



CREATIVE MEDIA **FUNDAMENTALS**

HOW TO PHOTOGRAPH GROUPS



CMF013

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MAKE IT EASY ON YOURSELF - AND EVERYONE ELSE!

The first thing you want to do is decide where you would like to photograph your group; select a background. I like to frame it first and make a record shot just in case I need or want part of it later. Then begin to add people, starting with two and building the group one at a time, telling each person where you want them to be and where to place their arms and hands.

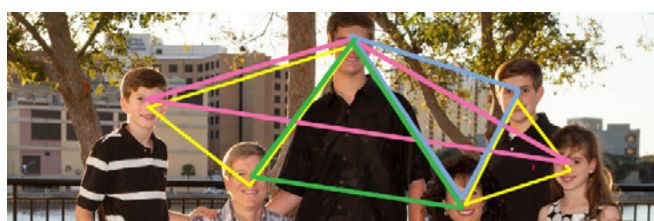
DECIDE HOW YOU WILL LIGHT THE GROUP BEFORE ADDING PEOPLE!

You want to give the people your full attention once you start working with them.



BRING IN THE “POWER PEOPLE” FIRST ... PARENTS, BOSSES, ELDERES ... BUILD THE GROUP AROUND THEM.

The power people may be seated, as in the above example, or standing. Once they have been placed, bring in the others, usually tallest to shortest, placing them with balance. Generally, tallest people are in the back, shortest ones are in the front. Create triangles by placing each head at a different level. Create relationships by using touch.



Triangles create motion. If any of the triangles has a flat bottom, the motion stops.

BUILDING A GROUP FROM SCRATCH

Allow people to be themselves and express themselves in the image. This example shows how the placement of the fourth subject can take the expression of the image in different directions. The left image shows the parents looking over their children. The example on the right shows the parents surrounded by them!



Create the relationship between the power people first. Then, add additional people one at a time. You have choices of where you want to put them.



There are times when adding an additional person requires that another person be moved. The position of the fifth person made the left side too heavy. Move the boy over for balance.



Layer people when you want to minimize size or clothing!

WORK WITH THE BACKGROUND

REPEATING LINES WITHIN A SCENE CREATES STRONG EMOTIONAL IMPACT.

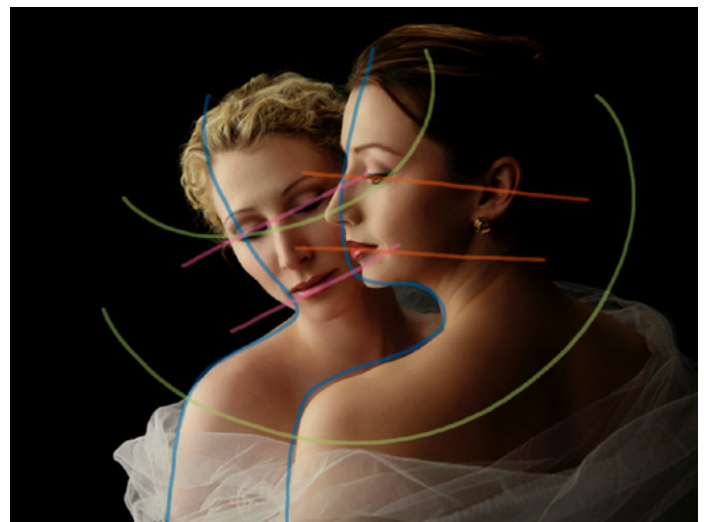


- **Horizontal lines make people feel relaxed and peaceful.**
- **Vertical lines project strength and stability.**
- **Diagonal lines indicate motion. The stronger the diagonal, the stronger the motion.**

REPEATING BODY LINES

Create artistic value and enhance the lyrical quality of an image by using repetitive line. In this example, it creates a feeling of quiet grace and movement, like a dance.

Don't overdo it because small differences are interesting. In the example at right, the heads are not at the exact same angle.



PUTTING PEOPLE IN PLACES



THE RULE OF THIRDS IN ART

There are many formulas for artistic composition, but this one, the rule of thirds, is simple and effective.

The four points of intersection are places where the eye rests naturally, so placing your subject in one of them enhances the IMPACT.



The high points of intersection give your subject strength over the background. The low points give the background strength over your subjects. Use this to tell your story!

In addition, you control the strength of subject vs back-ground by size. Place the subjects further back to accentuate the scene or show how large background elements are.



Bring the subjects closer to you to make them larger in comparison to the back-ground. When you do this, you are taking a picture of the people. The background exists just as an accent.

WORKING WITH COMPLEX SCENES



A COMPLEX SCENE IS ONE IN WHICH THERE ARE MANY THINGS TO LOOK AT.

There are many options for placing people in this scene. As is, the focal point of the picture is the red truck. It is the thing that is the most different because it contains the only red. Placing the people in that area while still including the truck will double the attention in that area of the image. Placing the people in front of the chicken coop will show off the truck as well but the viewer's gaze will wander between them.

Asking the group to stand back near the truck creates a pictorial portrait, a scene that includes people. Great for big wall images of a great memory with family! Having the people stand closer to you makes them big in the image and the scene merely sets the stage for their beautiful expressions!

WORKING WITH COMPLEX SCENES



CREATING SCENES IS ALL ABOUT BALANCE AND INTEREST

Be conscious of what you like about the scene you've selected to photograph your group in so you can use it as part of the story. Photograph the scene without the people first, just so you have the image.

Decide if you want to make a pictorial scene or if you're mainly interested in the faces and expressions. The distance the group is away from you assigns the power balance between the scene and the people.

Most photographers like to experiment with more than one option. The trick is to keep yourself moving and talking with everyone. Have fun with them and let them have fun with you!



To get the best expressions, give them! Find sentences that you can use to evoke the feeling and mood you want to portray. At some point your group will lose interest. Don't push it; when they are finished, you are, too!



FINAL THOUGHTS & TIPS

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN PHOTOGRAPHING GROUPS:

Scan the clothing. If a jacket looks boxy, button it up or take it off. Arrange scarfs, watches, hats and hair. Move large packages, purses and distracting items to the back - unless they are Vacheron, Constantin or Prada. Then, by all means ... :-)

Watch for things growing out of people's heads, bold legible signage or other things that will take away from the impact of your image. Include everything you need, and as little of that you don't need. When you are torn between wanting a scene but not wanting the traffic sign, remember that there is after capture software that you can use to get exactly what you want.

THINGS YOU CAN DO AND SAY TO PEOPLE WHILE YOU PHOTOGRAPH THEM:

The easiest way to ask a person to stand or sit in a certain way is to let them watch you do it yourself. Walk over to where you want them to be and say, "Can you come over here and stand like this please?". Works every time! If you want to touch someone to refine a hand or their hair **ASK THEM FOR THEIR PERMISSION FIRST**. Some people just do not like to be touched.

"OK, you're looking great! Stand a bit taller please, suck in the tummy ... perfect!"

"You look great! Can you put your right thumb into your pants' pocket for me, please? Perfect!"

"Wow these are great images! You're made for the camera! Now I want you two, on my count of three, to look at each other and say 'I love you' just with your eyes ... one, two, three! It's beautiful! Here ... let me show you ... "

SHARE THE LOVE :-)