



# Creating Photos with Impact

## Agenda

 What Creates Impact

 Storytelling

 Creativity

 Composition

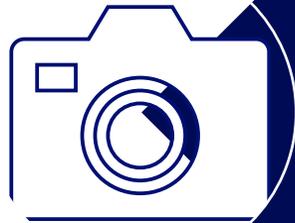
 Technical Excellence

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# Chane's Viewpoint on Creating Great Photos

*Beauty is in the eye of the beholder*



The photographer directs the eye of the beholder to the beauty they created.



Today we are going to discuss how to help everyone see that beauty in your photos.

# Chane's "Rules" for Photography

1

Crafting a great photo is unlike math or science

It's art, it's subjective, it's self-expression

2

All photos will benefit from some guidelines

No photo will benefit from every guideline

3

There are no required rules

There are lots of guidelines and an unbounded set of ideas

# What Is Impact?

The sense one gets upon viewing a photo for the first time



Impactful photos evoke laughter, sadness, anger, pride, wonder or another intense **emotion**.



This is the eye candy, the **wow** factor. It is the reason we love the photo. It moves us to look inwards.



Impact is what you get when many attributes are working **together** in concert.



Photos with impact don't just happen. They are thoughtfully **created** and nurtured and cultivated through the careful attention to photographic principles.

# What Creates Impact?

Inspired by Professional Photographer Association's 12 Elements of a Merit Photo.



Think of **Impact** as a stool supported by these four legs.

With 3 legs: Still very strong.  
With 2 legs: Hard to stand up.  
With 1 leg: Easily falls over.  
With 0 legs: It's a snapshot.

Storytelling

Creativity

Composition

Technical  
Excellence

# The Four Pillars Supporting Impact

## Storytelling

The photo's ability to evoke imagination

## Creativity

The fresh expression of a scene conveying an idea or message

## Composition

Bringing all the visual elements together to express the purpose

## Technical Excellence

The quality of the photo itself as it is presented for viewing

# What It Looks like When the Stool Falls Over



~~Storytelling~~

~~Creativity~~

~~Composition~~

Technical  
Excellence ✓

# Working to Stand up the Stool



Bake cookies. First photo.



80 photos later - new background, new lighting, added milk and I ate part of a cookie

