



Seeing Beyond the Subject

Session 1

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Introduction

Common Comments from Competition Judges

- “I don’t know what I’m supposed to look at.”
- “I’m not sure what the photographer intended.”
- “The background is too _____.”
- “Something is out of focus in the foreground.”
- “The subject is centered in the middle of the frame.”
- “_____ portion of the frame doesn’t add anything.”
- “Needs to be cropped tighter.”
- “This is a good photo to add to the photographer’s travel scrapbook.” (ouch!)

What Is a Successful Image?

**Successful
Image**



**Impactful
Image**

What Is a Successful Image?

Impactful Image

- **Evokes an emotion**
or
- **Informs the viewer**
or
- **Promotes an action**

What Is a Successful Image?

***About* something,
not just *of* something**



How We Are “Seduced” by a Subject

- Subject or place has personal meaning for us



Nigel Waters



John Simpson

How We Are “Seduced” by a Subject

- Subject or place has personal meaning for us
- An “exotic” (or just unfamiliar) location



J. Alan Whiteside

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- *A place is not necessarily a subject*



Brooks Jensen



Brooks Jensen

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- Hooked by a technique or tool



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How We Are “Seduced” by a Subject

- Subject or place has personal meaning for us
- An “exotic” (or just unfamiliar) location
- A place is not necessarily a subject
- Hooked by a technique or tool
- **Overconfidence in our ability to see the “best view”**



