

MadisonPhotoPlus the Photo Summit e-Photo Newsletter

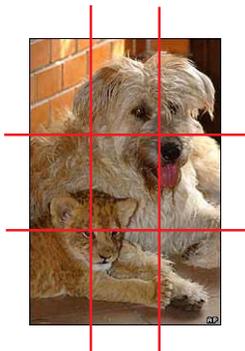
January, 2005

Happy New Year!

For a change of pace, let's look at some photos, comment on them, and learn from them. Some are from staff members, some are from various websites, some came from film, some digital.



What a nice shot, taken at the Budapest Zoo. When you look at this picture for awhile, your eye really doesn't wander outside the frame because the photographer took the time to compose the picture properly by using the rule of thirds. If the photo is broken down into sections by overlaying a tic-tac-toe grid onto the picture we illustrate that the centers of interest falls 1/3 of the distance into the picture instead of being plunked down in the center,



making a static composition. *Lesson learned:* don't put your subject dead center - it's boring.

The next set of shots illustrate a different principle. Because we are Westerners, we read from left to right, from the top down. We also read pictures the same way. In photo #1, when we scan from left to right, our eyes tend to go beyond the confines of the frame. There is no strong center of interest to hold our attention, so our brain looks for something further, leaving the picture behind.



If we flip the picture from left to right, as we scan we now have something on the right hand side to bounce our eyes back into the scene. There still is not a strong center of interest, and we grow bored of the scene after a little while, but the framing certainly improves the photo.



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Our next example continues the same theme. Pete Murrell's British countryside photo leads our eyes back into the picture (right to left)



instead of out (left to right). In oriental cultures where reading is learned right to left, up to down, the



opposite would be true. Aesthetics are cultural. This shot also has a stronger center of interest than the previous example. Wherever the road leads is where we're interested in going. Our eyes very naturally go down the road and bounce back into the scene, only to try going down the road again. This is a pretty successful shot.

While this next picture tells a great story, it has 2 centers of interest, the lion (primary) and the box (secondary). Our eyes immediately went to the cat's face, then to the box, then back to the face, then the box, and so forth. Even when the photo is flipped we stay within the shot because the subject matter is so strong. The upper version holds our gaze longer, while the lower permits our eyes to trail off along the cat's hind quarters.



(Fortunately there is no writing on the box to tell the viewer that the shot had been flipped. We're talking composition here, not reality!)

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In *Gristmill Dreams*, the photographer is showing us a scene in a way which we would not naturally see it by shooting in the infrared part of the spectrum. Our brains are taken by surprise and work on the color and tone discrepancies involved. If we saw the shot in natural color, we probably would



not be as interested. Because the water flows to dead center, the mystery of where it flows to is not as strong as it is in the previous British countryside scene.



With judicious cropping, however, we can add a little more tension to the scene and draw the viewer in longer.

Some people seem to be born with horizontalitis (a rarely fatal disease which causes a photographer to only hold a camera side to side, but never up and down). Such a photographer would render the following scene this way



instead of this way. Greg Summers had the fore-



sight to have shot the vertical composition, something most of us would consider enlarging and hanging on our walls. Both pictures are nice, but the lower picture is outstanding!

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We hope that showing you pictures would help explain some of the compositional rules that were discussed over the past several issues. By thinking about these concepts when you look at your prints, you'll start thinking about the composition of future photos each time you look through the camera.

Happy shooting! Enjoy the snow.

Lynne & Jerry

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