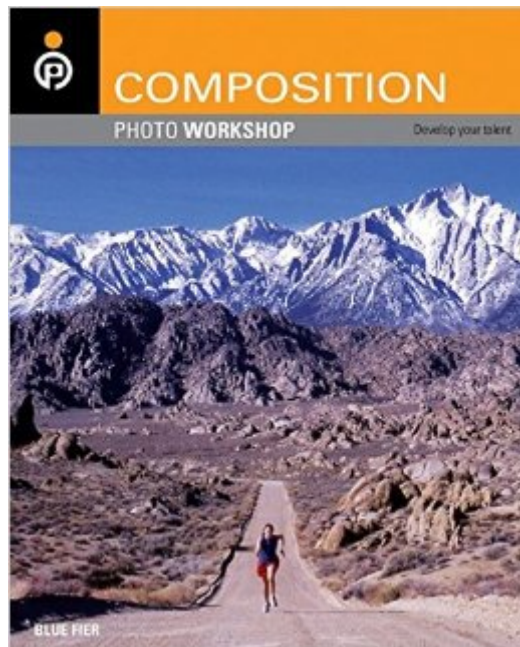


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# Composition Photo Workshop



## Synopsis

The hands-on instruction that digital photographers need to compose great shots. Introducing readers to the basic elements of design, this full-color guide shows photographers step by step how to frame great compositions before they take the shot. Instructions, advice, examples, and assignments cover all types of photography.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (33 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

Since moving to Alaska two years ago, I've taken up photography. The abundant wildlife and breathtaking natural scenery moved me to purchase a digital camera and start shooting. I had no formal training, but figured, much as with automobile repair, if I could read about it, I could figure it out. I read a variety of websites, participated in discussion forums, took many photographs, and generally have been trying to figure things out myself. With this background, I picked up this book with interest and curiosity. Composition is divided into eleven chapters, breaking things down into background, compositional elements, photographic styles and tips for improvement. The first chapter goes over a variety of background bits, talking about the the history of photography, sight and optics, eastern & western approaches to design and layout, and the interrelation between these items which is what makes up composition. The book clearly states that it comes to the discussion from a 'western' point of view. With the foundations properly set, the book delves into meat of the topic. Framing is tackled first, with discussion of shapes and thematic elements, shapes, the rule of thirds, symmetry and other topics explored. Next, focal depth and shutter speed, how lens selection

determines output characteristics and photographic capabilities, ISO speed selection, and on. The quality and types of light are examined, and how to best make use of what is available at any given time. Two chapters are spent on color and black & white photography. Filters are examined for the positive effects they can have in bright and contrasty situation, and when they can be beneficial to filter out or highlight a particular portion of the spectrum.

This is one of dozens of books that purport to convey the secrets of composing photographs, and actually go no further than relatively elementary information. It's not bad for someone starting out. In discussing compositional elements, points are dispensed with in less than half a page. Lines a bit more. Use of the image space pretty much stops the "Rule of Thirds." The only other technique for organizing the image space is what the author refers to as the "Golden Rectangle," without providing any guidance on how one might use this. In other words, the compositional formula that one comes away with is "Determine the focal point and place it if at all possible according to the Thirds rule." The concept of harmony is related to bananas and basketball, rather than being one end of a continuum, the other end of which is contrast. It is impossible to judge if lines are harmonious or contrast with each other from this level of treatment, let alone any other set of elements or colors. Composing is about the analytical, visual structure of the image - recognizing the structure before releasing the shutter and analyzing it afterwards more thoroughly. To do that one has to know the vocabulary and practice with the insights. I know this sounds boring. To paraphrase J. Itten, "If you find you cannot make masterpieces without knowing the theory, perhaps it is worth your while to learn the theory." Then and only then does one know what one is doing and know when and how to step outside the guidelines for unusual visual impact and conveyance of the photographer's message. Once one has been making images for a few years, more a more advanced approach can yield deeper understanding of image structure faster than continuing at the level of so many of these books.

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