Fundamentals of Imaging
Image composition

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Overview

- After hard math and physics, we can dedicate this lesson to a "softer", albeit not less important, subject:
    - Is there a way to determine "good photography"?
    - Which rules do photographers use?
    - How do they choose their subject?
    - How do they compose an image?

Inst-a-matic

- Take you average person
- Let him/her buy a camera
- Or maybe let them use a cellphone
- What do they shoot?

Inst-a-matic

- This

Inst-a-matic

- Or maybe this?

Inst-a-matic

- A far cry from this:

Inst-a-matic

- Or this:

Ansel Adams, *Evening, McDonald Lake, Glacier National Park* (1942)

What does the layman do wrong?

- What goes wrong with the normal user?

- Photography is not as simple as it looks like
  - Plenty of rules
  - Lots of guidelines
  - Fine craftmanship which needs
    - Eye for the subject
    - Knowledge of rules
    - Knowledge of light
    - Knowledge of colour
    - Knowledge of composition
    - Knowledge of camera, lenses, shutter speed, aperture values

Composition

Returning to the same ocean

Composition

Mt. Fuji

Composition

Yaw? Weee

Composition

Two ways at looking at a fish

Composition

- "Consulting the rules of composition before taking a photograph, is like consulting the laws of gravity before going for a walk."
- "Composition is the strongest way of seeing.." - Edward Weston (1930)

Composition

- "In a nutshell, composition is all about Simplification and EXclusion (SEX), then balancing what you've got.
- Repeat this until you get the strongest, simplest possible image". Ken Rockwell(2009)

Composition

- Effective composition gives the eye a comfortable visual environment for exploration-free of pointless obstruction, dead ends and misleading directional cues.

- Think of an image content as its CARGO and composition as its means of DELIVERY. Jim Krause (2005)

Why Composition?

- What is wrong with this?

Why Composition?

- What are you focusing on?

Why Composition?

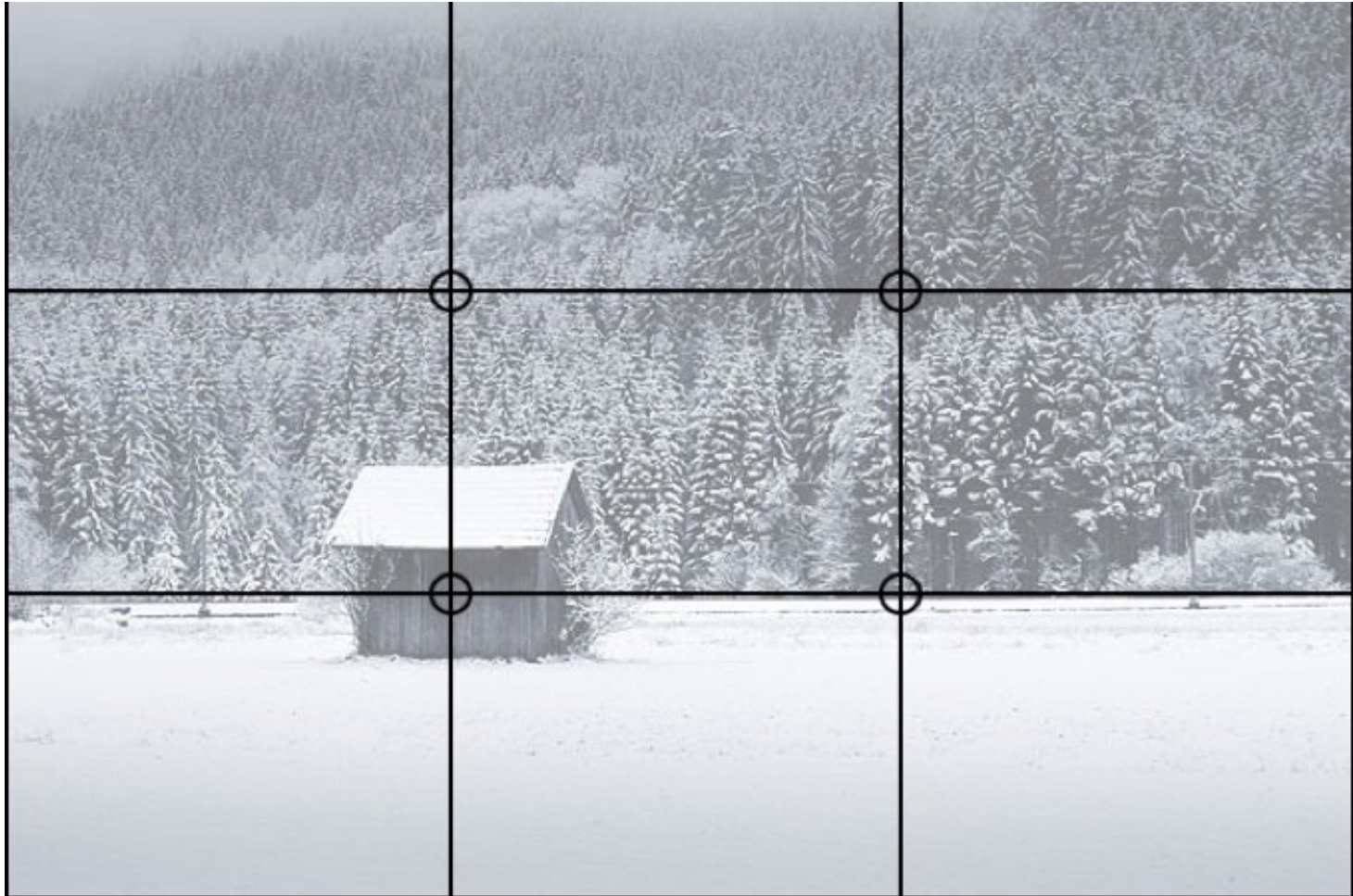- What are you focusing on?

