Photography and Art Glossary
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Term	Use	Definition
abstract	n	genre of photography where the subject is often unrecognizable. Usually due to a tight crop or unusual perspective.
aerial	adj	perspective of shooting down from above. Usually from an upper window, stairway, landing, balcony, rooftop, drone, plane, or elevated monopod.
aesthetic	adj	beautiful, pleasing, attractive, special. See fine art photography, portrait, snapshot aesthetic.
alludes to…	v	moves in the direction of or is not quite the same as. If an image alludes to the abstract, the subject is still identifiable. If an image alludes to a silhouette, the dark objects still have some visible details. If an image alludes to high key, it may have some colors below middle gray, higher contrast, sharp lines, or deeper shadows than true high-key photos.
American Gothic	n	aesthetic with blank expressions, looking in/out of a window. Refers to Grant Wood's painting.
Americana	n	stereotypical or symbolic of U.S. culture
amorphous	adj	shapeless, not well delineated. For example, clouds. Compare with shape.
amputation	n	cropping the top of the head above the eye or any body part. See completion, law of good continuation, touch.
angle	n	position or orientation of the camera when the image was taken. May be low, high, or odd (aka Dutch angle). See perspective.
aperture	n	variably sized opening through which light enters a camera
arch	n	strong, natural shape
area of dark details	n	low-key area of the image where one can faintly see objects in the shadows. See emergence.
articulated	adj	angling of the head due to posture, not camera rotation. An example of body language.
aspect	n	small part of a larger object, usually a building, car, sculpture, or massive animal. Larger than a detail or nuance.
aspect ratio	n	comparison of width and height measurements of an image. Common ones are 1:1 (square) and 2:3 or 4:5 (rectangle). See panoramic.
asymmetrical	adj	an arrangement where elements or weights are not centered. Everything falls unequally away from the middle of the image or at different distances from the center. May create tension. Antonym: symmetrical.
atmospheric	adj	pertaining to weather and air conditions that affect visibility. On the light side, it produces a light, airy feeling. Examples include light snow, light rain, light mist, light fog, light sleet. On the dark side, it produces a mysterious or brooding mood. Examples include heavy cloud cover, heavy fog, heavy smog, blowing sand, and smoke. Worst condition for infrared photography.

Term	Use	Definition
axis lighting	n	over-the-shoulder lighting
background	n	part of a scene farthest from the viewer. There should be a relationship between the foreground and background. Famous photographer Robert Doisneau (pronounced dwuh-no) would find a great background (stage) and wait for the subjects (actors) to appear. See black surround, negative space, shallow depth of field. Antonym: foreground.
balance	n	distribution of visual weight; can be symmetrical, asymmetrical, or radial.
black surround	n	a form of negative space where the background is black.
blown-out	adj	over-exposed, hot, too white, glare-y with a loss of texture and detail in the highlights. See high-key.
blue hour	n	time before sunrise or after sunset when the sun is significantly below the horizon and the light has a cool, blue hue. See golden hour.
body of work	n	group of photos of the same genre, theme, etc. Also known as a portfolio or series.
bracketing	n	camera setting that takes photos at a variety of exposures, apertures, or shutter speeds. Automatic exposure bracketing is abbreviated AEB.
brightness	n	quality that determines whether a hue is light or dark. Subjective impression of objective luminance.
burn	v	to selectively darken part of a photograph either in the darkroom or using post-processing software. Works best with Raw images. Usually used to make something distracting or unimportant less obvious. See eye-control element. Antonym: dodge.
C-curve	n	shaped like the letter C. For example, the shape of a bay's shore line. See S-curve.
cable release	n	photographic gear with a cable and trigger that lets the photographer press the trigger to remotely close the shutter. Mainly used with slow shutter speed, extended exposure, and a tripod to avoid unintentional jostling of the camera.
candid	adj	Natural. The opposite of posed or staged. Usually a description for character studies and street photography.
catch lights	n	reflections of light in the eyes
character study	n	genre of photography that shows a person with peculiarity, uniqueness, or attitude. Usually candid. Aesthetics are less important than in a portrait.
chiaroscuro	n	strong contrast of light and shadow usually with a swath of light
circles of confusion	n	visual anomaly that looks like foreground soap bubbles in an image. Caused by atmospheric conditions and shallow depth of field. Compare with lens flare.
cognitive visualization	n	analyze what you see (or imagine) and discuss it. See previsualization.

