


# 30+ PHOTO SKILLS & TECHNIQUES

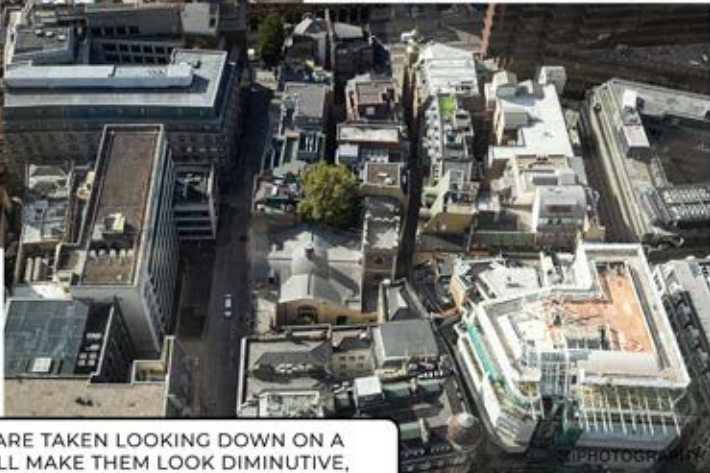
EXPLAINED WITH CLEAR VISUALS AND STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

# ANGLES

THERE ARE TECHNICALLY 3 DIFFERENT TYPES OF VIEW POINTS YOU CAN TAKE A PHOTO FROM. **HIGH ANGLE, LOW ANGLE, AND EYE LEVEL.** EACH GIVE A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE AND CHANGE THE STORY OF YOUR SUBJECT.



**LOW ANGLES** ARE LOOKING UP AT A SUBJECT. THEY MAKE OBJECTS LOOK POWERFUL AND DOMINEERING. INVERSELY THEY CAN MAKE THE AUDIENCE FEEL OVERWHELMED BY THE TOWERING SUBJECT.



**HIGH ANGLES** ARE TAKEN LOOKING DOWN ON A SUBJECT. IT WILL MAKE THEM LOOK DIMINUTIVE, SMALL AND LESS THREATENING.

# F-STOP & APERTURE



**F/1.4**



**F/2**



**F/2.8**



**F/4**



**F/5.6**



**F/6.3**



**F/7.1**



**F/8**



**F/10**



**F/11**



**F/13**



**F/16**



**F/22**

AS THE F-STOP NUMBER INCREASES THE SIZE OF THE APERTURE GETS SMALLER, LETTING LESS LIGHT IN, MAKING A PHOTO DARKER. F-STOPS AVAILABILITY RANGE FROM LENS TO LENS.

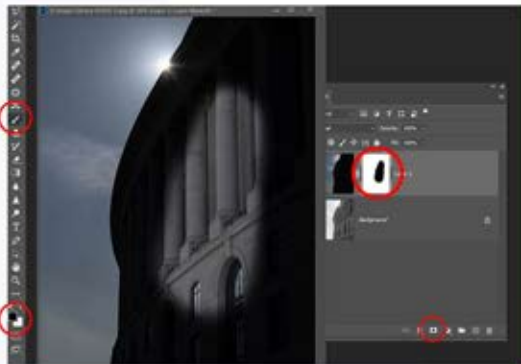


# MANUAL BRACKETING

**SHOT 1: EXPOSED FOR  
BACKGROUND**



**SHOT 2: EXPOSED FOR  
FOREGROUND**



**RESULTING COMPOSITE  
IS EVENLY BALANCED  
AND CORRECTLY  
EXPOSED. IDEAL TO USE  
WITH BACKLIT SUBJECTS.**

**IN PHOTOSHOP PLACE SHOT 1 ON TOP OF SHOT 2. ADD A LAYER MASK ON SHOT 1 AND USE A BLACK BRUSH ON THE SILHOUETTED AREA TO REVEAL THE COMPOSITE.**

# BROKEN PATTERNS



TO UPSET THE REPTITION, LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES WHERE PATTERNS ARE INCOMPLETE OR HAVE A GAP. YOU COULD ADD YOUR OWN BREAK WITH A CREATIVE CROP.

# COLOUR SPLASH

IDEAL FOR ISOLATING A PROP OR SUBJECT IN A BUSY SCENE. ONLY CHOOSE ONE COLOUR TO HIGHLIGHT.



