

Composition Case Study #10

ADVANCED COMPOSITION

When we look at certain genres of photography, it seems easy to dissect the composition, decide what's wrong with it, and make changes to it.

However, what about photographs with an extremely simple subject matter?

Take this image for example. It depicts a beautiful flower; there is no denying that.

One might think, *"What kind of composition can be created with this object? As long as I shoot it in a way that shows off its beauty and the lighting is good, it should be awesome."*

Unfortunately, that line of thinking doesn't hold up.

Let's take a look at what is happening with this photograph.

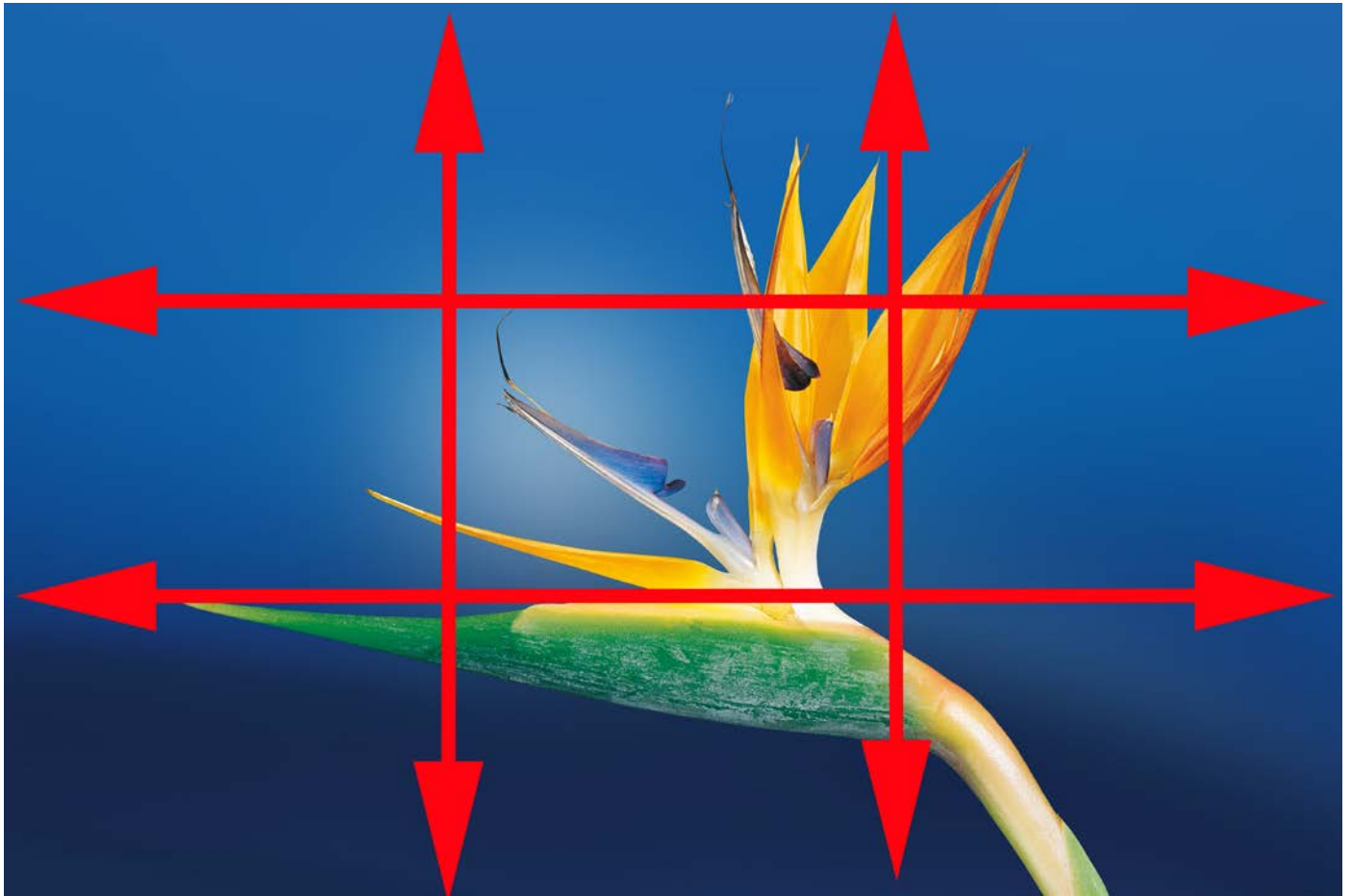




Making a determination that the subject is a flower was pretty easy.

