

Composition

a brief intro
by Jason Harlow
(spaceJASE)



Bad



Horrible



Better, but still lousy



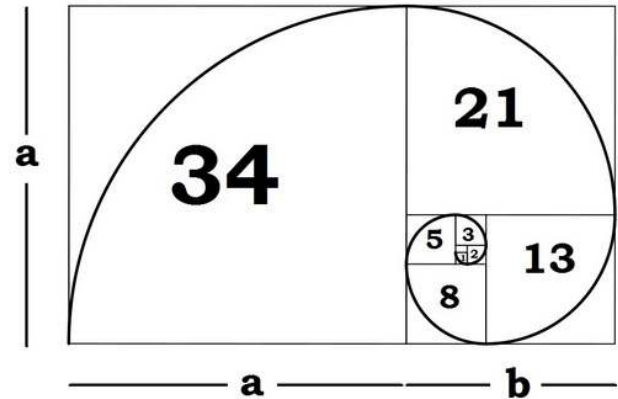
Acceptable but not great



- Image format matters

Golden Ratio / Golden Rectangle

- Square = not great (why is instagram set to square?)
- $16:10 = \text{closest to } 1.618:1$



5:4 (1.25:1)

Computer Displays

4:3 (1.33:1)

SDTV / Video
Digital Cameras
Computer Displays

3:2 (1.5:1)

35mm Film
Digital SLR Cameras

16:10 (1.6:1)

Widescreen Computer
Displays

16:9 (1.77:1)

HDTV
Widescreen SDTV

1.85:1

Cinema Film

2.35:1

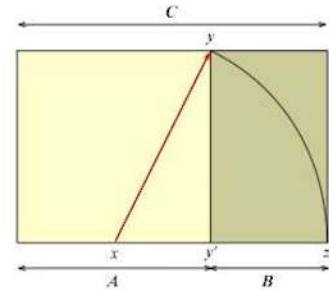
Cinemascope

Basic Composition Rules

by ~lucella

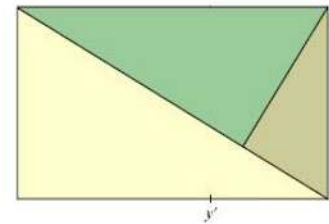
The Golden Mean (also Golden Section or Golden Ratio)

The Golden Mean is a geometric formula by the ancient Greeks. A composition following this rule is thought to be "harmonious". The principal idea behind it is to provide geometric lines which can be traversed when viewing a composition.



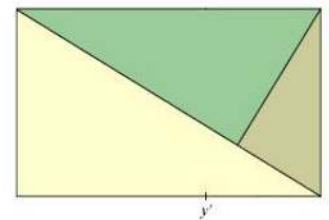
The formula starts with a perfect square. Now we divide the base of the square into two equal parts (left). We take point **x** as the middle of a circle with a radius of the distance between point **x** and **y**. Thereafter we expand the base of the square till it hits the circle at point **z**. Now the square can be transformed to a rectangle with a proportion ratio of 5:8.

The ratio of **A** to **C** is the same as the one from **A** to **B**. Luckily the 5:8 ratio fits pretty close to the ratio of the 35mm format (24x36mm = 5:7.5).



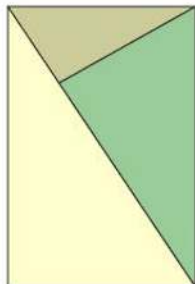
So now we have something which is thought to be a "perfect" rectangle. We draw a line from the upper left to the lower right edge of the rectangle (left) and another line from the upper right directed towards point **y'** till it hits the first cross line, dividing it into three different sections.

The idea is just try to find objects/parts in your scene that fit roughly into these three sections in order to have a "harmonious" composition. You can vary the formula by flipping and/or mirroring the schematic rectangle.

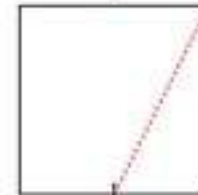


So now we have something which is thought to be a "perfect" rectangle. We draw a line from the upper left to the lower right edge of the rectangle (left) and another line from the upper right directed towards point **y'** till it hits the first cross line, dividing it into three different sections.

