

A digital illustration of a bamboo forest. A path made of flat, grey stones leads from the foreground into the distance, flanked by tall, slender bamboo stalks. In the background, a traditional Japanese torii gate is visible, partially obscured by the bamboo. The scene is bathed in a warm, golden light, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The overall style is soft and painterly.

Leading Lines

*Colette
Murphy*

What are Leading Lines?

- A method pinpointing a subject by *emphasizing* them or “leading” to them
- They center an audience’s focus on a given subject
- They can give a mood or serve as an indication
- They direct an audience’s vision, acting as a signal
- In photography and film, they can add depth, perspective, and movement within a scene



Examples from Studio SHAFT's "Madoka Magica"



The subject's arm acting as a leading line, as if signaling for the next scene to occur- it's a bit playful, but her arm being so tensed juxtaposes that.



The subject dancing around the leading line acts as symbolism for her role as a side character while implying what comes soon after this scene. It grabs your attention- it's definitely what Carroll would call a "hook."



A rather chaotic example, the leading lines in this scene are used in a pivotal moment as symbolism for the culmination of events in the series. The contrast in colors are also used to emphasize this pivotal turning point in the anime, the power system, our character's stance in the universe of the anime, and her turmoil.



ILDOVEMYPLACE

What can Carroll teach us?

- Leading Lines are your “hook” on a subject
- Being “lead around by the photographer”
- A “tightly controlled visual journey”



JUBACCHI

Video Example

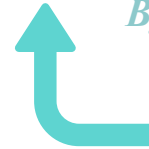


In this opening song, “*Futakotome*,” from Studio SHAFT’s anime the “*Monogatari Series*,” the subject’s hair works *as* leading lines in the beginning; representing the subject’s convoluted and messy personality. The subject’s body falling being the center of focus over the later duration of the video has the lines emphasizing the chaotic movement on the screen *and* unfolding plot. There’s also an interesting use of a staircase as leading lines- more proof you can use them playfully.

In this scene there's emphasis on negative space, inferring on what's about to happen between our subjects. The strict lines in the background that separate our subjects also tell us about their relationship and how complicated it becomes.



By zooming in, this scene becomes more personal. By using leading lines, it becomes a playful juxtaposition within the library; coupled by a sillier mood when the frame switches and our subject tilts her head. This emphasizes symmetry and personality, with the leading lines perfecting the scene and centering our character.



In this anime opening, Studio SHAFT uses actual people as leading lines while dirtying the camera with symmetry! Another instance of playfulness from their studio.

*Examples from Studio
SHAFT's "Monogatari Series"*

How can Leading Lines emphasize a shot?

“Monogatari Series”



No, after graduation,
I'm going traveling.

Leading lines can be playful and subtle, or intense and direct like in this scene- their shape is uncomfortable, like navigating the conversation their having, putting emphasis on their dynamic through scenery.

“Puella Madoka Magica”



Leading Lines don't have to be lines. Take this example: they can take any form as long as they direct attention and put emphasis on a subject.

“Monogatari Series”



They can temper with dynamics, like in this scene from the “Monogatari Series”

How can Leading Lines emphasize a shot by utilizing negative space?



See how the leading lines compliment this scene from the “Monogatari Series?” This emphasizes the characters’ closeness v.s. the rest of the world’s loneliness. The fact they’re walking- the lines acting as movement in this still frame- meaning they’ll have to face the loneliness that’s dawning on them together (and with the movement the leading lines gives them, it’s implied it’s inevitable)- the lines are highlighting that moment of realization. Their rigidness could represent our subject’s apprehensiveness- you stop at a crosswalk before walking. The lines’ clutteredness, the implication of cars passing, these imply how many nuances there are to having found comfort when these characters have been lonely for so long, and how complicated it is for them to navigate that realization.

What about positive space.....?



