
VINCENT BREEN 9TH AUGUST 2020

Photography 1

Workshop

Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/heyvincenzo>

Pinterest <https://pin.it/2vFDQI7>



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The workshop

- It's not technical
- Hopefully make you think
- Any skill level
- No darkroom so no film
- Digital
- Conversational

Agenda

- Hello & introductions
 - Assignment - Summer
 - Why I take photographs
 - Some principles
 - Gestalt principles
 - Different types of photography
 - Equipment
 - RAW v JPG
 - Inspiration
 - Q&A
-



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Hello & introductions

- I have been taking photo's since the early 1990's
- Got into photography at University
- Worked for Magnum Photos
- I shoot mainly abstract or what I call 'moment' photography

General intro about me
Find out about everyone else



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Assignment

- Summer
- Take a picture of what Summer means to you?
- Use any equipment
- Black & white
- Colour



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Why I take photographs

- I can't draw
- I'm impatient
- I like to walk and I like to cycle
- I like cameras and technology
- I find it therapeutic and relaxing



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Some principles

- Rule of odds
- Symmetry
- Light & Shadow
- Contrast
- Texture
- Reflections
- Gestalt

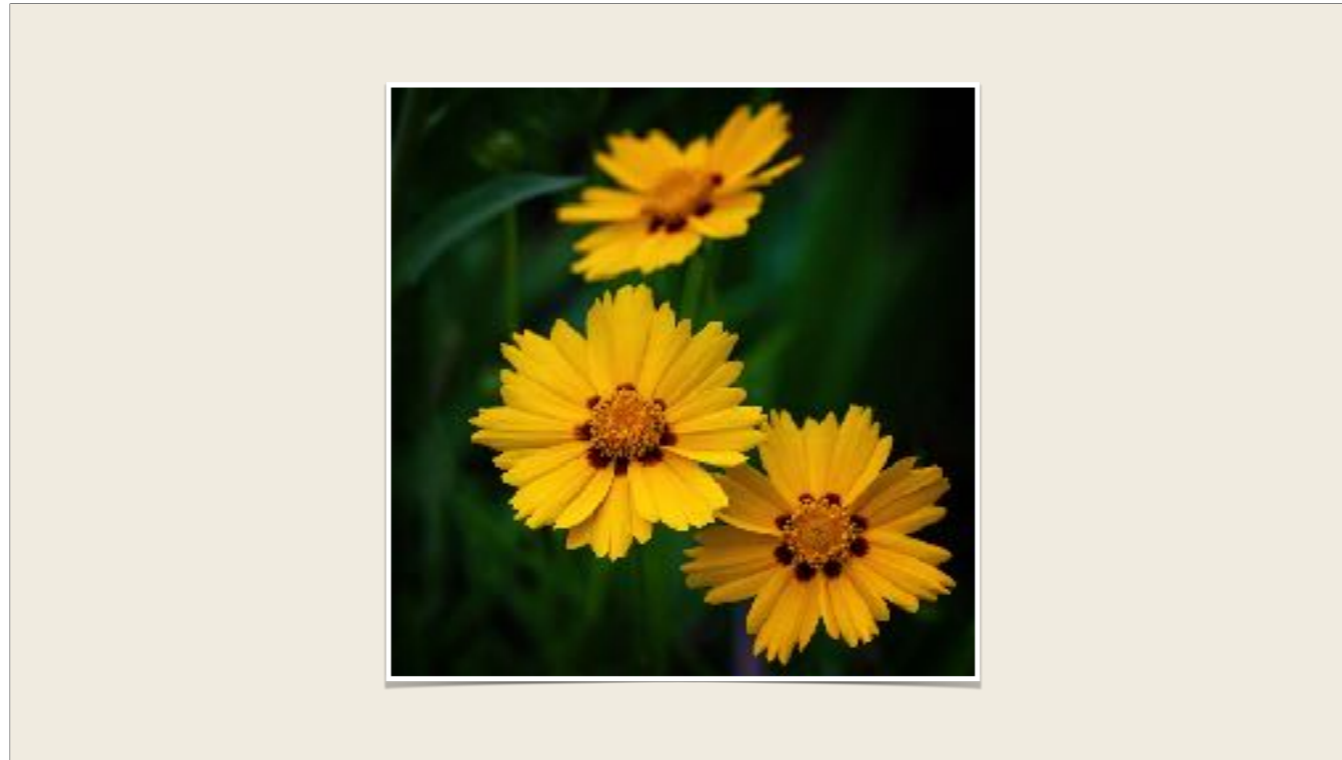
These are some classic principles of photography that improve your images - sometimes hard to use because that moment can sometimes happen and you don't have much time to compose.