TAKE YOUR IMAGE IN TO PHOTOSHOP / LIGHTROOM. USING THE SATURATION SLIDER, REDUCE ALL CHANNELS TO -100 EXCEPT THE COLOURS YOU WANT TO KEEP.

# DE-HAZE

WHEN SHOOTING INTO THE SUN SUBJECTS CAN BE CLOUDED BEHIND MORNING MIST AND LOOK HAZY. USE POLARISER & UV FILTERS TO CUT DOWN ON THE HAZE IN CAMERA.



BEFORE



AFTER

WHEN IT COMES TO EDITING REFER TO THE DE-HAZE SLIDER IN LIGHTROOM TO REDUCE THE SOFT WHITE MIST AND IMPROVE THE CONTRAST.

# DEPTH OF FIELD

RELATIVE DISTANCE IS IMPORTANT WHEN CHANGING DEPTH OF FIELD. AIM TO MAKE THE DISTANCE BETWEEN YOU AND THE SUBJECT SMALLER THAN THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THE SUBJECT AND THE BACKGROUND.

FAR FROM SUBJECT



CLOSE TO SUBJECT



IF YOU CAN'T MOVE YOUR SUBJECT FURTHER AWAY FROM THE BACKGROUND, MOVE THE CAMERA CLOSER TO THEM AND USE A WIDE APERTURE.



# CROPPING

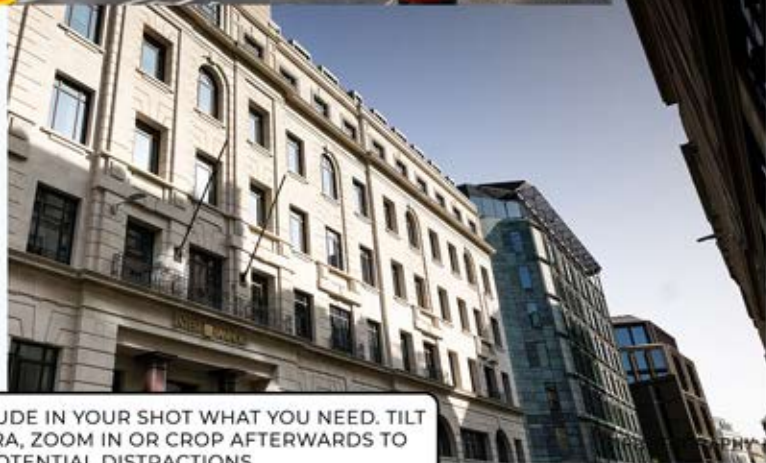
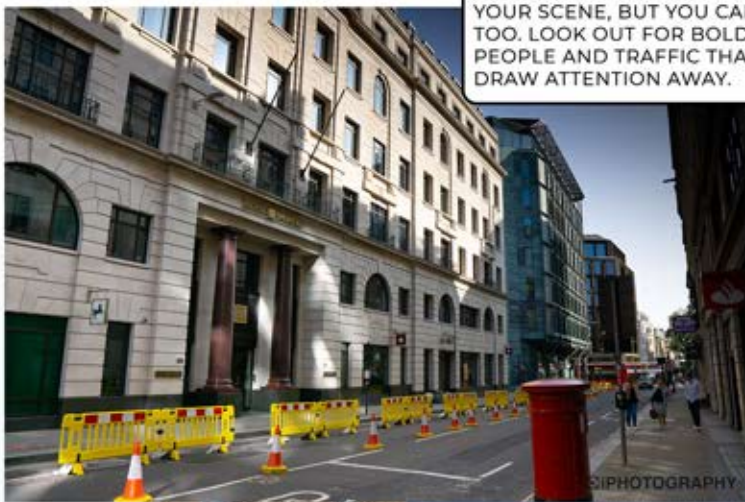
CONSIDER ALL CORNERS AND EDGES OF YOUR PHOTO BEFORE TAKING THE SHOT. IF THERE ARE DISTRACTING ELEMENTS IN IT, TRY TO ZOOM IN OR RE-POSITION THE CAMERA.



CROPPING IN CAMERA THROUGH ZOOMING IN, OR RE-POSITIONING SHOULD MAKE YOUR FINAL SHOT CLEANER AND LESS DISTRACTING.

