

Everyday Abstracts

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Agenda

- What is an abstract?
- What makes a photograph abstract?
- Visual design in abstract photography
- Techniques

What Is An Abstract?

ab·stract [adj. ab-strakt, ab-strakt; n. ab-strakt; v. ab-strakt for 10-13, ab-strakt for 14] Show IPA

5. Fine Arts . a. of or pertaining to the formal aspect of art, *emphasizing lines, colors, generalized or geometrical forms, etc., especially with reference to their relationship to one another.*

b. (often initial capital letter) *pertaining to the nonrepresentational* art styles of the 20th century.

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/abstract>

What Makes a Photograph Abstract?

- In painting, many semi-representational forms are accepted as abstract
 - Impressionism, cubism, fauvism
- Typically any image that is non-representational will be considered abstract
- Pieces of the whole (abstraction)
- Intentional camera movement (impressionism)

Communicating Visually

- Abstracts communicate different things to different people
 - Depends on point of view and mood
- Arrangement of elements in the picture space dictates some emotional responses/reactions

Visual Design in Abstract Photography

- Line
- Shape
- Color
- Texture
- Perspective

Line

- 4 types of lines
 - Contour - Outline shapes
 - Dividing - May outline shapes, but also divide spaces
 - Decoration - Embellish objects
 - Gesture - Show or suggest motion, direction and velocity
- 3 line styles
 - Straight - Suggest directness
 - Curved - Suggest laziness or restlessness
 - Zigzag - Suggest high energy
- 4 directions of lines
 - Horizontal - Static. Suggests peace or rest
 - Vertical - Static. Suggests strength
 - Oblique - Dynamic. Suggests motion
 - Diagonal - Dynamic. Suggests structure

