

The crystalline clarity of Garry Winogrand's awareness of a photograph cutting through motion and time makes this image of people interacting on a bench absolutely riveting. The quality and intensity of a photographer's attention leave their imprint on the mental level of the photograph. This does not happen by magic.

A photographer's basic formal tools for defining the content and organization of a picture are vantage point, frame, focus, and time. What a photographer pays attention to governs these decisions (be they conscious, intuitive, or automatic). These decisions resonate with the clarity of the photographer's attention. They conform to the photographer's mental organization — the visual gestalt — of the picture.

If you right now become aware of the space between yourself and this page, there is a transmutation of your attention and perception. This sort of perceptual change — this modification of the mental image — would, for a photographer, lead to a realignment of his or her formal decisions in making a photograph.