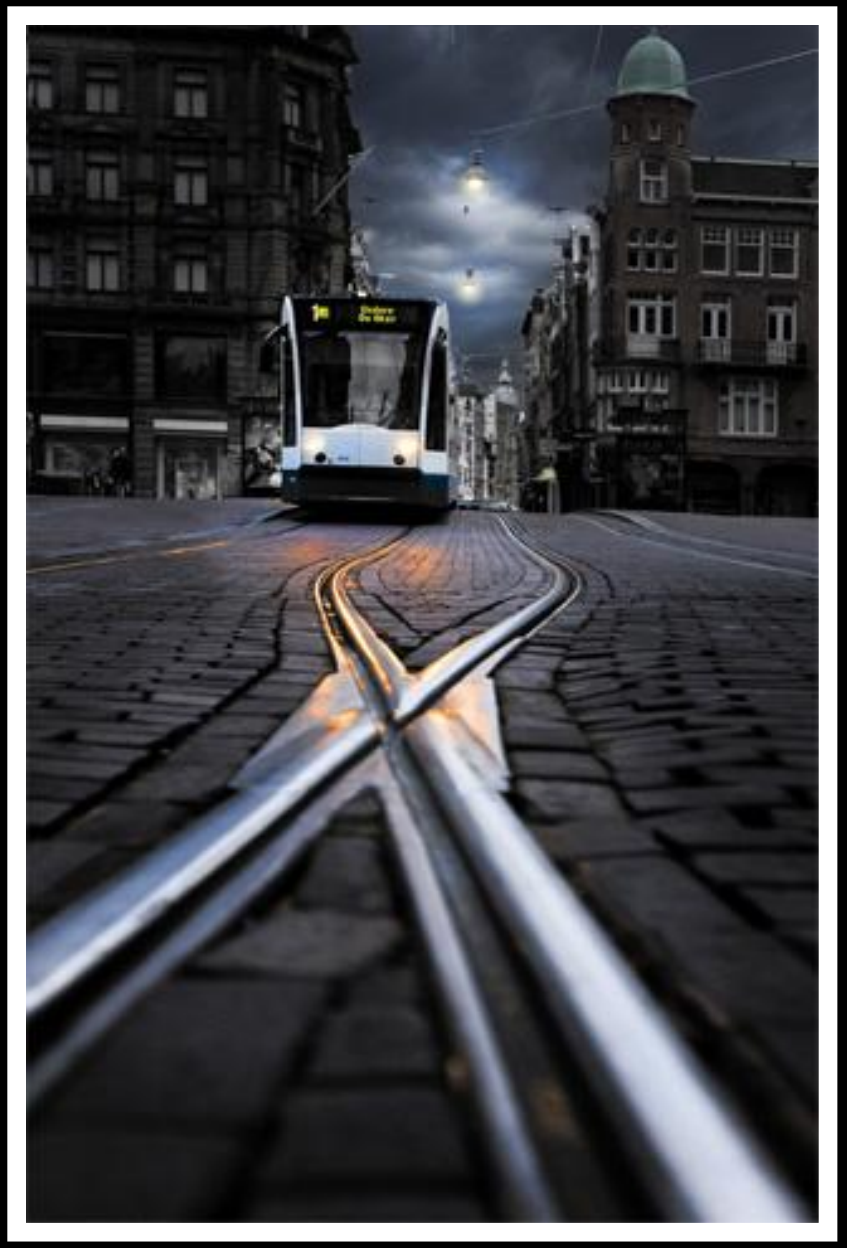
PERSPECTIVE

ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION IN PHOTOGRAPHY

How do photographers demonstrate “depth” or sense of “scale” in a (good) photograph?

They use the concept of Perspective.



Photographers often fall into the bad habit of shooting everything we see from eye-level. We are walking around, something catches our eye, and we take a picture right from where we are standing.

If you want to make an immediate impact in your photography, you need to get out of your eye-level (or tripod-level) rut. You need a change in perspective.

Get ready for some
bending,
turning,
walking,
kneeling,
laying down,
and climbing.

