

Improving Your Photography I

Isolation and Simplification

The Problem

“I only wanted Uncle Vern standing by his new car (a Hudson) on a clear day. I got him and the car. I also got a bit of Aunt Mary’s laundry and Beau Jack, the dog, peeing on a fence, and a row of potted tuberous begonias on the porch and seventy-eight trees and a million pebbles in the driveway and more. It’s a generous medium, photography.” - *photographer Lee Friedlander*

More Fun Quotes

“What the human eye observes causally and incuriously, the eye of the camera notes with relentless fidelity.” - *Berenice Abbott*

“You are responsible for every part of your image, even the parts you’re not interested in.” - *Jay Maisel*



The Goal

Determine what you are trying to show. (What is the “subject?”) Remove everything that is distracting to that subject, keep anything that supports it.

“Perfection is achieved, not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing left to take away.” - Antoine de Saint-Exupery

“Everything should be made as simple as possible, but no simpler.”



KEEP IT SIMPLE

What is the Subject?





“Border Patrol!”



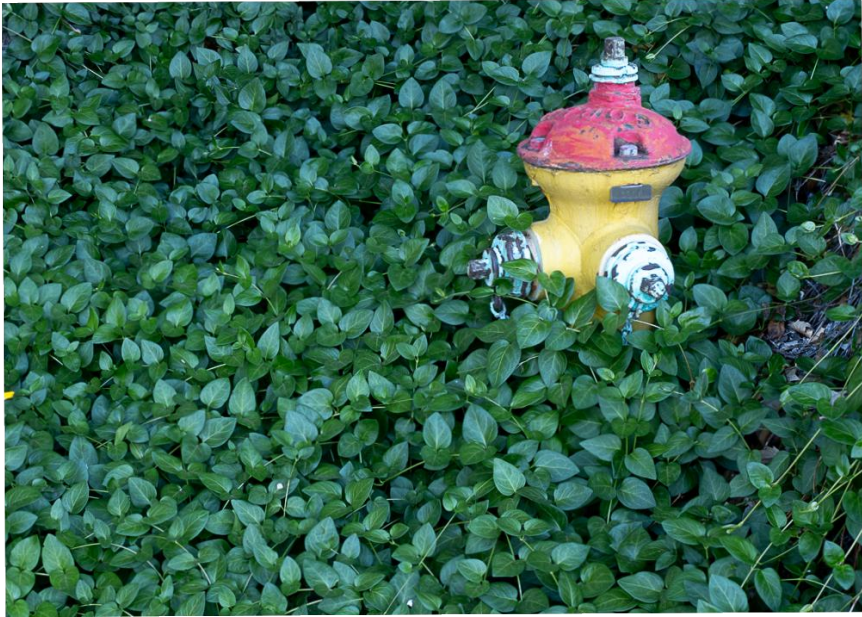


Isolate the Subject (Eliminate Distractions)

