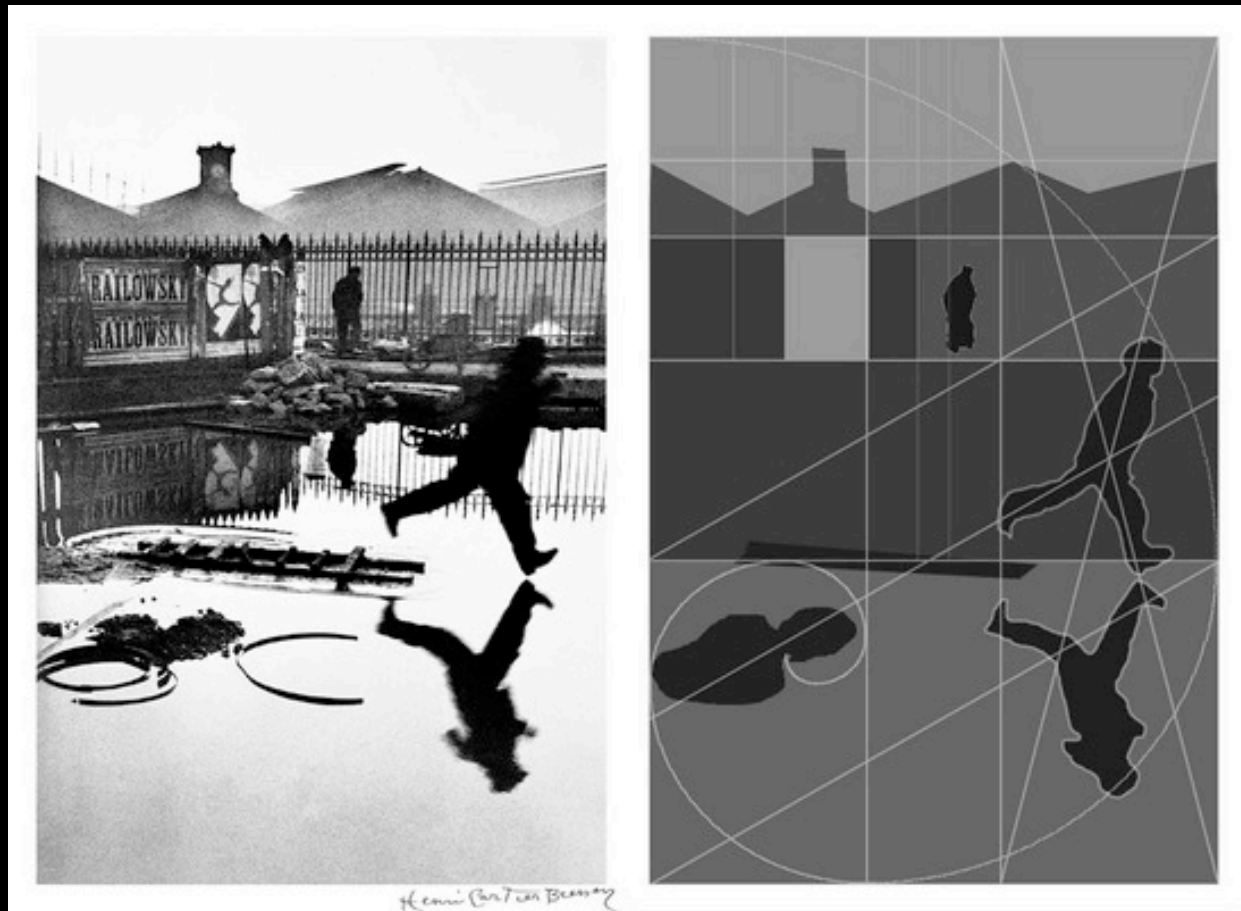# Photographic Composition

Ida C. Benedetto
Addis Ababa University
Jan 27, 2010

Today!

Aesthetics

Composition

Tomorrow!

Visual Storytelling

Documentary Photography

Now, put away your notebooks.

Do yourself a favor.

Just look.

Simplicity

All the things you have during your physical experience of a scene

- space, time, attention –

are not available to the viewer of

your photograph.

