Intro to Fine-Art Black & White Photography:

Notes & Musings

Andy Ilachinski

andy.ilachinski@gmail.com

571-217-8198

http://www.sudden-stillness.com

http://tao-of-digital-photography.blogspot.com

Outline of Class

Four Dimensions of Photography

- Practical Dimension

  Cameras, lenses, filters, bags,…

With a bit of …

- Technical Dimension

  Metering, f-stops, focus, …

Our main focus in this workshop

- Artistic Dimension

  Aesthetics, composition, design, …

With a bit of …

- Philosophical Dimension

  What does your photography mean?
  …to you? …to others?

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

Now, on to 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

http://tour.airstreamlife.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2007/11/oahu-north-beach.jpg

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”

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”

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

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, Charlotttesville, VA, 2009
- Wall calendar and datebook
  Change Your Mind, Change Your Life
  by Wayne Dyer (Amber Lotus Publishing, 2010)
- 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

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”

Step 1

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)

Step 3

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 4

Photography = *Constant Picturetaking!*

"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)

Step 5

Photography is all about…

"…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

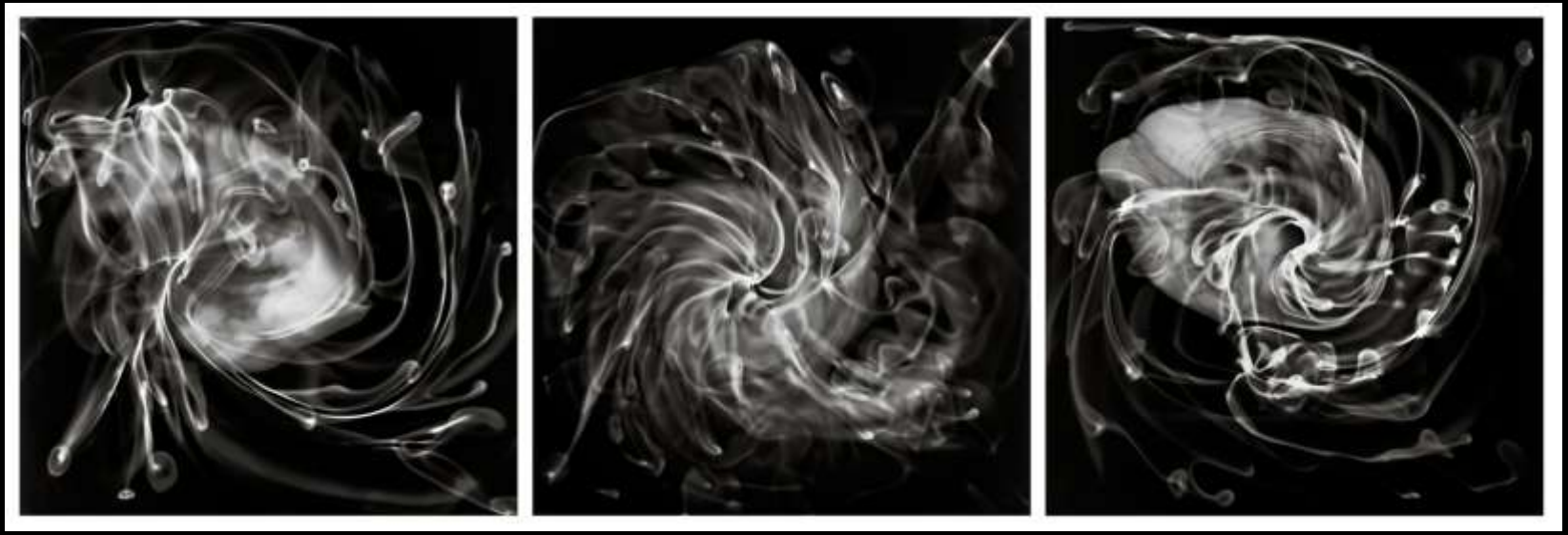
One last step
(seldom taught)

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 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 dollops of paint…

…transformed into mysterious glyphs of a lost language

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)

An ordinary candle holder…

…transformed into otherwordly realms

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”

Ansel Adams: *A Lesson from the Master*

Ansel Adams, *Moonrise Over Hernandez*, New Mexico, 1941

http://www.alindergallery.com/moonrise.jpg

Ansel Adams: *A Lesson from the Master*

Contact Print

What Ansel's *camera* saw!

Auto Curves

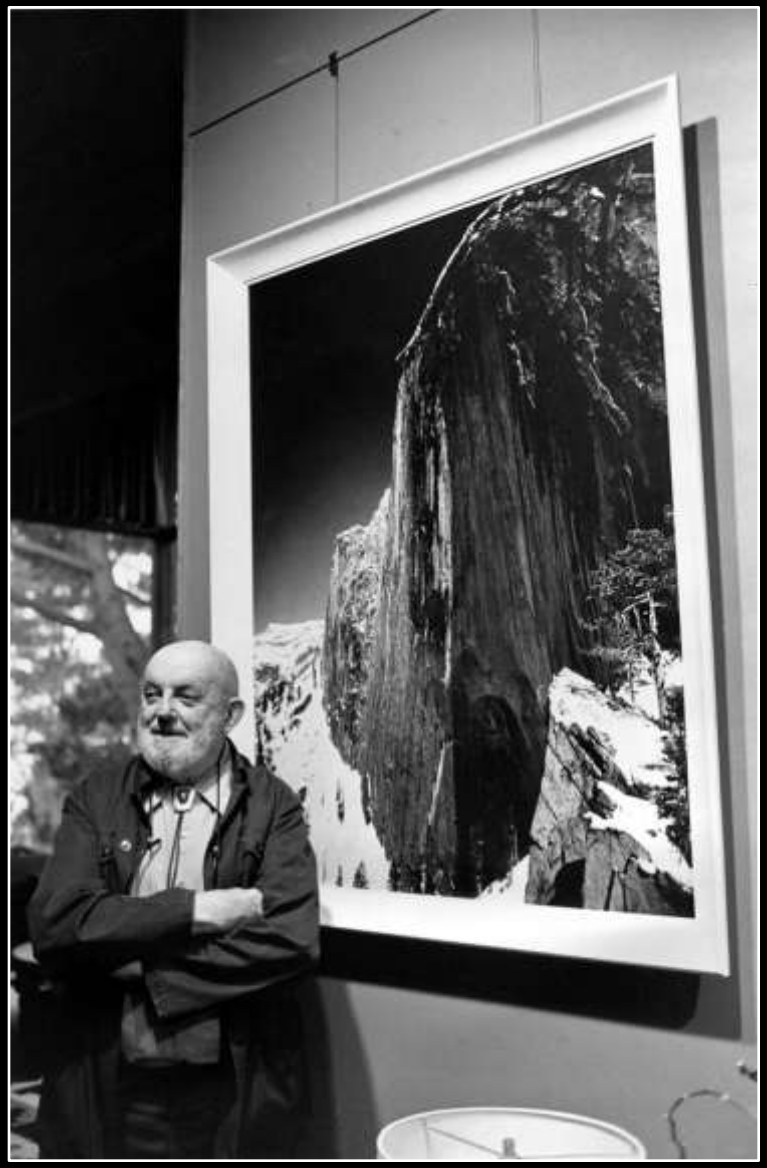
What *Photoshop* does without the photographer's intervention (or vision)

Ansel Adams: *A Lesson from the Master*

"Point-&-shoot photography *begins* <u>*and*</u> *ends* with the shot;

Fine-art photography starts *even before it!*

Ansel Adams: (Pre-) *Visualization*



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.

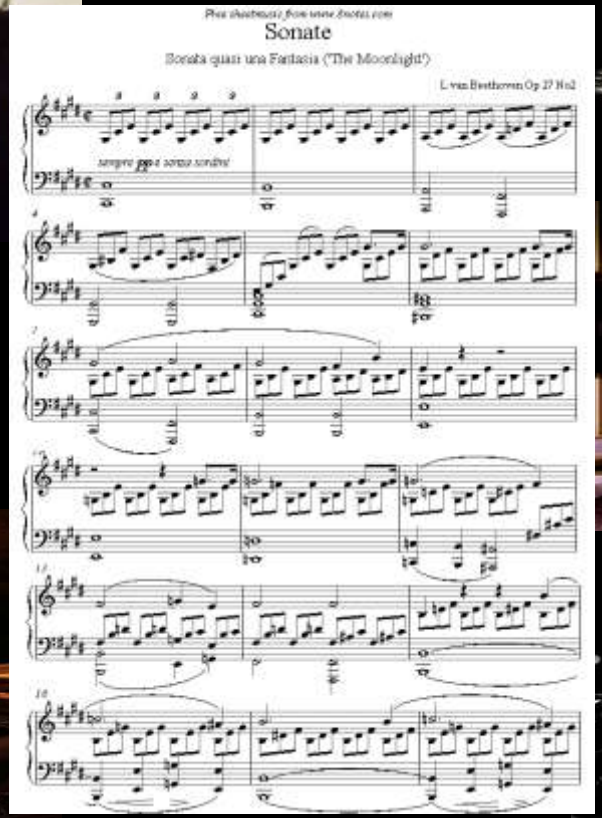
I had achieved my first true visualization!

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

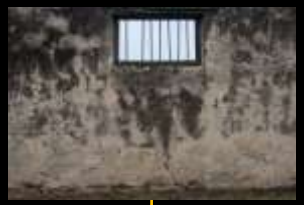
Dimensions of a photograph

Dimensions of "Reality"

Context
Legality
Light
Mood
Sound
Space
Time
Weather

Dimensions of Photographer

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

Postprocessing (*Photoshop*, …)

Tonal manipulation, skillfully & artfully applied, focuses photographer's intended message

Dimensions "evoked" in Viewer

Aesthetic
Emotional
Intellectual
Musical
Mystical
Personal
Philosophical
Political
Sensual
Social
Symbolic
Synesthetic

Capture *Process*, not Disconnected Things

Decisive Moment

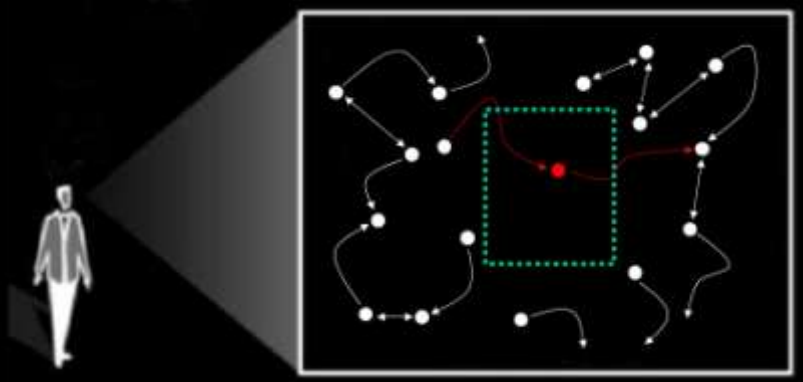
Decisive Moment = "The simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event as well as the precise organization of forms which gives that event its proper expression."

"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

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."

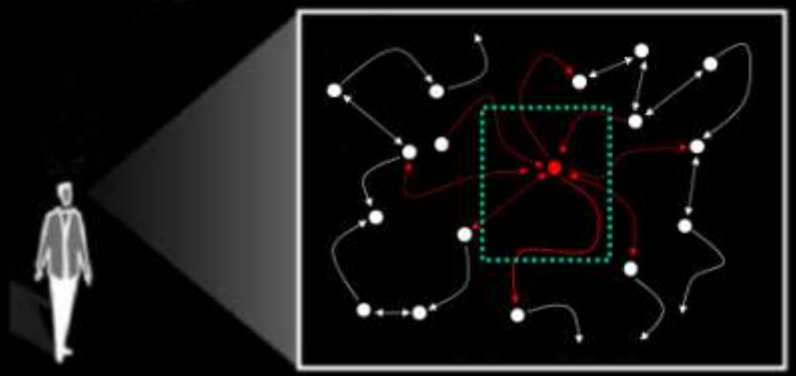
— Henri Cartier Bresson (1908 - 2004)

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 !*

How to take a *photograph*…

- Focus on what is happening
- Wait for all the interconnections to become clear
- Click the shutter



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”

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

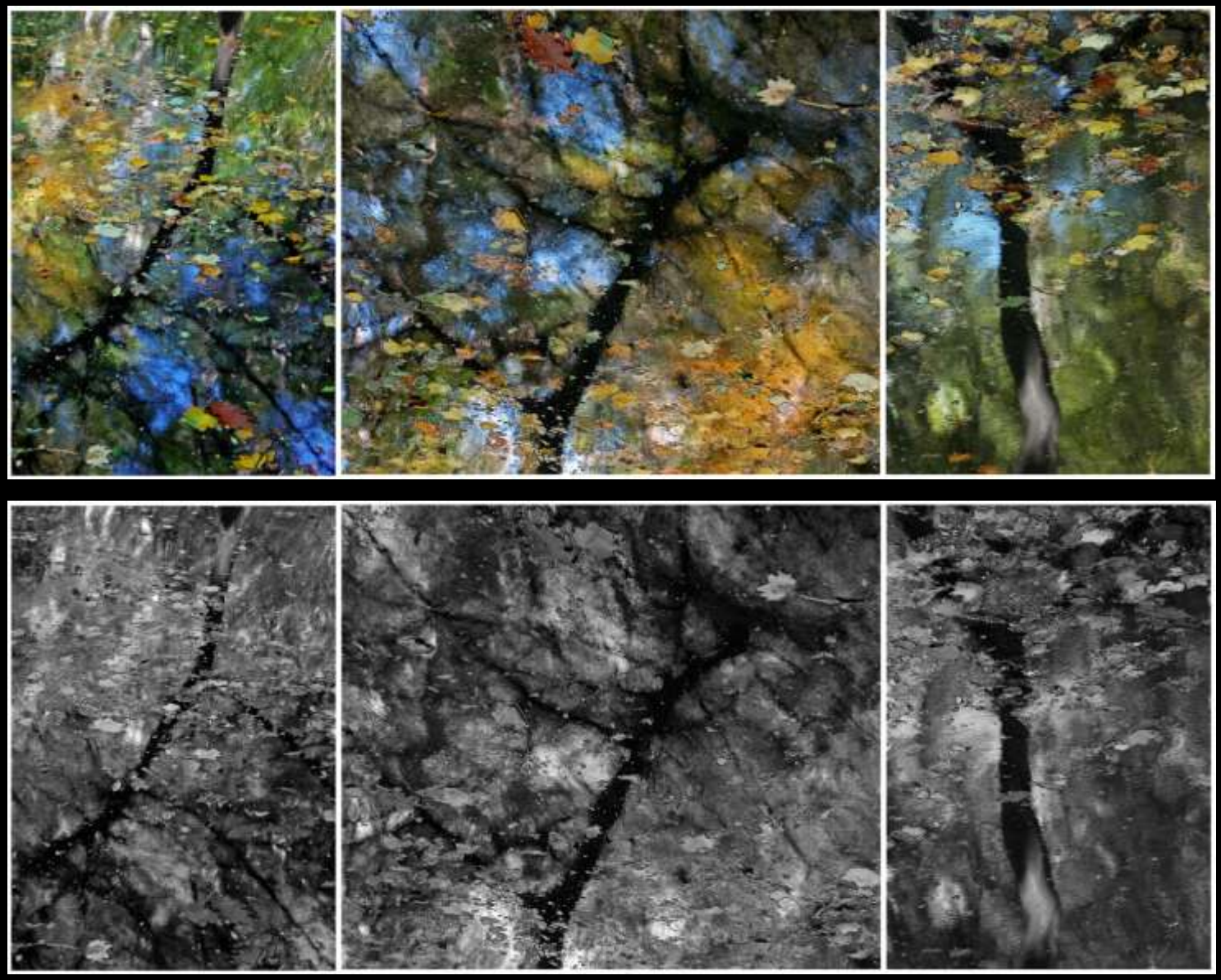
- B&W images are – by their nature – *abstract* and can tolerate much more tonal manipulation without sacrificing realism
- Require a different – *deliberate* - style of "seeing"
  - → Ansel Adams was a great B&W "seer" and photographer; But he was (arguably) only a "so-so" color "seer"
  - → Tip: if 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

Two useful filters:

Polarizer
Neutral density

→ **Shoot in RAW** ←

- 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)

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”

Seeing Images

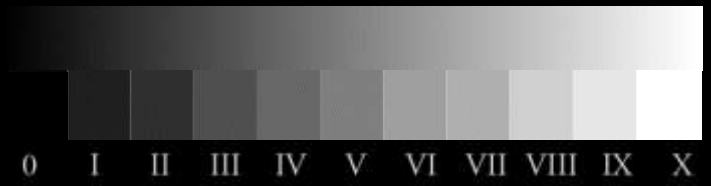
"Good composition is the artist's way
of directing the viewer's vision in a planned,
de-randomized fashion."

- Bruce Barnbaum

Composing / Designing

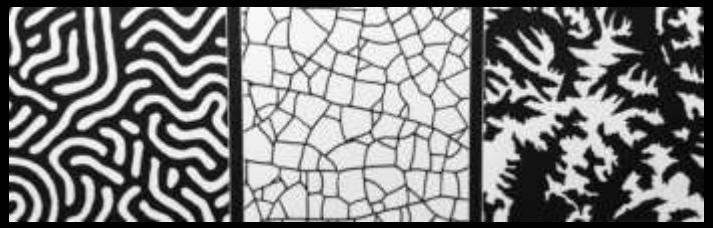
Basic Elements of Design

- Form



- Tone

- Texture

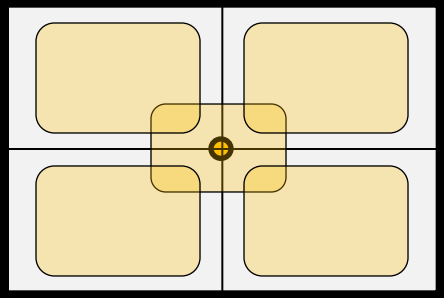


- Pattern

Form: Single Point

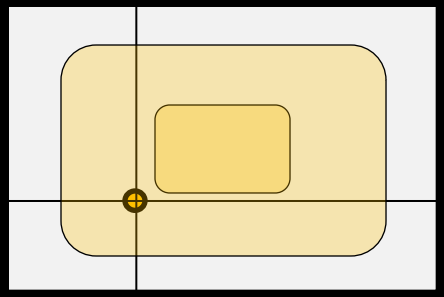
A single point creates two primitive relationships within frame:

- 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

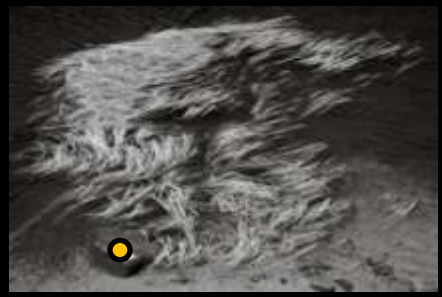


Slightly off-center

- 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*

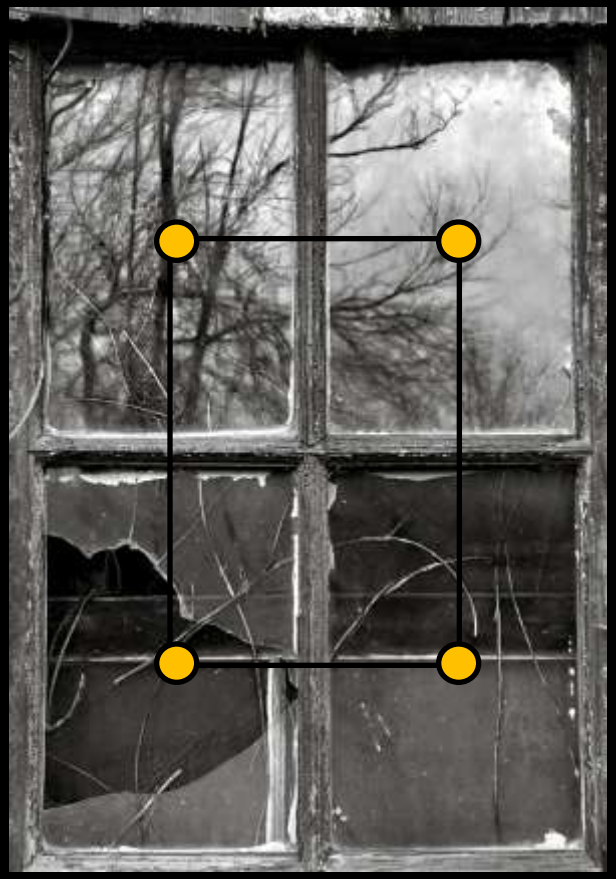
Skye, Scotland (2009)

