

Your Illusionary World > **Composition** > Frame it: Like Shooting with a Camera

Persuade the eye and the mind!

The eye compares everything in front of it to each other -- gauging their **RELATIVE** shapes, sizes, values, and colors; the mind links them with memory.

**Planning your world and the view into it (Setup a scene & shoot it with your camera)**

1. Choosing Subject(s): What do you want in your world? (What's your scene like?)
2. What kind of world should it be? (refer to class 1's survey of illusionary worlds)
3. Choose to look at it from a specific point of view then **frame it!** (Look through your view finder and choose your shoot)

**Example: Reframe Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa** (like a photographer)... Tell another story!



As is at the Louvre



Frame a part



Zoom in



Change size & proportion of frame; "centering" of image

Optional: Also consider a **title**, **frame your painting with a word or phrase** ... provide a verbal focus.

**Examples of effective framing in historic paintings:**



Sargent's painting fashioned "en plein air" has people whose faces are painted with one or two strokes; they are not dominating the frame even compared to the original Mona Lisa. What does his framing convey?

Turner's The Slave Ship is framed so that everything points to the setting sun that is dominating and just slightly off centered while the title frames the slave ships that are visually secondary. What do you think Turner is "framing?"



Cezanne's landscape has at least 3 frames, the canvas itself and those within the image like the visually contiguous horizon line that frames the sky with mountain and separates the dwelling-scape below to a different frame. See any other frame?

**Demonstration 1:**

Use the paper L's provided to consider reframing your images like the Mona Lisa examples.

**Demonstration 2:**

Creating a story within your "world" using Subject(s) & Composition.

Think about for next class:  
Drawing and Proportions

1. Choose a subject if you haven't already.
2. Bring image(s)/object to draw
3. Consider the framing of your subject

Your Illusionary World > **Composition** > Creating inter-relationships

"Composition is the art of arranging in a decorative manner the diverse elements at the painter's command to express his feelings."

Henri Matisse

I'm not sure I agree with Matisse's usage of "decorative manner" or "to express his feelings." I feel Matisse has limited the possibility of artistic composition if we were to accept his quotation literally. I prefer to understand that Matisse wanted to say, "Composition 'in painting' is the art of arranging in a 'visually descriptive manner' the diverse elements at the painter's command to 'convey inter-relationships'."



Two works by Henri Matisse 1869-1954

Matisse probably based his word selection on his own art, but we can also understand his works based on the appended definition of composition, above. Matisse worked representationally like with, Harmony In Red (left), but he also created many other works that could be interpreted as "non-objective" 2-dimensional designs (right). Both of his works **arrange in a visually descriptive manner, the diverse elements at the painter's command to convey inter-relationships**. Lets us take a look.

It is quite easy to perceive the similarities, differences, and inter-relationships generated within Matisse's non-objective painting because he used only geometric shapes and colors that do not necessarily have the complexity in interpretation as the subjects in the other work at left making it more simple to dissect:

Notice how Matisse placed on a polygonal canvas many other polygons, many relate to one another as being 4 sided, generating the relationship of the elements to the canvas itself. See how each of the polygonal shapes vary slightly in size, and the angles of their edges are slightly different when compared to another. Lastly, their respective colors also relate to that of the others by being neighbors on the spectrum to that being almost its opponent color. Each slight shift in quality of the polygons creates a more/less contrasting or harmonizing visual relationship with the other polygons, a visual inter-relationship to others. **Our eyes as viewers compare and try to comprehend the relationships creating a story or many stories** based on Matisse's decisions; in doing so we gain more understanding of "his feelings," his art. **How many other readings can you see within this set of inter-relationships? How do you read the relationship of the orange around the edges of the painting to the white within?** Spatial relationships are also created not only 2-dimensionally but in depth as well... let me explain.

The same type of visual understanding can be gained by viewing, Harmony in Red, although the representational elements like the figure, furniture, wall paper... add much more complexity to the inter-relationships created by spatial and geometric relationships alone. Not only can we objectively compare the shapes, sizes, color... , now we can associate our own memory, experiences, and feelings with each of the elements depicted within Matisse's painting. We can also attribute emotion into the woman... We can project ourselves into the room created by Matisse and imagine if it is comfortable or not... too busy for your taste -- perhaps too gaudy? What is the woman doing there? There are so many additional possibilities to create your story.

Let us start by using the image(s) you brought with you to create some VISUAL inter-relationships within your world to tell your story. Consider the way you "frame it" within your canvas, and how it relates to the illusionary space within your world. What other elements are in your world, and how does your main subject/object relate to them -- first consider that of color, shape, size, position on the canvas...

**Next class: How to transpose you image(s) accurately onto the canvas.**