Pictured: Alexandrea Boulat

You need to consciously **construct it visually**.

Think First!

What is important, interesting, and visual?

How do you make a photograph of it?

Ida C. Benedetto

View Point

Where you, the photographer,

(and ultimately the viewer of the photo)

are positioned in relation to the scene dramatically impacts the **feeling** and **message** of the photograph.

From Above   Ida C. Benedetto

At Eye Level   Eros Hoagland

From Below   Cédric Gerbehaye

Close Up   Mark Leon

Far Away   Travis Dove

Move around!

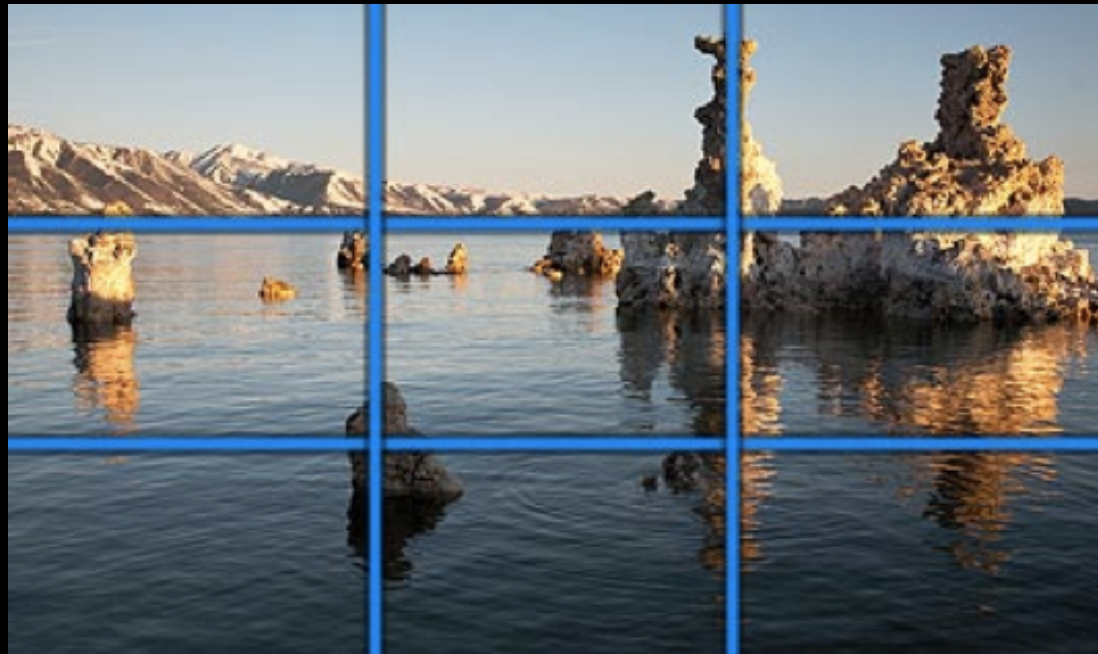After **your camera**, the most important photographic tool you have is **your body**.

