

*THE ART  
OF  
COMPOSITION  
IN  
VISUAL ART.*

*By Ghislain Bonneau - Version-6 2012*

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# THE 7 GUIDELINES TO SUCCESS ARE:

**1-(Whenever Possible) MAKE USE OF ALL THREE PRIMARY COLORS.**

**2- BE ALWAYS AWARE OF ALL THE LINES IN YOUR COMPOSITION.**

- 1- Convergent Lines.
- 2- Stream Lines (Evasive Lines).
- 3- Confusing Lines.
- 4- Perspective Lines.

**3- NEVER OVERLOAD THE BORDERS.**

**4- MAKE GOOD USE OF, OVERLAPPING.**

**5- CONTRAST THE SUBJECT WITH DIFFERENT TONES AND COLORS.**

**6- ACCENTUATE DISTANCE AND DEPTH WITH, AIR DENSITY.**

**7- LIMIT THE NUMBER OF ELEMENTS FROM 3 TO 7, NOT MORE.**

**HOW TO PREPARE FOR A COMPOSITION.**

**9 IMPORTANT FACTORS TO KEEP IN MIND.**

- 1-The use of a Foreground.
- 2-The use of Multiple Horizontal Lines to Increase the Effect of Depth.
- 3- Presence or Absence of Clouds.
- 4-Clouds & White Outs.
- 5-Post Processing: The Digital Darkroom. *(In Photography).*
- 6-Direction of the Light Source: *(In Photography).*
- 7-Depth of Field: *(In Photography).*
- 8-Aperture Explained. *(In Photography).*
- 9-The Law of the Third. *(In Photography).*

**IN CONCLUSION:**



# INTRODUCTION:

Know from the start that this Essay was originally intended for Visual Artist more than for Photography, but most of it will also apply to Photography. I know that it is a bit long to read, but it is well worth the effort and the time you will put into going through it. You don't have to read it all in one shot. Once you will know about all this stuff you will be able to decide if you can and want to use it or not in your photo compositions. The more knowledge you will have in how to make a better composition the greater your choices will be in making a better composition, and even in Photography.

In visual art, whatever the medium or the surface used, may it be an oil painting on a canvas, or a water color illustration on paper, or even a photo in photography, all those visual art contains elements that are common to one another and those elements forms the basic GUIDELINES that any artist in visual art must not ignore and always keep in mind to improve the quality of the final product and the visual impact on the observers.

Those GUIDELINES are very simple and flexible and they can be used to different degree and be adapted to all kind of style and adjusted to everyone needs. So they can be used more or less in a composition to emphasize a mood, a situation and to make the subject stand out better. You must know that a good composition rarely comes up all by itself; it is usually the result of thoughtful planning. Like building a bridge or a house or composing a symphony. A picture is composed of related elements that supports and are inter-related to each others. Even if all those GUIDELINES are not evident to the unaware viewer or observer, these GUIDELINES will determines the success of the finished composition. Because most viewers or observers are looking at your work more instinctively than by expertise, the hidden GUIDELINES will becomes even more crucial in determining if they will like your work or not. For starting in this venture one must know that the limited surface used in visual art does not show everything that the actual human eye can see in the real world. The limited space in visual art is like an open window in space and time, that the artist or the photographer uses to express a certain mood to a subjects and its relation to its surrounding on that small surface. The eye of the observer has a limited view when he looks at a visual art because he can not see 180 degrees and all of what is around the subject, and so he won't be able to define what is not represented there on the artwork. Then the information inside this limited space becomes very important to attract the eye of the viewer or the observers and to keep his eyes on the surface of the composition long enough for the observer to find the subject easily and to grasp all the moods and feeling associated with it, or the message if there is one.

There is also ways to make the observer love and appreciate the art work to its full value. To follow up in the same line of thinking one artist must then know right from the start and even before creating any visual art, how the human eyes works and see the world.

So the artist must also look at the composition of his art work as he is creating it, through the unaware eyes of the observer. Because the human eye moves with instinctive reaction to what ever he his looking at and the observer may not know anything about art or the subject reflected on the art work in front of him. So basically the artist must know how to attract the eyes of the observers and to make them understand quickly and love what they see and to keep the eyes of the observers on that small surface. And all this can only be done if the artist knows how the human eye works and be familiar with the basic GUIDELINES of composition that are needed to achieve the desired result in visual art and the process one artist must take to do so.

## **THE HUMAN EYE:**

The eyes of various species vary from simple structures that are capable only of differentiating between light and dark to complex organs, such as those of humans and other mammals. The human eye can distinguish minute variations of shape, color, brightness, and distance. The actual process of seeing is performed by the brain rather than by the eye itself. The function of the eye is to translate the electromagnetic vibrations of light (Light Photons reflected from objects) into patterns of nerve impulses that are transmitted to the brain. We wouldn't be able to see anything if not for the reflection of light onto the objects that we are looking at. So it is not the objects that we see, but only the light reflected from them. This fact becomes more important when it comes time to choose the light source and its direction to contrast the subject with shadows and to create the ambiance to reflect a certain mood. So the light source and its direction must be chosen very carefully, even before starting your composition. The visual system of humans is one of the most advanced sensory systems in the body. More information is conveyed visually than by any other means, so in visual art we must take advantage of this and make the most of it to help us achieve our goals.

## **THE 7 GUIDELINES ARE:**

### **NUMBER 1 =**

**(Whenever Possible) MAKE USE OF ALL THREE PRIMARY COLORS.**

To attract the human eye to the art work of your composition is simply done by using (whenever Possible) RED, YELLOW, AND BLUE, in your compositions. The most important reason that I suggest here to use them on you composition is that they are the colors that attract more the attention of the human eye then any other colors because they are more vivid and pure then green or cyan or any other primary colors that forms other color systems used in printing and modern video systems. It just happens that Red, Yellow and Blue are the Primary Colors of the oldest mixing method and this oldest Primary Color System is still widely used by artist around the world as of today, and for a very good reason. It has been a long proved fact for many years that those tree colors do just that and this is why I suggest here to use them as much as possible in your composition.

Believe it or not, the human EYE instinctively vibrates with joy when those three colors are present on the same surface and the UNAWARE eye of the observer will tend to keep looking at the artwork much longer because it is much more pleasant to look at than at another art work where any of those three colors are missing. It's the same thing like in Music; a composer must make use of all frequencies (LOW, MIDDLE, and HIGH Frequencies) for the music to be well appreciated by the Human ear. When I say the EYE; I mean the reaction of the human brain of course. If one or two of those colors are missing, the eye tends to want to wander somewhere else because he feels that something is missing, but he does not know exactly what it is, and the artwork is therefore not as pleasant to look at if one of those colors is missing. This alone may make the difference in the reaction of the observer between, I like it or I don't like it.

If it is impossible to use all three colours on the same surface because of the mood, it is imperative to use one of their secondary colors to a degree that will match the mood of the subject. So this is the first and most important factor to improve a composition. I don't believe in monochrome to reflect a mood or a feeling because only some animals can see in monochrome LIKE BLACK & WHITE. Monochrome means that there is only one color present on the surface, and it would be comparative like the use of a color filter in photography. I personally never use colour filters because I know that the human eye needs more than one color to appreciate what he sees and I don't need monochrome to reflect a mood or a feeling. I rather use intelligent design in my compositions and make the use of tones and colors to transcend a certain mood and a feeling.

