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**USING THE
MC ART FRAMEWORK™**
...for empowering visual creativity

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A METHODOLOGY FOR CREATING ART

Congratulations on deciding to move forward with your creative journey using the MC Art Framework.

The documents in this toolkit leverage the nature of visual creativity to provide a concise approach to creating that feeds artistic growth. This is an approach that I developed based on my own practices and experiences and is how I create work today and grow as an artist.

I compiled everything I've learned about visual creativity and the making of art into this four-part, eleven-step visual creativity empowerment and artistic growth approach.

I identified key practices for developing creatively and assembled a selection of design protocols (30 of them) to use with elements of design for constructing strong compositions and images with impact.

I then devised and refined an approach to systematically apply all of this to the creation of my art and the making of photographs.

The MC Art Framework is unique in that it is not about just learning and doing some things to make you a better artist (like a course or workshop) rather, its true value goes far beyond this as it is a system for lifelong learning that keeps making you better.

When reading about and working with the MC Art Framework, I cannot stress enough the importance of:

- Making the time to contemplate our subject matter
- Devising and articulating a concept for the work
- Making notes and/or quick sketches to train your mind to visually analyze and be able to visualize your desired end result.

The MC Art Framework guides you in adopting this mindset and provides the tools and processes for growing as an artist.

HERE IS THE “PLAN”

What follows is a suggested plan and timeframe for getting up to speed working with the MC Art Framework and tips for adopting it.

The steps and their order matter, the timeline is up to you.

It will take some time to go through and digest all of the content necessary to maximize your success. There are no shortcuts; you simply have to study and seek to fully understand the material and how the framework works.

Haphazardly applying some of the knowledge in the various MC Art Framework documents without working according to the framework will compromise your degree of success in improving your images and will constrain artistic growth.

Follow the framework, trust it, believe in it, and results will come.

STEP 1

Weeks 1-3

Read and study “The MC Art Framework - Step 6 - Connect” document to ensure that you understand and have digested the content.

This document is about visual design and analysis and reviews 30 design protocols to use with 7 elements of design. It has examples of the application of concepts covered. It also has tips for conducting visual analyses and judging results.

I recommend that you make notes referencing specific content that you may wish to flag as important or to revisit at some point.

The MC Art Framework design protocols are grouped into three categories:

- Gestalt Principles
- Elements and Techniques of Image Design
- Image-Frame Relationships

STEP 2

Week 3

Spend some time with the “MC Art Framework - Organizer Overview” document and make some sample trial entries in the tool to ensure that you are familiar with its functionality and understand how to use it.

STEP 3

Weeks 4-8

Print off a copy of the “MC Art Framework” and the “MC Art Framework Cheat Sheet - Visual Design” documents.

Study these documents thoroughly from beginning to end daily for a month or so until you have committed them to memory so that you can work with the framework to design your images without having to refer to these documents as you do so.

STEP 4

Weeks 4-5

This is where you begin to work with the framework...

Select ten of your best images and walk through the MC Art Framework steps as they may apply to each recalling what your thinking may have been in making each image. Ten images, ten weekdays, one image analysis per day.

For each image, as you go through the framework steps, document your thoughts to the best of your abilities and recollection. For Stage 3 of the framework (Construct), walk through the “MC Art Framework - Step 6 - Connect document”, parts 3 (Visual Design) - 6 (Visual Analyses) and see what content applies to each image. Mark up your image and make notes. Comment on how your image might have been improved by applying any of the design protocols.

Capture as much information about the making of each image as you can. Revisit your analysis after a period of time if necessary. Ensure that you pay particular attention to Stage 4 of the framework (Evolve - Evaluate, Learn and Aspire).

STEP 5

Week 6

Flag where the steps/concepts from the framework did not apply to each of your images. Identify any common gaps—these are the areas where you will have to pay particular attention to when making new work.

I urge you to not rush through doing this work. It is important for everyone to acquire a sense of where their workflow and thought processes do not align with the framework and to what degree of success has been achieved in applying design protocols to image making.

By being thorough and doing your absolute best at completing these initial steps to using the framework, you will not only have cemented an understanding of how to work with the framework but you will have identified your image making strengths and weaknesses and will have already begun a customized learning journey. Now, go make new work using the framework.

STEP 6

Week 7...

For producing new work, follow the “MC Art Framework - Quick Reference” document (framework and workflows) and work with visual design cheat sheet(s) to design images.

Be thoughtful, patient and thorough. Document your application of every step of the framework using the “MC Art Framework Organizer” tool. When in the field making images, you can refer to the “MC Art Framework - Quick Reference” and visual design cheat sheet documents for note-taking (to be transcribed later in the Organizer tool).

Stage 4 of the framework (Evolve - Evaluate, Learn and Aspire) is where much of the learning takes place.

Complete this stage as soon as possible after image creation and also revisit it again after a period of time.

Conducting your analysis immediately upon completing a work, when everything is still fresh in your mind, allows you to immediately apply any lessons learned to new work.

When revisiting an analysis of an image after a period of time has passed, you see the image with new eyes and an

open mind. This exercise can lead to new insights and inspiration to do new work and can serve to identify gaps in your knowledge and biases or errors in your workflow. Any negative information should not be judged as such—all of this is valuable experience and learning that contributes to artistic growth. We learn through our mistakes and the framework points these out to us.

The MC Art Framework “experience” of creating an image results in an in-depth analysis of each image created with the framework. This can be used not only for learning purposes but as marketing collateral for promoting work, as blog content or for information to accompany your images.

TIPS FOR USING THE FRAMEWORK

1. Print off pages 4-8 of this document and put them up on a wall somewhere where they will be visible to you on a daily basis. Do everything on this page!
2. Print off a copy of the “MC Art Framework”, “MC Art Framework Cheat Sheet - Visual Design” and “MC Art Framework - Quick Reference” documents and keep them with you for easy reference and review. Use them as checklists to guide your approach to creating work and designing images.
3. Follow the framework fully...without exception. Using this approach can take some time and may seem challenging at first. Be patient, be thorough. It may be more of a change for some people versus others, but everyone will realize results from using the framework. There is not much more that can be said about this.
4. Make use of the “MC Art Framework Organizer” tool. It is the simplest and best way of adopting the framework and the best way to learn and grow as an artist. Commit to using it fully for a minimum of twelve weeks. This will not only help you to adapt to working with the framework but will provide valuable insights regarding how you approach your work and how you compose your images.
5. Revisit the “MC Art Framework - Step 6 - Connect” document often and focus on parts 3 (Visual Design) - 6 (Visual Analyses). It is important to saturate your mind with the 30 design protocols so that you will begin to start easily identifying such patterns and relationships everywhere around you.
6. Make a habit of analyzing old work on an ongoing basis. Average one per day for your first year of using the framework. Complete an image design chart for each image (using the Image Template sheet found in the “MC Art Framework Organizer” tool). You will find that MC Art Framework concepts will apply to some degree to many of your images. Markup copies of your images with diagrams and reference notes to identify design protocols and elements of design used. Consider printing this information off and storing in a binder. You may be surprised at the role your subconscious has played in the design of these images.

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