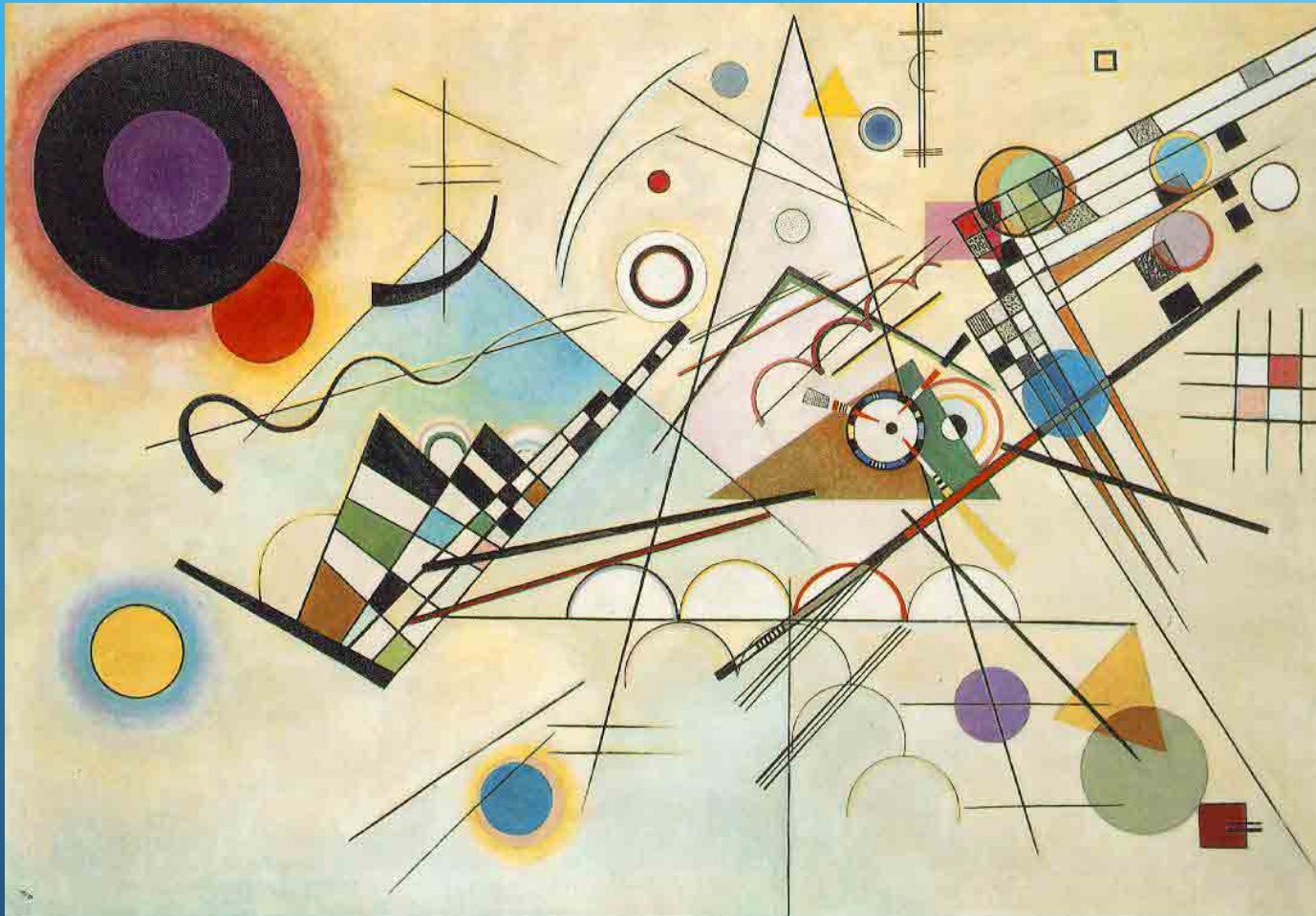
Shape

- Circle - Most powerful shape, suggests feminine qualities, completeness, eternity
- Square - Suggests stability and organization
- Equilateral Triangle - Suggests masculine qualities, movement and directs the eye



Composition VIII

Wassily Kandinsky



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Color

- Harmonious
- Complimentary
- Psychology
 - Red - Passion, Intensity, Love
 - Blue - Calming, Serenity
 - Yellow - Cheerful, Warm
 - Green - Peace, Harmony
 - Orange - Flamboyant, Exciting
 - Purple - Wealth, Wisdom, Respect



Texture

- Two types of texture
 - Tactile
 - Implied
- Tactile - Things like rust or sand paper that we relate to the texture of the object in life
- Implied - The way a surface looks as if it feels

Blue Poles

Jackson Pollock



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Perspective

- Perspective cannot exist in a photograph
- Can be implied through visual techniques
 - Converging lines
 - Overlapping shapes
 - Size differences
 - Tonal differences
 - Depth of field

