



Composition

How to create good composition with your art.

Composition

- The plan, placement or arrangement of the elements of art in a work. It is often useful to discuss these in reference to the principles of design, as well as to the relative weight of the composition's parts.
- Composition can also refer to the area of a sheet in which the design appears in a drawing or print. When a composition is limited to a distinct area of a plate or a sheet of paper, it is good practice to note the composition's measurements, as well as the measurements of the plate and of the overall sheet.
- The design of a composition should either be pleasing or it should be in some other way expressive.
- You can use several types of composition within any visual you create.



Can you explain why these are not working and are working?

Good Composition

Basically this is related to the placement of objects. We will soon see various reasons why one is better than the other.



Bad Composition

Balance

- A principle of design, balance refers to the way the elements of art are arranged to create a feeling of stability in a work; a pleasing or harmonious arrangement or proportion of parts or areas in a design or composition.

Symmetrical balance:



Symmetrical balance:



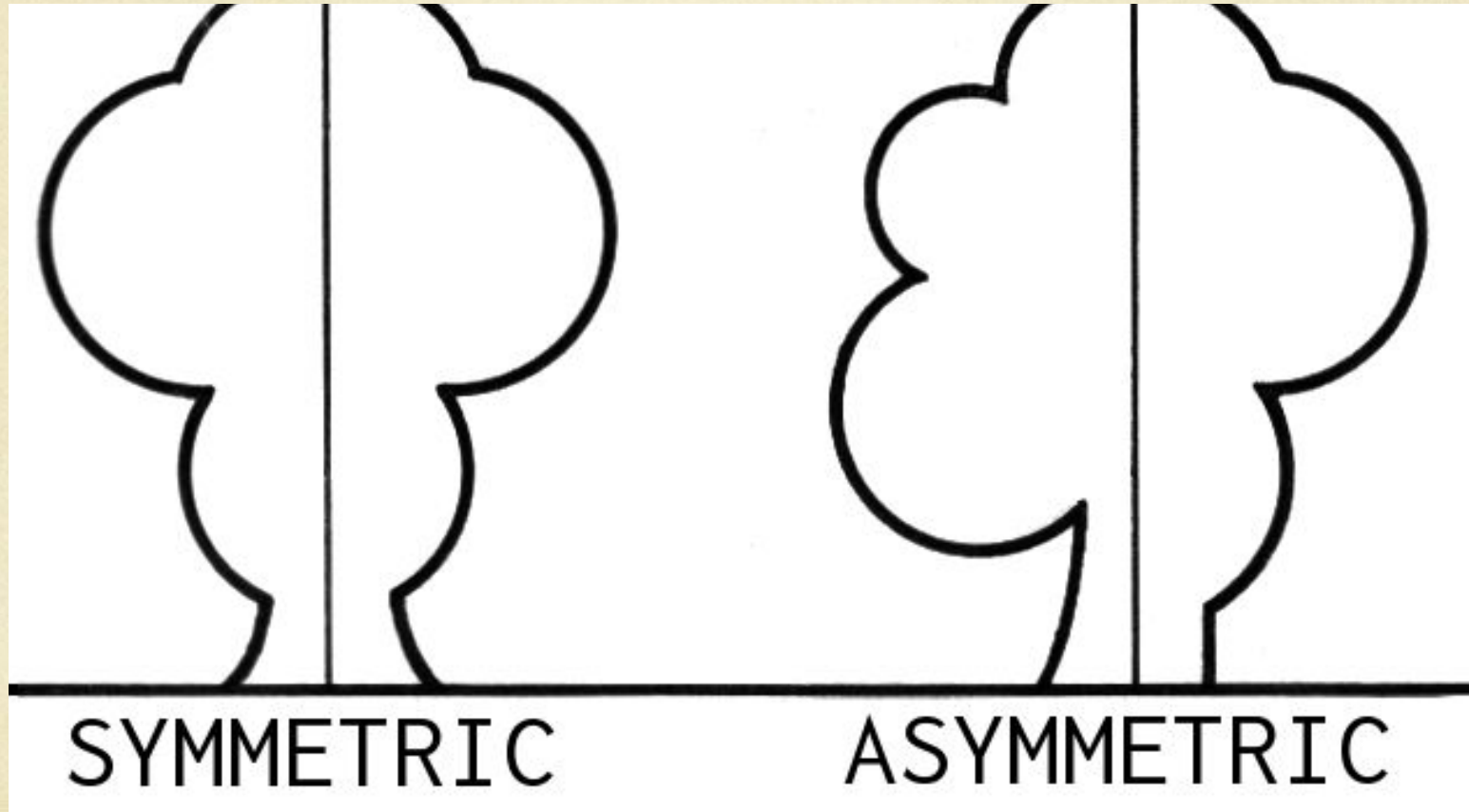
Asymmetrical balance:





Asymmetrical
balance

A comparison:



Radial Balance

- Radial balance is when elements and objects are arranged like rays.