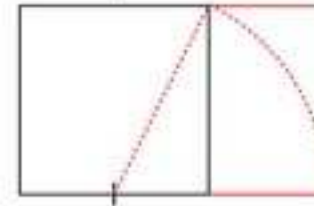
The idea is just try to find objects/parts in your scene that fit roughly into these three sections in order to have a "harmonious" composition. You can vary the formula by flipping and/or mirroring the schematic rectangle.



1. bisect the bottom edge of a perfect square



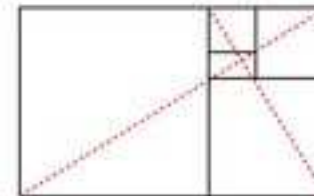
2. draw a line from that point, to the top left corner



3. inscribe an arc downward, even with bottom of the square



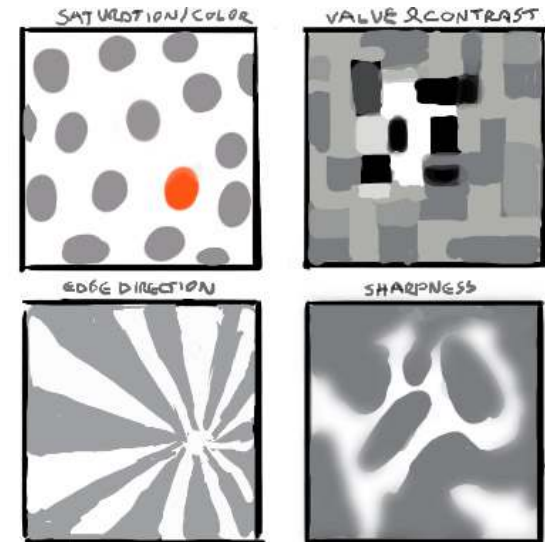
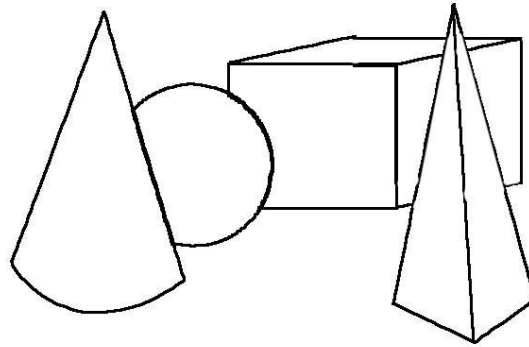
4. the result is a Golden Section Rectangle, and a new reciprocal GS rectangle



5. a diagonal line drawn to the corners of the rectangles creates continuous smaller rectangles

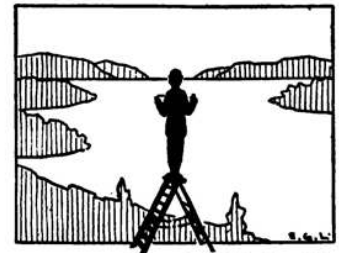
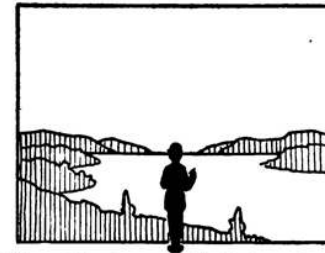
Faking depth

- Depth
 - overlap
 - size
 - detail
 - fade
- Focus

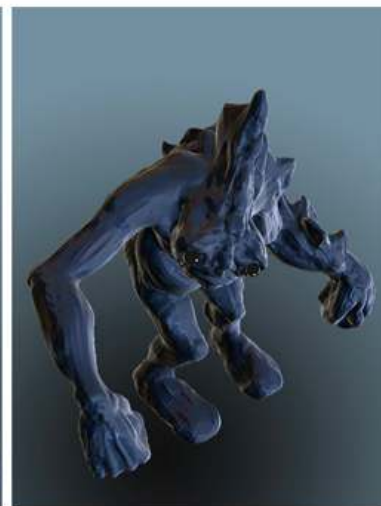
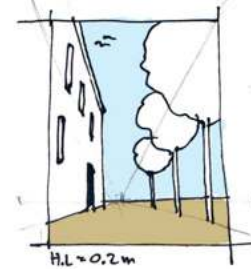


