Intro to Fine-Art
Black & White Photography:
Notes & Musings

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Outline of Class

Four Dimensions of Photography

• Practical Dimension
  *Cameras, lenses, filters, bags, ...

• Technical Dimension
  *Metering, f-stops, focus, ...

• Artistic Dimension
  *Aesthetics, composition, design, ...

• Philosophical Dimension
  *What does your photography mean? ...to you? ...to others?

Our main focus in this workshop

With a bit of ...
Outline of Class

Musings: Five Take-Away Points

• Photography: The art of capturing what a “thing” is

• Fine-art photography: The art of capturing what else a thing is

• Color photography: Any type of photography in which color is the main focus of attention or in which color is the primary visual tool that is selectively used to focus the viewers attention

• B/W photography: Any type of photography in which form, tone, texture, and pattern are the main focus of attention

• Content / presentation: All forms of photography depend on the same basic set of compositional / aesthetic principles
Don’t Miss the Forest for the Trees

**Forest**

Point-and-shoot photography is all about grabbing the shot (of something)

*Oh, what a lovely tree… where’s my camera?…click….let’s go*

Fine-art photography is all about doing everything possible (before / during / after a shot) to communicate feelings to someone else

*I’m so happy here…what beautiful light…how calm everything is… it’s as though nothing else exists…a gentle breeze…serenity…*
Don’t Miss the Forest for the Trees

This workshop is offered as a first step towards developing the skills – and frame of mind / eye / I – to become a fine-art photographer.
Don’t Miss the Forest for the Trees

A *point-and-shoot* photograph of Hawaii

Don’t Miss the Forest for the Trees

A fine-art photograph of Hawaii

“Seeing is not enough; you have to feel what you photograph. “

— ANDRE KERTESZ, Photographer (1894 - 1985)
Outline of Class

Topics

- Who is this guy, and why should I listen to him?
  - And why you ought not listen to him
- Photography in six easy steps ;-)
- Fine-art photography
  - A closer look
- Color → black & white :: Part 1 - examples
  - Some images are best in color; some beg for B&W
- Seeing images
  - Basic elements of design (form, tone, texture, pattern + light)
- Camera vs. eye :: similarities & differences
  - What photographers need to keep in mind
- Color → black & white :: Part 2 - doing it for yourself
  - Conversion techniques / programs / plug-ins
- Moving on to the next level
- Concluding thoughts :: references
- Extra :: portfolio samples / East vs. West in art / “complexity”
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• **Who is this guy, and why should I listen to him?**
  — And why you *ought not* listen to him

• Photography in six easy steps ;-)

• Fine-art photography
  — A closer look

• Color → black & white :: Part 1 - *examples*
  — Some images are best in color; some beg for B&W

• Seeing images
  — Basic elements of design (*form*, *tone*, *texture*, *pattern* + *light*)

• Camera vs. eye :: *similarities* & *differences*
  — What photographers need to keep in mind

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Who am I?

... and why you ought and **ought not** listen to me ;-)  

Whatever I may know about light, tone, texture, form, and composition, I learned by watching my dad. He was not a photographer, but was an artist par excellence.

Born 1960 / Long Island, NY

- First camera: 1970
  - Polaroid Instamatic / Christmas gift
  - First picture: *(abstract?) closeup of my right toe*

- First “serious” camera: 1982
  - Canon AE-1

- Ph.D. Theoretical Physics, 1988
  - *Complex Adaptive Systems*

- First “serious” digital camera: 1998
  - *Nikon Coolpix 950*

- First DSLR: 2001
  - *Olympus E-10*

- First Solo Show: 2007
  - *Coral Gables, Florida*

- First *Lenswork* portfolio: 2007
  - DVD Edition #71 / July-August

- First art co-op: 2008
  - One of 14 founding members at Lorton Arts, VA

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Everyone’s vision is their own ...

*The trick is to find it!*

"If the path before you is clear, you're probably on someone else's."

