

# **Improving Your Photographs**

**ART166: PROJECT 1**

Photo clearly communicates the assigned theme — transformation or absence (3)

<b>NO</b>	<b>SLIGHTLY</b>	<b>MOSTLY</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

Photo is a dynamic, asymmetric composition with significant formal contrasts (3)

<b>NO</b>	<b>SLIGHTLY</b>	<b>MOSTLY</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

Composition has a clear focal point (1)

<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

Photo is visually and/or conceptually unique (2)

<b>NO</b>	<b>SOMEWHAT</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

Print is of the highest quality, and has been trimmed/mounted correctly and with good craft (1)

<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

**TOTAL (10)**

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# **Clearly Communicates CONTRADICTION**

**green = yes**

**red = no**

**yellow = maybe**

















FROM

BAND OF OUTS

VEL















# **Clearly Communicates MOVEMENT**

**green = yes**

**red = no**

**yellow = maybe**



























WASHINGTON  
976-TER  
EVERGREEN STATE

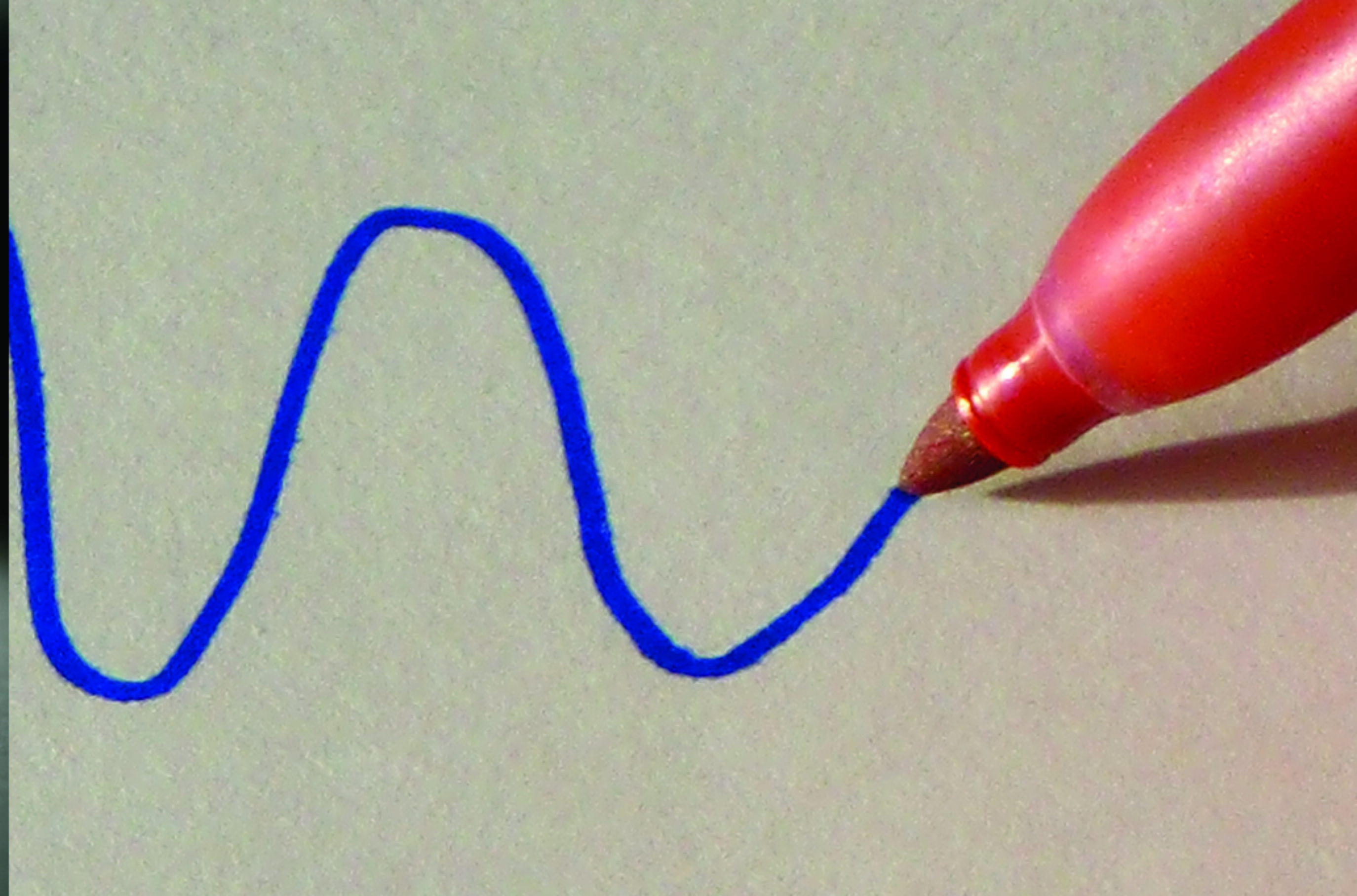




**Photo is a dynamic,  
asymmetric composition  
with significant  
formal contrasts.**







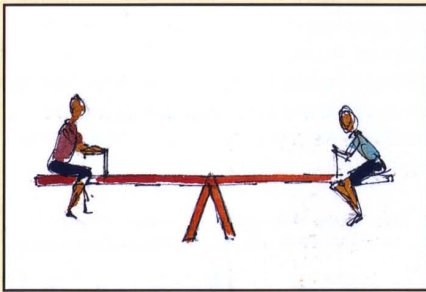
Achieving balance is a matter of adjusting visual weight and visual energy. If balance is created with visual elements identical in both weight and energy on either side of a central axis, a static balance is achieved. Static balance does not follow the **ONE RULE OF COMPOSITION:** *Never make any two intervals the same.*