Term	Use	Definition
color	n	the product of light. Color has three main properties: <u>hue</u> (primary and secondary on the color wheel), value and intensity. In pigment, primary colors include red, yellow, and blue. In pigment, secondary colors (orange, green, and purple) are a mix of primary colors. Primary and secondary colors are different for pigment and light. Some types: electric, muted, pastel, psychedelic, vibrant, vivid. See <u>complementary colors</u>, <u>de-saturated</u>, <u>monochromatic</u>, <u>saturation</u>, <u>selective color</u>.
color palette	n	non black-and-white <u>hues</u> that appear in the image. Antonym: <u>grayscale</u>.
commercial slick	n	art for advertisements. Also known as advertising slick. Slick describes the glossy paper upon which it is printed.
complementary colors	n	are opposite each other on a <u>color</u> wheel. Adding two complementary colors will create black in pigment and white in light. In pigment (RYB color model), the most common pairs are red/green, yellow/purple, and blue/orange. In light (RGB color model), the most common pairs are red/cyan, green/magenta, and blue/yellow.
completion	n	the eye finishes a <u>shape</u> that goes out of the frame. See <u>amputation</u> and <u>law of good continuation</u>.
composite	n	an image created from two or more layered, overlapping, or <u>juxtaposed</u> photographs. Created via <u>post-processing</u>, the combining of negatives, or in-camera with <u>double exposures</u>.
composition	n	selection and arrangement of visual <u>elements</u> within the camera frame and a final print. Compare with <u>design</u>.
compositional hook	n	interesting/focal point
concept	n	abstract idea. See <u>intention</u>, <u>previsualization</u>.
conscious involvement	n	<u>intention</u> of the photographer plus the selection of the subject, technique, <u>composition</u>, image content, and image to further enhance for the creation of compelling images. See <u>unconscious competency</u>.
contrast	n	difference in <u>colors</u>, subject brightness, <u>textures</u>, <u>shapes</u>, etc. Creates depth (for flat-looking images), visual excitement and adds interest.
contre jour	n	shooting into the light. May result in <u>silhouettes</u>.
crop	v	remove unwanted area(s) on one or more edges of a frame or an image. Can be done in-camera (by changing your <u>perspective</u> or focal length) or with <u>post-processing</u>. May change the <u>aspect ratio</u>. See <u>tight crop</u>.
curvilinear	adj	having rounded <u>lines</u>. See <u>serpentine</u>.
curvy lines	n	<u>lines</u> that express a delicacy as well as <u>movement</u>. Can be graceful and elegant.
dappled light	n	patchy light and shadow, usually due to sunlight filtering through tree leaves
decisive moment	n	split second of genius, inspiration, and good fortune in which a photographer captures a fleeting instant. For example, Henri Cartier Bresson photographed a man in mid-air leaping across a puddle.

Term	Use	Definition
depth of field	n	separation of front and back. How far back can you see? See <u>shallow depth of field</u>.
de-saturated	adj	intentionally muted (<u>hue</u> or <u>color palette</u>). Usually used to de-emphasize something or set a somber mood. See <u>saturation</u>, <u>selective color</u>.
descriptive style	n	objectively documenting reality. See <u>dramatic style</u>, <u>epic-legendary style</u>, <u>lyrical aesthetic style</u>, <u>narrative style</u>, <u>photojournalism</u>.
design	n	planned artistry that appears within a <u>composition</u>. See <u>previsualization</u>.
detail	n	small object. Smaller than a <u>nuance</u> and an <u>aspect</u>. See <u>area of dark details</u> and <u>ornamentation</u>.
diagonal lines	n	<u>lines</u> created by a river, road or fence, etc. cutting through the image cover more ground. In doing so, the eye is carried through the image from the <u>foreground</u> taking in the additional <u>elements</u> as it moves across the picture plane. Could also be the line between an artisan and the piece being worked on. Create two <u>triangles</u>, <u>dynamic tension</u>, <u>movement</u>.
dichotomy	n	contrast or division into two mutually exclusive, opposite, or contradictory parts, things, or groups. See <u>juxtaposition</u>.
digital art	n	photography with obvious <u>post-processing</u> enhancements, collages, etc.
diminishing perspective	n	size of repetitive similar objects decreases in the distance. See <u>leading lines</u>, <u>perspective</u>, <u>scale</u>.
diptych	n	two-panel image. Could be created naturally (e.g., by two adjacent window panes) or artificially during <u>post-processing</u>. May tell a story, de-construct, or reconstruct. See <u>triptych</u>.
documentary	n	<u>genre</u> of photography that records long-term, researched projects or events and tells a story with multiple images. Staging is possible. Compare with <u>photojournalism</u>.
dodge	v	to selectively lighten part of a photograph either in the darkroom or using <u>post-processing</u> software. Works best with Raw images. Usually used to make something important more obvious. See <u>eye-control element</u>, <u>luminance</u>. Antonym: <u>burn</u>.
dominant element	n	part of an image that grabs the attention due to visual <u>weight</u>, unusual size, placement, <u>color</u>, <u>contrast</u>, etc. Usually in the <u>foreground</u>. Not all images have a dominant subject. See <u>emphasis</u>. Antonym: <u>supporting element</u>.
double exposure	n	the image that results from superimposing two non-opaque photographs into one. Created in-camera or with <u>post-processing</u>. Often done to tell a story, add texture or a surreal, mystical quality. Most common ones overlay people with cityscapes or <u>landscapes</u> or show a variety of facial expressions or positions. Without skill, the image may turn out <u>unresolved</u>. See <u>composite</u>.
dramatic style	n	<u>narrative style</u> with impact. See <u>descriptive style</u>, <u>epic-legendary style</u>, <u>lyrical aesthetic style</u>.
dynamic (asymmetrical) balance	n	visual <u>weights</u> and forces are unequal. More interesting. See <u>asymmetrical</u>.