— Joseph Campbell
Recent Activity

- “Worlds Within Worlds” Exhibit (2009-2010)
  American Physics Center

- 1st Prize, Juried photo exhibit (2009)
  RoHo Photo Gallery, Cincinnati, OH

- Photography Workhouse Society, 2008/09
  Lorton Arts, VA

- Featured photographer (Lenswork Magazine)
  LOOK3 Photo Festival, Charlottesville, VA, 2009

- Wall calendar and datebook
  Change Your Mind, Change Your Life

- Featured Artist / After Words
  Northern Virginia magazine, August 2009

- "Micro Worlds" portfolio
  Lenswork magazine, Print & Extended Edition
  Issue #76 (May-June, 2008)

- Merit award, single-image contest
  Black & White magazine (2008)

- Semi-finalist, Photographer's Forum magazine
  Annual Contest, 2008

- Honorable mention
  Photo Techniques, portfolio contest, 2008

- Solo Exhibit (32 Photographs, 2007)
  Books & Books / Gallery, Coral Gables, FL

- Honorable Mention
  Photo Techniques, Portfolio Contest, 2007

- "Spirit & Light" portfolio
  Lenswork magazine, Extended Edition
  Issue #71 (July-August, 2007)

- Winner of book contest, 2007
  U.K. B&W magazine and Envisage Books

- “Entropic Melodies Series” portfolio
  Focus Magazine, April 2006

- Merit of Excellence (Abstracts)
  2007 B&W Spider Awards

- Portfolio contest winner
  Black & White magazine, Feb 2006

- Merit award, Abstract Exposure
  Oct 2006 juried on-line exhibit

- Finalist, Photographer's Forum magazine
  Annual Contest, 2005

- Third Place, photo contest
  Sybex Publishing gallery contest, 2005
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Photography = a language

“...the concept underlying this phrase is a very important one...

Just as in the media of the written word we have poems, essays, scientific and journalistic reports, novels, dramas and catalogues, so with photography we touch the domains of science, illustration, documentation and expressive art.”

— ANSEL ADAMS
Photographer (1902 - 1984)
Step 2
Photography = Communication

“Understand *what* you want to say!
Understand *how* you want to say it!
Then say it *without compromise*!
Now you are thinking in terms of creative photography!”

— BRUCE BARNBAUM
*The Art of Photography* (2010)
Photography = Feelings

“The key is to not let the camera, which depicts nature in so much detail, reveal just what the eye picks up, but what the heart picks up as well.”

— PAUL CAPONIGRO
Photographer (1932 - )

Step 3
Photography = Feelings
To be a photographer, one must photograph. No amount of book learning, no checklist of seminars attended, can substitute for the simple act of making pictures.

Experience is the best teacher of all. And for that, there are no guarantees that one will become an artist. Only the journey matters.”

— HARRY CALLAHAN
Photographer (1912 - 1999)
"...how you build a picture, what a picture consists of, how shapes are related to each other, how spaces are filled, how the whole thing must have a kind of unity."

— PAUL STRAND
Photographer (1890 - 1976)
Step 6
Photography = a personal journey

“A man's work is nothing but this slow trek to discover, through the detours of art, these two or three great and simple images in whose presence his heart first opened.”

— ALBERT CAMUS
One last step (seldom taught)

Concerning the art of fine-art photography

“One should not only photograph things for what they are, but for what else they are.”

— MINOR WHITE
Photographer (1908 - 1976)

Ordinary ink in water...

...transformed into extraordinary organic forms
"One should not only photograph things for what they are, but for what *else* they are."

— MINOR WHITE

*Photographer* (1908 - 1976)

**One last step**
(seldom taught)

Concerning the *art*
of fine-art photography

*Ordinary dollops of paint...*  
...transformed into mysterious glyphs of a lost language
One should not only photograph things for what they are, but for what else they are.

— MINOR WHITE
Photographer (1908 - 1976)

One last step (seldom taught)

Concerning the art of fine-art photography

An ordinary candle holder...

...transformed into otherworldly realms
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Ansel Adams: A Lesson from the Master

Ansel Adams, *Moonrise Over Hernandez*, New Mexico, 1941
http://www.alindergallery.com/moonrise.jpg
Contact Print
What Ansel’s *camera* saw!

