

Rules of Composition

[For more information on composition click on the link:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAPXep8wPts](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAPXep8wPts)



Focal Point

- The focal point is where the viewer's eye wants to travel to stay 'focused on' within a composition.
- Generally, you want to have a clear focal point within your composition.
- Usually, images that don't have a clear focal point are often lost and can make the composition boring.
- If there are too many focal points within the composition it can become hard for the viewer to focus on any part of the image.
- Pay attention where you place your focal point within the composition.

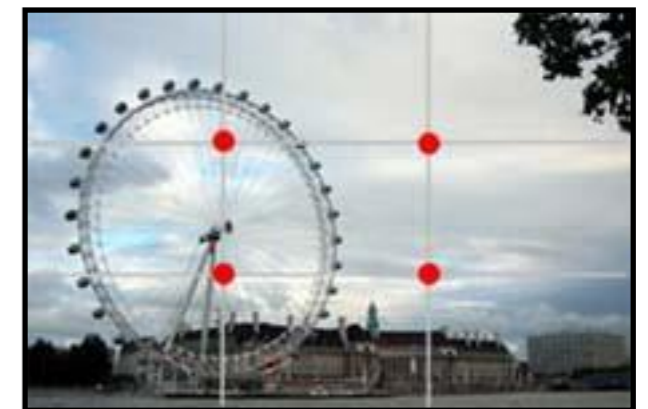
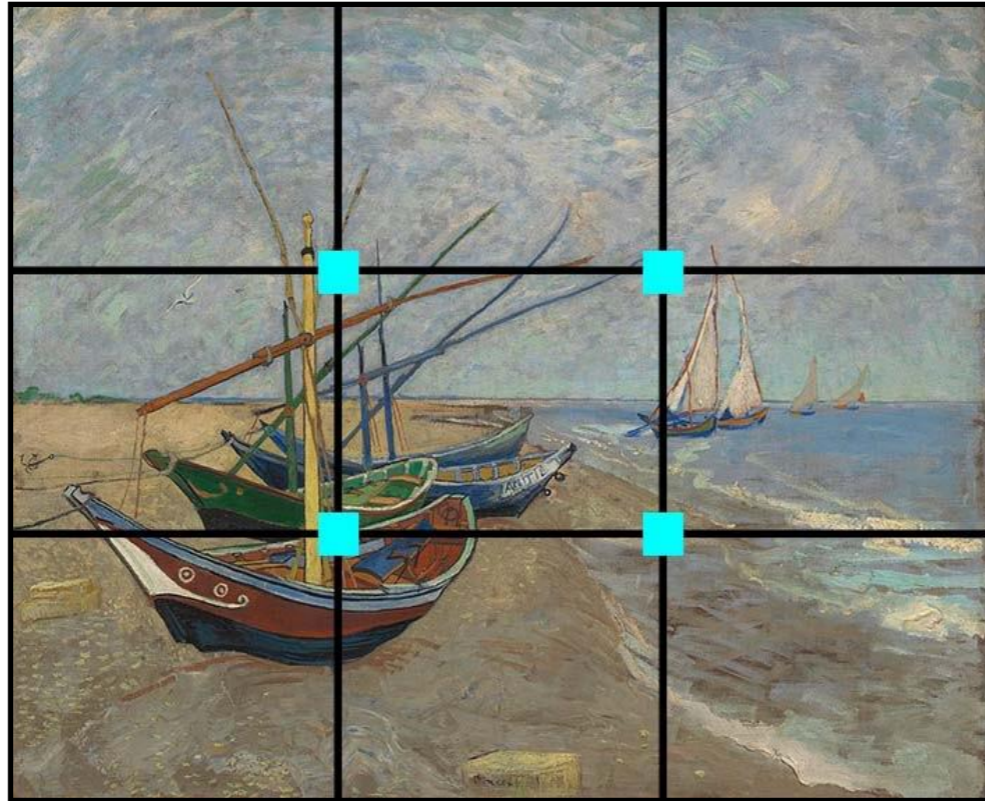
Focal Point: Examples



Rule of Thirds

- Usually, an image is more pleasing to the eye if you place your focal point (subjects - main objects) in one of the 'imaginary' intersecting lines created by dividing the image into thirds.
- Generally, placing your focal point (subject) within the center of the image tends to create a boring composition.

