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Photo for Media, the Where, the What, the When.

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The front page picture is an evening view from Runde, looking in Breisundet towards Ålesund. It is a typical evening view when birds commute to wherever they stay for the night. With one latecomer. Just that.

Photo: Gaute Hareide

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Introduction

This compendium is part of a series intended for students attending the course FME 103 (Photo for Media) at Volda University College, and is not approved for any other use or distribution.

I have to the best of my ability tried to get in touch with all participants prior to publication, regrettably without a 100% success. Should anyone here presented in any way today object to being part of this work, I would appreciate being contacted at gauteh@hivolda.no.

I will also point out that all images have been selected to illustrate elements regarding the art of producing and selecting media photographs, with no other purpose than that. All interpretation of what story they tell is my own.

The version of the English language used on these pages is also my own, kindly moderated once again by my friend Howard Medland. Please blame me for all abuse of it; he has done his best as always.

The title of this compendium is meant to indicate Composition.

Some say that media photos cannot be “composed”, since they are and should be unbiased witnesses to the truth.

Such understanding is rather naive.

Media photos are of course composed, only to a lesser degree than Art.

Media photo composition is mainly a question of what story one wants to tell, and in what medium. The tools, strictly speaking the only tools to use, are: Where to position your camera, What to include of what’s visible from that position, and When to capture The Moment.

Hence the title.

We will here look at the practical sides of composition that media photographers need to consider, and at some communicative considerations that should be made along with that.

Much of this will be my own, biased, opinions. This is particularly the case when I speculate on what message diverse images may carry.

The front page picture is my first example. I see the bird to the upper right as the main character. Whether or not this is the latecomer or the herd of the flock or just the individual “odd one out” is less important. This is the one standing out, catching the eye, making the picture interesting.

Others’ opinions may be different, so again:

Constructive criticism is welcome.

Volda, December 2018

Gaute Hareide

Where, What, When

Diverse media and diverse cultures have diverse rules regarding images. Diverse motives and diverse situations require diverse considerations to be made. There are universal laws, unwritten laws, common practices, common or less common biases or taboos, ways to read images that are partly cultural and partly human nature. And there are styles.

Several volumes, many of them heavy with words, deal with these things.

This volume is light. My main concern when writing it has been to focus on the images. Extra verbal information is found under Notes.

Publishing images requires a right to so. Most of the images here presented are, for that reason, my own. They cover a wide range of camera technology and time, and are selected for their visual contents only.

Most of them are from the last 15 years, planned, taken and selected as part of my job as teacher of practical photography at Volda University College.

In the following I have looked not only at ways to compose a photograph, but also at how to compose pages with pictures and words. This is what we call layout. The book itself is therefore also an example of that; each double page more or less successful.

Compromises have been made. Confronted with lack of space the verbal text has, as a rule, lost in favour of the visual. This is intentional. The images are the more important information carriers here, all chosen to be studied.

Additional texts, comments and references will be found at the end, under Notes. Prior to that, there is a list of rules to break or follow.

List of content:

- P. 3 Introduction.
- P. 4-57 Pictures with explanations and vice versa.
- P. 58 Rules
- P. 59-67 Notes
- P. 68 Very, very brief on analysing photos for media.



Above is a crappy picture from one of these seminars where co-workers learn to cooperate by kicking a ball while having one leg tied on to someone else's.

The Where is not so bad. There is a goal here, and presumably one couple will manage to place a ball inside of it at some time. The What is also acceptable. Changing the direction of view would not be smart given that the game is the motif, and including as much as this may as we will see also be OK in the end.

The When is hopeless. This is definitely not a good moment. We cannot see the ball. Many faces are hidden. We cannot see who they are or what they are doing. Those we can see are doing something else like checking their cell phones, lying down or just being boringly passive. Crappy, as mentioned.

The next picture (above, right) is better. The Where is improved by moving closer and the When is now good. We have a situation, all of the audience are paying close attention and scoring the goal seems inevitable.

The What needs reduction, and that can be done later. Some people claim that photographers should compose only while shooting and that later cropping is Bad. This is, at least as far as media is concerned, rubbish. Pictures should be captured in the camera but made during editing, and that includes cropping.

- and then What again



Cropping range depends on quality, but since modern cameras record four times more detail than we need and more, we can discard three quarters of the image and more and still have sufficient detail. But we can never insert image elements that are not there, and we do not know, when shooting, how the final picture needs to be cropped in the end. Therefore, the final What should wait.



Photo/cropping: Gaute Hareide



A vertical cropping of an originally horizontal image can also be the outcome, even when the image is captured by a small but good pocket camera like here.

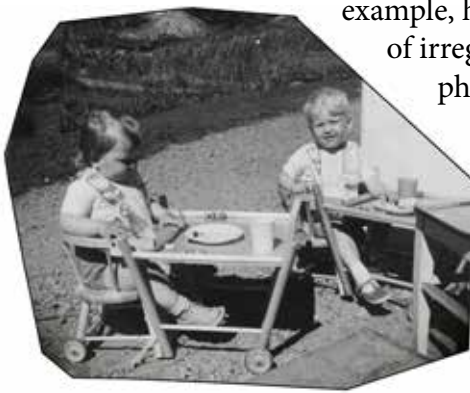
Composition means arrangement. You arrange sounds along a time-line to get a musical composition. You arrange flowers in a vase to get a visual composition. Arrange food on a plate - you get a culinary composition. Arrange patches and lines of colours on a surface, and you have composed a painting. Common to all of this is the wide range of choices you have.

Composing a photograph, and in particular a press photo, offers a much more narrow range of choices. There are only three, to be precise. You may choose a position. You may choose what to include of what's visible from that position, and you may choose when to do it. That is, strictly speaking, it.

Sometimes you are given slightly more slack. Asking people to pose for a picture is widely accepted, as long as it is obvious that the people are posing. Asking people to wait a bit before they do what they do may also be accepted, but the documentary photograph should, ideally, report reality as it was without any interference. The fact that the camera is there and people respond to it is a part of that reality and must be accepted; but a "fly on the wall" situation is seen by many as the ideal.

A photograph will always contain elements within a frame. The norm is a rectangular "window" along vertical and horizontal lines through which you "observe" the motive. This convention stems from the Renaissance and is very practical. It is not compulsory, though. The edges can gradually fade away if so desired, and the frame can be any shape imaginable. My mother for example, has always been fond

of irregular photos.



Far right: My Mom, 18, at her first job.

Above: My younger siblings, dining out that day.

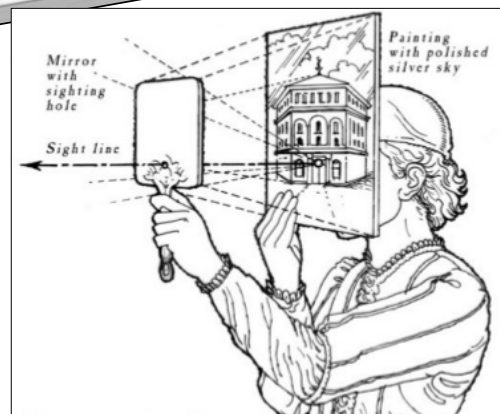
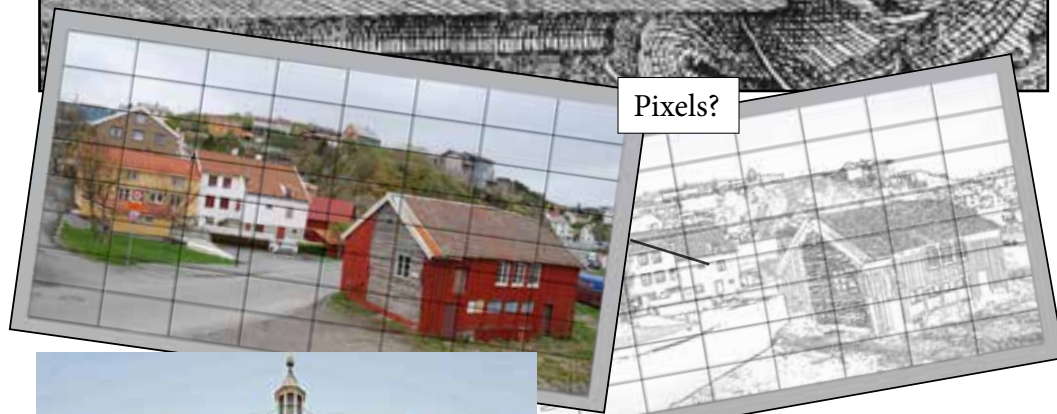
The idea of a rectangular frame as a window through which to see the motive is found in Alberti's 1435 work "Della Pittura" book one p.55(41): "*I inscribe a quadrangle of right angles, as large as I wish, which is considered to be an open window through which I see what I want to paint.*" Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472) was a Florentine architect and painter who wrote a guide on how to paint perspective. The window he mentions was a grid used by renaissance artists in their research on central perspective from the mid-15th century. The research is still in progress and the tool is still in use.

The grid is a rectangular frame with thin strings at regular intervals creating smaller subframes. Observing through this grid from a fixed point, all parts of the motive can be related to the position of the strings. By drawing lines on the canvas equal to the strings of the frame, the position of each part of the motive can be marked on the canvas equal to what is observed through the grid and re-present reality as it appeared to the eye. In addition to providing more exact information on the relative position and size of image elements as seen from a certain point, the technique might be seen as an early fore-runner of the digital camera. The principle is similar, with the difference that our cameras have more and smaller subframes (pixels); each just one shade of red, green or blue.

A surge of interest followed Filippo Brunelleschi's (1347-1446) famous demonstration in the early 15th century. Having made a painting from a fixed point in front of the symmetrical Baptistry of Florence, he carved a hole through the centre of the painting, placed it where it was painted but facing the Baptistry, and asked people to peep through the tiny hole. Placing a mirror in front of the painting and removing it, people were shown alternately the Baptistry and the painting of it, comparing the two and marvelling at how precisely the painting fitted the motive.

Brunelleschi was not the first to paint in perspective. That honour belongs to Agatharchus. According to Vitruvius, this autodidact from Samos painted a stage backdrop in perspective in the 5th century BC and wrote a note about it.

Brunelleschi, however, certainly managed to promote the idea. The rhetoric of his demonstration was convincing; seeing is believing as we know. Both the plates he made to demonstrate the principle are lost, but the Baptistry still stands so reconstructions can be and have been made.



Perspective is a *phenomenon* caused by light's desire to travel in straight lines, as proved by Ibn al-Haytham in his 1021 "Book of Optics." Perspective is thus a discovery rather than an invention, but the Renaissance does deserve credit for researching on how 3-dimensional motifs may be re-presented on 2-dimensional surfaces in a way that seems natural to the eye. Their descriptions of how diverse lines, if prolonged, converge toward vanishing points have had an immense impact on Western art. Apart from the use of guidelines in true-to-perspective paintings of anything from portraits to landscapes and interiors, the focus on imaginary lines has also influenced our ideas of how images should be composed and how they communicate.

Theories of the eye following imaginary lines from one point in a painting to another seem natural when you are accustomed to dealing with such lines in the planning of a painting, but we should remember that true-to-perspective art is almost exclusively a Western fashion, even if also other cultures make and read pictures, and that human vision is much older than the artistic concept of "perspective". Reading direction is also a cultural phenomenon that should not be given too much importance in how to compose images or layout. Pointer Institute eye-tracking research shows that our focus of attention "jumps" from one point of interest to another, taking in bright spots, colours and contrast rather than tracking imaginary lines.

Regarding live images, our attention to motion is an even more important fact. Human vision will momentarily be attracted to any kind of sudden movement, and if this is not a part of the intended story, that story will be disturbed. A side effect of this is that when leafing through a magazine our focus goes first to the upper right-hand corner (if reading left to right, of course).

Composition is a very complex theme. It has to do with creating an illusion of depth in a flat surface; which is what perspective painting is all about. It has to do with what to include and what to leave out; as good *storytelling* is all about. It has to do with how to create balance and harmony in a picture, or stress and discord. In the end it has to do with how we present our view of the world.

There are rules to learn and to follow, and to break when that feels better. Most of all, there is the fact that media photography is a fast-moving genre, with little time for details and much need of compromise.

Format

Most still cameras today have a rectangular format in the ratio 2:3. The format works well with the human eye but not with all motives or screens and certainly not with all layouts, and it is more based on technical concerns than research on vision.

The lens creates a circular image, as George Eastman accepted when constructing his Kodak. The Cathode Ray Tube gave similar restrictions to the TV-format, which was changed to wide-screen as soon as new technology allowed it.

My point is that the format of the still picture should be decided primarily by the motive, considering our human vision as well as the media platform and the layout of the story, but it should never be restricted to the format of the camera sensor.

The notion that all photographs have to be finally composed in the viewfinder before you press the release button should therefore be buried for ever, particularly in the realm of media. See page 4.

Some motives are definitely vertical, others definitely horizontal. Some are square and some are elongated.

How to re-present a motive will partly be decided at the moment of shooting, and partly later. The old principle of statement that the picture is captured in the camera but made in the darkroom still stands.

In daily work the cropping in particular is a matter of constant compromise, and seldom decided by the photographer alone.

A printed newspaper or magazine has a composition of its own, requiring harmony of illustrations, titles and text. The lay-out of each page is decided by the "Desk"; and to do a good job they need photos in both horizontal and vertical format with, and this is important, extra room for cropping. Insisting on having one's pictures printed as they are is not an affordable luxury, so please provide images with about 20-30% extra room for cropping each time. Modern camera resolution does allow for more than that.



As for cell-phone cameras, use them vertical mainly for portraits and *never* for video! Live images should fit human vision.

The Gudbrandsjuvet ravine (previous page) was shot with my camera vertical as the couple looked over edge. We can follow their gaze down the churning water, relating to their experience. Two persons in the picture was good, more would be crowded.

