



# Basic Composition

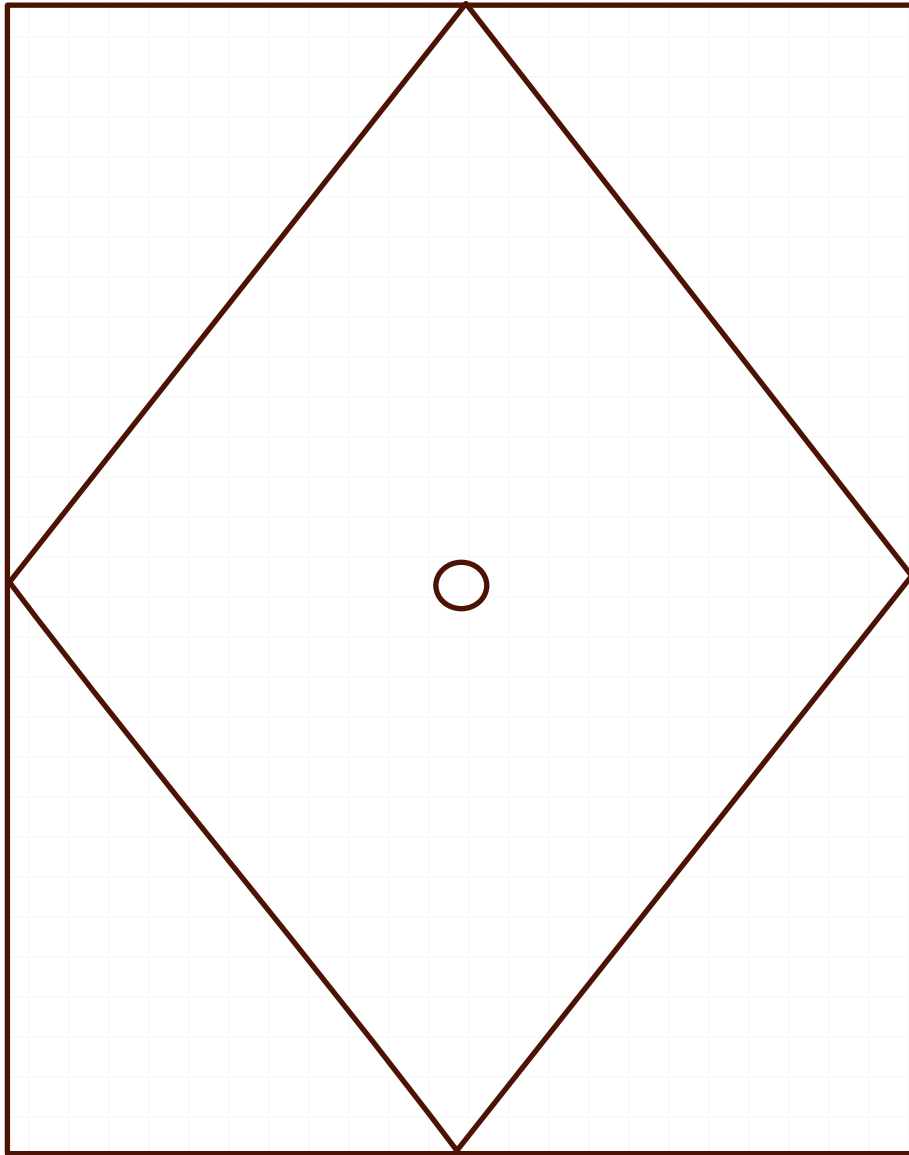
The secret to making artwork  
look Pro!

# What do you need to know to make a *Strong Composition*?

- 1. Picture Plane: The surface a picture is on. It goes from edge to edge of the surface (ex: canvas, paper...)
- 2. Focal Point: The Most important part of a work of art. It is usually the main area of interest/activity and usually communicates the artist's "Big" message to their audience. Should be the first thing people look at.
- 3. Composition: Organizing all of your content for a work of art in such a way that emphasizes and exaggerates the Focal Point. *Strong compositions are dynamic (hold the interest of your audience for more than a second).*
- *4. How do Artists get viewers to find the focal point?* They will usually have: content overlapping, running off the edge, and variety (size, placement, color, etc.). They use those tools as visual exclamation points.