Nude Descending a Staircase, #2 Marcel Duchamp



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Techniques

- Macro
 - Light Table
 - Flowers
- Close Up
- Montage
- Camera Toss

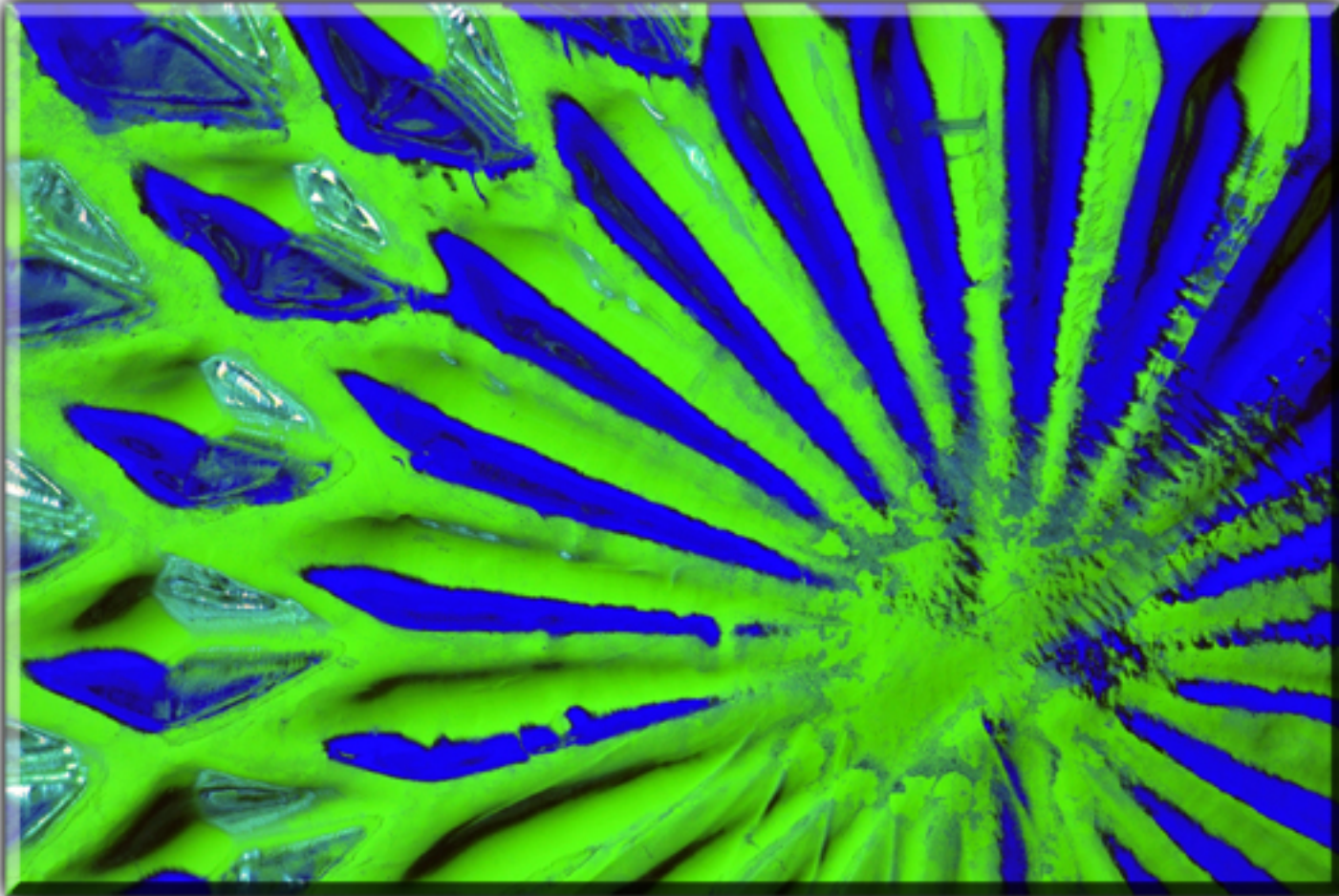
Macro

- Means 1:1 up to 10:1
 - Area of the sensor is equal to or larger than the area being photographed
- Doesn't require a big investment
 - Reversing ring with wide angle lens will do
 - Extension tubes reduce focus distance
- Manual focus
- Tripod
- Optional equipment:
 - Live View
 - Focusing rail

Macro - Light Table Technique

- Light table projects through gels
- Cheap glass sits on plexiglass above gels
- Camera on tripod over top of the glass
 - Use Live View to get precise focus
- Use cable release or self-timer to avoid touching the camera during the exposure
- Use mirror lockup to keep camera even steadier

Macro - Light Table



Macro - Flowers Technique

- Large flowers make easier subjects to work with
- Camera on tripod close to petals
 - Use Live View to get precise focus
- Use cable release or self-timer to avoid touching the camera during the exposure
- Use mirror lockup to keep camera even steadier

