

# **THE RULES OF COMPOSITION**

BY PETER HALL

“Rules are foolish, arbitrary, mindless things that raise you quickly to a level of acceptable mediocrity, then prevent you from progressing further”

The Art of Photography, Bruce Barnbaum

“There are no rules for good photographs, only good photographs”

Ansel Adams

# What is composition ?

“an arrangement of the parts of a work of art so as to form a unified, harmonious whole”

The Art of Photography, Bruce Barnbaum

# What is your photograph of ?

- A thing ?



# What is your photograph of ?

- A place ?



# What is your photograph of ?

- A person ?



# What is your photograph of ?

- An event ?





# What is your photograph of ?

- Nothing at all ?



“a good photograph is knowing  
where to stand”      Ansel Adams

- Where do I stand ?

*If you stand where everyone else is, you will  
take the same photograph*

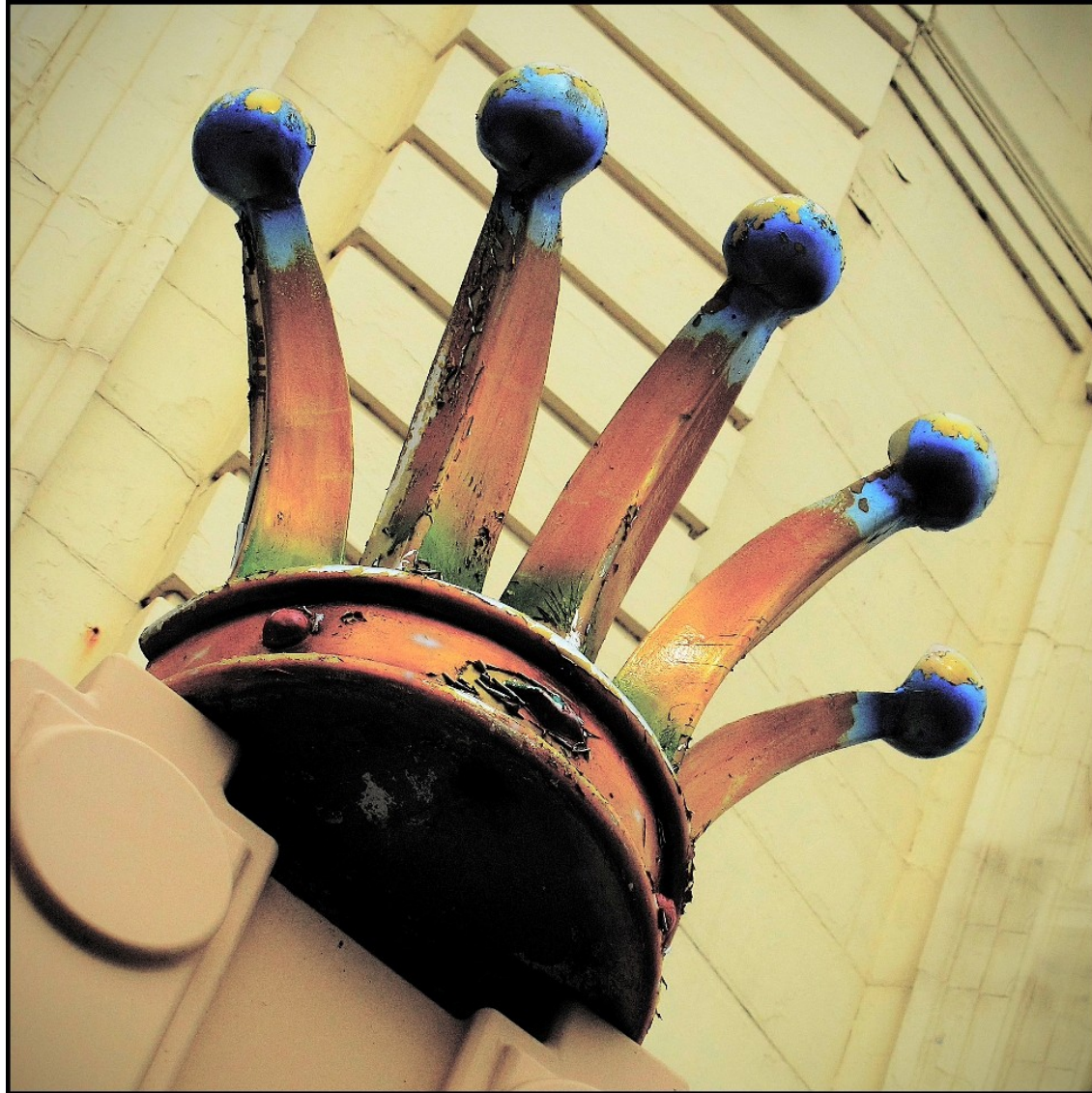
- Where do I look ?

