



Kawartha Camera Club

www.kawarthacameraclub.com

THE MAKING OF AN IMAGE

**Stop Taking Pictures,
Start Creating Images**

All levels of photographers are welcome to participate



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What is important to remember when you are making an Image?

Composition:

- Rule of thirds
- Leading lines
- View Point
- Symmetry & Patterns
- Backgrounds
- Depth
- Framing
- Cropping

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RULE OF THIRDS

Imagine that your image is divided into 9 equal segments by 2 vertical and 2 horizontal lines. The rule of thirds says that you should position the most important elements in your scene along these lines, or at the points where they intersect.

BALANCING ELEMENTS

Placing your main subject off-centre, as with the rule of thirds, creates a more interesting photo, but it can leave a void in the scene which can make it feel empty. You should balance the "weight" of your subject by including another object of lesser importance to fill the space.

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LEADING LINES

When we look at a photo our eye is naturally drawn along lines. By thinking about how you place lines in your composition, you can affect the way we view the image, pulling us into the picture, towards the subject, or on a journey "through" the scene. There are many different types of line - straight, diagonal, curvy, zigzag, radial etc - and each can be used to enhance our photo's composition.

SYMMETRY AND PATTERNS

We are surrounded by symmetry and patterns, both natural and man-made., They can make for very eye-catching compositions, particularly in situations where they are not expected. Another great way to use them is to break the symmetry or pattern in some way, introducing tension and a focal point to the scene.

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VIEWPOINT

Before photographing your subject, take time to think about where you will shoot it from. Our viewpoint has a massive impact on the composition of our photo, and as a result it can greatly affect the message that the shot conveys. Rather than just shooting from eye level, consider photographing from high above, down at ground level, from the side, from the back, from a long way away, from very close up, and so on.

DEPTH

Because photography is a two-dimensional medium, we have to choose our composition carefully to convey the sense of depth that was present in the actual scene. You can create depth in a photo by including objects in the foreground, middle ground and background. Another useful composition technique is overlapping, where you deliberately partially obscure one object with another. The human eye naturally recognises these layers and mentally separates them out, creating an image with more depth.

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BACKGROUND

How many times have you taken what you thought would be a great shot, only to find that the final image lacks impact because the subject blends into a busy background? The human eye is excellent at distinguishing between different elements in a scene, whereas a camera has a tendency to flatten the foreground and background, and this can often ruin an otherwise great photo. Thankfully this problem is usually easy to overcome at the time of shooting - look around for a plain and unobtrusive background and compose your shot so that it doesn't distract or detract from the subject.

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FRAMING

The world is full of objects which make perfect natural frames, such as trees, archways and holes. By placing these around the edge of the composition you help to isolate the main subject from the outside world. The result is a more focused image which draws your eye naturally to the main point of interest.

CROPPING

Often a photo will lack impact because the main subject is so small it becomes lost among the clutter of its surroundings. By cropping tight around the subject you eliminate the background "noise", ensuring the subject gets the viewer's undivided attention.

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Focus and Depth of Field

Focus draws your eye in and says, "this is important; look at me!" If nothing is in focus, your eye doesn't know where to look, reading an image as a pattern. If *everything* is in focus, then everything has equal weight. Depending on your needs, this can lead to a great shot, but if you're trying to place importance on one or two things, adapting your focus and depth of field is key. Consider focus as the singular best tool for storytelling: it creates a subject, while still retaining the supporting context around it. If you want to isolate one object, open up the aperture of your camera to between f1.8 and f4. To increase depth of field, use an f-stop in the range of f11 to f20.



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Brightness

Your eye will naturally travel to the lightest spot in a photo. This is perfect if your subject is the lightest element, but if it's not, then the bright spot off in the distance will end up competing with what's really important. It can be confusing, both visually and in terms of content. If your subject is naturally dark, then either tone down everything around it or make everything around the subject lighter, so it pops. In the image on the left, your eye bounces around from the lamp in back to the illuminated cup to the cup in focus, never resting on one thing. There's more clarity in the right image, but that also may be boring to some.



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Saturation

As with brightness, your eye will naturally gravitate toward the most color-saturated element, so try to be aware of what is saturated and popping in the background so you can make decisions about whether to play off of the color or remove it.

In both these pictures, there's a saturated object in the background.

On the left, it's a green poster; **on the right**, it's a red bucket.

The eye bounces between these elements and the cup because those shapes are rich in color, even though they're out of focus.



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Fall is a fantastic time of year for you to photograph the landscape and really push your creativity.

1. Use a longer focal length lens



It's tempting to photograph grand scenes with a wide angle lens, but using a longer focal length lens, 200mm or longer, can really help simplify the scene and make the subject about more than just color. You can also use the longer focal length lens to photograph the intimate details of a forest interior. Look for elements in the scene where there is a break in the pattern or use negative space to help isolate the subject.

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2. Use a wide aperture to isolate the subject



Pick a wider aperture, around $f/2.8$ or $f/5.6$, to isolate your subject from its surroundings. This will help create visual contrast between the sharp subject and the background, which will be softer and more abstract. This also adds tension between the real and the unreal, providing you with an image that's more dynamic and expressive. Experiment with different subjects and backgrounds and get creative with your choices. Pay close attention to your subject and make sure that you have the desired amount of the subject in focus when using a wide aperture.

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3. Make fall color the secondary subject



The temptation is for you to make the primary subject all about the fall colors. Find other primary subjects such as streams and waterfalls that are accented by the fall colors, to make images that have more depth and complexity. Although the color may attract your eye to the scene, ask yourself what the subject might be other than color.

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4. Look for patterns and textures



Color is an obvious design element that you'll be working with in your images but look, for others like pattern and texture, to create satisfying compositions. Learning to see the world around you as elements of 2-D design (line, pattern, texture, etc.) will help you move forward in your composition skills.

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5. Be patient and wait for interesting or dramatic light



Patience may be the best tool in your camera bag. Fall colors are wonderful, but can be even more stunning when combined with the right light for your subject. Patience usually is a big factor between a good image and a great image. Many times the best light can be short lived, so think through your composition in advance, and be ready for the light to work some magic.

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6. Experiment with intentional camera movement



Definitely experiment with moving your camera vertically as you release the shutter to blur the scene and create an abstract image of lines, textures, and colors. Experiment with different shutter speeds, and the pace of moving your camera, until you find the right amount of blur. This is a great opportunity for you to take your camera off the tripod and just play with camera movement. Darker elements that work well include a rock face, canyon walls, or deep shaded areas in the forest.

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7. Look for elements that contrast the fall color



Fall colors are usually bright and have texture and pattern. Look for opportunities to place the fall colors against darker elements so you can create an image with some dramatic tension.

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8. Don't forget to look up



The interior of a forest can be an amazing and colorful place to photograph, but it's often difficult to isolate a subject. If you're having trouble, look up and explore the canopy. Images that contrast the fall colors with the deep blue sky can be really pleasing and make interesting wide angle photographs. Don't forget to use smaller apertures like f/22, to create a starburst effect as you shoot through the forest toward the sun.

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Choose you image in your frame



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**Your challenge tonight
and on the
monthly “road trip outing”
is to frame your image
before you trip the shutter**

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EXPERIMENTATION

With the dawn of the digital age in photography we no longer have to worry about film processing costs or running out of shots. As a result, experimenting with our photos' composition has become a real possibility; we can fire off tons of shots and delete the unwanted ones later at absolutely no extra cost. Take advantage of this fact and experiment with your composition - you never know whether an idea will work until you try it.



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Information in this presentation was from the following sources:

<http://www.photographymad.com>

<http://www.designsponge.com/>

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