Term	Use	Definition
dynamic range	n	the difference in light intensity between the darkest and lightest parts of an image. See High Dynamic Range (HDR), subject brightness range.
dynamic tension	n	dynamic design elements. For example, diagonals or opposed lines in competing directions (misdirection). See dichotomy, juxtaposition, tension.
dynamism	n	suggestion of movement (fluidity, jitter, and more), energy, force, and/or speed.
edgy	adj	innovative, cutting edge, avant-garde, risky shots. "Learn the rules like a pro, so you can break them like an artist," said Pablo Picasso. See tension.
element	n	component, basic units (components) of or raw materials for composition. E.g., light, texture, shape, depth, line, perspective. See dominant element, eye-control element, framing element, and supporting element.
elevation	n	architecture shot upward from below. Antonym: aerial. See perspective.
emergence	n	gradual appearance of something in the darkness, mist, or glare or in an abstract after greater scrutiny. The more you look, the more you see. See area of dark details and pareidolia.
emphasis	n	used to create dominance and focus. Incorporates visual weight, color, values, and shapes as well as contrast to emphasize a center of interest. Antonym: de-saturated and Gaussian blur.
environmental portrait vs. environmental character study	n	environmental portrait is a genre of photography that shows aesthetic people working or in their work environment. If the people are not aesthetic, it's an environmental character study. See character study, greater context, portrait. Famous photographers: Arnold Newman, Annie Liebovitz.
epic-legendary style	n	powerful world figures and personalities. See descriptive style, dramatic style, lyrical aesthetic style, narrative style.
establishing shot	n	first photo of a photo shoot taken from a distance that sets the stage. See greater context.
execution	n	the act of making an image. For example, the previsualization and considerations about lighting, foreground, background, lens, filter, aperture, shutter speed, cropping, and post processing.
exposure	n	amount of light hitting the camera sensor due to shutter speed, aperture, and ambient light. See blown out, bracketing, High Dynamic Range (HDR).
extended exposure	n	photographic effect created with slow shutter speed (set to minutes or hours). Most commonly used to make rough water look misty, the path of stars look circular, and the movement of clouds streaky. See cable release, light painting, neutral density filter, star trails, tripod.

Term	Use	Definition
eye-control element	n	part of an image that directs the attention or moves the viewer's gaze through the image to the subject and away from distractions. For example, white and bright colors steal attention away from darker tones. See <u>burn</u>, <u>de-saturation</u>, <u>dodge</u>, <u>Gaussian blur</u>, <u>leading lines</u>, <u>selective color</u>, and <u>vignetting</u>.
field	n	repeated <u>shape</u> and subject that fills the frame so there is no <u>background</u> and no light shows through. Compare with <u>tight crop</u>.
fill-in flash	n	often is the built-in pop-up flash on a camera. Use it to illuminate something close in low-light or <u>contre-jour</u> (backlit) conditions. A flash diffuser (like a mesh sock that fits over the flash) helps prevent red eye and hot spots.
filter	n	transparent glass or gelatin positioned between the <u>lens</u> and the subject that protects the expensive lens, changes the color, or reduces glare and reflection through polarizing or stepping down (lowering) the <u>exposure</u>. See <u>neutral-density filter (NDF)</u>, <u>polarizing filter</u>, <u>ultraviolet filter</u>.
fine art photography	n	images with an <u>aesthetic</u> goal incorporating art concepts and techniques (such as <u>balance</u>, <u>composition</u>, and <u>light</u>) rather than a strictly representational goal (e.g., <u>documentary</u>, <u>photojournalism</u>, commercial, and scientific photography). Most are in black-and-white. Some famous photographers: Ansel Adams, Eugene Atget, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Irving Penn, Edward Steichen, Alfred Stieglitz.
fisheye lens	n	camera <u>lens</u> that is an ultra <u>wide-angle lens</u>. It distorts the image so the center appears round. The circular fisheye lens creates a 180-degree hemispheric image with a black border. The full-frame fisheye lens creates similarly distorted images but fills the entire frame.
forced perspective	n	optical illusion that confuses the <u>scale</u> and closeness of distant objects. See <u>perspective</u> and <u>two-point perspective</u>.
foreground	n	part of the scene closest to the viewer. There should be a relationship between the foreground and background. Antonym: <u>background</u>. See <u>shallow depth of field</u>.
form	n	describes volume and mass, or the three dimensional aspects of objects that take up space. Forms should be viewed from different <u>angles</u>. For example: sphere, cone, pyramid, cube, or box. Compare with <u>shape</u>.
framing element	n	part of an image that creates a border around a more distant part of the image. Sometimes there are frames within frames. Examples: branches, doorways, bridges, archways, tunnels, open windows, walls, the mouth of a cave, two similar <u>foreground</u> objects
Gaussian blur	n	<u>post-processing</u> effect that reduces noise and detail and creates smooth defocusing (unlike <u>shallow depth of field</u>). Uses: de-emphasize an area, conceal a face or brand, reduce chromatic aberrations on edges, and create drop shadows.
general photography	n	catchall <u>genre</u> for photographs that don't fall into other genres

Term	Use	Definition
genre	n	category of photography: ♦ abstract ♦ architecture ♦ fashion (Richard Avedon, George Hurrell, Howard Schatz) ♦ figure study ♦ fine art ♦ general ♦ industrial ♦ landscape, seascape, cityscape ♦ lifestyle ♦ macro ♦ nature ♦ photojournalism, street photography, documentary ♦ portrait, environmental portrait, character study ♦ sports (Walter Looss) ♦ still life ♦ travel ♦ urban exploration (urbex) ♦ wildlife
gestalt	n	psychological term regarding grouping, structure, and composition
golden hour	n	time shortly after sunrise and before sunset when the light is soft, has a warm hue, and is nearly horizontal. Flattering light for portraits. See blue hour.
gradation	n	subtle changes in color, shade, etc.
grand landscape	n	landscape with sky and horizon. Antonym intimate landscape.
graphic design	n	lines, shapes, forms, boldness, usually angles and streamlined. See design.
grayscale	n	tones from white to black. See subject brightness range. Antonym is color palette.
greater context	n	total information (foreground and background). The environment. Back away and get more information. In interpretational, not representational, photography. See establishing shot.
Henri Cartier-Bresson	n	Pioneer of street photography. Known for taking photos at "the decisive moment."
High Dynamic Range (HDR)	n	image that usually uses post-processing software to merge at least three exposures (default, under, and over) into one. Provides detail in both the lightest and darkest parts. Results may be realistic or surreal. See bracketing, neutral density filter (NDF), tripod.