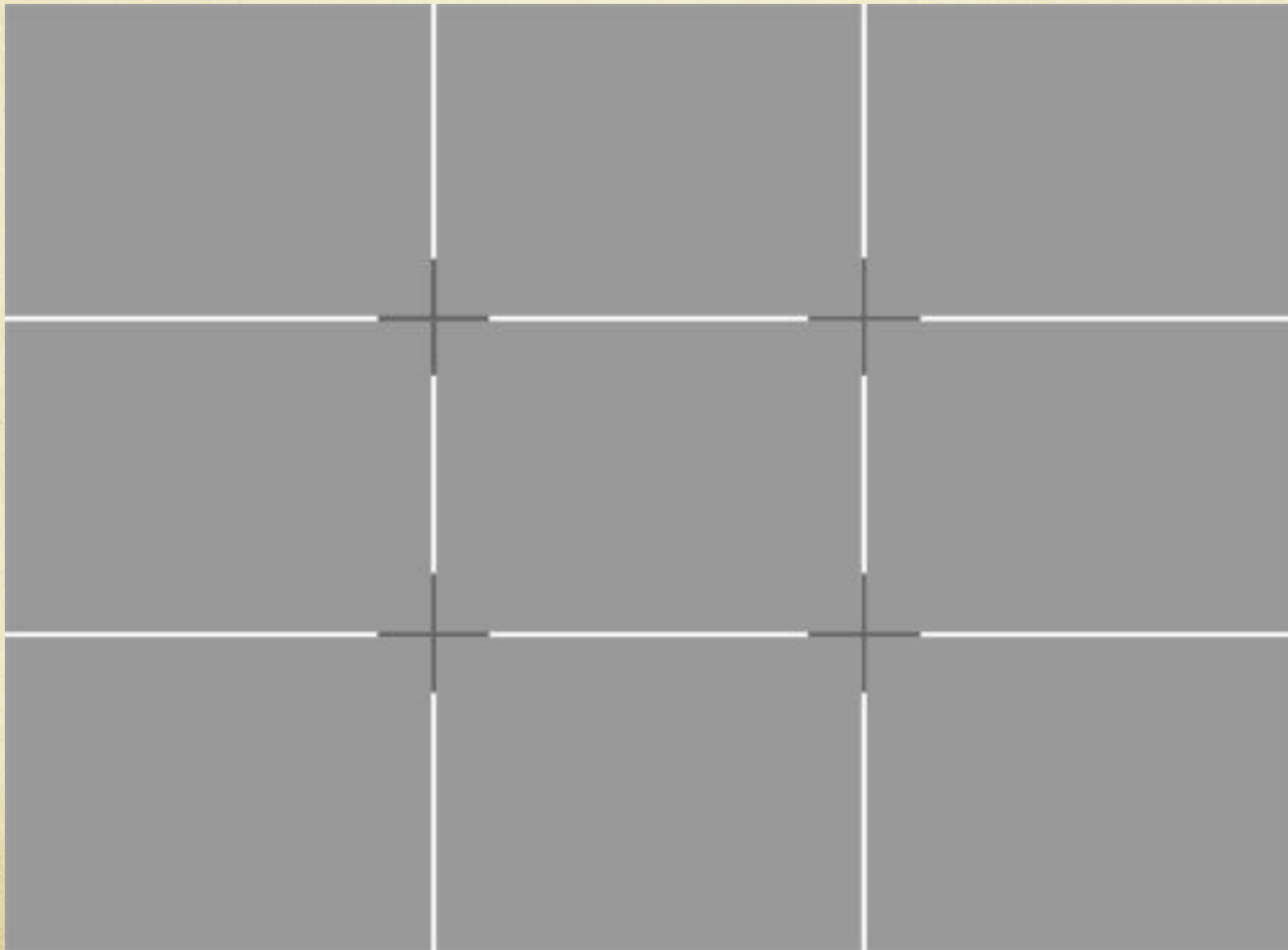




Rule of thirds:

- A composition rule where you use a grid divided into 9 equal sections. Placement of objects and horizons work best and are considered rule of thirds when they are placed on a grid line or intersection.
- Many cameras have this built in to see through your viewfinder. You can never lose with this particular composition type.

This is what the rule of thirds grid looks like. It will show up on your camera view finder like this.





If you compare centered with rule of thirds you will find that rule of thirds is a much stronger visual.



Rule of Odds:

- One of the first things to decide in a composition is how many elements or items there will be in it. And one of the simplest ways to make a composition more dynamic is to have an odd number in the composition, say three, five, or seven, rather than an even number, say two, four, or six. It's called the Rule of Odds.







Leading the eye:

- Controlling the viewers eye so they stay on the page. This means when you draw a face do not place it on the edge so that it is looking off the page. This technique is used to lead the viewers eyes through out the page so one element/object leads to another with out leaving the page.

18 - Lead the eye into the picture, but.....



19... *Don't lead the eye out of the picture*



- *A road or row of buildings can lead the eye out of a picture*

21... *Lead the eye through the picture*

*Tree &
bank block
exit*

*Road
directs the
eye*



*Tree &
shadow
block the
exit & point
back into
the picture*

- *The eye can be taken through the picture by one or more objects to the centre of interest*



The principle of the S-curve

- It is one that many people have an intrinsic feeling for, but is very rarely to its fuller potential. Fundamentally, the S-curve is anything that has a S-like shape to it. Where the potential remains unmatched is in the way it is implemented: all too often, S-curves are used as-is- the subject offers a S-like form which provides ready-made composition. However, the stronger S-curves, the real value of them as a compositional tool, is when they are crafted from multiple elements. Unfortunately, of the examples I have pulled together for this article, only a few can boast the combinatory approach.





Framing:

- In visual arts and particularly cinematography, framing is the presentation of visual elements in an image, especially the placement of the subject in relation to other objects. Framing can make an image more aesthetically pleasing and keep the viewer's focus on the framed object(s). It can also be used as a repoussoir, to direct attention back into the scene. It can add depth to an image, and can add interest to the picture when the frame is thematically related to the object being framed.



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Lindsay Roberts



Diagonal compositions:

