

Minimalist Composition II Elements and Examples

Presented by Jeffrey Sward

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Bibliography

[1] Lidwell, William, et al. *Universal Principles of Design: 100 Ways to Enhance Usability, Influence Perception, Increase Appeal, Make Better Design Decisions, and Teach through Design*. Rockport Publ., 2003.

[2] Herrigel, Eugen. *Zen in the Art of Archery.: With an Introduction by D.T. Suzuki*. Translated by R.F.C. Hull. Vintage Books, 1971.

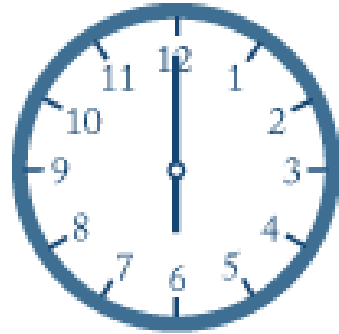
[3] "Minimalist Photography Awards 2024." *Minimalist Photography Awards*, 9 June 2024, minimalistphotographyawards.com/.

Elements of Art [1]

- Line
- Shape
- Texture
- Form
- Space
- Color
- Value

Minimalism

- Austere simplicity
- Sparseness focusing solely on the smallest number of objects in the compositional process
- Only the most important things are placed into a space
- Management of space, shape, organization, and simplicity.
- Minimalism is the antithesis of story telling



Function

Form

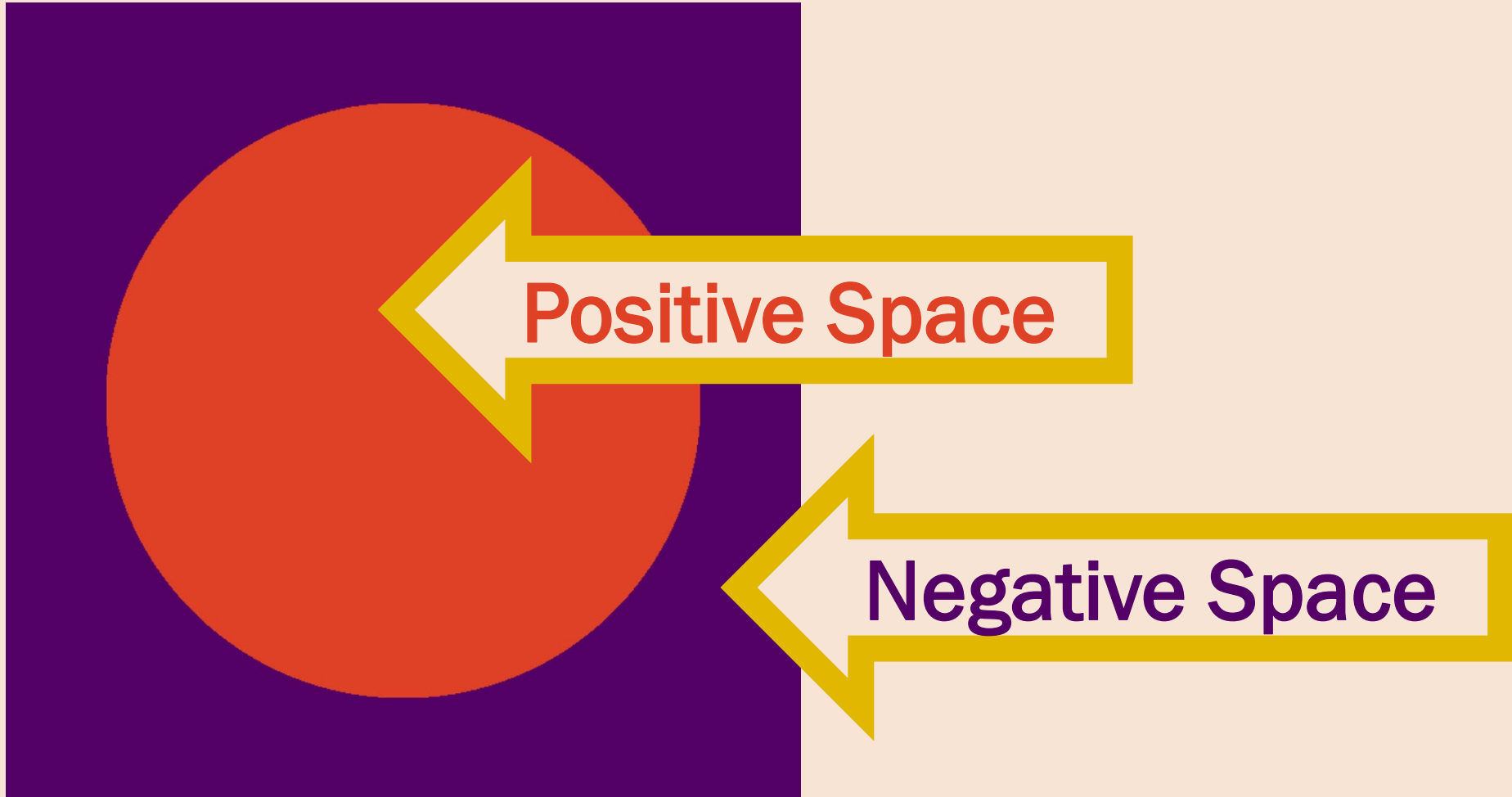
**One approach to minimalism is
to keep eliminating details
until only the essence remains**

