

# NATURAL FRAMING PHOTOGRAPHY



## What is Natural Framing?

- Framing is exactly as it implies, seeing your image through something that frames it such as: a doorway, a window, through leaves of a tree, between people, etc.
- Framing your subject within another is a strong, graphical composition. The idea is to use the frame portion to complement and highlight the subject.



- Framing is the technique of drawing attention to the subject of your image by blocking other parts of the image with something in the scene.



- Framing can add depth and focus points to a photo.



- Keep in mind that the term ‘natural’ in this case points to naturally occurring frames rather than strictly organic subjects in nature.
- Natural frames don’t have to be made of a ‘fixed’ material either. Shadows and light can make for interesting natural frames too. But by relying on the contrast between darkness and highlights, you can create an eerie silhouette or an abstract exploration of form.





## Shadows

- The image of the shadows of the people were framed with the surrounding dark shadow. It is doing what natural framing tells us to – which is to use a frame to **draw attention** to the real subject of the photo





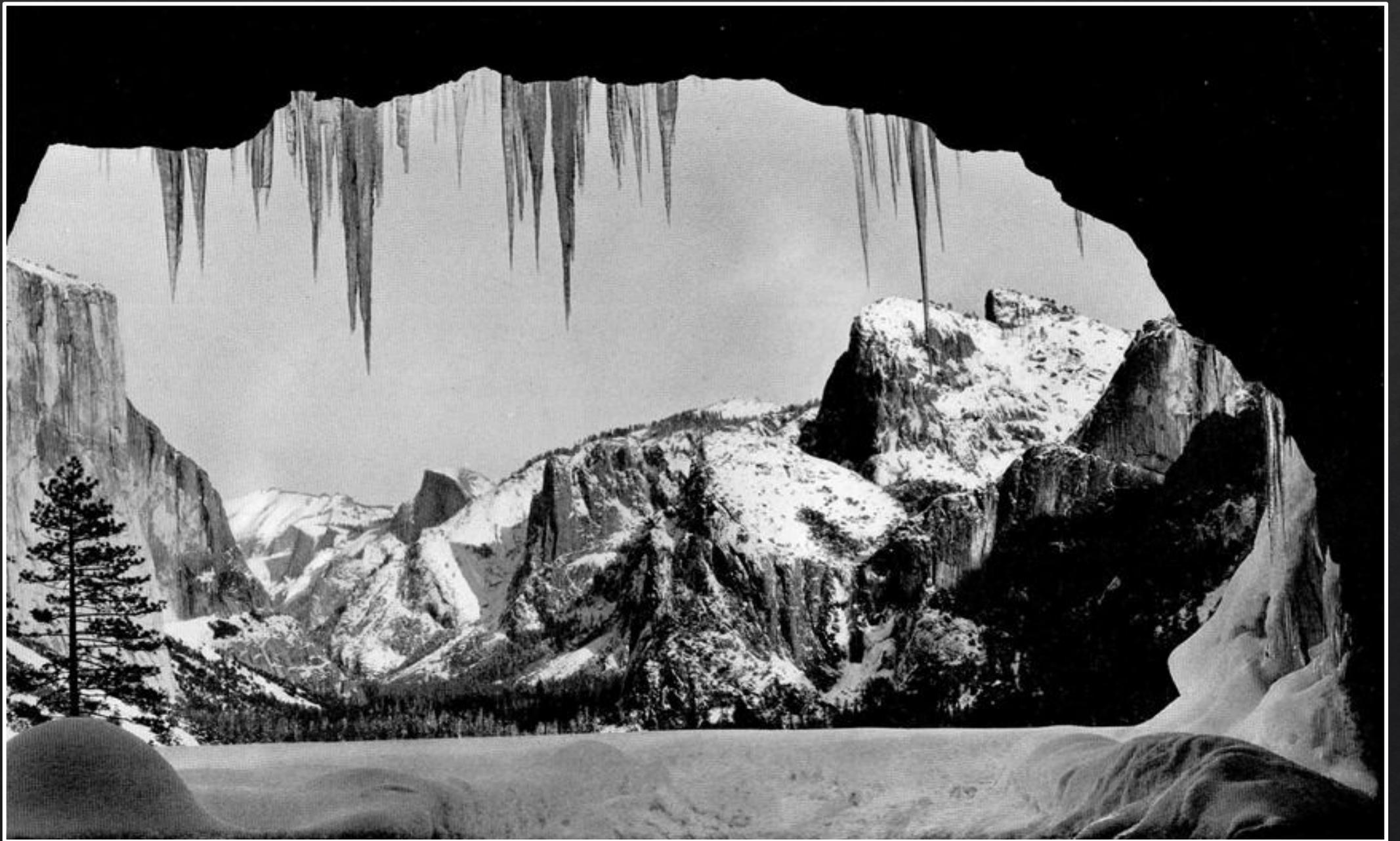


## The benefits of framing pictures:

- **1. giving the photo context** (for example framing a scene with an archway can tell you something about the place you are by the architecture of the archway or including some foliage in the foreground of a shot can convey a sense of being out in nature).
- **2. giving images a sense of depth and layers** (in essence framing a shot generally puts something in the foreground which adds an extra dimension to the shot).



- **3. leading the eye towards your main focal point** (some 'frames' can draw your photo's viewer into the picture just by their shape). Some also believe that a frame can not only draw the eye into a picture but that it keeps it there longer – giving a barrier between your subject and the outside of the shot.
- **4. intriguing your viewer.** Sometimes it's what you can't see in an image that draws you into it as much as (if not more than) what you can see in the picture. Clever framing that leaves those viewing your image wondering a little or imagining what is behind your frame can be quite effective.



