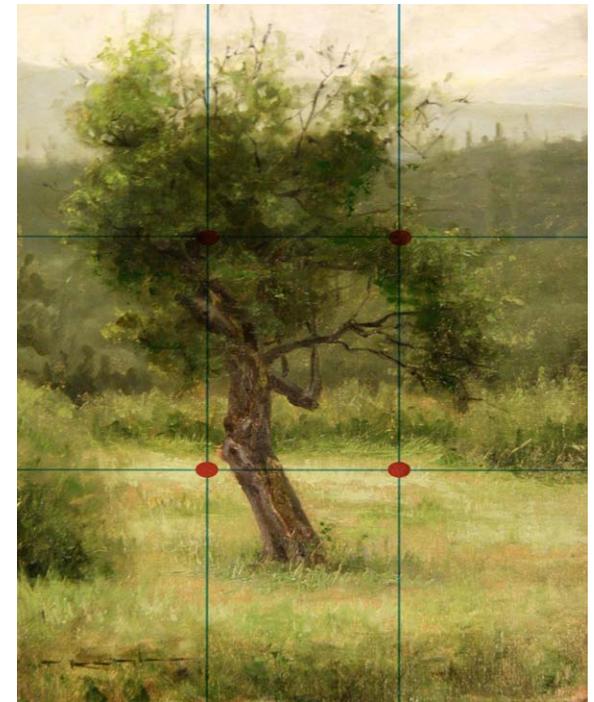
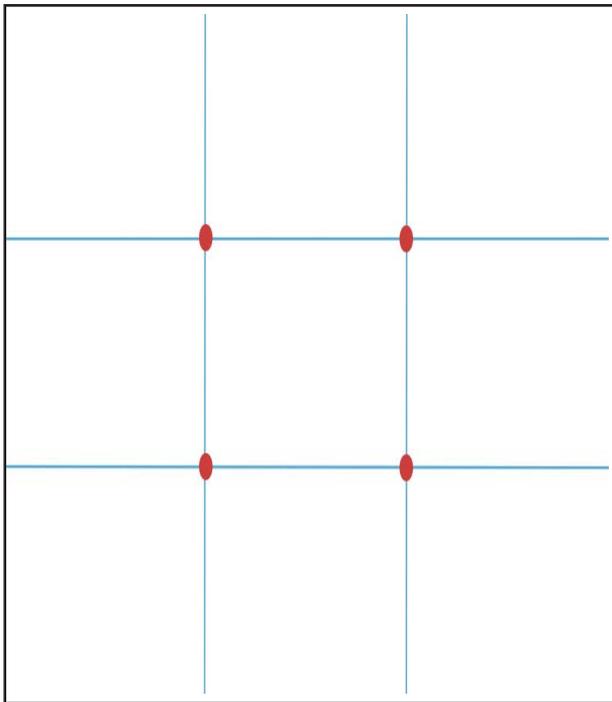


Composition

Composition is arguably one of the most important components of a moving work of art. It is, however, an aspect that has been neglected in most academic settings – settling for what visually (subjectively) “feels” right. There are, however, objective approaches to composing an image. There are many good books written on the subject and I advise artists to educate themselves. This is a very abbreviated explanation as a starting point to help artists.

Rule of Thirds

Perhaps the most basic compositional arrangement is the rule of thirds. Massing of colors and values can simplify complicated themes/motifs. This approach simply encourages placement of focal points on the points of intersection. The reason that the rule of thirds works is that it is a derivative of the proceeding harmonic armature on the next page.