If the balance is created with two visual elements that are not identical in weight and energy, a dynamic bal-

ance is achieved. Intervals are not the same and the **ONE RULE OF COMPOSITION** applies.

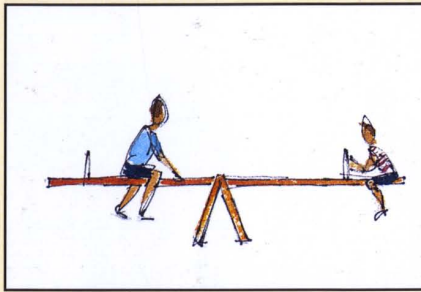
Static balance is also called *formal, classical* or *symmetrical* balance because it is based on an equal or even (symmetrical) arrangement along a central axis.

Dynamic balance is also called *informal* or *asymmetrical* balance and is based on an uneven arrangement.



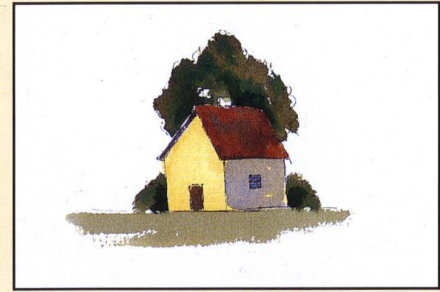
### Static balance

When children of the same weight are equidistant from the center, they balance perfectly and the seesaw remains level.



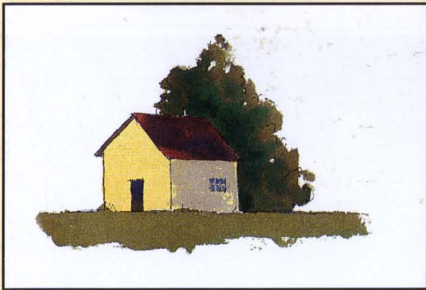
### Dynamic balance

If one child is bigger and both are equidistant from the center, the seesaw doesn't remain level. To keep the seesaw level, the bigger child must move closer to the center, or the smaller child farther from the center.



### Symmetrical arrangement

Avoid centering things. The center is the most boring part of the painting. Symmetrical compositions are naturally static.



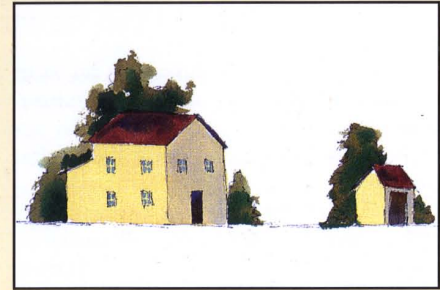
### Asymmetrical arrangement

Although the image is still centralized, the tree and house are asymmetrically arranged and visual interest is increased.



### Static balance

The tree and the house have identical visual weight and energy. A static balance is created.



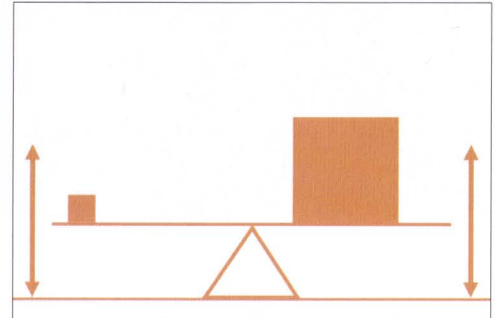
### Dynamic balance

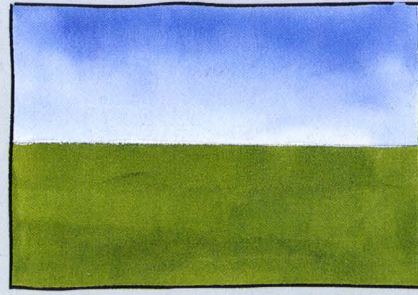
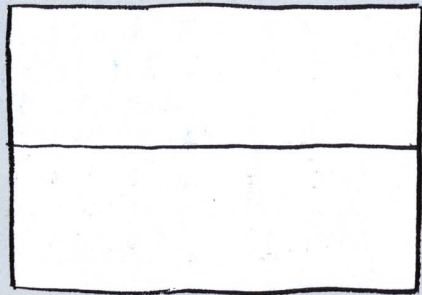
The house and tree on the left have greater visual weight, but the house and tree on the right counter-balance the weight, creating a dynamic balance.