Term	Use	Definition
high-key	adj	The highest key is white and the lowest key is black. High-key photographs have an ethereal, <u>lyrical aesthetic</u>, bright, light, airy, pristine, serene, magical, upbeat feel. Ideal subjects are soft, feminine, or delicate (e.g., flowers, fur, feathers, lace, sheer fabric, snow, clouds, babies, girls, women). In camera, increase the <u>exposure</u> 1-3 stops (using the +/- EV button) to just short of <u>blown-out</u>. In <u>post-processing</u>, slide exposure, shadows, blacks, and/or highlights to the right and slide clarity and/or contrast to the left. High-key images generally have the following qualities:
minimal <u>contrast</u> **minimal <u>luminance</u>**	adj	♦ consisting entirely of the lightest pastel <u>color palette</u> or tones well above <u>middle gray</u> ♦ little or no black ♦ no distinct lines or edges ♦ no dark shadows ♦ not <u>blown-out</u> See <u>alludes to...</u>, <u>bracketing</u>. Antonym: <u>low-key</u>.
horizontal	adj	suggesting the feminine, peaceful
horizontal lines	n	<u>lines</u> created by shadows, walls, or natural planes in the <u>landscape</u> are restful (peaceful) and easy to look at because they suggest repose and echo the horizon. They help carry the eye from left to right in the picture plane. Antonym: <u>vertical lines</u>.
hot	adj	see <u>blown-out</u>.
hue	n	the essence of <u>color</u> and the quality that gives each color its name and is what most people mean when they use the word color. E.g., blue, yellow, and green. Hues are arranged in a color wheel. See <u>selective color</u>.
implied line	n	imagined <u>line</u> that connects people or objects. Often it connects an artist with a subject or runs through their heads or is the same <u>color</u>.
impressionistic	adj	similar to Impressionism, a 19th-century painting style. Painterly. Looking as if color were dabbed on (often due to de-focusing the <u>lens</u>, <u>intentional camera movement</u>, water droplets on glass, <u>atmospheric</u> conditions, or <u>post-processing</u>). Compare with <u>surreal</u>.
industrial photography	n	<u>genre</u> of photography about specific industries (construction, manufacturing, transportation, energy, and mining), their buildings, heavy equipment, large machinery, assembly lines, and staff who make or do something in these places and with this equipment.
infinity	n	point above the horizon where lines meet. <u>Contrast</u> with <u>vanishing point</u>. See <u>law of converging verticals</u>.
infrared (IR)	adj	an infrared-converted camera takes IR photos using the infrared wavelengths in light. Most people shoot IR on bright days. IR images may be <u>color</u> or black and white; they usually have black skies, white chlorophyll (leaves and grass), and pallid skin with pronounced veins.
intention	n	goal of the photographer. For example, to create a pleasing or unique image, to depict an emotion. See <u>concept</u>, <u>previsualization</u>.

Term	Use	Definition
intentional camera movement (ICM)	n	photographic effect created with <u>slow-shutter speed</u> combined with vertical, horizontal, J-shaped, circular, or other repositioning of the camera while taking the shot. "Sharpness is a bourgeois concept," said Henri Cartier Bresson.
intimate landscape	n	<u>landscape</u> with no sky and no apparent horizon because it was shot below the horizon. Antonym <u>grand landscape</u>.
ISO	n	sensitivity of the camera sensor to light. A low setting makes the camera less sensitive to light and creates images with a finer grain. A high setting makes the camera more sensitive to light (good for photographing in dark places) and creates images with a rougher grain. Try to adjust the <u>aperture</u> and <u>shutter speed</u> before adjusting the ISO. See <u>noise</u>.
juxtaposition	n	close or side-by-side positioning of two (or more) dissimilar objects to encourage comparing and contrasting. See <u>dichotomy</u>.
keystone effect	n	<u>perspective</u> distortion that makes tall buildings seem to lean or fall. Some <u>post-processing</u> tools offer lens correction tools for keystone correction.
landscape	n	<u>genre</u> of photography that includes the great outdoors. Should consider <u>foreground</u>, mid ground, and <u>background</u>. Usually shot with a small <u>aperture</u> opening (large aperture number). <u>Panoramic</u> landscapes may be shot with a <u>wide-angle lens</u>. Variants are seascapes and city scapes. See <u>atmospheric</u>, <u>grand landscape</u>, <u>intimate landscape</u>, <u>sense of place</u>. Famous photographers: Ansel Adams, Galen Rowell, Peter Lik.
law of converging verticals	n	optical illusion that two parallel <u>lines</u> are getting closer together. Gives a sense of depth. If and only if there are changes in depth/distance, the <u>vanishing point</u> is at <u>infinity</u>.
law of good continuation	n	<u>gestalt</u> concept. A <u>line</u>, <u>shape</u>, or <u>pattern</u> keeps going in its established direction. There is no need to see the whole object. The viewer's eye/brain fill in the rest. (Part of the <u>nature of shapes</u>). See <u>amputation</u> and <u>completion</u>.
leading lines	n	<u>eye-control element</u> where <u>lines</u> direct the eye to the subject or into the image. See <u>diminishing perspective</u>.
lens	n	transparent curved glass (or similar substance) that brings light to the camera sensor. See <u>fisheye lens</u>, <u>macro lens</u>, <u>prime lens</u>, <u>telephoto lens</u>, <u>wide-angle lens</u>, <u>zoom lens</u>.
lens flare	n	visual anomaly that looks like rainbow-colored halos or spheres in an image. Caused by bright light entering the <u>lens</u>. More likely with older lenses lacking anti-reflective coatings. Mostly seen in <u>contre jour</u> images. Compare with <u>circles of confusion</u>.
lifestyle	adj	<u>genre</u> of candid photography that captures real-life situations and pastimes such as billiards, dominoes, and hobbies. One type of <u>photojournalism</u>.
light painting	n	night-time photographs that include a choreographed moving light or burning substance (for example, glow stick, sparkler, or ignited steel wool) and <u>slow shutter speed</u> or <u>extended exposure</u>. See <u>light trails</u>, <u>star trails</u>.