There is many other color system that exist today like RGB, HSL, CMYK, and more, but the SELECTION OF THEIR INDEPENDENT PRIMARY COLORS DEFINITION SYSTEM is in fact related in how they intermix colors together and so their different Primary Colors was chosen for THE PURPOSE OF MIXING COLORS ONLY and not necessarily to attract the human eye. I am not talking about mixing colors here, I am talking about attracting attention with pure and vibrant colors, and RED, YELLOW and BLUE are the ones you want to use to do just that. So there are actually only two kinds of different primary colour system: The colours you will get from the RGB system by combining light are called Additive, and the colours you will get by mixing pigments in the printing industry, are called Subtractive colours. The additive colors are Red, Green, and Blue. Traditionally, the subtractive colours were RED, Yellow, BLUE. But to be more on the technical side, they are actually now called Cyan, Yellow, Magenta, like the color system used in the CYMK mixing color method for the printing industry. CYMK refers to cyan, yellow, magenta, and K is the black value added to the colors to make them darker. So the mixing system of the printing industry today is the same as the original RYB primary colors system, they just added K (black) to the PRIMARY color definition to make different tone values and they also changed the name of the colors BLUE to CYAN, and RED to MAGENTA. Their name is different but they are still BLUE and RED with a different purity and tone value than the original system RYB and so CYMK works the same way in mixing colors.

The artist works his colors the same way by adding black or white when mixing colors to change the tone and purity value of get the desired colors. In photography it will be very difficult to satisfy to this GUIDELINE or SUGGESTION if you want, but just by knowing this fact that those colors will draw more attention, this will help you to improve your composition by a very large margin. If no yellow is present, light brown and beiges will do just fine. If no red is present, Orange and purple will help also.

Those 7 GUIDELINES are only there to help you to get a BETTER composition, and that does not mean that if one or two of those GUIDELINES are not present that your composition is not good. The use of only one or two of those GUIDELINES will help to improve your overall composition, AND IT IS THEREFORE NOT A MUST TO USE THEM ALL TOGETHER AT THE SAME TIME ON THE SAME COMPOSITION for you to have a good composition; they are simply a big preference to improve the overall of your composition.

See this link for more info on the primary colors RYB and the color wheel.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RYB\\_color\\_model](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RYB_color_model)

## **NUMBER 2 =**

### **BE ALWAYS AWARE OF ALL THE LINES IN YOUR COMPOSITION.**

Now that you have succeeded to attract attention to your art work by using all three primary colors, how do you keep the eyes of the observer on that small two dimensional surface?

There are Four different kinds of lines involved in visual art, and in the every day world around you for that matter, and those lines influences the eyes of the observer to an extend that you just can't imagine right now. Those lines are called or expressed here in a way that describes their inter-relations to the action of the eye of the observer when someone looks at a surface of a visual artwork. This is true because the human Eye is very lazy in a way that it will follow INSTINCTIVELY the contour lines of any objects and follow any direction that those objects creates with their contour lines and the eyes of the unaware observer will tend to want to move in those directions.

It is then imperative that one artist in visual art must know and make use of those very important lines to direct the eyes of the observers directly to the main subject and to keep their eyes on the small surface of his art work.

### **THOSE FOUR VERY IMPORTANT LINES ARE:**

#### **LINE 1: CONVERGENT LINES.**

It is very important to make the use of convergent lines to direct and guide the unaware eyes of the observer automatically towards your subject. A convergent line could be a street, a sidewalk, a tree branch, a fence or anything that is in the foreground and that directs the eyes of the observer towards the subject. Those lines should be preferably in the foreground or ahead of the subject but on some occasion there could be some convergent lines created by mountains, clouds or the horizon lines that are behind or past the subject.

For example on my painting of Mount Baker that was the subject, as convergent lines, I used rocks and wood logs and branches that were in the foreground and that were pointing towards the center of the painting and in the center there was a sailboat that was overlapping over Mount Baker and the sailboat was therefore continuing the converging lines towards the subject. The eyes of the observers always see what is in the foreground first because the colors are brighter and they attract his eyes right away and their eyes then follow the lines created by the rocks, log and he sees the sailboat and then the eyes get stuck on the big Mountain in the center of the painting. The clouds and the horizon lines even played a role as convergent lines to direct the eyes of the observer towards the center and the Mountain, from all directions and helped to keep the eyes of the observers on the subject and the artwork.

See the Painting of Mount Baker in the last 5 pages of this document.

## **LINE 2: STREAM LINES. (Evasive lines)**

Stream-Lines on the contrary would direct the eyes of the observer towards the outside of your composition and you must therefore eliminate those lines as much as possible. It is ok to have some small ones but not too many. Any lines going upward on each side of the surface would become stream lines because they don't guide the eyes towards the main subject but rather towards the outside. For example if you make a mountain, make sure that on each side the mountain is going downward but not up. If the mountain is going up, then the lines will direct the eyes towards the outside and give the impression that something is missing, because you would want to see more of the mountain. It is also a good idea to use a foreground like, small bush, flowers, fence post or any other small objects that would have directive lines up and towards the subject rather than a fence or a street going straight from the left side to the right side, because this would also cause STREAM LINES, directing the eyes of the observers towards the outside of the composition.

## **LINE 3: CONFUSING LINES.**

Confusing lines would be created in situations where the contours of any object come too close to each others or to the contours of the subject or with any other objects on the surface, and this will create confusing lines. The contour lines of the subject must be clearly defined and free of any proximity lines of other object's contours to eliminate confusion in determining the subject's exact form and its precise location. As you will see later in the overlapping technique that we can use to enhance perspective and depth, it is imperative to pay special attention to the closeness of the respective contours of different objects in the composition. As an example you just don't put a brown horse's back at the same height of a brown fence that is behind the horse, either change the height of the fence or paint the fence white. Their contour lines must not be too close to each others because they will surely contribute to create confusion and the eye of the observer will tend to go to the next art work and not stay on yours because it is too confusing. Don't forget that the eyes of the observers are lazy and you must therefore keep things very clear and simple to help them to detect and to see the subject and its contours very easily without confusion.

#### **LINE 4: PERSPECTIVE LINES.**

These have also a very important role to play in the composition of visual art as they can be used to direct the eyes of the observer towards the subject. That's why it is wise to try to place the subject near the center as much as possible because most of the time perspective lines created by roads, fences, buildings, all runs from each side of a 2 dimensional surface and towards the horizon. The horizon lines are generally where the Sky and the Earth meet together, but note that perspective lines could be directed a little higher or lower of the horizon line depending on the height of the point of view or reference used in the creation of the composition.

#### **POINT OF VIEW** (also sometime called point of reference.)

Point of view or point of reference is actually the height of your camera compared to the subject's height in your shot. It is a very important factor in achieving a good effect on your photos and a better composition. Depending on the subject size and distance and the effect or importance that you want to give to the subject, the height of your point of view must be chosen very carefully and it also can play an important role in adding more elements and colours to your shot.

For example let's say that you are taking a picture of a little girl standing on the beach. She is 3 feet tall and you are 6 feet tall, and if you stay up chances are that you probably won't see the horizon line at all, or it will be higher then the little girl and those lines won't help much to create converging lines, and if they are higher then the subject, you just created stream-lines, and you don't want that. But if you kneel down, the little girl will be centered or higher with the horizon and you will make a much better picture to look at, since the horizon lines becomes convergent lines towards the subject and by lowering your point of view you also added more elements to your composition, like, sailboats, clouds, mountain.

