



Aperture Photography Group
Camera Skills
Composition

www.aperturephotographygroup.co.uk



Camera Skills

Tonight:

- ❖ Composition
- ❖ Recap the key points from the Nick Rains video
- ❖ Q&A



Composition

- ❖ “Get it right in camera.”



Composition

- ❖ There are no rules in composition
- ❖ But there are a series of guidelines.
- ❖ Subjective, not objective!

Composition

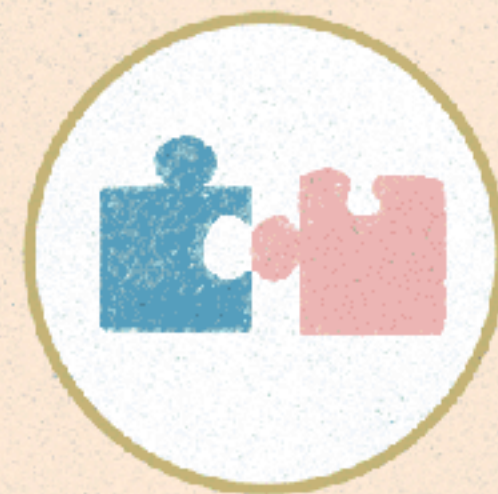
- ❖ Everything is about the frame.
 - ❖ Where you place the frame on the world.
 - ❖ What elements to include or exclude.
 - ❖ What is the 'Lead Actor' and who are the supporting cast?
 - ❖ The way you arrange the elements in the frame.

Composition

- ❖ What is the intent of the image?
- ❖ Interesting subject matter.
- ❖ Hold the viewer's attention.
- ❖ How you light the image.
- ❖ When you press the shutter.