*When everybody is looking up – look down*

- Which way do I hold my camera ?

*Still (usually)*

# A contradiction 1 – fill the frame



# A contradiction 2 – negative space



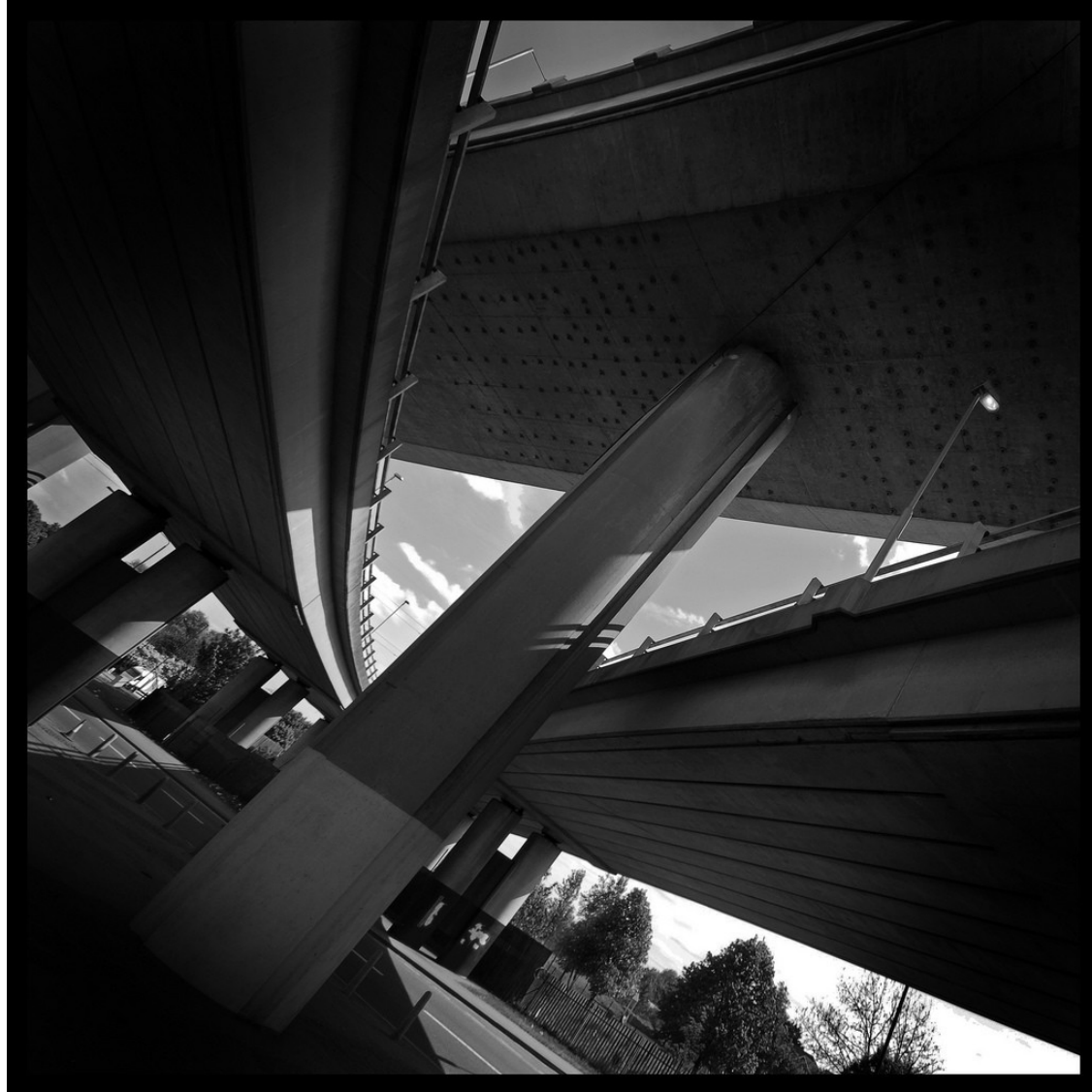
The only unbreakable rule ?