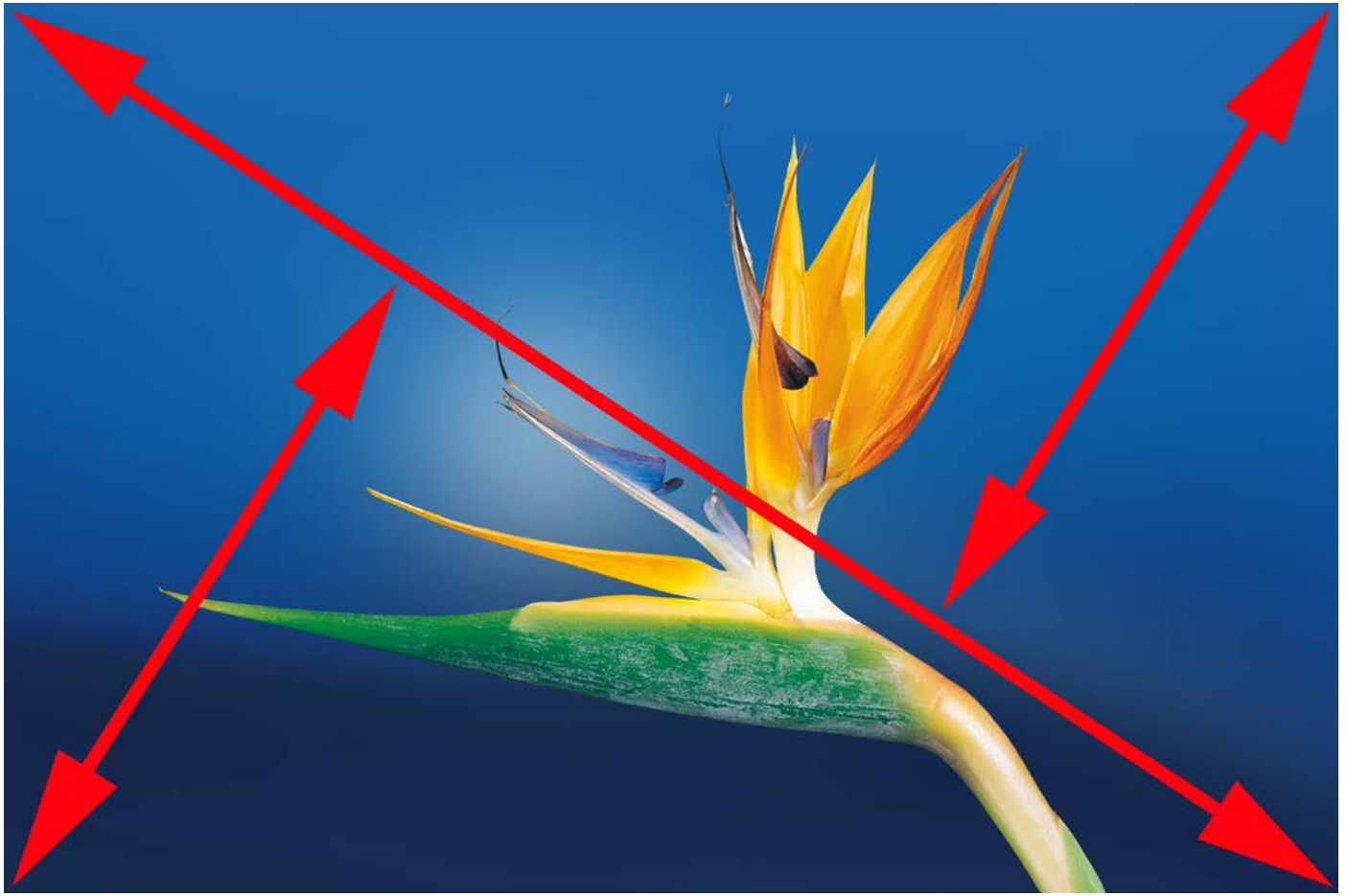
However, as we have discussed previously, a photograph should have a path and stopping point to give the viewer a full experience.

In this particular case, I believe the photographer was giving some consideration to a stopping point by placing a highlighted area on the background (as indicated in the red circle).



That consideration is confirmed when you examine the photograph with the Rule of Thirds grid.

