

# Basic Photographic Composition

# Snapshot vs. Photograph

A snapshot can be taken of anything and of varying quality. Usually a snapshot is a quick rough capture to document a scene or an event.

A photograph on the other hand, is a well thought out, composed, exposed, and executed art form

# Photography is all about Light & Composition

*Today, our focus is going to primarily be on  
Composition to help you take your own  
photos to use as references for your artwork.*

**What is Composition?**



# Composition is...

... how subject matter is arranged within the frame of a photograph.



**What is Subject Matter?**

# Subject Matter is...

... the subject of your photograph is whatever you are taking a photograph of (ie: person, place, thing, etc.)



# Photographic Composition 101

# Composition 101: Simplicity

# Composition 101: Simplicity

- Keeping it simple is usually a good thing in photography
- Too much visual distraction in your photograph can take away from your subject and make it look more like a snapshot

... so, don't be afraid to get close to  
your subject!

# Composition 101:

## Focal Point

# Composition 101: Focal Point

- Where the viewer's eye goes directly upon looking at a photograph (the first thing you see)
- Try to establish a focal point or center of interest in your photographs



# Composition 101:

## Rule of Thirds

# Composition 101: Rule of Thirds...?

... The placement of your main subject and/or horizon line into  $\frac{1}{3}$  of your photographs frame, rather than the center/middle.

...A “rule of thumb” in the visual arts that creates a more interesting artwork through added visual tension

**Examples of**  
**Rule of Thirds**  
*Portraits*





























My tired eyes  
won't sleep,  
I keep them open  
'til we meet again.



**Did you notice anything  
else about portraits...?**



# Did you notice...?

## Tips & Tricks for Portraits:

- Can be black and white or in color
- Can be very simple yet powerful
- Reveal a side of a person's personality (directly and/or more creatively)
- Subject does not need to be looking at the camera
- Up close shots should have eyes be the sharpest point of focus.