# The only unbreakable rule ?

- Straight horizons !



Except when you break it...

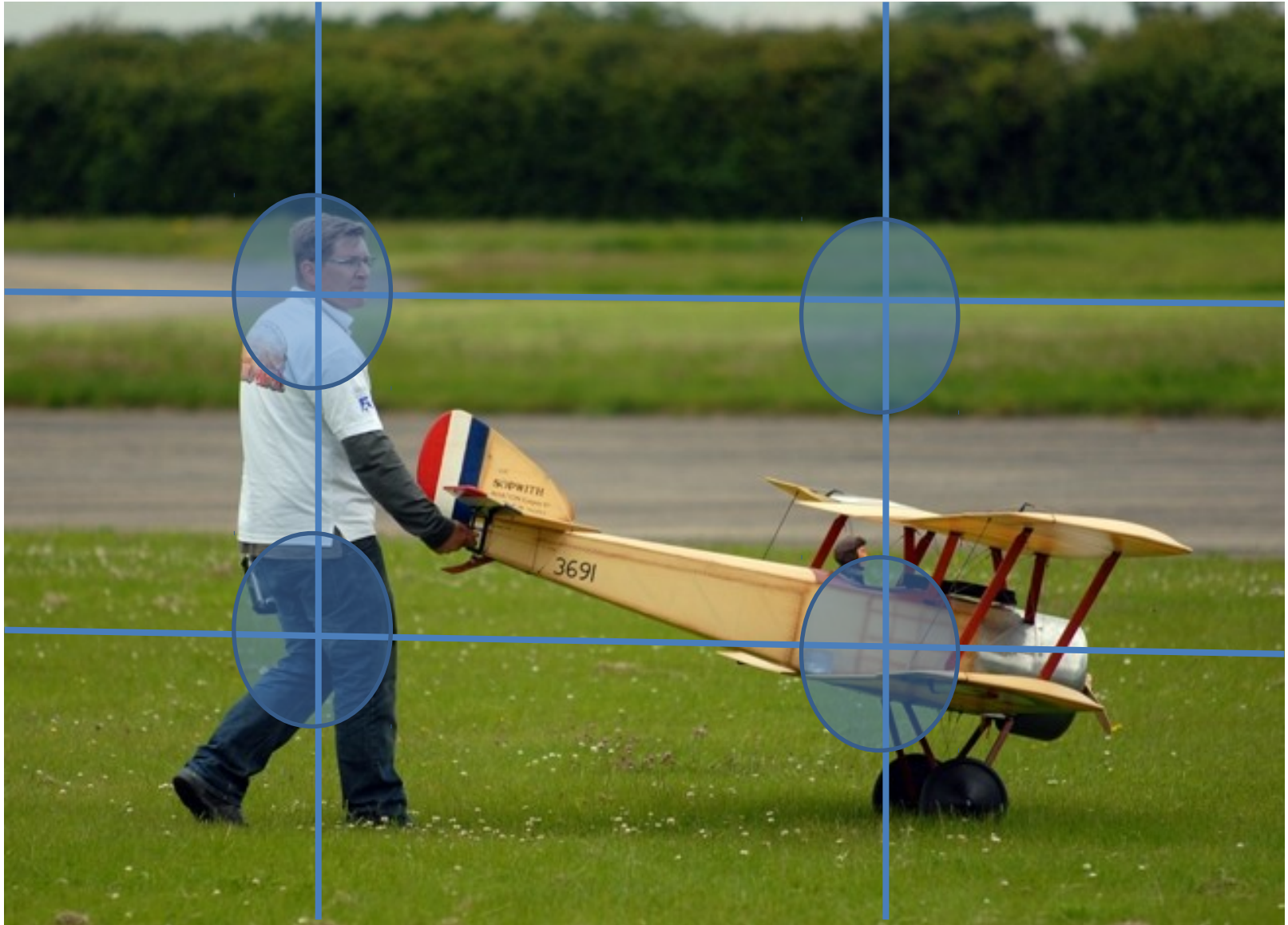


Oh no, it's...