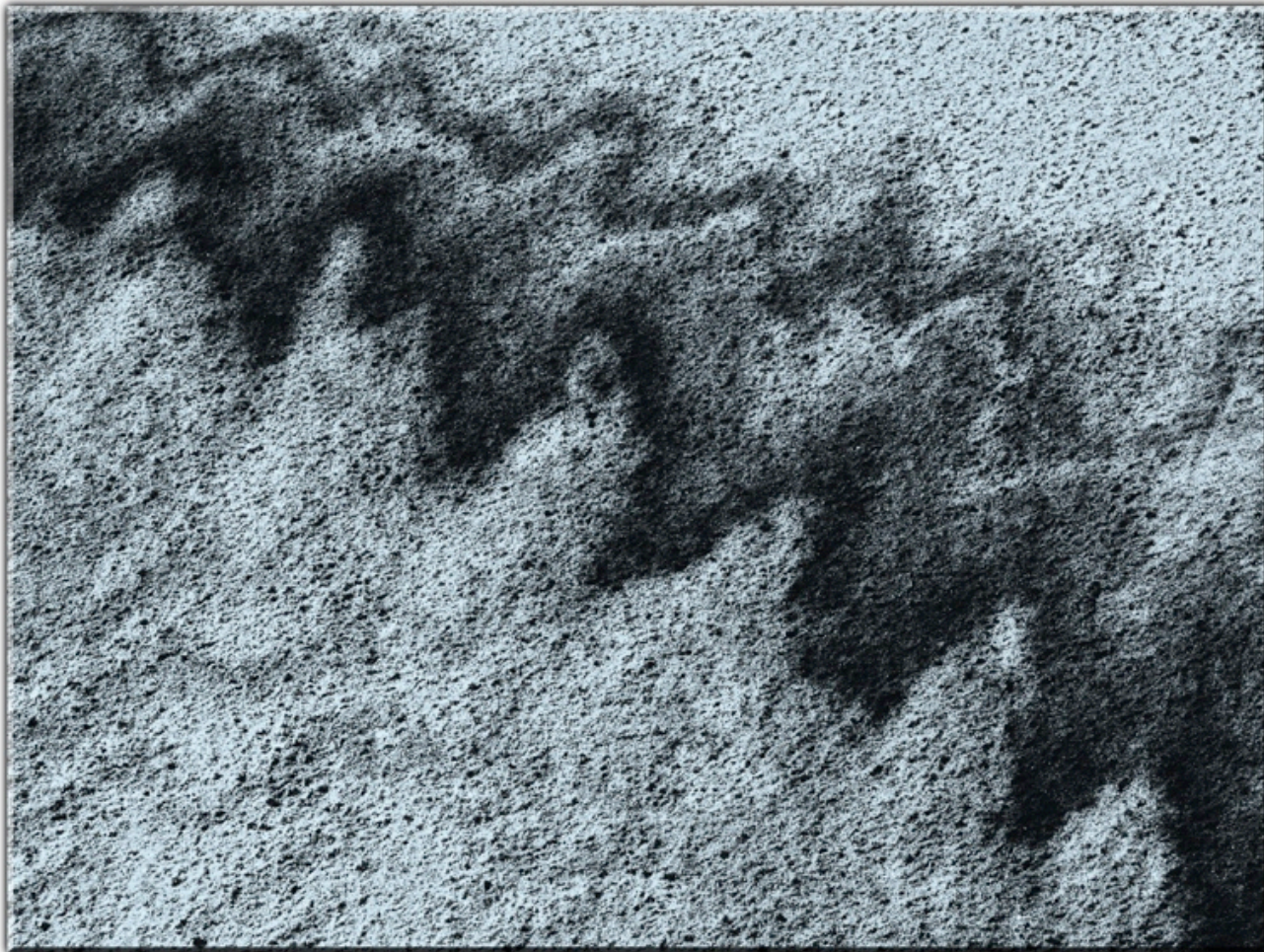
Macro - Flowers



Close Up

- So close that the object is not recognizable
- Line and Texture become the focus

Close Up



Montage

- Photoshop technique
- Something to do photographically on cold or rainy days
- Use photos that you've already taken
- Strong graphic lines tend to work best
- Types
 - Multiple exposure montage
 - Reverse montage
 - Mirror montage

Montage - Multiple Exposures Technique

- Shoot a series of images slightly out of register
 - Panning or zoom and rotate
- Open series of images in PS
 - Typical series are 9, 10 and 16 exposures
- Copy each image into a new layer of one image
- Adjust the Opacity of each additional layer by $1/\text{Layer \#}$
 - 2nd layer is 50% Opacity ($1/2$)
 - 3rd layer is 33% Opacity ($1/3$)
 - 4th layer is 25% Opacity ($1/4$)
 - 5th layer is 20% Opacity ($1/5$)
 - 6th layer is 17% Opacity ($1/6$)
 - 7th layer is 14% Opacity ($1/7$)
 - 8th layer is 13% Opacity ($1/8$)
 - 9th layer is 11% Opacity ($1/9$)
 - 10th layer is 10% Opacity ($1/10$)

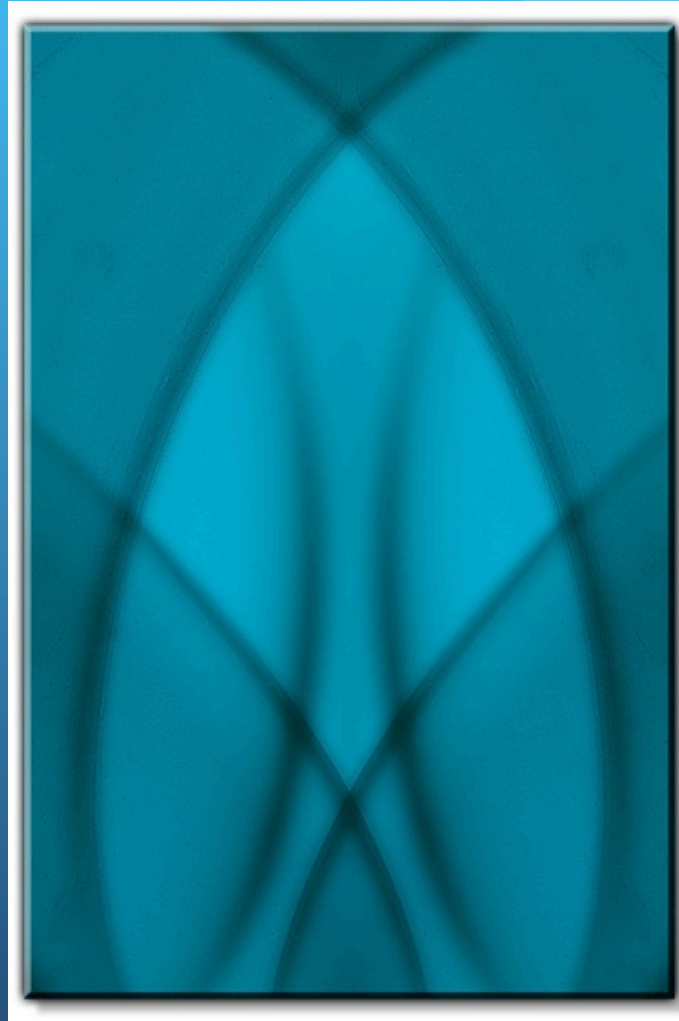
Montage - Multiple Exposures



Reverse Montage Technique

- Open image in PS
- Duplicate the Background layer - Layer, Duplicate Layer...
- Flip or rotate Background copy layer - Edit, Transform, then Flip Horizontal or Flip Vertical or Rotate 180°
- Change Blend Mode of Background copy layer to Multiply
 - Alternate technique - Change Opacity of Background copy layer to 50%