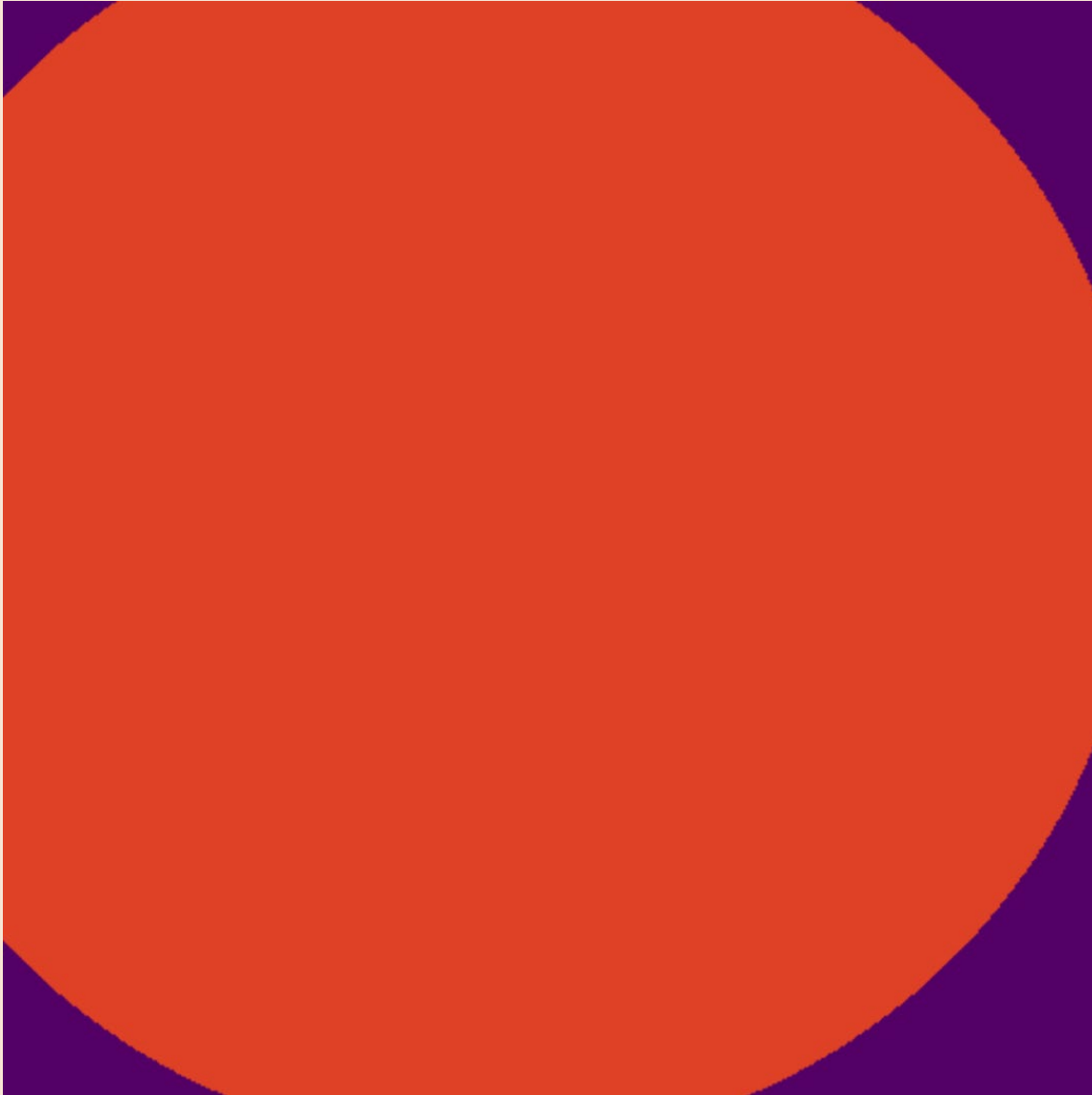
"Simple" Example



- The purple is the canvas
- Discussion
- How many shapes?
 - Is one shape the most minimal??