Auto Curves
What *Photoshop* does without the photographer’s intervention (or vision)
“Point-&-shoot photography begins and ends with the shot; Fine-art photography starts even before it!”
As I replaced the slide, I began to think about how the print was to appear, and if it would transmit any of the feeling of the monumental shape before me in terms of its expressive-emotional quality. I began to see in my mind's eye the finished print I desired: the brooding cliff with a dark sky and the sharp rendition of distant, snowy Tenaya Peak. I realized that only a deep red filter would give me anything approaching the effect I felt emotionally. I had only one plate left. I attached my other filter, a Wratten #29(F), increased the exposure by the sixteen-times factor required, and released the shutter. I felt I had accomplished something, but did not realize its significance until I developed the plate that evening.

I had achieved my first true visualization!

I had been able to realize a desired image: not the way the subject appeared in reality but how it felt to me and how it must appear in the finished print.

— Ansel Adams, *Autobiography*, p. 76
Capturing an image → Crafting an image

"The negative is comparable to the composer's score and the print to its performance. Each performance differs in subtle ways. “ - Ansel Adams
Capturing an image → Crafting an image

"The negative is comparable to the composer's score and the print to its performance. Each performance differs in subtle ways." - Ansel Adams

“Score” = Original raw capture / default settings

“Performance” #1

“Performance” #2

“Performance” #3
Dimensions of a photograph

Dimensions of “Reality”
- Context
- Legality
- Light
- Mood
- Sound
- Space
- Time
- Weather

Dimensions “evoked” in Viewer
- Aesthetic
- Emotional
- Intellectual
- Musical
- Mystical
- Personal
- Philosophical
- Political
- Sensual
- Social
- Symbolic
- Synesthetic

What can a Photographer do?
- Find subject matter
- Wait for “best” light / conditions
- Choose vantage point
- Frame / cropping
- Plane of focus
- Exposure time

Tonal manipulation, skillfully & artfully applied, focuses photographer’s intended message
Capture *Process*, not Disconnected Things

**Decisive Moment**

*Decisive Moment* = “The simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event as well as the precise organization of forms which gives that event its proper expression.”

“Above all, I craved to seize the whole essence, in the confines of one single photograph, of some situation that was in the process of unrolling itself before my eyes.”

— Henri Cartier Bresson (1908 - 2004)

How to take a *snapshot*...

- Focus on a *thing(s)*
- Wait for all “distractions” to disappear
- Click the shutter
Capture *Process*, not Disconnected Things

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This is not a picture of my son, his hand, or the ripples in the water…

It is a picture of what my son is doing!
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Black & White vs. Color

Major distinction...

Color depicts reality
Black & White vs. Color

Major distinction...

Black & White (allows the photographer to) interpret reality
Black & White vs. Color

• B&W images are – by their nature – *abstract* and can tolerate much more tonal manipulation without sacrificing realism

• Require a different – *deliberate* - style of “seeing”
  → Ansel Adams was a great B&W “seer” and photographer; But he was (arguably) only a “so-so” color “seer”
  → Tip: if you are using a DSLR, set picture style to B&W to use LCD for previewing compositions in B&W

• *Allows selective focus* of viewer’s attention
  → Toning / burning / dodging / ...

• *Not all subjects are suitable for B&W; those that are, tend to have these properties in common:*
  → Color is not the primary (or even secondary) focus
  → The graphic content of the image is strong without color
  → Color is a distraction to the overall “mood” of the picture
  → The scene includes interesting contrast between light and dark
  → Shadows play an important role in the composition
  → You want to deliberately inject an “old fashioned” feel into the image
Black & White vs. Color

Some images simply must remain in color!
Black & White vs. Color

Some images simply must remain in color!
Black & White vs. Color

Some images work well in color & B&W

But induce very different moods!
Black & White vs. Color

Some images work well in color & B&W
Black & White vs. Color

Some images work well in color & B&W
Black & White vs. Color

Some images beg for B&W (color adds essentially nothing)!
Black & White vs. Color

Some images beg for B&W (color adds essentially nothing)!
Black & White vs. Color

Some ideas / tips for finding B&W images

- Abstracts
- Architecture
- Close-ups (of everyday things)
- Contrasts
- Figure study / models
- High / low key
- Light / dark spaces
- Patterns
- Portraits
- Selective coloring
- Simplicity (less is more)
- Street photography
- Subtle lighting
- Shape & form
- Textures
- Water / flow (long exposures)

Two useful filters:
- Polarizer
- Neutral density

→ Shoot in RAW ←
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Seeing Images

“Good composition is the artist’s way of directing the viewer’s vision in a planned, de-randomized fashion.”