### < DYNAMIC BALANCE

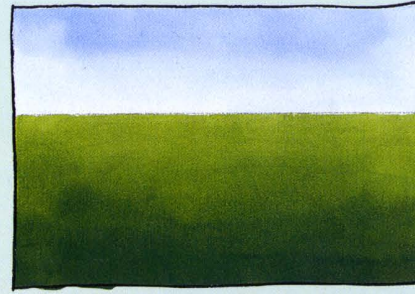
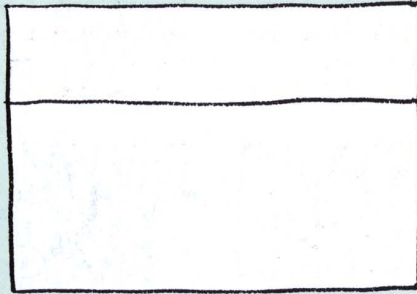
Dynamic equilibrium opposes two unequal subjects or areas. Just as a small weight can balance a larger mass by being placed further from the fulcrum, large and small elements in an image can be balanced by placing them carefully in the frame. Note here that the content of the upper right area—Chinese characters—increases its visual importance (see pages 98-99 for more on visual weight).





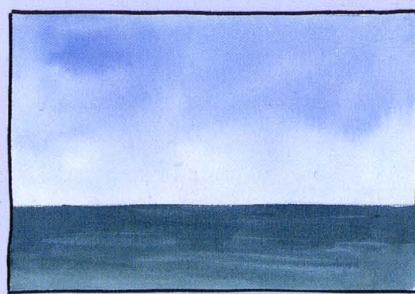
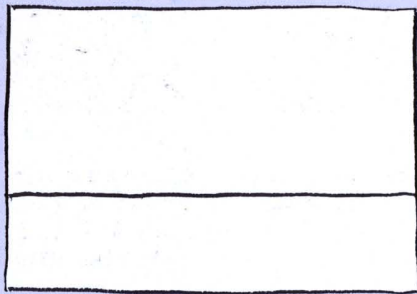
### Boring

Dividing a picture in half is boring. Placing the horizon in the middle of a landscape is too dull. Neither sky nor ground dominates.



### Interesting: ground is dominant

When the picture is divided unequally, the intervals are not the same. Placing the horizon about a third from the top makes the ground dominant and creates more interest.



### Interesting: sky is dominant

Placing the horizon about a third from the bottom makes the sky dominant.



### Boring

Dividing a picture into equal parts violates the **ONE RULE OF COMPOSITION**. Don't divide a landscape into bands of equal width.

The edge or frame of a visual image creates the illusion of space within that boundary. Even a blank canvas suggests space, albeit undefined in any way. Draw a line or any mark on that blank canvas and the pictorial space within the frame is more defined. Draw a line across a

rectangle and the line could be the sea meeting the sky, an edge of a table, the bottom of a wall or window.

How you divide the rectangle should follow the **ONE RULE OF COMPOSITION**: *Never make any two intervals the same.*



**Boring**

Don't divide a picture into equal halves, as does a diagonal from corner to corner.



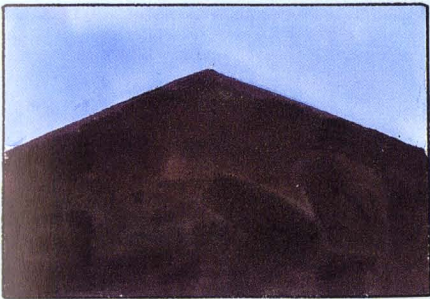
**Better**

Although not corner to corner, this oblique divides the picture into equal halves. The line divides each side into lengths of the same proportion.



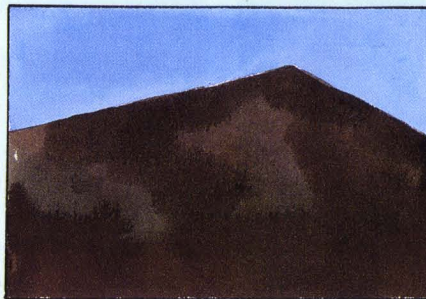
**Best**

This oblique divides the rectangle into unequal portions. The distance from the top to the line on the right is not equal to the distance from the bottom to the line on the left.



**Boring**

Placing a mountain peak in the exact center with sides of equal length violates the **ONE RULE OF COMPOSITION: Never make any two intervals the same.**



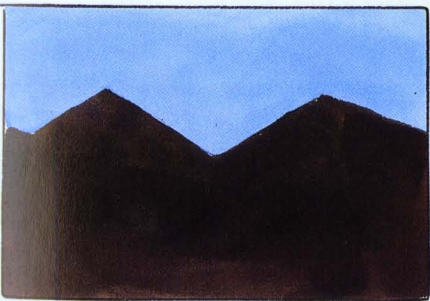
**Better**

Placing the peak off-center makes it more interesting. However, the sides of the rectangle are divided into the same intervals.



**Best**

In this arrangement, no two intervals are the same. The sides of the mountain are different lengths, the peak is off-center, and the sides of the rectangles are divided into four different lengths.