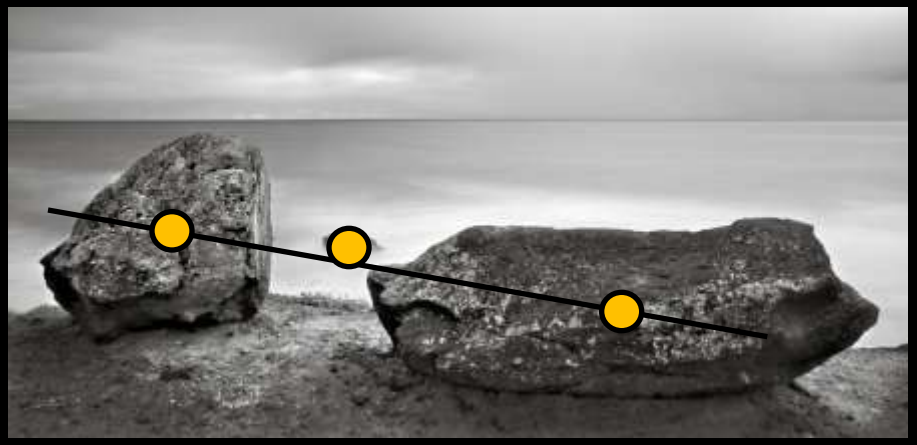
- *Position and context determines overall mood of the image*
- *Centering anchors shot*
- *Dark silhouette of subject adds contrast*
- *Dark clouds (at top) and dark band of kelp on bottom both anchor and add contrast*
- *Subject's (relative) "smallness" intensifies total immersion (into the "infinite")*
- *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*

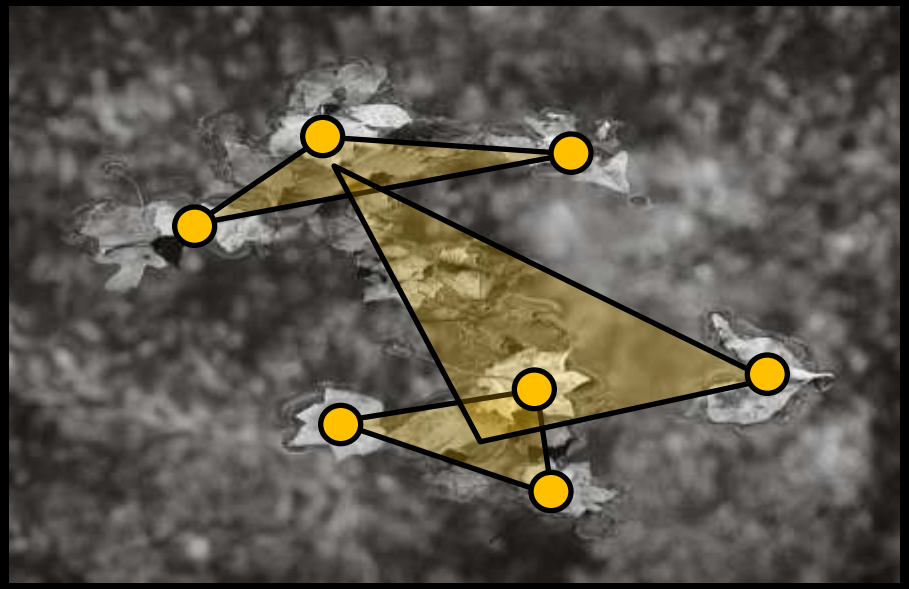
Form: Single Point - *Example*

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*

Form: Lines

Sometimes the lines are *obvious*

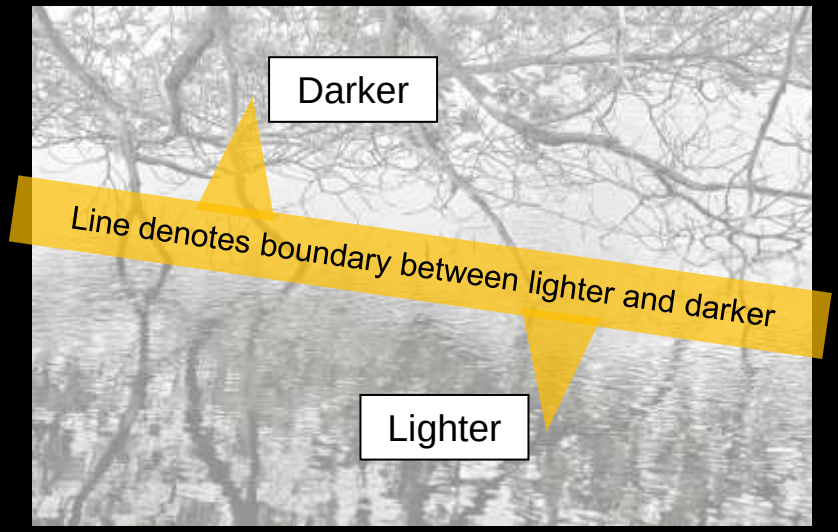
- Arguably, the most important element
  - Without lines there is no shape;
    Without shape there is no form;
    Without form there is no texture or pattern
- Lines can lead you *away* or *toward* a focus of interest and establish the overall mood
- Different types induce different emotions:
  - Vertical → *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*

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*

Sometimes the lines are *implicit*

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*

Sometimes the lines are *implicit*

Form: *Multiple* Lines

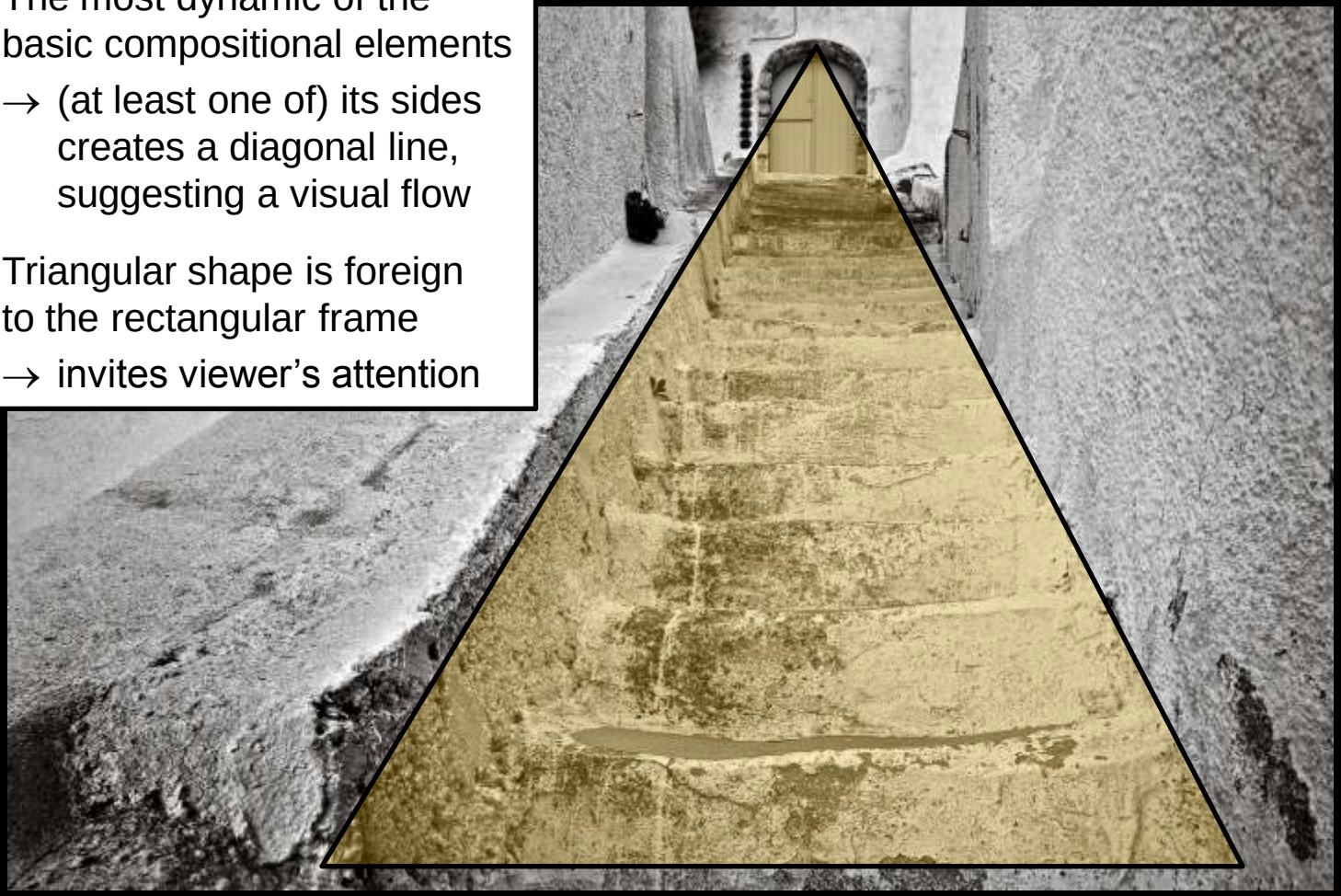
Form: *Multiple* Lines

Form: *Multiple* Lines

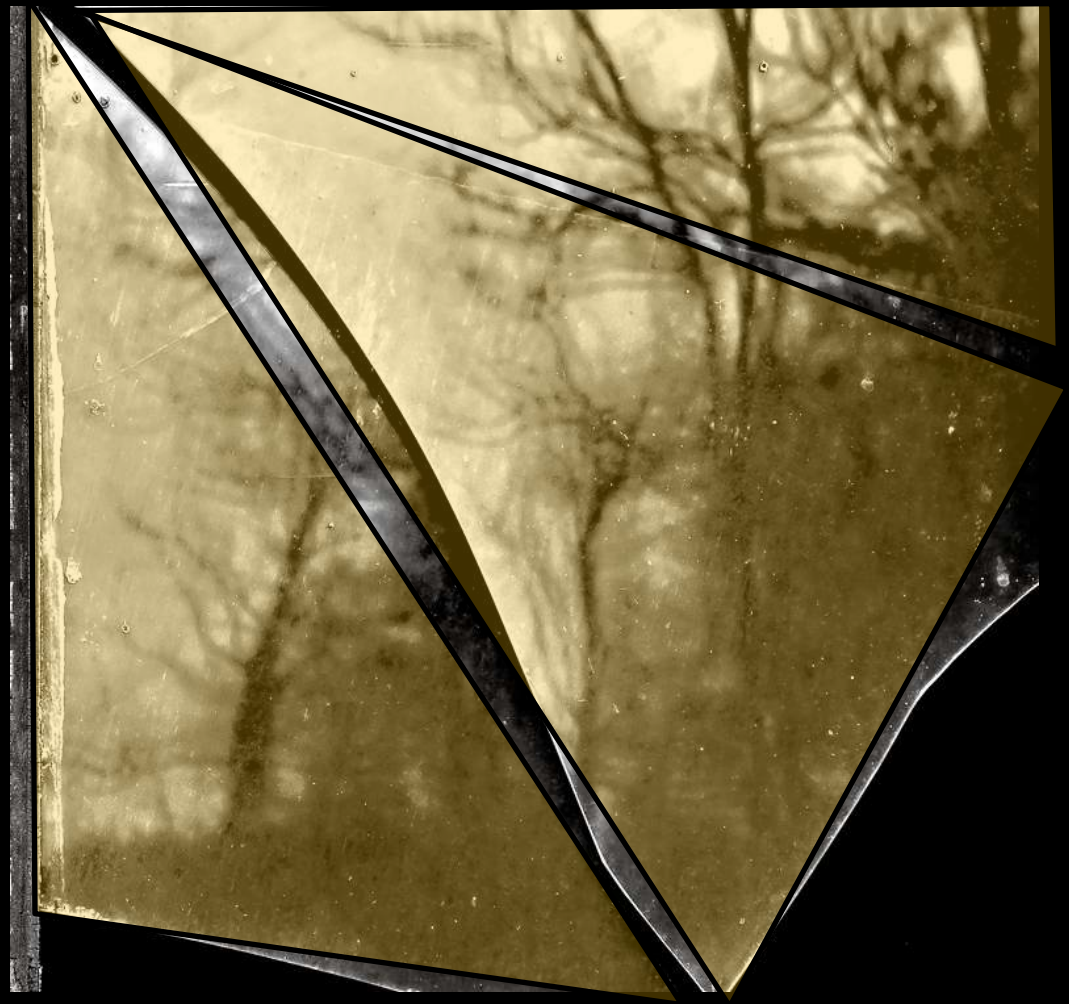
Form: *Multiple* Lines

Form: Shapes - *Triangles*

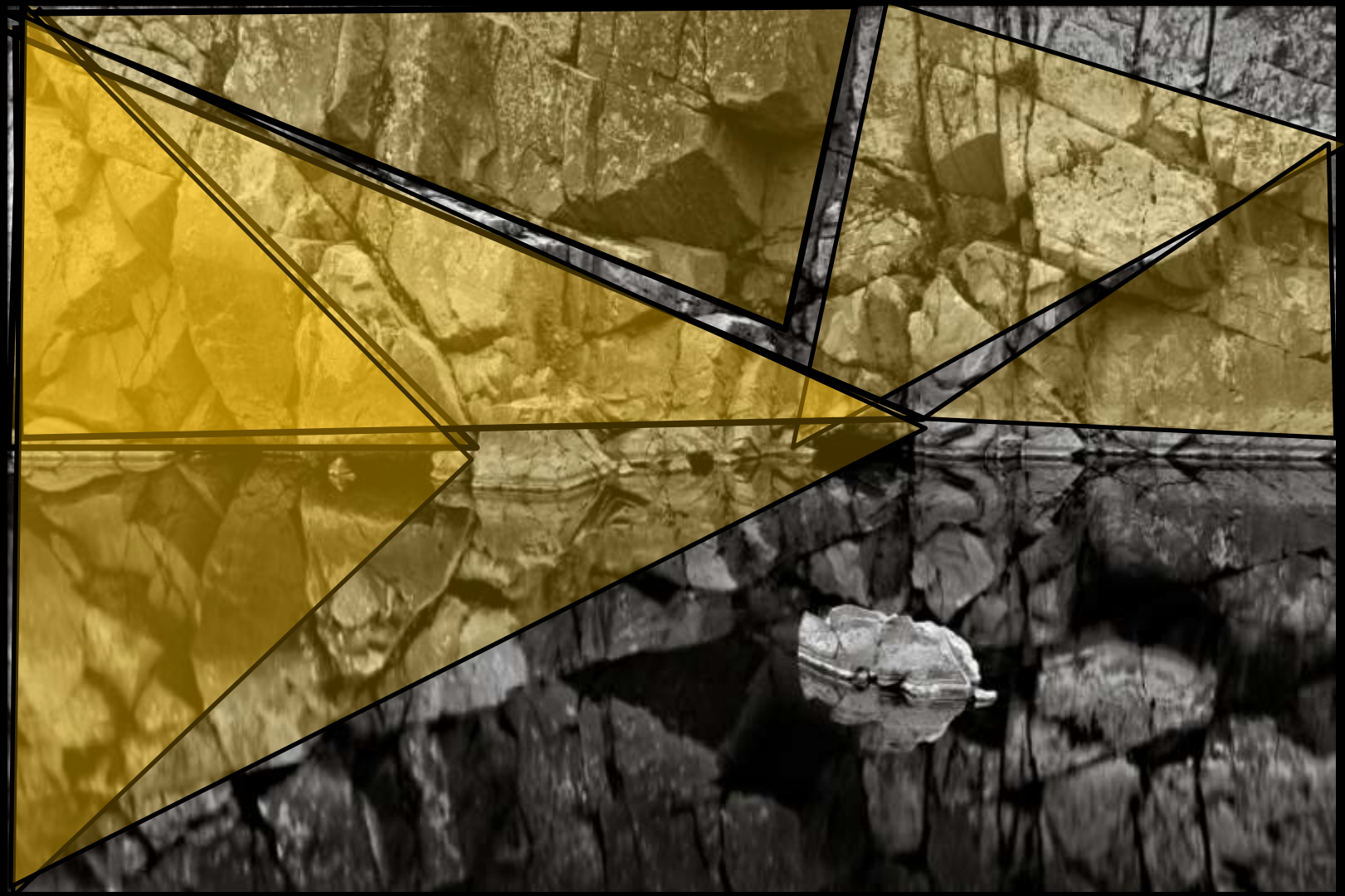
- The most dynamic of the basic compositional elements
  → (at least one of) its sides creates a diagonal line, suggesting a visual flow
- Triangular shape is foreign to the rectangular frame
  → invites viewer's attention



Form: Shapes - *Triangles*



Form: Shapes - *Triangles*



Form: Shapes – *Squares / Rectangles*

Form: Shapes – *Squares / Rectangles*

Form: Shapes – *Squares / Rectangles*

Form: Shapes – *Circles / Ovals*

Form: Shapes – *Circles / Ovals*

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

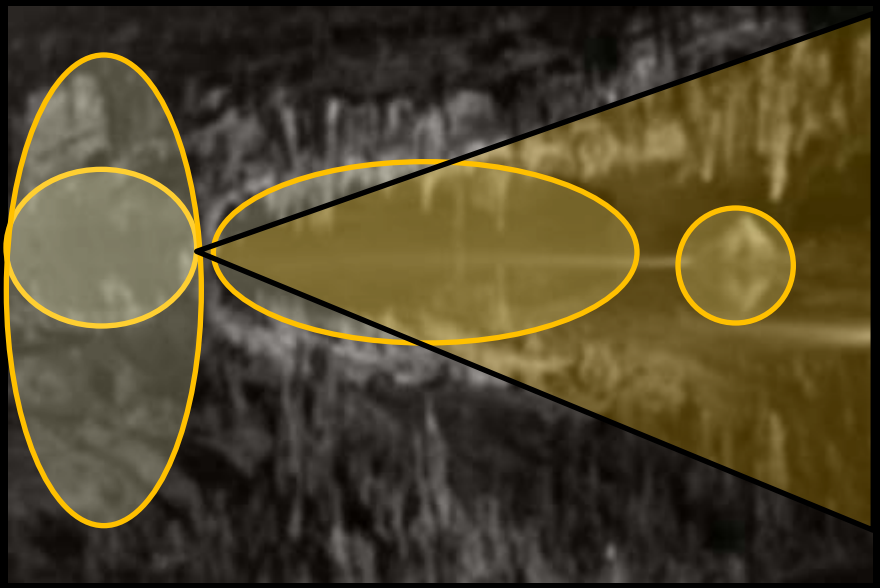
Form: Shapes – *Combined*

Form: Shapes – *Combined*

Form: Shapes – *Combined*

Form: Shapes – *Combined*

Even seemingly very *complex* combinations

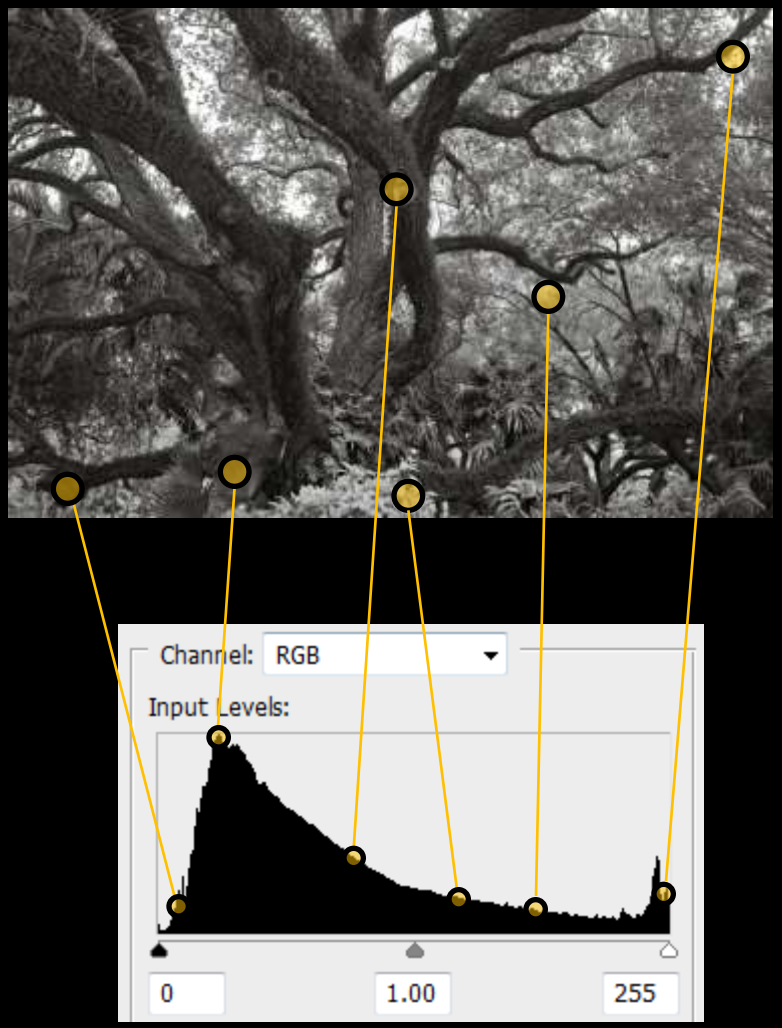


"Complex" only in the details

Really…
Simple shapes + texture / pattern

Basic Elements of Design

Tone



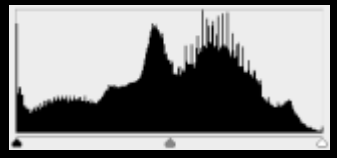
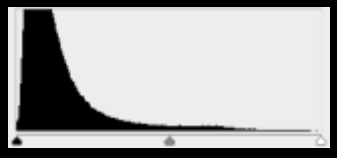
- Arguably the most intangible element
  - May consist of shadings from white → gray → black
  - Marks consist of darks again lights with little gray
  - Useful in adding a 3rd dimension to a "flat" B&W image
  - Helps create a "mood" of a composition
    → "High key" images convey lightness, joy
    → "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

