



# VISUAL DESIGN BASICS

SESSION 5: DOMINANCE, BALANCE,  
PROPORTION, & RHYTHM

# HOMework

- **1. MAKE AND TURN IN TWO (2) EXAMPLES OF *TEXTURE*.**
- **2. MAKE AND TURN IN TWO (2) EXAMPLES OF *PERSPECTIVE*.**

# “PUTTING THE BUILDING BLOCKS TOGETHER”

FREEMAN PATTERSON

- **THE BUILDING BLOCKS:**
  - **LIGHT**
  - **SHAPE**
    - **FORM**
  - **LINE**
  - **TEXTURE**
  - **PERSPECTIVE**

“ONCE YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE MAIN BUILDING  
BLOCKS OF VISUAL DESIGN, YOU’LL WANT TO DO  
SOME BUILDING-TO MAKE PHOTOGRAPHS RATHER  
THAN SIMPLY TO TAKE THEM.”

FREEMAN PATTERSON

BY LEARNING TO ARRANGE SHAPES, LINES, TEXTURES, AND PERSPECTIVES IN  
MEANINGFUL WAYS, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO CREATE VISUAL DOCUMENTS THAT STIR  
THE EMOTIONS AND EFFECTIVELY TELL THE STORIES YOU WISH TO SHARE.

# CONSTRUCTION CONCEPTS

**1. DOMINANCE**

**2. BALANCE**

**3. PROPORTION**

**4. RHYTHM**

# DOMINANCE

**HOW MANY TIMES HAVE WE HEARD A CONTEST JUDGE SAY THAT AN ENTRY “LACKS A CENTER OF INTEREST”?**

**THE CENTER OF INTEREST IN A COMPOSITION IS GENERALLY THAT ELEMENT WHICH INFLUENCES THE ENTIRE FRAME MORE STRONGLY THAN ALL OTHER ELEMENTS.**

**IN OTHER WORDS, IT **DOMINATES** THE FRAME.**

# DOMINANCE

**PATTERSON SAYS THAT SOMETHING CAN BE “DOMINANT BECAUSE OF ITS SIZE, COLOUR, LOCATION, SYMBOLIC VALUE, OR ANY OF THESE AND OTHER FACTORS”.**

**ALSO, HE SAYS THAT “IT’S OFTEN USEFUL TO RECOMPOSE A PICTURE TO INCLUDE A SECONDARY SHAPE OR LINE THAT COMPETES MILDLY FOR ATTENTION WITH THE MAIN ONE. IN SOME CASES TWO, THREE, OR SEVERAL SECONDARY MOTIFS ARE BETTER THAN JUST ONE.”**

# DOMINANCE

## SUGGESTIONS\*

1. PICK AN INTERESTING SUBJECT
2. FILL THE FRAME
3. ISOLATE THE SUBJECT FROM A MESSY BACKGROUND
4. USE SELECTIVE FOCUS
5. USE OTHER ELEMENTS IN THE SCENE TO SUPPORT THE MAIN SUBJECT

\*NOT RULES



# DOMINANCE

**BEFORE YOU PRESS THE SHUTTER BUTTON, LOOK AROUND THE SCENE IN YOUR VIEWFINDER  
AND MAKE SURE YOU HAVE MADE YOUR SUBJECT THE DOMINANT ELEMENT OF YOUR  
COMPOSITION.**