- Bruce Barnbaum
Composing / Designing

Basic Elements of Design

- Form
- Tone
- Texture
- Pattern
Form: Single Point

A single point creates two primitive relationships within frame:
- Implied forces that are proportional to the distance from edges / corners
- Implied lines that divide frame into horizontal & vertical boxes

Center
- Static
- (Usually) not very interesting
- (When used selectively) provides strong, anchored focus

Slightly off-center
- Adds a dynamic element
- Aesthetics / “feel” depends critically on relative positioning to edges

Close to edge
- (Obviously) “unusual”;
  Needs strong aesthetic justification
- Best used as “accent” (for aesthetic elements remaining in smaller “box”)

Form: Single Point - Example

Skye, Scotland (2009)

• Position and context determines overall mood of the image
• Centering anchors shot
• Dark silhouette of subject adds contrast
• Dark clouds (at top) and dark band of kelp on bottom both anchor and add contrast
• Subject’s (relative) “smallness” intensifies total immersion (into the “infinite”)
• Snatches of land (left / right) adds stability
• Water in foreground echoes ocean
• Layers of rocks and kelp in foreground echo layers of cloud
• Vertical space echoes subject’s gaze
Form: Single Point - Example

Alternative Crops...
Form: Multiple Points
Form: Lines

• Arguably, the most important element
  – Without lines there is no shape;
    Without shape there is no form;
    Without form there is no texture or pattern

• Lines can lead you *away* or *toward* a focus of interest and establish the overall mood

• Different types induce different emotions:
  – Vertical → *power, strength, growth*
  – (Single) horizontal → *rest, stability*
    • High horizon: *heaviness, nearness, earthiness*
    • Centered horizon: *peaceful, quiet, static*
    • Low horizon: *ethereal, expansive, light*
  – (Multiple) horizontal → *drama, rhythm*
  – Diagonal → *action, draw viewer’s attention*
  – Thin → *unstable, vulnerable*
  – Thick → *dominating, rigid, stern*
  – Curved → *relaxing, soft, soothing*
  – Jagged → *chaotic, sharp, threatening*
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Sometimes the lines are obvious
Arguably, the most important element
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Sometimes the lines are implicit
Form: Multiple Lines
Form: *Multiple Lines*
Form: *Multiple Lines*
Form: Shapes - *Triangles*

- The most dynamic of the basic compositional elements
  → (at least one of) its sides creates a diagonal line, suggesting a visual flow
- Triangular shape is foreign to the rectangular frame
  → invites viewer’s attention
Form: Shapes - Triangles
Form: Shapes - *Triangles*
Form: Shapes – *Squares / Rectangles*
Form: Shapes – *Squares / Rectangles*
Form: Shapes – Squares / Rectangles
Form: Shapes – *Circles / Ovals*
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Form: Shapes – *Circles / Ovals*

- Circular objects typically portray calm, serenity; invite contemplation
- Tend to grab hold of a viewer’s attention
- Because circles / ovals are so different from a rectangular frame, they are usually dominant areas
Form: Shapes – Combined
Form: Shapes – Combined
Form: Shapes – Combined
Form: Shapes – *Combined*

Even seemingly very *complex* combinations

“Complex” only in the details

Really...
Simple shapes + texture / pattern
Basic Elements of Design

Tone

• Arguably the most intangible element
  – May consist of shadings from white → gray → black
  – Marks consist of darks again lights with little gray
  – Useful in adding a 3rd dimension to a “flat” B&W image
  – Helps create a “mood” of a composition
    → “High key” images convey lightness, joy
    → “Low key” images convey darkness, mystery
  – Tonal contrasts create boundaries between objects that aid in building aesthetic compositions

