

Total time:
4-6 hours



Difficulty Level: Advanced
beginner to intermediate

Skill Points:

- Identifying patterns
- Learning the difference between patterns and repetition
- Using interrupts within a pattern and identifying emerging patterns

THE SECRET OF PATTERNS



There is confusion among photographers regarding the **art definition** of pattern and repetition. Here are the definitions...

Repetition refers to similar objects, or shapes, that appear repeatedly in a composition. **Pattern** is a combination of similar objects, or shapes, repeated in a **regular arrangement** within a composition. It's a very fine line between the two.

KEY LESSON: Pattern is important because it touches upon another key function of the human mind, and that is rhythm. An irregular pattern can have an irregular rhythm. A visually regular pattern, with an interrupt, is the musical equivalent to a crescendo. It garners immediate attention.



Birds in Flight: Is this pattern or repetition? Re-read the definitions. This is repetition. The image does not match the definition of pattern.

Green House: This is pattern. Pattern is a combination of objects, or shapes, repeated in a regular arrangement within a composition. What is the difference between this image and the birds? The birds do not have a regular arrangement.

Biker Hands : This is a use of pattern. The represented objects aren't exactly the same, but similar. The rings are regularly arranged within the composition. The tattoos are mirrored on both sides. This image definitely has a rhythm through pattern. The thumbs in the pockets break the rhythm, creating a pseudo-crescendo.

Peeling Paint: Does this represent a pattern? It does. We have similar shapes in an organized arrangement. It's important to note that a pattern doesn't need to have a lot of objects. Three objects can establish a pattern.



South Korea stairs: Learning to anticipate patterns, as they develop, is a key skill to your growth as a photographer. Practice watching multiple elements in motion, and then seeing the pattern develop before it actually forms.



ACTION ASSIGNMENT!

- 1- Organize a photo shoot where you will go in search of patterns. Set a goal as to how many you will find and photograph.
 - Find and photograph a pattern that has only three elements (think of peeling paint).
 - Find and photograph several patterns that have multiple elements. Make sure they appear in a regular arrangement, or you are creating a repetition.
 - Try watching a pattern develop, and then creating the shot just as it does... (think of South Korea stairs).
- 2- Print your photos, so that you can examine them as a group.

HOW DID YOU DO?

- Did you meet your goal for finding the number of patterns? Did you use different subjects and objects?
- After reviewing your results in print, do you think that all of your attempts meet the definition of a pattern and not simply repetition?