# The Magic Diamond

The most versatile Composition Tool



## Purpose:

Helps with focal point placement.

Weak compositions have focal points in the center or corners. They're not bad exactly they just communicate very specific ideas. Those specific ideas are very difficult to go beyond.

For example if you put the focal point in the center, viewers tend to get stuck and don't see the rest of the artwork. It gives a feeling of confrontation- the "in-your-face-factor".

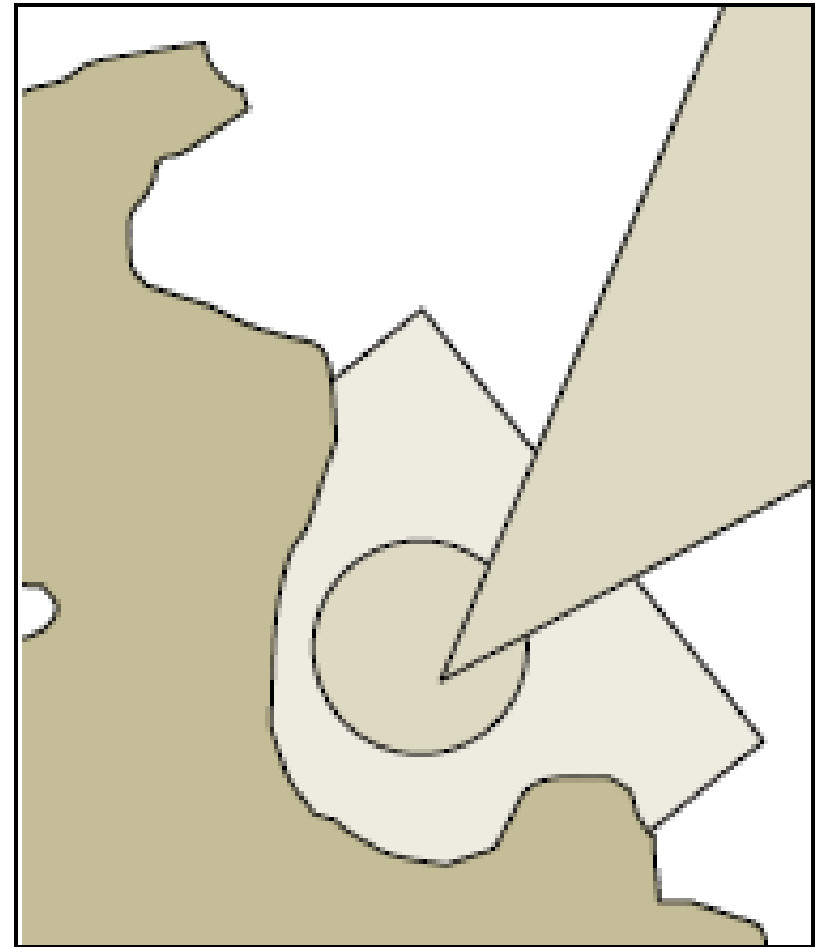
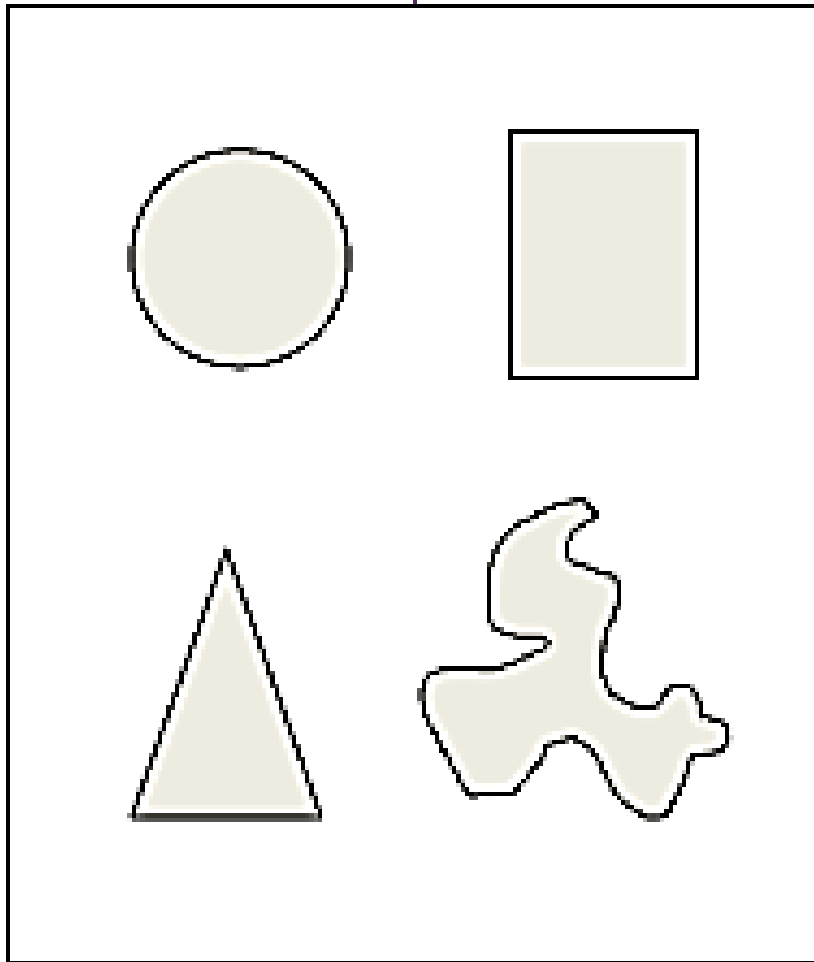
Basically be mindful of your focal point placement!