Commonly Used Terminology



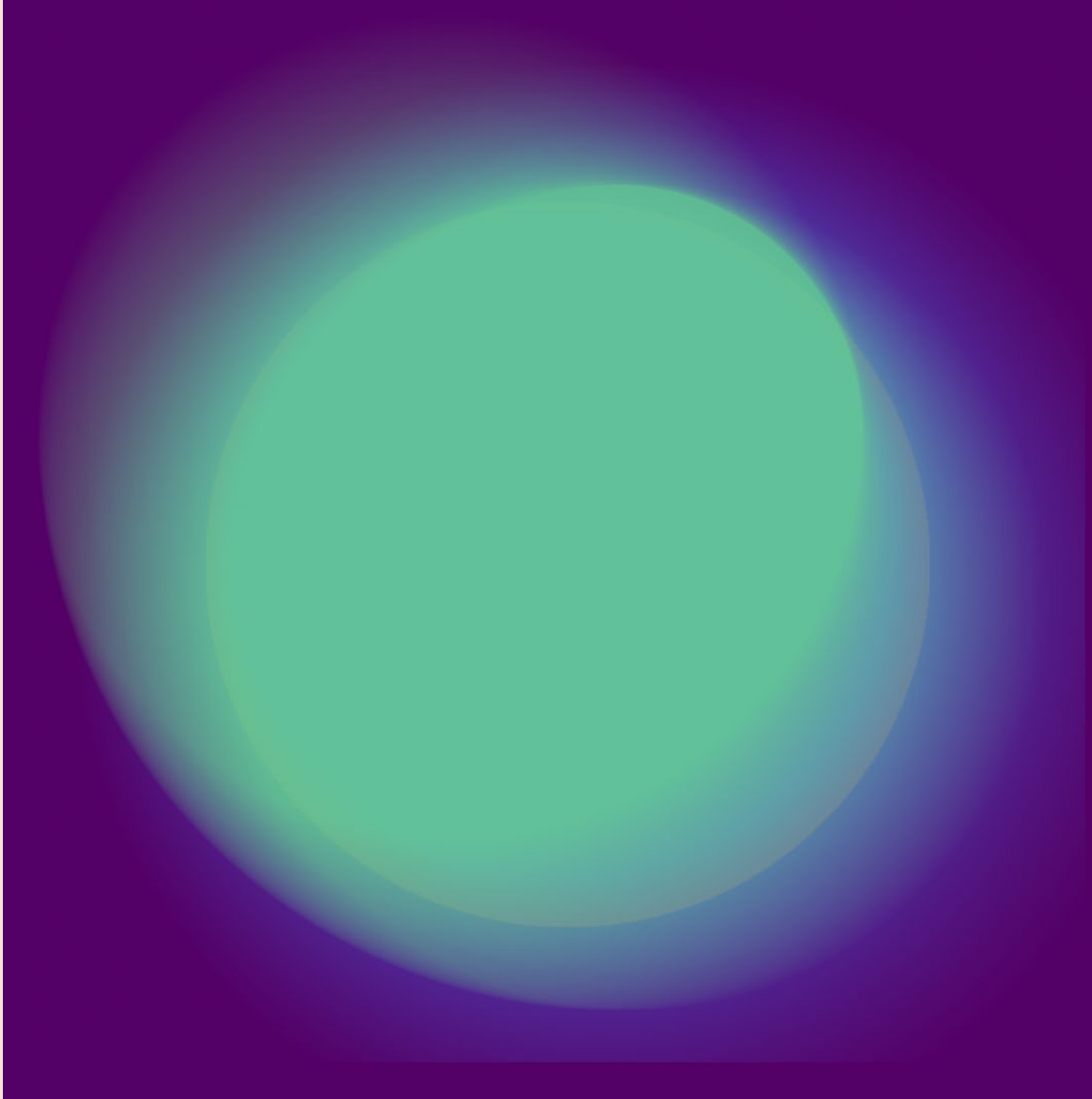


Discussion

- How many shapes?



- ## Discussion
- How many shapes?
 - Is this still minimal?



Discussion

- How many shapes?
- Is this still minimal?

Working with a Specific Image