Storytelling

Creativity

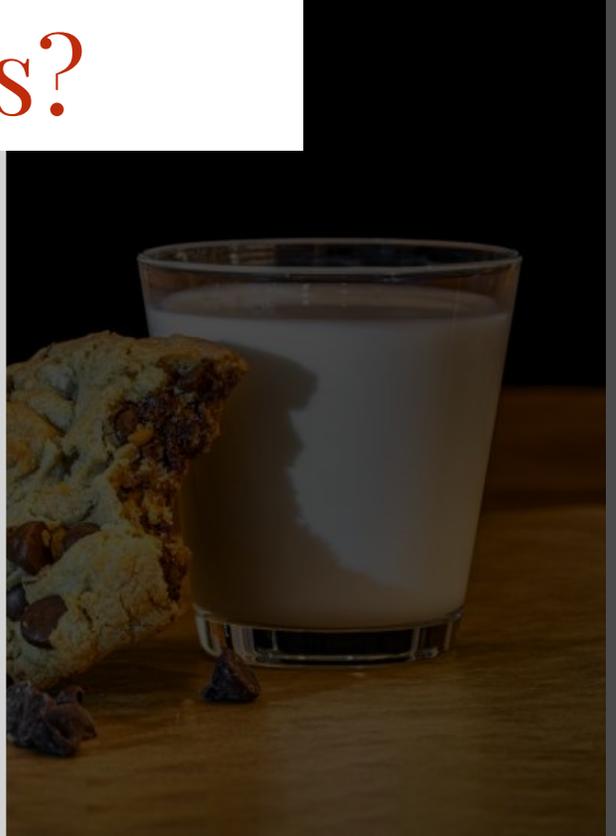
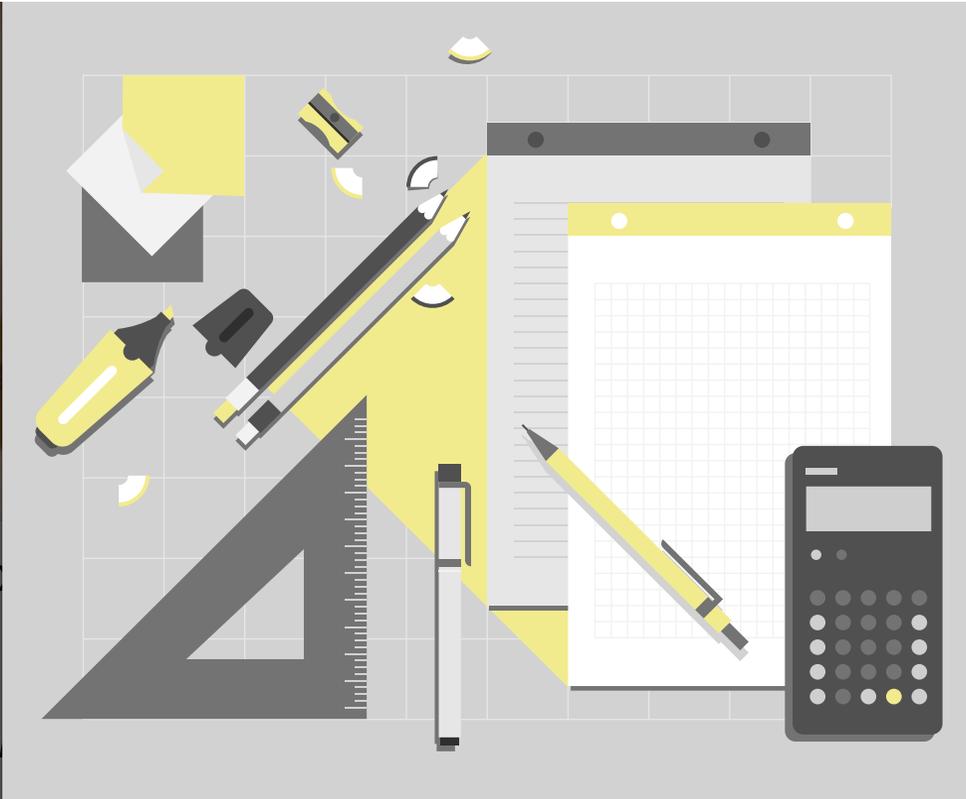
Composition

Technical  
Excellence

# Maybe a Plan Would Be Better than Taking 80 Photos?



Bake cookies. First photo



ate part of a cookie

80 photos later - new

Storytelling

Creativity

Composition

Technical Excellence

# Ideas for Creating a Photo

Sometimes you're at the right place at the right time.

Even then, you need to decide how to "**create**" an impactful photo.

Here is a 3-step method that helps!



Vision



Prepare



Achieve

# Vision



## Prepare



## Achieve

### DEFINE



### WHY



### VERIFY

- “Wow, it’s beautiful” is not a vision.
- Strive for simple, but clear.
- Select a couple pillars to start creating impact.  
Storytelling, Creativity, Composition, Technical.

- Why subjects work or not?
- Why this main subject?
- Why this foreground?
- Why this background?
- What is the audience?

- Pretend you are explaining your photo to a stranger.
- Evaluate relative to your primary audience.
- Get feedback from another person.



# A “Simple Things in Life” Starter Vision

Vision  
Prepare  
Achieve



Storytelling

- An enjoyable evening at home watching Netflix

Creativity

- ?

Composition

- Use feet as a leading line

Technical

- TV visible, yet the room dark & hidden

Any thoughts on what to change in this vision?

