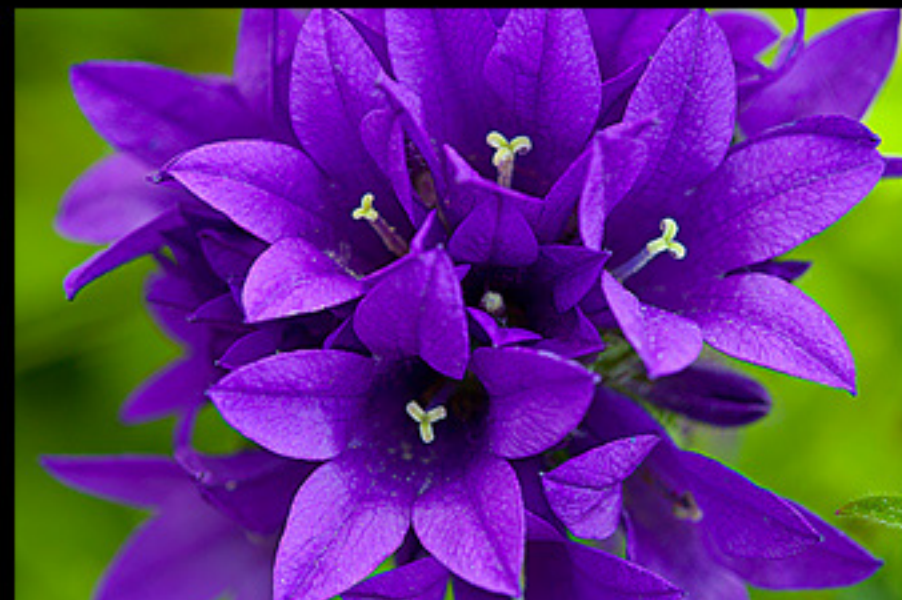
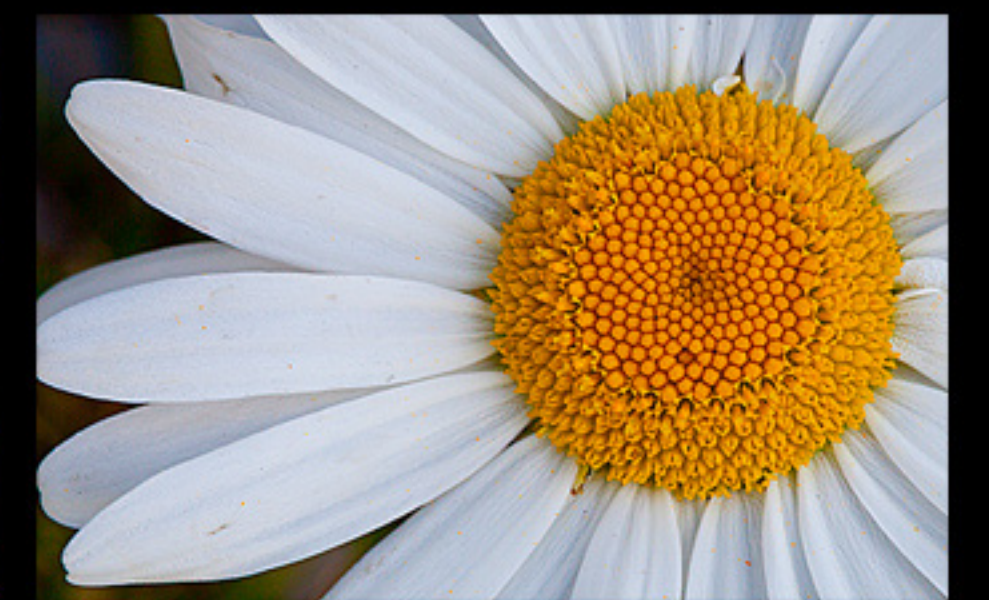
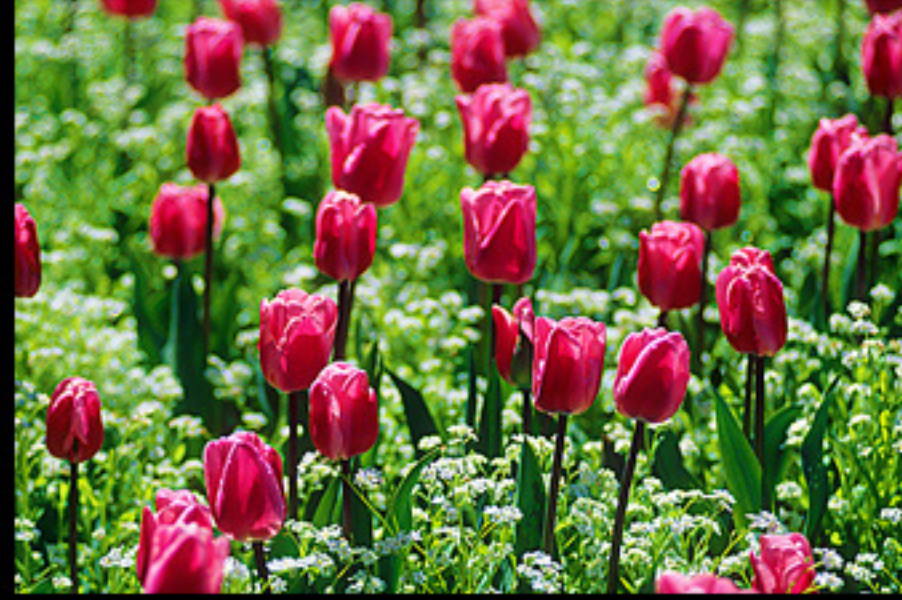


PHOTOGRAPHING FLOWERS

by Robert Berdan



Why Photograph or Paint Flowers?

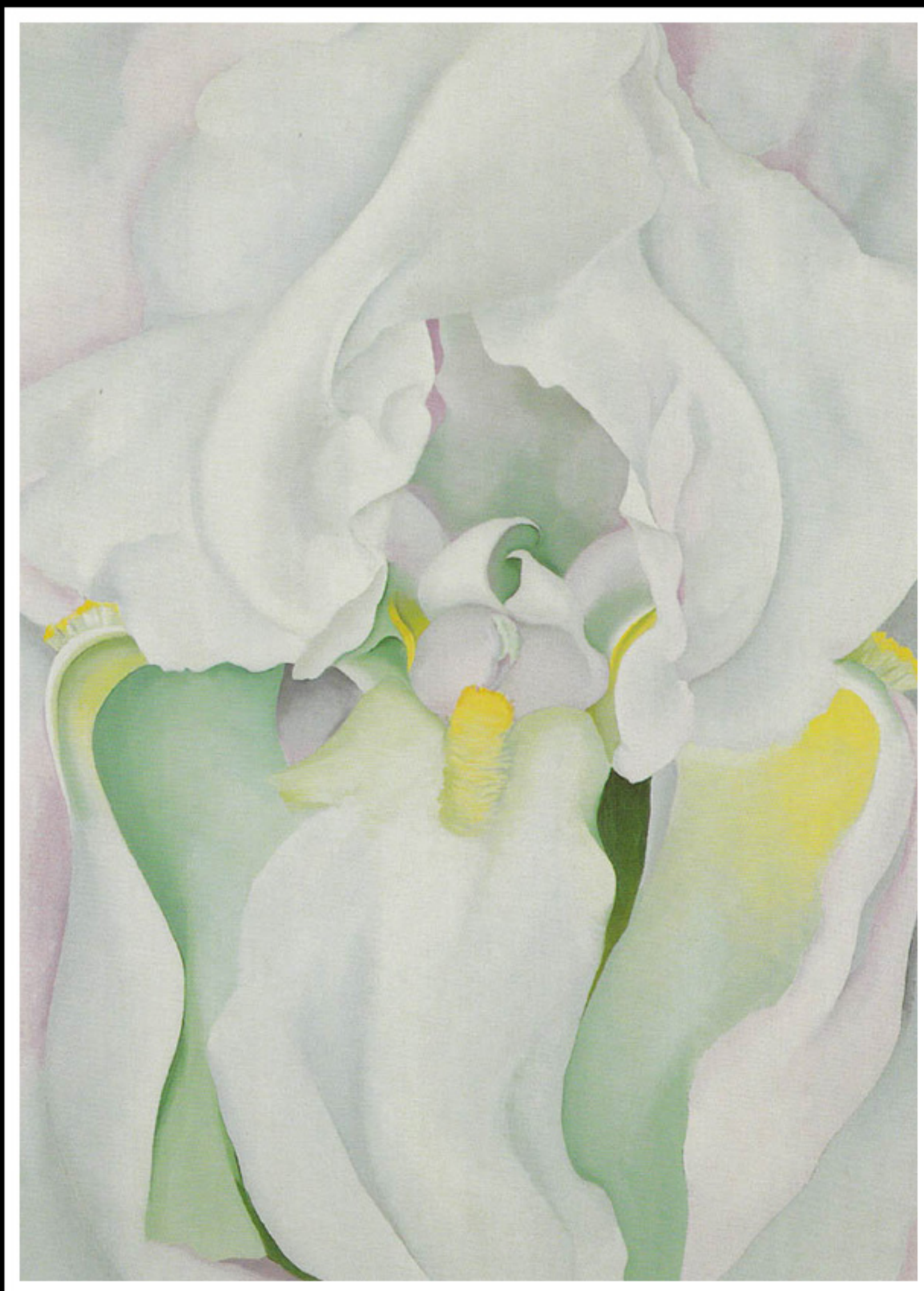


Beautiful saturated colour



Painting by Georgia O'Keeffe - Red Cana

Sensuous Shapes



Painting by Georgia O'Keeffe



2009 Photo by Paul Williams -

<http://www.myceredigion.co.uk/2009/06/photo-marathon-georgia-okeefe-lilies/comment-page-1/>