**Boring**

The sides and angles are equal and they divide the rectangle in half in this example. It is monotonous and boring.



**Better**

This mountain skyline is nearly as boring because the peaks are spaced equally, are of the same angle, and have sides of the same length.



**Best**

This skyline is more interesting because the angles and the lengths of the sides are varied.

**Enhance visual interest**

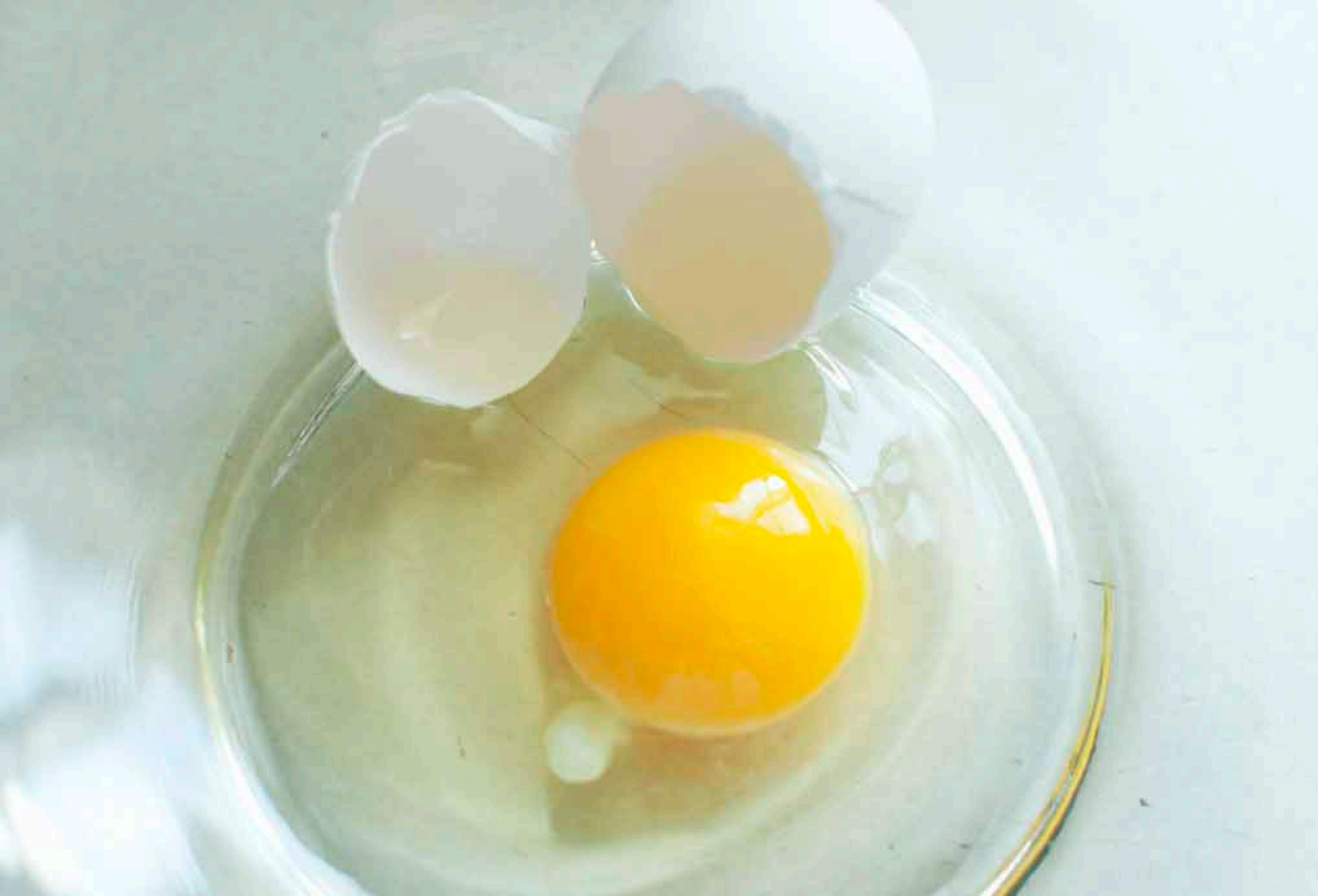
Almost any equal division of your picture will be boring; for example, dividing a picture with a line that goes from corner to corner on the diagonal. Although one side is

not the mirror image of the other, it still creates regular intervals and is therefore boring. Any division of space is an opportunity to enhance visual interest.