The highlighted area, while not 'on' the sweet spot for the Rule of Thirds, is very close.



I decided to examine the photograph using the various other known composition rules, including the following:

- The Golden Triangle
- The Golden Ratio
- The Golden Spiral

The one that seemed to work best for this shot was the Golden Triangle, as you can see in this image.

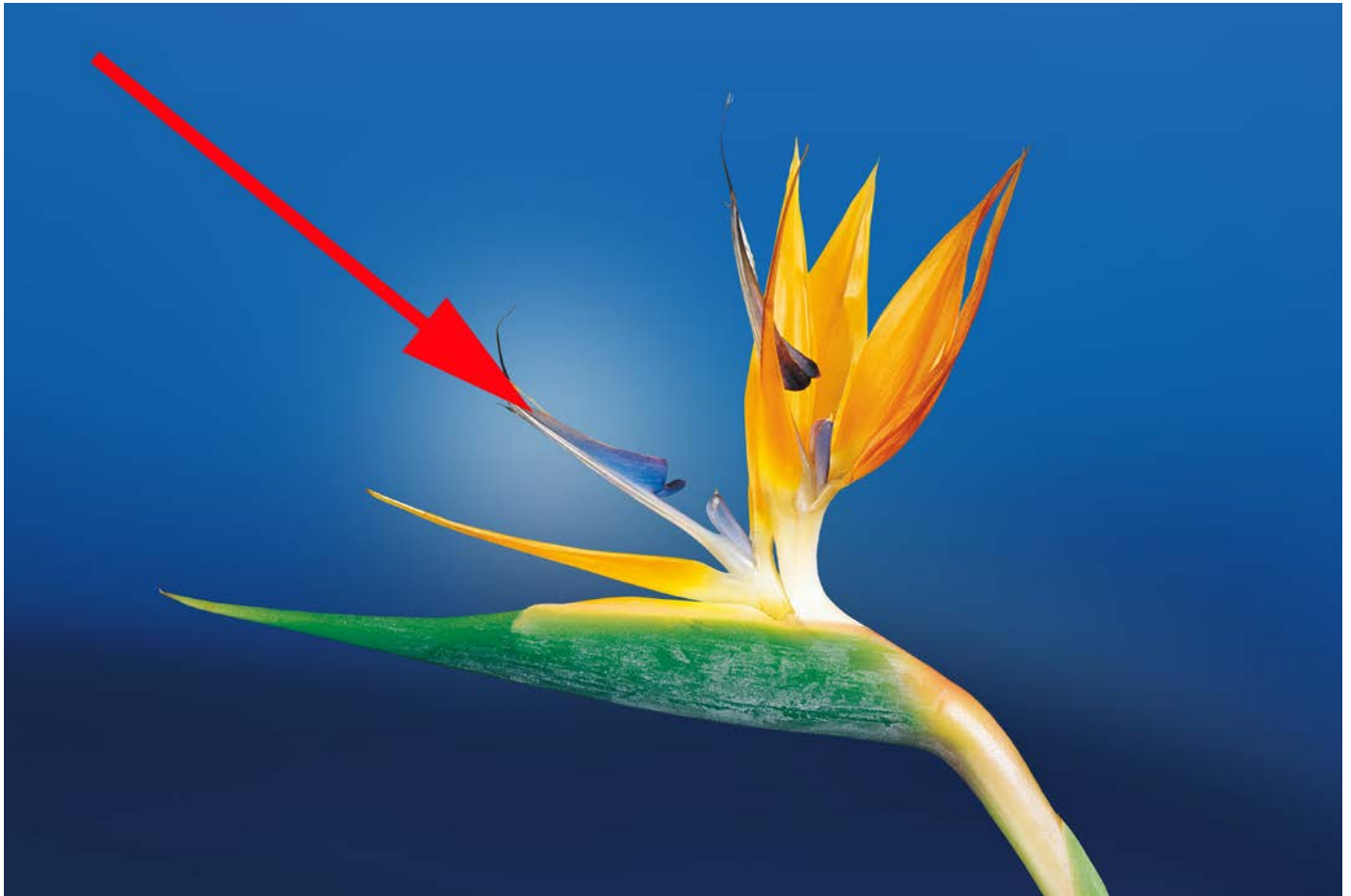


A primary tool of composition, which the photographer implemented quite emphatically, is color contrast.

