



PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION

▣ What makes a good photo good?



Image from Anne Geddes, "Baby in a Flower"

ANNE GEDDES
www.annegeddes.com

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Composition

- ▣ Strong composition is what makes the difference between a good and bad photo
- ▣ One definition for photographic composition is simple:
 - the pleasing selection and arrangement of subjects within the picture area.



The Rules

- ▣ With composition, there actually are no rules, just guidelines
- ▣ The main guidelines:
 - Simplicity
 - The Rule of Thirds
 - Lines
 - Balance
 - Framing
 - Mergers

Simplicity

- ▣ The first and perhaps the most important guideline is **simplicity**.
- ▣ Look for ways to give the center of interest in your pictures the most visual attention.
- ▣ One way is to select uncomplicated backgrounds that will not steal attention from your subjects.

Center of Attention

- ▣ Let's see how we can improve this photo by looking for visual simplicity.



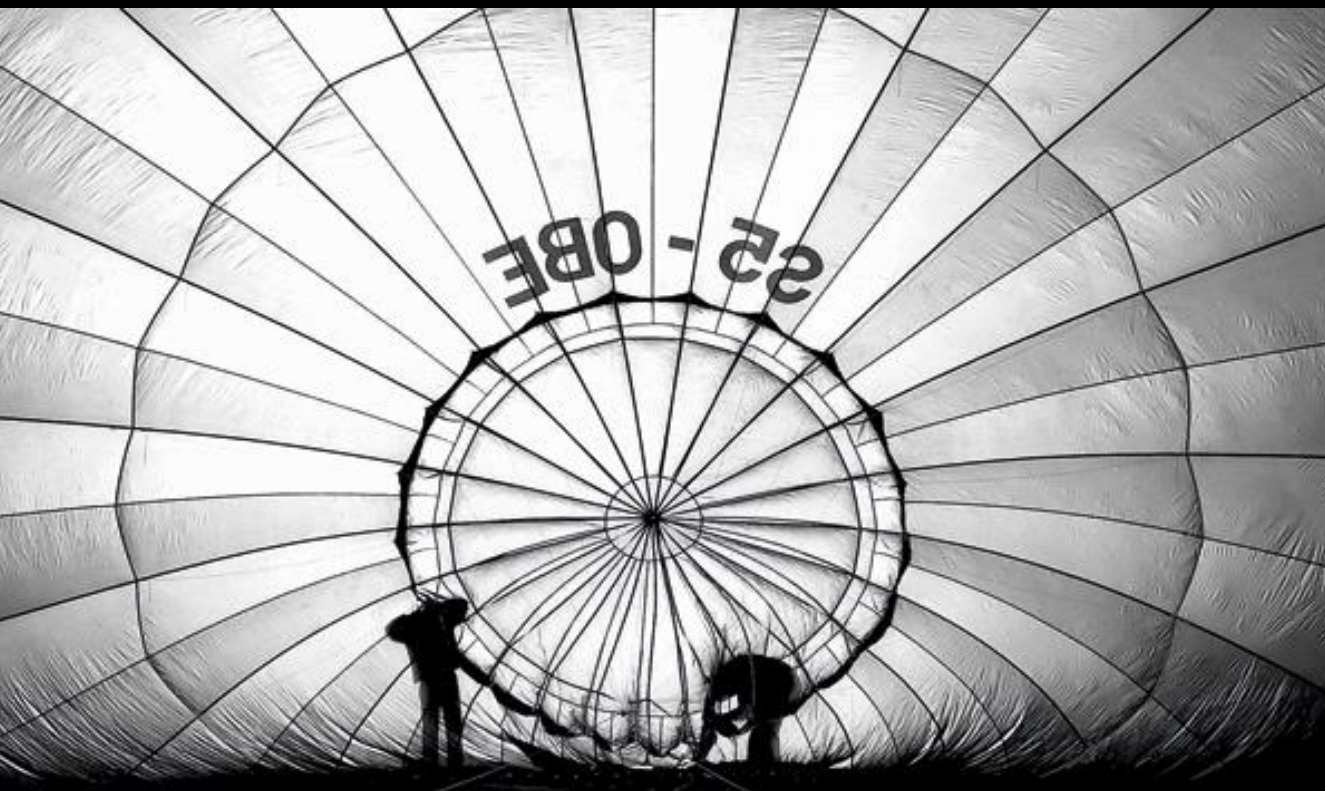
Telephone?

