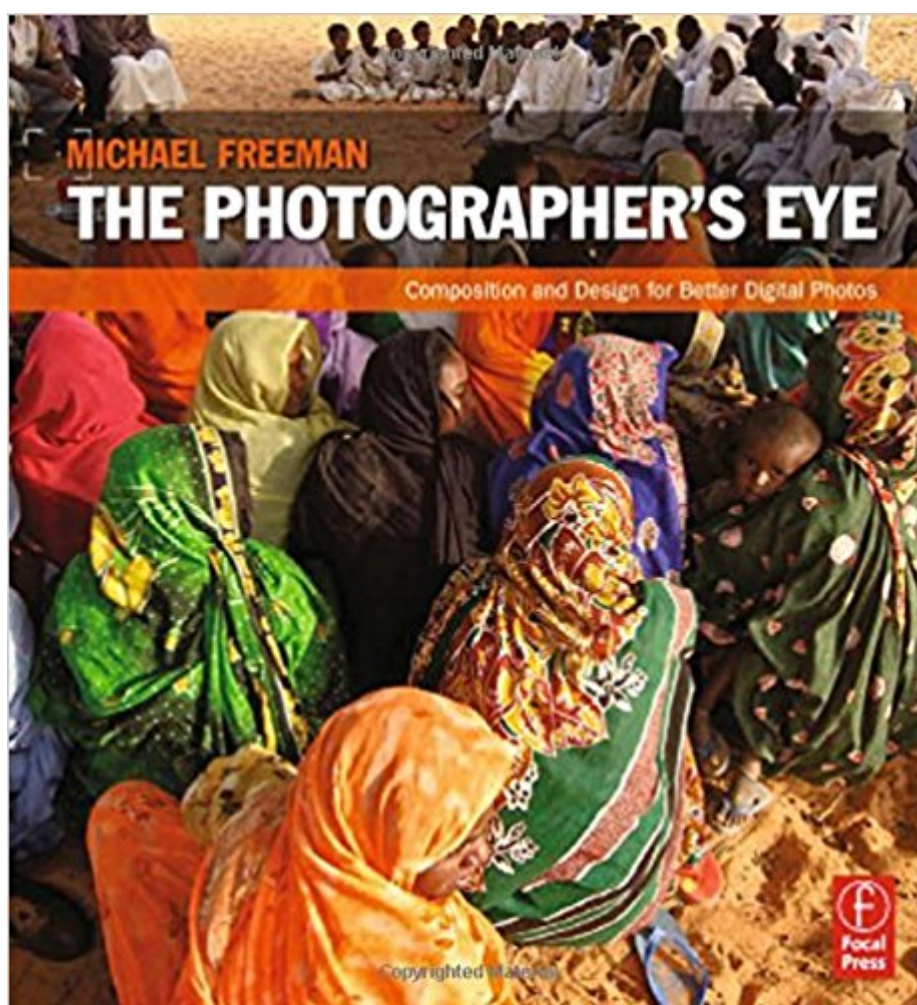


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# The Photographer's Eye: Composition And Design For Better Digital Photos



## Synopsis

Design is the single most important factor in creating a successful photograph. The ability to see the potential for a strong picture and then organize the graphic elements into an effective, compelling composition has always been one of the key skills in making photographs. Digital photography has brought a new, exciting aspect to design - first because the instant feedback from a digital camera allows immediate appraisal and improvement; and second because image-editing tools make it possible to alter and enhance the design after the shutter has been pressed. This has had a profound effect on the way digital photographers take pictures. Now published in sixteen languages, *The Photographer's Eye* continues to speak to photographers everywhere. Reaching 100,000 copies in print in the US alone, and 300,000+ worldwide, it shows how anyone can develop the ability to see and shoot great digital photographs. The book explores all the traditional approaches to composition and design, but crucially, it also addresses the new digital technique of shooting in the knowledge that a picture will later be edited, manipulated, or montaged to result in a final image that may be very different from the one seen in the viewfinder.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Beautifully presented with generous and helpful color illustrations, this book is a very affordable addition to the library of the serious photographer."--*Canadian Camera* (Feb. 08)

Michael Freeman is a renowned international photographer and writer who specializes in travel,

architecture, and Asian art. He is particularly well known for his expertise in special effects. He has been a leading photographer for the Smithsonian magazine for many years, and has worked for Time-Life Books and Reader's Digest. Michael is the author of more than 40 photographic books, including the hugely successful Complete Guide to Digital Photography and The Photographer's Eye. For his photographic educational work he was awarded the Prix Louis Philippe Clerc by the French Ministry of Culture. He is also responsible for the distance-learning courses on photography at the UK's Open College of the Arts.