Yellow and blue are complementary colors on the RGB color wheel.

The green creates a somewhat 'truncated' triadic color scheme.

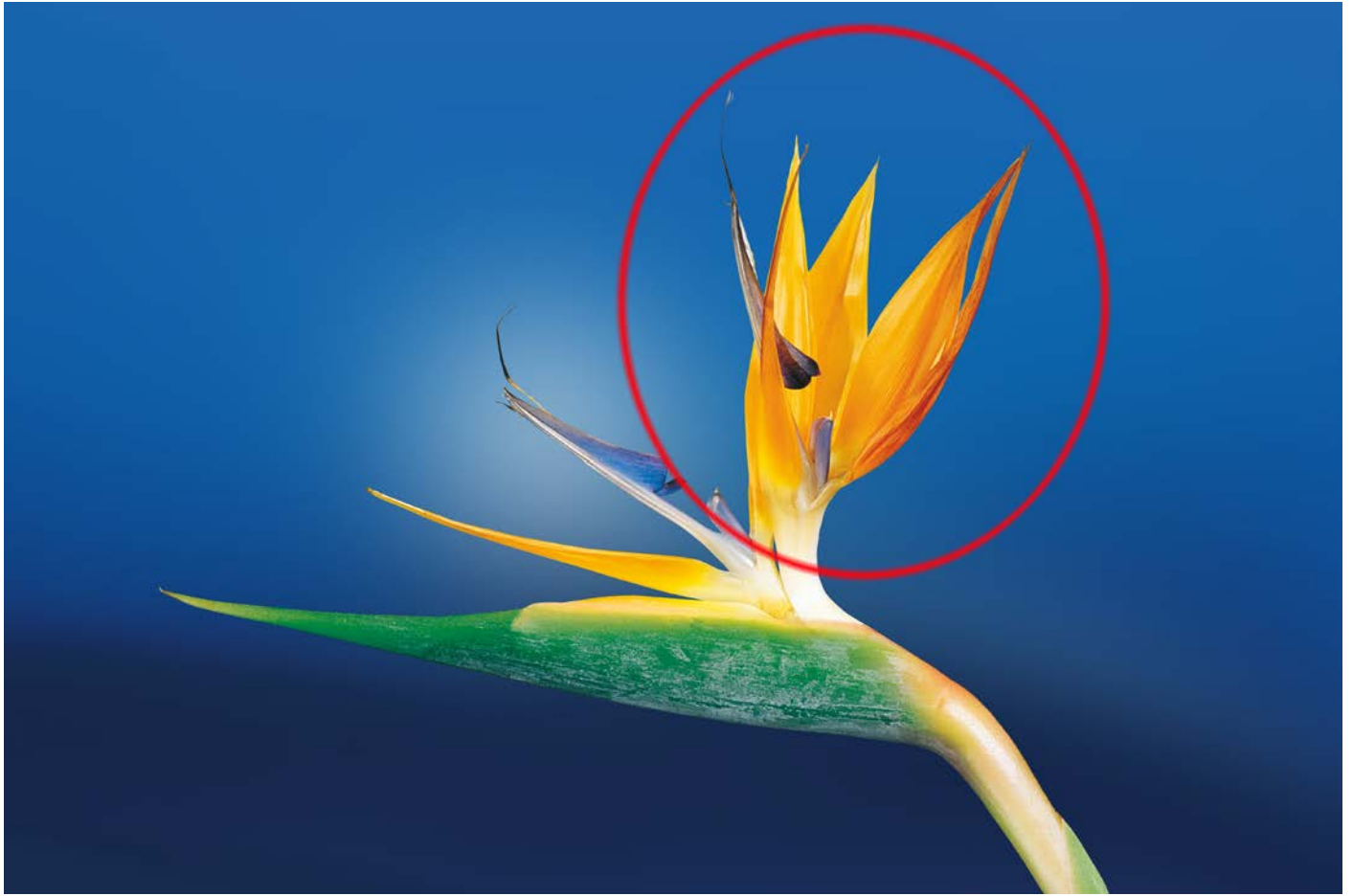
This analysis raises a VERY interesting question.



Why did the photographer place the highest visual weight – the stopping point, if you will – where the arrow is pointing?