Rule of thirds: Examples



Rule of Odds

- Usually, compositions with odd numbers of objects (subjects) are MORE interesting to the eye.
- Generally, compositions with even numbers of objects (subjects) are LESS interesting to the eye.
- This is because our brain is wired to find and patterns and group objects. When we see a grouping of odd numbered objects (subjects) our brain automatically and subconsciously tries to create even groups. As a result, without even realizing it, your attention is kept longer on the composition.

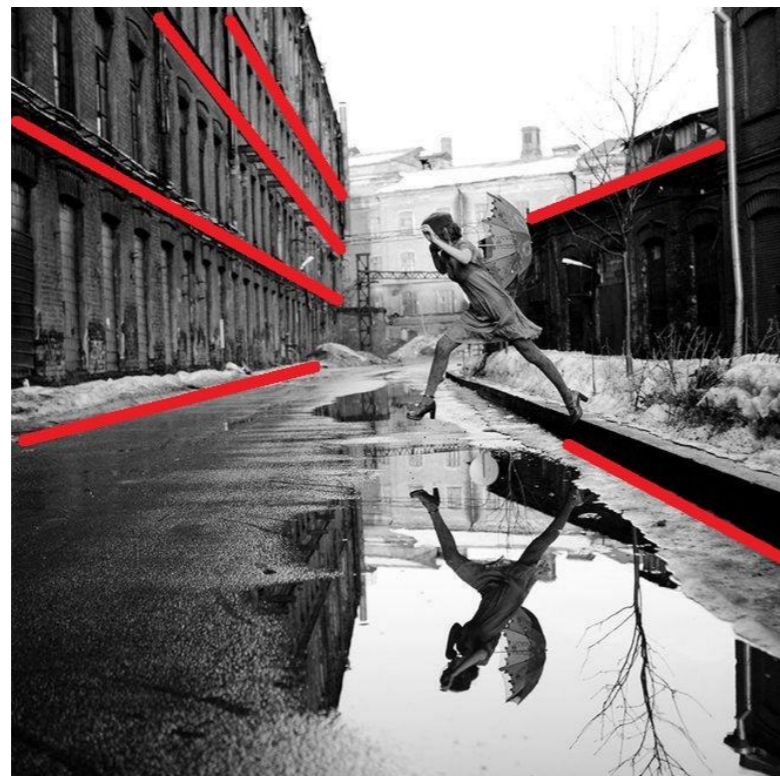
Rule of Odds: Examples



Leading Lines

- Generally, using strong lines in an image will help to move the viewer's eye through the image from the foreground to the background. This can help to create a sense of depth and movement within the composition.

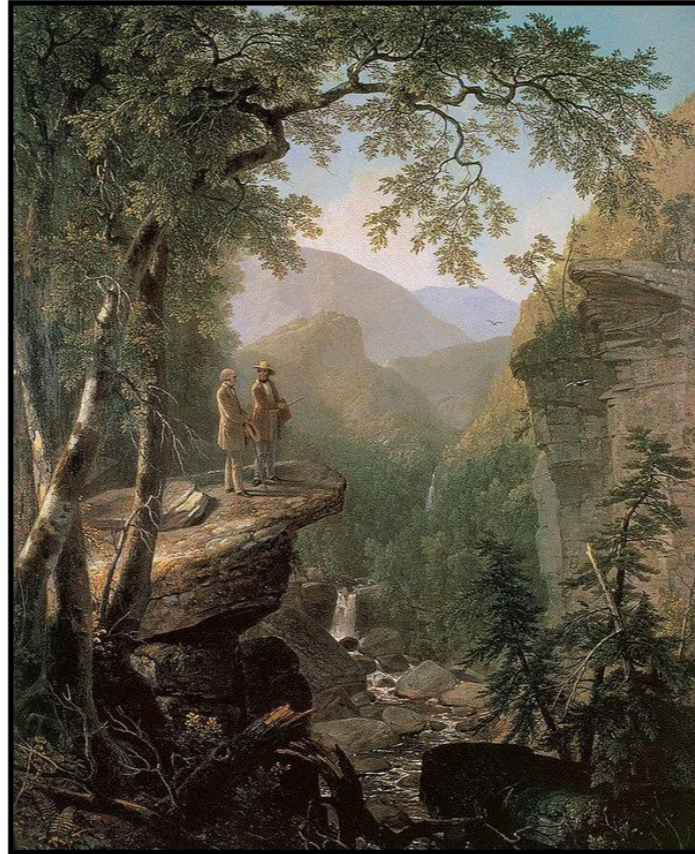
Leading Lines: Examples



Framing

- Using objects to frame some part of the subject can attract more attention to it.

