

PHO 2700 ADVANCED DIGITAL
PHOTOGRAPHY

**PICTORIAL ELEMENTS OF
COMPOSITION**

INTRODUCTION

Unless the visual elements in a photograph are organized and presented in a meaningful way, the image is likely to become only a shallow account of subjects and events that would have seemed far more intriguing had some planning taken place before the shutter was released.

Organizing the visual elements and presenting them in such a way as to convey meaning, mood, emotion or insight is the function of composition.

INTRODUCTION

As you gain better control of your medium, you may increase your ability to emphasize important details and relationships, to subordinate others, to guide the attention of viewers, and to affect them intellectually and emotionally.

INTRODUCTION

This lecture will serve as a basic expansion on terms you may have learned in Beginning Digital Photography. At the very least, these elements will help the you to further develop your composition skills and judgment.

COMPOSITION

- ▶ Composition refers to the way in which visual details are selected and organized within a photograph to convey meaning
 - ▶ The organization will alter the content of the visual image, and relationships among the visual elements
 - ▶ The approach taken depends on the photographer's interpretation in the scene

COMPOSING PHOTOGRAPHS

- ▶ Without the mind's organizing power the visual world would be completely chaotic
 - ▶ The mind helps us pick and choose what we see
 - ▶ We view details until a pattern of meaning emerges

COMPOSING PHOTOGRAPHS

- ▶ The mind, not the camera, selects and organizes visual detail so that meaning emerges
 - ▶ If a photographer is going to convey meaning, then the photograph must be organized around an idea to shared
 - ▶ Without this, a photograph is little more than a chaotic record of what happened before the shutter was released



BEGINNING

**BASIC COMPOSITIONAL
CONCEPTS**

BALANCE

- ▶ Achieving balance within your composition can be accomplished in several ways:
 - ▶ Symmetry
 - ▶ Using a visual counter-weight for a large mass
 - ▶ Color palette
 - ▶ Specific arrangement of large masses within the frame

BALANCE





BALANCE

FRAMING

- ▶ Fill the frame
 - ▶ Determine whether the subject's surroundings are important to the scene
 - ▶ If not, make the surroundings small in relation to the subject
- ▶ Move in until all extraneous information is no longer in the scene
 - ▶ Creates impact
 - ▶ Reveals more detail

FRAMING



FRAMING



Edward Steichen

Dark Beauty

FOREGROUND – BACKGROUND RELATIONSHIP

- ▶ Include a foreground object to establish a sense of scale
- ▶ An overhanging branch or archway will provide depth, and guide the viewer's eye towards the subject
- ▶ Foreground details may contain information about the scene in the background

FOREGROUND – BACKGROUND



FOREGROUND - BACKGROUND



LEADING LINES

- ▶ Lead the viewer's eye on a path through an image
- ▶ Direct the viewer's attention to a subject
- ▶ Can suggest a feeling or mood

LEADING LINES



LEADING LINES



LEADING LINES



Jerry Uelsmann

THE RULE OF THIRDS

- ▶ To use the Rule of Thirds, divide the frame into thirds both vertically and horizontally.
- ▶ Where the lines cross are 4 intersection points. These points are ideal locations to put your subject for a balanced composition.
- ▶ The horizon should be placed at either the upper third or lower third (horizontally).

