings “just right”
- Take a deep breath...
- ...Press button!

The New Digital Days: a post-process

- Get a 64 GB memory cartridge
- Take pictures like there is no tomorrow!!!
- ...
- Back home, spend hours of agony trying to find 1-2 good ones

Lucky Imaging



Simplicity to Complexity



Enjoying your next trip to (SF)-MOMA



*Pablo Picasso
The Guitar Player (1911)*

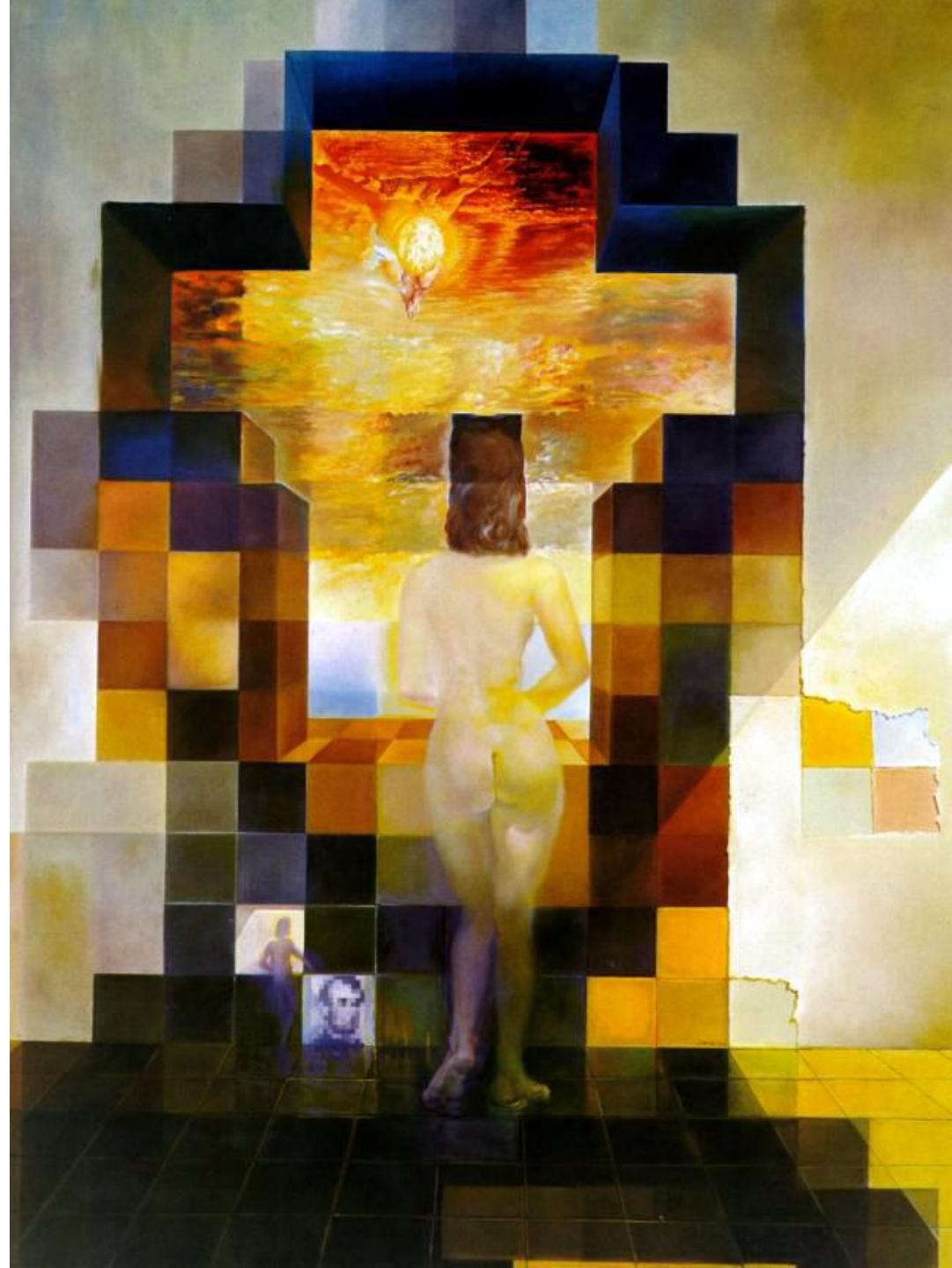
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Simplistic Art PCA

Some “Principal Components” of Art:

- Cute ideas / illusions / clever tricks
- Direct Visceral Pleasure
- Familiarity / Nostalgia
- Art-Historical “Context”

