

List of image characteristics for refining your prompts

Here are some characteristics of imagery to explore:

Mood (also represents “story” or “intent”)

A short list to get you started:

Serene
Melancholic
Vibrant
Mysterious
Peaceful
Whimsical
Romantic
Eerie
Joyful
Somber
Tranquil
Dramatic
Lively
Soothing
Captivating

Composition

Rule of Thirds: The image is divided into nine equal parts by two horizontal and two vertical lines, and important elements are placed along these lines or at their intersections.

Symmetrical Composition: The image is perfectly balanced with a central axis, creating a mirror-like effect. Symmetry can be soothing and formal.

Asymmetrical Composition: The elements in the image are not centered or evenly balanced, but they create a sense of balance through contrast in size, color, or position.

Leading Lines: The viewer's eye is guided through the image by lines, such as roads, fences, or natural features, leading to a focal point.

Framing: Natural or constructed elements are used to frame the subject, drawing attention to it and adding depth to the composition.

Foreground, Middleground, Background: The image is divided into three distinct areas, each with different visual elements, creating depth and dimension.

Diagonal Composition: Elements are arranged along diagonal lines to add a sense of energy and dynamic movement to the image.

Golden Ratio (Fibonacci Spiral): A more complex version of the rule of thirds, where the elements are arranged according to the Fibonacci sequence, creating a sense of natural balance.

Minimalist Composition: This style simplifies the image, often with a single subject against a clean background, to create a sense of elegance and clarity.

Layered Composition: Multiple elements or layers are arranged in the image to create depth and dimension, often found in landscapes or architectural photography.

Radial Composition: Elements radiate outward from a central point, creating a sense of symmetry and balance.

Fill the Frame: The subject fills the entire frame, emphasizing its details and eliminating distractions.

Dynamic Symmetry: A composition that combines mathematical principles with dynamic elements, often used in classical art.

Triangular Composition: Elements are arranged in a triangular pattern, creating a sense of stability and balance.

Selective Focus (Bokeh): A technique where one element is in sharp focus while the background is intentionally blurred to draw attention to the subject.

Montage Composition: Multiple images or elements are combined to create a single composition, often used in collage or surreal artwork.

Double Exposure: Two or more images are layered on top of each other to create a surreal or dreamlike effect.

Point of view. (Also includes focal length)

Eye-Level View: This is the most common POV and represents the scene as the human eye sees it, with the camera at the subject's eye level.

Worm's Eye View: The camera is positioned very low, at ground level or below, looking up at the subject. This perspective can make subjects appear imposing and dominant.

Bird's Eye View (Aerial View): The camera is positioned high above the subject, looking down from an elevated vantage point. It's often used to show an overview of a scene or to create a sense of detachment.

High Angle View: The camera is positioned above the subject but not as high as a bird's eye view. It can be used to show vulnerability or to emphasize certain details.

Low Angle View: Similar to worm's eye view but not as extreme, this perspective is achieved by positioning the camera below eye level, looking up at the subject. It can make subjects appear taller and more dominant.

Dutch Angle (Oblique or Tilted View): The camera is intentionally tilted to create a diagonal composition. This can convey a sense of unease, tension, or disorientation.

Over-the-Shoulder View: The camera is placed behind a subject, typically looking over their shoulder. This POV is often used in storytelling to show a character's perspective or to establish a connection between the subject and the viewer.

Close-Up View: The camera is positioned very close to the subject, capturing fine details. It's often used for portraits or to emphasize specific elements.

Macro View: Extreme close-up photography, often used to capture tiny details or small subjects, like insects or flowers.

Fish-Eye View: This wide-angle lens distorts the perspective, creating a convex effect and capturing a vast field of view. It's known for its distinctive, curved appearance.

Panoramic View: Multiple images are stitched together to create an expansive, wide-angle view of a scene or landscape.

Split View: The image is divided into two or more sections, each showing a different perspective or scene, creating a dynamic composition.

Candid View: Unposed and natural, this viewpoint captures spontaneous moments, often in documentary or street photography.

Subjective View: The camera attempts to capture the perspective of a particular character or subject within the scene, allowing the viewer to see through their eyes.

Environmental View: This perspective places the subject within its surroundings to provide context and show how it interacts with the environment.

Lighting effects

Hard Light: Produces strong, well-defined shadows with sharp edges. Used for dramatic and high-contrast effects.

Soft Light: Creates gentle, diffused shadows with smooth transitions between highlights and shadows. Often used for portraits and still life.

Rim Light: Lighting from behind the subject, creating a rim or halo effect along the edges. Adds separation and depth to the subject.

Backlighting: When the primary light source comes from behind the subject, creating a silhouette or highlighting contours.

Fill Light: Used to reduce shadows and even out lighting by filling in the areas not well-lit by the main light source.

Golden Hour: This term refers to the actual warming of sunlight either near dawn or dusk when there is still direct and angular sunlight available in the composition.

Blue Hour: This term refers to the time either before dawn or after sunset when there isn't any direct sunlight, but there is still enough light in the sky so that the sky appears blue rather than black.

Rembrandt Lighting: A specific type of portrait lighting with a small, triangular highlight on the cheek opposite the key light, named after the painter Rembrandt.

Split Lighting: Divides the subject's face or scene into two equal halves, with one side in light and the other in shadow. Creates a striking and dramatic effect.

Chiaroscuro: Emphasizes strong contrasts between light and dark to create a dramatic, three-dimensional effect.

Candlelight: The light from candles is typically quite "warm" .. both literally and allegorically. It's also rather dim, so images are sometimes lower resolution to compensate for reduced lighting. Candlelight from a single candle (or group of candles like on a cake) create strong directional light emphasizing dimensionality.

