

## **Photographic Composition Tips**

Remember that there are no hard and fast rules to composition. There are only guidelines. Follow them and understand them to learn. Once you have a solid command of the guidelines, break them to experiment

### **Photo Composition Tips**

- Be clear on your subject. What story are you trying to tell with your image?
- Draw attention to your subject
  - Get closer
  - Use selective focus
  - Use color
  - Use selective lighting
  - Frame the subject (doorway, window, etc)
- Simplify. Remove anything that doesn't help tell the story. When in doubt, leave it out.
- Be aware of your negative space! Don't leave too much and be sure what is used is used correctly.
- Fill the frame. You can rarely go wrong by filling the frame with the main subject. Don't add background for the sake of adding background.
- Check the edges of the frame. Don't cut off feet or hands of your subject half way. If you want to exclude them, make a clean crop well above them.
- Check for intruders. Is there something popping in from the side? Does a tree branch, power line, sign or some other distraction steal attention from the subject? Recompose and remove it.
- Consider your point of view. Shoot up on objects to make them more powerful. Shoot down on objects to diminish them or make them look less imposing.
- Use the rule of thirds. Draw a tic-tac-toe board over your picture in your mind. Position your subject at one of the four intersecting points or on one of the lines.
- When making portraits, always keep the eyes above the center line of the image.

## Photo Composition Tips Continued

- Strive for balance. Look for objects out of place that tilts the viewers attention one way or the other
- The eye goes to the brightest part of the scene first. Don't let anything be brighter than the main subject.
- Add depth by adding strong foreground objects in shots where the background is also important.
- Shoot vertically to enhance tall objects or emphasize height. Shoot horizontally to emphasize width.
- Use patterns, particularly repeating patterns to make images more interesting.
- Use leading lines to attract the viewer's eye where you want it to go.
- Use S curves as a more relaxed casual way to lead your eye through the composition
- Start by shooting at your subject's eye level. Get down low when shooting a child or animal's portrait rather than shooting down on them.
- Make sure there is separation between multiple subjects to avoid unsightly merges
- Don't center everything unless there's a reason
- Don't let the horizon fall dead center in the picture
- Don't let the horizon cut through the head of any human or animal subject.
- Don't let the horizon merge with objects that are important to your image
- Make sure the horizon is level
- Right before capture, take a second to look up, down and all around to make sure there's nothing you're missing.