Unadjusted RAW File
J. Alan Whiteside



Unadjusted RAW File
J. Alan Whiteside

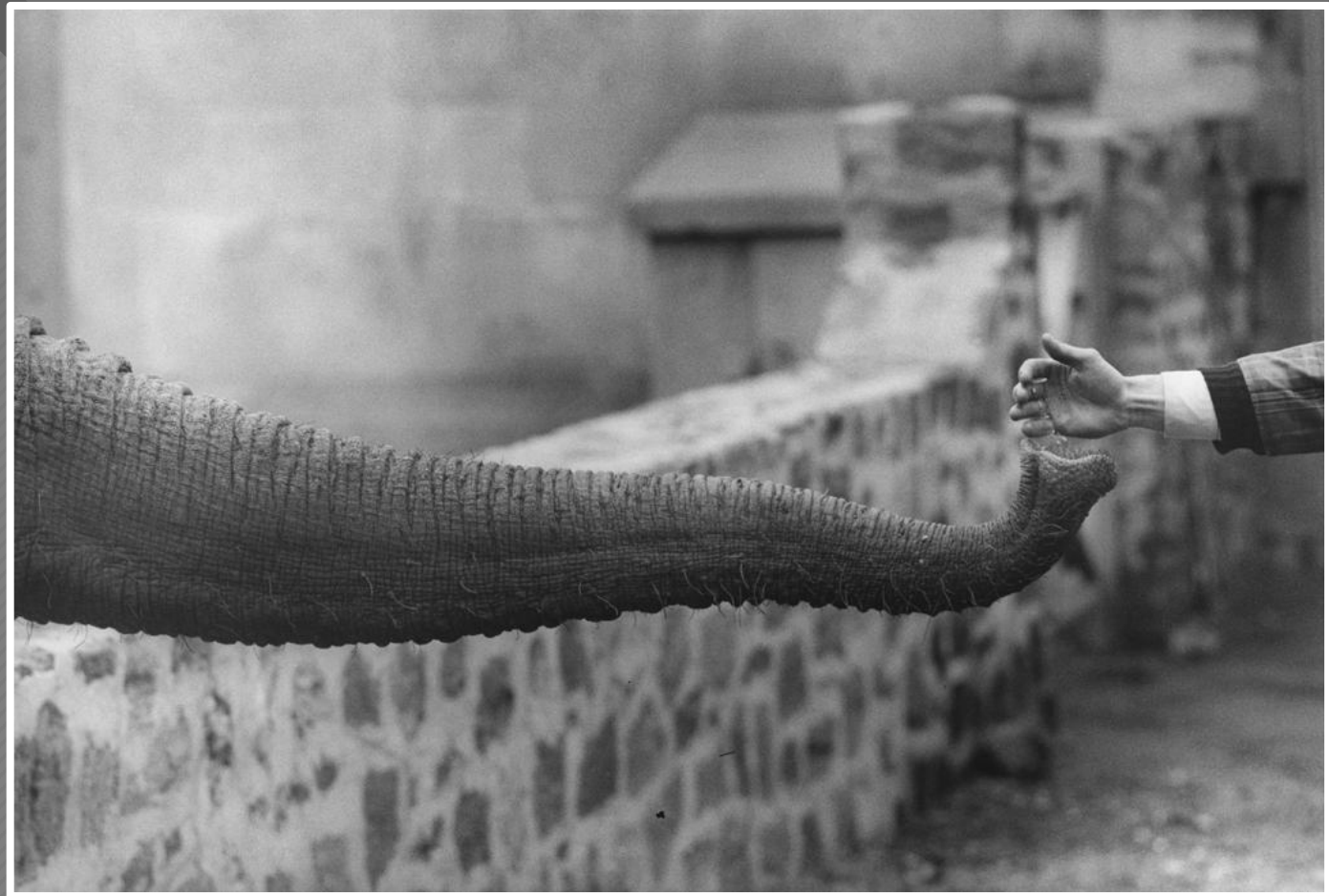
Course Goals

1. Recognize that a successful image is more than an appealing subject
2. Identify strategies to help ensure a successful image



Photography is not about the thing photographed. It is about how that thing looks photographed.”

- Garry Winogrand



Garry Winogrand
(*New York, ca. 1963*)

Getting Past the Seduction of the Subject

Getting Past the Seduction of the Subject

- Engage your vision (intent) for the final image
- Use structure and design elements to guide the viewer
- Re-frame and simplify the image
- Make the image your own

Technique One: Envisioning Your Final Image



The question many photographers obsess about is “What?” ...
“Why?” might be the most important question we ask..”

- David DuChemin



David DuChemin
Venice, Italy, 2013



Unadjusted RAW File
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Unadjusted RAW File
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Rather than **glimpses of the superficial beauty** of the land, I wish instead for my work to speak to a **deep familiarity** with my subjects, revealing something of my reverence for them and the roles they play in my life.”