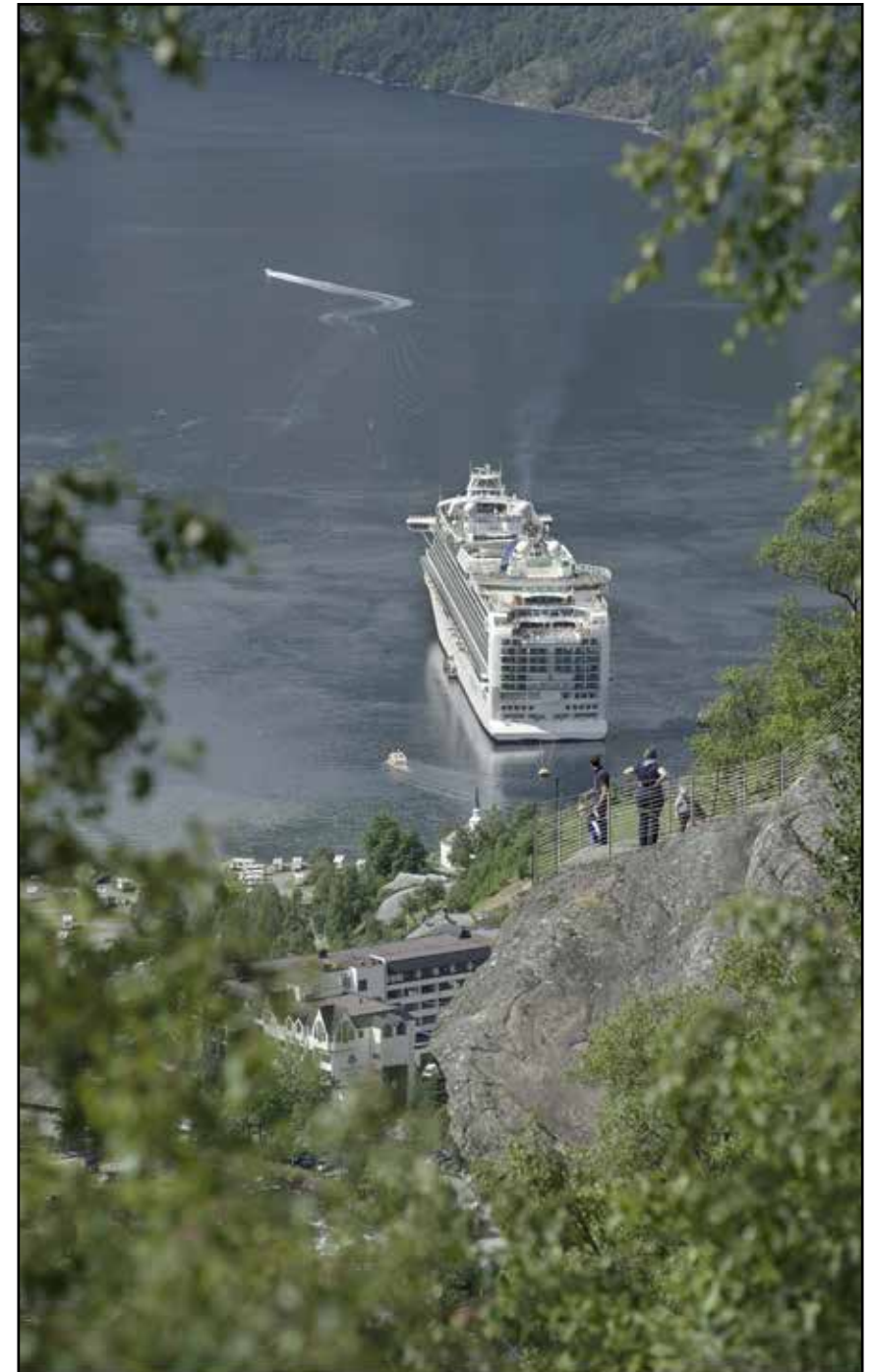
The ship is captured in Lustrafjord as the bow approaches a small patch of inhabitable land, illustrating a contrast between those visiting and those living here. On entering the area I saw the ship starting its engines, found my spot and waited for the moment.



The person in red was a good eye-catcher for the horizontal view of Flydalsjuvet down to Geiranger. I saw him approach and took my shot as he was leaning over the fence.

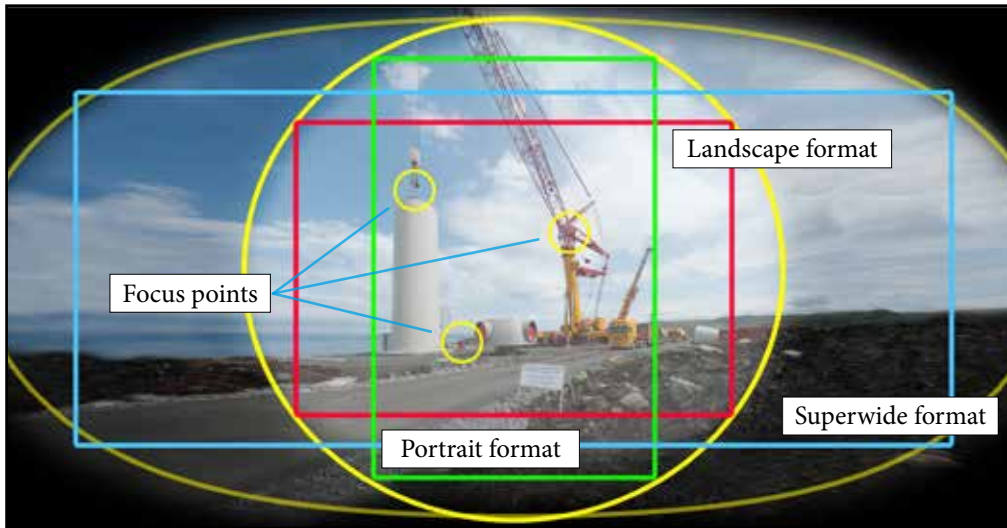
The vertical version is from a position further to the right, to get the viewpoint and the cruiser aligned. Here I had to depend on an opening through the leaves, due to rapidly growing vegetation blocking the view since the last clean-up. In older times I kept a small saw in my car for similar emergencies but of course any such remedy has to be used very discreetly.

Both pictures are taken with a telephoto lens focusing on the tourism, not the scenery.



Stereo flow versus mono freeze

Understanding how to compose photographs depends on understanding the difference between the constant, flexible flow of human, stereoscopic vision, and the frozen, two-dimensional array of elements in a photographic frame. Human vision covers a roughly elliptical horizontal field about 180° wide and 120° tall. Within this there is a more circular area (yellow), where the view of both eyes will overlap and give us stereoscopic vision. This is slightly different for each person and can be tested just by closing left or right eye respectively.



Inside this circle there is a small, movable sector of about 3° where we focus sharply. By focusing both our eyes on diverse objects close or far away we can concentrate on these, filtering out the background or foreground - and we will normally place this sector in the middle of our vision by turning our heads. If we want to focus on something outside or close to the edge of the circle we will *have* to move our heads. Regardless of focus, any sudden movement within the full field of our vision is a sign of danger and will be detected immediately.

The ability to focus on one particular spot helps us to determine the distance to diverse objects, which is very useful for hunting and picking fruit. It has helped us survive, as a species, over the years. As photographers, it is sometimes a drawback. It makes us tend to *not* notice diverse objects behind our main motive, until we see the photograph. The habit of placing what we look at in the middle of our vision is another drawback. It makes us tend to do the same when we photograph. The result can be static pictures.



Static is often boring, but not always; making that discussion difficult. Things popping out of or into people's heads, however, are either distracting, disturbing or funny. The picture above is from a seriously intended and probably expensive advertisement, where they failed to realize the visual effect of this image and layout: The model got a very strange and heavy hat on her head. Below: Two slightly unsuccessful attempts at the art of making selfies.



Background

Most background problems are about disturbing elements. Using a large lens opening to bring them out of focus may be of great help, particularly in sports photography where one has little control over composition. A slightly longer exposure time as the camera follows a moving object is sometimes even better. The image below is, by deliberate attempt and lucky chance, not bad at all.

In other cases one can change position, or wait, or just accept that not all pictures are perfect. The impression to the right of two people posing for the camera as they enjoy an apple, is disturbed but hardly destroyed by the two other persons doing whatever they are doing in the background.



Sometimes the background offers good framing (p.16) or elements that may be beneficial to the story. Signs or objects identifying the place is one such thing, but they should all be used with careful attention to desired effect.



For video the above is more critical. Moving objects can be very distracting. Our vision is very observant of motion, as the following story may illustrate.

A shipyard director was once interviewed on TV. The company had a survey performed to document the effect of his statements, and were surprised to find there was none. Not one viewer remembered anything of question or answers. It turned out that at the start of the interview a man with a yellow helmet came into the background to inspect a ship section placed on the quay in view from the director's office window. During the entire interview the man walked around, in through one opening, out of a next one, on different levels; and that moving, yellow helmet had monopolized all attention from every viewer.

So: Consider the background carefully, always!



Central composition

To the right is an amateur photo from the mid-sixties; a straight-forward documentation of a young lady ready to celebrate her fourth anniversary. At least four invited guests have already arrived. Hot chocolate is poured, biscuits and cake is served and the candles are lit. Her best dress is on, her hair is done and we can read from her face a state of happy expectation. The feast may commence as soon as daddy has had his photo of his little princess.

The composition is central. That means static. Is that bad? The answer is no. This is a portrait; a brief but static moment where she poses for the camera, looking directly into the lens and therefore directly at us viewing the picture; creating the dynamics there is between the model and the viewer of a portrait. The format is vertical; Portrait Format as it is also called, so that's OK too.

The angle is from above. That is strictly speaking wrong since a formal portrait, as this is, should be taken at eye-level. Over-angling a portrait makes the model smaller, less powerful, like a child. But she is a child, and not a very big one (even if she probably would disagree with that!), so this is also appropriate.

The light-source is a flash on top of the camera, and as the camera is tilted into portrait position the light comes slightly from the left-hand side. The effect of direct flash is flat light, small but hard shadows, and reflexes. The reflex in the window is disturbingly strong, but in this case it highlights the fact that it is dark outside and it is raining. Indirect flash is as a rule recommended, giving a softer, more agreeable atmosphere.

The frame includes extra information that may function well in a feature story, and is of course cherished seen from fifty years later. Normally, it would be cropped to include just the young lady and the cake with candles.



Vertical format

Central, vertical composition is in many cases unavoidable. Waterfalls, portraits and rocket launches are three. That does not mean they have to be static, stiff or boring. To the left we have water falling from sky to sea. Below a young man is momentarily arrested by something to his right, while the rocket to *our* right has no intention of stopping anytime soon.



All three images have some kind of movement that keeps them from being seen as “static” or “boring”. The waterfall is meeting its own reflection at the horizontal centre, while the leaves framing the rocket launch give an illusion of depth; an illusion that in the portrait is given by an out of focus background. Most images refer to more than one rule of composition.

Horizontal format - panorama

We live on the surface of a giant sphere, where most of what happens around us takes place. This means that most (with a few exceptions) of what we find interesting takes place along horizontal lines. Sometimes this can be a line that goes almost all around the horizon, recorded in some old panorama cameras by the lens and shutter encircling a flexible film negative wrapped around a cylinder. The bottom view of these pages shows Kristiansund, Norway photographed by such a camera anno 1900 (here in two parts to avoid hiding details).

Below we have a 180 degree view from the Arc de Triomphe in Paris made out of 13 assembled, vertically taken images, while the view of the Overåsanden beach to the right is made from three horizontally shot images combined automatically in Photoshop. Panorama pictures today are made partly by software stitching a series of shots into one at some later stage, or in the camera while moving it smoothly and evenly in one direction, preferably using a tripod. In any case; try to define natural points for the left and right sides of the image.





Panorama Overåsanden: Gaute Hareide

Framing



Framing is about placing a motif element in a frame, like the “person” above seen through a doorway carefully approaching another and different “person”, who is minding his own in his own frame deeper inside the derelict building.

It could also be about placing a person against a background that embraces and enhances the portrait. Below, the author is in the sun with face and arm framed by the shadow of the cave, while the cave is framed by upper and lower sunlit rock and itself frames the brush and the sky behind its rear window.



Above, the head of the person is framed by the dark field behind him and outlined by light coming from above and behind, while the frames below are given some life by framing the bicyclist, and some depth by the bridge and buildings.



Room for action

A basic rule of composition is: “Space in the direction of movement”. When there is action in any direction, there should be room for that action to go there. The surfer, framed by the breaking water around him, is moving to his right, so we leave some room for that when cropping the picture. The beacon placed in the exact middle of the picture also makes this a central composition (neither the lighthouse nor the island are going anywhere), and “the rule of thirds” (p. 35) is followed rather well. Light falling almost horizontally on the surfer’s face is a bonus, as is the surfer’s left arm lifted for balance, with the background nicely out of focus. All in all much to say about one lucky shot.

The river kayak is an easy target (from here you will get a good picture of each competitor during the first round, leaving the next for other opportunities, see p. 44). The rock at bottom left adds framing and depth, and a hint of danger.

The young cat’s introduction to the treadmill, supervised by a more experienced fellow feline, is a trickier shot since the occasion is spontaneous, speedy and soon ended as well as backlit. 1/60 sec., f:4, ISO 800.



Balance

Rule number one regarding balance is that the horizon should be *horizontal* and vertical lines in the centre of the picture should be *vertical*; deviation from this is disturbing and should be used only if the picture is meant to disturb.

Apart from that the picture should balance according to visual weight and what I like to call visual momentum. The surfer below is balanced by the fishing boat he is looking at; different size, purpose and direction but still a vessel like his.

Far below the man-made bridge leads to Kristiansund while the God-made one leads to Valhalla, and we may wonder which destination the white vehicle (going right, space ahead) is destined for this particular day.



Falling debris from the house (previous page) being demolished is balanced by the close attention of the operator. Notice the importance of him being silhouetted in the frame of his cabin, and the reflected light in the glass of the falling window to the left. The eye-catching element is of course the arm of the machine standing out against the sky, while the foreground elements provide an illusion of depth.

Below we have a young lady studying literature while Mom (probably) is engaged in some necessary wardrobe renewal inside. Her seated position indicates an expectancy of time to be passed and her general pose has an air of contented patience. The approaching woman is adding a bit of action to the scene, while the diagonal of the shopping arcade alley and the warmer light inside the shops provide an illusion of depth.

The man loading explosives, his right hand's action foreboding a grim destiny for the house behind (as we have seen), and his pushing pole leaned to our left, is nicely balanced by the drill rig leaning to the opposite side.