Bridge?

Cactus?

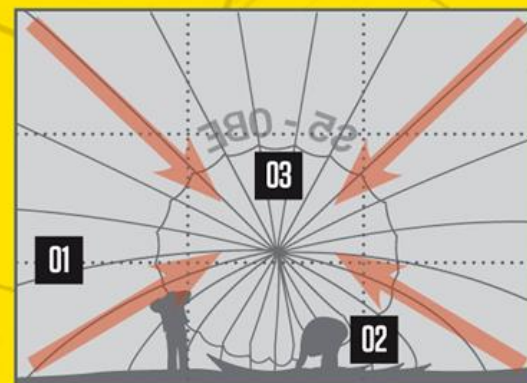
Keep it Simple





PICTURE POINTERS

*The simpler the shot
the bigger the impact*



- 01** Move in close to cut out other parts of the scene.
- 02** Silhouettes and shapes make strong subjects.
- 03** The balloon's radial lines draw you into the frame.

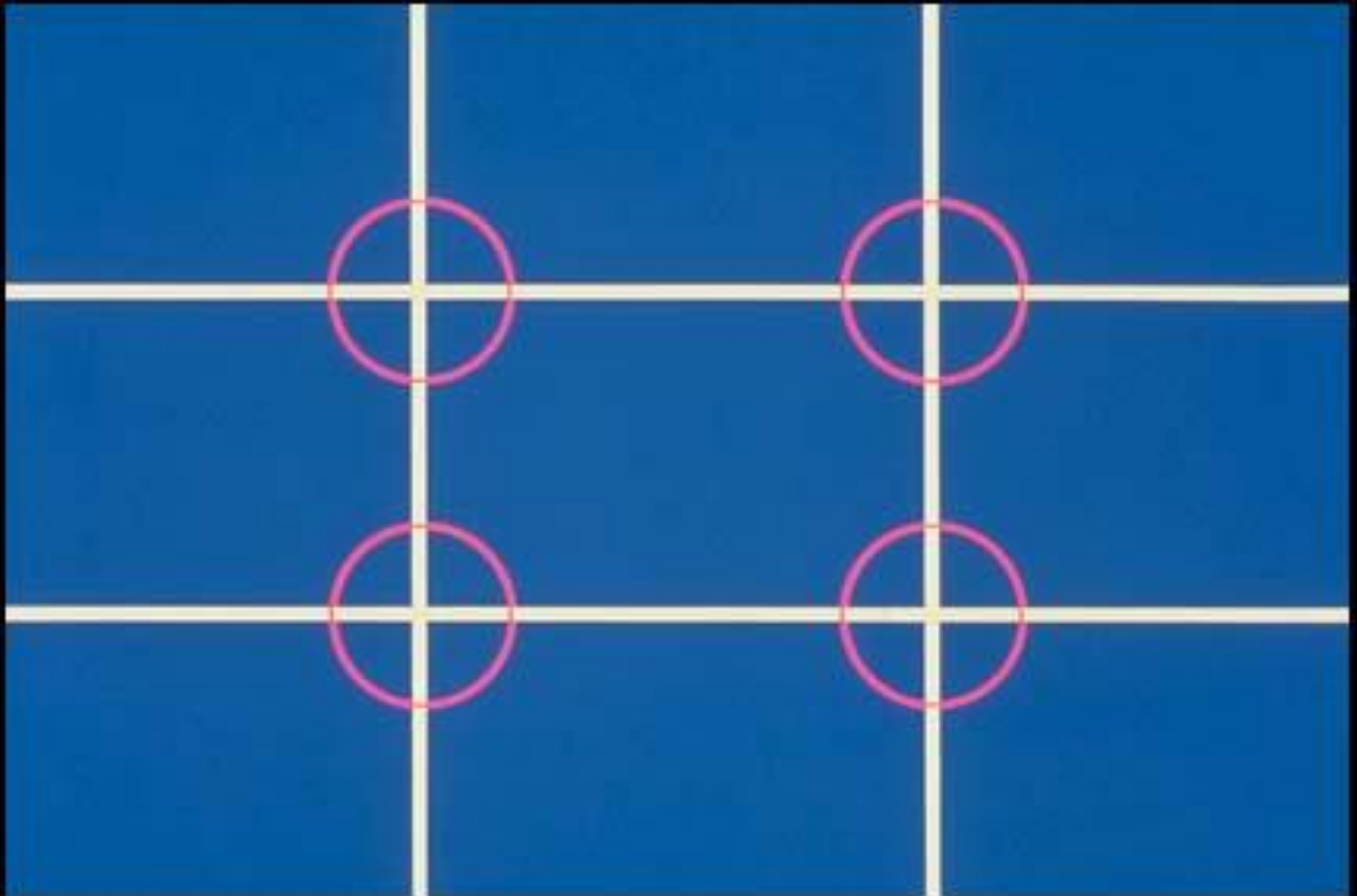
Center of Interest

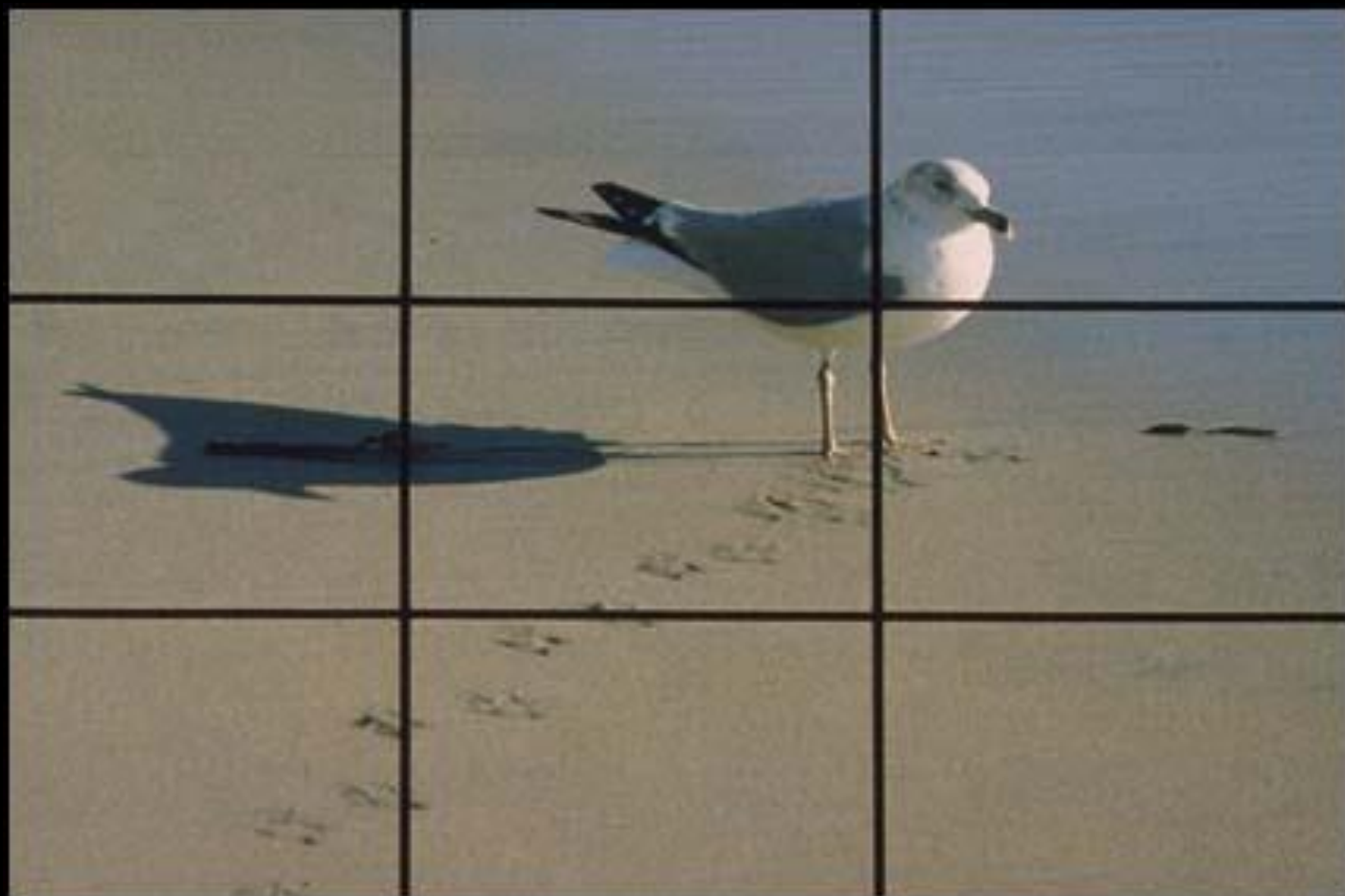


Less Interesting



Rule of Thirds



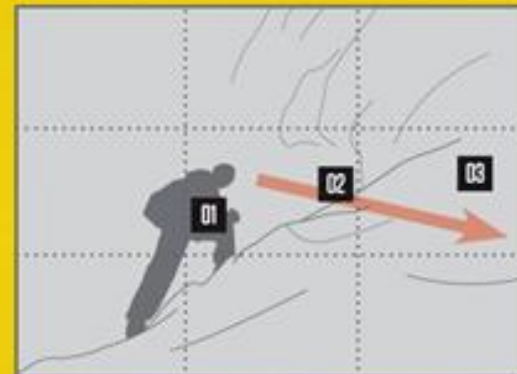




PICTURE POINTERS

Make your shots more interesting by shifting the balance