• Developing an intuition for the tonal distribution of an image — both before and after a photo has been taken — is critical

• There is no such thing as an *ideal* histogram; histograms merely define the tonal range in a scene and are to be used to assist the photographer in conveying the desired mood
Basic Tonal Elements

Brightness & Contrast

Predominantly light ("High key")
Low contrast
Global Contrast
Balanced Range
Predominantly dark ("Low key")
Basic Tonal Elements

Local vs. Global Contrast

Boost global contrast

Enhance local contrast either by selecting part of image (and using curves again), or applying *Unsharp Mask*
Basic Tonal Elements

Local vs. Global Contrast

Initial B&W conversion

*Global* contrast boost

*Local* contrast boost
Basic Elements of Design

Be mindful of other possible contrasts

Light / dark
Near / far
Large / small
Sharp / diffuse
One / all
Be mindful of other possible contrasts

**Basic Elements of Design**

- Thin / Thick
- Broad / narrow
- One / many
- Plane / volume
- Solid / liquid
- Linear / circular
Basic Elements of Design

Be mindful of other possible contrasts

- Sharp / soft
- Black / white
- Solid / liquid
- Flow / motionless
- Smooth / rough
Texture

- Refers to the roughness or smoothness of a surface
  - Often over-looked as a visual design element
  - Appearance depends on how close to (or far away from) you are from them
  - Made more visible by using side-lighting
    → creates shadows on surface in proportion to roughness
  - Contrasts between textures create boundaries between objects (much as tonal contrasts do)
  - Textures may be used as the sole focus of a composition, but we aware of possible (unintended) distractions

- You can create textures
  (in otherwise textureless environments)
  - Using a long exposure, pan the camera horizontally across a scene
  - Combine – slightly staggered - multiple exposures of the same scene
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Pattern

- Fundamental component of nature; not just photography (I'm speaking here as a physicist ;-)
  - Often over-looked as a visual design element
  - Does not have to be perfect to be useful
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- Two ways to use it compositionally
  - Emphasize the pattern
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• **Two ways to use it compositionally**
  - Emphasize the pattern
  - Deliberately break the pattern
    → Ex: add a contrasting object (shape, texture) or remove a repeating object(s)
    → Note: the element that breaks the pattern becomes a new “point” in composition (figure ↔ ground)
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Basic Elements of Design

Balance / Distribution of Visual Weight

- **Balance** = resolution of tension; of opposing forces (contrasts)
- The eye seeks to balance visible forces
- Balance $\rightarrow$ aesthetic harmony
  $\rightarrow$ Unless disharmony is the objective!
Basic Elements of Design

Balance / Distribution of Visual Weight

- Balance = resolution of tension; of opposing forces (contrasts)
- The eye seeks to balance visible forces
- Balance → aesthetic harmony
  → Unless disharmony is the objective!
- Symmetry works only when it is perfect
Basic Elements of Design

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Gestalt Theory

Founded in Germany ~ 1912 (Max Wertheimer): offers useful principles of organization

Gestalt Laws of Perceptual Organization

1. Proximity: objects grouped by closeness
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Grouping

1. Emergence
   Parts of image that do not contain sufficient information for explanation suddenly pop out after looking
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   The mind fills in shapes / areas due to inadequate visual input
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4. Invariance
   Recognition takes places regardless of orientation, rotation, aspect, scale, and other factors
Gestalt Theory: a few examples
Gestalt Theory: *a few examples*
Gestalt Theory: a few examples
Gestalt Theory: a few examples
“I almost never set out to photograph a landscape, nor do I think of my camera as a means of recording a mountain or an animal unless I absolutely need a 'record shot'. My first thought is always of light. “

— GALEN ROWELL, Photographer (1940 - 2002)
Composing / Designing

Fifth Essential Element: **Light**

- Photography: “φωτος” (photos = light) + “γραφειν” (graphos = painting) → “painting with light”

- A point-and-shooter asks: “How’s the weather?”
  A photographer always asks: “How’s the light?”