The Horizon Line

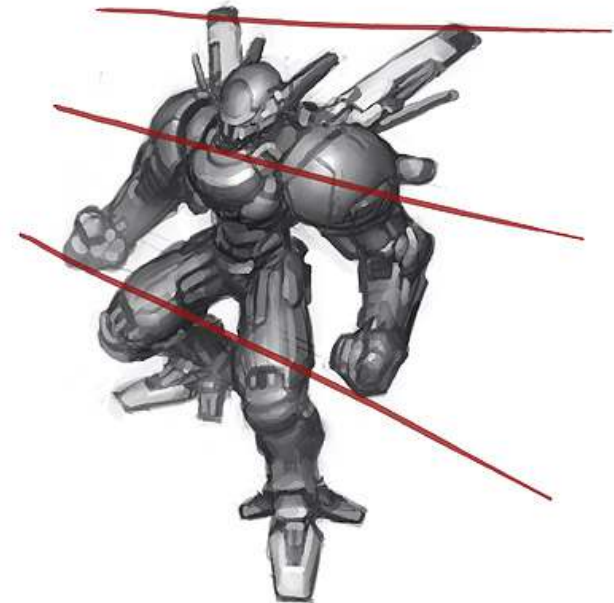
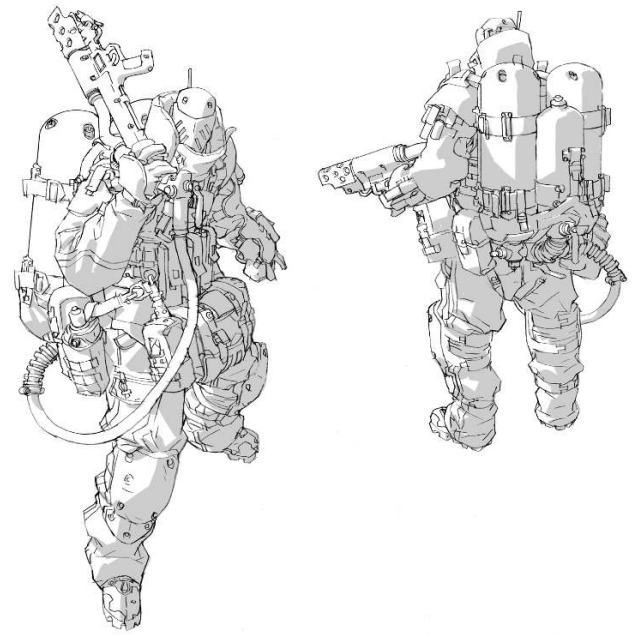
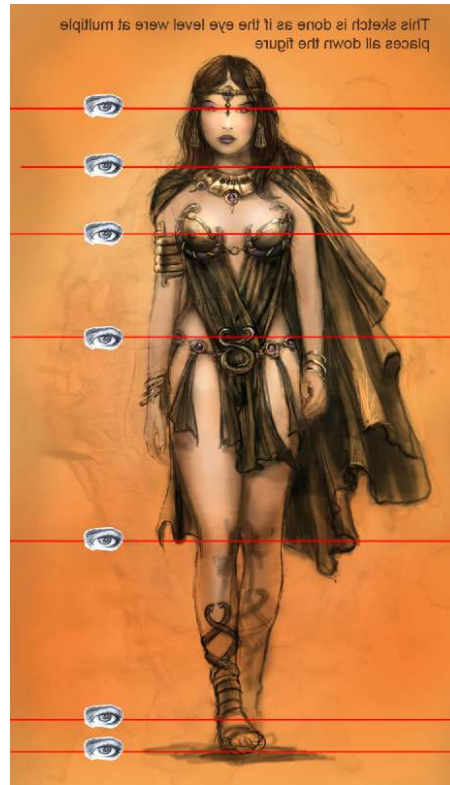
- Horizon Line
 - Lines are lies – how will you lie to viewer?
 - Use it to help tell your story
 - Viewers' eye level/point of view
 - (accepted reality & implications)
 - Telling a story – cultural assumptions
 - landscape - grand
 - portraits – look up/down/straight at subject – what does it imply?
 - comics – reality vs exaggerated persp



