

RULES OF COMPOSITION SOME GUIDELINES

From a talk to the club by Peter Stevens – 20 September 2011

Peter gave a talk to the club on Taking Better Photographs, and suggested 10 'Rules of Composition' that should be put in any photographer's 'toolbox'.

These are the 10....

1. Create Balance – the image should be balanced overall. Think in terms of 'visual weight' across the image.
2. Shoot the Light – Photography is about light. Recognise the lighting conditions which will give rise to a great image, e.g. morning and evening light, mist, back light, soft light, night light.
3. Rule of thirds – position the main subject near the intersection of the 'thirds' of the frame.
4. Separate the main elements of the composition. Avoid as far possible subjects overlapping in the frame and producing an unattractive, unrecognisable or confusing shapes.
5. Colour – recognise different types of colour. Contrasting colour, harmonious colour. Try using just one or two colours.
6. Fill the frame. Every part of the image should be making a contribution. Avoid wasted space.
7. Create depth. Lead the viewer into the picture. Avoid lines cutting across the image that stop the viewer eye moving forward.
8. Lines and shapes. Look for horizontal, vertical and particularly diagonal lines which are more dynamic and create a more energetic image. Be careful horizontal lines don't inhibit depth in the image. Look also for shapes e.g. triangles, circles.
9. Repetition – often creates an attractive image.
10. Intent – not so much a rule, but a state of mind. Be clear about what you are trying to achieve. This will focus your attention.

And one more rule

11. Break the rules.... Don't let these so called rules stifle your creativity. Be prepared to think outside the box.