OBJECTIVES



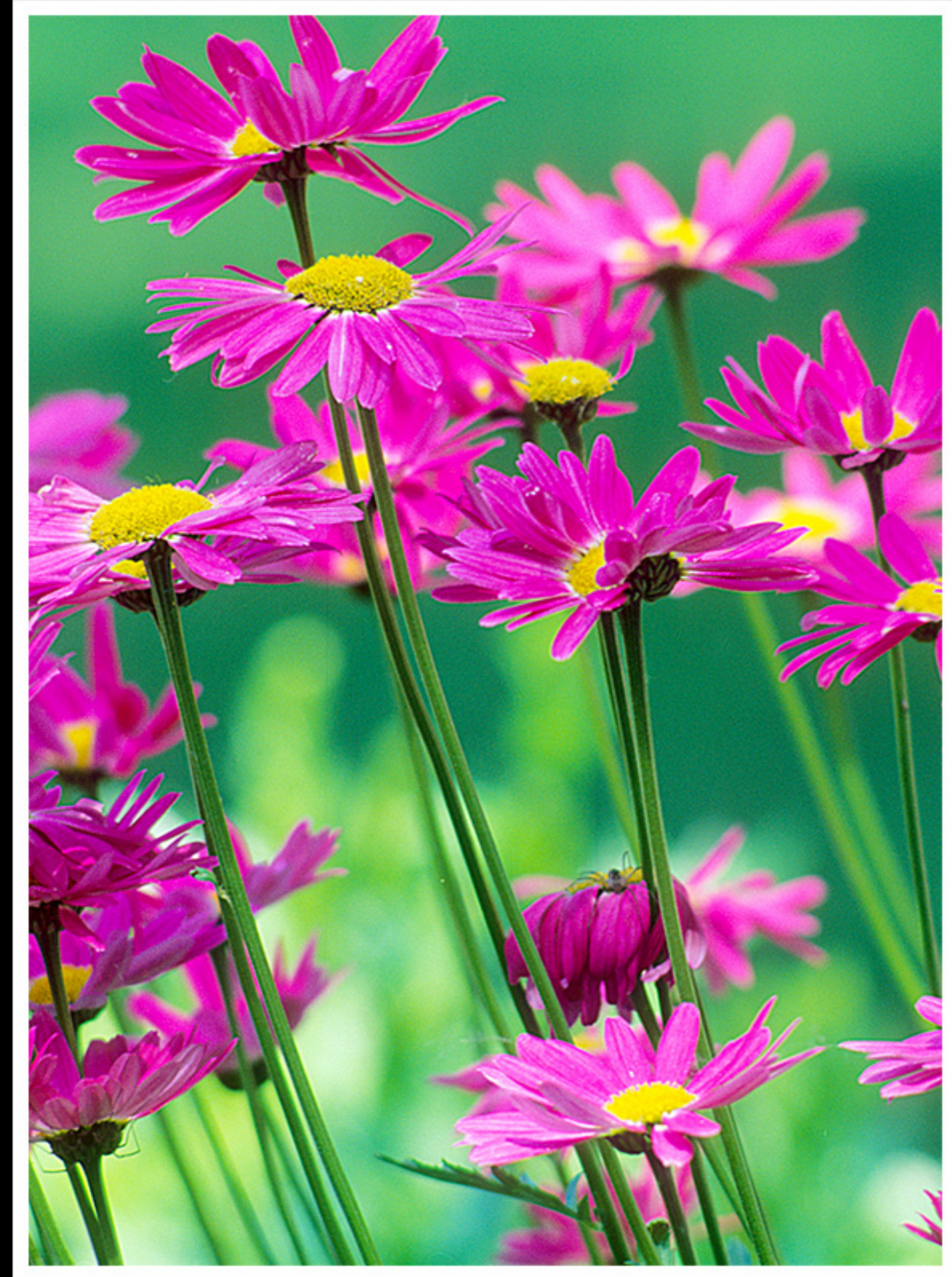
Composition



Lighting



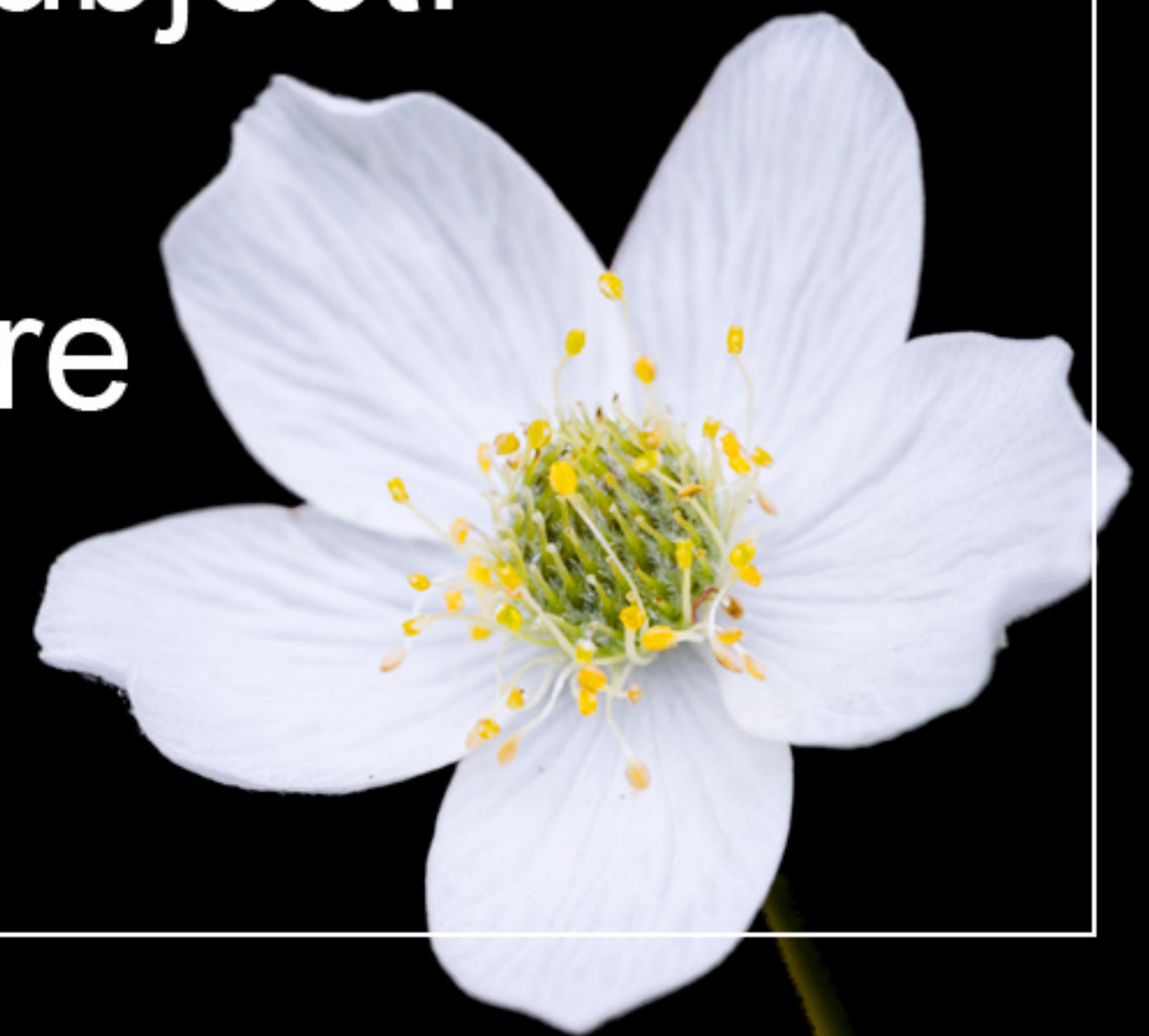
Exposure



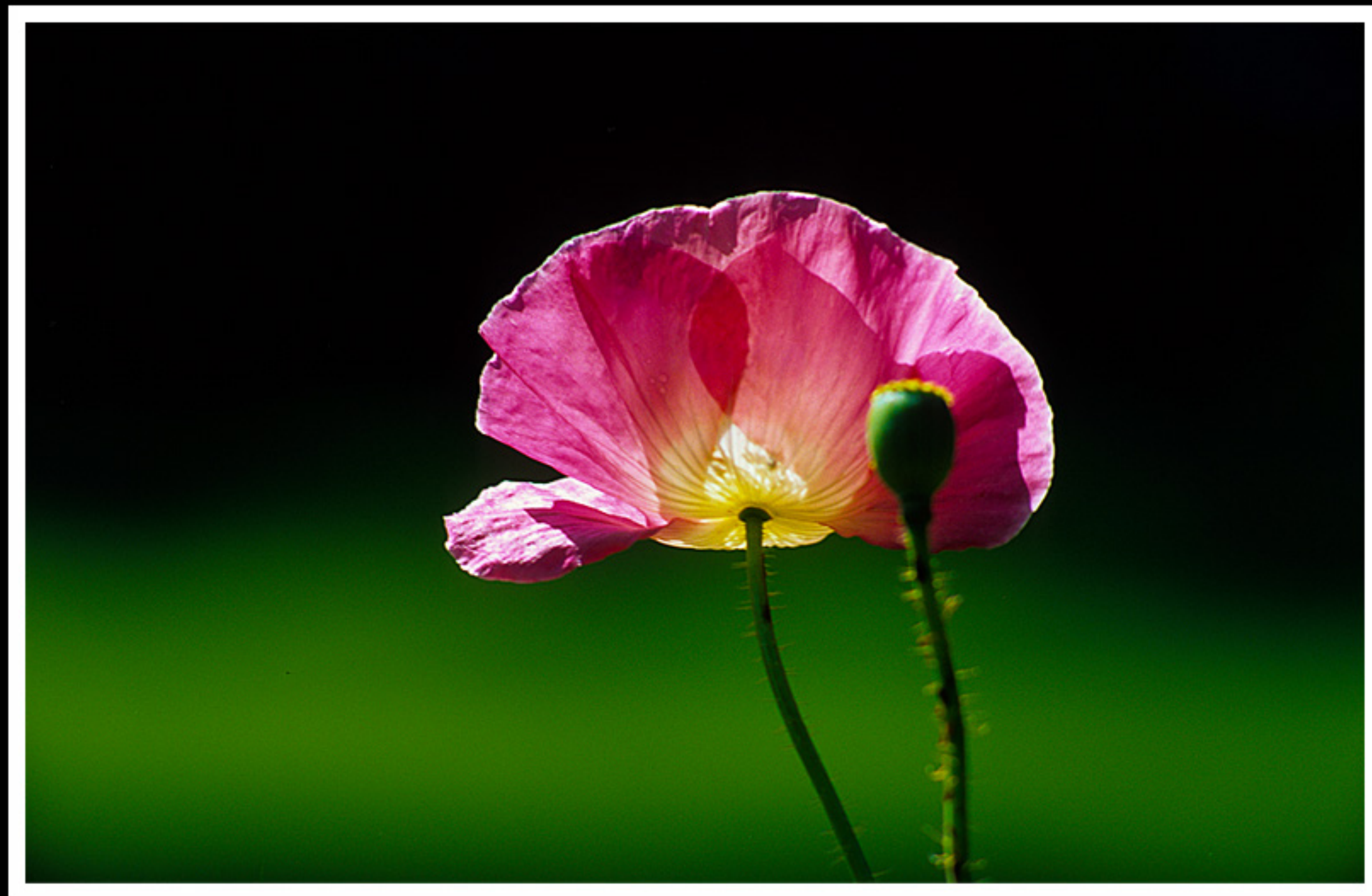
Composition refers to the placement of elements in a photograph (artwork).