Shadow Power: Shadows can reveal dimension, the direction of light, the quality of light, and add graphic strength to an image. Strong light yields strong shadows and gentle light yields gentle shadows.

Light Rays: Light creates mood and rays of light often portray a mood of inspiration or drama. While light rays can occur in nature, this technique is ideally suited for the context of AI Art where they can be rendered with a few simple words.

Window Light: Light through a window often creates a gentle dimensionality by using highlights and shadows. This lighting style is popular both with photography and more traditional art forms.

Silhouettes: Creates a dark rendering of the principle subject. Often used as foreground framing technique.

Cross Lighting: Illuminates the subject from two different angles, often at 90 degrees from each other, to create strong shadows and depth.

Lighting Qualities:

Color Temperature: Refers to the warmth or coolness of the light. Measured in Kelvin (K), with lower values (e.g., 2700K) indicating warm (yellowish) light and higher values (e.g., 5500K) indicating cool (bluish) light.

Direction: The angle and direction from which light strikes the subject, influencing the way textures and shapes are revealed.

Intensity: The brightness or strength of the light source, affecting exposure and contrast.

Quality of Light: Describes the softness or harshness of the light, which depends on the size and distance of the light source.

Natural Light: Utilizes available daylight, which can vary in quality and intensity depending on the time of day, weather conditions, and location.

Artificial Light: Refers to light sources such as flash, tungsten, fluorescent, or LED lights that are used to control and shape the lighting environment.

Specular Reflection: Produces small, bright highlights on shiny surfaces, like metal or glass, creating a high-gloss effect.

Diffuse Reflection: Scatters light evenly in all directions, reducing harsh highlights and creating a soft, matte appearance.

Gobo: A device used to block, shape, or control the direction of light, often casting patterns or shadows.

Lighting Ratios: The relationship between the intensity of the main light source and the fill light, affecting the level of contrast in the image.

Color palette

Monochromatic Palette: This palette consists of various shades and tones of a single color, creating a harmonious and subtle effect.

Analogous Palette: Analogous colors are adjacent to each other on the color wheel. This palette combines colors like red, orange, and yellow for a harmonious and pleasing result.

Complementary Palette: Complementary colors are opposite each other on the color wheel, such as red and green or blue and orange. Using these pairs creates contrast and visual interest.

Warm Palette: Warm colors like reds, oranges, and yellows create a sense of energy, passion, and heat in a painting or photograph.

Cool Palette: Cool colors such as blues, greens, and purples convey a sense of calm, serenity, and tranquility.

Earthy Palette: Earthy tones like browns, tans, and muted greens create a natural and grounded feel, often used in landscapes and outdoor scenes.

Pastel Palette: Pastel colors are soft, muted shades that convey a sense of delicacy and lightness, often used in portraits and spring-themed works.

Neon Palette: Neon colors are extremely bright and vibrant, often used for a bold and attention-grabbing effect.

Grayscale Palette: This palette uses various shades of gray, from white to black, and can create a sense of simplicity, elegance, and timelessness.

High-Contrast Palette: Utilizing strong contrasts between light and dark colors, this palette can create a dramatic and eye-catching composition.

Vintage Palette: Vintage or retro color palettes often include faded or sepia tones, evoking—a sense of nostalgia and history.

Minimalist Palette: Minimalist artworks and photographs often use a limited color palette with just a few carefully chosen colors to emphasize simplicity and clarity.

Style (if using Midjourney you can use artist names).

In addition to the list below, to browse art styles check out <https://www.art-prints-on-demand.com/> and <https://midlibrary.io/styles>. (This phenomenal resource was created with Midjourney but can also be used for brainstorming prompts for other platforms.)

Impressionism: Emphasizes light and color to capture the essence of a subject rather than its precise details.

Cubism: Represents objects or scenes from multiple viewpoints and angles, often using geometric shapes.

Surrealism: Explores the subconscious mind, featuring dreamlike and fantastical elements.

Abstract Expressionism: Uses abstract forms and spontaneous brushwork to convey emotion and energy.

Pop Art: Incorporates elements from popular culture and mass media into art.

Realism: Strives to depict subjects with accuracy and detail, often resembling high-resolution photographs.

Minimalism: Focuses on simplicity, often using basic geometric shapes and a limited color palette.

Fauvism: Uses bold, vibrant colors and simplified forms to create expressive and non-realistic images.

Pointillism: Uses small, distinct dots of color to create an image when viewed from a distance.

Abstract Art: Non-representational art that emphasizes shape, color, and form.

Art Nouveau: Known for its ornate and decorative style, often featuring flowing lines and natural motifs.

Photorealism: Aims to create artwork that closely resembles high-resolution photographs.

Collage: Incorporates a variety of materials and images to create a composition.

Graffiti Art: Street art style often characterized by bold colors and expressive lettering.

Op Art: Uses optical illusions, patterns, and geometric shapes to create visually stimulating images.

Digital Art: Utilizes digital tools and techniques to create art, often with a wide range of styles within it.

Contemporary Art: Encompasses a wide range of styles and approaches, reflecting current cultural and artistic trends.

Abstract Impressionism: Combines elements of both abstract and impressionist styles.

Conceptual Art: Emphasizes the idea or concept behind the artwork over traditional aesthetics.

Gothic Art: Known for its intricate architecture, stained glass, and ornate decoration.

Renaissance Art: Characterized by realistic portrayal of subjects, use of perspective, and classical themes.

Baroque Art: Features dramatic lighting, rich colors, and ornate details.

Mosaic Art: Uses small pieces of materials (such as glass or tiles) to create a larger image or design.

Expressionism: Focuses on conveying emotions and feelings through bold colors and exaggerated forms.

Digital Painting: Digital artwork created to resemble traditional painting styles.