

# Composition and Shooting Tips



Chris Edwards

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# Do We Even Need A Brief?

- *"Consulting the rules of composition before taking a photograph is like consulting the laws of gravity before going for a walk." - Edward Weston*
- *"The so-called rules of photographic composition are, in my opinion, invalid, irrelevant and immaterial"*  
*- Ansel Adams*
- *"There are no rules for good photographs, there are only good photographs." - Ansel Adams*

# Why Composition Matters

- Adds interest for the viewer, thus reinforcing the message of your photo
- Captures the beauty of our world in a creative way
- Adds your unique viewpoint or “signature” to your work



# What is Composition?

- Arrangement of a subject within (and without) the frame
- The ability to see beyond the objects to the greater artistic and pleasing whole; the “organization of space” -  
- Michael Minner, photographer
- Emphasis on the subject within the frame



*Good composition intrigues the viewer's eye*

# The Power of Observation

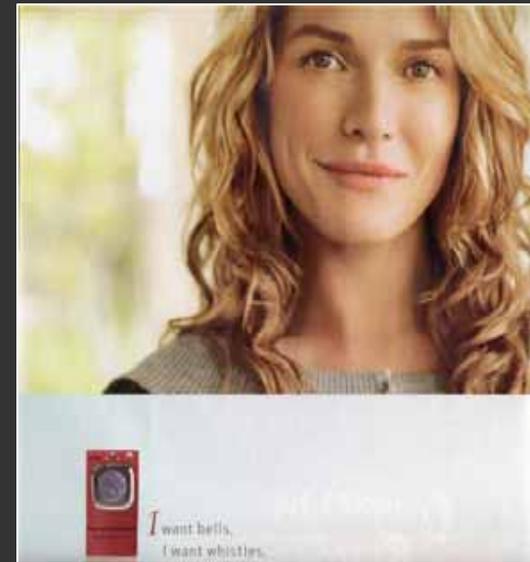
*"The only real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes."*