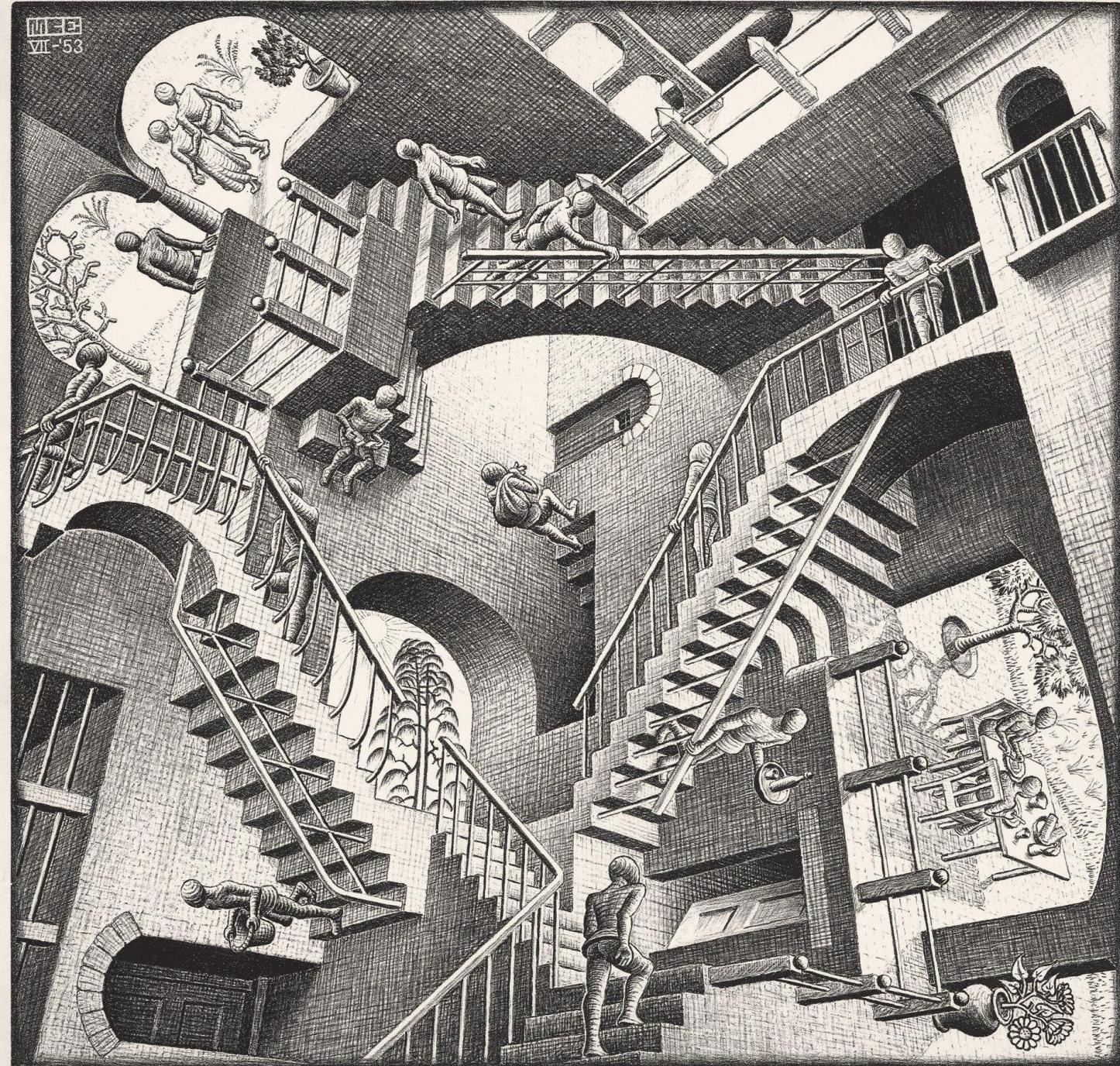
Cute Ideas / Illusions / Clever Tricks



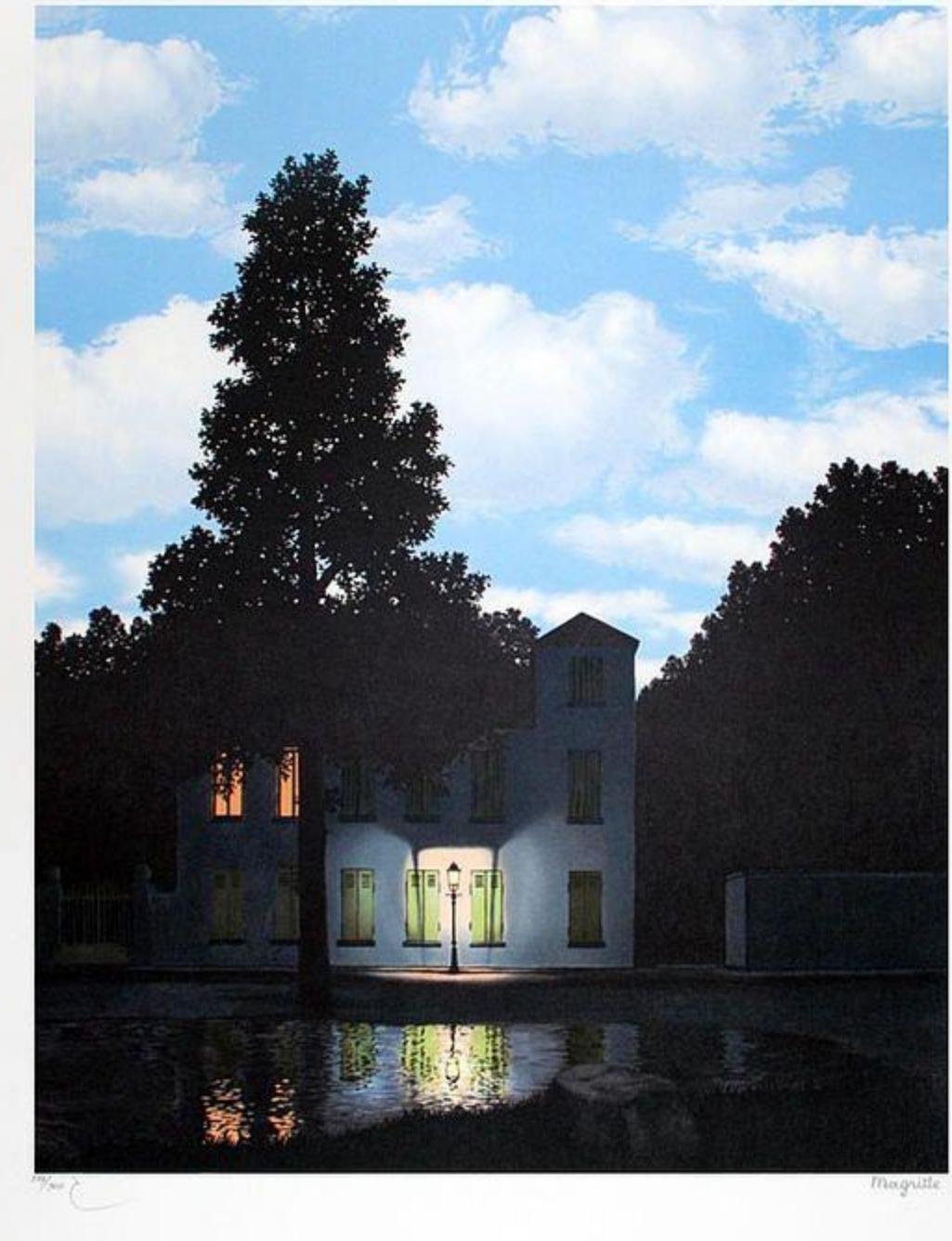
Salvador Dali

*"Gala Contemplating the Mediterranean Sea,
which at 30 meters becomes the portrait
of Abraham Lincoln", 1976*

M.C.
VII-'53

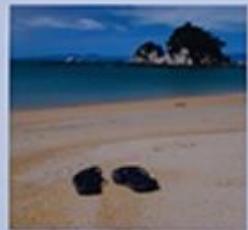


M.C. Escher



Rene Maritte

People who liked this also liked...



Motapouri Bay
0.54 km East



Mangawhai Falls
24.30 km North



Crown Falls
0.74 km North West

[Scott Kelly and Ben Polkinghorne](#)

Direct Visceral Pleasure



Jan van Eyck, *The Arnolfini Marriage* (c. 1434)



Olafur Eliasson, The Weather Project



Mark Rothko



Mark Rothko

Familiarity / Nostalgia



© Michael Galinsky, 1989
(from "Malls Across America")



Edward Hopper



Alberto Giacometti

Art-Historical “Context”

Cultural Context

A screenshot of a web browser window. The address bar shows the URL: higheredtoday.org/2017/02/17/scylla-charybdis-navigating-cost-college/. The browser has several tabs open, including "no subject", "Between Scylla and Charybdis", "UC Berkeley", "Launch Meeti", "Launch Meeti", "Launch Meeti", and a "+" tab. Below the address bar is a navigation bar with links: Apps, Research, Paris Stuff, teaching, Premium Fare Deals..., Кино онлайн бесп..., PI Portfolio, Other bookmarks, and Reading list. The main menu bar has categories: POLICY & RESEARCH, LEADERSHIP, INTERNATIONAL, and ATTAINMENT & INNOVATION.