The Horizontal Line is always on a Level with the Eye



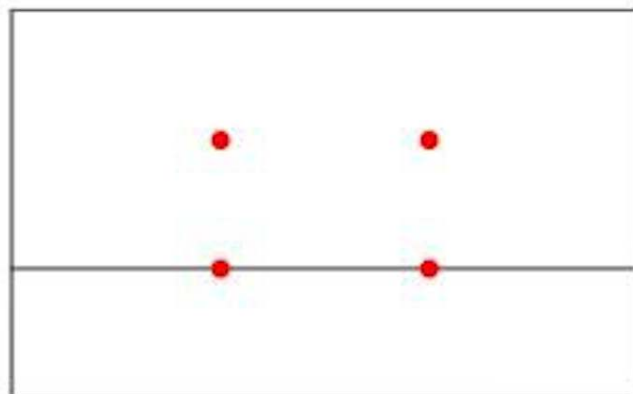
Characters in Perspective



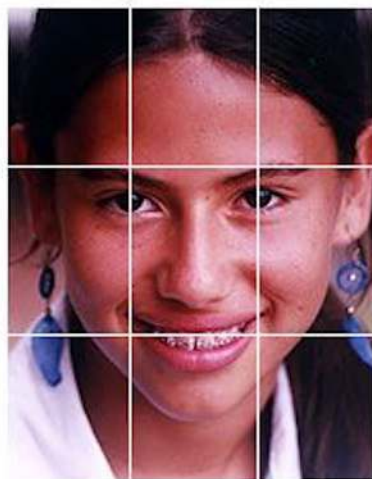
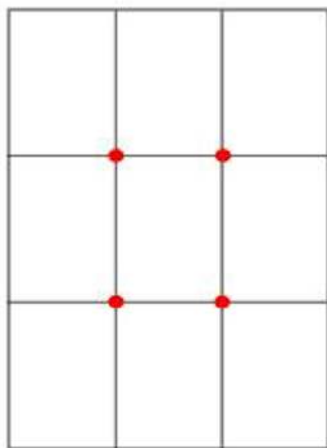
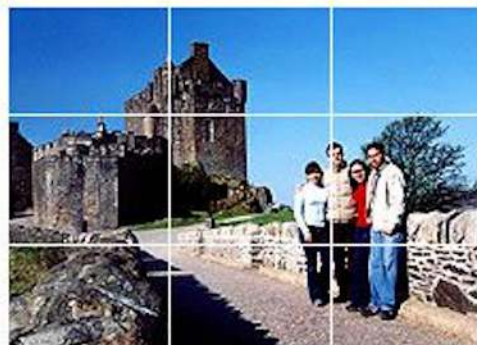
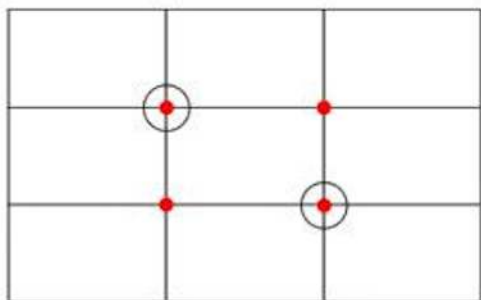
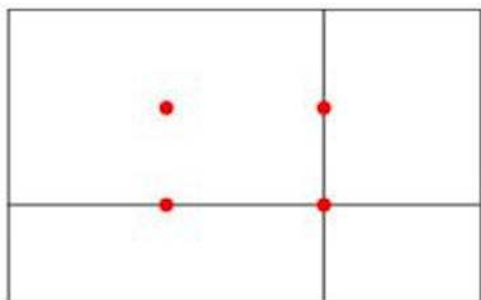
The Rule of the Thirds

The Rule of the Thirds is a simplification of the Golden Mean. Its basic philosophy is to avoid a symmetric composition which is usually boring because the view is centered. This rule can follow two concepts:

First we can divide the image into two distinctive areas which cover 1:3 and 2:3 of the size of the picture.