- Guy Tal

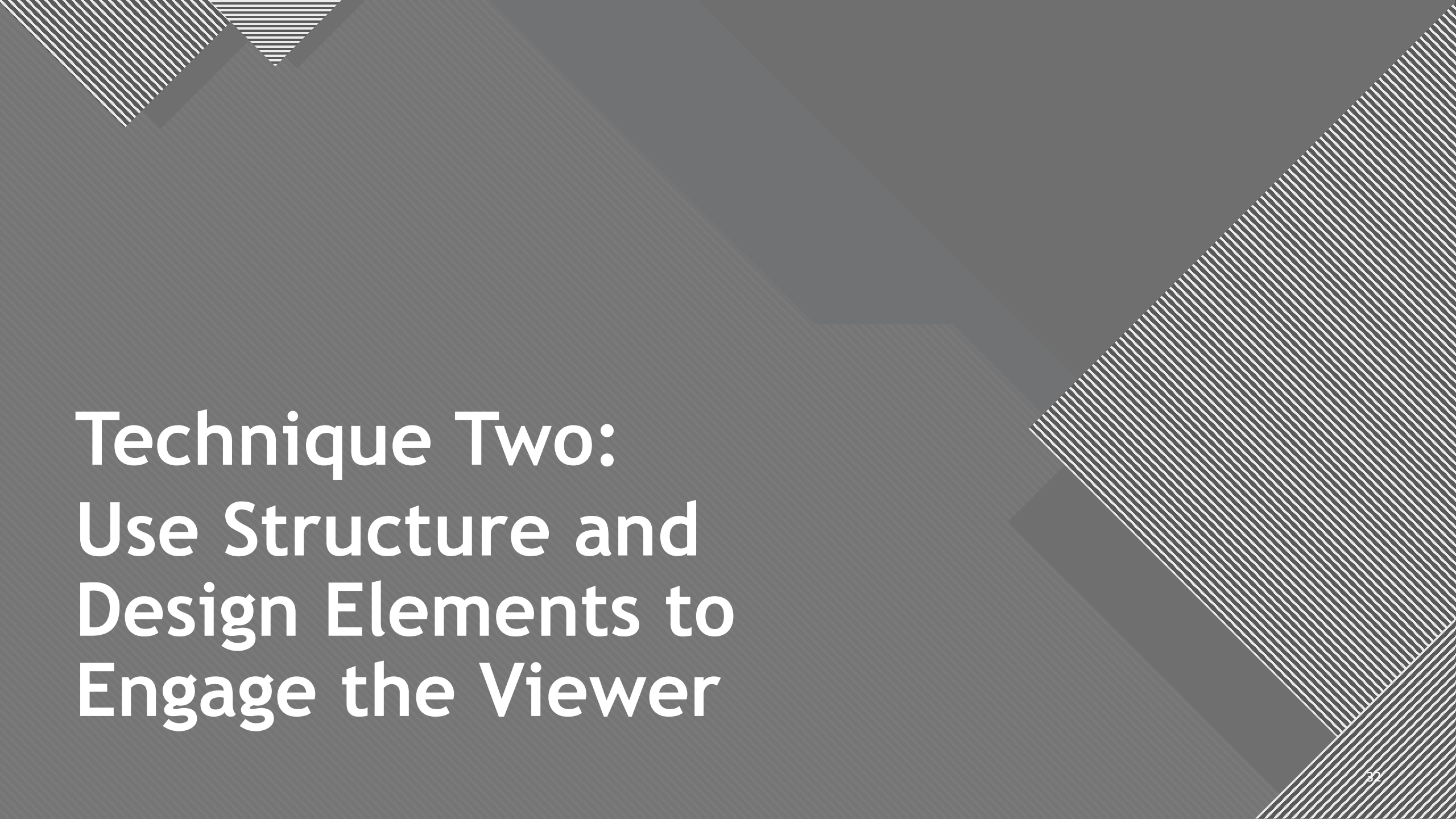


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Softness
Guy Tal

Prompts for Envisioning Your Final Photo

1. What's the intent of your image? What are you trying to communicate? (both in general and more specifically)
2. Are you telling a story? Showing relationships? Explaining a situation?
3. Are you trying to capture a mood or an emotion?
4. Are you trying to make a statement about the subject? Are you expressing your feelings about it? Trying to convince the viewer about something?

The background features a dark gray field with several overlapping geometric shapes. In the top-left corner, there are two triangles pointing downwards, each filled with a pattern of thin, parallel white lines. A large, semi-transparent gray triangle points downwards from the top center. On the right side, a large triangle points upwards, also filled with a pattern of thin, parallel white lines. In the bottom-right corner, another triangle points downwards, filled with a pattern of thin, parallel white lines.

