

# COMPOSITION



# SIMPLICITY



# Composition

- **Guidelines for ordering elements of picture**
- **Be conscious of them when you are thinking about a picture**
- **Useful rules, but can be broken**
- **Conveying a message is more important than following a rule**

There are no rules for good photographs, there are only good photographs.  
-- Ansel Adams

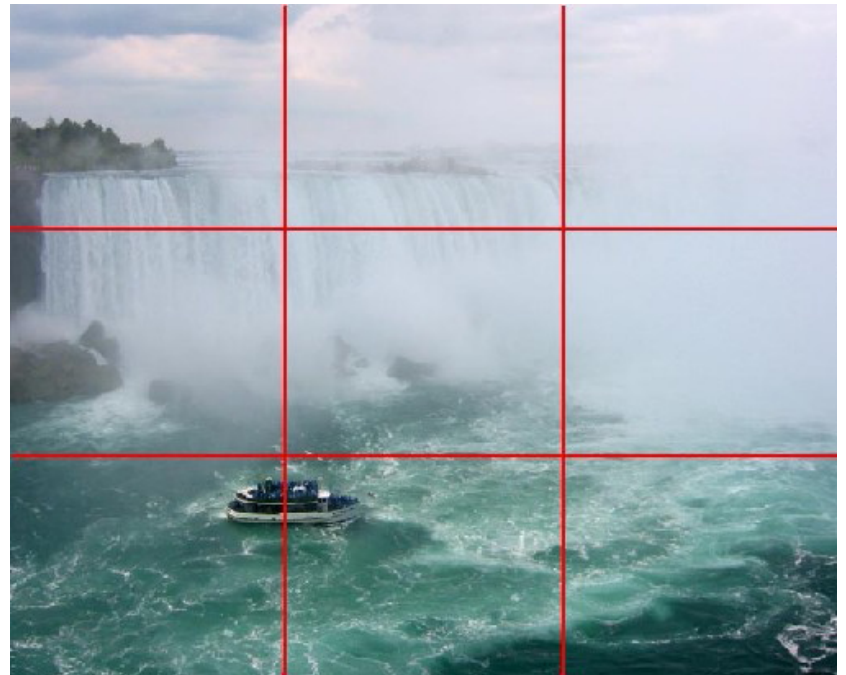
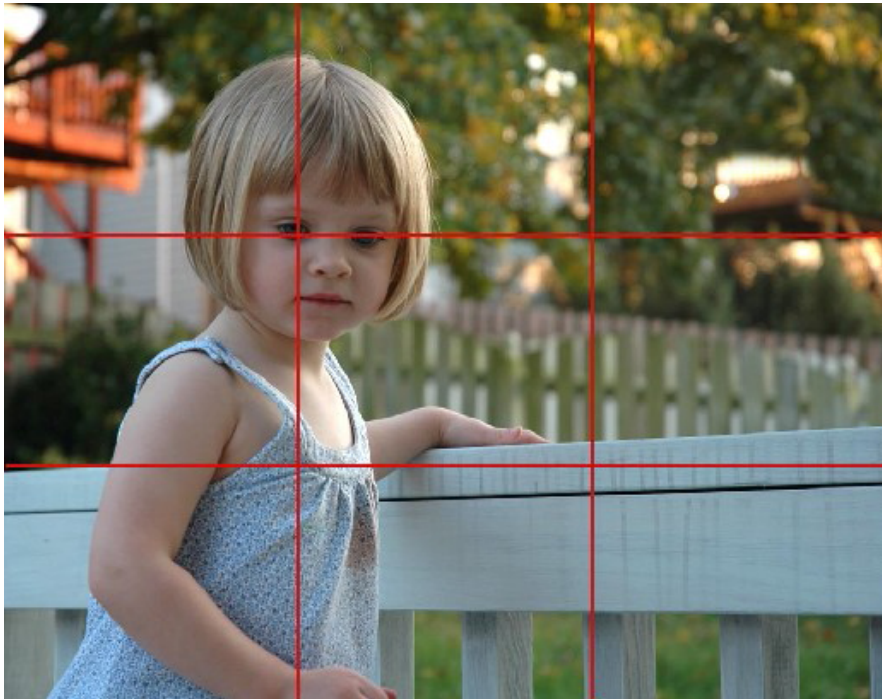
# Why is the bottom picture “better”?





# Rule of Thirds

- A picture should have a single strong center of interest, minimizing competing objects.
- Generally, the center of interest should not actually be “centered.”
- **Place the center of interest roughly at the intersection of the “rule of thirds” lines or lined up with one of the lines.**





**ASYMMETRICAL BALANCE:** Whether consciously or not, compositions are often conceived away from the center of the frame, using the “rule of thirds.” **Photo by W. Eugene Smith**