- 01** Don't be a slave to the 'Rule of Thirds' – just get your subject off-centre.
- 02** Look out for any 'balancing' elements in the scene, such as this bright cave entrance.
- 03** In this image, you can see how the space on the right (for the climber to look into) has simplified the picture.

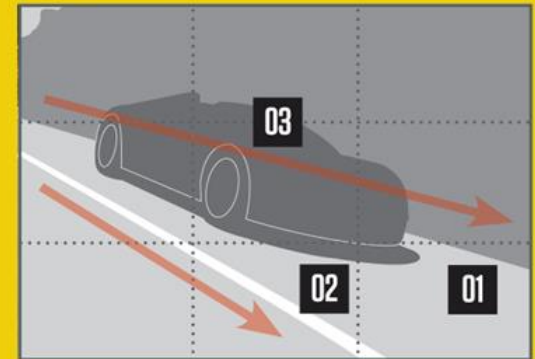


Space to Move



PICTURE POINTERS

This car's position in the frame is no accident



01 This speeding car needs space to move into, or the shot would look wrong.

02 Note the strong lines in the road, reinforcing the sense of movement.

03 The photographer has used a tilt to emphasise the strong diagonals.



Run with the Picture



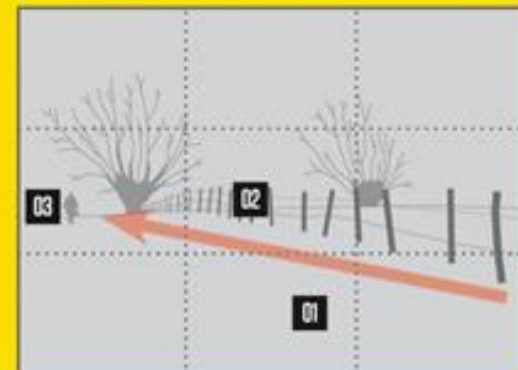
Use Lines for Impact



PICTURE POINTERS

Lines can be important compositional devices

- 01** When pictures like this one contain a strong line, it's almost impossible for your eyes not to follow it.
- 02** As the posts in this shot get further away, they create a converging effect that pulls you in.
- 03** The fence leads you straight to the focal point – the small figure in the distance.



Diagonal Lines



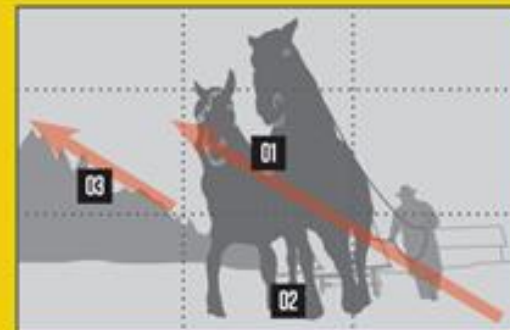
Diagonal
lines
are
DYNAMIC!