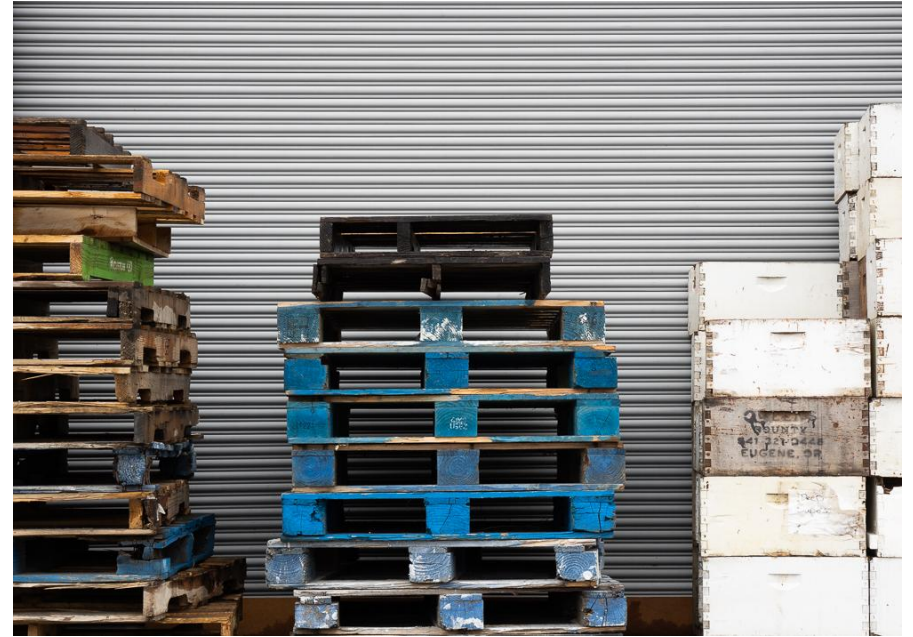
- Choose a subject that is naturally isolated
- Get closer
- Use a longer lens
- Use selective focus (portrait mode on your phone)
- Use atmospheric conditions, like fog, snow, or smoke
- Change the background

The Naturally Isolated Subject





Get Closer



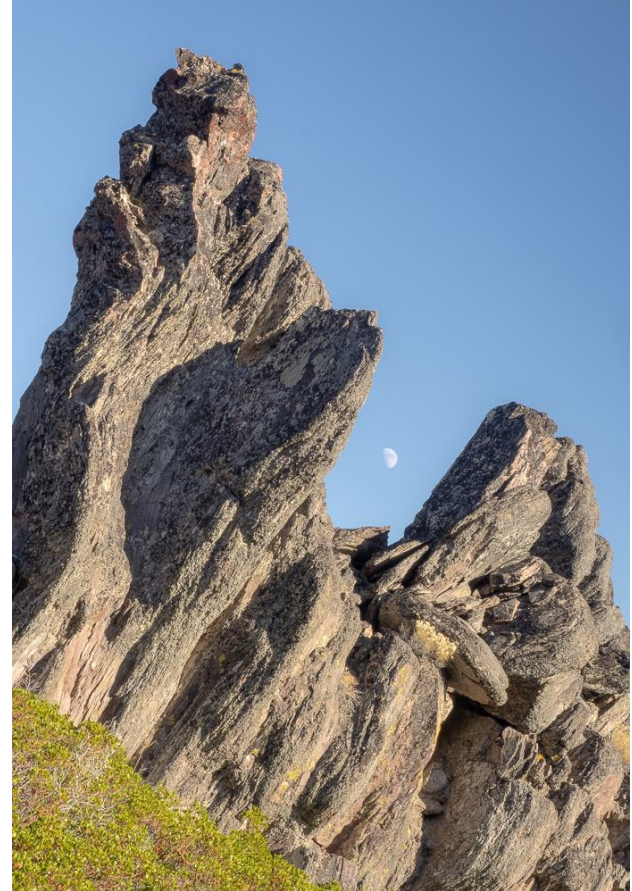


Timeout! Horizontal or Vertical?





Use a Longer Lens







What's This About Lens Lengths?

- A longer lens is one that, on your phone or camera, has a larger number. A longer lens allows you to “zoom in” on a subject.
- A shorter lens has a smaller number. It might also be referred to as “wider,” for a reason you are about to see.

Shorter (Wider) Lens

- Encompasses a wider view.
- Exaggerates front-to back distances.
- Exaggerates the size of close objects (like people's noses!) relative to those farther away.



Longer Lens

- Encompasses a narrower view.
- Compresses front-to back distances.
- A longer lens on your phone may still not be long enough to compress distances by much.



Selective Focus

- You can get this on your phone by using the portrait mode. On a camera, it is obtained by using a larger aperture (smaller f-stop number).
- You may need to do some experimenting to obtain good results.



Use Fog, Snow or Smoke





Change the Background







More Border Patrol



“Work the Scene”