Between Scylla and Charybdis: Navigating the Cost of College

February 17, 2017

By Geoffrey L. Brackett

One of my favorite episodes in Homer's *Odyssey* is one of the most fearsome. It involves the sailing between the mysterious cave-dwelling monster Scylla and the terrifying, ship-destroying whirlpool known as Charybdis. There is something about having to manage two supernatural threats at once that makes Odysseus' journey

SHARE THIS
POST

SHARE THIS...



Type here to search



69°F



4:41 PM

12/1/2021



Cultural Context

A screenshot of a web browser window. The address bar shows the URL: texastribune.org/2016/01/05/cruz-trump-alliance-again-shows-signs-fraying/. The page content is a news article titled "Still Chums? Cruz Says Trump Jumped the Shark". Above the article, there is a teal banner with the text "EXTENDED: Help us unlock \$30,000 in matching funds. Donate now to double your impact." and a "DONATE" button. The page header includes the "THE TEXAS TRIBUNE" logo, navigation links for "DONATE", "NEWSLETTERS", "EVENTS", "AUDIO", "DATA", "LOG IN", "SIGN UP", and a search icon.

Still Chums? Cruz Says Trump Jumped the Shark

The political bromance between GOP presidential hopefuls Donald Trump and U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz appeared to be unraveling Tuesday after Trump raised the issue of Cruz's Canadian birth, and Cruz suggested his rival has jumped the shark.

BY PATRICK SVITEK JAN. 5, 2016 8 PM CENTRAL

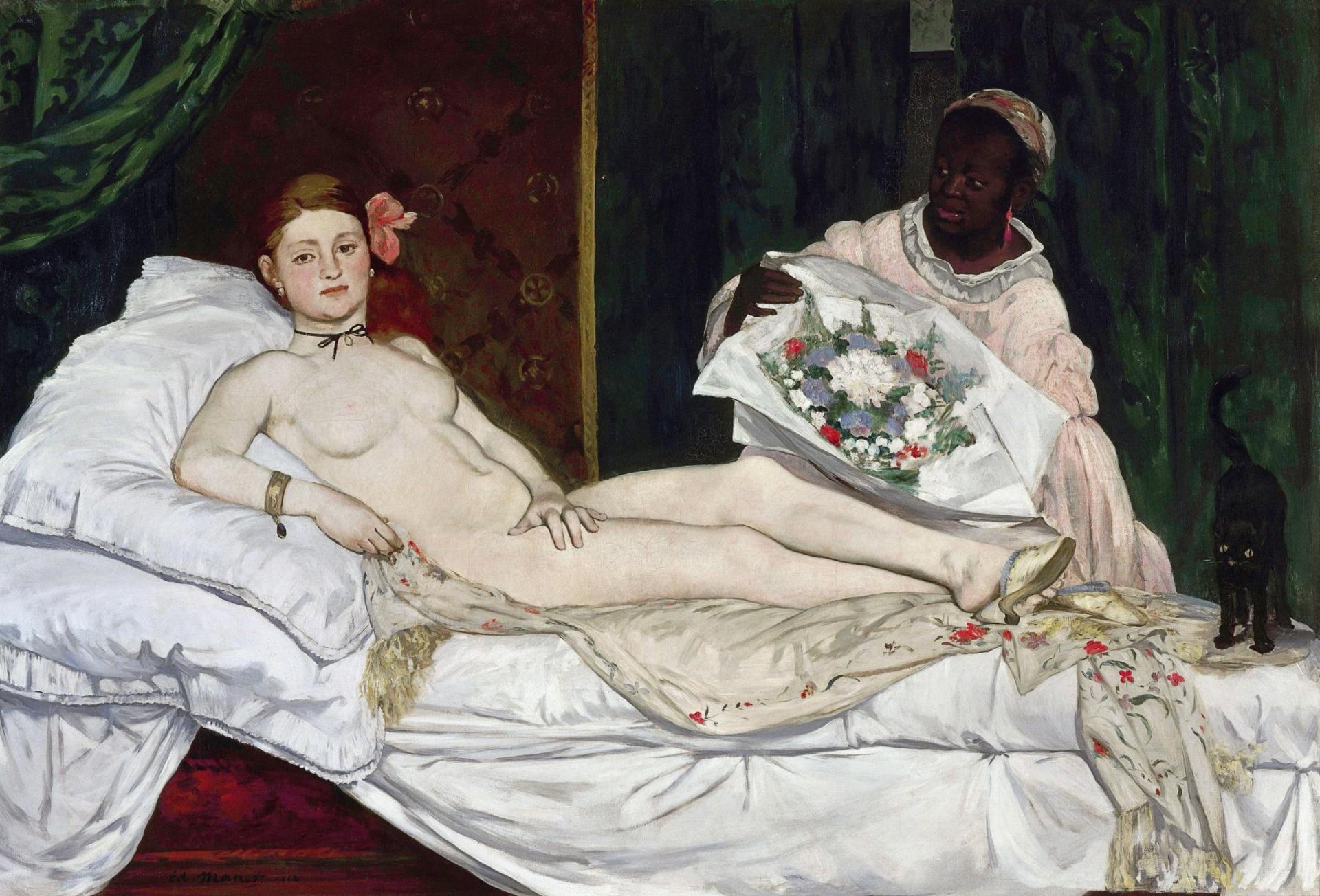
Cultural Context

The screenshot shows a web browser window with multiple tabs open at the top. The active tab displays a news article from [thesouthafrican.com](https://thesouthafrican.com/news/red-wedding-five-killed-in-shootout-eastern-cape-manhunt-launch/). The page header includes the logo 'THE SOUTH AFRICAN' and navigation links for ADVERTISE, ABOUT US, TERMS, CONDITIONS, PRIVACY & GDPR, CONTACT US, and various news categories like NEWS, SPORT, CULTURE, LIFESTYLE, BUSINESS, #STUDENTLIFE, and WIN. The main content features a large, bold headline about a tragic wedding shooting in the Eastern Cape.