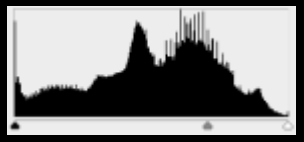
Global Contrast

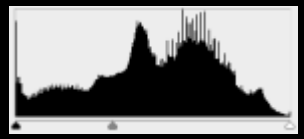
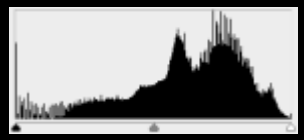
Balanced Range

Predominantly dark
("Low key")

darker

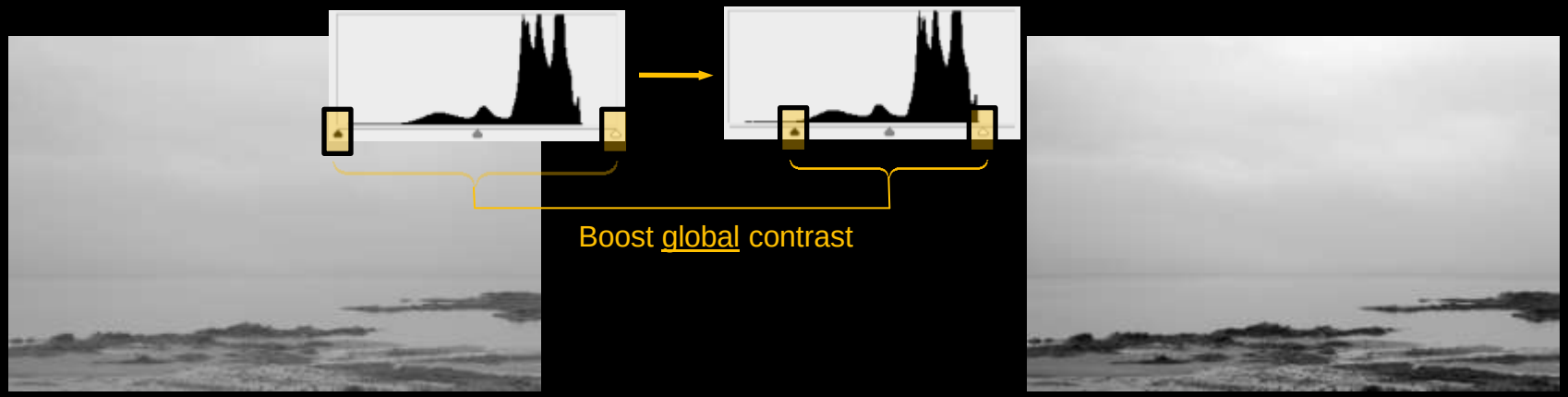
lighter



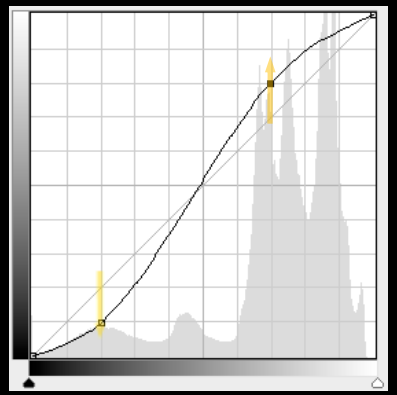
Basic Tonal Elements

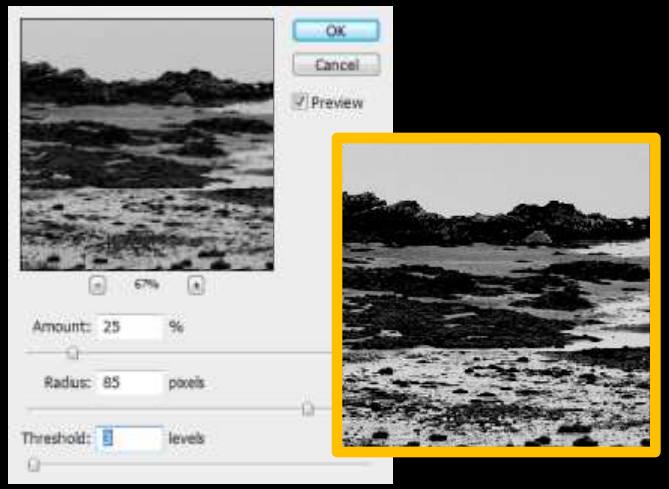
Local vs. Global Contrast



Boost global contrast

Boost global contrast more by using *curves*





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

Basic Elements of Design

Be mindful of other possible contrasts

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

Basic Elements of Design

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 creates 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

Basic Elements of Design

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 creates 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

Basic Elements of Design

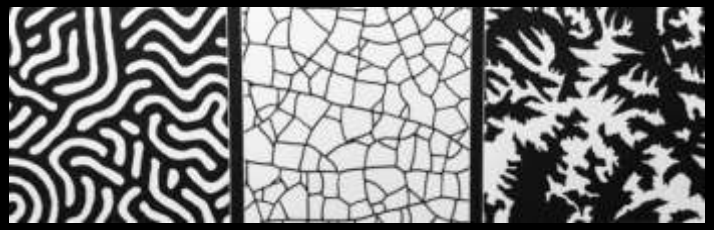
Texture

- 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 creates 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

Basic Elements of Design

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

Basic Elements of Design

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
- Two ways to use it compositionally
  - Emphasize the pattern

Basic Elements of Design

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

- 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)

Basic Elements of Design

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
- 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)

Basic Elements of Design

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
- 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)

Basic Elements of Design

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
- 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)

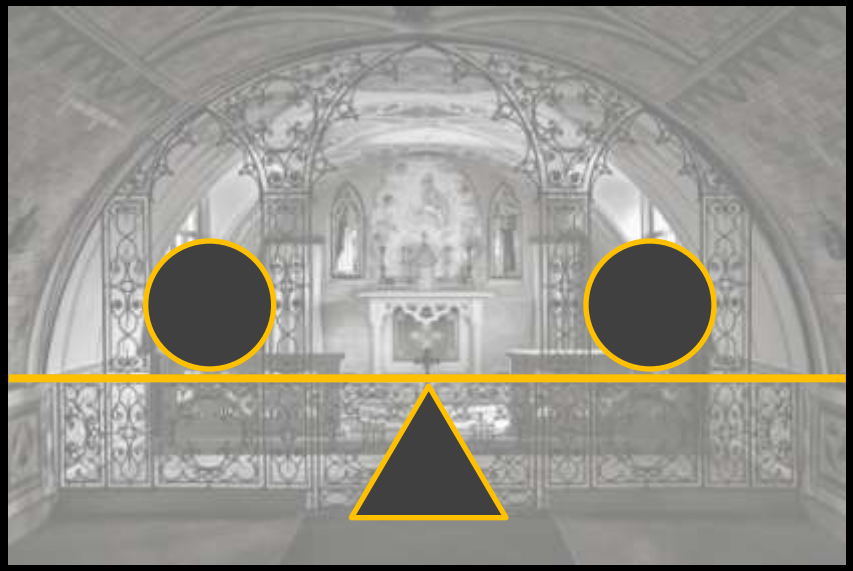
Basic Elements of Design

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 !

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*

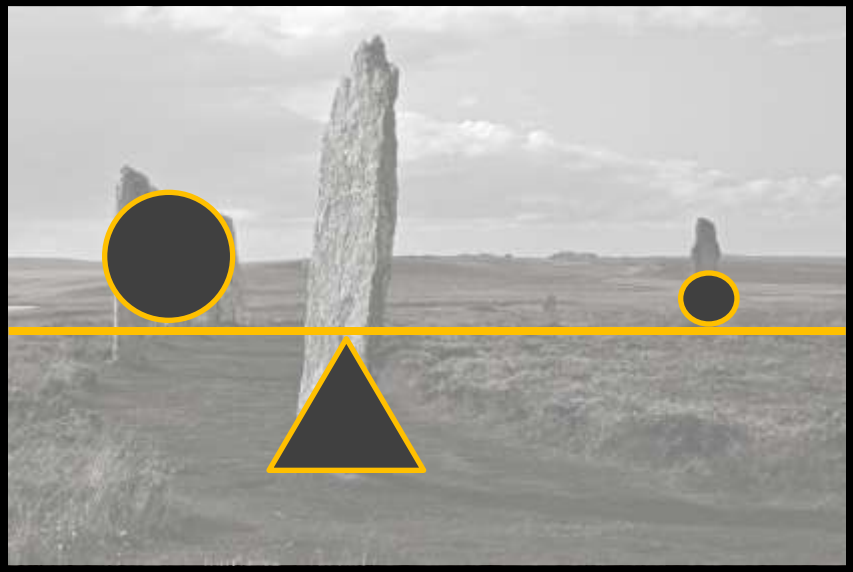
Basic Elements of Design

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*
- Three general kinds of balance
  - Symmetrical : objects fall equally away from center of image
  - Asymmetrical: objects are “weighed” according size and distance

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*
- Three general kinds of balance
  - Symmetrical : objects fall equally away from center of image
  - Asymmetrical: objects are “weighed” according size and distance

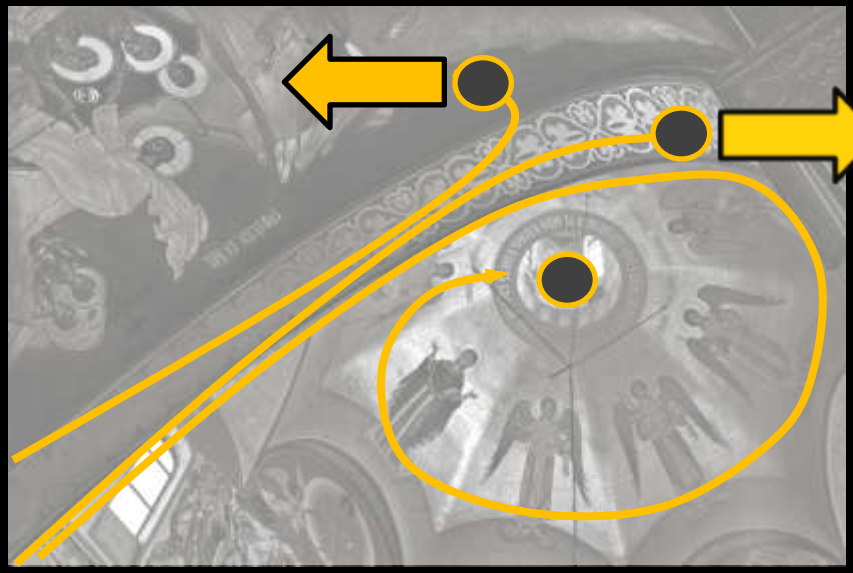
Basic Elements of Design

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*
- Three general kinds of balance
  - Symmetrical : objects fall equally away from center of image
  - Asymmetrical: objects are “weighed” according size and distance
  - Dynamic: weighed balance of *forces*

Basic Elements of Design

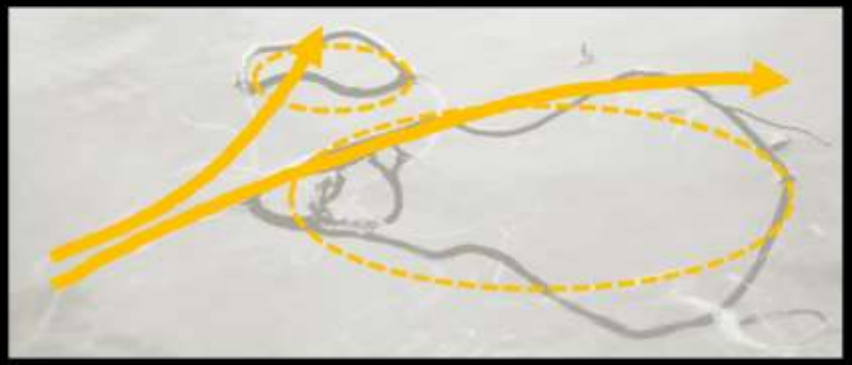
Balance / Distribution of Visual Weight



- 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*
- Three general kinds of balance
  - Symmetrical : objects fall equally away from center of image
  - Asymmetrical: objects are “weighed” according size and distance
  - Dynamic: weighed balance of *forces*

Basic Elements of Design

Balance / Distribution of Visual Weight



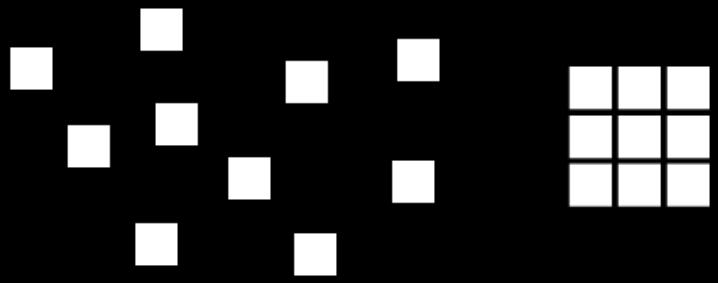
- Balance = resolution of tension;
  of opposing forces (contrasts)
- The eye seeks to balance visible forces
- Balance → aesthetic harmony
  → Unless disharmony is the objective !
- Symmetry works only when it is *perfect*
- Three general kinds of balance
  - Symmetrical : objects fall equally away from center of image
  - Asymmetrical: objects are “weighed” according size and distance
  - Dynamic: weighed balance of *forces*

Gestalt Theory

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

Gestalt Laws of Perceptual Organization

1. Proximity: *objects grouped by closeness*

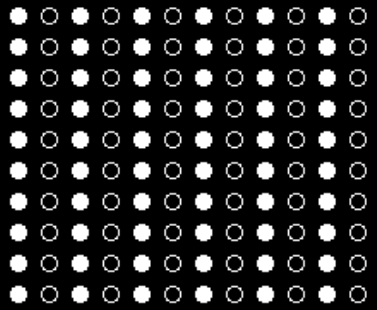


Gestalt Theory

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

Gestalt Laws of Perceptual Organization

1. Proximity: *objects grouped by closeness*
2. Similarity: *objects grouped by similarity*

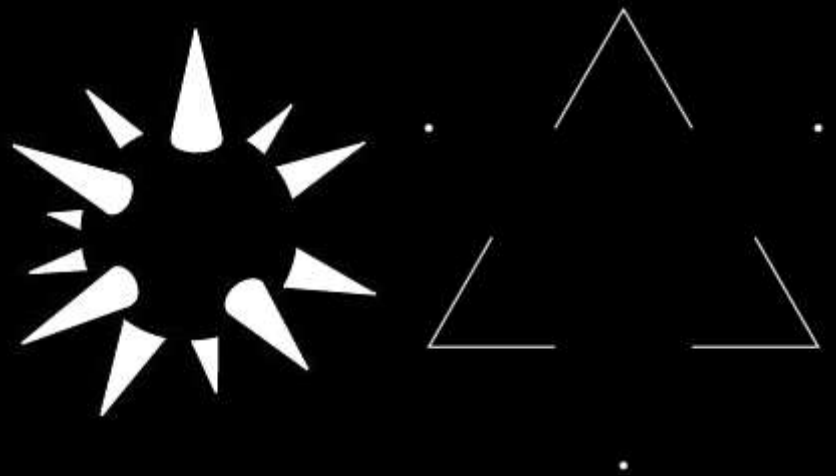


Gestalt Theory

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

Gestalt Laws of Perceptual Organization

1. Proximity: *objects grouped by closeness*
2. Similarity: *objects grouped by similarity*
3. Closure: *mind's "eye" fills in missing detail*

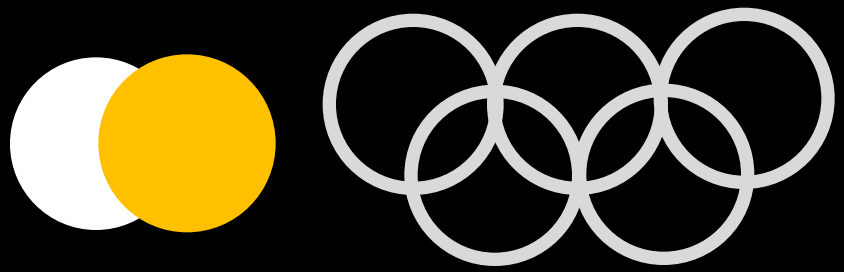


Gestalt Theory

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

Gestalt Laws of Perceptual Organization

1. Proximity: *objects grouped by closeness*
2. Similarity: *objects grouped by similarity*
3. Closure: *mind's "eye" fills in missing detail*
4. Simplicity: *interpretation tends to the simpler*

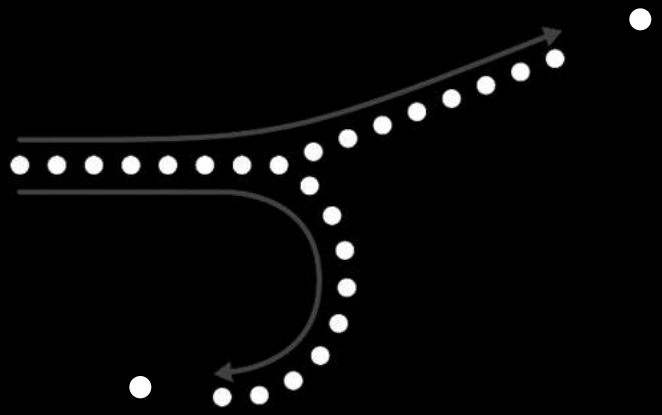


Gestalt Theory

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

Gestalt Laws of Perceptual Organization

1. Proximity: *objects grouped by closeness*
2. Similarity: *objects grouped by similarity*
3. Closure: *mind's "eye" fills in missing detail*
4. Simplicity: *interpretation tends to the simpler*
5. Continuity: *existing curves extended "simply"*

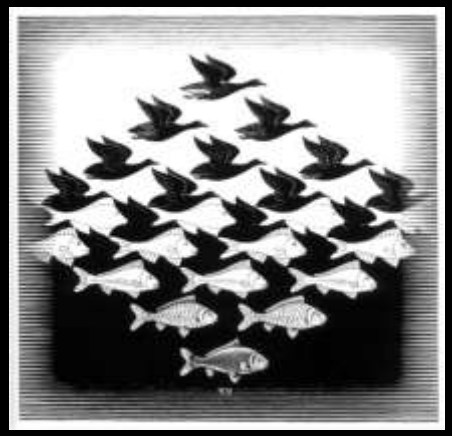


Gestalt Theory

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

Gestalt Laws of Perceptual Organization

1. Proximity: *objects grouped by closeness*
2. Similarity: *objects grouped by similarity*
3. Closure: *mind's "eye" fills in missing detail*
4. Simplicity: *interpretation tends to the simpler*
5. Continuity: *existing curves extended "simply"*
6. Segregation: *all figures require a ground*



Gestalt Theory

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

Gestalt Laws of Perceptual Organization

1. Proximity: *objects grouped by closeness*
2. Similarity: *objects grouped by similarity*
3. Closure: *mind's "eye" fills in missing detail*
4. Simplicity: *interpretation tends to the simpler*
5. Continuity: *existing curves extended "simply"*
6. Segregation: *all figures require a ground*

Grouping

1. **Emergence**
   Parts of image that do not contain sufficient information for explanation suddenly pop out after looking

Gestalt Theory

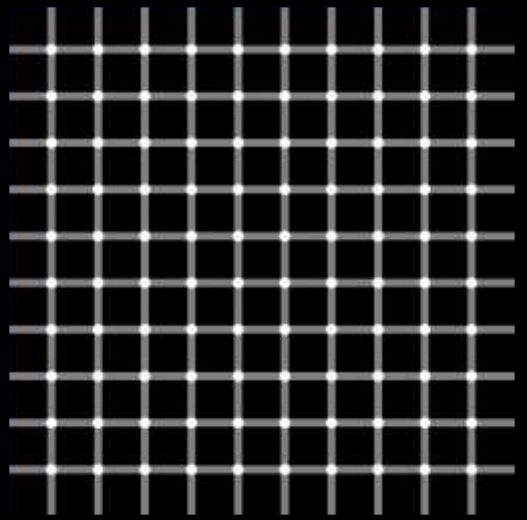
Founded in Germany ~ 1912 (Max Wertheimer): offers useful principles of *organization*

Gestalt Laws of Perceptual Organization

1. Proximity: *objects grouped by closeness*
2. Similarity: *objects grouped by similarity*
3. Closure: *mind's "eye" fills in missing detail*
4. Simplicity: *interpretation tends to the simpler*
5. Continuity: *existing curves extended "simply"*
6. Segregation: *all figures require a ground*

Grouping

1. **Emergence**
   Parts of image that do not contain sufficient information for explanation suddenly pop out after looking
2. **Reification (generalized closure)**
   The mind fills in shapes / areas due to inadequate visual input



Gestalt Theory

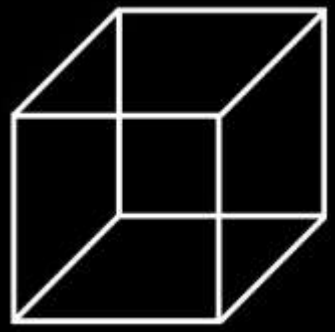
Founded in Germany ~ 1912 (Max Wertheimer): offers useful principles of *organization*

Gestalt Laws of Perceptual Organization

1. Proximity: *objects grouped by closeness*
2. Similarity: *objects grouped by similarity*
3. Closure: *mind's "eye" fills in missing detail*
4. Simplicity: *interpretation tends to the simpler*
5. Continuity: *existing curves extended "simply"*
6. Segregation: *all figures require a ground*