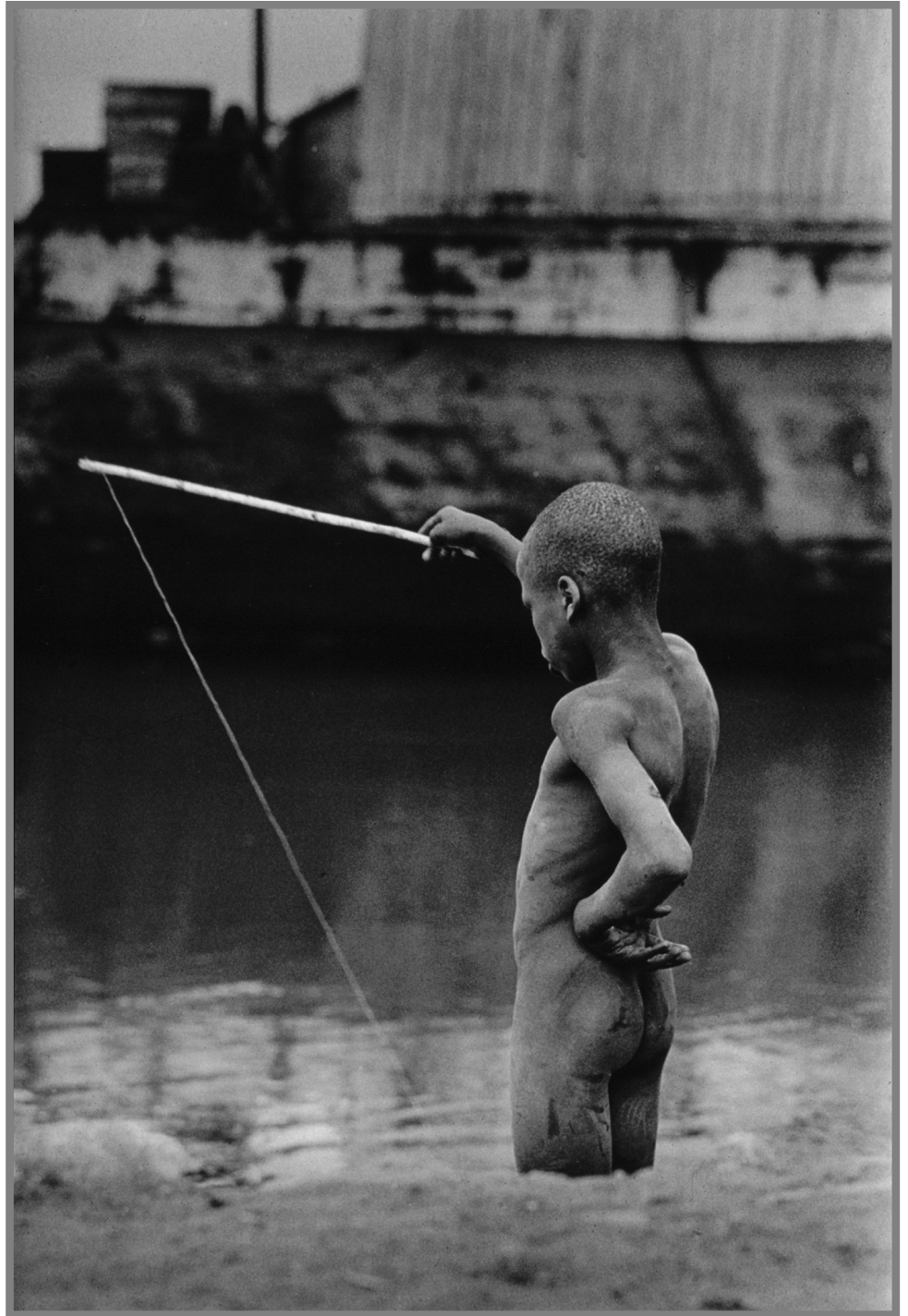
Photo by Yosuf Karsh





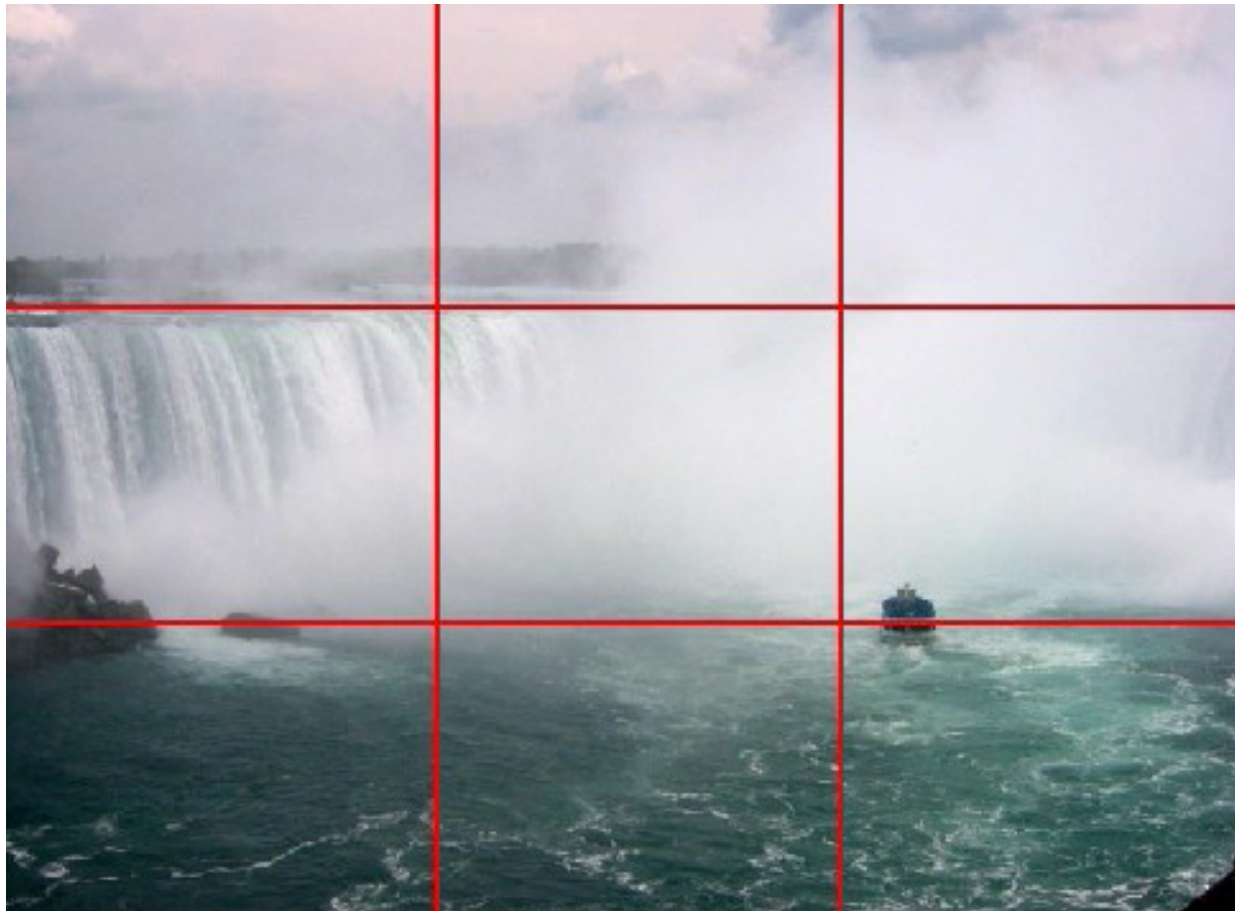


Photo by David Blumenkrantz



# Rule of Thirds and Motion

- People in the West tend to scan from left to right
- Our eyes begin with the top of the falls coinciding with upper “Rule of Thirds” line.
- The bottom of falls (including mist) roughly coincides the lower line.
- Our eyes are led from the falls on the left to the relatively tiny boat that roughly is located at the lower right intersection of the lines
- Creates a sense of motion.



