

Black and White Photography

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Black & White Photography

“It’s time to stop shooting in black and white. We don’t see the world in black and white and it was something only done in the past due to the technical limitations at the time and it’s time to move on.” – Some Guy

We Shoot Differently When Choosing Black & White

- When should a photograph be converted to B&W?
- Convert after the fact or setting out to see the world in B&W?
- The following are some reasons to shoot in black & white.

Colour No Longer Distracts

- Clothing, colour temperature, cars and colourful backgrounds are not an issue.
- Allows you to begin to think about other key elements such as lighting and composition.



You'll See Light Differently

- What you lose from not being able to capture golden hour light, you'll gain back in focusing more on the direction, quantity and quality of light around you.



It Helps Emphasize Emotion

- Looking at someone's face, or into their eyes, without the distraction of color can provide a stronger emotional connection to your subject.
- With color gone, it's purely about the connection you have with
- the subject.



Timeless & Classic Quality

- It lends a certain timeless quality to the image.
- We still think of black & white as being a throwback to the photographic past.



Amplifies Use of Negative Space

- Negative space – areas of the frame that have nothing in them, are easier to highlight in black & white.
- Negative space is useful in separating subject from background.



Highlights Shape, Form & Pattern

- Focuses on the elements in the frame, both in terms of their shape and form, but also how they relate to one another.



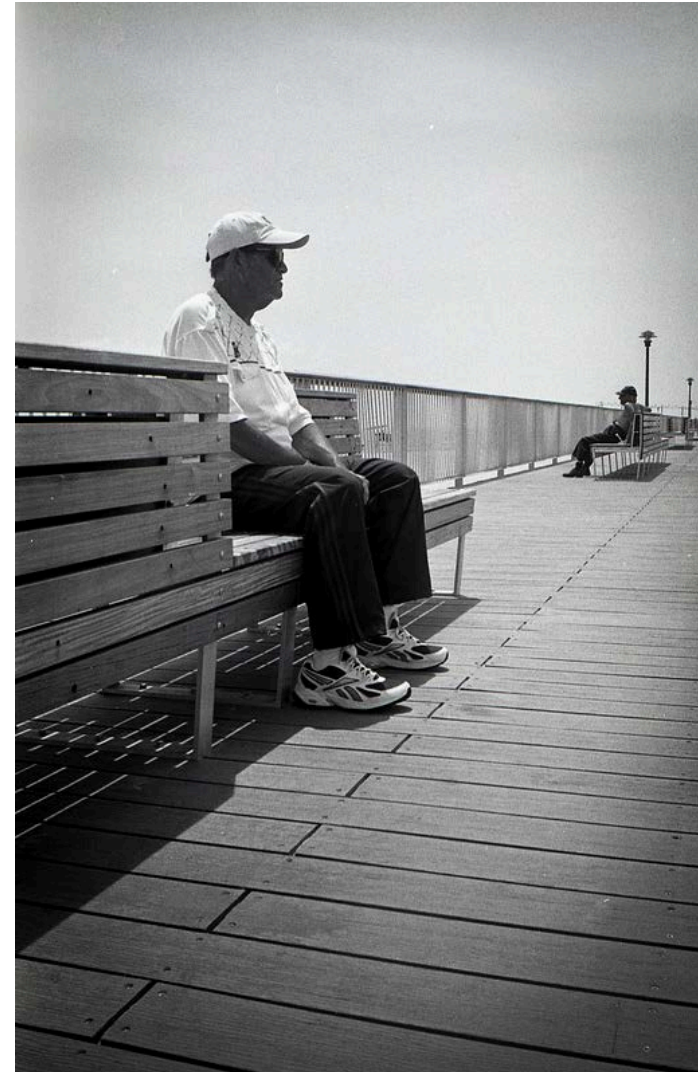
Highlight Beauty & Skin Tones

- Provides wonderful tonal range between deepest blacks and whitest whites.
- Removes distracting elements of the skin.



