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Mastering Composition: The Definitive Guide For Photographers



Synopsis

Going beyond the rule of thirds, this offers invaluable tips and tools to help the photographer take control of the creative process with emphasis on four elements: an impactful subject, dynamic composition, effective use of lighting, and an ability to invoke an emotional response in the viewer. What makes a great photo? Flicking through the pages of popular photography magazines you might get the impression that there's only one rule of importance—the rule of thirds. Indeed it appears that some will judge the merit of a photograph based almost solely on this. Rarely do you hear discussion about visual weight, balance, negative space, depth, and so on. Author and professional photographer Richard Garvey-Williams argues that success lies in a combination of four elements: an impactful subject; dynamic composition; effective use of lighting; and, perhaps the most crucial, ability to invoke an emotional response in the viewer. Citing examples gleaned from a study of history—the Ancient Greeks' Golden Rule; Fibonacci's mathematical ratio; and the principles known as the Gestalt theory—the author analyzes the concepts, rules, and guidelines that define successful composition in photography and offers practical guidance to achieving great results. In clear, concise, and jargon-free text he also considers the role of tone and color in good composition, and offers invaluable tips and the tools to help the photographer take control of the creative process. The book is illustrated with examples of the author's own beautiful nature photography, along with diagrams and notation to explain techniques most clearly. A final chapter in this definitive guide for all serious photographers discusses photography and its relationship to art before offering a considered conclusion to the exploration of this fascinating topic.

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Customer Reviews

I really thought I had a good eye, when I compared my images with those in other books or friends photographs, I felt good about myself. This book opened my mind to what a master of composition can see.... now I realize I am a bit blind but at least I can learn. First off, the photographs are inspirational, even if I did not read the text I would learn quite a bit about composition just from studying the images. Richard covers how we can look at a scene and provides instruction on useful theories and rules, while also focusing on the importance of breaking or defying these guidelines if it fits the message we are trying to convey. The book encourages us to think about what our intentions are with the photographs we take as our approach will depend on this. I think this book is a must for all photographers of all levels. It is written in a clear and understandable way and therefore, should be helpful to beginners. I am a very experienced photographer myself and yet still learnt a great deal. The book is packed full of useful tips and the photos are inspirational and reflect a variety of subject matter. I look forward to his next book.

First of all this is an extremely well written book and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I'm an intermediate photographer that loves to travel for outdoor photography. I would often study many photos of the same scene that I have taken that are just slightly different. But however how close they appear to be at first glance one will usually stand out as more pleasing but I never knew why necessarily. This book explains really well, with nice pictorial examples, the why. This book now helps me look at a scene more analytically and abstractly and to take a step back from the extreme details of a scene and look at the general basic shapes, tones, curves and lines of a scene before I take a shot. Such a valuable book and fun read.

This book has many valuable aspects. first, it is a composition of artistry that works not only for photographers but also for those who enjoy the beauty that can be achieved by capturing images of nature as well as graphic designs. For me it also offered a clear and precise education as to the essence of composing an image. I would recommend it for serious armatures as well as those who enjoy sharing the beauty of photos , like being in an art gallery. Larry D. I give it 5 stars

I'm new to photography and was told by a number of friends who do it for a living that the best thing I could do to improve my skills on a budget was read as much about the subject as possible. This is

probably the 8-9th photography book I've read since December 2015. It's very in depth and informative. The example pictures are wonderful and help drive the talking points home. Some of it is honestly a little over my head but that's not anything against the author. It's just something I'm going to have to go back and re-read after I've put some of the lessons into practice. I highly recommend for anyone who feels their pictures would benefit from better composition.

This is definitely not one of those 'how to' books where the author rambles about the 'art' of this or that instead of getting to the point. In this book, you learn techniques and principles that I did not find on Lynda.com videos. Even some of my pro friends find it useful. Highly recommend.

I don't really feel like I learned much that I will be using in my photography. Perhaps because the author seem to be the artistic type of photographer who talk about the photos having a "message", while I'm more interested in just how to set up/frame an already beautiful-looking scene for the best result. The book was not of that type.

Very thoughtful and thought provoking discussion about composition. Should be on one's short list of book for this topic (also check out Freeman Patterson's books).

Great book. I love to read these books from the masters. Recommended reading from beginner on.

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