# Framing

Careful framing of your subject can make a dramatic difference in your photos. Remember—every photo has a foreground and background, so use them together to add an interesting element to the shot.

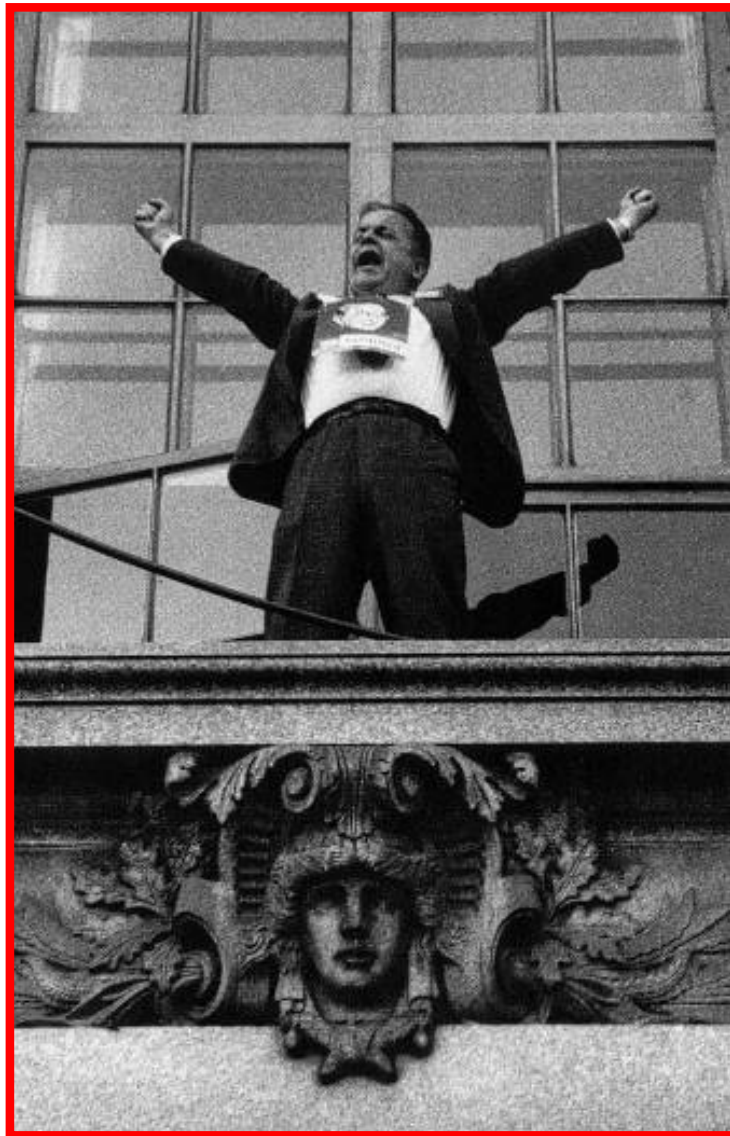
Use foreground elements to frame your photo's subject. Architectural elements work well (windows, doorways, arches, and so on), but you can find any number of interesting elements to use for framing your photos. The important point here is the subject. It doesn't do much good to frame your subject with interesting elements if they overshadow the subject, making it difficult to determine what the subject is supposed to be.







