

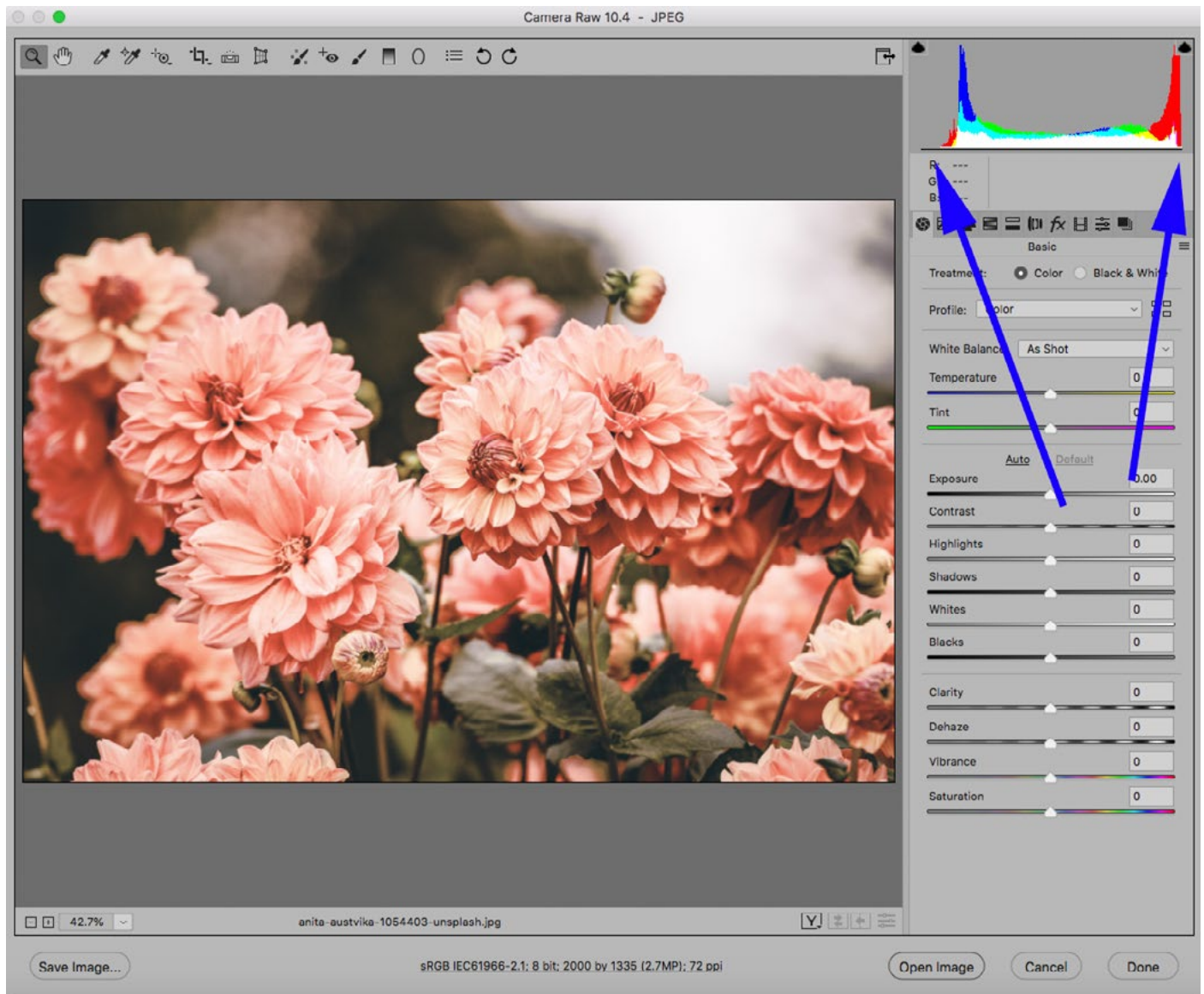
Case Study #01

PHOTOGRAPHING FABULOUS FLOWERS

This flower photograph is not awful. However, it has problems. In the flower guide, we discussed techniques to help a viewer follow a path through the image and to your intended viewing point.

This photograph lacks a good path. Let's look at why.





When doing your own research for learning flower photography, it's always a good idea to examine the photograph inside your editing software. This helps to reveal technical aspects of the shot that you might otherwise miss.

This screenshot shows us that this photograph has a good exposure and good contrast. The photographer elected to produce no deep-black tones, which is fine for this subject. We also see that the highlights, while bright, are not clipped.



An excellent way to identify the 'stopping point' in a flower composition is to look for the critical point of focus, which is identified here with the blue circle.