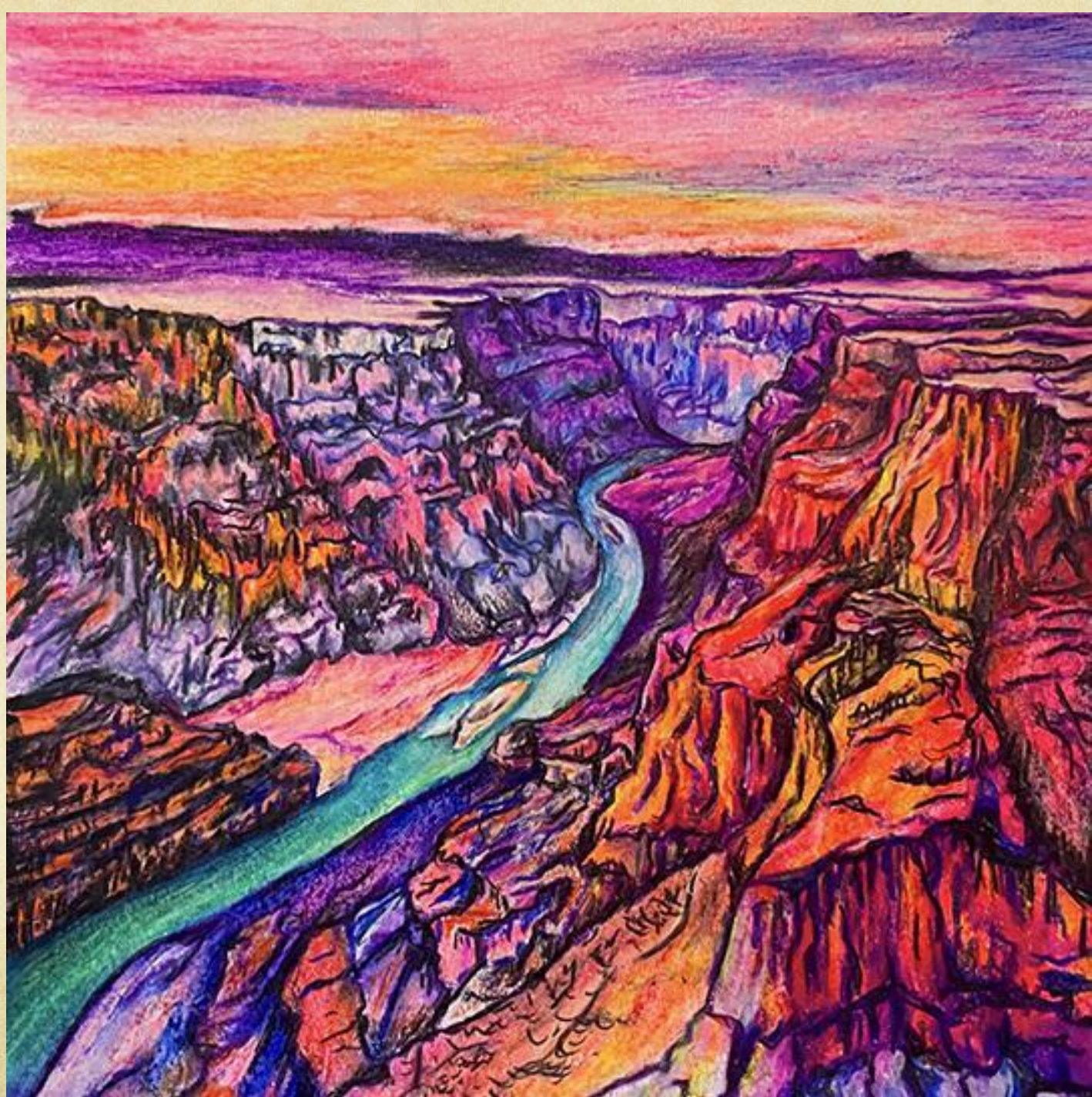
- Diagonal is a line having an oblique or slanted direction, running either from the upper left to lower right corner of picture or running from the upper right to lower left corner. Compositions with domination of horizontal and vertical lines are architectonical and static. In comparison with them compositions comprised of diagonal lines are dynamic.