**ASK YOURSELF IF YOUR SUBJECT IS:**

**LARGER/SMALLER**

**BRIGHTER/DARKER**

**CLOSER**

**SHARPER**

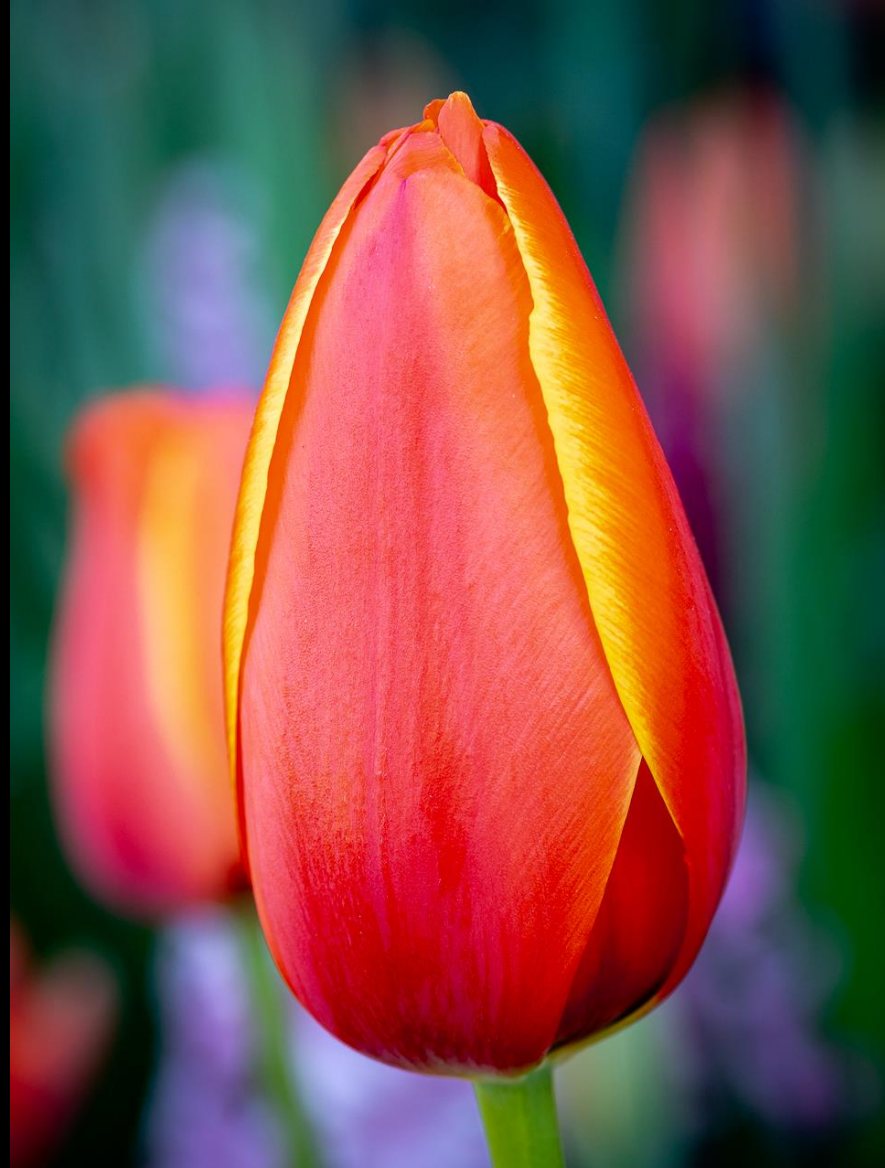
















# BALANCE

**WHEN YOU LOOK AT A PHOTOGRAPH AND IT “FEELS RIGHT”, IT PROBABLY DEMONSTRATES A BALANCE BETWEEN THE VARIOUS PICTURE ELEMENTS AND THE MAIN SUBJECT AND COMMUNICATES THE INTENT OF THE MAKER.**

**PATTERSON SAYS THAT “EVERY VISIBLE OBJECT ATTRACTS ATTENTION BY ITS TONE, COLOUR, SHAPE, SIZE, LOCATION, OR OTHER PHYSICAL PROPERTIES AND CHARACTERISTICS. THE DEGREE TO WHICH IT ATTRACTS ATTENTION IS KNOWN AS ITS VISUAL IMPORTANCE OR WEIGHT”.**

