

Developing Composition In Photography

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Most amateur photographers will approach the subject of composition with fear and trembling. Probably the necessity for it in pictures has been stressed to the amateur since that first day he took his first picture, but a coherent grasp of the subject has eluded him. However, good composition is like good taste, based on simple principles and common sense.

A difficulty with composition for photography is that it is hard to select the portion of the subject that will appear on the finished print. A photographer does not wander around examining each potential subject from several angles before he takes each shot. It is a waste of time, inconvenient and unnecessary. He must first train himself to block off a section of the view at a time in his mind.

Too often as the eye darts from object to object, the unobtrusive details in a shot are overlooked and the results are startling when the picture is printed. The background plays a very important part in good photographs. The garbage can in the background is not very flattering to the girl friend. Just try to tell her that you did not see it! The big tree that takes up half of the picture does not benefit the principle object in the other half either.

Color and contrast must be considered.

A scene whose beauty depends on its aspects of color will seldom make a good picture on black and white prints. Here composition comes to the rescue, for it directs attention to the lines and masses of the scene rather than its superficial colors. Tone fits in with this combination. A little practice with filters can help to control tone.

As balance is an important factor in placing a load in a transport plane, so it is in photography. There must be a balance of lines and masses as well as color.

Composition will not teach you which film, lens or shutter speed to use. It does not deal with the elements of your equipment but rather with those of the scene before you. It is not difficult to become familiar with composition. The most important object should be placed where it will be most readily noticed—with the masses in sufficiently close relationship to each other to give balance and a pleasing pattern—lines where they help create a desired atmosphere and tone accented to give the eye the greatest satisfaction of unity.

Try this art which teaches control and arrangement of form the next time you are taking pictures.