Zachi Ebenor

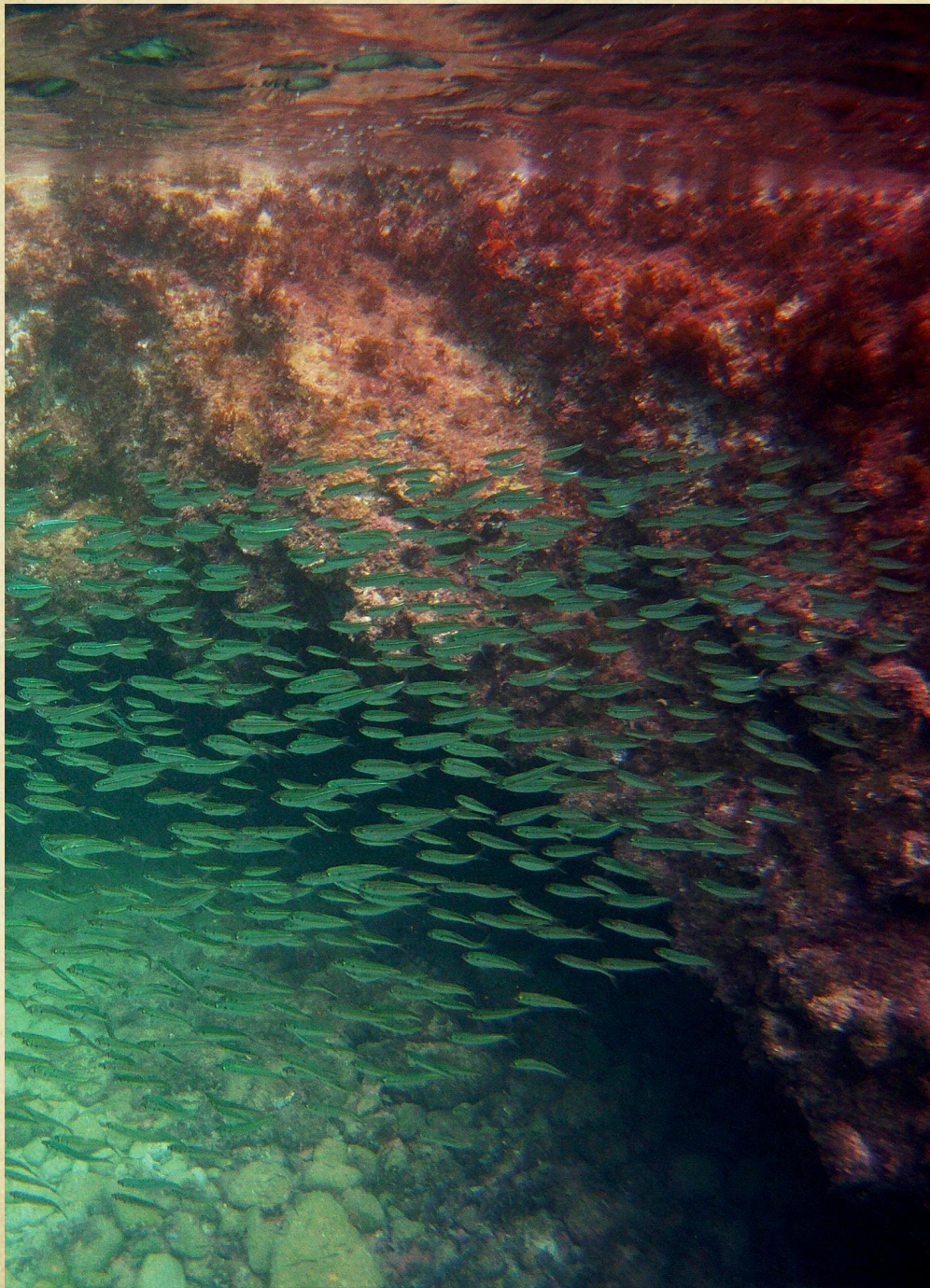








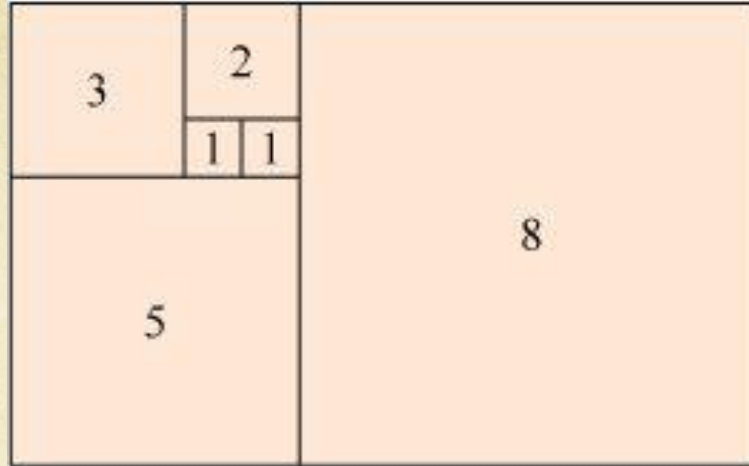
The cross composition is used in many Christian paintings. It is pretty obvious that it is the composition used. Here is a sample of it used in Abstract expressionism.



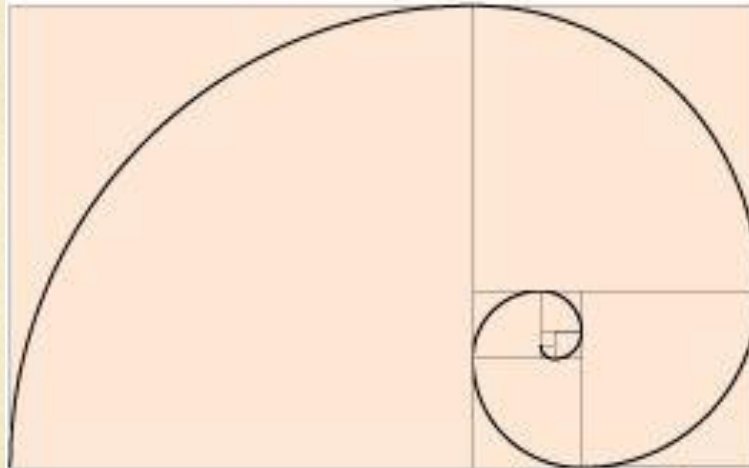
Focal Mass is the concentration of mass in a specific region of space.

Fibonacci number/Fibonacci spiral/Golden spiral

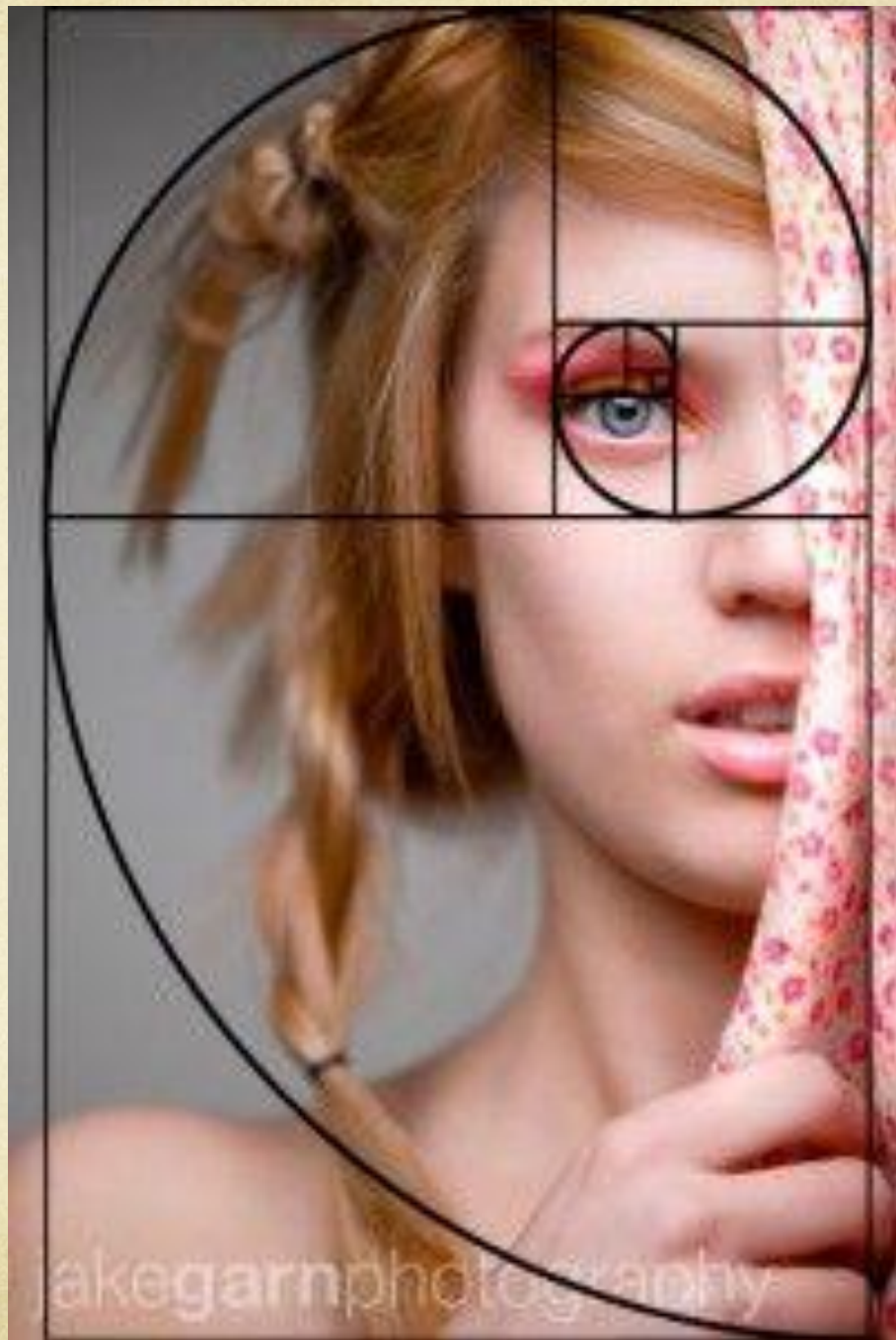
- In geometry, a golden spiral is a logarithmic spiral whose growth factor is ϕ , the golden ratio.[1] That is, a golden spiral gets wider (or further from its origin) by a factor of ϕ for every quarter turn it makes.