Good composition is one where the elements in the picture provide unity - a sense of belonging and each element supports the main subject.

Try to organize the elements of a picture so the picture is seen as a whole.



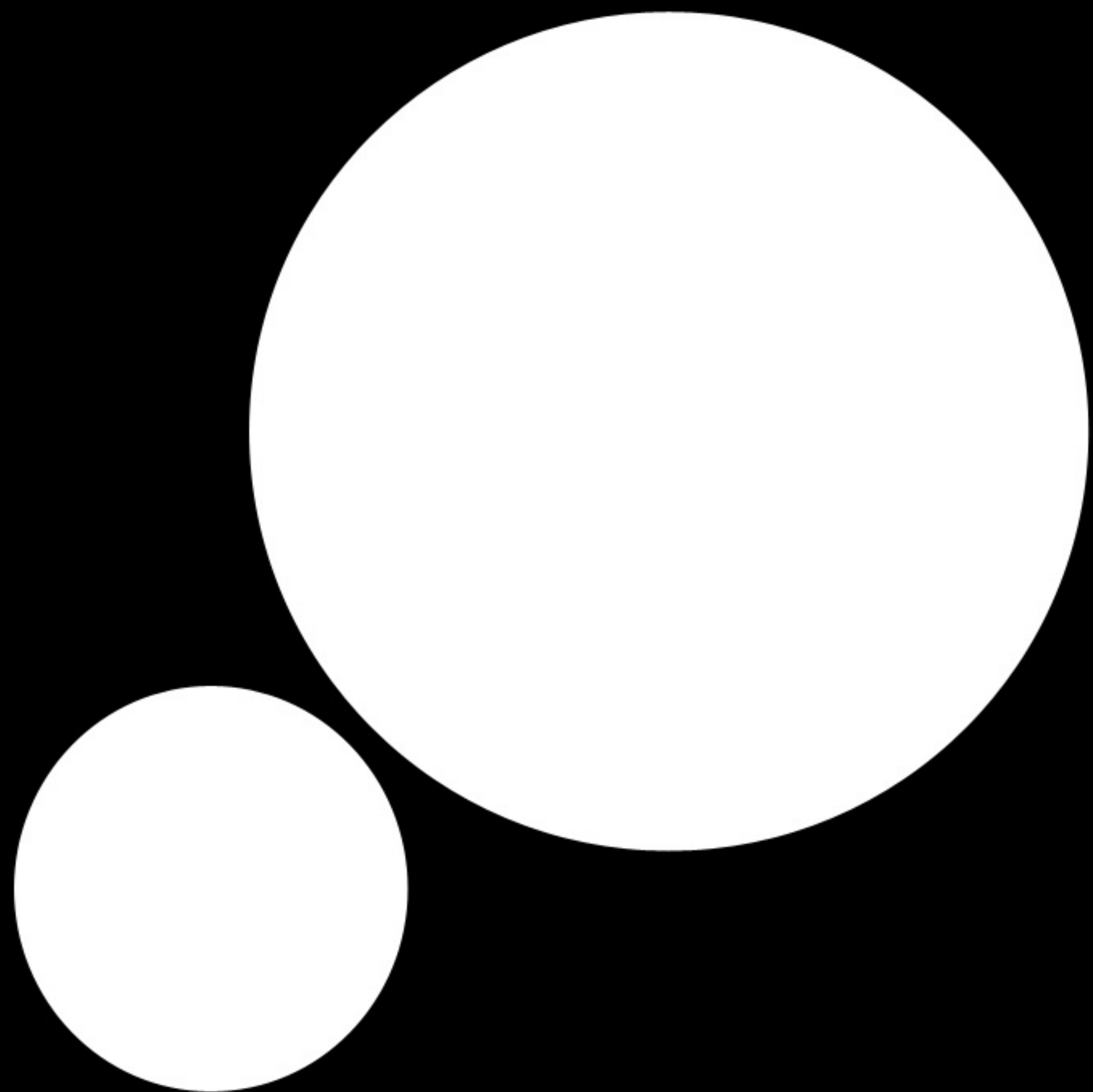
Decide whether to shoot your subject with a horizontal format or a vertical format - or shoot both formats.



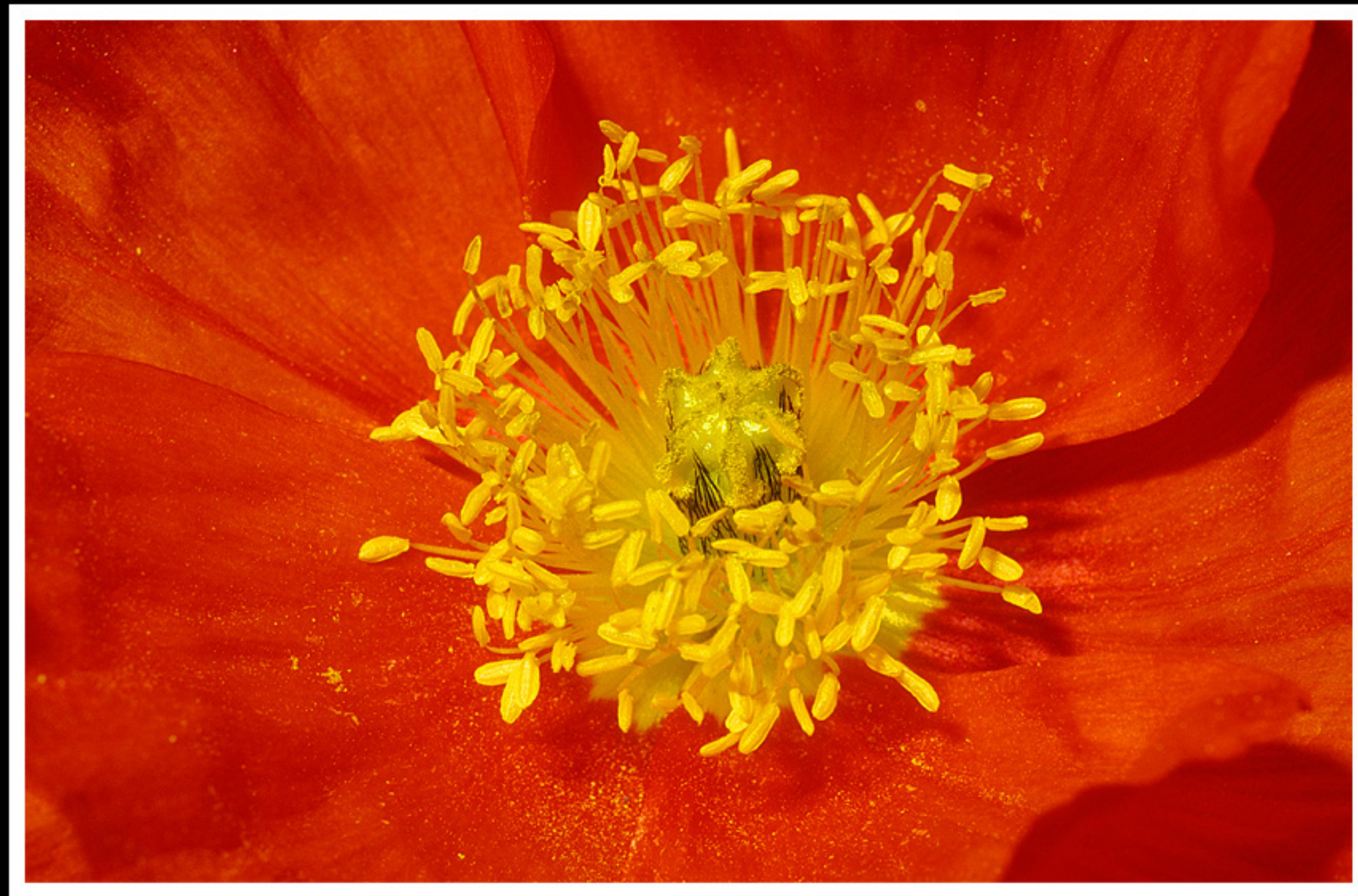
How to achieve Unity or a Sense of Belonging?

1. Through dominance and subordination.
2. Dominance can be achieved by differences in size, color, location, focal point, convergence and the use of light.
3. A photographer tries to control the amount of attention an element receives and the sequence in which the elements are observed.