Home > News

Red wedding: Five killed in shootout during Eastern Cape nuptials

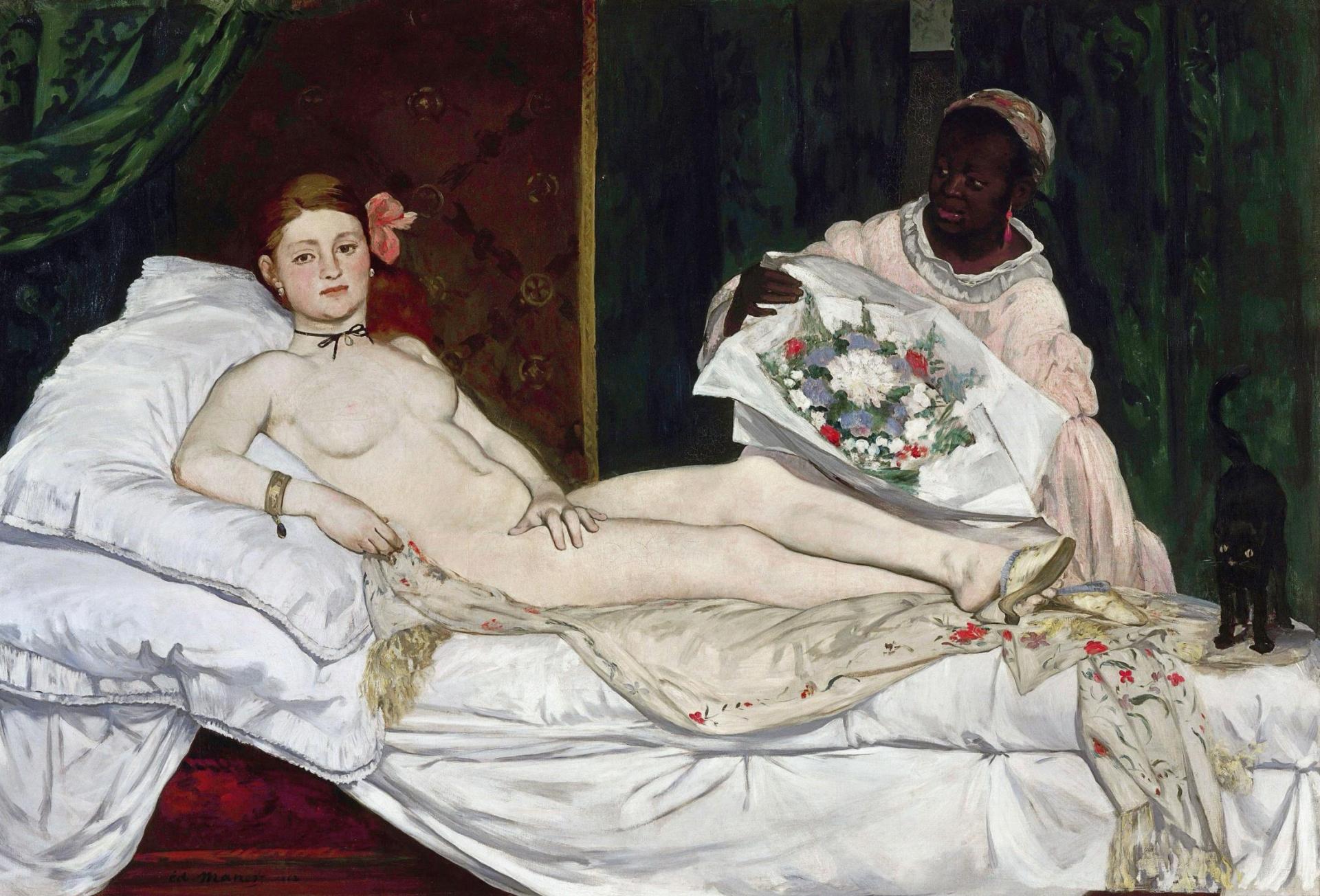
A manhunt has been launched after gunmen stormed a wedding in the Eastern Cape and opened fire on unsuspecting guests.



Édouard Manet, “Olympia” (1865)



Titian, “Reclining Venus” (1532)



Édouard Manet, “Olympia” (1865)