That's where cropping comes in.

But they are good for landscape, still life, portrait, architecture.

Let's look at some of the principles...

Rule of odds



Rule of odds



Rule of odds

Symmetry



Symmetry

Light & shadow



Light & shadow



Light & shadow - Kings Cross 2019

Contrast



Contrast



Contrast but in the subject matter - young & old

Texture



Texture



Edward Burtynsky
Abstract
Texture
Contrast

Reflections



Reflections



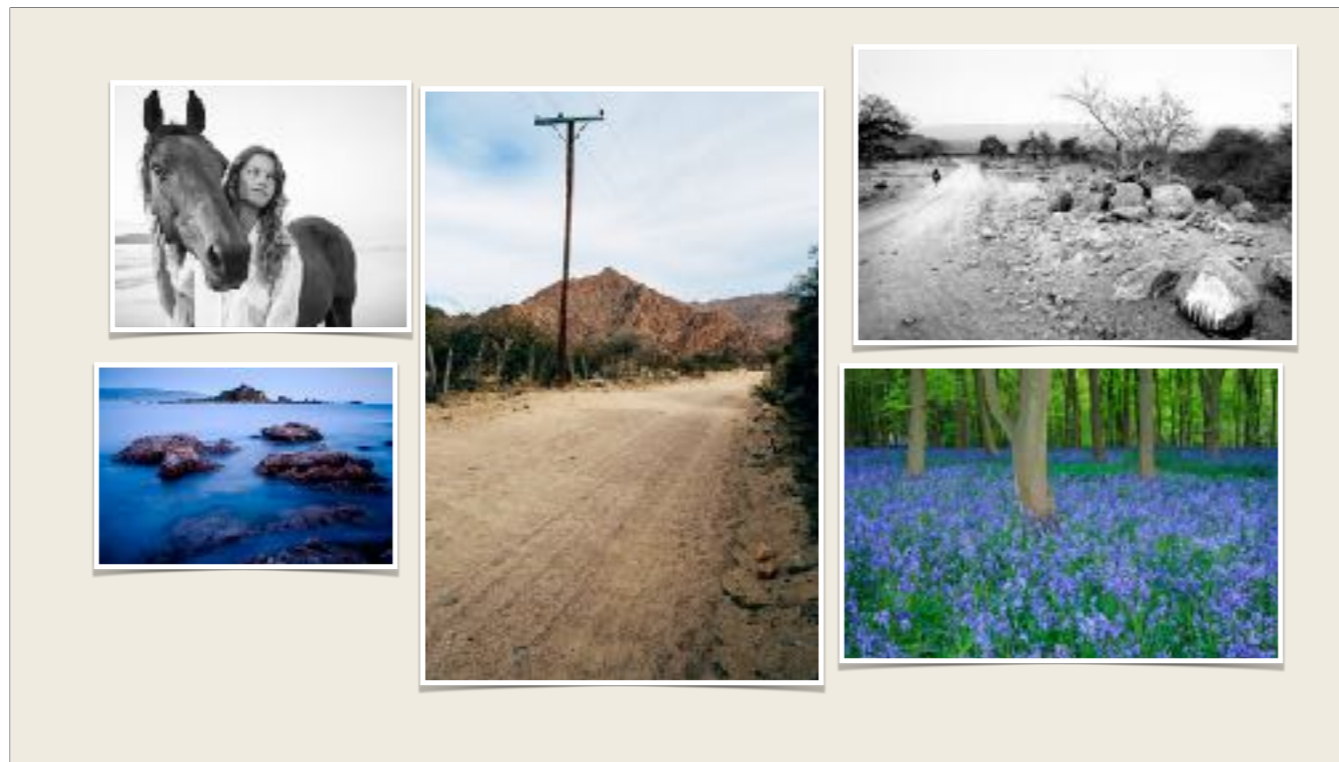
Reflection - Walthamstow Wetlands



Gestalt theory evolved in the 1920's to explain some of the ways in which people perceive the world around them. The basic idea is that, when faced with a visually chaotic scene, the human mind simplifies it into more recognisable patterns and shapes.

