Creating Photos with Impact

Agenda

⭐ What Creates Impact

📖 Storytelling

🪄 Creativity

📐 Composition

🖩 Technical

🖩 Using Impact to Evaluate Photos

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November 4, 2023
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Chane's Viewpoint on Creating 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 talking about how to help everyone see the beauty in your photos.

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What Creates Impact

Storytelling

What
Finding
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Using Impact to Evaluate Photos

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.

The impact of a photo is subjective and can vary from person to person based on individual experiences, perspectives, and cultural backgrounds. There is no magic formula, but there are photographic principles we can all leverage.

What Creates Impact?

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

Impact

Storytelling

Creativity

Composition

Technical

How strong is the stool?
With 4 legs: Hard to knock over.
With 3 legs: Still very strong.
With 2 legs: Hard to stand up.
With 1 leg: Falls over.
With 0 legs: For your eyes only.

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

Photography Principles Overlap

Impact

Storytelling

Creativity

Technical

Composition

Changing focus can alter any pillar

- **Storytelling** – Adding motion blur to an object can enhance what your mind sees.
- **Creativity** – Putting specific items in focus or not in focus, to enhance uniqueness.
- **Composition** – Focus can be used to direct the viewers eye to the main subject.
- **Technical** – Focus may be altered using many aspects of your camera – shutter speed, aperture, camera motion. Also, focus changes in post-processing using focus stacking and blurring.

Is the Impact Stool Standing Strong?

- ✓ Lighting
- ✓ Focus
- ✓ Color

✓

Technical

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

Storytelling

The photo's ability to evoke imagination.

- ✓ Breathing space

Composition

Bringing all the visual elements together to express the purpose.

Putting too much weight on any one leg of the impact stool can lead you into the danger zone.

Creativity

The fresh expression of a scene conveying an idea or message.

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Storytelling

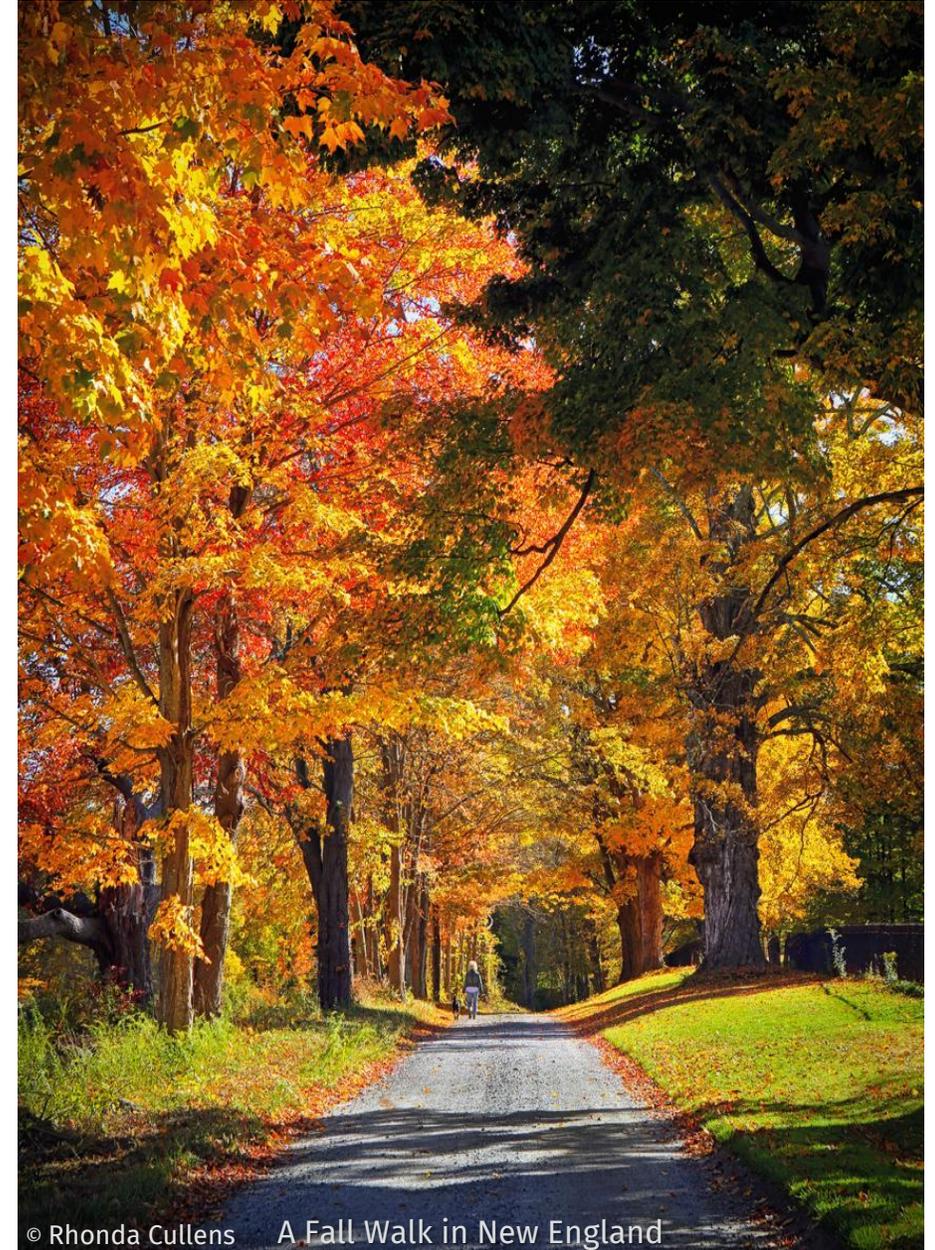## The photo's ability to evoke imagination

Take a **step back** to see what
kind of stories
you can create with your camera

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 elements and
make them noticeable

Subject – Keep it interesting and appropriate. Pretty doesn't mean it's right.
Title – Use to provide an emotional connection to the photo.