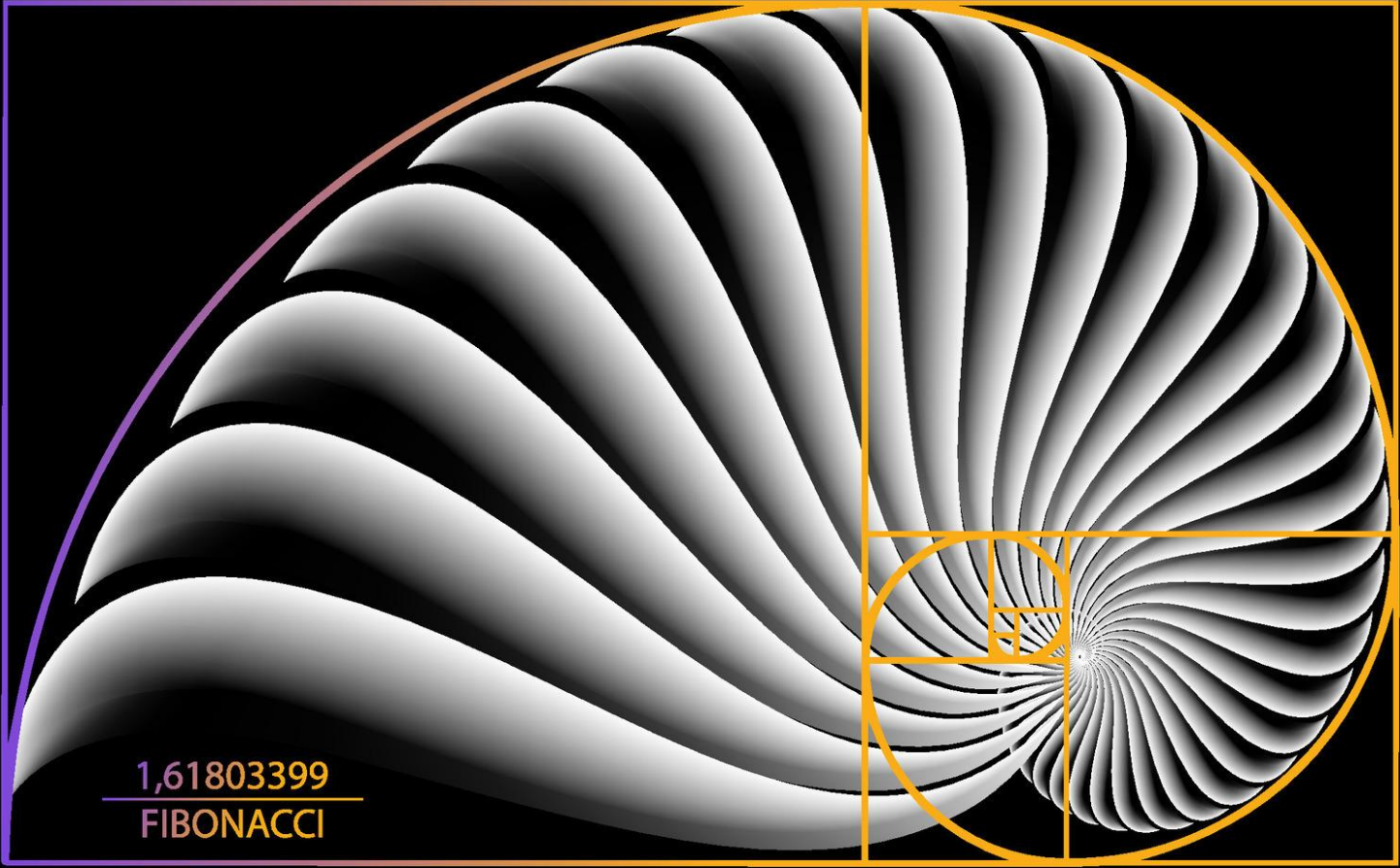


A tiling with squares whose sides are successive Fibonacci numbers in length.



A Fibonacci spiral created by drawing circular arcs connecting the opposite corners of squares in the Fibonacci tiling.