Explore different points of view by moving around, NOT by hitting the zoom button.
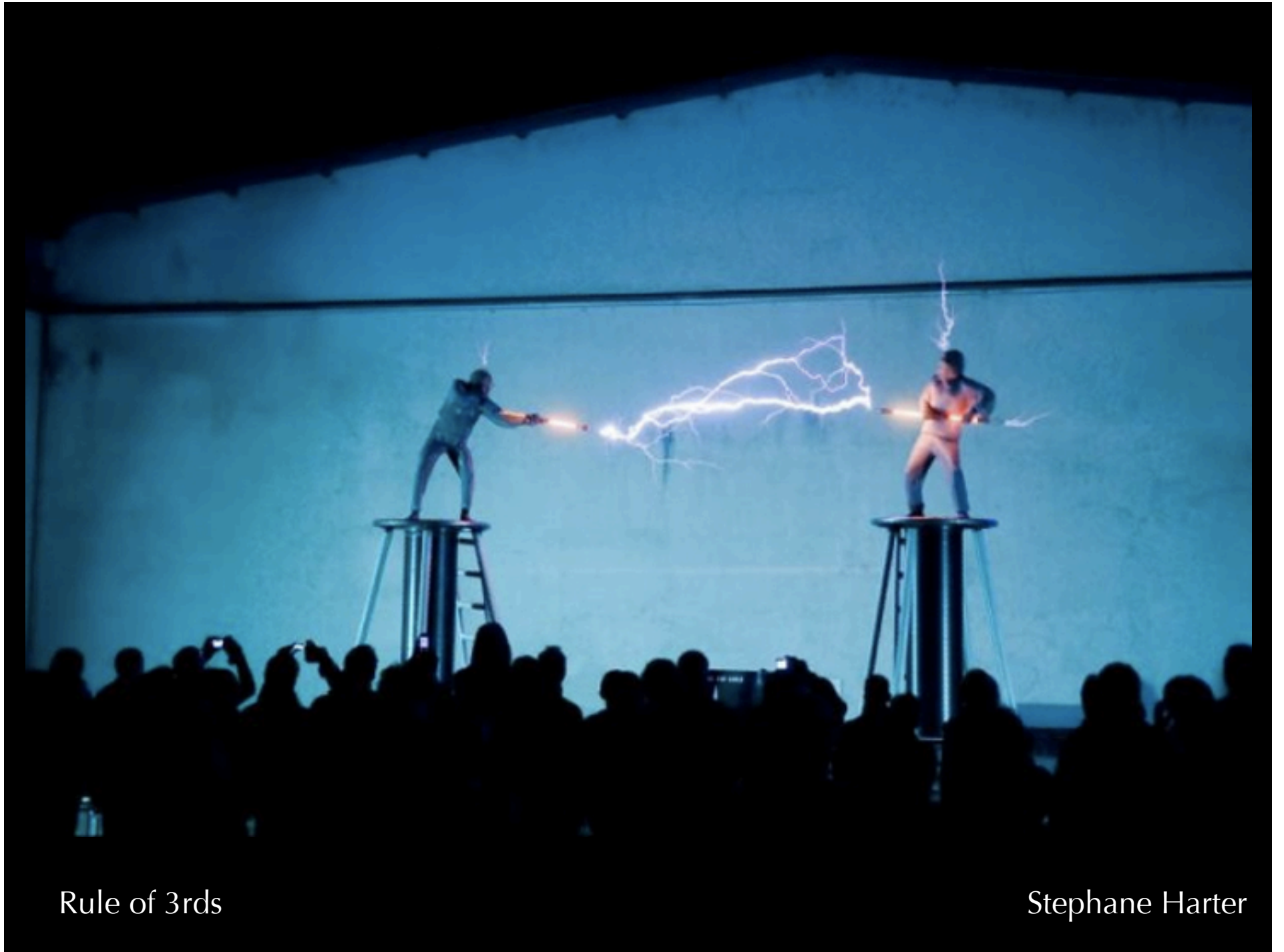
Compositional Balance

Organized   ~~Static~~

Dynamic   ~~Busy~~

Rule of Thirds

Composition along vertical and horizontal lines that divide the picture into thirds, with focus on where the lines intersect.