Whenever in doubt about balance, test it by cropping differently until it feels right. That means you have to give it some time, both for each picture and for training your eye.



Dynamics

Straight lines are static, especially the horizontal ones. Diagonals are dynamic. Imagine a pencil standing upright. It may stay like that for a long time, but will topple over at the slightest disturbance. It is in a static but unstable position. Once fallen it will be in a static and stable position with no more action to be expected. While falling it *is* in action, hence the idea that diagonal is dynamic.

There should be little doubt that the explosives specialist on the previous page is dynamic and that the diagonal of his rod underlines this capacity. It should also be clear that the waterfall on the next page is dynamic and particularly so due to the previous heavy rainfall (that heaviness is documented by the little bush clinging on by every strand of root fibre - had this been the normal flow of water it would not have been here at all).

The power line to the right is static as in “not moving”, but still dynamic in its flow through the clouds down along the steep mountain side.

The buildings below are sliding sideways down, however slowly, except the one far right, which is now just busy rotting away in silent resignation.





Photos: Gaute Hareide

Depth

Reality has four dimensions; width, height, depth and time. Paper and screen surfaces have only two, depth has to be hinted at. For time we need video.

The illusion of depth, generally referred to as “perspective ” has, as mentioned, been a subject of research for Western art through many generations. The camera played an important role in this, as the Camera Obscura provides true perspective automatically. Even so, the illusion of depth depends to a large degree on elements of the motif and the light and the moment. There is more than one thing to consider if an illusion of depth is desired.

Repetition of known sizes getting smaller as they recede into the background is one good indication of the third dimension, like a row of bicycles or rows of parallel fences or a narrowing road winding its way into the far beyond. Rain or smoke or haze making the background gradually indistinct is another. Backlight shining through leaves and branches is a third indicator of depth. Well defined foreground and background a fourth. Shallow depth of field is a fifth, and sometimes even motion plays a part.





- in relation to ...

Comparing sizes is not just something young men do at a certain stage of life. We all do it all the time. Everything is short or tall, wide or narrow, big or small *in relation* to something else. The same goes for the more abstract quantities. Grief is stronger surrounded by happiness, rich is richer surrounded by poor, young is younger surrounded by old and so on. Here are a few examples, some of them requiring a certain image size to be functional.



To the left two young women are silhouetted against the sky at a summer sunset. One of them is currently on the phone, and we may wonder if the other end of that has something to do with the young men who have just been busy burning tyres in the foreground - a not uncommon sight in rural areas with more space than people.

Bottom left shows the contrast between two men in one small boat approaching two considerably bigger boats with, presumably, a few more people on board. All three vessels are designed for leisure, and one may speculate on which group has the more sustainable and rewarding holiday experience.

Directly below a scene from the prairie showing a connection between an old and lonely and stationary tree, and a young and lonely and freely moving bird.

The prairie is perfect for composition practice since all views are simplified. The flatness makes the horizon straight and close so anything a few kilometres away is out of sight. One house, one tree, one road, one bird becomes the only clearly defined elements against a straight line between land and sky.





The late summer night situation here is not hard to read. Some have more flashy means of transport than others, and if the sight of that should trigger a desire in someone else to trade in the bicycle for something more fashionable that's understandable for most of us. The When (the moment) shows all persons focusing their attention on the car, while the Where (the position) and the What (the included) underline the car as an intruder in a slightly less fashionable environment.

Space

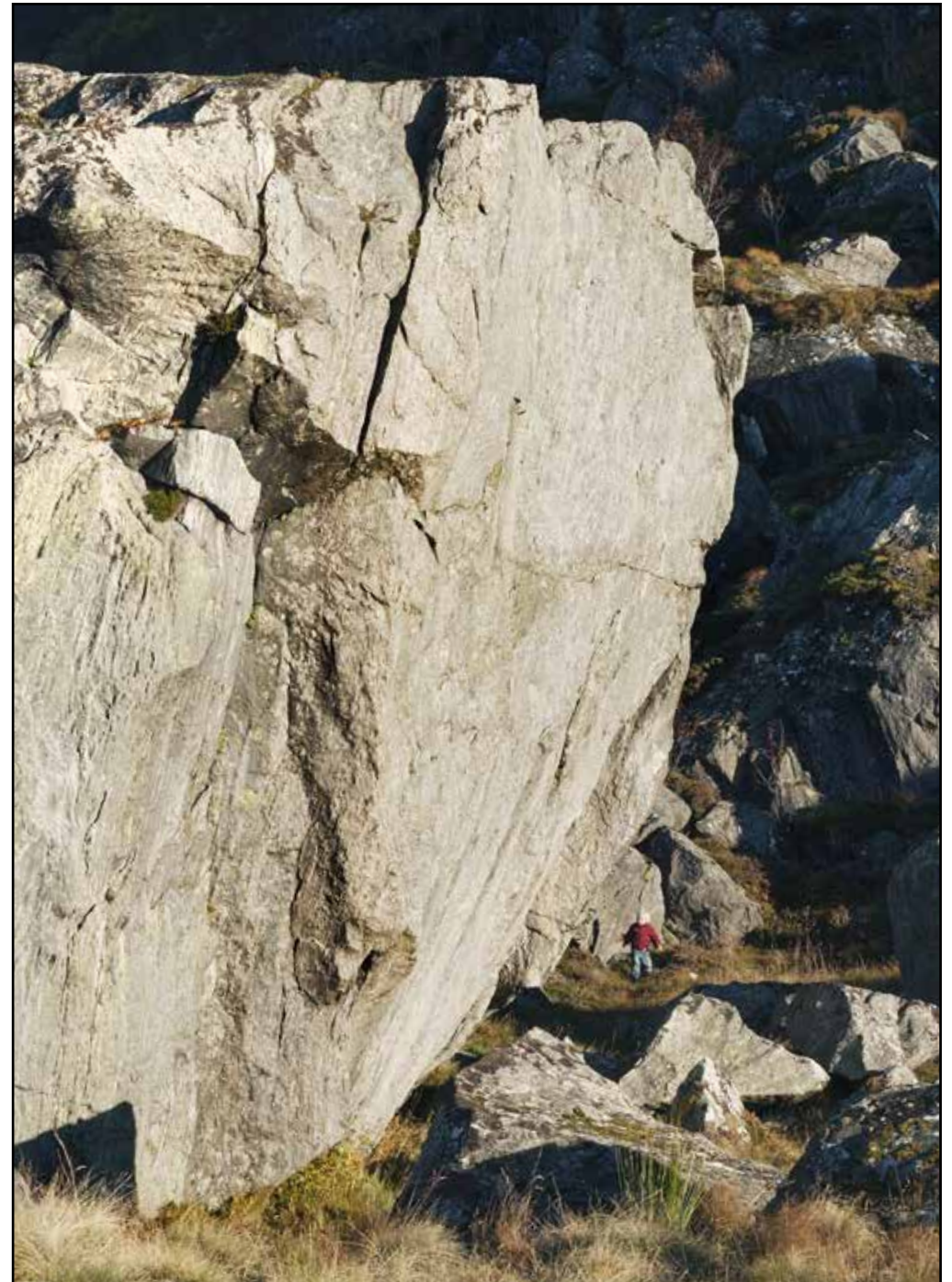


Photojournalism is about visual storytelling. To the left a representative of the sordid side of society is almost demonstratively avoided by the more fortunate. Situations like this are not uncommon, and the empty space around the beggar effectively underlines his social status.

To the right the smallness of the child is emphasized by the largeness of the boulder towering over it. Such pictures need a large print size to communicate. The child, despite its red jacket, will otherwise be easily overlooked.

Below, an abandoned farm on the North American flatlands is photographed from a distance. Close by one may focus on decay, on weather-beaten panelling and broken windows, on rusty hinges and left-behind oddities. Regarded from afar like here, the vastness and loneliness of the prairie is emphasized by the space included. The deer's trail, being the only sign of life in the picture, stands out as a strong symbol of people having left the area.

A hundred years ago people came, settled and cultivated the land. Now the best land is run as larger units of industrial agriculture. People have moved to the cities, and the poorer land is reclaimed by nature.



Space, balance and mood



“Space in direction of movement” (p. 17) also relates to “direction of gaze, even if no physical movement is taking place or anticipated. The gaze itself implies a “visual momentum” that influences our feeling of balance regarding the picture.

Above we have a flow of light gracefully felt and appreciated through a stone wall, and there is little doubt that all elements here contribute to a balanced image.

To the left we have a rock and a mountain of similar shapes leaning left and up, and a woman perched on top of the smaller one also on the left-hand side of the image. Still we have balance, due to her gaze in the opposite direction.

The image of the anonymous person to the right is rather closely following the “rule of thirds” (p. 35-36) and as such presumably conveying “balanced harmony.” This could well be someone enjoying the view of the sea during a healthy stroll in the rain, but the What and the When also give room for uneasiness. The person is looking out and left, so why is there so much space behind him? And is that foot on that rock on the other side of the chain placed there only for support? The rain, grey tones, bluish tint, low fence, pose and cropping of the image may well communicate a mood of distress rather than one of harmony, and the umbrella anonymizing the person is a further sign in that direction; often necessary in images of this kind.

- and anonymity





Sometimes space itself is an important part the motif. The image to the left shows a winter solstice sunrise over the Red Sea. Light reflected from the water is here the main motif, as seen from a rather low camera position just as the sun is about to break free from the horizon. Close to the Equator as here the sun rises almost vertically while chance had the little waves rolling in towards the camera, all fitting well with a central composition and a vertical format.

To the far right we see the last surviving wooden ship built for the once prosperous Arctic seal hunting tradition of Norway. The ship is photographed against a dark sky on slightly shifty waters to underline this type's capacity for provoking seasickness. The hulls had to be strong and rounded to withstand the crushing power of drifting ice. This made them safer but also more uncomfortable due to reduced sailing stability. Extra sky is included as a background for text, since the picture was planned for front page and poster use.

The composition rule of “space in the direction of movement” is here used to focus on the ship's heaving *upward* motion, more than on its forward thrust.

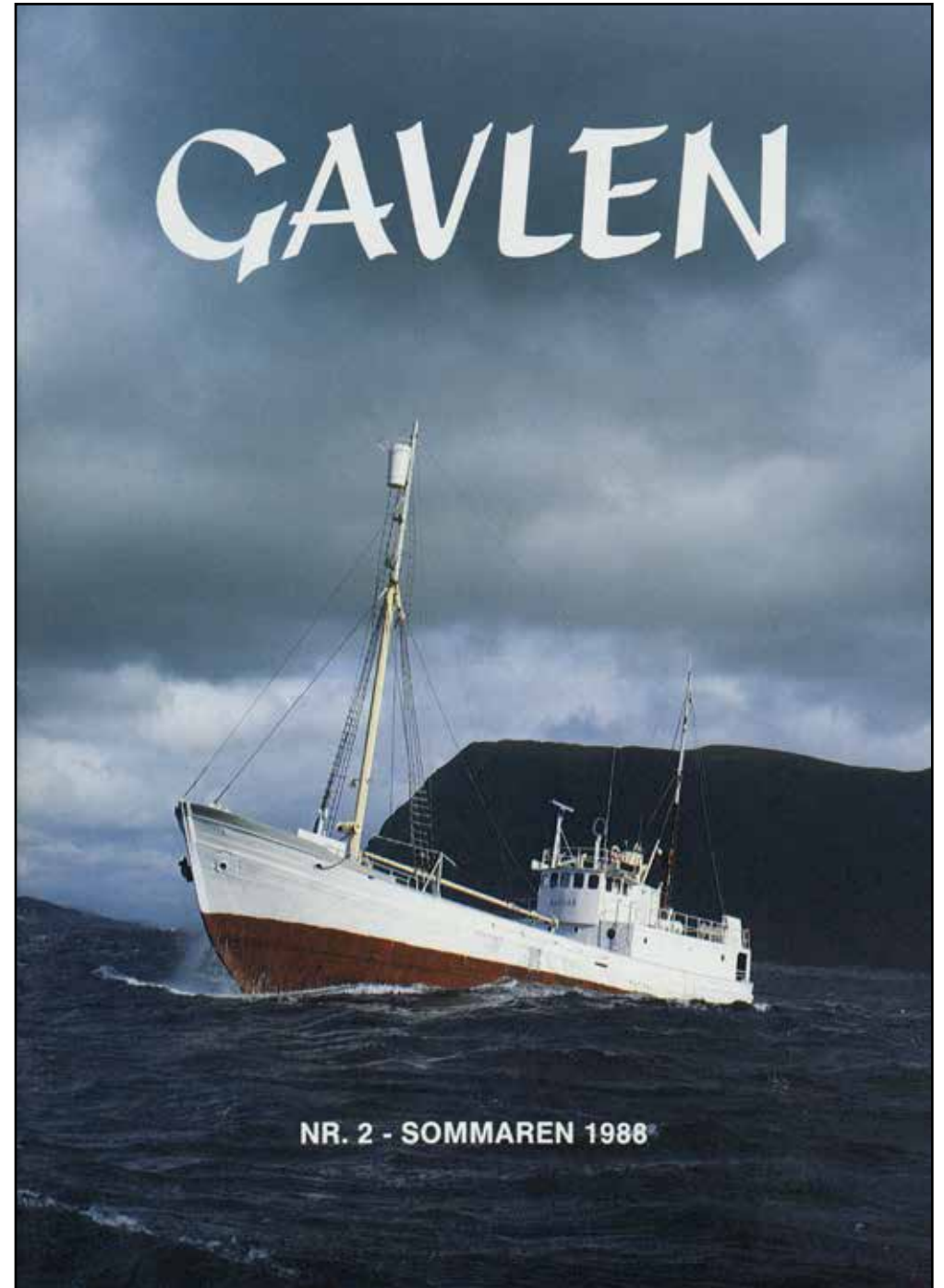
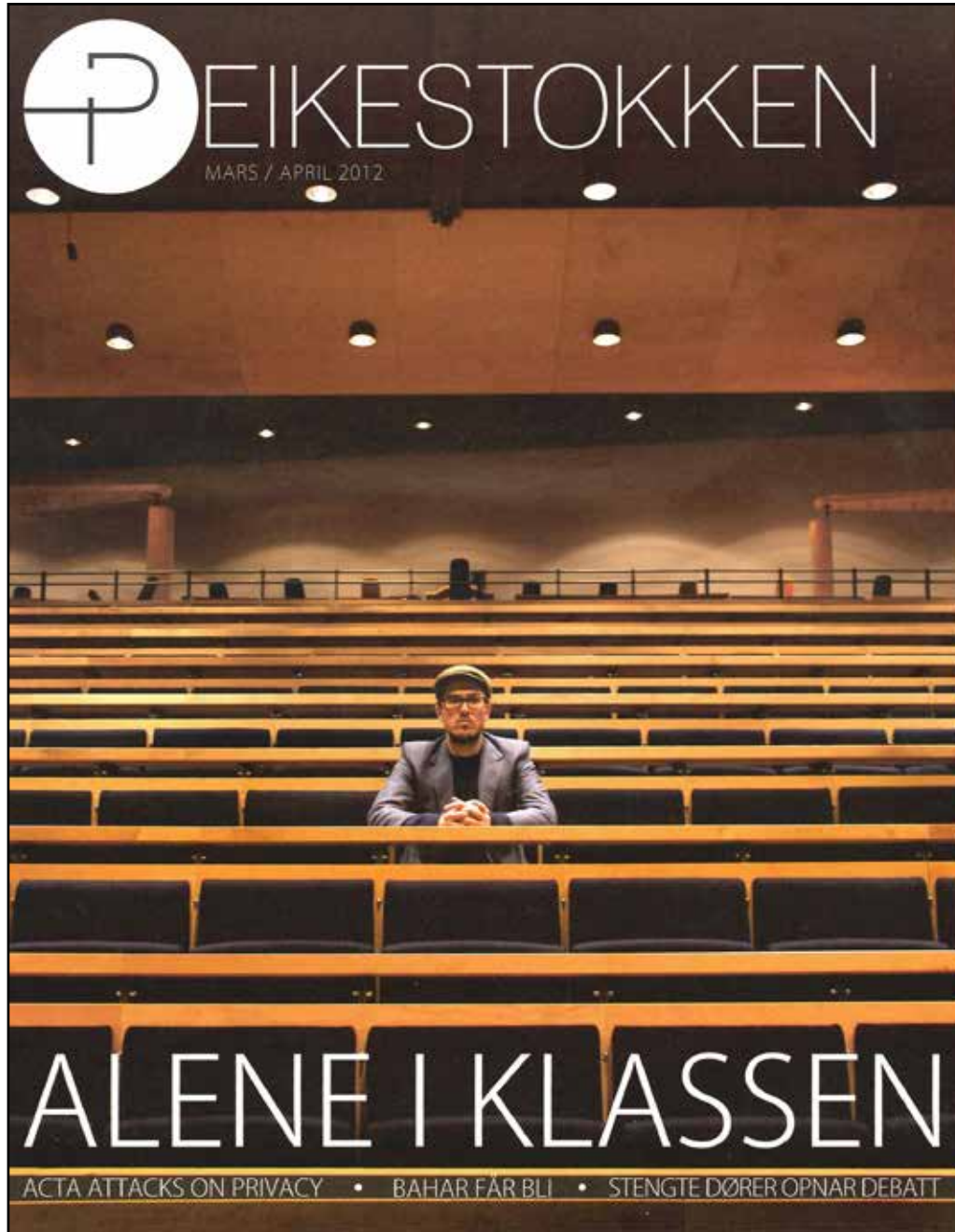
Close right you can see the front page of the VUC student magazine Peikestokken from March/April 2012. The story illustrated is one of fewer students on campus due to more students following courses via Internet.