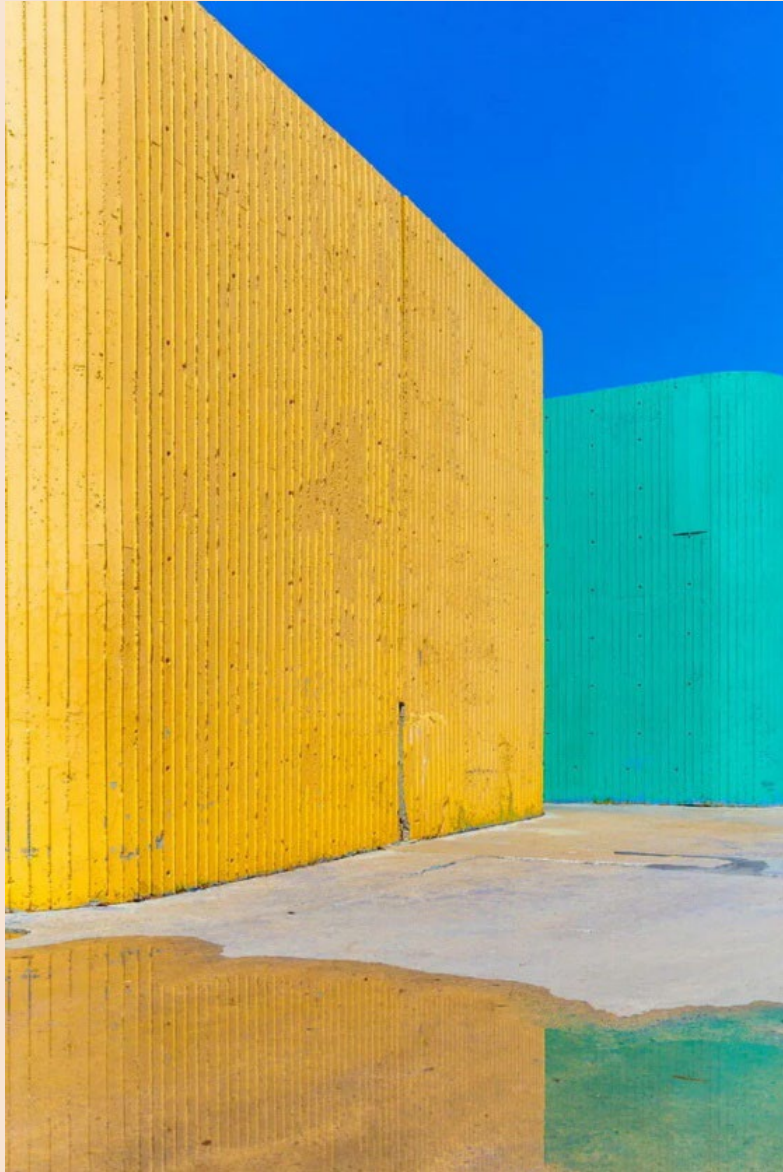
- Is there any element which can be removed?
 - Cloning, context sensitive delete, crop, etc.
- Can placement be improved?
- Does the image succeed under its own premises?
- Are these techniques for you?