# **Has a Clear Focal Point**

**green = yes**

**red = no**

**yellow = maybe**













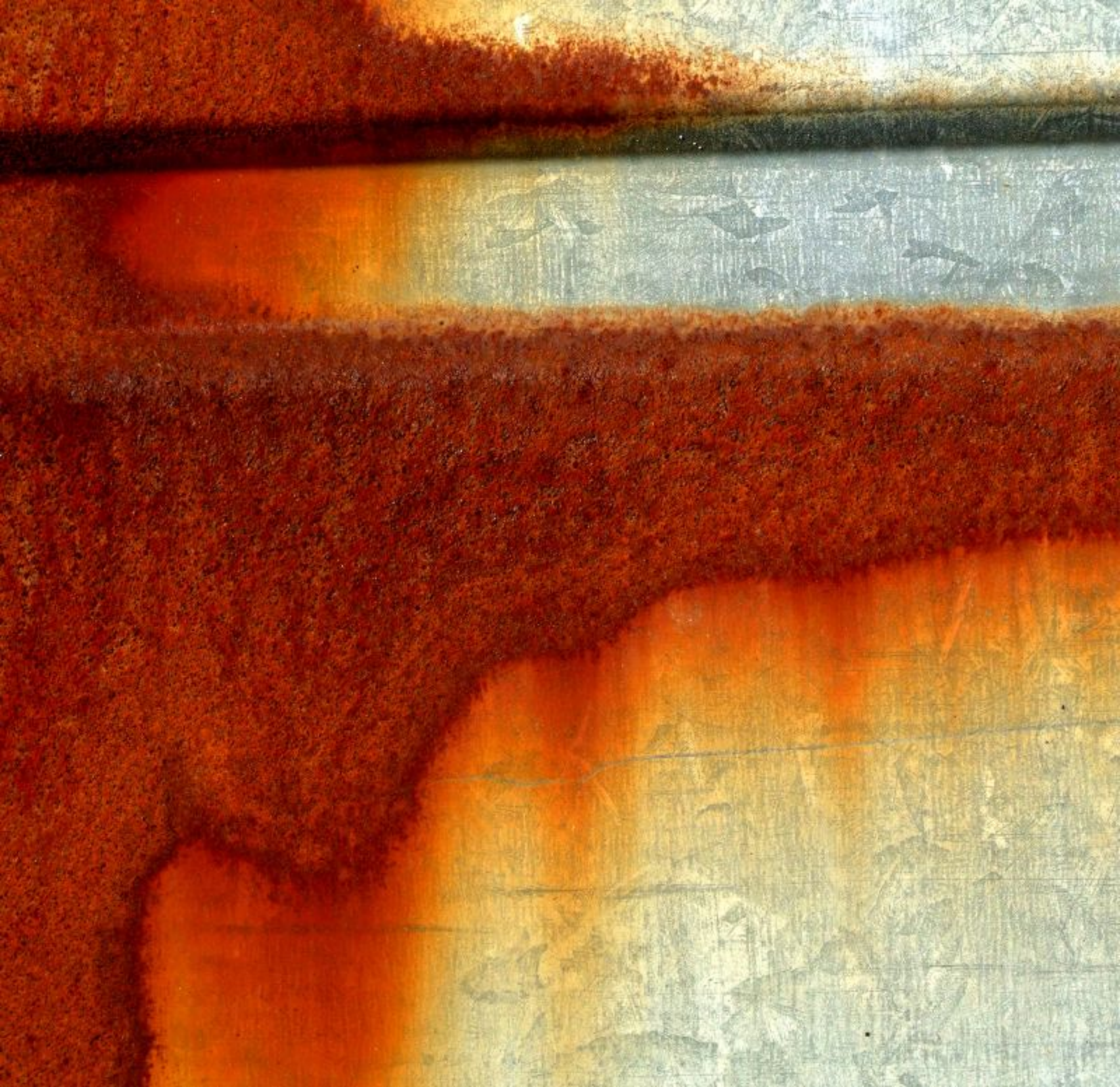
**subject + context =  
message**

**“a foreground, a background,  
and nothing else”**

**background:  
avoid distractions**

**what you exclude is  
just as important as what  
you include**









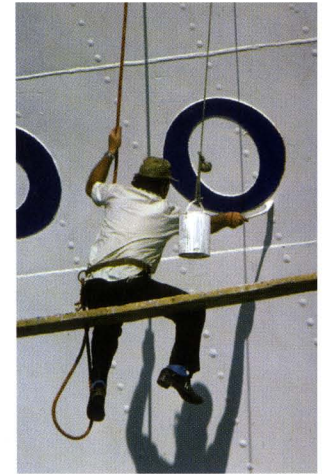






► **SHIP PAINTER**

The smaller image to the right (the first I took) is completely straightforward—a man painting a ship—but the angle of the sun casting a clear shadow on the side of the vessel suggested a less obvious, and so potentially more interesting, way of framing the shot. The shadow communicates what is happening well enough on its own.