A central composition like this, with the person situated in the middle of the auditorium, fingers folded, head up, looking straight into the camera with a very visible absence of anyone else around, is effectively illustrating his position of being alone. The use of space is vital for this impression. The use of a straight-on camera is equally vital, and with an extra bonus regarding the inclusion of letters.

Photographing at an angle of 90 degrees to the rows of seats make them all run horizontally parallel and thereby suitable for including text in the picture. This is normally something to be avoided, since the array of bright or dark spots of the average picture will interfere with letters printed on it and make them less readable, unless they are outlined or placed on a semitransparent band across.

Even so, letters may hide or disturb vital information in the picture and should, as a rule, be avoided for that reason. In these three cases there *is* room for text, when adapted and used with sober discretion.

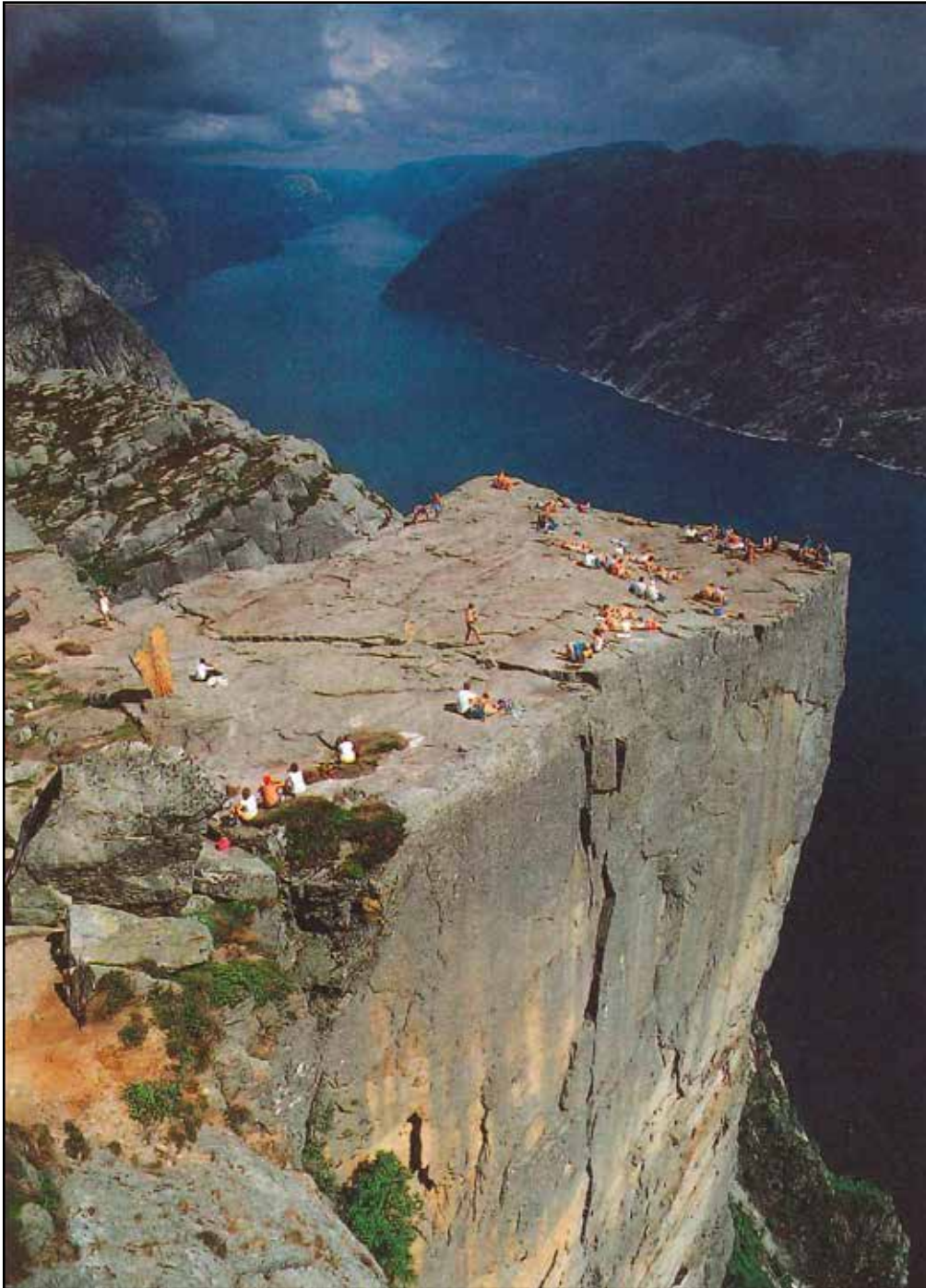
Text on images



Text on images requires careful planning and minimalistic use.

Photos: Berit Buran Juul, Gaute Hareide

The landscape in a romantic tradition of postcards



This postcard picture is partly included because it is brilliant, and partly because it is previously analysed in accordance with scientific tradition by professor Peter Larsen (see Notes), so anyone interested may compare his qualified theoretical approach to my more practical views.

It is presenting Preikestolen, an icon of Norway and a most popular viewpoint. We are shown a rectangular plateau with edges ending abruptly in vertical cliff-sides down to the fjord below. It is a killing view. A deep crack seems ready to topple the outer part of the rock off into the fjord at any minute, and no fences are guarding the edges, where one false step will certainly lead to a sudden death. Despite these indisputable signs of danger the plateau is filled with seemingly relaxed people enjoying a moment in the sun.

This is a masterly performed presentation of the “Pulpit” rock (as its name translates), due to a rare combination of choice and luck regarding Where, What and When.

The camera position is one of a few provided by nature, and could hardly be improved by scaffolding or drone. The plateau is seen at a 30° angle rising to the right, meeting the fjord at a similar angle rising to the left. The distance between them is accentuated by the warm colours of the rock being spotlighted by the sun, while the blue colours of the fjord are darkened in shadow. This darkness is deepest where the rock towers above, adding to a feeling of drama.

From this view is selected a section including the cliff side, the full plateau with people, and the fjord as it turns in the upper part of the picture to stretch on toward the inland areas. The entire fjord is covered by shadow, but at the far end we can see light penetrating the clouds to illuminate a small part of that area, just as the sun is illuminating the main motive at the time of exposure. The choices are good. The ability to make them, regarding landscape, light and diverse people present, is luck. Both are needed.

So what’s the story? Norway is spectacular. The nature is breath-taking and still not tamed (lack of fences), with weather that is just as breath-taking and absolutely unpredictable. This nature can kill you if you’re not careful, as it frequently does to both reckless ignorants and experienced adventurers. In short; this picture supports a myth about Norway and it does it well.

Postcards is a minimalistic medium, somewhere between Twitter and the letter. Unlike the letter, it is always short and always open. Unlike Twitter, it takes time to reach the recipient, it has a limited audience and it has a visual side.

Photographic postcards may claim a tradition via the tourist photos of the late nineteenth century back to the landscapes of Romanticism. Key components of landscape postcards are often beauty and harmony, even with drama, as seen.

Still, most photographic postcards have one main concern: Showing what X looks like. This X can be anything visual; a place, a factory, a building, a person, an animal or a product - to mention a few.

Most photographic postcards made for sale, however, show a pretty place from a good viewpoint when the sky is clear. Tourists are seldom able to get pictures from the best standpoint and/or time, so postcards are fine souvenirs. They are also documents of What Once Was, as this is or at least used to be the main characteristic of a photographic picture.



Photos: Gaute Hareide

The two pictures below show respectively Hjørungavåg and Hareid, as parts of those places looked like in the early 1980's. Both are photographed in low, direct sunlight to outline the topography of the landscape and the urban areas. Both are photographed from a pre-chosen location and both are exposed with a ship/ferry in a well visible position and with space in the direction of movement. Both have a foreground of small trees and bushes, both have a central area where people work and live, and both have a rock solid background.

Both are made as attempts at following traditional rules of composition. Neither of them claim to be masterpieces of romanticism, but they try. Their main purpose, however, is to identify a place so the sender can say; I was here!

Aerial photo postcards became popular in the 1950's, effectively depicting locations from above. This is now even more effectively taken over by drones that can deliver high quality airborne still photos and film at a fraction of the cost and from much lower positions. As for composition, aerial photos mainly seek to fill the frame with an area of interest with little ambition other than that.



A formula for Beauty

The rules, tips and tricks so far mentioned open up for a question. Is there such a thing as a formula for beauty? The answer is yes. It is a ratio; 1:1,618... It is ancient, discovered by Euclid 300 BC as a geometrical phenomenon: the golden cut. He found that you may cut a line AC at a point B so that BC relates to AB as AB relates to AC. If now AB is the long side and BC is the short side of a rectangle, that rectangle will be seen as “prettier” than others by a majority of people. It is therefore called golden. The golden rectangle is much used in art, in design and architecture. All credit cards for instance have this ratio of roughly 8:5. It is also reported as found in pretty parts of nature like the Nautilus shell and diverse plants, and it is called the Formula for Beauty.

Does it work? Many people think so, and clever folks have developed ways of measuring faces to see if also pretty people fit the formula. Apparently they do. Elisabeth Hurley and John Cleese once made a BBC-series on taste where this was discussed. Hurley was then found to be closer to the magic number than Cleese, and many may agree that she *is* by a tiny bit the prettier of the two.

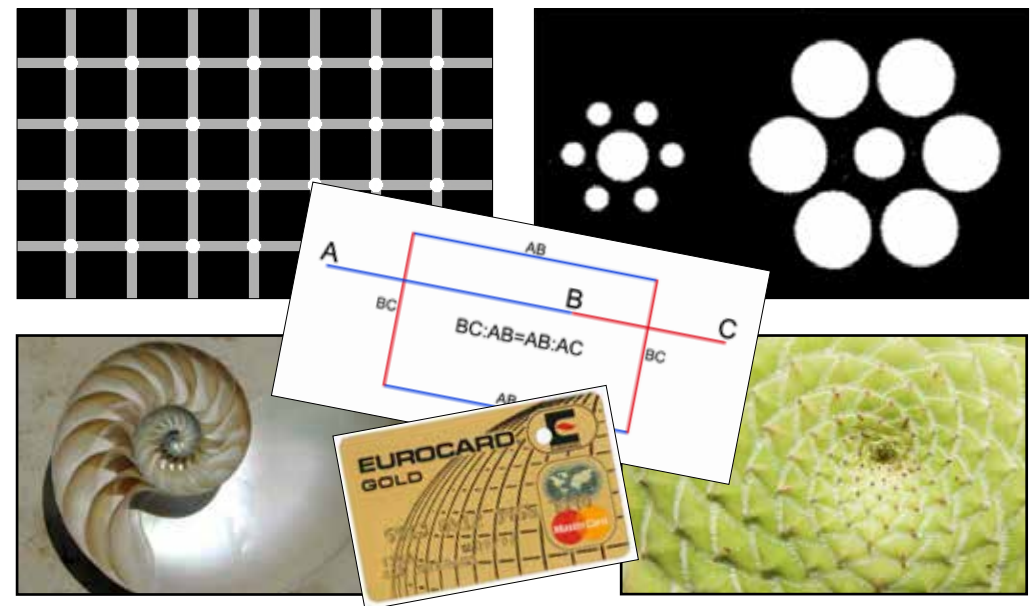
There are objections to the theory, though. Featured Fine Art photographer Bruce Barnbaum has claimed that the proof of the golden cut being a formula for beauty is a construction. Barnbaum is also a mathematician, and should

be listened to. His former job was to calculate trajectories of intercontinental ballistic missiles, and such people do not take numbers lightly.