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FIBONACCI

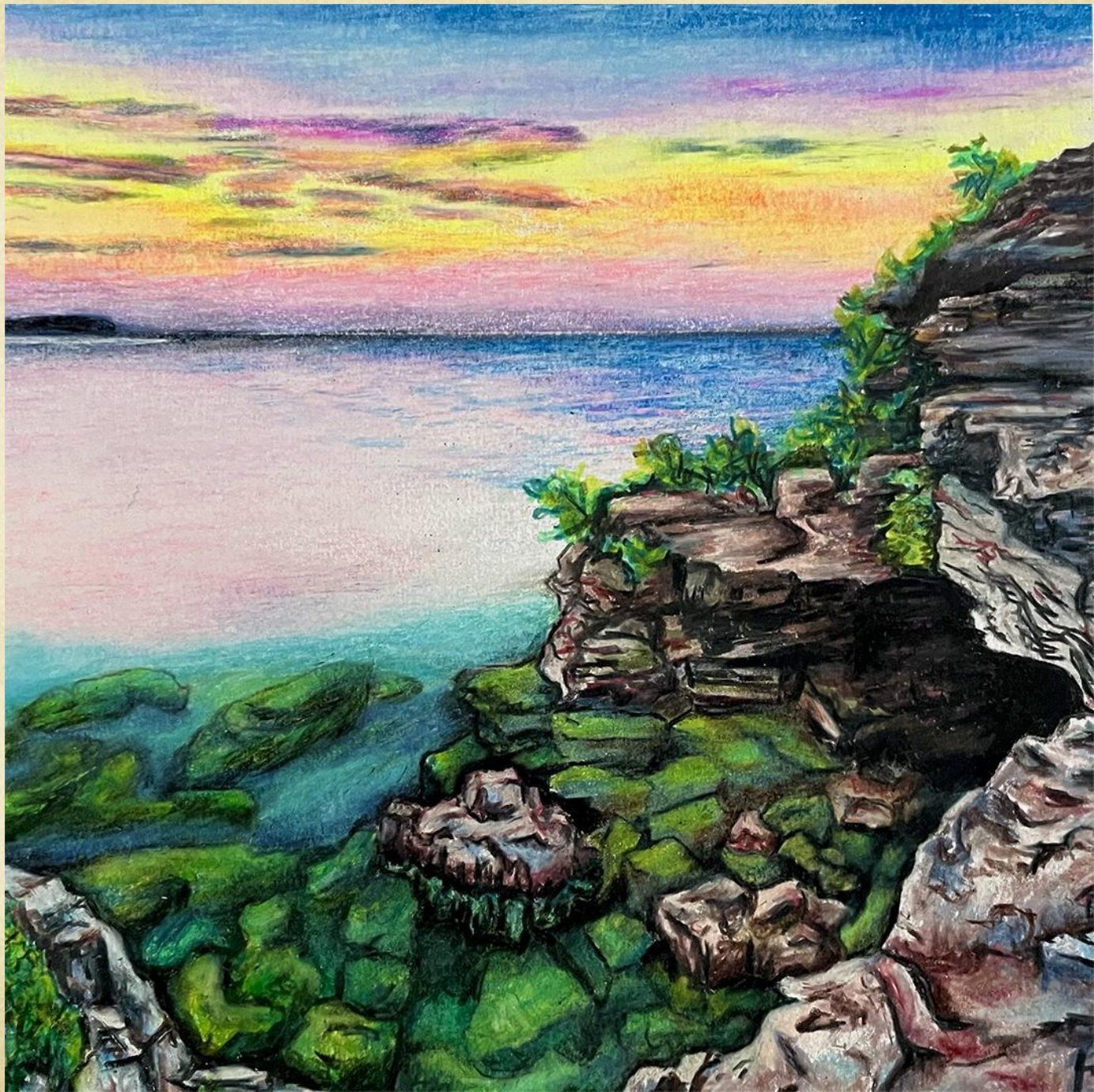


Most portraits are centered. Centered is normally not a good composition. In these famous portraits though, the Fibonacci spiral makes it work. Also notice that the subjects are looking straight at you. This also helps. You have to consider it is human nature to follow where the eyes are looking. If they were looking off the page then the composition does not work as it leads you off the page.

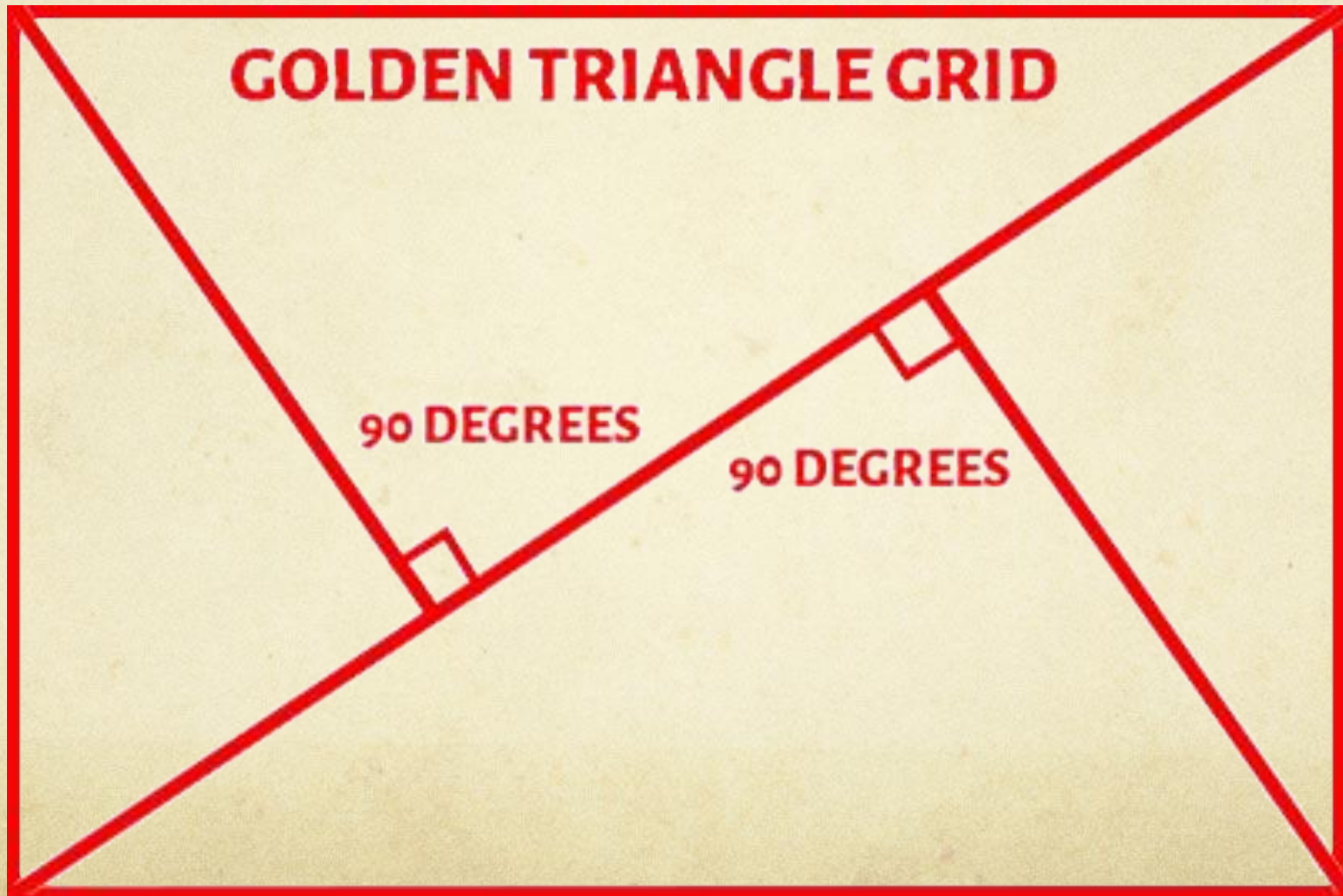


The L composition is closely related to the rule of thirds. Objects, colors, or even light sources within the visual form an L shape.