Term	Use	Definition
light trails	n	night-time photographic effect that creates ribbons of light, usually from car headlights and taillights, by photographing with <u>slow-shutter speed</u>. See <u>light painting</u>, <u>skyglow</u>, <u>star trails</u>.
lighting	n	Illumination. Look for the light and you will find the shadows. Some types: harsh, soft, flattering, flattening. See <u>axis lighting</u>, <u>blue hour</u>, <u>catch lights</u>, <u>chiaroscuro</u>, <u>contre jour</u>, <u>dappled light</u>, <u>fill-in flash</u>, <u>golden hour</u>, <u>high-key</u>, <u>low-key</u>, <u>noir</u>, Rembrandt lighting, <u>rim lighting</u>, <u>split lighting</u>.
line	n	visual component composed of three points. See <u>curvilinear</u>, <u>curvy lines</u>, <u>diagonal lines</u>, <u>horizontal lines</u>, <u>implied line</u>, <u>law of converging verticals</u>, <u>leading lines</u>, <u>linear</u>, <u>misdirection</u>, <u>radial</u>, <u>serpentine</u>, <u>vertical lines</u>, <u>zigzag lines</u>.
linear	adj	graphic composed of <u>lines</u>
low-key	adj	The highest key is white and the lowest key is black. Low-key photographs have a moody, dramatic, mysterious, sensual, or luxurious feel. Low-key <u>lighting</u> has predominant shadows and is used in <u>chiaroscuro</u>, film <u>noir</u>, horror. It emphasizes texture, wrinkles, and lines. In camera, decrease the <u>exposure</u> 1-3 stops (using the +/- EV button) to just short of detail-less black. In <u>post-processing</u>, slide exposure, shadows, blacks, and/or highlights to the left and slide clarity and/or contrast to the right. Low-key images generally have the following qualities: ♦ minimal <u>contrast</u> ♦ consisting entirely of the darkest <u>color palette</u> or tones well below <u>middle gray</u> ♦ little or no white ♦ no distinct lines or edges ♦ dark shadows ♦ not detail-less black Antonym: <u>high-key</u>. See <u>area of dark details</u>, <u>bracketing</u>.
luminance	n	scientifically, it is the objective measurable amount of light passing through, emitted from, or reflected from an area from a specific viewing angle. During image <u>post-processing</u>, selectively increasing the luminance of one area in an otherwise dark image will provide <u>contrast</u> and draw attention to that lighter part. Due to their low contrast, <u>high-key</u> photographs have minimal luminance. See <u>brightness</u>, <u>dodge</u>, <u>skyglow</u>.
lyrical-aesthetic style	n	soft-focus or veiled girls, ingénues (young women), or children often in pastel colors, usually engaged in gentle, loving pursuits. See <u>aesthetic</u>, <u>descriptive style</u>, <u>dramatic style</u>, <u>epic-legendary style</u>, <u>narrative style</u>. Famous photographer: David Hamilton.
macabre	adj	disturbing, horrifying, spooky, scary. Usually <u>low-key</u>. See <u>noir</u>, <u>tension</u>.
macro	adj	<u>genre</u> of photography that includes an extreme close-up usually of a 1-inch or smaller subject (such as an insect, flower aspect, or microbe). See <u>shooting tight</u>.