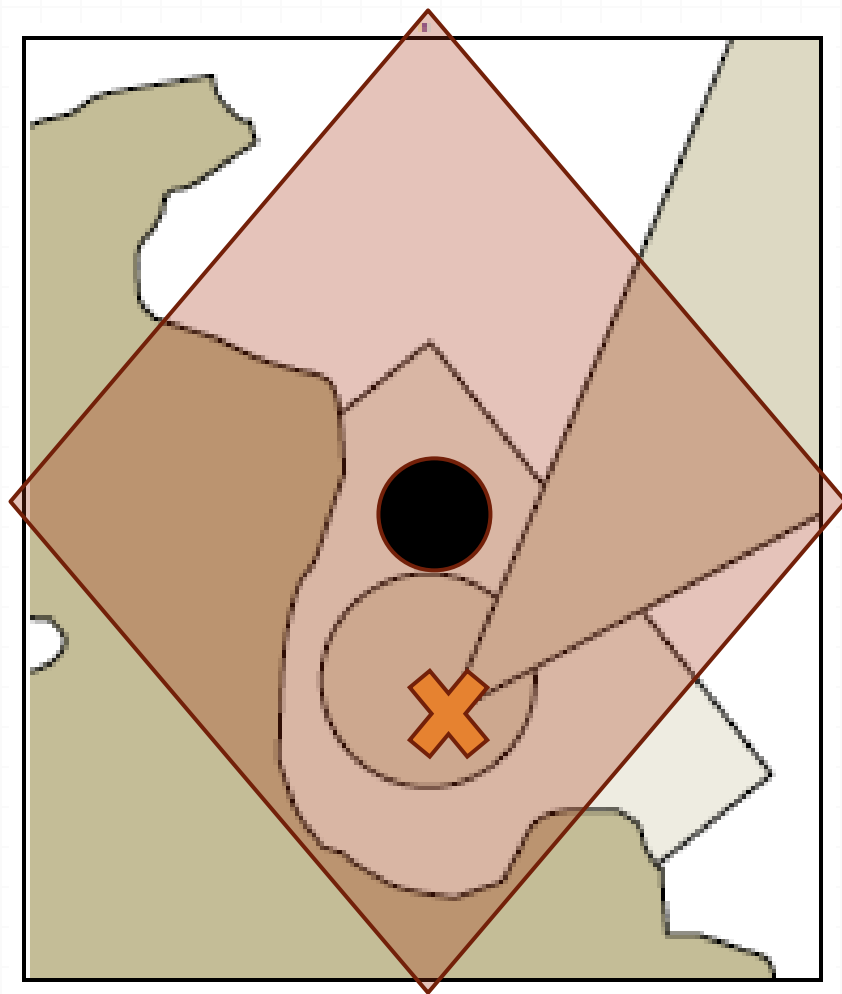
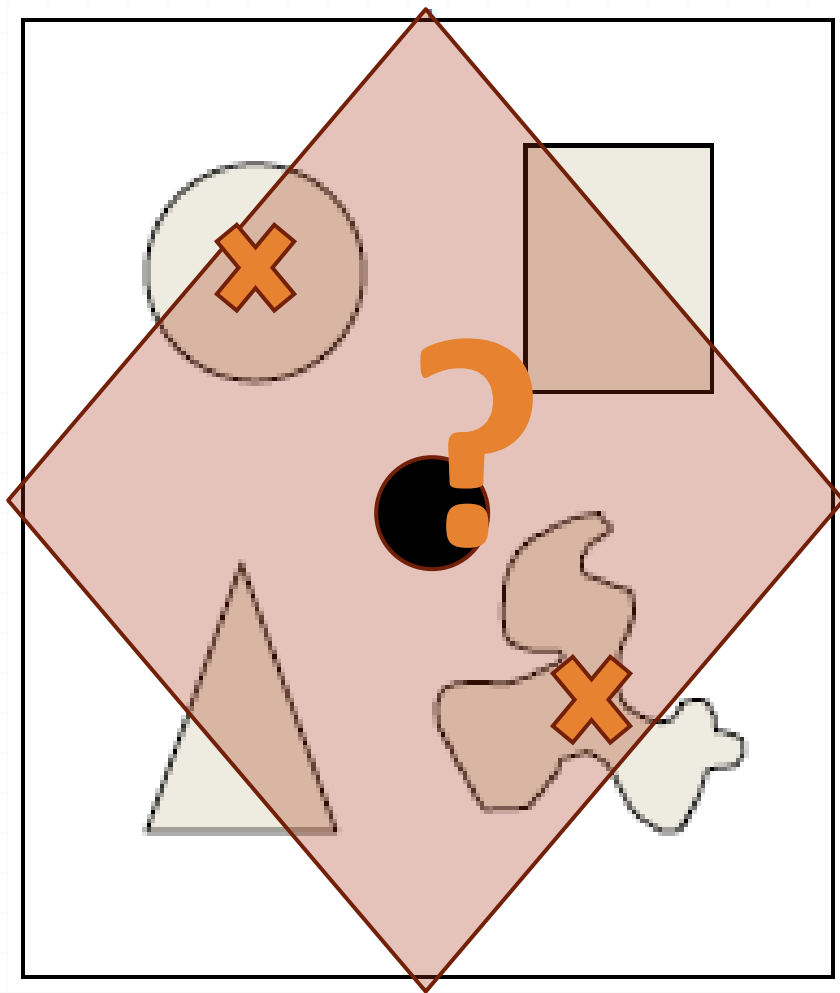