# **DISTRACTING ELEMENTS**

YOU CAN USE DEPTH OF FIELD TO DISGUISE DISTRACTING ELEMENTS IN YOUR SCENE, BUT YOU CAN ALSO CROP TOO. LOOK OUT FOR BOLD COLOURS, PEOPLE AND TRAFFIC THAT COULD DRAW ATTENTION AWAY.



ONLY INCLUDE IN YOUR SHOT WHAT YOU NEED. TILT THE CAMERA, ZOOM IN OR CROP AFTERWARDS TO CUT OUT POTENTIAL DISTRACTIONS.

# DUTCH TILT

## CLASSIC



TILTING YOUR CAMERA OFF THE HORIZONTAL AXIS ADDS A MODERN & STYLISH TWIST TO A SHOT. IT CAN HELP YOU CUT OUT DISTRACTING ELEMENTS WHILE ALSO CREATING A UNIQUE VIEWPOINT.

## DUTCH TILT



SIMPLY LINE UP YOUR SHOT AS NORMAL AND TILT THE CAMERA 30 DEGREES LEFT OR RIGHT. IF THE TILT IS TOO ACUTE CAN JUST LOOK WONKY.

# EXPOSURE

**OVER  
EXPOSED**



**CORRECTLY  
EXPOSED**



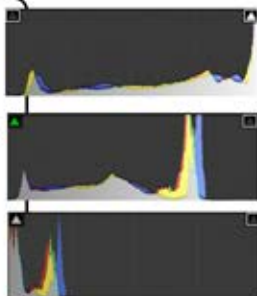
**UNDER  
EXPOSED**



OVER EXPOSED PHOTOS HAVE NO DETAIL IN THE BRIGHT PARTS (SKY/CLOUD) THE WHITE AREAS ARE TOO BRIGHT. THE HISTOGRAM WILL HAVE A PEAK ON THE RIGHT SIDE.

CORRECTLY EXPOSED PHOTOS DISPLAY A GOOD BALANCE BETWEEN DETAIL IN THE HIGHLIGHTS AND SHADOWS. HISTOGRAMS SHOULDN'T TOUCH EITHER SIDE.

OVER EXPOSED PHOTOS HAVE NO DETAIL IN THE BRIGHT PARTS (SKY/CLOUD) THE WHITE AREAS ARE TOO BRIGHT. HISTOGRAMS WILL HAVE A PEAK ON THE LEFT SIDE.





# FOCAL LENGTH

ALL LENS HAVE EITHER A FIXED (PRIME) OR CHANGEABLE (ZOOM) FOCAL LENGTHS. THIS MEANS YOU CAN GET CLOSER OR FURTHER FROM YOUR SUBJECT BY ZOOMING.



**20MM**



**35MM**



**45MM**



**55MM**

USE YOUR ZOOM TO CUT OUT DISTRACTING ELEMENTS AND FOCUS THE STORY ON THE MAIN SUBJECT. LONG FOCAL LENGTHS COMPRESS THE BACKGROUND WHEREAS SHORT FOCAL LENGTHS INCLUDE MORE OF THE BACKGROUND.

# FOCUS STACKING

TO INCREASE YOUR PERCEIVED DEPTH OF FIELD TRY FOCUS STACKING. TAKE NUMEROUS FIXED POINT SHOTS AND ONLY CHANGE THE FOCUS POINT IN EACH IMAGE. SELECT 3-5 DIFFERENT POINTS THROUGHOUT YOUR FRAME.



WHEN IT COMES TO THE EDIT, LAYER ALL IMAGES TOGETHER AND ERASE ANY AREAS OUT OF FOCUS IN EACH SHOT TO DELIVER FORE-TO-BACKGROUND SHARPNESS.

# FRAMING

PLACING A FRAME PARTIALLY OR FULLY AROUND YOUR MAIN SUBJECT  
NARROWS THE FIELD OF INTEREST  
MAKING IT EASIER FOR YOUR AUDIENCE TO READ YOUR PHOTO.



USE ARCHWAYS, DOOR FRAMES, TUNNELS AND BRIDGES TO CREATE AN ARC ABOVE OR AROUND YOUR SUBJECT. THE FRAME DOESN'T HAVE TO BE COMPLETE BUT MAKE IT SUBSTANTIAL ENOUGH TO REGISTER. USING A FRAME THAT MIRRORS THE SHAPE OF THE MAIN SUBJECT ADDS THAT CREATIVE TOUCH!