One very important fact to consider when choosing your point of view is the fact that being much higher then your subject, this high position will tend to give the impression that your subject is much smaller then it really is. But if you lower your point of view to the ground compare to your subject, (in this case here...the little girl) she will look much bigger then she really is and she will take a very impressive part in the composition. But if you want the subject to look his normal size, then you have to adjust your point of view mid way with the subject height.

In an another example if you take a photo of a cow, standing up, the cow won't look very impressive, but if you lower yourself as much as possible to the ground the cow will look very huge and imposing. To take a photo of a cow I would bring my point of view just a little higher then mid point of the cow's height. This would give the cow a normal look and make it's head just a little more imposing, but not the whole body of the cow. You would also ad more elements to the photo then if you stayed standing up. If your point of view is too high then you will probably only see the cow and the grass and then this height is not preferable since you will only have two element and two colors.



Lower down enough to add a background like a mountains, tree line, sky, clouds, or a fence. Make sure the fence does not come too close to the cow's back because that would create a confusing line and you don't want that on your shot. Adjust your height accordingly so the fence will be either higher than the cow's back or lower.

When taking photos of buildings or tall objects.

To minimize distortion when taking shots of buildings or tall objects it is preferable to back up and to find a higher point of view mid way to that building or object. Use a tripod and zoom in on the building to get a close up shot. The deformity will be minimal doing it this way, and you could also use the smallest Aperture available on your camera to minimize lens distortion, like f8, f11, or f16 would be preferable for this kind of photo as in Landscape photography. With a very large Aperture like f2.5 or f3.5 the objects at the edge will be deformed by the lens curvature. With all the technology today they did not find the way to eliminate lens deformity, but they could do it if the lens was twice as big and that you could only use 3/4 of it as a maximum Aperture. In this case the lens and the camera would be very heavy, and would anybody want that I wonder??

You must realize by now that changing your point of view will change also the perspective lines of any object. If you want to experiment in your own house or apartment to see what I mean, take a photo of your living room including your TV and Stereo System and make sure that on the photo you can see the corner where the walls meet and the ceiling. From the same position, take one shot at your eye level, and another one at your waist level and one more from about one foot from the floor. Now put those photos on your computer and see the difference in the perspective lines deforming the look of your object and the walls around them. Try also some shots of a corridor or a doorway at the same 3 point of view. This will only show you that taking a photo at the mid point height of your subject is preferable in most cases to eliminate distortion by perspective lines. You must therefore always be aware of the effect that the height of your Point of View will have on your subject. Those deformities are not as apparent when you just look at those objects because you see more of what is around them and your attention is less centered on just some part of those objects. This proves the statement that I made in the ART OF COMPOSITION that what you see on the limited space of your composition (photo) is very important and that because a photo has a limited view that this makes the deformity of the objects appear more evident than when you just look at them with your own eyes. This little exercise was only to show you the importance of your point of view, meaning that if your point of view is centered with your subject, chances are that you will have much less distortion.

Also choose your point of view wisely to include other elements on your shots and in turn this will add more colors and more perspective and horizon lines to help you to create a much more enjoyable composition to look at. The height of your point of view will also give a certain feel of your subject's size giving it more or less importance in your shot. Also by adding more lines and more elements you will probably have more overlapping objects and this in turn will help also to improve your composition.

The more elements that overlaps, the better it is to give more depth to your photos. Don't forget that in visual art you only work with 2D, so you want to emphasize the depth and 3D effect of your photo as much as possible so adjusting your POINT OF VIEW to have more overlapping elements on your shot is the best way to achieve this. Just make sure you don't put too much elements on your shot, between 3 and 7 in the preferable number of elements you want in your shots. Not enough and you won't have enough colors, lines and overlapping objects and more then seven you will create confusion by distracting the viewer from your main subject.

### **NUMBER 3 = NEVER OVERLOAD THE BORDERS**

This simply means not to put any big object too close to any borders, because if you can't see the whole thing this will create the sensation that something is missing and that you would want to see more of it. For example if you place a big tree on one side and that you can't see how big it really is because you don't see the whole thing and you only see one side of it. This would be considered here as overloading the borders, and if you want to put a tree on the side don't make it too big and leave some space between the border and the tree. You must be able to see something else between the border and that tree. If there is also too many dark areas and they are too big, they are also considered as overloading the borders and also considered as being the same patterns. So on your composition make sure that you don't have too many dark areas. On some occasions a building could also overload the borders but this would be ok if you see enough of it and that it creates convergent lines towards the subject. It would not be ok if you only saw a small part of it and that it takes all the space of the border. Overloading the borders will leave the observer with a feeling that something is missing and he will pass to the other art work beside yours. Don't forget that the surface is limited and you don't want to give the impression that there is something missing, it must give the impression that it is complete and that all the elements presents fully contributes to the overall mood of the composition and that it would not be necessary to add other elements to improve this composition.

### **NUMBER 4 = MAKE GOOD USE OF, OVERLAPPING.**

The technique of overlapping objects in a composition will help you to create the effect of 3D by enhancing distance and depth by also making those objects smaller the further away they are. Be careful when overlapping objects not to put their contours too close to one another because this might create confusing lines. Keep also an eye on the lines inside those objects to make sure that they don't conflict with one another and that their respective tones and colors are different to avoid confusion. You must also abstain to put those objects on a straight line or in any geometric pattern, unless a certain form of placement is related to the subject or to the message and mood of the composition.

## **NUMBER 5 =**

### **CONTRAST THE SUBJECT WITH DIFFERENT TONES AND COLORS.**

#### **TONES AND COLOR VALUES;**

TONES are the intensity of BLACK AND WHITE present in any given colors from dark to light colors, so the amount of black and white mixed with any colors will determine its tone and brightness value or its color purity. It is recommended to make the use of different tones values and different colors to make your subject stand out with the rest of the composition. For example if the background is dark, then it is preferable that the subject would be of a lighter tone to be well contrasted.

#### **OVERALL MOOD AND AMBIANCE;**

For example if the subject of your composition is sadness then you must use darker tones and colors that would be towards the blue spectrum of the color wheel, and if the subject is happiness then you use light and bright colors like yellow, orange, and reds. The overall tone and colors of the composition must also match with the mood of the subject to help transcend those mood and feelings to the viewer that is looking at your art work. If the ambiance is dramatic the contrast of tones and colors must be more pronounced then if the mood is smooth and relaxing. In this case I would use more whites and less black in the color mix to have a pastel color effect that would be smooth and not as contrasted. The overall mood and ambiance can then be determined by the use of different tones and color values. A well balanced mid tone value for the overall composition is preferable, not too dark or too light. The use of contrast and texture must be carefully adjusted to match the subject and its mood..

## **NUMBER 6 =**

### **ACCENTUATE DISTANCE AND DEPTH, WITH AIR DENSITY.**

For the purpose of the illusion of DISTANCE and DEPTH it is useful to use more white in the mix of colors the further away they are, and the closer they are to the foreground the less white is used to create pure colors that will give also the effect of being closer to the observer. Simply by gradually mixing white with the colors as they are further away will contribute to create air density and accentuate the effect of distance. You must also know and keep in mind that on a cold winter day the air density is much less dense then in a hot summer day because in winter there is almost no heat reflected from the earth's surface going up into the air. It is the heat reflected from the surface of the earth that creates more air density and everything that you see that is further away will seem to be whiter and those far away objects will lose color density and contrast as well. The closer that the objects are to the foreground the less air density will affect colors and contrast so the colors in the foreground should be much brighter and well contrasted then the ones far away in the background.