Dominance Through Size

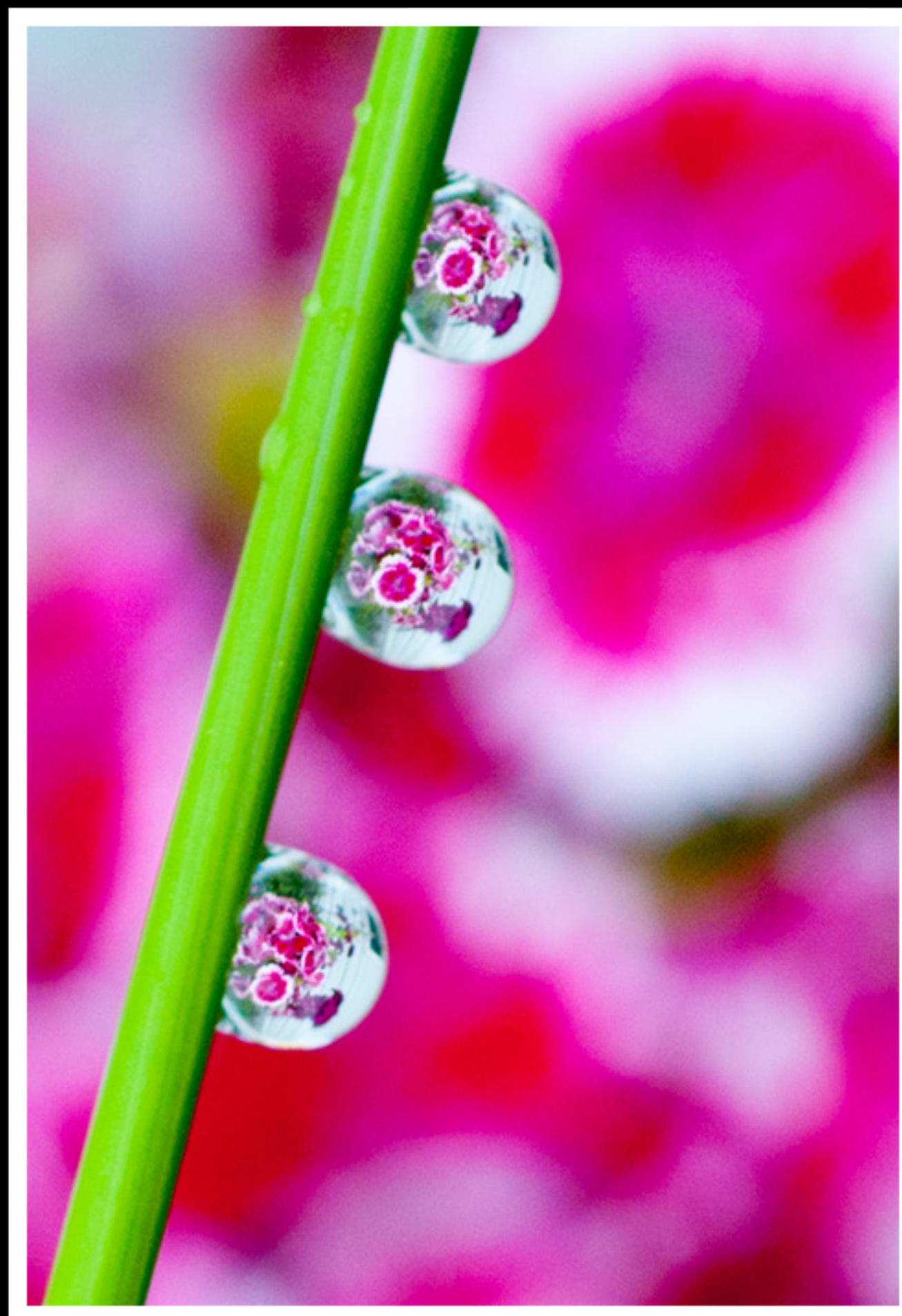


Dominance Through Colour



Dominance Through Focal Point

most important elements are in focus





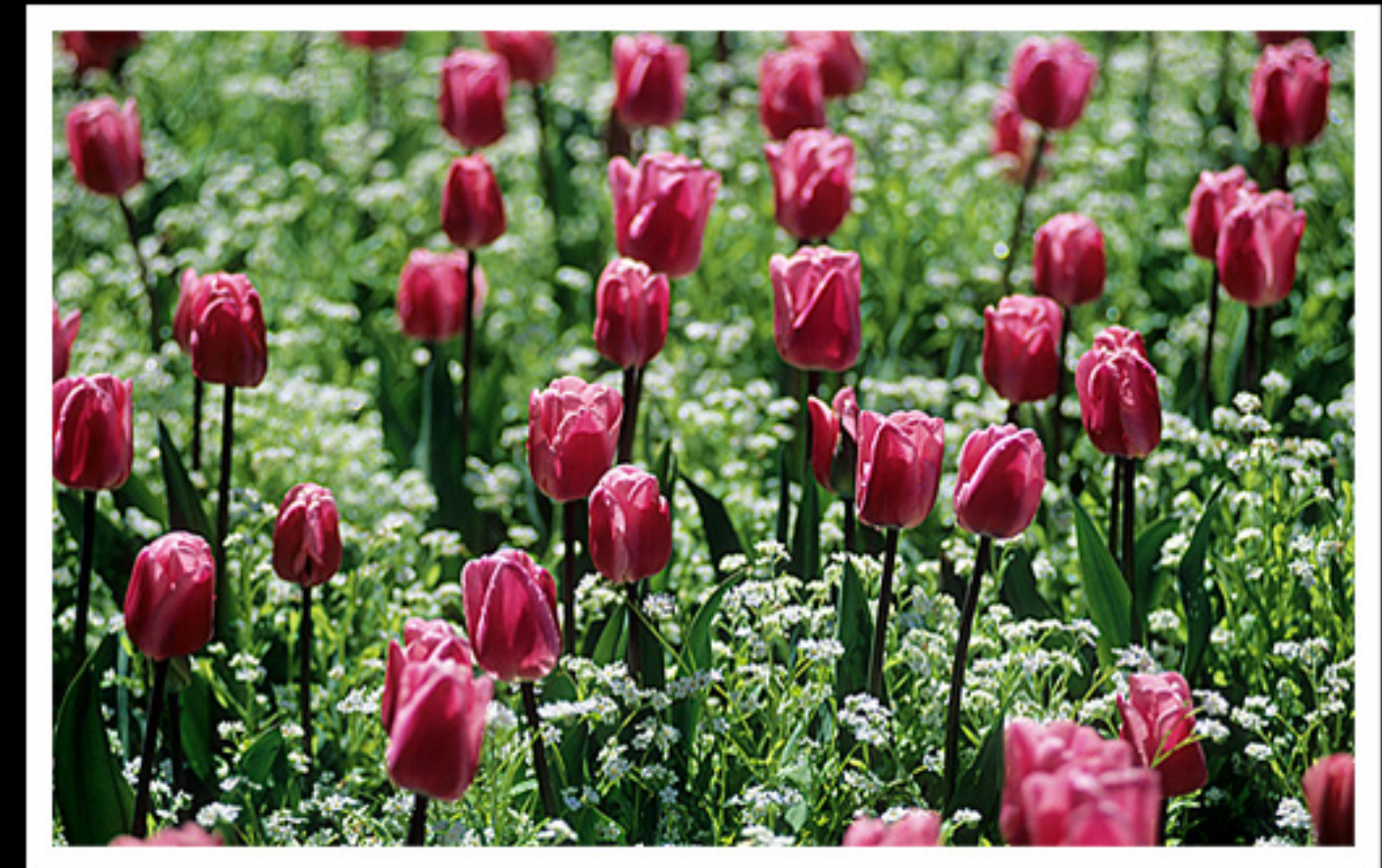
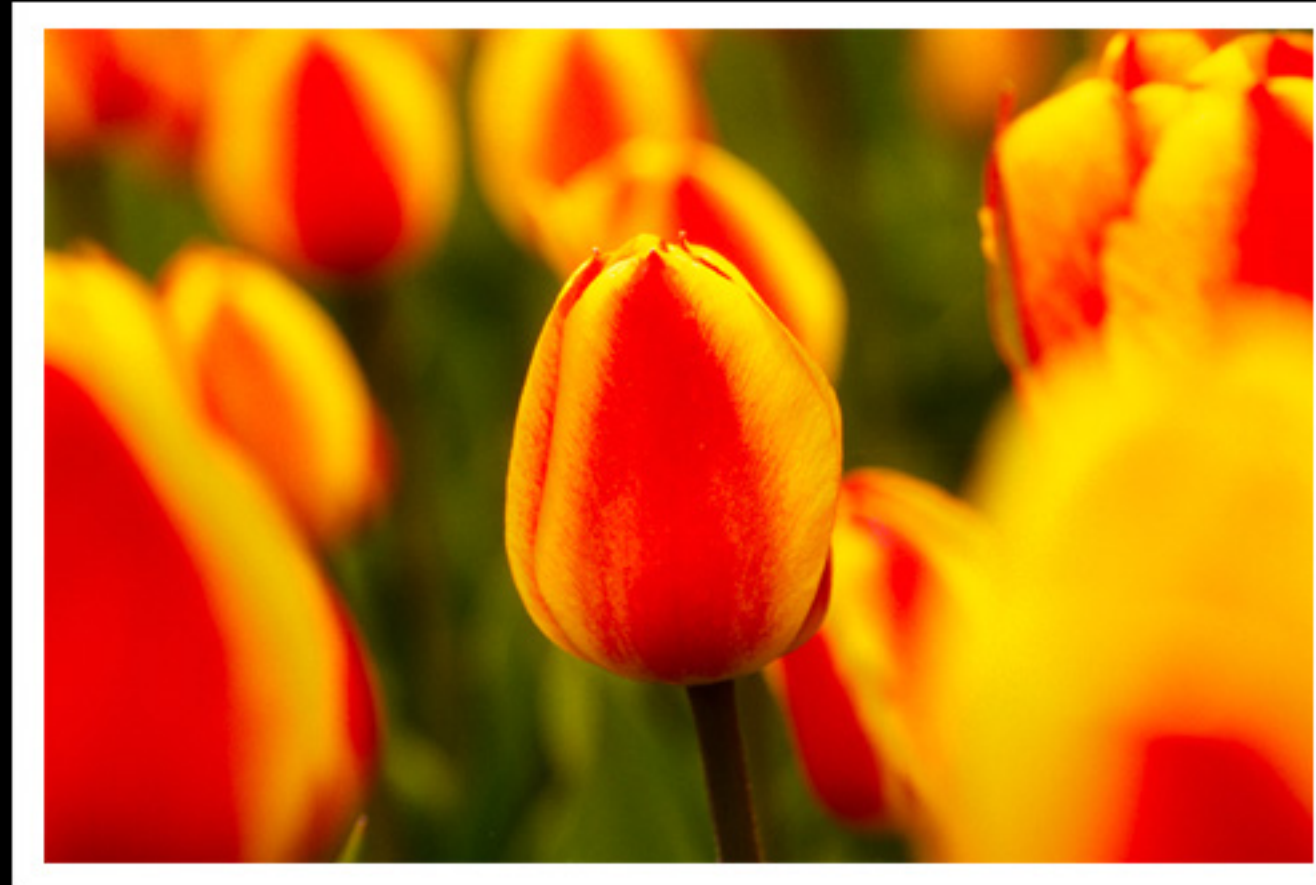
Dominance through difference

