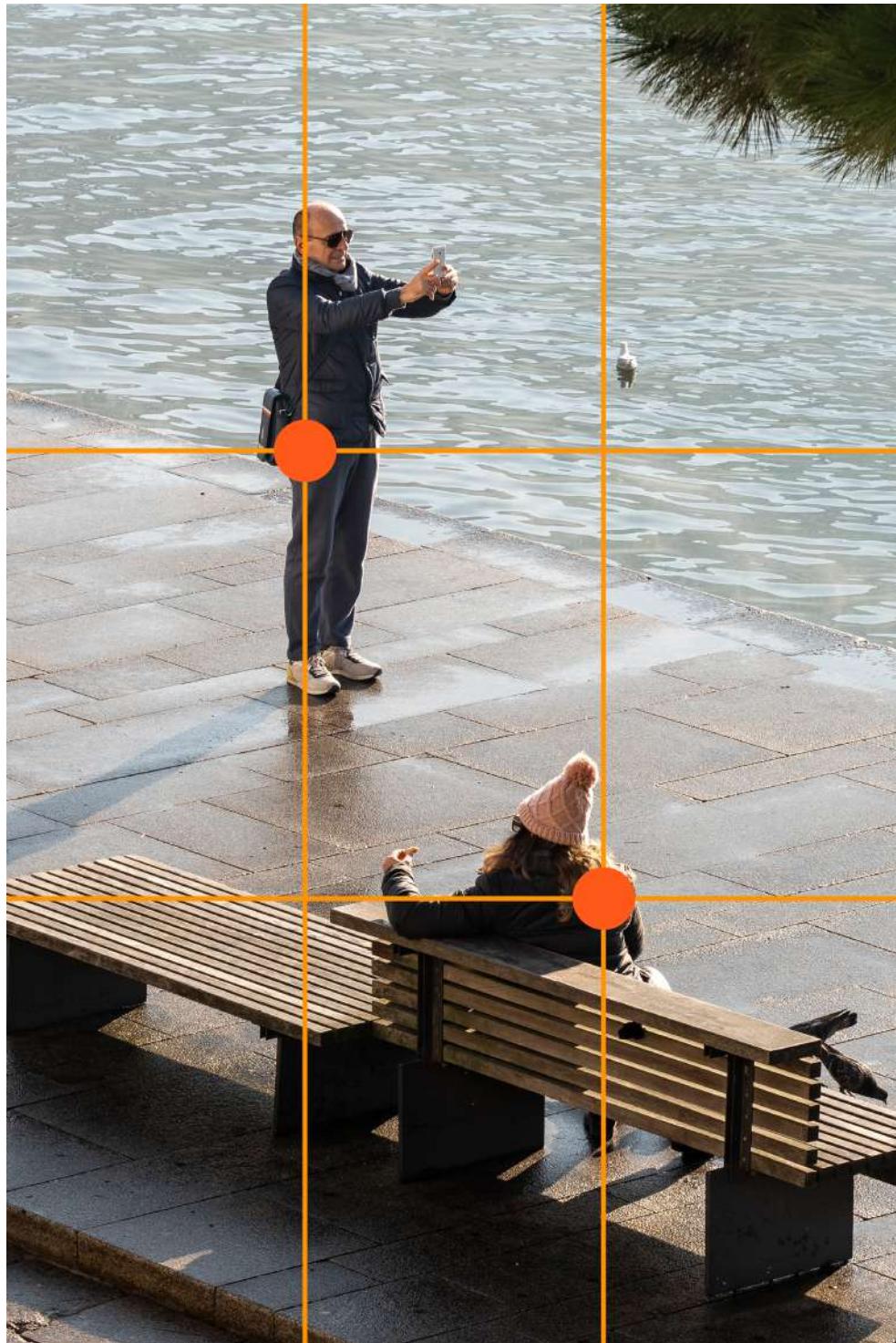


# RULE OF THIRDS

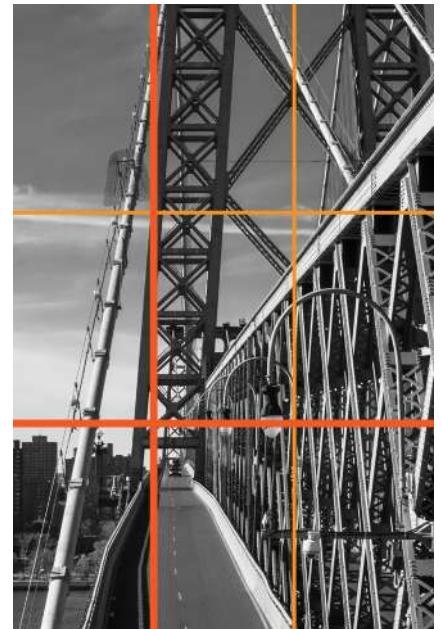
1

## BASIC RULES

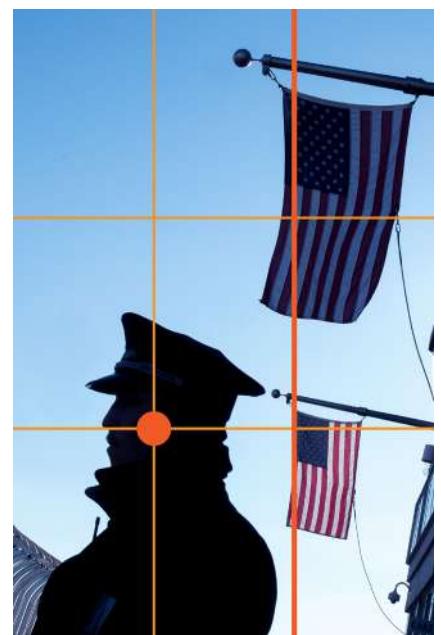
When using the rule of thirds, you break up the image into nine equal sections split with two horizontal and two vertical lines. You should arrange your composition so that the most interesting parts of the scene fall onto the lines, or where the lines intersect. This adds structure, depth, balance and interest to the scene.



▲ By using the rules of thirds we can add depth to the frame and a balance between the two main focal points.



▲ The horizontal and vertical lines intersect to add balance and depth to the image.



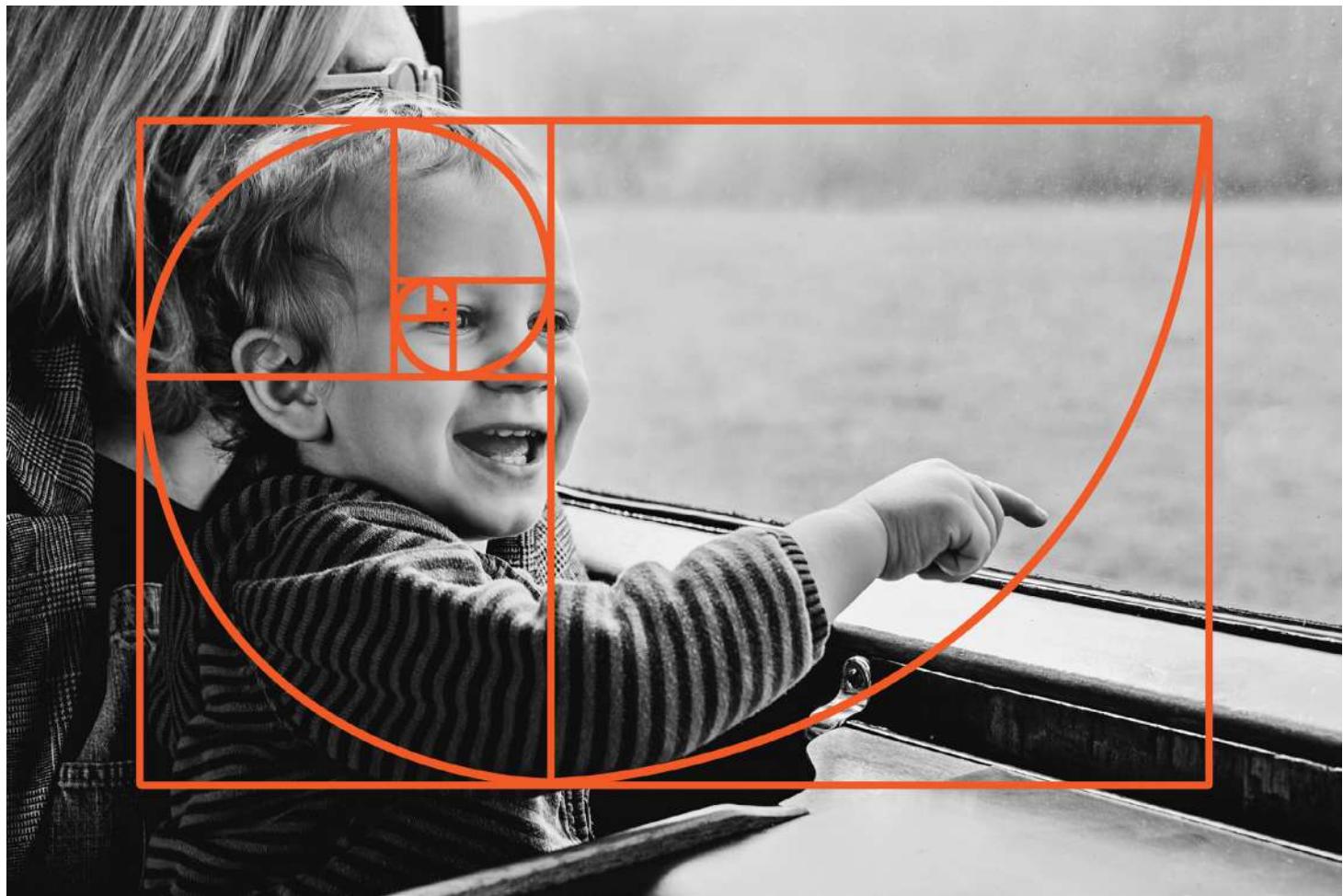
▲ The silhouette falls into the bottom left intersect point and is balanced by a line of flags.

# GOLDEN RATIO

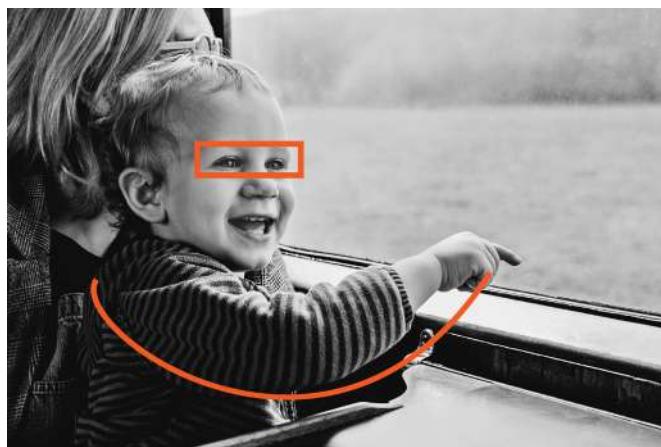
2

## BASIC RULES

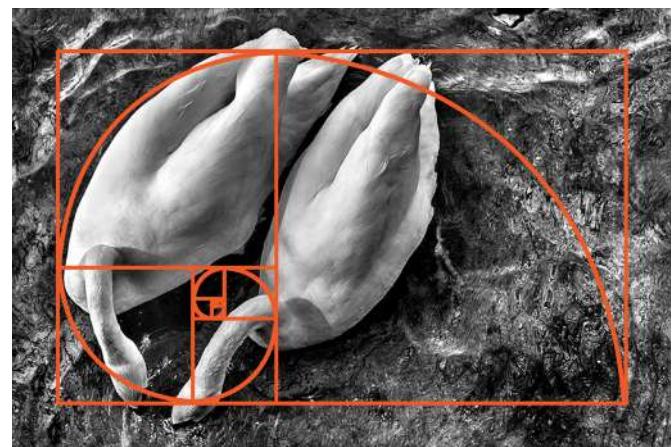
Also known as the Fibonacci Spiral, the Golden Ratio is a composition rule found in nature. The frame is repeatedly divided up into a ratio of 1.618:1 to create a spiral effect. To use this rule in your photography, you can add elements of your frame along the spiral, and at the point where the spiral ends. It produces beautiful harmony and perfect balance in images.



