

BEGINNING WITH PHOTOGRAPHY

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When reflecting about photographs that I consider good ones out of my instinct, I find out that all of these pictures have in various extent the following four properties:

- * They captivate our interest*
- * They have a visible purpose and meaning*
- * They make emotion-like impression*
- * They function on the graphical level*

Andreas Feinger

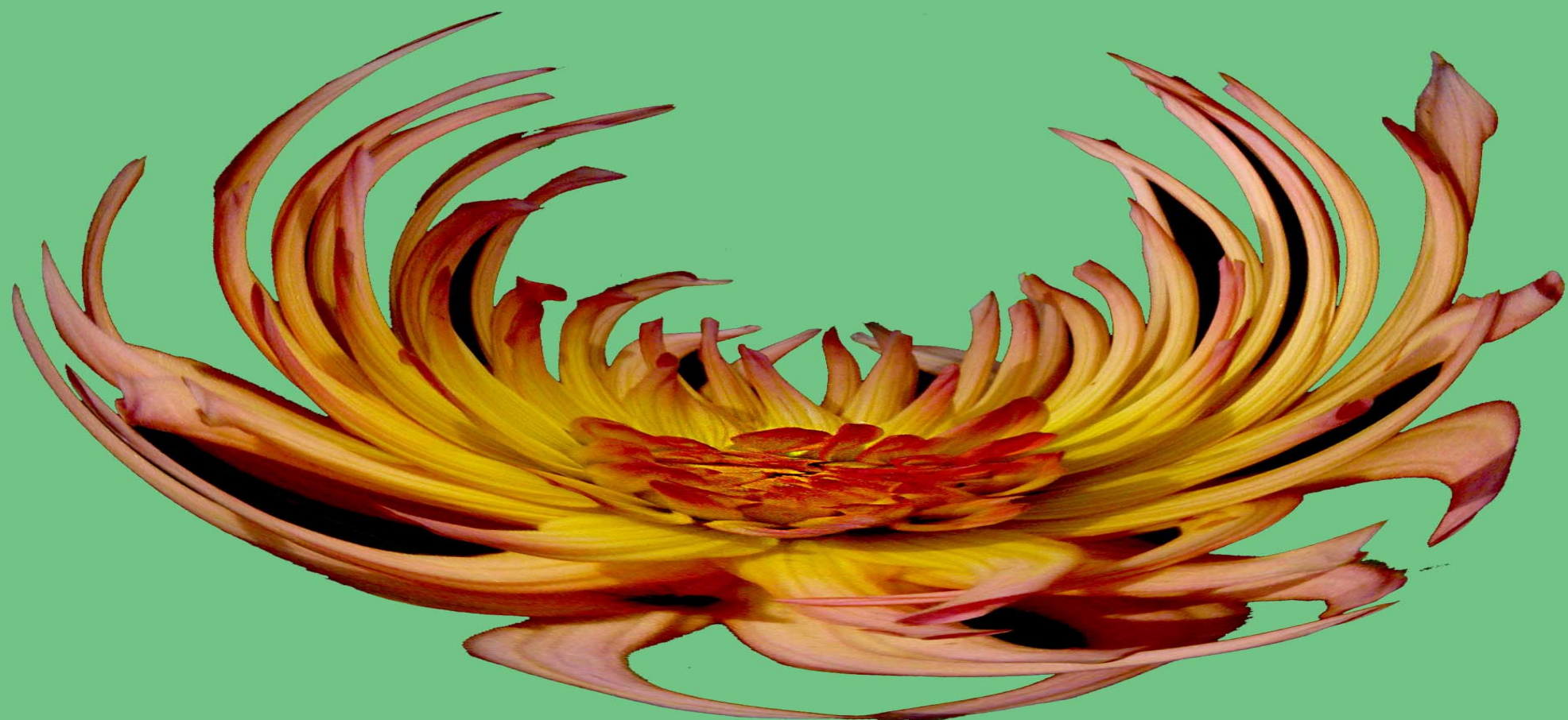


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We all transform reality into a certain photographic image in our own way. In order to take distinctive and appealing photographs which could please our family, friends and to be able to present them proudly on the Internet, such photographs need to be interesting, attractive and has to have a spark. We can reach this with setting up the right exposition and adhering to particular composition rules.

