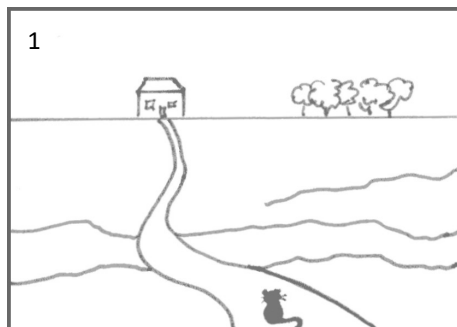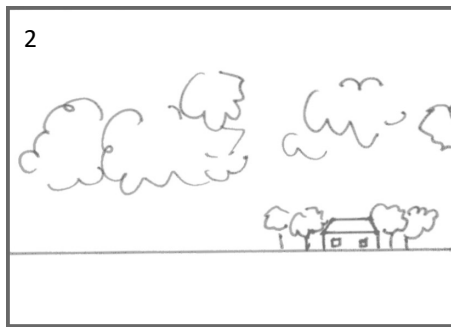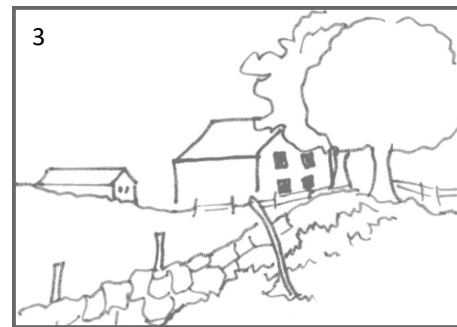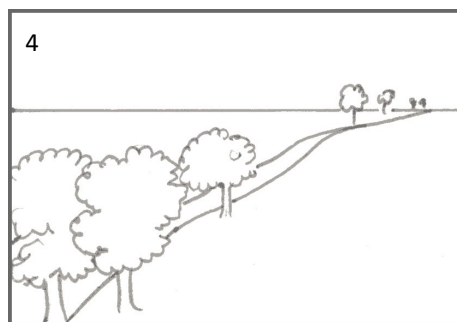# Good Compositions

1

High horizon, off-centre subject.
Road leads the eye to the focal point.
Shows some foreground interest.
Trees provide secondary interest.

2

Low horizon to highlight the sky.
House provides an off-centre focal point.
Shallow foreground remains uncluttered
and doesn't detract from the sky.

3

Midline horizon that works in this case.
Foreground wall leads us gently across
to the trees and buildings, with
the trees providing volume and height.

4

High horizon, asymmetrical composi-
tion with river/road leading the eye to
the horizon, scale of trees from large to
small provides perspectival depth.

5

Low to medium 'horizon' ,ground eye-
level viewpoint for habitat.
Off-centre sprawling subject, with taller
leaves giving height. No depth/
perspective - so would use colour.
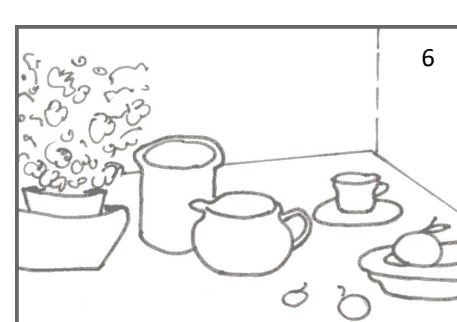
6

High viewpoint onto the table
The eye is prompted to explore the
objects.
Some cropped off components.
Vanishing point where the corner of the
table meets the corner of the room,
provides a final resting point and depth.