Statistic preference of the golden rectangle may come just from the fact that it fits well, if not quite, with the human field of vision, see page 10. The ratio 8:5 is rather close to the ratio 16:9; today a common format for TV and film. This format is chosen from peoples’ preferences, unlike the Leica-format and early TV-format of 3:2 that were chosen out of optical and technical preferences. Still, this doesn’t give us a formula for beauty, just a hint of preferred frames.

My personal view is that photography is about reality, and that the complexity of reality eludes formulas. The adaptability of the human vision makes matters even more complex. The picture of Barnbaum, for instance, is not closer to the blue line above it at its right-hand side. It just looks that way due to the lines of the ceiling panel below it. The two central white dots below right are identical, believe it or not, and there is not a single black dot in the rectangle below left.

Everything we see in an image affects the way we see other elements of the same image. One simple formula to cover the complexity of our entire visual world has to my mind yet to be found. It may not exist.



The Rule of Thirds



The “rule of thirds” (golden cut light) is a simpler, less sophisticated but more efficient aid to composition. Just imagine splitting the image in three, both ways.



The Rule of Thirds - The Moment



Testing this rule I once walked sideways until the middle of an “island” in a “sea of grass” aligned with *one* imaginary crossing of lines while the head of a resting bison bull aligned with the diagonally *opposite* imaginary point in my viewfinder. The simple motifs of the prairie are *so* good for such testing.

Now I had a composition in harmony, according to the “rules”, and should be happy. But since a sleeping bull is rather boring, I wasn’t. A bit later things improved. The bull got tired of sleeping and rose. Better, but not much. Still I waited. Then the bull scratched himself with his hind leg and rolled over, as dust drifted sideways in the wind. Patience pays, at times.

Below a view from Bergen. People doing what they do creates a flow of diverse positions. I explained my needs and took my time and was soon ignored. At this particular moment all the workers were occupied with different stages of the same procedure; picking stones, laying down stones and brushing sand, and no other visible activity was drawing attention away. Catching this was in my mind well worth waiting for - but of course, the time was my own. As for the rules, well, they are followed, some of them, in a way. Can you see which?



Simple stories like this may help illustrate what Henri Cartier-Bresson meant by the title of his 1947 book: “The Decisive Moment”. The phrase has come to mean the right split-second to release the shutter. To Cartier-Bresson, however, the decisive moment was only one part of it. The “geometry” or “form” of the image also had to be right. All elements together should participate in producing the perfect photograph.

“Photography is the simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event as well as of a precise organisation of forms which give that event its proper expression.” This quote from the foreword of his book is a brief expression of his view on what photography should be.

The best known illustration of this philosophy is his picture of a man jumping a puddle of water, selected by TIME as one of the 100 most influential photos to have “shaped the human experience.” The jumping man, his reflection in the water, a poster with jumping dancers in the background also reflected, ripples of water mimicking half submerged metal rings lying about - all combine to make this masterpiece what it is, according to scholars.

In my own opinion, his 1961 picture of a running girl at the island of Sifnios is an even better example of his *aestheticism*, while his captured moment of decisive recognition describes the *photojournalist* to the point.

The light and the shadows and the forms of the man-made environment he has chosen as the “geometry” of his report from Sifnios, as well as the position of the running girl half-way up the old stairway is just perfect. Likewise; the triumphant expression of the lady recognising a Gestapo informant, the other clenching her fist in defeat, the stern expressions of the bystanders and the official at the desk makes this one of the most important pictures from the liberation days of 1945.

Both patience, anticipation and quick reaction are needed. And of course luck, as mentioned. Still, no one wins without participating. Cartier-Bresson participated. He searched. He observed. He anticipated, waited and responded when the moment was right. With his little Leica, an unimposing appearance and no flash he was as invisible as a photographer can be, and with his extensive use of film he got “lucky” more often than most. So “luck”, yes, but not just that.

Photos: Henry Cartier-Bresson



Daily life



Even this picture of a great-grandmother and -child needs space to convey its peaceful moment of joint concentration on art production. Notice the toothpick!

“The Moment” covers a wide range of time from fractions of milliseconds to days and years. The rocket launch page 13 may represent one extreme as far as media photography is concerned, while the decaying shacks on page 20 show another. Their process of falling down did not end that day but it has surely ended now, many years later. The two ladies to the left demonstrate a more deliberate and quicker, but still tranquil form of activity.

Common to photographs is that they are “frozen moments of time”. Or symbols of death, as the French critic Roland Barthes suggested. One might just as well call them symbols of eternal life, the way the Vikings saw it. The rocket is gone. The shacks are rotten remains and the old woman is no longer able to draw pretty pictures with her great-granddaughter, but thanks to the photographs none of these situations are forgotten.

Photographs being symbols of death? That’s a gloomy view. Let us rather call them witnesses of life, as it was and is and will be in all its shapes and forms.

Below right is one involving both Man and Beast, not quite organized along the rule of thirds, but close. The picture is balanced; the horses are facing separate directions while waiting for a decision, while the people just now are looking at something to the right. And the background matches the motif well.

Telling stories is what media photographers like to do. To do that we try filling the frame with something interesting. Sometimes we crop it close, like above right. The young man at his confirmation party is sharing something funny with his granny. We can read “celebration” out of the way they are dressed, but not what kind. “Grandmother” is of course also not defined by the picture, but given the difference of age, the intimacy and fun between them, most guesses in Western society would be close to that fact.

Again we must acknowledge the value of the moment. However well composed an image for media purposes may or may not be, its capacity for catching our attention relies more on the moment than on anything else. Simply stated, the wrong moment means elements of the picture not telling the same story, or telling no story at all. Arranged photos of people posing to have their picture taken will often fall into that category. This little booklet is dedicated to cases of the opposite, to moments that are captured and not created.



Open air entertainment



Sometimes an act has no other intention than entertainment, and showing the response of the audience is just as important as showing the cause of it. Bear also in mind that the dancing feet of a juggler may be just as important as his hands.



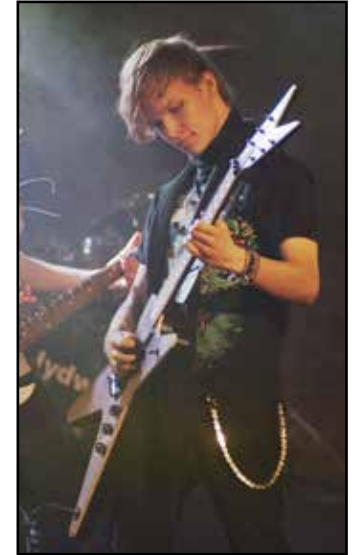
Music festivals



At music festivals you will need pictures where you can *see* the sound. Easy?



Talent contests



Capturing a jumping artist like the one above is not so hard, at the top of the jump he is rather static. The Yo-yo artist bottom left is much more of a challenge. Here one just has to choose the largest lens opening, the highest ISO and the shortest exposure time possible, take a lot of pictures against a good background and hope for the best. Lastly: Do not forget the audience, sometimes a shot from behind is a good choice.



Cabaret



The Musical Cabaret is also a bit above easy. Capturing all the individual members in a group shot, and particularly as a final shot, is almost impossible. Getting pictures of diverse acts like the wife's admiration for her husband as he once was, and what he is doing now, and his return in the morning is a different matter.



Sports



Sports photography is another type of event; predictable or not depending on what discipline you are covering. Most types of track sports, jumping, throwing or lifting place the athlete in a certain position at a certain time. You just have to not miss the appointment, so to speak. Focus where the long jumper is supposed to land (as a reporter you will know the capacity of the potential winners, and they are the only ones you care about), and press the button when the feet hit the sand. Do likewise when the runner crosses the finishing line, or when the slalom skier rounds a flag.

One easy sport to get good winner photos from, is river kayaking. See page 17.

Next round you can spend downstream for more action. Be careful to use a lifeline. The lady below is wearing a helmet, a life jacket and a wetsuit. She is prepared for this and will be fine. You are not. If you fall in, you die. Don't!



Even if the winners take all, they do not always give the best photos. The buck rider below did not win, but he did provide entertainment.

One of the Judo fighters below right is also in big trouble, and his mother in the background is not happy at all. But the guys on longboard are cool.

Sports photography has much to do with Where. Getting close is all-important. This means that you have to get permission. It also means that you have to be careful not to get in the way, not to disturb and not to be a danger to yourself and others.

The rodeo shot is taken ringside, through the rails, just above the posters. Here I was as close as I could get without risk, and not blocking the view of the people behind me.

The guys on longboard come at high speed so you definitely take care to stay out of their way. In this case that was also on the safe side of a fence.



Team sports



Team sport photography is less predictable and as a rule less risky to cover. Normally you find a spot ringside where you may expect some action, observe and wait. As there will be no individual winner, you try to capture active situations where people are fighting, jumping, throwing, kicking, scoring or missing; preferably showing faces. Athletes are heroes, and the supporters will want to see them giving all for the team.

The background is often disturbing, so use a large lens opening and manual focus. Autofocus will all too often result in a sharp background and blurry athletes. Large lens opening may also be necessary to get short enough exposure times. 1/500 should be a minimum for most cases, 1/1000 or shorter is often necessary. It is also necessary to shoot as many pictures per second as possible in active situations, and to leave cropping until later. There is little time for careful composition when the game is on.





Photos: Maja Furuhaug, Håvard Brennhovd, Ole Fredrik Lie

Hard news



Sudden cases of a dramatic nature can be visually rewarding but also stressful. You will not always be welcome, so a humble attitude in combination with persistence may be a good mixture. You have a job to do, but other jobs may be more important then and there. Many sites are also potentially dangerous, so show respect and try not to be a security risk. Present yourself to those in charge, state your needs and follow instructions. If you want to do this often; attend a security course and learn how to behave in unsafe environments.

Whatever the case is, you need to get to the place by any means available. Foot, bicycle, car, boat, plane or helicopter. Getting to the place is often the hardest part of the job, and it is a good idea to have a list of resourceful people to call.

Sometimes, like with the dolphin below, reporting is both good fun and a real challenge. A friend had time and a speed-boat available, which gave us a good time following a large pod of these small whales. I soon found that getting a picture of their front was difficult. Their breathing was done in a second, so as soon as I saw them break the surface and snapped my shutter, the snout was already gone and all I got was the dorsal fin. Then I realized that they drew in air as regularly as I do and started following wakes. Seeing one wake a bit off I looked for a next one closer, trying to predict the course and pressing the button one second before the anticipated moment of the third wake. Following this procedure for the one-and-a-half rolls of film I had left got me three acceptable "portraits", the one below being the best one.



Accidents are news that can be emotionally hard to handle. When you arrive at a scene and the road is dry and the weather is fine but the car is crushed and you realize that the only reason that young people are dead is somebody's "need for speed", then the sadness you feel can be overwhelming. You still have to do the job, and you have to do it with respect for the bereaved and with respect for those who see these things more often than you, and are there for an even better reason than news. So how do you behave?

Be gentle. Never rush into a situation with your camera in shooting position, you are not there to attack. Find those in charge, they will have a vest with "LEADER" of some sort on it. Present yourself and accept that they may not like the fact that you are there. And that you may have to wait.

When you can start working, try to illustrate what has happened and how. Skid-marks on the road in line with a wrecked car may indicate speed and loss of control. The wreck itself is a motif, but focusing bloodstains can well be avoided. Elements indicating the involved may be used. A tricycle outside the remains of a burnt house may tell a story. A teddy-bear in a ditch may do the same. Or if you are there in time; rescue personnel in action (not identifying victims), a helicopter, ambulances, police, wrecked cars being removed.



Photos: Gaute Hareide



Sometimes tragedy strikes close. I was on my way to Hoddevik one morning to film surfing when the radio reported a young man missing. A group had gone to watch the waves the night before, one of them had been taken by a wave and presumably not survived.

In cases like this there will be search parties organized in the hope of locating and retrieving the body. This, and the fierceness of the sea, is what you may use to illustrate such tragedy. The waves were still hitting the breakwater with considerable force. After a while I noticed that at a certain interval there would be a double wave breaking rather spectacularly. While I was changing position to get a clear view of this, two persons from the search party came into the area. I moved even further away to get them in line with the anticipated breaking waves and got my picture soon after.

The body was found later that day.

My hope is that people seeing this picture will think twice before going close to the sea during a storm, particularly at night.

Feature



“I like making money!” Anna confided with a smile, when I asked her how she found time for lefse-production in between all the other activities on the farm.

Johannes Riise had other priorities. Always ready for a good conversation, his carpenter’s workshop was a meeting place and an institution. If customers sometimes had to wait a bit, none of them complained either. The quality was good and his charges reasonable, and popping in to check on the progress was a pleasure each time.

Capturing his personality on camera, however, was difficult. As soon as the camera was lifted the conversation took a break and he became seriously focused on his work. Shooting “blind” with the camera chest-high I got one good shot of his natural expression. But as he heard the click and realized that I could take pictures without looking through the viewfinder, that option was gone and did not return.

Most reporting has little drama. People are interviewed in some context or other. Then you need a picture, and it is all too easy to go for a facial when the interview is over. “Why don’t you stand in front off ... and look in the camera ...” See next page. The result can be OK, but seldom more than an identification of those who are interviewed. My approach has been to do pictures first, talk while we do it, and check on details later. That can always be done over the phone, by the way. Pictures require presence, words do not.