# SYMMETRY



**Centering the subject**

**Photo by Robert Frank**

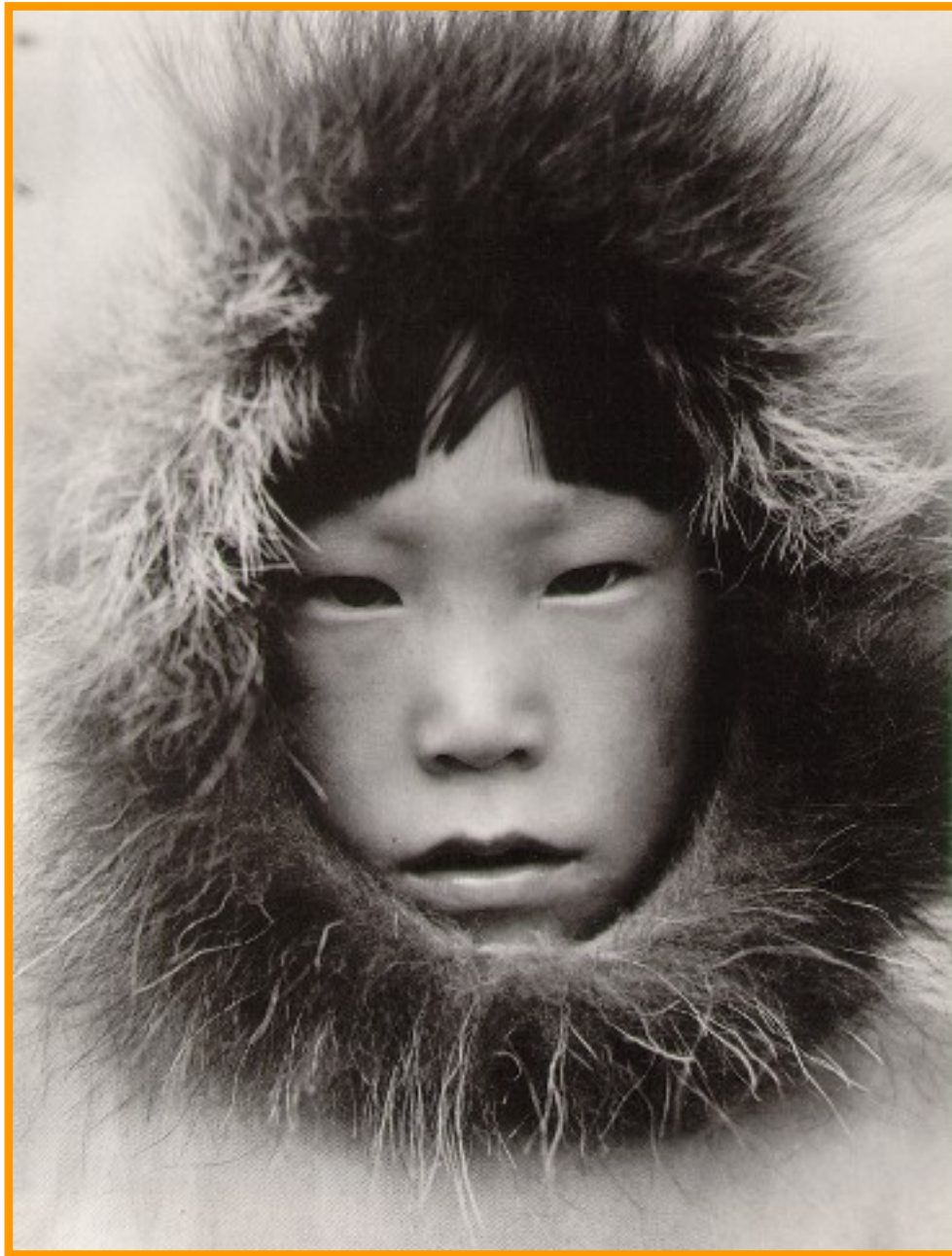


Photo by Margaret Bourke-White

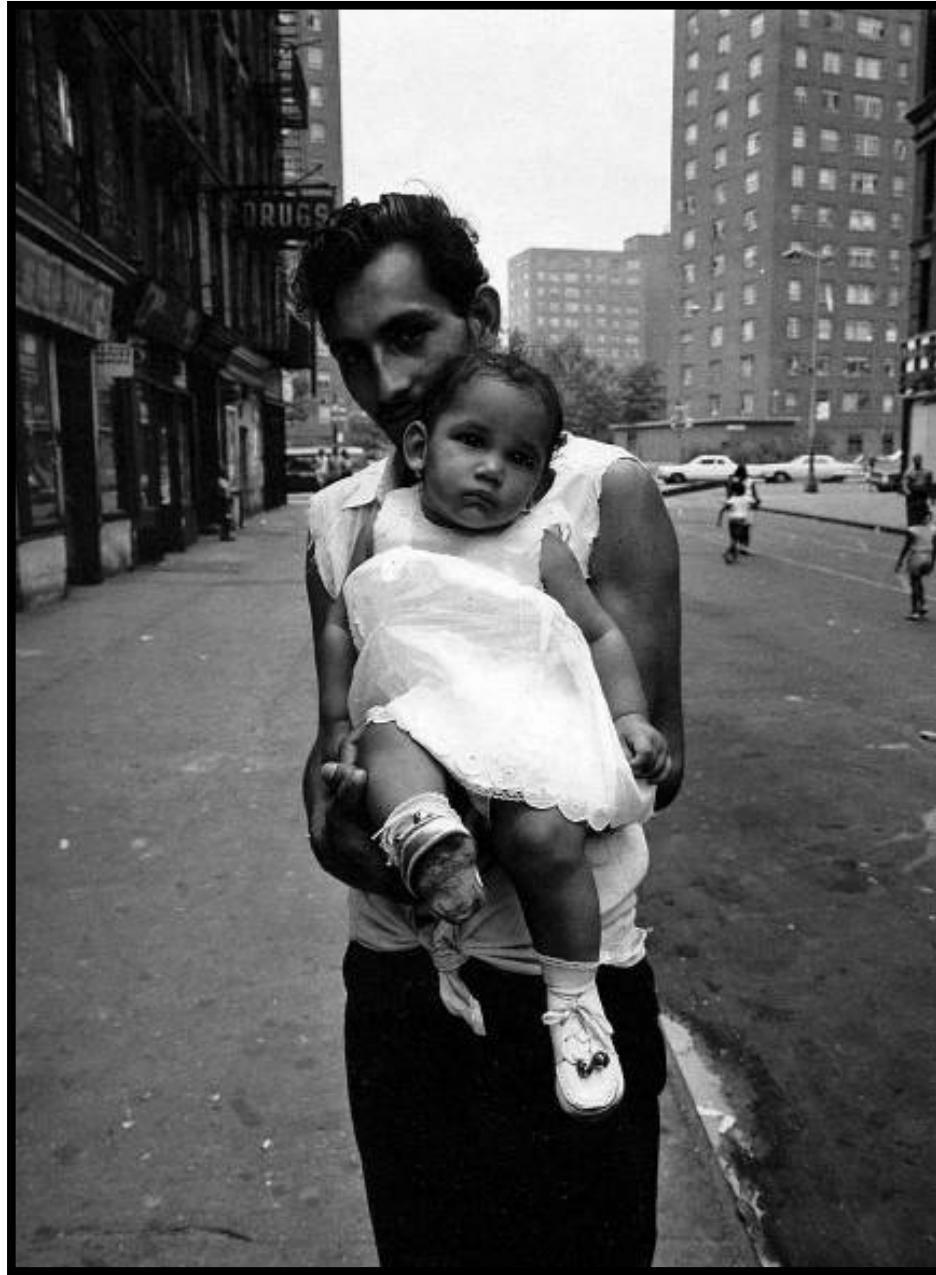


Photo by Bruce Davidson



# Which is a better picture?



# Fill the Frame

**Don't be afraid to get close to your subject and fill the frame with the image.**

If a picture's not good enough, you probably weren't close enough.

-- Robert Capa







**ECONOMY:** Fill up the frame, by moving around your subject, and moving in close (or use a telephoto lens to get the effect of close-up shots). Avoid space between subjects and exclude details that are not relevant to the story. **Photo by Sebastio Salgado**