Find the focal point in each composition.

How are they similar? Which one do you think is more dynamic and interesting to look at? Which one was easier to find?





How do you make the  
focal point stand out?



# Rule of 3<sup>rd</sup>'s

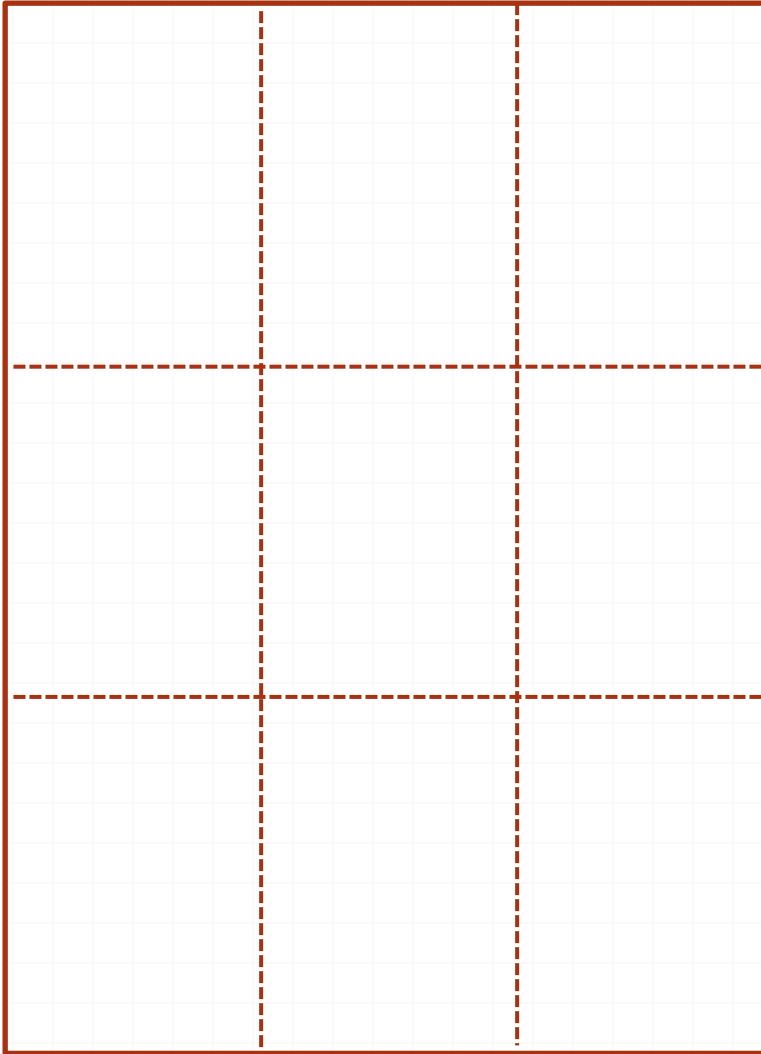
## Purpose:

Helps with checking for variety.

