Assignment 3: Composition

Due:

Composition is a personal decision on how you compose what you shoot. Some people already have a strong sense of composition but those who don’t need worry, it will improve as your awareness does and the more photographs you shoot. Remember that your eye is more sensitive than the camera’s vision. You must become acutely conscious of every element in the viewfinder before composition becomes intuitive, a matter of feeling rather than thinking.

BASIC CHOICES:

1. Camera Orientation: Horizontal, vertical or on an angle: try all your options in each situation.
2. Placement in the frame: many folks like to automatically place the primary subject dead center of the frame—like a bull’s eye. This can be effective but also try changing that placement—high, low, left, right, angled or skewed. Pay attention to placement of the horizon line. Try several different positions.
3. The edge of the frame: your subject extends in 4 directions. What you choose to include and eliminate forces a concentration on the pictures edge. What happens at the edge is at least as important as what occurs in the middle of the frame. The edge is the line that separates in from out—you can use it to isolate an element, to create relationships or juxtapositions, to interrupt or fragment. Literally and consciously run your eye around the edge of the viewfinder. Use the edge of the frame to create or interrupt shapes, to activate the negative space and to eliminate distracting elements.
4. Distance: do you want to show the whole scene or a significant detail? Do both. For emphasis, photograph each situation from a little too far away, a little too close and several points in between.
5. Vantage point: many people shoot only from their own eye level. Try a “bird’s eye view” as well as the viewpoint of a worm. Don’t just stand there—move. Bend, squat, kneel, lay down, climb up. Do anything you can (safely) to change your vantage point. Shoot from the waist and or hold the camera over your head (you don’t always have to look through the viewfinder).
6. Viewpoint: don’t just take a picture from a straight on, frontal point of view. How does your subject look from a 45-degree angle? From the side? The back? The top or bottom?

Other things to try…

1. Shoot an entire roll with your camera set on the closest point of focus and move around until you find interesting compositions.
2. Think like a Cubist painter and shoot an entire roll exploring distances, angles, perspectives, details and sides of one object or situation.
3. Shoot an entire roll of an object or situation so that the proof sheet is the final product.