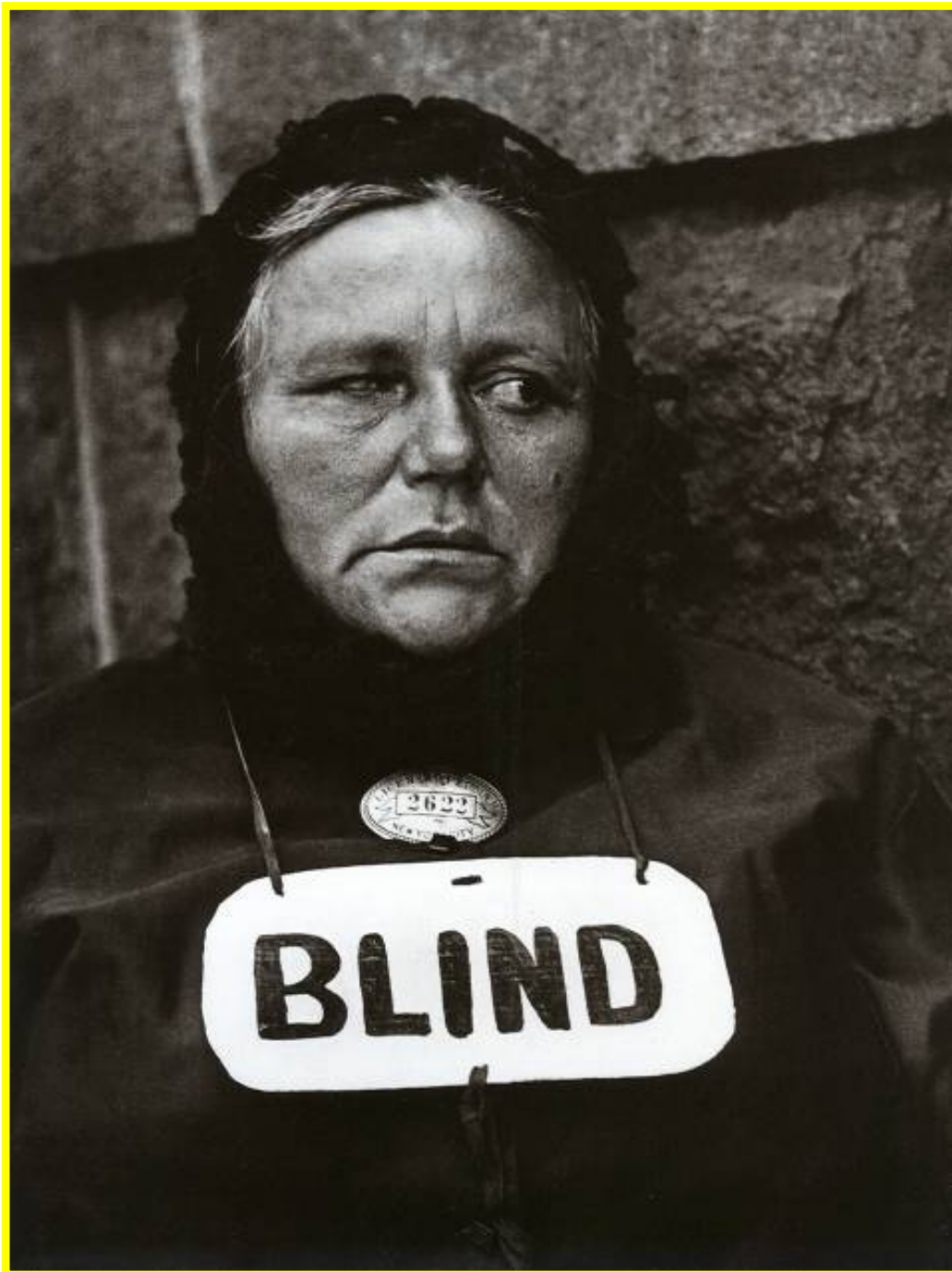
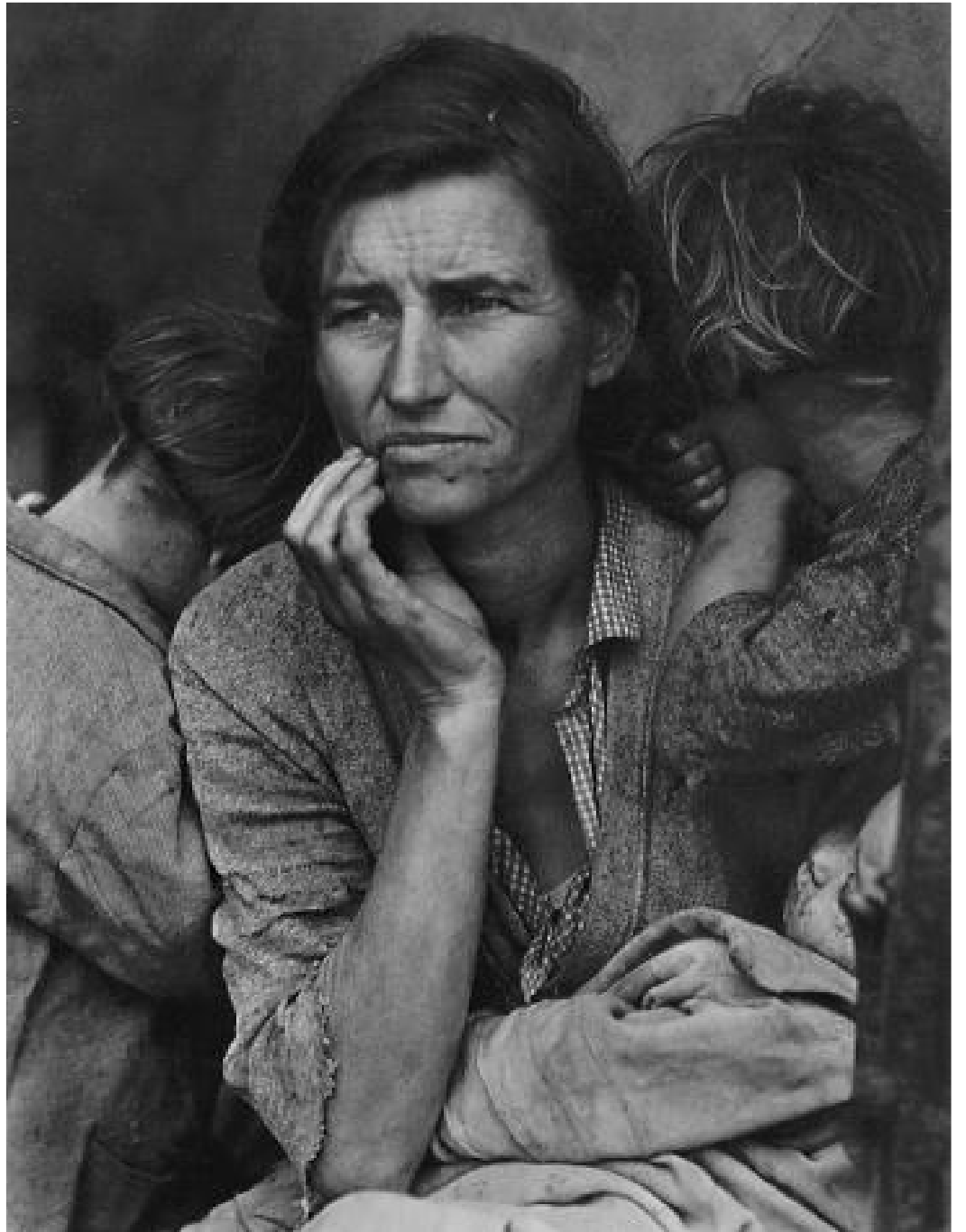