Rule of 3rds   Stephane Harter
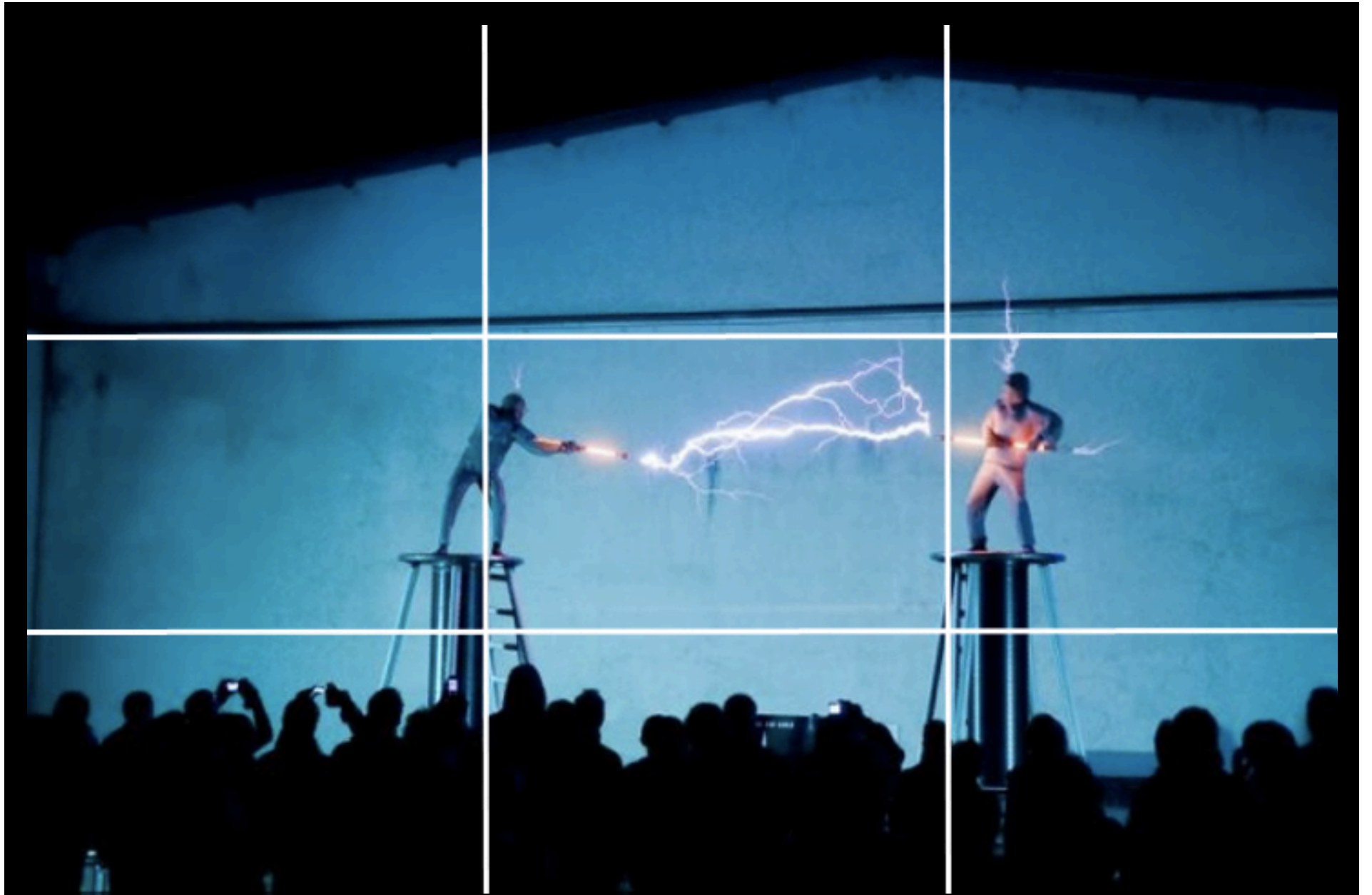
Rule of 3rds   Stephane Harter