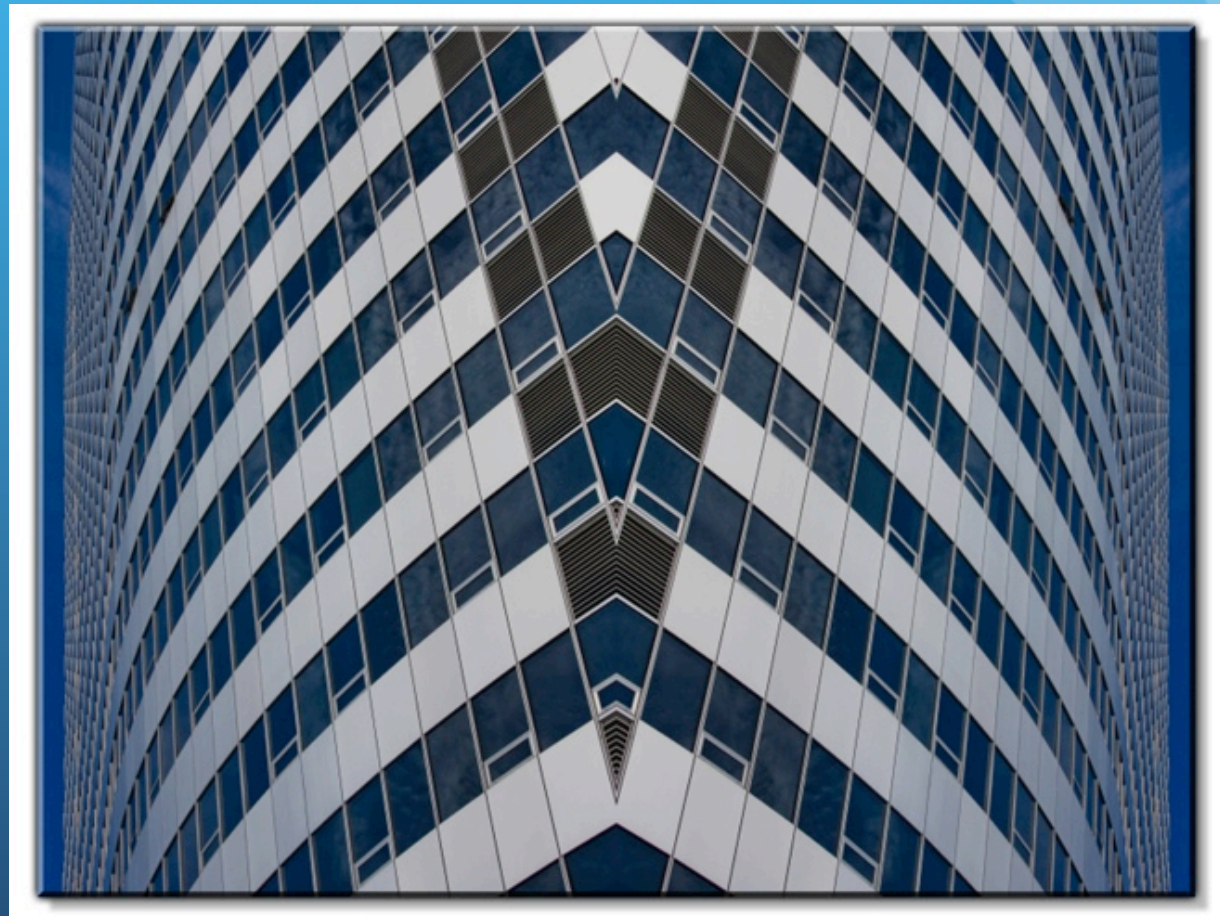
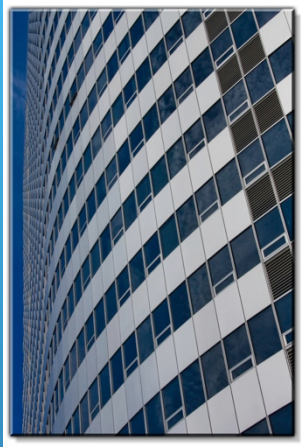
Reverse Montage



Mirror Montage Technique

- Open image in PS
- Unlock Background layer - Double-click Background layer, press OK (renames as Layer 0)
- Resize the Canvas - Image, Canvas size...
 - 100% for Width or Height (whichever direction you want to mirror)
 - Select an Anchor for the outside edge of the montage
 - Default is expand in all directions
- Duplicate Layer 0 - Layer, Duplicate layer...
- Flip Layer 0 copy - Edit, Transform, then Flip Horizontal or Flip Vertical (depending on where the mirroring is occurring)
- Use Move tool to move Layer 0 copy to fill open canvas

