



WHAT MAKES A GOOD PHOTO

# SOME TIPS AND TECHNIQUES

- Develop “Pre-Visualization
- Composition and Technical – Both required
- Learn to see the elements of composition even when not obvious.
- The presentation will introduce some of the factors on the handout and try to answer questions.
- Examples: identifying story, subject, focal point. Composition elements such as lines, color, shapes, frames, placement, weight, balance, and space.
- No Photographs were harmed in making this presentation (or improved)



## TECHNICAL

This is a technical error. The picture is over exposed and has a "blown out" area



## TECHNICAL - CROPPING

Okay, maybe this is not where your eyes are drawn, but where are her fingers?

# BACKGROUND



The subject can be lost in a busy background.



Bad Tourist. Watch for things sticking out heads, distracting from the subject.



## TIME AND PRE-VISUALIZATION

Anticipate motion in order to bring elements together to form a pleasing composition – before it happens.



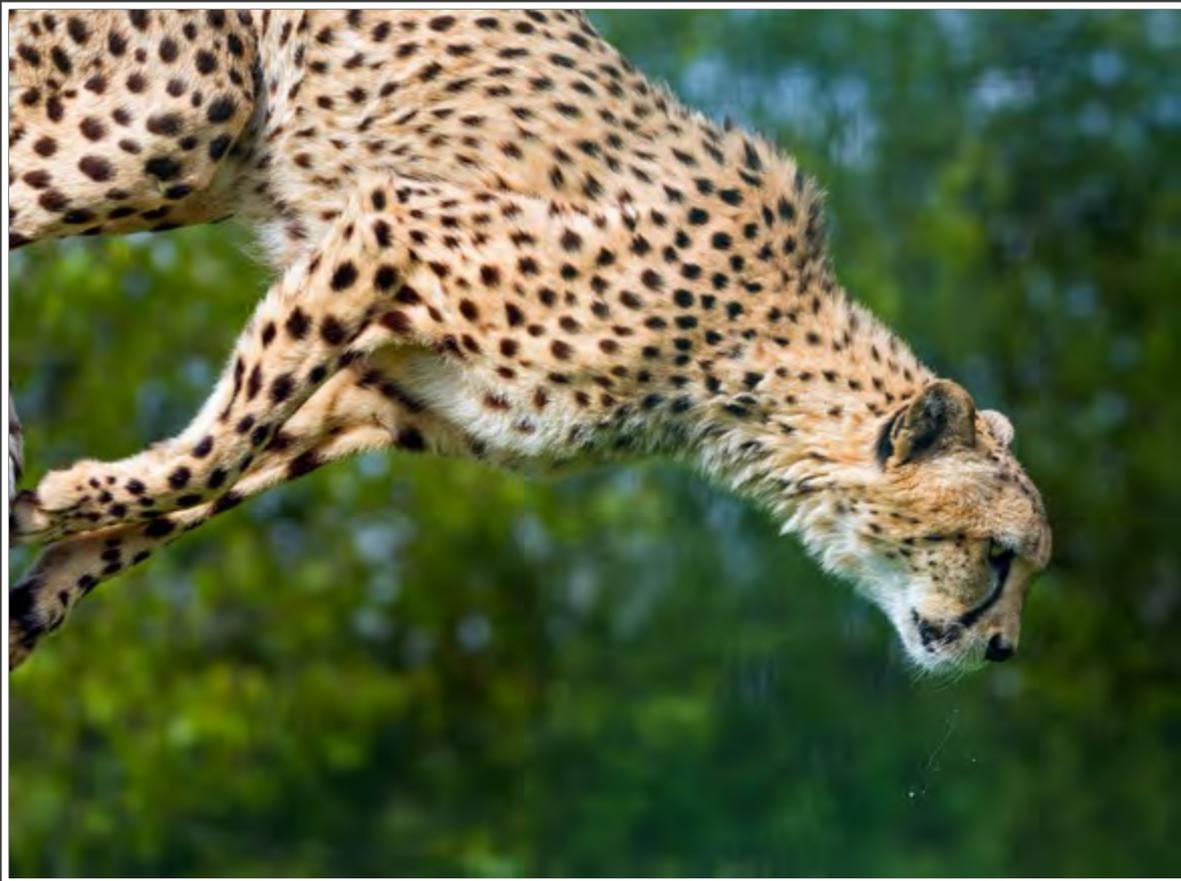
PRE-VISUALIZATION IS  
UNIQUE TO EACH  
PHOTOGRAPHER

The photo illustrates light,  
shadow, lines, curves, space,  
repetition and a focal point.