## **Why you should use natural framing:**

- It easily draws your viewer's eye into the photo and emphasizes the subject.
- It isolates and separates your subject from what's around it.
- It brings a sense of order and structure to a photo – and the eye loves order.



## When to use natural framing

- To obscure boring sky.



## When to use natural framing

- To obscure boring sky.
- To add depth to an image – especially when the item acting as the frame is not in focus.
- To bring contrasting elements into the photo without detracting from the subject.
- To create structure.
- To create a feeling of a self-contained image, particularly if you are photographing something quite ordinary and simple, a frame will help give depth to the subject.





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- **Focus on the subject, NOT the foreground element which is the frame.** The viewer's eye will go to the sharpest area of the image and you want that to be the subject. You don't want the frame drawing attention, it should support the subject, not take away from it.
- **Make sure the element being used as a frame isn't overly bright.** Like sharp focus, brightness also draws the viewer's attention. If you're shooting into a building and using the doorway as a frame – but the outside of the doorway is in sunlight and the inside where your subject is location is much darker – it will not be as effective because the door will stand out more. In such a situation I would suggest just going inside and not including the bright doorway.



- **If you find an interesting subject, photograph it as you normally would first.** Then look behind you to see if there is anything that can be used as a frame. Sometimes simply backing up and shooting through the doorway behind you does the trick.
- **Look for ways to shoot through natural frames to highlight your subject.** Trees, doorways and windows work well.



- **You must frame SOMETHING INTERESTING!** Just because you have a frame in your image doesn't mean it will be a winner. You have to have something worth framing on the other side. You must still have a center of interest – a subject. Consider if the photo of the subject being framed would be interesting enough on its own first. If it is, then go ahead and frame it. If not – adding a frame will NOT make it more interesting.





