

Visual Juxtaposition

April 2025 Assignment

To be shown at the May general meeting

By Jeffrey Sward

It is useful to understand common usages of the definition of visual juxtaposition in photography.

Webster

An instance of placing two or more things side by side often to compare or contrast or to create an interesting effect

American Institute of Graphic Arts

- Visual juxtaposition is inquiry through contrast, facilitated by the side-by-side positioning of two images, or images and text.
- In order to create a point of juxtaposition, the resulting image must contain at least two elements of equal visual weight.

Octet Design Journal

- Juxtaposition is a visual design technique that involves placing contrasting or similar elements close together to create an effect.
- It can be used to create contrast, highlight differences, or evoke emotion.

Some Juxtaposition Effects

- Tension
- Ambiguity
- Is the objective comparing similar or dissimilar objects?
- Slight differences
- Major differences
- Conceptual and/or physical connections
- Humor
- Often unintended or "discovered"

How to Create Images using Juxtaposition

- Identify the Core Message(s)
- The quest for meaning
- Select Your Elements (gimmicks)
- Choose the Contrasts
- Refer to elements of Art
- Experiment and Iterate
- Juxtaposition is art not science
- A broken clock is correct twice a day

Examples



Anonymous



Mini Coopers c. 1959 - 2021



Liana Bumde NT



Becky Anderson:
NT



Ruth Bernard:
Two Leaves, 1952



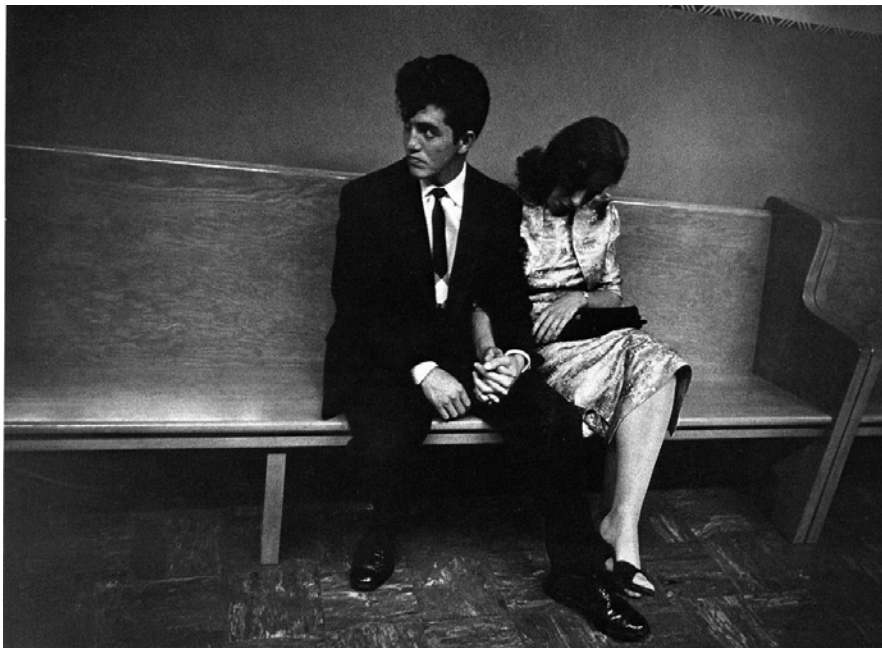
Margaret Bourke-White:
Depression Food Line, 1937



Harry Callahan:
Chicago, 1960



Henri Cartier-Bresson:
The Big Game, Brussels, Belgium (1932)



Robert Frank:
City Hall, Reno, Nevada, 1956

In 1956, Robert Frank picked up two hitchhikers in Blackfoot, Idaho and let them drive the car at night. In the era of bench seats, three people were in the front seat, with Frank in the rightmost position. Frank was able to take this photo using his Leica rangefinder, which is small and unobtrusive.



Hansel:
Trade In



Man Ray:
Black and White, 1926



Najam Quraishy:
Africans



Weegee the Famous:
The Critic, 1943 (Mrs. Marie Muller Kavanaugh (AKA Mrs. George Washington Kavanaugh), Elizabeth Wharton Drexel (AKA Lady Decies), unknown person)

Despite appearances, nearly all Weegee photographs were staged to some extent. In order to create *The Critic*, Weegee signaled his assistant Liotta, who released the disheveled woman and gave her a little nudge into the frame. Judging by the photograph, she is reeling, barely able to stand. If there was one thing Weegee knew from being in a scrum of press photographers, it was how to make a few shots very quickly, swapping in sheets of film and flashbulbs as fast as he could. He caught Mrs. Kavanaugh and Lady Decies as the third woman observed them. A moment later, the two ladies turned, passed him, and stepped into the lobby, facing half a dozen other photographers with the same tight smiles. Much later, Liotta told the journalist Joyce Wadler that there were three or four bulbs set off, almost too fast to parse. That was it. No different from Weegee shooting outside police headquarters any day of the week. Although Weegee had staged the sidewalk encounter, he couldn't have known quite how perfectly the tableau would square up on film. The two ladies in fur are almost pure white, nearly blown out by his flash. Mrs. Kavanaugh's smile is taut and paper-thin, the essence of fatuousness; Lady Decies looks quizzical, perhaps a little sour, her mouth pursed. They both face the camera square on. The drunken woman, by contrast, is caught in perfect 90-degree profile, giving her features a sharpness against the nearly black background. Weegee wanted a contrast; he got more than he could have asked for. P.S.N.W. Ayer & Son, the big advertising agency who has the account of De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd., bought this picture for their files. They examined the photograph with a magnifying glass and said the diamonds were real.



Weegee the Famous at Work