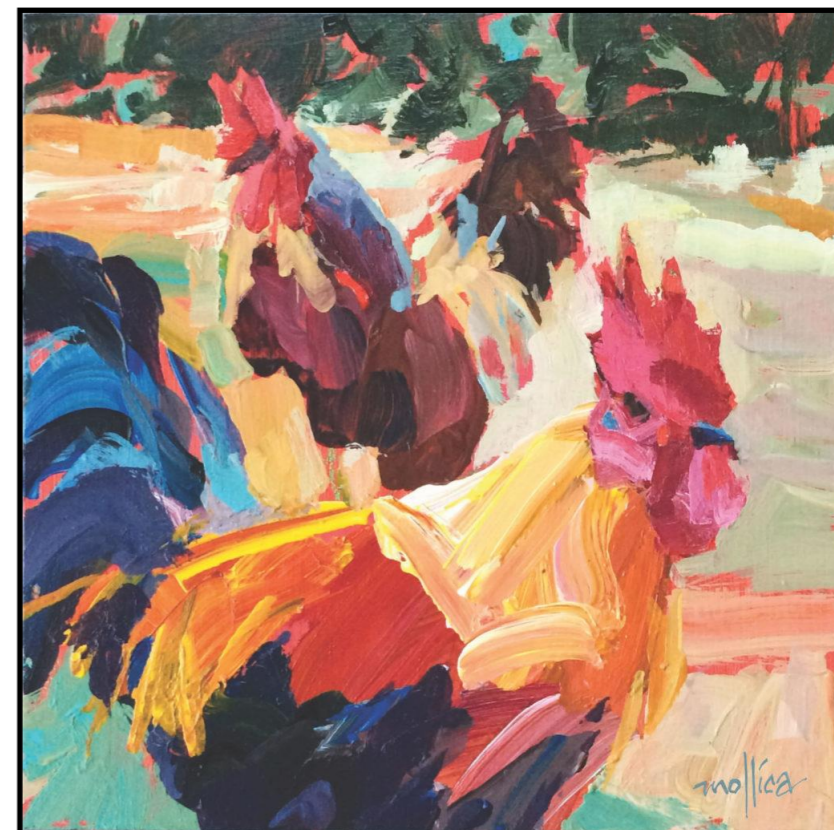
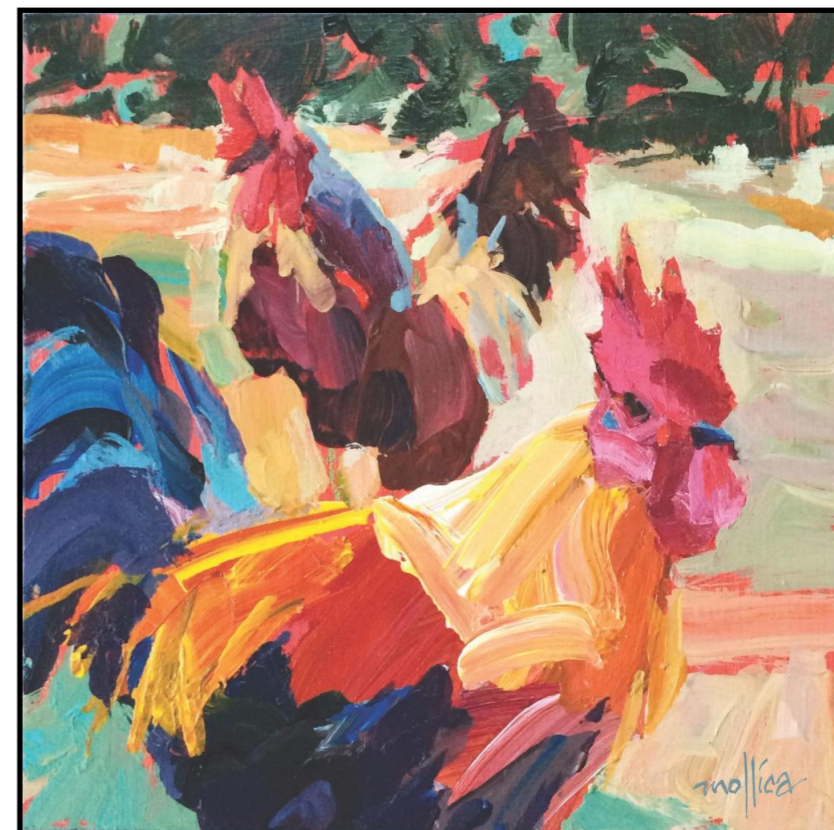
Framing: Examples