## You are in control of how the viewer sees the image

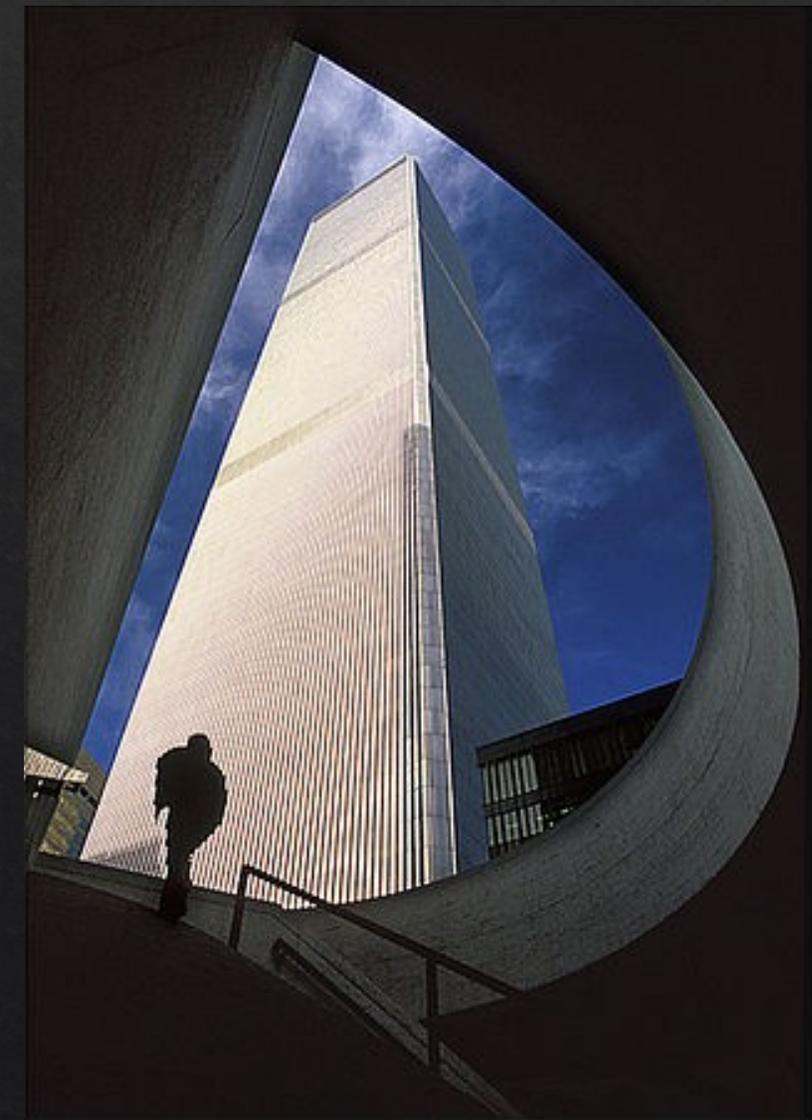
- Here the subject is St Paul's Cathedral, bang in the centre of the image. But all around it there are buildings, streets, cars, people, etc. When you first see the image, all of that other detail bleeds into one, creating a natural frame for the cathedral. But then gradually you start to see the details, so the image becomes something quite different.
- This photo is a good example of how you can use framing to create order to a very busy scene, and give the viewer a way into the photo. It's also a good example of how your eye moves around an image.