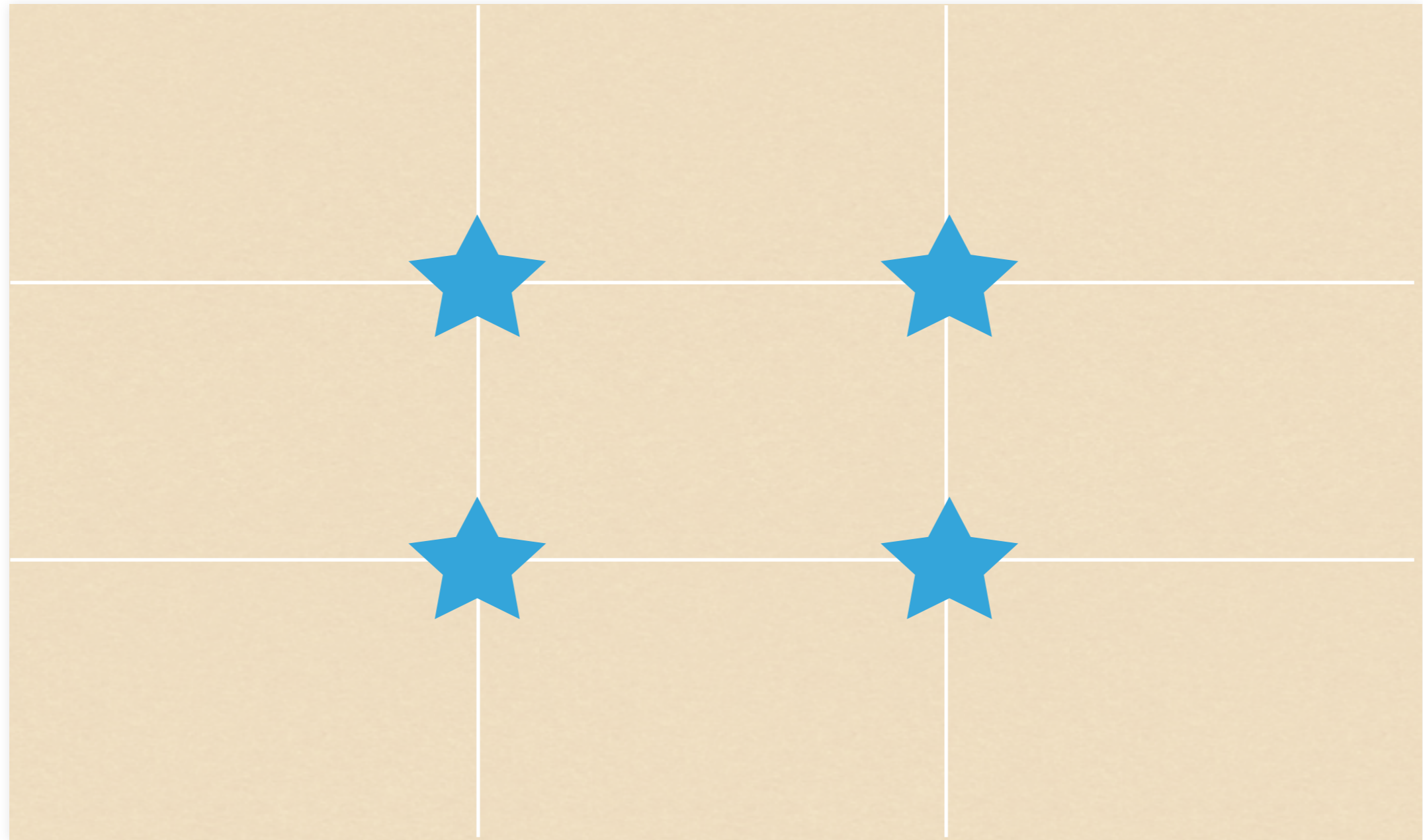
THE RULE OF THIRDS

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THE GOLDEN RECTANGLE

THE RULE OF THIRDS



RULE OF THIRDS



RULE OF THIRDS



SHAPE & FORM

- ▶ Shape in photography refers to the 2-dimensional outline of an object
 - ▶ A silhouette is an example of shape in its purest form
- ▶ Form refers to the apparent 3-dimensionality of an object
 - ▶ A side-lit object reveals its true form with shadows and highlights

FORM



Yousuf Karsh

SHAPE





ADVANCED

**PICTORIAL ELEMENTS
OF COMPOSITION**

PICTORIAL ELEMENTS

Pictorial elements describe the characteristics of an image

- ▶ Line
- ▶ Mass
- ▶ Tone
- ▶ Contrast
- ▶ Color

PICTORIAL ELEMENTS

Line

- ▶ Refers to the arrangement (real or imagined) of outlines, contours, and other connecting elements within the image