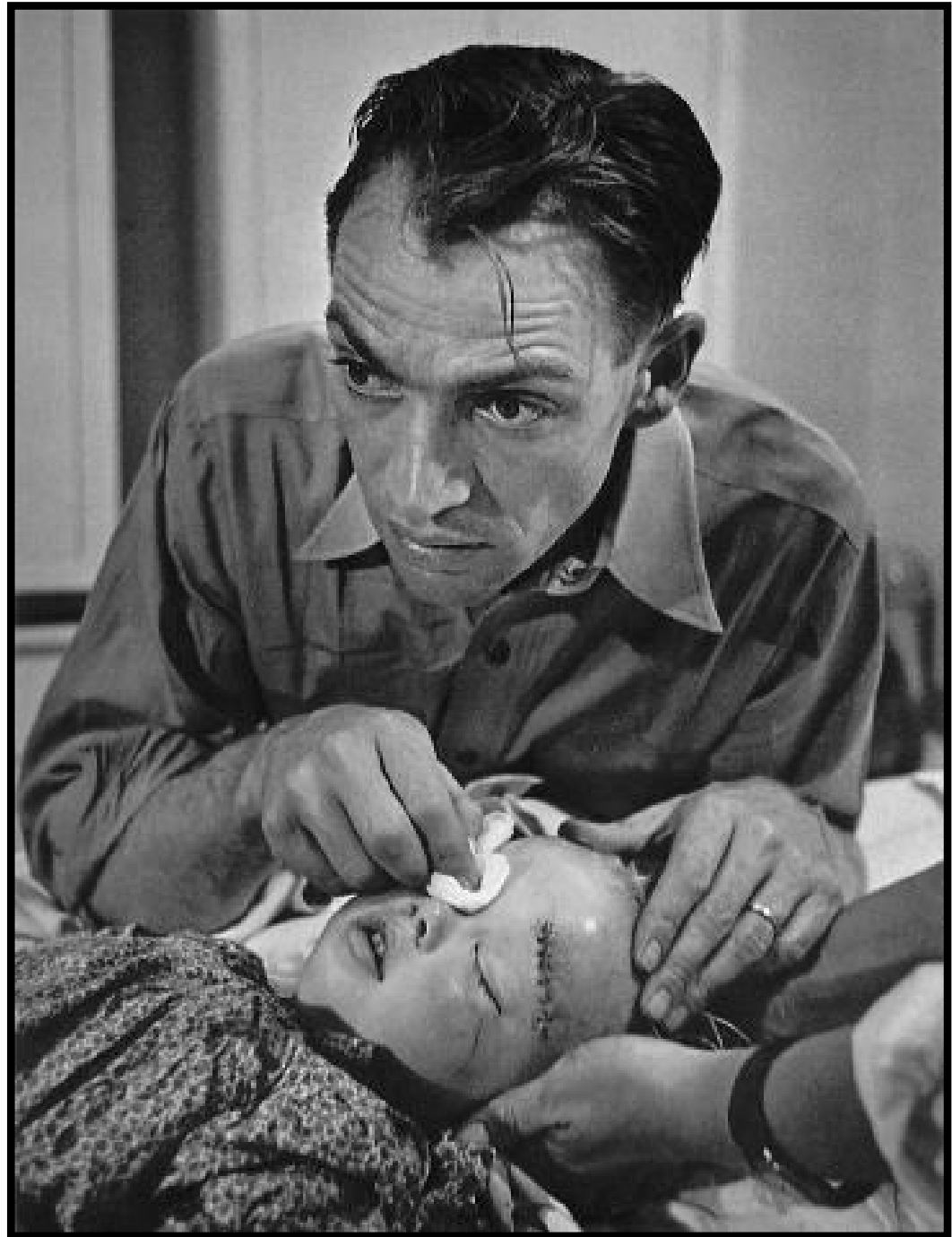
Photo by Paul Strand



**Photo by Dorothea Lange**

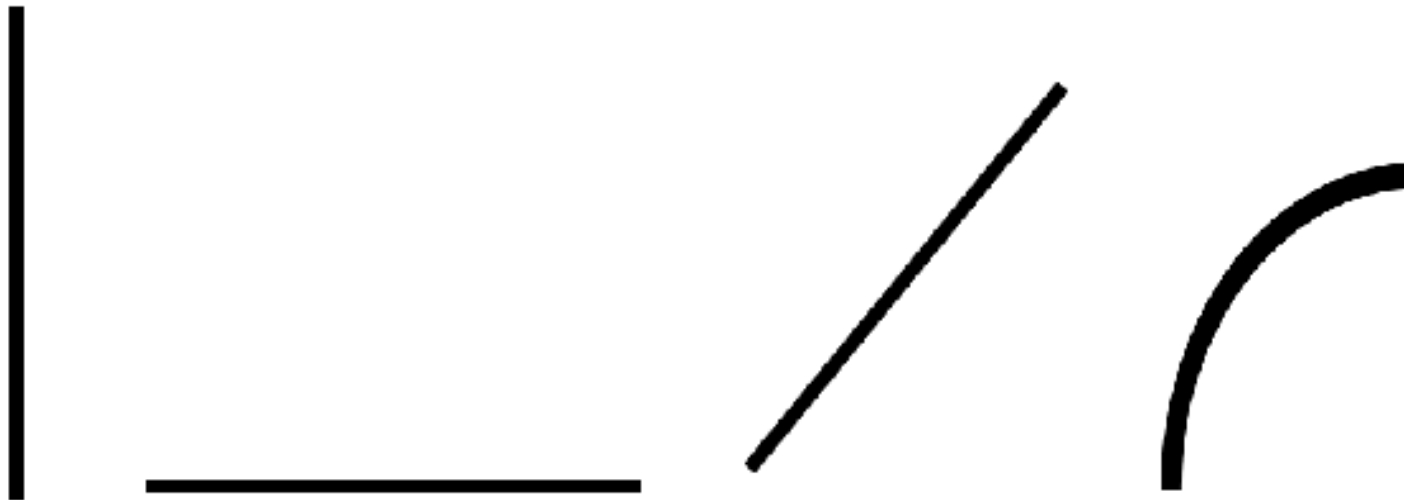


**Photo by W. Eugene Smith**



# Lines

- Lines have emotional content
- Which line would you match with each of these feelings?
  - Stability, rest, and serenity.
  - Beauty, gentleness, and grace
  - Strength, grandeur, and dignity.
  - Movement and tension.



