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Black & white images are more than just nostalgic. They present images free of distraction, forcing you to truly focus on light and shadows—the very essence of image making.

- Sal Cincotta
FIGHT OR FLIGHT?

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO SURVIVE?

with Sal Cincotta
Photographers around the world have been impacted by the pandemic. If you are a photographer, this opening statement should be of no shock to you. However, what is shocking to me, as a business owner myself, is the reaction to those events. It has ranged from pure panic to survival mode and a rebirth of the “we can do it” attitude that has made this country what it is today.

No one could have predicted the current state of affairs or how the world would react to it—government shutdowns, limited gatherings, and just the overall mental state of humans. To make it worse, talk to any two people and you will get a different perspective on the whole “Covid-19” thing. Some believe it’s a conspiracy theory and masks are an encroachment on our rights, while others believe you could die without a mask that the CDC has already confirmed doesn’t work. The world is a crazy place right now and the mixed messages from the media and our government offices make it impossible to know what to believe or who to trust.

I prefaced all this to focus on the task at hand. Will you and your business survive this? I have watched in shock at the businesses that have just quit and given up. I’m not talking about just photographers. Surely, you have seen the same thing in your local markets. Businesses that have been around forever just closed up shop and moved on. I can’t even imagine not putting up the good fight here. Was the future that pessimistic? Why give up on your dreams? Why give up on something that you have taken a lifetime to build? I can’t imagine giving up. Don’t get me wrong, my business has been impacted. We had to cancel our conference, we had to lay off employees, but I was not willing to give up. And my point: nor should you! Don’t you dare quit.

FIGHT. EVERY. DAMN. DAY.

Success is not easy. It is not guaranteed. Success is hard. Everyone wants it, but not everyone will achieve it. This means we have to do the things no one else is willing to do in order to get to the top. Are you ready to fight? Because right now, it will be tougher than ever to succeed.

Here are the things we are doing to ensure we not only survive, but thrive in the current business environment.

EDUCATION

It is way too easy to get comfortable. We all do it. We find our rhythm and we stick with what we know. There is only one problem with that: complacency leads to obsolescence. There is always a new and better way to do something. New techniques, new gear, and new products. Are you still relevant? Almost every professional industry has their own version of continuing education to stay certified, but not photography. This is a problem for sure.

I can tell you that in all my years doing this I continue to educate myself and push myself each and every year to grow professionally. I love learning something new. It keeps you sharp as an entrepreneur and as an artist. Education is the easiest way to ensure you and your business continue to stand out.

SAY YES TO EVERYTHING

No matter how big or small, say yes to every opportunity presented to you. During this time, opportunities are scarce and this is no time to be picky. You have to find your inner hustle. This is where I feel like I saw a lot of business owners just give up. I watched local restaurants shut down completely because they didn’t feel like offering curbside dining or call-ahead pick up. FIGURE IT OUT. Seriously, figure it out.

For the last four months, we have been working on every single opportunity presented to us because we just don’t know what sector of the market will be impacted or where the next job is coming from. Clearly weddings are a bust in this moment with limitations on group sizes. Most weddings are being pushed to 2021.

So, what does that mean for me and my studio? We worked on small jobs like headshots, small commercial shoots, etc. Jobs that we normally might not pursue since they don’t align with our core business, but right now, if it’s green then it’s in perfect alignment with our business goals.
PARTNERSHIPS

Guess what? You are not in this alone. Every other small business in the world is struggling right now too. This is a GLOBAL event. The upside to this is it is the perfect time for you to partner with other businesses who could benefit from your talents. Find common ground here. Find a way to banter with them. We need each other.

During this time, we reached out to vendors and started working on initiatives to create social content for them from older images or new stylist shoots. The rub? We provide this content and get premier space in their sales rooms. Sure, I’m talking weddings, but it doesn’t matter your genre, figure out the give-get and find a way to make it work.

STAY FRONT OF MIND BY BECOMING AN EXPERT

This might not be for everyone, but I’m telling you, people are craving content right now. We all have cameras, cell phones, Facebook accounts, etc. Use your platform, no matter how small or large to start generating informational content. This will allow you to position yourself as the expert in your area.

Don’t get hung up on the technology here. It is truly irrelevant. Start a blog. Create a newsletter. Give people a reason to come to your site with relevant and timely information about whatever area of expertise you have.

If you are a wedding photographer, what are some of the challenges you think your audience is struggling with right now?

I can immediately think of topics that would get people clicking, sharing, and visiting your site:

- How to plan a wedding during a pandemic.
- Top 5 things to consider when planning your wedding in 2020.
- Backyard weddings, the new normal.

Again, the list goes on and on. Create content like this weekly and it will allow you to position yourself as the expert and ultimately will drive more business to you once things pick back up.
This was a tough one for us. During this time, we had no choice but to lay off non-essential staff. We truly had to protect the business. We dropped down to production staff and staff that generated revenue for the business. This was tough for several reasons. First, we had to let go of some long-time employees who were extremely loyal to us over the years. This crushed my soul. Secondly, it put a lot of the day-to-day operations back on my plate, so now myself and Alissa (my second-in-command) were suddenly overloaded and stressed with tasks. The upside to all this, we were able to cut costs and protect the most valuable resource any business can have: cash.

In addition, start looking at all those expenses you don’t need. If they are not tied to contract or essential services to your business, you might want to start looking at ways to cancel or pause. We cut back on a ton of crap that we just didn’t need. We shut off our water delivery service at the studio. We turned off the cable TV at the studio. We downgraded several other services that we realized we just don’t need. They are small savings here and there, but they add up.

DEVELOP A FLUID MINDSET

This might seem like a small and insignificant thing, but I can tell you that your state of mind is so important right now. If you look for the negative in everything you will find it. The same holds true for the positive. If you stay positive and look for mini success stories, you will find them. And those small successes will start to build on one another until you start finding larger successes.