Gestalt theory provides an insight into the pattern recognition process that occurs when people look at photographs. Once you understand the principles of gestalt theory, you can use them to improve the composition of your photos.

What I've done is taken some of my images that are on Instagram and tried to match them to the principle.



From left to right -
Proximity
Similarity
Simplicity & Continuation
Segregation
Closure



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Equipment

- Mirrorless
- DSLR
- Compact
- Smartphone
- Lenses
- Filters

Mirrorless - smaller more compact, rangefinders, no mirror, Fujifilm, lenses, limitations limited shutter speed, tactility, retro, good for street, travel

DSLR - Pentax KP, single lens reflex, full control, higher megapixels 36mp plus, heavy, expensive, good for landscape, wildlife, portrait

Compact - fixed lens often 21mm or 28mm, fast point and shoot, can shoot in different formats JPG and RAW. RICOH GR3

Phone - fixed lens, HDR, not much control, most phones now shoot RAW

Lenses - wide angle to telephoto. Prime lenses, Zoom lenses. Fast lenses. I use 4 lenses, 15mm, 35mm, 50mm, 70mm, possibly buying a 5th lenses 100mm. Cost can be expensive. Pentax K mount allows to mount old lenses on a new camera body so you pick up a 20 year old 50mm for £20 from eBay.

Filters - UV, ND neutral density, bw filters, polarisers, software like LightRoom and SnapSpeed means that you no longer need to shoot with filters. I just use a UV filter to protect the lens.





Phone cameras - Instagram, Facebook, Social Media everyone is either an influencer or visual storyteller

Powerful - 48 mps



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RAW v JPG

- What is RAW
- What is JPG
- LightRoom
- SnapSeed

RAW - all the exposure data the camera captures. You can lighten, darken, change colour values, even sharpen and handle lens distortion. Once you've edited, you export as a JPG. Gives you flexibility to edit your images. Presets - Streetlife by LinTaro

JPG - compressed image format good for posting online. No ability to edit but easy to upload and distribute.

LightRoom - give a demo

SnapSeed - give a demo



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Different types of photography

- Street
- Landscape
- Abstract
- Portrait
- Selfie's
- Colour
- Black & white

Street - Street photography is basically taking pictures of people going about their daily business. Famous street photographers are Vivian Maier, Gary Winograd, Joel Meyerowitz, Henri Cartier Bresson.

Bresson was the father of street photography.

In the 1930's smaller cameras called rangefinders were developed by companies like Leica.

Bresson saw the potential in these smaller more discrete cameras as a way to capture life.

He coined the term the decisive moment.

The decisive moment for Bresson was the moment when all the elements of the image come together.

Let's look at some of his photos...

Landscape - I think we all know what landscape photography is.

Common themes are deep focus so everything from foreground to background is sharp.

That means setting a low aperture on your lens. So f8 to f36 (if your camera supports it).

At those settings you'll probably use a slow shutter speed that rules just holding the camera.

You'll have to use a tripod or a monopod to increase stability.

Abstract - Hard to define but the way I interpret abstract is that it's more about elements that form the building blocks of an image.

The meaning of the image is in your interpretation.

So a photograph could be about patterns, colours, light, structure.

They can encompass a huge variety of subject matter.

They can also play around with the rules of photography introducing blurring to suggest speed...

Portrait - Portraits I don't think we need an explanation as I'm sure we are familiar with portraits. Portraits can be used to great effect in documentary photography.

We are probably more familiar with it as photojournalism or reportage.

Annie Liebovitz uses portraiture when she is on a photojournalism assignment and it provides a person to the story.

Steve McCurry's photo of an Afghan girl whilst working in Afghanistan in the 70's is an amazing image

Selfies - anyone no explanation needed

Black and White, Colour - Personal choice.

Serious photography is always as black and white.

That statement isn't true because colour adds a different value.

Ansel Adams patented the zone system in the early 1900's and it's still in use today.

Photographers like HCB would only shoot in black and white for artistic reasons.

By the 1950's and 1960's colour became more widely.