Examples:

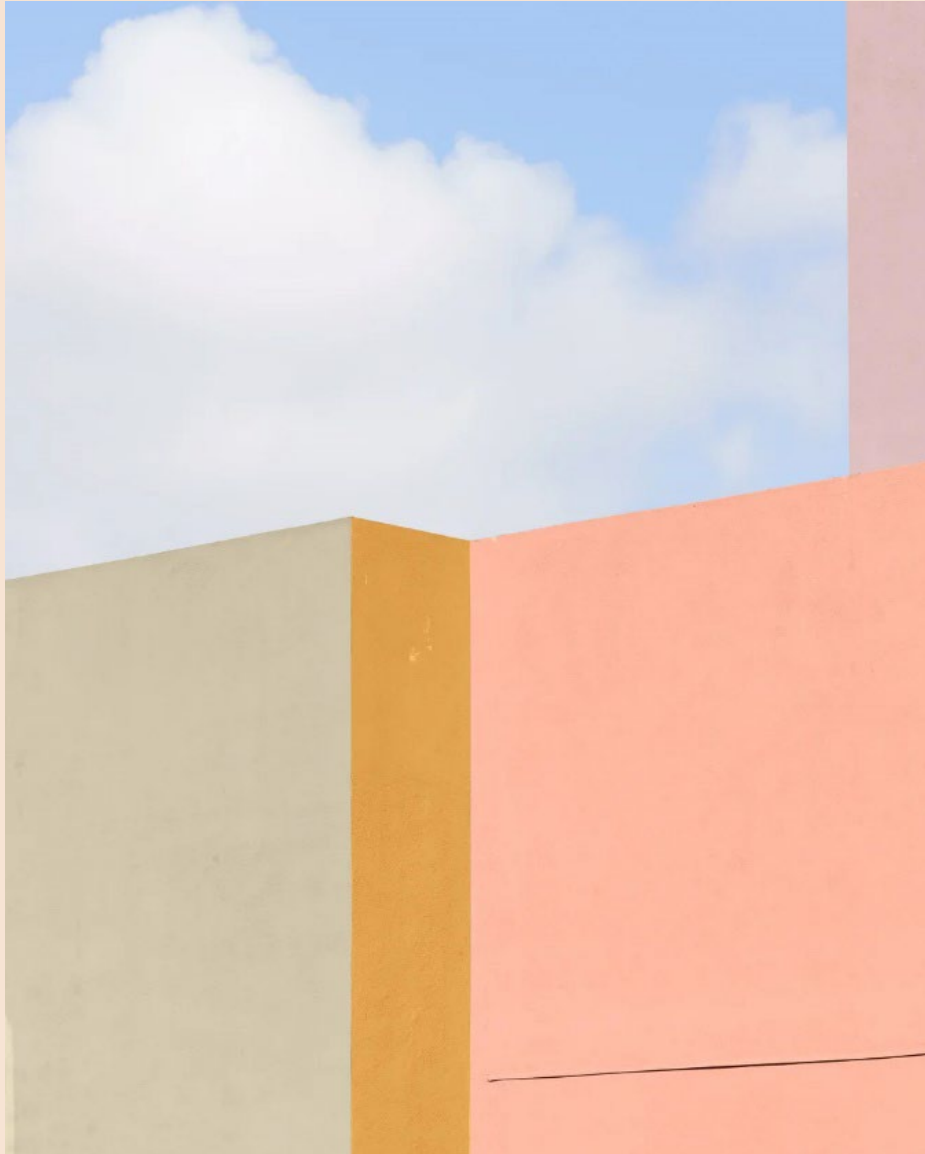
Concrete walls and shapes



Dieter Demey: Concrete Stories [3]



Dominic Blewett: It Is What It Is [3]



Gleici Rufatto: Hiding in Plain Sight [3]



Glenn Homann: X-ing [3]