## TELLING A STORY – EMPLOYS SEVERAL ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION

Cat is not placed according to the Rule of Thirds – but the subject is clear and the viewer's eye is led to the subject. Shows space and balance. Any other element in the grass would shift “weight” away from the cat.



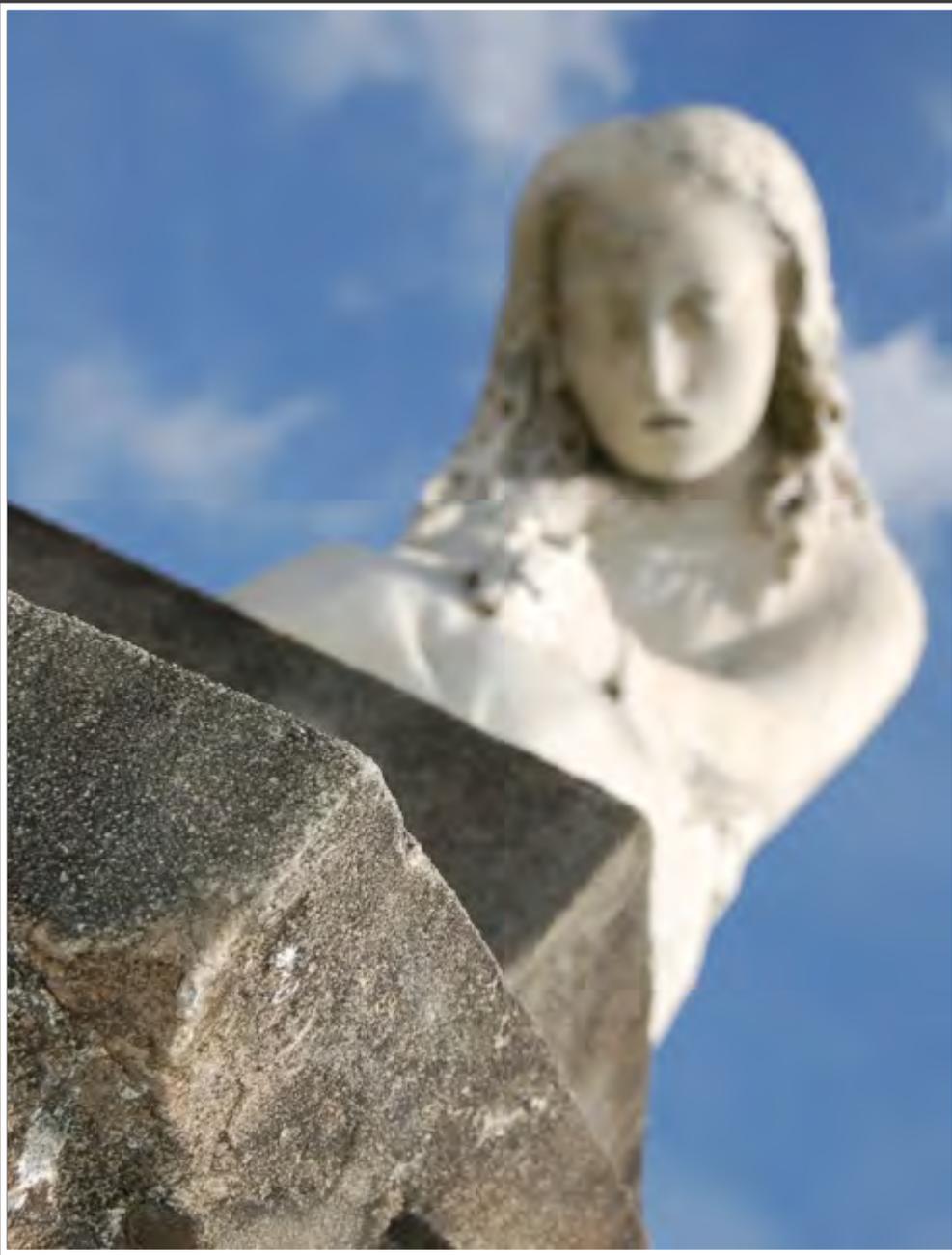
## WEAK USE OF SPACE CREATED A “FRAME BREAK

