

MESSAGE FROM ERIC

- JUNE -

SOFT EDGES — THE SECRET WEAPON

Consider all the “Rules of Composition”— the do’s and do nots — and ask yourself: why are they labeled as such? In many cases it’s because they are to keep us from creating a riveting visual discomfort: the viewers’ eyes will not be able to travel throughout the picture plane. But, if I violate a “Rule”, is it possible to mitigate the negative fallout from it, and still find the violation acceptable in an otherwise good composition? The answer is yes, and one of the most effective tools in our arsenal is the soft edge.

Consider the following do nots:

Horizon Line bisecting the picture plane.
Two trees in parallel rather than three.
A line going out to the corner of the picture plane.

Awkward geometric shapes such as square, triangle, circle, parallelogram.
Shapes in tangent.

There are others; so many that one can suffer from paralysis by analysis.

One of the best solutions is an effective incorporation of the soft edge. Soft edges allow the viewers eye to pass through an area without being arrested by an awkward passage.

So consider making one side of a pair of trees soft edged, allow the horizon line to drift off into the sky at a point away from the area of dominance, let the building meet the sidewalk with a soft edge as it comes to the corner of the painting, and allow the corner of a parallelogram roof drift off into the trees.

Hold “Rules” loosely in your hands; one of your most effective tools to violate them is the soft edge.

Keep your brush wet! - ERIC



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