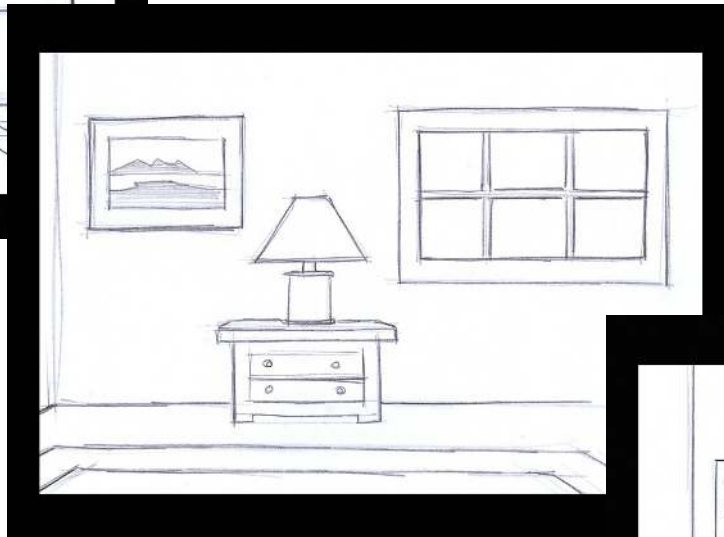
The second possible application is directly based on the crossing points of the Golden Mean: You can add dramatic interest without upsetting balance by placing your subject at any of the four points where the lines cross.



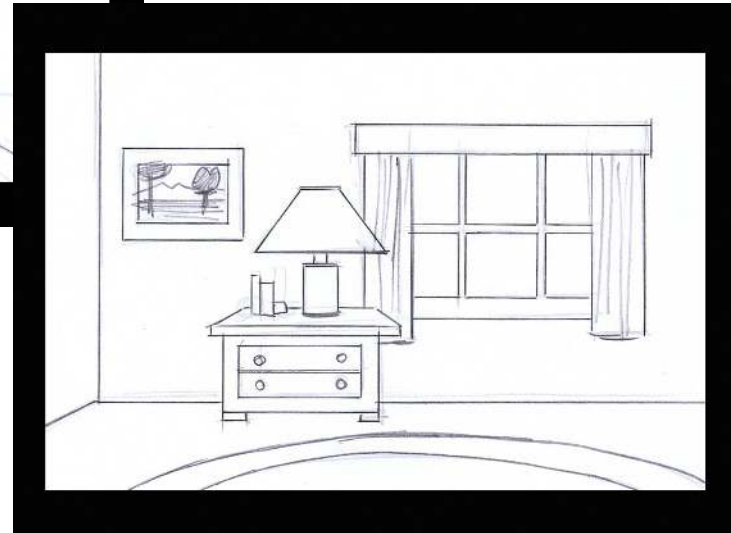
Composition breakdown



- Barely touching = anxious
- Not touching = lonely
- Some overlap is good.
- TANGENTS – note wall and table perspective lines...

