

essentially a quality of three dimensions, shape is a two dimensional graphic element.

7. Look for silhouettes. A striking outline of a backlit object always appears interesting, and in a black and white image it can be anything from surreal to sinister.

8. Volume. If you wish to convey volume you need to pay close attention to the way light falls on an object. Directional lighting that throws distinct shadows will create volume providing there is an effective balance between light and shade. Frontal lighting casts few shadows and is therefore much less effective than side lighting.

If you decide that the scene before you would be stronger in black & white you have two options in how to go about the conversion – either in-camera, or through an image editing program.

While the black & white conversions discussed in this course are based on the use of Photoshop you should be able to adapt them to other image editing programs. However, if you do not have any suitable way to try these conversion techniques you can (as a last resort) use the JPEG image from the mono mode that most DSLRs have in their advanced menu settings. While this will produce satisfactory results you will lose a great deal of subtle control over how the tones in the final image will reproduce.

The conversion method you choose will depend on the characteristics of your original RGB image and whether you simply want to optimize the image for the best reproduction in one ink, or whether you want to achieve a particular photographic effect (duotones etc). In each case, making the conversion to a greyscale will be only part of the process. You will also want to do some fine-tuning in Photoshop. We will look at techniques to achieve this in Unit 2.

THE TASK:

1/ As the general emphasis of this unit is on exploring the black & white potential of an image we would expect you to take a set of new

photographs and not rely on previously made images.

2/ Take your time to explore a series of carefully considered photographs with a particular emphasis on their black & white suitability. It is important to use previsualisation as the cornerstone to this approach.

3/ Be aware of how the image is composed within your camera viewfinder and consider all elements that make a good monochrome image. Each brief we set you during this course will add to your growing knowledge and skill with monochrome photography.

4/ Convert your images to black & white, paying particular attention to tonal quality. If you have the Photoshop skills you may also want to use Curves and adjustment layers for further refinement.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO CONSIDER:

Use previsualisation to 'control' your photography for each image.

Use your camera histogram to fine tune your exposures. Do not blow your highlights.

Take your time and study the environment before you make your photographs.

You are refining your photographic skills, and so be prepared to put time and effort into this unit. Do not rush to complete this course. The more images you make the greater will be your resulting skills in black & white photography.

Where possible use a tripod to ensure that your photographs are sharp. This will also give you additional time to consider and previsualise your photographs.

Take a wide range of photographs and explore slight variations of the same scene/idea. It does not cost you anything to shoot with digital and providing that your memory card has enough space take as many photographs as you can.

Finally, use a personal digital workflow to refine your photographs with your photo-editing software.

WHAT YOU NEED TO SUBMIT:

Email us **THREE** new photographs that have been carefully previsualised and converted to Black & White.

We will also expect you to comment on each image with regards to your previsualisation and to the suitability of the image.

The three photographs should **not** be taken at the same time or in the same location. You are refining your photographic skills and so the more images you shoot the greater will be your success rate.

These photographs should be about **500 pixels** along their longest length. You will therefore need to resize your images in your chosen software, and then save them as a high quality jpg.

The images should then be inserted in to a MS Word document, together with your written reflection/comments under each image.

Your personal tutor will then give you a written critique of each photograph, highlighting good and bad points, and suggesting ways to further refine and improve your images.

FURTHER READING

There is an amazing amount of information and images accessible through the internet, and we would actively encourage you to explore this resource in relation to the focus of this unit and monochrome photography in general. Take time out to analyse the work of others. Good photography will inspire you and will help you develop your own skills.