7

Eye level is the traditional way to paint
florals.
Selected specimens are arranged here
at different heights across the format
for the eye to explore.
Maybe the plants would be related in
some way?
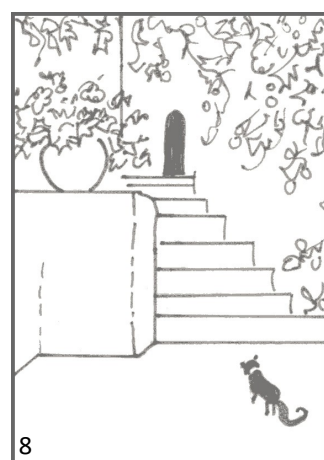
8

High horizon, low view-
point, looking up.
Foreground interest and
steps lead to the central
door. Pot and foliage
function to frame and
soften.
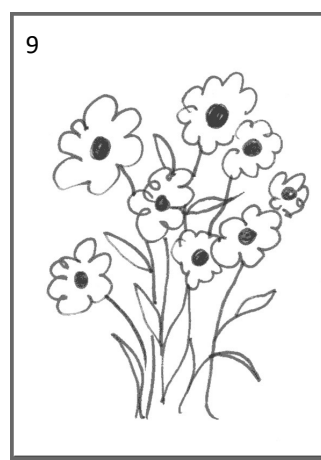
9

Centralised, eye level
'bouquet' arrangement.
Make sure you have differ-
ent heights and crossing
over stems and leaves.
Only the use of colour can
provide depth.
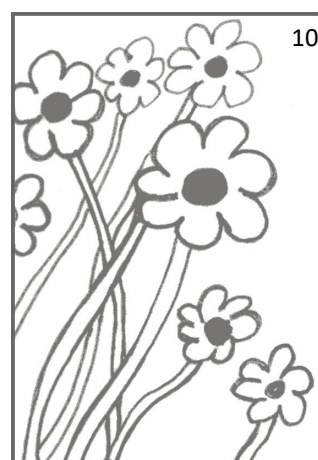
10

Asymmetrical composition.
Strong sense of direction
and immediacy. Suits
wandering types of stems,
maybe paired with
another? Only the use of
colour/scale difference can
provide depth.
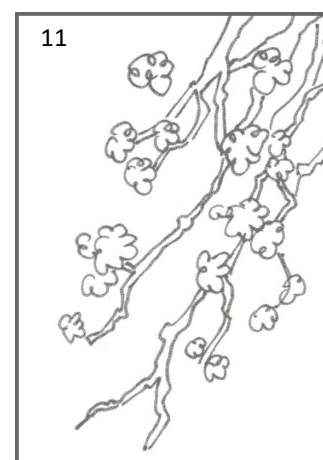
11

Another asymmetrical
composition, good for tree
branches/ wandering
stems/bird illustrations etc.
Only the use of colour/
scale difference can pro-
vide depth.