Technique Two: Use Structure and Design Elements to Engage the Viewer

Composition is
the fundamental
scaffolding of
image-making.*

* Harold Davis



Boring

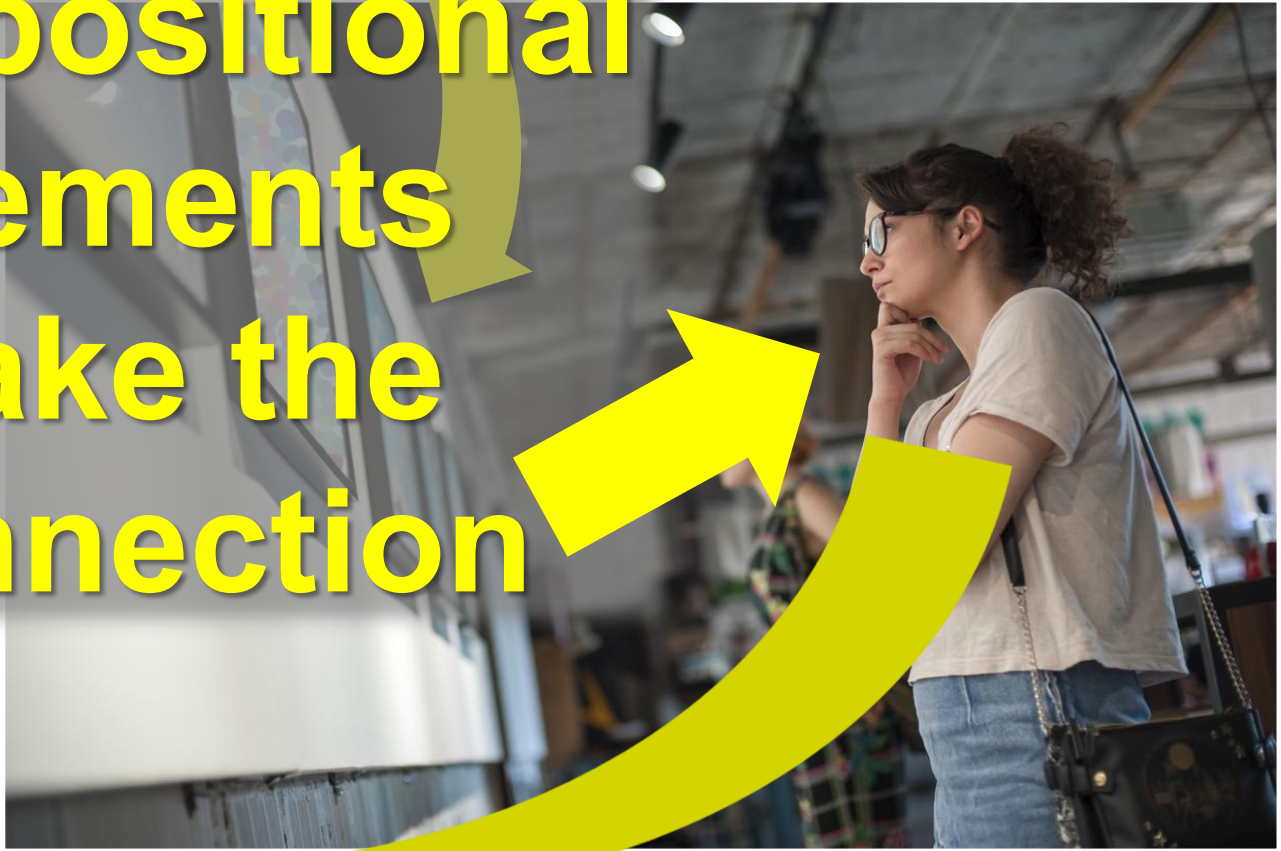


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More
Interesting

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**Compositional
Elements
Make the
Connection**



Brooks Jensen



It's a conduit to take us beyond the artifact of the photograph itself."

- Brooks Jensen



Brooks Jensen

Dancer



J. Alan Whiteside

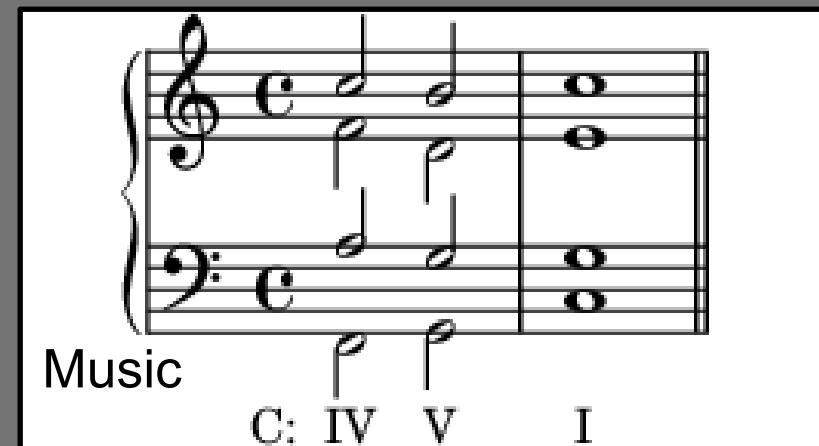
Structure and Design Elements in Composition



Heydar Aliyev Center (2007-2012) by Zaha Hadid. (Photo: Aleksandr Zykov)



Call me Ishmael.
—Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (1851)
Writing



Structure and Design Elements in Composition

- Line
- Shape
- Texture
- Pattern
- Color
- Space
- Juxtaposition / Relationships
- Symmetry / Balance
- Point of View
- Contrast
- Depth of Focus
- Saturation
- Repetition
- Framing
- Motion
- Shadows



