



Composition and Design for Better Digital Photos

Photographs are created with a spatial context, and that context is the viewfinder frame. The most common image area is a horizontal frame in the proportions 3:2.

ALIGNMENT

Align one or two prominent lines in the image with the borders of the frame.

FRAME SHAPE

Our natural view of the world is in the form of a vague horizontal oval in 3:2 proportions. This frame conforms to the horizon and suits nature photos such as landscapes. For natural vertical subjects use a elongated frame of 2:3 and this most portraits.



SQUARE FRAME

Patterns and other formless arrangements fit well into a square format because the frame has no directional emphasis.

“...how you build a picture, what a picture consists of, how shapes are related to each other, how spaces are filled, how the whole thing must have a kind of unity.” Paul Strand

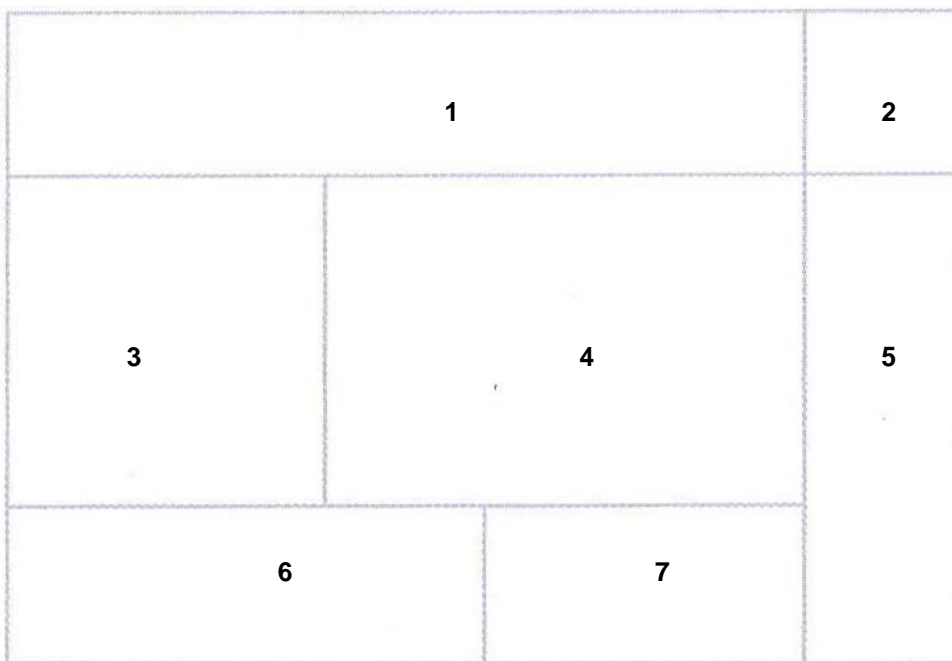
► FILLING THE FRAME

Photographing a single subject allows you to fill the frame with a close up shot. This shows structural details but can deliver too much detail in a portrait and may involve complex post production. When we pan back from the subject, we show something of the surroundings; this puts the subject in context.



► WHERE TO PLACE THE SUBJECT

Whenever you place free space around an object, its position becomes an issue. Most images have strong lines and when they are diagonal s they form vectors that influence an off centre position.



▲ FIBONACCI PROPORTIONS

As a photographer, you will notice that the intersection of the divisions are fundamentally pleasing and this can be a satisfying location for a point or any other focus of attention.

LOCATION 1

Take a series of photos of the same image and compose your point of interest at locations that correspond to the intersection points in the Fibonacci diagram. Use the automatic setting on your camera.

Points to consider

1. How does the placement of your point of interest change the emphasis and feeling of your photo?
2. Do any of your photos fill the frame?
3. Did you align any prominent lines to line up with the border of the frame of the photo?
4. Which of the divisions require a change in the orientation of your photo?