Use of space has created a “frame break”, the cat is leaving the frame through motion and sight line. The area of green foliage fights for attention because of size and placement. The story is broken because we can't see why the cat is jumping and where it is jumping to



## SUBJECT APPARENT BECAUSE OF COMPOSITION

Viewers eye immediately drawn to toad on left. Composition – juxtaposition, contrast, and spot color. Eye color of left toad gives more weight.



## FOCAL POINT

A focal point is typically produced by including an object that stands out from the rest of the photograph due to color, size, shape, or focus. This photo uses shape, intersecting lines and focus to establish a focal point. Does it work?



## WHAT IS THE SUBJECT?

The subject is the touching of the hands. Weight is given to the hands through use of frame, focal point, and depth of field.



## WHAT IS FIRST THING YOU SEE IN PHOTO?

The focal point is the bird's beak. Uses elements of composition of contrast and shape to establish the focal point. Perfect placement because it draws the viewers eye to the face of the bird. The bird is the subject, and the beak is the focal point.



## PROBLEM WITH MULTIPLE FOCAL POINTS

The viewer's eyes don't know where to rest, and it's hard to determine exactly what the subject is.

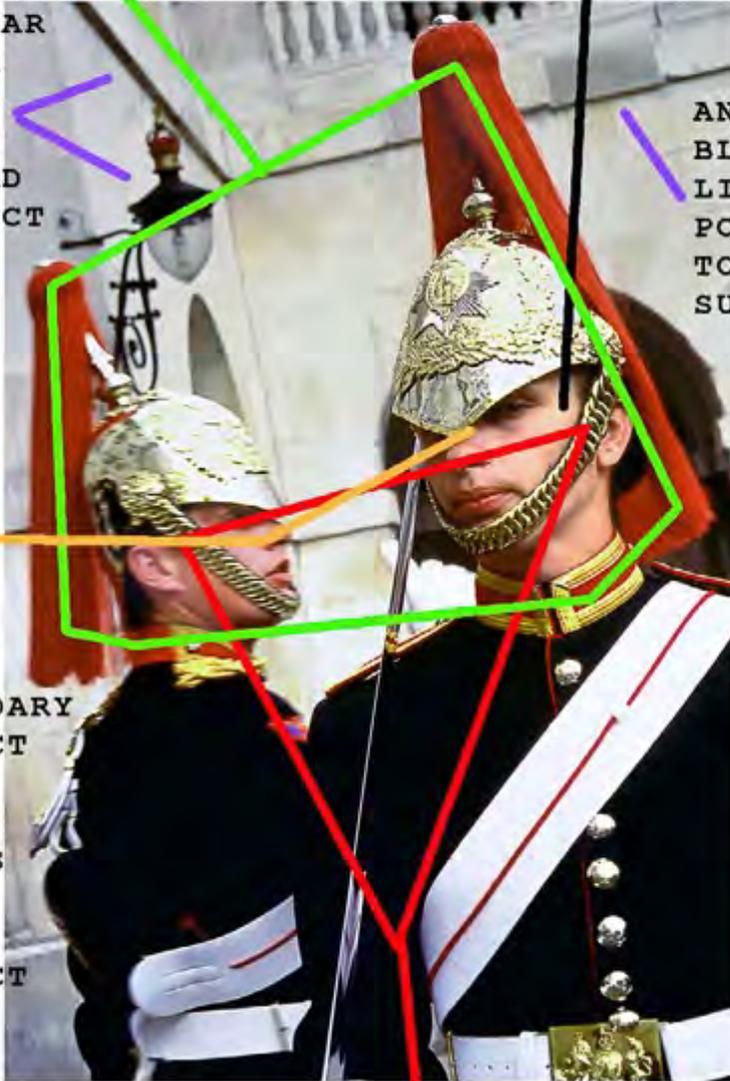
REPETITION OF RED  
COLOR FRAMES FACES

INTERESTING EXPRESSION

ANGULAR  
BLACK  
LINES  
POINT  
TOWARD  
SUBJECT

ANGULAR  
BLACK  
LINES  
POINT  
TOWARD  
SUBJECT

SECONDARY  
SUBJECT  
SIGHT  
LINE  
POINTS  
TO  
MAIN  
SUBJECT



STRONG TRIANGULAR COMPOSITION

## STRONG TRIANGULAR COMPOSITION

Practice studying photographs  
to see what draws your eyes.



## TOO MANY FOCAL POINTS FIGHTS FOR ATTENTION

Although the composition element of using lines is used, the lights on the right confuses focal point and subject. The edges are fighting for attention

