

DIAGONAL LINES

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In the previous Advanced Composition Creativity Prompt, we touched upon the concept of a dynamic angle in the division of space.

In this prompt, we are going to dig a little deeper into the topic of 'diagonal lines'.

Diagonal lines are often lumped in with dynamic angles when composition is

discussed. However, they are quite different and can very much operate autonomously.

If you spend any time studying art (outside of photography), you will quickly realize the importance of diagonal lines.





A diagonal line can be a powerful leading line as in the first example (see image on page 1).

Opposing diagonal lines can lead the eyes, and they can also create visual tension where they meet.

The above photograph is a great example of opposing diagonal lines, both directing the eyes and creating visual tension.



Assignment:

Create ten portfolio-worthy photographs that make use of diagonal lines. In the first five photographs use the diagonal line as a leading line toward your subject. For the second five portfolio-worthy photographs find opposing diagonal lines, and make use of them in any manner of composition that you wish. For this Creativity Prompt it is okay to tilt your camera!



Diagonal lines add drama to what might otherwise be a mundane or over-photographed location. At the same time, you need to use them wisely, so that they appear purposeful. This example photograph appears purposeful.



This example photograph, while it may have been purposeful, appears to be a mistake. Tilting the camera to create the diagonal line brings an imbalance to the composition.



Assignment:

Spend some time online studying photographs that have strong diagonal lines. Look for photographs that appear to have had the camera tipped to create the effect. Pick out ten that you like and ten that you don't like. Study your selections and write down what is influencing your feelings regarding each shot.



Diagonal lines are often found in architecture and sculpture.



Assignment:

Plan a photo safari. Visit some architecture that you enjoy in your area. Study the location specifically for diagonal lines. Once you have identified some diagonal lines at your chosen locations, plan a specific photo shoot around those diagonal lines. (Think of the image above as a great example.) You can use people as models, or simply photograph the building itself. Get creative in your choice of lighting, camera angle, and subject matter. For instance, in the example photograph above, imagine that the three women were removed from the scene. Now imagine that you have brought a large potted plant filled with bright yellow flowers. You place the pot on the boardwalk in the foreground. You then place your camera low to the ground so that the diagonal line leads right toward your subject! Get the idea?



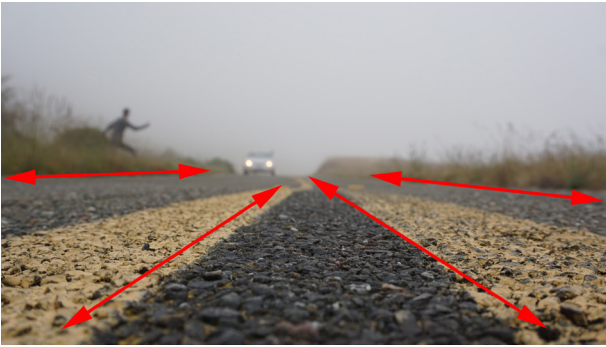
A diagonal line doesn't have to be isolated all by itself to be dramatic. A huge part of becoming an advanced composition photographer is training to see all of the potential composition elements within a busy scene. Everywhere we look, these days, it's complicated and busy. Find the elements that work together, in this case the image above, there are two diagonal lines. The lines were then incorporated in a meaningful way with the rest of the environment.



Assignment:

Plan at least two photo safaris where you spend the day looking for nothing but diagonal lines. When you find them, work with the scene you are given, and incorporate the diagonal lines in a meaningful way within your compositions.

In order to help you get inspired for your Creativity Prompt here are some sample photographs.



A little imagination goes a long way!



Diagonal lines can also make your portraits more interesting...



Here we have a nice example of opposing diagonal lines at work.



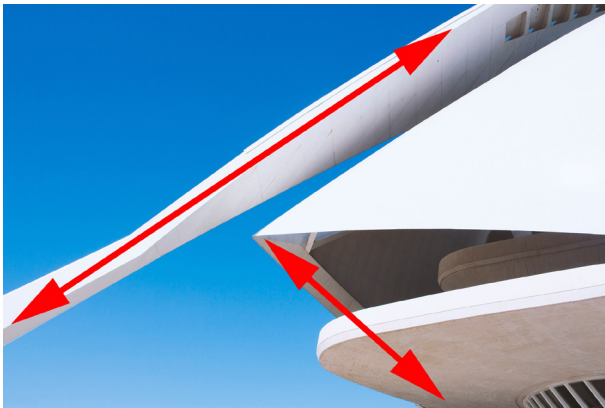
No matter where you live, or what you do in your regular life outside of photography, you can find amazing diagonal lines.



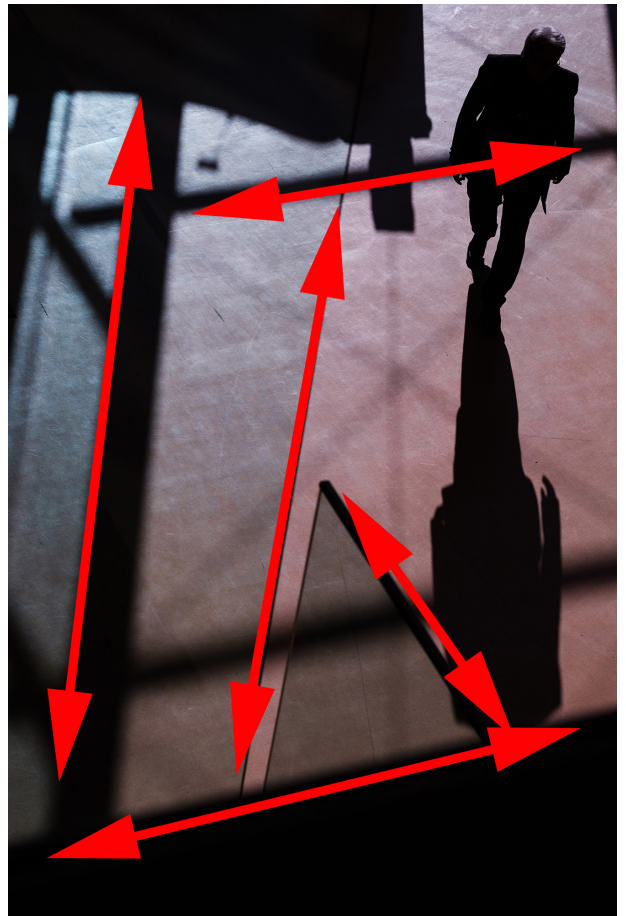
Diagonal lines can make a wonderful frame for a subject!



Don't be afraid to use your imagination and create a diagonal line!



Diagonal lines can be simple and yet elegant.



They can also be chaotic and dramatic. It's time for you to develop your advanced composition eye for diagonal lines!