Anna Bjåstad had earned local fame for her “lefse”, and spent the spare time of her busy days supplying customers with this delicacy. I spent an evening recording the process, as I listened to the story of her life. The conditions of her childhood would not be approved today, neither would the production facilities in her earthen floor farmhouse basement. But none of her customers ever found reason to complain. Neither did she.



Quite often a posed portrait is the only way to get a picture. Sometimes this is even the best way to do it. All press photos should be relevant; see Rules page 58, and the relevance may be just that background.

Below we see a group of men, uniform in skin tone and (almost) in outfit, posing in the snow in front of a ship. Their nationality is the Republic of the Gambia. The year is 1978, the location is Hareid and the time is winter. They are very happy, with the snow that most of them see for the first time as well as with the newly built freighter they have come to take over.

So: What better place for a group photo than just here?



Monrad Røyseth is posing in uncultivated nature, looking into the camera, right hand stretched out as in saying: “Look here! This is it.”

The relevance is, admittedly, less obvious than in the picture with the African ships’ crew, still: Monrad suffered from poor health all his life, and found little relief in modern medicine.

Nature, however, did provide. He studied herbal medicine from his younger days and kept his problems at bay with an alternative lifestyle and diet.

So: What better place for a photo than in his Pharmacy?

National holidays



Annual events like national holidays have to be covered, often in a traditional form presenting parades, national costumes, speeches and happy faces. Kids in their Sunday best playing games or throwing water balloons at legal targets is often a good choice - particularly in Norway, where May 17th has a strong focus on the young.

Capturing good moments from such activities requires an eye for anticipated action and an ability to get to the right spot in time. This can be exhausting and is a good excuse for photographers not to be too stiffly dressed on such days.

Capturing good moments from diverse games is more a question of a large number of shots from a well chosen standpoint. As for speeches, keep in mind that the visual moments here are also more or less good. Pronouncing vowels looks better than consonants and a lifted hand adds to passion. Also remember that all parts of society hope to be represented in the traditional photo-reports from the celebration, and that this includes the fact that Norway today is less mono-cultural than it used to be.



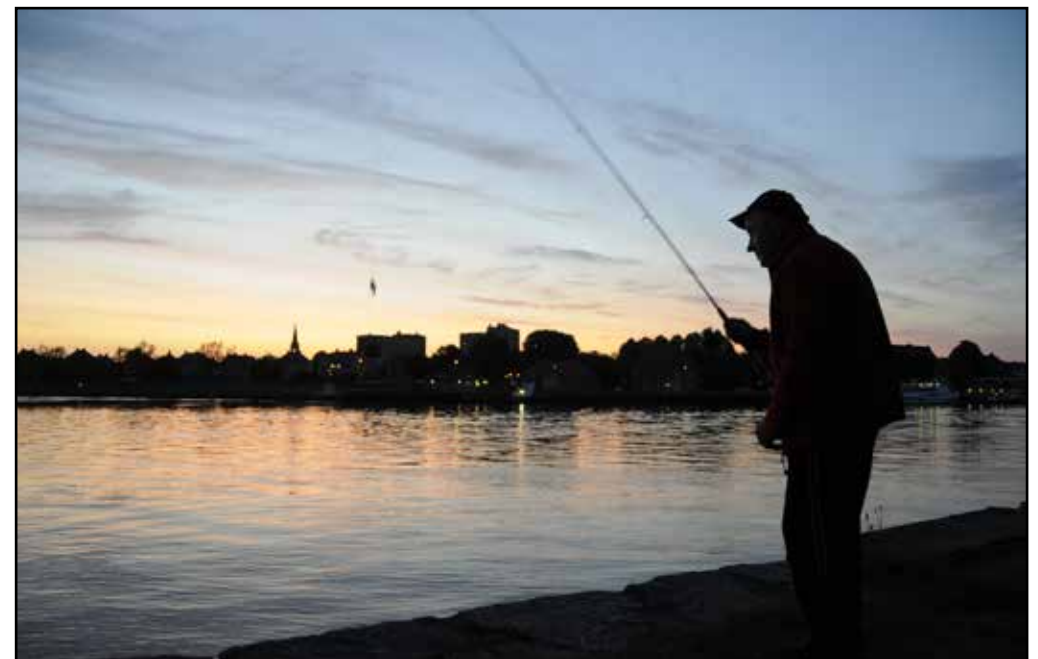
Street photography



Street photography covers any interesting motif in public view. Hungarian youths enlivening the dullness of the subway with a Rubic's cube. A German artist offering entertainment on a grey day. Norwegians grabbing an informal bite on 17th May. Swedes lunching out with seagulls. An Estonian lady ignoring a sales campaign.

The rainy days that locals endure. The sunny scenes that the tourists bring home for their albums. The man fishing in the harbour.

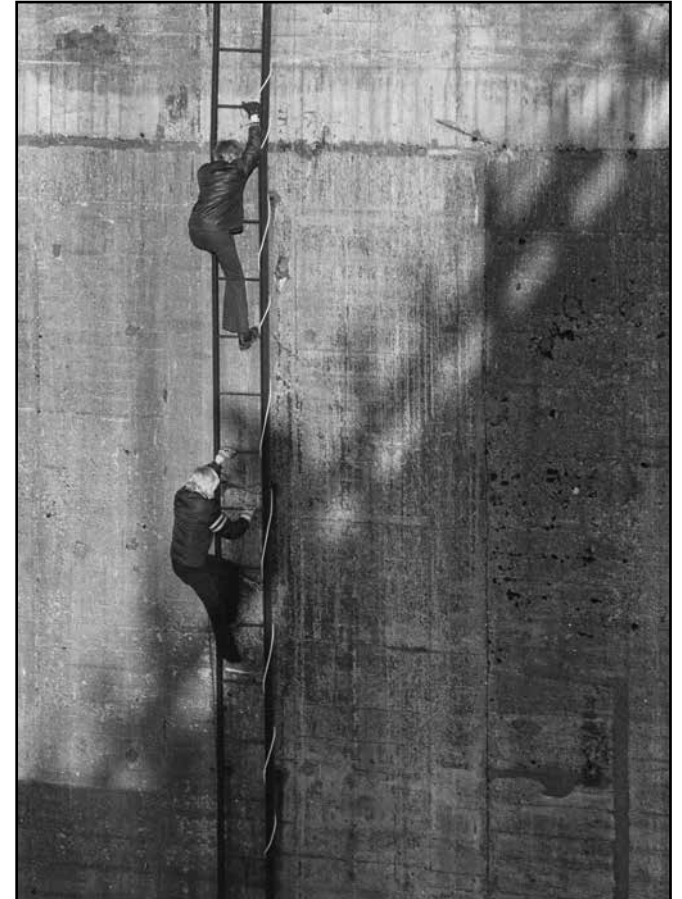
Glimpses of everyday life do not have to be of streets and do not have to be of people, but they should be worthy of notice.



Miscellaneous

Photography is about knowing how to use camera and light and image handling to produce pictures that re-present your vision at the time.

Photojournalism is about seeing the motifs, and if you don't, to go looking for them. Kittens are cute, and boys are daring, and the bell is chiming since someone's chiming it. But can a sewage pipe ever look good? And can a man look happy after 800 years underground? It does seem that way.



Industry



13 rules to follow, two of them unbreakable

1. The motif should be relevant.

If the motif is not relevant to the story, it will be misleading and should not be used. This is the first unbreakable rule, see no.13.

2. The motif should be interesting.

This is not absolutely necessary, as even dull pictures may illustrate and/or inform. But dull pictures rarely lead to reading or reflection and should be used only with regret.

3. The frame should fit the motif.

Portraits as a rule require a vertical frame, and landscapes the opposite. Whatever the motif is, the shape of it should decide the proportions of the frame.

4. The motif should fill the frame, plus a little extra (for printed media).

Printed media may need some space for cropping, since cutting text as a rule is more of an obvious flaw than cutting pictures. Costly space should not be wasted, but: All relevant image information should be intact after cropping.

5. The picture size should be adequate.

Pictures with much information, like a group portrait, should as a rule be presented bigger than pictures with less information, like a single portrait.

6. Balanced picture or not is a statement.

The left and the right-hand side of a picture should have equal amounts of what might be called “visual momentum”. If not, one feels that there is too much included on one side or too little on the other. Describing this in full is a big task, as it includes the shape, size, colour, brightness, position and direction of each element of the picture - as already briefly discussed in this compendium.

7. Static or Dynamic composition is a statement.

A picture presenting a frozen moment in time should have a dynamic composition to underline this, while more static motives like a person at a certain age or a situation of little action, or an object or a place in a similar situation might well be reflected also in the composition of the picture.

8. Straight picture or not is a statement.

Gravity is vertical and the horizon slightly curved, but level. Our pictures should reflect this order of nature. If the picture is tilted, it is a signal that something is out of order. “Dutch angles”, as the technique is called, is professionally used to indicate speed, instability or tension. Unprofessionally it is a common statement of incompetence; sometimes claimed to be “creative”.

9. Space in the Direction of Movement is a statement.

Movement is here seen both as things actually on the move, and direction of gaze. Looking/moving upwards/into the picture is positive and promising while the opposite is not.

10. Foreground and sizes and mist and focus and light “create” distance.

The picture is flat and the world is not. The illusion of depth in a picture is just that: An illusion. Foreground elements help create such illusion; partly by being larger than similar things further off and partly by being “crisper” than the same. Moist or dusty air makes things far away slightly blurred, which in contrast with clear details close to the camera adds to a feeling of depth.

11. Background elements support or destroy.

Elements in the background will support the picture if they are part of the same story. If not, they will distract and sometimes destroy the picture.

12. Framing adds focus to the motive.

Framing can be leaves, or rails, or walls or even clouds surrounding our entire motive, or it can be elements of the picture framing other elements, like a cat in a window or a coloured patch behind a person. Used with care such frames may lead attention to that cat, or person, or whatever the story is.

13. The picture should be truthful.

This means the picture should be an actual photograph from a specific place and/or time with nothing added and nothing removed. Cropping is OK, the same is overall and partial adjustments of brightness and colours to make the picture as close to the human eye’s perception at the time, as possible. Anything in excess of that is not allowed, including presenting it as from a different location or time. This is the second unbreakable rule, see rule nr.1.

Notes. Here follows comments, extra information and references to diverse images. See also Reference List.

Page 4 on Composing while shooting

During diverse debates the last half of the nineteenth century on Photography's right to be seen as Art or not, the Photographic Artist's ability to compose the image in the camera was seen by some as one vital criterion. According to these purists, the edge of the negative should therefore be included in the print to prove that this vital sign of excellence had been met. See page 50 bottom right. The root of this idea can be found in Cartier-Bresson's 1947 debut book, see page 37 second paragraph. Cartier-Bresson was indisputably a master of seeing and catching the right frame of the right moment, but he was also without any interest in darkroom work and preferred to have others develop and print his images. His view of not cropping the negative should be seen in that light. Apart from the obvious sheepishness of defining an idol's personal convenience as a universal ideal to be followed by all, there is the objection that the format of art is not something to be decided by camera manufacturers.

One flaw regarding his practice can be seen in the image quoted bottom right on page 37, where one person in the background watching something outside the frame draws attention away from the drama in front. A slight cropping on top would conceal this disturbance. It would also hide four other faces, and one might argue that such cropping would hide facts of the situation and should not be accepted. A valid counter-argument could be that Oscar Barnack's choice regarding the Leica-format in 1923 should not decide the format of a visual document in 1945. One might also argue that the photographer could have tilted the camera slightly down if he had wanted to. Studying the full series this image belongs to (see reference to page 37) one will see that to make such a demand is bold. The way the situation changed rapidly made it a challenge even to Cartier-Bresson, and supports my claim that ordinary mortals at least should leave the final cropping to the editing suite.

I may of course also mention that the image claimed by many to be the very definition of Cartier-Bresson's combination of geometry and moment (The Jumping Man) is cropped from its original to a more elongated format since: *"There was a plank fence around some repairs behind the Gare St. Lazare and I*

was peeking through the space with my camera at my eye. This is what I saw. The space between the planks was not entirely wide enough for my lens, which is the reason the picture is cut off on the left." This quote proves that even the master of composing could admit to the 2x3 format not being the perfect every time. See:

<https://iconicphotos.wordpress.com/2009/04/23/behind-the-gare-st-lazare/>

Page 5, 6, 8 and 9 on Formats

Early art is preserved mostly on rock and pottery of diverse shapes. Modern art is produced mainly on rectangular surfaces with straight edges, since such are more easily produced by modern tools. There is no evidence that rectangular shapes are particularly suited for image production and presentation, apart from the obvious that they are more easily framed and placed on walls or among text in a typographical work-flow. Media's preference for rectangular photos should be seen in that light.

Some typographer's (and some journalist's) tendency to crop images without any regard for the communicative and/or aesthetic value of that image should be studied against a different background. 500 years of science, teaching and media with little and no use of images has taken its toll, and it is only to be hoped that modern media's access to images will lead to better use of both visual and verbal communication.

Page 6, 7 and 22 on Perspective

For information on Alberti,

see:

<http://www.noteaccess.com/Texts/Alberti/1.htm>

Transferred to digital camera technique the pixels of a CCD-sensor can be seen as a very fine "grid" where light makes imprints of the motif directly without the aid and fallibility of the human eye and hand. Given a digital *pin-point* camera, beams of light will draw images in exact re-presentation of the motifs they are reflected from without any distortion created by a lens, but also with less detail. This is of course very similar to the "analogue" camera, except that here the receptors of light will be more or less evenly spread light-sensitive molecules instead of a regular grid of electronic sensors. (Please pardon these rather complicated sentences. I've tried to make this short. It is not *that* important.)

Pin-point images will not correspond exactly with the human perception of a motif since our vision is both stereoscopic and continuous as well as biased, but they will correspond exactly with perspective as transferred from a 3-dimensional motif to a 2-dimensional surface. Images created by lens-equipped cameras will differ slightly from such perfection due to diverse lens-flaws. Some of these (vertical perspective, distortion, vignetting and colour fringing) can and should be corrected after recording. In many cases, this is done by in-camera conversion from RAW to JPG, but a competent photographer should know how to do it manually, and know when *not* to do it. This is particularly the case with vertical perspective adjustment.