▲ The spiral meets at the boy's eyes after following the curve of his arm. This adds an emphasis on his face and direction.



▲ Without the overlay, you can still see the effects in action.



▲ Look for curves that meet at an obvious focal point to try the Golden Ratio for yourself.

# FINDING THE FOCAL POINT

## BASIC RULES

The focal point of the image is where your eyes are naturally drawn to first and this usually means it has the strongest visual weight. Without a decisive subject in focus, you can lose the meaning of your image and the viewer can end up confused about where to look. Remove distracting elements which may fight for attention from your focal point for a clearer composition.



▲ The focal point speaks to the audience and says: this is what I want to show you! The boat works as a single focal point here and is a strong and obvious one.



▲ The placement of the subject can have an effect on the emotional feel of the photograph.



▲ Find multiple focal points to give depth and dimension. It creates a feeling of space and height.

# CREATING DEPTH

## BASIC RULES

The depth of a photo gives us a perception of length, width and height to turn a flat composition into a three-dimensional image. This is easily achieved through a variety of compositional tools like leading lines, vanishing points, and comparisons of size and scale. It will add more interest into your frame and keep your viewer's attention for longer.



▲ By comparing the size of the steps and lamps and different points in the frame, we can see a sense of depth.



▲ The focal point is on the tourists. The stairway creates a pull-through effect in the scene.



▲ The man and the ship take up similar space in the frame, which creates depth.

# CROPPING

## BASIC RULES

5

Cropping defines the edges of the image, as well as what's visible or not in your frame. There are several ways to crop a picture, which likely depend on what you shoot. Different rules apply to portrait, landscape and still-life photography. Cropping can change the narrative of an image. So it is a goal to be conscious of what to include in your shot.



▲ On this first picture, the emphasis is clearly on the two men. It seems that they are the owners of the boat.



▲ The second image shows that they are spending their vacation with their friends.



▲ This last picture shows the beach. Cropping depends on the story you want to tell.

# THE RULE OF ODDS

## BASIC RULES

The Rule of Odds is a technique which utilises an odd number of subjects in the frame to achieve more appealing images. The power of using an odd number of elements relies on the fact that even number of subjects tend to look too uncomfortable to view, especially if they are all in a row. When shooting products or a group of people, it's always best to stick to odds.



▲ The Rule of Odds can make a scene more appealing by only featuring uneven numbers.



▲ The three kayakers conform to the rule of odds. They are more pleasing to look at.



▲ Minimalistic compositions in still-life images often require an odd number of items.

# FILL THE FRAME

## FRAMING

7

A well-composed image relies on the conscious process of inclusion and exclusion. Filling the frame is crucial to make the viewer's interpretation easier by including only the most important elements into your shot. This way you can emphasise the main subject in your photo, but pay attention not to cut out all of the surroundings. Balance is the key.



▲ The focal point here is the lady. You want everything else to lead your eye to this point as this is the most important aspect in your frame.



▲ Too many distractions are pulling your eye away. These take away from the composition.



▲ By moving closer to fill the frame, the composition became simpler and more defined.

BEST FOR: STREET, ENVIRONMENT

COMBINE WITH:

1

5

48

# FRAME WITHIN THE FRAME

## FRAMING

This visual technique means that you place your subject into a natural or manmade frame, within the frame of the image. It works well to emphasise depth and dimension. It is also adds context and strengthens the focal point by creating a negative space for the subject to appear in. It will direct your viewer's attention and creatively emphasise your subject.



▲ In this case it would be easy to leave out the frame of the composition, but it gives a more unique feeling to an everyday scene.



▲ Here, I used a gap in the hedge to frame this building along the rule of thirds.



▲ A frame within a frame engages the viewer's interest for longer and creates dynamism.

# HORIZONTAL PLACEMENT

## FRAMING

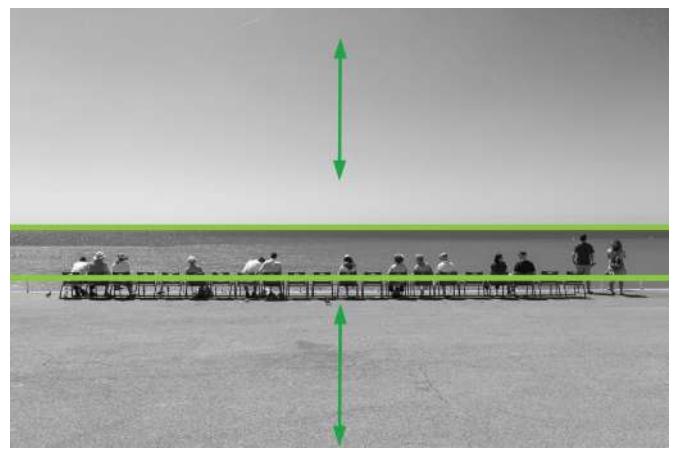
Experimenting with the horizon placement is most common in landscape photography as it allows you to prioritise the most interesting part of the frame. It also adds stability to your image which helps with the overall balance. Be careful to not place the horizon in the middle of the frame as it will cut your image in half, making it uncomfortable to look at.



▲ This seaside photograph illustrates the power of parallel horizontal lines.



▲ There is a relation between the horizon layers and the natural setting of the main subject.



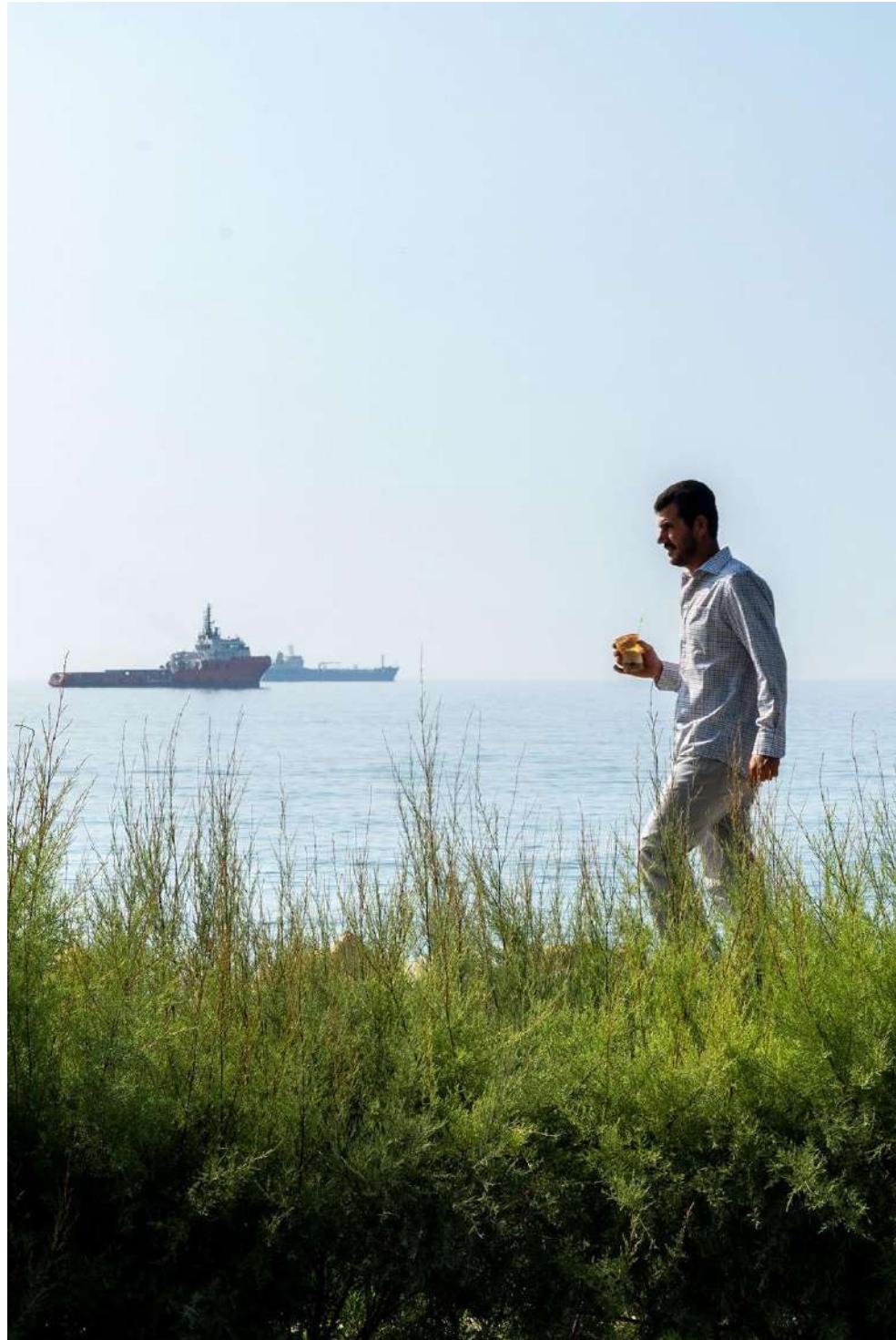
▲ The horizon line creates a precise separation between the fore-, middle- and background.

# FOREGROUND AND BACKGROUND FRAMING

10

## FRAMING

This technique means using any object in the foreground or in the background to create a framing to your subject. The object should be fairly even in texture and not too distracting. It shouldn't take the viewer's eye away from the main subject, but complement it. It helps to emphasise the focal point and play with the depth of field in your pictures.



▲ The foreground gives grounding to the image as it encloses the image. Use simple color and texture to not to distract the viewer.



▲ The statue is framed by using the leaves of a tree. The leaf color creates a feeling of unity with the statue.



▲ The archway frames the cyclist beautifully, with the backlight adding separation.

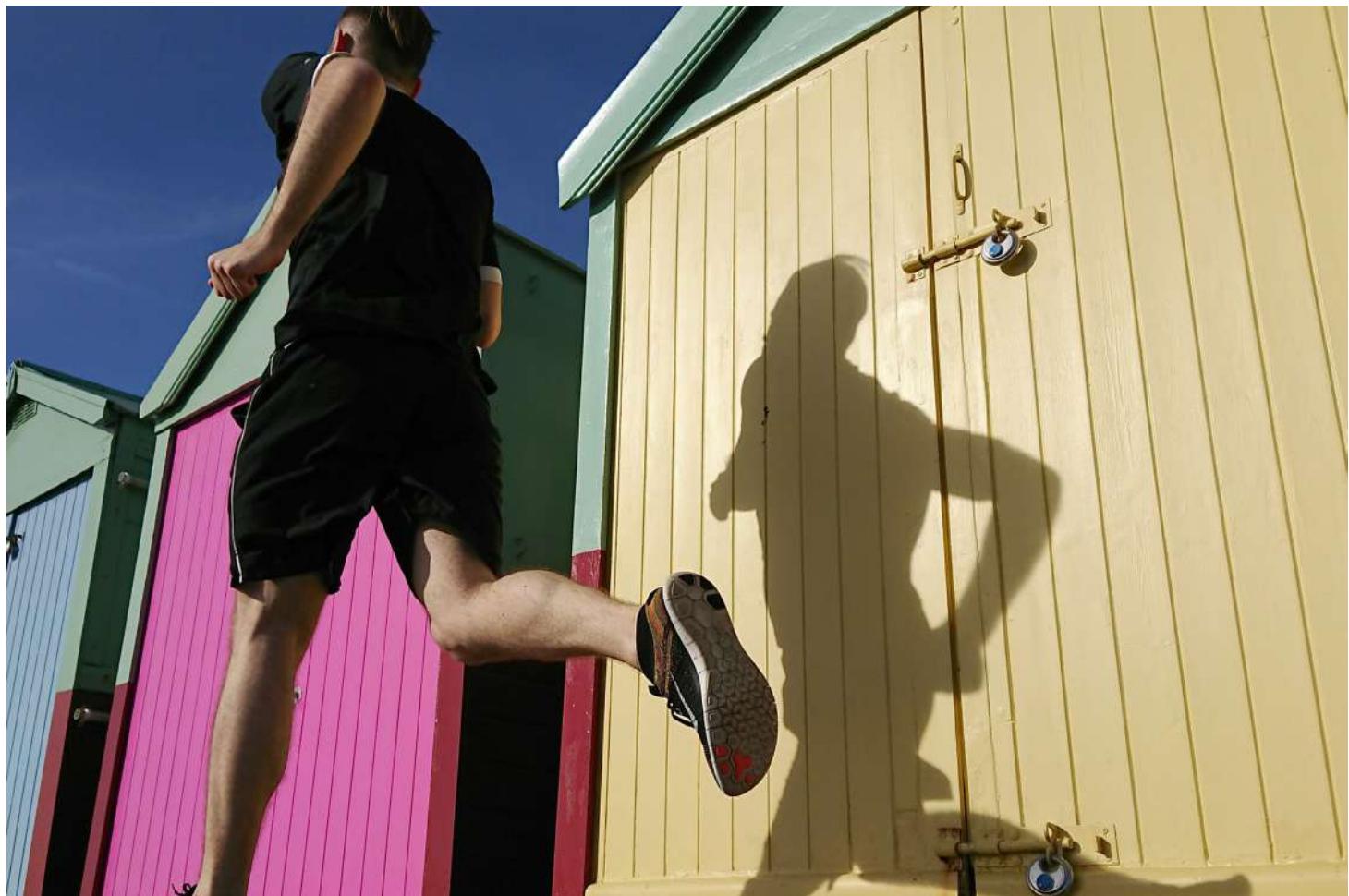
BEST FOR: LANDSCAPE

COMBINE WITH: 9

# LOW ANGLE PERSPECTIVE

11

Using a low angle means shifting the perspective of the image from head-on to looking upwards. It creates a monumental sensation, with a stronger focus on vertical lines. This can result in your image appearing less stable, and should be used sparingly. This dramatic effect evokes a feeling of power and dominance while emphasising your focal point even more.