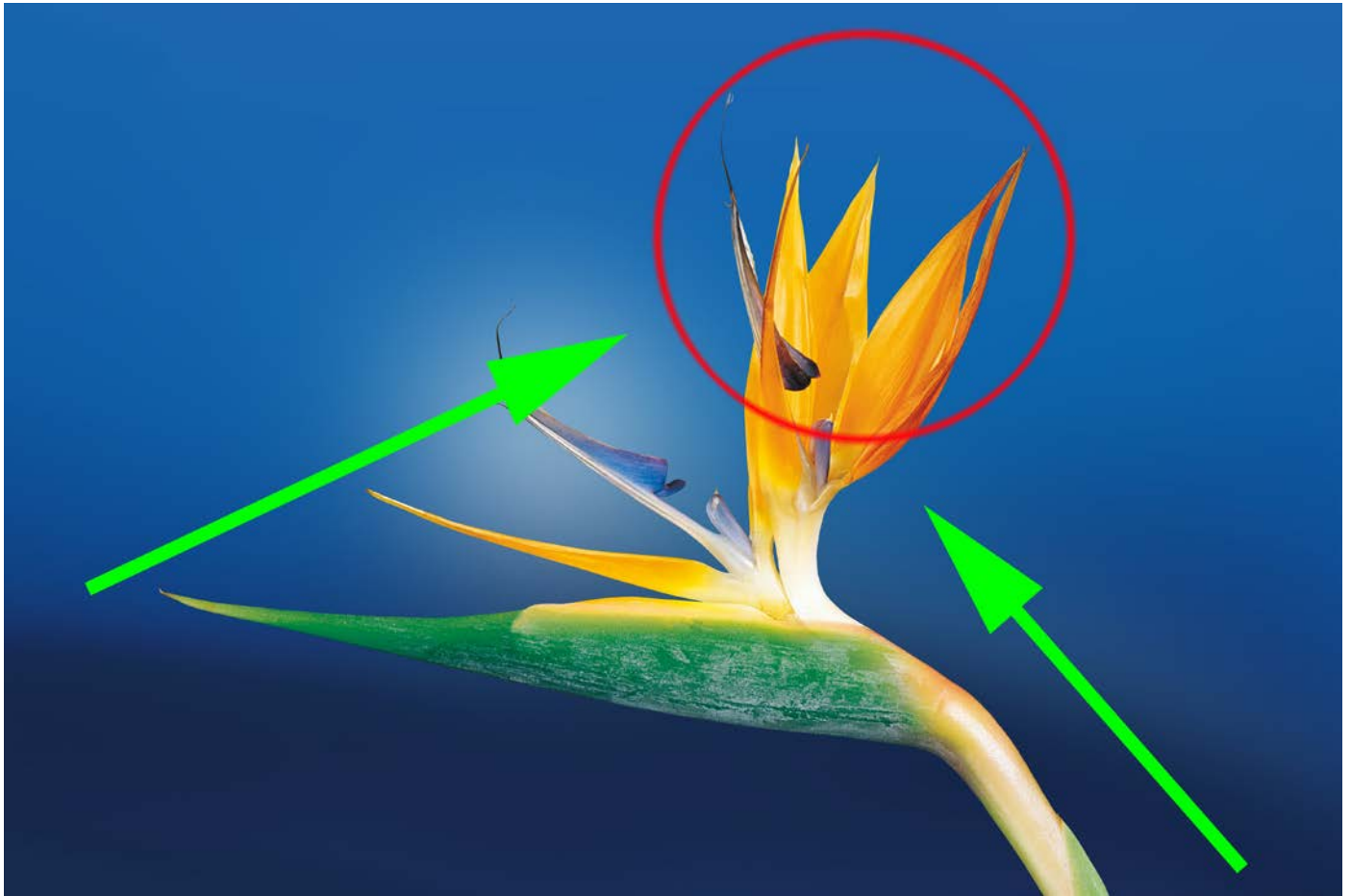
It makes no sense. It has the lowest color contrast in the entire picture.

It does have a strong shape. But so does this:



This part of the flower has a strong shape as well. It also has the highest color contrast to the background.

In addition, it holds the best position within the frame for the Rule of Thirds, the Golden Spiral, and the Golden Triangle.



If the highlight on the background had been placed behind the flower (within the red circle), it would have taken advantage of all the previously listed composition assets.

Plus, it would have created two leading lines toward the stopping point through the repetition

of shape and the flower stem (see the green arrows in this image).

No matter how simple your subject is, analyze the importance of placement, contrast, color, tone, and light for advanced composition.