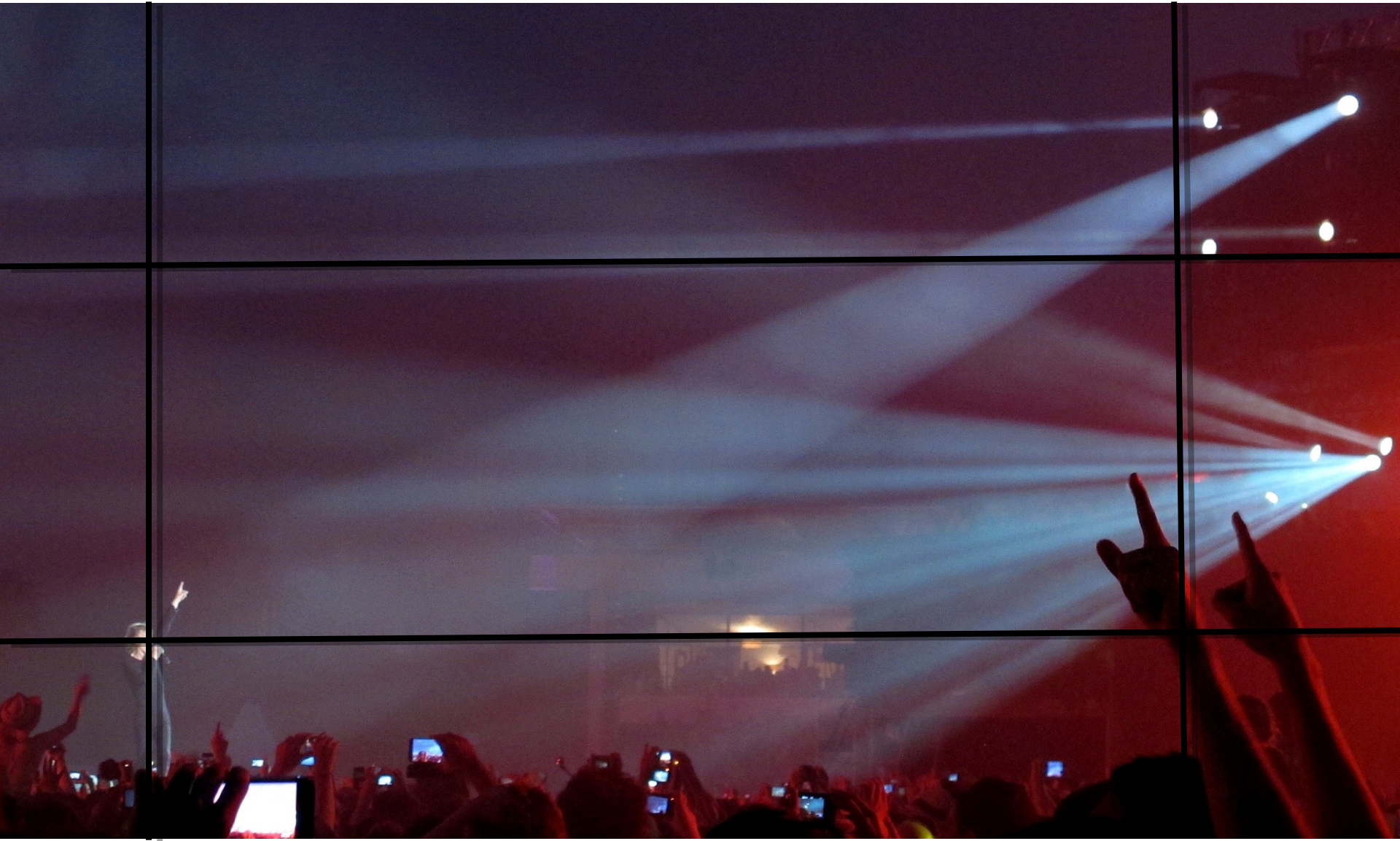
# Oh no, it's...the rule of thirds















# Selective focus







**WALTHAMSTOW  
FOLK**

[www.walthamstowfolk.co.uk](http://www.walthamstowfolk.co.uk)

