

Exercise 1.2 Point

The point is the most fundamental design element. It has to be small within the frame and its position is generally more important than its form (see the example of the white polystyrene cup underneath the chair opposite). 1. Take two or three photographs in which a single point is placed in different parts of the frame. (A 'point' should be small in relationship to the frame; if it's too large it becomes a shape.) How can you evaluate the pictures? How do you know whether you've got it right or not? Is there a right place and a wrong place for the point? For the sake of argument, let's say that the right place shouldn't be too obvious and that the point should be clear and easy to see. As there's now a 'logic' to it, you can evaluate your composition according to the logic of the point. As you look at the pictures you might find that you're also evaluating the position of the point by its relationship to the frame. 2. Take a number of images in which a point is placed in relationship to the frame. Can you find any place where the point is not in relationship to the frame? If it's in relationship to the frame you can place a point in any part of the picture and the picture is balanced. You could think about the two parts of this exercise in a different way, as 'test pictures' versus 'real pictures'. The only purpose for the test pictures is the exercise: you can analyse them according to the criteria and get the expected answer. But 'real' pictures are not so easy to analyse. What are the criteria for 'relationship'? (We're hoping that you'll shoot the rest of the exercises in this course as real pictures, not test pictures!)

You could think about the two parts of this exercise in a different way, as 'test pictures' versus 'real pictures'. The only purpose for the test pictures is the exercise: you can analyse them according to the criteria and get the expected answer. But 'real' pictures are not so easy to analyse. What are the criteria for 'relationship'? (We're hoping that you'll shoot the rest of the exercises in this course as real pictures, not test pictures!) As you review your photographs, observe the way your eye 'scans' the surface of the image. Note how: • a point attracts attention out of proportion to its size • the eye looks for connections between two points • placing a point close to the edge seems to animate both the point and the frame. Print out two or three of your point photographs and trace the route your eye takes over the surface with a pencil. Then try the same with a selection of photographs from newspapers or magazines (or the example above). You should notice that each photograph seems to have its own tempo. Add the traced photographs to your learning log together with brief observations.

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