Al DaValle



David DuChemin



Huu Tam



Sylvia Plachy



Markham Starr



Sylvia Plachy

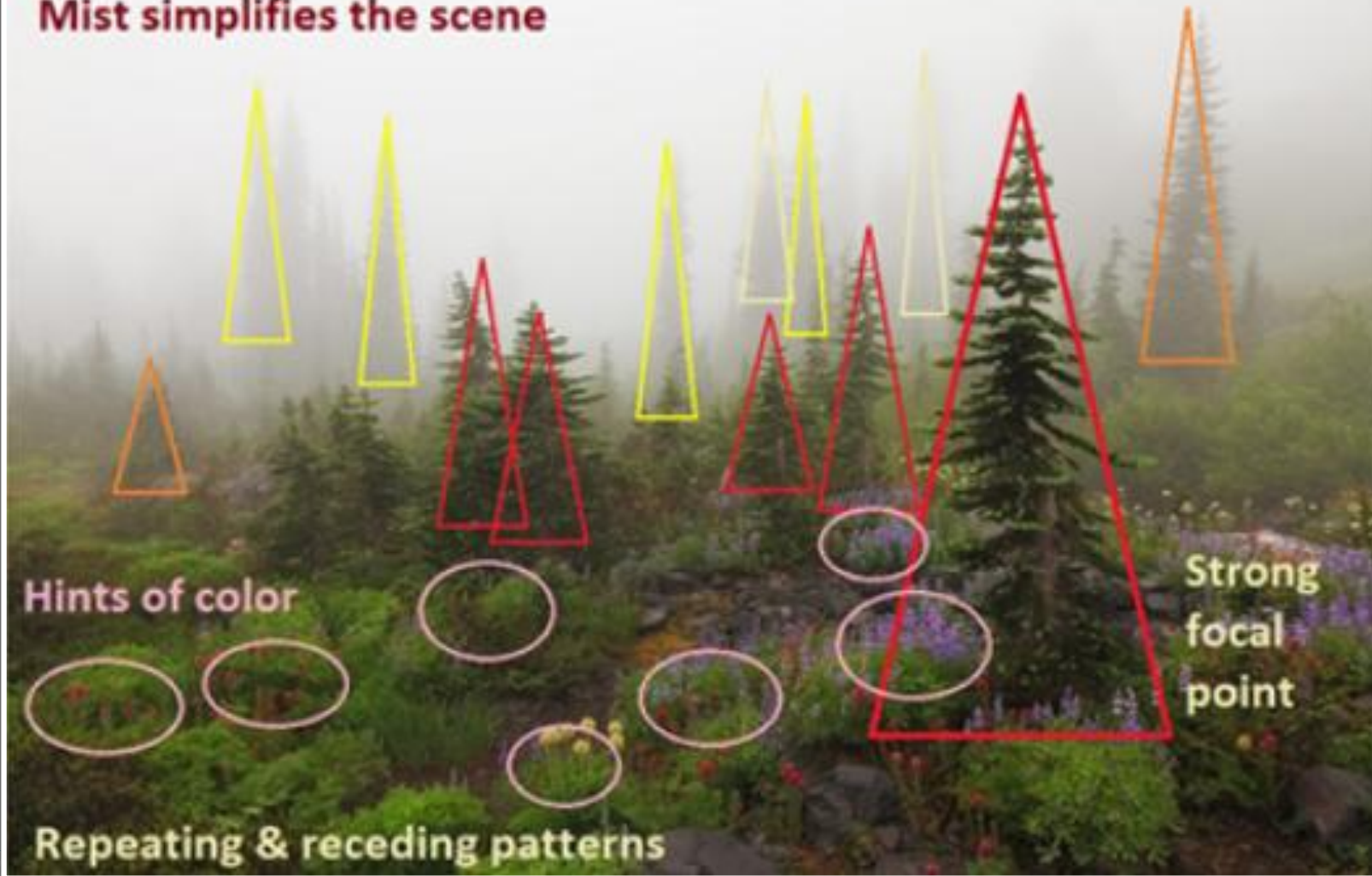