This is a catalog of compositional ideas for organizing the visual elements of a photograph. The catalog is organized into 10 major areas of interest, then further divided into 80 subgroups. For each subgroup, the concept being discussed is illustrated by a full page photograph followed by a second page (or more) of discussion using mostly graphical diagrams illustrating the organizing principles involved. These pages give a thorough and enlightening education in designing and constructing photographs. Note that the list is NOT organized by the subject of the photograph (nature, cityscape, people, macro, etc.) Rather it contains the design elements that determine how ALL pictures look (framing, placing, dividing, viewpoint, color, etc.). In this sense the catalog is applicable to all photos regardless of the subject matter. The methodology used to discuss each of the subgroups is unusual. Verbal descriptions are kept to a minimum while the main points are illustrated with graphical explanations. The reasoning is that the discussion of graphical images might best be conducted using graphics. It works well once you get into the spirit of the venture. The question remains of what to do with this valuable information and analysis. It is not likely that many photographers will memorize the essence of 80 compositional subgroups. Most will probably start with their present range of photo subjects and relate these photos to the analyses shown in the book. Comparing what they do to compose their pictures with the analyses shown by Freeman can help clarify their photographic thinking. Further, investigation of related subgroups can broaden their photographic thinking. They can experiment with new compositional variations and expand their photographic horizons. Freeman's great contribution is in providing a comprehensive framework that photographers can use in many ways to help expand their visual perception.

As much as I respect Mr. Freeman, this book should not have been published (and sold) separately from The Photographer's Eye. The PE is a brilliant book, one that makes you start thinking and actually seeing while taking photos. This book could be a great appendix to The PE. Buy and read The PE and safely skip this one., the kindle price is too high.

This is a review of the Kindle version. It's ironic that a book about how to visually organize information is itself lacking in it. I assume that this is a problem specific to the Kindle edition, and although I am an unapologetic convert to digital books whenever I want to highlight or take notes, I find this book extremely frustrating in this regard. Problems include:

- Frequent misspellings. This isn't an issue with spellcheck picking the wrong word. Rather, letters are randomly missing from the middle of words, resulting in fragments that are not words themselves. It's as if the print version had been run through OCR software that was not operating at 100%.
- Missing spaces after periods. Not only is this visually messy and distracting, but it makes highlighting annoying because the software does not register them as separate words. You are therefore forced to highlight an extra word after the end of a complete thought.
- Captions are out of order. They often refer first to a photo on a later page than the one you're currently on, then backtrack to a previous page. The constant flipping back and forth makes for a clumsy viewing experience. This is how one set of them appears in the book:  
Page 1: Picture A, Caption A  
Page 2: Picture B, Caption C  
Page 3: Picture C, Caption B
- Spaces are also missing between all caption titles and their explanations. You can tell where the explanation begins because the title and explanation are written in different font treatments, but it is nevertheless irritating.
- Page links in the book take you to the wrong place, as if they had not been updated from the print version to the digital one. For example, a link might refer back to itself, or tell you to go to page 76 but take you to page 1039, where the subject matter may or may not be relevant. If it's purely text information, you can in theory look it up easily, whether in the book's search function or on Google. However, you can't just Google a random picture of a boat to follow along with the explanation of why the photo of the boat works. It's particularly irksome when I've flipped 20 pages in either direction and still can't find the referenced photo. Photos are often too small. I'm not complaining about them not reaching an arbitrary resolution. I mean it's actually difficult to tell what the photo is of, much less which part is supposed to be in focus and which part isn't (when different weights / focus is the theme) because some of these photos are ' (or even smaller) the width of the text / page. Double-clicking to expand the picture doesn't help, as it just pulls up a blurry or pixelated version of it. Even the photos that you can see could benefit from being larger; this book is about how to compose and design photos, after all. In this sense, it's a bit like a manual with tiny images crammed in, whereas I think enlarging the photos would have given them more impact so that they could also inspire instead of merely instruct.

That said, here are some pros of the content:

- There are entire sequences

of photos from a single shoot, showing you the progression to the final shot. It helps illustrate what the author tells you he was looking for at the time. It can also be instructive for showing how you might try to find a better shot even after you've made one that you initially deemed good enough. Gray-scale representations of some shots, with colored lines / arrows / crop lines overlaid to better explain the author's point. With regards to writing style, my personal preference is for something a bit more direct and concise, but then again, I have a science background where that's the norm for our learning materials. We don't have things that say, "X, Y, Z, or whatever," but hey, another person might prefer the more casual tone. There's a lot of information packed in. It's especially nice if you like having it all in one place, rather than having multiple books that address only a single or narrow range of topics. Overall, I think this is a useful resource, but I am the kind of person who likes my information to be highly visually organized so that digesting it is very straightforward. The execution of the Kindle format was not that, to the point where I'm not sure I would purchase it again if I had the choice. The issues are glaring, and it doesn't even feel like a single pass at editing was made once the information was ported over.

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Photography Composition: 12 Composition Rules for Your Photos to Shine  
The Photographer's Black and White Handbook: Making and Processing Stunning Digital Black and White Photos  
The Wills Eye Manual: Office and Emergency Room Diagnosis and Treatment of Eye Disease (Rhee, The Wills Eye Manual)  
7 Day Digital Photography Mastery: Learn to Take Excellent Photos and Become a Master Photographer in 7 Days or Less  
Third Eye Awakening: Guided Meditation to Open Your Third Eye, Expand Mind Power, Intuition, Psychic Awareness, and Enhance Psychic Abilities (3rd Eye, Higher Consciousness, Spiritual Enlightenment)  
Third Eye: Third Eye, Mind Power, Intuition & Psychic Awareness: Spiritual Enlightenment (3rd Eye, Spiritual Awakening, Psychic Abilities, Mediumship, Pineal Gland)  
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