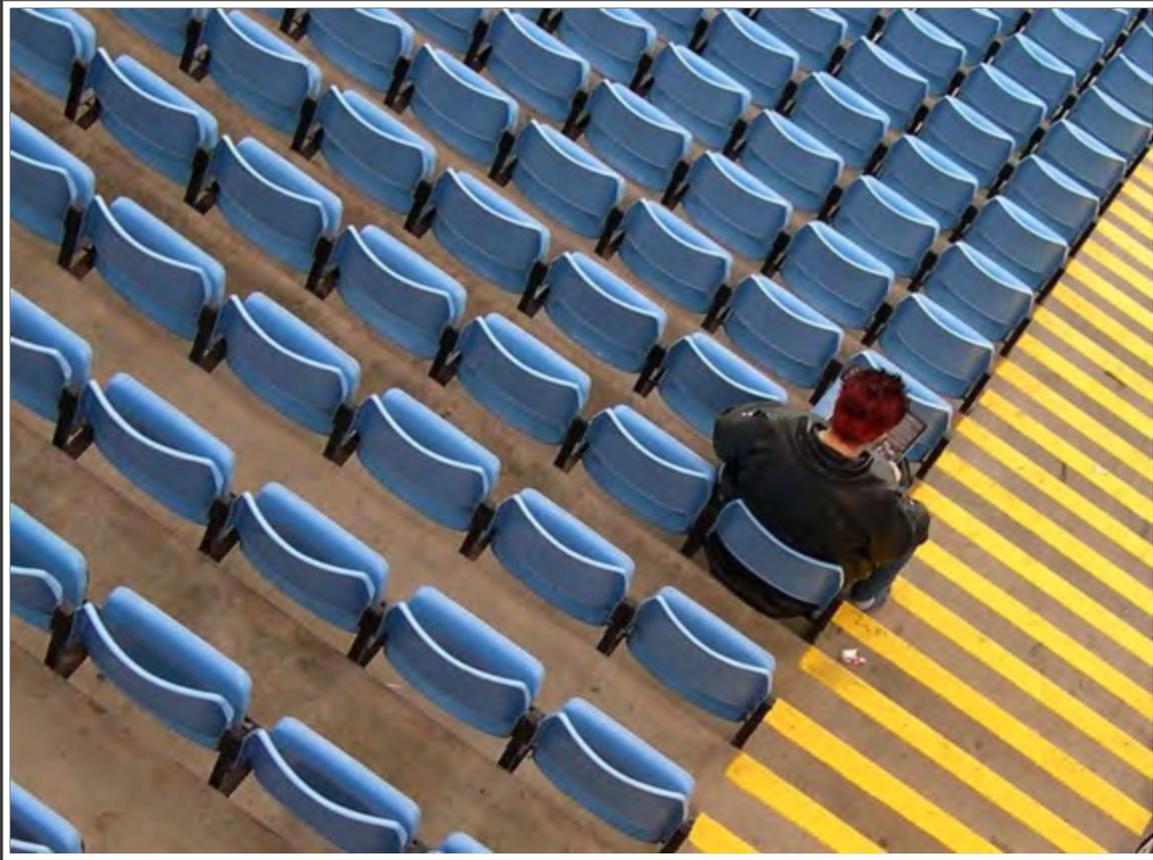
# FRAME BREAK



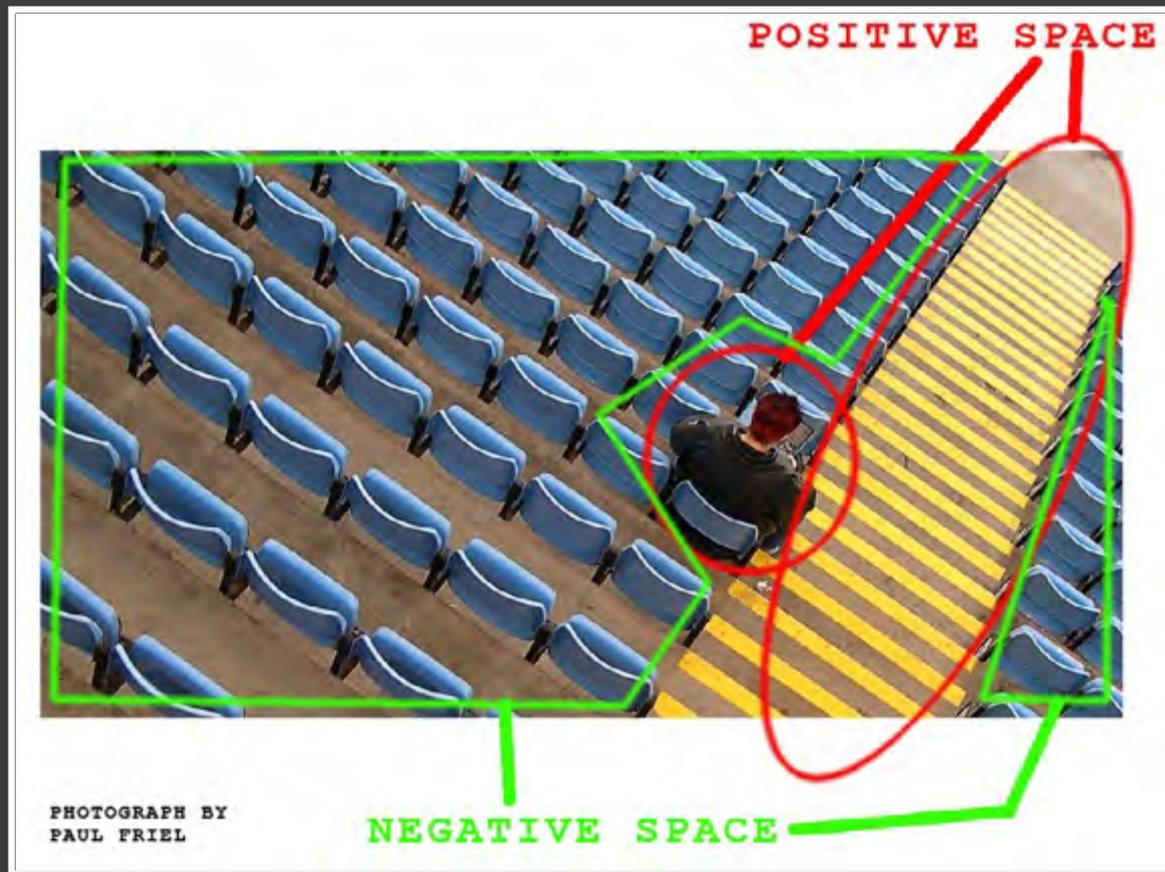
Example of “bad” frame break



Example of a good frame break



WHAT IS THE SUBJECT AND FOCAL POINT?