*- Marcel Proust*



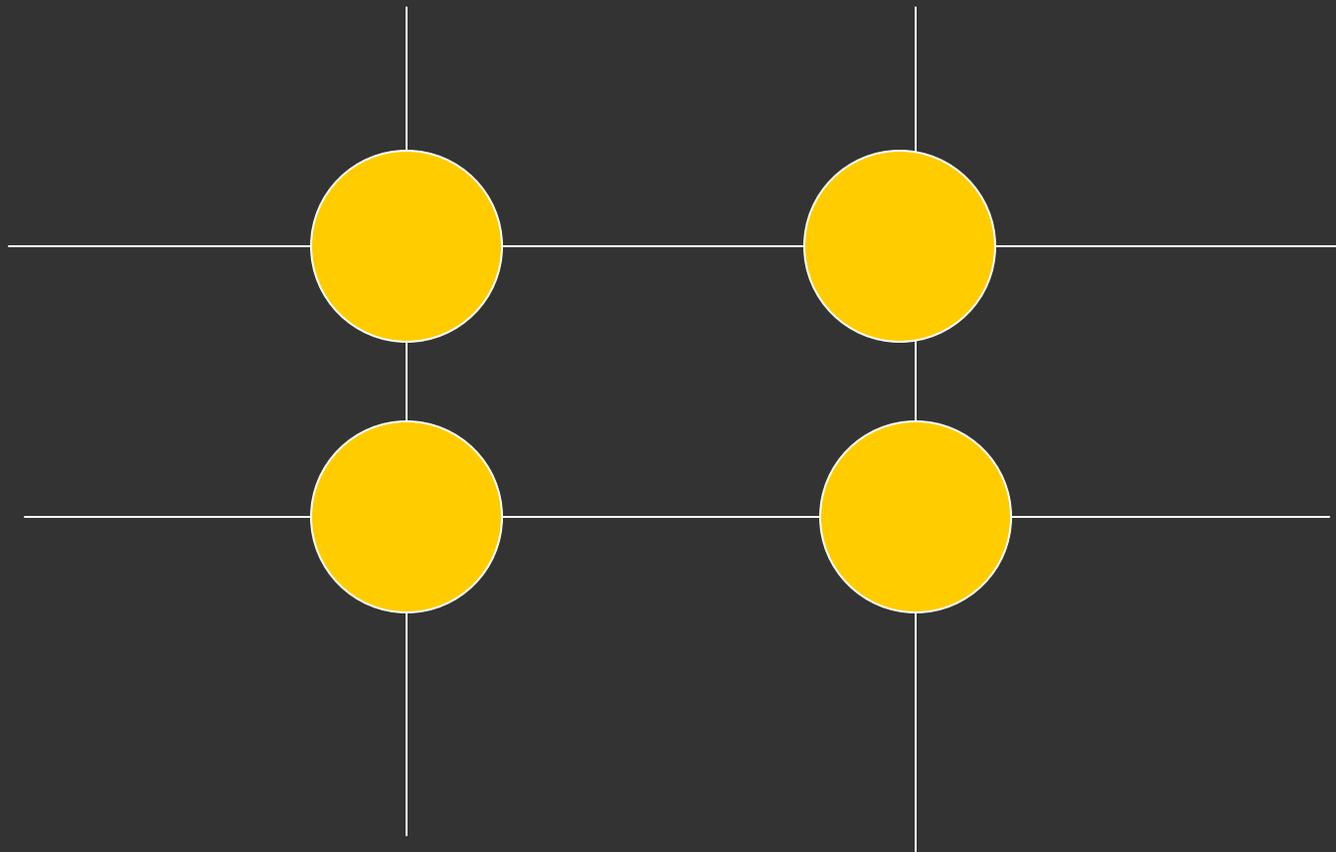
# Increase Your Artistic Sensibility

- Practice really seeing
- Study others' work on [Flickr](#), ads in magazines, pictures in newspapers
- Make a conscious effort to compose creatively
- Experiment with everyday objects
- Try to determine in advance what the photograph will be about and look like



# Keep in Mind the "Rule" of Thirds

Consider this a guideline, not a hard-and-fast rule

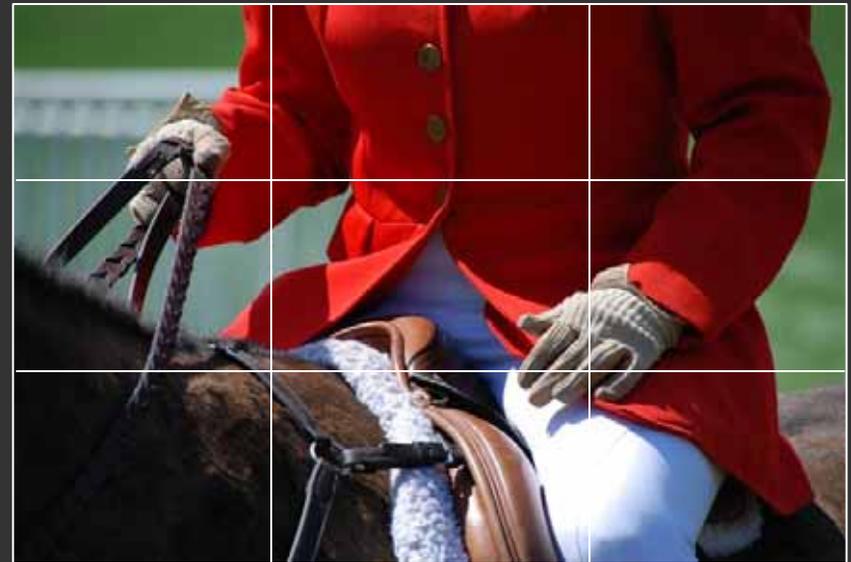
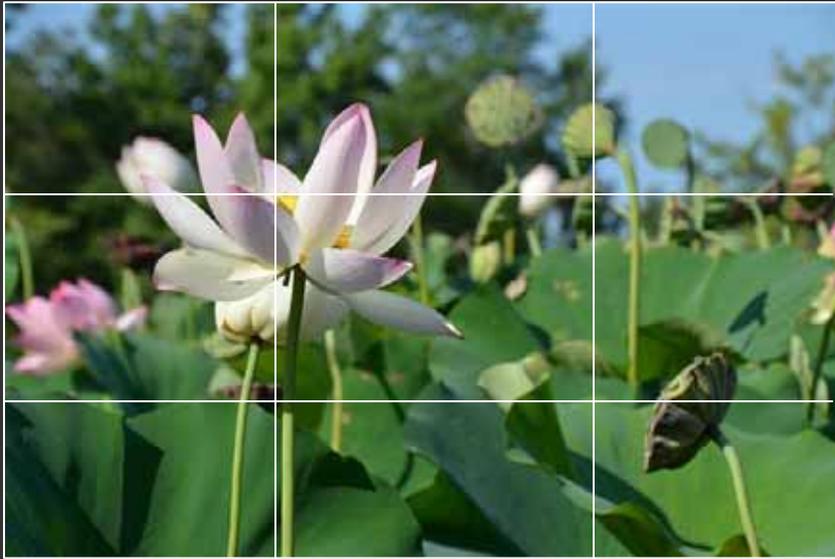


