

# Composition for Landscape and Macro Photography – Part 2



# Format

- Choice of portrait or landscape - has a direct impact on aesthetics of an image
- Formatting will affect the way the eyes travel through the image
- By choosing one format over the other one controls what will be seen first and last and influence the mood and emotions evoked
- Experiment - pay attention to how formatting influences the visual design of the composition

# Diagonal Lines and Triangles

- Different shapes and lines can influence the message conveyed
- Diagonal lines exude a sense of activity, speed, and motion
- Objects on a diagonal plane appear more active than objects on a vertical or horizontal plane
- When looking for triangular elements, they do not need to have straight lines – a hint of a triangular shape will add energy
- Natural occurring triangles - a dune or mountain ridge are excellent subjects

















# Tilted or Dutch Angles

- In cinematography, the **Dutch angle** is one of many cinematic techniques used to portray psychological uneasiness or tension.
- To create a more interesting image consider tilting the camera on the x-axis
- Captures a scene strangely and makes it hard to ignore













# Symmetry

- Both sides of an image appear to mirror each other
- Often makes images appear static but at times can be pleasing
- **Reflective** symmetry – a mountain or sky reflected in water
- **Vertical** symmetry - symmetry is perpendicular to the horizon line; can depict height and infinity; adds a sense of stability
- **Radial** symmetry - circular shapes symmetrically aligned; repeat to create a hypnotic effect – for example, ripples in water