Sylvia Plachy



Sarah Marino

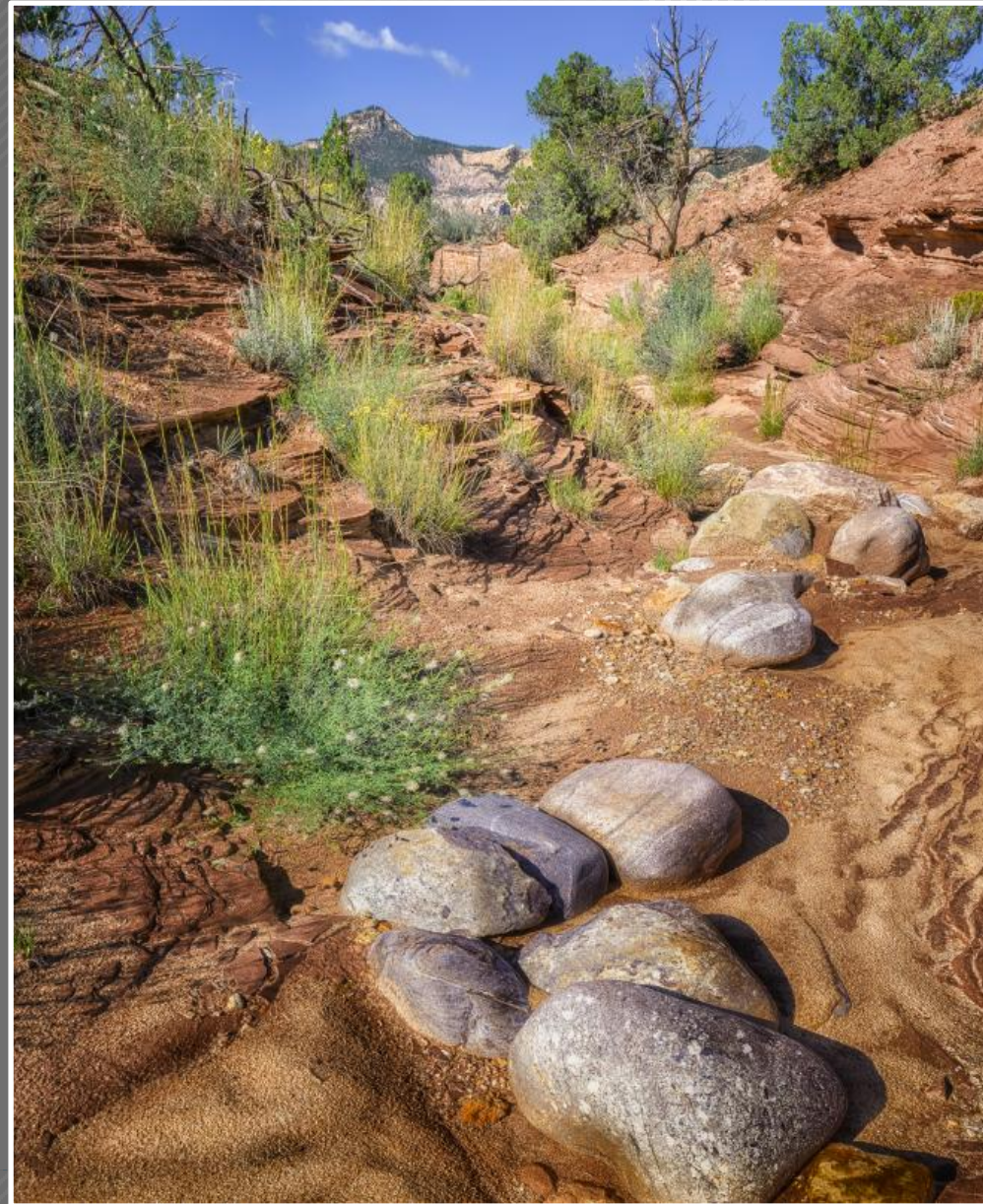
Mist simplifies the scene





ian Plant
PHOTOGRAPHY