Planning

- Find out who you are and do it on purpose. - Dolly Parton
- Start with a concept
- For studio still life, full life cycle planning and execution are possible
- For field work, adaptability and compromise become important.
 - In most cases the exact concept may not be practical or available
 - However, a related concept may present itself
 - Pure reaction to a found scene is possible. Luck comes to those who are prepared (airplane)
- Separate planning scheme is helpful for post processing, either general or specific



Emmanuel Passeleu: Airplane and Architecture [3]



Guido Klumpe: Cloudy day [3]

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Other Subjects



Alessandro Tagliapietra: Laguna Nord [3]



Alessandro Tagliapietra: Laguna Nord [3]



Folker Michaelsen: Hottest place on Earth [3]



Luke David: Presence [3]



Lynn Savarese: Dive-In-I-Scaled [3]



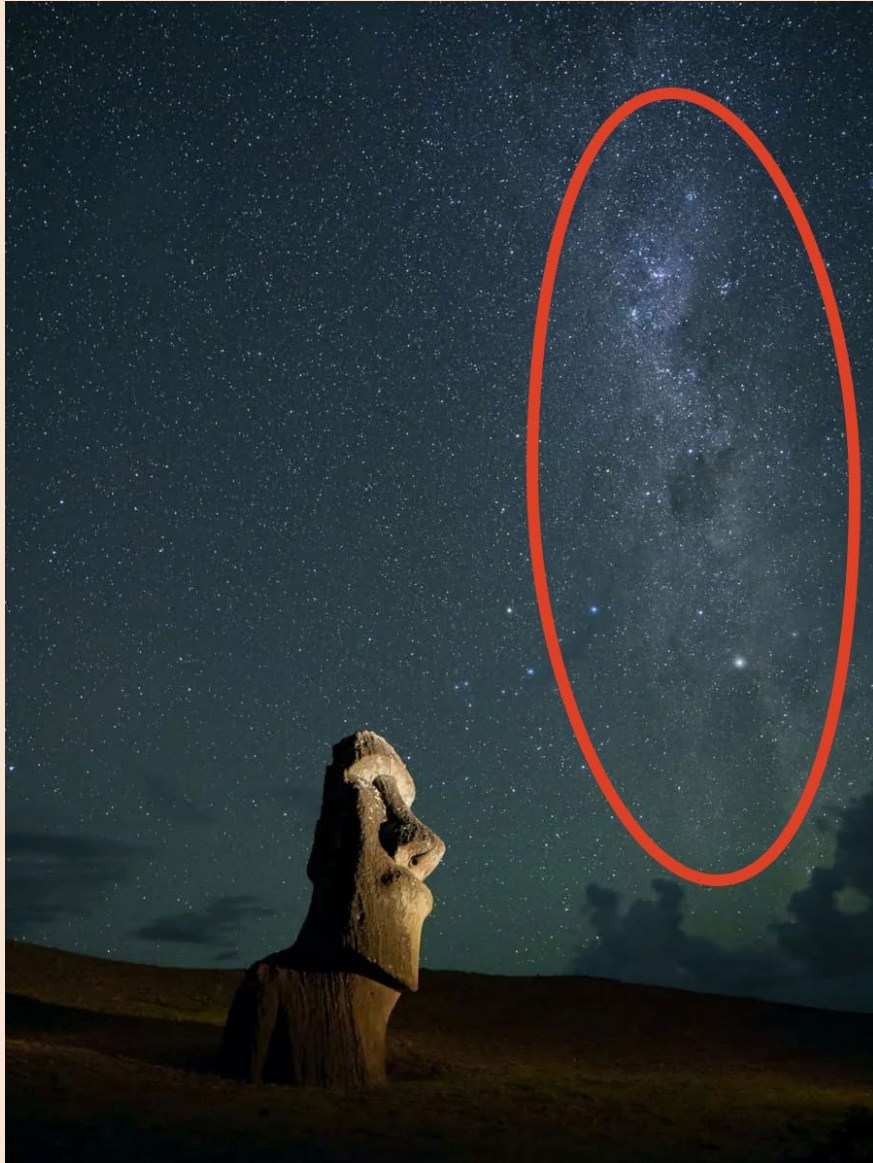
Nadia Srebryakova: Reflections of Loneliness [3]



