

# Photography Composition for Better Storytelling

## Introduction

### Composition

- “The act of combining parts or elements to form a whole.” Dictionary.com
- Like a puzzle, but the pieces are moving
- Takes time to master
- “How can I make this better?”
- Crop the crap
- Rules were made to be broken

### Rule of Thirds

- Subject falls on lines
- Best at intersections
- Focusing
- Rules were made to be broken

### Balance

- Arranging the subject with the scene to create a sense of balance
- Formal/Symmetrical: both sides of the frame have the same weight
- Informal/Asymmetrical: dissimilar elements create visual balance

### Backgrounds & Foregrounds

- Composition is about subtraction
- Move around until you eliminate elements that don't support your story
- Look around the edges of your frame
- Look for objects with too much visual weight

### Visual Weight

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Light<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Light colored</li><li>• Negative space</li><li>• Out of focus</li><li>• Small</li></ul></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Heavy<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dark colored</li><li>• Human: Eyes/Face</li><li>• Focus</li><li>• Large</li></ul></li></ul> |
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## Visual Weight (cont.)

- Our eyes are drawn to contrast
  - Lightest object in a dark image
  - Darkest object in a light image

## Elements of Composition

- **Mergers** - "Head in a clear spot"
- **Leading Lines** - Visual lines leading to your subject
- **Framing** - Using background or foreground elements to frame your subject
- **Pattern & Repetition** - Repeating subjects, or patterns within a single subject
- **Active Space** - Giving your subject room to move

## Layering for Storytelling

- Brings depth to your images
- Layering your image - foreground/middle ground/background
- Most powerful is to place subject in the middle



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