Mirror Montage



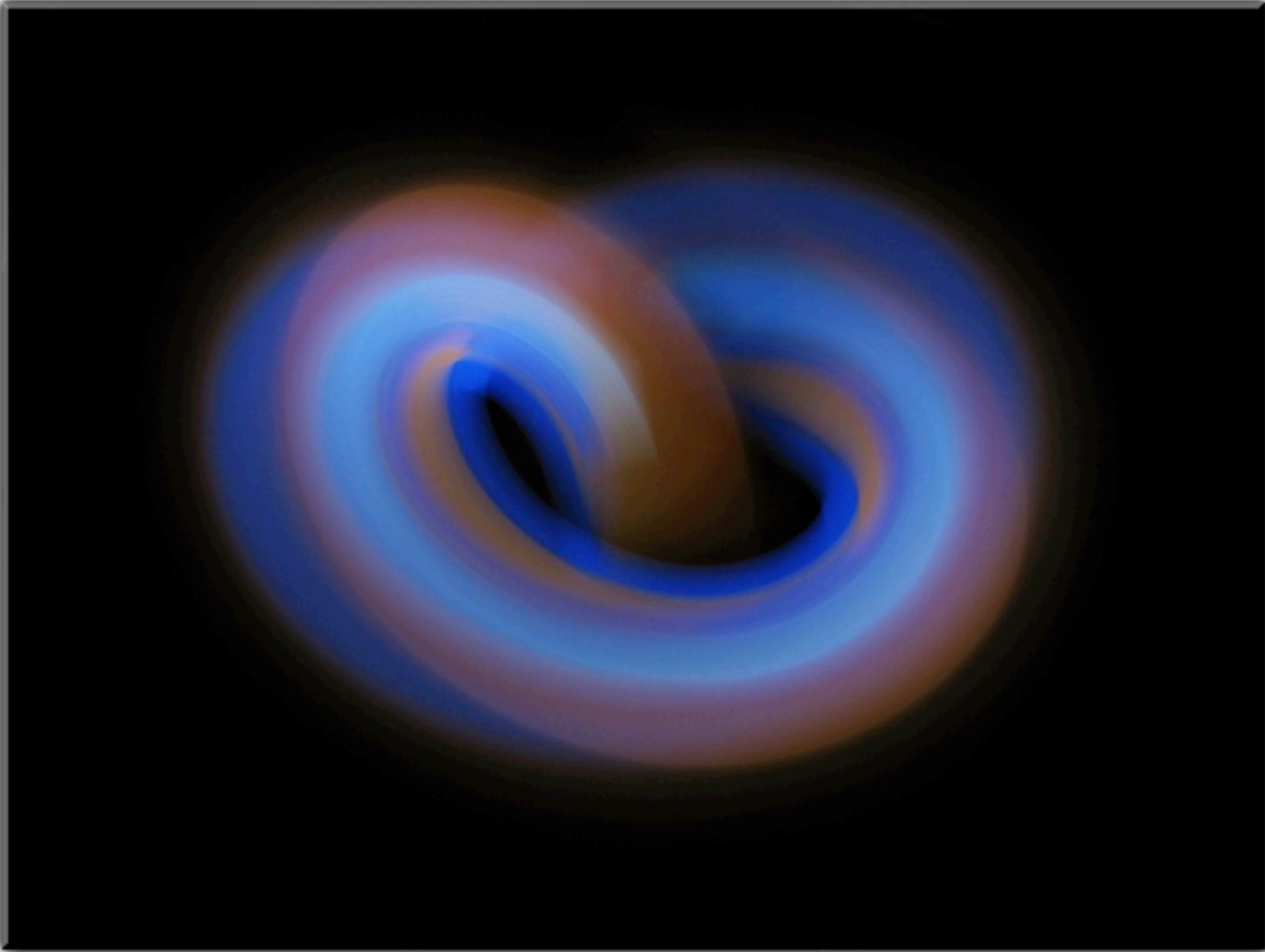
Camera Toss

- Can be scary!
 - Do not try this with your DSLR
- Read about it in Wired Magazine
http://howto.wired.com/wiki/Snap_a_Camera-Toss_Picture
- Things you'll need
 - Point and shoot camera
 - Self-timer
 - Manual controls
 - Lights (Christmas Lights, Candles, Computer Monitor)
 - Much darker background (2 stops or more)

