

# *"Grow Your Image"*

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# *Welcome*

The aim of this workshop is to help you take images which have better:

- ➔ Composition
- ➔ Content; and
- ➔ Context

...all of which will help to

**GROW YOUR IMAGE**

# *Task One*

- ➔ Split into groups as directed
  
- ➔ Take the following smartphone photos:
  - A portrait (no 'selfies')
  - A group shot
  - A photo of someone either:
    - ◆ Reading
    - ◆ Writing, or
    - ◆ Talking with someone else

# *Composition*

- ⇒ Positioning
  - Rule of Thirds
  - Leading Lines
  - Fibonacci
  
- ⇒ Perspective/Point Of View
  - High
  - Eyeline
  - Low

# *Composition*

- ➔ Environmental.
  - There are many environmental aspects which can either aid or ruin a perfectly good photograph, such as:
    - ◆ Background detritus
    - ◆ Using available lighting
    - ◆ Poor engagement with the lens

# *Composition*

- ➔ Space. The use of:
  - positive (active); and
  - negative (inactive or 'void') space

...in an image can add greater interest and give more prominence to your message.

# *Composition*

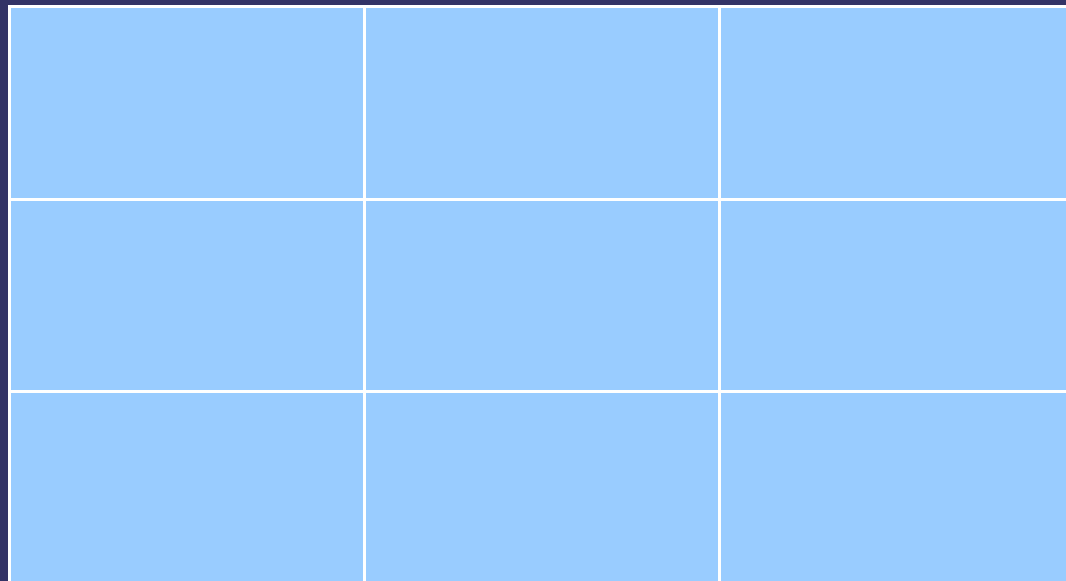
## ➔ Focus

- Finally, we'll look at something which is often overlooked in smartphone photography:
  - ◆ FOCUS

No matter how lovely the image, if it's out of focus, it's ruined – and totally unusable!

# *Composition*

- ➔ The Rule of Thirds: Splits the elements of the image to achieve balance.
- ➔ Alignment of element(s) on image on guidelines gives greater visual 'flow'.





# *Composition: Rule of Thirds*



# *Composition*

- ➔ 'Leading lines' are lines which invite the viewer's eye from one area of a photograph to another.
- ➔ Strongest use in composition is usually achieved when the lines lead the viewer to the main subject of the image.
- ➔ Use natural forms such as roads, fences and lamp posts etc to create those lines.

# *Composition: Leading Lines*



# Composition

- ➔ Fibonacci (pron. *Fib-o-nach-ee*) is the name given to the principle of using exact ratios when composing images.
- ➔ Also known as the Golden Mean, Phi, or Divine Proportion, this law was made famous by Leonardo Fibonacci around 1200 A.D.

# *Composition*

- ➔ Fibonacci noticed that there was an absolute ratio that appears often throughout nature, a sort of design that is universally efficient in living things and pleasing to the human eye.
- ➔ Since the Renaissance, artists and architects have designed their work to approximate this ratio of 1:1.618.