- Regardless of all other elements of a photograph, often even including what the photograph is about, it is the quality of the light that determines its mood
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  - Hard / soft / direct / indirect / warm / cool / front / back

    “There is no such thing as ‘bad’ light.” – Jay Maisel

- Light gives form by creating contrast
  → Use strong shadows in hard light as “objects”
  → Use directional lighting to enhance textures
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- Explore different “takes” on the same scene bathed in different kinds of light

- Often the only difference between so-so image and memorable photograph is the quality of light
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• Who is this guy, and why should I listen to him?
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  — A closer look

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Camera vs. Eye

“The difference in "seeing" between the eye and the lens should make it obvious that a photographer who merely points his camera at an appealing subject and expects to get an appealing picture in return, may be headed for a disappointment. “ - Andreas Feininger

• Both have a lens, an aperture, an image plane, and light sensors

• A camera (typically) has a mechanical shutter; human vision is sampled through the optic nerve

• Human eye has very narrow angle of sharp vision (~ 3 radial deg)

What the camera sees

What the eye sees
Camera vs. Eye

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- Eye scans images in small segments / takes in very wide view segments; Focus darts up / down / left / right according to what grabs attention; Most fine details remain fuzzy / brain fills in unfocused details;
- Light: eye/brain records subjectively; camera records objectively
- Focus: eye – muscles adaptively change the shape of the lens; camera – lens moves closer/further from the film to focus
- Sensitivity: film/CCD uniformly sensitive to light; retina is not
- Dynamic range: digital camera ~ 5-10 (14 max) f-stops; eye ~ 20 f-stops!
Camera vs. Eye

The *eye* “sees” certain colors as brighter / darker than others

Which is darker…

the green patch
or the blue patch?
Camera vs. Eye

The *eye* “sees” certain colors as brighter / darker than others

Which is darker…

the green patch
or the
blue patch?

Desaturation
(i.e. pure luminance)
shows they
are *equally bright*!
Camera vs. Eye

The brain "sees" (interprets) shades of grey *locally*
Camera vs. Eye

The brain “sees” (interprets) shades of grey *locally*
Camera vs. Eye

The brain “sees” (interprets) color **locally**
**Dynamic Range** = ratio between the max and min measurable light intensities

<table>
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<tr>
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*Straight out of camera*
**Dynamic Range** = ratio between the max and min measurable light intensities

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Straight out of camera

Clipped
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Corrected in Raw Converter
**Dynamic Range** = ratio between the max and min measurable light intensities

**Camera vs. Eye**

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Anticipated **LOCAL** manipulations: Darken + Increase G.C. + Noise Removal
Enhance G.C. + L.C.
W-B balance + USM
Enhance L.C. + USM
Enhance L.C.

Histogram
**Dynamic Range** = ratio between the max and min measurable light intensities

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**Final color → B&W conversion**
Primary colors – R G B
arise not from physics,
but from *how our eyes work*!

Question: *Where does magenta come from?*
Color → Black & White

Color Filter Array (CFA) / Bayer pattern
(named after its inventor, Bryce E. Bayer of Eastman Kodak)

\[
\begin{align*}
G_{i,j} &= \left( G_{i,j+1} + G_{i-1,j} + G_{i+1,j} + G_{i,j-1} \right) / 4 \\
R_{i,j} &= \left( R_{i-1,j+1} + R_{i+1,j+1} + R_{i-1,j-1} + R_{i+1,j-1} \right) / 4 \\
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\end{align*}
\]
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• Extra :: portfolio samples / East vs. West in art / “complexity”
Color → B&W Channel Conversion

- **“R / G / B — Cyan / Magenta / Yellow”**
- **Grayscale / default**
- **Lightness / LAB**
- **RGB**
- **CMYK**

- Red 100%
- Green 100%
- Blue 100%
- Cyan 100%
- Magenta 100%
- Yellow 100%
- Black 100%
Color → B&W Channel Conversion

“Out of camera” / default raw conversion

- Grayscale / default
- Lightness / LAB
- Red 100%
- Green 100%
- Blue 100%
- Cyan 100%
- Magenta 100%
- Yellow 100%
- Black 100%
- CMYK
Color → B&W Channel Conversion