## FAILURE IN EXECUTING ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION

The man was intended to be the subject. Man is in fact the focal point. Stairs are a leading line but they lead away from the man and out of the frame. The stairs become the subject due to size (weight) and color.



## SYMMETRY

Symmetrical or asymmetrical are both choices. But the correct element is often obvious. The symmetry of the bird leads the viewers eye.



## SYMMETRY SOMETIMES DOESN'T WORK

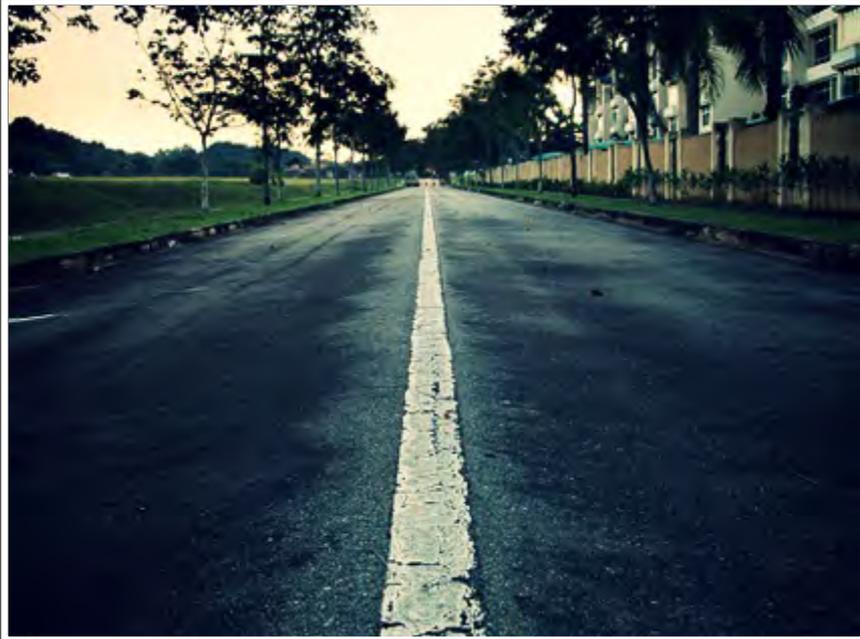
This photo not as effective as the bird photo because the viewer's eye is led to a point in the sky that has nothing.



## USE OF SPACE

The use of space in front of the horses shows movement. The horses are going some place and staying in the “frame”.

# LINES



Learn to identify lines. Don't position lines that leads viewer's eyes away from the subject.



Lines can be straight, curved, angled, crossing, singular.



DOES THIS PHOTO HAVE LINES?

Lines don't have to be obvious. See elements within a scene: lines, shapes, structure, tone, texture. The crowded street provides a line into the image.