The top three illustrations page 7 is an attempt at illustrating how the “grid” system of the Renaissance is remarkable like the digital camera of today.

Perspective painting is far older than the Renaissance. According to Vitruvius, *scenographia*, as he calls it, was introduced by autodidact painter Agatharcus of Samos in the 5th century BC. «*For in the beginning in Athens, when Aeschylus was presenting a tragedy, Agatharchus set the stage and left a commentary on the matter. Instructed by this Democritus and Anaxagoras wrote about the same thing, how it is necessary that, a fixed centre being established, the lines correspond by natural law to the sight of the eyes and the extension of the rays, so that from an uncertain object certain images may render the appearance of buildings in the paintings of the stages, and things which are drawn upon vertical and plane surfaces may seem in one case to be receding, and in another to be projecting*» The architect Vitruvius refers to scenography as the third way of drawing a building, in addition to ground plan and front. The technique was forgotten after the fall of the Roman Empire and rediscovered as renaissance scholars started studying surviving scripts from antiquity.

Even so, scholars have disputed the existence of perspective painting in antiquity due to lack of evidence in the form of surviving paintings. The few wall paintings having survived from Roman times do not show a full mastery of the central vanishing point painting technique, and this has been taken as proof that such technique was not yet developed. Be that as it may, I find it hard to denounce Vitruvius’ testimony due to lack of wall paintings of sufficient artistic quality having survived the turbulent times of two-and-a-half millennium.

Page 10 on vision

The illustration is a hint at how the author’s vision is perceived. The field is individual, depending on how deep set your eyes are and the size of your nose.

Studies on human vision (ancient Optics) were first done by Aristotle (ca.340BC), al-Farabi (ca. 950AD) and Kilwardby (ca1250AD). The first thorough scientific work on Optics was done by Ibn al-Haytham around 1000AD. See:

A.I. Sabra: The Optics of Ibn al-Haytham, The Warburg Institute 1989.

Dominique Raynoud: Studies on Binocular Vision, Springer 2016 p.4.

James T. Enns: The thinking eye, the seeing brain, W. W. Norton & Company 2004

Poynter Institute Eyetracking research at <https://www.poynter.org/tags/eyetrack>

Page 10 on things to avoid

Placing a person like this: in the middle of the picture with her arms crossed, head at an angle, looking straight into a camera slightly below her with a sinister expression on her face, is a well-known technique for presenting a powerful person. Placing this person right in front of Wigeland’s Monolith so that this sculpture becomes a ridiculously tall and heavy “hat” is making fun of that person, intentionally or not. Adding text to create a cross makes it even worse. The rest of the advertisement increases an impression of severe incompetence regarding visual communication, so one must suspect that the damage done is unintentional. With no wish to rub salt into wounds I have done my best to hide the identity of those involved, but I really could not let go of using the example as a warning. Disturbing background elements are unintentionally included more often than we like, as the top right image page 11 clearly shows.

Page 11 on background diffusion

Moving the camera to blur the background is an effective way of creating an illusion of depth in an image as well as speed, but always at the risk of also diffusing the main motive. In this case it worked well, particularly regarding the admiring young ones behind the safeguard.

This picture is of course to a large degree what we call a lucky shot, but, once again, you are never win the lottery unless you buy a ticket.

Page 11 on background movement

The story from the shipyard was told by NRK senior Roald Øyen at a video course in 1984. Regrettably, he did not remember the name of the yard.

Page 11 on deliberate use of tempting opportunities

These four examples of portraits with a twist are included just to show that some opportunities are too good to be ignored.

Page 13 on a vertical format portrait with dancing feet and hands

The young man is captured at his coming-of-age party, where he is the person of honour to be celebrated by friends and family. It is quite possibly the best day of his life so far, which I think is visible in this image.

Page 14 and 15 on panoramas

The idea that the photograph is one frozen moment of time is challenged ever so slightly by the panorama pictures. These are, with few exceptions, a result of more than one exposure or of an exposure that started and ended at different times for the left- and right-hand side of the image. Software designed for stitching multiple exposures through a telephoto lens into one panoramic image of extreme resolution, so called “gigapixel” images, is facing one problem in particular: The existence of more than one version of the same person or persons, or cars, or whatever object that may have changed position during the recording procedure. The image from Overåsanden is consequently available in more than one version with some of the persons in different positions or activities. A side effect of the same stitching technique is an ability to remove moving objects from an image, or to make an area appear more crowded. Both will be in violation of the ethic norms of press photography, and one may argue that in view of that, panorama pictures should be treated with some caution.

Page 16 on framing

Framing is used both to define one image element as more important than others by separating it from the surroundings. It can also add to an illusion of depth if the frame is clearly in front of or behind the framed.

Page 17 and 28-29 on space in the direction of movement

Space in front of an action or gaze gives room for that action or view, and is

positive. Lack of space in front of an action or view represents an obstacle, and is negative. Space behind a person indicates the past as more important and the future as more of a challenge. “Meeting the wall” is a metaphor for stopping up, not being able to go on, and is an effective cliché also visually.

The young cat on page 17 is definitely not depressed. Tail up, full speed it is chasing the white dot and nothing else matters. The older cat watching seems to be in a slightly different state of mind.

Page 18-19 on balance

Balance is control. It is not necessarily harmony and not necessarily static, but it is a necessity for almost all well composed images.

Page 20-21 on diagonals

Diagonals are dynamic. They are visual lines indicating something going somewhere, or they are imaginary lines indicating tension. Regarding the image of the waterfall we also have the diagonal between the old mill at close right and the church behind left - both historic buildings in the community. But the main focus of interest is the bush in danger of being washed away, and as such also the one element to decide which moment is the decisive one (see p. 37).

The power lines supported by “monster masts” as some people like to call these installations, are claimed by the same people to be ugly and to be banned from nature for that reason. Controversial necessities as they are, they do sometimes create exciting motives and do, definitely, tell a story.

The falling shacks is a different mark of Man on Nature. They were used for storing grain in older times and have long since been replaced by silos.

Page 22-23 on depth

Depth on a flat surface is an illusion, fully mastered by painters only after the renaissance research on central perspective. Receding lines toward a vanishing point and gradual reduction of known sizes only work if you have lines that can recede and sizes that are known. Acknowledging this makes it easier to understand that the refinement of perspective painting techniques came late, see p. 6-7. Other phenomena like haze diffusion, depth of field, backlight and motion are less well defined but still effective.

The winding roads of Norway are results of a rather bumpy topography, apart from a few, tiny spots. Ervik on the Stad peninsula is such a spot, where six fences separate six small farm fields. They also illustrate that in a stormy area, rock is a both more durable and available fence pole material than wood.

Gothenburg has reduced traffic problems by making bicycles and public transport convenient while private car use is not. London could learn a lesson here.

No one was injured during the cannonade of blanks, but the smoke was real and the light was good. Below a glimpse of a conversation on a fine day, and to the right light shining through air filled with moisture from a nearby waterfall.

Page 24-25 on relativity

I do not feel very rich compared to my immediate neighbourhood. Compared to some other backgrounds, however, I have to admit that I am, and through little merit of my own. Photography has a capacity for illustrating differences in standards of living, and is probably a main contributor to the uneasiness behind some of today's waves of migration. It is hard to be satisfied with little when your cell phone screen constantly feeds you stills and videos of people driving sports cars and sipping drinks in blasé leisure. Just a thought.

The girls on the phone were captured as I turned my back to a splendid sunset, proving that the good motif may be somewhere else than first expected. The tourist ships were photographed from a pier I got access to by driving my van through a gate with an air of having legitimate business there, and the bird and the tree is one more result from the lone prairie.

Page 26-27 on space

Space is also an element of little meaning unless it is compared to something. Space itself is limitless both large and small, and cannot be illustrated without a unit of measure. As for the urban scene, the distance shown by the empty space is accentuated by the determined body language of the pedestrian.

Page 28-29 on this and that and a bit more

Even a state of mind can be accentuated or at least hinted at by the use of space in an image. The lady looks quite happy with the tiny ray of sunshine

on her face as well as with having successfully climbed the boulder below the mountain. The latter works well as a comment on all the mountain-peak selfies flooding social media - even small peaks may be conquered to satisfaction. The person by the sea, however, seems to be more on the gloomy side of life.

Page 30-31 on space for text

Letters on images are as a rule an abomination, since they (again as a rule) interfere with the contents of the image with damage to both as a result. Successful exceptions are almost without exception a result of careful planning or selection regarding both image and text. The actual choice of colours, fonts and background for text is only part of this, the meaning of the text also has to be relevant. Peikestokken is the student's magazine in Volda so both the picture of the student and the text is relevant, and Gavlen is a museum's magazine that was running an article on this particular historical vessel.

Page 32 on romanticism

For further elaboration on my three W's regarding this picture, the Where is as mentioned one of many choices. A view of the Pulpit from below looking upwards, which is perfectly possible, would accentuate the reason for its name. Seen from the fjord it resembles a pulpit rather closely. The view from the fjord also shows the height of the cliff quite well, one might even say better and more dramatically, but you will miss the plateau. Views from the east are possible, where you may get a profile presentation of the cliff side leaning out, including people on the plateau providing a scale. Then there is a choice of viewpoints from the west and above, out of which this is one. Using a drone the choices will multiply. Google "Preikestolen" or Preikestolen" and you will find a wide range of examples (but not this one, yet).

Given the Where as it is, roughly, the What depends partly on fine-tuning the Where and partly on direction, angle and format. Studying the google-samples again you will find that this position is closer to the edge and plateau than most others. The entire plateau is included, and so close that the individuals on it are adding information in excess of just scale. We can hardly see who they are, but easily see what they are doing and how. They are walking, sitting, laying down, partly free of unnecessary garments and basically relaxing like people on a beach or in a sunny park.

This particular position also makes the plateau framed by the fjord, as we can see water below and behind it on three sides.

The format is vertical, focusing the height of the cliff and the stretch of the fjord by excluding other parts of the view from this point.

The composition is central with the plateau occupying the middle 1/3 of the image, the cliff side the bottom 1/3 and the background with sky the top 1/3. See pages 35-36. Thus the cliff occupies 2/3 of the image and is clearly the main motif while the plateau is the motif in the motif. The people on the plateau are just as clearly the motif in the motif in the motif, as they are framed by the plateau, as they inhabit the central position and as they become representatives to us who only by studying them may imagine what it's like to be there.

The composition is also diagonal with the plateau leaning at a ca. 30° angle and the fjord below and behind at a similar 30° angle in the opposite direction, before it turns and stretches on inland. This crossing provides tension as well as balance and adds to the drama of the image, and the fjord stretching inland adds to the feeling of depth.

The people are of course a result of the When, since the photographer has chosen a sunny summer's day when an adequate number of visitors might be expected.

The most remarkable use of the When in this case is the light. Heavy, drifting clouds give a constantly changing mixture of spotlight illuminated patches of land in between parts darkened by shadows. This is probably the main reason for choosing this particular day for this shot. The particular moment is most definitely chosen with care, with the fjord darkened by shadow as a dramatic backdrop for the sunlit plateau. A side-effect of this is warmer colours where the sun is shining and colder where it is not. Both add considerably to the illusion of depth in the picture, and also to the feeling that even if the plateau at this moment looks inviting and friendly it can turn nasty at any moment.

A stroke of luck presents itself by the light shining through the clouds at the far end of the fjord, adding even more to the depth of the image and, to speak

metaphorically, to a hope of a bright future even if the immediate now should be covered in darkness. The word "luck" is used here since the co-existence of light falling on the plateau and light falling at the end of the fjord at the same time cannot be planned, only hoped for. Luck is a vital element of photography, particularly as far as the When is concerned, and is the reason that even a monkey with a camera may happen to take a good picture. It is, however, a statistic fact that professionals tend to be lucky more often than monkeys.

As professor Larsen points out in his analysis of this picture, our reading of it depends to some degree on our previous, sometimes unconscious knowledge. To me and other Norwegians this is a view of a fjord, while it to some others may be interpreted as a river. The light and the clouds indicate to anyone familiar with the local climate that this is a moment of sunshine on a day of shifty weather, while it to others could be the end of a storm or the beginning of one. Regardless of that, the image communicates a story of a spectacular nature that can be both kind and cruel, and contrary to most other pictures of this plateau, the weather plays an important part of telling that: This plateau is flat and dry and fit for a rest on a warm and sunny day, but one false step can be fatal and the weather can turn bad any minute.

See:

Peter Larsen: Medier - teksteori og tekstanalyse. Medievitenskap bind 2 Second edition Fagbokforlaget 2008 p.84ff

Page 33 on more romanticism

These two postcard pictures and the previous one have this in common: The views are selected among a limited number of choices provided by nature and cropped to fit the standard format of the postcard. Apart from these two compromises their moments of exposure are chosen to fit an established tradition of landscape image production, regarding the time of year as well as the day and the time of day.

In addition, the recorded sectors of the views from the respective standpoints are chosen according to traditional rules of composition, but with two different preferences. To the left we see a rural area with main focus on the balance and diversity of the landscape, with the deep bay coming in from the left approaching the lake, both parallel to the fjord with the passing ship and the partly

snow-covered mountains in the distance. A low sun casting shadows and a bit of haze adds to an illusion of depth. To the right we have a community centre with focus on the harbour area with ferry traffic and facilities for industry and offshore fishing support. Here also a low autumn sun provides contrast and gives highlights to the urbanized areas.

See:

<https://global.britannica.com/art/Romanticism>

Oddlaug Reiakvam: Bilderøyndom Røyndomsbilde. Samlaget 1997

Ivar Ulvestad: Norske postkort. Cappelen Damm 2005.