Term	Use	Definition
macro lens	n	camera <u>lens</u> usually with a focal length of 45- 105mm used to do <u>macro</u> photography.
middle gray	n	tone that is halfway between white and black.
minimalism	n	uncomplicated, streamlined image with no distractions. Includes most <u>single-point subjects</u>.
misdirection	n	opposing <u>lines</u> or directions or with a subject looking, moving, or pointing out of the frame
model release	n	legal document that grants permission to the photographer to use images of the person (or minor child of the person) who signed the release.
monochromatic	adj	containing or using only one <u>color</u>. For example, the color of the sky and water are in the same color family. See <u>sepia</u>.
monopod	n	One-legged camera stand that provides stability and, when raised, expedites <u>aerial</u> shots. See <u>tripod</u>.
movement	n	<u>eye-control element</u> used by artists to direct the viewer to different focal areas. Employs <u>leading lines</u>, <u>shapes</u>, <u>colors</u>, edges, etc. See <u>dynamism</u>, <u>intentional camera movement</u>, <u>rhythm</u>.
narrative style	n	an image that tells a story, makes an observation, recounts an episode. See <u>descriptive style</u>, <u>dramatic style</u>, <u>epic-legendary style</u>, <u>lyrical aesthetic style</u>.
nature of shapes	n	relation of <u>shapes</u>
negative space	n	the blank stage, providing no information. Area of the <u>composition</u> that does not include the subject. The form of empty space has a great capacity for communication and expression. <u>Background</u>. Defines the subject by giving it a context in which to exist (or boundary shape). Antonym: <u>positive space</u>. See <u>black surround</u>.
neutral density filter (NDF)	n	<u>filter</u> that lets less light in or steps down (lowers) the <u>exposure</u>. Sets typically block 1, 2, and 3 steps. Usually used when there is high <u>contrast</u> between the highlights and shadows (e.g., sunrises and waterfalls) and when using <u>slow-shutter speed</u> or <u>extended exposure</u> on very bright days so images don't get <u>blown out</u>. Enables the use of a more open aperture. Graduated NDFs transition from dark at 12 o'clock to clear at 6 o'clock; usually used to darken a bright sky without altering the land for proper overall exposure. Replaces realistic <u>High Dynamic Range (HDR)</u> photography. See <u>polarizing filter</u>, <u>ultraviolet filter</u>.
noir	adj	black-and-white images that are usually <u>low-key</u> with long shadows and small bright lights or shadows that fall on the face. Images would be appropriate for a mystery, crime, or thriller. See <u>macabre</u>, <u>Rembrandt lighting</u>, <u>rim light</u>.
noise	n	visual distortion such as grain and discolored splotches. Usually occurs in low-light conditions with a high <u>ISO</u> number. Prevent it by using a lower ISO number or correct it in <u>post-processing</u>.

Term	Use	Definition
nuance	n	small extra (sometimes extraneous) object. Bigger than a detail and smaller than an aspect.
ornamentation	n	frills or extras which, like good design, may be pleasing to the viewer, but draw the attention to them and away from the subject
painterly	adj	like a painting. Perhaps with brush strokes, dabs, dashes, smudges, distortion. See impressionistic, soft focus, texture.
panning	n	photographic effect created with slow shutter speed while tracking a moving object. The subject is (relatively) sharp and appears to be frozen while the background is blurred and seems to be moving. Compare with zoom burst.
panoramic	adj	a photograph where the width is much greater than the height in the aspect ratio. Panoramic landscapes may be shot with a wide-angle lens.
pareidolia	n	the perception of a clear image (especially a face) where it does not actually exist. See emergence.
pattern	n	planned or random repetition of elements. Requires three or more instances. Patterns increase visual interest by enriching surface intensity.
personal style	n	the expression of the inner voice/inner vision, something original/personal, a figurative fingerprint, a uniquely identifiable approach, visual expression, or aesthetic in an artist/photographer's work. Reflects favorite equipment, genres, techniques, subject matter, and personal taste. Develops over time. Often emerges after the study of inspiring artists. An artist may have more than one dominant style. Some famous photographers with personal style: Annie Liebowitz, Ansel Adams, Edward Weston, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Irving Penn, Jerry Uelsmann, Richard Avedon.
perspective	n	height and angle from which a photo is taken. See aerial, diminishing perspective, elevation, forced perspective, keystone effect, two-point perspective.
photojournalism	n	genre of candid photography that records breaking news and decisive moments. May include paparazzi and lifestyle photographs. Compare with documentary. Famous photographers: Henri Cartier Bresson, Robert Doisneau.
polarizing filter	n	filter that reduces atmospheric haze, glare, and reflections from glass, water, and shiny skin; and adds contrast to and increases the blue in skies. May be a uniform darkness or graduated. Orientation affects effectiveness. The most common is the circular polarizer (CPL) that reduces the f-stop by 1.5 stops. See neutral-density filter, ultraviolet filter.
portrait	n	genre of photography that includes an aesthetic image of the face or face and shoulders of an individual, celebrity, or aristocrat. Usually posed (not candid). Pleasing look about face/persona. Compare with character study. See environmental portrait, shallow depth of field. Famous photographer: Yousuf Karsh.

Term	Use	Definition
positive space	n	the actor. Area of selected importance, composed of the subject(s) whether people or objects (or whatever). Usually <u>foreground</u>. Antonym: <u>negative space</u>.
post-processing	n	photo editing done out of camera, after the photo was taken. May be done in the darkroom or with software (Adobe Photoshop and Lightroom, Luminar, Topaz Labs filters, Nik Efex, etc.). Aka treatment. "Edit ferociously", said Edward Steichen, director of the department of photography at the Museum of Modern Art. See <u>crop</u>, <u>digital art</u>, <u>Gaussian blur</u>, <u>keystone effect</u>, <u>noise</u>, <u>selective color</u>, <u>stroke</u>, <u>vignette</u>.
previsualization	n	Ansel Adams' word for the process of imagining the physical arrangement, lighting, emotional and symbolic content, etc. of a photograph before taking it. A vision that precedes <u>execution</u>. See <u>concept</u>, <u>design</u>, <u>intention</u>, <u>visualism</u>.
prime lens	n	camera <u>lens</u> with a fixed focal length. For example, 50mm. Antonym: <u>zoom lens</u>.
principle of closed form	n	<u>lines</u> and <u>shapes</u> are perceived more easily if and when they are closed, or uninterrupted, as in a circle, polygon, rectangle, <u>triangle</u>, or square. Antonym: <u>amorphous</u>.
principle of continuity	n	<u>elements</u> in line with a minimum number of interruptions are seen as one continuous <u>line</u> and strongly attract the eye.
principle of proximity	n	suggests that the closer together the visual <u>elements</u> of an image, the greater the probability that they will be seen as a unit
principle of similarity	n	visual <u>elements</u> that are similar in <u>shape</u>, <u>color</u>, and size tend to be related to each other.
pulling back	v	<u>zooming</u> the <u>lens</u> back creates a wider angle of view allowing you to incorporate more of the environment. See <u>establishing shot</u>, <u>greater context</u>, <u>panoramic</u>.
radial	adj	<u>lines</u> that lead out from a center. For example, hands on an analog clock or petals on a daisy.
Rembrandt lighting	n	<u>split lighting</u> on the face where only the eye on the shadowy side is subtly lit
repose	adj	resting, reclining, or lying back. A person's body may be *in repose*.
representational art	n	images that reflect the real world in an identifiable way. Antonym: <u>abstract</u>, <u>surreal</u>.
resolved image	n	unified image that works, with nothing extraneous. Antonym <u>unresolved</u>. See <u>unity</u>.
rhythm	n	the repetition of visual <u>movement</u>, e.g., <u>colors</u>, <u>shapes</u>, and <u>lines</u>. Movement and rhythm work together to create the visual equivalent of a musical beat. Offers momentum and activity.
rim light	n	a back-lit edge with little light on the adjacent area. Rarely from side lighting.