Vision



Prepare



Achieve



Figure out how to create it, in the camera and post-processing



Weather? Time of year? Subjects? Supplies? Equipment?



Cost? Time? Effort? Probability of success?



Knowledge – especially if post-processing is required



Honesty – consider reality to drive creativity

Vision



Prepare



Achieve



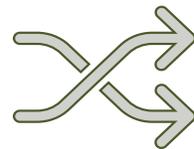
Time is always a limiting factor



Nature may be a limiting factor



Check & recheck equipment list



Plan alternatives

**JUST DO IT.**



Vision



Prepare



Achieve

What should I do differently next time?



Storytelling

Creativity

Composition

Technical Excellence

# Agenda

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What Creates Impact



Storytelling



Creativity



Composition



Technical Excellence

# Storytelling

*“One picture is worth a thousand words.”*

## The photo's ability to evoke imagination



Take a **step back** to see what kind of stories your photos can create



One beautiful thing about art is that each viewer might create their **own** story



Look at the photo as if it is your **first time**, find the story and make it noticeable

# Storytelling

Is it easy for you to  
tell a story about  
this scene?



# Storytelling in Nature Photos

The PSA Nature definition specifies that “the most important part of a nature image is the nature **story** it tells”. The following guidelines suggest one way of evaluating the strength of nature stories when the subject of the photo is a living creature.

**Level 1**

- Descriptive stories (bird on a stick)



**Level 2**

- Behavior and life cycle stories (eating, singing ...)



**Level 3**

- Same species interactions



**Level 4**

- Different species interactions



# Thoughts on Adding Storytelling

## The Story

- Clearly define the main subject and key elements of your story.
- Our most cherished stories are often from everyday moments.
- Downplay your emotional attachment, the viewer may have other thoughts.
- Editing and revision is part of every story you read, the same is needed here.

## Subject Matter

- How is the subject matter helping the story?
- Think about the context of the subject – dramatic, calm, familiar.
- Are the subjects clear and often visually separate (no mergers).
- Add interaction or more context – a runner vs finishing vs passing

## What Else?

- What could be added or removed to enhance the story?
- How would capturing motion help tell the story?
- How does the foreground and background support your story?
- Don't overlook using the Title to hint at your story!



Is there a story?  
How can the story be improved?

# Work the Scene to Create a Story

Driving to the airport as dawn turns beautiful – there must be photo somewhere



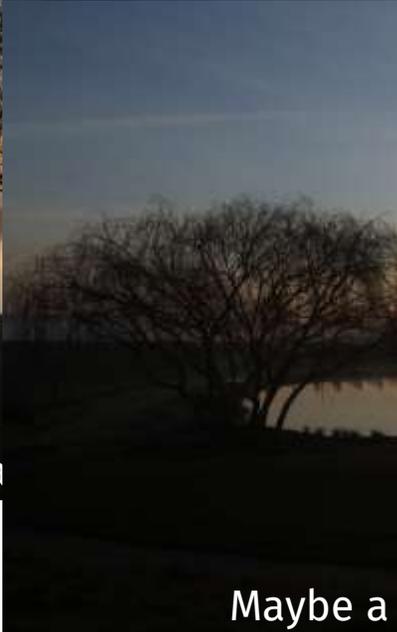
From the main



I turn on a road t



How to create a



Maybe a



The story is forming, but something is missing.



I added a person, Rhonda, looking at the sunrise. A better story.  
Hint at the story using the title "Enjoying Sunrise"



Should I crop to make the story element even more visible?

# Agenda

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What Creates Impact



Storytelling



Creativity



Composition

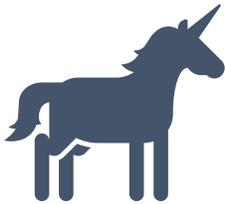


Technical Excellence

# Creativity

*“Creativity is a wild mind  
and a disciplined eye.”*

The fresh expression of a scene  
conveying an idea or message



The ability to see beyond the physical reality in front of  
the camera and create something **unique and interesting**



Judges may give you **bonus points** for creativity



May use unconventional perspectives, **experimenting** with  
light and shadows or playing with composition.