© Rhonda Cullens   A Fall Walk in New England

Storytelling

The photo's ability to evoke imagination

📖 Take a step back to see what kind of stories you can create with your

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

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

Photographer Tip

Downplay your emotional attachment to the story to sense what the audience sees.

🧱 Subject – Keep it interesting and appropriate. Pretty doesn't mean it's right.
Title – Use to provide an emotional connection to the photo.

© Rhonda Cullens   A Fall Walk in New England

Storytelling – How to Find the Story

Ask yourself if it is easy for you to tell a story about the scene?

If you find it hard, the storytelling can use improvement.

Yes, taking a stroll on a beautiful fall day.

Is the main subject clearly defined?

How is the subject helping to launch the story?

Yes, a fall scene.

Are there supporting elements?

Do they help? How do they help?

Yes, the road suggests a journey, and the person helps me look inward.

Is there interaction or activity helping the story?

Runner standing vs Runner passing vs Runner finishing

Not much, but she is taking a step and on the left side to remind us cars use the road.

Did the title help start the story?

Why or Why not?

Yes, it is exactly what I was thinking.

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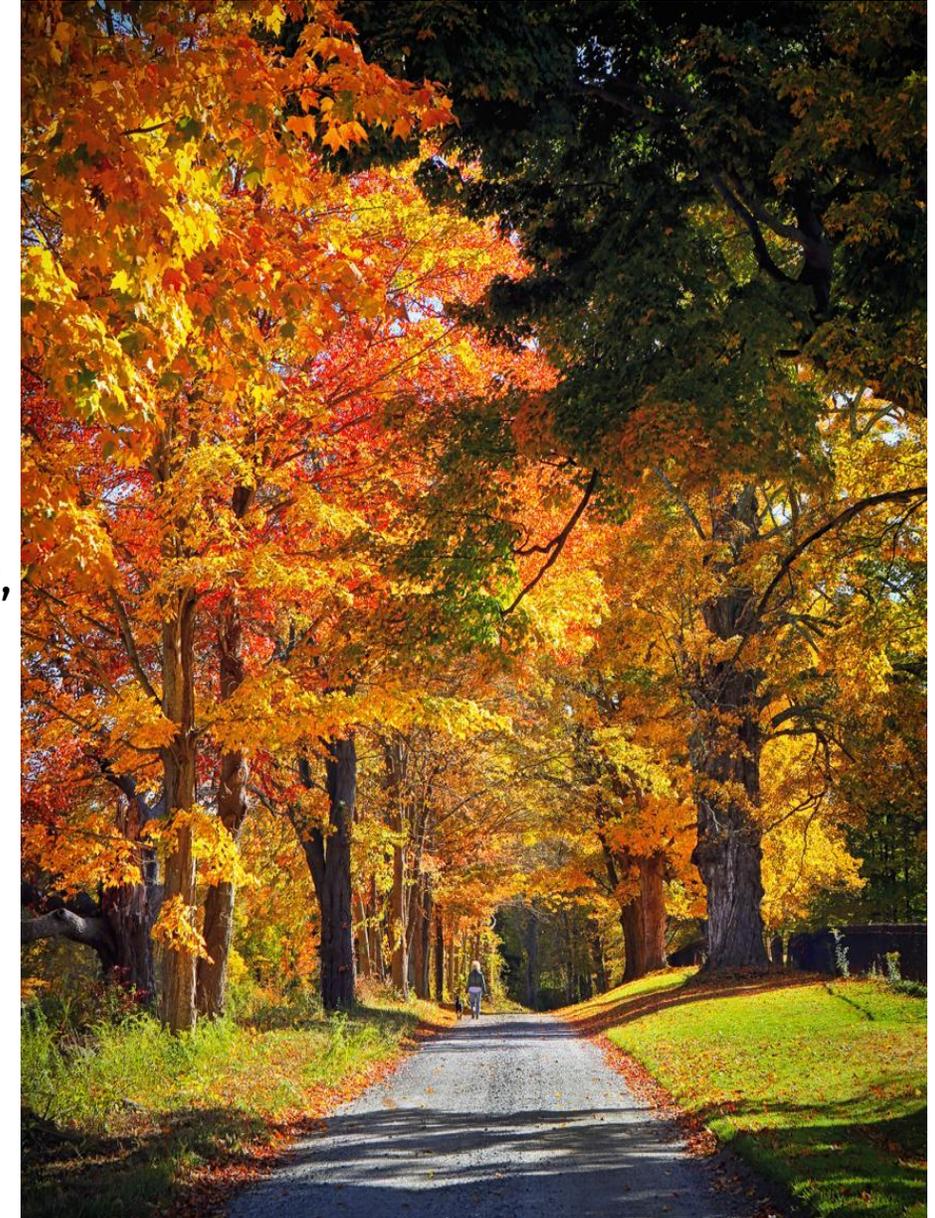
Storytelling Only – You Decide #1

Ask yourself if it is easy for you to tell a story about the scene?

If you find it hard, the storytelling can use improvement

A little. More if you know the category is "Thrill of Victory or Agony of Defeat." Expression is sad or "defeated".