This book provides an insight into fundamentals of composition. If we add frequent photographing and creative thoughts to such knowledge, this sort of cocktail becomes a guarantee of perfect creative photographs. At the beginning we need to carefully think over every image even before shooting and later all rules get under our skin. We gain the photographic instinct and seeing ability and our pictures are able to surprise and enchant others. Afterwards, we may let our imagination run riot and tune in to a creative mode.



1 SELECTION OF THE MOTIF

Selection of the motif is the first and the most important step in taking a photograph. We either know in advance what we are going to photograph or we try improvising. A motif of a picture can be either the whole village or a sole petal, for instance. Sometimes it is enough to trigger the shutter release button at the right moment and you take the cutting edge photo and next time the right picture needs longer decision-making process.

The motif selected should be attractive (meaning photogenic) and simple in order to set up the pictorial scene properly and it should be disclosed. The photographer always perceives the theme subjectively and in this way he/she proposes a different perspective to the viewer than what the viewer can see.

The theme itself constantly changes. Landscape is influenced by lighting, weather but also relationship of the photographer to a certain theme. A photographer may be inspired by sea or rocks, for example; when he is inspired by something, he fills the image with his mood and all that influences the final implementation of the photograph. The resulting image should always depict the photographer's personality.





When selecting the motif, we should already take into account its:

- ⇒ **Photogenic** factors (meaning the optical harmony), attractive and interesting shapes, arrangement of elements, variety of colours, tonality as well as content.
- ⇒ **Simplicity** since beauty lies in simplicity. Fewer elements are sufficient but they should be somehow striking. In this way they convey a message more clearly and efficiently and the viewers have better understanding of it. If we aspire to present beauty, we don't need to have the whole garden in the picture. The content is diluted in a complicated image on account of which the picture is more chaotic.
- ⇒ **Content** - may it be a story, beauty, a gesture, originality, a shape or abstraction.



Seeking the spell in the theme that could attract others is a creative part of photographing. In order to find such spell that attracts viewers, the objects in the pictorial scene are captured in a suitable manner and arranged on the pictorial area to highlight its content.

When we go for a walk in the nature with the camera in hand, we perceive it in a very different way than without the camera in hand. We tend to select a motif that could be attractive and appealing for us and we look for a picture with balanced composition and particularly with an interesting dominant factor. We also take notice of all those details we otherwise just pass unnoticed. In this way photographic perception enriches us since we are able to perceive the nature and the life around us more sensitively.

If the same motif is portrayed by two people, the outcome might be very different. By means of our photographs we propose our own expression, feelings, imagination, experience as well as view of the world to others. Therefore, we select the motifs that we communicate to others and every now and then we can get back to them out of love, nostalgia or just as a recall of a situation.



↑ *The Green hill church has been already photographed countless times - I reckon that this tender and dream-like version is the first one.*

1.1 Photogenic Factors

Photogenic factors are grouped elements, areas and lines that make an impression on the viewer's aesthetic perception when combined with light, colour and composition of the photograph taken.

We choose photogenic (meaning attractive) motifs for photographing. This does not mean tacky motifs but strong colours or themes that could be appealing for everyone. A photogenic image is awaiting its viewers and thus it should have more profound meaning.

We primarily relate photogenic factors to a portrait. Although some faces are beautiful from the first point of view, such beauty cannot be utilized. On the other hand, an ordinary face can all of the sudden come live with an extraordinary expression. The face seems to be photogenic which means that we perceive its nice shape, colour as well as aesthetic or artistic properties. Sometimes just coincidence, lighting or a gesture may help. Another essential factor is how we manage to cope with the face or another motif, capture just its characteristic properties and highlight it from more interesting perspective.

Actually any pictorial element may be photogenic - may it be a tree, an animal, a bridge, or a straw bale. There might be an interesting tree but after trigger the shutter release button we may be disappointed. The reality is different than what's captured with a camera. We gradually learn seeing in similar way as our camera and get photographic instinct. We are able to perceive photogenic shapes, light, shadows as well as tonality contrast that together create a balanced scene.



A photogenic face is only one part of a good snapshot. It needs to be made special with something extra. We focus the portrait on eyes that should be located in the upper third of the pictorial area. If the person in the portrait wears a hat or other headgear, it has to be either in the whole, reduced with a cut out, it cannot touch the picture frame or it can be darkened by the frame via, for instance, vignetting in a photo editor.