



# PAINING COMPOSITION TIPS

## 100 MOUNTAIN PROJECT

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# Composing your painting

The goal of this guide is to propose you some known **composition tips or rules**, that could help you when you **sketch your next landscape**.

Composition rules apply to many **visual arts** such as figurative painting, photography, film, etc.

They're used so your **visual message can communicate** with clarity and precision.

I think these rules **don't apply for all cases**, so before you start reading them, it's important to know that your painting can still **be awesome** and communicate your message **even when you don't follow** them.

You can see for yourself some famous art pieces that are **awesome but also break the composition rules** in [this article](#) or [this one](#).

If you follow some fellow artists online I'm sure you can find more of these examples!

This doesn't mean these rules need to be applied always. I personally try to **not overthink** them, I come back to them when my **sketches are stuck** and I'm still not satisfied or when I don't **how to start the drawing**.

Using some of these rules as a start for my sketches also **removes the fear of the blank page** so don't hesitate to model or use them to your advantage!

Hi, I'm Afri! I am a watercolor and gouache artist in love with nature and landscapes.

My goal is to inspire you to unleash your creativity and to show you how painting outside could be good for your soul!

Next to me you can see Kenzo! He is my little helper when I go outside looking for artistic adventures.



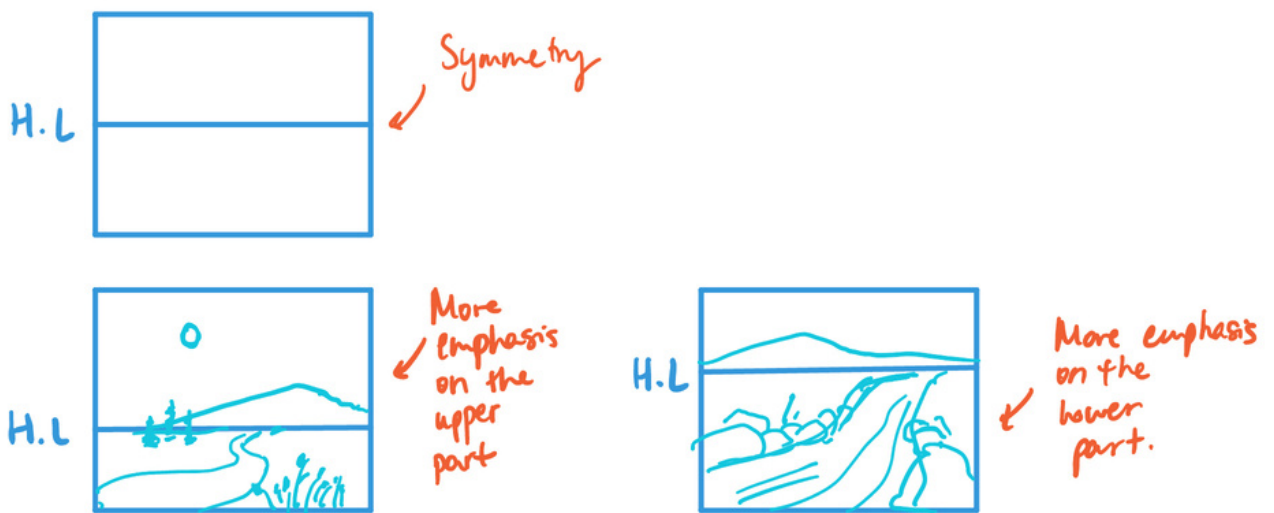
# THE HORIZON LINE

Starting your sketch by **placing the horizon line first, combats the fear of the blank page**. It's an easy habit to repeat whenever you start a new sketch, but also helps with its composition!

**The horizon line will be the anchor of your painting**, many of the elements of a landscape have interaction with this line

Depending on where you place it, you can **give more focus** to the sky part or to the ground part, which will help depending on what you want to tell

You can make your painting more interest if you **avoid perfect symmetry** when you place your horizon line.



Symmetry is a concept that our brains understand very well and in many of these rules, we try to make it more interesting by breaking it.

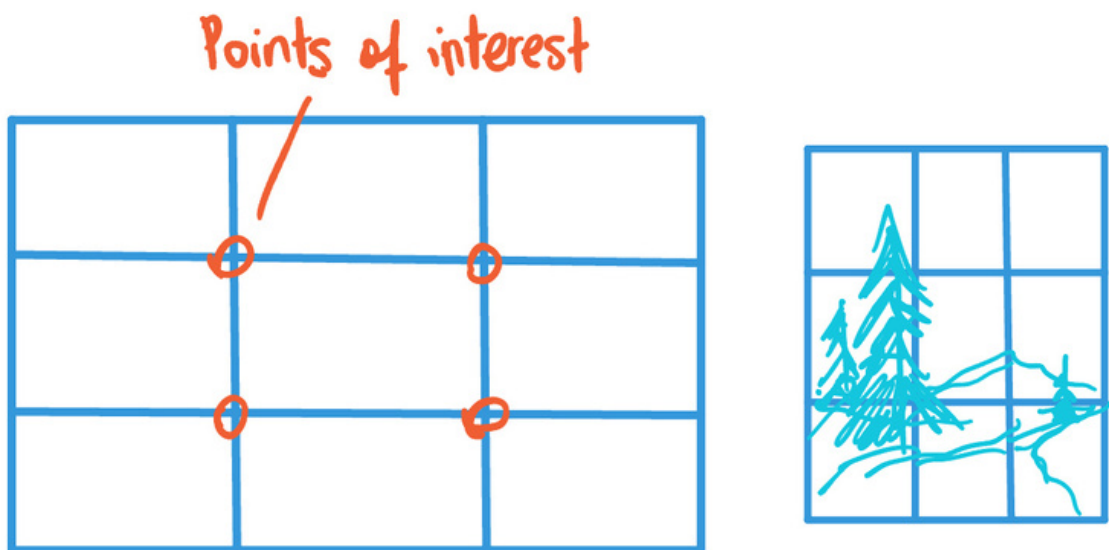
However, sometimes the message you want to share with your painting is the symmetry itself so don't hesitate to ignore this advice!