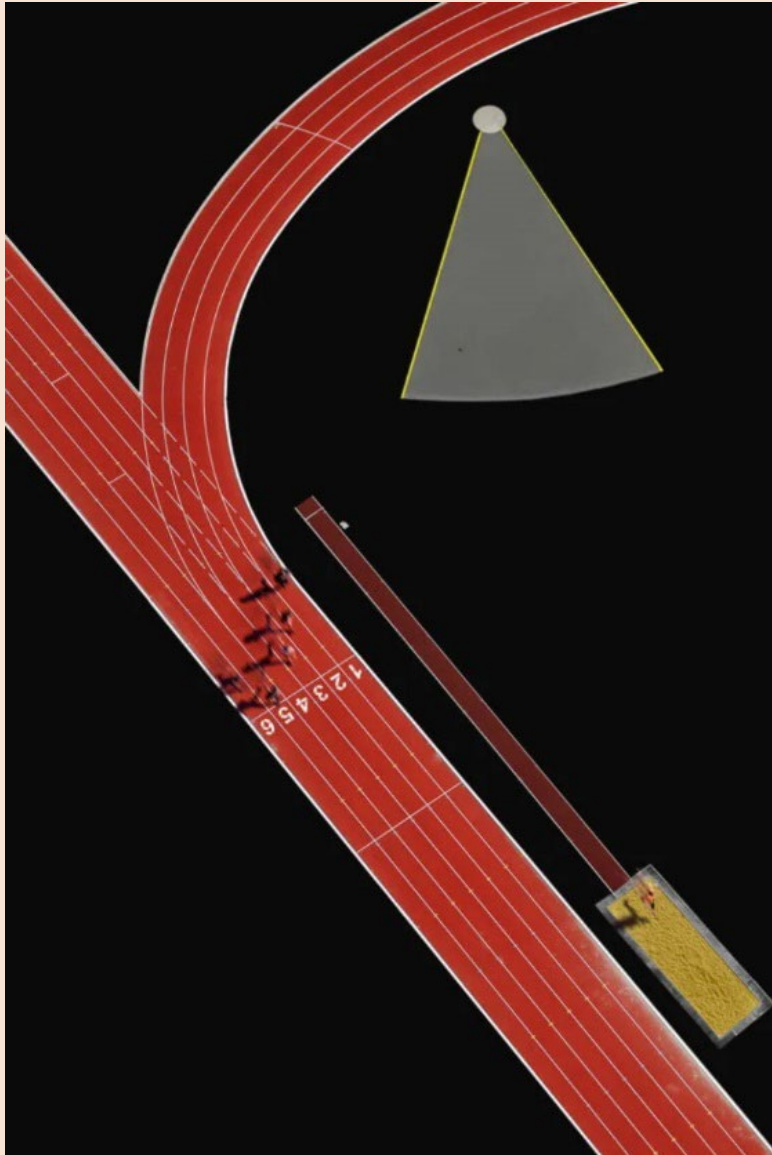
Paul Lichte: Colorado River Delta [3]



Therese Iknoian: Star gazing [3] (Location Easter Island)



Therese Iknoian: Star gazing [3] (Location Easter Island)



Vosicky Zdenek: Light Athletics [3]



Jeffrey Sward: Interior Corner



Jeffrey Sward: Drapes and Ceiling

Summary of Recommendations

- Given a choice between functionally equivalent designs, the simplest design should be selected – Ockham's Razor [1]
- Simplify, particularly by deleting elements until only the necessary elements remain
- Work with both positive and negative space equivalently
 - Either leave extra space or plan to utilize Photoshop context sensitive fill in order to provide negative space
- Incorporate spatial isolation
- Look for geometric shapes and lines
 - Lines can show isolation, separation, connection, distance, proximity and depth.
 - Contrasting colors, shades, patterns, shapes, or even contrasting ideas are effective ways to create compositional tension
- Planning is extremely important
- Avoid flatness if possible
- You will never ever make the final composition at time of image capture

Bibliography

[1] Lidwell, William, et al. *Universal Principles of Design: 100 Ways to Enhance Usability, Influence Perception, Increase Appeal, Make Better Design Decisions, and Teach through Design*. Rockport Publ., 2003.

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