

Drawing the Collection Lesson 4 – Composition: The Rule of Thirds

What is the rule of thirds? The rule of thirds is very commonplace in art as it instantly helps to add tension, balance and interest to your drawing. Rule of thirds can work very well within a rectangle, however, squares can be harder to create a balanced drawing even when sticking to the 'rules.'

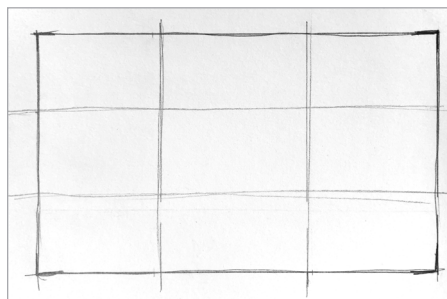
You can see in the Frances H.D. Crumrine painting at right how there are numerous examples of aligning focal points within the rule of thirds; the top of the yellow building aligns with top horizontal line, the smokestacks are butted up to the vertical line, the top of the blue shed on the left side sits along on the bottom horizontal line. You'll also notice the stairs lead up to a doorway that is located near one of the intersections of these lines, making it a focal point.

Now let's try a simple landscape thumbnail sketch using this technique.

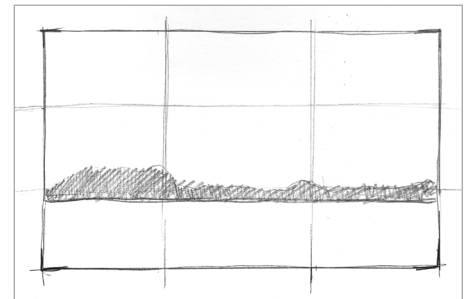
When creating a composition for a landscape this is what you do »



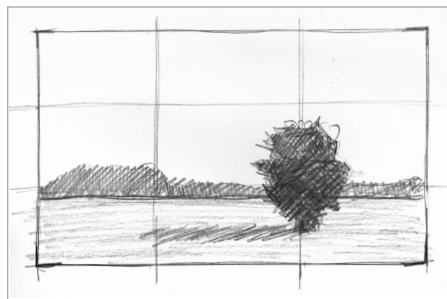
Frances H.D. Crumrine | FACTORY SCENE, PROVINCETOWN, MA | oil on canvas | undated



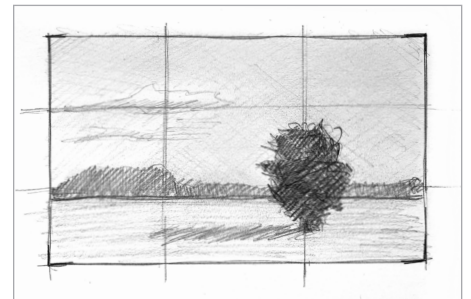
1. Divide your page horizontally and vertically into thirds.



2. Decide whether to have your horizon on the top third or the bottom third (the bottom third is always easier to balance, it helps to make the sky look vast and imposing).



3. Align areas of focus at the intersection between the lines.



4. Add some shading and marvel at your genius!"

We'd love to see your sketches!
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