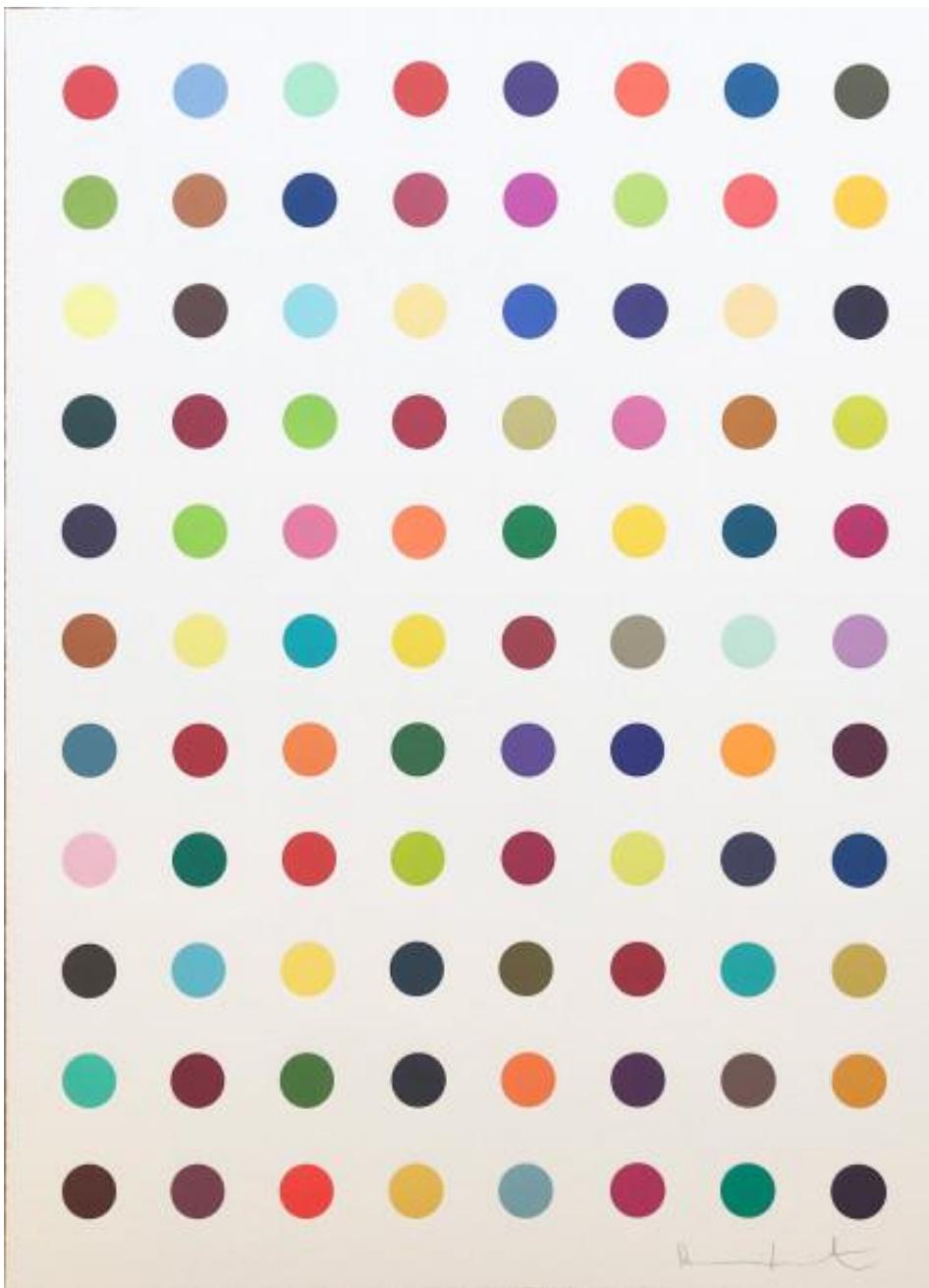
Shepherd Fairey



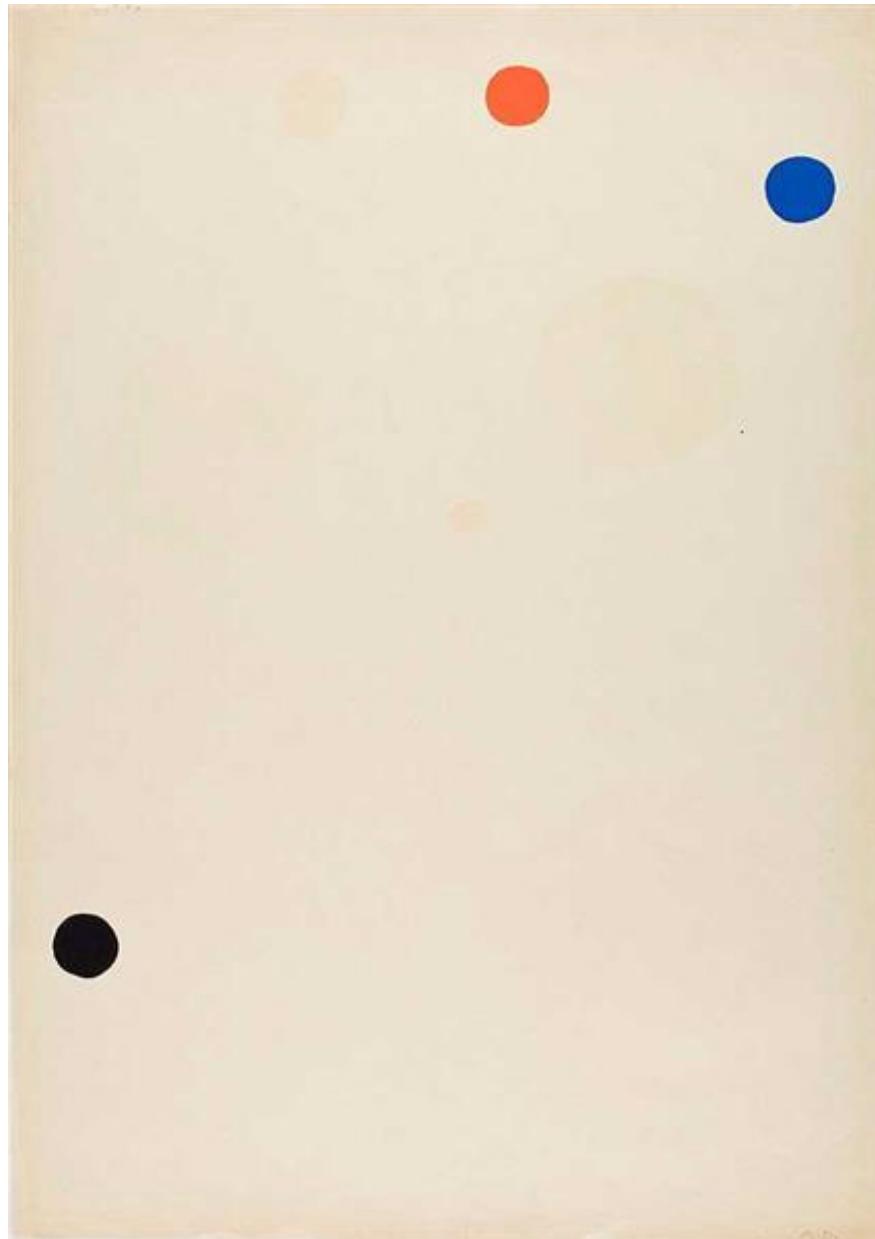
Shepherd Fairey