# Thoughts on Adding Creativity

## The Scene

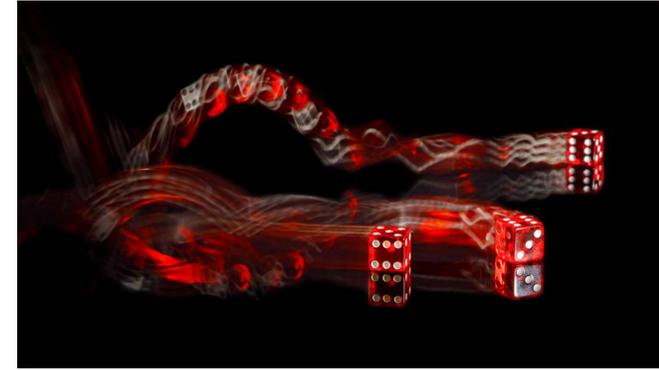
- See the potential in a scene and use creative techniques to capture it.
- Ask yourself how can I capture the scene in another way, then think of other ways.
- Review your capture and ask yourself, would others think it is boring?

## Look for Ways to Add Interesting Details

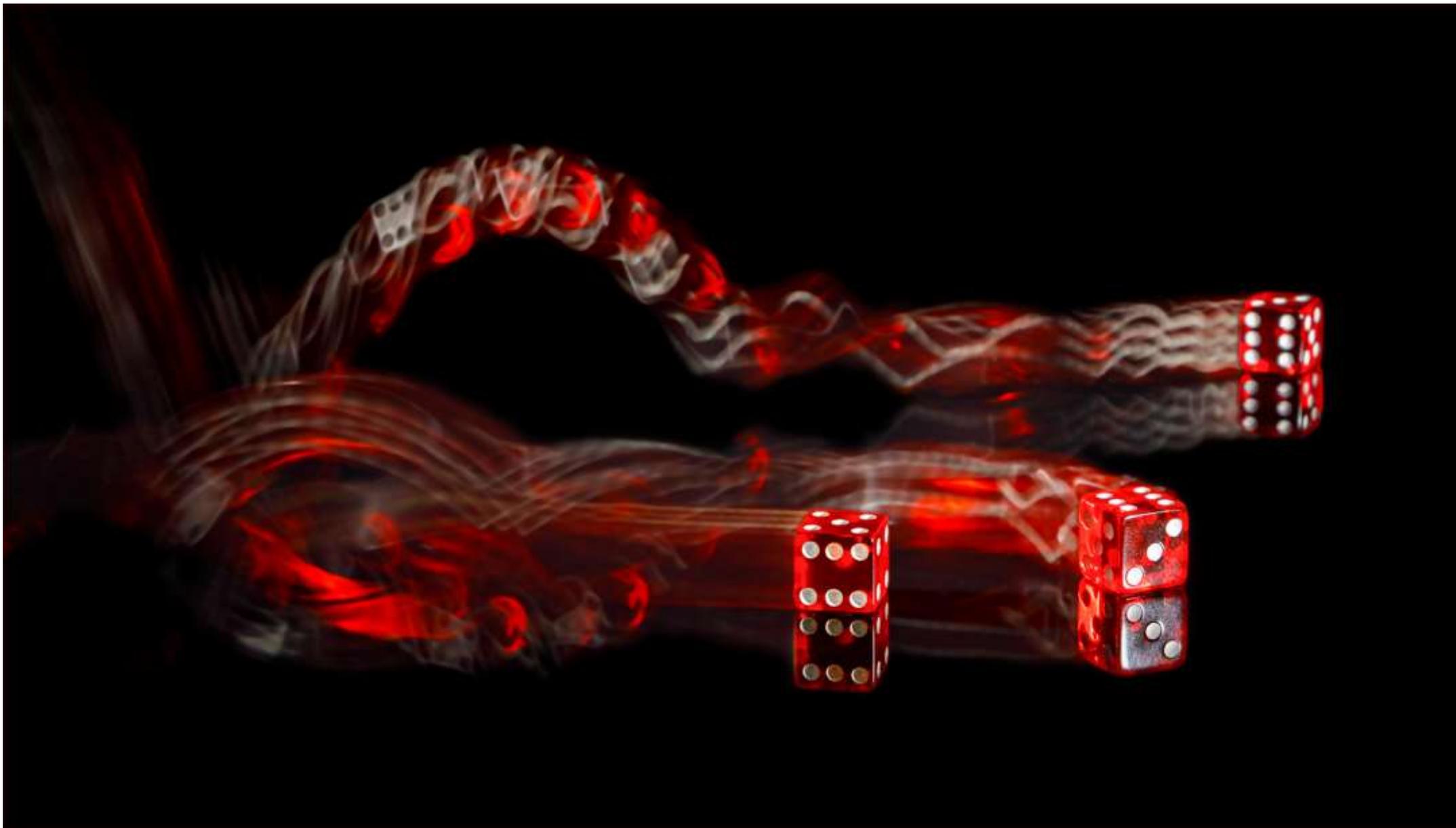
- Color?
- Focus depth?
- Patterns?
- Light?
- Action?

