

Composition: Arranging Elements for a Knockout Photo

Photographs that are a cut above the rest are not captured through sheer luck and chance alone. Taking a good photograph takes many years of experience and careful toil. A beautiful subject set against a breathtaking background is simply not enough to arouse the emotions of your dear audience.

More than your meticulous choice of subjects and your good, old camera, knowing about photography composition can be your newest tool in capturing a timeless and evocative photo.

Tell a Story

Sometimes, the best stories are told through two-dimensional photos. The story is staged after careful selection of details on background, exposure, and lighting. Here is where composition comes in to play a major role. Because sometimes, the simplest details make a massive difference.

Placing a human subject in the right half of the frame while looking directly at the camera retells stories that have been heard by many. But if he looks across the photo to his left, the eye follows his gaze and puts a different twist to the plot. A hand pointed downwards directs the eye to a different direction, making your photograph more interesting.

The Ol' Rule of Thirds

There is no box and there are no rules. Go out of your comfort zone and explore endless possibilities with your camera. But there is an age-old theory that can be your trusty guide to keep your onlookers linger on your photo: the rule of thirds.

Used by Renaissance painters in their craft, this reliable trick lures the human eye to stay a while and roam the expanse of a photograph with your subject.

In your camera's grid option, you'll see the screen split into 9 equal squares or 3 vertical and 3 horizontal spaces. The trick is to place your subject in the top, bottom, left or right third of the frame.

When you place your subject at the center of the frame, you risk having a static subject that your audience can easily forget. By following the rule of thirds, the human eye lingers with interest and goes on a short journey from the center to where your subject is.

Can you bend this rule without losing the interest of your audience? Yes you can. You may place the subject at the center of your photograph and play with its depth of field. Imagine a happy, newly wed couple placed dead-center in the frame and using a shallow depth of field. The blurry background can make your subject pop out.

Introducing Depth

Overlapping images produce a sense of depth and distance. For landscape photos, including the mountains in the distance behind your subject can bring life to a boring two-dimensional photograph

Adding a foreground can also help you guide your audience's eyes towards your subject. Pick a foreground that can highlight your subject effectively the next time you snap a picture.

All About the Angles

An uninteresting subject can be given a fresh breathe of life if captured in a unique angle. In today's era of digital, fast-paced technology and a multitude of photos waiting to be viewed, you have to seduce the human eye using unique viewpoints and angles.

Crouch, try out a plethora of new angles and be imaginative. A low angle shot of skyscrapers communicates a whole new different message than a direct shot of the same subject. No subject is boring, just old, used photographic viewpoints.

Arousing Emotions

Soothe a troubled soul or ignite a fiery passion through powerful images. A seasoned photographer knows which buttons to tap in order to trigger different emotions using lines, symmetry and textures.

Lines guide the eyes toward subjects and even add depth to photos. Vertical lines symbolize strength and vigor while horizontal lines signify peace and tranquility. Diagonal lines, on the other hand, provide motion. They run across a photograph and are often used to point to your subject.

Careful arrangement of image pieces lets you create lines and create a relationship among different elements in your photo.

As visual creatures, we are attracted to symmetry and patterns. As a photographer, you may opt to create symmetry or to introduce tension by breaking patterns.

There is beauty in utilizing texture to bring out emotions. For one, texture cuts the monotony of a peaceful scene. Create rough textures by including objects in an otherwise smooth arrangement of elements. You can also use a textured background to create a striking balance with your subject.

Skill, Knowledge, Luck

In the end, it all boils down to methodical manipulation and skill in taking a good photo. Of course, a keen eye on what constitutes a good photo is needed, but is never the utmost tool when capturing beauty within a tangible photograph.

So get out, find the perfect subject and use a new perspective before clicking to take a photo. Remember, hard work and skill with a hint of chance are your important tools in producing a knockout photo.