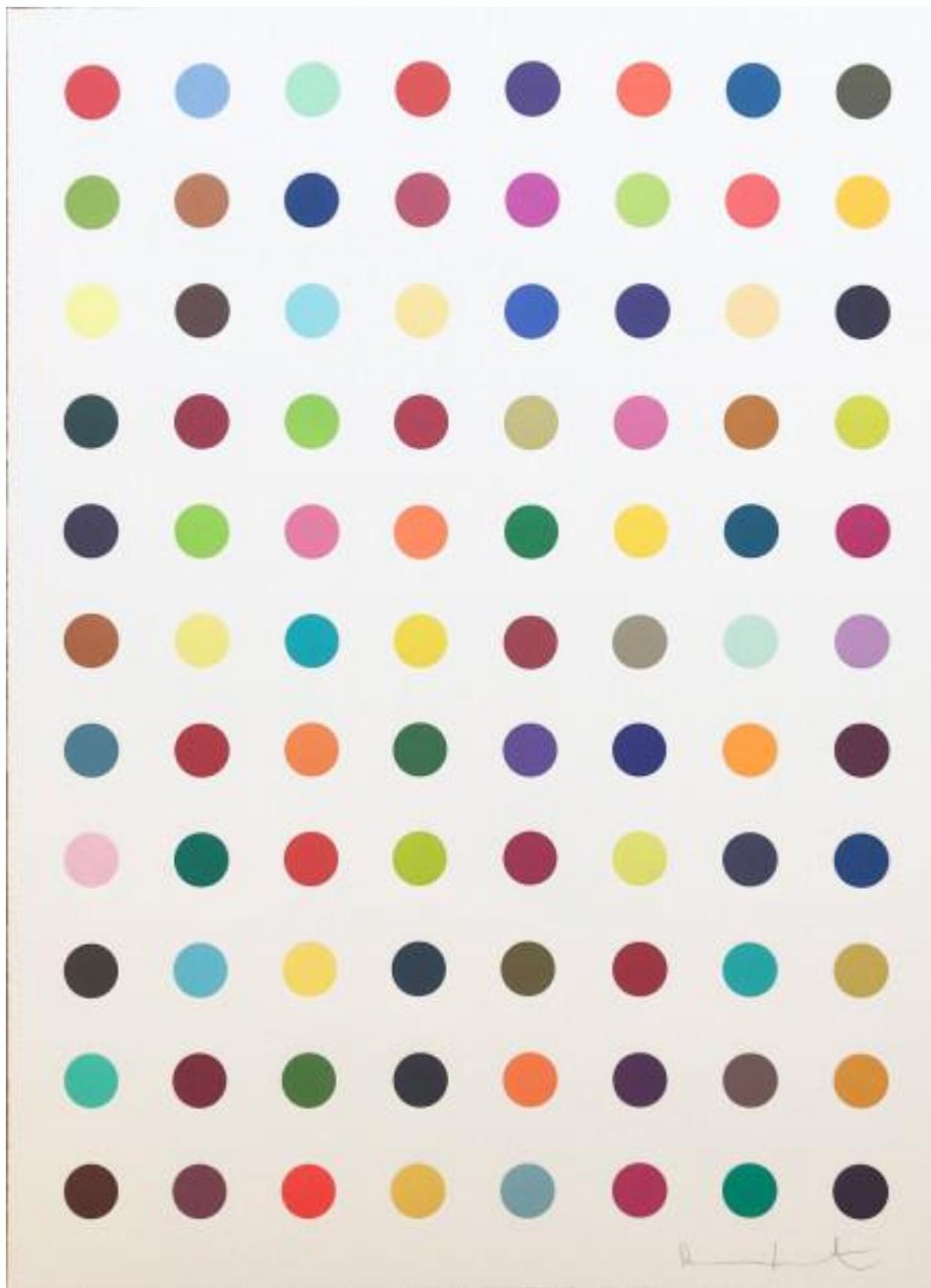
Banksy



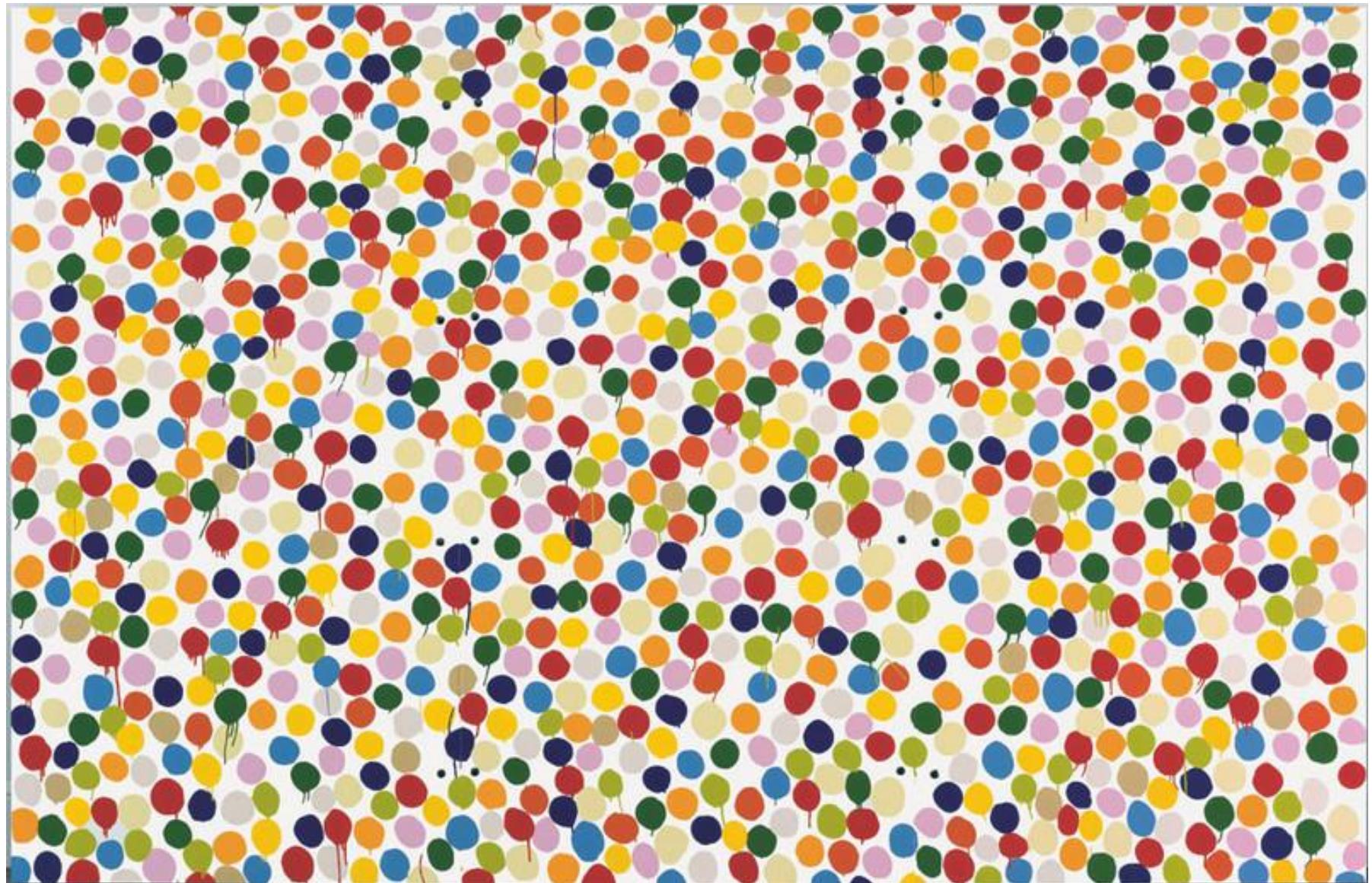
Damien Hirst, Spot Paintings (1968--)



