

## A lens with a view to view (view 4)

### Key elements

"I went around with eyes like twin vacuum cleaners sucking up designs" – *Ralph Steiner*

Do you subconsciously compose images in your mind before you actually know that you place image elements in your viewfinder when you make a photograph?

How often have you instinctively moved a little bit to the left or the right with your camera when you were looking through your viewfinder? Why did we move to the left or the right, or up and down - what is the driving force behind this?

For instance, let us take a vertical image. For most people this is already a unnatural start, we are so used looking at images that are wider than high that we have a natural tendency of keeping it that way and hold the camera on a horizontal plane.

When I have my camera in the vertical format position, I hardly ever place any well-defined subject matter in the middle of the frame or top of the frame.

In most cases I place my item of interest near the bottom, or about between the centre and the bottom of the image, this is for me a better suited visual "resting place" than anywhere else.

The reasoning behind this can be that in a vertical image our eyes have a tendency to scan from the top to bottom and in horizontal images our eyes are used to scan from the left to the right.

The bottom of the image implies the base, and on the base we can rest "things" - "hero's" or "focal points". This could be a case of "gravity sucks" 😊!

This logic can be easily apply when we have a rectangle of frame to work in, directions inside this frame are possible because one side is longer than the other.

See my (off the wall) nut photos, from left to right: a rising nutcase.



The 1<sup>st</sup> photo seems to be quite natural, the 2<sup>nd</sup> is acceptable, but the 3<sup>rd</sup> is going nuts, very unnatural.

In a square image we have already achieved a balance of lines and composition will become a little bit more difficult to work in. Everything inside the square has to be placed with more precision to get the effect of dynamics working. Once you are used to place your composition within the square, forming your composition will be easier but I would have great difficulty switching formats. It is probably easy to create a very balanced photograph inside a square, because our eyes and brain have a tendency to place the important part of our image in the middle of our viewfinder or frame. (I am just wondering if people that have a very balanced nature, or those who are born under a star sign like Libra, use a Hassleblad camera, the negative size is 6 by 6 cm. ☺)

Probably all things about composition comes down to some design basics, flair, and a well - (or un) balanced mind and strong desire to create images that feel good..... I possibly cannot comment on these last statements, however design basics are more tangible.

Because our eyes scan what we see, we do not accept a view in front of us in a blink, while our eyes go through the image in front of us we discover what we see.

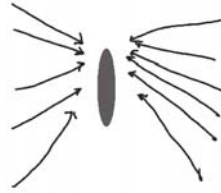
When a man starts looking at a woman he may start at the face and ends up at the legs....well kind off, you get my drift..... He does not look at the woman in one glance and absorbs in one overall blink the full presence of that woman...



To practice to see images in a different – meaning “DESIGN – light” have a look at photos based on the approach below, do not look at the actual image, but translate it into lines, shapes, forms and contrasts etc.

In a photograph (see photo above) we use lines to guide our eye to where we want it to

rest. I do not mean natural lines, the part (shelves) of the photograph that can be interpreted to convey something like a line. See sketch 2.



When we look at the key elements in the image, the woman and are shelves, the path in between, and the ceiling, we see contrast. See photo 3.



When we look at the shapes we can draw imaginary *lines* containing parts of the image that are relevant. See photo 4.



When we look at the shapes and converging lines they create a vanishing point, fortunately off centre.

When we look for distribution of tonal values we can easily draw lines around those too. Or we can look at the balance and visual weight of the elements, similar lines again! Unfortunately there are no grey values in my image, this image limits us somewhat, see



photo 5.

I knew I had been given a b/w page for this issue, thus I had to look for something simple and graphic, practise on your favourite images instead.

Hope you can read between the lines, enjoy your conceptual thoughts, visualize and

create those pixels or crystals and exchange them for a positive bankbalance.  
Viewing you next month, any comments or suggestions.... Email me at  
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Ciao

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