Language of Composition

Elements Of Composition In Art



Unity



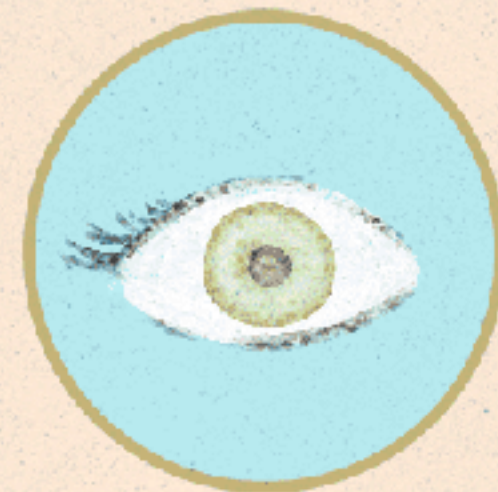
Balance



Movement



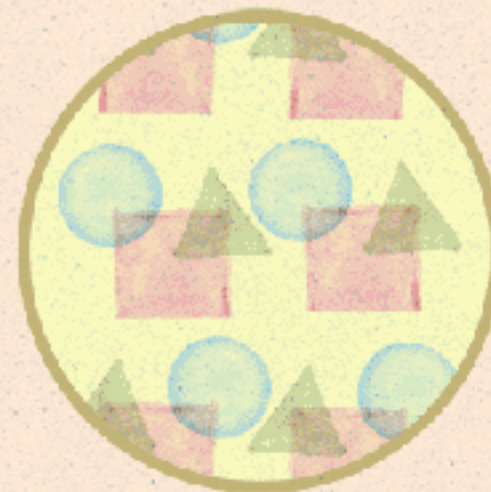
Rhythm



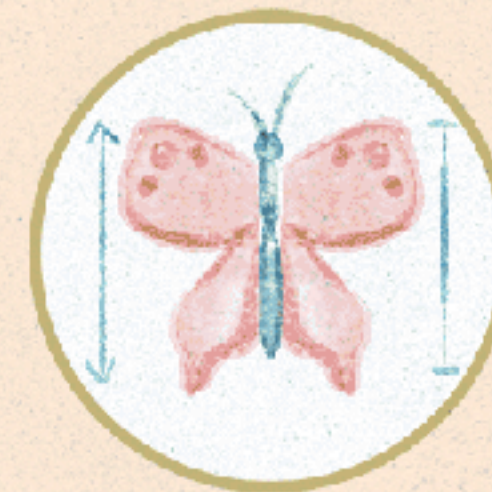
Focus



Contrast



Pattern



Proportion

Language of Composition

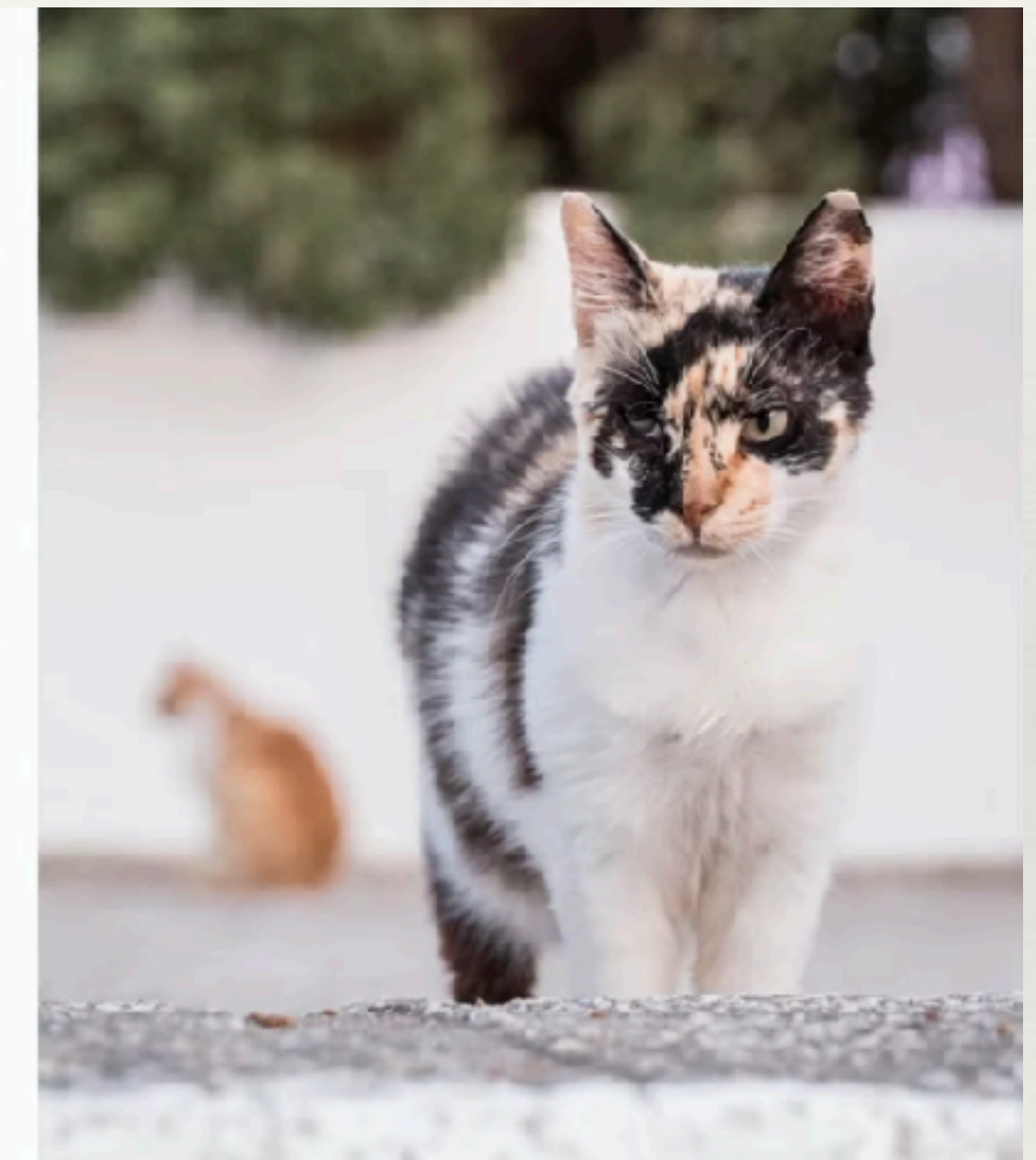
- ❖ Luminosity
- ❖ Geometry
- ❖ Contrast
- ❖ Colour
- ❖ Atmosphere

Composition Basics

- ❖ Fill the frame and be bold.
- ❖ Off centre subjects are often more interesting.
- ❖ Look for balance, repeating shapes and / or symmetry.
- ❖ Use perspective to arrange your subjects in the frame.
- ❖ Intentionality.
- ❖ Hold the viewer's eye.
- ❖ Break the rules - with a reason.

