



"Technique is important only insofar as you must master it in order to communicate what you see." -- Henri Cartier-Bresson

"I only wanted Uncle Vern standing by his new car (a Hudson) on a clear day. I got him and the car. I also got a bit of Aunt Mary's laundry, and Beau Jack, the dog, peeing on a fence, and a row of potted tuberous begonias on the porch and 78 trees and a million pebbles in the driveway and more. It's a generous medium, photography." -- Lee Friedlander

## Unusual/5 Angles/Composition Assignment

### Your goals are:

- To show people, places and things from fresh and unusual perspectives that will capture interest.
  - To use different perspectives to get good backgrounds, lighting and compositions
  - To use different camera orientations: landscape  and portrait . **For this assignment you are required to shoot roughly HALF YOUR PHOTOS in PORTRAIT ORIENTATION** and half in landscape orientation
  - To learn how to work a subject by trying multiple perspectives, camera orientations, focus points, and aperture and shutter speed settings
- Find eight or more different subjects per week. Two subjects must be people, one must be a place, and one must be a thing - the rest are your choice. Something about the subjects should engage your interest.
  - If humanly possible, photograph each subject from five different angles, looking to go beyond the ordinary view on at least some of them. Try shooting from high up (stand on top of something), shooting from very low down, and getting in close so you only see part of the subject. "Unusual angles" is in the assignment name – make sure you try some. Look up at things you normally look down on, look down on things you normally look up to see.
  - Eight different subjects taken from five different angles = 40 photos. Shooting more than this is encouraged to increase your chances of getting good photos and improving the score you earn – just follow the idea of shooting subjects from multiple angles, looking for fresh angles and compositions.
  - Put **creative effort** into your work – look to find or make interesting photos rather than easy ones. It's more fun.

### Things to explore:

- Can you vary the background by moving around the subject and/or up and down? What sets the subject off best? Can you get a dark subject against a light background, or vice versa?
- How does the subject look from different distances? Zoom with your feet as well as your lens (if it's a zoom lens) – different things happen. Consider views of the whole subject in its environment; of the subject filling the frame and maybe touching/bleeding off one or two edges; and of close-up detail views.
- Does the background complement the subject so you want it in focus, or do you want it to drop out in a blur?

### Composition:

- **Rule of thirds** (it's often more interesting to place subjects off-center), or center the subject and break the rule (more confrontational/in your face/dividing the picture; or more balanced, calm, stable, formal)
- **Get closer** – fill the frame. As Robert Capa said, if you're photos aren't good enough, you're not close enough.
- **Simplify/Isolate your subject** – move yourself and/or the subject to get rid of distractions and visual clutter.
- **Lines & leading lines** – paths, edges, limbs, poles, stripes, etc., both as subjects and as ways to guide the viewer's eye around the image to what's important
- **Framing** – using something to border the subject to focus attention on it. Is there a frame that relates to or contrasts the subject? A frame has to have a subject.
- **Value/Light & Shadow** – scenes containing a range of values from dark to light are usually more pleasing than low-contrast scenes. Good lighting will catch your eye. **If you find an interesting subject in poor light, think if there might be better light at a different time of day and come back.**
- **Texture** – Rough, smooth, soft, weathered, etc. Side-lighting shows off texture while front-lighting minimizes it.
- **Balance** – pay attention to where your eye wants to look in the viewfinder. Try to compose images so that interesting elements move your eye throughout the image or balance/complement each other.
- **Contrast** – the viewer's eye will be drawn to the brightest areas, and to the areas of greatest contrast (of value, of color, of texture, of subject matter, etc.)
- **Juxtaposition** – arrange two or more things in the viewfinder so that some sort of relationship is created that adds meaning to the photo.
- **Patterns & Rhythms** – and things that break them
- **Movement** - tilted horizons & diagonal lines, motion blur or frozen action