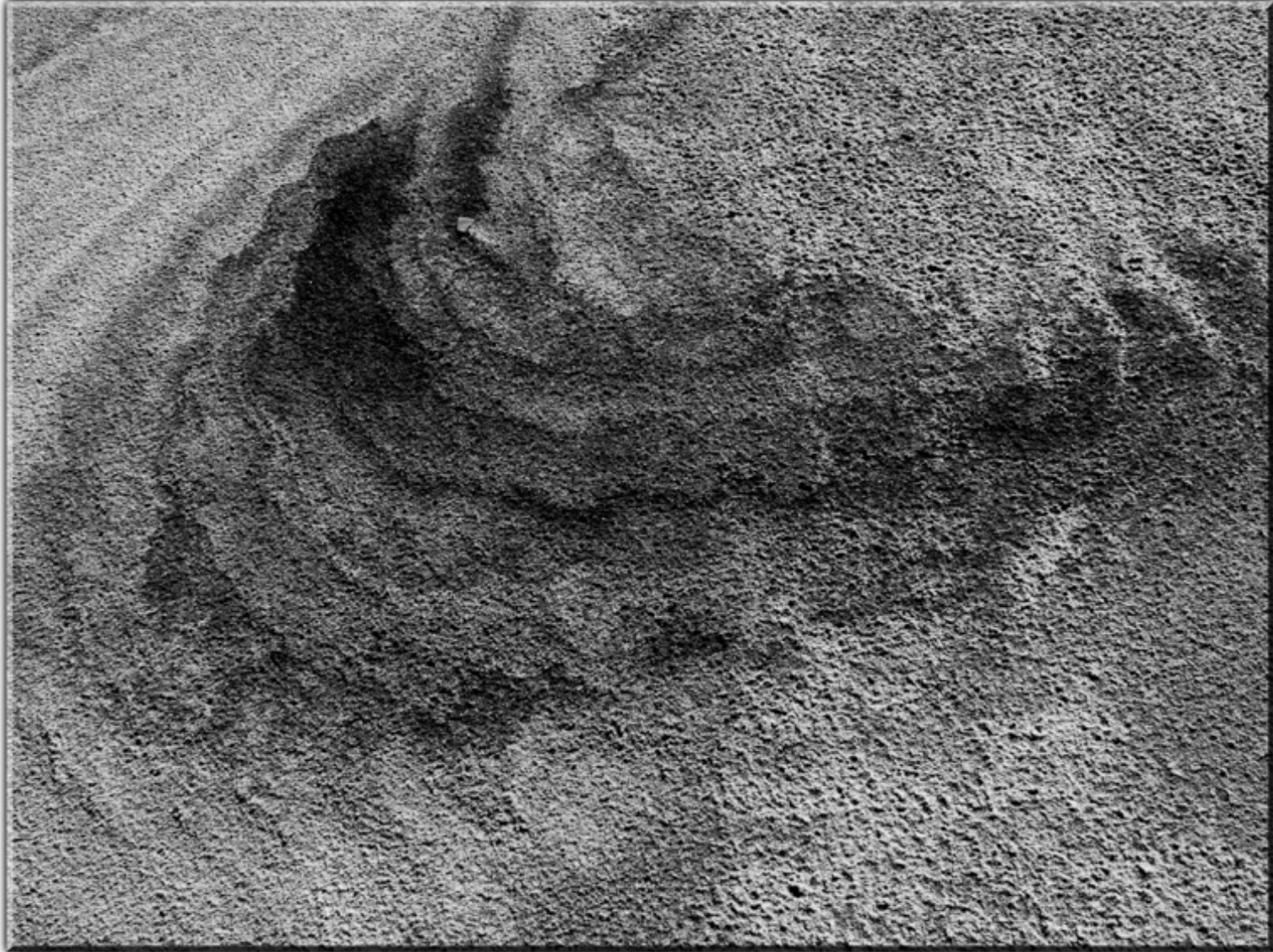
Camera Toss Technique

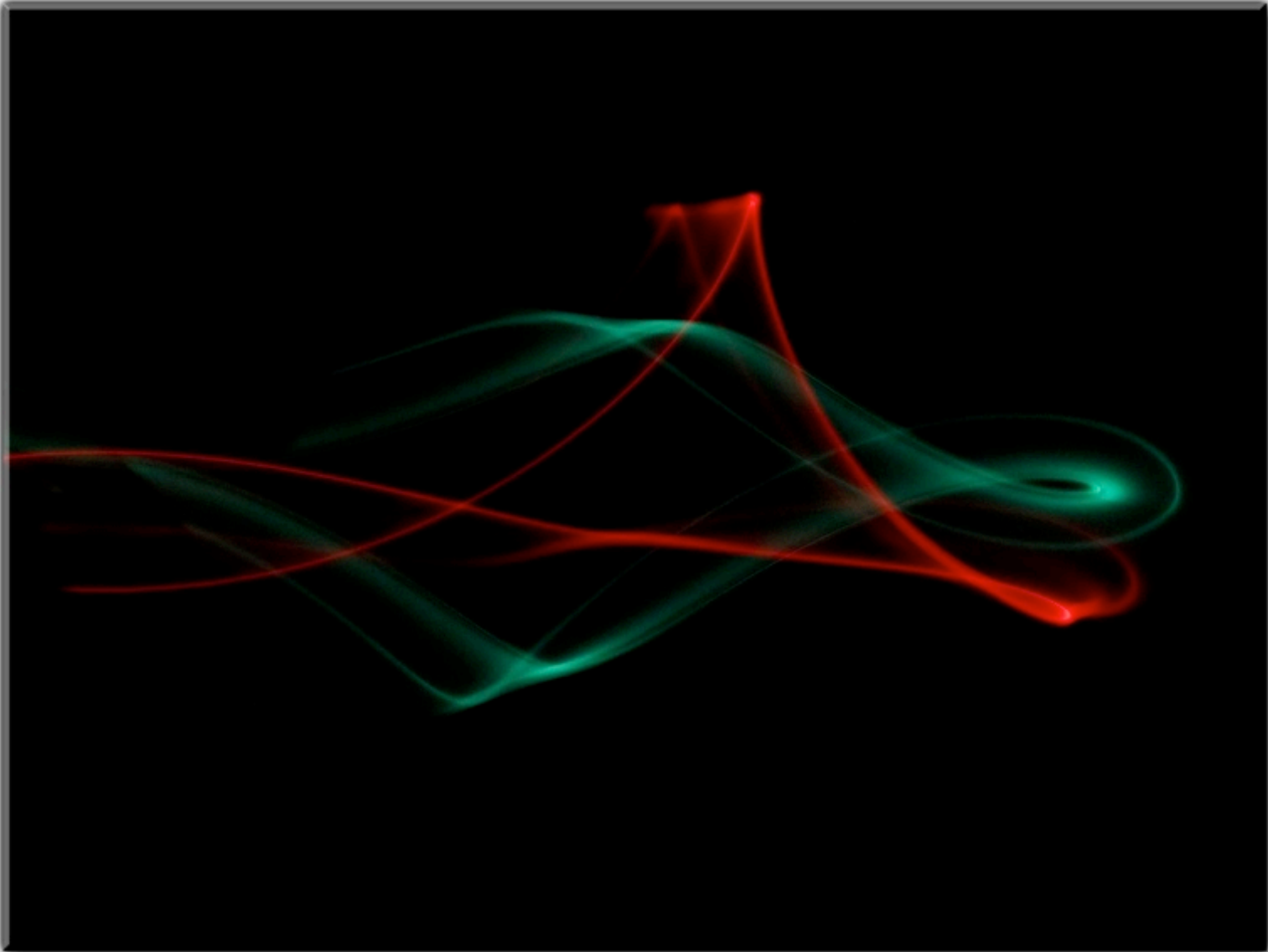
- Lights - At least 3 inches apart
- Set the camera to manual focus
- Set the focus at the approximate distance to the subject ~ 3 feet away
- Set the camera on Manual
