

Composition
10 Techniques to Use
by Philip Gebhardt

1. Rule of Thirds/Golden Rectangle (subject off-centre)
divide the frame into thirds vertically and horizontally
also golden rectangle (golden ratio) — 1.618:1
2. 80/20 Rule
either 80% light and 20% shadow or 80% shadow and 20% light
focusses the viewers' eye on the important area of the photograph
3. Chiaroscuro/ Clair-obscur/Counterchange
place a dark shape on a light shape (or background) or place a light shape on a dark shape (or background) to provide contrast
4. Diagonal sidewalks/roads/walls
avoid shooting buildings or people square on because the image will look flat and roads and sidewalks will be parallel to the bottom edge of the photograph giving a mathematical and unappealing look; diagonal lines provide perspective and increase the sense of depth and illusion of distance as well as giving energy to the photograph; when possible, shoot buildings at 30 degrees to show the face and side
5. Parallel lines
e.g. edges of roads, sidewalks; rows of buildings, trees; walls, floor & ceiling in a room
provides perspective and increases the sense of depth and illusion of distance
6. Cast shadows
provide perspective and increase the sense of depth and distance
7. Large vs. small
large objects seem closer; small objects seem farther away
increases the sense of depth and the illusion of distance
8. Overlapping objects (layers)
when two objects overlap, the one we see must be closer and the one that is hidden is farther away
increases the sense of depth and the illusion of distance
9. Frame the subject
frame the subject in a doorway, window, archway, tree branches
10. Sun location
on a bright day, the Sun casts shadows which provide texture on materials
the Sun creates cast shadows which provide perspective and increase the sense of depth and distance