# Lead in lines



# Lead in lines - direction



# The S Curve



# Foreground



# Framing within the frame



# Juxtaposition





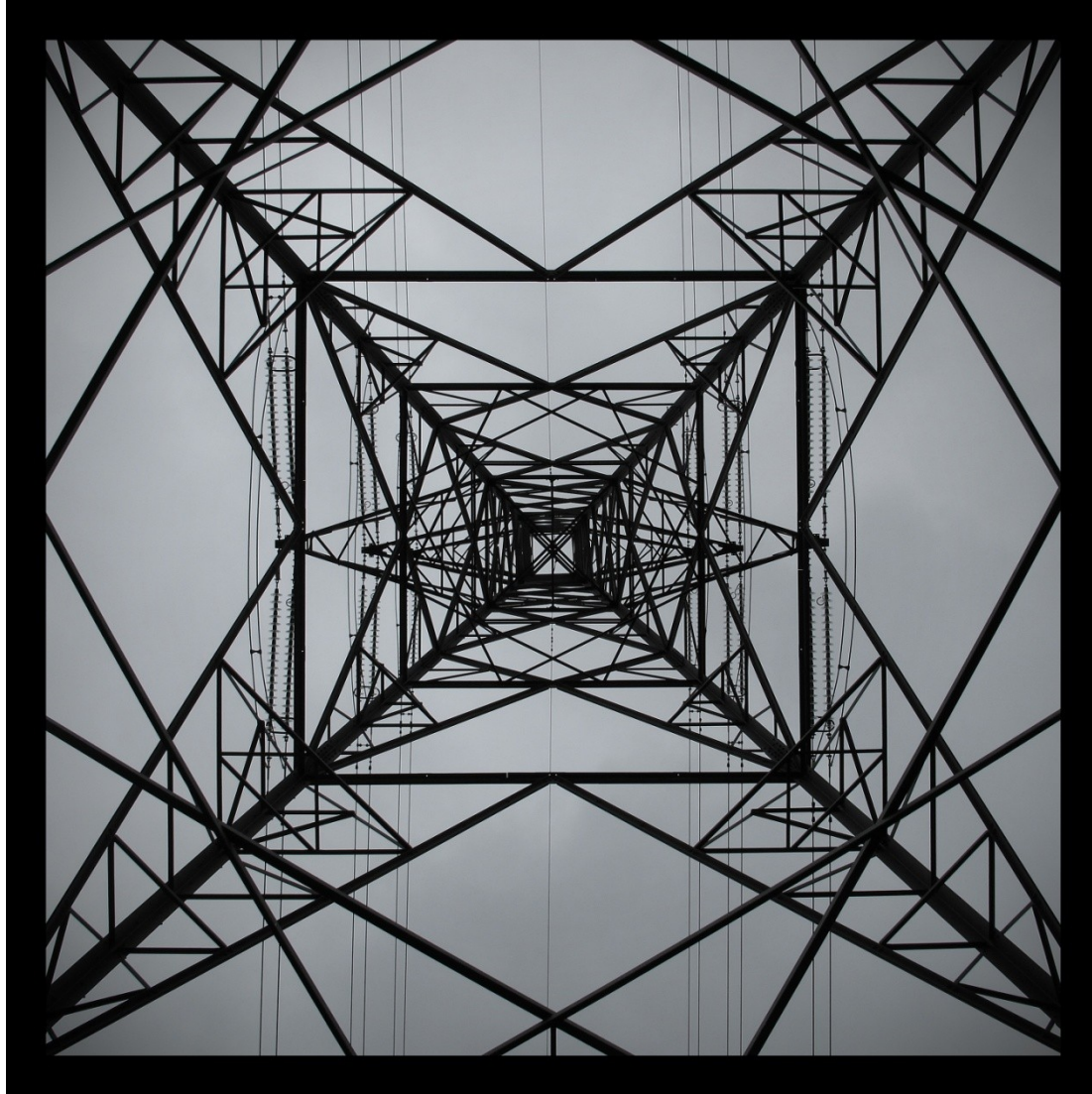
# Square



# Panorama or 'letter box'



# Symmetry



# Diptych



# Odd numbers (the preference for 3)



# Repeating patterns



# Simplicity



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/peterphotographic/>