Grouping

1. **Emergence**
   Parts of image that do not contain sufficient information for explanation suddenly pop out after looking
2. **Reification (generalized closure)**
   The mind fills in shapes / areas due to inadequate visual input
3. **Multistability**
   Sometimes, when insufficient depth clues, objects invert spontaneously



Gestalt Theory

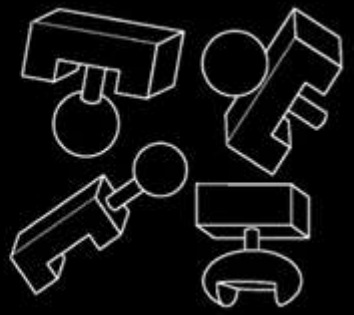
Founded in Germany ~ 1912 (Max Wertheimer): offers useful principles of *organization*

Gestalt Laws of Perceptual Organization

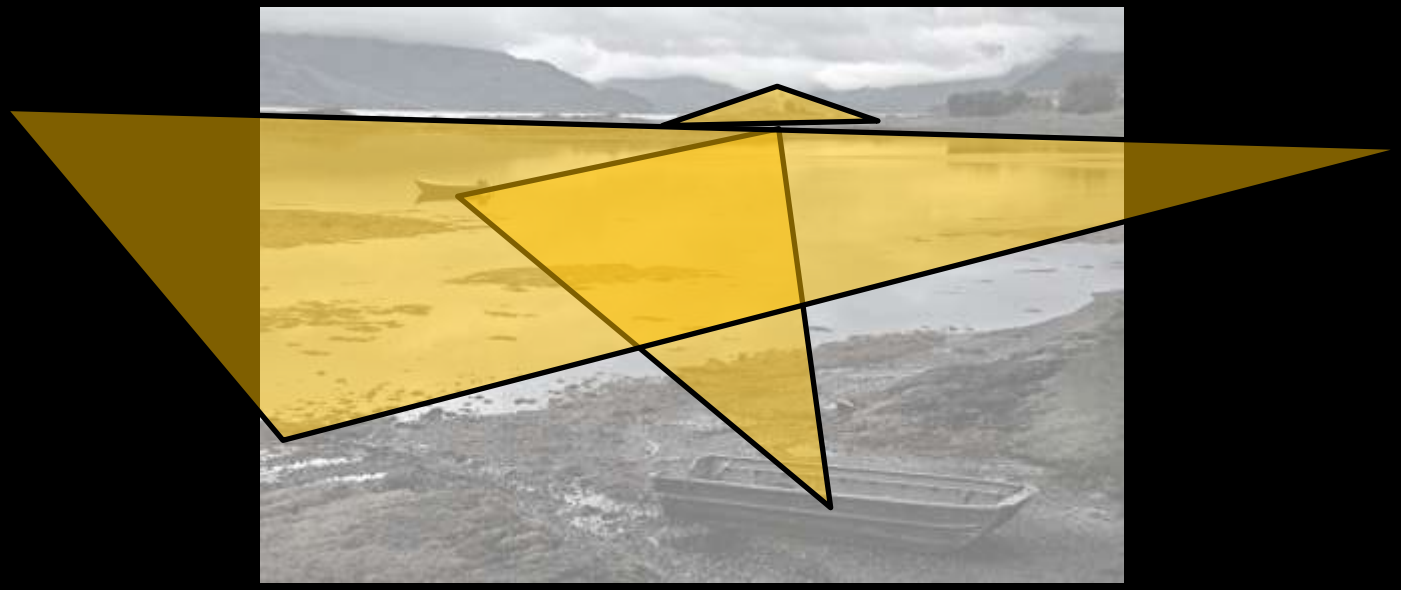
1. Proximity: *objects grouped by closeness*
2. Similarity: *objects grouped by similarity*
3. Closure: *mind's "eye" fills in missing detail*
4. Simplicity: *interpretation tends to the simpler*
5. Continuity: *existing curves extended "simply"*
6. Segregation: *all figures require a ground*

Grouping

1. **Emergence**
   Parts of image that do not contain sufficient information for explanation suddenly pop out after looking
2. **Reification (generalized closure)**
   The mind fills in shapes / areas due to inadequate visual input
3. **Multistability**
   Sometimes, when insufficient depth clues, objects invert spontaneously
4. **Invariance**
   Recognition takes places regardless of orientation, rotation, aspect, scale, and other factors

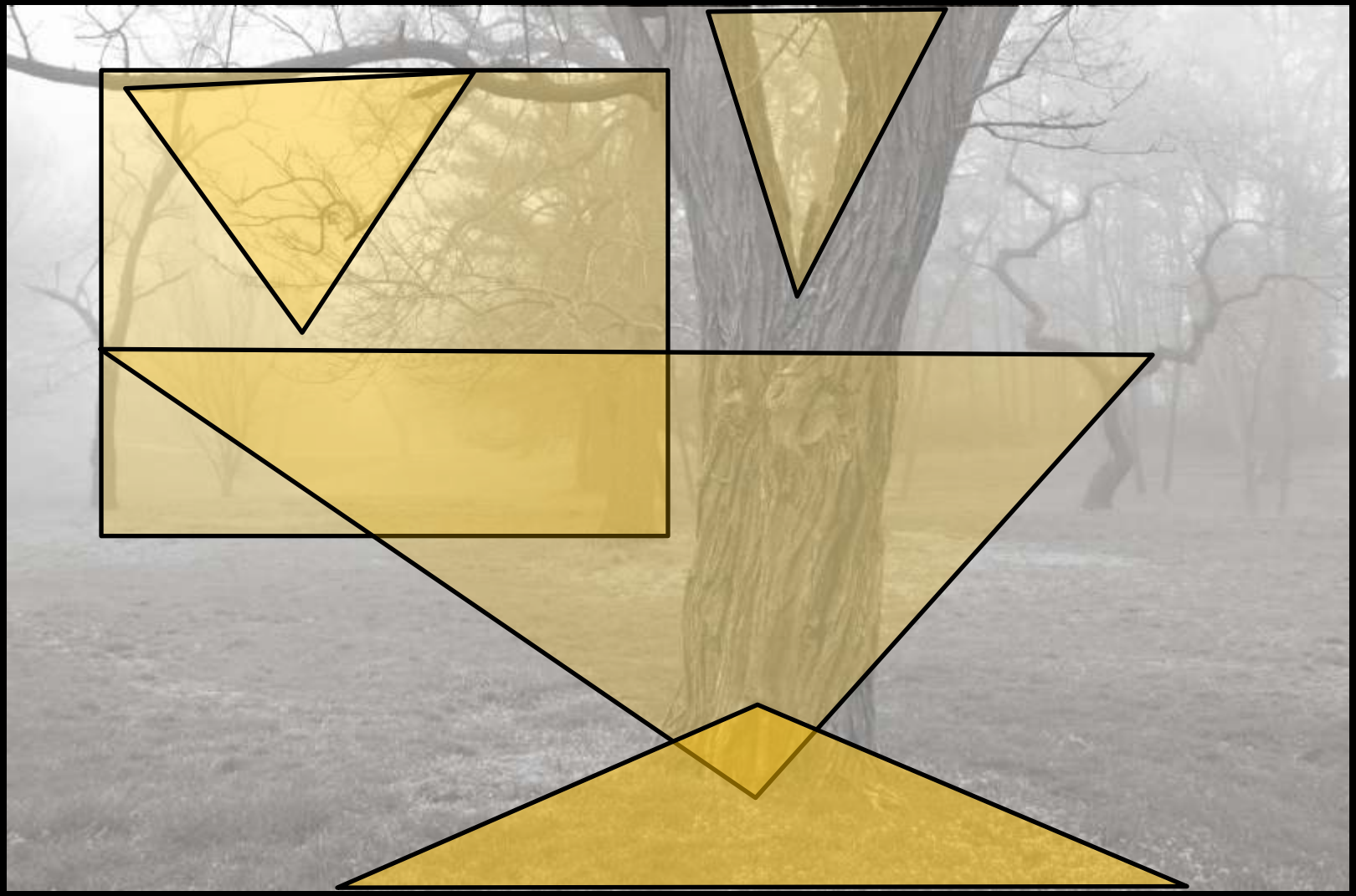


Gestalt Theory: *a few examples*

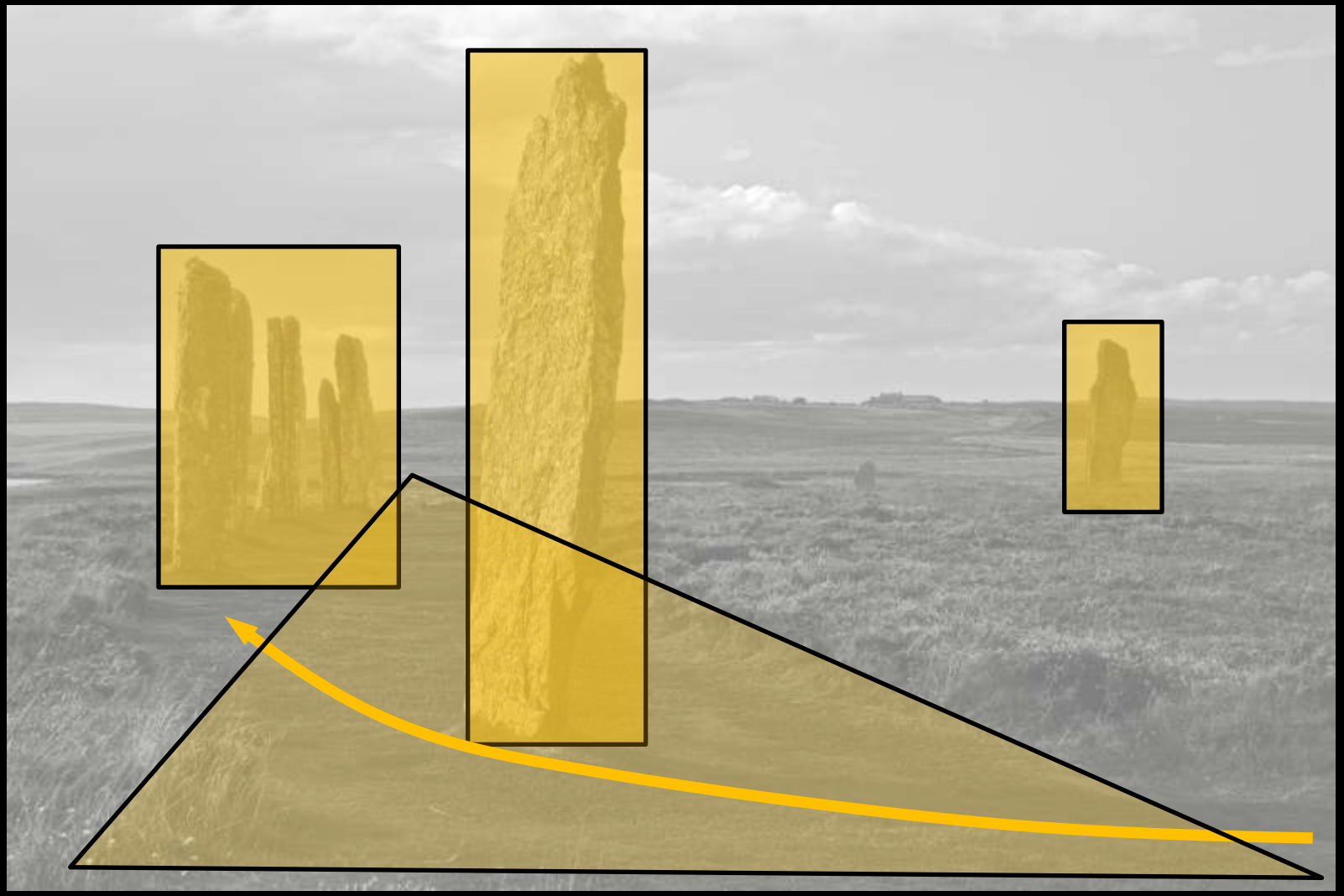


Gestalt Theory: *a few examples*

Gestalt Theory: *a few examples*



Gestalt Theory: *a few examples*



Composing / Designing

Fifth Essential Element: *Light*

"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

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
- 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

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
- 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
- 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

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”

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

"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)
- 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

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

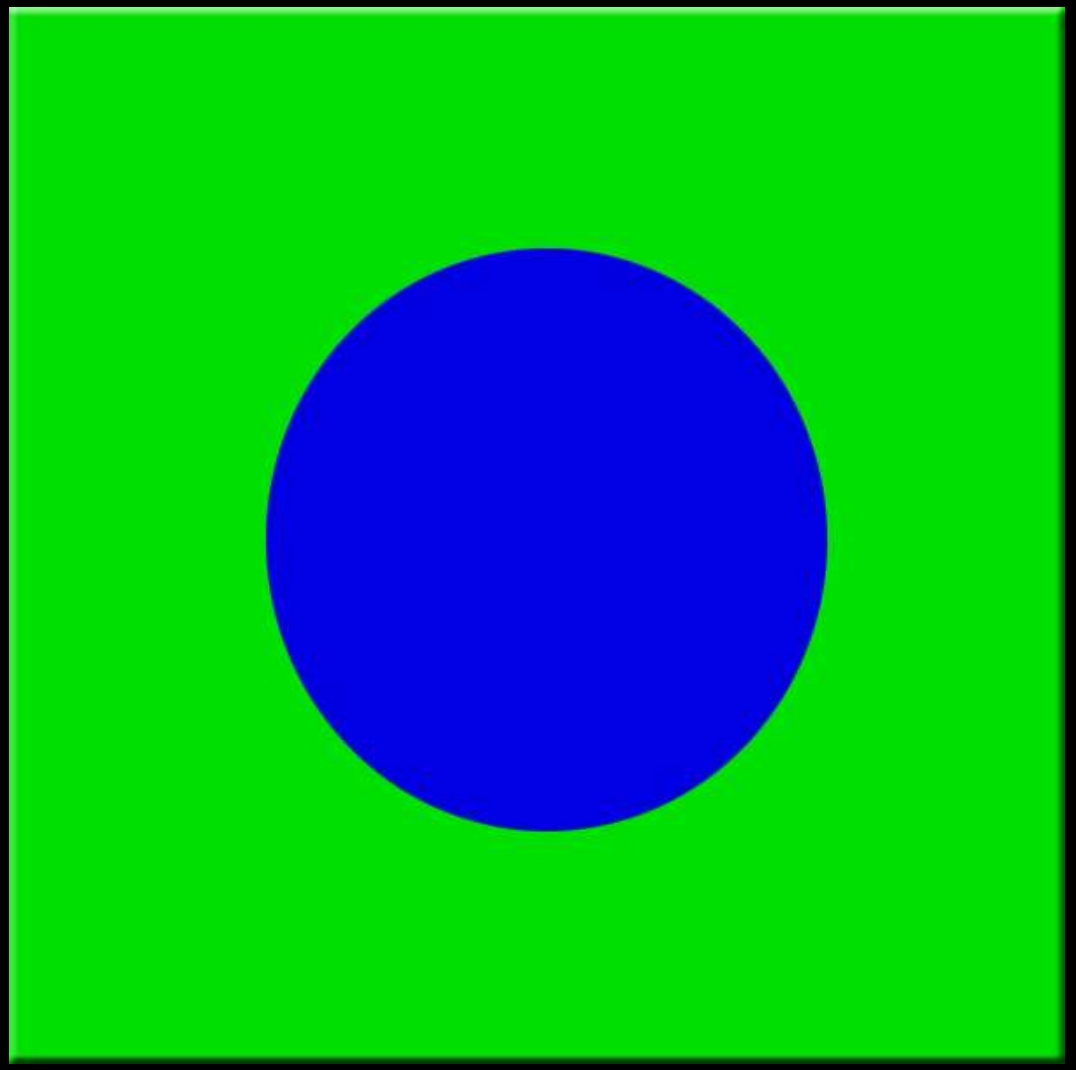
- Both have a *lens*, an *aperture*, an *image plane*, and *light sensors*
- A camera (typically) has a mechanical shutter;
  human vision is sampled through the optic nerve
- Human eye has very narrow angle of sharp vision (~ 3 radial deg)
- Eye scans images in small segments / takes in *very* wide 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?



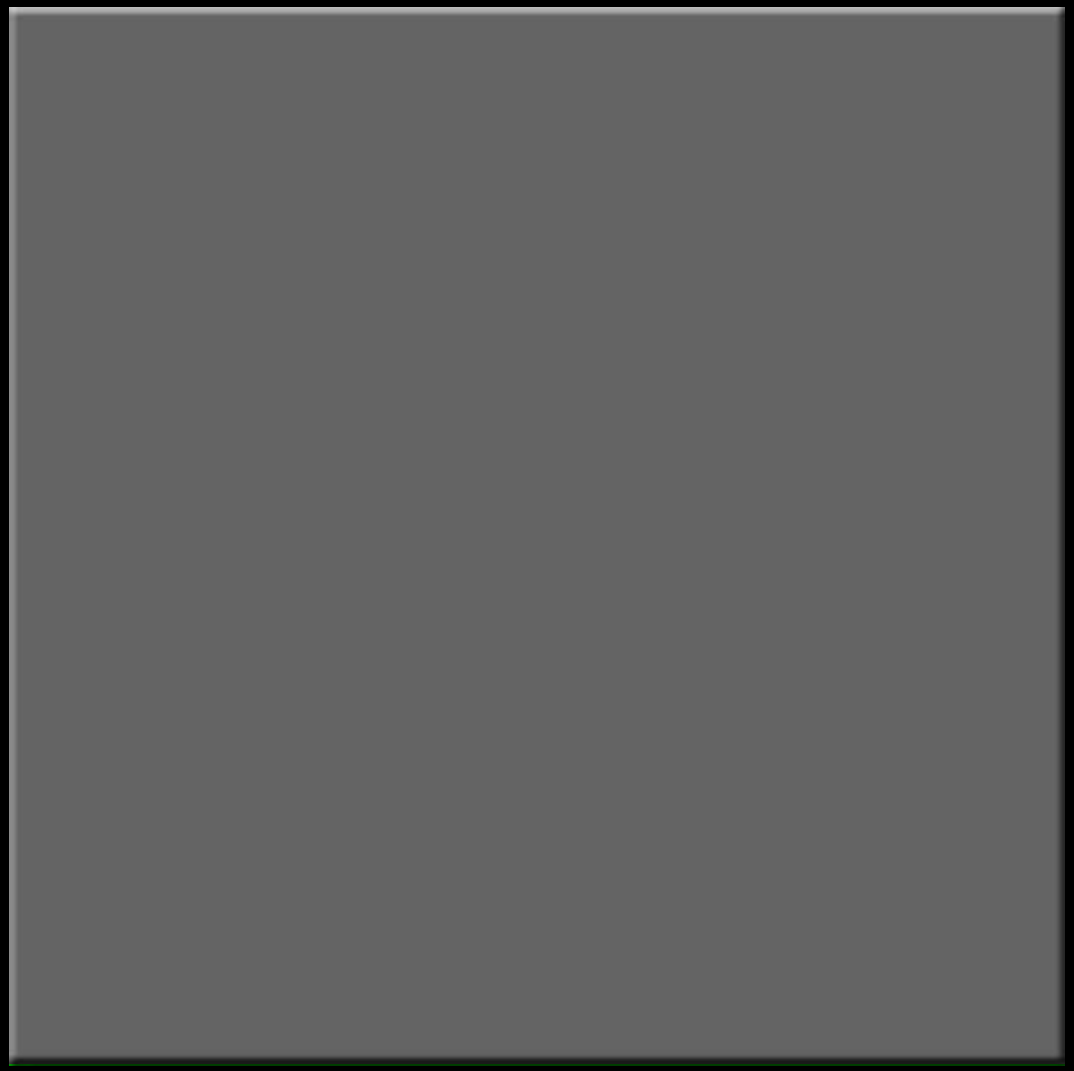
Camera vs. Eye

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

Which is darker…

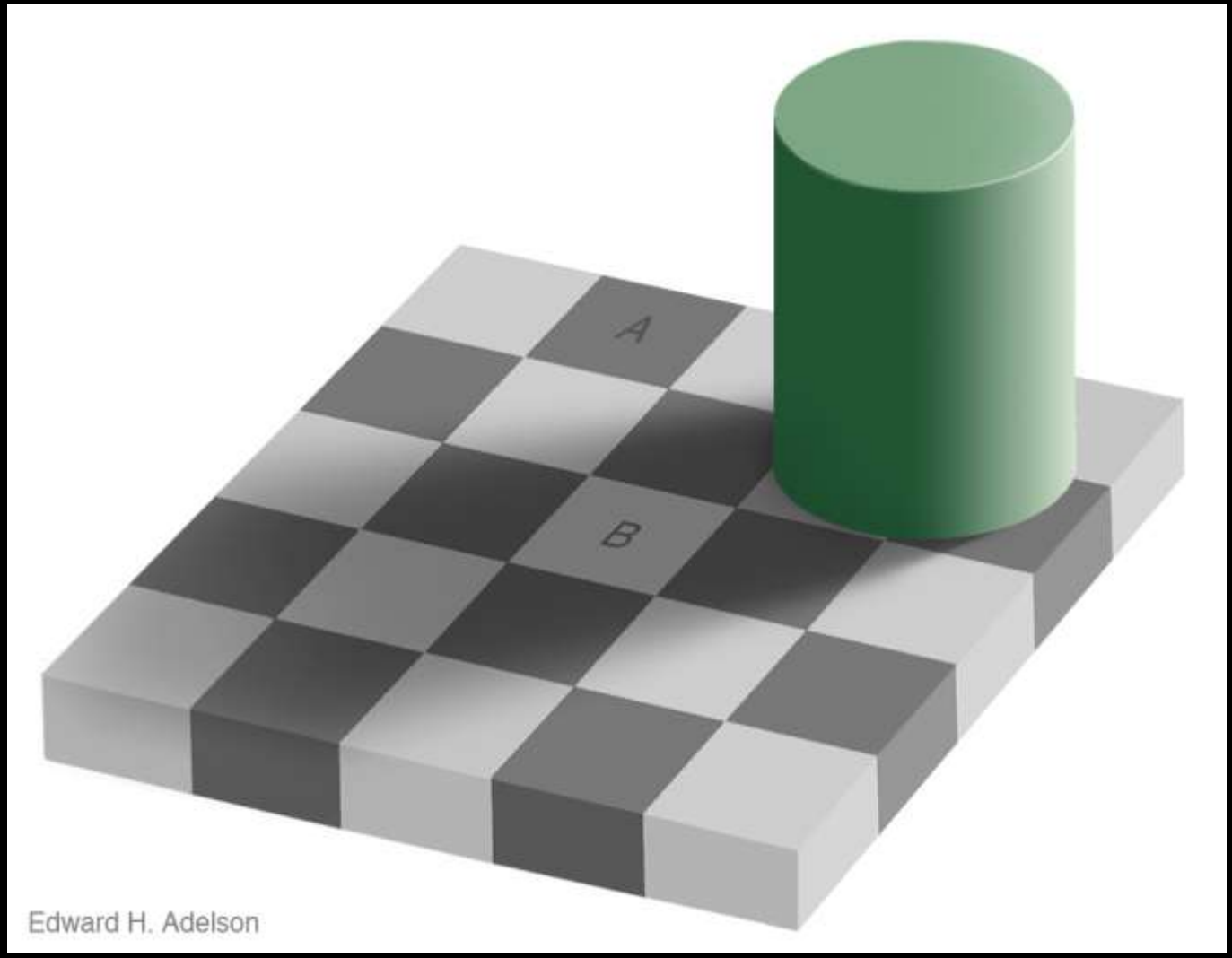
the green patch
or the
blue patch?