Is the main subject clearly defined?

How is the subject helping to launch the story?

Maybe, the expression on her face. Bright, easy to find.

Are there supporting elements?

Do they help? How do they help?

The horse, clothes and the fence help explain the setting.

Is there interaction or activity helping the story?

Runner standing vs Runner passing vs Runner finishing

Nice that the horse is looking down and defeated as well.

Did the title help start the story?

Why or Why not?

The title directs the judge to focus on her face and the horse's posture, telling the story of disappointment.

I'm Disappointed, As Is My Horse

Storytelling Only – You Decide #2

Ask yourself if it is easy for you to tell a story about the scene?

If you find it hard, the storytelling can use improvement

Not really, simply a lighthouse on a nice day.

Is the main subject clearly defined?

How is the subject helping to launch the story?

Is the subject the living quarters, the lighthouse or the rocks?

Are there supporting elements?

Do they help? How do they help?

Not for storytelling.

Is there interaction or activity helping the story?

Runner standing vs Runner passing vs Runner finishing

No people, no activity, no storm.

Did the title help start the story?

Why or Why not?

The title talks about living at the lighthouse which is not well supported by the scene.

Living at the Lighthouse

As the Photographer, You Can Insert a Story

Photographer Tip

Creating the story before clicking the shutter is often easier than adding it later.

Living at the Lighthouse
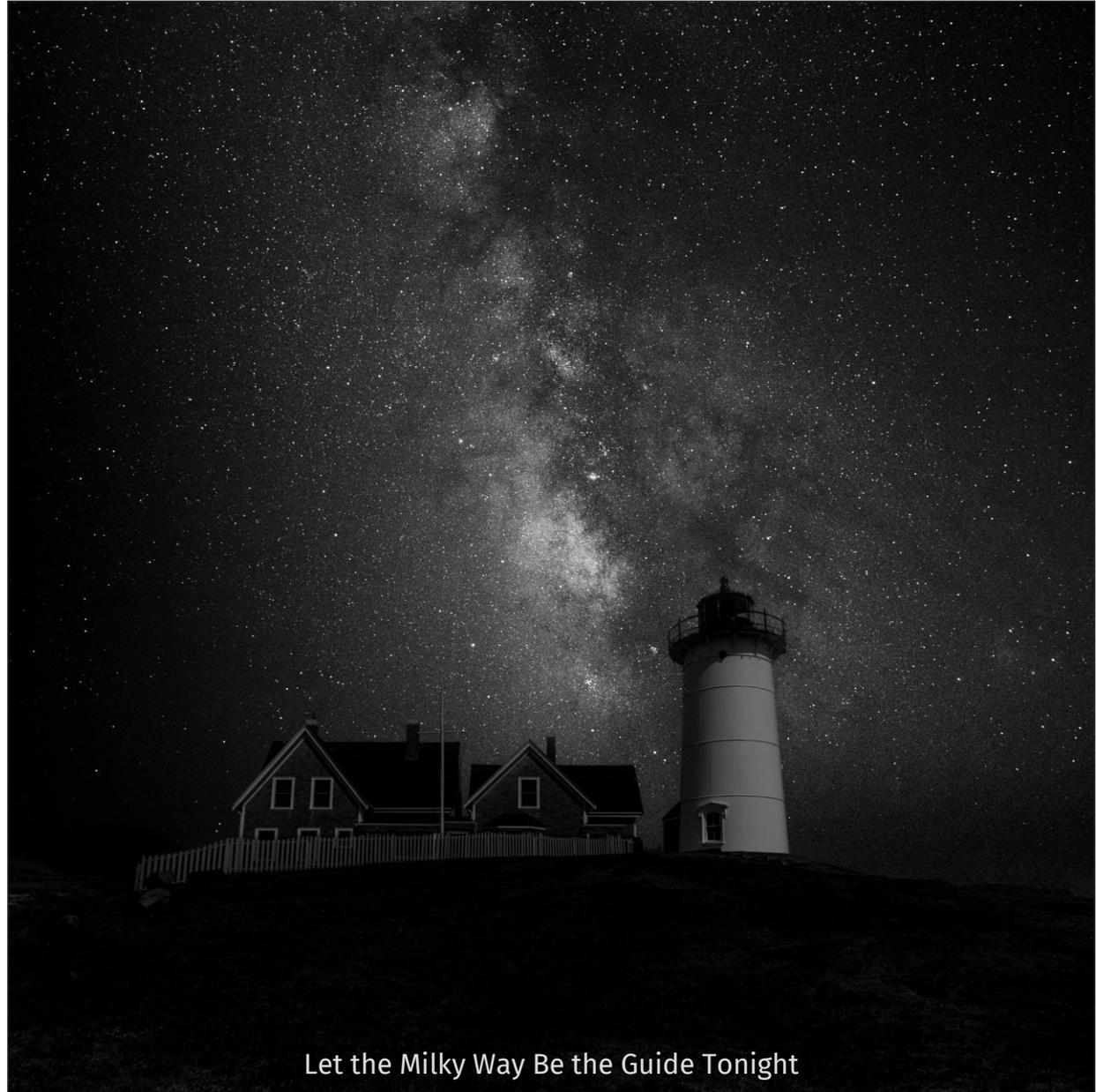
Let the Milky Way Be the Guide Tonight

Thoughts on Adding Storytelling

The Story

- Define the main subject and key story elements clearly.
- Our most cherished stories often stem from everyday moments.
- Avoid letting your emotions overshadow the viewer's perspective.
- Remember, like any story you read, this one also needs editing and revision.