Composition Basics

- ❖ **Fill the frame and be bold**
 - ❖ Make the subject prominent.
 - ❖ Simplify the picture to make your message clearer.
 - ❖ Eliminate anything in the frame that is not helping.
 - ❖ Some pictures work better with others in a series, some work better in isolation.



Composition Basics

- ❖ **Off centre subjects are often more interesting**
 - ❖ Rule of thirds: placing elements on the intersections can make an image more visually interesting, but it is being off-centre that really helps.
 - ❖ Only put things in the middle when you want to stress something is static/stable.
 - ❖ Strong colours/bright elements in the picture attract the eye.



Composition Basics

- ❖ **Off centre subjects are often more interesting**
 - ❖ Watch out for elements breaking the edge of the frame.
 - ❖ If you are going to be off-centre, be well off-centre, not just off-centre.
 - ❖ In portraits, positioning the eyes above the half-way line works well.
 - ❖ There should be no confusion in terms of what you are trying to show.



Composition Basics

- ❖ **Look for balance, repeating shapes and/or symmetry**
 - ❖ All four quadrants of a picture should contain something interesting (nota hard or fast rule).
 - ❖ Balance can be around: the subject, tone, or size.



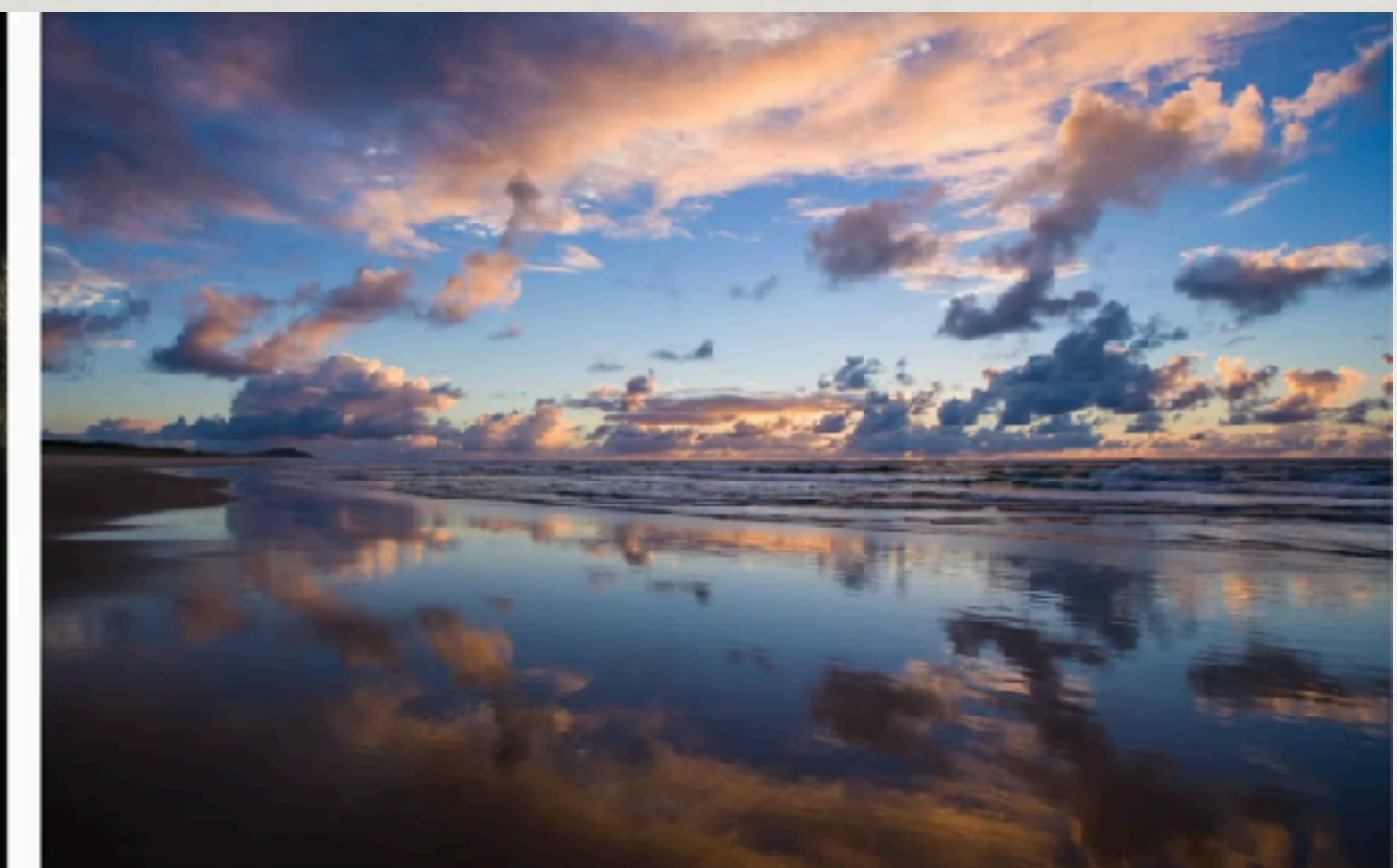
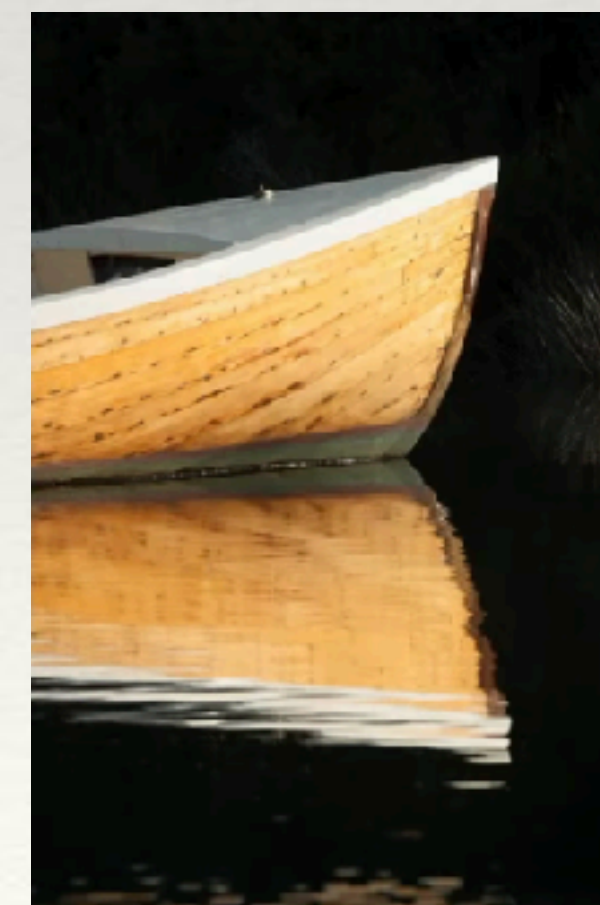
Composition Basics