LINE



Joshua Lutz

LINE



Matthew Ferri

LINE



Kristin Ashburn

LINE



Heather Liebenson

LINE



Alex Coppel

LINE



Mark Blinch

LINE



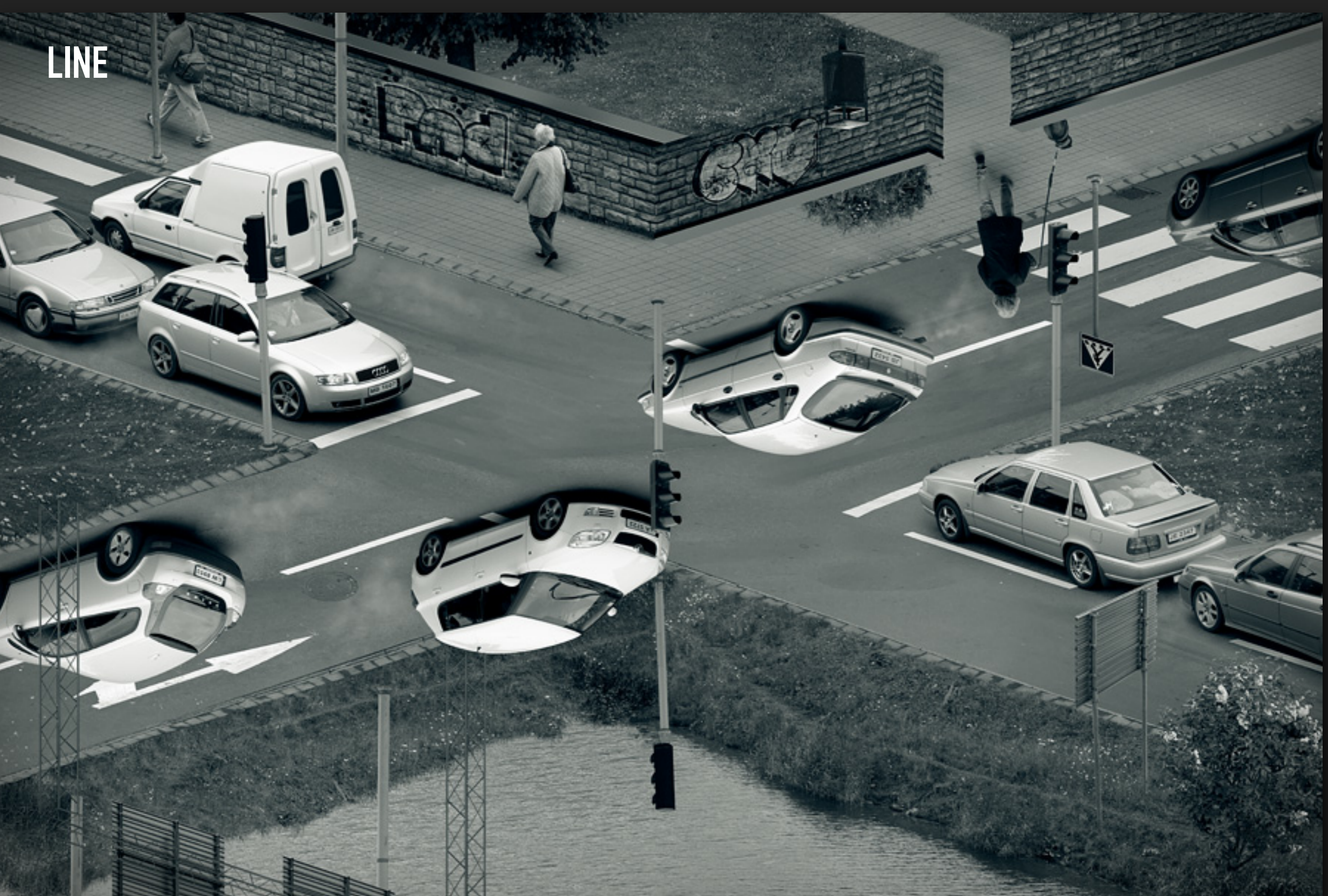
Annie Griffiths

LINE



David Doubilet

LINE



Erik Johansson

LINE



Ilya Naymushin

LINE



Vivek Prakash

LINE



Scott G. Winterton

LINE



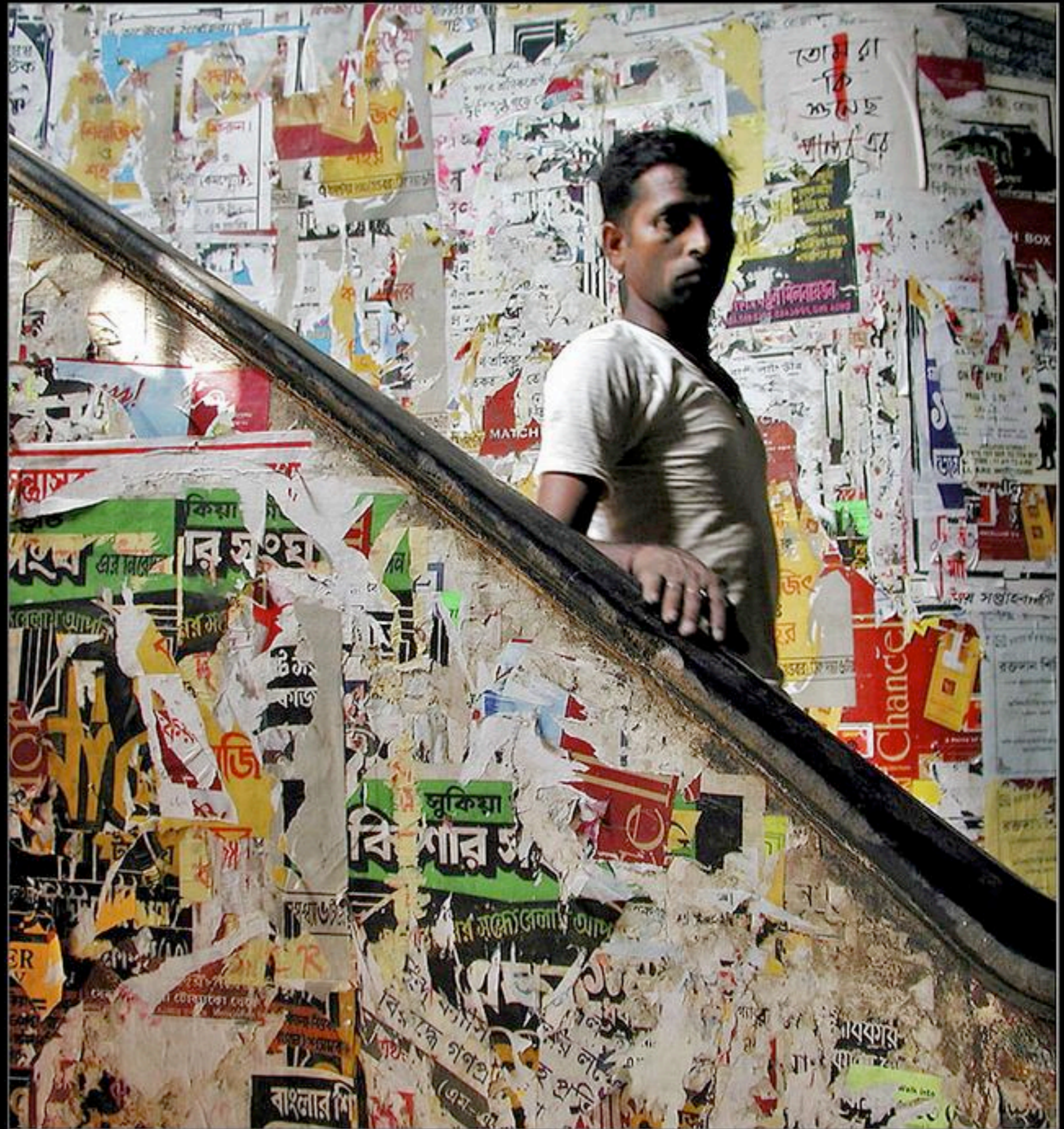
Javier Manzano

LINE



Erik Johansson

LINE



Skip Hunt

PICTORIAL ELEMENTS

Line

- ▶ Refers to the arrangement (real or imagined) of outlines, contours, and other connecting elements within the image

Mass

- ▶ Refers to the areas of density within the image that cohere together

MASS



Thomas Senf

MASS



Justin Guariglia

MASS



Lee Balzano

MASS



Alex Druzhinin

MASS



Dionys Moser

MASS



Annie Leibovitz

MASS



Thom Jackson

PICTORIAL ELEMENTS

Line

- ▶ Refers to the arrangement (real or imagined) of outlines, contours, and other connecting elements within the image

