

6 Tips For Effective Use Of Colour In Photography

Using colour in photography correctly helps draw attention to your subject, and therefore creates a powerful visual effect that is pleasing to the eye. The six tips will help you to understand how to use colour in photography and take even better photos!

1. Use The Colour Wheel To Obtain Contrasting Colours

To use colour in photography effectively it helps to have an understanding of the colour wheel. This is a useful tool to illustrate the basic idea of how different colour combinations work with each other.

Look at the colour wheel to find complementary colours. For example, if you want to find a colour that works well with red, find the colour red on the colour wheel, then look at which colour is directly opposite. In the case of red, the complementary colour is green. These complementary colours are highly contrasting which can create a striking vibrant image.



Using The Colour Wheel To Obtain Contrasting Colours

Orange and blue are also complimentary colors on the color wheel. The pale blue background helps to bring out the orange of the girl's top and her lipstick. This captures the attention of the viewer and draws you into the image.



The colors purple and yellow are another example of contrasting colors. In this image, the use of these colors has made the flowers look more striking and visually appealing.



In this image, the saturated red and green colours create a strong contrast.



2. Colour Accent

A pop of colour is a bright splash of colour that stands out against the other colours in a scene.



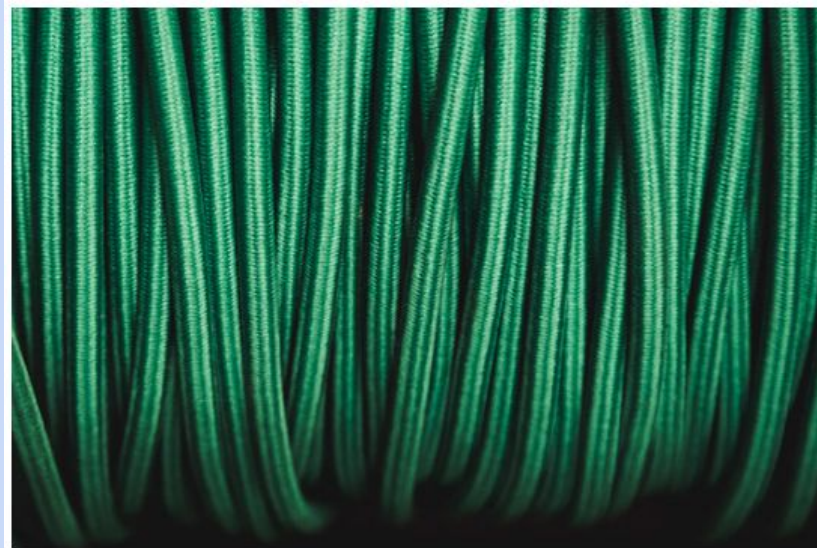
Including a pop of colour in your image will have a powerful impact because it creates a strong focal point that instantly catches the eye.



This could be from using colour in a desaturated composition or, a small pop of a complementary colour.

3. Use Colour To Create An Abstract Photo

An abstract image tends to have only a few visual components. Colour, shape, and texture are the highly effective elements to include in your photos. Use them to create a colourful, abstract image with huge visual appeal.



To create a good abstract image, look for blocks of colour that form strong shapes. Also, try to include plenty of colourful, empty or negative space. Colours and the quality of the light are the main elements to create a striking abstract image.

In this image where there is only one colour, texture, shape, and light are being used to draw the viewer in. Look out for interesting shapes that you can capture.

Using very saturated colours makes for a striking impact. This is nicely illustrated by these colourful shapes found in some plastic buckets, creating a wonderfully abstract and minimalistic feel.

4. Use Bright Colourful Backgrounds

Bright colourful backgrounds make a great backdrop for your photos. If you can find a colourful wall or building then think about using this for your image.



A colourful wall looks great on its own but including a person in the shot adds another dimension to the image. This is partly because the human subject gives the scene a sense of scale, but also because it adds an element of human interest, which is easier for the viewer to engage with.



You don't need to use a wall to get a striking background colour. For example, this dandelion seed head was held up to the sky to create a bright backdrop, with bright colour attracting the viewer's attention.

5. Understand Dominant And Receding Colours

In photography, the dominant colours are the warm colours, e.g. red, yellow, and orange. These colours are considered dominant because they reach our eyes before the cooler colours. The cooler colours are the receding colours, e.g. blue, green and purple.

The warm colours are dominant because they demand your attention first, leaving the receding colours to fade into the background more. In this image, the flower grabs your attention, but it's only fractionally later that you notice the watering can.



6. Use Colour In The Rule Of Thirds Composition

The rule of thirds is a compositional tool that divides a scene into three horizontal or vertical parts, or a mixture of both. So, to make using the rule of thirds more convenient, turn on the grid overlay in your camera settings, giving you a visual guide you can use to line up the elements in the scene.



Split the scene into thirds using horizontal blocks of colour or patterns, creating a powerful and well-balanced image.



The rule of thirds works both horizontally and vertically and is not limited to the use of colour. However, using this compositional tool with colour can be fun and highly rewarding