# Photography Composition using the Elements and Principles of Art

# Elements

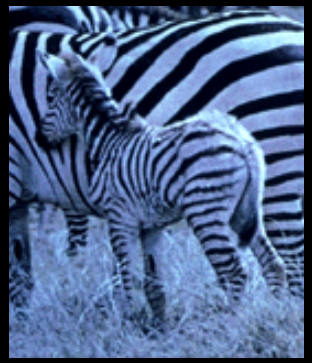
## The basic building blocks

- Line
- Shape/Form
- Space
- Value
- Texture
- Color

# Lines

- A mark made by a moving point.
- Has greater length than width.
- Directs the eye – horizontal, vertical, diagonal, curvy, zig-zag, etc.
- Can be actual obvious lines or the borders or edges of shapes.

# Lines



# Shape/Form

- A contained area.
- Can be GEOMETRIC (man-made) ex. Square, triangle, circle, etc.
- Can be ORGANIC (natural) ex. Leaves, humans, puddles, etc.
- Shapes are 2-Dimensional and flat. (circle)
- Forms are 3-Dimensional with height, width and depth. (sphere)
- Used to create a sense of space and substance.

# Shape/Form

# Space

- The area used or unused in a composition.
- Positive space – the area the objects/subject takes up.
- Negative space – the area around, under, through and between.
- Gives the photo a 3-dimensional feeling. (Depth)
- Foreground (closest), Middle ground, and Background (farthest).
- Can be open, crowded, near, far, etc.

# Space

# Value

- Black and White and all the Grays in between
- Dark to Light
- Can add drama and impact to composition.
- Can give a sense of timelessness
- Train your eye to read color as Black and White!

# Value

# Texture

- The surface quality.
- How an object feels, or how it looks like it feels.
- Rough, smooth, bumpy, gooey, sharp, etc.
- Adds interest! Sense of sight and sense of touch involved.

# Texture

# Color

- Artistic term is HUE
- Need light to see color.
- Primary, Secondary, Intermediates.
- Use color schemes to enhance appeal or make impact.

# Color

# *Principles*

- The different arrangements – or *compositions* - of the ELEMENTS of design to create artistic, interesting, more visually powerful photographs.
- Principles

# *What are the Principles of Art?*

- Emphasis
- Balance
- Unity
- Contrast
- Movement/ Rhythm
- Pattern/Repetition

# *Pattern/Repetition*

- An element that occurs over and over again in a composition.
- Can repeat the element in a consistent pattern.
- Can repeat the element in a variation of the pattern.

# *Repetition Examples*

# *EMPHASIS or Focal Point*

**Emphasis** in a composition refers to developing points of interest to pull the viewer's eye to important parts of the body of the work.

# *EMPHASIS EXAMPLES*

# *Balance*

**Balance** is a sense of stability in the body of work. Balance can be created by repeating same shapes and by creating a feeling of equal weight.

# *Balance Examples*

# *Unity*

**Unity** is seen in a painting or drawing when all the parts equal a whole.

# *Unity Examples*

# *CONTRAST*

**Contrast** refers to the opposites and differences in the work. You can achieve variety by using different shapes, textures, colors and values in your work.

# *CONTRAST Examples*

# *Movement*

**Movement adds excitement to your work by showing action and directing the viewers eye throughout the picture plane. Rhythm is a type of movement in drawing and painting. It is seen in repeating of shapes and colors. Alternating lights and darks also give a sense of rhythm.**

# *Movement*

# Elements and Principles in Photographic Composition

- The Elements and Principles are used in *making* photographs – not just taking photographs.
- You have to know and understand the elements and principles of art to *see* them all around you and capture them in your photos.
- Good luck!