## Have Fun!

- Imagination is key.
- Continuous change turns playing with failure into success.
- Learn new things.



# How is this Creative?



# Creativity May Require Dynamic Revision



# Having Fun by Learning & Playing!



Checking drop zone



Flour



Brown Sugar



Chocolate Chips



Egg



Broken Egg

# Results of the Right-Hand Ingredients Drop



Have Fun!

## Agenda

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What Creates Impact



Storytelling



Creativity



Composition



Technical Excellence

# Composition

*“Seeing and composing the beauty is what separates the snapshot from the photograph.”*

Bringing all the visual elements together to express the purpose of the photo.



Holds the viewer in the photo and prompts the viewer to **look** where you placed the beauty.



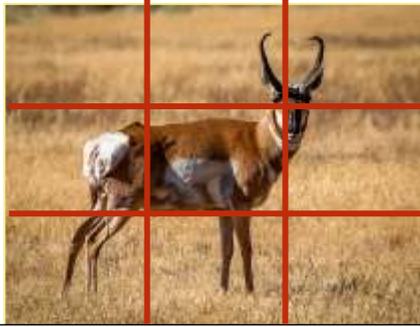
You have incredible **control** of how items in your photo are arranged. Leverage that control to compose the scene.



Do you always follow the standard **rules** of composition? When do you break them to enhance the photo?

# Composition Ideas

1. Balance
2. Centered & Symmetry
3. Color combinations
4. Depth
5. Distance
6. Fill the Frame
7. Framing
8. Isolate the Subject
9. Juxtaposition
10. Leading Lines
11. Left to Right
12. Patterns & Texture
13. Points
14. Rule of Odds
15. Rule of Thirds
16. Shapes – diagonals, triangles, golden ratio
17. Simplicity & Minimalism
18. Space – positive, negative, breathing
19. Tone
20. ...



## Rule of Thirds

Place the most interesting item on the lines or intersection



## Leading Lines

Use a line to lead the viewer to the most interesting item



## Rule of Odds

For visual balance and harmony use 1, 3 or 5 items



## Leaving Space

Breathing room and implied motion

# Thoughts on Adding Composition

## Center of Interest

- Is there a center of interest?
- Are there too many centers of interests?
- How can I help the viewer find the center of interest?
- What should I exclude? Even if it is beautiful.