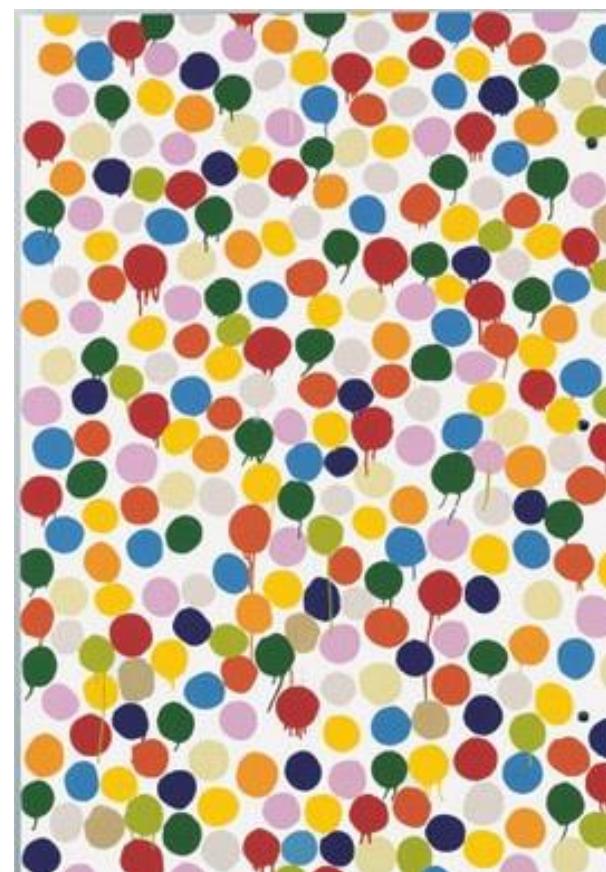
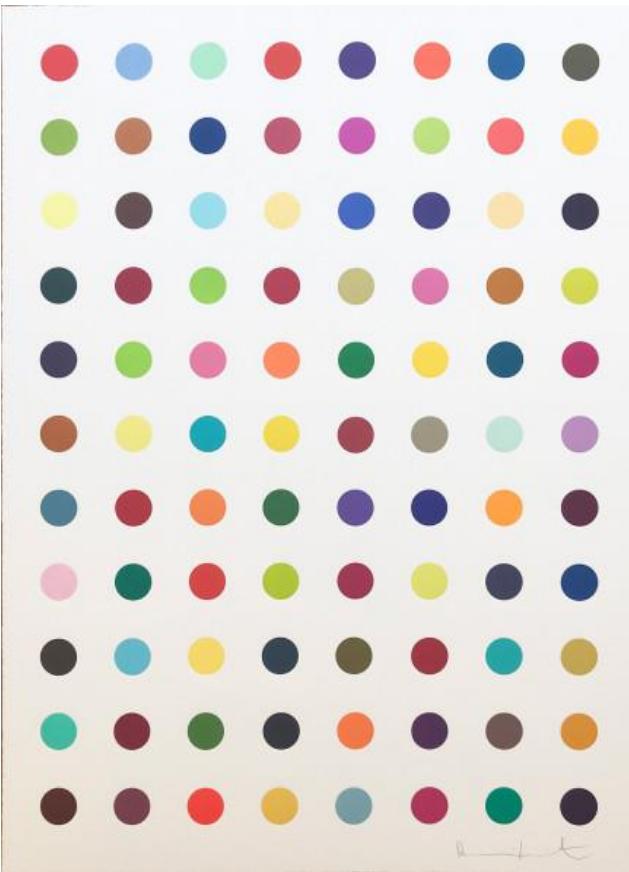
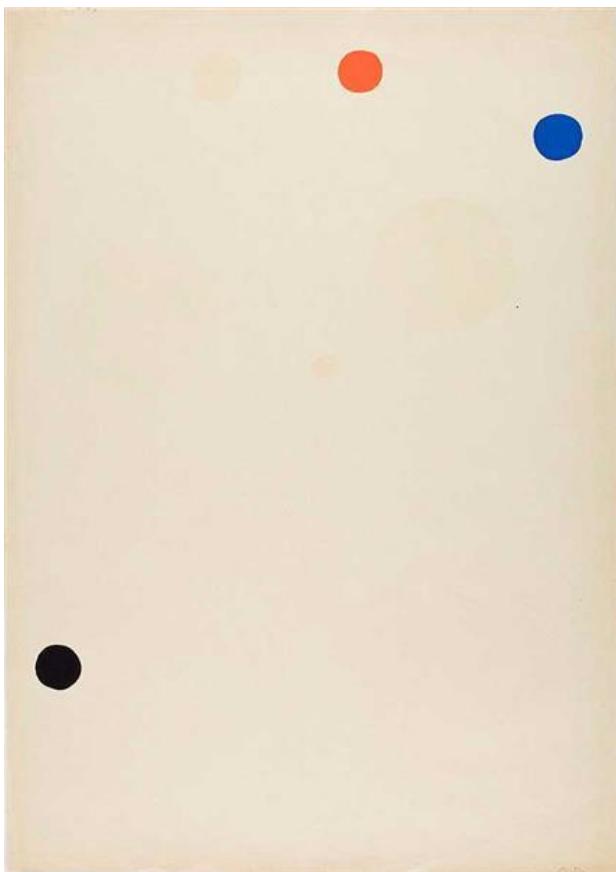
Zlotnikov, "Signals" (1965)



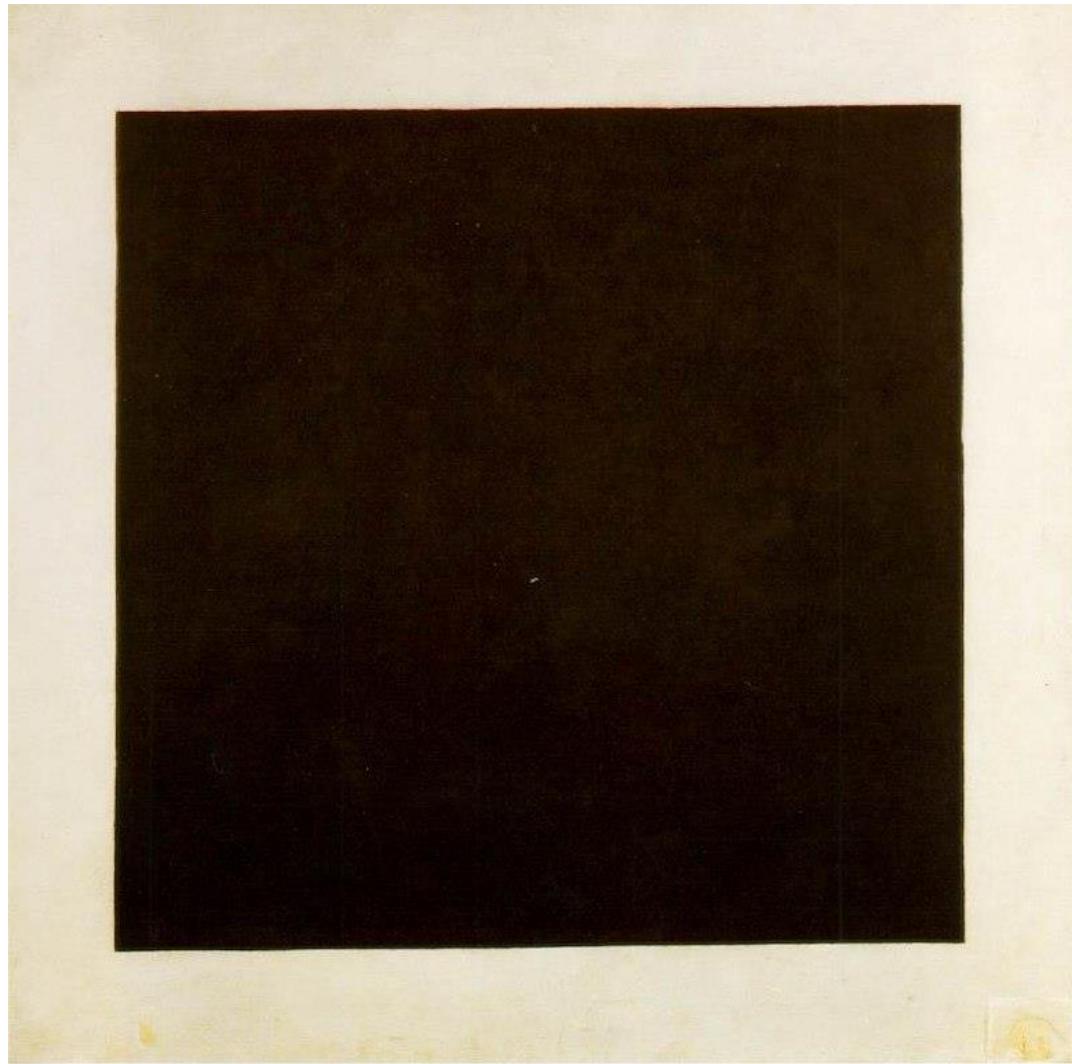
Damien Hirst, Spot Paintings (1968--)



