

# Rules, Art of, or Whatever Else You Call It.

## How and Why Series

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The so called rules or art of photography is really a very subjective. Many people consider them something that must be followed if you want to be considered a “real” photographer and many others really couldn't care. When it comes right down to it, they are just a very basic starting point. Throughout history, rules have been created and modified to blend in with many painters and photographers that are based on things we humans seem to acknowledge as pleasing. Rules can be a geological forms or maybe an action of human beings, it doesn't really matter.

Pick a photo and there is very likely been some kind of rule attached to it. Someone somewhere has tried a different way to do a photo and others came up with a rule that goes along with it. Very likely it stuck being called that.

Please don't confuse rules and art forms with technical things. There is a difference!

Techniques are a bit different. Basically when a camera manufacture comes out with a new method of doing something and convinces you it's the best thing since the indoor outhouse, that makes many want to own it so they can advance their own ability. Many have that thought but is it really true? Most rules can be performed using older style cameras. About the only real advantage is ease of use and probably speed in doing so.

When taking a nature or landscape photo, you might want to look for a design in the area that follows some kind of rule that you like. It could be a natural “frame” or an “S” curve pattern. Additionally a winding river or shape of a mountain could be exactly what you're looking for.

In another case it might be different shutter speeds when pointing towards a water falls. It could also be using a neutral density filter to make the clouds look fluffy when you want a sharp looking lighthouse to be included. Another photographer might refer to this type a photograph as “The Art of Seeing”. (There's a new term for you.)

“Rules have been used by painters and photographers for many years. You might wonder what rules really are, so I'll try to define “rules” for you.

## Rules

### **Rules of thirds**

Dividing an image into nine equal parts using two equally spaced horizontal and two equally spaced vertical lines. Place the subject along the lines at intersecting locations. This creates an

appealing image.

**Leading lines**

A compositional technique that utilize the lines within the photo to guide the viewers eyes towards a specific point of interest or subject. They can also be used to create depth, movement, and direction.

**Symmetry**

A technique that creates balance between two sides of an image, making one side semi-mirror the other. It can evoke feelings of order, harmony, and perfection.

**Depth**

Including something close up and far away.

**Fill the frame**

Getting close to your subject, either by moving closer or using a zoom lens, so that the subject takes up the majority of the frame.

**Golden ratio**

The Golden ratio often referred to as a French Curve, uses a ratio of 1:1.618 where the rule of thirds uses a ration of 1:1:1

**Frame your subject.**

A technique to use elements in the scene to create a frame around your subject adding depth and directing the viewers eye.

**Frame within a frame.**

To draw attention to a subject by surrounding it with other elements within the frame.

**Rule of odds**

Using an odd number of subjects in a photo is more appealing than using an even number. As an example, this is often used when photographing less than five or seven flowers.

**Diagonals**

A tool that adds depth, and direction to an image.

**Background**

The area behind the main subject adding context, depth, and visual interest.

**Balancing elements**

The visual equilibrium of an image, achieved by arranging elements within the frame to create harmony and stability.

**Negative space**

The empty space surrounding the subject, emphasizing both the subject and the emptiness.

**Complementary colors**

Various methods of combining colors on the color wheel.

**Figure to ground**

A visual perception where the brain distinguishes an object from its background.

**Leading lines in composition**

A compositional technique that uses lines within an image to guide the viewers eye toward a specific point of interest or focal point of the image.

**Viewpoint**

The position from which a photograph is taken, influencing how the subject and scene are perceived.

**Rule of space**

This suggests placing a subject with more space in the direction they are moving or looking.

**Use framing and foreground**

Using elements in the foreground to draw the viewers eye towards the main subject and enhance the overall composition.

**Center dominant**

Placing the main subject in the center of the frame.

**Patterns**

Textures, designs, and patterns in photography.

**Focus on texture**

Highlighting surface details and patterns, often using close-up shots or macro lenses.

Now that you have gone through this list defining “rules”, look through you old photographs or go out and see if you can replicate them. After a while you might start to consider yourself a true photographer, if you really care at all.