**Examples of**  
**Rule of Thirds**  
*Objects*



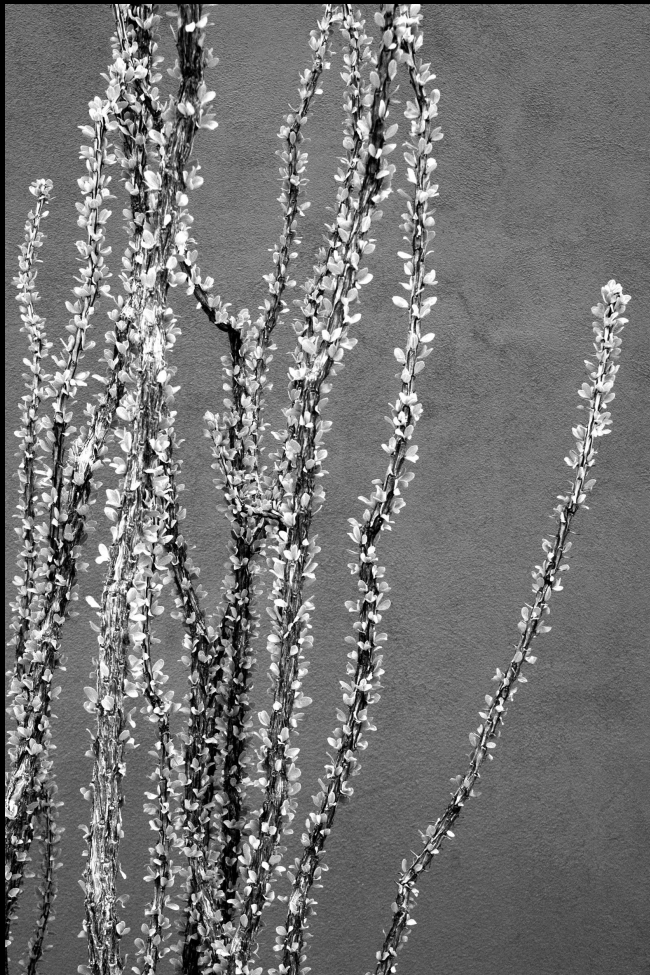








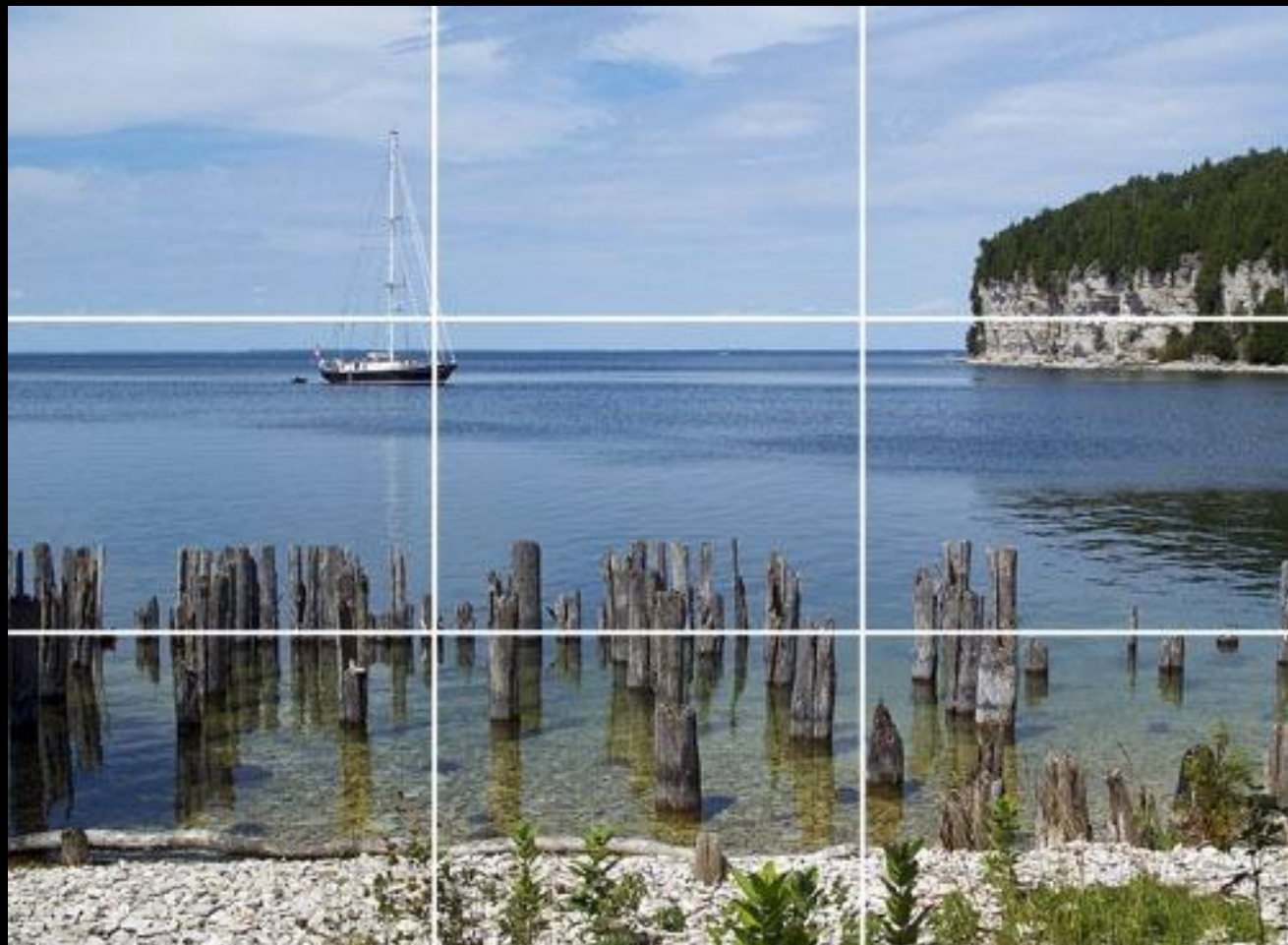








**Examples of**  
**Rule of Thirds**  
*Horizon Line*







oneslidephotography.com







# Rule of Thirds, More Tips & Tricks:

- Leave more room in front of a moving subject rather than behind
- Keep the overall composition simple
- Don't be afraid to get close to your subject with your camera



# Other Reminders:

- Don't stand too far from your subject
- Of subject is standing in front of a wall, have them stand away from it to avoid shadows, or have them get close and capture the cast shadow at an interesting angle.
- Kneel or sit if your subject is lower to the ground

# Composition 101:

## Lines

# Composition 101: Lines

There are 5 main types of Lines we can look for and photograph:

- Horizontal Line
- Vertical Line
- Diagonal Line
- S-Curve Line
- Leading Line

# Composition 101: Lines

## Lines can...

- Add visual interest in a photograph by creating a sense of movement
- Lead a viewers' eye to a focal point or main subject
- Can become the subject matter themselves, and become abstract when viewed close-up

# Horizontal Lines: *side to side*



# Vertical Lines: *Up & Down*



**S-Curve:** *Curved, moves eye through photo*





# Diagonal: *Angled*



**Leading:** Moves your eye through a photograph and leads you to a focal point or main subject. Can be any of the previous other types of line



# More Examples of Lines

*Horizontal, Vertical, Diagonal, S-Curve,  
& Leading*







































# Composition 101: Framing

# Composition 101: Framing

-Use elements in the foreground of your photograph to frame a focal point or main subject that is further from you

-This can add visual interest by creating stronger sense of depth in a photograph