Partly because of the advances in colour emulsions that Kodak patented notably Ektachrome and the more widespread availability of cameras amongst the general public.

Kodak understood and effectively created a market that tapped into the increased affluence and leisure time of families and the availability and affordability of cameras.

Think about Kodak's business model. They owned the film that you bought and they owned the processing outlets that you used to get your films developed.

By the 1950's, black and white becomes much more of an expression - serious photography is black and white.

Some photographers though used colour as a fundamental element in the images they took...

Talk about photographers Fred Herzog, Saul Leiter, Vivian Maier, HCB, Gary Winograd



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Inspiration

- Photographers
- Themes/Verbs/Actions
- Artists
- Films
- Instagram, Facebook, Flickr

Photographers - I follow 5 photographers. When I say follow I mean interested in their work as some are no longer with us - HCB, Greg Girard, Saul Leiter, Daimyo Moryama, Thomas Struth. Over the last year I've amassed a small library of books of their work. I love books but there is something particular special about a monograph or the work of a photographer. Every book tells a story and with a book you travel to a certain degree on the same journey they did. You understand how they think and what their process is. Plus photography books look great on your bookshelves. Unfortunately they aren't cheap but I've found used bargains on AbeBooks and you'll find on Amazon special deals. One book I bought which was originally at £58 it was on offer one day on Amazon for £14 and it was brand new. I learn a massive amount about photography reading about photographers and I like the tactility of books.

Themes - following, looking down, looking up, layers, rain, The Street Photographers Manual by David Gibson. <https://www.words-to-use.com/words/summer/>

Artists - Impressionists, Monet, Rembrandt. They explored colour, form, light and shadow so they are good reference to improving your photography. I never thought of much of the Impressionists until quite recently when I came across a painting called The Beach at Trouville by Claude Monet and I really fell in love with it. We are in the process of moving to Worthing on the South Coast and I've set myself a project to shoot a series of photographs that tries in some way to capture the essence of that painting. Might be the light or the palette but obviously not the subjects because we don't dress like that anymore. That's short term easy project to do. I mentioned earlier about books. I recently read a retrospective on Saul Leiter. Leiter was massively influenced by the Impressionist so that gave me a different view of the influence had on photography with the way they handled colour.

Films - Films can inspire your photography. Cinematography shares a lot of the language of stills photography. A lot of my more abstract are influenced by a Russian filmmaker now deceased called Andrei Tarkovsky. His films are very elemental. A lot of my abstract photo's are influenced by Tarkovsky. The other filmmaker is Terence Malick. Malick shot his A Hidden Life with a 14mm. The film I think is a feast to look at. Primarily because of the choice of lens and the colour palette he uses. I love the multiple use of a wide angle to create space but at the same time focus on the actors. I've never seen that before. That's inspired me to purchase a 15mm lens and

create some images. What was a revelation to me was that whilst watching A Hidden Life I thought immediately he has shot this with a wide angle lens. 2 points to that. For me I'm thinking about the lens and the composition or structure of the shot. The second thing was that I thought it was a 12mm lens he used. It was a 14mm so I wasn't far off. But it shows that after a while you can train eye to recognise stuff like this. That has inspired me to do something and also learn something about the way an artist works.

Instagram, Facebook, Flickr - you can get a lot of inspiration from Social Media sites. They are mostly free and the only price you are paying is the use of your data. They are communities so you can find them really supportive with your photography, not just in the images but also if you have technical questions. I use Facebook now only for photography and I think I belong 20 different groups.