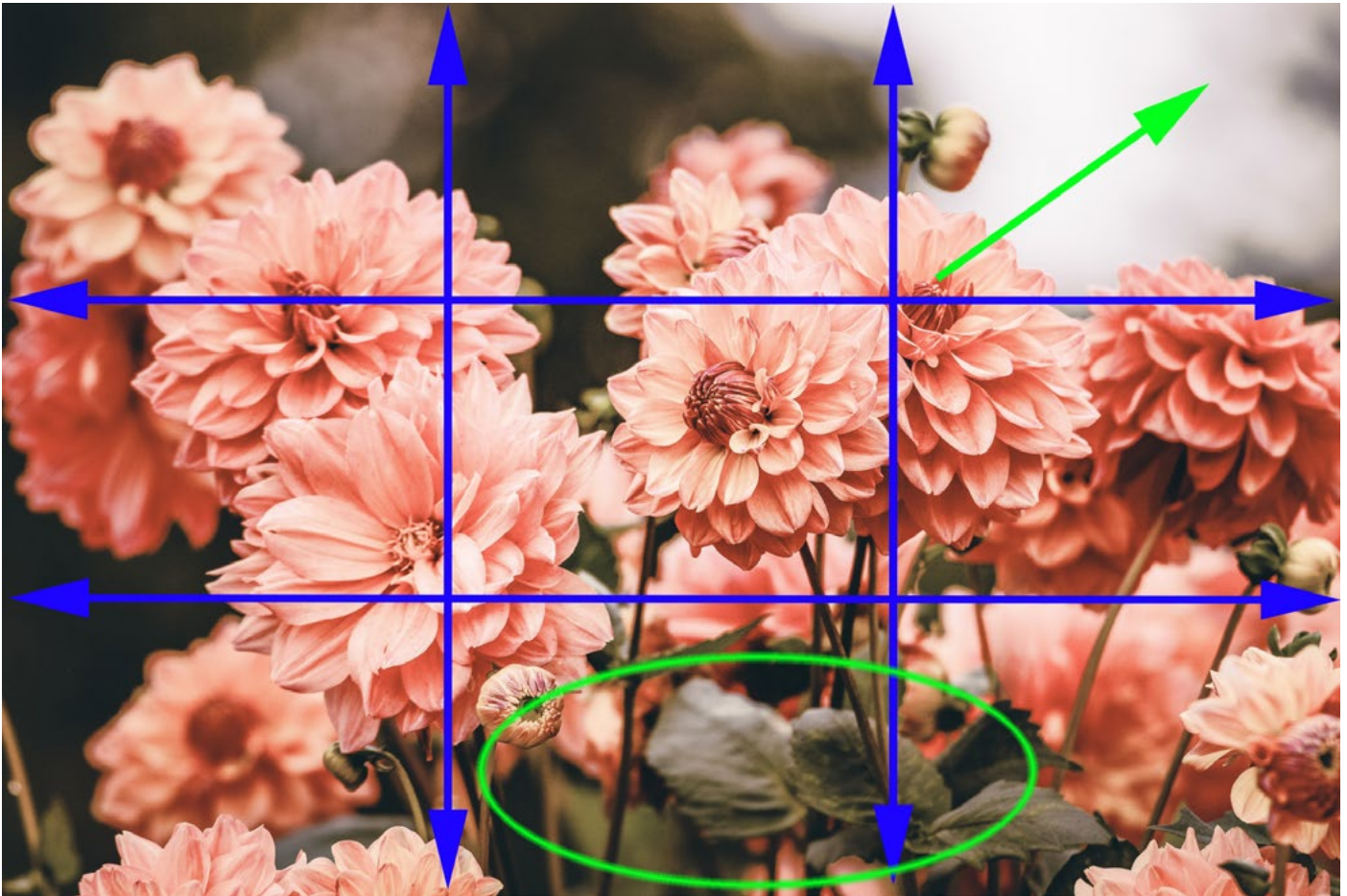
Immediately, we can see that there is a problem with this composition.

Look at the blue arrow in this image. Any strong shape of high contrast is going to grab the attention of a viewer.

You don't want a **non-important area** to present a strong shape of high contrast. It will draw attention away from your intended landing spot for the

viewer within the photograph (in this case the area where the blue circle is located in the previous image).

Now, this shot has already been created, so we can't recompose with the camera. We could remove that flower bud using cloning techniques. Or we could look more deeply at the composition to identify if there are other problems.



The RULE OF THIRDS grid indicates that there are other problem areas, so cloning out that bud in the background maybe isn't the best solution.

The other alternative would be to try and crop the shot. We have plenty of resolution, so that's an option.

I have identified two other key problem areas.

The right-facing flower is in complete focus, and it falls right onto the RULE OF THIRDS intersection. This draws a lot of visual weight.