Find a subject where all the elements are similar except for one.

Examples: one colored flower against a background of different colored flowers. This type of image symbolizes - uniqueness, being different, standing out in a crowd.

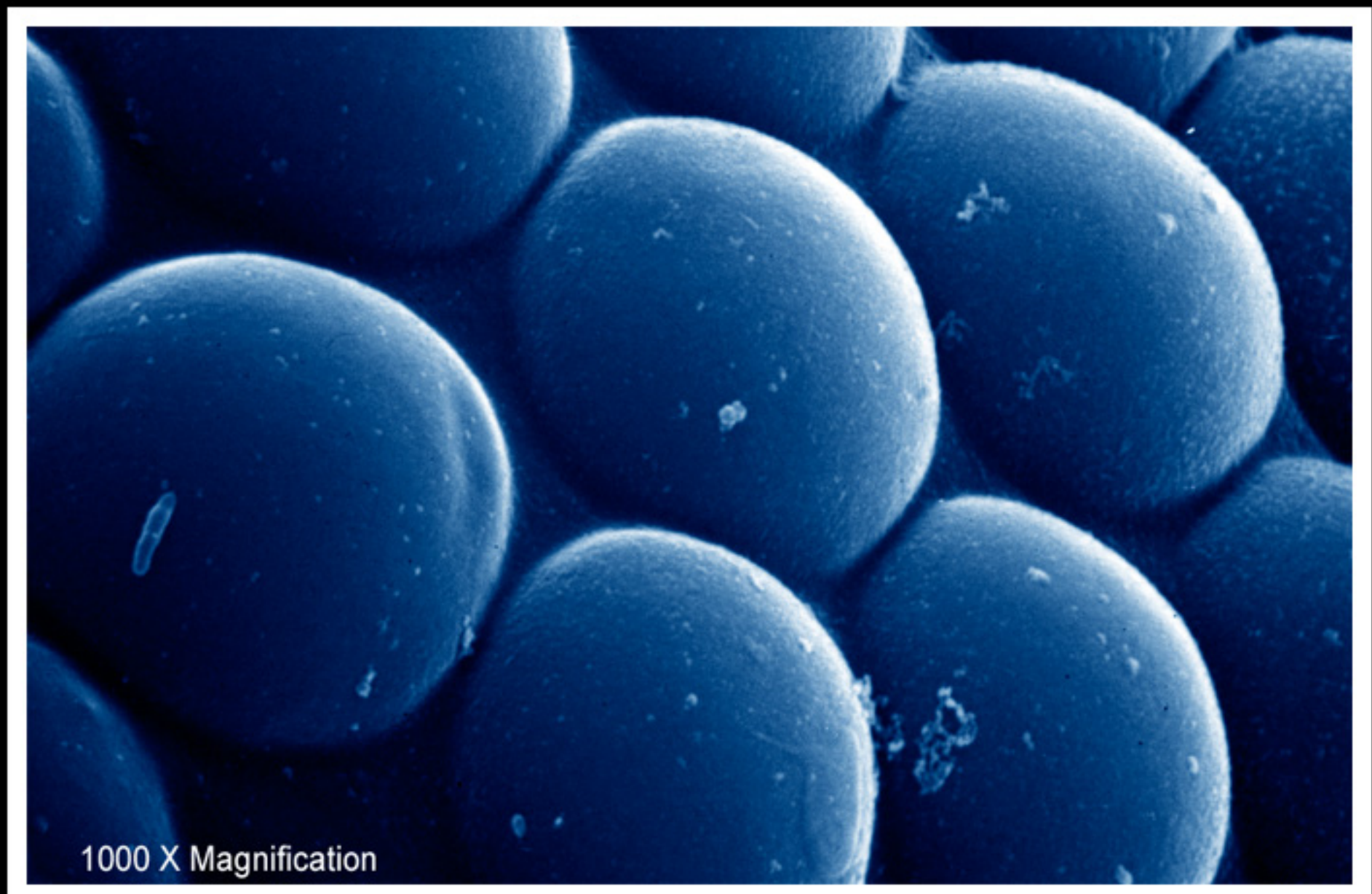
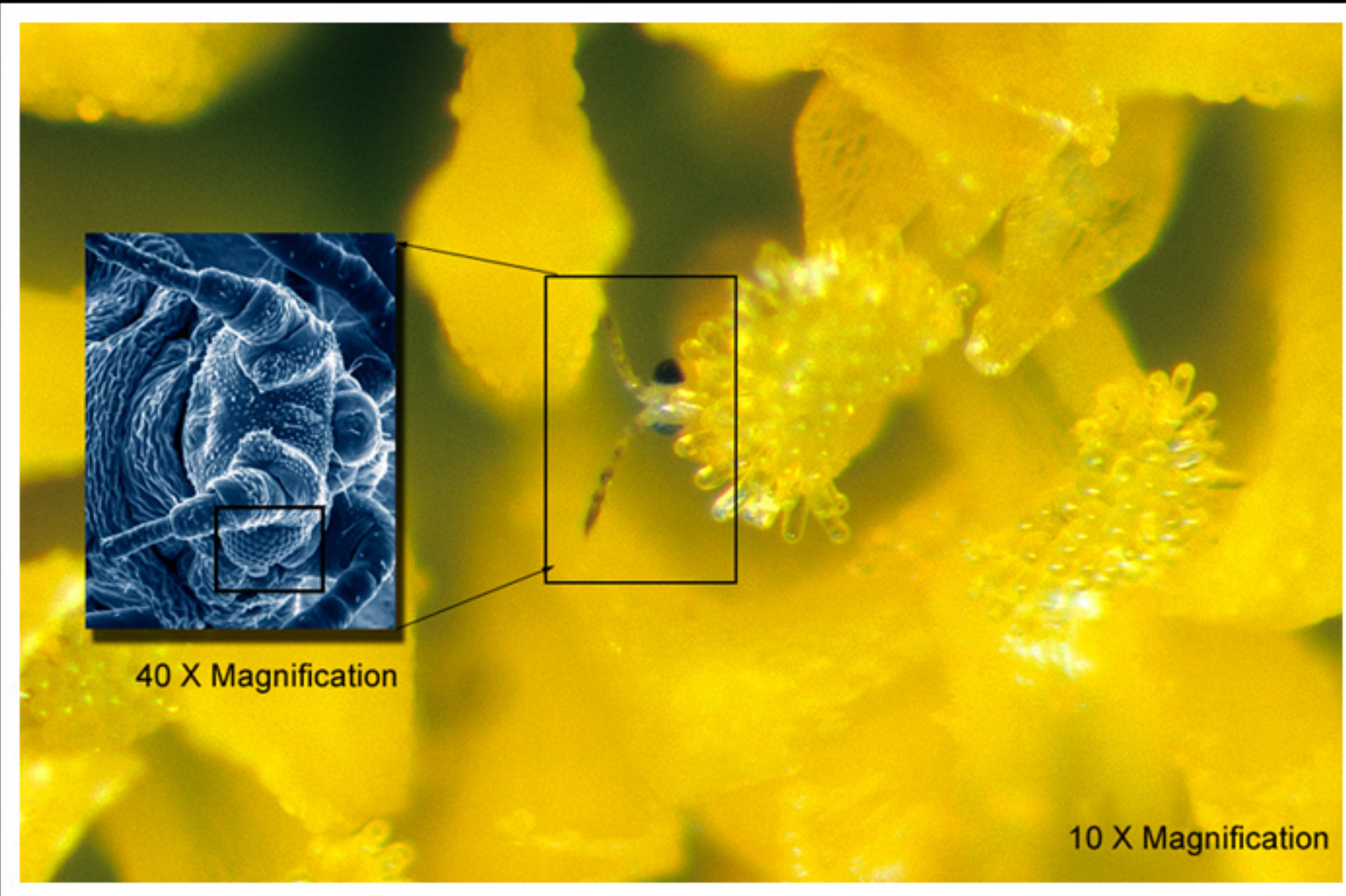
Arranging the Flowers in your Pictures

1. Focus on a single flower or a part of the flower
2. Focus on a flower surrounded by many flowers
3. Photograph many flowers but crop close so no sky or edge visible



Simplify the image and exclude those elements that do not belong.