# BALANCE

**COMPETITION BETWEEN ELEMENTS IN A COMPOSITION RESULTS IN TENSION**

**THIS TENSION CAUSES THE VIEWER'S EYES TO CONSTANTLY MOVE  
AROUND IN THE PICTURE SPACE**

**GOOD BALANCE IN A COMPOSITION PRODUCES A DYNAMIC VISUAL EXPERIENCE WITHOUT  
ANYONE ELEMENT OVERWHELMING THE SCENE**



# BALANCE

**ACCORDING TO PATTERSON, “THERE ARE BASICALLY TWO WAYS OF BALANCING SHAPES  
AND LINES IN A COMPOSITION”**

**SYMMETRICALLY AND ASYMMETRICALLY**

**SYMMETRICAL COMPOSITIONS ARE ORDERED AND STATIC**

**ASYMMETRICAL COMPOSITIONS ARE OUT OF BALANCE**

**AND THEREFORE MORE DYNAMIC**





















# PROPORTION

**CLOSELY RELATED TO BALANCE, PROPORTION DEALS WITH THE RELATIVE SIZE OF ELEMENTS WITHIN THE PICTURE FRAME**

**THE PROPORTION OF THE PICTURE SPACE ALLOCATED TO THE VARIOUS ELEMENTS HAS THE EFFECT OF PRODUCING FEELINGS ABOUT THE COMPOSITION IN GENERAL, AS WELL AS THE COMPONENT PARTS**















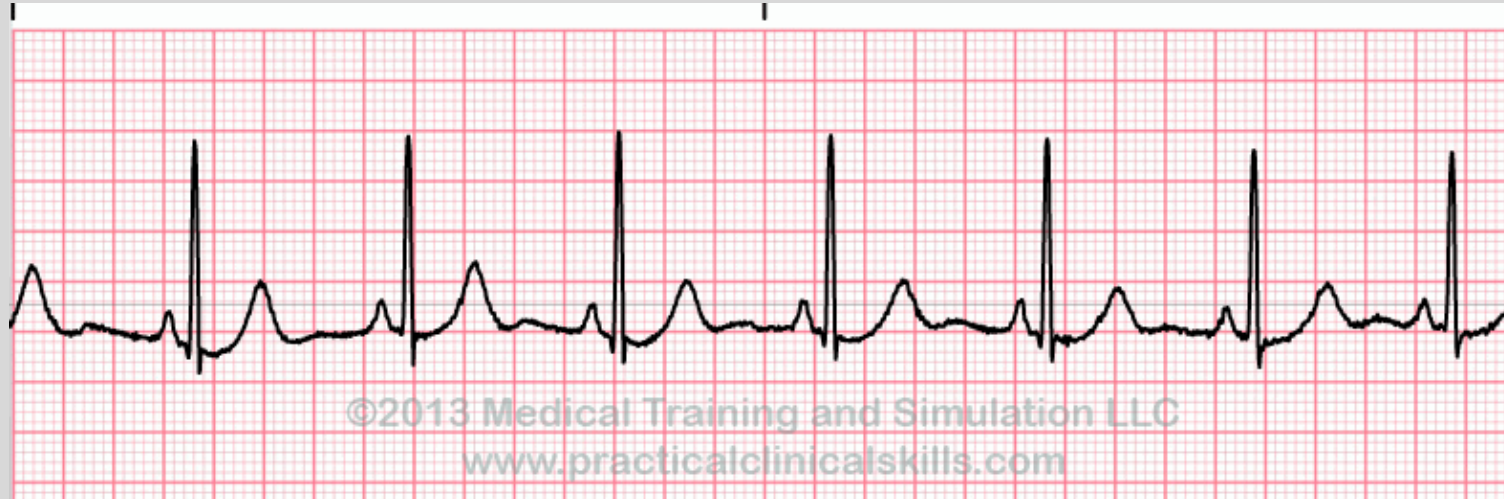




# RHYTHM

**“RHYTHM IS A HARMONIOUS PATTERN CHARACTERIZED BY THE REGULAR RECURRENCE OF STRONG AND WEAK ELEMENTS, USUALLY LINES AND SHAPES. AS IN MUSIC, RHYTHMIC ARRANGEMENTS ARE BOTH ORDERLY AND DYNAMIC, PROVIDING OVERALL STRUCTURE ON THE ONE HAND, AND A FEELING OF MOVEMENT ON THE OTHER.”**

FREEMAN PATTERSON



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NEXT TIME

**PUTTING IT ALL  
TOGETHER:  
COMPOSITION**

**QUESTIONS?**