The problem is that it creates a boundary break as it is pointing up toward the right corner. That right

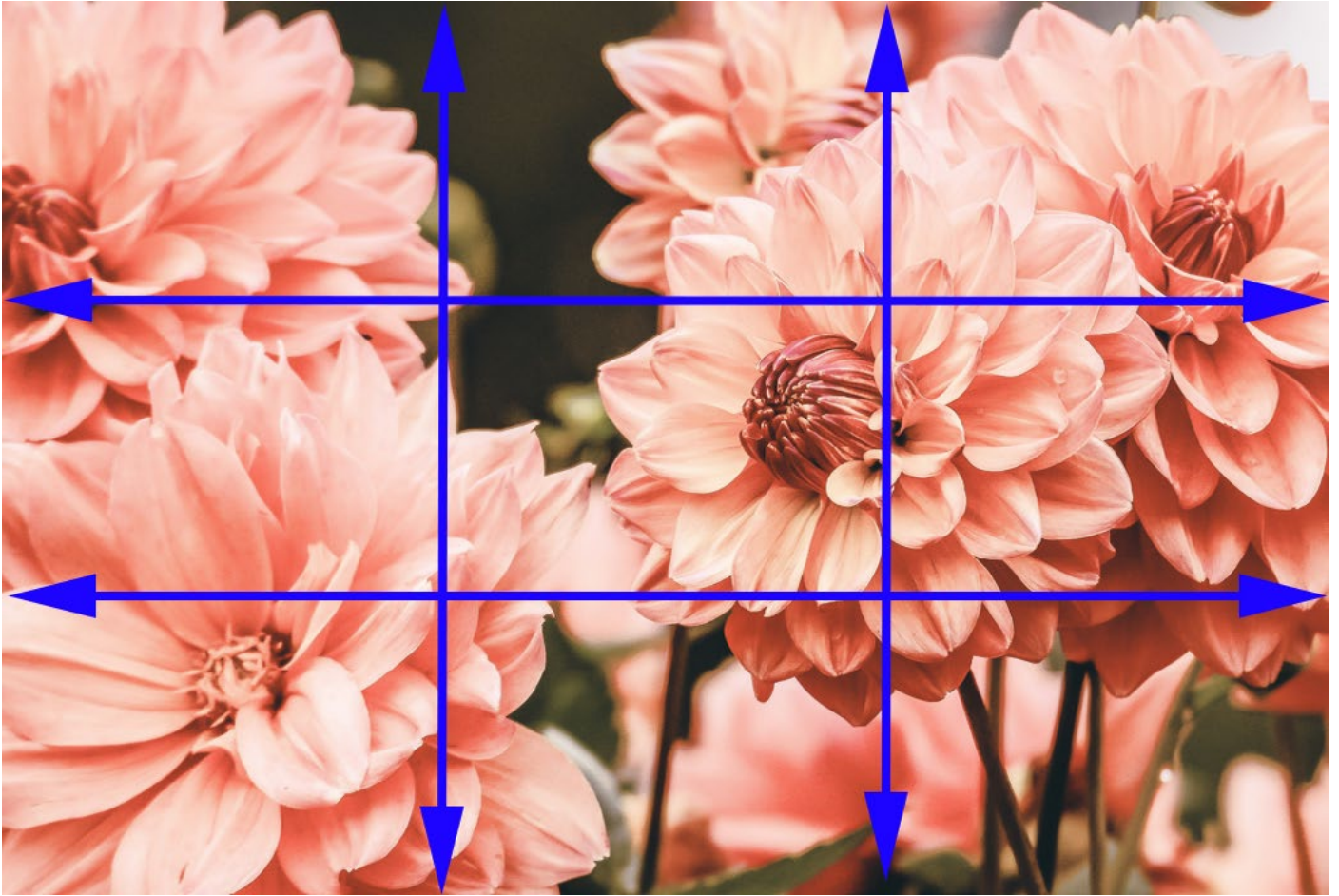
corner is also problematic in that it is the brightest, whitest space within the frame.

Those two considerations definitely draw the eyes away from where we want them to be.

We also have a problem area at the bottom of the frame, as indicated by the green circle.

This is an area of negative space that carries too much visual weight. It does so because of the amount of varying detail and contrast that is occurring there.

The shot could most definitely be improved by eliminating this area of the frame.



By carefully applying an image crop, we've eliminated most of the problems and placed our stopping point within the composition, close to the crossing point for the RULE OF THIRDS.

By eliminating distractions, we have directed our viewer's eyes right to the flower where we placed the critical camera focus.



Here is the final image after cropping.

Did you notice how our problems occurred in the foreground, background, and around the edges of the frame?

With flower photography, we tend to get so focused on the flower we are taking a picture of that we don't study the rest of the frame around it.

A good lesson in flower photography is "roll your view" around the frame that you see inside your viewfinder before taking the picture.

Look for problem areas like the lone bud sticking up in the background or the dead negative space at the bottom of the frame.

Keep in mind where you want the viewer's eyes to go and what may be within the frame that might detract from that.