

Four Compositions

All images are composed of other images, both imagined and real.

Identifying an image according to its individual compositions, and then exploring and refining their contribution, honestly reveals the structure of the image. By rendering the individual compositions in the following order, the image can be most efficiently resolved.

Drawing Composition = The relationships within the image

- Apply the Dust & Scratches filter on a duplicate layer blended in Darken Mode.
- Spot any remaining non-image artifacts with the Cloning Tool.
- Cropping experiments uncover the 'psychological space' within the image.
- Use Guides to outline the image window, thereby allowing precise cropping of the image.
- Carefully examine the image on screen and in a test print at the final scale.
- **These strategies reveal the drawing composition and how it functions in the image.**

Tonal Composition = The drama of the image

- Convert the RGB image to Lab (16bit) and display only the monochromatic 'L' channel.
- Use Levels to set highlight and shadow points, and adjust middle grey (gamma).
- Use Curves to adjust local contrast.
- Apply the Dodge & Burn tool to modify local tonal values.
- Paint with black and white on a 50% grey layer in Soft Light mode as a 'printing pack'.
- **These strategies reveal the tonal composition and tonal relationships in the image.**

Colour Composition = The mood or personality of the image

- Convert the image from Lab to RGB.
- Use Levels to globally adjust overall colour balance.
- Use Curves to locally adjust colour contrast (saturation) and density.
- Use the Sponge tool to locally saturate or desaturate the image.
- Use HSL controls and Selective Colour to precisely adjust individual colour values.
- **These strategies reveal the colour composition independent of tonality and drawing.**

Spatial Composition = Our relationship to the image

- Duplicate the image layer and apply the Unsharp Mask filter or Gaussian Blur filter.
- Use a Layer Mask to locally apply the sharpening or blurring with different brushes.
- Use Advanced Layer Options to blend the effect into specific tonal regions.
- Duplicate the image layer and apply a low pixel radius High Pass filter in Overlay mode.
- Paint on this layer or add a Layer Mask to locally distribute the effect.
- **These strategies reveal and orchestrate the spatial relationships within the image.**

Structure is the backbone of our desire. Bringing things together in an image, and the associations between them, builds structure. Preventing collaboration between friendly areas of an image destroys structure. Without structure we have nothing expect spectacle or artifice to carry the weight of our concerns. The heart of an image doesn't escape our attention when its structure doesn't require our attention. A self-sustaining image sustains us.

Les Walking