- ❖ **Look for balance, repeating shapes and/or symmetry**
 - ❖ A smaller white element can balance a larger dark element.



Composition Basics

- ❖ **Look for balance, repeating shapes and/or symmetry**
 - ❖ For symmetry, split the picture in half using the horizon.
 - ❖ Sometimes you have to make decisions quickly.
 - ❖ It is better for a subject to have an orientation, or implied direction when they are pointing into the frame.



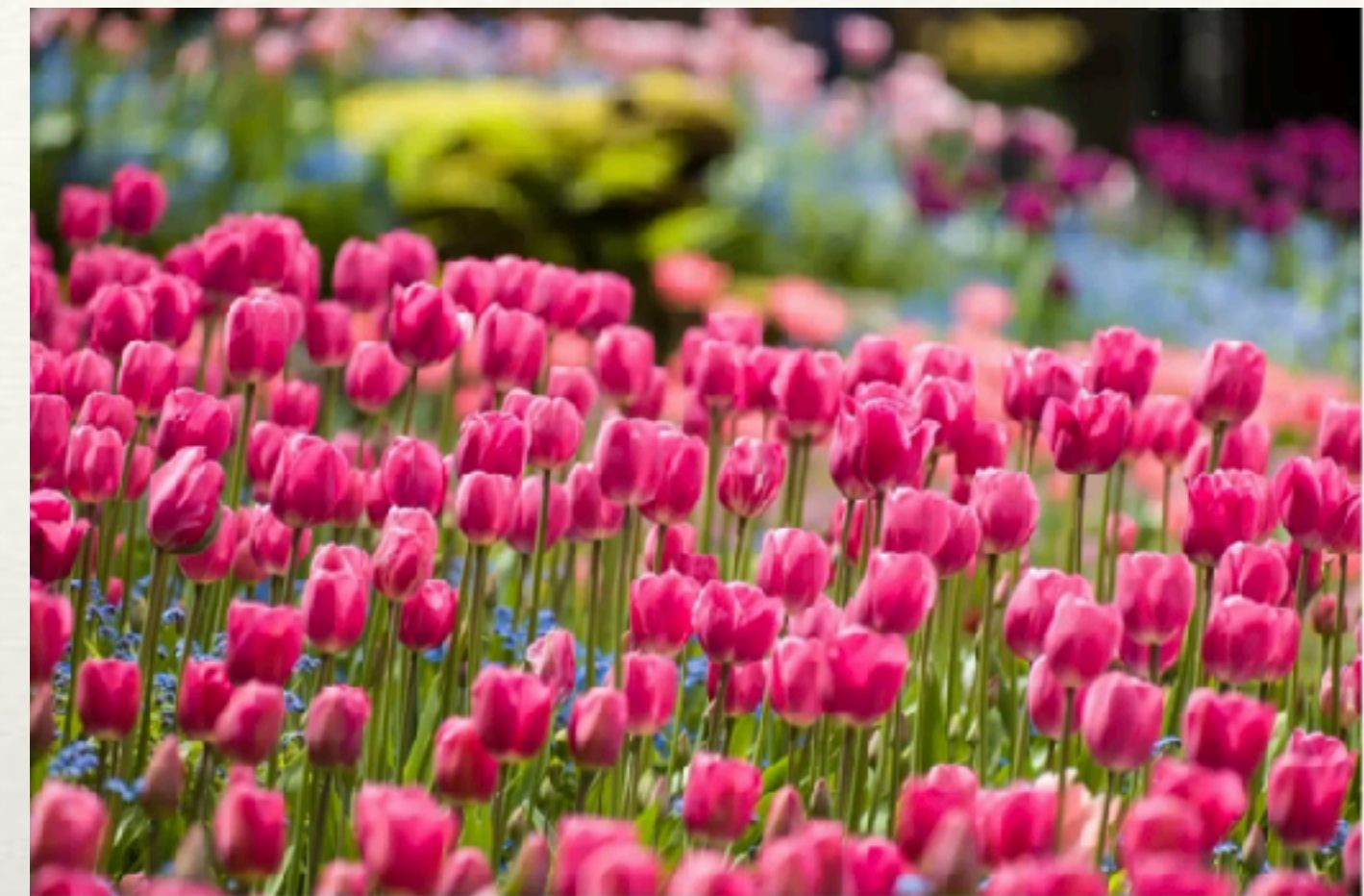
Composition Basics

- ❖ **Look for balance, repeating shapes and/or symmetry**
 - ❖ Repeating shapes are appealing, they can create patterns.
 - ❖ A repeating pattern with an odd-man out (the break in the pattern) can be particularly strong, if you also need it in the right place in the frame.