Place objects of interest where the lines intersect

# Rule of Thirds



# Rule of Thirds



# Shoot Subjects Off Center



Subjects typically face the center of the frame



# Be Alert to Reflections



Watch for reflections on water, polished surfaces, windows, sunglasses, ornaments, etc.



Move around to determine the best vantage point

# Incorporate Diagonals



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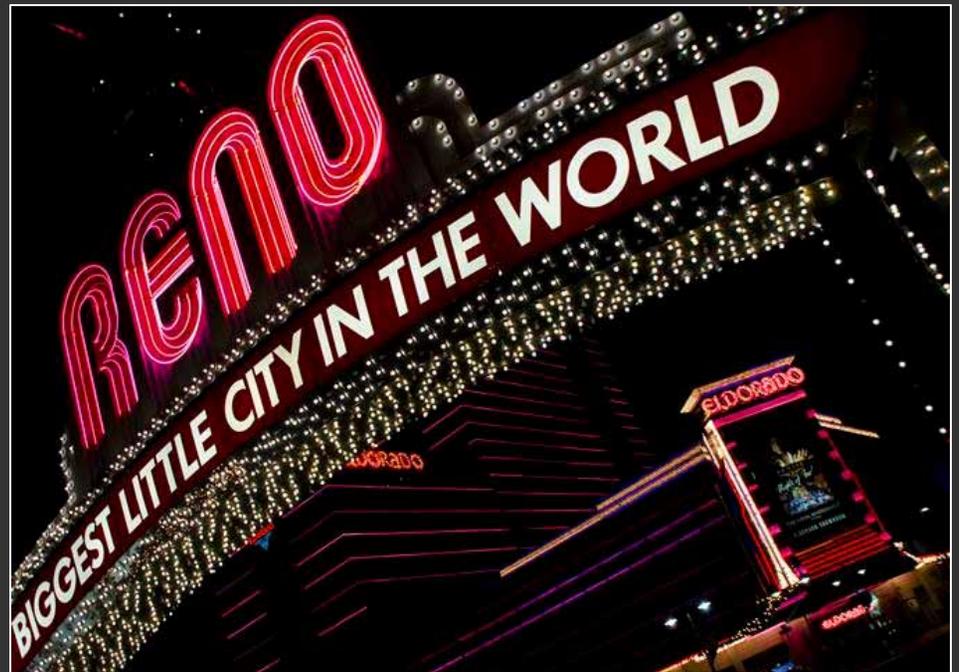
You can increase/create the diagonal through post-processing rotation or cropping, depending on the available space surrounding your subject



# Force the Diagonals



Initial shot is colorful but run of the mill



Off-kilter shot has more interest and energy

# Add Depth

Create dimensionality through foreground and/or middle ground objects



# Simplify Backgrounds



Original shot with  
distracting background



The blue sky helps  
showcase the performer

# Eliminate Distractions



Clone stamp used in post-processing to make the background more consistent

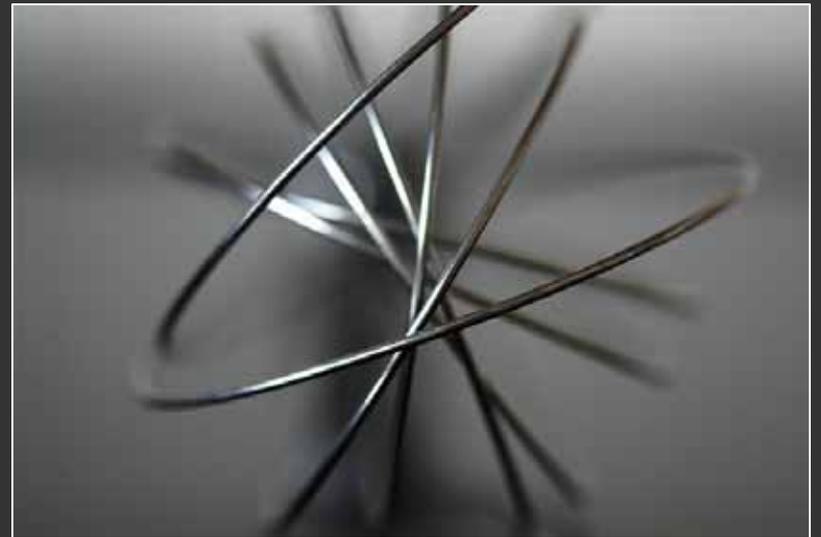
# Shoot into the Sun



Boost contrast/use burn tool in post processing to bring out the silhouettes, if necessary