Mass

- ▶ Refers to the areas of density within the image that cohere together

Tone

- ▶ Refers to the color quality or brightness value in a portion of an image

TONE

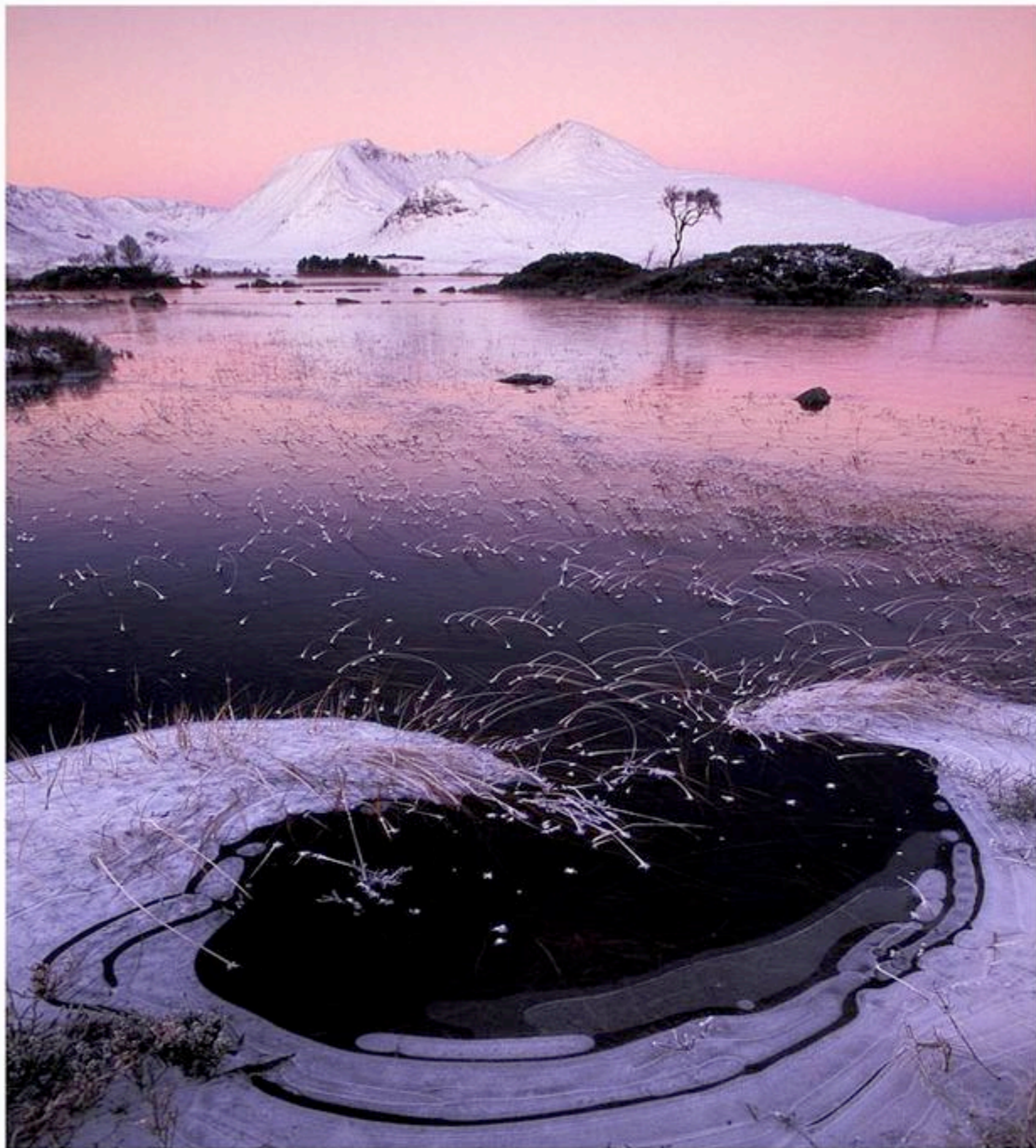


Lars Topelmann

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DKR TX 6049