**great photos have an  
underlying complexity.**

**they are simple, but not  
simplistic.**



RICHARD WENTWORTH, GENOA, ITALY, 2004





vespa





**avoid clichés**









**avoid forced images**













01/17/2010 05:39

















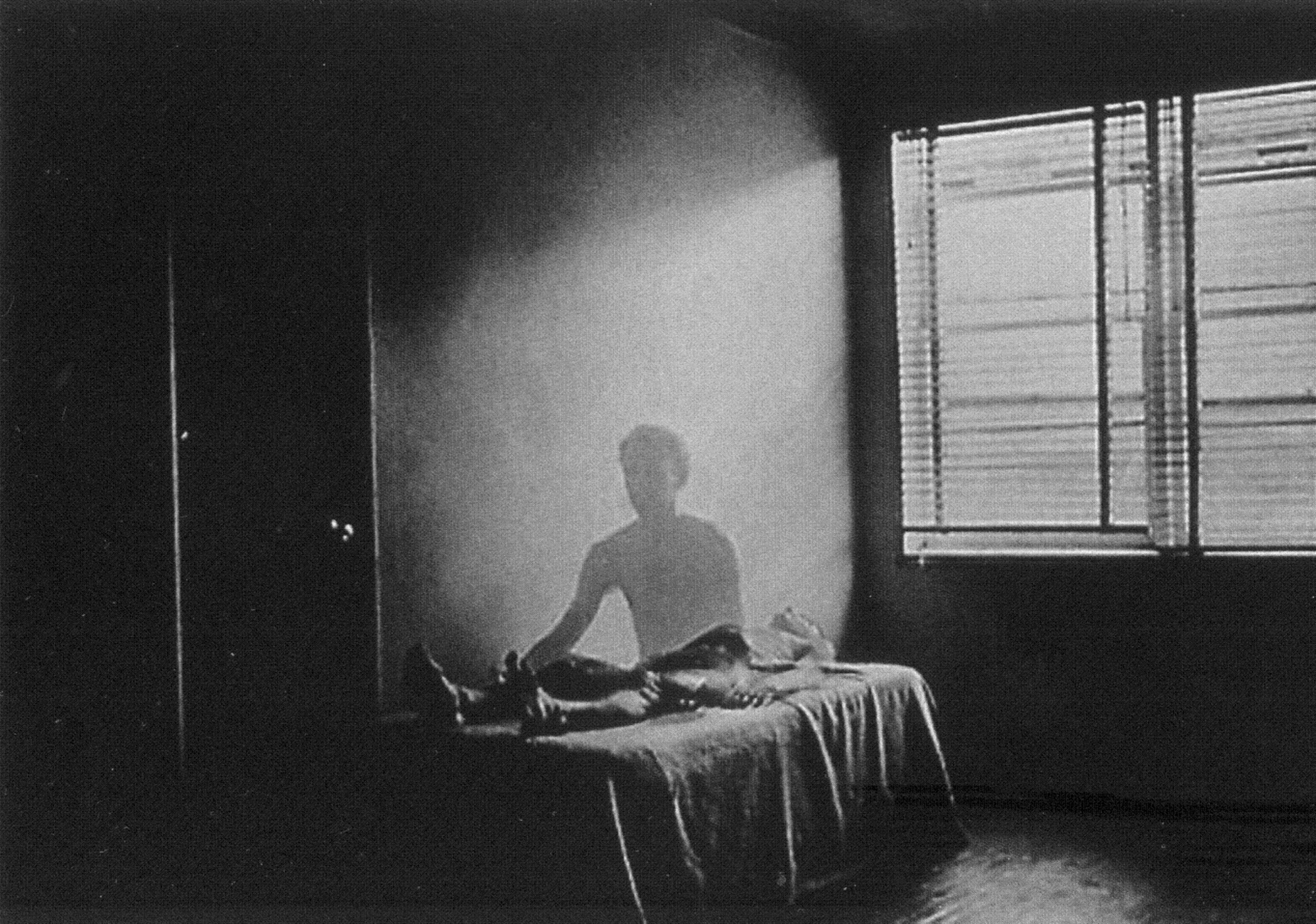


**subject/content  
also matters**













The Annunciation

Duane Michaels 6/25



08-09



**look for contrast —  
unique juxtapositions**





Limo

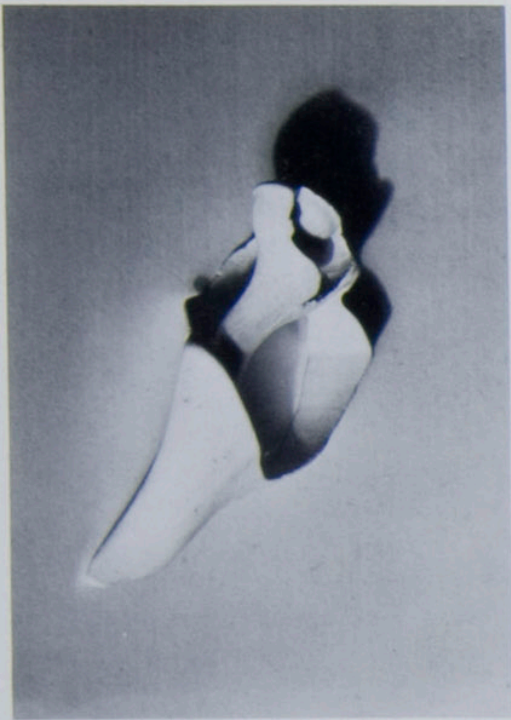
**“great photographs:**

**1) convey a strong message in a subtle but meaningful way**

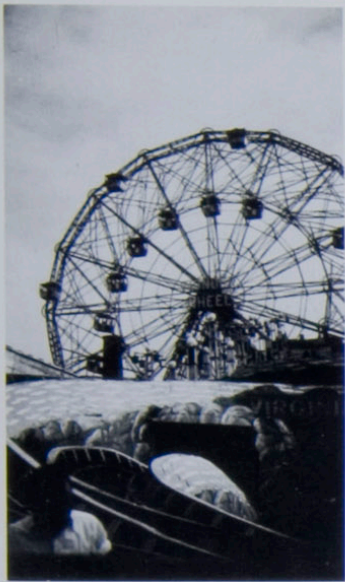
**2) make you say ‘wow’ due to technical details, such as great colors, contrasts, formal composition, etc., ...”**