▲ Shooting from low down and looking up to your subject implies an emotion of dominance and power.



▲ The angle emphasizes motion and refers to an activity by outlining shadows.



▲ A low angle lets you to capture details in the foreground, and emphasize the shapes.

BEST FOR: LANDSCAPE, STREET

COMBINE WITH: 26

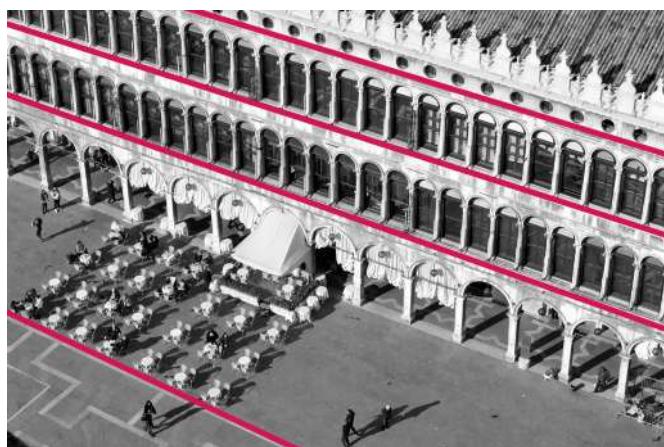
# HIGH ANGLE PERSPECTIVE

12

High angle photography means capturing scenes from 45 to 80 degrees, but not totally overhead. This creates an interesting view of the world which is suitable for architecture and street photography, but unsuitable for most portraits. The results can be quite dramatic and unusual, which makes it ideal for abstract photography. Experiment by shooting from the tops of buildings.



▲ High angle gives us a unique feeling, because it puts us into a new position, so we can see everyday scenes from a new perspective.



▲ Diagonality also adds to the feeling of height in this image.



▲ High angles can distort the true scale of subjects, which can result in abstract images.

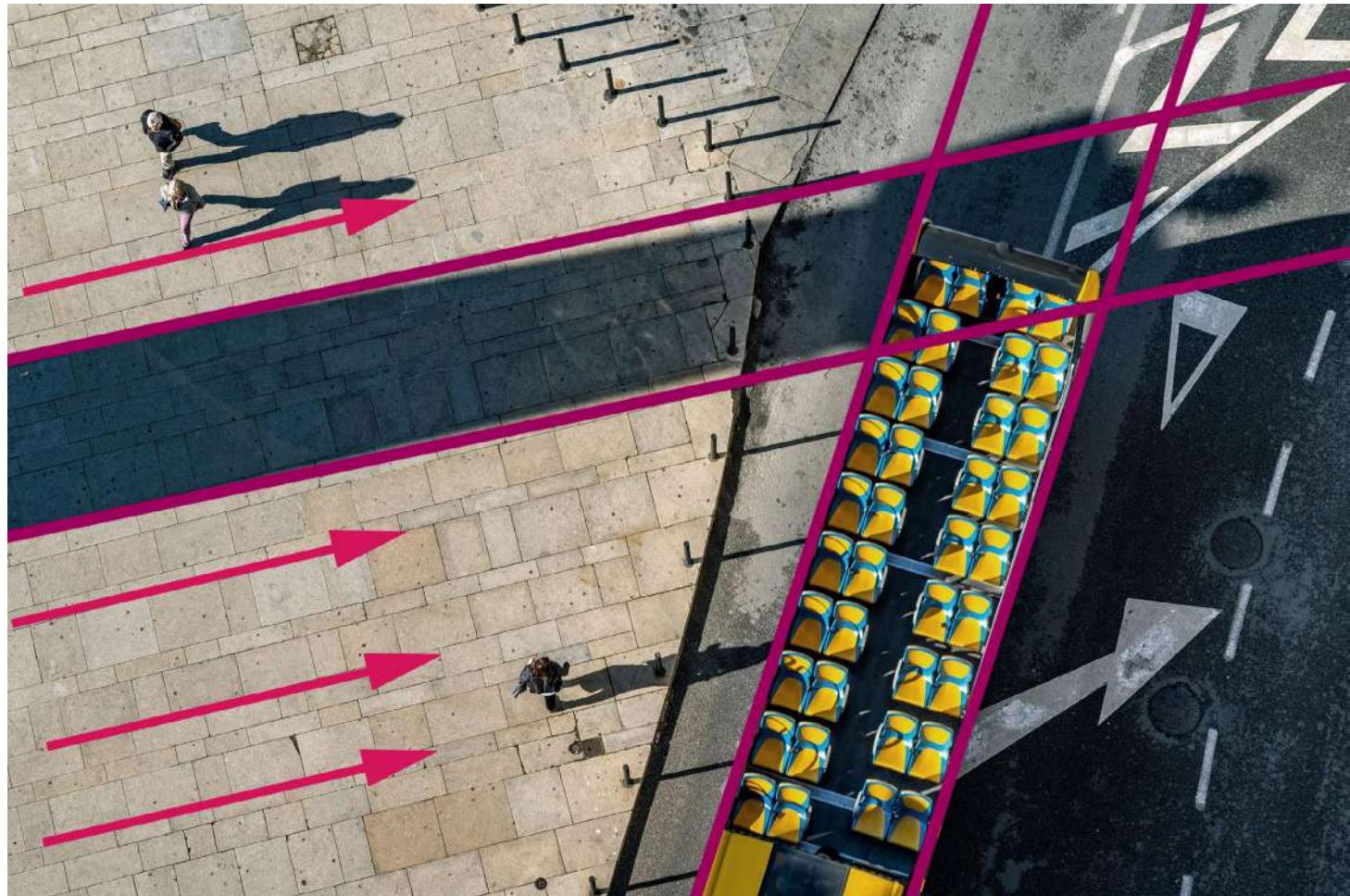
BEST FOR: LANDSCAPE, ENVIRONMENT

COMBINE WITH: 48

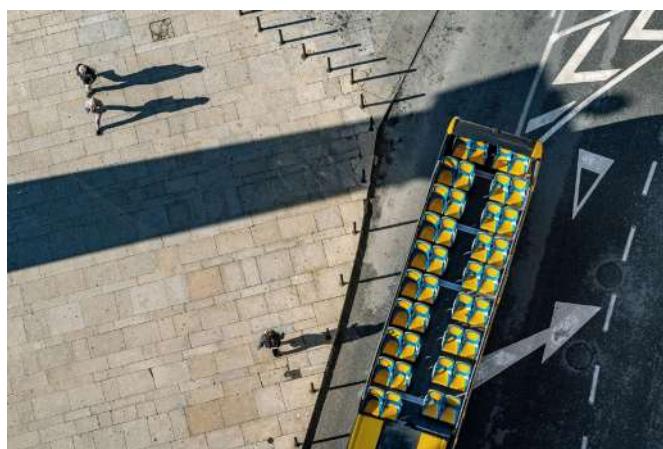
# FLAT LAY PERSPECTIVE

13

Flat lay means shooting from directly overhead, looking straight down on your subject. Besides paying attention to the 90-degree angle, you can play with the lighting to make the image more dynamic. Flat lays are used a lot in still life photography, as it's easy to create shapes and patterns this way, but it can give a unique atmosphere to any kind of photography.



▲ The lighting results in a contrasty look and diagonal alignment. It makes the scene energetic.



▲ Having one dominant light source on one side can give the feeling of depth by creating shadows.



▲ Shooting from above can result in painting-like abstractions with the subjects appearing 2D.

BEST FOR: STILL LIFE, PRODUCT

COMBINE WITH: 6

# DRAMATIC PERSPECTIVE

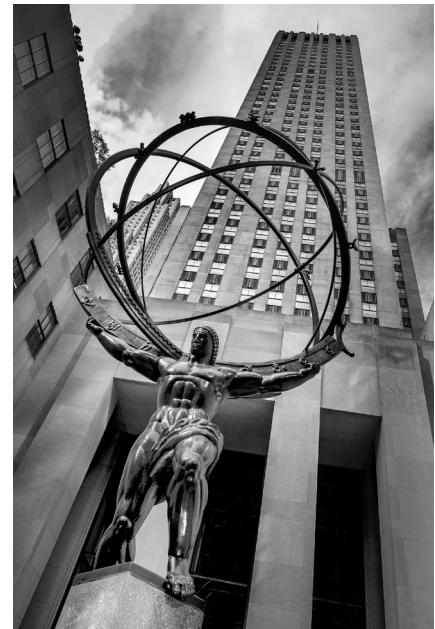
## PERSPECTIVE

14

Similar to high or low angles, dramatic perspective allows you to play with the horizontal angle to find the most striking composition. This works best when you're close to the subject and using a wide angle lens as it will add separation between the points of interest. The result will be quite dramatic, but should be used sparingly throughout a portfolio.



▲ Using a wide-angle lens, and by including lots of foreground and background and keeping it all in focus, I managed to create depth.



▲ There is an increased feeling of space and depth in this picture by including the foreground statue.



▲ The slight rotation enhances the dramatic perspective.

BEST FOR: STREET, ARCHITECTURE

COMBINE WITH: 8

# PROXIMITY TO SUBJECT PERSPECTIVE

15

Proximity to a subject affects how a person interprets an image by including or excluding the surrounding context. This is why we often use it as a technique in portraits. Picturing a person closer evokes feelings and personal attachment. Keeping a distance from your subject creates a feeling of isolation and aloofness.



◀ This shot brings our attention to the emotion of the person. The gesture of the subject's hand creates a personal feeling.



◀ By including more of the surrounding scene, there is less emotion in the image, but more information about the work of the artist.