TONE



Brian Clark

TONE

Panya Wong



TONE



Irving Penn

TONE



David Roossien

PICTORIAL ELEMENTS

Contrast

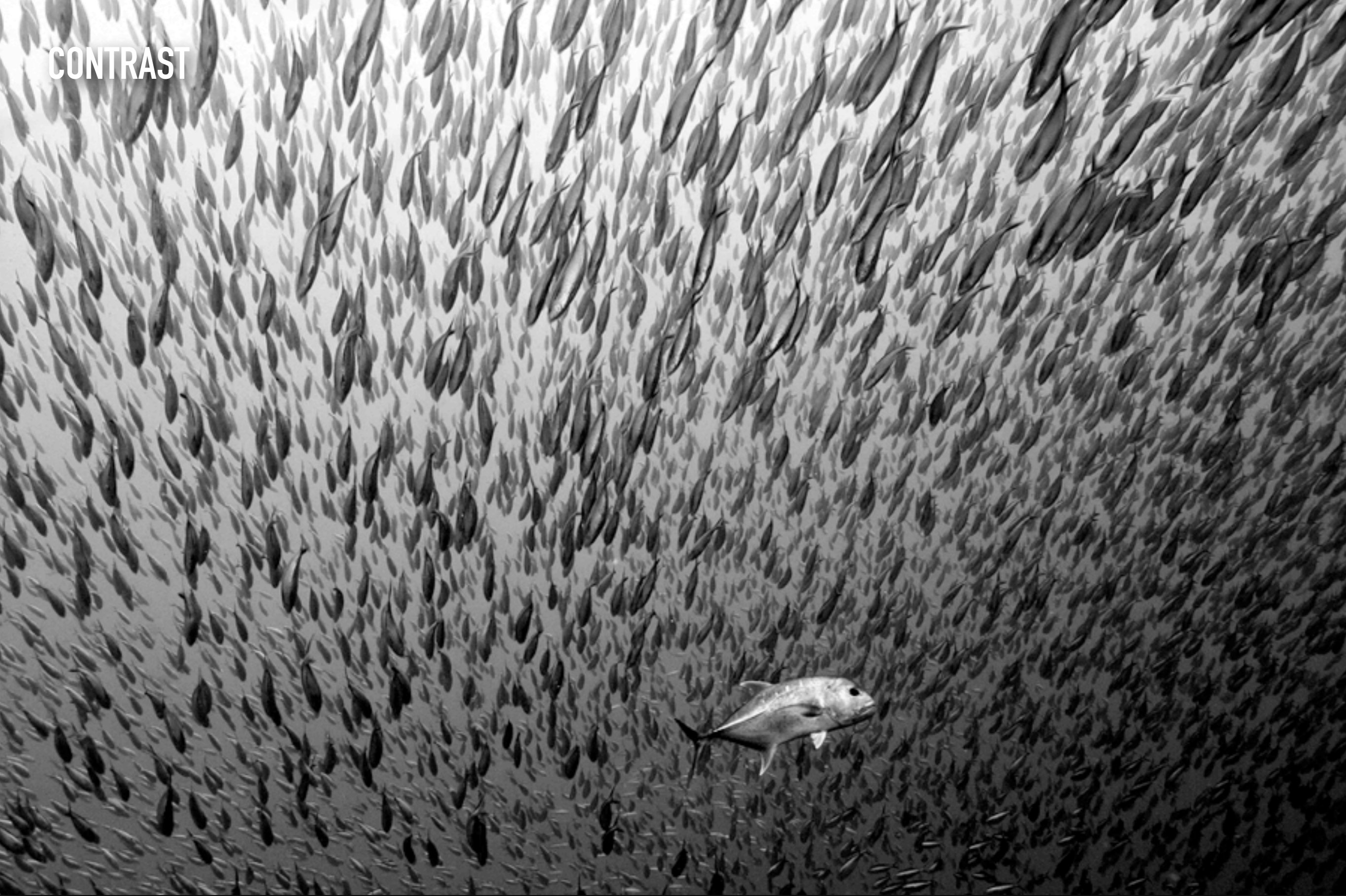
- ▶ Refers to the magnitude or brightness differences between adjacent masses

