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Key Considerations: Black and White Photography

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Black and white photography is now more associated with the fine art medium than is color, and there is no surprise there. It has become a means of representing and transferring one's own and unique inner vision of the external world to the others through a medium that is limited in characteristics, rather than just portraying things the way they are.

By its nature black and white photography differs in some characteristics from color photography. Some differences are vital while others are more subtle. Today we look at some of the main characteristics of black and white photography, and key considerations to keep in mind when producing black and white imagery.

Tonal Compression, Brightness and Global Contrast

Photographers usually manipulate the tonal compression, brightness and global contrast of their photos to produce more appealing results that better represent their intentions. Generally these 3 characteristics can often be pushed to either extreme more acceptably and freely in black and white photography than in color, while still maintaining the integrity of a photograph.