Term	Use	Definition
risky shot	n	unusual, non-traditional crop or placement of information in the frame. Creates tension, an edgy feeling.
rule of thirds	n	placement of an important visual component at one of the junction points of two equally spaced horizontal and vertical lines forming a grid over the composition (frame). Allegedly, this makes things look more natural and dynamic.
S-curve	n	shaped like the letter S. For example, the shape of some winding roads. See C-curve.
saturation	n	intensity or purity of hue, with the minimum being a completely neutral gray. See de-saturated.
scale	n	relative size. For example, showing a motorcycle and a camper on the same visual plane lets the viewer compare dimensions. See diminishing perspective.
selective color	n	(aka spot color) a post-processing technique that desaturates the color of most of the image and may leave a single hue or area saturated. See eye-control element.
sense of place	n	viewers' feeling that they are a part of the scene. They are there. Most important aspect of a landscape.
sepia	adj	reddish-brown color of some monochromatic photographs. Often used to give the image an aged look.
serpentine	adj	curvy line. See curvilinear.
shallow depth of field	n	large aperture opening (small aperture number) lets in more light. Useful with portraits. Creates distance between foreground and background. Enables selective focus. Usually makes the background soft focus. See depth of field.
shape	n	an area contained within an implied line. incorporates two dimensions: length and width. Shapes are positive (subject) or negative as in the negative space as background. For example: circle, square, triangle, heart, star. Compare with form.
shooting tight	v	filling the frame. Can be said about some portraits, character studies, and macro photography. See field, tight crop.
shutter speed	n	amount of time during which the camera sensor is exposed to light. See slow shutter speed.
silhouette	n	back-lit, easily identified black shape created from shooting into the light (e.g., sun or headlight). Usually achieved with contre jour photography. Some people call shadows silhouettes.
single-point subject	n	one small, distinguishable object or person in a large, simple background. For example, a leaf on a road or an inner tube in a pool. See minimalism.
skyglow	n	diffused luminance of the night sky due to artificial sources (light pollution) or natural sources (starlight, sunlight scattered by solar system dust (zodiacal light), and atmospheric emissions (airglow)). See star trails.

Term	Use	Definition
slow shutter speed	n	camera adjustment that accentuates motion and the passage of time. See extended exposure, intentional camera movement, light painting, light trails, panning, shutter speed, star trails, zoom burst.
snapshot aesthetic	n	a style of street photography, that may look chaotic and have misdirection in the gazes. Famous photographers: Garry Winogrand and Lee Friedlander. See aesthetic, unresolved.
soft focus	n	shallow depth of field, diffused (not blurred). Compare with Gaussian blur.
spatial relationships	n	balance of larger and smaller elements
Spider Awards	n	Online-only, juried, annual black-and-white photography contest for amateur and professional photographers. They usually get about 6,500 entries from about 75 countries. Their website is https://thespiderawards.com.
split lighting	n	one side of the face is in light and the other side is in shadow. See Rembrandt lighting.
starburst	n	radial look of a small light source when shot with a high aperture number (usually f/16-f/22) (small aperture opening). For example, street lights, Christmas lights, or sunlight through tree leaves.
star trails	n	night-time photographic effect that produces circular star paths via extended exposure. Aka, astrophotography. See light painting, light trails], skyglow.
still life	n	genre of photography that consists entirely of inanimate objects often on a tabletop. Includes most product photography. The objects may be found or arranged and staged. "Less is more."
storytelling image	n	photo that stimulates the viewer's imagination about real or imagined people, events, places, and more (e.g., who the people are, what their relationship is, what happened before or will happen afterward, etc.).
street photography	n	a form of photojournalism that usually shows an un-staged group of people, vehicles, vendors, performers, pets, etc. on the street or sidewalk or at an outdoor event. See snapshot aesthetic.
stroke	n	colored image border or frame added in post-processing. Camera clubs recommend a 1-pixel white stroke to differentiate a projected photo's black edges from the black background. Note: The Art of Photography - US is NOT a camera club.
subject brightness range (SBR)	n	in black-and-white images, representation of a variety of tones between the extremes of white-white and black-black. Contrast, light to dark relationships, highlights, shadows. See dynamic range, grayscale.
subjective evaluation	n	an opinion about inclusion/exclusion in an image. See unresolved, well developed, well seen.
supporting element	n	part of an image that reinforces the dominant element.