Henri Cartier Bresson



Bresson
The Decisive Moment - symmetry, continuation, reflection

Vivian Maier



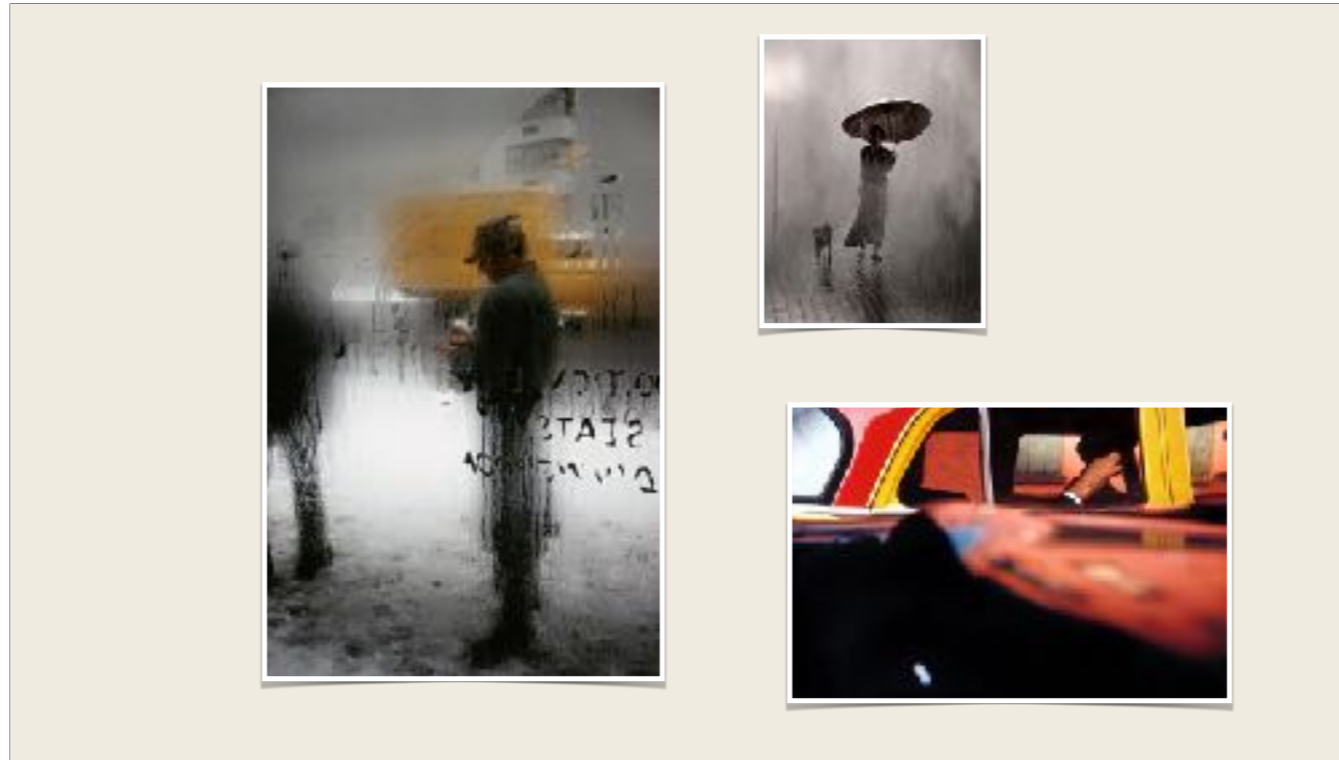
Maier - rule of odds, contrast, reflections