# GHOSTING

GHOSTING IS A TECHNIQUE USED TO INCREASE THE SENSE OF MOTION IN A MOVING SUBJECT. PUT YOUR CAMERA ON A TRIPOD AND REDUCE YOUR SHUTTER SPEED TO 1/30th.



FOCUS ON THE BACKGROUND AND TAKE THE SHOT AS THE MOVING ELEMENTS COME INTO FRAME. MIX UP THE DIRECTION OF MOVEMENT.

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# GOLDEN HOUR

THE GOLDEN HOUR IS A PERIOD OF TIME JUST BEFORE SUNSET. IT IS ALL BASED ON WEATHER CONDITIONS IF IT HAPPENS OR NOT. THE EVENING LIGHT IS STRONG AND SHADOWS HEAVY.



YOU WILL NEED TO OPEN YOUR APERTURE AND INCREASE YOUR ISO DEPENDING UPON YOUR LOCATION. SILHOUETTES IDEAL AT GOLDEN HOUR.

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# GRADUATED ND FILTER

NO FILTER

GRADUATED NEUTRAL DENSITY FILTERS (GRAD ND) ARE DESIGNED TO LOWER THE EXPOSURE OF THE SKY WITHOUT AFFECTING THE EXPOSURE OF THE SUBJECT TOO. TWIST THE FILTER SO TO THE RIGHT POSITION ON THE LENS.

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GRAD ND FILTER

AS YOU CAN SEE IN THIS EXAMPLE, THE SKY IS DARKER WITHOUT HEAVILY AFFECTING THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE BUILDING. THIS IS GREAT TO USE ON A VERY SUNNY DAY TO SKY BLOWN OUT HIGHLIGHTS.

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# HDR

## HIGH DYNAMIC RANGE

HDR IS A PROCESS OF IMPROVING  
DETAIL AND FRONT-TO-BACK  
EXPOSURE IN LANDSCAPES AND LARGE  
VISTAS. TAKE 3 SHOTS AT DIFFERENT  
F/STOPS.

# RESULT



F/8



F/11



F/5.6



ONE IMAGE SHOULD BE AT THE CORRECT EXPOSURE,  
THE OTHERS ONE ABOVE AND ONE BELOW THAT  
F/STOP. MERGE IN PHOTOSHOP OR LIGHTROOM.

# HORIZONS

WONKY HORIZONS ARE A PITFALL MANY NEW PHOTOGRAPHERS FALL INTO, BUT IT'S EASY TO FIX IN EDITING. USING PHOTOSHOP SELECT THE RULER TOOL AND DRAW ACROSS YOUR HORIZON.

AFTER



BEFORE



3. Press straighten layer to correct the horizon

1. Select the Ruler tool from the vertical toolbar

2. Draw a line across what you want to be straight

YOU CAN ALWAYS DO IT IN CAMERA BY USING A VIRTUAL HORIZON TOOL OR A SPIRIT LEVEL GADGET THAT FITS ON A HOT SHOE.



# ISO

ISO IS THE SENSITIVITY SETTING OF YOUR CAMERA'S SENSOR. THE HIGHER THE NUMBER THE MORE LIGHT IT DETECTS BUT THIS CAN ALSO CAUSE NOISE. NOISE IS A DIGITISED TYPE OF FILM GRAIN WHICH OCCURS WHEN PIXELS ARE OVERSTRETCHED.



ISO 100



ISO 200



ISO 400



ISO 800



ISO 1600



ISO 3200



ISO 6400



ISO 12800

SHOOT AT **100-200** ISO ON SUNNY DAYS.

**400-1600** ON CLOUDY DAYS

**3200+** AT NIGHT TIME OR IN DARK ROOMS, BUT BE MINDFUL OF DIGITAL NOISE. USE A TRIPOD TO MINIMISE CAMERA SHAKE.

# LEADING LINES

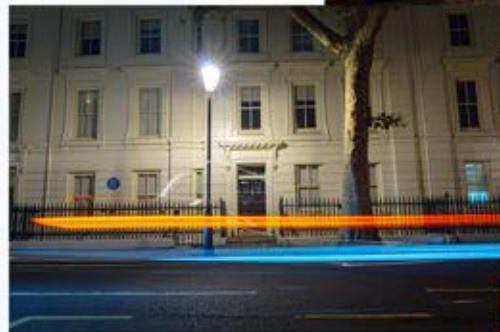
USING LINES TO DRAW ATTENTION TO A SUBJECT IN A PHOTO IS A POWERFUL COMPOSITIONAL TOOL. LINES CAN BE HORIZONTAL, VERTICAL, DIAGONAL AND ALSO CURVED.