Subject Matter

- Consider how the subject matter contributes to the story.
- Keep in mind the context of the subject, whether it's dramatic, serene, or familiar.
- Ensure subjects are distinct and visually separate, avoiding mergers.
- Enhance engagement by add interactions or providing additional context.

What Else?

- Consider additions or removals to improve the story.
- Explore how capturing motion can enhance storytelling.
- Evaluate the role of foreground and background in supporting your narrative.
- Utilize the title to provide hints about your story's content.

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

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The *Creativity Principle* is different than a Creative Category focused on *Altered Reality*
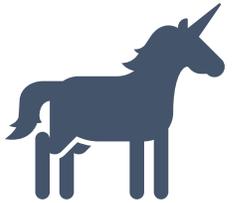

Creativity Principle

Not talking about Creative Altered Reality

Creativity

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.

Creativity will manifest itself in your mind as something is a bit different.

May use unconventional perspectives, experimenting with light and shadows or playing with composition.
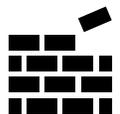
Style – how you use lighting, posing, composition or perspective to enhance the creative impact.

How to Find the Creativity

Why it is unique or interesting to you?

If you find it familiar or boring, creativity can use improvement

Mostly, the exploding objects are rare.

What specifically is unique?

The perspective, the alignment of elements, the lighting style …

The high shutter speed to freeze the motion dust.

How else is creativity expressed in secondary elements?

Do they help? How?

The axe tells you how it happened. The pieces flying show impact strength. The dust makes it look real.

What about lighting, color, focus depth, patterns, …

What else would help express the creativity?

The simple white background does not distract, instead it enhances clarity of the objects.

Is the creativity aligned with the competition category?

Why or Why not?

Yes, the category is 'bricks', and this is unique among the other brick photos

Breaking an Old Brick

Creativity – You Decide #1

Why it is unique or interesting to you?

If you find it familiar or boring, creativity can use improvement

Yes, new to me.

What specifically is unique?

The perspective, the alignment of elements, the lighting style …

Yes, showing the path of the bouncing dice.

How else is creativity expressed in secondary elements?

Do they help? How?

On the left, we see the dice falling.
On the right the dice are stationary.
They help explain the lifecycle story.

What about lighting, color, focus depth, patterns, …

What else would help express the creativity?

Too dark on the left side.

Is the creativity aligned with the competition category?

Why or Why not?

The category was 'Reflection', alignment is average. Exists as a secondary element.

The Journey of Three Dice

Creativity – You Decide #2

Why it is unique or interesting to you?	Not unique, however interesting.
If you find it familiar or boring, creativity can use improvement	

↓

What specifically is unique?	Yes, the "bite out of the cookie" shadow.
The perspective, the alignment of elements, the lighting style …	

↓

How else is creativity expressed in secondary elements?	Maybe, the extra chocolate chips laying around?
Do they help? How?	

↓

What about lighting, color, focus depth, patterns, …	The lighting lets me look between the individual cookies in the stack.
What else would help express the creativity?	

↓

Is the creativity aligned with the competition category?	Cookies are well aligned with the Category "Something You Love"
Why or Why not?	

A Taste of Love

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

Creativity Is Possible Even with Cookies

The Baker's Magic Hands

Thoughts on Adding Creativity

The Scene

- Recognize a scene's potential and employ creative techniques to capture it.
- Challenge yourself: How can I capture this scene differently?
- Explore multiple approaches to capture the moment.
- After capturing, assess: Would others find it dull?

Add Interesting Details

- Explore intriguing details like color and light.
- Consider depth of focus.
- Create or observe patterns.
- Capture dynamic action.

Have Fun!

- Embrace imagination.
- Invite a friend to join.
- Adapt to change to turn failure into success.
- Keep learning new things.
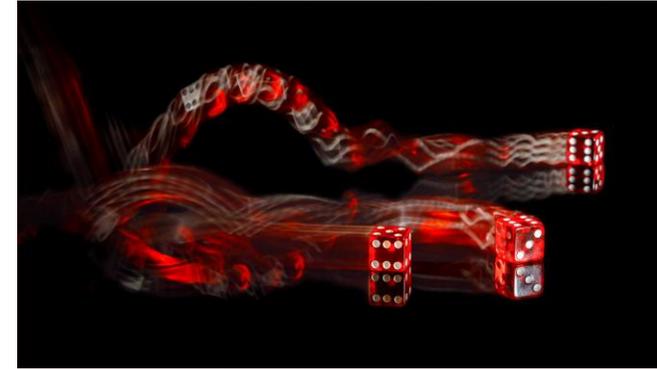
Having Fun by Learning & Playing!
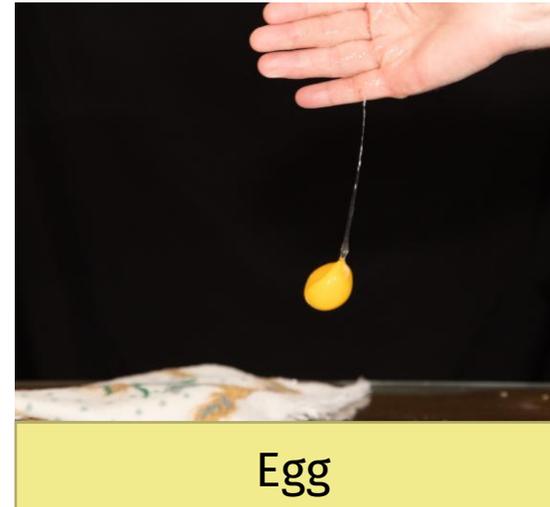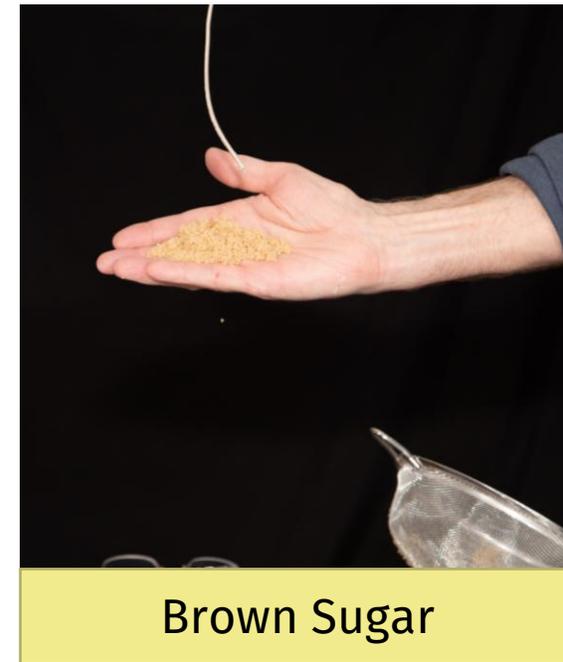
The Baker's Magic Hands