## Leading Lines

- May be straight, curved or a complex curve.
- It may be one or more objects, each more interesting.
- May be very noticeable or subtle.
- We are accustomed to looking left to right.

## What Else?

- Our mind finds the most brightly lit item.
- Our mind finds the sharpest focused item.
- The rule of odds diminishes after 5 items.
- A slightly dark vignette keeps the viewer from leaving.



In this photo, what is good and bad about the composition?

## Agenda

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What Creates Impact



Storytelling



Creativity



Composition



Technical Excellence

# Technical Excellence

*“There is nothing worse than a sharp image of a fuzzy concept.”*

The visual presentation of the photograph.



Lighting, focus, exposure, camera motion, color, post-processing, printing, mounting ...



While focusing on the **nuts and bolts** of photography use caution to avoid excessive post-processing.



It's what makes you look like a pro. Even a great scene **falters** without technical excellence.

# Technical Excellence

Which aspects do you see?

- Lighting
- Focus
- Aperture
- Shutter speed
- Color

What would you add?



# Four Flavors of Technical Excellence



## Lighting

Defines dimension, shape and roundness in a photo

- Artificial, natural or post-processing
- Light impacts the color & tone



## Technique

The camera settings & perspective used to create the photo

- Focus, angle, pose, expression, skin tones
- Lens, texture, digital noise, monochrome conversion style, sharpening



## Color

Color tones working together to enhance the emotional appeal

- Use color, color harmony & saturation to evoke feelings
- Monochrome & other tonal conversions



## Presentation

Affects a photo by giving it a finished look

- Crop, Border, Dust, Mat
- Awareness of fine details

# Lighting

How did the choice of lighting help or hurt this photo?

Defines dimension, shape and roundness  
Artificial, natural or post-processing  
Light impacts the color & tone



# Lighting the Cookie

This was not used



This was used



20 secs, F/14, ISO 100, 100 mm



*Experiment with changing the lighting to create more opportunity for impact.*

# Technique

What techniques changed how you look at the photo?

The camera settings & perspective used  
Focus, angle, pose, expression, skin tones  
Lens, texture, digital noise, sharpening

*Always look around for a better angle.  
“Work the scene”*



*Backup*

*Left Side*

*Portrait*

*Right Side*

*Look Up*



# Color

Why did blue and yellow work well in this photo?

Color tones working together to enhance the emotional appeal  
Use color, color harmony & saturation evoke feelings  
Monochrome & other tonal conversions



# Color

aka  
Color Balance  
Color Harmony

# COLOR THEORY

## COLOR MODELS

**CMYK**  
Printing standard.  
Mix of cyan, magenta, yellow and black inks.



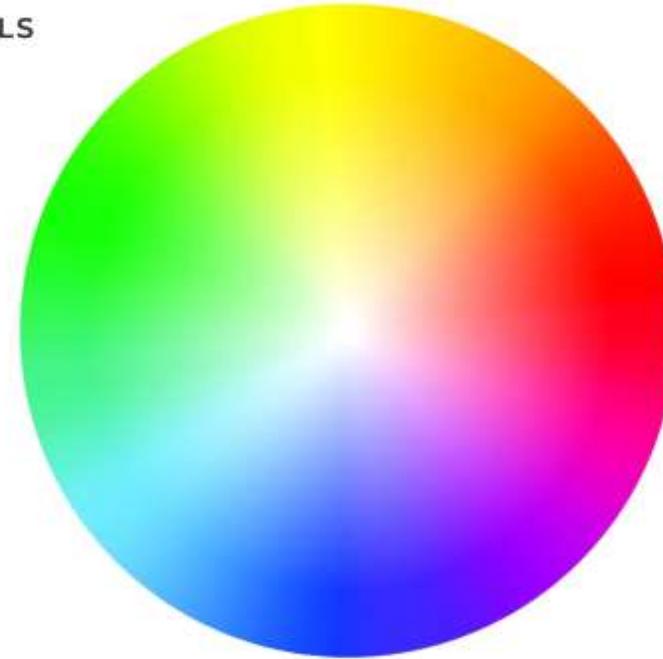
**RGB**  
Digital standard.  
Mix of red, green and blue channels of light.