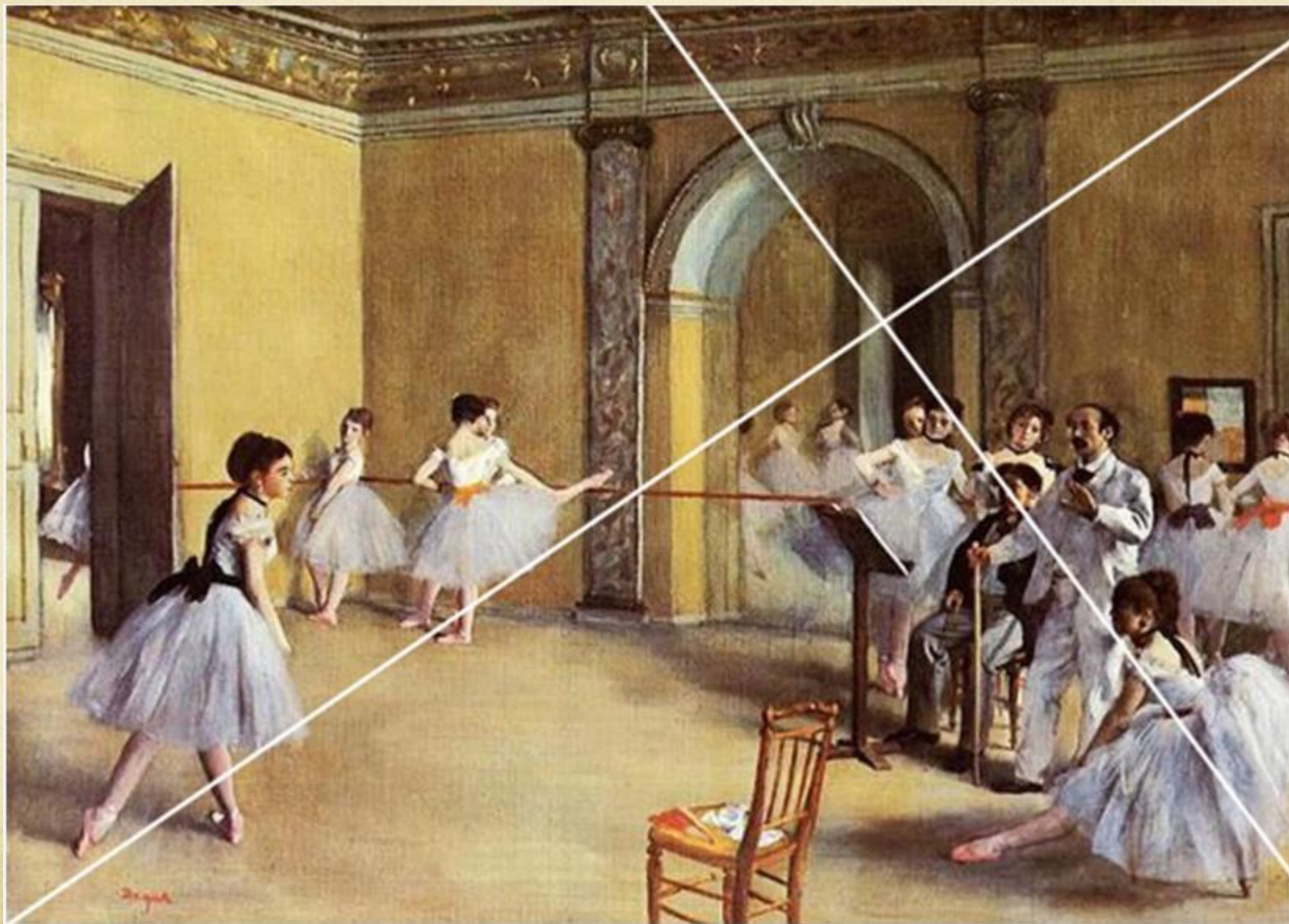


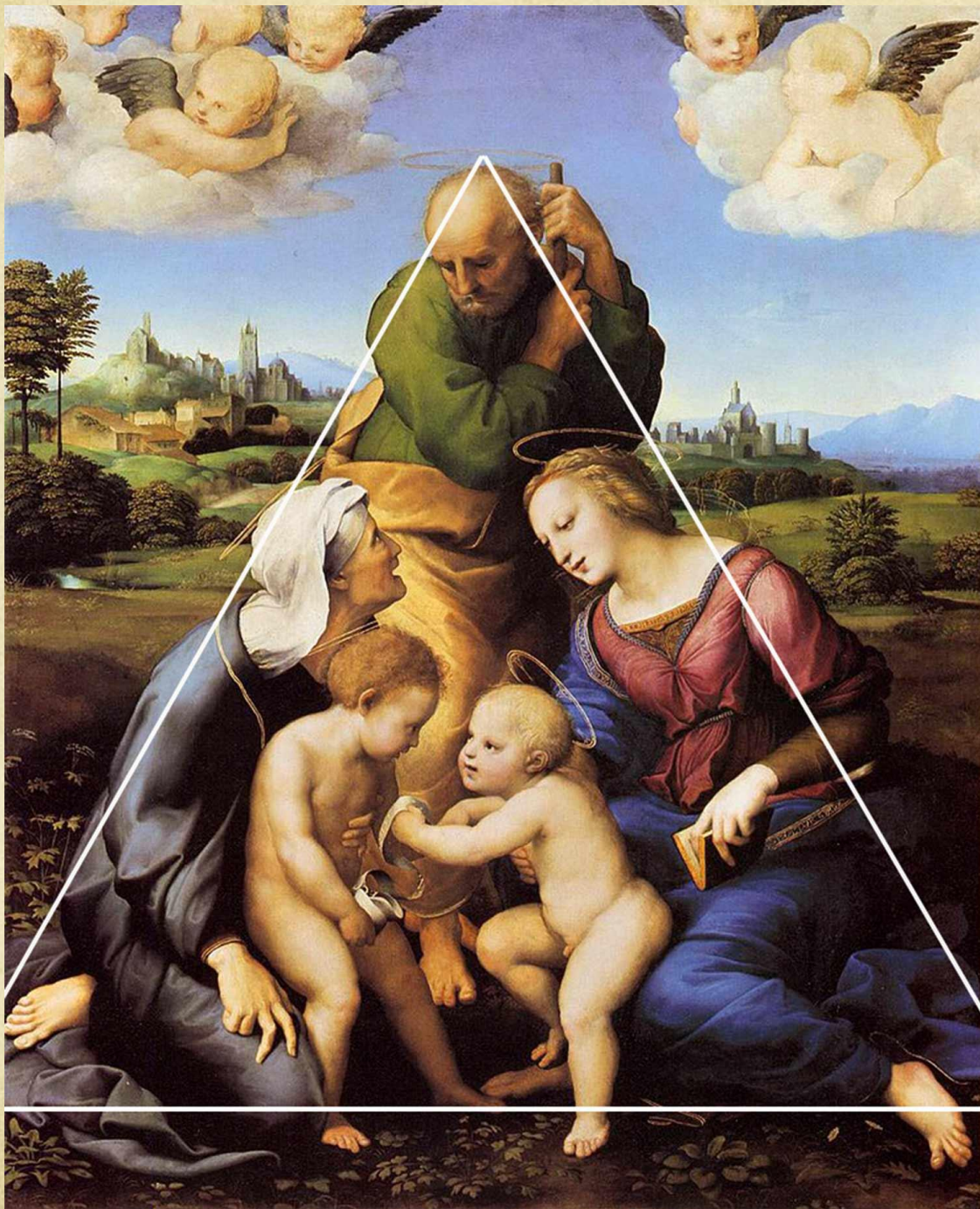
Golden and harmonious triangles are another form of composition that works quite well. It works in photography and was used often by famous painters.