Fred Herzog



Herzog

Saul Leiter



Leiter - light & shadow, contrast, texture, closure

Annie Leibovitz



Liebovitz - rule of odds, symmetry, contrast

Greg Girard



Girard - light & shadow, contrast, certain symmetry, rule of odds

Daido Moriyama

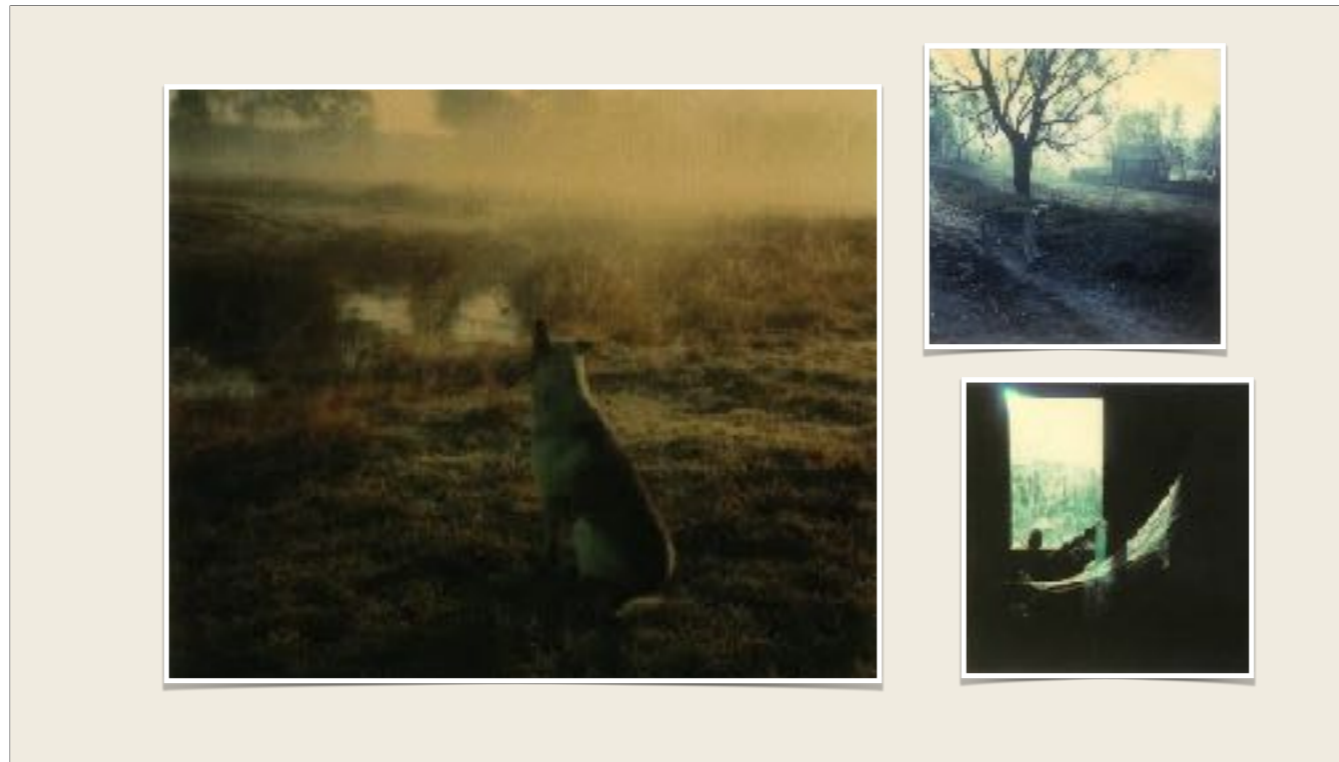


Moriyama - contrast, light & shadow, segregation



Moriyama - contrast, light & shadow, continuation

Andrei Tarkovsky



Tarkovsky - abstract, contrast, light and shadow, continuation, simplicity

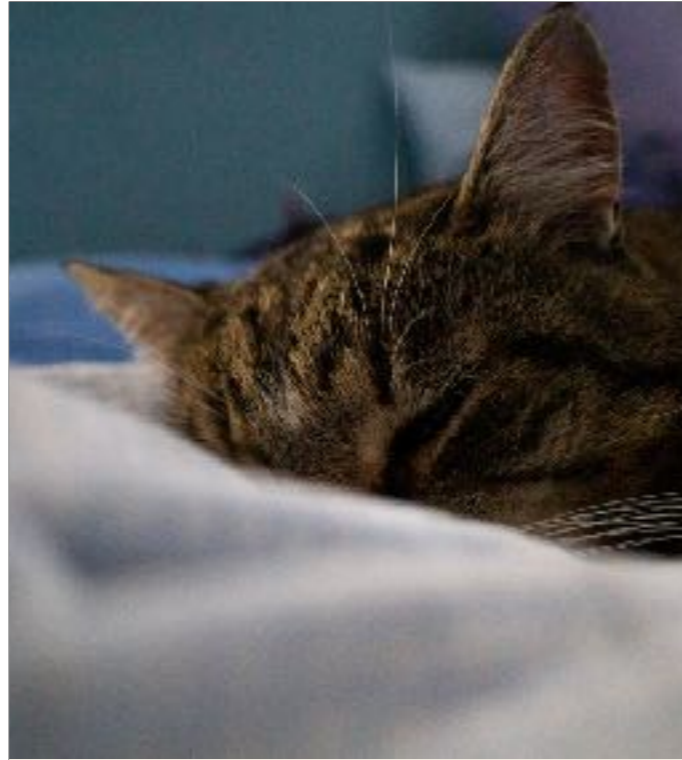
Rule of odds



Struth - contrast, complexity opposite of simplicity, closure



Struth - contrast, light & shadow, rule of odds



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Q&A