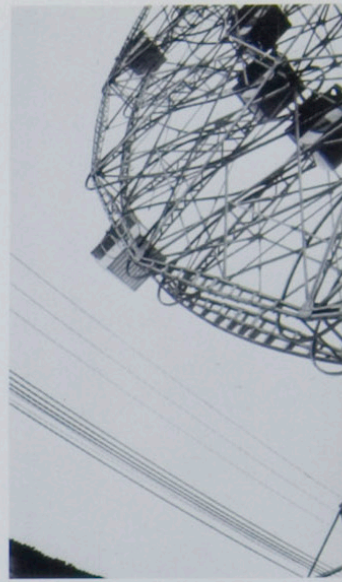
**design process**











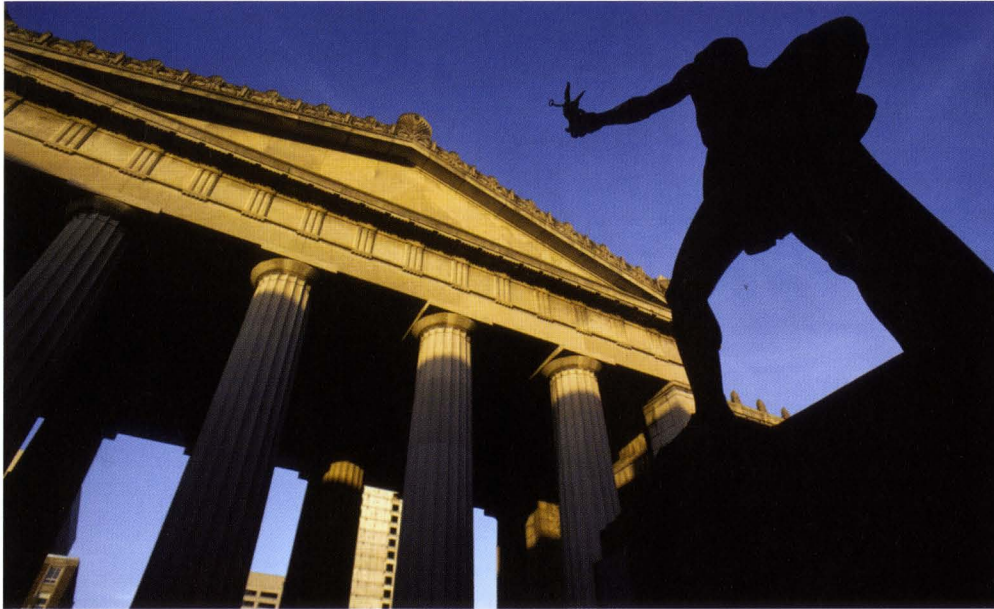
*TEXASCAPE*  
*(OUTTAKE)*



TEXASCAPE  
(OUTTAKE)

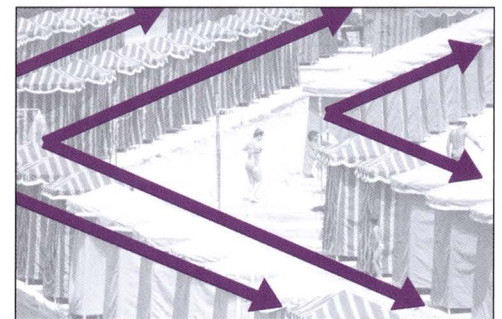
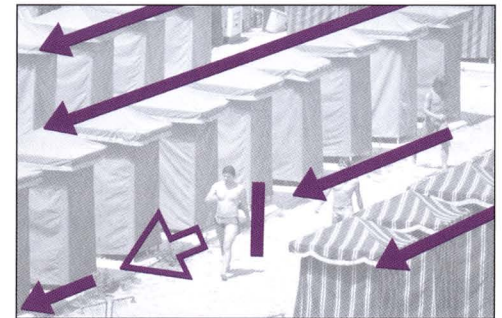


TEXASCAPE (SELECT)