Why Composition?

- What are you focusing on?

Why Composition?

- What are you focusing on?

Why Composition?

- What are you focusing on?
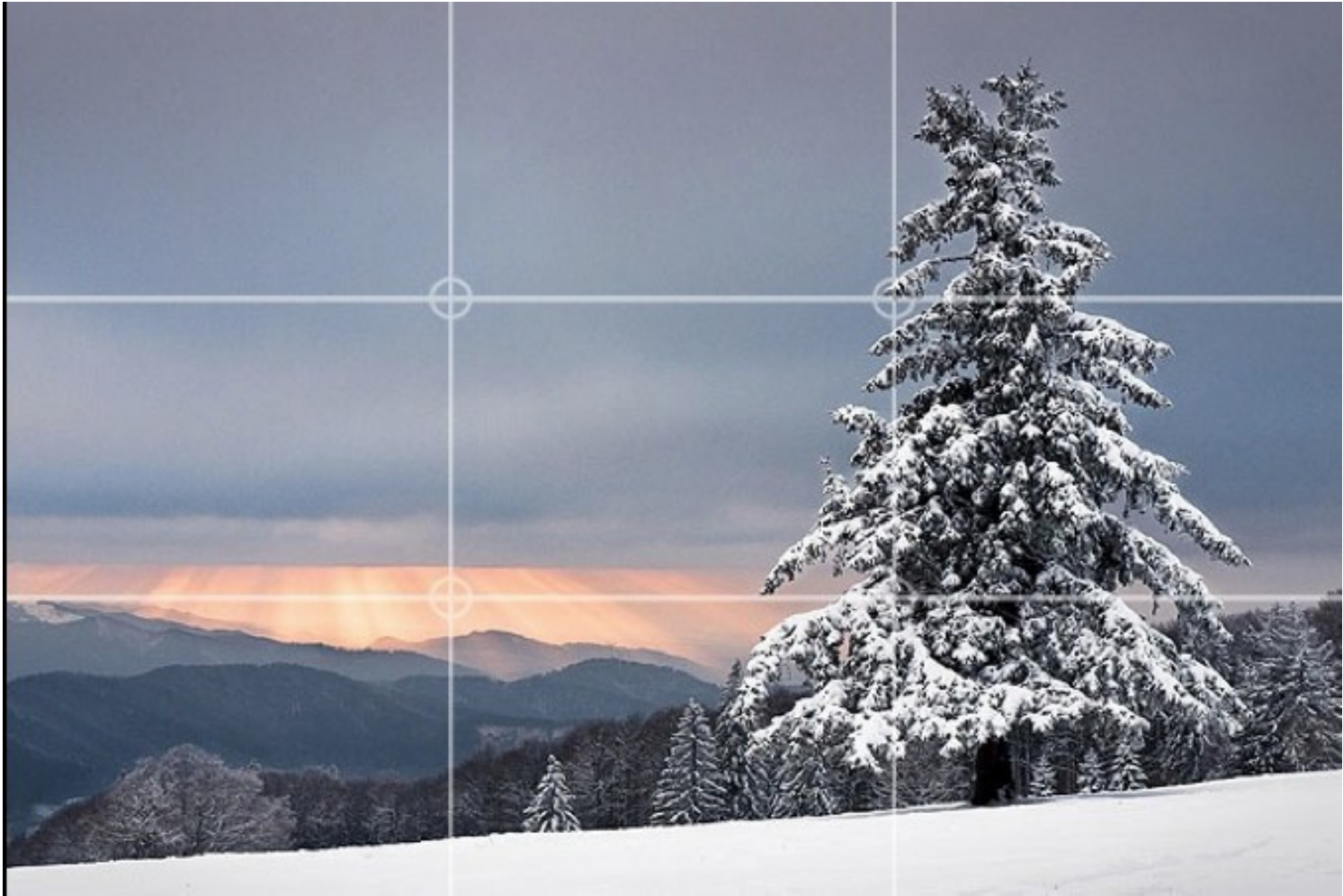
How to compose?

