

3 Composition

Let It Breathe

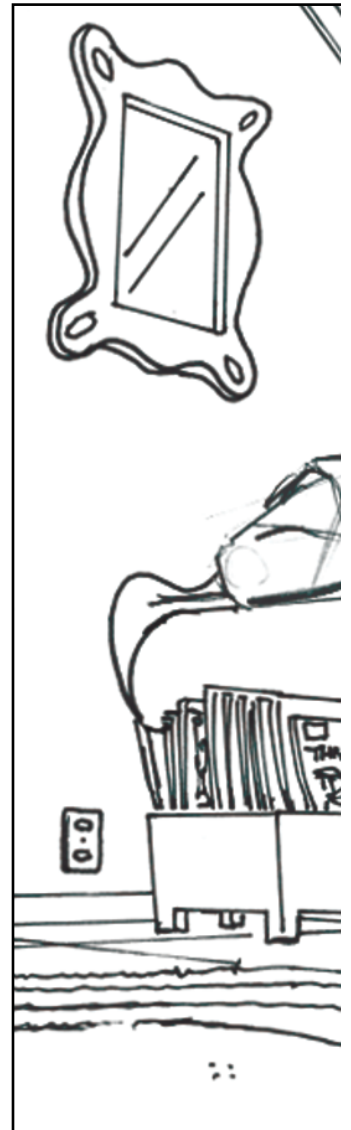


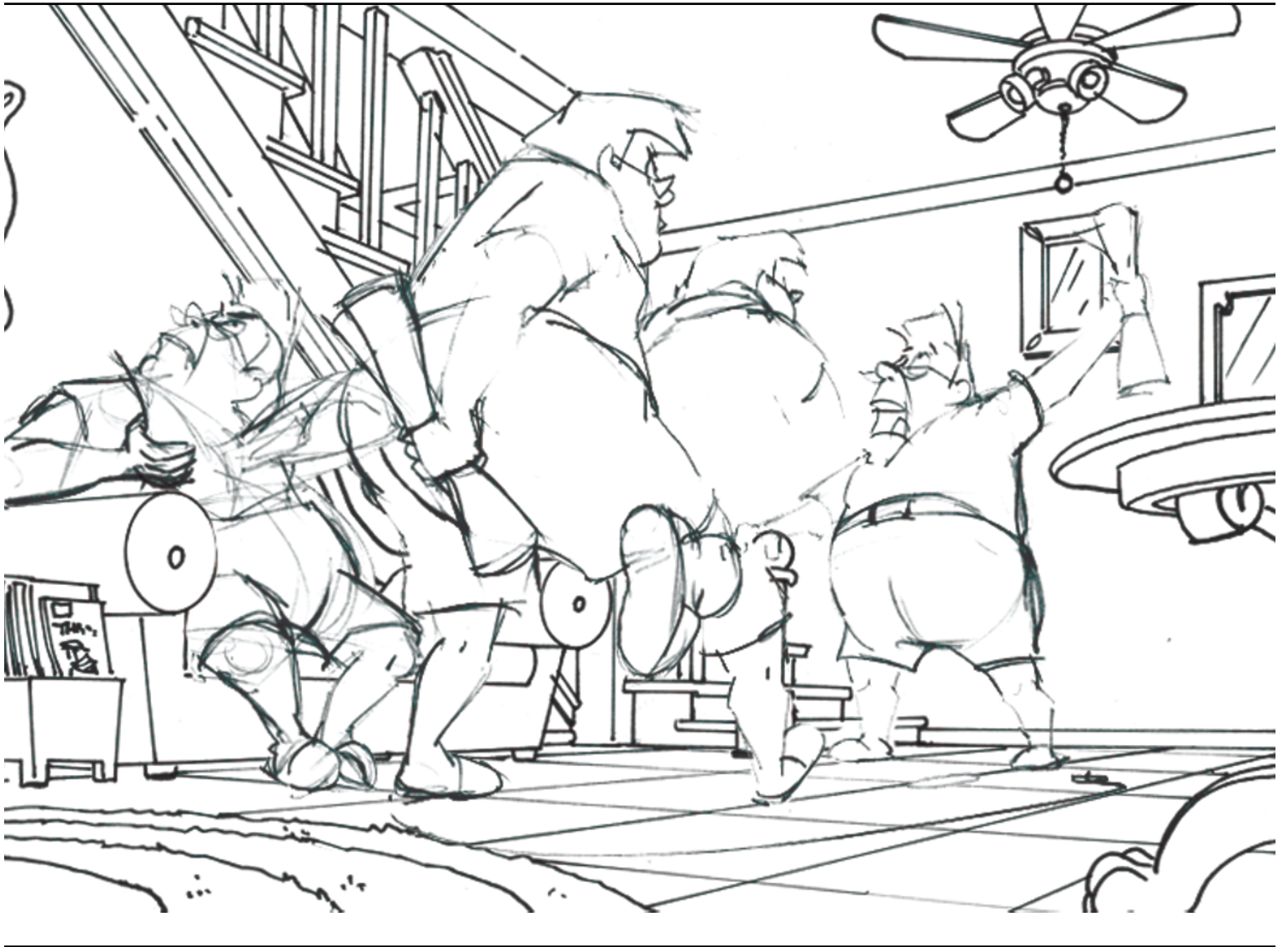
- Composing
- Path of Action



L **ea**ve air around the character.
Let the scene breathe.