#### ◀ ▲ DIAGONAL TENSION

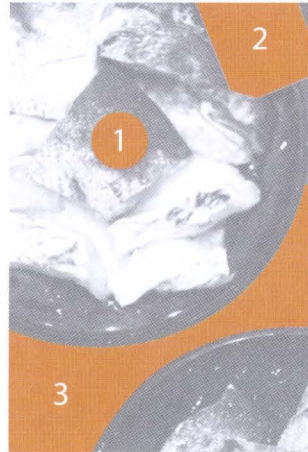
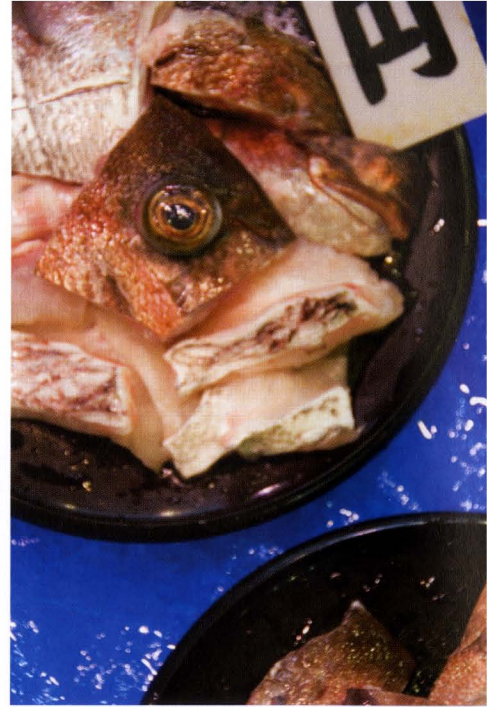
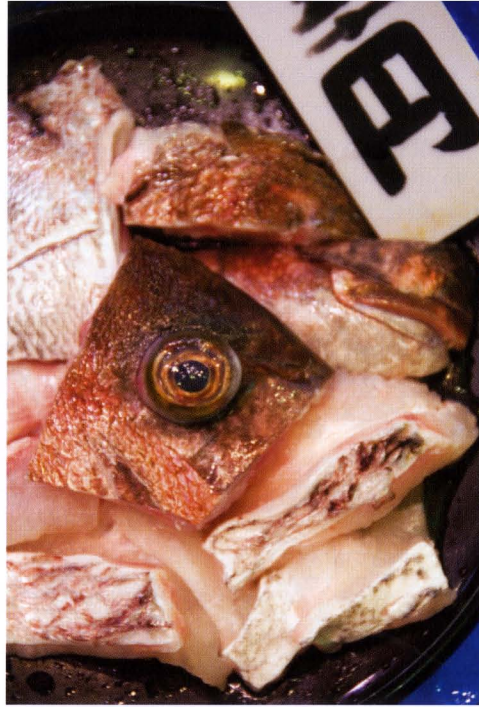
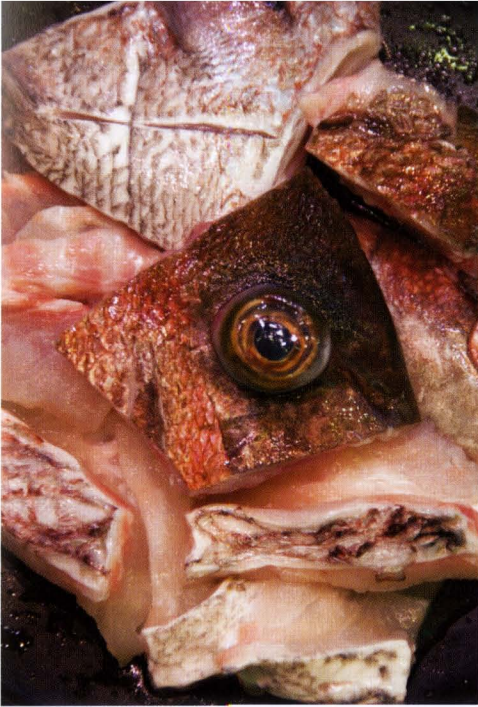
The dynamic movement in this wide-angle photograph comes from the interplay of diagonals with the rectangular frame. Although the diagonal lines have an independent movement and direction, it is the reference standard of the frame edges that allows them to create tension in this picture.



### ◀▲ ZIG-ZAGS

Oblique views of right angles produce zig-zags, a chevron effect of multiple diagonals. The angles are jointed, so the impression of movement along the diagonal is maintained, but with a sharp kink. As can be seen from this pair of photographs of rows of bathing tents, both taken within moments of each other, this type of dynamic effect is different. In the diagonal picture, the graphic movement is single-minded (the bias of direction is set by the walking figures). In the zig-zag version, the change of direction produces more internal activity.





### ▲ FISH MARKET

A close-up of fish parts in a Kyoto market unexpectedly offers three “attractants” in one—an eye (admittedly separated from the fish, but nevertheless still an eye), writing, and a strong color patch. These three framings were taken naturally, with no intention of making an exercise. In the first, the eye is the undisputed focus, and placed slightly off-center. Pulling back and up, in the second frame, reveals one-and-a-half Japanese characters, and the attention is strongly diverted towards this corner. Pulling back even farther, and down, brings a piece of blue plastic into view, so that they eye travels between the three points of interest.

**Unique Visually  
and/or  
Conceptually**







**“..it must be evocative,  
mysterious and at the  
same time realistic.”**

**Walker Evans**



**“...it’s the images that stay with you long after you first encounter them. They have complexity, a visual intensity, or the power to convey certain emotions...”**