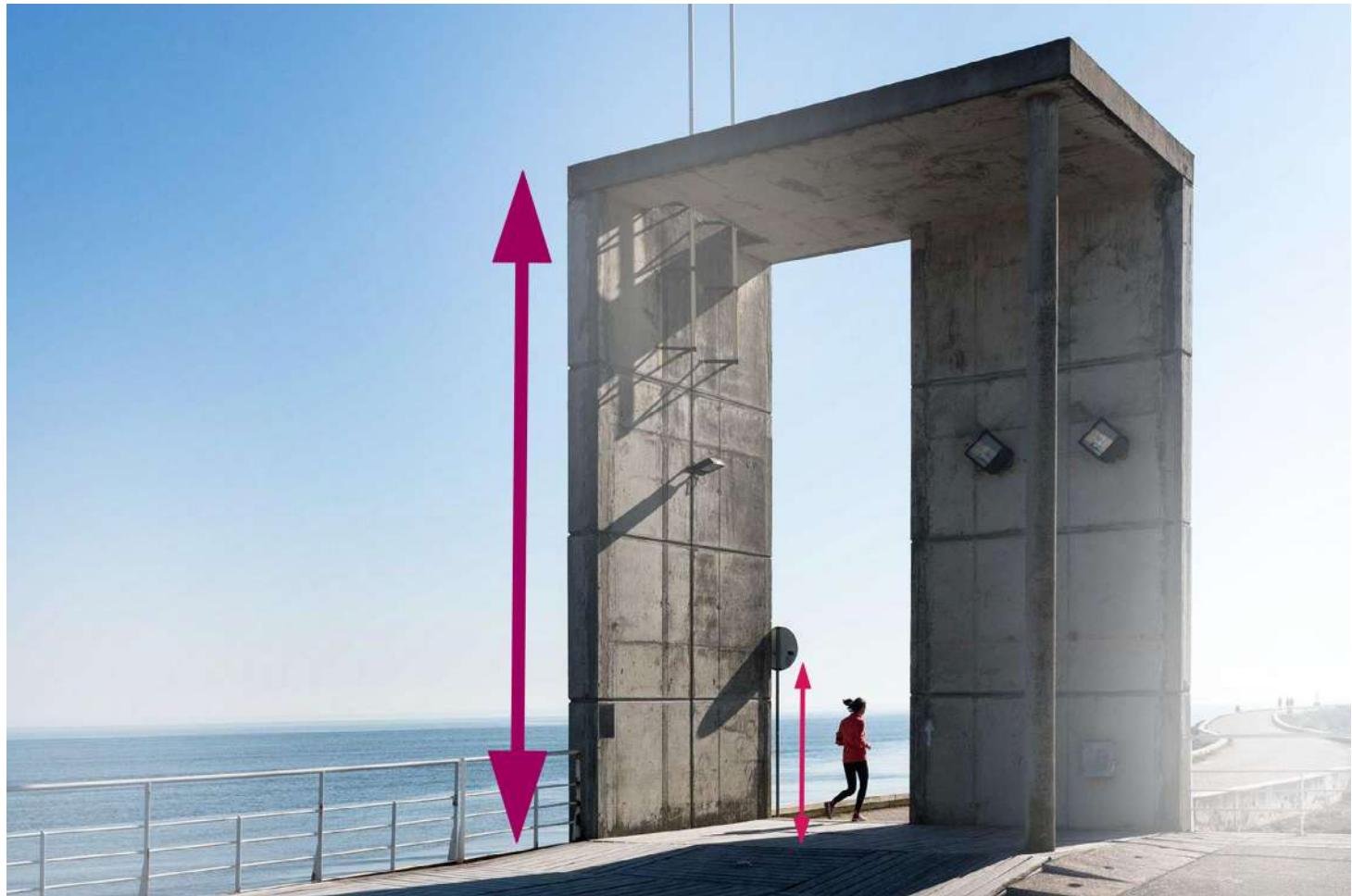
BEST FOR: PORTRAITS

COMBINE WITH: 1

# SHOWING A SENSE OF SCALE

## PERSPECTIVE

With scale in a photograph, the viewer will be able to determine how big or small an object really is. This method works best when there's an element in the frame we can compare to the main point of focus. Street and environmental photography regularly uses a human being as a point of comparison to show a sense of scale. The results can be quite dramatic.

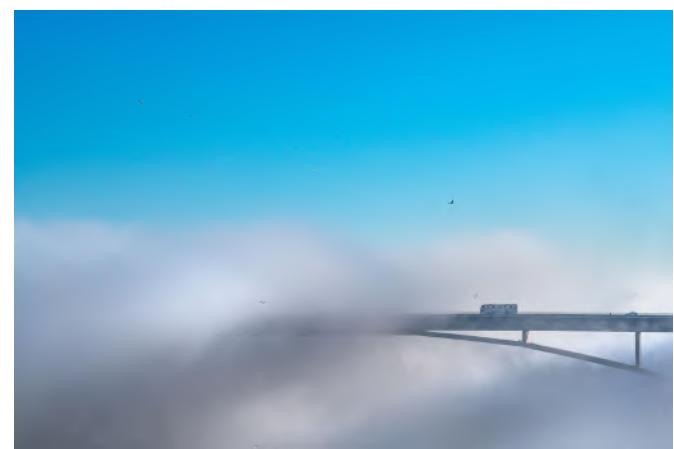


▲ Composing people into your street scenes can emphasize the difference in scale.



▲ We can enhance monumentality by showing how small a person can be next to a building.

**BEST FOR: STREET, ARCHITECTURE**



▲ Proportionality makes us understand why a scene or environment is outstanding.

**COMBINE WITH:** 4

# TRIANGLES

## LEADING THE EYE

17

Triangles are used to connect three different points of focus using perceived lines in the frame. Find 3 separate points of interest and then visualise in your mind how they connect to each other to form a triangle. By utilising this shape in your compositions, it will help lead the viewer's eye around a photograph. It also helps to keep your composition closed and clear.



▲ It is visible that the triangle composition is not only an addition, but a necessary element of storytelling in this image.



▲ The triangle creates a perfect harmony and dynamic between the 3 main subjects.



▲ By dividing your frame into 4 triangles, you can reach an even distribution of the elements.

BEST FOR: NATURE, STILL LIFE

COMBINE WITH: 37

# RECTANGLES LEADING THE EYE

18

Rectangle composition uses 4 points and 4 lines in a geometrical structure to outline the elements of a photo. It tends to look formal and deliberate. To reach this, you should adjust your subject into a four by four grid to create a symmetrical and evenly distributed photo. This is a great way to highlight the orderliness of a scene.



▲ When you look at this photo, the first thing you notice are the straight, parallel lines. This enhances the orderliness.



▲ The repetitively appearing rectangles give a strict and formal feeling.



▲ The rectangles being by line and level rhyme with each other and the shape of the image.

BEST FOR: ENVIRONMENT, LANDSCAPE

COMBINE WITH: 46

# CIRCLES

## LEADING THE EYE

19

Circles can help you to create outstanding compositions. With composing circles and spiral forms into your photo, you can easily draw people's attention to your subject and into the frame. These shapes can direct the viewers' eyes as they automatically follow the lines. Circles and arches are soft and flowing, creating a similar emotional reaction for your viewer.



► You can find circles and spirals in nature. These shapes can enhance the calmness and the harmony of the environment you are in.



► The concentric circles with the brightest part of the scene in the middle create depth.



► The light direction emphasise the circular motif and creates a pulling effect.

BEST FOR: STILL LIFE, NATURE

COMBINE WITH: 45

# PARALLEL LINES

## LEADING THE EYE

20

Parallel lines run adjacent to each other in the same direction. They can be at any angle as long as the distance between them remains the same, so they never meet and cross each other. With finding and composing parallels into your photo, you can evoke a feeling of order, and the viewer will visualise them extending out of the frame.



▲ This image was shot in an urban environment to emphasize how architecture uses the rule of parallelism all the time.



▲ The parallel lines create a visual path and a frame to the skyscraper in the background.



▲ Here the parallels of the columns are pointing towards the letters on the building naturally.

BEST FOR: ARCHITECTURE

COMBINE WITH: 50

# LEADING LINES

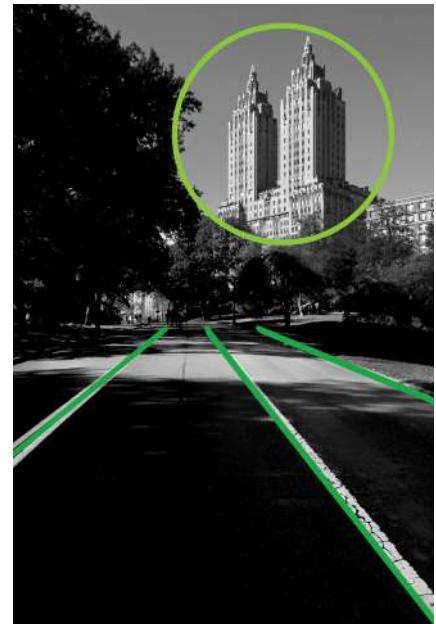
## LEADING THE EYE

21

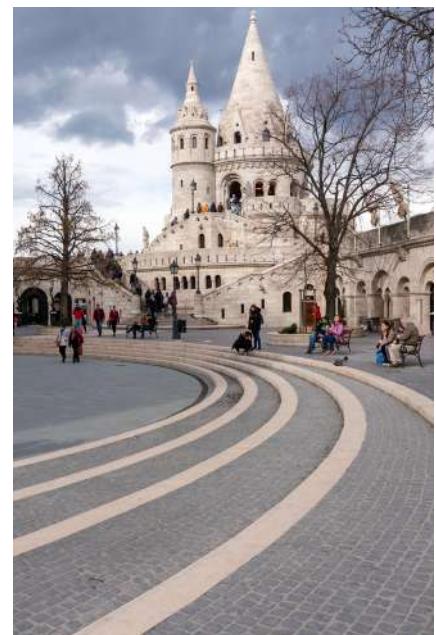
Leading lines create a path to show a way for the eyes to explore the essential elements of your image. You don't have to find exact arrows which point towards your main subject. You can have actual lines, or a succession of individual elements, which together make up an imaginary line. It's a great way to draw attention to your subject by using the surrounding scene.



▲ Anything can form the leading lines in your image, from traffic lanes to paths in nature.



▲ Here, the clever use of the foreground creates a track for the eye to take a further look at the buildings above.



▲ Curved lines can also lead the eyes smoothly and calmly.

BEST FOR: LANDSCAPE

COMBINE WITH: **2**

# DIAGONAL LINES LEADING THE EYE

22

Diagonal lines are angled lines. They are similar to leading lines but they don't necessarily lead the viewer's eye to any point of interest. Try composing them to go to from left to right and from bottom left to top right, as this is the most natural way humans follow objects. They create drama and tension. They can also cross each other to create discord in an image.



▲ Diagonal lines separate the image into two parts. This way, the still image became more dynamic.



▲ The diagonals in this composition create a natural and interesting division in the image.



▲ You can see how your eyes are led through the image without resting on an exact focal point.

BEST FOR: ENVIRONMENT, NATURE

COMBINE WITH:

33

37

# HORIZONTAL LINES

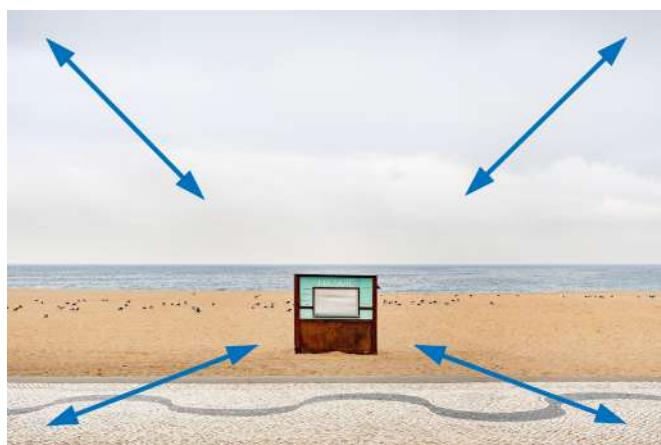
## LEADING THE EYE

23

Horizontal lines add stability to your frame as we naturally associate them with the stability of the earth. They are commonplace, especially in landscape photography, and help to build a sense of balance in the frame. The more lines you use, the most stable the image will appear. Try contrasting them against vertical lines for a more dynamic image.



▲ Horizontal lines can enhance the stillness and the symmetry of a scene.



▲ If you have to include a focal point, placing it to the centre will keep the image balanced.



▲ There is a perfect alignment between the building's parallel horizontal lines and the grass.