YOU CAN RUN LINES THROUGH YOUR SUBJECT, UP TO THEM, OR EVEN PAST THEM. GET LOW DOWN ON PATHS AND ROADS TO MAKE LINES MORE DRAMATIC.

# LIGHT TRAILS

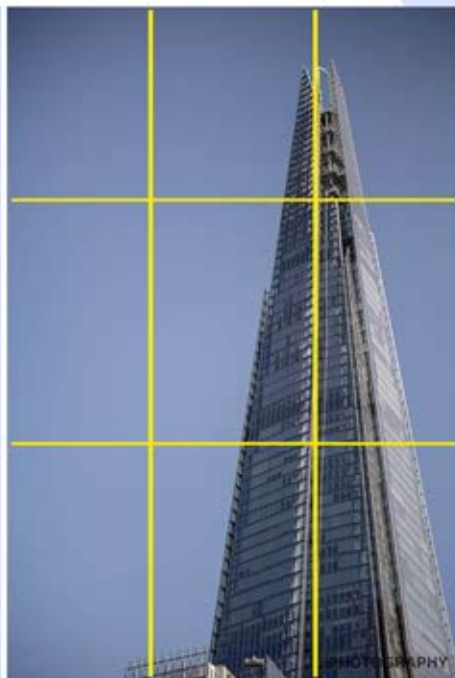
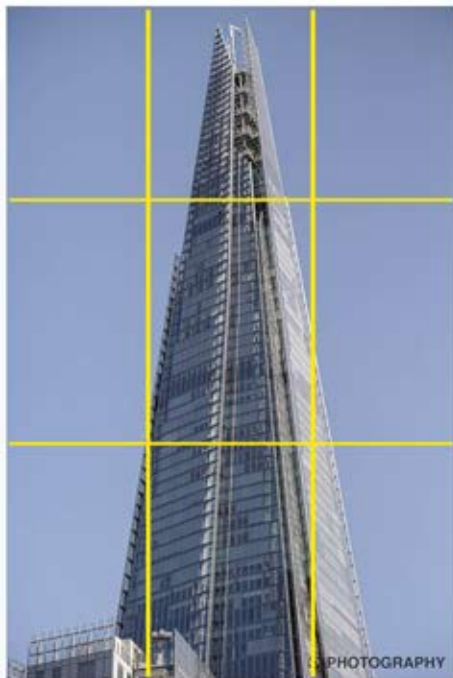
BY SLOWING YOUR SHUTTER SPEED TO 1/30th OR SLOWER AND STABILISING YOUR CAMERA ON A TRIPOD, YOU CAN CATCH MOTION BLUR FROM MOVING OBJECTS. DON'T MOVE THE CAMERA WHEN YOU TAKE THE SHOT. CARS, CYCLISTS AND OTHER TRAFFIC ARE GREAT SUBJECTS TO SHOOT. KEEP YOUR ISO LOW AND APERTURE AT F/8.



IT MAY TAKE MANY ATTEMPTS TO CAPTURE THE LIGHT TRAILS. POSITION YOURSELF SAFELY IN A PLACE WHERE THERE IS CONSTANT MOVEMENT.

# CROPPING

SINGLE SUBJECTS DO NOT HAVE TO BE PLACED INTO THE CENTRE OF THE FRAME IF THEY'RE ON THEIR OWN. THINK ABOUT OFF-SETTING IT TO ONE SIDE.



REFER TO THE RULE OF THIRDS WITH YOUR PLACEMENT AND IN-CAMERA CROPPING AND KEEP SUBJECT'S ALONG THE VERTICALS & HORIZONTALS.



# ORIENTATION

DECIDING WHICH WAY ROUND TO HOLD YOUR CAMERA IS CALLED ORIENTATION. THERE ARE ONLY 2 OPTIONS - LANDSCAPE (HORIZONTAL) OR PORTRAIT (VERTICAL).

**PORTRAIT**



**LANDSCAPE**



**LANDSCAPE**



**PORTRAIT**



THERE ARE NO SET RULES THAT YOU REQUIRE CERTAIN SUBJECTS TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED USING A CERTAIN ORIENTATION. ALWAYS SHOOT BOTH WAYS.

