

COMBINING COMPOSITIONS 1

BLUEPRINT

While the technical side of image capture is important, it is the creative side that will define your picture. Modern cameras are incredible at covering the technical aspects. However, without a keen eye for composition, your images might look technically perfect but they will lack any artistic merit.

Why Combine Compositions?

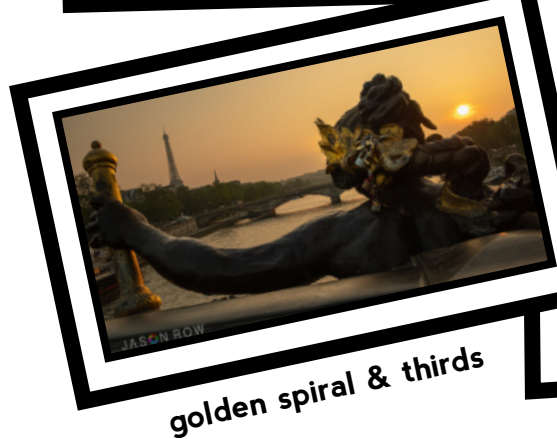
Of course one of the things that we learn first on the creative side of photography are the composition rules. Perhaps rule is the wrong word, guidelines might be better. We learn about thirds, geometry, scale and many other aspects and we try to incorporate them into our images.

The problem is, it is very easy to get fixated on one composition rule, especially for the relative newcomer to photography. You might go out and consciously look for shots that display juxtaposition or negative space. That's not a bad thing but the very best photographs do not restrict themselves to a single composition guideline, they combine two perhaps even more to elevate that image to greatness.

thirds & leading lines



negative space & color contrast

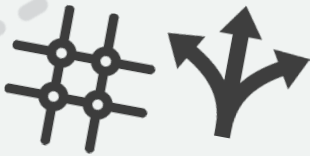


golden spiral & thirds

Examples of images with combined basic compositions

1 THIRDS & LEADING LINES

Thirds are probably the first composition rule that you learn. They are the cornerstone of many photographs. However, another of those cornerstones is leading lines. Combine these two and you can get a very striking composition.



Leading lines are often used to draw the viewer to the centre of the image. They can work equally well if they are used to draw the eye to a subject on one of the thirds. Often this will be the upper third, for example a line of crops leading to a distant barn. Leading lines can work well in the lateral plane as well as the horizontal.

TIP:

A leading line can enter the frame from the left and bring the eye to a subject on the right third. If you spot a leading line consider adding a third into that shot.

2 NEGATIVE SPACE & COLOR CONTRAST

Negative space is one of the most powerful composition guidelines available to us. As its name suggests, it uses a predominantly lifeless space around most of the image to draw the eye to a single subject.



Negative space works particularly well with color contrast as that contrast pulls the viewer's eye through the shot to the subject. This might be, for example, a bright red balloon in a deep blue sky. This combination does not end there - negative space works best when the subject is positioned on a third.

TIP:

The colors define the mood of the image. Soft complimentary colors convey a tranquil mood. Strong contrasting colors add dynamic tension to your shot.

THE ESSENTIALS

3 GOLDEN SPIRAL & THIRDS

The golden spiral uses the Fibonacci number to define a route that spirals from the edge of the image into our final subject. The Fibonacci number is also used in the golden ratio, a rule similar to thirds.



Seeing the golden spiral in shots is hard. Although it's a naturally occurring rule it can be difficult to spot. When you do however, it can lead to very powerful and dramatic images.

TIP:

An image which uses the golden spiral will often work very well when the background, typically the horizon, is placed on one of the thirds.