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



Camera vs. Eye

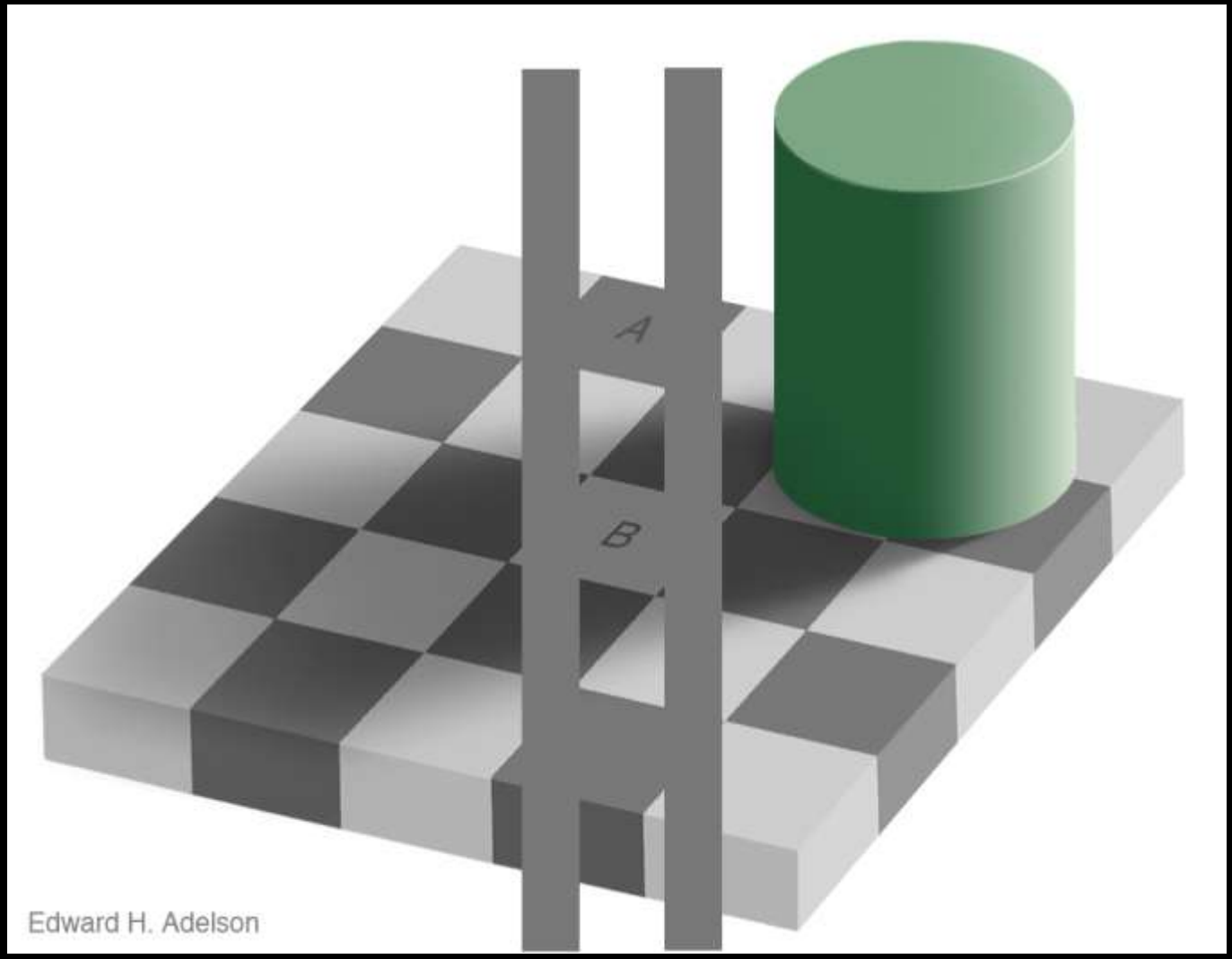
The brain “sees” (interprets) shades of grey *locally*



http://web.mit.edu/persci/people/adelson/images/checkershadow/checkershadow_illusion4full.jpg

Camera vs. Eye

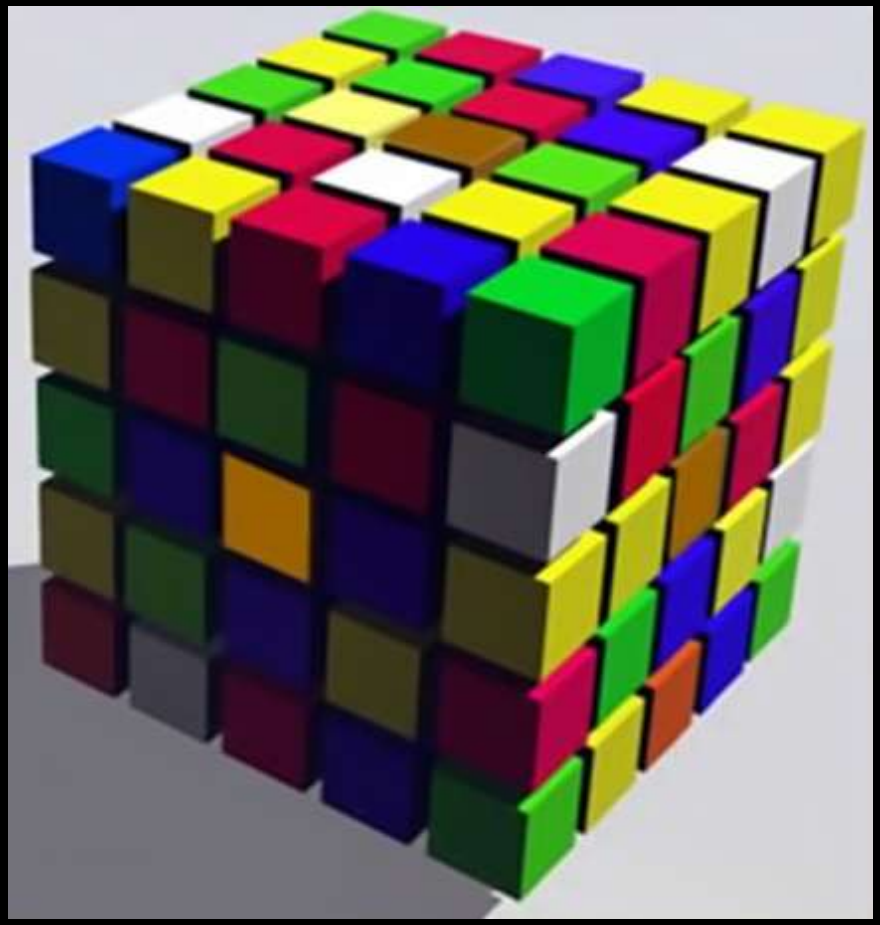
The brain “sees” (interprets) shades of grey *locally*

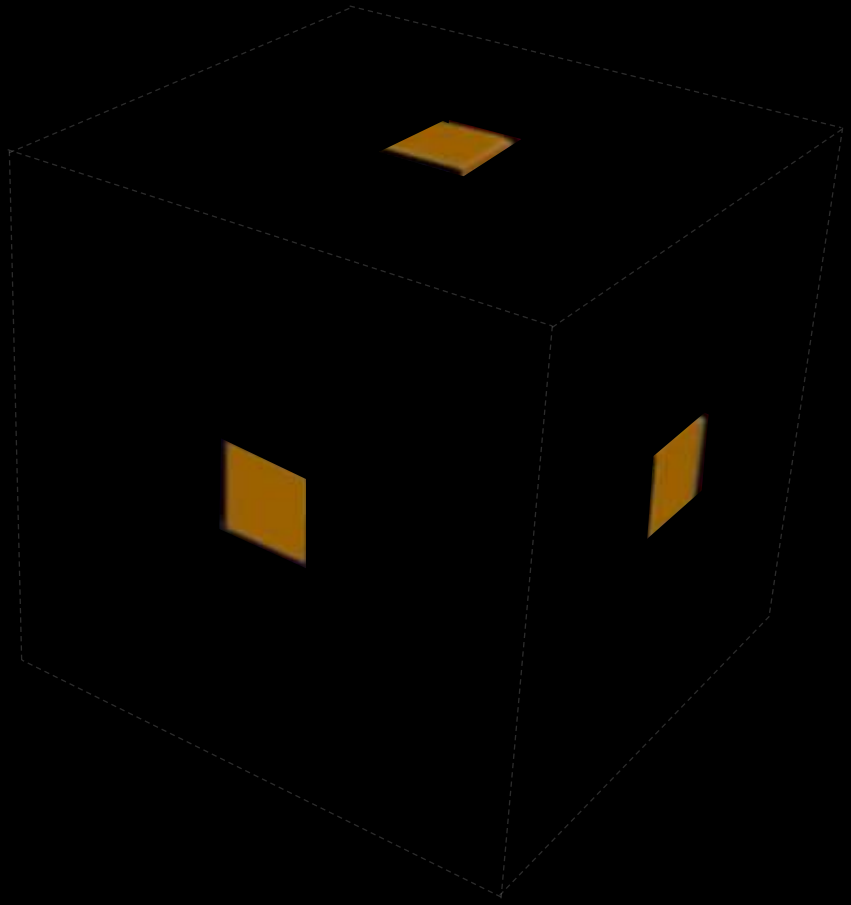


http://web.mit.edu/persci/people/adelson/images/checkershadow/checkershadow_illusion4full.jpg

Camera vs. Eye

The brain “sees” (interprets) color *locally*





http://www.ukpuzzle.com/puzzles/47.jpg

Camera vs. Eye

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

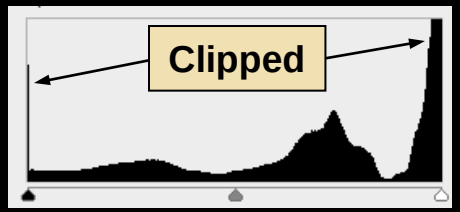
Straight out of camera

Medium	Range (f-stops)
Nature	24
Human eye	20 +/-
Color slide film	5-1/2
JPEG image	8-1/2
Color negative film	10
RAW image	12
B&W negative film	14
HDR image	16
Monitor (consumer)	6-1/2
Print paper	8
Monitor (pro grade)	10

Camera vs. Eye

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

Straight out of camera



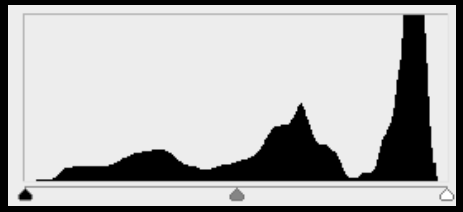
Medium	Range (f-stops)
Nature	24
Human eye	20 +/-
Color slide film	5-1/2
JPEG image	8-1/2
Color negative film	10
RAW image	12
B&W negative film	14
HDR image	16
Monitor (consumer)	6-1/2
Print paper	8
Monitor (pro grade)	10

Camera vs. Eye

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

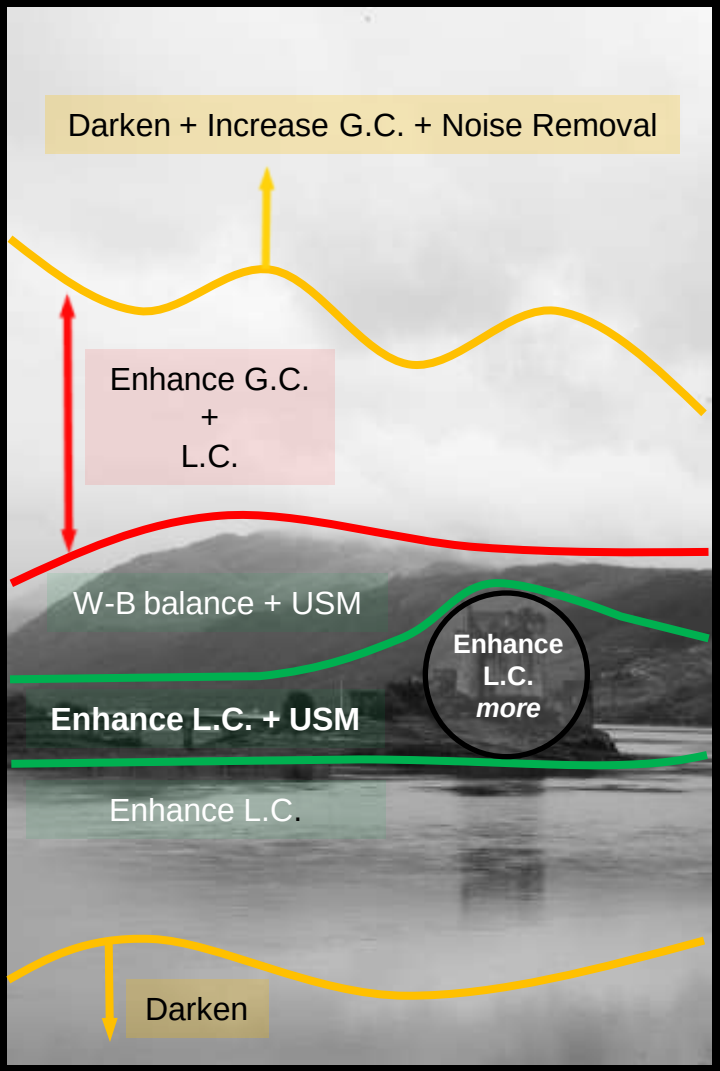
Corrected in Raw Converter

Medium	Range (f-stops)
Nature	24
Human eye	20 +/-
Color slide film	5-1/2
JPEG image	8-1/2
Color negative film	10
RAW image	12
B&W negative film	14
HDR image	16
Monitor (consumer)	6-1/2
Print paper	8
Monitor (pro grade)	10



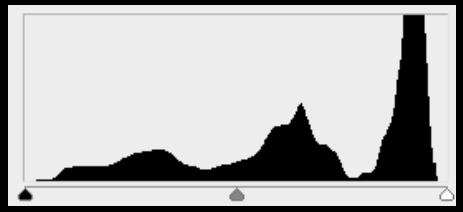
Camera vs. Eye

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



Anticipated **LOCAL** manipulations

Medium	Range (f-stops)
Nature	24
Human eye	20 +/-
Color slide film	5-1/2
JPEG image	8-1/2
Color negative film	10
RAW image	12
B&W negative film	14
HDR image	16
Monitor (consumer)	6-1/2
Print paper	8
Monitor (pro grade)	10



Camera vs. Eye

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

Final color → B&W conversion

Medium	Range (f-stops)
Nature	24
Human eye	20 +/-
Color slide film	5-1/2
JPEG image	8-1/2
Color negative film	10
RAW image	12
B&W negative film	14
HDR image	16
Monitor (consumer)	6-1/2
Print paper	8
Monitor (pro grade)	10

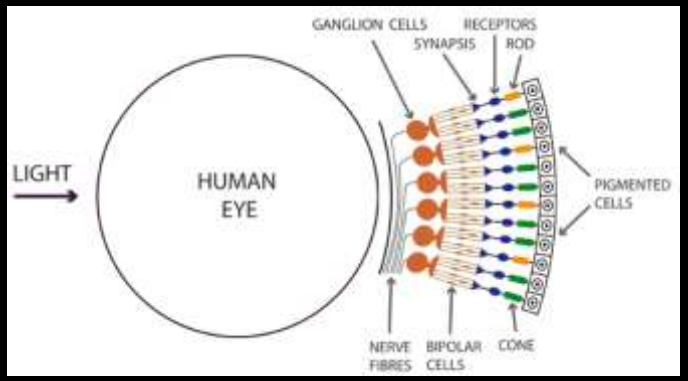
RAW processing can help approximate human vision

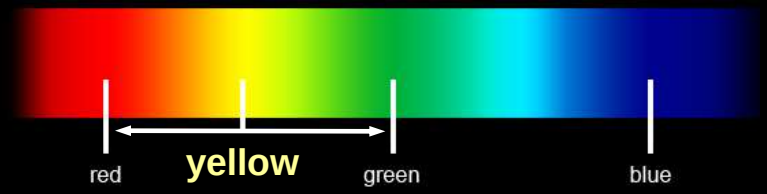
Color → Black & White

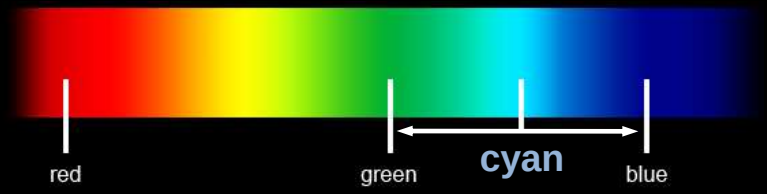
Primary colors – R G B

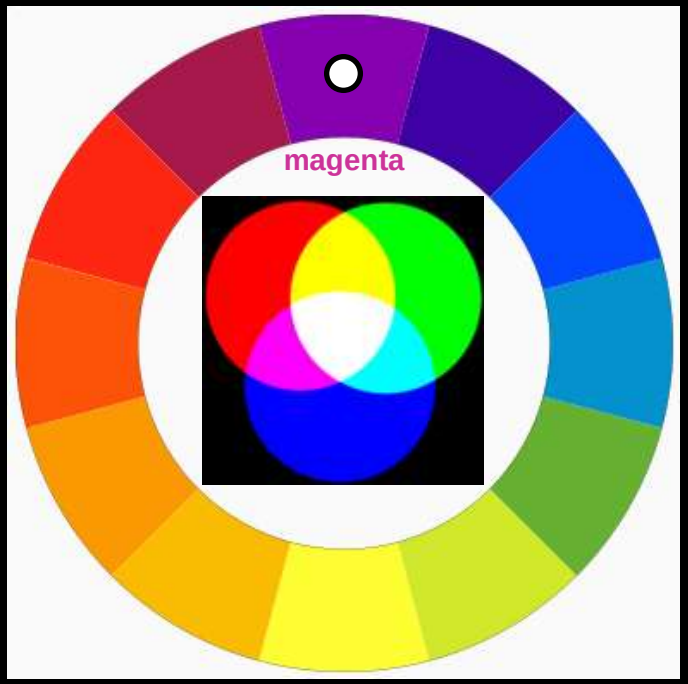
arise not from physics,

but from *how our eyes work!*



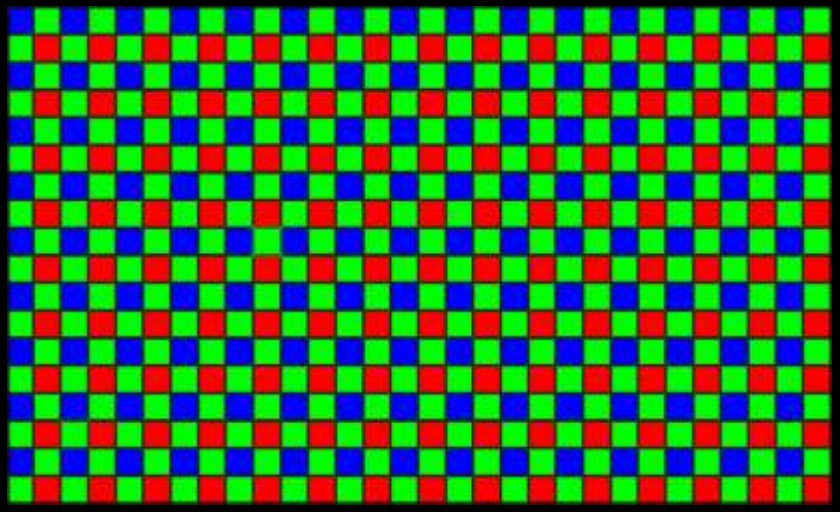


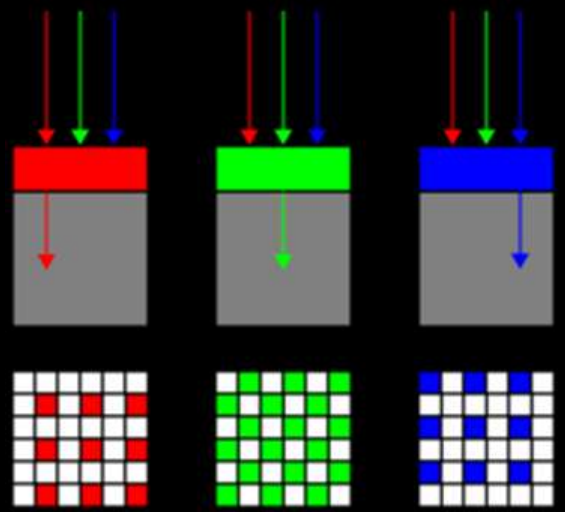




Question: ***Where does magenta come from?***

Color → Black & White





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

$R_{i-1, j+1}$	$G_{i, j+1}$	$R_{i+1, j+1}$
$G_{i-1, j}$	$B_{i, j}$	$G_{i+1, j}$
$R_{i-1, j-1}$	$G_{i, j-1}$	$R_{i+1, j-1}$