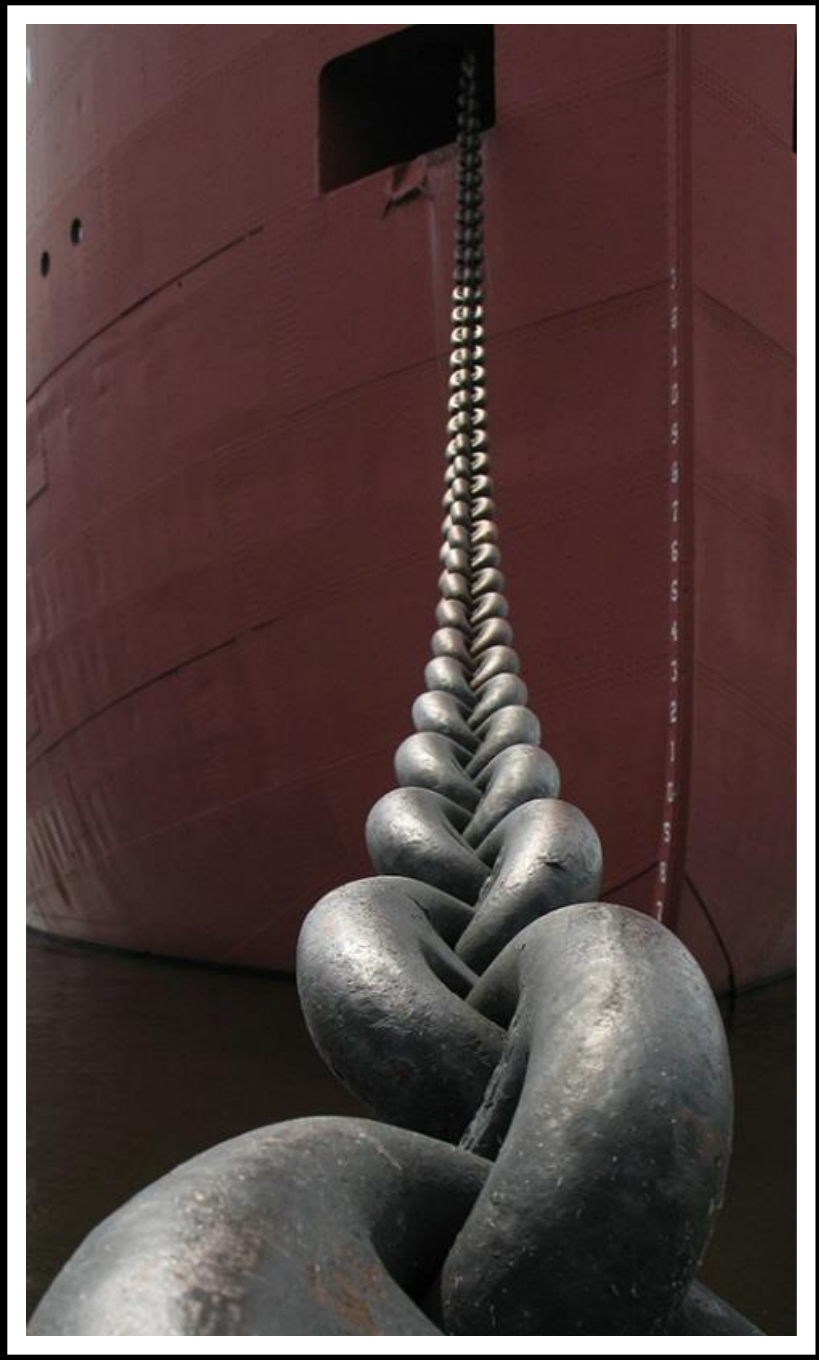
GET LOW

Get your camera down towards ground level, and see how it impacts your perspective. Getting down low allows you to feature the foreground of your composition, and gives your viewer context for the rest of the photograph. Use a wide angle lens to feature the foreground, while pulling the viewer into the image.

Getting low can also completely disorient your viewer. This near water-level view becomes a study in colour and texture, as the water and the fallen autumn leaves interact with each other. From eye level, this would simply have been a photograph looking down into a storm gutter. Getting low simplifies the composition and puts the viewer into a different, and unique perspective than their everyday viewpoint.

GET UP HIGH

You can get low and look at subjects from their level, but you can also get up high and take in your subject from above. Getting well above your normal line-of-sight will certainly give you a new perspective.

GO FOR THE LATERAL

Finally, do not forget to think laterally. Beyond just changing your stance or your direction of shooting, you also need to remember to move yourself. Take the time to walk around your subject, to consider the background and foreground. Think about how all the pieces of your final composition fit together. Your first view and your first angle are often not the best available, but you cannot be sure until you have taken the time to investigate others.