# PANNING

PANNING IS A TECHNIQUE WHICH AIMS TO CAPTURE A SHARP OUTLINE OF A FAST MOVING SUBJECT, WHILE THE BACKGROUND REMAINS BLURRED.



WITH THE CAMERA ON A TRIPOD, TRACK THE MOTION OF THE SUBJECT AND ONLY PRESS THE SHUTTER WHEN THE SUBJECT IS DIRECTLY OPPOSITE YOU.



SET THE SHUTTER SPEED TO 1/30th, AND CONTINUE TO TRACK THE SUBJECT BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER YOU TAKE THE SHOT. USING A TRIPOD WITH A PAN HANDLE WILL HELP YOU MORE.

# PANORAMAS

A PANORAMA OR PANORAMIC IMAGE IS A NARROWER ASPECT RATIO TO REGULAR IMAGES. THEY ARE IDEAL FOR CAPTURING WIDE LANDSCAPES WITHOUT A LOT OF HEIGHT.

## ORIGINAL SHOTS



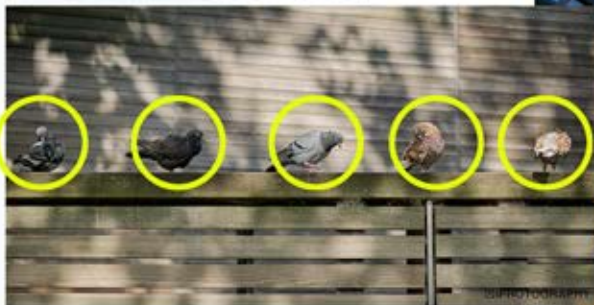
## FINAL PANORAMA



SOME CAMERAS ALLOW TO SHOT A PANORAMA IN CAMERA BY PANNING ACROSS A SCENE. OTHERWISE SHOOT SEVERAL SHOTS INDIVIDUALLY AND USE PHOTOSHOP (**FILE>AUTOMATE>PHOTOMERGE**) OR LIGHTROOM (**SELECT IMAGES, RIGHT CLICK, PHOTOMERGE>PANORAMA**) TO STITCH THE SHOTS TOGETHER.

# PATTERNS

FINDING REPEATING ASPECTS IN YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY ADDS HARMONY TO A COMPOSITION. PATTERNS CAN BE FOUND IN MANY LOCATIONS. CENTRALISE YOUR CAMERA IF THERE ARE ODD NUMBERS.



CROP OUT ANY ELEMENTS THAT AREN'T PART OF YOUR PATTERN. ALSO LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES WHERE PATTERNS ARE BROKEN OR DISRUPTED.



# PERSPECTIVE DISTORTION

PERSPECTIVE DISTORTION OCCURS WHEN PHOTOGRAPHING TALL OBJECTS WITH A WIDE LENS. VERTICAL LINES END UP WITH A CONVERGING ANGLE.



***DISTORTED***



***CORRECTED***

USE THE TRANSFORM TOOL IN LIGHTROOM TO CORRECT ANY TYPE OF PERSPECTIVE DISTORTION. USE THE CORRECT OPTION BASED ON WHETHER YOUR DISTORTED LINES ARE VERTICAL OR HORIZONTAL.

THE AIM TO CORRECT ALL LINES SO THERE IS NO ANGLE TO THEM.



# RULE OF THIRDS

USING THE RULE OF THIRDS IS AN EASY WAY TO COMPOSE AND PROPORTION YOUR PHOTOGRAPH EVENLY. MANY CAMERAS HAVE A VIRTUAL GRID TO FOLLOW ON YOUR SCREEN.



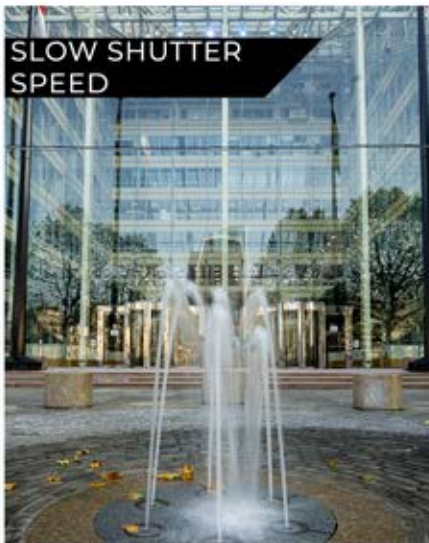
MADE UP FROM 2 HORIZONTAL AND 2 VERTICAL LINES, SPLIT UP LANDSCAPES WITH THE TOP THIRDS AS SKY, MIDDLE AS SUBJECT AND LOWER AS YOUR FOREGROUND.