BEST FOR: LANDSCAPE

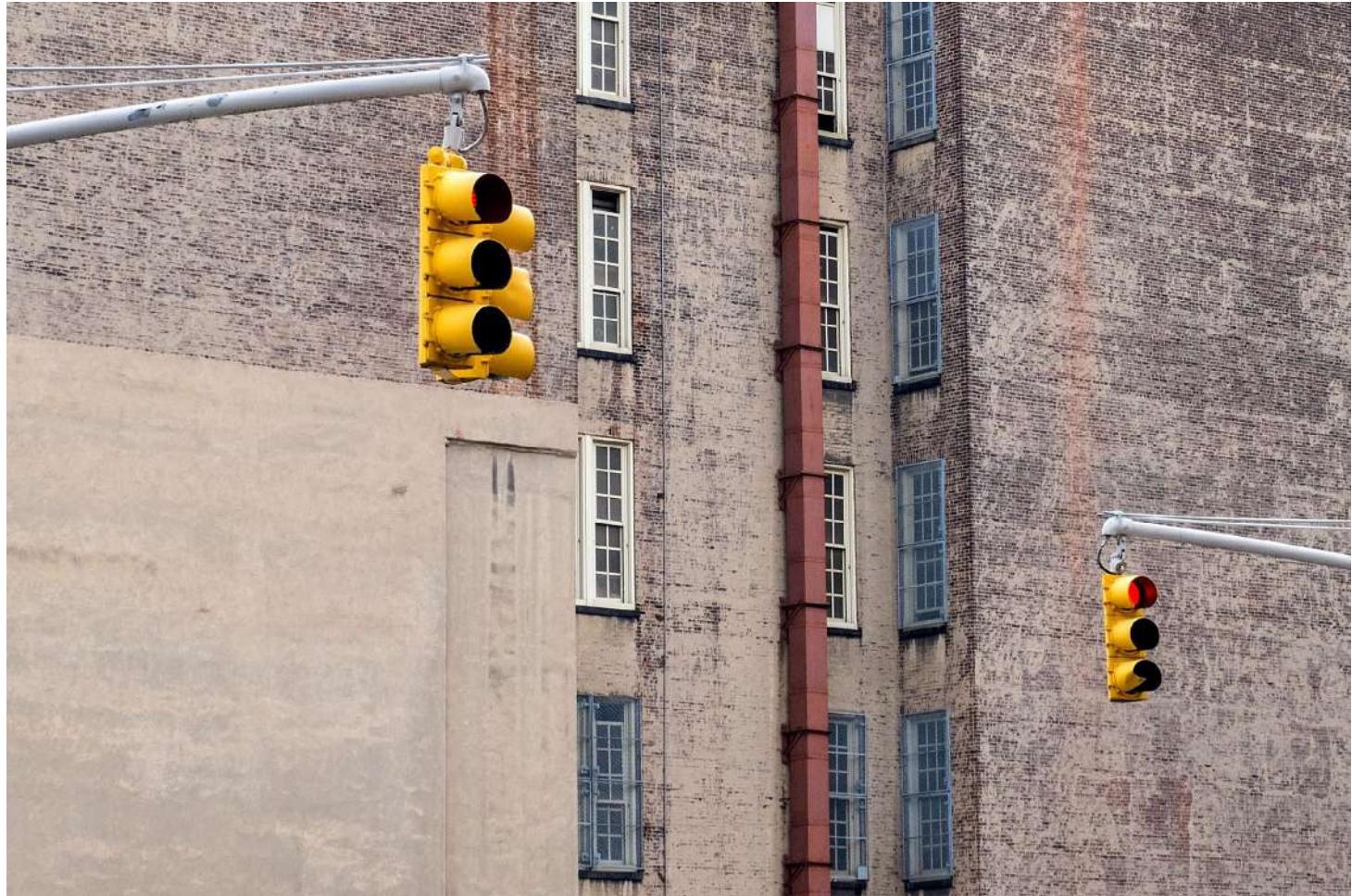
COMBINE WITH: 32

# VERTICAL LINES

## LEADING THE EYE

24

Vertical lines can create a feeling of dominance, especially if you shoot tall trees or buildings. These are much less stable than horizontal lines, so include a horizontal line if you'd like to add stability, or remove it if you want to capture an unstable image. Try shooting in both a portrait and landscape orientation for different results.



▲ Vertical elements can give a subject the feeling of stability and movelessness.



▲ Composing more vertical elements together can enhance the similar traits of different objects.



▲ This technique can make an object appear majestic and give the subject strength.

BEST FOR: LANDSCAPE

COMBINE WITH: 32

# USING EYE-LINES

## LEADING THE EYE

25

Eye-lines follow a person's direction of sight, whether that is to another person, an object, or just into space. They guide us through the picture as we naturally follow the eye-lines. Depending on the facial expression and context, it can give a positive or negative emotion. You can also evoke curiosity by having a person stare out of the frame.



▲ The two people are looking at each other. Besides being so close physically, the eye-lines enhance their emotional connection too.



▲ The eye-line is between the child and the fruit, so we know that he is focusing his attention to it.



▲ A powerful way of using eye-lines is having your subject looking directly into your camera.

BEST FOR: PORTRAIT

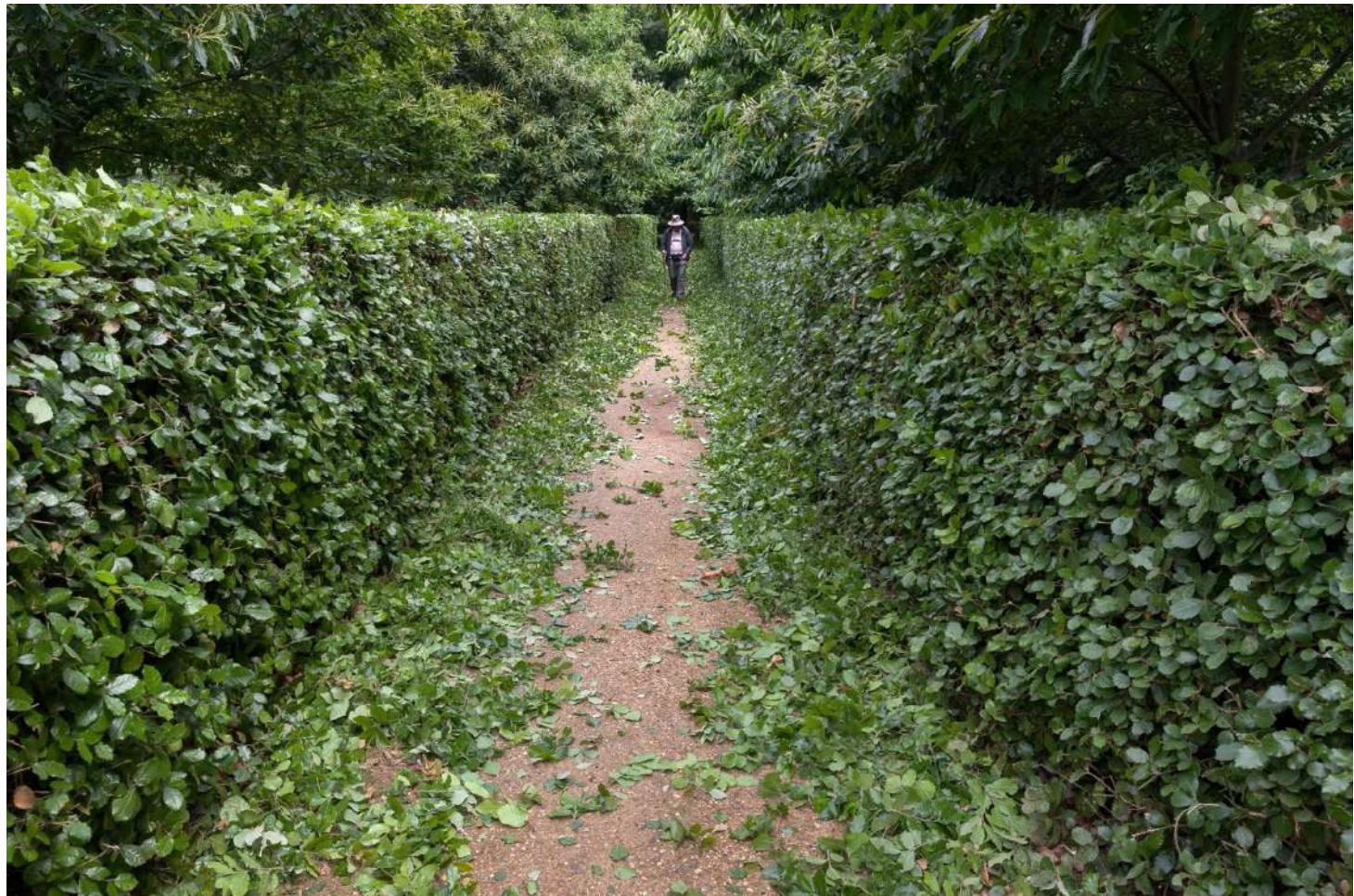
COMBINE WITH: 2

# CONVERGING LINES

## LEADING THE EYE

26

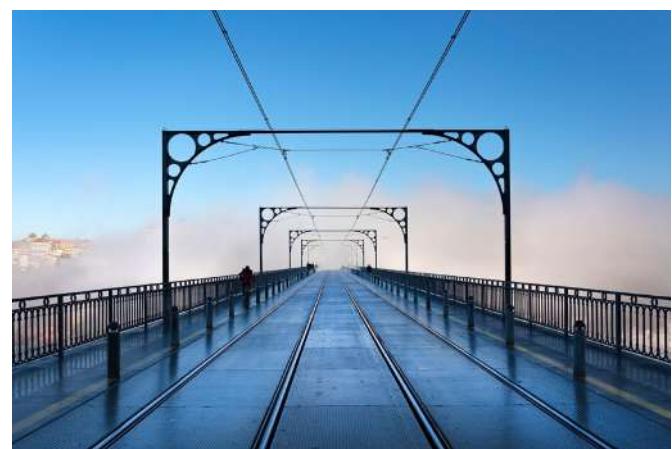
Converging lines appear to go towards each other, meeting at one point somewhere in the distance. This is often achieved using lines that don't actually meet, but appear to gather at a point of convergence. They don't have to be symmetrical, as long as the lines get closer together the further away they travel. Search for convergence on the streets or pathways in the forests.



▲ In this image, the hedges operate as converging lines to frame the man walking down the centre of the path.



▲ This effect inevitably pulls our vision towards the main subject.



▲ Converging lines can work even if you don't have a specific point of interest.

# S-CURVE

## LEADING THE EYE

27

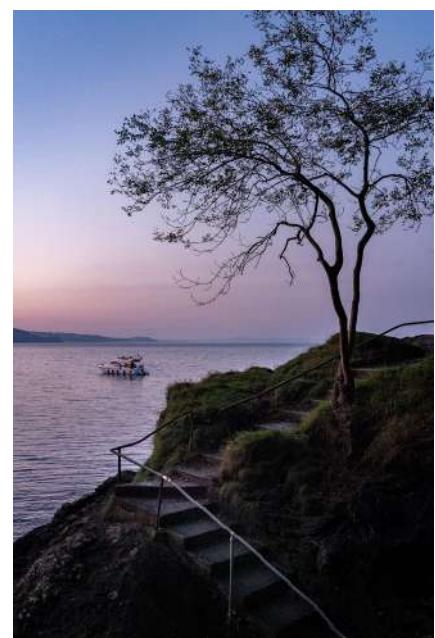
An S-Curve in a composition is a visible or implied shape of the letter S. They lead the eye around a composition from start to finish. This type of composition usually feels more comfortable when arranged from foreground to background and from left to right in either orientation. Curves are naturally easy to look at, as they are soft and gentle on the eye.



▲ In this situation, the distant hills are the elements which are worth the emphasis.



▲ The road shows a perfect S-Curve, which leads the eye around the bend.



▲ Landscape photography utilises S-Curves the most.

BEST FOR: LANDSCAPE

COMBINE WITH: 49

# C-CURVE

## LEADING THE EYE

28

A C-Curve is a visible or implied shape of the letter C. You should only look for half-rounded shapes, roundabouts or even bending seashores to break the cliches of photography. A quick swish is very effective and sometimes it's all a composition needs. Finding C-Curves in your landscape is a simple way of directing the field of vision.



▲ The road implies a c-curve to lead the eye around to the orange bus. This frozen moment is conveying a sense of motion.



▲ The curve marks the way the bus is going to have.



▲ A C-curve can give a calm look to landscapes as it is a relaxing shape for the eye to follow.