- Rule of thirds

How to compose?

- Rule of thirds

How to compose?

- Rule of thirds

How to compose?

- Rule of thirds

How to compose?

- Rule of thirds

How to compose?

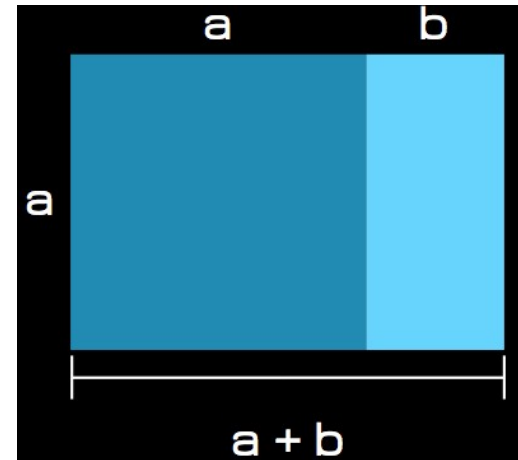- Use the golden ratio

$$(a+b)/a=a/b=\varphi$$
where
$$\varphi=(1+sqrt(5))/2=1.6180339887..$$
And $\phi=0.6180339887...$
is the inverse of φ
$$\varphi^{-1}=\phi$$

- Derived from the equation:
$$-1/\varphi =\varphi-1$$

How to compose?