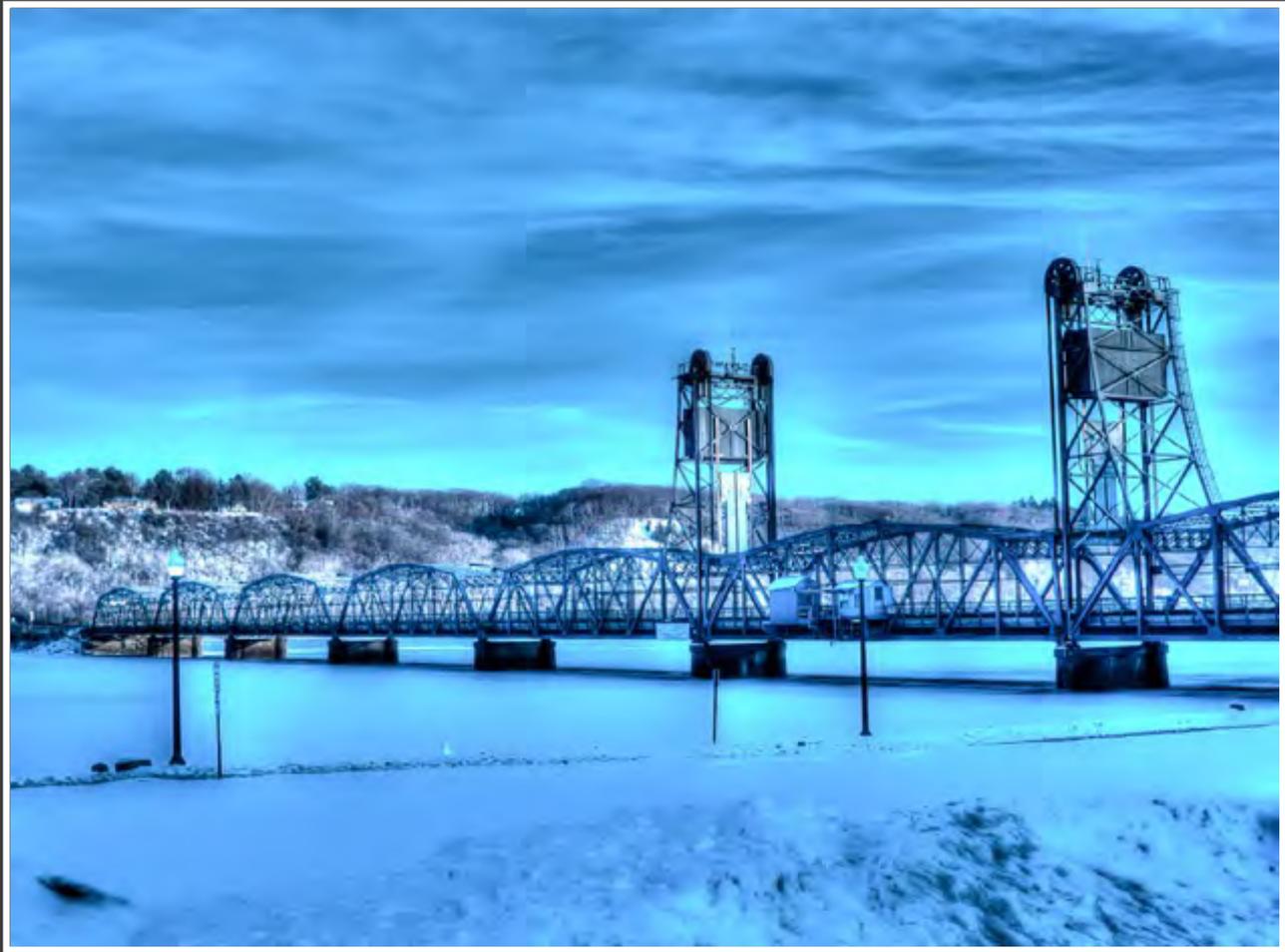
## LOOK FOR “INVISIBLE SIGHTLINES”

Notice the two men to the right. See how your eyes are drawn to where the men are looking in the scene. The kissing couple, the subject.

# MOTION AND SIGHTLINES



Creates tension for the viewer as they want to know where the subject will end up. The rule of space gives the bird somewhere to go. The triangular wall on the right adds visual weight and balances out the bird



## POWER OF COLOR

The use of blue and cyan “wash” tells the story of how cold a day it was.



## SPOT COLOR AS FOCAL POINT

A red barn on a field of white is a guaranteed eye catcher. The spot color and contrast work effectively.



## MULTIPLE COLORS

The three sides of the color wheel: red, green, and blue plus shape guide the eyes to the subject. More effective than just the use of one color.



USE OF FRAMES  
WHERE IS THE FRAME IN THIS PHOTO?

Frames can lead the viewer's eyes inward. In this photo the frame is the focal point. HINT: it isn't always this easy !!



## FRAME AS TUNNEL

This is a good example of using a frame as a tunnel. But it is missing a key element. What is it?

# TEST

- In tonight's Show & Tell – See if you can spot some examples of ideas presented and suggestions for improvements
- Be KIND !!