Cropping

- Usually, cropping objects within an image can draw more attention to the focal point and make your composition more interesting to the eye.
- Cropping can really change the composition.

Cropping: Examples



Overlapping

- Usually, overlapping objects (placing them in front of each other) can create a sense of depth (near to far) and will make your composition more interesting to the eye.

Overlapping: Examples



When we show all of each object in a picture the effect tends to be dull and uninteresting. This picture would be better if the objects were rearranged as at right.



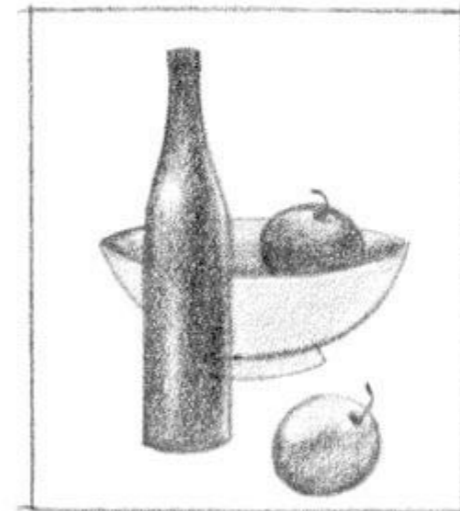
The shapes here are the same as those in the picture at left — but the effect is more interesting because the objects are varied in size and overlapped. The tree, cropped by the border, serves as a “lead in.”



Here is a natural tendency many students have at first: they show all of each object. Isolated objects do not make a well-organized picture.



This picture has a little more unity — but the objects touch each other rather than overlap. Overlapping should be more decisive.



Now the composition works well. We have moved the bottle and bowl to the left, the apple to the right. Everything doesn't have to overlap.

Overlapping: Examples



Depth

- In two-dimensional art or photography (2D Art) we create the illusion of depth (3D) on flat surfaces. Usually, creating a 'sense of depth' will help the viewer's eye to travel 'into' the image's composition. Creating depth in an image can make a composition more interesting.
- **You can create Depth by...**
 - making objects appear smaller (scale) as they get further away.
 - Overlapping objects.
 - Making colors or values lighter to appear closer.
 - Usually thicker lines appear closer than thinner lines.