BEST FOR: LANDSCAPE

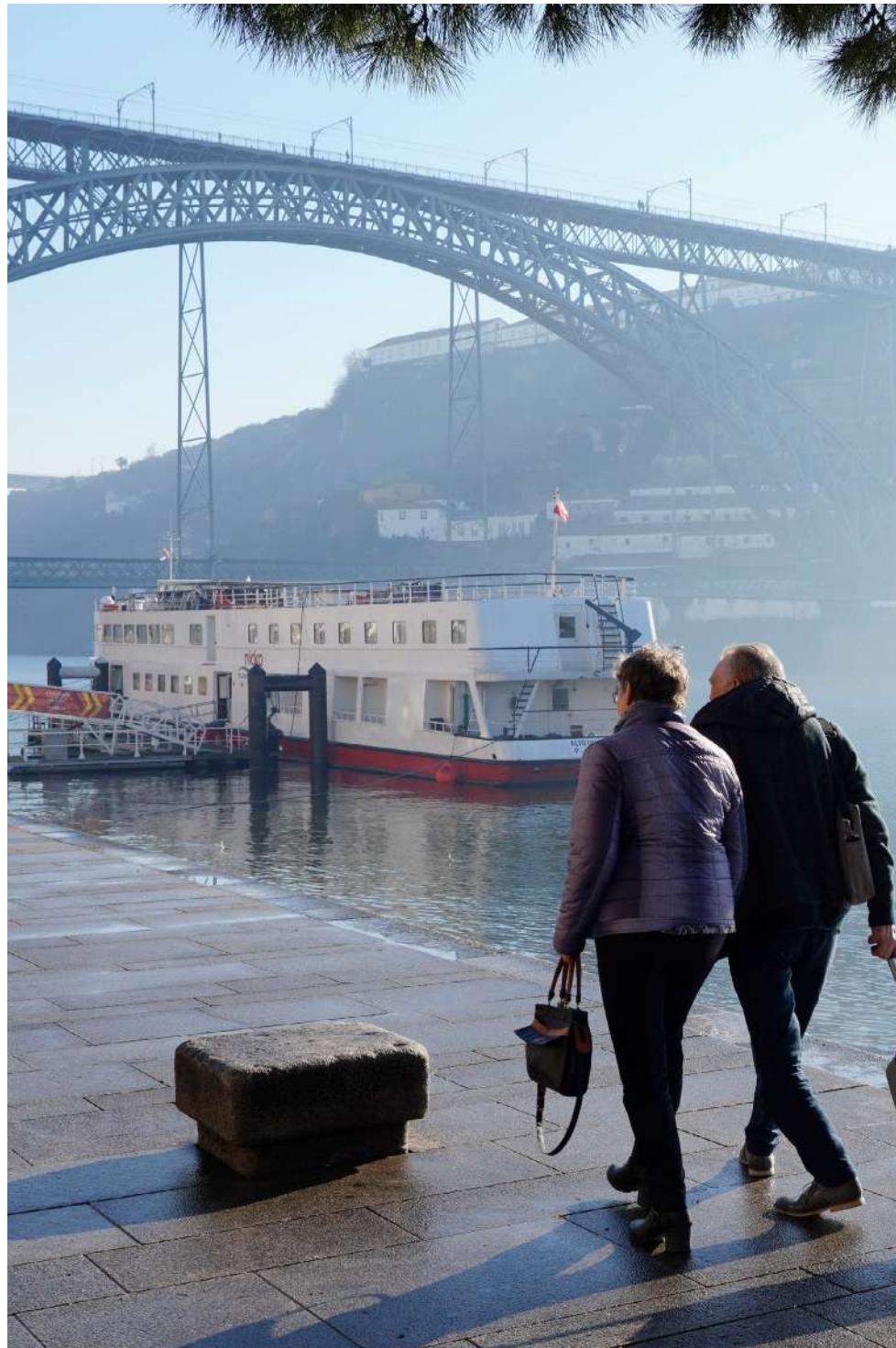
COMBINE WITH: 49

# CIRCULAR COMPOSITION

## LEADING THE EYE

29

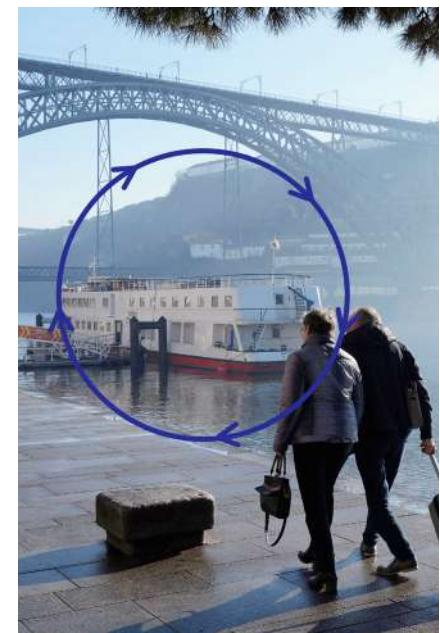
Circular compositions lead your eye around the frame in a shape of a circle. Start imagining a sphere in your picture to create the effect of a circle, then find elements to fit into it. A way to lead the eyes is to follow a curve up to the bottom, then along and down the other side, completing the circle. This gives the feeling that the image is complete as it is.



▲ On this picture, there is a certain circulation and flow between the travellers, bridge and boat.



▲ The couple is the starting point. Their walking direction leads the eye up to the bridge, then down the other side.



▲ Circular compositions often have a midpoint, in which all the main elements connect.

# DYNAMIC TENSION

## LEADING THE EYE

30

Dynamic tension describes an image that contains contrasting elements that produce energy and dynamism in opposing directions. This creates competing attention in the image which the viewer's eyes can't naturally resolve. You can add energy and movement to your images by utilising the power of divergence, which will keep viewers engaged for longer.



▲ Here, the yellow taxi contrasts with the blue of the sky. It creates a complementary color relation.



▲ The angles of the steelwork contrast with the lines of the skyscrapers, as their tonal values are the complete opposite.



▲ The angles of the buildings, the colour and cloud formation create dynamic tension.

# THE DECISIVE MOMENT

## LEADING THE EYE

31

The decisive moment is the exact time when all elements in one image form together to create a perfect and cohesive composition. It refers to the time when you should press the shutter button and capture interesting actions which may only happen for a split-second. Avoid shooting in burst mode to train your eye to spot the moment as it happens.



▲ This scene shows a diving man captured in the perfect moment of motion.



▲ Burst a few pictures and select the best or the funniest to enhance the desired feeling.



▲ The first image is more engaging. It enhances the viewer's interest in the outcome of the jump.

# SYMMETRY BALANCE

32

Symmetry is when an image appears reflected on a dividing line. You can find symmetry in nature, but it's more common in a manmade environment. There are various forms of symmetry such as reflection, rotation and point symmetry. All of them are pleasant for the eye, as they can create harmony and a sense of wholeness.



▲ Traditional buildings usually have some kind of symmetry.



▲ To take a perfectly symmetric photo, stand exactly at the dividing line to avoid distortion.



▲ Finding symmetry in nature can fill your image with calmness and stillness.

BEST FOR: ARCHITECTURE, NATURE

COMBINE WITH:

23

24

# ASSYMETRY BALANCE

33

Asymmetry is about creating a reflective composition while the opposing image doesn't truly reflect itself in its entirety. You can create it if you compose things into your image which are similar in a few ways, but there are differences in the way the lines and angles align. This lets you to enhance the similar and different traits. Perfection of imperfection.



▲ Similar patterns can turn completely assymetrical by using lighting and reflections. This way two identical things can become different.



▲ The water and the light create an assymetrical texture and a break into the pattern.



▲ With assymetry, you can enhance the magic of the uniqueness of each creature found in nature.

BEST FOR: STILL LIFE, NATURE

COMBINE WITH: 22

# SHARPNESS AND BLUR BALANCE

34

Using the contrast between sharpness and blur will keep your subject in focus and throw the rest of the image out of focus. To reach this, shoot with a large aperture (under f/3.5 or f/2.8). Your subject will be separated from the different layers of the image. The focal point will guide the viewer's eye while the bokeh and the surroundings will set an atmosphere.



▲ The cuteness of this picture is highlighted by shallow depth of field as a compositional element to outline the tiny subject.



▲ The sharp part of the image is small, but it doesn't lack essential elements.



▲ You can separate a subject from the background even if they are the same colour.

BEST FOR: NATURE, PORTRAITS

COMBINE WITH: 10

# REPETITION BALANCE

35

Constantly repeating an element in your composition can place a lot of emphasis on the subject. Repetition does not mean the subject has to be an exact copy used over and over again. Usually the placement of the similar elements helps to emphasise them even more. You should find the perfect rhythm of likely similar patterns to create a flow in your composition.



▲ Although the coast takes the most part of this image, it is ruled by the fascinating pattern of these brick buildings.



▲ The repetition of collateral elements can hypnotise the viewer.



▲ These birds are the same kind, heading to the same direction, highlighting their connectedness.

BEST FOR: PRODUCT, LANDSCAPE

COMBINE WITH: 48

50

# VISUAL WEIGHT BALANCE

36

Visual weight means the way elements in a photograph balance themselves in proportion to their neighbours. Elements with a strong visual weight include eyes, text, size, colour, and contrast. It's important that you recognise what is drawing the attention of your viewer so you can choose whether to include or exclude from your frame.



▲ There are three defining elements in this photo. The background mountains, the pigeon and the building all have their own visual power.



▲ The biggest weight is the building due to its size, in relation to the other elements.



▲ The size and eye make the centre of attention very obvious.

BEST FOR: LANDSCAPE, ENVIRONMENT

COMBINE WITH: 37

# JUXTAPOSITION

## BALANCE

37

Juxtaposition means the way different elements in an image are arranged in relation to one another. Your image has to show a conscious arrangement between the subjects. The main goal is to have a contrast between your subjects, and the placing of these elements should feel comfortable. Just like when you are moving objects around the frame until it “looks right”.



▲ In this image, there is a balanced juxtaposition between the statue and the women standing below. There is a contrast between the two.



▲ The subjects differ in their nature, but we still have a feeling that they relate to each other.



▲ This pleasant effect was reached by composing the subjects in a perfect balance.

BEST FOR: STREET, STILL LIFE, PRODUCT

COMBINE WITH:

17

22

# TONAL CONTRAST BALANCE

38

Tonal contrast is the difference in brightness between separate elements in an image. It gives your photo depth and separation. Without tonal contrast, an image would appear flat and without impact. Seek lighting conditions which create a three-dimensional look for your image. The lighting should provide balanced shadows, midtones and highlights.



▲ In this image of Manhattan in New York City, the sunlight created depth and, therefore, tonal contrast.



▲ This one-tone image looks flat and appears two dimensional.