WHERE THE LINES CROSS OVER ARE CALLED POWERPOINTS. PLACE SIGNIFICANT SUBJECTS ON THESE POINTS AS THEY ARE KEY POSITIONS FOR INTEREST WITHIN A PHOTOGRAPH.

# SHUTTER SPEED

SHUTTER SPEED IS THE CONTROL OVER HOW LONG THE MIRROR OR SHUTTER DOORS IN FRONT OF YOUR SENSOR IS OPEN FOR. THE LONGER IT'S OPEN THE MORE LIGHT & MOVEMENT IT CAPTURES.

## SLOW SHUTTER SPEED



SLOW SHUTTER SPEEDS ARE DEEMED TO BE  $1/30$ th AND BELOW. THEY ALLOW MORE LIGHT IN TO THE SHOT BUT ANY MOVEMENT DURING THE EXPOSURE WILL BE BLURRED.

## FAST SHUTTER SPEED

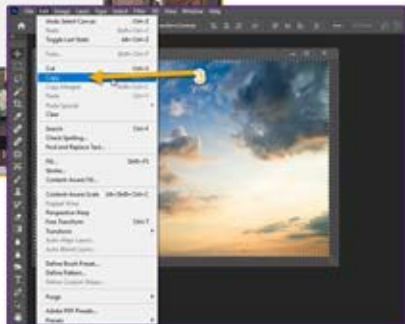
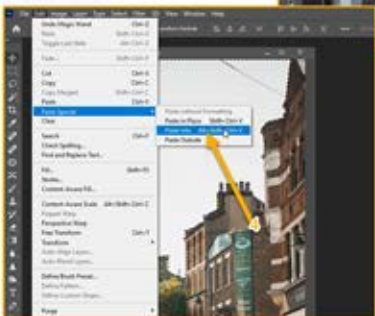
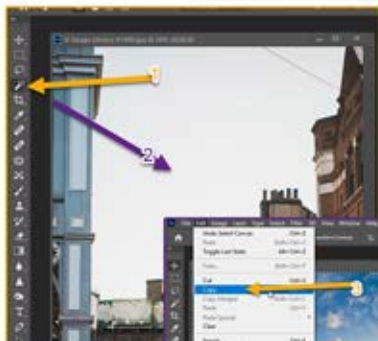


FAST SHUTTER SPEEDS ARE USEFUL FOR QUICK MOVEMENT THAT YOU WANT TO CAPTURE WITH A SHARP OUTLINE. THE CHOICE OF SHUTTER SPEED DEPENDS ON THE SPEED OF YOUR SUBJECT AND DISTANCE FROM IT.

SHUTTER SPEEDS ARE DEMONSTRATED IN FRACTIONS OF A SECOND (I.E.  $1/250$ th - OF A SECOND). BUT SPEEDS CAN BE AS SLOW AS 30 SECS. ALWAYS SHOOT ON A TRIPOD WITH SLOW SHUTTER SPEEDS FOR EXTRA CONTROL.

# SKY REPLACEMENTS

THERE'S NOT ALWAYS AN INTERESTING SKY ON OFFER EVERYTIME YOU TAKE A PHOTO. BUT EDITING SOFTWARE CAN ALLOW YOU TO IMPORT A NEW ONE.



**STEP 1:** USE THE MAGIC WAND TOOL TO SELECT ALL AREAS OF THE SKY.

**STEP 2:** SELECT YOUR NEW SKY AND MAKE A COPY OF IT (EDIT>COPY)

**STEP 3:** RETURN TO YOUR ORIGINAL PHOTO AND SELECT EDIT>PASTE>PASTE INTO. TWEAK THE FINAL POSITION AND COLOURS TO SUIT YOUR OWN VERSION.

YOU CAN ALSO USE SOFTWARE SUCH AS LUMINAR 4.