# *Composition: Fibonacci*

- ➔ Here's an example image with the ratio overlay:





# *Composition*

- ➔ Perspective is a key ingredient in photography and can give added emphasis to your story or message.
- ➔ Perspective can give an empowering message or, conversely, be disenfranchising.
- ➔ Subject placement vs camera placement!

# *Composition: High Perspective*

- ➔ In an image taken from a high perspective, looking down onto the subject, what message does the subject placement convey?
- ➔ Is this for a positive storyline or a negative storyline?



# Composition: High Perspective

- ➔ Here's an example of a high perspective image:



# *Composition: High Perspective*

- ➔ High perspective images taken looking down onto the subject matter can be used to convey messages of:
  - Disenfranchisement
  - Vulnerability
  - The 'underdog'

# *Composition: Eyeline Perspective*

- ➔ In an image taken from an eye-line perspective, with the subject looking straight into the barrel of the camera, what message does the subject placement convey?

# *Composition: Eyeline Perspective*

- ➔ Here's an example of an eyeline perspective image:



# ***Composition: Eyeline Perspective***

- ➔ Images taken at the eyeline of the subject can convey messages of:
  - Confidence
  - Assertiveness
  - Defiance
  - Power
  - Control
  - Authority

# *Composition: Low Perspective*

- ➔ In an image taken from a low perspective, with the subject looking down onto the camera, what message does the subject placement convey?

# *Composition: Low Perspective*

- ➔ Here's an ideal example of a low perspective image:



# *Composition: Low Perspective*

- ➔ Low perspective images can help to convey a message of:
  - Success
  - Achievement
  - Authority
  - Power

...**WITHOUT** resorting to using an eyeline shot, whilst at the same including environmental factors to give context. Works great when shot wide angle (ie. Including the branding and the bus).



# ***Composition: Environmental Issues***

- ➔ Sadly, many images fail to meet the required standard for press publication due to this key compositional element: background detritus!
- ➔ Can you think of any issues where photographs become unsuitable for wider publication?

# *Composition: Environmental Issues*

- ➔ It's quite unflattering when there's a lamp post or something else sticking out from a person's head!
- ➔ CHECK YOUR COMPOSURE!

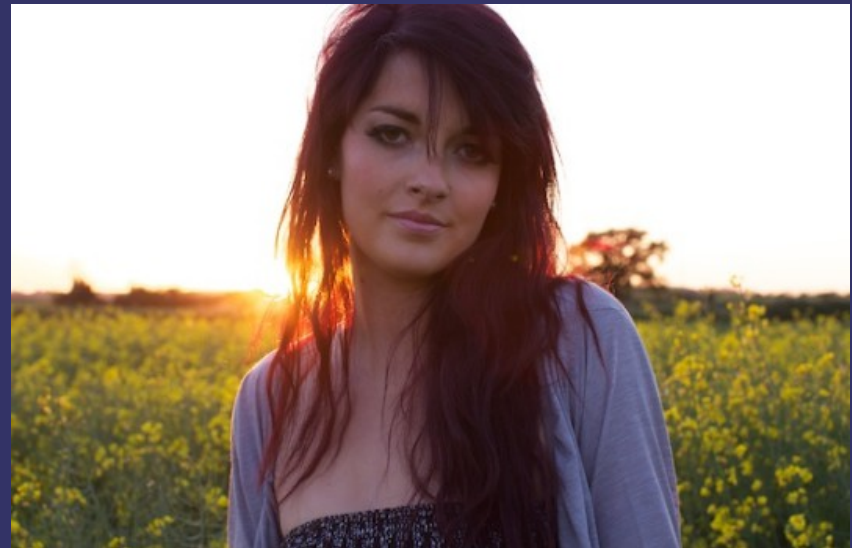


# ***Composition: Environmental Issues***

- ➔ Can you give an example of when a poor understanding of lighting can ruin a photograph?
- ➔ Can you give examples of where lighting can work with and against you when taking photographs?

# *Composition:* *Environmental Issues*

- ➔ Sunlight. If taking photographs with the sun behind your subject, to avoid getting silhouette (left image) use a fill-in flash OR a reflector (right image):



# *Composition:*

## *Environmental Issues*

- ➔ Sunlight. It's never good to take photos looking directly into the sun. It is also dangerous, so best to avoid at all costs.
- ➔ Keep the sun to either:
  - the back of your subject;
  - the side of your subject; or
  - or slightly to the front and side
  - but NEVER head on.
- ➔ Photographers NEED light in some way or another – artificial or natural.