GET CLOSE



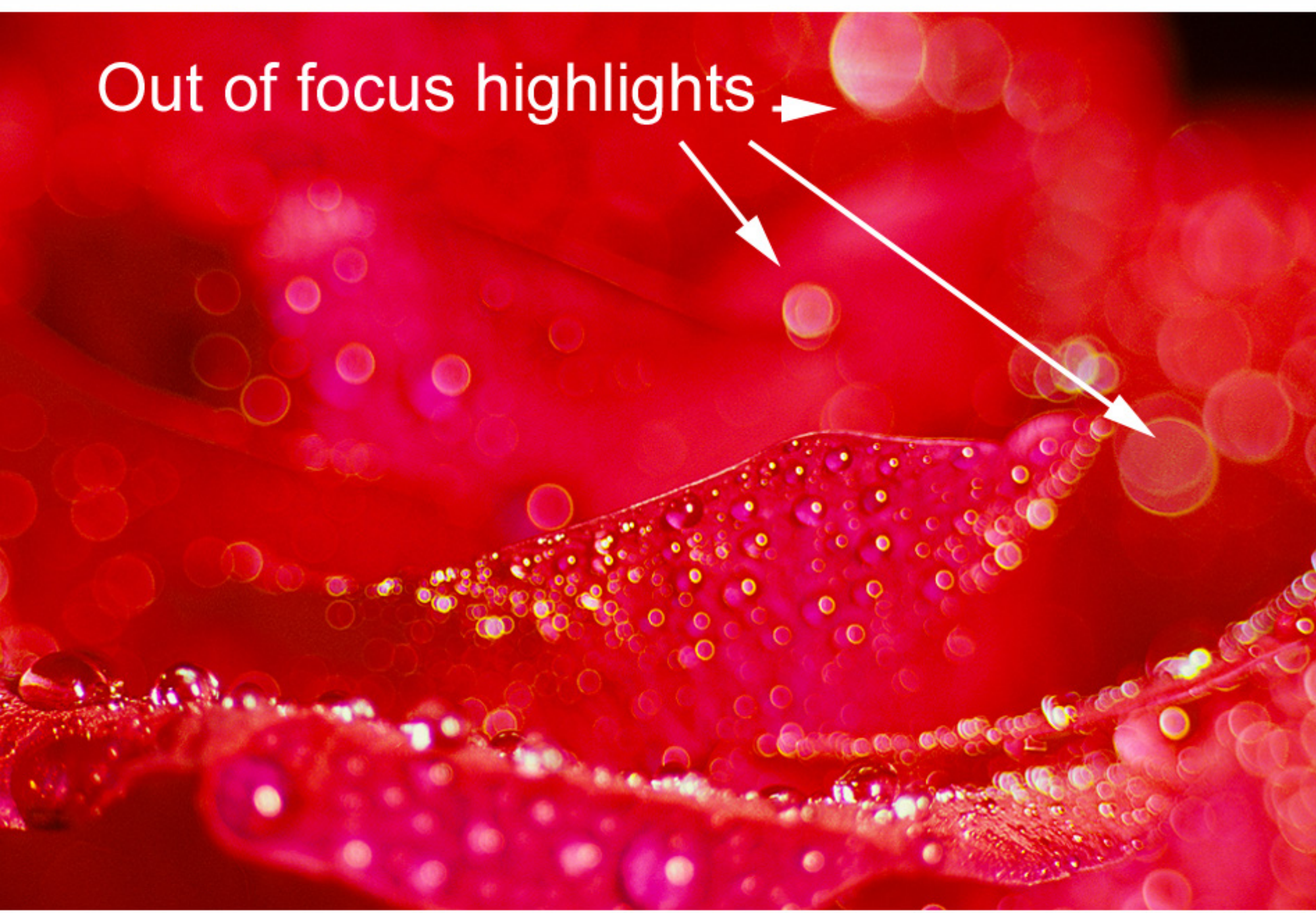


Common Dandelion





Vary the Depth of Field when you take Macro Photos



Out of focus highlights



60 mm Macro lens at F2.8

60 mm Macro lens at F22

You can reduce the depth of field by getting closer or using smaller F-stops



Creative Vignetting



Creative Vignetting



Standard



Vivid



Black & White



Sepia

Some digital cameras can alter the colour saturation or shoot in black & white or sepia - try some of these camera settings

Originally a colour photograph, the image was converted to Black and white and then the colour in the Cone flowers was returned using the history brush in Adobe photoshop.



QUALITY OF LIGHT

- 1. Direct Sunlight**
- 2. Overcast Light or Shade**
- 3. Back-light or Side-light**
- 4. Electronic Flash**
- 5. Color of Light**

White Balance



Sunlight



Cloudy\Overcast



Shade



Fluorescent



Tungsten



Flash



Custom



Cool 9000 K



Normal 6500 K



Warm 3500 K



Shooting in bright sunlight may cause certain parts of a flower to be too light or over exposed.

Soft Diffused Light is Usually the Best for Flowers



Harsh bright sunlight - blocked up shadows and over exposed highlights on the flowers.



The same flowers in shade created with an umbrella. Shade lowers the overall contrast and improves the rendering of tones.

SOFT LIGHT IS THE BEST FOR FLOWER PHOTOGRAPHY

To create softer light:

1. Photograph in the shade
2. Create your own shade with an umbrella or diffuser
3. Wait for the sun to go behind a cloud.
4. Wear a really big hat :-)







Queen's Cup Lilly

DIFFERENT FORMS OF LIGHTING



Soft Overcast Light



Strong Backlight



Electronic Flash

Backlighting



Lighting for Macrophotography



Natural Light



Flash

Soft overcast light - especially after rainfall is often the best for flowers

Simplify the Background with Black Card



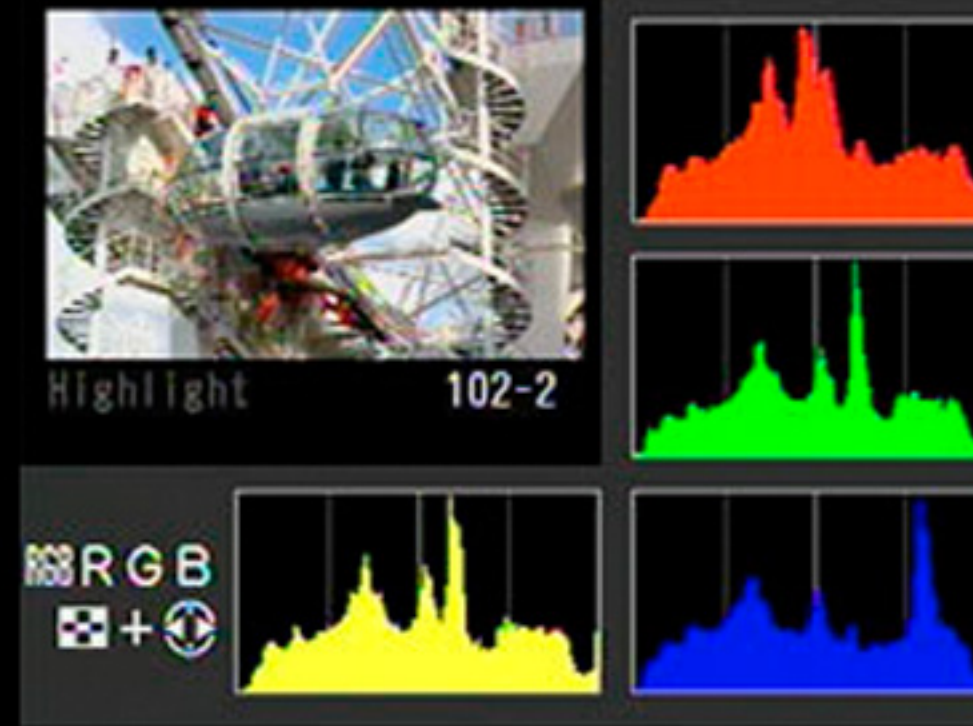
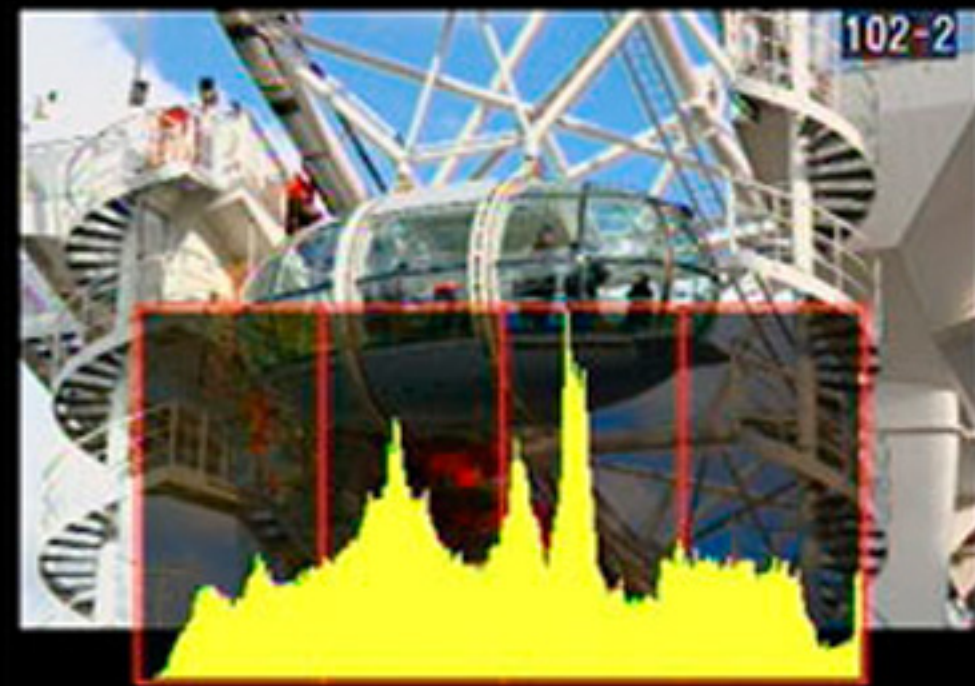
Flash only - background is distracting