Checking drop zone

Flour

Brown Sugar

Chocolate Chips

Egg

Broken Egg

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Composition

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 the most important element is placed.

How items are arranged. The choices made on what to include or exclude.

There are a few dozen composition rules. However, you can break them to help succeed in your vision.
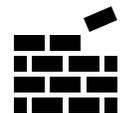
Center of interest – The point or points where the viewer should stop as they view photo

How to Find the Composition

Ask yourself if overall your mind understands the layout?

Is the scene pleasing to look at?

Yes, it feels good.

What specifically is the center of interest?

The point or points where your eyes stop to view the photo

The bird's eye. While there is a lot of color, the duller eye is obviously the center interest.

How did you find the center of interest?

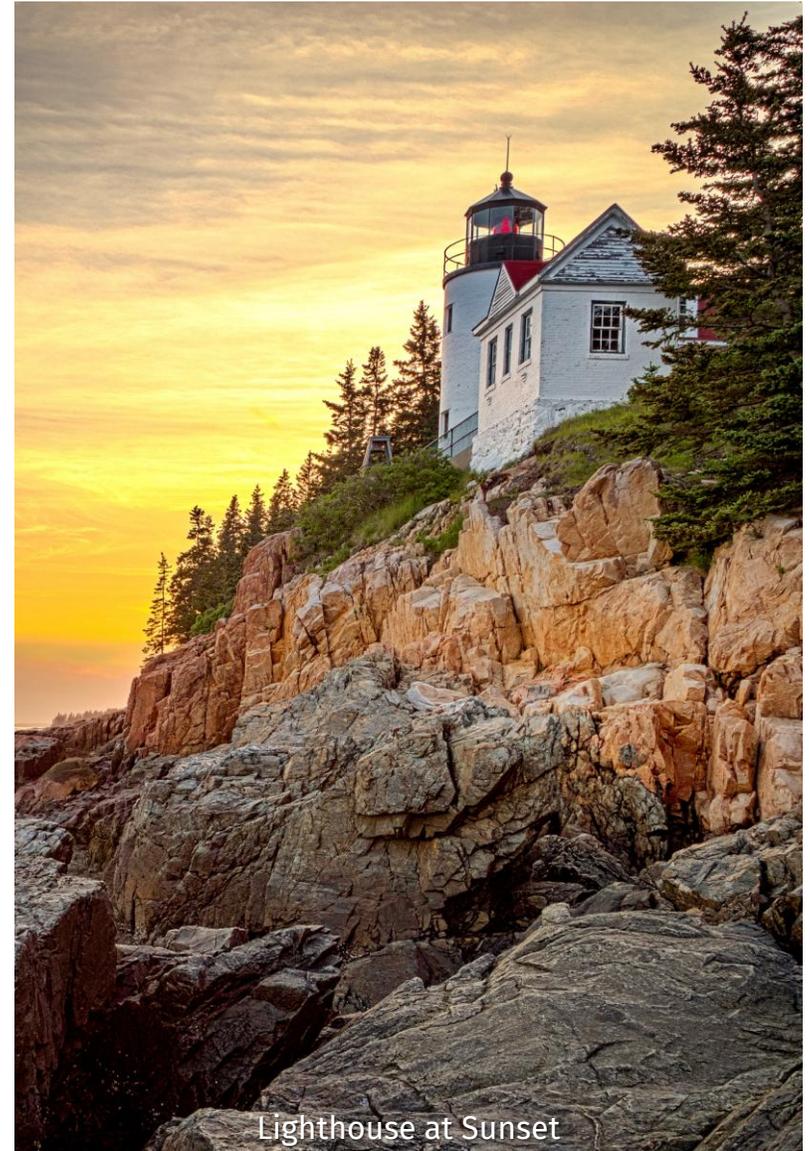Leading lines? Rule of Thirds? Focus? Lighting? Left to Right?

Most of the feathers are leading lines. The eye is on the rule of thirds intersection.

