

*Everything I know about
photography in just a few pages.*

*by
Peter Vanderwarker*

EQUIPMENT

1. Pick a camera you love. Use it a lot.
2. Spend money on good lenses. When I travel, I take 3 small lenses: 18mm, 35mm, and 85mm.
3. Know what each of your lenses sees. (Zooms make you lazy...use your legs instead.)
4. Pack carefully. You want to get each lens without looking. Take minimal gear.

VISUAL THINKING

1. This is a learned skill, so start practicing.
2. Be aware of what you see *and how you construct meaning* from your subject. Ask yourself: “What am I trying to say?”
3. You have complete freedom about what you choose to show the world as a photographer. It is okay to imitate other masters, but try to be as original as you can. Make it *yours*.
4. Read about art: (Robert Hughes and Sebastian Smee). Hang out at the museum, pick your favorites, and figure out why they are good. Keep a journal. Put good stuff on your walls.

HOW to SHOOT

1. Decide what you are looking for before you go out .

OK to make a list.

2. Look first, then shoot. Study your subject. Squint at it. Give yourself time to think: How should it look? Know in advance what your camera will see, before you pull it out. Watch the light.

3. Every so often, click through your shots: Got any winners? If not, figure out how to fix them: better light?....more drama?.....

4. When you get a good subject, shoot the crap out of it!

5. Move to get to the perfect spot to shoot. Get used to moving while keeping your eyes on your subject. *Find the right spot.*

HOW TO EDIT PHOTOS

1. Shoot like a spendthrift, but edit like a miser.
2. You are looking for a winner. Reshoot if you have to.
3. When you get the winner, save it three ways: by Date Taken, by Location, and by Subject. Write the subject on the file.
4. I save only about *ten* Great Family Photos each year.
5. If you have negatives, and old family prints, try to scan them before you die. Write the names on the file, otherwise the world will forget you. (Photography will make you immortal.)

OUTPUT

- 1. Print your work and put it up.*
- 2. Find your audience. Get a show. Make prints.*
- 3. Give prints as gifts. Make cards and send them.*
- 4. Make books. Get good frames.*
- 5. Sign and date your best work.*

(You will be famous.)

SHOOTING INTERIORS

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There is *ONE* good station point: *FIND* it. It is best to move around, up, down, left, right, in, out. *FIND* it.

Do *NOT* go in with your superwide lens and snap away: these pictures look thoughtless.
USE THE LONGEST LENS YOU CAN.

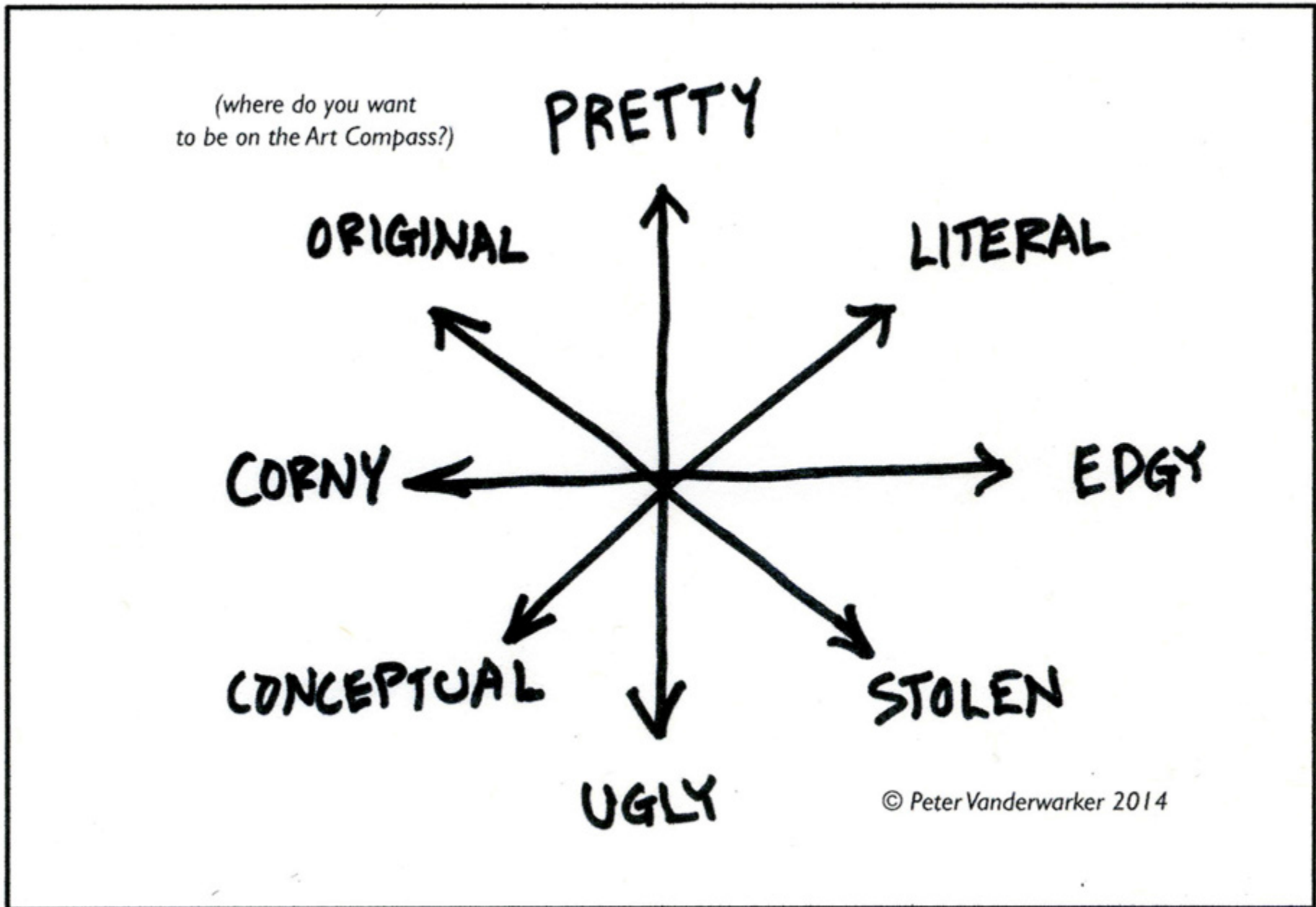
Don't let the camera dictate the shot: use your eye. Squinting helps. Go see some good plays: good theater designers know all about how to make small spaces look big. Look how they use light and how they force perspective.

Make a composition that tells the viewer something good about your design. Is the view out the window important, or is it a distraction? Many HDR interiors look totally fake because the view outside was pasted over the window: it looks like wallpaper.

Remember the *Moth Effect*: the viewer's eye goes to the light. Make that journey a good one — across darker foreground areas to much more interesting light areas that have something meaningful.

Think about the *CORNERS*: they are important. Is something cool happening there? Does the corner even support or dilute the overall feel of the image?

Think about *PEOPLE*: they can make (or break) a shot. Lots of magazines like ABP's: (Anonymous Blurry People), but people well scripted help a lot. *THIS IS HARD*: you have to shoot a LOT to get a person to look good. Avoid people "plopped" randomly in the shot: that is so 90's.... One good tactic: think like a film director: set up a 30second scene and have one person enter, sit down, smile at their cohort, then leave. Shoot like crazy as they do this.





My Tiny Volcano, Yellowstone, January 2017

Peter Vanderwarker

You can see more of this work at: <http://www.gallerynaga.com/artists-list/peter-vanderwarker>