## **NUMBER 7 =**

### **LIMIT THE NUMBER OF ELEMENTS FROM 3 TO 7, NOT MORE.**

When there are too many elements on the composition it becomes more confusing and difficult for the viewer to find the subject and his eyes don't really know which way to go and what to look at. Confusion is the last thing that you need because it is much better to keep it simple and easy for the viewer to find the subject. If the composition is too complicated most viewers won't like it and they will pass on to something else because it will be too hard for them to find the subject and to understand the mood. If the mood is confusion, well there is other ways to deal with that then to add too many unnecessary elements on your composition.

I know that this might not be applicable to all forms and type of art but if you use the basic rules even to a minimum degree you will succeed to improve your compositions much better than if you didn't follow the basic rules at all. So keep it simple by making the subject easy to find with a minimum of elements present.

Some people will say "What if I just want to take a photo of a lamp? Would not that be just one element? And does it mean that my photo won't be good? Most likely you will see a table and a wall so that make 3 elements, and if you take a photo with just one element there is always a background in your shots, (blurry or not) it is never the less and Element. You don't need to get so picky with the number of elements, the most important thing to remember here is that more than 7 Elements will tend to confuse and distract the viewer from the main subject and this is what this Guideline number 7 is all about. There you have it. There are simply 7 Basic Guidelines to follow, and they will guide you to success. Now all you have to do is to learn how to prepare to make a winning and successful composition.

### **HOW TO PREPARE FOR A COMPOSITION:**

Now that you know a little bit more about the fundamentals of Composing a Visual Art, you are ready to start a composition. The four Main Elements of ANY composition are;

#### **1-PICTURE AREA 2-DEPTH 3-LINES 4-VALUE**

The picture area will determine the size of your different elements comparatively to your main subject and to the surface that you are working with. The subject should be bigger than all the other elements and it should also stand out easily among them. So the picture area is actually the dimension of your canvas and it must be chosen very carefully before starting your composition so that it will match your style, your subject, and the mood and impact that you want to achieve with your art work.

**2-Depth** on a 2 dimension plane depth is an illusion of distance created by different techniques like overlapping, perspective lines, converging lines and the presence or lack of details and size of different objects and air density. The further away objects are, and the less detail will be present on them and the closer they will be and the more details you will see.

**3-Lines** in a composition, they would be all the lines mentioned above in Rule # 2 and also all the contour lines of objects and directions that your eyes follow when looking at that composition. You must arrange the lines in a way that they unconsciously guide the eyes of the viewers to the main subject or center of interest and they also must keep the eyes of the viewers on the 2 dimensional plane of your art work. So eliminate any Evasive lines whenever possible and coordinate all your elements to point to the main subject.

**4-Value** is the lightness or darkness of particular area or objects on your composition and is also the over-all value of your composition. The use of different value or tone is primary to make the subject stand out and to give a certain mood to your composition. Do not put too many dark area on you composition because they will become repetitive patterns and this is the last thing you want.

## **BASIC THINKING AND ARRANGING OF ALL THE ELEMENTS, ON THE SURFACE OF YOUR COMPOSITION.**

First you must visualize in your head a picture of what you want to do, and once you have decided witch elements will be used on your composition you cut out a rough form for each element without using too much detail. Elements are things like a tree, a mountain, a road, a car, a fence and so on. It could also be a doorway, a table, a lamp, or a human form. Just cut out their approximate contours and size, and that will suffice for now. I used to do this with construction paper of different colors and I cut out my elements in proportional size to each other and to the surface that I was working with. I placed those elements in different ways to see what would be the best result and doing so I always kept in mind the basic rules and tried to apply them to my composition as much as possible. After a while you won't need to cut out pieces of paper because you will be able to visualize your composition in your head and you will be able to draw a sketch right away. Always keep in mind when working on a composition that you have to see your composition with the eyes of the unaware viewers.

## **9 IMPORTANT FACTORS TO KEEP IN MIND:**

### **1-THE USE OF A FOREGROUND:**

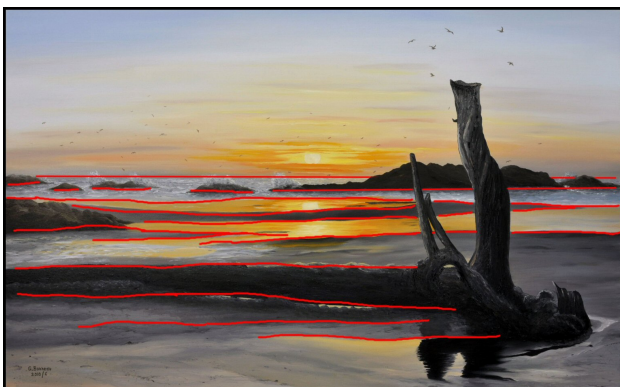
In most visual art, the presence of objects closest to the bottom of a two dimension plane, and that would be before the subject are called, the **FOREGROUND**, and any objects behind the subject would normally be called the **BACKGROUND**. This can be true and applied in most cases but it is not a rule of thumb. What the use of foreground does, is that it helps to create movement and action in the foreground, that otherwise would be static and dead and dull and filled with repetitive patterns, and you don't want too many repetitive patterns to fill space on your composition. Foregrounds also help to create moods and can be used to direct the eye of the viewer towards the subject with the direction of their contour lines.

So you must make a wise use of foreground objects to help enhance, mood, movement, life, action and depth in your composition. But be aware not to make your Foregrounds stand out more than the subject. The foreground should never be distracting or take too much importance compare to the subject and the rest of the composition.

## **2-The Use of Multiple HORIZONTAL LINES to Increase the Effect of Depth:**

Yes this is a new one for me as well and that I have just discovered very recently. I have always thought that Converging Lines and Perspective line where the best ways to help to create the illusion of depth and the effect of 3 Dimension, but guess what, a whole bunch of Horizontal lines on your paintings or on a photo does also a very good job at creating the illusion of Depth and 3 Dimension. Just imagine that you are up a large staircase and you look down on it. First you can see that the first horizontal lines are longer and spread further apart from the next one but as you look down further you notice that the lines are getting shorter and are also closer together. This gives the effect of Depth and Distance. Well on your painting or on a photo you can't always paint a staircase to give the effect of depth but if you can increase the numbers of horizontal lines using any object on your composition and if you can manage to get those lines closer together as you look further away then you got it made. The illusion of Depth is very well expressed by all those horizontal lines bunched up together on the same picture.

So I discovered this by accident as I was looking at my Painting # 100, after it was completed. It is right in front of me over my stereo system and I look at it very often, and recently I noticed that all the horizontal lines on it help a lot to create the effect of 3D and accentuate distance and Depth. Fortunately for me they also come closer together as they are further away like in a staircase. Eureka I found it. **(The Horizontal lines I am talking about are marked in Red on the Photo below).**



Amazing isn't it, so from now on I will use that powerful tool when ever I can in my compositions to accentuate Depth. In that composition I did not look for those lines and did not create them either, because I did not know about this back then, and they where just there waiting for me to discover their very powerful effect on Depth. **I hope you will keep this in mind** and try to use objects in your compositions to create horizontal lines that will give that same effect. As you can see the horizontal lines don't have to be strait at all, but running from left to right is good enough and if you can bunch them closer together as you look further away, you got it made. This will increase the quality of your composition by a lot, and I mean a whole lot because if you can create the effect of depth and 3 D on a two dimension plane like on a photo or a painting, this means that you did an excellent job on your composition and this is one good way to do it and that I will never forget. There is also the use of convergent lines of a fence or a road towards the Horizon that will give the effect of Depth and 3 D.