This chapter discusses the physical and emotional compositional aspects of your story and the placement of characters within the setting. Having an understanding of the composition and shapes used to fill the graphic space of your canvas, the relationships between them, and the world you create for them to live in, will strengthen the story point.





Composing

Standards in Film Language

These examples are for a standard 1.85 aspect ratio. Widescreen will be tighter.

Extreme Long Shot



Full body shape with little or no detail

Long Shot



Full body

Medium Shot



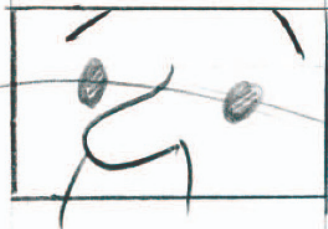
Waist to top of head

Close-up



Top of chest to top of head

Extreme Close-up



Eyes

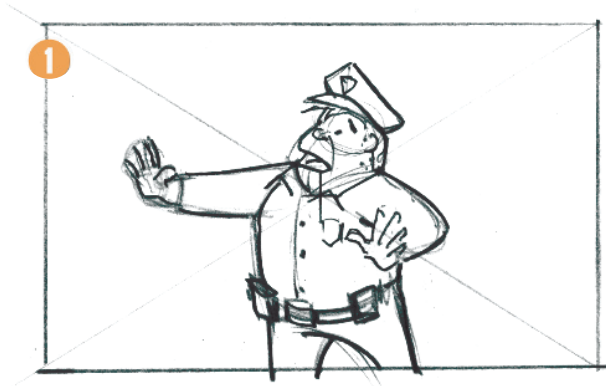
Directional Cues

Placement or position of a character in a scene depends on the direction the character is facing and if it's a single shot. The character should be just to the left or right of center with the center of the field close to an eye of the character.

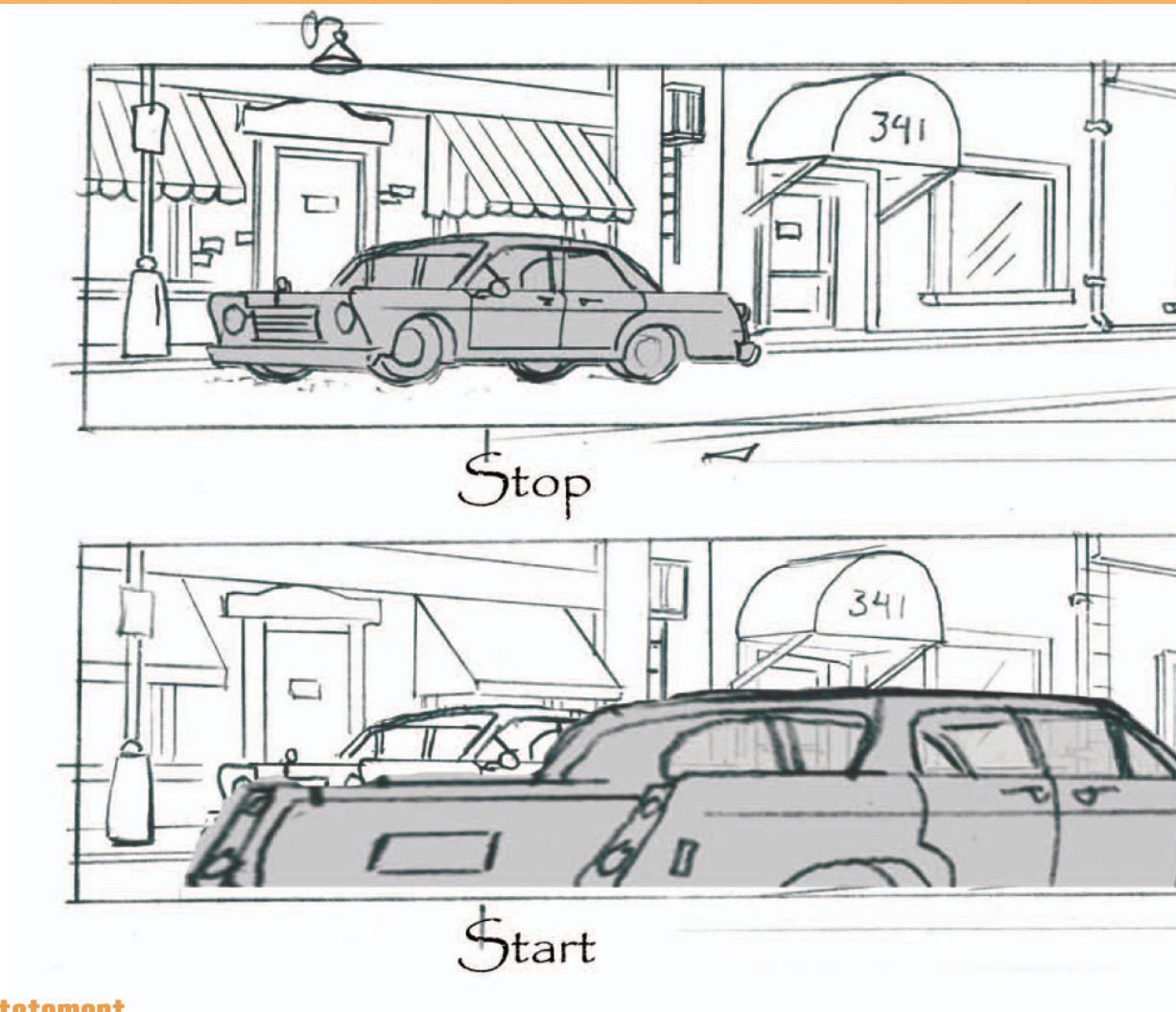
The examples given show how the third's break-up of space works.