Ian Plant



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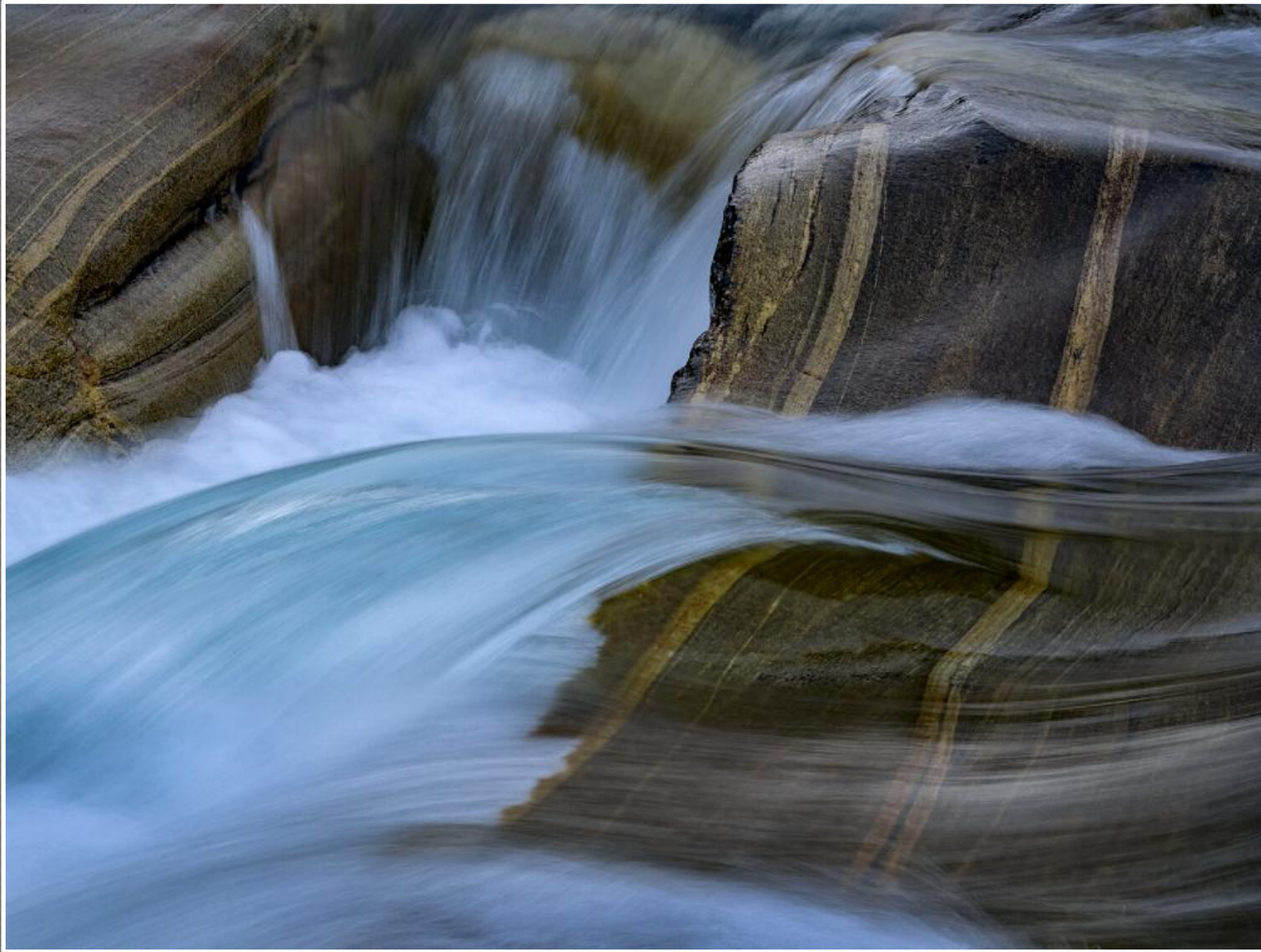
Al DaValle