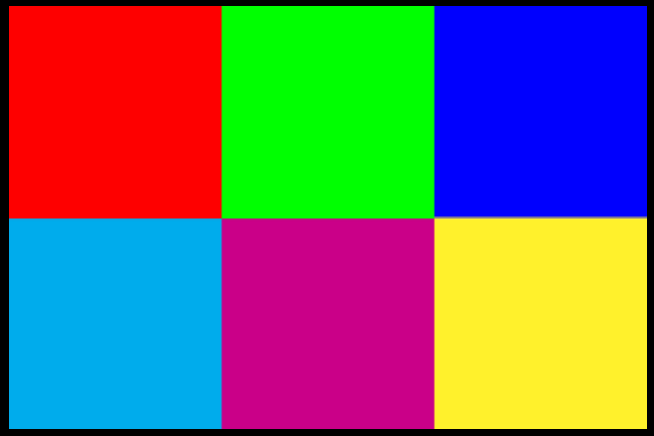
$$\begin{cases} G_{i,j} = \left(G_{i,j+1} + G_{i-1,j} + G_{i+1,j} + G_{i,j-1}\right)/4 \\ R_{i,j} = \left(R_{i-1,j+1} + R_{i+1,j+1} + R_{i-1,j-1} + R_{i+1,j-1}\right)/4 \\ B_{i,j} = B_{i,j} \end{cases}$$

Outline of Class

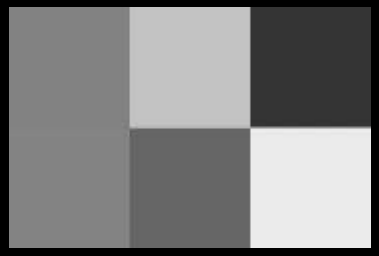
Topics

- 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”

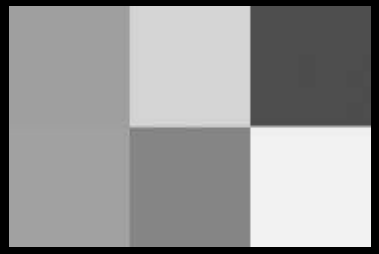
Color → B&W *Channel Conversion*



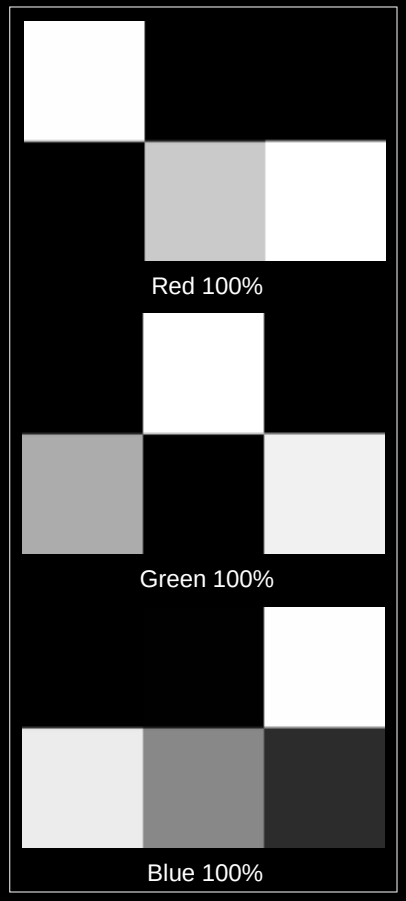
“R / G / B — Cyan / Magenta / Yellow



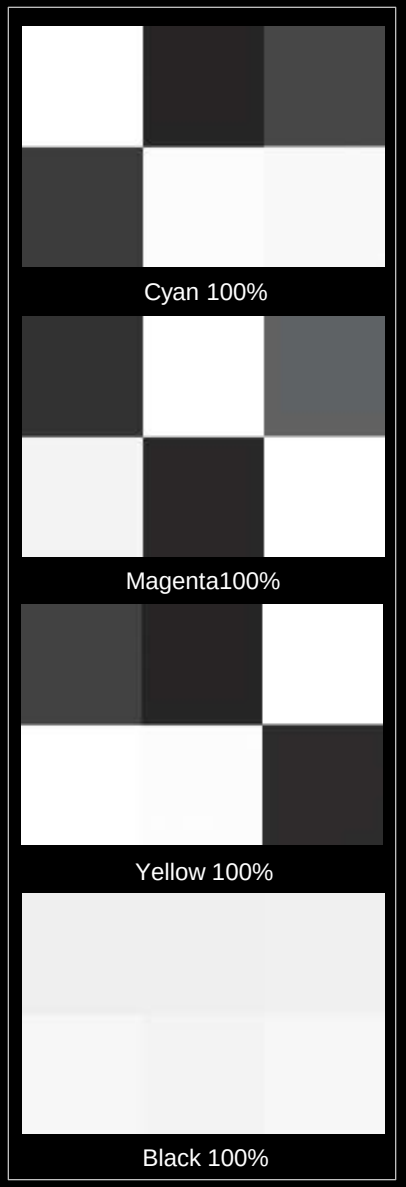
Grayscale / default



Lightness / LAB



RGB



CMYK

Color → B&W *Channel Conversion*

"Out of camera" / *default raw conversion*

Grayscale / default

Lightness / LAB

Red 100%

Green 100%

Blue 100%

RGB

Cyan 100%

Magenta100%

Yellow 100%

Black 100%

CMYK

Color → B&W *Channel Conversion*

Completed image

- *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

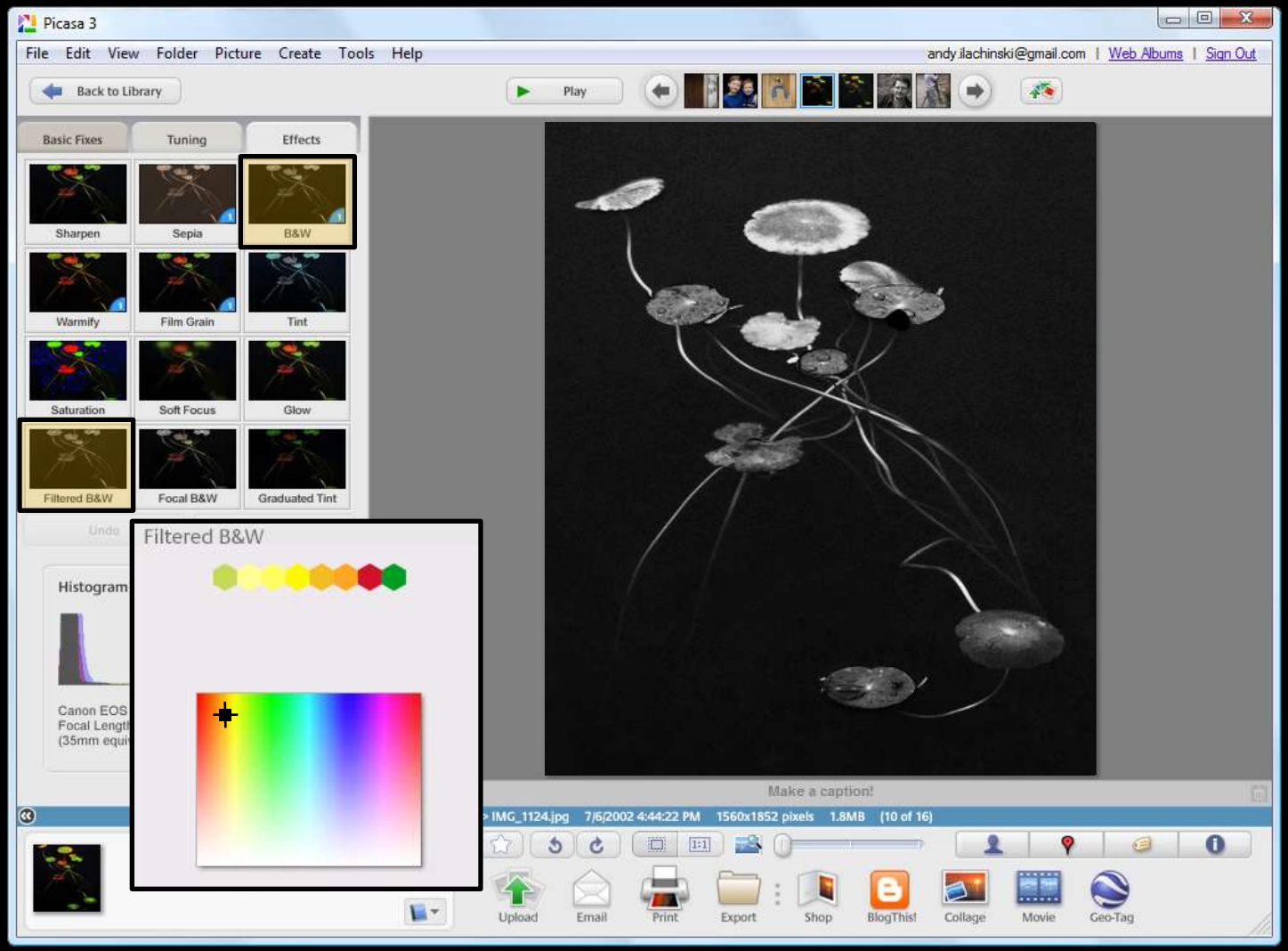
Conversion options

- 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*

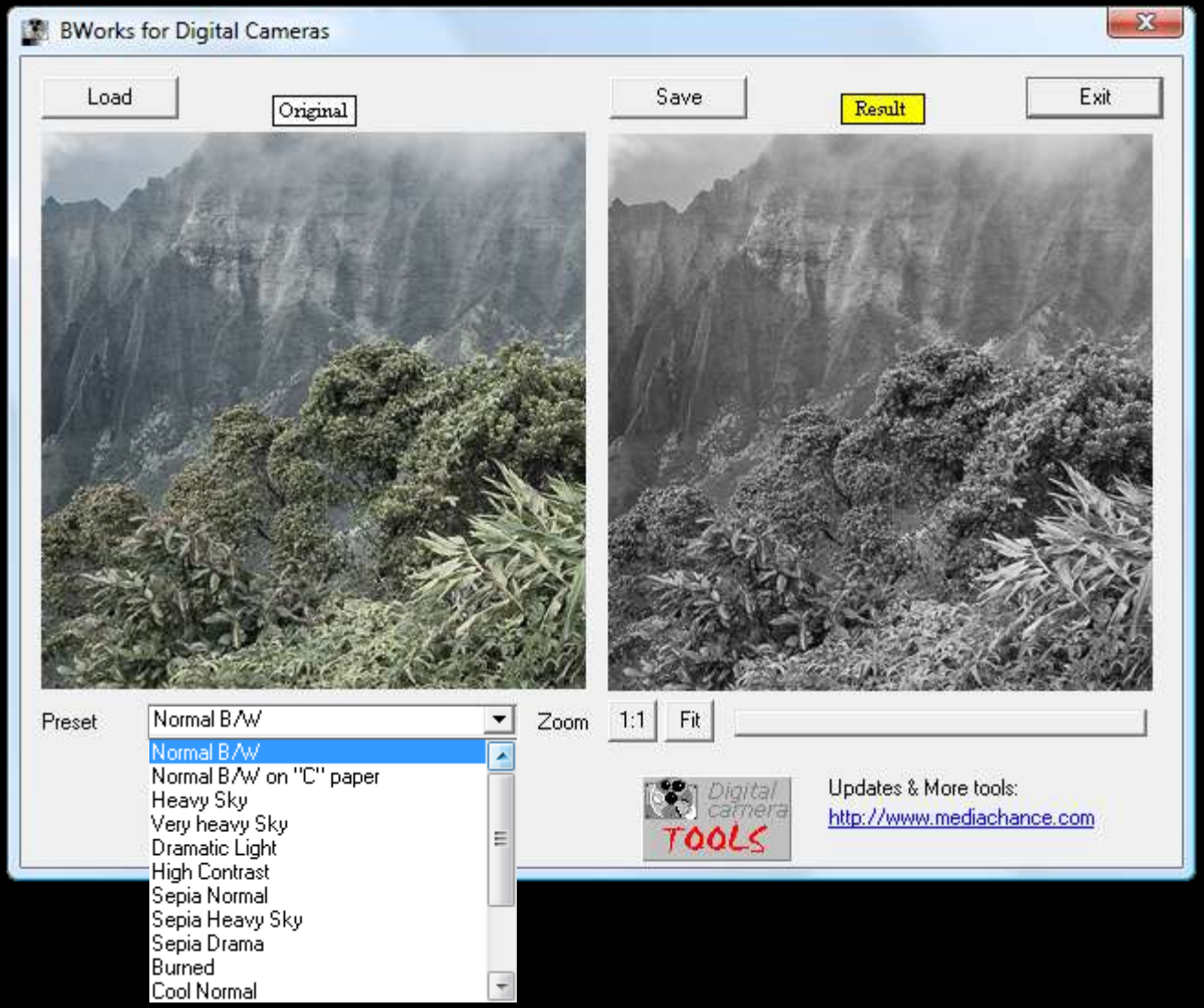
Filtered B&W



http://picasa.google.com/

Converting to Black & White

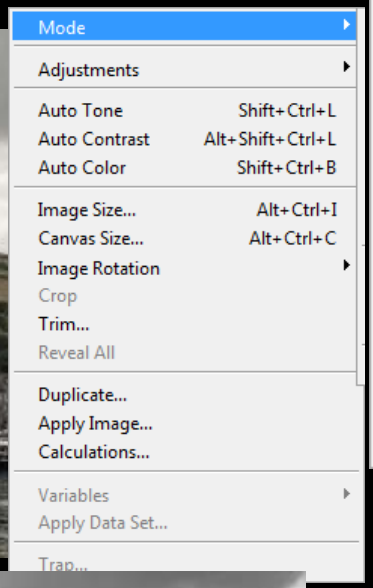
Stand-alone Program: BWorks (*Free*)

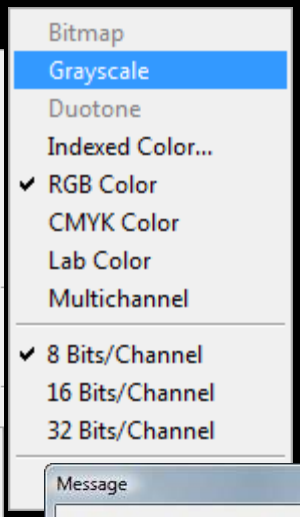


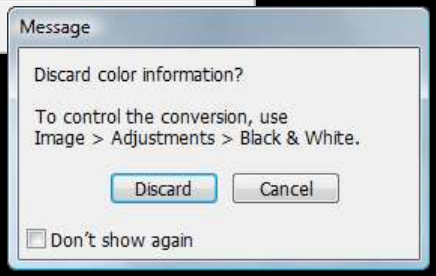
http://www.mediachance.com/digicam/bworks.htm