# Zero in on a Feature



Helps the viewer see familiar objects in a new way

# Showcase Massed Subjects

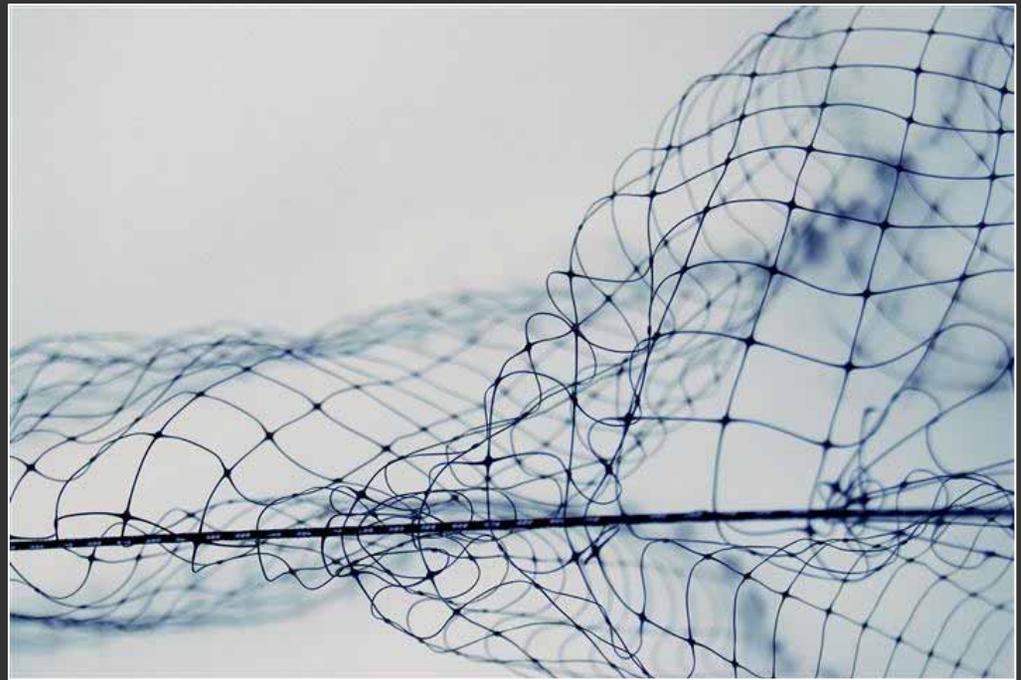


Move in close enough to lose the background/setting

# Capitalize on Patterns



Emphasize the dominant lines through judicious framing or cropping



# Take Advantage of Atmospheric

Mist, fog, shadows, sun shafts  
add an "otherworldly" feel



Fog shots may need  
contrast boosting, otherwise  
they'll be too flat



# Shoot Animals and Kids at Eye Level



# Experiment with Unusual Angles



Disrupts our usual way of seeing

# Catch the Subject in Action



Panning can create the sense of movement-- make sure the background is colorful

# Get in Close



The traditional tourist shot emphasizes the site over the people...fine if you were the architect!

Close-ups create a more intimate record of "being there"



# Some Resources

- Podcasts at 7 Photography Questions

“Learning to See Creatively” interviews with Bryan Peterson

Part 1: <http://www.7photographyquestions.com/2008/10/podcast-20-learning-to-see-creatively-an-interview-with-brya.html#more>

Part 2: <http://www.7photographyquestions.com/2008/10/podcast-21-learning-to-see-creatively-an-interview-with-brya.html>

- 23 articles about composition at Photoinf.com
- 5 articles about composition and graphic design at BetterPhoto.com  
<http://www.betterphoto.com/photography-articles/Photographic-Composition/>
- Bryan Peterson's book *Learning to See Creativity*

Have Fun!