- Golden spiral:
- Approximate and true golden spirals.
    - The green spiral is made from quarter-circles tangent to the interior of each square,
    - red spiral is a Golden Spiral, a special type of logarithmic spiral.
    - Overlapping portions appear yellow.
    - The length of the side of one square divided by that of the next smaller square is the golden ratio.
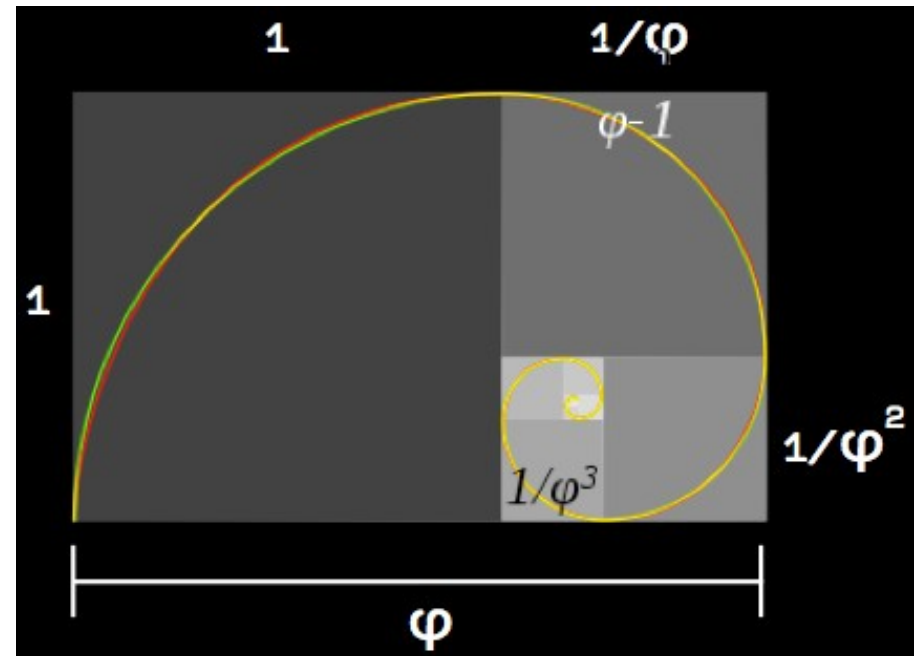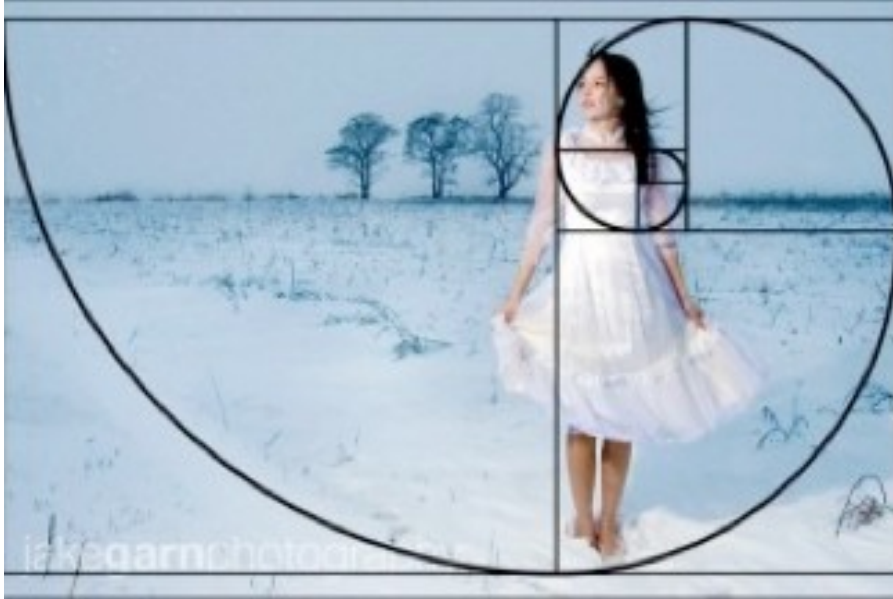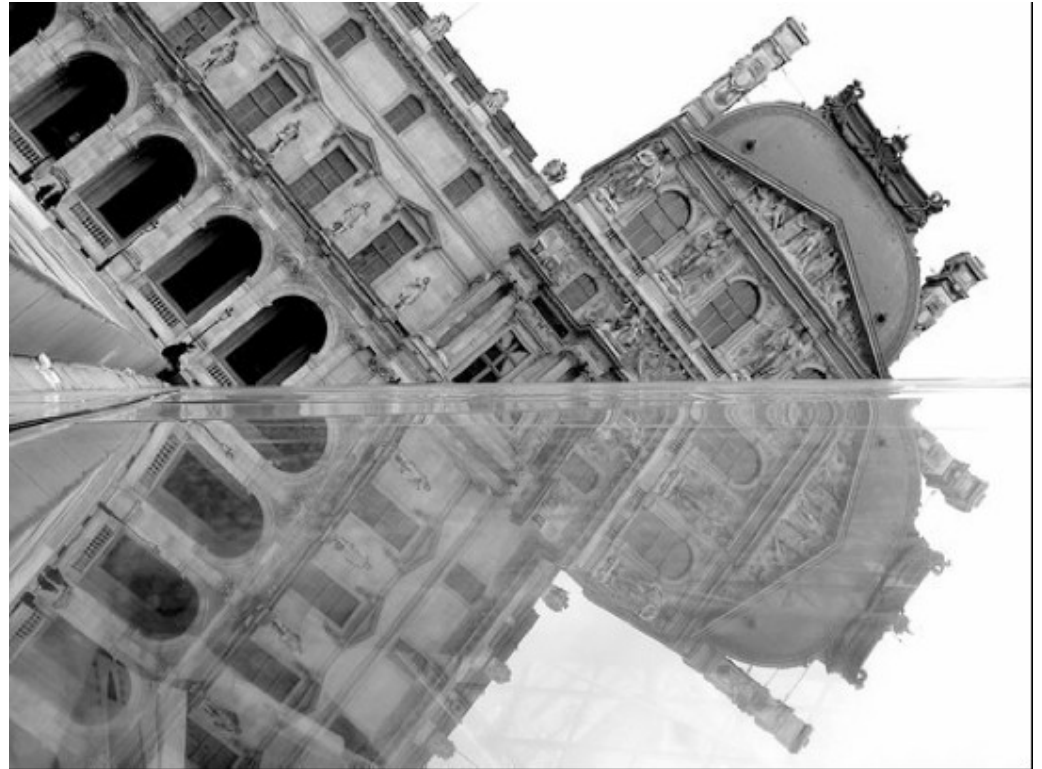
How to compose?