Depth: Using overlapping, scale and different values



Depth: Using overlapping and different values



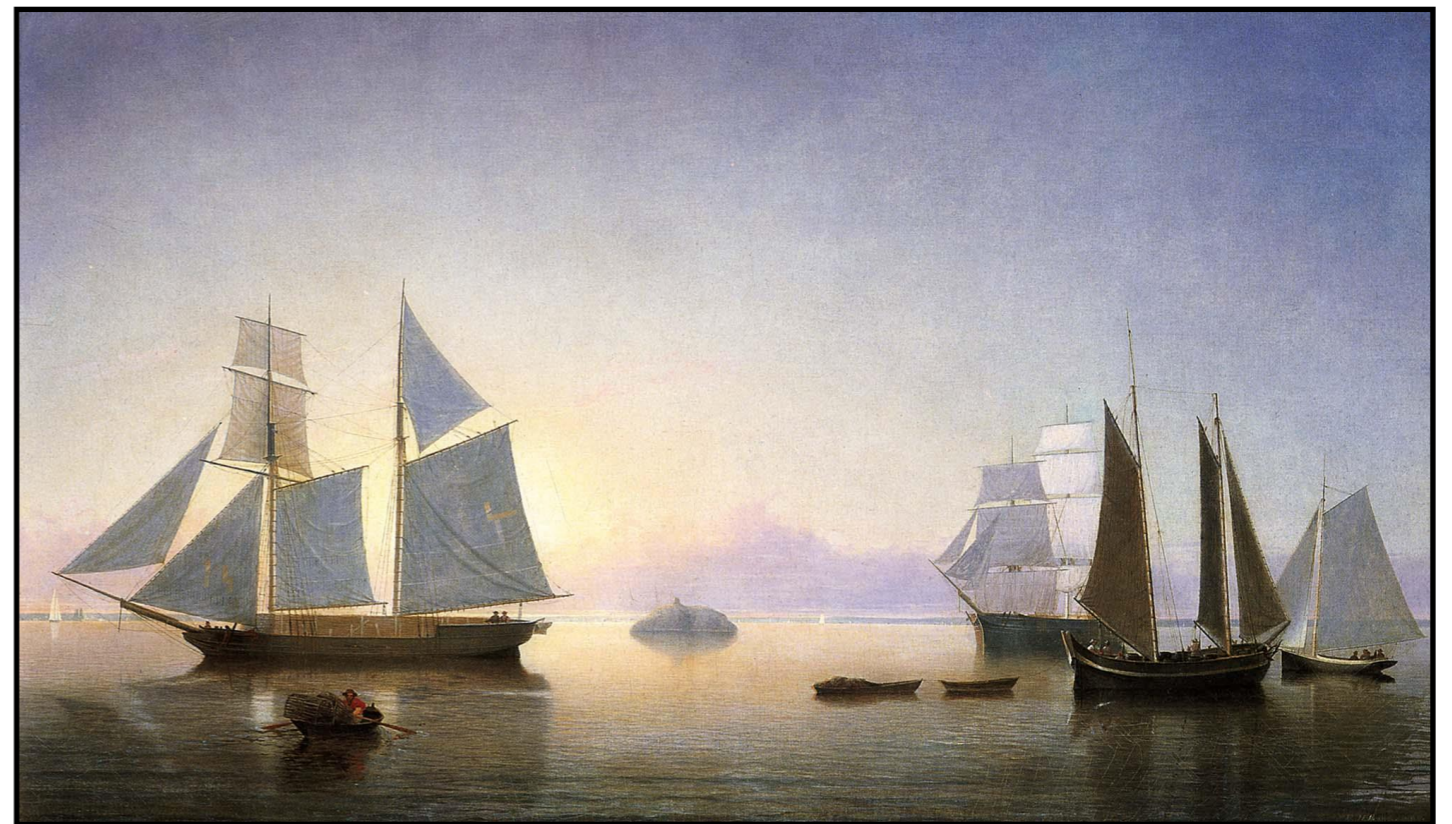
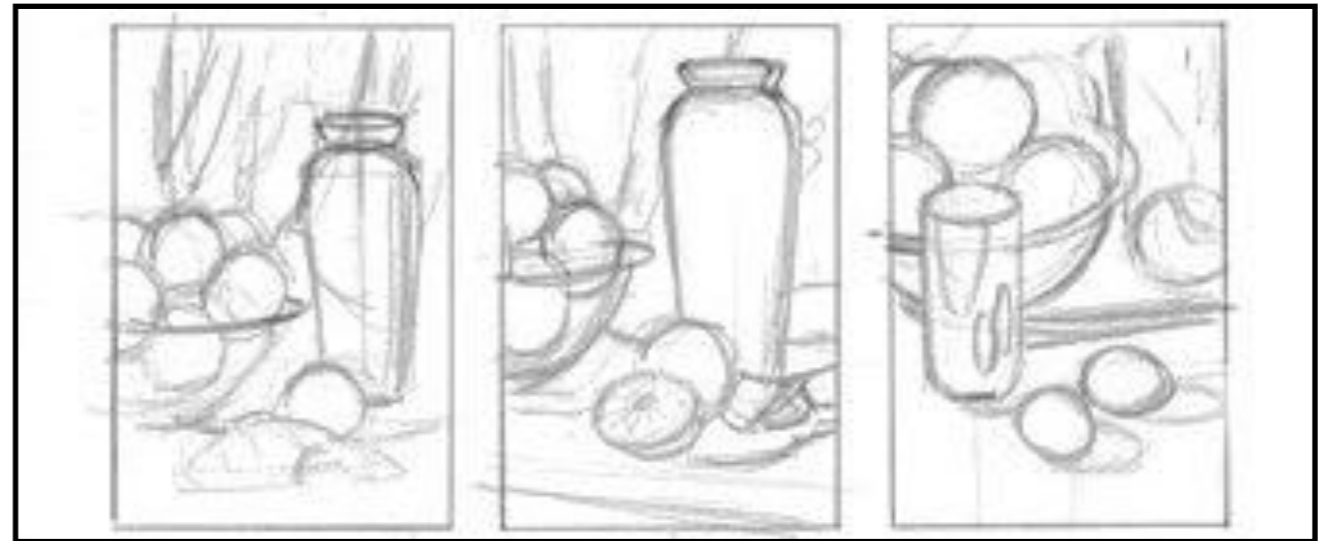
Using Thicker vs. thinner lines