Rule of 3rds   Dana Popa

Rule of 3rds   Dana Popa

Rule of 3rds   Lynsey Addario

Rule of 3rds   Lynsey Addario

Rule of 3rds   Ida C. Benedetto

Rule of 3rds   Ida C. Benedetto

Rule of 3rds   Ruth Fremson

Rule of 3rds   Ruth Fremson

Rule of 3rds   Kevin J. Miyazaki

Rule of 3rds   Kevin J. Miyazaki

Rule of 3rds   Ida C. Benedetto

Rule of 3rds

Ida C. Benedetto

Rule of 3rds   Ida C. Benedetto
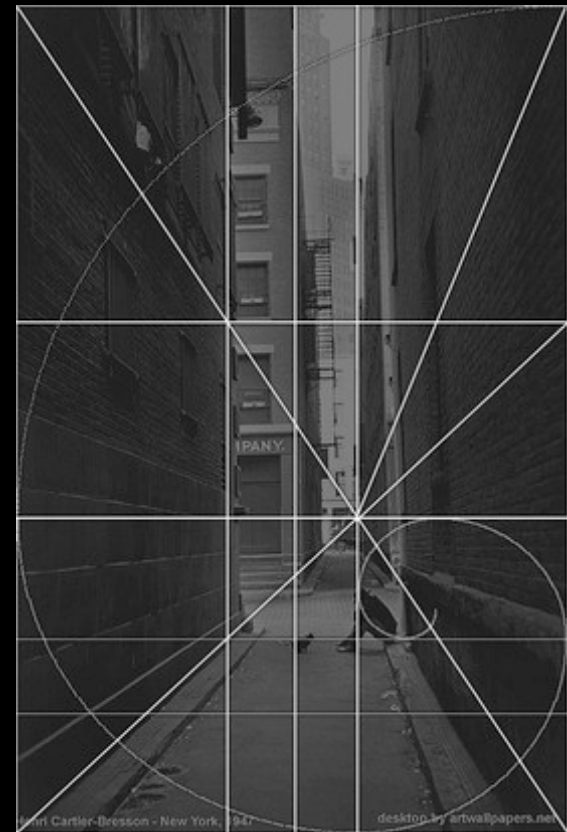
Rule of 3rds   Ida C. Benedetto

Framing

The relationship between the main subject of the photograph, other visual elements, and the edges of the photo.

Framing   Åsa Sjöström

Framing   Chris Maluszynski

Framing   Oded Balilty

Layering   Ida C. Benedetto

Framing   Ida C. Benedetto

Framing   Ida C. Benedetto

Framing

Ida C. Benedetto

Framing   Damon Winter

Framing   Ron Haviv

Guiding the Eye

A good photograph will maintain the viewers attention by moving their gaze around the image.

Jean Gaumy

Lines

Visual lines keep the eye moving through the frame. Diagonals and curves can be especially pleasing.

Philip Dunn

Lines   Brian L. Frank

Lines   Mark Leong

Lines   Nathan Golden

Lines   Poul Madsen

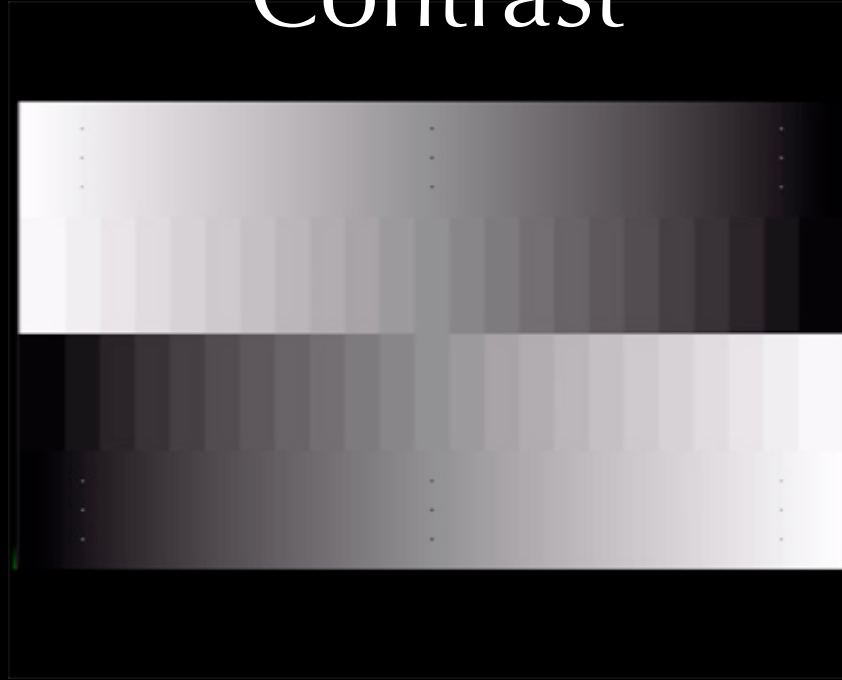Lines   Stephen Voss

Lines   Kuni Takahashi

Lines   Karim Ben Khelifa

Lines   Ida C. Benedetto

Contrast

Contrast in tone and color will dictate what the viewer looks at first and how much different elements in the photo are distinguished from one another.