# Lines

What kind of feelings do the two pictures evoke?

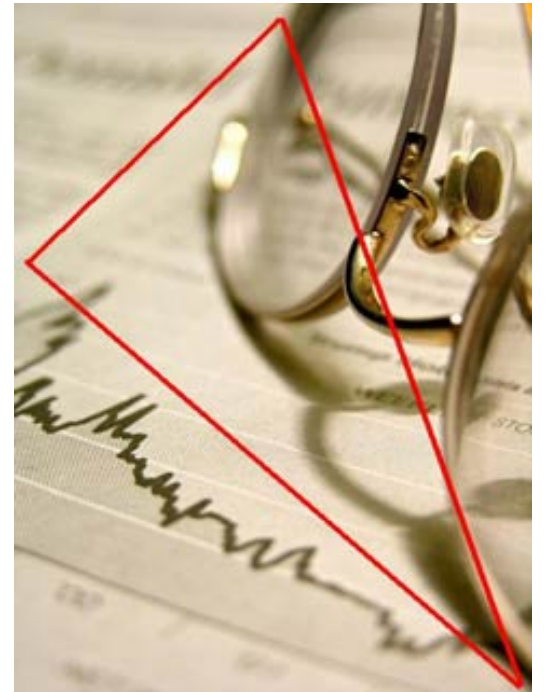
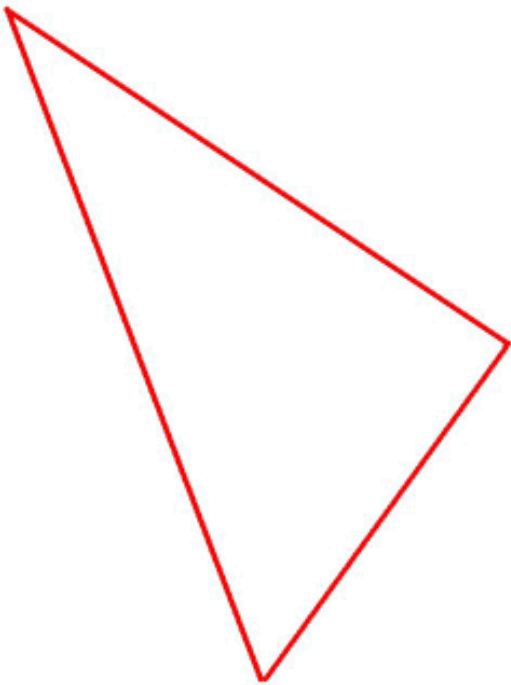