**HSB**  
Variation of RGB.  
Mix of hue, saturation and brightness.



**GRAYSCALE**  
Intensity of black.  
Uses only black intensity to create shade.



## COLOR MEANINGS

- RED** PASSION, LOVE, BLOOD, DANGER, STRENGTH
- PINK** ROMANTIC, FEMININE, LOVE, SENSITIVITY, EXCITING
- YELLOW** OPTIMISM, SUNSHINE, CONFIDENCE, ATTENTION, SUCCESS
- GREEN** HEALTH, GROWTH, PEACE, VITALITY, WEALTH
- ORANGE** ENERGY, HAPPINESS, SUCCESS, WARMTH, CREATIVITY
- BLUE** TRUST, SERENITY, PEACE, COMMUNICATION, SADNESS
- PURPLE** ROYALTY, MAJESTY, MYSTERY, SPIRITUALITY, LUXURY
- BROWN** ORGANIC, HONEST, NATURAL, SIMPLE, WHOLESOME
- GRAY** COMPROMISE, NEUTRAL, BALANCE, CONSERVATIVE, FRUSTRATION
- BLACK** ELEGANCE, POWER, LUXURY, MYSTERY, SORROW
- WHITE** PURE, SIMPLE, INNOCENCE, VIRGINITY, MINIMALISM

## COLOR PROPERTIES



## COLOR HARMONIES



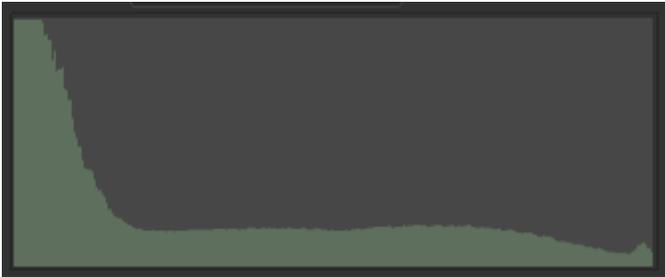
Experiment at Adobe Color  
<https://color.adobe.com/create/color-wheel>

# Color - Monochrome

Monochrome is useful to remove harsh colors  
Add structure by altering individual colors, is blue dark or light?  
Impact emotion by changing histogram spectrum

Black

White



# Presentation

What Presentation aspects do you like or not like?

