



THE

LAST FRAME

October 2003

St. Albert Photo Club's Monthly Newsletter

A Rule Of Thirds And Shapes

On October 7th, the St. Alberta Photo Club had the opportunity to hear Gerry Harris present a lecture on photographic composition and design. Gerry has been involved in photography since the end of World War II and I first meet him in 1994. He utilized both geometric shapes and sample images to demonstrate composition. The following is an overview of his presentation.

Composition may be very personal in intention, such as documenting family, pets and flowers, but most successful images (from a composition point of view) have what is called "eye relief". The eye should, hopefully, settle on the primary subject.

It helps immensely if the primary subject is also the brightest colour in the photograph. Both portrait and wildlife photographers prefer to use darker backgrounds for their subjects;



Gerry Harris explaining the use of shapes in photography.

this tends to make them "pop" in the photograph as darker backgrounds have a receding quality. Speaking of colour, warm colours (red, yellow) advance while cooler colours (blue,

green) will recede.

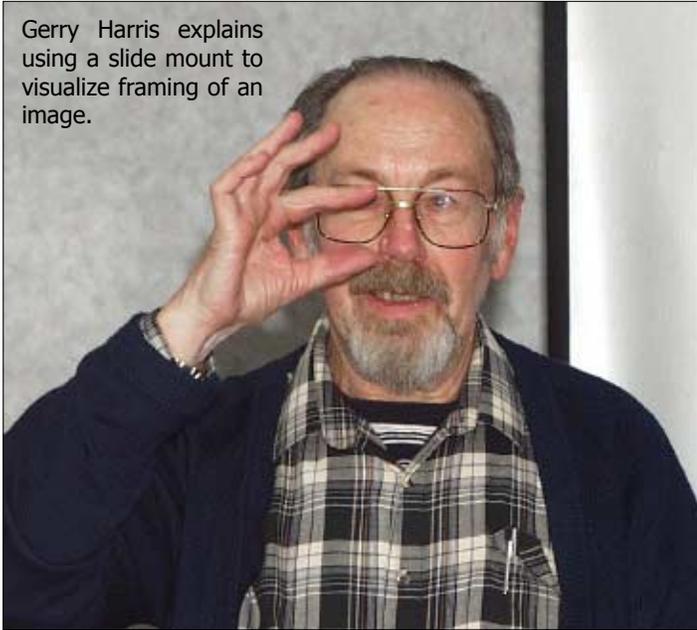
Subject placement should be slightly off-center to create an asymmetrical composition. If you follow the guidelines for subject placement using

either the Golden Mean or the Rule of Thirds when composing your photographs, the image will have a dynamic quality. These two differ only in degree but the idea is the

NOVEMBER GUEST SPEAKER TBA	NOVEMBER COMPETITION Motion	TECH TIPS None	DECEMBER GUEST SPEAKER None	DECEMBER COMPETITION None
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Gerry Harris explains using a slide mount to visualize framing of an image.



same.

In the Golden Mean you take the rectangular frame in your viewfinder and draw a diagonal line from one corner to its opposing corner. You then construct another line from either of the two remaining corners to intersect the diagonal line at a 90-degree angle. It is at this intersection that your primary subject should be positioned. The Golden Mean was the compositional technique that classical painters adhered to.

Similar to the Golden Mean, is the Rule of Thirds. This is basically an imaginary tic-tac-toe design etched onto the camera's ground-glass and

where the two vertical and two horizontal lines intersect one another, is where your primary subject can also be positioned. The major camera manufacturers offer focusing screens that you can insert into your camera body to help aid in off-center imagery.

Horizontal lines in photographs result in a serene and calm feeling, such as a distant shoreline in a sunrise/sunset shot. Almost by default, many photographs are composed horizontally due to the design of camera bodies - the controls are set up so they work best in a horizontal format. This results in many photos that would work best vertically being

photographed horizontally, thus the term "horizontalist".

Vertical lines portray strength, for example: the steeple in a church cathedral or mountain face. Diagonal lines produce a feeling of tension and action like a javelin streaking towards the ground. An opposing line to a diagonal creates a feeling of reaction. The classic S-curve is one of the strongest compositional elements you can incorporate into your photography. It is often used to unite the foreground with the background such as a meandering lake or river traveling between foreground rocks and wildflowers to the forest and mountains in the distance.

Bold shapes, such as triangles (whether right side up or inverted), circles and ovals always generate interest in photographs. Sidelighting these shapes creates form and that gives the image a sense of depth. Sidelighting also reveals texture, giving the image a tactile feeling. An extreme form of side lighting (almost from a 90 degree angle) is called "grazed" lighting and this

reveals the most texture as the light "grazes" across the subject creating highlights in the protruding elements and deep shadow in the recesses.

Walk around your subject to determine its "good side" - you always hear people say "photograph my good side only!" If you are unsure of whether a composition is successful, turn the slide or negative around and view it backwards. If it still looks fine, it is probably a successful photograph.

Finally, once you understand what you should do, don't be afraid to break the rules. Shoot against the light. If you expose for the background light, a detail-less silhouette will result. If you, however, want detail in your backlight subject, expose for the shadow side. Or, expose for the backlight but then "fill" the subject from the shadow side. It generally looks better if the shadow side is underexposed by about one f/stop to retain that "backlit" look.

So go out, with your camera in tow, and never forget ... film is cheap! Experiment!

Article/Derald Lobay

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CLUB MEMBERS WINNING MONTHLY PICTURES



First place slide - Derald Lobay



Second place slide - Derald Lobay



Third place slide - Tim Schultz



First place print - Allen Skoreyko



Second place print - Erik Klaszus



Third place print - Deb Tetz