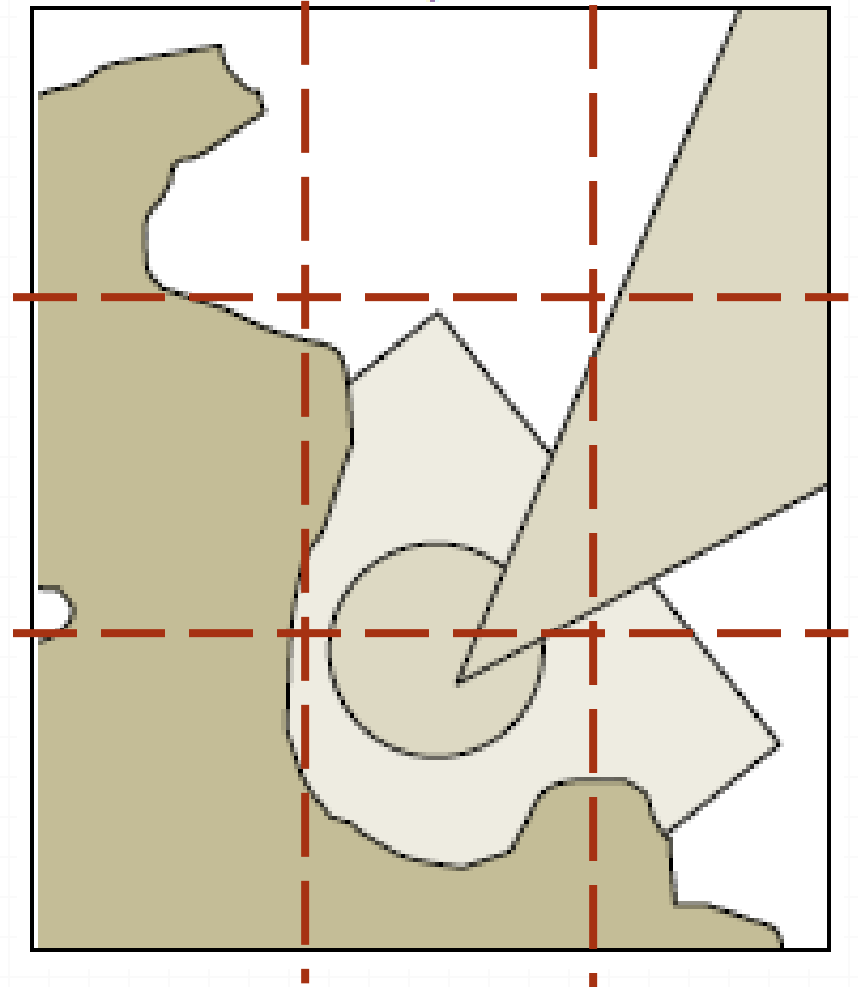
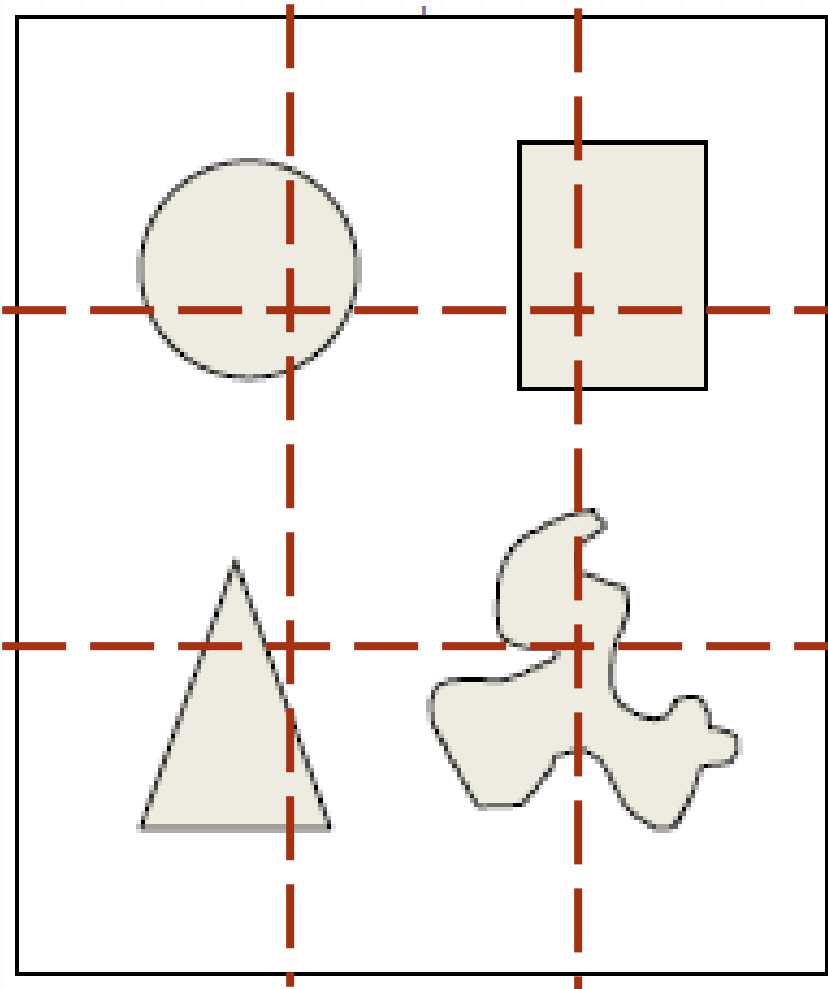
For a dynamic composition each square should have different amounts of "activity". Some square may be blank; others may lots of different content. *Basically you don't want everything to be the same or similar.*

## How it works:

- In your mind divide the picture plain into thirds vertically and horizontally.



Which composition has more variety that helps it have more counter balance?



# How do you make the Focal Point Obvious?

By having :

## ○ Overlapping:

- make it look like some content is going behind/in front of other content.

## ○ Running off the edge:

- Make it look like things are continuing off the edge of the picture plane- give audience a chance to imagine what may be happening outside the picture.

## ○ Variety (size, placement, color, etc.)

- Adds visual interest and it becomes even more dynamic. This happens because you have opportunities to create contrast to help emphasize your focal point.

Artist like to use these tricks to create "visual exclamation" points to help emphasize their focal point/"Big Idea" they want to communicate their message.

Just like with good writing- making the idea *obvious* make is easier for your audience to understand what you want to communicate. When you talk around the idea it may sound impressive but people just get confused.

# Check List for Strong Composition:

- o Focal Point- magic diamond helps with placement on the picture plane.
- o Composition has...
  - Overlapping- emphasize the focal point
  - Running off the edge- emphasize the Focal Point
  - Variety- rule of 3rds helps check for variety



## Last things to keep in mind...

Don't put important content close to the edges. When artists matt and frame their artwork at least  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch of the picture will get covered up.

Signing artwork... read article...

note: should be at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch in from the edge so it doesn't get covered up when matted/framed.