How do other items in the photo support or distract from the layout?

What has your eyes jumping somewhere they don't need to go?

The background is not distracting. I want to look at the feathers, but I always jump back to the eye.

Are there other composition rules you think would help?

Symmetry, Patterns, Negative Space, Breathing Space, Framing, Vignette, Rule of Odds …

The cropping supports rule of thirds, also negative space and patterns.

Tucked in for Comfort

Composition – You Decide #1

Ask yourself if overall your mind understands the layout?

Is the scene pleasing to look at?

Mostly, I was expecting more water from a lighthouse seashore scene.

What specifically is the center of interest?

The point or points where your eyes stop to view the photo

The lighthouse.

How did you find the center of interest?

Leading lines? Rule of Thirds? Focus? Lighting? Left to Right?

Yes, the white lighthouse stands out by brightness and rule of thirds .

How do other items in the photo support or distract from the layout?

What has your eyes jumping somewhere they don't need to go?

The sunset background and rocks foreground support it. Tree is blocking part of the lighthouse

Are there other composition rules you think would help?

Symmetry, Patterns, Negative Space, Breathing Space, Framing, Vignette, Rule of Odds …

The dark rocks don't add much, what about a square or landscape view that includes water and minimizes the black rocks.

Lighthouse at Sunset

Composition – You Decide #2

Ask yourself if overall your mind understands the layout?

Is the scene pleasing to look at?

It's vague, nice but not pleasing.

What specifically is the center of interest?

The point or points where your eyes stop to view the photo

Unknown, might be the bright sun, might be the sea stacks, the beach?

How did you find the center of interest?

Leading lines? Rule of Thirds? Focus? Lighting? Left to Right?

I'm still looking for it.

How do other items in the photo support or distract from the layout?

What has your eyes jumping somewhere they don't need to go?

Middle half of the photo is empty. My eyes are bouncing between the bright top right and lower left corners. The horizon is not level.

Are there other composition rules you think would help?

Symmetry, Patterns, Negative Space, Breathing Space, Framing, Vignette, Rule of Odds …

Work the scene or wait for the sun to be lower in the sky. Then, Rule of Thirds or Triangles might work.
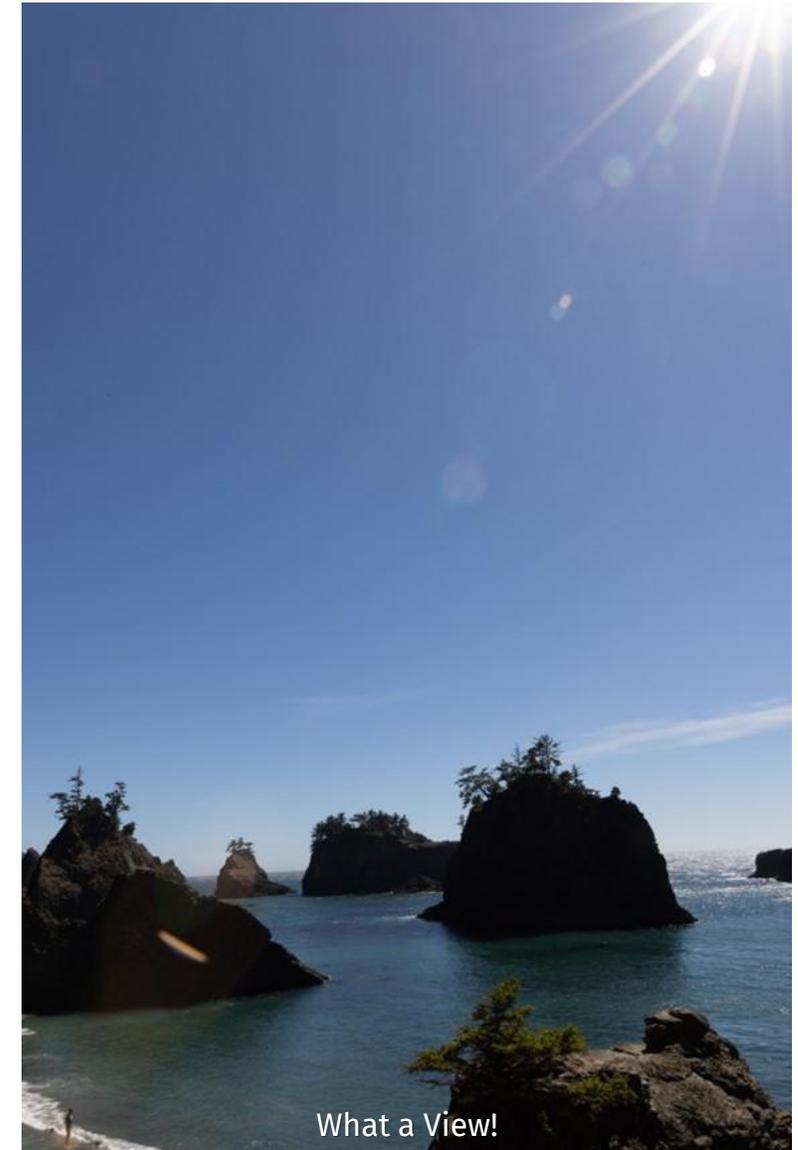
What a View!

Thoughts on Adding Composition

Center of Interest

- Is there a clear center of interest point?
- Avoid having too many key items to look at in first glance.
- How can I guide the viewer to the focal point?
- Decide what to exclude, even if it's beautiful.