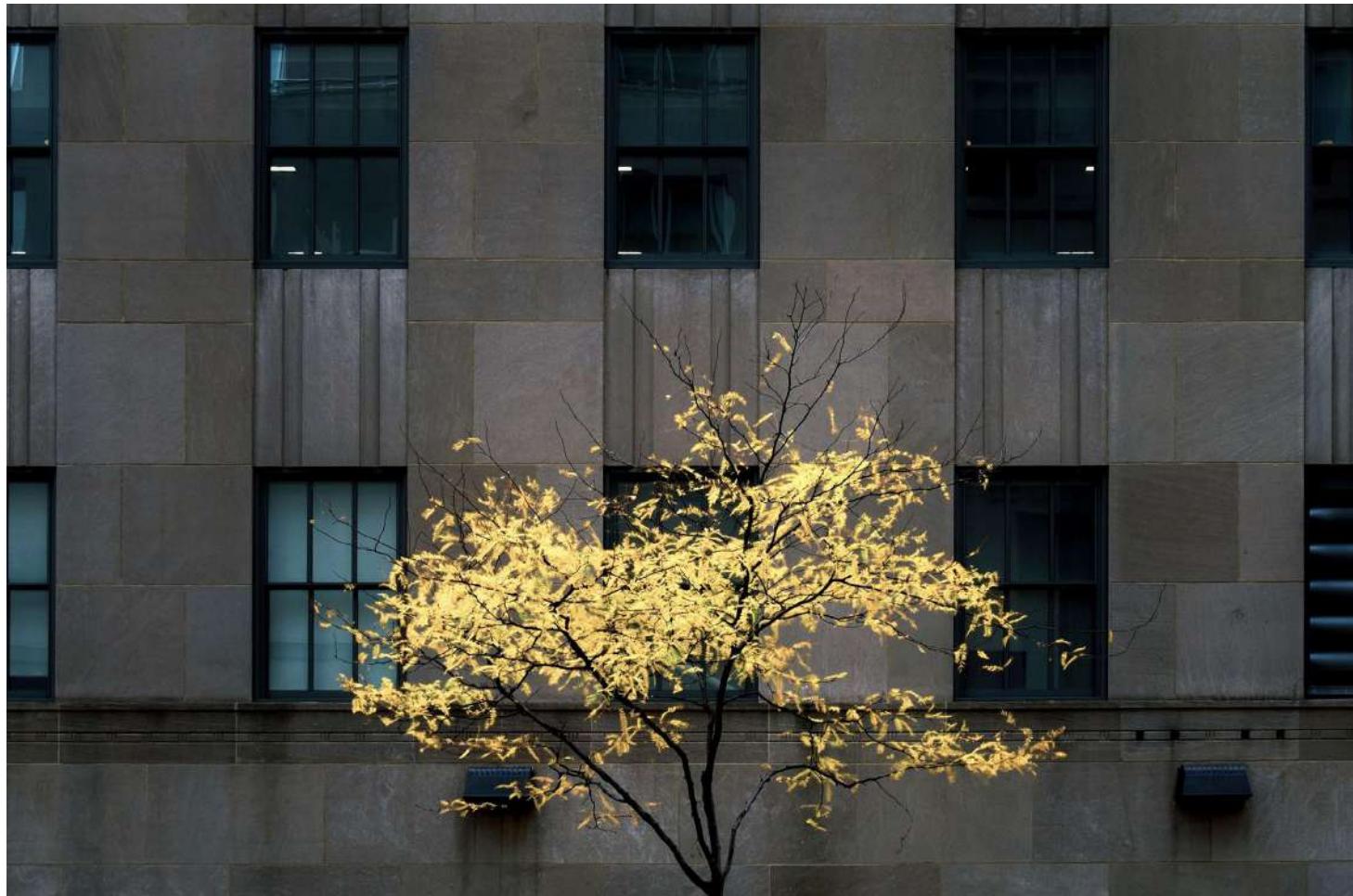
▲ Black and white images are great if you wish to highlight the tonal contrast of a scene.

BEST FOR: LANDSCAPE

COMBINE WITH: 40

## BALANCE

Photography is all about light. The direction, quality and brightness all combine with each other in different ways to form a major part of the ingredients in photography. Playing with light and shadow allows you to create dramatic images. This works great in black and white, and often the simplest compositions turn out to be the best.



▲ The sunlight is falling only on the leaves of the tree. This creates a strong contrast, making the tree pop out.



▲ The sunlight was coming directly in front of the camera and created texture in the grass.



▲ You can make the simplest scene unique if you pay attention to the shadows too.

# FIGURE TO GROUND

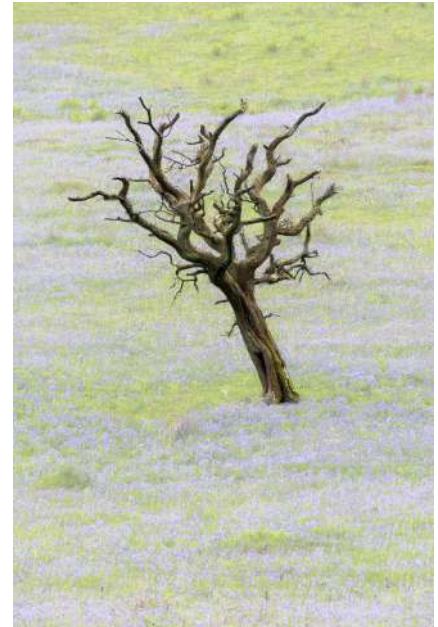
## BALANCE

40

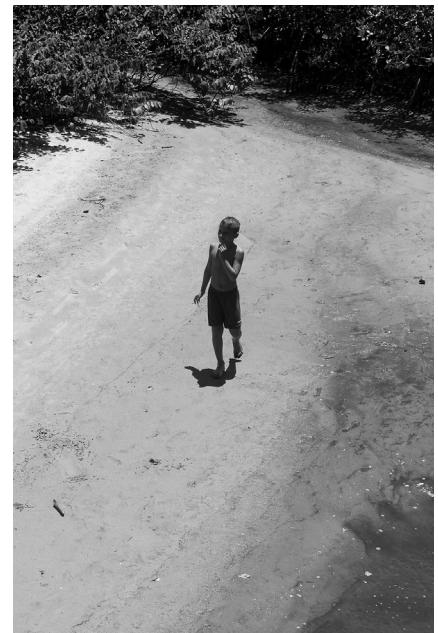
Figure to ground describes the relationship and the contrast between a subject and its background. They should be clearly visible and separated from each other. You can reach this by utilizing contrasting colors or creating a tonal difference. Generally, the best way to shoot is in black and white, as this strips away the distracting colour.



▲ This picture shows a great separation between the main element and the background.



▲ The clear contrast is mostly because of the color and pattern mismatch, which comes out really well in this scenario.



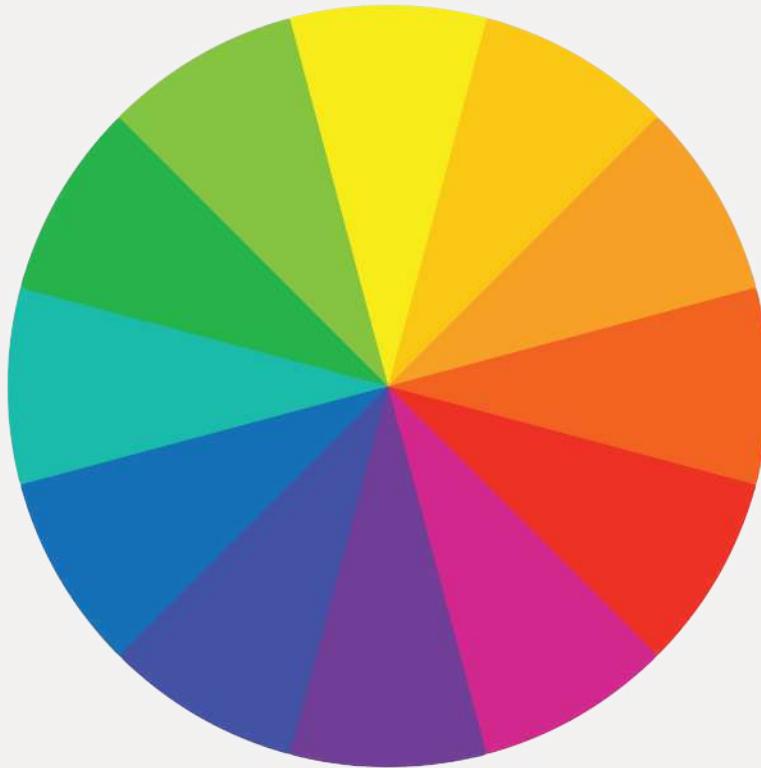
▲ Black and white photography helps to separate the figure and the ground.

# THE COLOR WHEEL

## LIGHT

41

The color wheel helps you to visualize how colors relate to each other. It can be divided into primary, secondary and tertiary color wheels. If you mix primary colors (Red, Green and Blue (RGB)) you get secondary colors. If you mix secondary colors, you get tertiary colors. Learning the basics of color matching can lead to masterful compositions.



▲ This is the colour wheel.



▲ Mastering the smart use of color combinations can end in beautiful results.



▲ By using complimentary colour combinations you can make banal scenes interesting.

BEST FOR: STREET, STILL LIFE, PRODUCT, NATURE

COMBINE WITH: 46

# REFLECTIONS LIGHT

42

In its simplest form, a reflection can enhance an image by mirroring the scene in front of you. Beautiful symmetrical photographs can be created by using reflective surfaces like water or mirrors. To achieve a mirror image, you can slice up the frame into two or more parts. Be creative and shoot through glass, or use lights reflecting off of buildings.



▲ A masterful example of the reflective effect of water and how it can turn a photograph into a symmetric abstraction.



▲ Try photographing only the mirrored part of the view to create an abstract image.

BEST FOR: LANDSCAPE, ARCHITECTURE



▲ This image represents the various styles of photographing reflections. There is no limitation!

COMBINE WITH: 1

# SILHOUETTES LIGHT

43

Silhouettes can occur when your subject is lit from behind, losing detail, and resulting in a shape against a brighter background. They can be quite challenging to shoot, as you need a defined subject to make the image eye-catching. When composing silhouettes, always look for simple, clean subjects so that the composition is clear and intentional.



▲ There is a touch of detail in the painter and on the bridge. It gives the photograph a bit more interest than it would if it was totally black.



▲ Capture your subjects at the right moment to show clearly what they are doing.



▲ Again, a little light from this side can work perfectly on silhouettes.

BEST FOR: STREET, PORTRAIT

COMBINE WITH: 44

# SHADOWS LIGHT

44

Shadows are crucial compositional elements that set the atmosphere of a picture. They create depth, dimension and even subject matter in your photograph. With the use of shadows, the outlines stand out more, leading the viewer's eyes to the subject. Ideally, you should choose a sunny day with hard light conditions to have great results.



▲ A good example of using shadows is shown here. Recognise the potential of people who cast shadows onto footpaths on bright and sunny days.



▲ To bring out the true dimensions of your scene, you can also illustrate more objects.



▲ Black and white photos emphasise the contrast and mood that the shadows create.

BEST FOR: STREET

COMBINE WITH: 43

## LIGHT

The direction of the light can influence the mood and feeling of the photograph, and set a clear focus and direction for the viewer. Competing light directions can be distracting and lose the viewer's attention quickly. You should previsualise the light you want to capture before you start shooting as it has a big impact on the overall composition.



▲ The texture of the leaf is perfectly highlighted, thanks to the alignment between the backlight and the object.



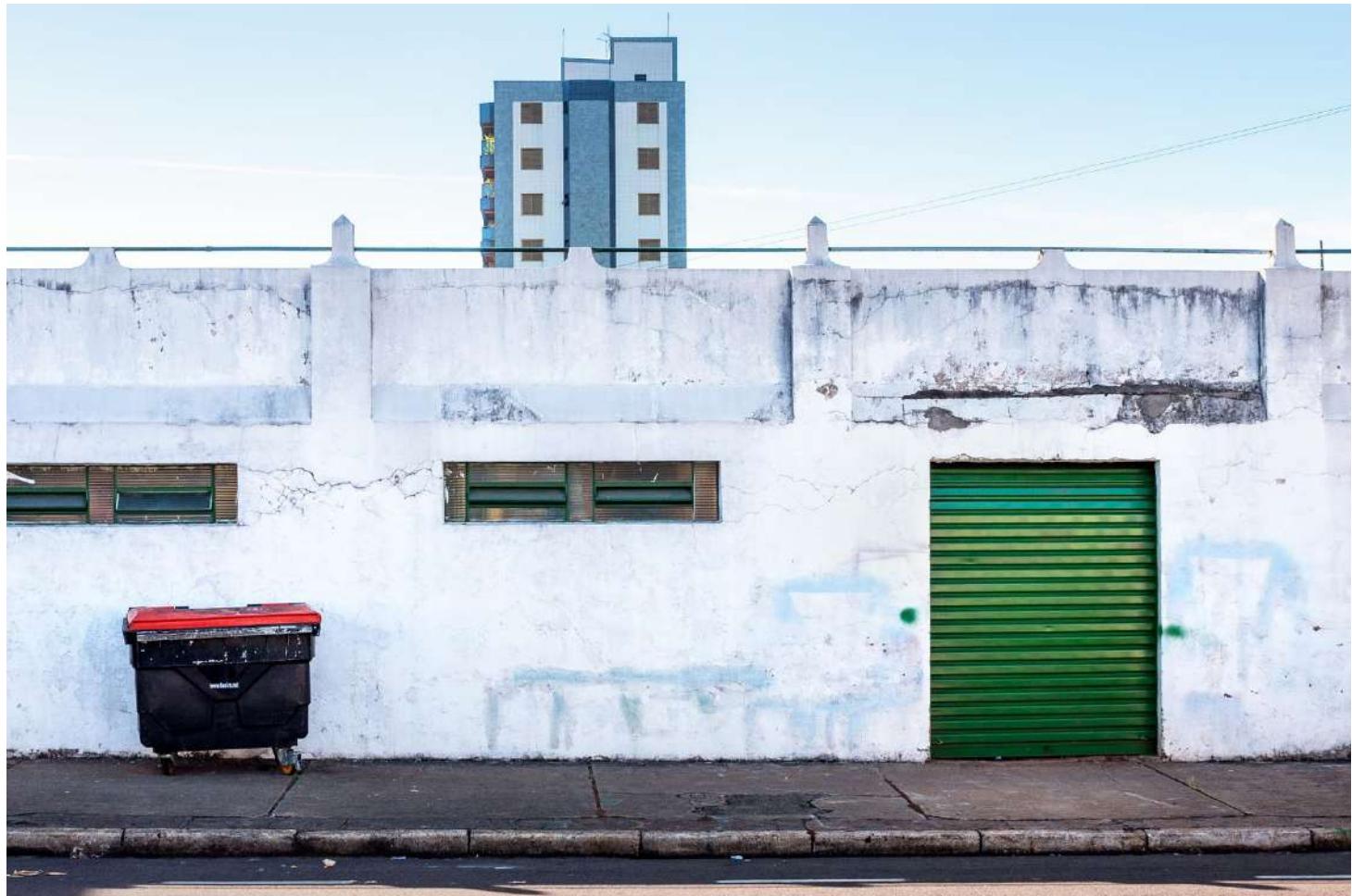
▲ The sidelight coming from up and behind the child sets a warm atmosphere.