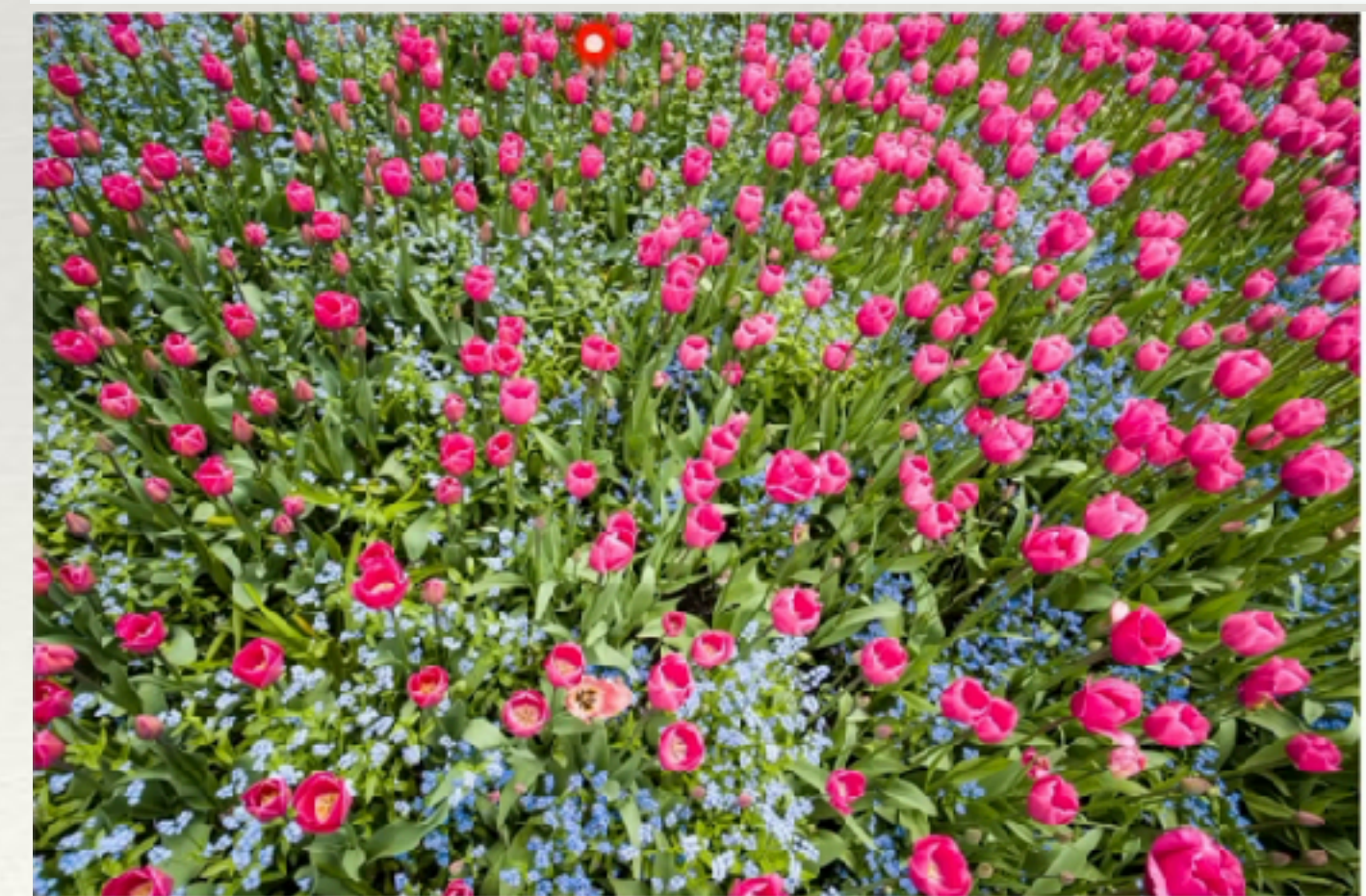


Composition Basics

- ❖ Use perspective to arrange your subjects in the frame
 - ❖ Focal length doesn't affect the composition, but it does change the perspective by altering the compression.
 - ❖ Different focal lengths require different compositions: telephoto lenses create compression; wide-angle lenses create strong perspective and depth.



180mm



18mm

Composition Basics

- ❖ Use perspective to arrange your subjects in the frame
 - ❖ A telephoto lens narrows the field of focus and can help to eliminate unwanted background.
 - ❖ A wide angle lenses can increase the amount background in the picture.



Composition Basics

❖ Intentionality

- ❖ Make your pictures look like you meant it - don't be half-hearted or unthinking.
- ❖ Sometimes it is difficult to get into the position you need to be to make the photo, but move, change the camera position and / or lens and you will avoid taking a snapshot.
- ❖ Focus on the head and eyes.



Composition Basics

- ❖ **Hold the viewer's eye**
 - ❖ Bright parts of the picture draw the eye.
 - ❖ Warm / saturated tones in a picture draw the eye.
 - ❖ Figures in a frame draw the eye.
 - ❖ Don't let the viewer have a 'pathway' out of the frame.
 - ❖ Change the tonal balance in post processing.
 - ❖ Use post processing to enhance your images to draw the viewer's eye to where you want it to go.



Composition Basics

- ❖ **Break the rules - with a reason**
 - ❖ To break 'rules' you first need to know what they are.
 - ❖ If it works for you, do it.



Composition - Summary

- ❖ Full the frame - be clear and bold.
- ❖ Off centre subject.
- ❖ Focus on the head and eyes
- ❖ Look for balance, repeating shapes and / or symmetry.
- ❖ Use perspective to arrange the elements in the frame.
- ❖ Intentionality.
- ❖ Use tones as attractors.