Photography composition - Your photo as a story

Photo composition rules

Rule of Thirds
Golden Section rule
Diagonal rule
Disappearing Lines

"If you, an artist, the one who cannot manage figures, you look like an orator who cannot manage words."  
Leonardo da Vinci

Photo composition rules

What is a photograph? It is a story. What is a story? It is a series of sentences connected to each other. The same is true about photography. To create a photograph, it is not enough just to take an image of something. The first impression from a photograph is determined by the composition balance of an image.

To increase the expressiveness of your digital pictures, apply the picture composition rules while taking the photos or modeling their edges.

Rule of Thirds

The Rule of Thirds is based on the fact that the human eye is naturally drawn to a point about two-thirds up a page. Crop your photo so that the main subjects are located around one of the intersection points rather than in the center of the image:

Your landscapes will be optimally pleasing to the eye if you apply the Rule of Thirds when you place your horizon line. If the area of interest is land or water, the horizon line will usually be two-thirds up from the bottom.
Alternately, if the sky is the area of emphasis, the horizon line may be one-third up from the bottom, leaving the sky to take up the top two-thirds of the picture:

![Image 1](image1.png)

Golden Section rule

It has been found that certain points in a picture’s composition automatically attract the viewer’s attention. Similarly, many natural or man-made objects and scenes with certain proportions (whether by chance or by design) automatically please us. Leonardo da Vinci investigated the principle that underlies our notions of beauty and harmony and called it the Golden Section. Long before Leonardo, however, Babylonian, Egyptian, and ancient Greek masters also applied the Golden Section proportion in architecture and art.

To get a clearer sense of these special "Golden" composition points, imagine a picture divided into nine unequal parts with four lines. Each line is drawn so that the width of the resulting small part of the image relates to that of the big part exactly as the width of the whole image relates to the width of the big part. Points where the lines intersect are the "golden" points of the picture:
Diagonal rule

One side of the picture is divided into two, and then each half is divided into three parts. The adjacent side is divided so that the lines connecting the resulting points form a diagonal frame. According to the Diagonal Rule, important elements of the picture should be placed along these diagonals:
Linear elements, such as roads, waterways, and fences placed diagonally, are generally perceived as more dynamic than horizontally placed ones:

![Image of a river with ice covering a portion.](image1.jpg)

**Disappearing Lines into Corners**: If there are strong lines in the scene, try to get them to disappear into the corner. If the lines break into the center or the edge, it tends to divide the photo, but disappearing into a corner seems to make composition stronger.

![Image of a road with a white line](image2.jpg)
**Monotonous Content:**
Some images would make killer jigsaw puzzles - they contain many examples of the same object but with deep detail that allows the brain to dwell on and discover arbitrary parts of the photo.

![Image of gourds](image1.jpg)

**Using Silhouettes**
Another aid to the eye seems to be the use of silhouettes. Silhouettes allow you to form a stronger sense of scene depth because there is a colour becomes a function of depth. Dark Silhouettes at dusk are the easiest form of silhouette to form - just over expose the frame in a high contrast scene.

![Image of sunset](image2.jpg)
3D Composition Rules:
For landscape and environment photos, there are additional strategies you can use to make your photos stand out. These seem to tap into the brain's ability to perceive or reconstruct spacial relationships.

**Using Layers of {Textures | Lighting}** One of the easiest ways to recover three dimensions from a two dimensional rendering is to use layers of lighting or textures. They eye can easily trace outlines and assign a depth sorting priority to the various pieces in the frame.

The second type of silhouette is a blend to ambient (often white). Fog is the most common situation to cause these effects, although it happens for many other reasons (dust storms, forest fires, mist).

**Using Reflections**

Again, our brain seems clever at resolving a three dimensional scene with the aid of reflections. If the reflection folds at the center of the frame, it is less effective than using the third line, or even leaving the fold out of the frame all together.