Converting to Black & White

Method 1: *Grayscale*

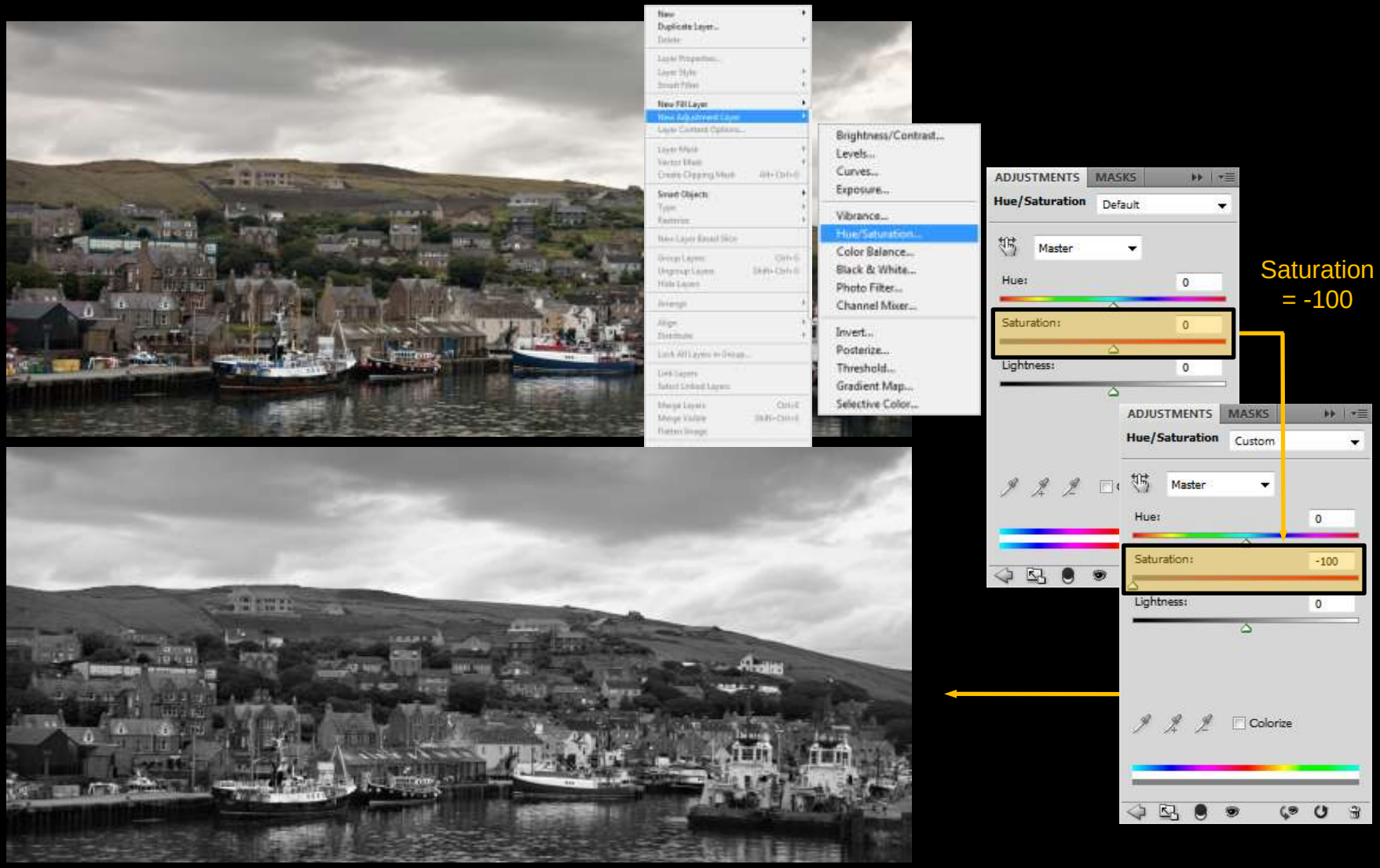






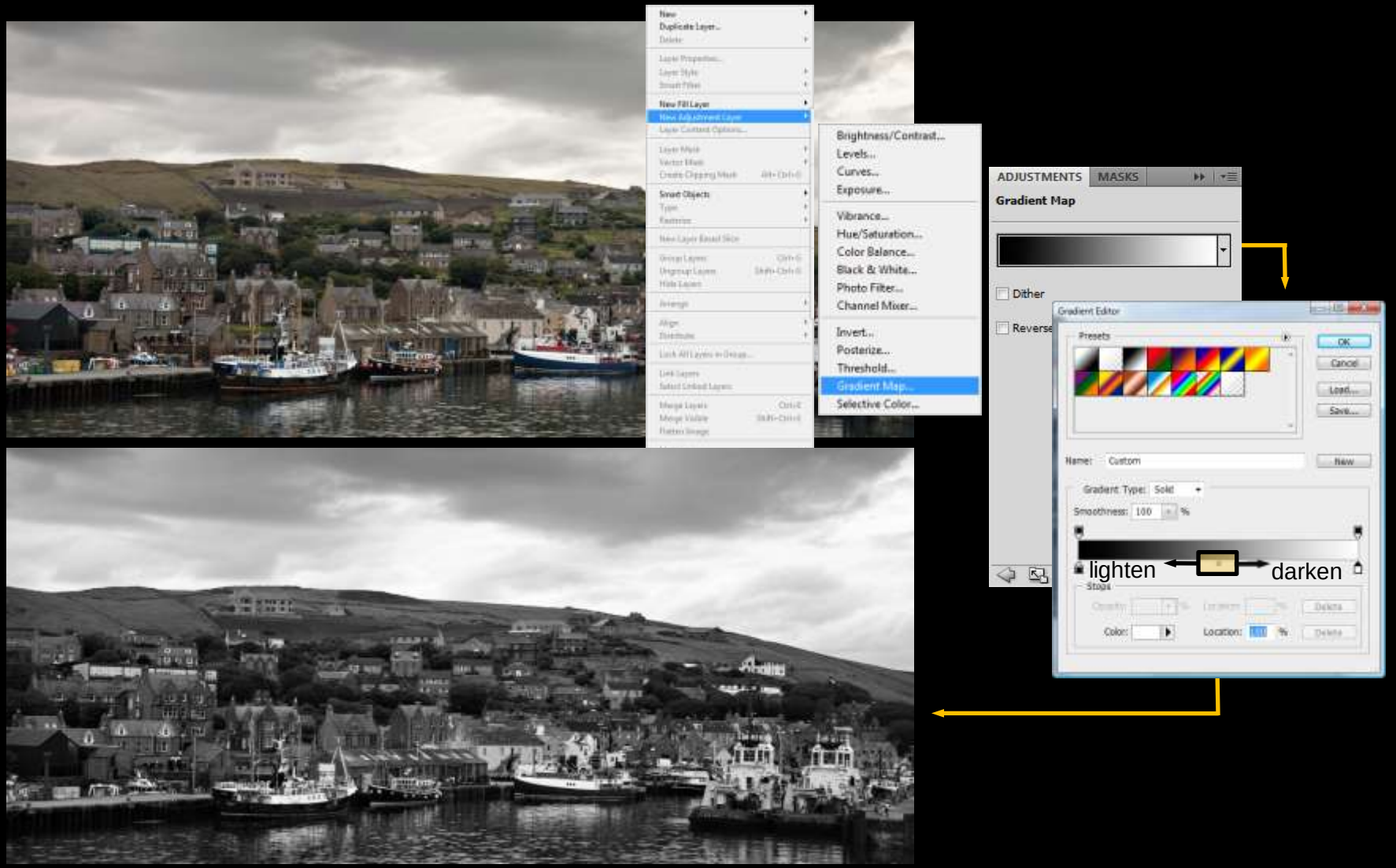
Converting to Black & White

Method 2: *Desaturation*



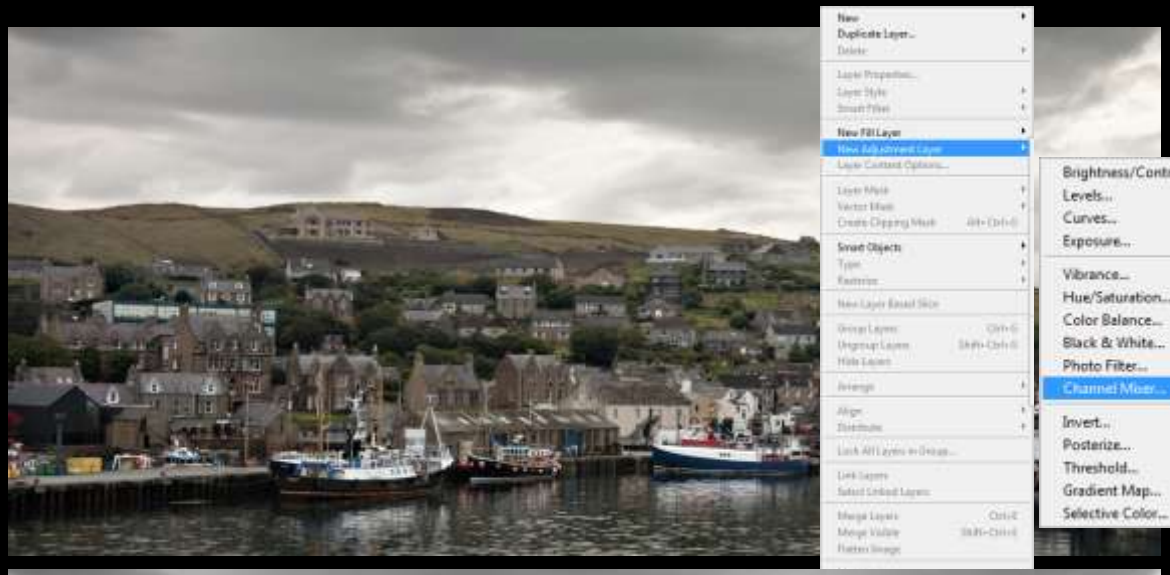
Converting to Black & White

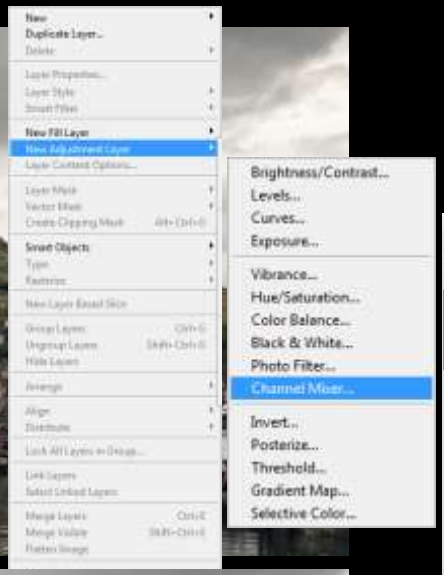
Method 3: *Gradient Map*

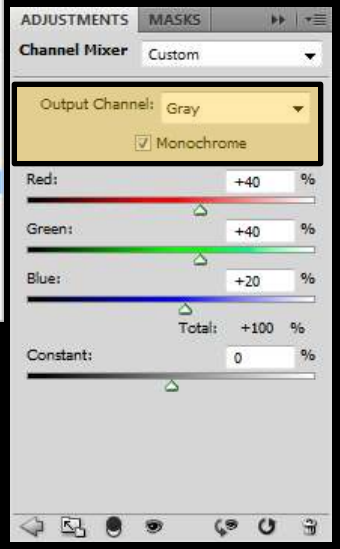


Converting to Black & White

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







By default,
R, G, B → +40, +40, +20

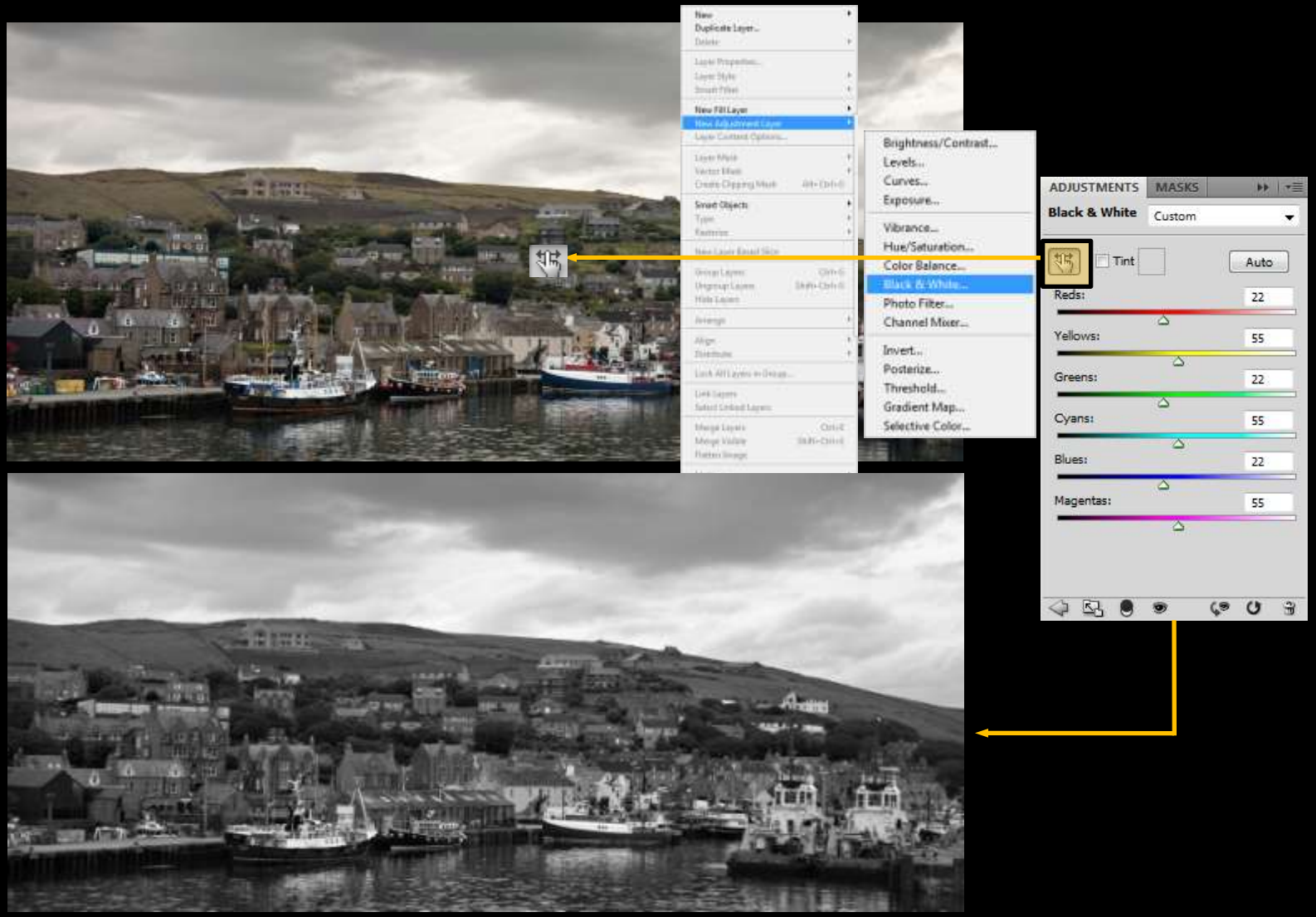
No particular reason for

(R,G,B) = (+40, +40, +20)
or
R + G + B = 100

Adjust so that ***you*** think the image looks good!

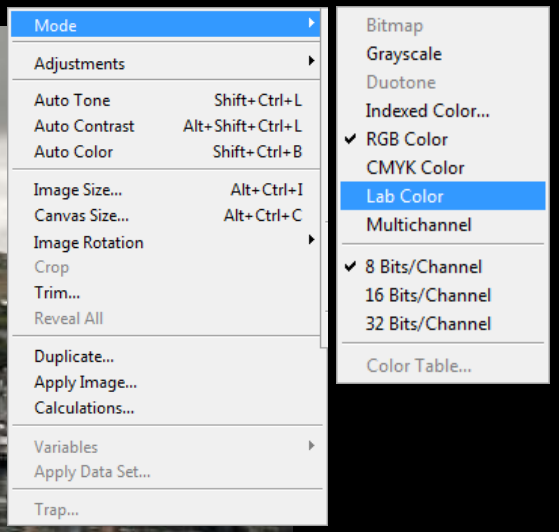
Converting to Black & White

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

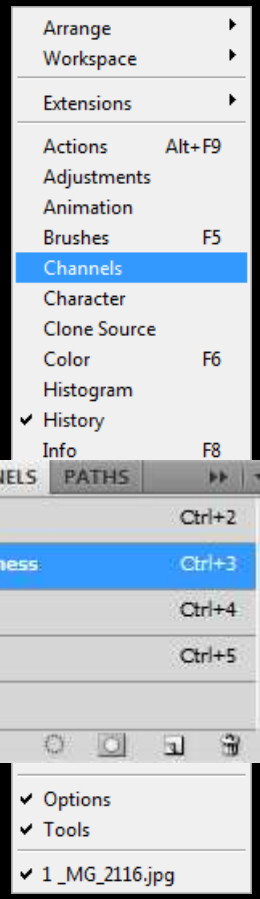


Converting to Black & White

Method 5: *Lab Color*



Menu → Windows



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)

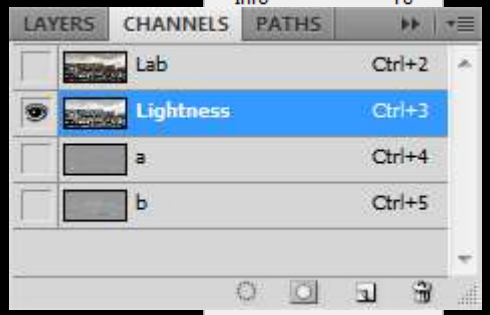
Step 4: Select GREEN channel → *Paste* (click Ctrl-V)

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

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

Done!

Menu → Windows



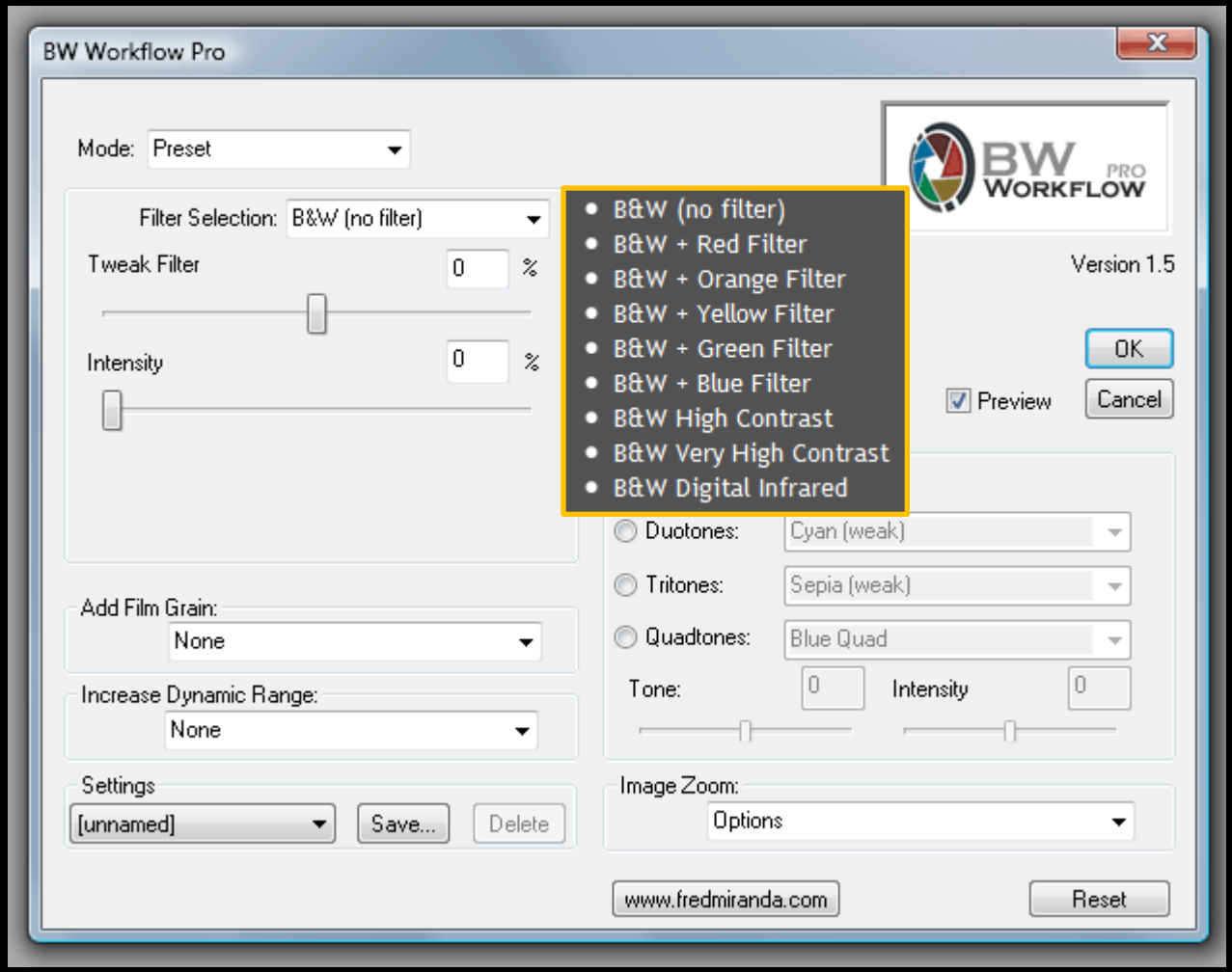
Converting to Black & White

Plug-in: Colormancer Tint (*Free*)

http://www.colormancer.ca/free/download-filters/tint-plug-in.htm

Converting to Black & White

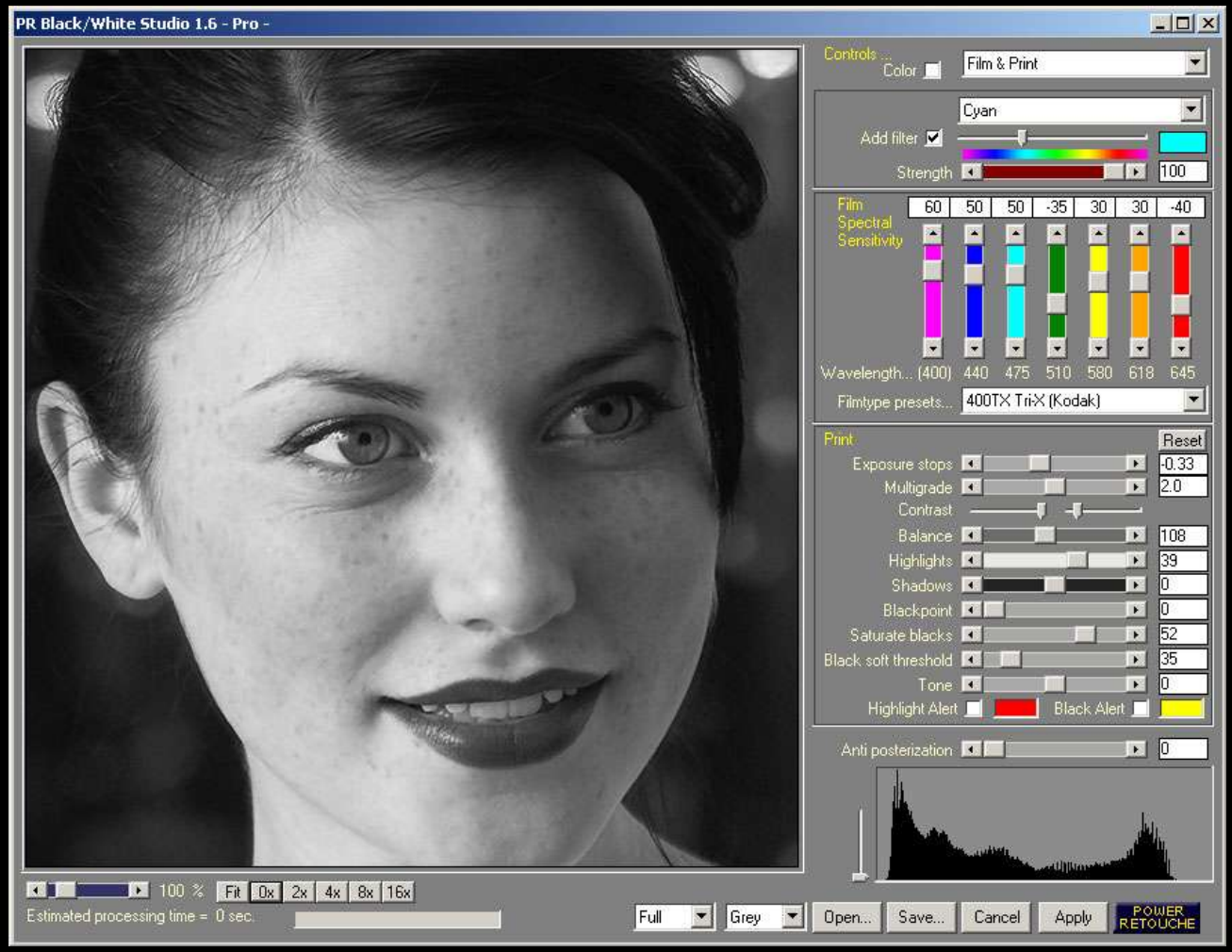
Plug-in: BW Workflow Pro ($20)