- Golden spiral:
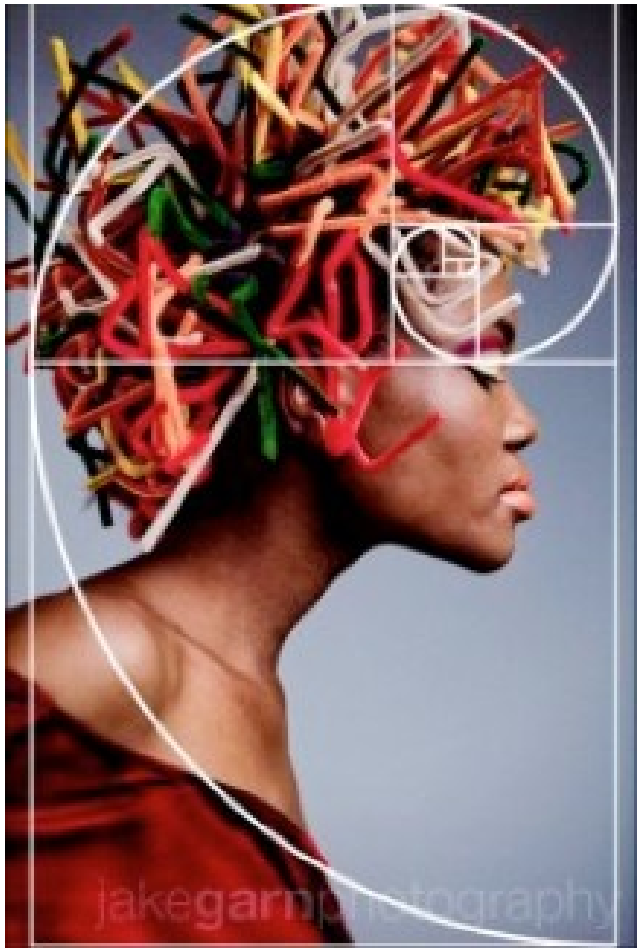
How to compose?

- Golden spiral:

How to compose?

- Use symmetry

How to compose?

- Use symmetry

How to compose?

- Use asymmetry

How to compose?

- Use leading lines:

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How to compose?

- Use the horozon for framing

Copyright © 2011 Ron cellospiller@flickr.com

How to compose?

- Unify,
  don't separate:

How to compose?