Poor Compositions
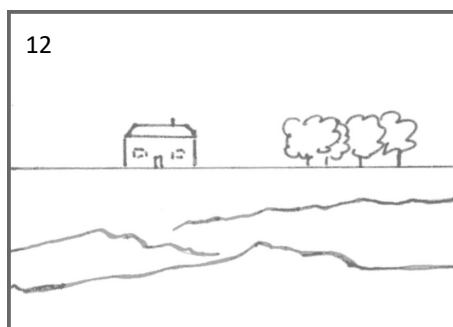
Midline horizons don't usually work
very well.
There is no focal point, as the house and
trees compete for attention and make
for frustration viewing.
Foreground forms cutting right across
can prohibit the viewer from entering
the picture.
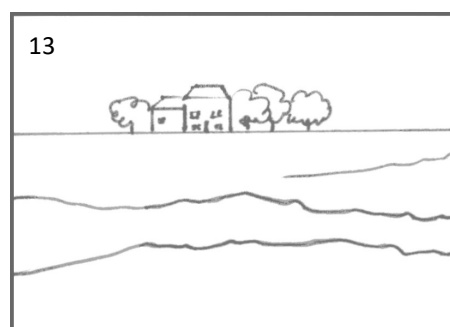
Higher horizon is better, but the build-
ings and trees are neither central nor
properly off-centre—so it irritates.
Foreground forms cutting across,
eg a hedge, once more bar the viewer
or take them off and away out of the
picture. This is a very annoying
composition.
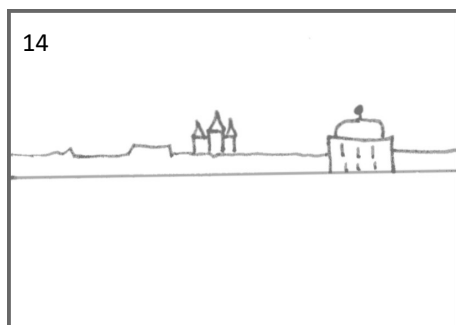
Midline horizon with equal sky and
foreground space doesn't work.
There is no real focal point or interest
to lead the eye in—and to what? It's
too indeterminate.
This composition could work better if
the foreground happens to be strong
reflections of sky in water, but it would
still be very poor because the buildings
wouldn't support it much.
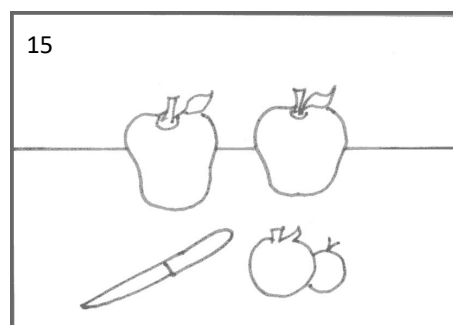
Higher 'horizon' line, where we're
looking down slightly onto the table is
OK. But the two apples are too similar
in shape and size, and placed too much
in alignment.
There is a total waste of space on the
left and right of the picture—nothing to
explore.
Not much sense of depth. Although in
a still life smaller objects at the front
can work very well, here they are too
clustered together, and too evenly
arranged directly below the apples.

Good Compositions
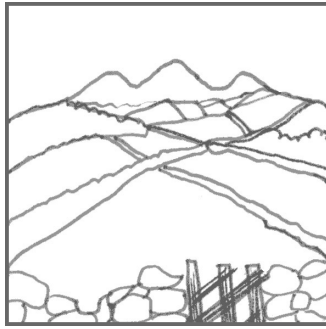
16

High horizon.
Centralised focal point, with the field boundaries converging to draw the eye to the hills.
Gate and wall provide foreground interest. Larger to smaller field shapes gives us good sense of perspective.
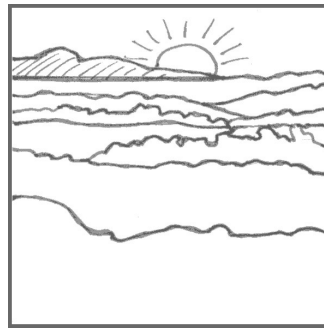
17

High horizon, central focal point. Could be landscape or seascape, in which the bands of forms become successively narrower as they meet the horizon. So the scale of the shapes alone provide the perspectival depth here.
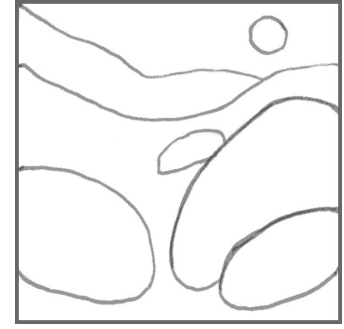
18

High horizon, off centre focal point, with a ground level view looking up eg pebbles on a beach. The eye wanders through the picture to the sunset in the distance. One smaller pebble further back behind the larger cropped off pebbles provides the depth.
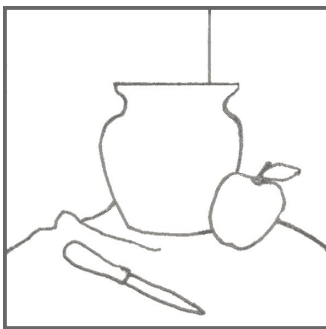
19