Al DaValle



J. Alan Whiteside



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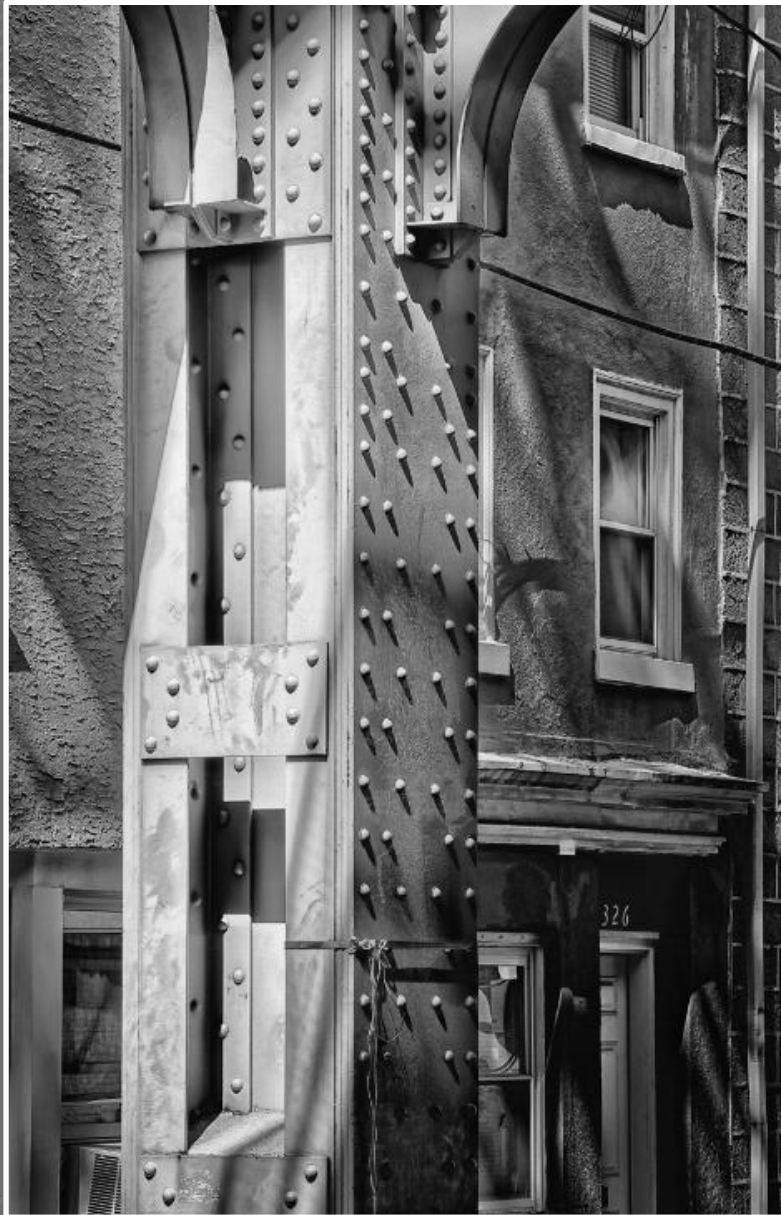
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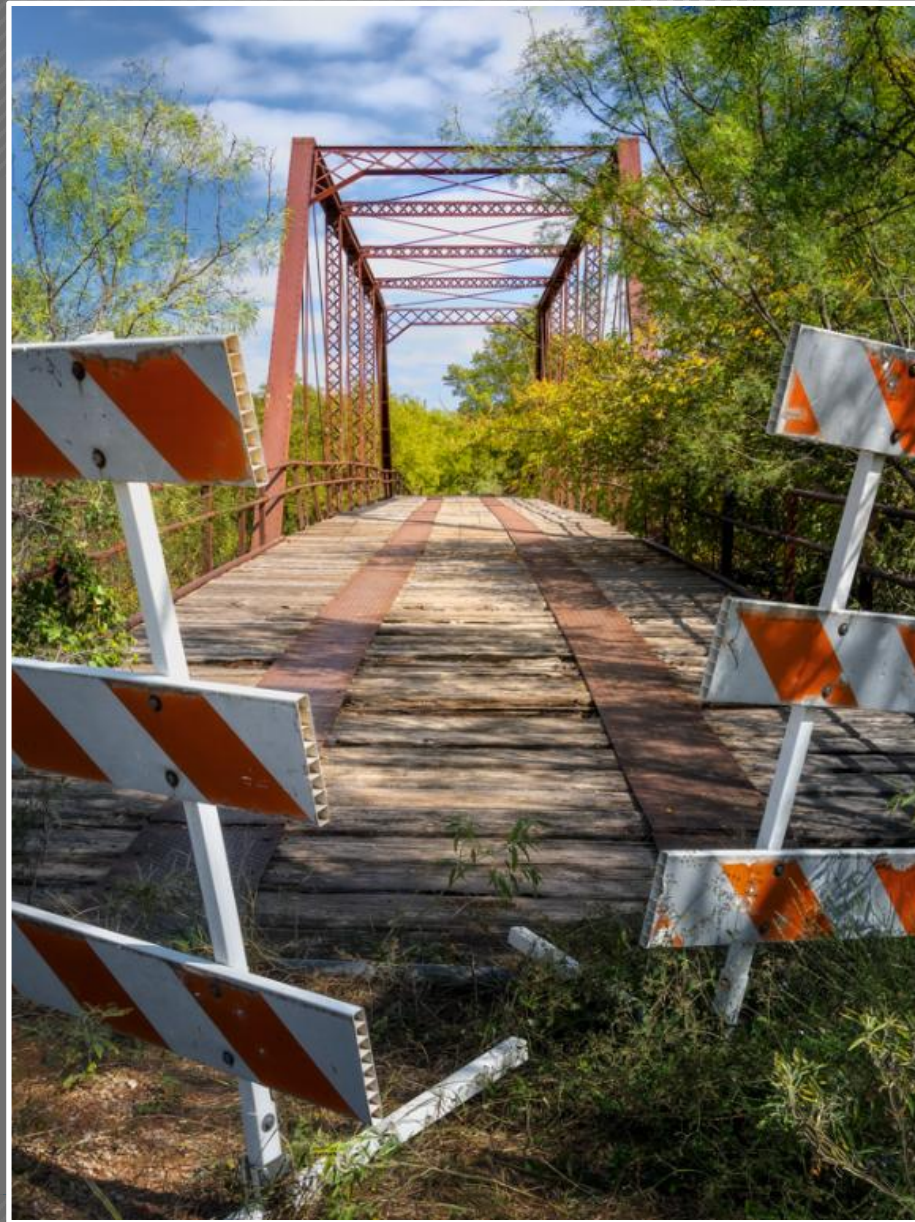
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Native American, Assault Rifle, Graffiti, NYC



Jay Maisel

Seeing Beyond the Subject

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Next Session

The background features a dark gray field with several overlapping geometric shapes. In the top-left corner, there are two triangles pointing downwards, filled with horizontal white lines. A large, semi-transparent gray triangle points downwards from the top center. On the right side, a large triangle points upwards, filled with dense, parallel white lines. At the bottom right, another triangle points upwards, also filled with dense, parallel white lines.

Thank You