



Black & White Photography and Processing

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Black & White Photography

- Why Black & White?
- The Human Eye
- Making the Photograph
- Basic Processing
- Conversion to Black & White
- Image Manipulation

Why Black & White?

- Oldest form of photography that dates back to the start of photography with the Daguerreotype and Calotype processes.
- The human eye is more sensitive to black and white.
- Color is distracting!
- Black & white is all about tonal relationships.

The Human Eye

- The human eye has rods and cones.
- Rods are very sensitive to light but not color.
- Cones are sensitive to color.
- There are more rods than cones (20x).
- At night, the rods are active, so we see in black and white at night.

Human Eye (contd).

- Eye sees in the following sequence:
 - Patterns
 - Light to Dark
 - High to Low Contrast
 - High to Low Sharpness
 - In Focus to Blur
 - High to Low Saturation
- Most of these items relate to tones and not colors.

Making the Photograph

- We are making a color image that will be converted to black & white later.
- Shoot RAW.
- A good exposure is as important as for color.
- Watch for blown highlights.
- Expose to the right to capture detail in the shadows.

RAW Image Processing

- Ingest image files into Lightroom or Bridge.
- Perform basic image processing on images:
 - White balance
 - Exposure (highlights)
 - Recovery
 - Blacks (shadows)
 - Contrast
- Perform this with Lightroom Develop module or Bridge/ACR.

Black & White Conversion

- Lightroom Develop module with B&W treatment.
- Bridge/ACR #1 with grayscale conversion.
- Bridge/ACR #2 with Photoshop adjustment.

Photoshop Conversions

- Black and white adjustment layer.
- Channel mixer.
- Lab color.
- Filters (eg, Nik Silver Efex Pro).

B&W Manipulation

- Optimizing the image.
- Local manipulation of tones.
- Burning (darkening the image).
- Dodging (lightening the image).

Sample Processing



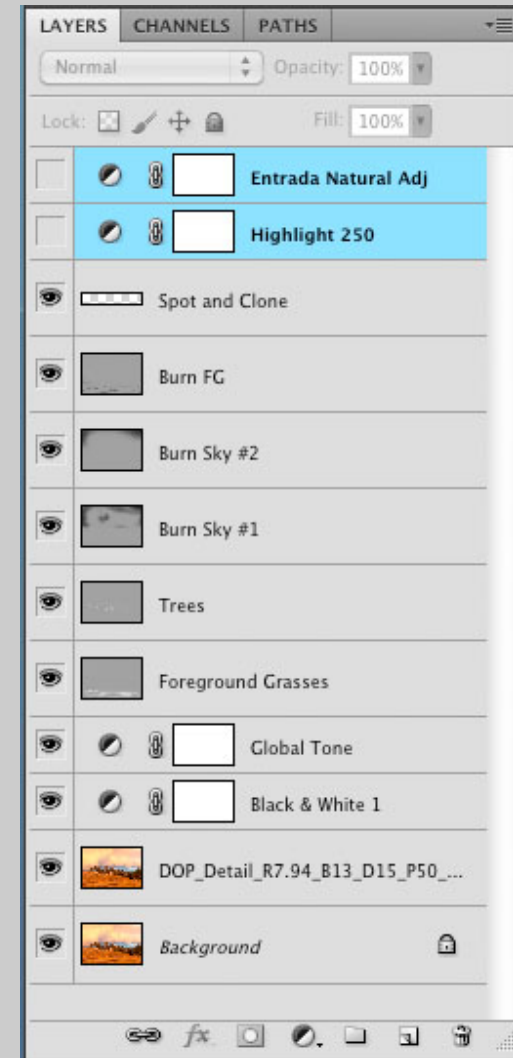
B&W Conversion



Manipulation



Final Image



More Information

- Nik Radio (a podcast). Vincent Versace was interviewed on 1/27/2011.
- Books:
 - B&W Printing, George deWolfe
 - B+W Landscape Photography, George Schaub
 - Welcome to Oz, Vincent Versace
 - The Art of Photography, Bruce Barnbaum

Demo