▲ Sunlight hitting only the leaf makes the background darker, creating contrast.

## PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

Balance in a composition can evoke feelings from pleasing and harmonious to uncomfortable and unresolved, depending on whether the image is balanced or unbalanced. A balanced photo is not better than an unbalanced photo, or vice versa. But you should have a clear reason behind why you've structured the balance in the way you have.



▲ The correlation of the garbage bin, the green shutter and the apartment block make a natural balance in this photograph.



▲ The slightly symmetrical positions of the two red subjects makes this photo even more balanced.



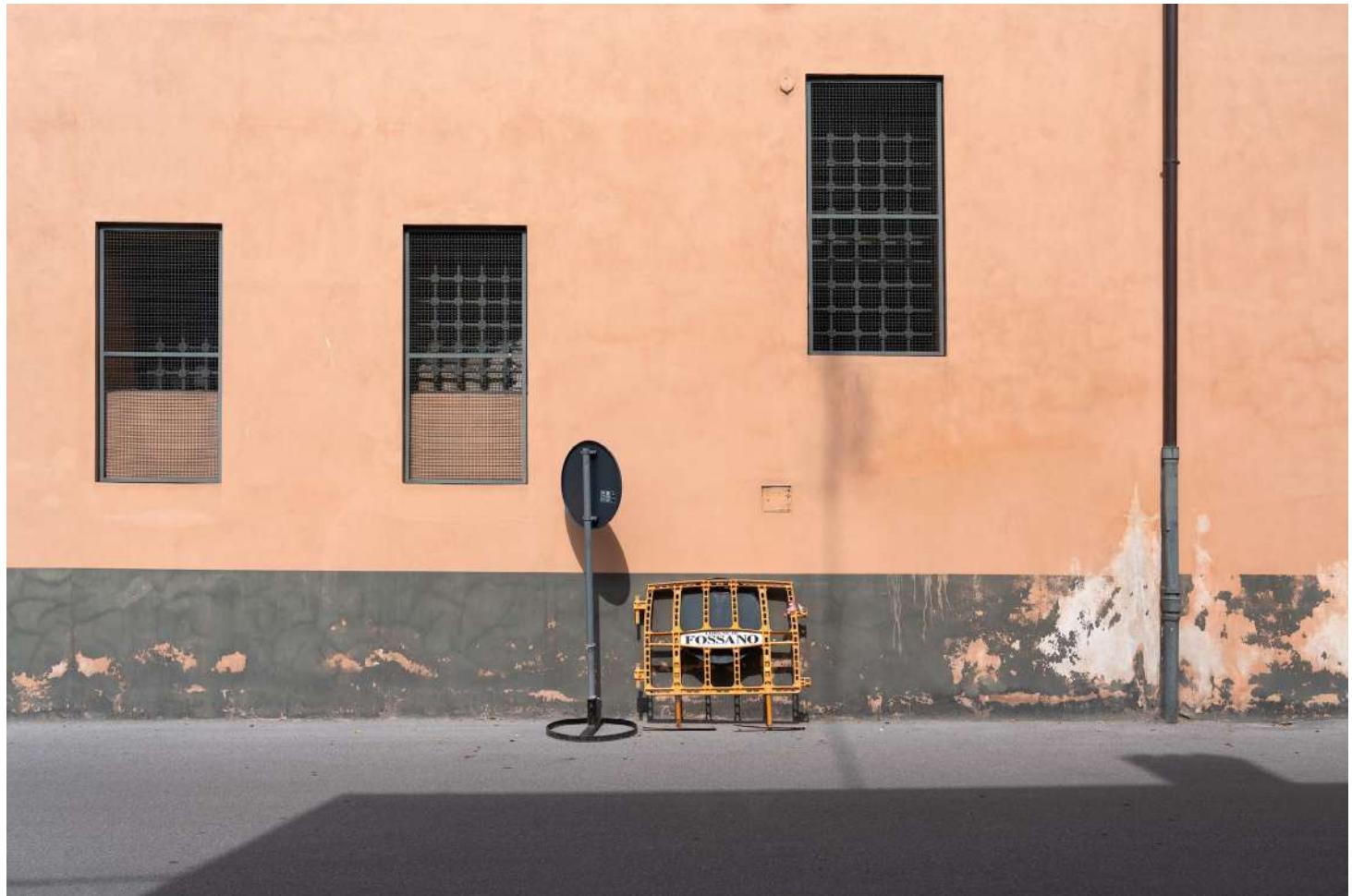
▲ The buildings are the dominant elements, so this isn't a perfect balance.

# HARMONY

## PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

47

Creating harmony in a photograph is about bringing together all your elements to achieve coherence. Every element in your image should relate to each other without creating any discord. Two of the most common ways to achieve harmony is by utilizing color and shape. Color harmony is about avoiding tension, while shapes are used to evoke emotions.



▲ This image shows rectangles as a dominant shape. There is a feeling of unity through the image, in which the colors also play a huge part.



▲ All the pebbles are soft and circular, creating a visually harmonious image.



▲ There is balance between the colors because there is one overall tone.

BEST FOR: ENVIRONMENT, STILL LIFE

COMBINE WITH: 41

## PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

Patterns are everywhere you look, in man-made objects and in nature. When using patterns in a composition, you can blend different colors, shapes and textures to compose a picture with a strong atmosphere. You should fill the frame with the pattern that you are capturing. This way, you can also turn everyday objects into abstract compositions.



▲ Sometimes, the easiest way to search for unique patterns is to observe nature.



▲ The repetitive motion of animals shot from a distance can easily create an abstract pattern.



▲ I've cut out any distractions concentrating the eye on the overall pattern.

# MOVEMENT

## PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

49

Movement is a flow that appears in the picture. It makes it easier for the viewer to move through the image with their eyes. Composing movement is about the relationship of the objects in your images and how these elements move your eye around the picture. You can benefit from patterns, leading lines, and object relations to achieve movement in a picture.



▲ Here the movement starts off at the swans by the boat. The eye then moves to the mountains and across to the boathouse.



▲ The line of the water leads the eye to the right, then up along the boulders to the horizon.



▲ In this picture, I used the lines of the road to show where the bus is going.

BEST FOR: STILL LIFE, LANDSCAPE, NATURE

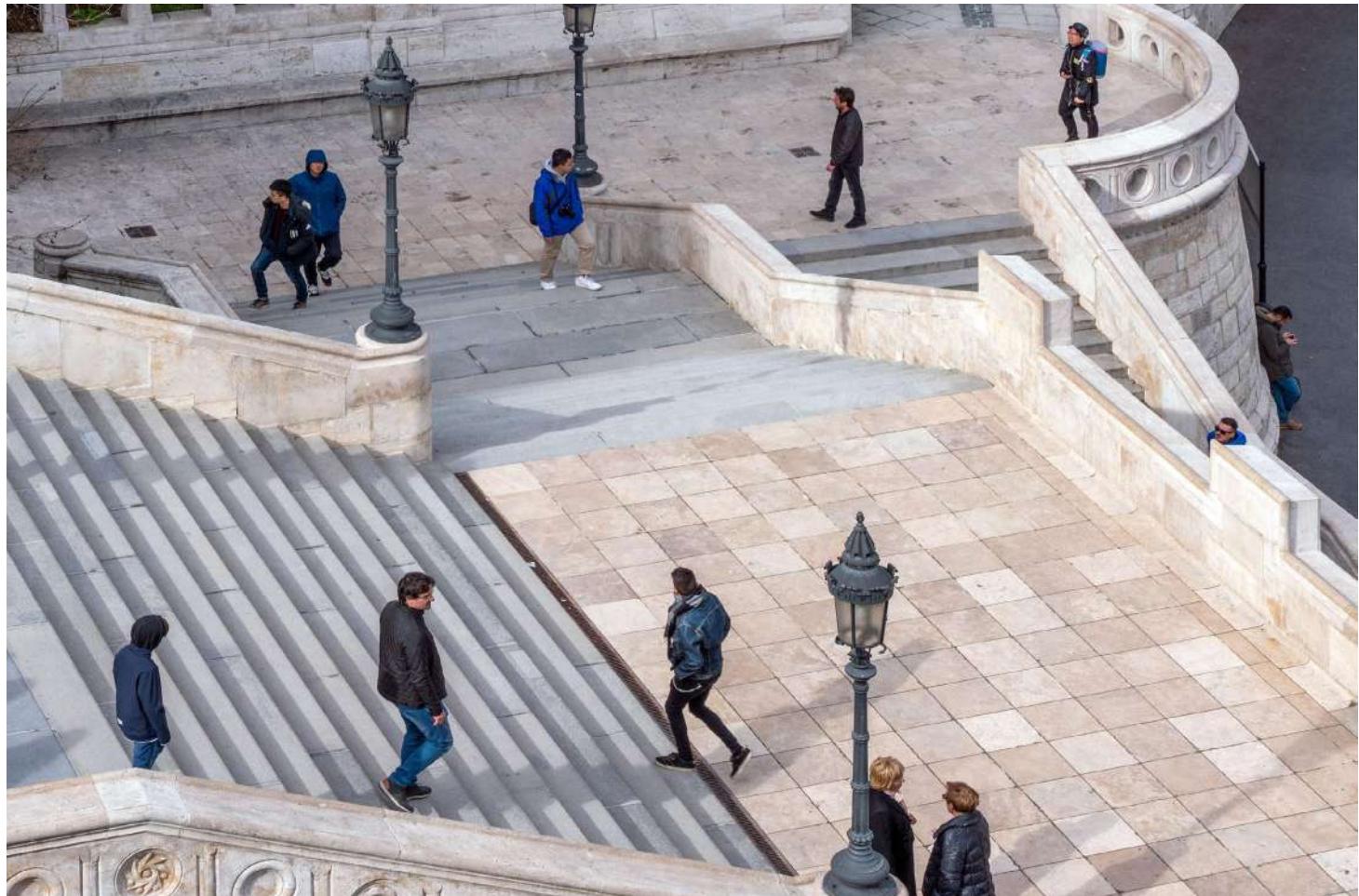
COMBINE WITH: 27 28 31

# RHYTHM

## PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

50

Rhythm adds movement to compositions. It also merges the power of repetition, patterns, textures, and motion by filling out the frame of the image. You can use rhythm to make your composition stronger and more attention grabbing. First, you need to spot patterns or repetitive elements, then you have to emphasise them when composing the photo.



▲ In this photograph, the people walking back and forth create rhythm. This gives a consistent flow to the photo.



▲ The boats' pattern creates their own rhythm.



▲ Your eyes will automatically move through the image, following the rhythm.

BEST FOR: STILL LIFE, ENVIRONMENT, NATURE

COMBINE WITH: 20

35

48