Looking down a little works well for still-lifes. Here the vase is central, but the vanishing point is off centre—wouldn't work if they coincided. Apple overlaps main subject forming a natural cluster.
Ruched cloth softens and knife provides foreground interest.
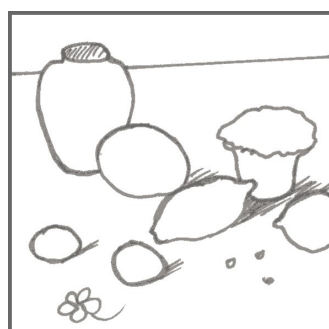
20

Flatter perspective with a high viewpoint onto the table. Table edge at an oblique angle—maybe more natural than straight? The eye is invited to explore the objects. Some objects overlap and some are cropped off for a natural continuation. (This is less formal than the preceding lay-out).
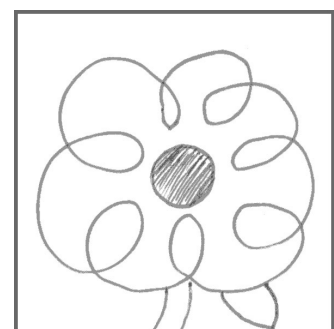
21

Eye level viewpoint for florals. Large single component centrally placed for full impact.
Make sure the centre of the flower is well in focus otherwise it really disappoints.
The single leaf is optional.
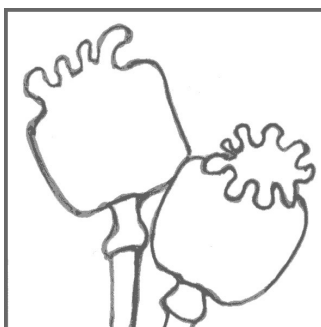
22

Breaking the rules with 2, rather than 1 or 3? Possibly. But rules can sometimes be broken and the subject may play a part.
The fact that they are at different heights and angles, and that, for depth purposes, one could be made to slightly more overlap the other, certainly helps!

23

Okay, back to an odd number. Safer ? Yes.
Ideally the smaller upper right daisy should be slightly higher, so that all three are at different heights. But the grass stem fixes the problem by taking the eye higher and away from the two level flower centres.

Poor Compositions
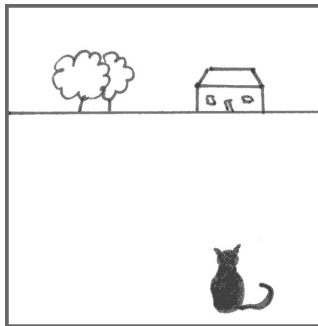
24

High viewpoint is fine, but there is nowhere for the eye to rest on the horizon (competing elements), and no way for the eye to be led there. Foreground interest, yes, but feel sorry for the cat who is confused and can't get home!
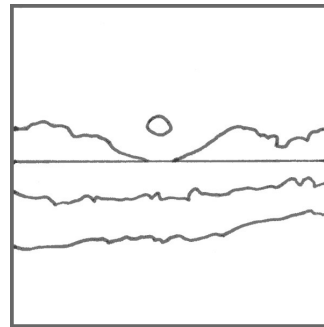
25

Midline horizon divides the picture and interest in half. The sun and gap in the landmass are neither central nor properly off-centre. No features lead into the picture, indeed a hedge/other structure cuts across to distract.
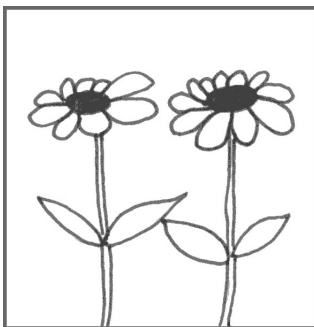
26

Eye level viewpoint is fine.
But the two flowers are at the same height and it would be better if there were three of them.
Leaves should either be not touching or be properly overlapping - not just touching at the margins—too contrived/unnatural.

27

Flat perspective, looking right down on the table is fine.
The problem is that the onion leaves are creating one diagonal line, and the stripes of the cloth another—and they cross over each other, like a X, so competing with each other. But the onion bulbs themselves are arranged obliquely too, and their arrangement could support the cloth stripes—so does this composition work overall or not?