### **3-PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF CLOUDS:**

If possible always use a minimum of clouds rather than no clouds at all in your compositions because cloud's gives more movement and life to a composition and they also help to create the effect of distance and depth. In photography you have to wait for that perfect day to take your pictures. Wait for the day with light clouds that makes interesting patterns and lines. Those type of clouds makes the best pictures.

Too many clouds and the sky will probably be all whiteout and the reason for this is that too many white clouds brings up too much light intensity to the frame in contrast with the dark ground so chances are that your clouds will be white outs. No clouds at all and the contrast will be too pronounced on your objects because of the unfiltered sun light and you might have whiteouts areas on your picture depending on the brightness values of objects present on the picture. Whiteouts can not be brought back because you loose texture and details of the surface that is whiteout, no mater how dark you make your picture your details will be lost for ever.

### **4-CLOUDS & WHITE OUTS:**

**I must explain here the definition of white outs and Tone Value so that we will be on the same page of understanding.**

**White outs** are when you loose texture and details in the brightest areas of your photo, and they can not be brought back later with a photo program, they are lost forever.

**Tone Value** is determined by the amount of black and white in a color.

The darker the color, the darker the tone value of that color will be. (LOW KEY)

The brighter the color, the lighter the tone value of that color will be. (HIGH KEY)

This is also true for black and white photography because Tone Value has nothing to do with colors but is determine only by it's brightness or darkness value.

So the Overall Tone value of a photo can be determined by the amount of dark area compared to the amount of bright area that are present on the same frame. The more dark area you have on your frame the darker the overall Tone value will be, and the less dark area there is on your frame the brighter the Overall Tone Value of your frame will be.

(This definition here of the OVERALL TONE VALUE is only to refer to the FRAME just before you take the shot, and will be YOUR evaluation of tonality, not the result readings done by the camera).

Of course I could use the brighter area of a frame to determine the Overall Tone Value but the Camera will always give priority to the darker area in your frame to adjust the EV value to give details in those dark areas regardless of the white outs that will be caused by the settings, so it is easier to understand the Overall Tone Value of your frame by evaluating the dark area rather than the brighter area of your frame. You want to control the dark area so as not to have white outs in the brightest area of your frame.

Clouds are the most difficult to control as far as white outs are concerned, but don't worry most people don't know how to control white outs in clouds and this is why I wrote this article to help you to achieve a better control of the white outs in your clouds. It is actually very simple once you know the principle on how to control the Exposure Value of your camera without having to go to the menu and change the settings every time you want to eliminate white outs in clouds or for any other reasons. You don't always have the time to open the menu and start to play with the EV settings because you will lose your shot opportunity, and most of the time you will forget to set your EV value back to 0 and your next shots will be over or under exposed.

Well here you will learn how to control the EV settings made by the camera without having to go to the menu to do it and this way you will be able to control the white outs in your shots. But before I start open your camera menu and make sure your EV SETTINGS is at 0 and leave it there for now.

Most people nowadays use a digital camera for ease of use and troublesome great quick shots. But there is a set back, to giving the camera freewill to make all the important decisions. When you set your digital camera to fully automatic or any other program mode the camera will evaluate the overall LIGHT INTENSITY of the frame you want to take when you press the shoot button half way down, this is when the camera thinks for you and make all the big decisions and also make the correct focus. When using a digital camera this way the more dark area there is on your shots, the more chances are that your clouds will be white outs because the camera will always bring the EV value up to try to give you details in the darker areas. That fact is also valid for any kind of metering method you selected on your camera. To learn more about Metering method go to the link below:

<http://www.dpreview.com/learn/?/key=metering>

What metering method will work best on most occasions is something that you will have to experiment and find out by yourself because it could be different depending on the type of camera you use and every situation.



So the tone value of the overall photo is an important factor that the camera use to determine its EV settings when you press the shoot button half way down, and it does not really matter how many points or sensors the camera has to do an accurate Exposure Value reading.

Of course the more points the camera has to do its reading the better the end result will be. But the Digital Camera will always give priority to the darker area of your frame by trying to bring in more details in the darker area and therefore if you have too much dark area in your frame your clouds will probably be all white outs. Look at your old photos and notice those that have more darker tone value in the overall frame, that the clouds are white outs, and in your photos with a less darker tone overall value, you can probably see more details in the clouds.

So always keep this in mind because too much dark area on you shots and you will loose texture and details in the white area, and especially in the clouds. Look at your frame before you push the button and try to guess the overall tone value of your frame and realize that the more dark area there is, the more chances will be that you will end up with white outs in your clouds or in the brightest areas of your shot.

**Here is some hints on how to have a better control to eliminate white outs in your clouds.**

**1- Minimize the amount of dark area** in your frames by moving your frame either to the left or to the right.

**2- Lower the horizon.** If clouds have an interesting pattern and nice colours most people will bring the horizon line very low and since the sky is much brighter then land the camera will automatically bring the EV value down and your clouds won't be white outs. So lowering the horizon line is another way to play with the EV value.

**3- Point and focus away from the dark area or the light source.**

I hope you know by now that when you press the shoot button half way down on the camera that this is when the camera takes its readings to evaluate the correct EV value for this shot and also makes the focus, and when you continue to press all the way down this is when the camera takes the shot. Realize that you don't have to have the camera pointed exactly at the frame you want to take when you press the button half way down. You can move the camera to the left or the right or up or down to have a different EV value when you press half way down and then hold the button at that position and move the camera back at the position of the frame you wanted to take and then continue to press the button all the way down to take your shot. You will find that this technique will give you a great control over the EV value that will be chosen by the camera without having to change anything in the menu every time you want to take a shot. For example if you still want those dark area in your shot, just point your camera away to a brighter area to make your focus and bring the camera back to the frame you wanted to take. This way the dark area won't have as much details and the clouds won't be white outs either.

Also when taking shots of a sunrise or a sunset to control the EV value without having to go to the menu, I never point the camera directly at the sun or too close to the sun to let the camera take it's readings because the shot would be too dark since the camera will see that there is too much light in the frame.

So to play around with the EV value I point my camera further away from the sun on either side to press the shoot button half way down for the camera to take it's readings and I hold the button half way and move the camera back to centre the sun or the subject and then I continue to press all the way down to take my shot.

Depending on how far you move the camera away from the sun to press the button half way down will determine the settings the camera will choose for the shot. Keep a close eye on the clouds and find the effect you want by varying your position or distance away from the sun when you press the button half way down. The further away you are away from the sun when you press the shoot button half way down, the brighter the shot will be and the closer to the sun you are the darker the shot will be. This is what I do to control the EV value on most of my shots and not only at sunrise or sunsets, but don't forget that the camera also adjust the focus when you press your button half way down so make sure your subject is used to do the focus or something that is at the same distance and then bring the camera back towards the sun and continue to press the shoot button all the way down to take your shot. Experiment with this technique and take many shots. On most digital camera there is the possibility to take multiple shots with different EV value, (EXPOSURE COMPENSATION). For example one shot will be EV +1 and one at the selected EV value by the camera and the other at EV-1 depending on the bracket you choose the EV value to be. But the setback in this case is that you have to wait for the camera to take all three shots and to save them and in most case you will probably loose the next shot opportunity because of that.