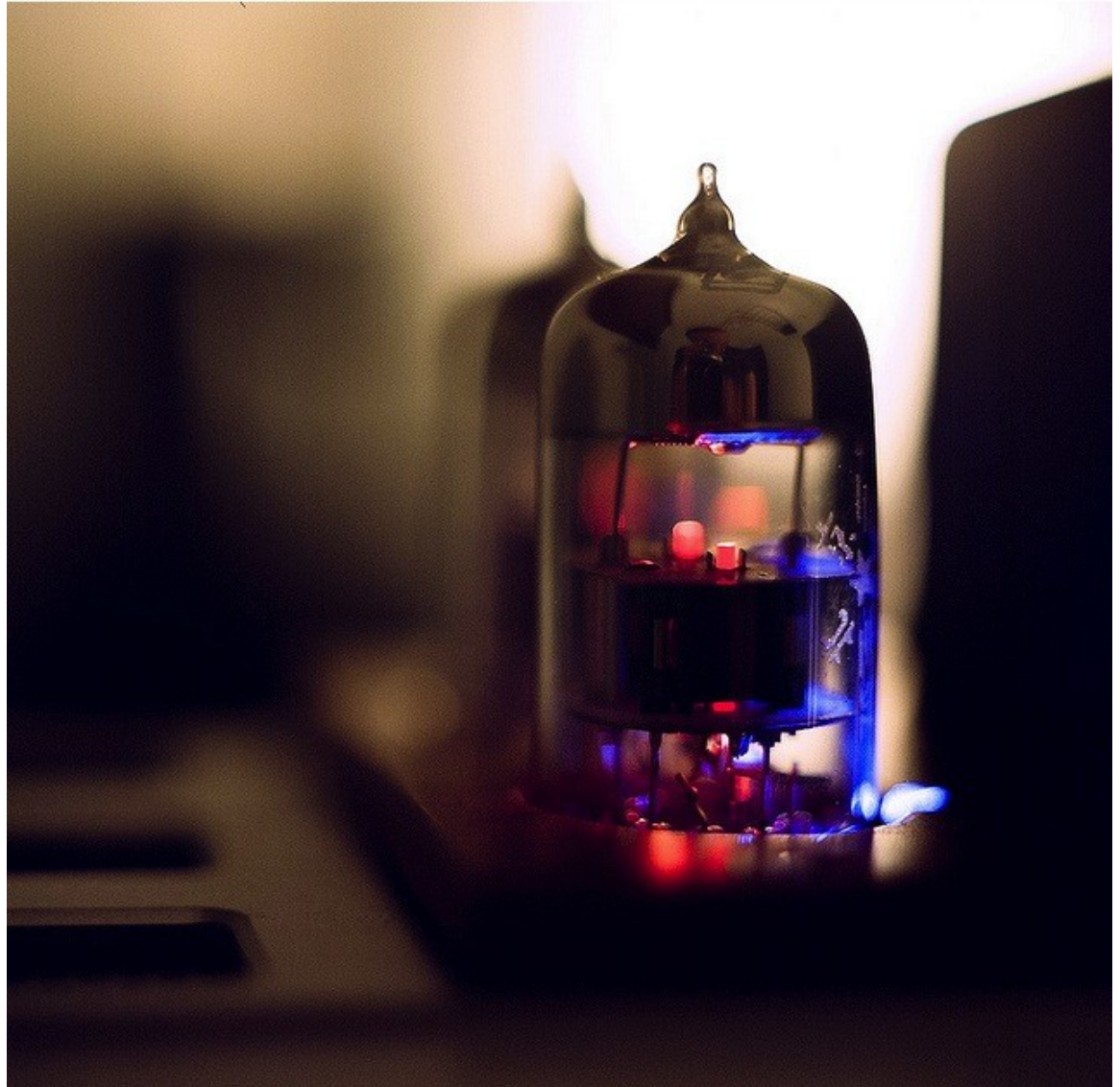- Frame things:

How to compose?

- Cropping:

How to compose?

- Visual Hierarchy:

How to compose?

- Depth of field:

How to compose?

- Use lines and curves:

How to compose?

- Use repetition:

How to compose?

- Use visual textures:

How to compose?

- Use color simplicity:

How to compose?

- Thank you for your attention

  Anyone thirsty?