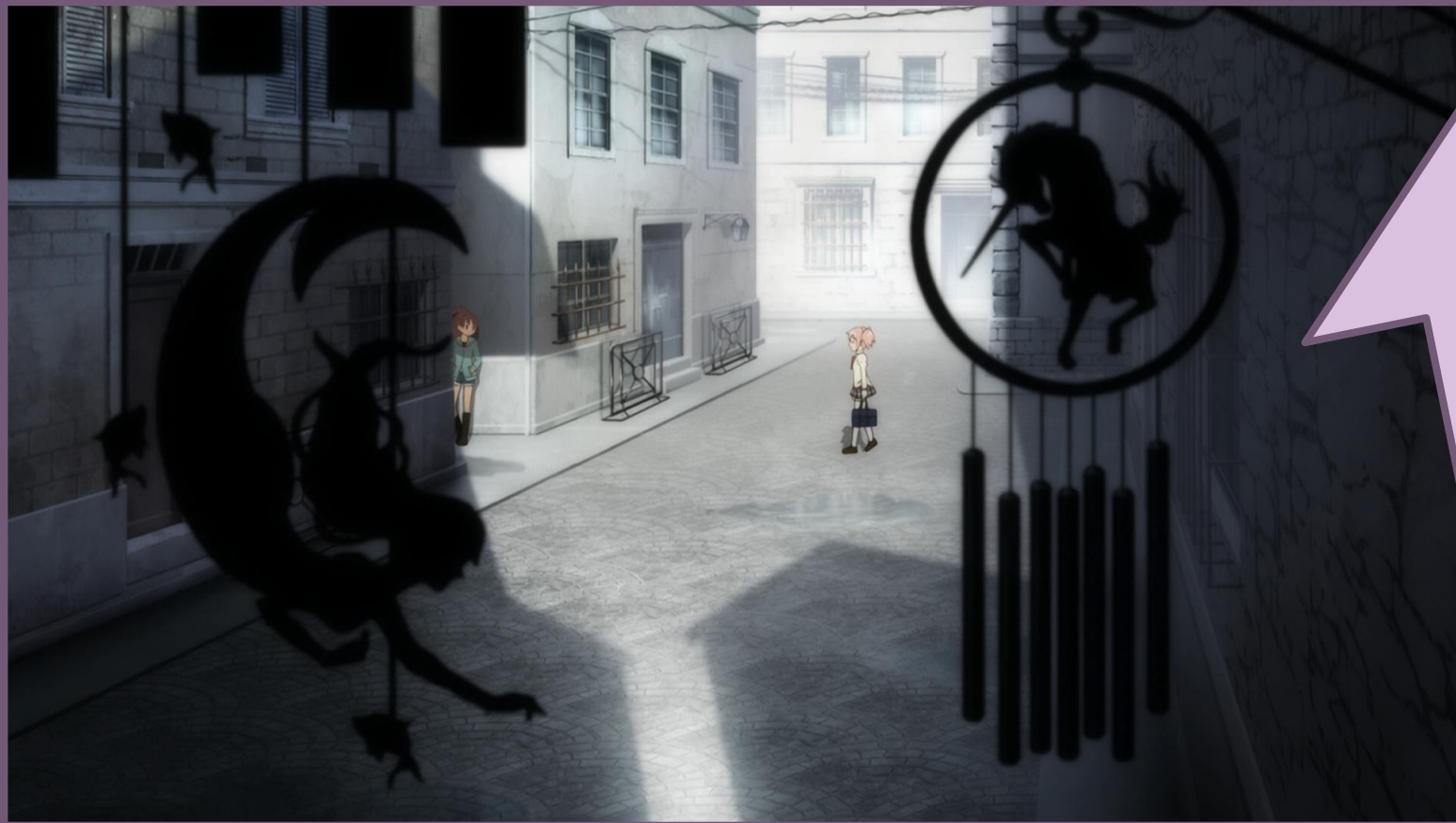
"Monogatari Series"

While in this scene, the trees and cane make our subject feel alone despite the pinks surrounding him. Using the bridge as the leading line makes him stand out too, physically "lifting" our character onto the screen and bringing our attention to his staggered walking in the center of the frame.

In this scene, the leading lines represent how convoluted their relationship is. The contrasting bright colors, the character's positions indicating their dynamics, the amount of positive space used, and the leading lines of the staircase behind them as well as the cluttered bars in front of them emphasize their chaotic universe, as well as their relationship.

"Sayonara, Zetsubou-Sensei"





*How
Leading
Lines
emphasize
a shot by
utilizing
“dirtying
the
camera”*



Examples within my camera roll !!