On my Old **FUJIFILM FinePix S100FS**, there is an external wheel that permits me to adjust directly the Exposure Bias up or down very quickly but not all Digital Cameras have this quick access feature. So Exposure Compensation and Bracketing would be another way to do it but experience showed me that I can get much better results just by moving the Camera away from the sun to take the EV readings and then move it back to continue the shot. This way I have a much better control on the end result and my shots are exactly as I want them to be.

This would be another way to do it but experience showed me that I can get much better result just by moving the camera away from the sun to take the EV readings and then move it back to continue the shot. This way I have a much better control on the end result and my shots are exactly as I want them to be.

To take my EV readings and Focus on this photo I moved the Camera to the back of the Tall Ship and then I moved the Camera back to centre the ship to complete the shot. Had I left the camera pointed towards the sun to take the EV readings, the shot would have been much too dark.



This is the technique I used on all my shots of the tall ships where the sun was in the frame and this is why my shots are not too dark. This technique can be use for most of your shots and the only thing to remember is to focus at a distance of your subject or at what ever distance you want to have in focus.

Remember that for landscape photography it is better to focus half way from your position to infinity and use a small f/stop value for example, f8 is better for landscape then f2.5.

So now with this new technique you will have a better control of your shots. Just experiment and take lots of shots and you will find that this technique is worth a try because you will finally have the shot you want and the way you want them to be with a better control over the camera's selected EV readings. No more need to play around in the menu with the EV settings, just leave it at 0 and always keep in mind the overall tonality of your frames and act accordingly to have the desired results and keep a close eye on those clouds.

**LATITUDE:** Means the ability to perceive details in bright and dark areas of an image. A Wide Latitude will show details and a Narrow Latitude will be a loss of details. The human eye has a wide Latitude and can perceive details in both dark and bright areas even if the range of brightness is considerable between them. Cameras work and see the world differently. Film's have a large latitude in bright areas, and a narrow latitude in dark areas.

Digital cameras have a good latitude in the darker areas, and a narrow one in the bright area, so Digital Cameras work in reverse of Negative Films. Slide and Transparency films have a very narrow latitude in both bright and dark areas requiring greater exposure accuracy to minimize the loss of details in both dark and bright areas.

**High ISO setting** will increase the latitude in Negative Films but on the contrary a High ISO setting in a digital camera will reduce the Latitude. So it is always much preferable to work at the lowest possible ISO setting when using a Digital Camera.

## **5-POST PROCESSING: The Digital Darkroom.**

(Also called **Touch up** process.)

If you have succeeded to eliminate white out when you took your photos, you are in luck as long as you do not create white outs in Post Processing your photos, and if you kept a copy of your Originals.

There is many things that could create white outs in your clouds when you change something on your photos with a photo Program, and here are the main culprits.

**1-CONTRAST;** Adding too much CONTRAST will cause White Outs because what contrast does is to make the darker areas darker and the brightest areas brighter, therefore creating a greater value of light Intensity between those different regions on your photo.

**2-COLOR BALANCE;** Be careful when changing the color balance because if you add too much Yellow, this will also create white outs in the brightest region of your photo. Yellow is light and adding Yellow is like adding light.

**3-BRIGHTNESS;** Adding brightness might also cause white outs, but brightness is not as drastic as adding Contrast would be but you must always keep a close eye on this one also.

When retouching your photo with a photo program it is always a good idea to look at the brightest areas of your shot to make sure you did not create white outs. When adjusting Contrast, Color Balance and Brightness, zoom in those brightest region and stop cranking up the value of any of those mentioned above when you start to see that you are losing texture and details in those brightest regions, stop and bring those value back down a couple of notch. This will be the best adjustment you can ever make without causing any White Outs. **Always remember** that the less you touch up a photo, the better the quality of the pixel will be and the better the quality of the pixel is, the clearer the final result of your image will be. So keep the touch up process to a minimum and only if necessary.

### **6-DIRECTION OF THE LIGHT SOURCE:**

In photography never let the sun touch the lens of the camera from in front of you and not sideways either, because the sunlight will shine on the surface of the lens and it will whiten all your colors. So you will lose the brightness of the colors and their intensity and contrast will be greatly diminished. This might be ok if that effect helps to accentuate the mood of the subject. In visual art, the location and direction of the light source is very important to help to create shadows and to use them to your advantages to bring out the subject and to create ambiance and more depth in the composition. So before you start any composition you must decide on the Exact Location of the Light Source, and always keep it in mind during your composition so that you will place your shadows accordingly in the correct angles, depending of your light source's location.

### **7-DEPTH OF FIELD (in Photography)**

Someone told me that it was not easy for him to take Macro shots, and he is not the only one to have problems with close-up shots. I too have sometime difficulty to get exactly what I want in a close up. A better understanding of DOF will help you to have a better control of your Macro shots and Photography in general. Depth of field is simply the focus range that your camera will give you in your shot depending on the camera settings and your lens. The Focus Range can be measured from where the image is in focus to the point where it starts to get blurry. So this distance is in inches or feet depending of the situation. If you are taking a shot of a flower or a butterfly and you set your camera to macro or super macro then we are talking about distance in inches. If you take a shot of a landscape then we are talking about distance in feet. The smaller the DOF is, the less distance of the shot that will be in focus, and this is called (Shallow Focus). The larger the DOF is, the more distance in the shot will be in focus, and this is called (Deep Focus). There is many ways to control the DOF and here is some of them.

**8-APERTURE EXPLAINED:** A small Aperture Opening would be (f8 or f11 or f16) and a Large Aperture Opening would be (f2.5 f3 or f4) It works in reverse the higher the f#, (Example f16) the smaller the Aperture Opening will be, and the smaller the f# (f2.5 or f3.5), the larger the Aperture Opening will be. Note also that a large Aperture Opening will give you better and brighter colors then if you would use a smaller Aperture Opening. Always keep in mind that with a large aperture you will have more lens deformity on the edge of your photo from the curvature of the lens then if you used a small Aperture. So adjust your Aperture's size accordingly to the need of your shots.

#### **FOR A LARGER DOF.**

- 1- Do not use magnification or telephoto lens. ( If you have a telephoto lens on your camera, do not use the zoom)
- 2-Use a small Aperture setting like f8 or f11 or f16. (Ideal for landscape Photography)
- 3- Move away a little bit from the subject and crop the photo on a computer later with a photo.
- 4-For automatic cameras set it to (LANDSCAPE) the camera will give priority to a smaller Aperture, but for a better control of your shots it is always better to set it to manual mode or select Aperture Priority mode if you have it on your camera and select the smallest Aperture Opening possible. (Example: f8 or f11 or f16)

#### **FOR A SMALLER DOF.**

- 1- Use magnification lens or telephoto. (Magnification will give you a smaller DOF)
- 2- Set the camera Aperture at the highest possible opening with the lens you are using. (Example: f 2.5 of f3.5 or f4)
- 3- For automatic cameras, set it to (FLOWER) the camera will give priority to a larger Aperture, but for a better control of your shots it is always better to set it to manual mode or select Aperture Priority mode if you have it on your camera and choose the biggest possible Aperture Opening on your camera. (Example: f 2.5 of f3.5 or f4)

**For landscape Photography:** If you have an Automatic Digital Camera and that you don't want to bother with settings just put it at (LANDSCAPE) and the camera will adjust the Aperture accordingly. Do the focus as explained below.