Dominant Object

- Usually, having one object (usually the focal point...but not always) that is larger from other objects within the image will add more interest to your composition.

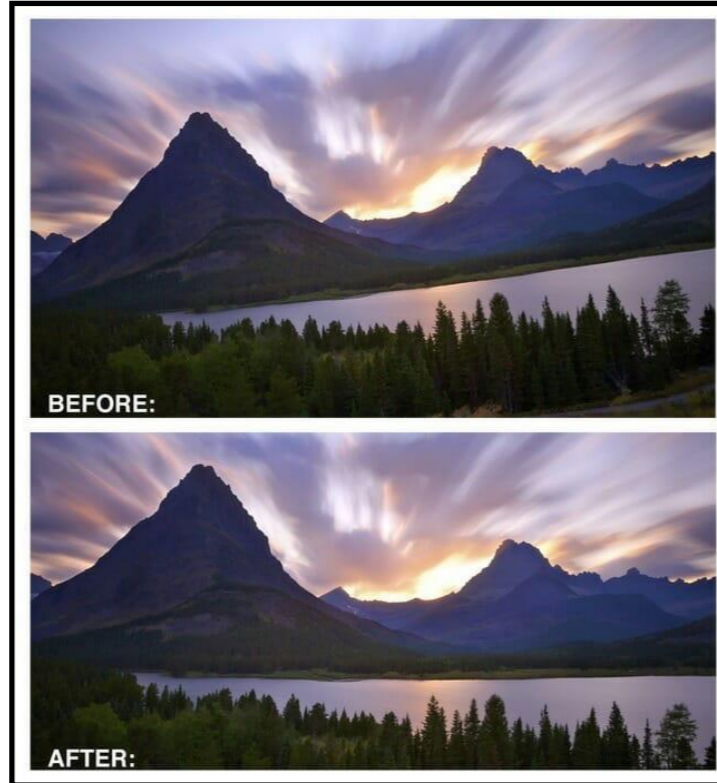
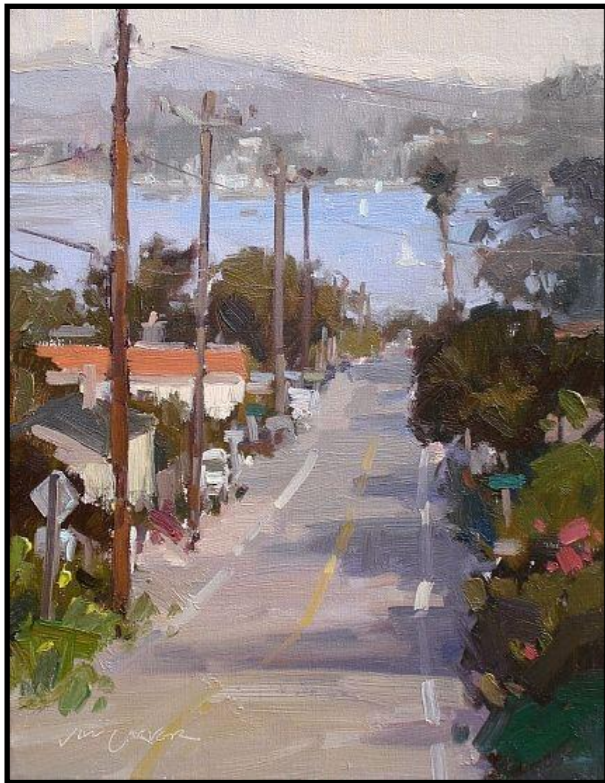
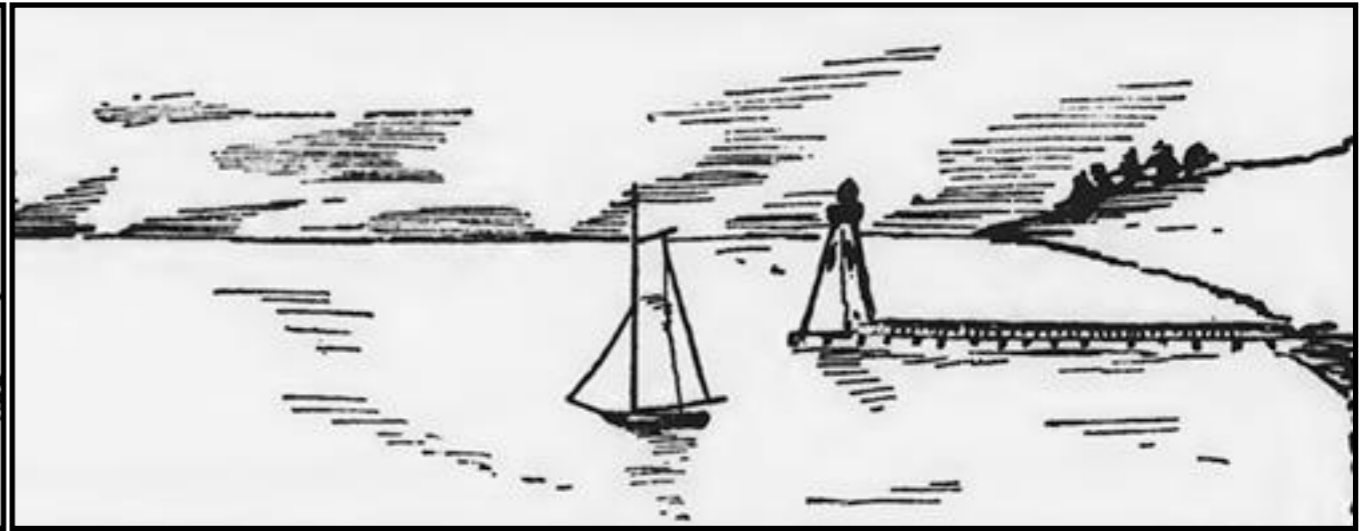
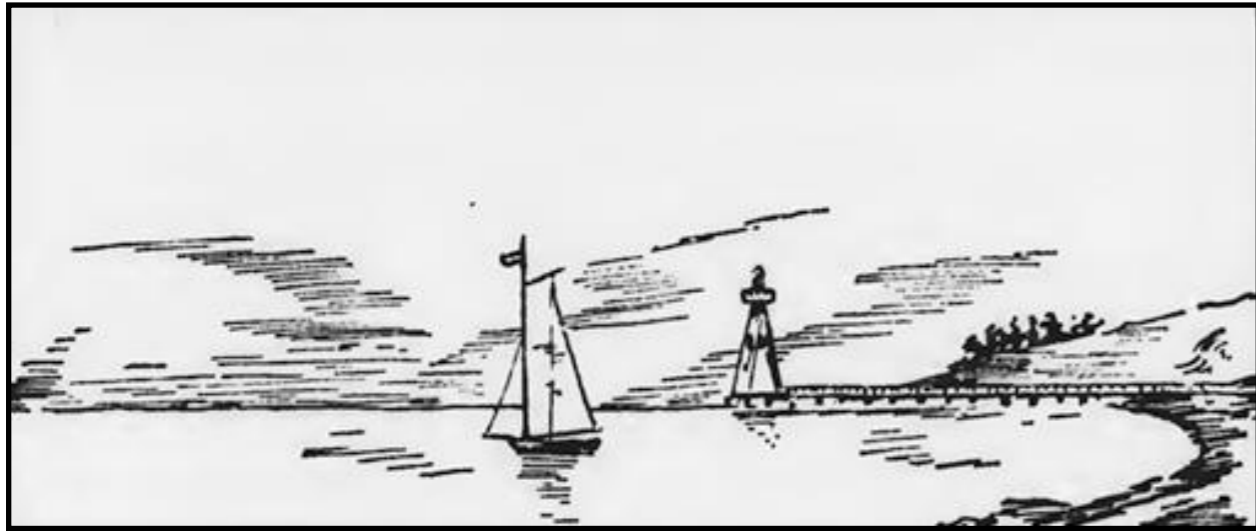
Dominant Object: Examples