- Lens distortion correction
- Remove ("clone out") distracting elements
- "Aesthetic" mix of red / orange / yellow / green / qua / blue / purple / magenta channels
- Local contrast enhancement
- Sharpening ("unsharp mask")
- Add warm duotone
Color → B&W Channel Conversion

As colors are converted to B&W, they become shades of grey;
Light colors → light tones / highlights ; dark colors → dark tones
Converting to Black & White

Conversion options

• In-camera filter (B&W JPEG capture)

→ • Stand-alone Color → B&W conversion program

→ • JPEG conversion using *iPhoto, Picasa, Photoshop / Elements, ...*

→   Grayscale
→   Desaturation
→   Gradient
→   Channel Mixing (in RGB / CMYK)
→   LAB space

• Raw conversion using Adobe RAW

→   Raw capture (processed for color) and converted in Lightroom or Photoshop

• Raw capture (multiply processed for color); multilayer processed in Photoshop

→ • B&W conversion plug-ins
Converting to Black & White

Stand-alone Program: Google’s *Picasa (v3.8)* - Free

http://picasa.google.com/
Converting to Black & White

Stand-alone Program: BWorks *(Free)*

http://www.mediachance.com/digicam/bworks.htm
Converting to Black & White

Method 1: Grayscale
Converting to Black & White

Method 2: Desaturation

Saturation = -100
Converting to Black & White

Method 3: Gradient Map
Converting to Black & White

Method 4a: *Channel Mixing* (RGB Space)

By default, \( R, G, B \rightarrow +40, +40, +20 \)

No particular reason for \((R,G,B) = (+40, +40, +20)\) or \( R + G + B = 100 \)

Adjust so that *you* think the image looks good!
Converting to Black & White

Method 4b: *Channel Mixing / Black & White*
Converting to Black & White

Method 5: Lab Color

Step 1: Select all (click Ctrl-A)

Step 2: Convert back to RGB (Mode → RGB Color)

Step 3: In channel window, select RED channel → Paste (click Ctrl-V)

Step 4: Select GREEN channel → Paste (click Ctrl-V)

Step 5: Select BLUE channel → Paste (click Ctrl-V)

Step 6: Select top channel (to make all color visible)

Done!
Converting to Black & White

Plug-in: Colormancer Tint (Free)

http://www.colormancer.ca/free/download-filters/tint-plug-in.htm
Converting to Black & White

Plug-in: BW Workflow Pro ($20)

http://www.fredmiranda.com/DBWpro/
Converting to Black & White

Plug-in: Black and White Studio ($40)

http://www.powerretouche.com/Black-white_plugin_tutorial.htm
Converting to Black & White

Plug-in: B&W Styler ($50)

Converting to Black & White

Plug-in: ConvertToBW Pro ($100)

http://www.theimagingfactory.com/data/pages/info/cbwp/cbwp.htm
Converting to Black & White

Plug-in: Nik Silver Efex Pro ($200)

http://www.niksoftware.com/silverefexpro/usa/entry.php
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Learning to Look

• **Look for simplicity**
  → Find viewpoint where otherwise cluttered scene appears simpler

• **Don’t look for specific photographs**
  → Focus attention on finding *places that you enjoying looking in*

• **Look for the part that represents the whole**
  → Find the microcosm that contains the macrocosm

• **Don’t wait for the image to come to you... explore**
  → Don’t be shy about “getting dirty”... get on your knees, climb higher, look down and up and sideways

• **Find ways to express your experience of looking**
  → How do feel as you are wandering around with your camera?

• **Block out distractions**
  → Embrace a meditative solitude; plug-in favorite music

• **If nothing presents itself, pause, reflect, put down your camera**
  → Wander around and enjoy the location for what it is
Taking your photography to the next level

• Never stop taking pictures
  → Take photographs… *take more photographs!*  
  → Use your mind’s eye (when you’re without your camera)

• Forget about things and instead focus on processes and feelings

• Never take to heart what others tell you about your work
  → Keep taking the pictures that are important to you

• Spend as much time as you need to learn and internalize technique
  → Then never again allow it to distract you
  → Lose yourself in your pictures
Taking your photography to the next level

• Look at the works of photographers you admire
  ➔ Look everywhere: book, galleries (physical and online)
  ➔ Look at the works of photographers you do not admire

• Learn from the traditional masters as well
  ➔ Look at historical paintings, watercolors, and lithographs
  ➔ Take away what is most meaningful to you

• Attend workshops

• Go out with your friends on photo safaris
  ➔ Creativity breeds creativity

• Never be afraid of taking bad photographs
  ➔ Forge your own path

• Be mindful of Louis Pasteur’s adage:

  “Chance favors the prepared mind”
At first, the photographer finds the picture...