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

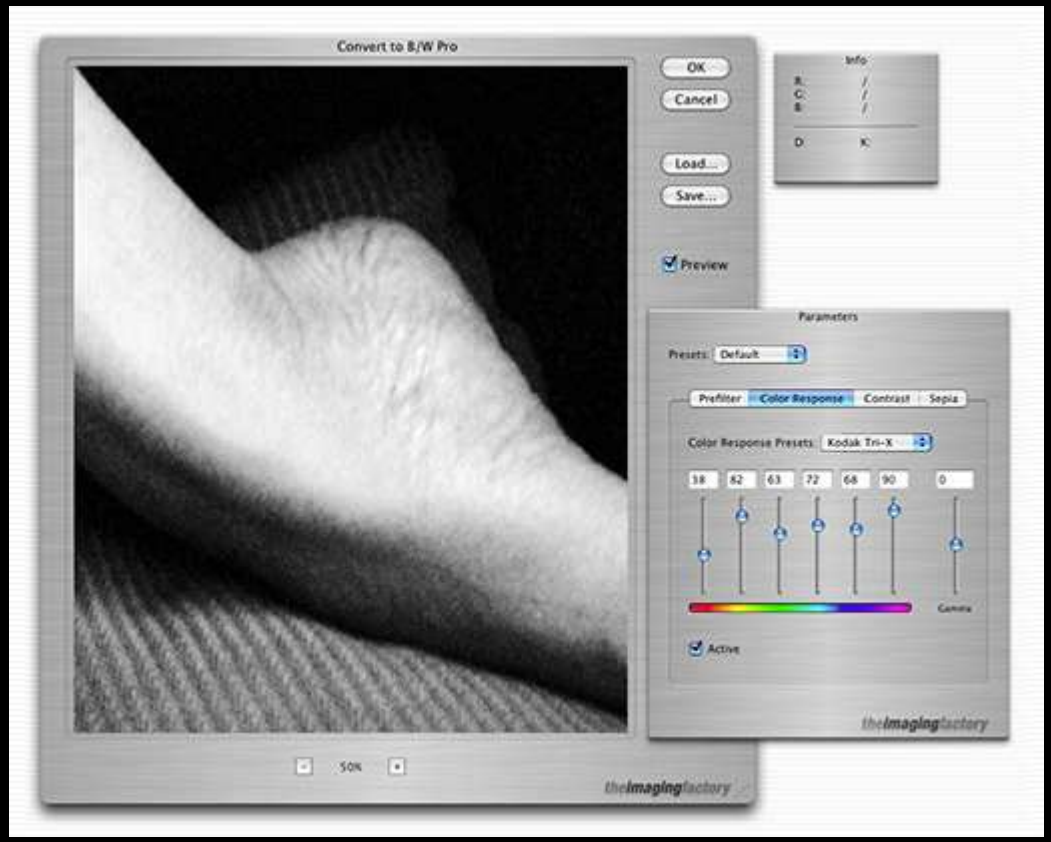
Converting to Black & White

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

http://thepluginsite.com/products/photowiz/bwstyler/main.htm

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

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”

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*…

Color

Tao

Abstraction

Leaves

Water

Rocks

Trees

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”

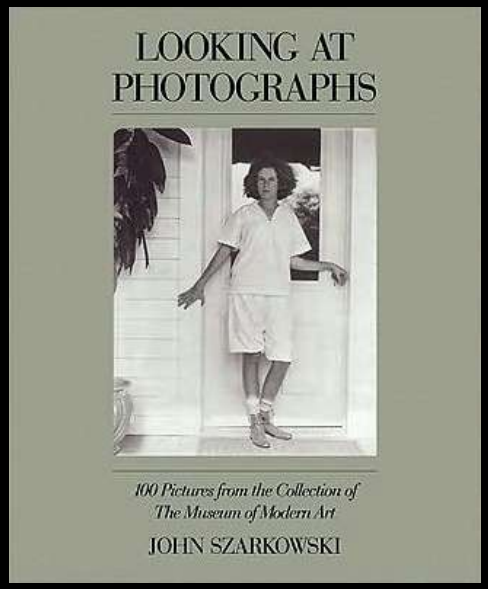
References

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

Run – don't walk – to get this book !

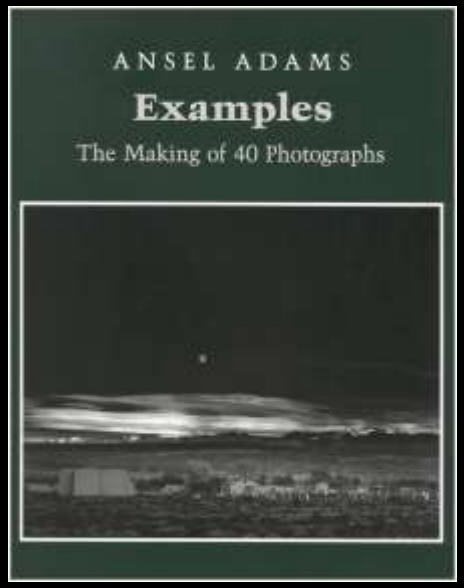
Why Photographs Work

George Barr



Looking at Photographs

John Szarkowski

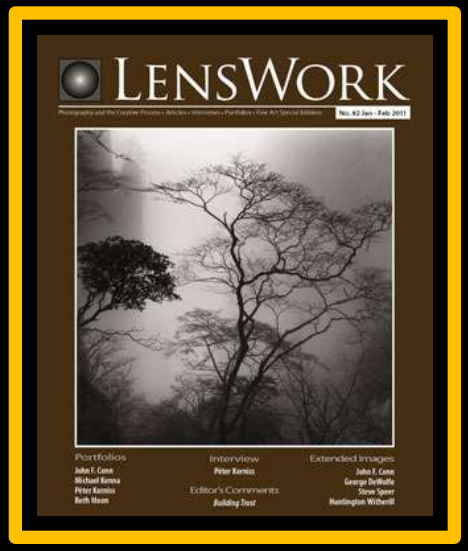


Examples

Ansel Adams

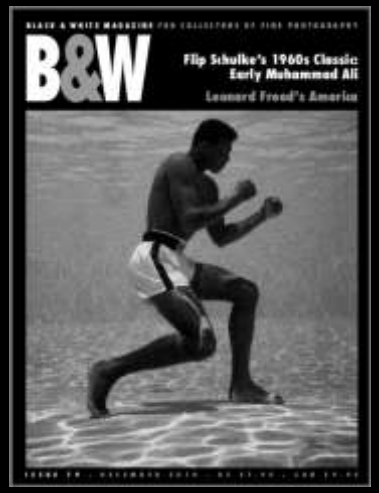
References

Black & White Magazines



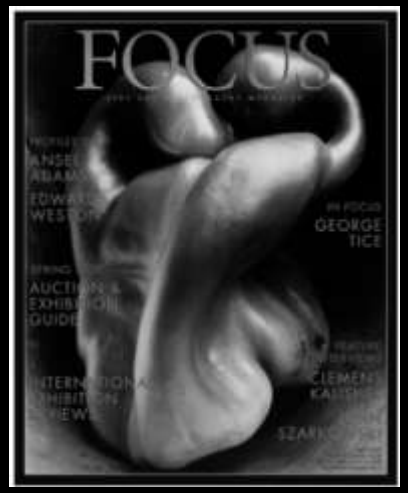
http://www.lenswork.com

Subscription only
Available for iPad / pdf
$3.95 / issue



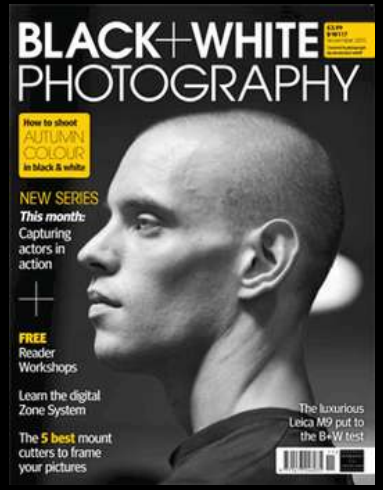
http://www.bandwmag.com/

Borders / Barnes & Noble



http://www.focusmag.info/

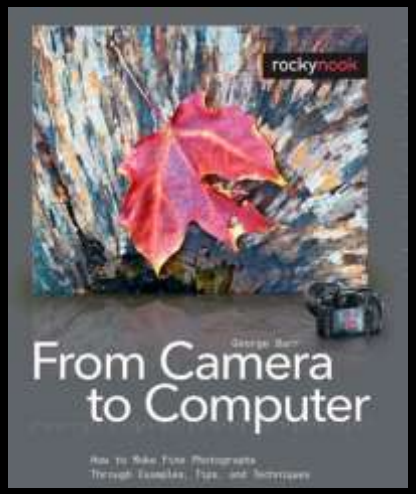
Subscription only
Available for iPad / pdf
$9.95 / issue

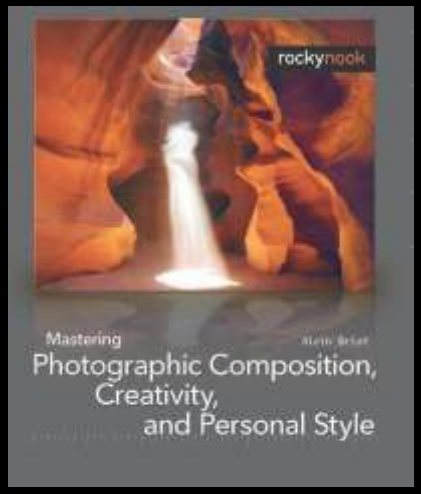


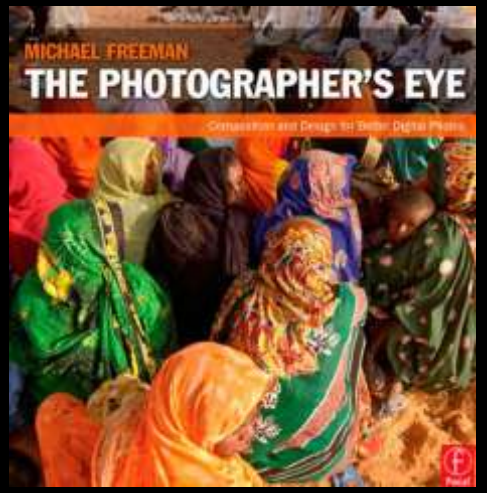
Borders / Barnes & Noble

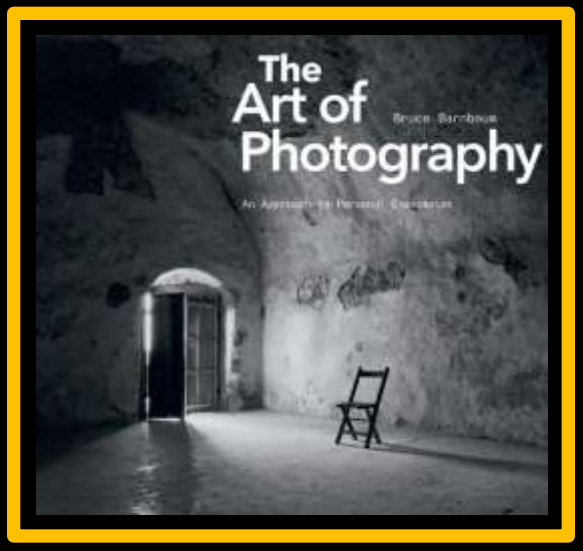
References

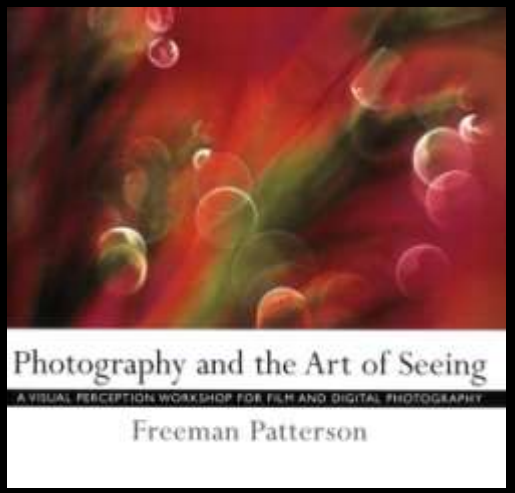
Books about Fine-Art Photography

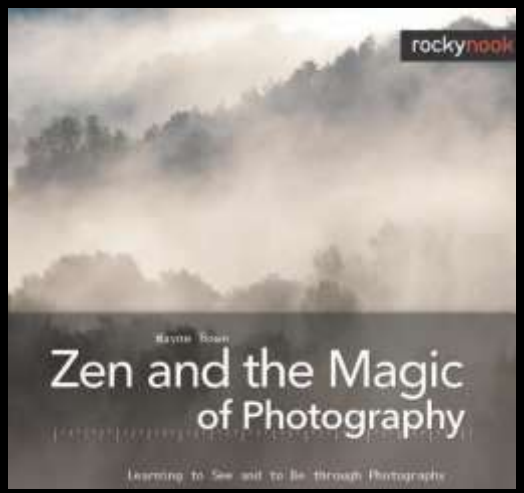








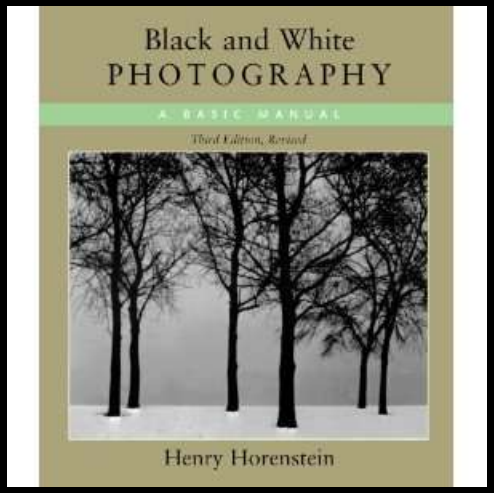


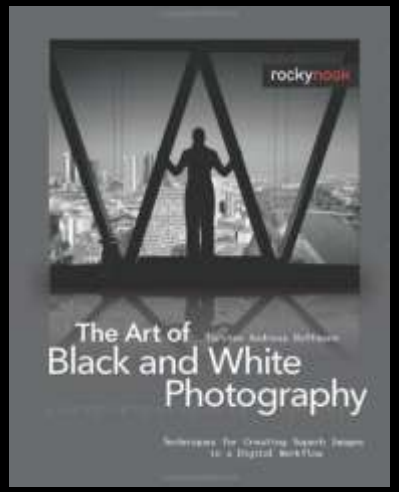


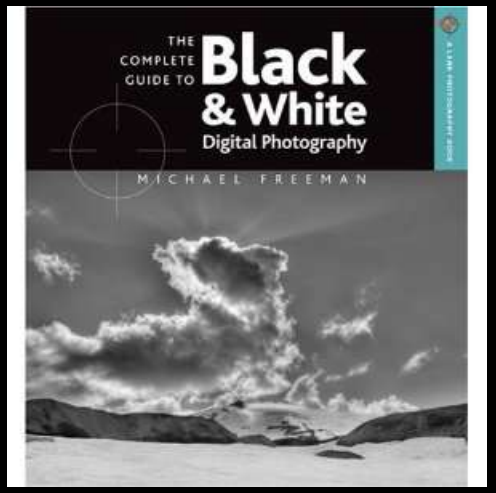
One of the best books on the "art" of photography available

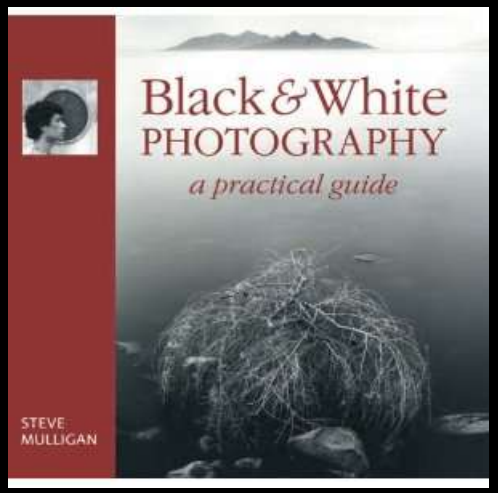
References

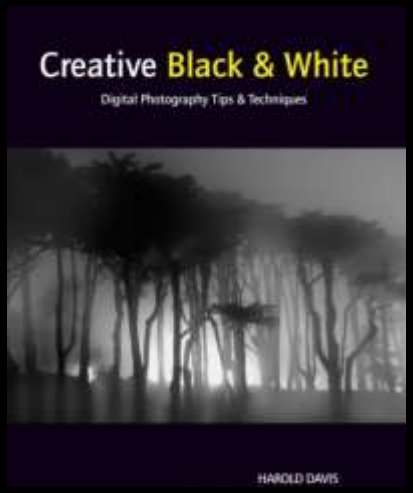
Books about Black & White Photography

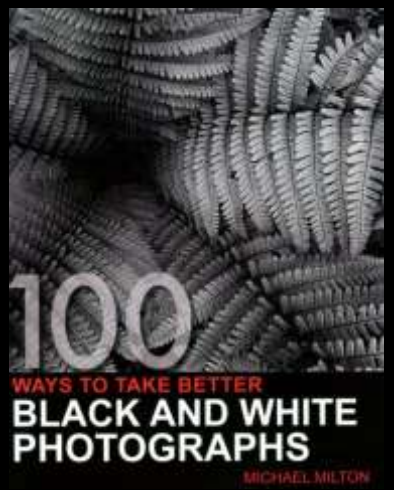






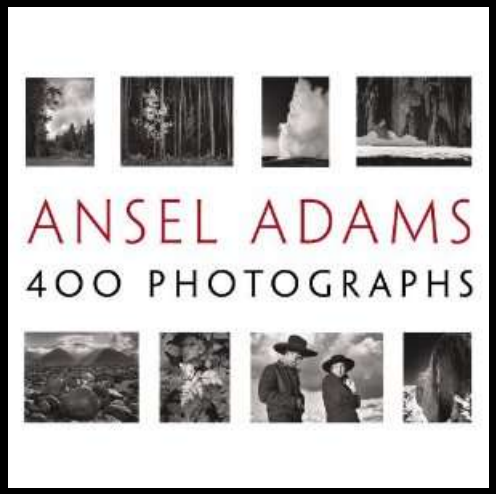


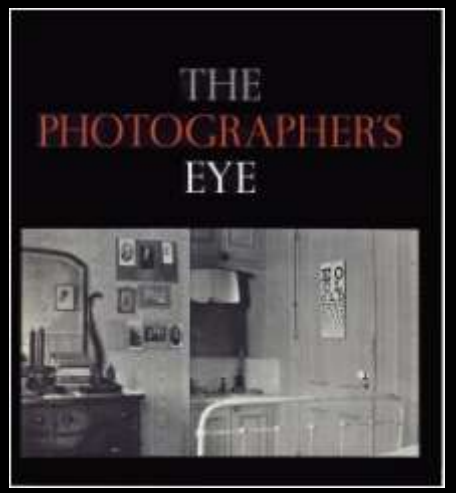




References

B&W Fine-Art Photography – Some Masters

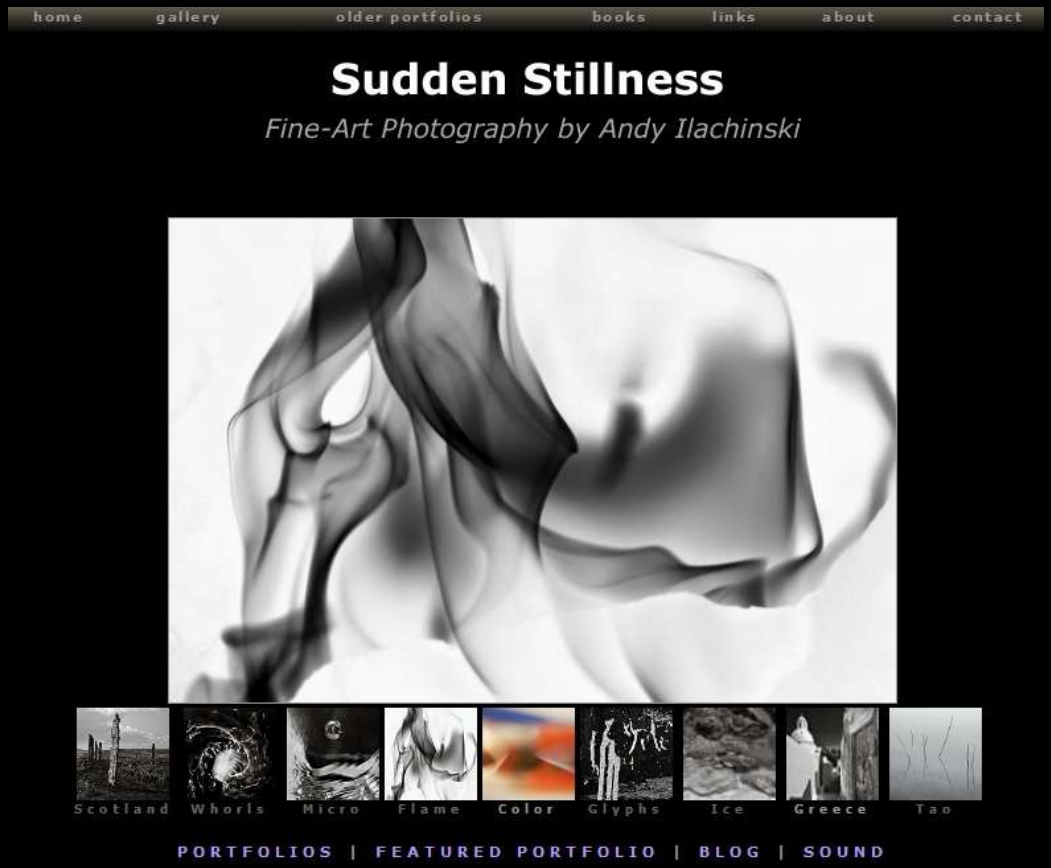




“When words become unclear,
I shall focus with photographs.
When images become inadequate,
I shall be content with silence.”

— ANSEL ADAMS

Please visit my website…
http://www.sudden-stillness.com



Questions?