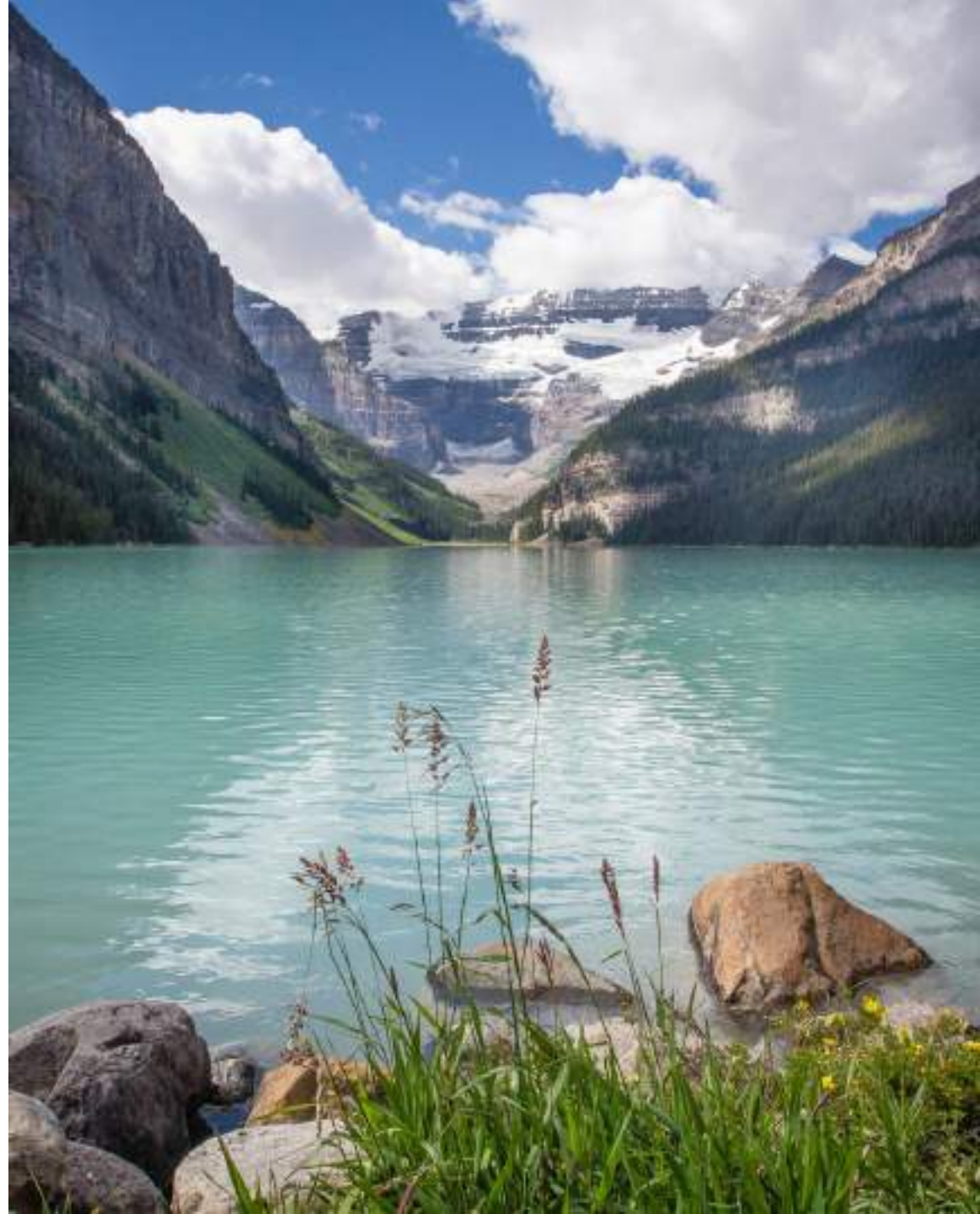






# Foreground Elements

- Can use to stage depth
- Objects appear larger when closer and smaller further away; change in size creates illusion of depth
- Including foreground elements separates images in different places which gives depth
- Adding something like rocks or flowers in the foreground can do wonders for a flat image
- Wide-angle lens can enhance depth; can exaggerate distance between close and far objects
- Make sure foreground element does not take attention away from the subject









# Perspective

- Can use different perspectives to add depth
- Central perspective – one vanishing point which is located straight in front of the viewer at the principal point
- Lines create vanishing points which give a sense of depth in a picture; vanishing point - where two parallel lines converge; parallel lines converging is perceived as distance
- The more lines converge, the farther away viewer perceives
- Vanishing points often occur in the horizon, but can occur anywhere
- Can be several vanishing points in a frame; we usually only notice up to three vanishing points













# Patterns

- Add stability and consistency; can include elements like lines, colors, shapes
- Help guide the viewer towards the subject in focus OR may be the subject
- In landscapes can evoke a sense of eternity
- Can emphasize a focal point
- A break in a pattern helps draw attention to subjects















# Frame Within a Frame

- Framing can highlight or ignore particular elements in a scene
- Photograph through a window or doorway
- Shadows give implied frames
- Surface divisions can be used to create a frame
- Vignetting will draw the eye to the subject















# Texture

- Can enhance tactical feel of a photo
- May be smooth to prickly, hard to soft – all sorts of things
- Texture helps increase depth; objects with more texture will appear closer than objects with less
- Can make images more realistic
- Creates complexity and visual interest to simple compositions

- Including texture can be done in several ways:
  - Choose a subject possessing plenty of textural detail
  - Manipulate focus settings: Objects in focus will have more texture than objects with less
  - Adjust amount of texture with post-processing (use clarity, sharpness or contrast sliders)
- To emphasize texture, use adequate lighting
- Overhead lights and sidelights can accentuate texture
- Overhead sun emphasizes texture casting shadows and exposing detail











# Focal Length

- Use a variety of focal lengths to manipulate sceneries
- To capture grandeur of subjects far away, take advantage of the telephoto lens; make distant objects seem bigger and within reach
- Telephoto lens can help exude intimacy between the viewer and subject

- To highlight objects that are closer to you, use a wide-angle lens; makes closer objects seem more significant and distant objects appear smaller
- Wide-angle lenses - great to capture expansive landscapes
- Useful in vertical scenes such as architectural buildings



- Wide-angle lenses and fisheye lenses often distort
- Distortions can be unwanted or a creative tool





















# Backlighting

- Light comes from behind subject
- Can set a mood or add a creative touch
- Can emphasize contours and silhouettes of objects
- In landscape photography, best time to use is when the sun is low on the horizon
- Light is much softer at sunrise or sunset
- Sun's low angle creates dramatic colors
- Middle of the day - often best to filter light with objects such as leaves to soften harsh, mid-day sun





















# Juxtaposition

- Can highlight the contrast between two or more objects
- Objects should be equally dominant so viewer can easily compare the objects
- Can underscore differences in colors, shapes, age, and more











# Vantage Point

- Choice of vantage point will have a significant impact on the effect of an image
- Low vantage point
  - makes objects seem larger
  - makes the subject appear more authoritative/dominant
  - in landscape photography, a low vantage point can highlight tiny objects

## Eye level

- helps connect subject with viewer easily
- most commonly used angle

- High vantage point
  - Will allow viewer to see the entire scene
  - Objects will adopt subordinate position
  - Allows the viewer to observe what is in the middle ground
  - Can get above any obstructions
  - More clearly displays the space between the foreground and background
- Aerial Vantage Point
  - Serves same purpose as a high vantage point but often more exhilarating
  - Best used to capture a panoramic view of landscapes
  - Can use a drone
  - This viewpoint can unveil new compositional possibilities that weren't obvious before



















# Layers

- A technique which is easy to use and can have a tremendous impact
- Can guide the viewer's eye to a focal point but doesn't have to
- Can use layers to give movement – to do this consider how the foreground, middle-ground and background blend together
- Using the right combination of elements to create layers, can make an image dynamic and appealing























# Macro Photography Composition

- Choose a subject and the right subject – possible choices include a flower/plant, insect, a pattern
- Have a single point of focus; isolate your main subject as much as possible
- Consider filling the frame; focus on lines and curves - of petals for example
- Consider the various rules previously mentioned especially consider depth of field, shutter speed, texture and color
- Shooting angle matters
- Include a uniform background for maximum impact
- Keep composition simple