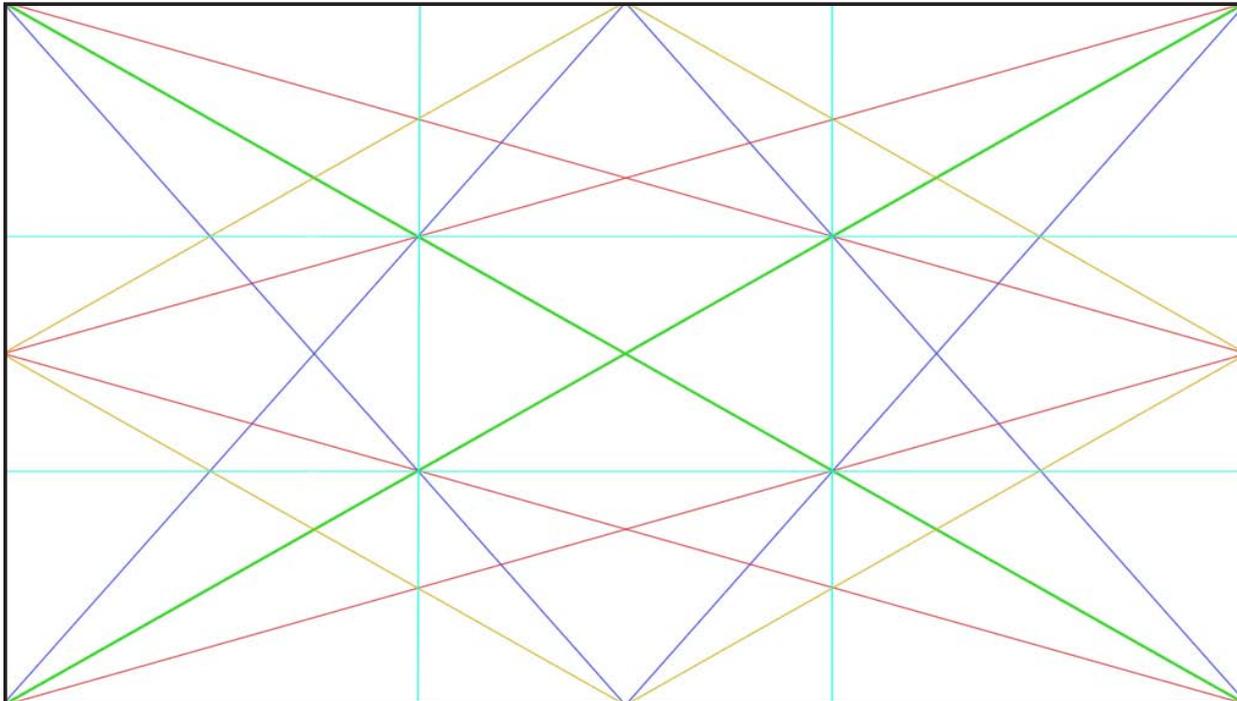
Harmonic Armatures

For artists wishing to create more elaborate visual arrangements, armatures are very helpful.

Proportions that are pleasing our ear (audible harmonics) are also pleasing to our eye (visual harmonics). Intervals of one third, one quarter, one half, two thirds and three quarters (both in audible and visual harmonics) result in positive sensory responses. There are several visual armatures that artists can use to create pleasing compositions. Root rectangle armatures as well as the Golden Mean are effective configurations.

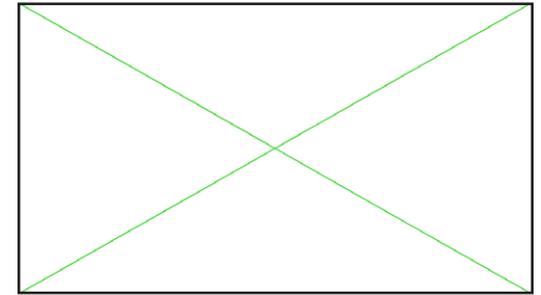
The one I use most often is a simple generic armature that can be applied to any rectangle configuration/proportion from a square to a long thin rectangle. The major intersections correlate to the musical harmonic scale (one third, one quarter, one half, two thirds and three quarters).

Generic harmonic armature:

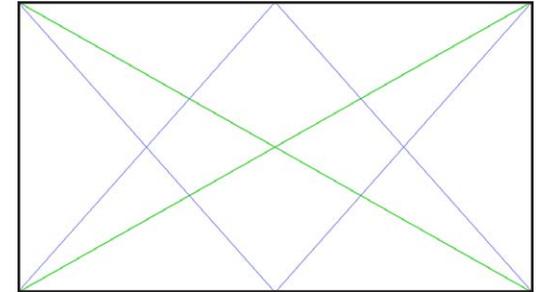


Steps to create a generic harmonic armature

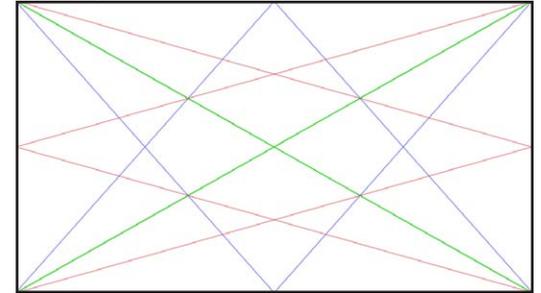
corner to corner



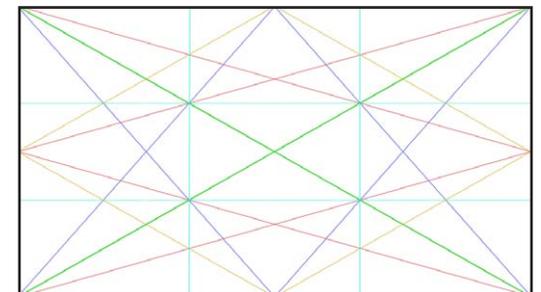
corner to 1/2 mark



remaining corners to 1/2 mark



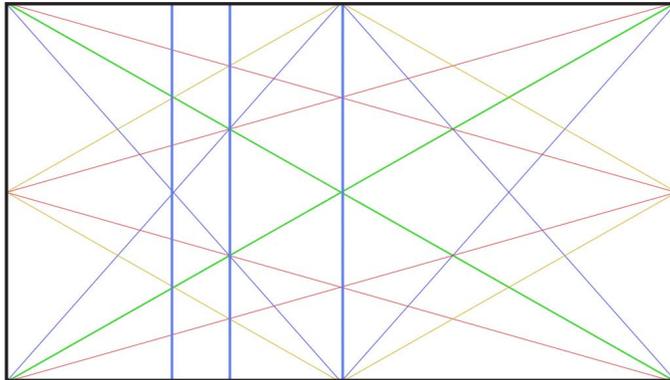
1/2 mark to 1/2 mark



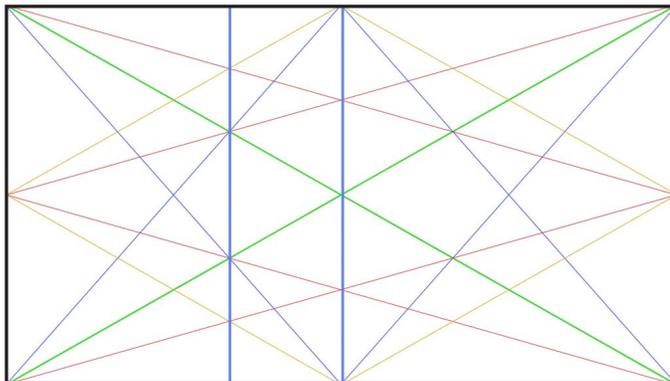
Locations of Harmonics

The samples below indicate the harmonic proportion locations. Anchoring focal points and leading lines using these locations will help ensure a pleasing composition.

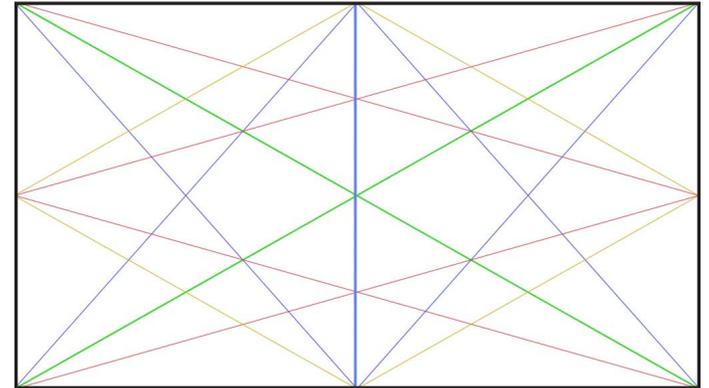
1/4 mark called out



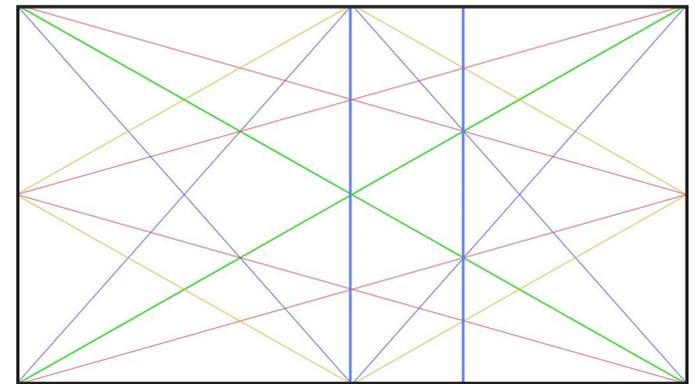
1/3 mark called out



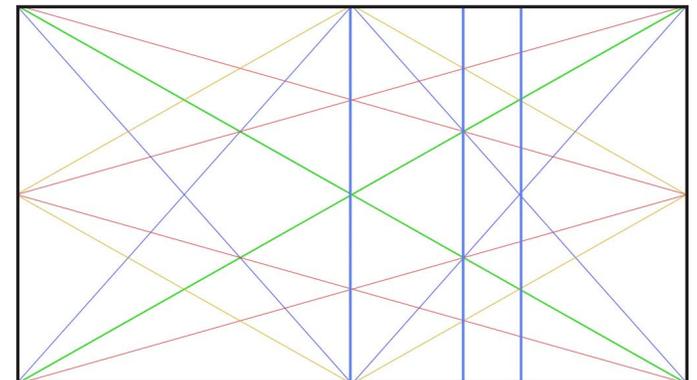
1/2 mark called out



2/3 mark called out



3/4 mark called out



Samples of Armature in Use

You should always plan out your final layout before moving to the final work to be sure you have as solid composition.

To use an armature in planning out your composition, it is helpful to simply sketch your masses and elements directly on an armature pre-drawn or printed on sketch paper. Consider the location of elements based on the lines and intersections. Artists can use the angles as leading lines and the intersections as points of interest. The samples below help to illustrate how an underling armature can direct thoughtful placement. Elements are not simply subjectively arranged because they feel “right” – they are objectively arranged to be visually pleasing.