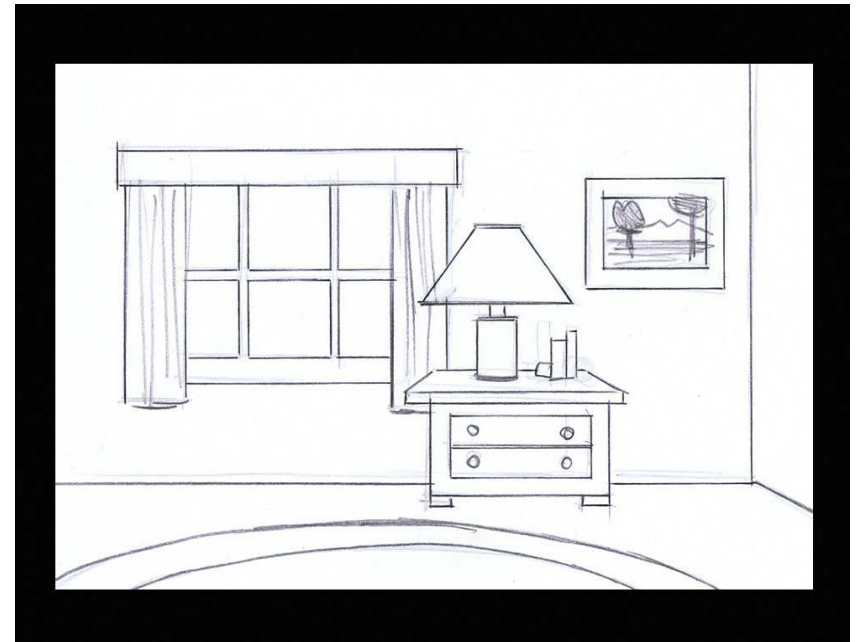
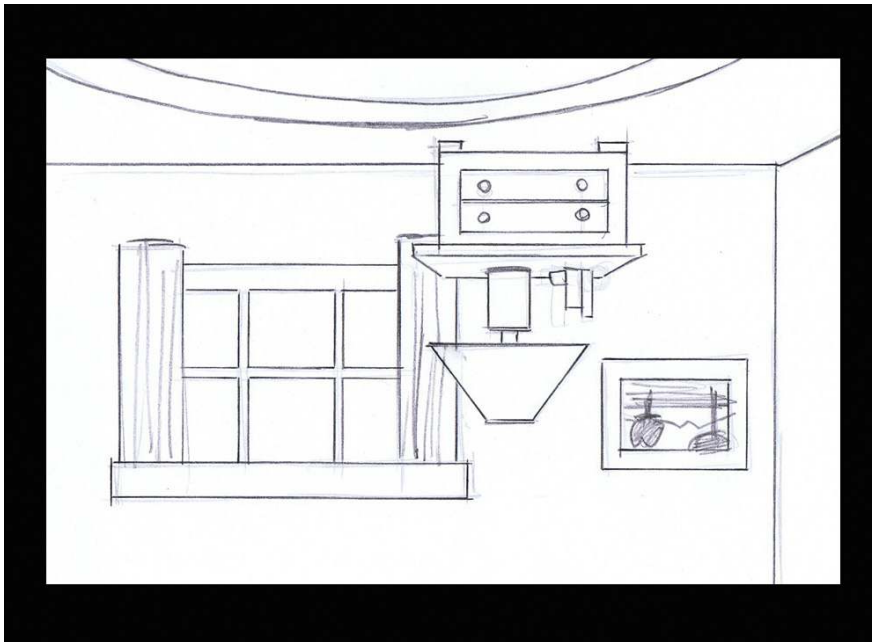


- One point or two point perspective?

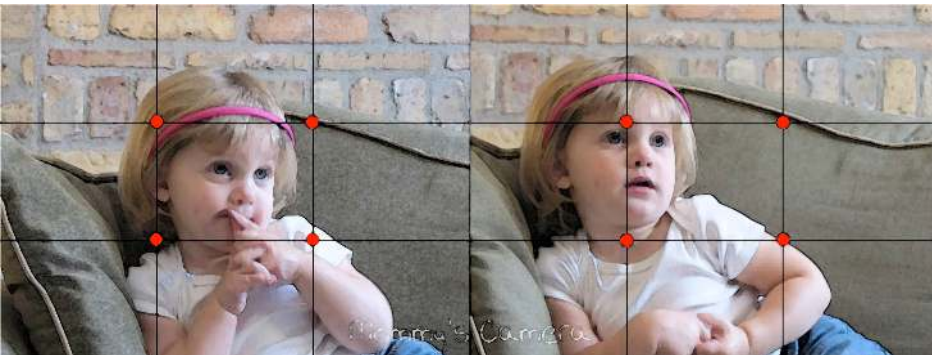


Turn it and/or Flip it

- Helps throw off your brain's accepted reality.



Good/Bad/Fugly composition & why



Bad



Good

















better composition explanations

- <http://kalidraws.tumblr.com/post/32953413185/today-i-gave-my-students-a-quick-presentation-on>
- <http://lulie.deviantart.com/>