Horizon Line

- Generally, moving the horizon line away from the middle of the image will make your composition much more interesting. Move it towards the bottom of the image and enhance the sky or move it to the top of the image and enhance the land or water.

Horizon Line: Examples



Perspective/Point of view

- Changing the perspective (point of view) can help to make the composition of an image more interesting and even add a sense of scale that can tell us more about a subject. Perspective can be described as a 'worm's eye view' (looking up at the subject), eye level, or a 'bird's eye view' (looking down at the subject).

Perspective/Point of View: Examples



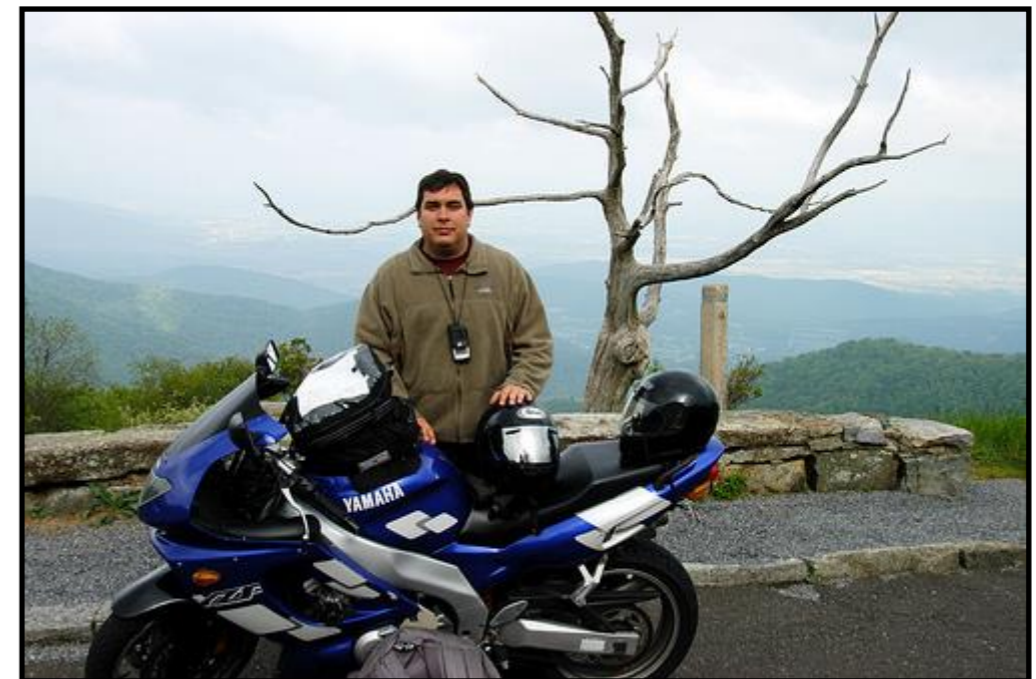
Distracting Backgrounds

- As a rule, you want to make sure what is in your background isn't distracting from your subject or focal point.

Distracting Background: Examples



Distracting Background: Examples



Follow Up Activity...

Directions:

- 1. Find a work of art, photograph, or graphic design (poster, advertisement, etc.) that you LIKE, and you THINK is a good example of composition.
- Explain in a few words, what rules of composition made this design's composition interesting to you.
- 2. Then, find a work of art, photograph, or graphic design that you DO NOT like, and you think is NOT a good example of composition.
- Explain in a few words, what rules of composition could have been used (to used better) to make this design's composition better.
- *Post your images and responses to Canvas.*