# ***Composition: Environmental Issues***

- ➔ Engagement with the Lens
- ➔ Can you think of any examples which might be construed as 'poor engagement with the lens'?
- ➔ Why would such an image not be regarded as 'suitable for use'?

# *Composition:*

## *Environmental Issues*

- ➔ Examples can include:
  - Background distractions from photo
  - Not everyone facing the camera
  - Blinking (do a 'burst' of images)
  - Facial expressions(!)
  - Fidgeting
  - Distractions
  - 'Photobombing'

# *Composition:* *Environmental Issues*

- ➔ To avoid poor engagement with the lens, TAKE CONTROL.
- ➔ Ensure those subjects to be photographed are either arranged accordingly, have no distractions, are presented before the lens the way you want them to be.
- ➔ Remember – it's YOUR story to tell.



# ***Composition: Environmental Issues***

- ➔ Positive and Negative Space.
- ➔ Ideal for 'doing' shots and showing your work in action.
- ➔ Either leave space for your subject to move into (positive or active) OR
- ➔ Leave space for them to vacate (negative or inactive).

# *Composition: Environmental Issues*

- ➔ Example of use of positive/active space.



# *Composition: Environmental Issues*

- ➔ Example of use of negative/inactive space:



# *Composition: Environmental Issues*

## ➔ FOCUS

- With ever increasing usage of UGC, so many photos used in the press (and in social media posts) are out of focus – either on a large scale or just ever so slightly 'soft'.
- Tiny amount of leeway on large expansive group shots but for portraits/headshots, they need to be **TACK SHARP**.

# *Composition: Environmental Issues*

- ➔ FOCUS continued...
  - Using smartphone touchscreen, hover focus square over the EYES.
  - Ensure focus is locked (often the square goes green) before taking the shot.
  - Take several to make sure!

# *Composition: Environmental Issues*

- ➔ Focus continued...
  - If the subject's eyes are not in focus, then the image is LOST.
  - The eyes engage with the viewer!
  - Ideal to use if person giving a quote as part of your newsletter/press release.



# *Composition: Environmental Issues*

➔ Example of tack sharp focus at 400%:



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# *Content*

- ➔ It's surprising how many people overlook the actual image **CONTENT**.
- ➔ Are all the people in the photograph meant to be there?
- ➔ Don't be afraid to ask people to move!
- ➔ Are there any other items in the photograph that shouldn't be there (misplaced carrier bags, shopping etc).



# *Context*

- ⇒ Is the image being taken showing the true context of your story?
- ⇒ Example can be:
  - A group photo taken to relate to a story of a donation, but minus the cheque handover and in an setting unrelated to the storyline, or
  - A personal photo lifted from Facebook to accompany a quote from a group member.

# *A Few Tips*

- ➔ Portraits:
  - Should always be shot in landscape if they are the **only** image being sent to the press for publication. Press don't tend to lead their stories with portrait orientation.
  - Otherwise, shoot the photo in portrait orientation for use in your group's newsletters/blogs and leaflets.

# *A Few Tips*

- ➔ Group photos:
  - Try to think back to your school photos. Tallest people at back, shortest at front. Height at back in centre of frame, fanning out to shortest at ends of image
  - ODD numbers work best.
  - Ensure ALL faces can see YOU, the photographer! No hiding!

# *A Few Tips*

- ➔ Usually a small suite of photos will suffice when dealing with the press, including:
  - A group shot
  - A portrait (if a quote included)
  - A 'doing' shot
- For your online blogs, newsletters etc., three to five photographs per entry will usually be enough. Keep it simple and don't swamp the reader with too much.

# *A Few Tips*

- ➔ Whatever photos you use, and however you use them, do ensure that:
  - Images sent to the press are of the highest resolution possible.
  - Images used in print are of the highest resolution possible.
  - Images used in online blogs and newsletters are sized down accordingly.

# *Task Two*

- ➔ Taking on board what we've discussed in this workshop, revisit the images you took in Task One earlier.
- ➔ Are there any aspects of your photos which could now be improved?
- ➔ Do a recap, checking issues such as:
  - Subjects appropriately positioned?
  - What's the perspective saying?

## *Task Two*

- Did you check the environment?
- How are your images lit?
- How is your use of space?
- Are your photos in focus?
- What about your portrait photo?
- Is your group photo set up correctly?

# *A Final Reminder*

- ➔ Enjoy improving your photography.
- ➔ Take the time to concentrate on the visuals you are creating.
- ➔ Always have your message at the forefront of your image – pictures ARE worth a thousand words.

**HAVE FUN!**



# *Finally...*

- ➔ Thankyou for your time.
- ➔ Any questions...?

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