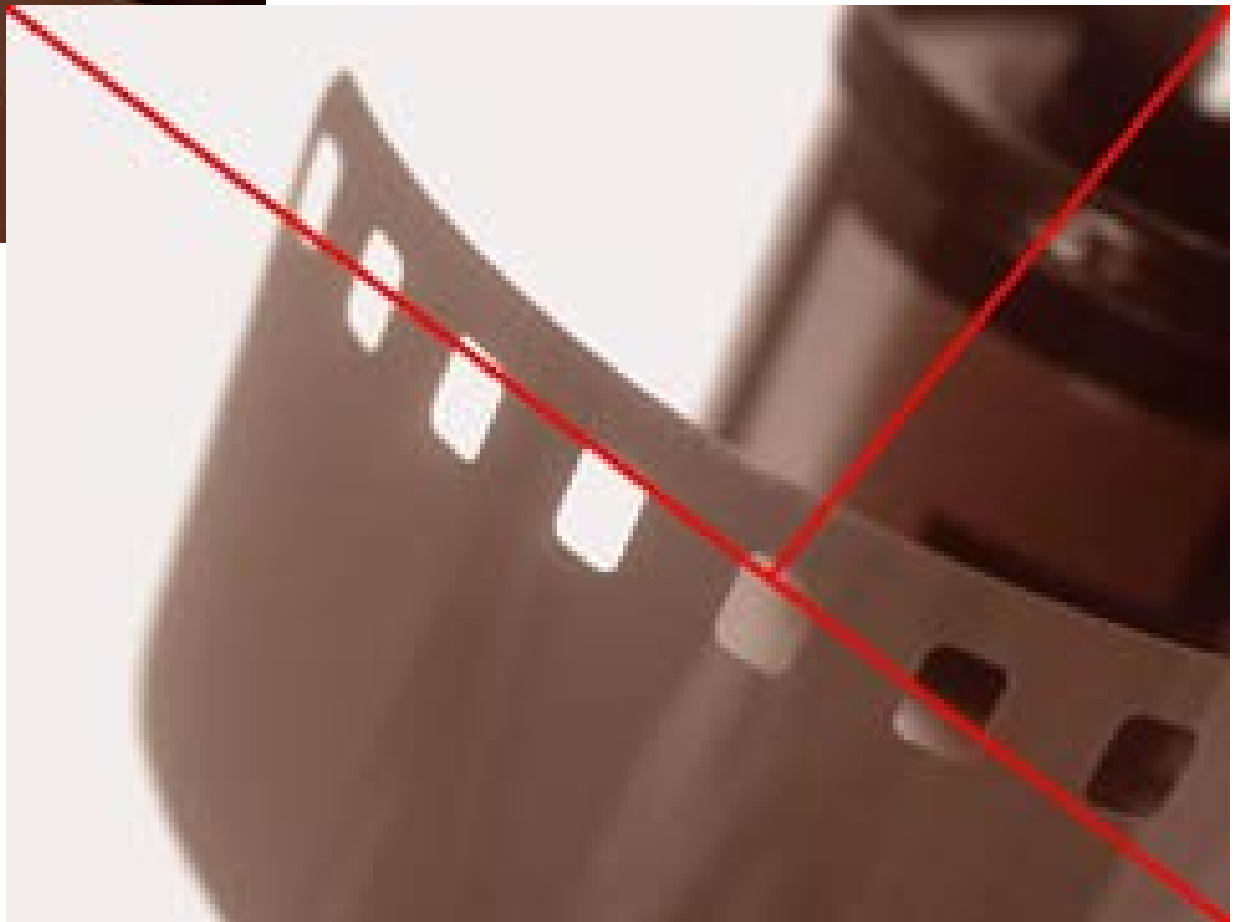


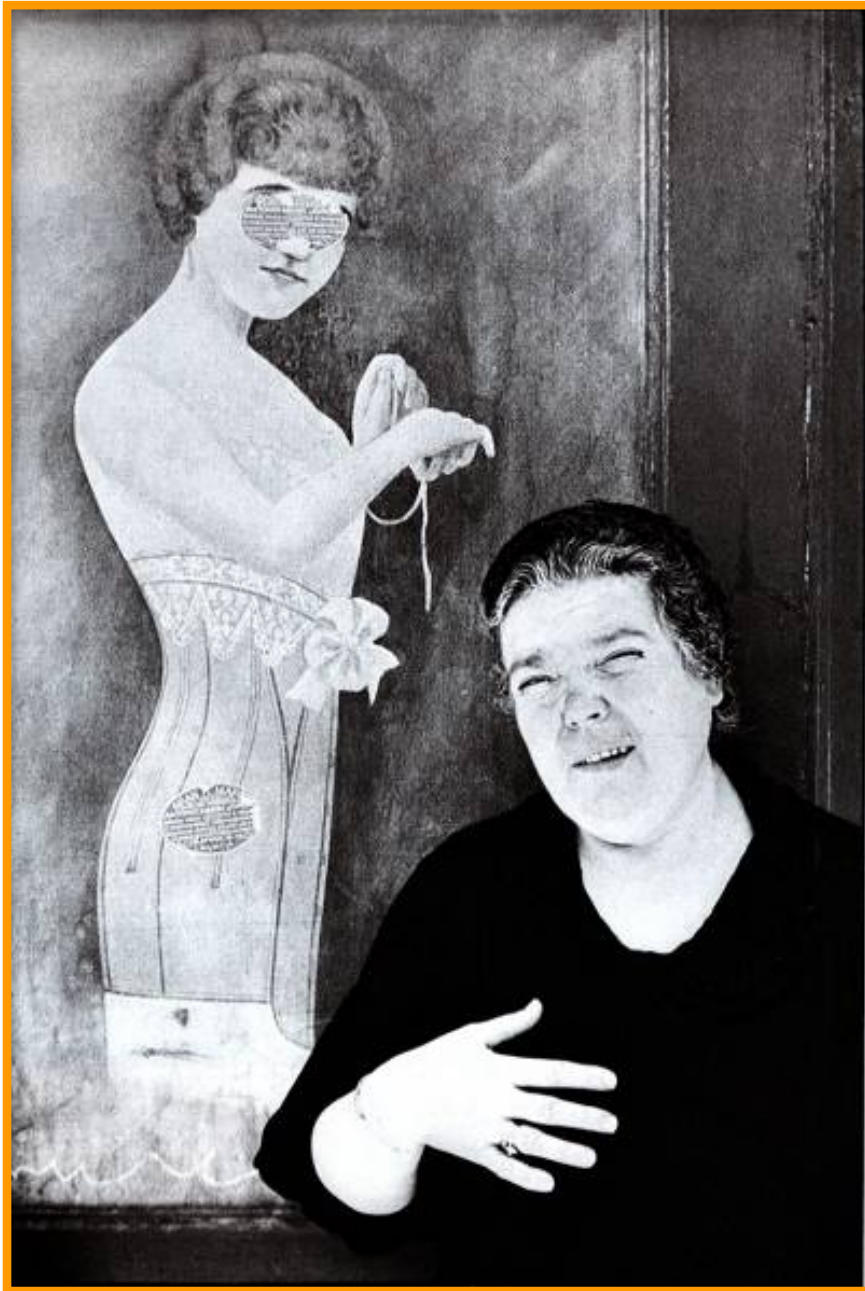


# The Triangle

When you take a photograph in a rectangular frame, basing the composition on a triangle that goes from any one corner to the two opposite sides, like this diagram, is always a good way to create a strong image. Note the following example:







**CURVED LINES** are one of elements of composition most pleasing to the eye, giving a photograph a feeling a movement . . .

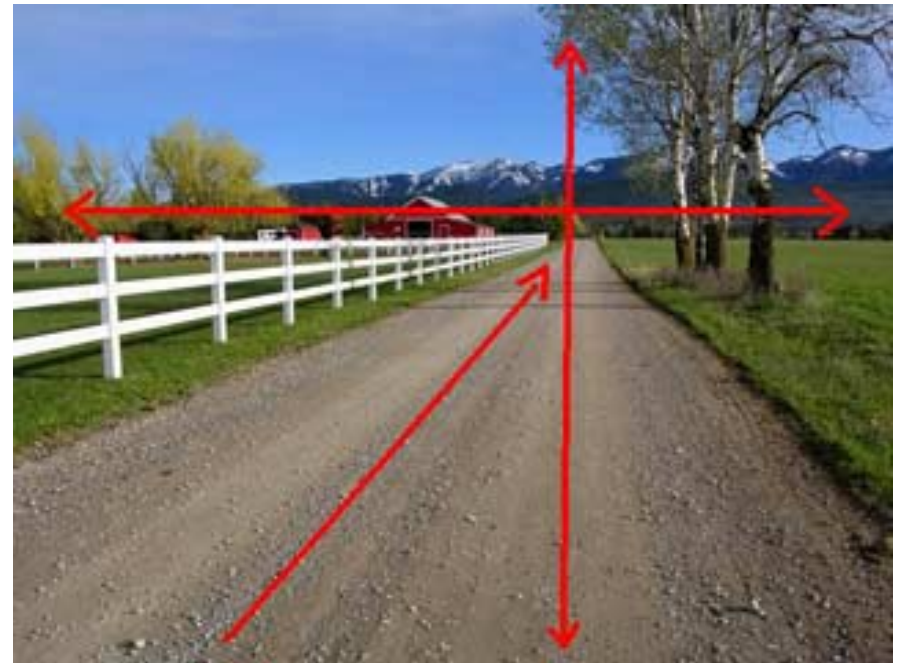
**Photo by Henri Cartier-Bresson**



# Leading Lines

- Lead the viewer's eye through the picture
- Leading lines should
- Be simple and not draw attention away from the subject.
- Lead your eyes around the picture and not out of it.







## PERSPECTIVE



Photo by Lewis Hine



**ANGLE, AND DIAGONAL LINES:** Choosing unusual angles can result in interesting perspectives on a subject. The use of diagonal lines can add tension, and a sense of directionality.

**Photo by Bruce Davidson**





**Photo by Weegee**



Photo by Dorothea Lange