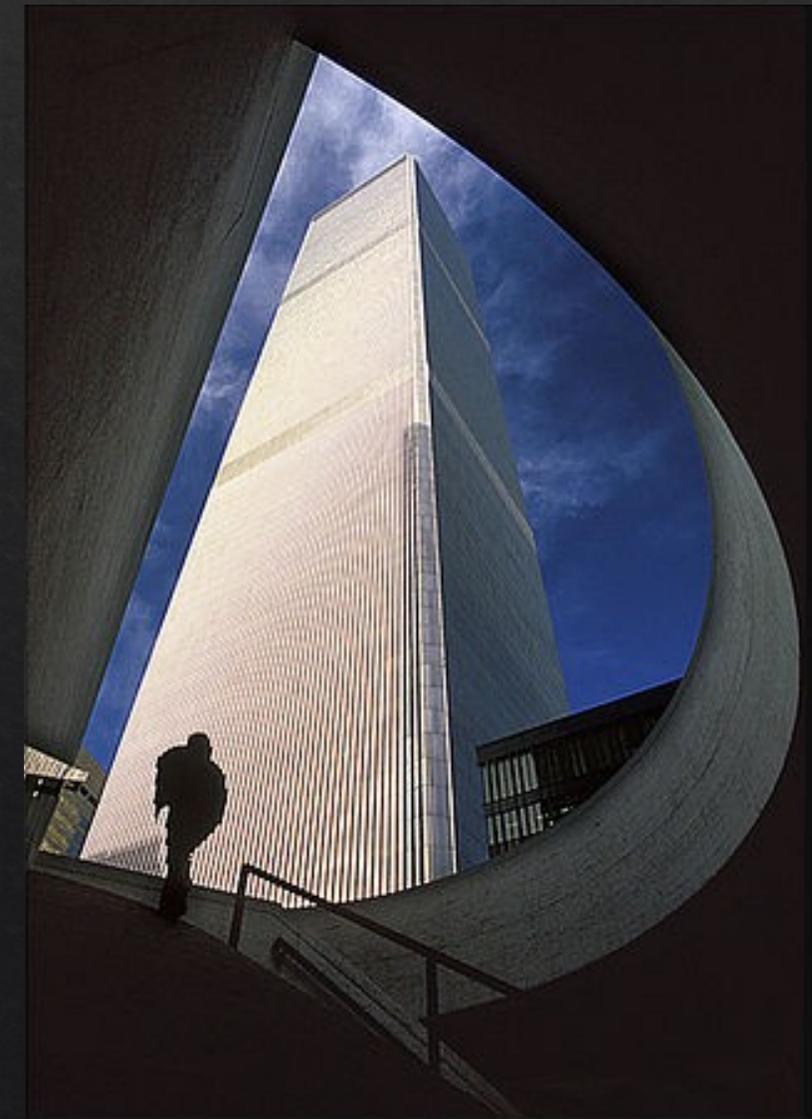
## Architecture

- Buildings
- Bridges
- Arches
- Windows and doors

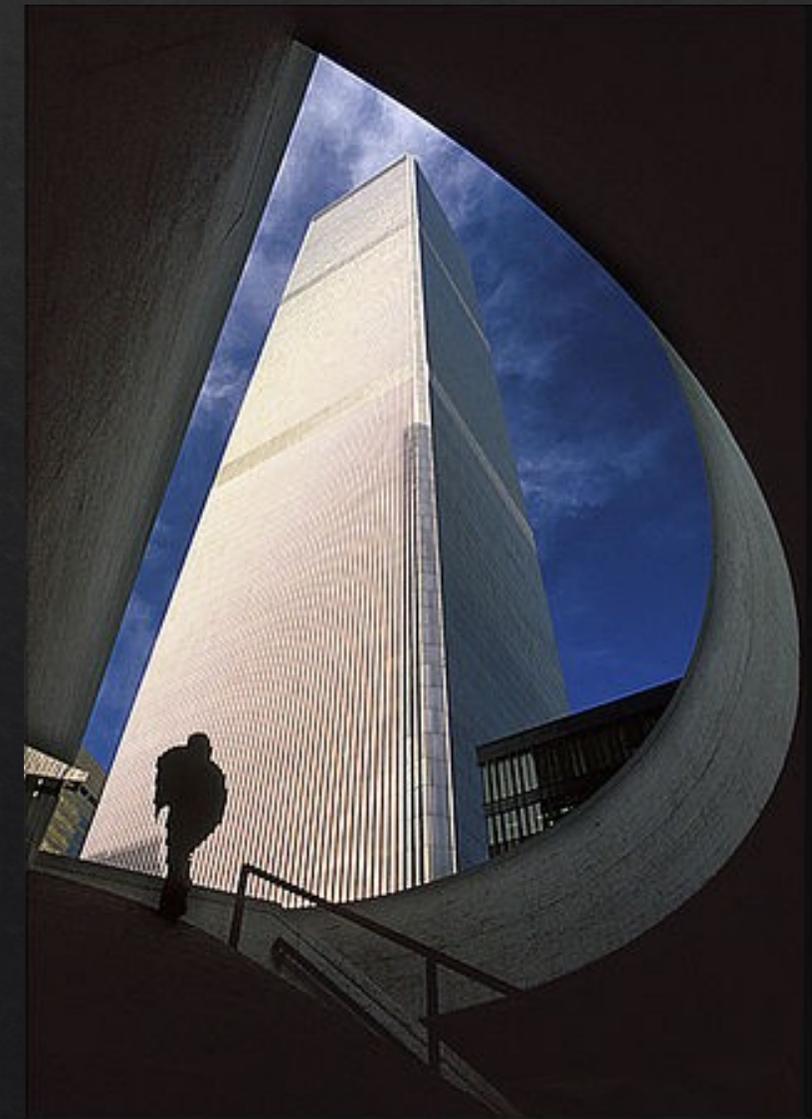
# Architecture



# Architecture



# Architecture



# BRIDGES

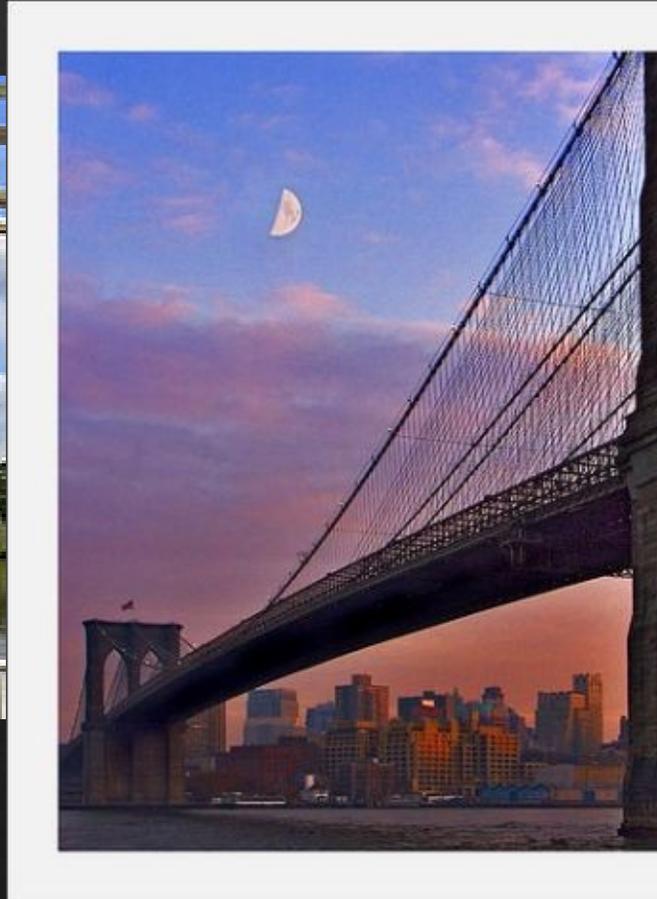


# BRIDGES



*gary spindler*

# BRIDGES





## Useful Tips

When framing within your photos, pay careful attention to your foreground and your background. Remember that both elements are present in nearly every photo that you make. Try to find a way to frame the subject with an object in the foreground that relates somehow back to the object. Try to utilize elements in the foreground that may give the viewer more information about where the photo was taken, what the location was like, or even what event or activity is taking place.



To find framing, take the extra time to explore your surroundings when taking photographs. Walk around the scene. Find different angles. Look for elements within your surroundings that you can use to fill the frame. Imagine objects as windows and frames to help isolate your subject and highlight what you are trying to show. It's sometimes the simplest techniques that help take your images to the next level.



# ARCHES / LAND BRIDGES



# ARCHES / LAND BRIDGES



# ARCHES / LAND BRIDGES





TREES

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# DOORWAYS / WINDOWS



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DOORWAYS / WINDOWS



# OBJECTS





## OBJECTS





## OBJECTS





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## Portraits

Even in portraits the principles of framing a shot can be applied.

You can use body parts, props, lighting, studio equipment, furniture, clothing, etc to form a frame.





Name: Her Study  
Photographer: Fan Ho  
Date: 1955  
Place: Old Hong Kong