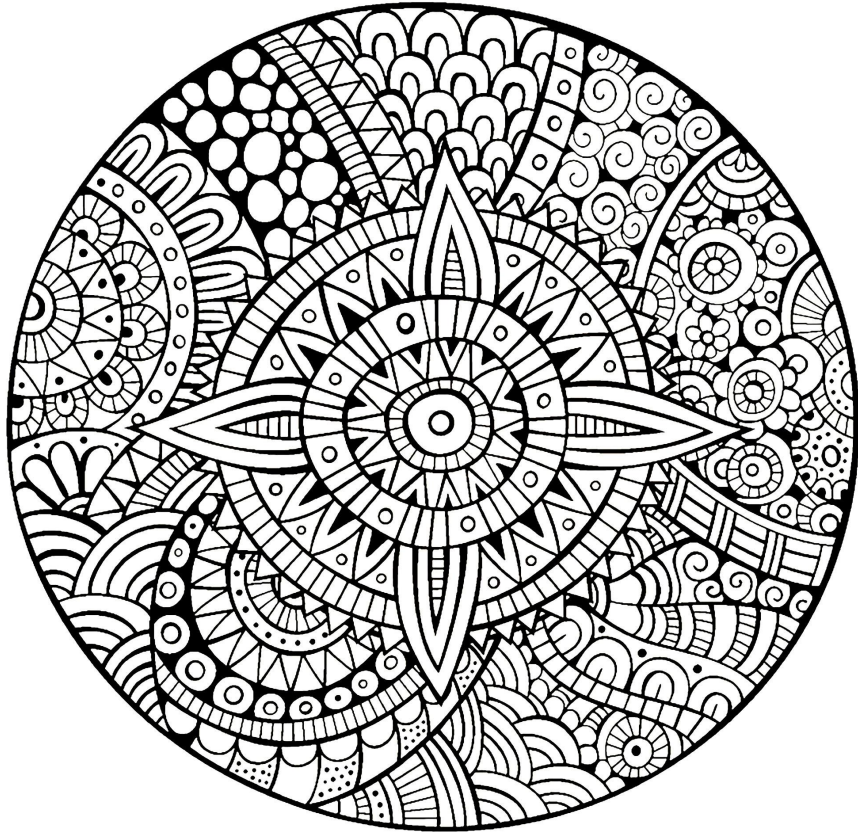
Degas





A triangular composition works well in this painting. It is when objects form a triangular shape.

For some visuals it is difficult avoiding being centered. In some cases it can work using a circular composition. With Mandalas like the visual on the left it must be used.



What not to do in a composition:

- Never draw a figure and cut off the feet or top of head.
- Never place objects in a way that they are merged with out purpose or meaning. An example would be a tree growing out of a persons head.
- Never draw a face to the edge of a page where the face is looking off the page.



Mergers can be intentional and do work in some cases. The top 2 images are samples of mergers that work. Notice how they also use rule of thirds. The bottom is not one that works as it appears the tower is coming out of his head. Notice how it is centered.



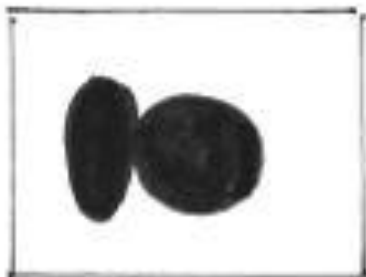
Closed corner



Halved shape



Fused edges, frame



Fused edges, shapes



Hidden edge



Split apex



Stolen edge



Antlers



Skimmed edge

WHEN YOU COMPOSE YOUR PICTURE...



AVOID 2 EQUAL POINTS OF INTEREST THAT WILL FIGHT FOR ATTENTION.



AVOID A LOPSIDED ARRANGEMENT OF TONES



AVOID A "BULLS EYE" IN THE MIDDLE FOR YOUR FOCAL POINT

Viewpoint

The viewpoint you choose influences the viewer's understanding of your illustration & which figure they identify with!



Viewing a figure or object from a low angle makes it appear dominant or intimidating.



Unsurprisingly, viewing a figure or scene from a high angle has the opposite effect!



Viewing a separate scene from within your illustration (like looking through a window, doorway, or mirror) can be a great way of showing a division or contrast. This is also a nice framing device.

The viewer will tend to identify with whatever character is most visible. Generally this is the character that is closer to the viewer, but could also be the character with the most readable face.

Keep this in mind if you are trying to show a hero/villain showdown!