Page 34 on the Formula for Beauty

Professor Peter Larsen has praised the use of the golden cut in a wonderfully written analysis of Edward Steichen's 1898 self portrait. By referring to real and imaginary lines in this picture he points at how precisely Steichen has used the golden ratio. The picture was by Steichen himself described as an early experiment on composition and exists to my knowledge in four copies and two versions, made over a span of six decades. Three copies are more or less identical to the one analysed by Larsen, the other one is a radically different crop of the same negative. This proves that the negative includes more than the final copies do. They are "captured by the camera but made in the darkroom" to quote the old rule, which again proves that the compositions of the final prints are results of deliberate choices. As far as I have had opportunity to control the golden proportions on copies of this version of the image available through Internet, I find little ground for contesting Larsen's statements. The image presented in Larsen's book, however, seems to have been cropped in printing. The proportions of this image, presented with the text, twice, are thereby *not* golden, and as such contradicting his statements instead of supporting them.

The proportions of the image presented in the book has been controlled by mathematician Antje Meier at Volda University College.

Bruce Barnbaum's opinions on the golden cut as a formula for composition were presented at a speech at Festiviteten, Kristiansund during Nordic Light Events 2007 (Personal notes and portrait of Barnbaum from that event).

See also:

Hurley/ Cleese: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00pfqy6/episodes/guide>

Peter Larsen: Album. Spartacus 2004 p. 71-84.

Page 35 on the Rule of Thirds

Agreeing with Larsen insofar as the fact that the golden cut may have a value regarding very simple compositions of very simple motives with the artist in full control of arrangements, and with Barnbaum in his statement that prerequisites can be set to prove just any kind of formula as correct, I maintain my view that media photography is about re-presenting reality and that reality is too complex to be restrained by rules. All the tips and tricks and "rules" so far presented are therefore to be regarded more as "guide lines" - like the "Pirate's Code" of the Caribbean in former times (according to the cinema, at least).

The rule of thirds is perhaps the most useful of these, since it represents a way of thinking that helps us consider and reconsider any motive in the viewfinder, and at the same time is so simple that it often works. It is rarely to be followed "by the letter", but the horizon should be close to one of the horizontal lines unless you want to express something particularly static or dramatic, and the same goes for vertical elements. In short; along the lines you have harmony without being boring. Action should be directed towards the centre unless you want to demonstrate distress, and elements placed further away from centre provide more tension in the image than the opposite.

The image is from Ervik, Stadt at sunset, shot from a precarious position on a small rock at sea level with a 200 mm on a full format sensor and cropped.

Page 36-37 on the Rule of Thirds versus the Moment

Regardless of the different approaches to the "geometry" of these images, along with all other images in this book, their value is determined by the decisive moment of their exposure. Care has been taken regarding composition as well as focus and lens opening and shutter speed and light, but all of this has not been perfect in every case. There have been compromises, and they have all been overlooked in favour of the effect of the Moment.

Compromise is an everyday element of visual media. Press photographers are not and should not be in full control of any situation except for some cases of portraits, so "flaws" are a natural part of the trade. Perfect pictures occur, but more as a rarity than a rule. Here if ever we embrace the fact that "perfect is the enemy of good".

Cartier-Bresson's image from 1945 is the best example of that in this little selection. It is one of a series of stills taken while other photographers were filming the same scene so the situation was both tense and crowded, and things happened quickly. It took place at a centre for displaced persons in Dessau, Germany in May/June 1945 and was documented as part of a project covering the return of French citizens from Germany.

See:

Time: 100 Photographs, 2015. Time Inc. Books pages 190-191 and:
The Museum of Modern Art: Henri Cartier-Bresson, 2014. Thames & Hudson Ltd, London pages 210-211
notes to page 4 (on page 59) and the picture of the apple eaters on page 11.

Snap-shots, as photos for media often are, record situations as they occur with no previous planning or editing apart from one's ability to sometimes predict, get into position, point and shoot. Due to that they often contain image elements of a distracting nature, and not all can be removed by cropping.

Page 38-39 on daily life

Recording everyday life was rarely done by older photographers, but is now one of the most common forms of photography. Smart-phones with decent cameras have for the first time in history made communication through photos easier than communication through words. This is a truly democratic change, with more than 1/3 of the world's population on Facebook and other social media and the numbers are rising. By 2016/2017 over three billion images were shared each day, and Instagram alone reported over 40 billion images and videos since its start in 2010.

See:

<https://www.brandwatch.com/blog/96-amazing-social-media-statistics-and-facts-for-2016/> and

<https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2017/04/20/instagram-statistics>

How this flow of photos will affect our ways of communication and our understanding of images is hard to predict, but it will be naive to assume there will be none.

For my personal benefit, and for anyone aspiring to develop skills as a press

photographer, friends and family is the best training ground you can get. The only difference between a good candid shot of your inner circle and a good candid shot of a president is the status of the motive. Likewise, a bad picture of a celebrity is still a bad picture. You cannot expect to be able to use celebrities for target practice. Your family and friends, however, are available. They share your life, and they (hopefully) love and trust you so they are more inclined to let you use your camera without posing. Take very good care to not abuse that trust! It is one of your most valuable possessions.

Page 40-43 on entertainment

Outdoor entertainment, music festivals and contests usually provide room for relocation and they usually follow a plan. This makes it easier to change positions for each act, and make sure to get good pictures of the audience!

One thing to remember when portraying a vocalist: Listen to the lyrics and press the button as an A or an E or an I is coming. The rest of the vowels plus the consonants produce funny faces. Look in a mirror and see for yourself!

A few other tips: All players look more concentrated, more "soundy" when performing solo. Contorted and ugly perhaps, but intense. The drummer looks passive unless at least one stick is in the air and preferably moving - try an exposure time of 1/50 - 1/25 of a second. And sometimes you just need the facial expression of one musician enjoying the sound.

Cabarets, concerts, opera etc. require a seated position unless you are allowed to cover the dress rehearsal. Try to get a seat in the middle of a row halfway up, at around eye level to the performers. Bring along a medium tele-zoom plus a wide-angle for a couple of full-stage pictures. Also try using a mirror-less camera with all sound signals set to "off". You do not want to disturb audience or actors if you can help it. Using a tripod is also a good idea, since you may want to use longer exposure times and not too high ISO. And you will of course never, EVER, EVER!!! use a flash in a theatre. Just mentioning it.

Page 44-47 on sports

Sports photography requires as a rule fast shutter speeds and some knowledge of the sport in question. Most good shots are lucky results of positions you take based on anticipated action. Good, basic rules are to be close without blocking

the view of others, to focus manually on spots where anticipated action is going to (hopefully or not) take place (the lady in distress was anticipated but not hoped for), and to include at least 50% extra for cropping. See p. 59 on p. 4.

The photographs of team sports are selected from works of previous students while following my courses in Volda. I am both proud and grateful for being able to use them, proud because they are made by my students and I think they are good, and grateful because I have little interest in watching sports games without being paid for it so I have little material of my own in that area.

Why they are good? They capture moments of interest, moments that for all I know were decisive for the games, and they show actors in determined action.

Page 48-49 on hard news

Hard news is a major part of media and is challenging, exciting, stressful, interesting, rewarding, rough and sometimes emotionally hard to handle. Some love doing this and become specialists at covering disaster, conflict, war or famine. Some sacrifice friends and family to do it, some their lives. It is a path I really cannot recommend, since the cost can be very high. For those who have to do it now and again as a part of a news job, make sure to be practically and emotionally prepared and to get a good debriefing whenever needed.

Page 50-51 on feature

There is a long stretch from the hard side of hard news to the softness of the feature. Here the everyday stories have their place, here the common voice is heard. Feature is distinguished by the quality of the words as well as images. Sometimes images are the main carriers of information, sometimes one image only may complete the text. Other times, particularly on the web, a mix of words, video and stills combined may tell a story of a person, a place or something that sometime happened somewhere. This is also a genre where the little details matter. Landscape, housing, decorations and memorabilia may all participate in giving character and flavour to the whole.

Page 52-53 on national holidays

17th May is the day when Norwegian dress up and leave home to participate more or less actively in public merriment. It is a day with focus on national sovereignty, on the fallen or missing in war, but most of all on the young. It is

definitely a day for photo opportunities, and broadly covered by photos of any medium with a wish to please its subscribers.

Page 54-55 on street photography

Street photography is a genre between art and media. You might well say that National Holiday photography is part of this and you would be right, but it is much more than that. Street photography is about documenting public life at times and in situations where public life does not expect to be documented.

“Stolen photos” is a name for this in some cultures and not always approved. I suspect the lunch-break under the secondhand sign falls into that category.

Street photos might follow particular motives like “fashion” or “oddity”, or styles like all black-and-white or all tilted or all slightly blurred. Diane Arbus became known and criticised for photographing the abnormal citizens of New York while Elliot Erwitt has focused a bit on dogs and the legs of their owners. Erling Søliland documented street life in Stavanger through a lifetime and displayed them all for sale in his shop, while Vivian Maier photographed street life all *her* life and showed not a single one to anyone.

See:

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2011/jul/26/diane-arbus-photography-sideshow>

<https://pro.magnumphotos.com/Package/2K7O3RZ7T9S>

Stavanger Aftenblad 2018-03-19, Gaute Hareide on images from a 1945 folder by Erling Søliland.

Vivian Maier Street Photographer ISBN: 978-1-57687-577-3

Street photography is above all characterized by the snap-shot, a term and style that was introduced by the Kodak (the camera where you only had to press the button, Kodak did the rest), and means a picture that captures a spontaneous moment as it happens, with no plan or posing. Few press photographers have never been fascinated by this, and many have made it a part of their living.

My personal favourites among these nine are the display of boots covered in plastic so as not to be filled with rain water in the rainy town of Bergen, and the man fishing in Fredrikstad. The latter perhaps because he told me his story

and confided that he never caught anything but always had a hope.

Page 56 on diverse motifs searched for or stumbled over

Those who really love the camera and what it can do, never stop looking for motifs. The old guy peeped up from the ground and looked so happy at seeing the sun again that I just had to take his portrait. The archaeologists were busy with lunch, I don't think they even noticed me entering their scaffolding for the shot. I would of course never have stepped on to the ground on the site without permission; interfering with the dig would have been a crime.

The curved line was visible through naked branches and I braked and brushed through to the beach. Fog was hiding the land on the other side of the fjord and the new sewage line made a pretty curve behind the boat, nicely balanced by the skerries and the sailing mark.

The two boys are caught with a telephoto lens from a distance climbing the old U-boat bunker in Trondheim one lazy Sunday many years ago, at a time when such explorations were still possible for those with a craving for adventure.

The cats are just sceptical. Who is this stranger looking at us and what does he want? Is he dangerous? As you might see, the two of them have different plans should any sign of inappropriate approach be detected, different personalities as they are.

As for the chimer, he was dedicated to the job but his hearing did not improve by it.

Page 57 on industry

Industry photography is what I did for most of my freelance days, and almost exclusively on "high quality" PAL video. *That* is not equal to the quality of the HDTV of today, and definitely not equal to the stills camera, so I present only a few examples of video-stills here.

The technique, however, is independent of camera quality. You define a place to record from and make arrangements to go there, whether this is a skerry on the coast providing support for a telephoto lens on a tripod when filming a

high speed MOB boat hitting the waves, or a man at close range tending a river of liquid steel while emptying a blast furnace, or hovering in a helicopter while a multi purpose support vessel is testing its fire fighting equipment at an oil field, or inside a factory during the assembly of a gearbox for ships. You need the permission to go there and the means to go there and to know what to do once you are there. That is when you start thinking in detail on *exactly* Where to be, and *exactly* What to include, and *exactly* When.

Providing a few hints on how to do that is the purpose of this little book.

Very, very brief on analysing photos for media

Works of art are, traditionally, results of careful planning and meticulous effort by trained and talented persons, and, traditionally, subject to critical study and debate, in some cases for years and centuries. This is natural since every single detail in a traditional work of art is included intentionally, or at least could and should be, if the artist is serious.

Photos for media are, traditionally, results of quick response to momentary happenings and should be read as a different kind of report than any written matter or drawing or painting. Critical study of photographic images for media should also be based on the fact that they often contain image elements that are not wished for or consciously approved by the photographer or publisher.

At the very best, photographs are reliable documentation of something that somewhere was visible in front of a camera, and most of us have a tendency to see all media photos like that.

We often forget that media photographs may have been “doctored”, arranged, adjusted, biasedly selected, presented as showing something else from somewhere else at a different time, or just the simple fact that most of them are influenced by the presence of the camera.

We also often forget that “the decisive moment” sometimes never happened. The human eye records continuously, collecting information and creating our impression of an incident based on a wider range of time than just a fraction of a second. The one split-second moment recorded by the camera does not have that capacity. (See: Gaute Hareide: Photo for Media, Law and Ethics, p. 26 ff. Volda University College, to be published in February 2019.)

Photographs communicate both precisely and not. Photographic descriptions of what we see are more accurate and more extensive than any written text can manage, but they say nothing of how and why what we see came to be as we see it. Photographs also talk to emotions in ways that written texts seldom manage to do, and often in ways that the photographer or publisher did not see or intend.

As Roland Barthes points at in his *Camera Lucida* (english edition, 1980, ISBN: 978-0-374-53233-8), photographs communicate across verbal languages but within diverse cultural and personal codes (often more to our emotions than to our intellect), and the impact of an image for a person can change dramatically with change of time, mood, context or additional information.

When analysing media photos one should take all of this into account, plus give room for the fact that time pressure is common both when capturing and selecting images for publishing, that lack of choices is an element, and that biases are quite possibly more part of the process than we like to think.

I have in this book stressed the Where, the What and the When as the basic elements of how to compose images for media. Analysing the content of media photographs should primarily focus the first half of the six questions of media: What do we see?, Who do we see?, and Where is this? A good press picture should answer at least the first two of these questions with no room for misinterpretation. The other questions of When was this?, Why did this happen? and How? are not always well stated by a photo, if stated at all.

This leads us to the seventh question: Who is the *source* of the information?

Regarding photographs, that is the photographer. As already mentioned and as we should all well know today, photographs can most definitely lie. The only one who really knows if they do or not and to what degree, is the photographer.

Critically analysing a press photo without knowing who that is or, preferably, interviewing that person or at least knowing something more about the photograph than the picture itself presents, is therefore a much more careless thing to do than analysing a text by an anonymous writer would be.

You know that every word of a written text is selected and arranged by someone with a more or less biased opinion of the matter at hand.

You may possibly believe that all photographs are unbiased witnesses to the truth and all of the truth and nothing but the truth.

Please don't.