On manual settings, Use the smallest possible Aperture on your camera, (EX: f8 or f 11 or f 16) to have the Largest possible DOF, and to make your focus, point your camera half way between your position and the horizon at infinity distance and then position your camera up to take your shot. This will give you a clear focus at mid distance in your shot and the overall picture will be in focus and that is preferable for landscape Photography.

**9-THE LAW OF THE THIRD:** In photography you will often hear this term and this is a very simple way to take better shots but this law does not tell you much of anything on how to make a better composition and it is not always a good thing to use either. On most digital cameras that you can buy today, you will have a display button and if you press it continuously, you will eventually see two vertical and two horizontal lines appear on your viewfinder display. Those lines won't appear on your pictures and are there to guide you to place your subject, to find your center and also to help you to keep your camera strait.

If you noticed, they also divide your picture area in thirds, three vertical spaces and three horizontal spaces, and the intersections of those lines create a square that defines your center area. The law of the third, suggest that you place your subject on one of the spot where the vertical and horizontal lines intersects. The law of the Third specifies that placing your subject on those spot will make your shots more interesting, but I strongly disagree with that fact because most of the time this will only open the door to allow repetitive and unnecessary patterns to be left on the picture area and you might have to make your subject too small to satisfy this law. Instead use those lines to help you to center your subject and to keep your camera strait. Only on rare occasions you might be able to place your subject at the intersection of those lines. Your subject could be a person, a flower or a butterfly, and on occasions I did place my subject at those intersecting points, but I made sure that the other areas of my photo did not have any repetitive patterns. Repetitive patterns are, a sky with no clouds, or a grass area with the same tint and color, or sand on a beach with no distinctive difference. In other words, what ever repeats itself on a picture you don't need to have it to fill too much space on your photo, so try to eliminate any repetitive patterns as much as possible? To help you to do this either get closer to your subject or change your angle of view by either lowering yourself or placing yourself on an elevated area to take your shot.

One other thing you can use those lines for is also to limit the height and the low of your horizon line. Never place your horizon line higher then the top horizontal line and not lower then the bottom horizontal line either. Anywhere in between is OK. If I take a picture of a sunset and the sky is very beautiful I will lower the horizon line to the bottom horizontal line in my viewfinder and leave less space for repetitive patterns like sand and rocks or waves at the bottom. If I have a nice foreground I will put my horizon bang in the center. Most of the time if there is no clouds in the sky I will put my horizon line on the top horizontal line, since an empty sky is all the same color and pattern, and this would make a very dull picture unless you can incorporate some tree branches or birds. Your main subject should be always bigger then anything else on the picture and well contrasted, so it is not always possible to line up your subject with those intersecting points.

I don't say here that your subject should always be centered, because on occasions if the surroundings are filled with many different interesting patterns, (like different lines, tones and colors) and if it is possible to use them in your shots, then you can make your subject smaller and place it off center and that will make an interesting picture, but don't do this all the time, variety is the key to learn and to get great shots. So just take multiple shots at different angles and you will see what comes out best. Just try to keep in mind the 7 basic GUIDELINES of composition and your photo will improve greatly. Think about all the lines that will be in your shot before you take it and place yourself accordingly to maximize their effect in the composition of your photos. I know that you can't change the way nature is made but you can change your point of view and your distance and angle so that the main lines in nature that will compose your shot are in accordance with the 7 GUIDELINES of a good composition.



## **LIGHT REFLECTION and the Effect of surrounding Colors on the Subject.**

The First and Foremost Important thing that you must know is that when working from a photo, I advice you to never, never, never reproduce the photo as it is on your canvas, you must correct in your mind the Contrasts, Brightness, Color Temperature, and the Saturation of the colors and improve on the composition if you can.

Since that this is not always easy to do in your mind as you paint, I suggest to do like me, as I prefer to FIRST correct the photo on my computer and I Reprint a better version that will be closer to what it should be and how I want to reproduce it on my canvas. Then and only then I can work from my photo.

It is very important that all Artist are also aware of light reflection and the effect it will have on their subjects because when light reflects on anything it does not only reflects the light but also reflect the color where the light reflects from and that color imprints on the subject in the light ray and will effect the subject's color, and specially if the subject is white or with light and bright colors and light rays.

So Under different Light Condition Colors will look different because of the color of the light source and the color of the surrounding objects that will reflect light rays and their respective colors back on another object in proximity. So reflected light rays from nearby objects can change the brightness and color of an object. For example if you where to paint a white and gray dog in nature and it is surrounded by green trees and grass and the sky is blue and the ground is brown near the dog, so all those colors will reflect on the white and grays of your Dog, and since that white absorb more colors then any other colors your dog should have all those colors in his white. In this situation in the Dog's white and gray hair, there should be light shade of PINKS, LIGHT BLUE, LIGHT GREEN, LIGHT BEIGE but not everywhere, just a bit here and there. Like on the dogs back towards the sky there should be some light blue-grays, and on the side and the edges there should be some light green and beige, and towards the bottom and sides some light green and light beige. Also around the area where you can see some of the skin of the dog, there should be light Pink colors mixed in the white of the hairs. Know that there is always a touch of Light Blue in the shaded areas anyway. So the white is never just white unless you are painting a scene in black and white only.

OK this was only one example, and does not cover everything about this subject but it gives you an Idea of what I am talking about here. Doing landscape works also the same way. If you paint a big rock and it is surrounded by grass and green trees, you should expect to see some light green mixed in the grays of that rock near its edges closer to the grass. The same with a tree trunk should have some green mixed in the brown of the tree trunk at it's base near the grass.

## **THE EFFECT THAT LIGHT HAS ON COLORS:**

Know that a White Subject will never be just white unless it is in a photo studio surrounded by only white walls, white ceiling, and white floor. Because any colors around the subject will reflect on the white of that subject. If you paint a scene in the sun, all colors should tend towards yellow since that the sun rays are yellow. This is called color temperature (in Photography) and if a scene is painted in the shade all colors should have a tint towards blue in them. But don't forget that at the edge of the shaded area where it is closer to an area in the sun, the yellow light rays will be reflected at the edge of the shaded area so that there will be less blue in the edges and gradually more yellow.

Shaded areas should be well defined near the subject and fade at the edges the further away the shade is from the subject.

Think of light rays as **A TRANSPORTER of COLORS** and don't be shy to make experiences with it. Use a yellow light source like the one from a flashlight using an incandescent light bulb and another flashlight using a WHITE LIGHT emitted from LED or (Light Emitting Diodes) if you want. Now get some cartons of different colors like the construction paper of different color you can buy at a dollar store, they sometime come in pads with all different colors. Make sure you have one blue, one red one yellow one orange one green and one white and one black. Now place the white carton upright like on the wall or against an object to hold it up and at its base flat on the table place one green carton. Now use a yellow flashlight and shine the light down at a 45 ° angle so the that light will bounce back up on the color carton and hit the upright white carton and notice the effect that the light has on the white carton. Notice that not only the yellow light of the flashlight bounce back up on the white carton but also the green color from the green carton. Repeat this experiment with the white flashlight and notice the difference in the color reflected on the white carton. Try a blue carton with a yellow light and see what happen.

Now instead of the white carton you could use a white cup or a white bowl. Now change the color carton and repeat the same thing. It won't be long that you will see that colors do reflect easily on white and specially on shiny surfaces. Now take those cartons and stand in front of a mirror that has a light over head. Look at your face and put a white carton parallel to the floor just below your chin at about shoulder high so that you can also see your neck and see the effect that the color of the cartons has on your skin. Try it with all the colors you have, one at a time and since the skin is a light color it will absorb easily the colors of the cartons reflected back from the light above you.