Flash and black card used



Use the Histogram Function to Determine Exposure with Digital Cameras





Sundew

Exposure Compensation

Better Cameras allow you to override the exposure to make the picture darker or lighter



Under Exposure



Normal Exposure

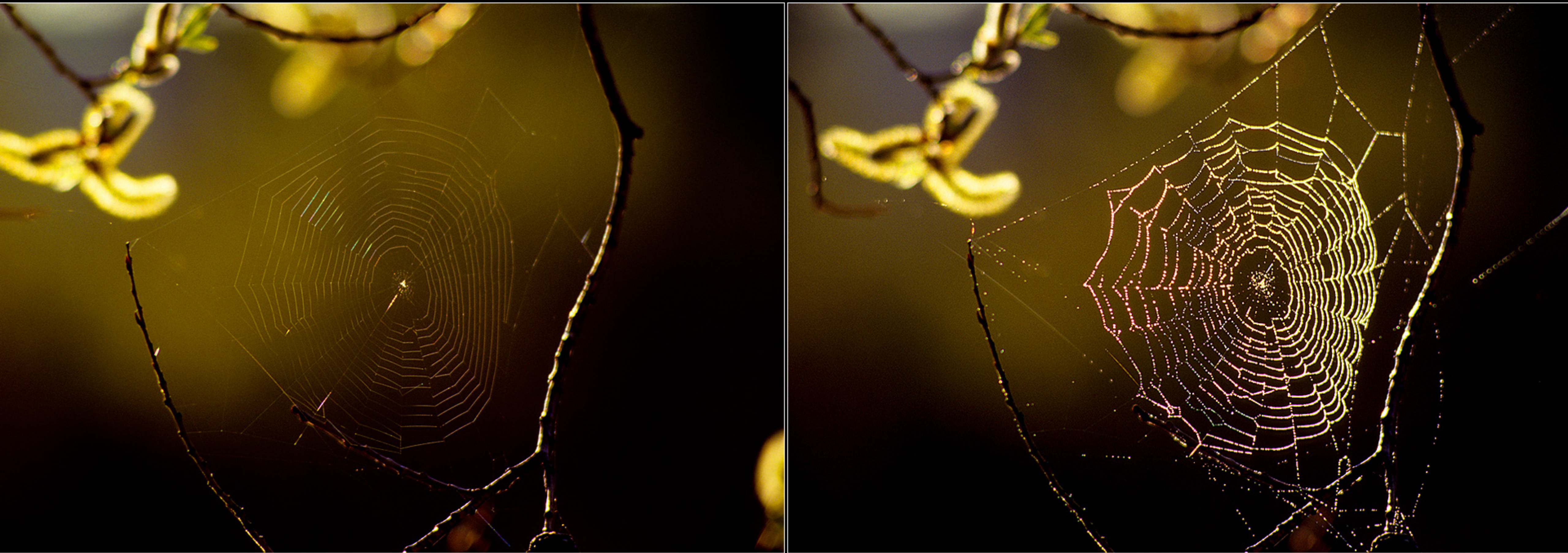


Over Exposure



check your camera manual to find out whether or not your camera can alter the exposure

Mist & Dew



If there is no natural dew on the web or flower you can add it with a spray bottle



Water drops can act like a magnifying lens when you get close. The drop needs to be on plants that are close to the flower. If possible you want to be able to move the branch with drops closer or further away from the background flowers. You will need a tripod and no wind.




Water Drop Technique

To create a dream like effect, use a telephoto lens and shoot through the flowers - have flowers close to the front of your lens so they are out of focus.



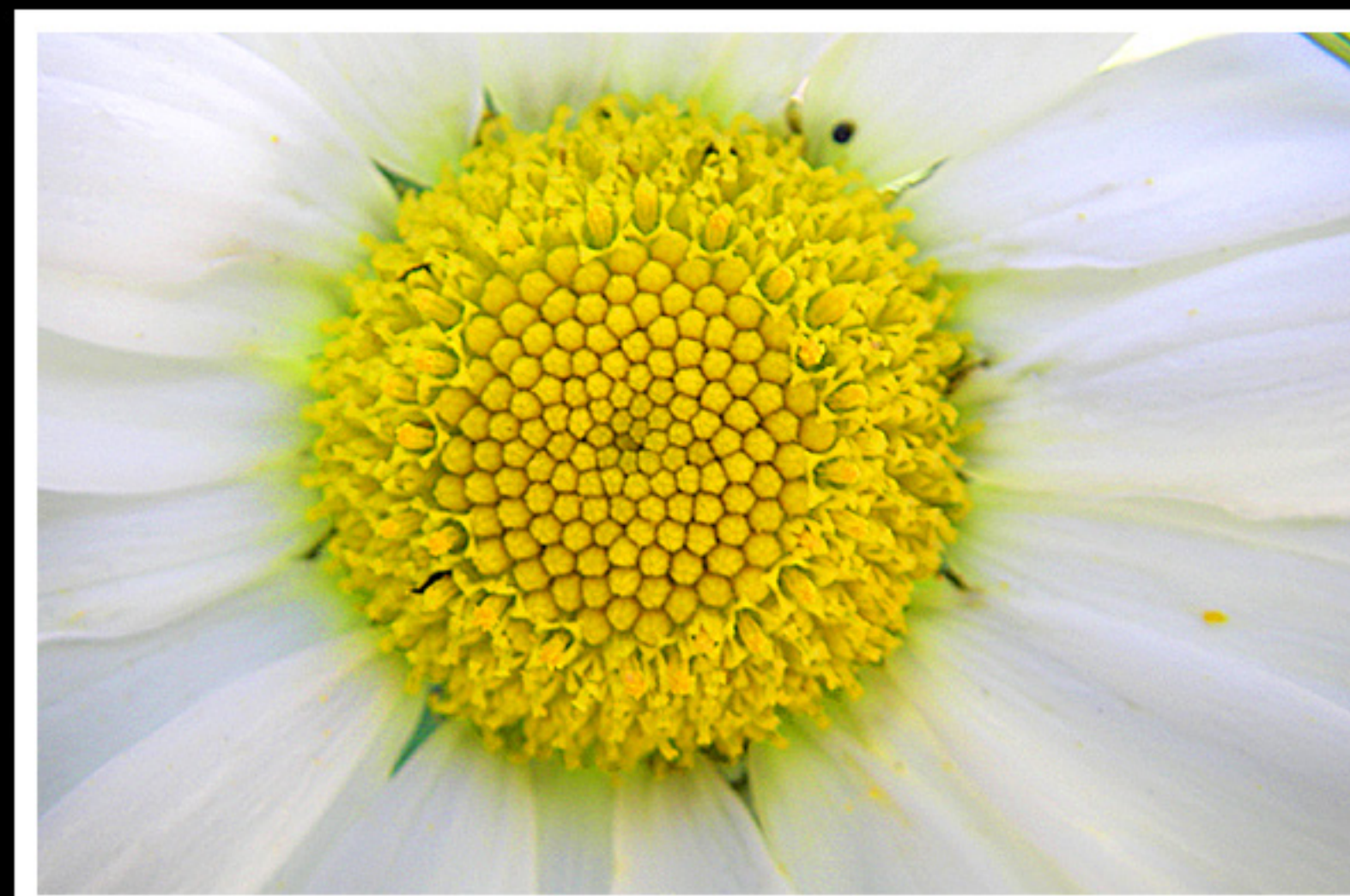
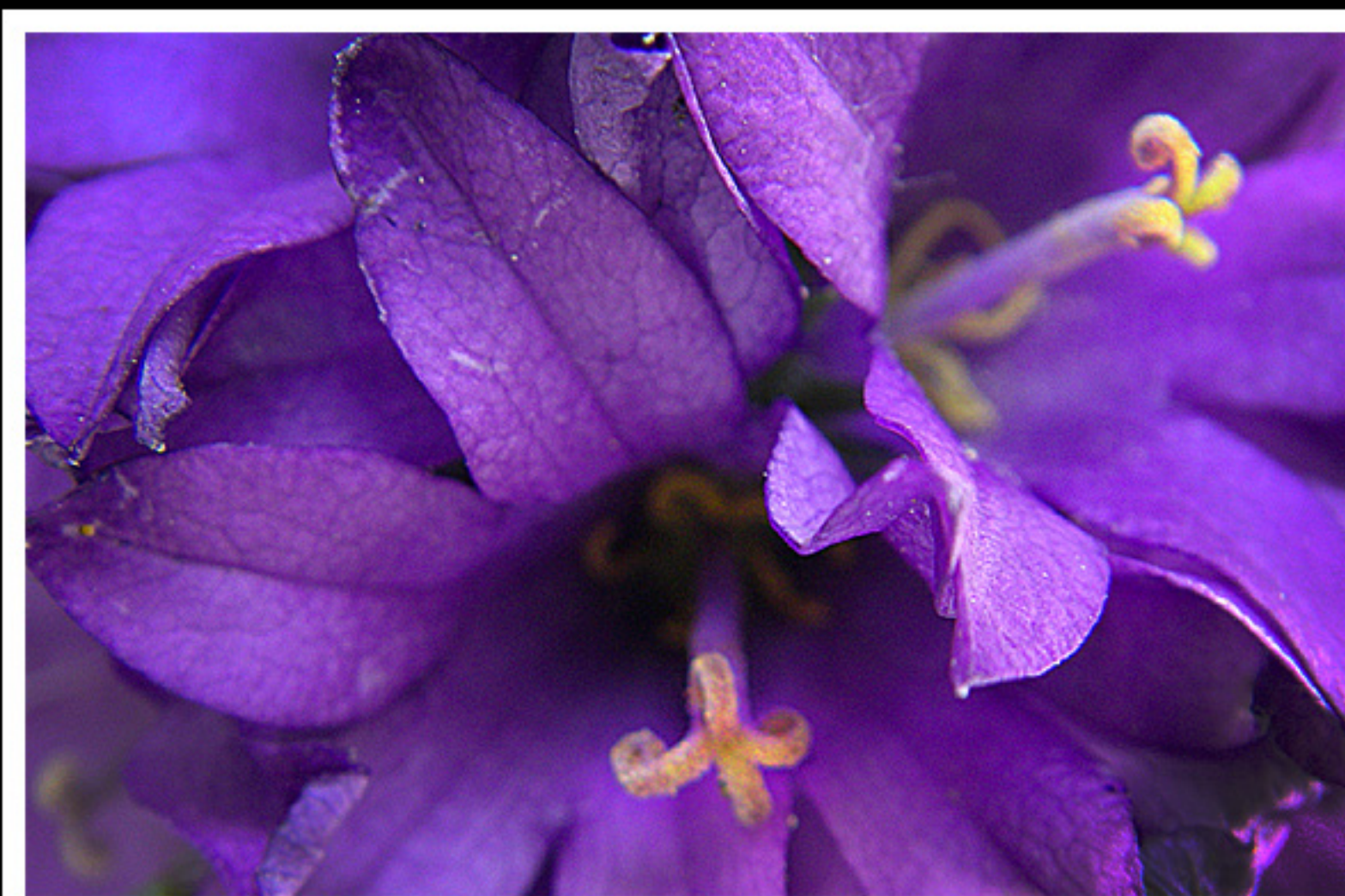