Helps Focus on Composition

- A strong composition is a strong composition.
- Elements within the frame can relate in a way that might otherwise have been distracted by colour.



Converting to Black & White

- With the rise of digital photography, we now have ways to recreate what film has done, including recreating a black & white photo.
- There are two basic ways to create a black & white image.



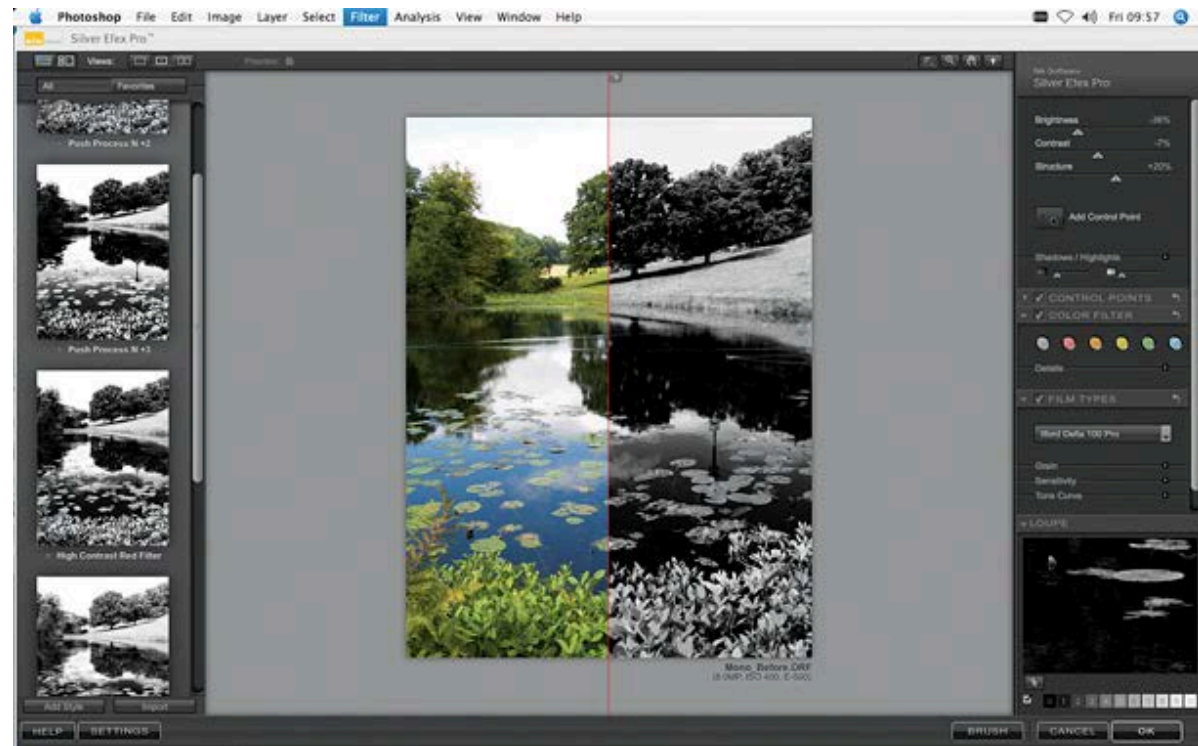
In Camera

- Most digital cameras have a setting to take a black & white photo.
- Essentially this is a built-in desaturation method that removes the colour information after the camera has taken the photo.



Post-Processing

- Numerous methods inside your favorite image editing software.
 - Channel Mixer
 - Lab Colour
 - Gradient Map
 - Desaturation



Tones and Tonal Range

- Tones (shades of grey / levels of brightness) are the essence of a black and white photograph.
- Sometimes colours makes the photo; sometimes when converted to B&W, the contrasts due to colour disappear and the B&W photo is bland.