You must also know that a shiny surface will reflect more light and will also absorb more colors from the surrounding objects and this is true also for any subject. If the subject surface is shiny it will absorb more of the reflected light and colors and if the surface are not shiny but rough or dull, they will not reflect as much light and as much color either but there will always be some reflected color present near the subject and the adjacent colors. Experiment with different objects and different colors and see for yourself the magic of light and color and from that moment on always remember to use that knowledge in your paintings when painting a subject surrounded by other colors then it's own.

For another example look at my painting # 75 The Lady has a yellow dress and this is a light bright color and she is surrounded by green wall, plants and green floor tiles so it is normal that some of that green reflects back all over on the yellow dress. In nature like in a landscape painting it is not always evident to see the reflection of colors from one object to another because in nature most objects are dark with a rough surface, but it is there and as an artist you must train your eyes to be able to see it and to reproduce that effect on your paintings. Just go out and take a walk in nature and observe the magic effect that LIGHT REFLECTIONS has on colors of nearby objects.

**Now you are becoming a better artist then ever before, and you are now on the right track.**



# PLATE # 1



#60 La Campagnarde - 24 x 36



White lines and arrows shows what directions the eyes will follow when looking at the art work.



# 26 Vision - 20 x 26



**Red lines denotes evasive lines.**  
**Small ones and not too many is ok.**

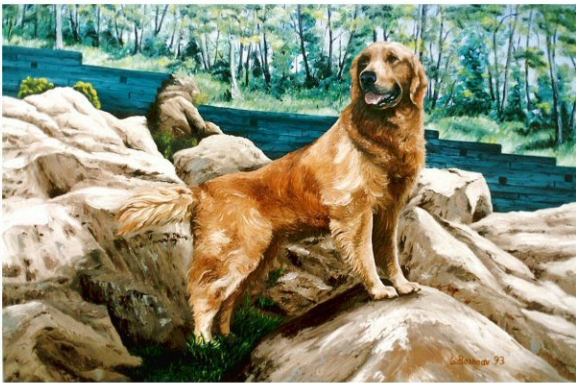
# Plate # 2



#53 Le Grand Canyon - 24 x 36



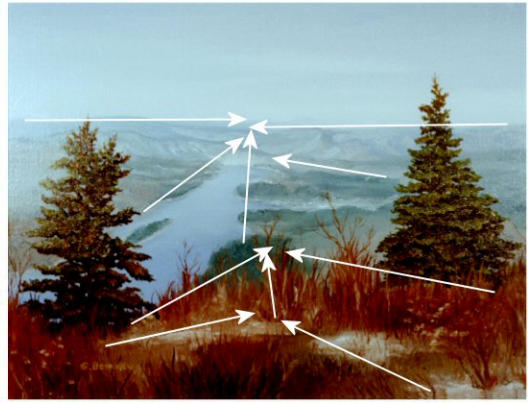
White lines and arrows shows what directions the eyes will follow when looking at the art work.



# 55 Bobby - 24 x 36



#38 U.S.A. (Nevada) - 20 X 24



# Plate # 3



*#89 Mount Baker 24 x 36*



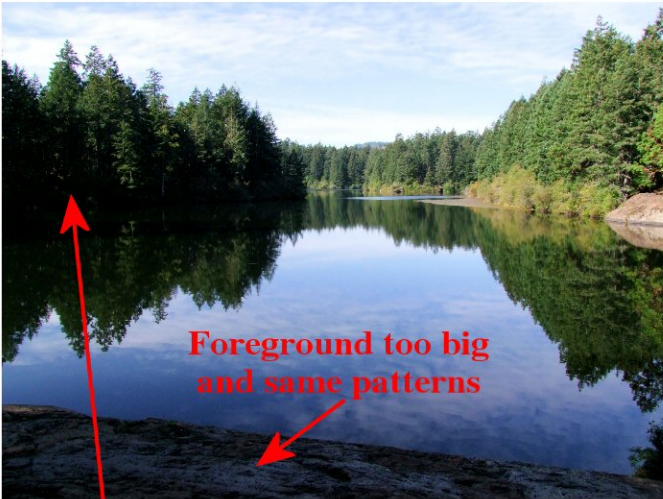
# Plate # 4



**Borders overloaded**



**Better**

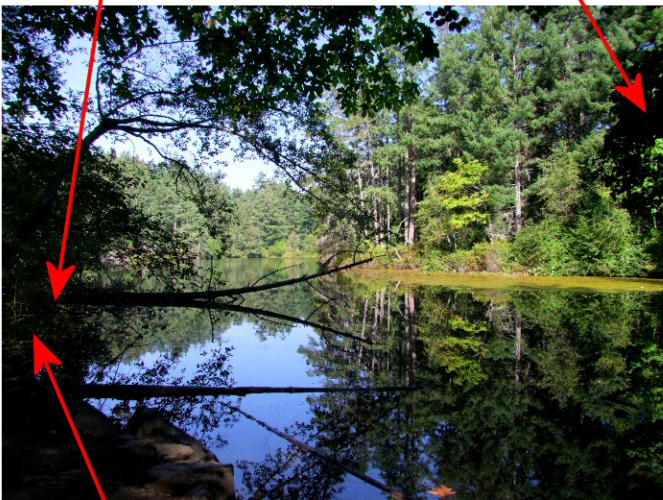


**Foreground too big  
and same patterns**

**Too many dark areas**



**Better**



**Borders overloaded**



**Better**

# Plate # 5



## **IN CONCLUSION:**

I am an accomplished Artist with over 45 years experience in visual art, as well as in professional photography. I took a course in Commercial Art, with the FAMOUS ARTIST SCHOOL in Connecticut, USA, back in 1970 and I never stopped learning since. So the text that you just read contains some of what I learned in that course and a lot of my own experience in this field. I started to learn photography when I was only ten years old from my Father who was a Professional Photographer.

What he did then, he gave me a camera, and he said to me....TAKE THIS AND GO TAKE SOME PICTURES. I think that all he wanted to know was, if I had a natural talent, and I guess I did, since I never had any bad comments from my Father about all the pictures I took from that day on. It did not take long after, that he appointed me to take pictures at Weddings and other special occasions, all by myself. My older sister was also doing that and on some weekends, My Father, My Sister, and I, were all contracted at different Weddings at the same time.

With all my experience and knowledge, I am now more than ever dedicated in helping my fellow artists and Photographers so that they can become the best they can be in their respective Field of Art, and to help them to improve also with their own personal style. The only cost for you to use this file is to send it out on the Internet to all your friends and to pass it around to other artists or photographers that will also profit from this very important BASIC information for working in Visual Art. Tell me, who does not have a camera these days, and won't need this information since that now anybody can take pictures with their Cell Phones. As you can see the Basic Guidelines of Composition in Visual Art are very simple, but they are also very, very, very POWERFUL. So never underestimate their capacity to help you to improve in your work and to guide you towards success.

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Thank you in advance for Sharing this File, and Good Luck to you all.

***For any Questions or Comments, you can contact me at my e-mail address;***  
[gbonneau@gbphotodidactical.ca](mailto:gbonneau@gbphotodidactical.ca)

**ARTISTICALLY YOURS**

**GHISLAIN BONNEAU.**