Physicist
- Light,
- Entropy,
- Geometry

Poet
- Romance,
- History,
- Culture

Photographer A
- Textures,
- Landscape

Photographer B
- Dilapidated door,
- Contrast

Photographer C
- Tones,
- Forms
Then, the *pictures* discover a *path*...
Eventually, the *path* defines the *photographer*

“Through the years, a man peoples a space with images of provinces, kingdoms, mountains, bays, ships, islands, fishes, rooms, tools, stars, horses and people.

Shortly before his death, he discovers that the patient labyrinth of lines traces the image of his own face.”

— Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986)
Stages of growth in photography

Stage 1: Joyful snapshots of anything and everything
   → First camera, excited about anything & everything

Stage 2: A passive stirring of aesthetic value
   → Certain objects draw a deeper attention than others

Stage 3: Willful engagement of the aesthetic environment
   → Photographer actively seeks out images of interest
   → Both difficult to see "from the outside" and dramatic

Stage 4: Recognition of the power of expression
   → Photographer discovers how to express not the object itself, but what draws attention to the object

Stage 5: One picture is not enough
   → Photographer begins to see the world as a patchwork; a tapestry of images

Stage 6: Need to tell a story
   → Focus on portfolios of interrelated images as elements of narrative
   → Interested in telling a story about what the eye (and heart) is drawn to, and why

Stage 7: Portfolios of Portfolios
   → Work begins to transcend a “mere” aesthetic impression of the world to an imprint of a deeper aesthetic order of the external world
   → Photographer “discovers” the patterns of the world by observing her own work

Stage 8: Self-discovery
   → Outwardly similar to Stage-7 (to others)
   → Inwardly, photographer “discovers” truths about her own soul
Outline of Class

Topics

• Who is this guy, and why should I listen to him?
  — And why you ought not listen to him
• Photography in six easy steps ;-)
• Fine-art photography
  — A closer look
• Color → black & white :: Part 1 - examples
  — Some images are best in color; some beg for B&W
• Seeing images
  — Basic elements of design (form, tone, texture, pattern + light)
• Camera vs. eye :: similarities & differences
  — What photographers need to keep in mind
• Color → black & white :: Part 2 - doing it for yourself
  — Conversion techniques / programs / plug-ins
• Moving on to the next level
• Concluding thoughts :: references
• Extra :: portfolio samples / East vs. West in art / “complexity”
References

Great photos and commentary on **WHY** they are great

*Run – don’t walk – to get this book!*

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**Why Photographs Work**

George Barr

**Looking at Photographs**

John Szarkowski

**Examples**

Ansel Adams
References

Books about Fine-Art Photography

One of the best books on the “art” of photography available
Books about Black & White Photography

- Black and White PHOTOGRAPHY
  A Basic Manual
  Third Edition, Revised
  Henry Havenstein

- The Art of Black and White Photography
- The Complete Guide to Black & White Digital Photography
- Black & White PHOTOGRAPHY
  A practical guide
- Creative Black & White
  Digital Photography Tips & Techniques
- 100 Ways to Take Better Black and White Photographs
  Michael Milton
References

B&W Fine-Art Photography – Some Masters

- Ansel Adams: 400 Photographs
- John Sexton: Recollections
- Henri Cartier-Bresson
- Michael Kenna: A Twenty Year Retrospective
- André Kertész
- The Photographer’s Eye
“When words become unclear, I shall focus with photographs. When images become inadequate, I shall be content with silence.”

— ANSEL ADAMS
Please visit my website...
http://www.sudden-stillness.com

Sudden Stillness
Fine-Art Photography by Andy Ilachinski

Questions?