Leading Lines

- It can be straight, curved, or intricately shaped.
- It could involve one or multiple objects, each with its own appeal.
- It might be highly prominent or subtly woven into the scene.
- Our natural tendency is to scan from left to right.

What Else?

- Our attention gravitates toward the brightest object.
- Our focus is drawn to the sharpest item.
- The rule of odds becomes less effective with more than 5 items.
- A subtle dark vignette retains the viewer's attention inside the photo.

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

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Technical

The visual presentation of the photograph.

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

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.

Presentation – finished look, crop, border or mat to enhance the look

Lighting – defines dimension, shape and roundness, also light impacts the color & tone

Technique – camera settings & perspective, focus, angle, pose, expression, skin tones, lens, texture, digital noise

Color – color choice, saturation, harmony and tones to enhance the emotional appeal and structure
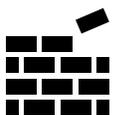
How to Find the Technical Excellence

Ask yourself if overall, do colors, focus and lighting match the scene?

What technically makes the scene standout?

> The red and green colors *complement* each other, and green and blue are *similar* colors. Everything is in sharp focus. The lighting is bright with sharp shadows from upper left.

What specifically do you like about the lighting?

Are the important subjects easy to see and evaluate?

> It creates depth with the shadows and deeper down in the shavings is naturally darker.

Is the center of interest technically excellent?

Focus, Color Harmony, Geometry, Light?

> I don't sense a specific center of interest, other than the pile of shavings.

What technical issues distract?

Dust, Overly bright areas, Overly dark areas

> There are small bright shiny lines on parts the pencil leads.

What is overly harsh or dull?

Sharpening, Contrast, Saturation, Light

> The sharpening, contrast and saturation are on the edge of getting harsh.

Sharp and Ready for Action

Technical – You Decide #1

Ask yourself if overall, do colors, focus and lighting match the scene?

What technically makes the scene standout?

The tiger's orange color works well with the fall-colored background, where it needs focus, it has focus, lighting is natural.

What specifically do you like about the lighting?

Are the important subjects easy to see and evaluate?

Vignette helps, bottom of face and under face could use more light.

Is the center of interest technically excellent?

Focus, Color Harmony, Geometry, Light?

Good focus and texture, even texture in the white areas on the face, crisp whiskers, eyes level, looking at camera.

What technical issues distract?

Dust, Overly bright areas, Overly dark areas

The big dark blob in the lower right is a little distracting.

What is overly harsh or dull?

Sharpening, Contrast, Saturation, Light

All good, except the lighting from the lower left is dull.
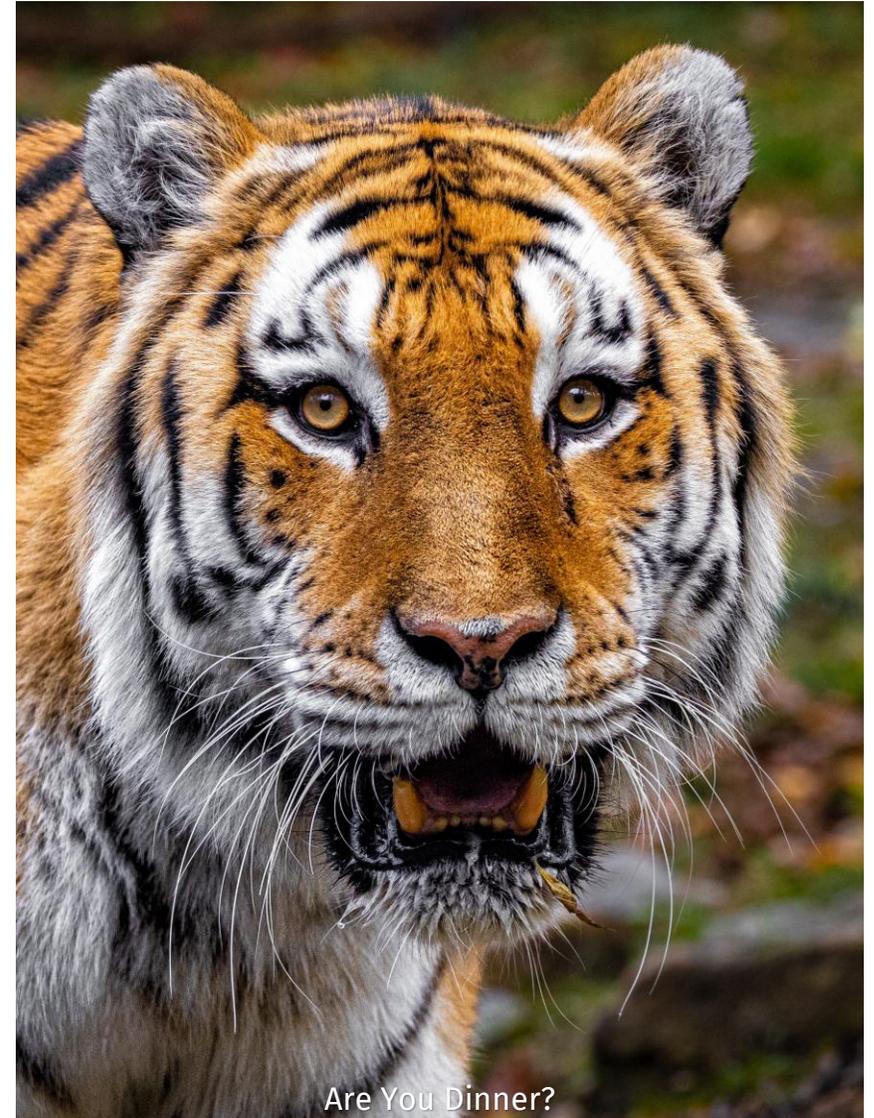
Are You Dinner?

