

MINIMALISM Notes To go with the powerpoint of images.

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HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

All definitions and information and many pictures used today are from locations on the internet. Listed at the end of presentation.

SIMPLIFICATION IS KEY

There are lots of ways to simplify images. I will not be teaching you how to use them. Instead, I will describe how simplification was accomplished.

ANY SUBJECT IS AMENABLE TO SIMPLIFICATION AND MINIMALIST STYLE

When looking for stock images I often found abstract and minimalist images in the same file. I am making a distinction between them today because they differ in amount of context.

All photographers are credited at the end of the presentation, and thank you to all who contributed to this talk today.

- Most minimalist portraits I saw had a complete face, but very simple background. This face is simplified down to a strip of light on one side.
- This one is simplified down to repeated lines
- This is one is simplified down to a few sharp petals and black negative space
- This one is simplified down to an isolated subject and just a spot of colour

- This one is simplified by use of distance and negative space. Negative space deserves a workshop all by itself.
- This one is simplified by use of a high key pale colour palate, and a simple spiral composition ending in what may be perceived as a window.

ABSTRACT VS MINIMALISM

Different people perceive images differently. Where one person may identify a subject easily, another person may see no subject at all. This is to be expected as we all have differing life experiences.

When describing images, I will be using the words context, details, and information interchangeably.

Abstract or minimalist

- This image was created with a macro lens, in ambient light, is low key, and has repeated curves. There is some texture information but you don't have enough information to easily know what it is. It is therefore abstract.
- Moving back a bit there is now enough context or info to clearly see it is a candle. There are few more details in the foreground. It may be now be considered a minimalist photo.
- This was taken a few years ago during the fires near Sechelt. That's what made the strange colour. Though some details are not there, you know it's a sunset. It was simplified by cropping out some foreground details. But I left in the pylons to give enough context so you would know more easily this is a landscape in sunset. It is minimalist
- The colour conveys a lot of weight and emotional impact.

- I wanted to simplify the image further to create an abstract, so I took out the colour details, cropped out the pylon details, and further softened the foreground. Now It is abstract.
- In this image there is no clearly defined subject that enables us to say, yes it's a sky or yes it's a seascape. For this presentation that's not enough context to consider it minimalist. It is therefore abstract.
- In this one I clearly identify it as snow because I know that snow looks blue due to sky reflection, and the little whiskers aren't whiskers, they are bits of vegetation. Enough context to consider this a minimalist image,
- This image has extremely little visual information apart from grey and white bars and stripes. There is nothing to indicate what is creating the shapes. It is an abstract.
- This one has a very simple colour palate, repeated lines, and squares that are clearly windows, it is a minimalist image.

CLEAR MEANING MUST BE EVIDENT IN ORDER TO CONSIDER AN IMAGE MINMALIST.

ASK YOURSELF DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE SUBJECTS ARE

Do you know what it is?

- Yes it's a branch in the snow,. It is a small section of a larger image. its minimalist
- I know what it is do you? I took it. Colour can covey a great deal of information. Leaves are green. This is a macro of leaves. Does it need more information to be considered minimalist.?? I don't know.
- No I don't know what it is . I could only guess. abstract

- Yes Does this have enough info for you to see the pylons and the water? If so, it is minimalist. If not its abstract.
- No Do you know what this is? Its made with slow shutter speed and camera movement. You can't tell its a branch in the snow. Its abstract.
- Yes clearly this is stairs. Its high key. minimalist

IS IT SIMPLE ENOUGH?

- This has negative space but I don't find it simple enough to be minimalist. I tried various crops didn't work, too much info in the flower it needs to be simpler. However, there is great space to add text for a card.

REDUCE CONTEXT THROUGH THE LENS OR IN POST

There are lots of ways to eliminate details. Here are some of them.

- This one for me is simple enough. It's a macro, I took most of the green out. You may find *it does not have enough information* though.
- This one for me is fine as is. It is not minimalist, though it is simple. The subject is isolated and the image has a great deal of texture info which I find pleasing. I feel no need to remove details from it to make it simpler.
- According to the definition on the title page, minimalism requires a simple composition and as few elements as possible. This image has 1 shape 2 sizes, one colour. One type of information repeated as texture can be considered simple. However, further simplification of the background is needed to meet the requirements for minimalism as defined today.

- This is a close up and though the foreground is soft, the image needs further simplification. The colour carries meaning and weight. The foreground conveys no information but it has details are just busy. I tried taking out the colour, that was not enough. It needs to be simpler. I will next try darkening and softening the foreground.
- Simple enough to be minimalist, the negative space works well to impart weight to the chair, note slightly off centre chair and slight dip in the yellow ground also contributes to tension and weight.
- Simple enough, very high key all white but for dots of colour, you know what it is with very few visual details. Works well as a minimalist image.
- This is a macro. Simple enough but for the colour. I considered it minimalist until a friend said that, with colour she knew it was a flower, but without colour she did not. Colour conveys context and meaning.
- I Took out the colour. Now for me it is extremely minimalist, my eye goes straight to the petal edge. I like it better. My friend did not know what this was. she considered it abstract.
- I took this. Subject is clearly a railing. I think it is simple enough for minimalism. The background is blurred from depth of field. I know the colour tone is due to glass but this is not obvious to the viewer, and the colour does not impart meaning. Does it need more softness? Don't care. I like it as it is and consider it minimalist, though not as extreme as some of my other images.
- Mine also. Simple enough for minimalism. There is little context in this image other than the parts of the chairs. Taken from 2 floors up looking down.

- Also mine. Unless you know old cars, there is no context in this image other than the word. Text is the most contextually rich detail there is. Is it minimalist? Yes maybe. Or maybe just simple.
- Does it need simplification? I took out the name and voila, an abstract. Unless you know old cars. if you know this car you know exactly what you are looking at. Maybe you don't think it is abstract at all.
- Simple enough. Soft background due to distance away. Some details in the plant but I don't know what it is.
- Simple enough for minimalism. Uses negative space and tones of grey to reduce details.
- Simple enough. Uses a very simple composition, low key dark image to reduce details, pop of colour
- Mine needs simplification. Too much colour. Simple background but too much colour. This does nothing for me.
- So I applied a bw filter and pop. Now the composition has a strong diagonal and the dark makes it, for me, delightfully ominous and minimal. Might put back one small facet of red.