

TOP 5 B/W CONVERSION TECHNIQUES

GIVEN THE ACTIVITY AND RESPONSE I RECEIVED FROM THE "TOP 7 OF 2007", IT SEEMS THE BLOGGING WORLD REALLY ENJOYS LISTS. IT MAKES SENSE IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT TOO. LISTS ARE NICE, SIMPLE, BULLET POINTS THAT DON'T REQUIRE MORE THAN A FEW SECONDS TO TAKE IN. THERE'S NOT A LOT OF PROSE OR BLOATED PARAGRAPHS OF MEANINGLESS TEXT TO SCAN THROUGH. IN FACT, CREATING LISTS DOES SEEM TO BE A COMMON PRACTICE BLOGGERS USE TO ATTRACT ATTENTION TO THEIR SITES.

THE INTERNET IS INUNDATED WITH LISTS, WHETHER THEY PROVIDE VALUE OR NOT AND ON AS MANY TOPICS AS YOU CAN SHAKE A STICK AT. THE GAMUT IS PRETTY WELL COVERED FROM A TO Z, INCLUDING THE BEST ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS TO THE BEST ZOOS OF THE U.S. NATURALLY, PHOTOGRAPHY AND ITS MANY SUB-FIELDS ALSO PEPPER THE LIST. SO THE QUESTION BECOMES ONE OF "HOW DO YOU FILTER OUT THE GOOD LISTS FROM THE BAD LISTS?" MY ANSWER TO THAT IS TO TRY AND RAISE THE BAR IN TERMS OF THE VALUE BEHIND THE LISTS. TO THAT END, THE MONDAY MINUTIA PROPOSES 5 OF THE BEST WAYS TO CONVERT IMAGES FROM COLOR TO BLACK-AND-WHITE.

SO...WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, HERE ARE MY TOP FIVE BLACK AND WHITE CONVERSION TECHNIQUES

1. IN CAMERA - MOST CAMERAS THESE DAYS HAVE A B/W MODE IN THEIR LIST OF MENU OPTIONS AND SETTINGS. SELECTING THIS AS YOUR STARTING POINT GIVES YOU A TRUE BLACK AND WHITE BASELINE TO START WITH. THIS APPROACH WILL PROBABLY STRIKE A CHORD WITH THE "PURISTS" IN THE CROWD.
2. CAMERA RAW CONVERSION - IF YOU AREN'T WORKING IN CAMERA RAW, HERE IS A BIG REASON TO THINK ABOUT IT ñ CONVERTING IMAGES TO BLACK AND WHITE IN CAMERA RAW ALLOWS YOU TO MAKE A CONVERSION WHILE RETAINING ACCESS AND MALLEABILITY TO ALL IMAGE DATA. THE CAMERA RAW DIALOGS THAT YOU SHOULD USE TO MAKE CONVERSIONS HERE INCLUDE THE SATURATION SLIDER, THEN EXPOSURE AND SHADOW SLIDERS, FOLLOWED BY THE BRIGHTNESS SLIDER. DON'T FORGET TO PLAY WITH THE CONTRAST SLIDER A LITTLE TO ENHANCE THE EFFECT AS DESIRED. LAST BUT NOT LEAST, FOR ADVANCED ADJUSTMENTS, THE CALIBRATION TAB CAN HAVE EFFECTS SIMILAR TO THE COLOR MIXER.
3. CHANNEL MIXER - WITH YOUR IMAGE OPEN IN PHOTOSHOP, YOU CAN SELECT A SPECIFIC COLOR SET YOU WANT TO REMOVE FROM OR ADD EMPHASIS TO IN AN IMAGE. THE TRADITIONAL COLOR SETS OR RED, GREEN AND BLUE ARE AVAILABLE, AS WELL AS A CONSTANT (THINK BRIGHTNESS), AND A CHECK BOX FOR MONOCHROME.
4. HUE/SATURATION ADJUSTMENT - WHETHER AS A DEDICATED LAYER, OR DIRECTLY TO AN IMAGE, THE HUE/SATURATION ALLOWS YOU TO ACCOUNT FOR DIFFERENT INTENSITY LEVELS OF A WIDE RANGE OF COLORS, FROM RED, YELLOW, GREEN, CYAN, BLUE, AND MAGENTA. YOU CAN ALSO ADJUST THE RANGE OF COLOR WITHIN ONE OF THE DEFAULT RANGES FOR EACH SET BY ADJUSTING THE LEFT AND RIGHT LIMITERS OF THE COLOR WHEEL AT THE BOTTOM OF THE DIALOG WINDOW.
5. GRAYSCALE CONVERSIONS - MOST BLACK-AND-WHITE IMAGES AREN'T TRUE BLACK AND WHITES, BECAUSE A LITTLE COLOR FROM A SPECIFIC RANGE IS ADDED BACK IN FOR EMPHASIS. TO MAKE AN IMAGE TRULY A B/W, IT WOULD ONLY HAVE A RANGE OF BLACK AND WHITE. THIS CAN BE DONE USING THE GRAYSCALE OPTION IN PHOTOSHOP. OFTEN, THIS IS USED AS THE LAST STEP IN A DIGITAL APPROACH TO BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY SO THAT SATURATION AND BRIGHTNESS LEVEL LOSS IS MINIMIZED.