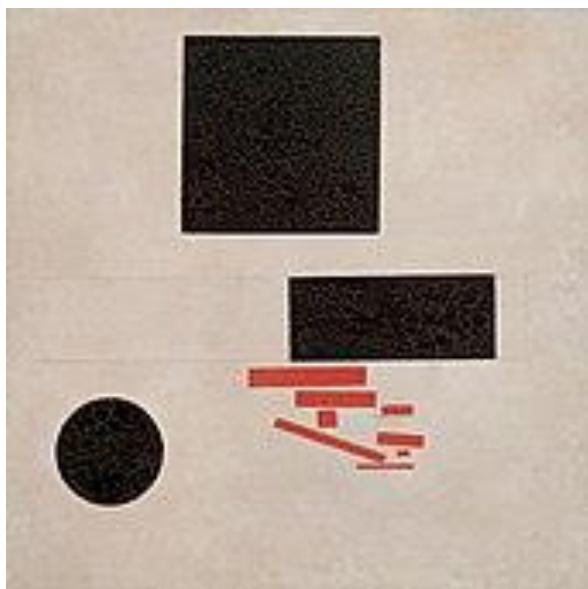
Damien Hirst



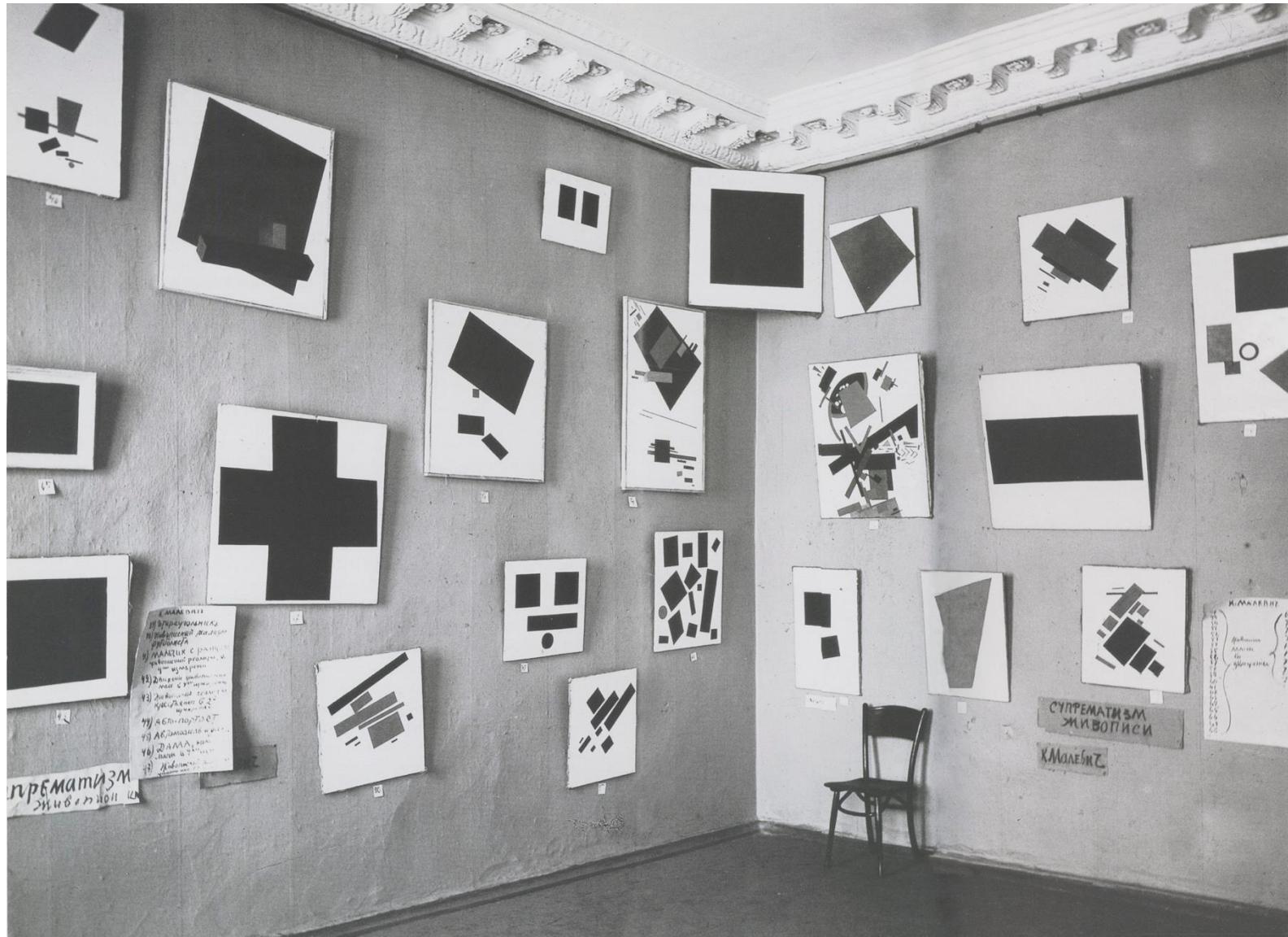
Direction of change



Malevich, “Black Square” (1915)



Malevich



“Black Square” as exhibited (1915)

THANK YOU!