Technical – You Decide #2

Ask yourself if overall, do colors, focus and lighting match the scene?

What technically makes the scene standout?

Colors are dull, focus is a little soft everywhere, sky overexposed.

What specifically do you like about the lighting?

Are the important subjects easy to see and evaluate?

Nothing. It's challenging due to the bright sky and the shade in the valley.

Is the center of interest technically excellent?

Focus, Color Harmony, Geometry, Light?

No, the valley is out of focus, colors weak, exposure is too low.

What technical issues distract?

Dust, Overly bright areas, Overly dark areas

Sky is too bright and the sky reflections in the water might be too bright.

What is overly harsh or dull?

Sharpening, Contrast, Saturation, Light

Not sharp. No contrast. Dull colors.
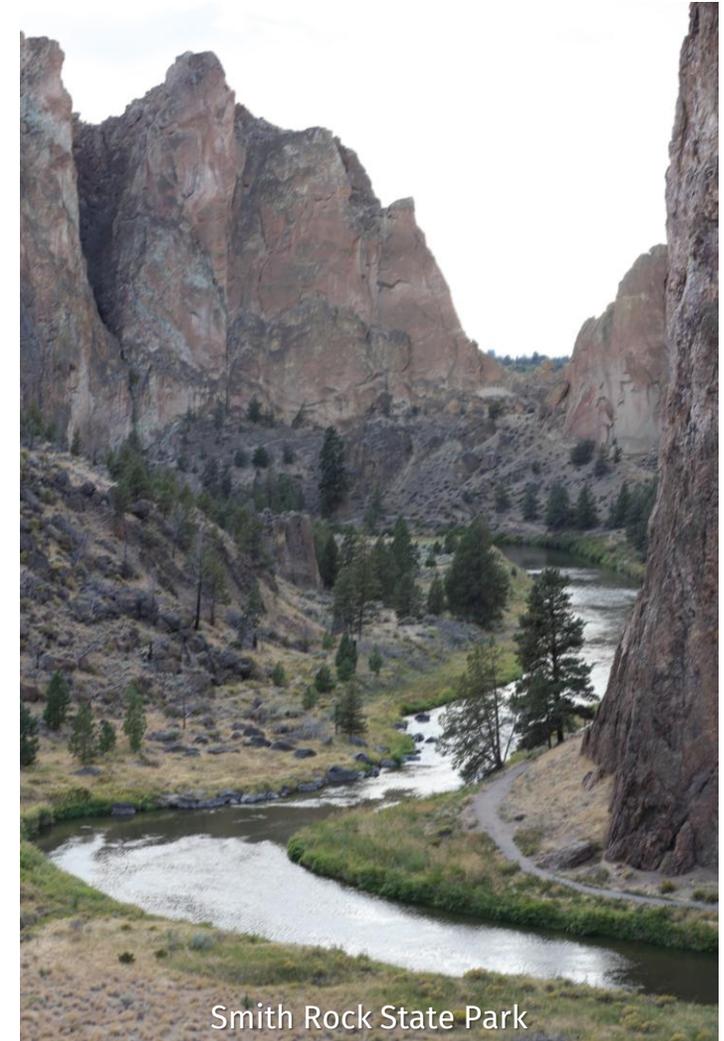
Smith Rock State Park

Thoughts on Adding Technical Excellence

Lighting

- How do alterations in light direction and quality impact the story?
- Is the exposure appropriate? Should it be brighter or darker?
- How can I utilize lighting to enhance depth?

Technique

- Is the camera position, height, and angle ideal?
- Are the aperture, shutter speed, and ISO settings correct?
- Determine what should or shouldn't be in focus.

Color

- How do colors enhance the story?
- Should I adjust color intensity?
- Is monochrome a better option?

Presentation

- Have I examined the finer details?
- Consider sensor and lens cleaning.
- Add a vignette, border, or both?

Finishing Lunch

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Evaluate your photo and ask tough questions about each leg of the stool.

Impact

With 4 legs: Hard to knock over.
With 3 legs: Still very strong.
With 2 legs: Hard to stand up.
With 1 leg: Falls over.
With 0 legs: For your eyes only.

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

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

Does your photo Stand Up?

Thoughts on Adding Storytelling

Thoughts on Adding Creativity

Thoughts on Adding Composition

Thoughts on Adding Technical Excellence

Evaluate your photo and ask tough questions about each leg of the stool!

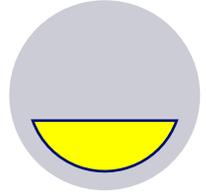Storytelling - Would adding the fork help the story?

Creativity - Does does the overhead view help?
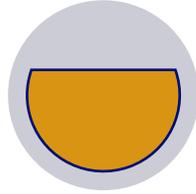
Technical - Do the apple peelings look like octopus?

Composition - Will the viewer find the center of interest?

Assignment: *Fruit*   Title: *From Apples to Dessert*

Creating Impact Requires a Plan

⬤ Vision   ⬤ Prepare   ⬤ Achieve

Define   How   Time

Why   Knowledge   Nature

Verify   Honesty   Alternatives

Creating Photos with Impact

Questions?

Impact

Storytelling | Creativity | Composition | Technical

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Storytelling **Creativity** **Composition** **Technical Excellence**