Shooting with Compact Digital Cameras

1. Set camera to macro-mode and move in close to the flower 
2. Set camera to auto white balance or set to match the type of light you have
3. Hold camera steady, use a tripod, support, bean bag and protect flower from wind
4. Find flowers in the shade or create shade around the flower for more even lighting
5. Watch your backgrounds - search for a dark uncluttered background
6. If your image is too light modify exposure compensation and darken
7. Take many photos and delete pictures that are not sharp or properly exposed
8. To improve an image you can edit, crop, and modify using a computer and software like Picasa (free from google), GIMP (free), Photoshop Elements etc.



Flower Photos taken in my Backyard using a Pentax Optio Compact Digital Camera

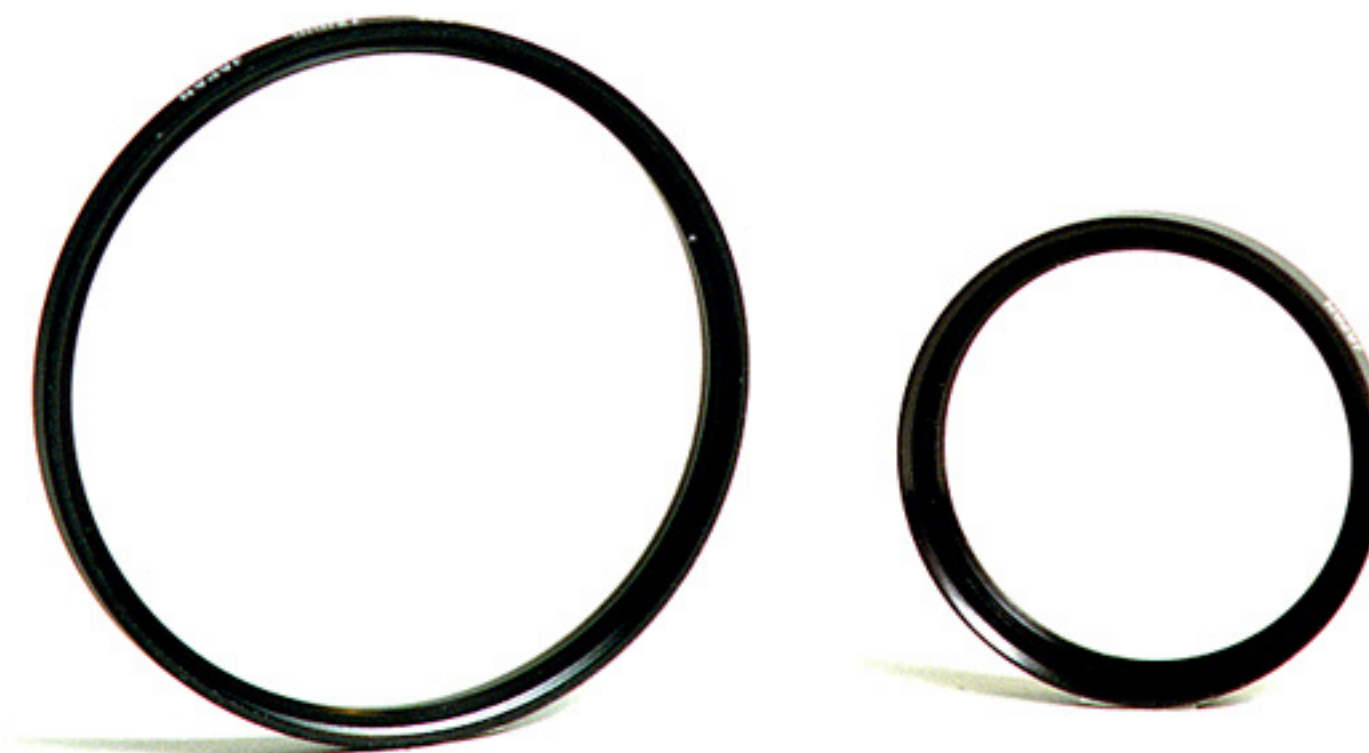


Serious photographers will want to purchase and use a digital single lens reflex (SLR) type camera and a macro lens. A tripod will hold the camera perfectly steady. Costs start at about \$600 for the camera.





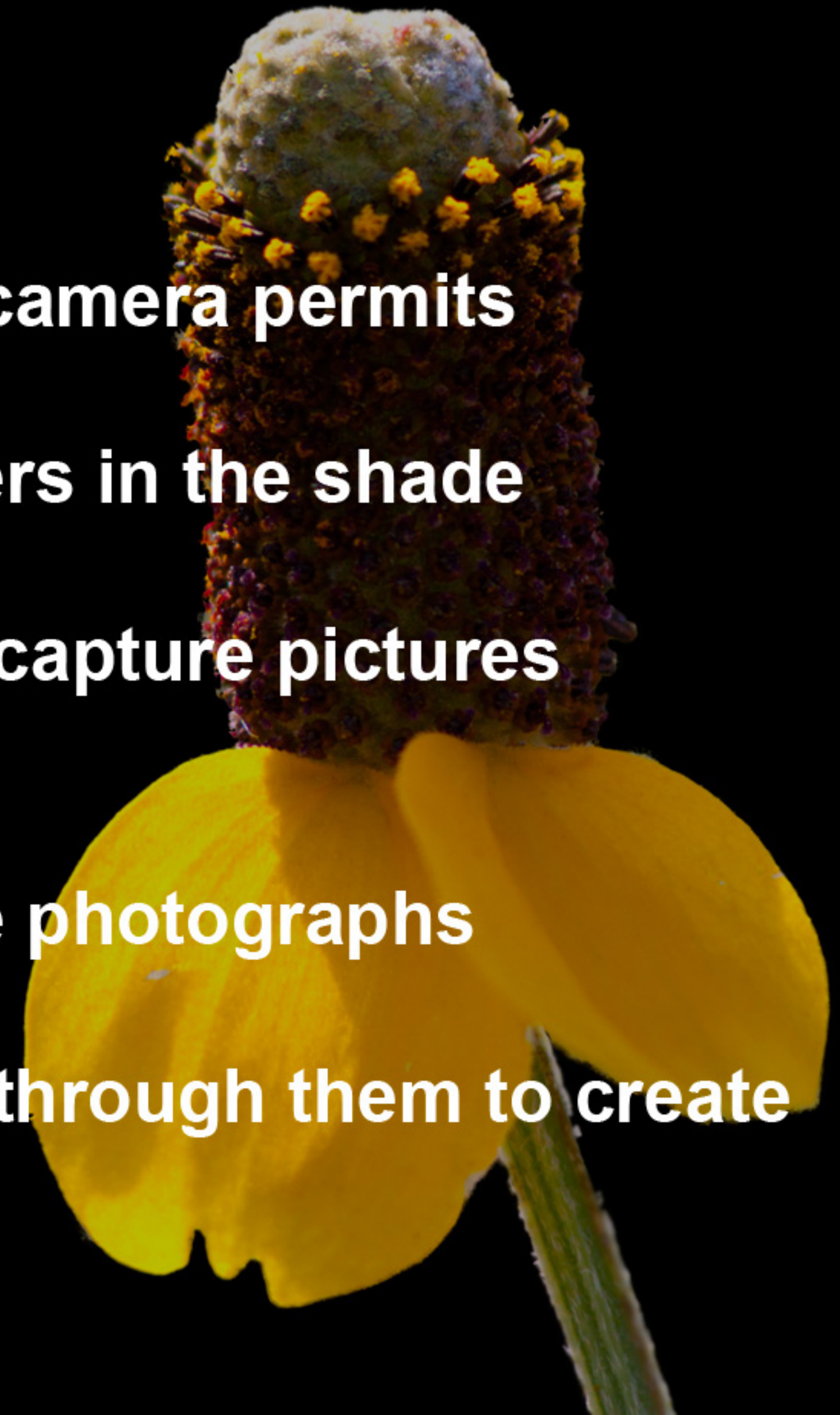
Normal 35-50 mm lens



Close-up Filters

CREATIVE IDEAS TO TRY IN THE FIELD

1. Shoot both vertical and horizontal compositions
2. Get really close to some flowers - as close as your camera permits
3. Create some shade with a diffuser or seek out flowers in the shade
4. Spray water drops on the flower and see if you can capture pictures within the water drops
5. Set your camera to Black & White or Sepia for some photographs
6. Place flowers or leaves close to the lens and shoot through them to create out of focus areas or vignettes





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