CONTRAST



Doug Burgess

CONTRAST



Fransisca Harlijanto

CONTRAST



Nina Andersen

CONTRAST



Eric Guth

CONTRAST



Shane Rucker

CONTRAST



THE ILLUMINATED MAN

Duane Michals

CONTRAST



Karl Root

CONTRAST



Amd Wiegmann

CONTRAST



Asif Hassan

CONTRAST



Silvi Gecht

CONTRAST



Guillermo Labarca

CONTRAST



Irving Penn

CONTRAST



Ansel Adams

PICTORIAL ELEMENTS

Contrast

- ▶ Refers to the magnitude or brightness differences between adjacent masses

Color

- ▶ To the visual sensations produced by different wavelengths of light

COLOR



Eric Fredline

COLOR



Andrzej Dragan

COLOR



Joel Sartore

COLOR



Tim Laman

COLOR



James L. Stanfield

COLOR



Norbert Rosing

COLOR



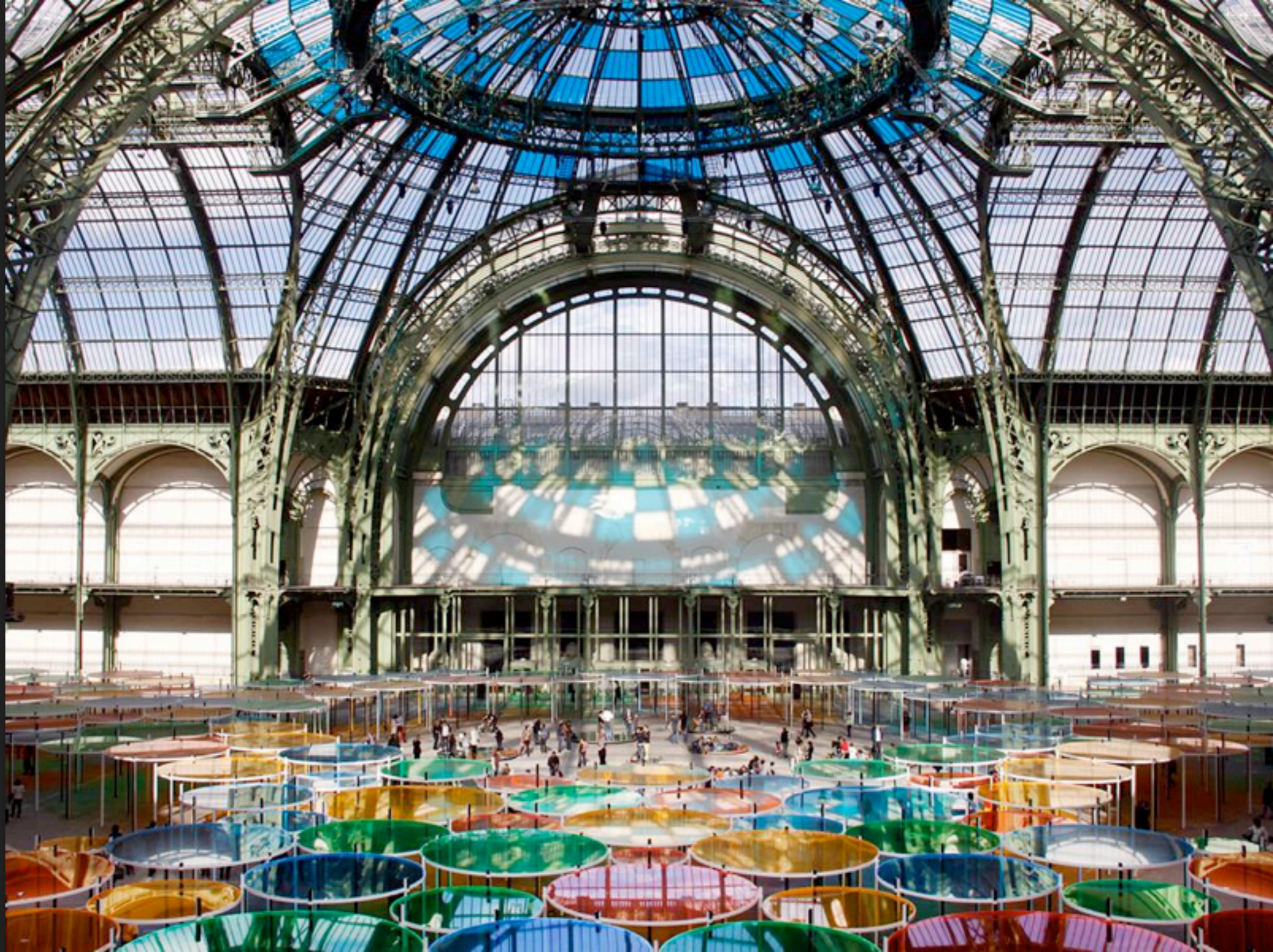
Bill Hatcher

COLOR



Jodi Cobb

COLOR



Lance McMillan

COLOR



Annie Leibovitz

COLOR



Erik Johansson

FUNCTIONS OF COMPOSITION

- ▶ One function of composition is to achieve emphasis within the image
- ▶ In an effective composition, pictorial elements within the scene are *selected* and *emphasized* to communicate the photographer's ideas
- ▶ Other elements are subordinated, or eliminated altogether
- ▶ Thus, a major function of composition is to focus the viewer's attention upon certain details. Doing this, the photographer communicates a central or dominant idea.