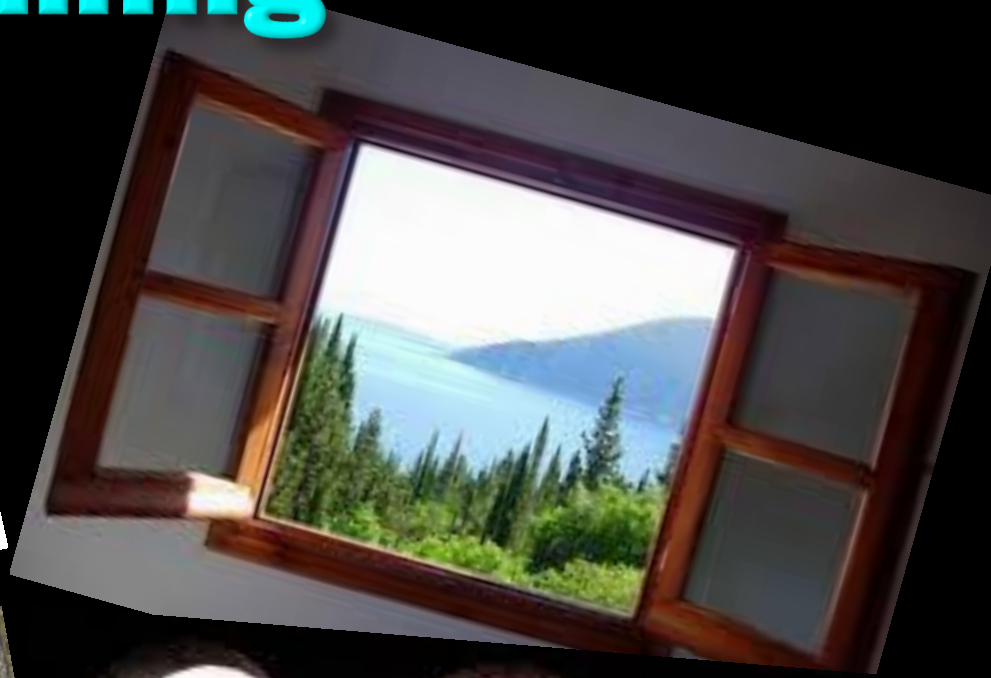
PICTURE POINTERS

Diagonal lines give a strong sense of movement and force

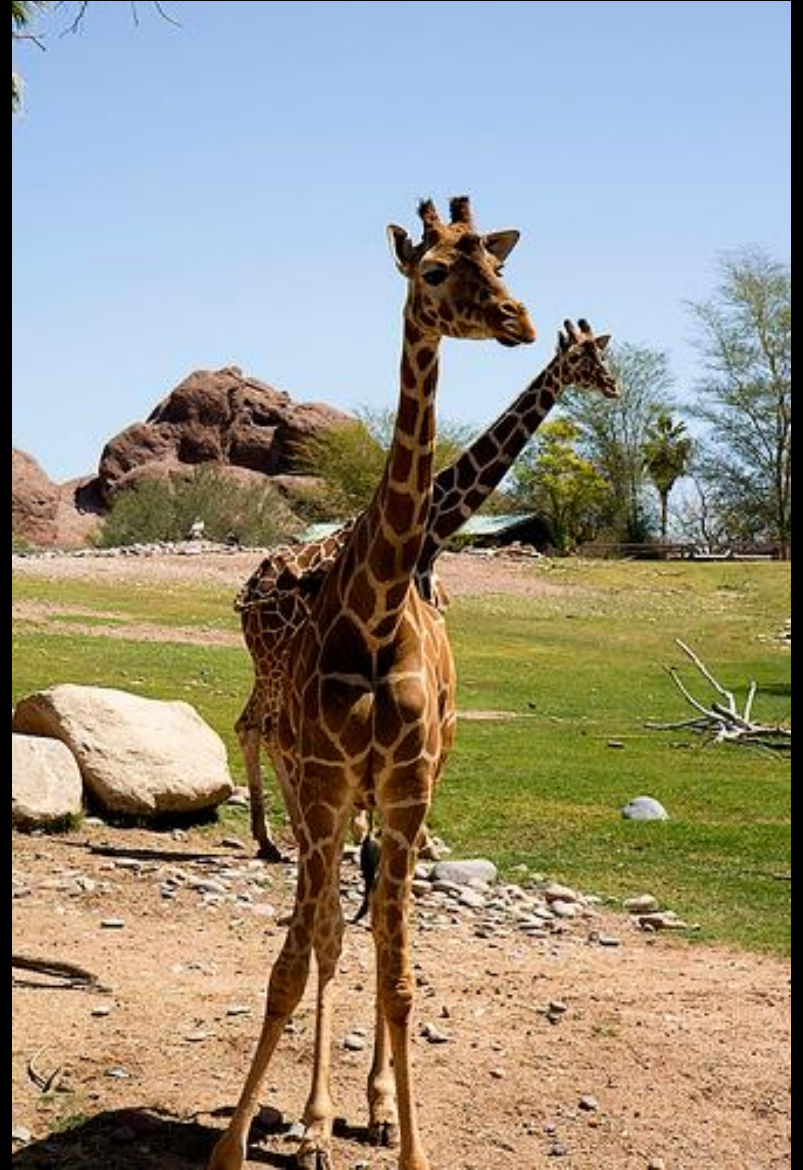
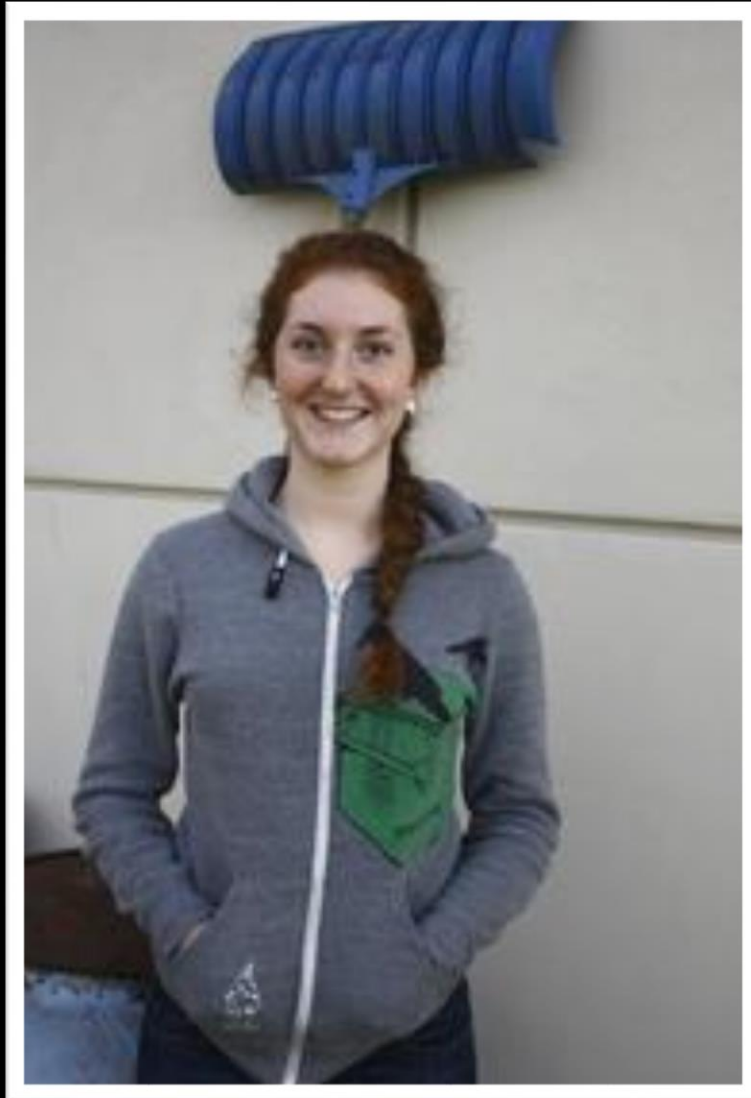
- 01** The perspective given by a wide-angle lens creates diagonal lines automatically.
- 02** Low viewpoints make you tilt the camera upwards, which strengthens diagonals.
- 03** Here, the photographer has left space on the right of the shot for the horses to move into.



Framing



Merger Background



Merger Border



Mergers for Effect



Invoke Feeling



PICTURE POINTERS

Follow some rules but break others to make a statement

- 01** This lady's looking straight out of the frame, which puts you on edge – and that's the ideal
- 02** The man's gaze creates a really strong imaginary line connecting the two figures.
- 03** The lady's off-centre position works really well, and she's balanced well by the man at the back of the shot.



Your Assignment

- ❑ Using the idea page in your Engineering Journals, begin to think about a story narratives with a partner. Identify characters, setting, and conflict.
- ❑ Based on your ideation work, have create a few sketches to represent your actual images.
- ❑ Take at least 10-20 photographs. From these, select the three that best tell the story using photographic composition guidelines.
- ❑ These three photos may then be edited.
- ❑ The final project will include a narrative to accompany your 2-3 photos telling the story of the photo.