Contrast   Jared Moossy

Contrast   Isabelle Eshraghi

Contrast   Tyler Hicks

Contrast   Kerem Uzel

Contrast

John Goodman

Contrast   Martin Kollar

Contrast   Ida C. Benedetto

Contrast   Frédéric Lecloux

Contrast   Ida C. Benedetto

Contrast

Ida C. Benedetto

Contrast   Kerem Uzel

Contrast   Johan Bävman

Layering

Visual media organizes three dimensional space through foreground, middle ground, and background. Including something of visual interest in multiple layers of the image is called layering.

Layering   Michael Appleton

Layering   Anna Barry-Jester

Layering   Ida C. Benedetto

Layering   Massimo Berruti

Layering   Chris Maluszynski

Layering   Marko Djurica

Now,

you can take notes.

Simplicity in Photography

Abstraction of 4-dimensional world into a 2-dimentional visual with the intent of communicating information and/or affect.

View Point

Where the subject is seen from.

Above, eye level, or below. Near or far.

Also called **perspective**.

Compositional Balance

An organized, dynamic visual plane achieved through such devices as the rule of thirds, framing, lines, contrast, and layers.

Rule of Thirds

Compositions organized around lines dividing the visual plane into three equal parts both vertically and horizontally create energetic and interesting images, especially when important components are placed where the lines intersect.
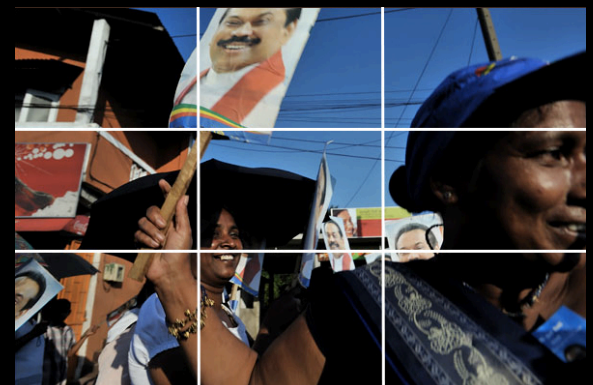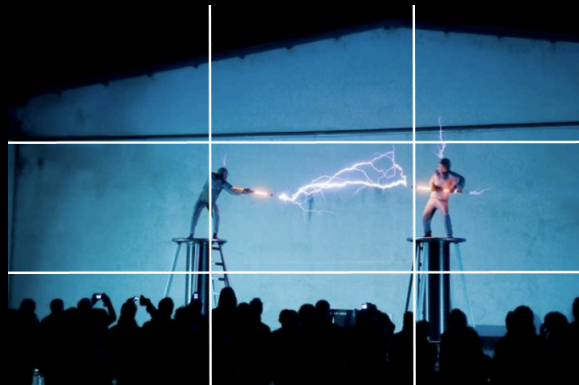
Framing

Use of the flat visual plane to focus attention through the relationship between objects in front of and behind each other and their relationship with the edges of the photograph.

Compositional Lines

Lines that keep the viewer's eye moving through the photograph and direct attention to important elements. Diagonals and curves are generally most effective at creating visual interest.

Contrast

Difference in tonal value (light and dark) and differences in color will effect what the viewer looks at when and how defined individual elements in the photograph are.

Layering

Simultaneous use of foreground, middleground, and background to dynamically organize a complex scene and create relationships between different elements.

Where are the photos in this presentation from?

Redux Pictures   http://reduxpictures.com

Agence VU   http://www.agencevu.com

Moment Agency   http://www.momentagency.com

Blueeyes Magazine   http://blueeyesmagazine.com

Vewd   http://www.vewd.org

New York Times   http://lens.blogs.nytimes.com

Shot Addict   http://www.shotaddict.com

And my archive.

Make pictures, not excuses.

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