Tips for Shooting Black & White Photography

Shoot in RAW

- Offers the most control in post-production.
- Set your back of the camera preview to monochrome to get an indication of how the image will look.

Look for Contrast, Shape & Texture

- Complimentary and opposing colours are reduced to black, white, and shades of gray in a monochrome image.
- Look for tonal contrast to make a shot stand out.



Try a Long Exposure

- Long exposures work really well in monochrome photography, especially when there's some movement.
- Highlights of water are recorded across a wider area than they would be with a shorter exposure and can help enhance tonal contrast.



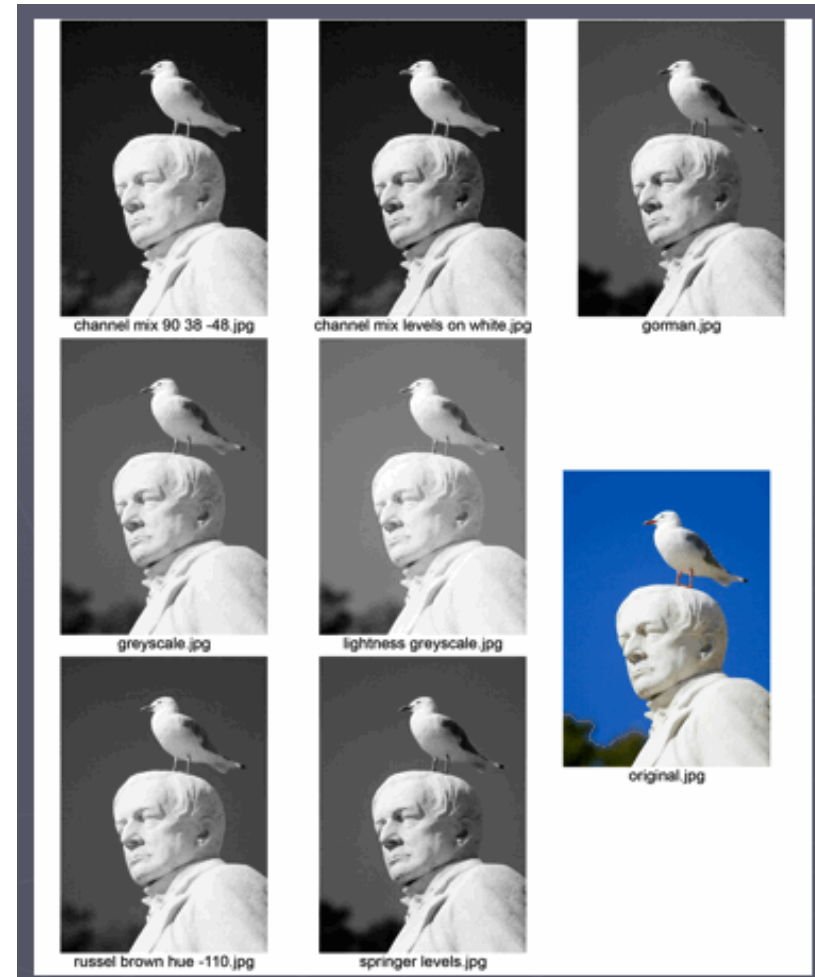
Use Filters

- Graduated neutral density and polarizing filters manipulate image contrast.
- Coloured filters, (essential for monochrome film photographers), can also be used to manipulate contrast in digital images.



Take Control

- While colour filters are still useful for film shooters, it's more common to save this manipulation to the post-processing stage.



Dodge and Burn

- Used to burn or darken highlights and hold back (brighten) shadows.



Black & White Photography

- Colour photography is not a modern invention and has been around since the late 1930s.

*“Why is black and white **STILL** so prevalent today, given that we’ve been able to shoot colour for so long?”*

Source & Reference

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Challenge

For the month end slideshow, either:

1. shoot something new in black and white,

OR

2. revisit an old photo that makes a good candidate for B&W conversion.