# THE RULE OF THIRDS

I bet it's not the first time you hear about this rule!

The rule of thirds suggests that **dividing our painting horizontally and vertically in thirds**, creates points of interest in the intersection of those lines



\*excuse my wonky lines 😊

These points of interests can be then used to **place important elements of our landscapes**, such as mountain peaks, trees, etc

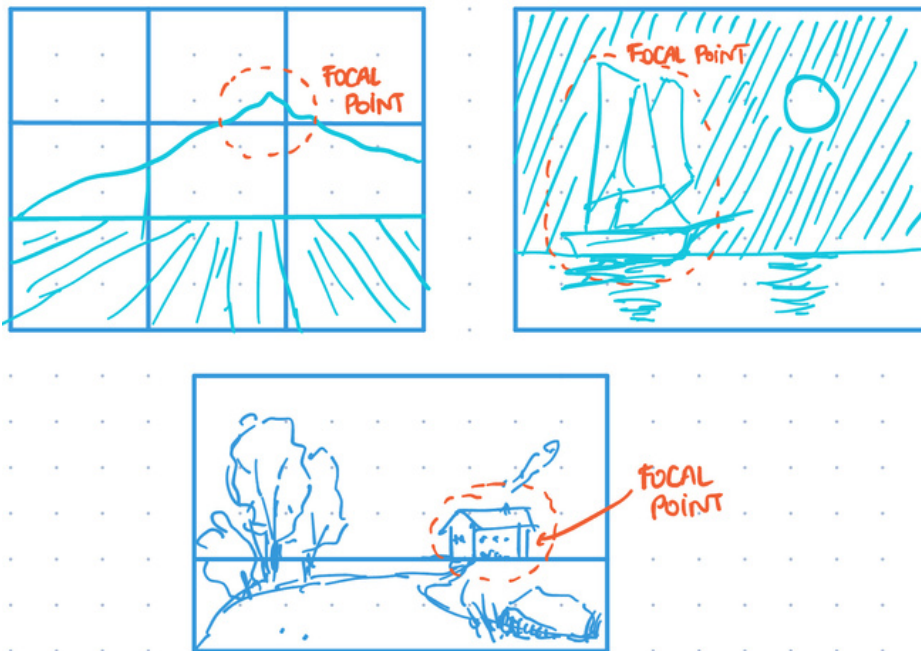
Don't focus only on the intersection points, **the lines that create the grid also work** to place the focus elements

This matches the rule of not placing your horizon line in the **middle of the painting** but rather on the upper or lower line

# THE FOCAL POINT

The focal point is the part of your painting that most **draws the eye of the viewer**. It's said to be the most important part of the picture, which you want to **highlight because it conveys the message** you want to share.

Focal points are not only obtained in the initial sketch, the **colors** you use in the painting play a big role to emphasize it.



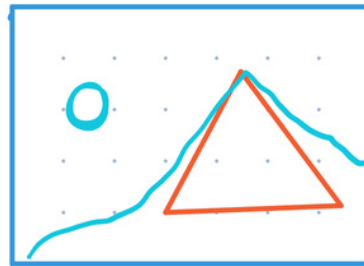
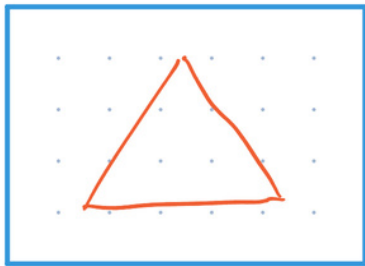
According to the previous rules, it's a good idea to **place the focal point in one of the points of intersection or lines** of the rule of thirds

When you have several focal points, they'll be understood more easily if they follow a **clear hierarchy**: a primary focal point, a secondary one, etc

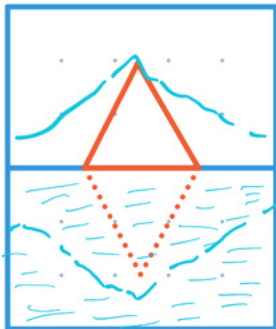
**High contrast areas** get more attention, you can use them to better define your focal point. You can create them by placing a bright color over a neutral background or a very dark color over or next to a light one

# TRIANGULAR COMPOSITION

Triangular composition means making use of a triangle within the picture. They can provide stability to a painting and they are quite harmonious. They're often used to group three elements of the image together.



Example:  
Mountain  
close-up



Example: mountain reflection

⚠ Although we said before symmetry is less interesting, it could be the whole point of your painting or message.

This composition type is very useful when you paint **mountain landscapes**, but not only in that case!

You **don't actually need to see a drawn triangle** when you use this composition, just arrange the elements as such

Which triangle you mimic is important! **Isosceles or equilateral** triangles will make the painting more stable