

Roll: **20211004-u3a-odds**
Camera: **Canon EOS5 MkIII**

Subject:

Rule of Odds.

1. Plan:

The "rule of odds" doesn't really merit the title. Using an odd numbers of subjects is ok for the composition of images where the subject is artificially constructed but in many, if not most circumstances, I think it is a long way from being a rule and I wanted to illustrate this for the project.

2. Notes to the images:

2.1. 01: Big Wheel Nottingham.

I really like the composition of this photograph but it was not created with any conscious consideration of the "rule of odds". It could be argued that there are three loci of interest, the wheel, the building and the bus stop but that surely is a retrospective conceit. Would the image be diminished by the absence of the bus stop?

What makes this picture successful for me is the plain canvas of the featureless sky, and the framing of the building by the arc of the wheel. The prosaic nature of the bus stop possibly standing for the humdrum of everyday working life contributes something too but ...

2.2. 02: Enkutatash.

Now this is an artificial construct for the purpose of creating an image. It is a collection of lights and (yellow) flowers, both real and painted, given as gifts to my wife as part of the Ethiopian New Year Celebration (Enkutatash).

It may not be impossible but it is certainly very hard, to identify an odd number of objects of interest, unless you said it is only one but that surely would be cheating.

Despite the absence of the "rule of odds" I think the composition is nicely balanced and if anything is binary, contrasting the bringing of light into a background of the darkness of night.

2.3. 03: Gold chimney pots.

It would be easy with the third image to jump on the obvious presence of three golden pots atop the chimney stack and I do think it contributes something but I suspect it would have worked every bit as well with four pots.

What I think significant in the creation of this image is the affect of the setting sun on an otherwise quite dull picture of a chimney stack at twilight. The pots are of course not in ordinary way of things golden, anymore than the buildings glimpsed through the trees are normally glowing orange and red. These colours are are caught for only a few minutes on a day when the atmospheric conditions and the angle of the sunlight created the effect.

2.4. 04: Father and children.

The fourth image is a classic arrangement of people, in this case being my brother and two of his children at a family celebration. Rule of odds? I think not. If my brother's stepson had been there, there would have been four people in the shot.

2.5. f47A3219: Grandad and granddaughter.

Proof if proof be needed that the rule is easily dispensed with when the subject requires it. We compose according to the nature of the subject and any addition would only be to the detriment of the photograph.

2.6. F47B3543: Look to the rose.

The Rule of Odds applied. "At once the silken Tassel of my Purse Tear" three formerly beautiful but dying rose blossoms laid against a granite background, in the Garden of Remembrance on the Embankment.

2.7. F47B3567: Selling tomatoes.

The "rule of odds" applied in order to get the best possible image of tomatoes. If I were doing food photography this is the way I'd go (although hopefully I'd make a better fist of the background and spread that oil around more liberally or dispense with it altogether.

3. Conclusion:

Composing pictures with an odd number of objects of interest does work with the right subjects but more often than not there are more pressing constraints on the scene before us and these are not necessarily to the detriment of the final image.

4. Technical Notes:

All the pictures were shot digitally on a full frame Canon EOS 5D, They were captured as raw images and developed using Darktable.

Some of the images were lightly cropped and rotated.

The Grandad and granddaughter image was slightly adjusted for exposure, shadows and highlights.

"Look to the rose" was a struggle in processing. The background, for which I had used the wall of the memorial fountains, was incomplete and I resorted to cloning other parts of the image.

In all cases the final images were exported to 8 bit JPEG files for ease of rendering in web browsers.

Author: **Clifford W Fulford. October 2021.**