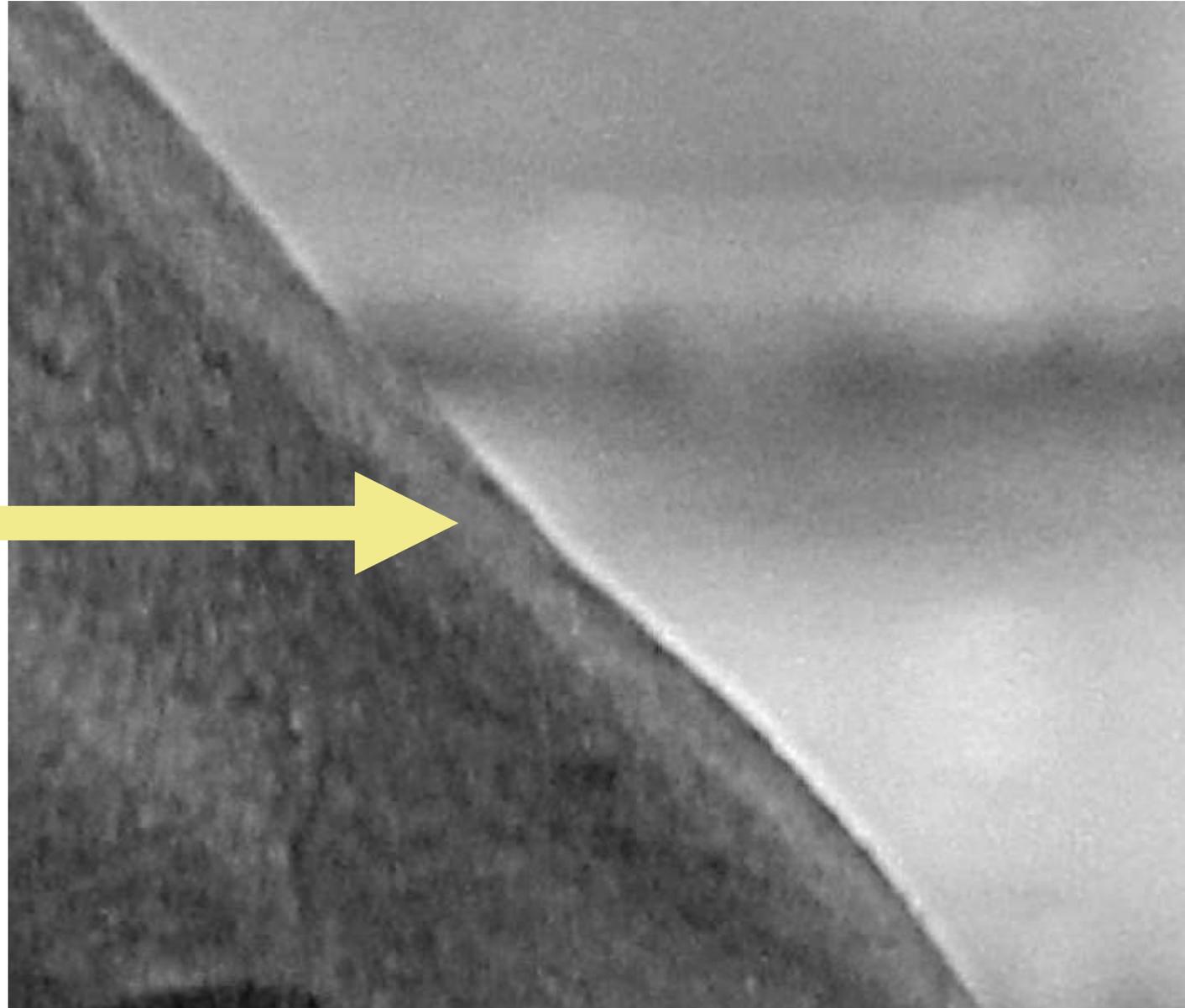
Affects a photo by giving it a finished look

Crop, Border, Dust, Mat  
Awareness of fine details



# Presentation – Fine Details Matter

Awareness of fine details is critical.



The horse's head and front has a small white outline.

Became ugly on 24"x30" print. Fixed before I printed at 30"x40".

# Thoughts on Adding Technical Excellence

## Lighting

- How does changing the light direction and quality help the story?
- Is this the right exposure? Brighter? Darker?
- How can I use the lighting to add more depth?

## Technique

- Is this the right camera location, height, angle ... ?
- This this the right aperture, shutter speed, ISO ... ?
- What should or should not be in focus?

## Color

- How do the colors support the story?
- Should I change the color intensity?
- Is monochrome a better choice?

## Presentation

- Did I look at the fine details?
- Clean the sensor and lens?
- Should I add a vignette or border or both?

# Using a Photo's Impact to Influence Commenting & Scoring



Think of **Impact** as a stool supported by these four legs.

With 4 legs: Very strong.  
With 3 legs: Still very strong.  
With 2 legs: Hard to stand up.  
With 1 leg: Easily falls over.  
With 0 legs: It's a snapshot.

[Click for more info](#)

## Storytelling

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The quality of the photo itself as it is presented for viewing

# Creating Photos with Impact



# Questions?

**Impact**



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