In example 1, the character is in the lower right-third of the frame just right of center. He feels balanced.

Example 2 shows how off-balance the composition feels when this rule is not followed. It feels as though you should expect to see something happening behind and to the right of the character.



Composing



Make a Statement

Another element that needs to be clarified before composing any scene or piece of artwork is to know what the statement of the scene or painting is.

For example: If a scene starts on a car

moving down a street stopping at a storefront, the background at the start position doesn't need as much detail as the stop position (depending on the speed of the car). The background is moving from the



Start



Stop

start of the scene and the car will cover most of it. The camera stops when the detail shows up and usually you'll see this part of the background the longest. Obviously, the reverse applies to a scene that

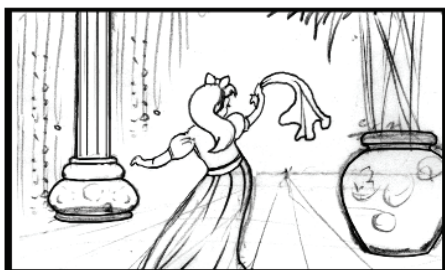
starts on a still and moves to the cut of the scene.

Composing

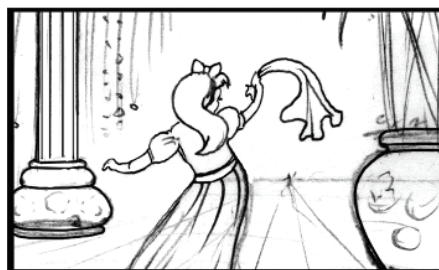
A Little Bit Jumpy

While composing for a project it is very important to review the scenes surrounding the one you're working on. You might encounter a jump cut which is when two scenes are similar in composition, but not

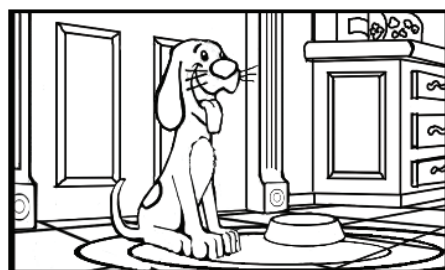
exact, and are placed into the film next to one another. The cut will be jarring or look like a mistake. The examples given show jump cuts from one to another.



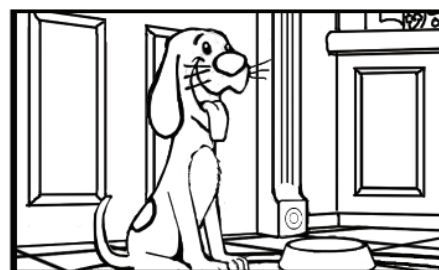
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Let It Breathe

These two examples show what “leaving air” around a character means. The space around the character leaves room for acting and movement. Composing a scene too tightly feels claustrophobic.



No Air

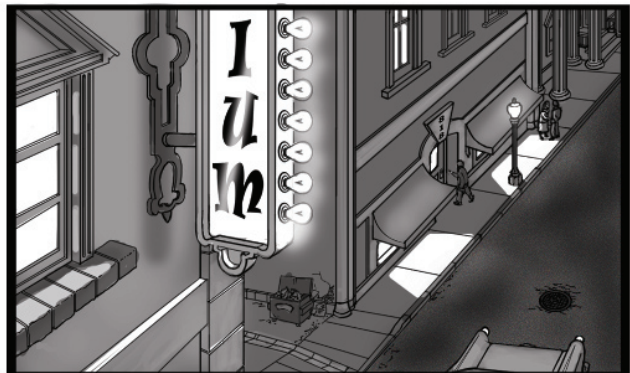


Air

Composing

All The Angles

A down shot or upshot push the dramatics of a scene. An upshot is when the point of view of the camera is looking upwards, and the down shot is where the point of view of the camera is looking downwards.



A Dutch angle or tilted angle can be used to give a sense of uneasy and off balance.