# DEPTH OF FIELD

USING A SHALLOW DOF CAN DRAW AN AUDIENCE INTO A IMAGE BY PLACING THE FOCUS ON THE BACKGROUND. IN THIS EXAMPLE, IT GIVES A PARTIAL FRAME TO OUR SUBJECT LEADING US OVER THE LEAVES.

FOREGROUND  
BLUR



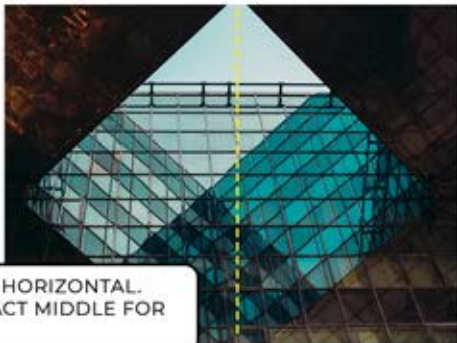
BACKGROUND  
BLUR



PLACING YOUR FOCUS ON THE FOREGROUND ISOLATES YOUR SUBJECT AND MAKES THEM THE OBVIOUS FEATURE OF YOUR SHOT.

# SYMMETRY

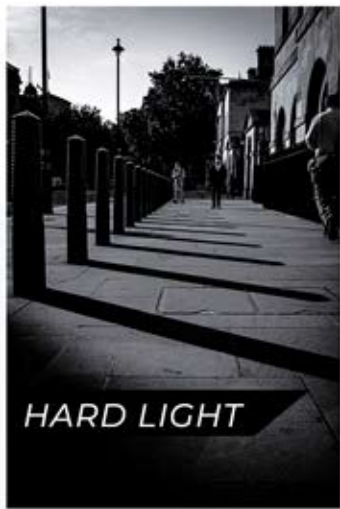
LOOK OUT FOR OBJECTS THAT HAVE A CLEAR MIRROR SYMMETRY IN YOUR COMPOSITIONS. SYMMETRY OFFERS PEACE AND BALANCE MAKING AN AUDIENCE FEEL RELAXED.



SYMMETRY CAN BE VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL. POSITION THE CAMERA IN THE EXACT MIDDLE FOR TRUE BALANCE.

# TYPES OF LIGHT

SOMETIMES REFERRED TO AS LIGHT QUALITY, THERE ARE 2 MAIN TYPES OF LIGHT THAT PHOTOGRAPHERS WILL ENCOUNTER - HARD AND SOFT.



**HARD LIGHT**

**HARD LIGHT** OCCURS ON BRIGHT, SUNNY, CLOUDLESS DAYS. IT CASTS HARD SHADOWS. THE TRANSITION BETWEEN LIGHT AND DARK AREAS IS SHORT AND SHADOWS ARE WELL DEFINED. HARD LIGHT IS GOOD FOR HIGH KEY B&W PHOTOS, BUT CAN BE UNFLATTERING ON PORTRAITS.



**SOFT LIGHT**

**SOFT LIGHT** REQUIRES A CLOUDY DAY. THE TRANSITION FROM LIGHT TO DARK IS LONGER AND THERE ARE MORE TONES VISIBLE IN BETWEEN. IT CAN OFFER MORE SHAPE TO A SUBJECT BUT LESS FINE DETAIL AND TEXTURE DUE TO ITS LACK OF BRIGHTNESS.

THERE IS A THIRD TYPE OF LIGHT RARER USED - **REFLECTED LIGHT**. THIS CAN BE FOUND USING LIGHT BOUNCING OFF A SURFACE TO ILLUMINATE A SUBJECT.

# WHITE BALANCE

WHITE BALANCE, OR COLOUR TEMPERATURE, IS A CAMERA SETTING ALLOWING YOU TO ADJUST YOUR PHOTO BASED ON THE TEMPERATURE OF THE VISIBLE LIGHT. MOST CAMERAS HAVE BUILT-IN PRESETS TO CHOOSE BASED ON THE LIGHT IN YOUR LOCATION.

**AUTO**



**SUNNY**



COLOUR TEMPERATURE IS MEASURED ON THE KELVIN (K) SCALE. 3000K AND LOWER PRODUCE WARM, ORANGE TONES, 9000K+ PRODUCE COOLER, BLUE TONES. DAYLIGHT BALANCED TEMP IS APPROXIMATELY 6000K.

**SHADE**



**INDOORS**





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