Term	Use	Definition
surreal	adj	bizarre, unreal, disorienting, nonsensical, unbelievable, hallucinogenic, having irrational juxtapositions, having a dreamlike quality like that of 1920s surrealist painters such as Salvador Dali, Rene Magritte, and Giorgio de Chirico. Compare with impressionistic. Famous photographer: Jerry Uelsmann. Antonym: representational art.
symmetrical	adj	an arrangement where objects or weights are centered. Everything falls equally away from the middle of the image or equidistant from the center. Special, perfect case of balance. Very rigid. Requires absolute precision. Antonym: asymmetrical.
telephoto lens	n	camera lens with a long focal length, usually over 100mm. For example, 200mm. May be a prime lens or a zoom lens. Antonym: wide-angle lens.
tension	n	quality of an image that is disquieting, stimulates interest and greater examination. Usually achieved by applying one or more of the following techniques: asymmetrical balance, unbalanced negative space or weight (instability), odd angles (perspective), two-point perspective, misdirection (diverging or vertical lines, leaving the frame, etc.), bizarre lighting, unconventional crops (amputation, tight crop), numerous edge touches, juxtaposition of opposites (tones, hues, saturation, or sizes), or soft focus of foreground objects when the middle ground or background is sharp. There is a risk of the image becoming unresolved. Usually not appropriate for peaceful subjects and high-key images. See contrast, dynamic (asymmetrical) balance, edgy, low-key, macabre, risky shot. Antonym: symmetrical.
texture	n	surface quality both simulated and actual. Describes surface quality we can almost feel with our eyes. Best shot with both the lighting and the camera at the side. Some post-processing software provides a way to add textures, such as scratches.
tight crop	n	close-up of a single subject so it fills the frame and there is no background. Often done in abstract and macro photography. See amputation, crop, law of good continuation, shooting tight. Compare with field.
touch	n	a place where the subject borders on or is amputated by the frame. Usually two touches are OK. Three or four touches create a lot of tension. See amputation.
triangle	n	strongest manmade shape
tripod	n	three-legged camera stand. See extended exposure, High Dynamic Range (HDR), monopod.
triptych	n	three-panel image. Could be created naturally (e.g., by three adjacent window panes) or artificially during post-processing. May tell a story, de-construct, or reconstruct. See diptych.
two-point perspective	n	having two well-spaced vanishing points, usually due to divergent pathways. See perspective.
ultraviolet filter	n	filter that blocks ultraviolet wavelengths of light to reduce haziness. See neutral-density filter, polarizing filter.

Term	Use	Definition
unconscious competency	n	muscle memory for the brain. Highest level of thought. Superior to incompetence and conscious competence. See conscious involvement.
unity	n	provides the cohesive quality, such as when all included elements look as though they work and belong together in the frame. Positive and negative contributions of all elements and details. See resolved image.
unresolved	adj	an opinion that the image is too busy, too complicated, doesn't work, is not well-composed, misuses or lacks eye-control elements, or lacks organization and unity. See snapshot aesthetic, subjective evaluation, well seen. Antonym: resolved image, well developed.
urbex	n	short for Urban Exploration. Genre of photography that involves the exploration of abandoned, distressed man-made structures.
value	n	relative artistic merit of portions of the image. For example, a dramatic sky may be more important than a flat lake. Often the area of greater value takes up more of the artistic image.
vanishing point	n	point where lines appear to meet in space (usually the sky). Contrast with infinity. See law of converging verticals.
vertical lines	n	are more powerful and energetic than horizontal lines because they suggest vertical movement and the eye follows them from bottom to top. These lines can create tension and strength in an image relative to the subject matter.
vignette	n	post-processing technique that reduces (or rarely increases) brightness or saturation around the image's edges as an eye-control element that keeps the eye in the frame
visualism	n	before execution, the ability to see the finished emotional and visual aesthetic of an image, not just the composition. See previsualization.
wabi-sabi	n	Japanese word for the aesthetic that accepts imperfection, impermanence, deterioration due to age and use, and transcendence.
weight	n	heaviness of a visual element that can create an impression of falling or pulling down. An asymmetrical image has unequal weight distribution. Excessive weight on one side can disrupt visual balance, create tension, and contribute to an image being unresolved.
well developed	adj	an opinion that the composition or concept is successful. Antonym: unresolved. See subjective evaluation, well seen.
well seen	adj	an opinion that the photographer made a good observation. See subjective evaluation, unresolved, well developed.
wide-angle lens	n	camera lens with a focal length under 25mm. On close-ups, it makes the foreground very large and the background very small. On larger scenes, such as landscapes, it makes it possible to put a large vista into one image. May be a prime lens or a zoom lens. See fisheye lens. Antonym: telephoto lens.

Term	Use	Definition
working the subject	v	photographing the same subject horizontally, vertically, from different <u>angles</u> and distances, with different lighting, with different shutter speeds
zigzag lines	n	<u>lines</u> that often add excitement. Most commonly from stairs or lightning bolts
zoom burst	n	photographic effect created with <u>slow-shutter speed</u> and manually changing the focal length on a <u>zoom lens</u> while taking the photo. Creates <u>radial</u> lines from the center of the image. Sometimes called zooming. Compare with <u>panning</u>.
zoom lens	n	camera <u>lens</u> that incorporates variable focal lengths. There is some image compression when the lens is fully extended. Antonym: <u>prime lens</u>. See <u>zooming</u>.
zooming	v	adjusting the focal length of a zoom lens. See <u>pulling back</u>.