 - Shutter speed $\frac{1}{2}$ sec - 1 sec
 - Aperture f/5.6
- Set the self-timer to 2 seconds
- Press the shutter release and toss
 - Rotation is a good thing

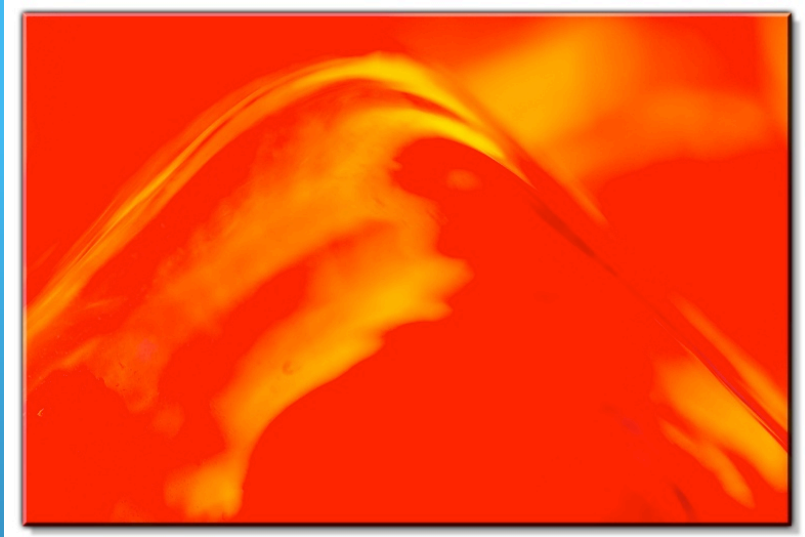
Camera Toss











Focus changes the appearance
of objects