This was one of the most challenging times I can remember in my life and my business. Normally, we hit a road block, we reroute, and we move forward. Well, during this time we had to adopt a more fluid mindset. What I mean by that is our plans were changing daily. Every day there was new guidance from the CDC, from state government, then from city government, all seemingly contradicting one another.

It is super easy to let the changes get you down because you feel this never-ending sense of uncertainty. We all need stability, but during this time, I’m not sure that’s possible. We have to roll with the punches.
REINVENT YOURSELF

This is where your survival instincts must kick in. No one knows what the future will look like. No one knows how long it will take for the economy to recover. No one knows if the wedding industry will ever look the same. If you are going to survive, you must reinvent yourself. Whatever the future looks like, you need to be prepared to take advantage of it.

I alluded to this earlier where I was perplexed at how businesses just threw in the towel vs. adjusting. Now is the time to look at ways of reinventing your business and looking for new opportunity.

For us, we doubled down on the commercial side of things. Why? Because I am confident that as the economy starts to recover, small and medium businesses around the world will start marketing again and they will desperately need our services. We launched a new headshot line of business and have been focusing on video production for web commercials. I can tell you that as of this writing it has paid off tremendously. Not only are we making headway with these new lines of business, but our already-established lines of business are picking back up.

Now is the time to decide. Are you going to fight for your business and livelihood or are you going to throw in the towel? I hope this has helped you in some way to understand you are not in this alone and there is a path forward. Don’t ever give up!

Sal Cincotta is an international award-winning photographer, educator, author, Canon Explorer Of Light and the publisher of Shutter Magazine. Sal's success is directly tied to the education he received in business school. He graduated from Binghamton University, a Top 20 business school, and has worked for Fortune 50 companies like Procter & Gamble and Microsoft. After spending 10 years in corporate America, Sal left to pursue a career in photography and has never looked back.

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HOW TO RELAX A NERVOUS Boudoir Client

with Shannon K Dougherty
You hear the notification from your email and… Yes! You have a new booking for your studio. You encourage your potential client into an actual paying client… Now, how do you take a client who’s nervous and relax them for their bad*ss session?
BEFORE THE PHOTOSHOOT: PHONE CALL AND EMAILS

If you’re a photographer who is too afraid to get on the phone with your clients, I recommend you change that right now. I might be in the minority when I say I love to get on the phone with my client before their photoshoot. Why do I love this? It’s a time to really get to know them. I can understand who they are before they even step in front of my camera. This is when I can introduce myself, get to know their life, and go over what they need to know for their photoshoot. They get to hear that I am a real person on the other end of the phone, and the same for me. I find this especially important from a safety protocol as well (for myself and the client).

I have personally had a lot of success when I’ve talked to a client beforehand versus not having the chance. I know, I know... Who wants to chat on the phone when we can text, email, and send Facebook messages? I will keep preaching to get your clients on the phone. Seriously, take 15 minutes to chat. It will make them more excited. Take the time to make a phone script before your calls. This doesn’t have to be a different script per client, but make sure you are connecting with them on a personal level. Don’t just sit on the phone reading robotically from a piece of paper.

After I get them on the phone for their initial call, I like to follow up with an email about a week before their photoshoot. This is a check-in to see how they’re doing as they prepare for their shoot, asking if they have any questions or concerns, and really just keeping them excited. I like to know why they want to come in for this experience and relate to their viewpoint. This helps me tailor their photoshoot experience to them and their needs. The shoot should be a collaboration more than a just a service and provider relationship.

Again, communication is so important with your client, even before their photoshoot. We all want an excited client to walk through our door knowing what they are about to experience will be fun, relaxed, and empowering for them. Help take the pressure off and ease their anxiety by letting them know you’ve got an amazing photoshoot planned.
How to Relax a Nervous Boudoir Client | Shannon K Dougherty

WHEN THE CLIENT ARRIVES

It’s now the day of the photoshoot. The client arrives excited, but they are nervous as hell! Many of my clients bring their own wardrobe, so I’ll have them lay out what they brought so we can have a chat about it. I like to ask them, “Which of the wardrobe items you brought today make you feel your best and sexiest?” (Also, I always ask them to try on what they want to bring before their shoot so they can better answer this question.) At this time, I pull out some of the studio wardrobe I think would be amazing pieces to add into their wardrobe for the day. Who doesn’t want to play dress-up in the studio wardrobe?!

When the client is in the hair and makeup chair, I offer them a snack or something to drink, such as coffee or tea. I don’t offer alcohol to my clients anymore. I did in the past but found I want them to be fully attentive in their session. Find out what works best for you!

I sit with my client when they are getting their hair and makeup done. It’s important I keep conversation going. This is light and fun conversation at this time (no crying and messing up mascara!). I take this time to go over how the photoshoot flow and process will be for the day.
DURING THE PHOTOSHOOT

Most of us have probably had a nervous client in front of our camera. This is a bit trickier when your client has an intimate photoshoot. How can you relax them?

To start, I ask if the temperature in the room is okay for them. If the client has a playlist that will help them relax and have fun, LET’S PLAY IT AND DANCE!

One thing I mention throughout the whole shoot is this session is all to their comfort level. They don’t have to do anything that feels uncomfortable, such as certain poses or nudity. NEVER PRESSURE YOUR CLIENT. I keep this communication going the whole time and constantly check in with the client to make sure they are okay with a pose. I will show them the poses as well. Normally, at this time we have a big laugh as I try to show them a sensual pose or expression and completely fall at it. It’s a wonderful icebreaker. Also, I let them know to never hesitate to speak up if they need a break at any point.

Your client might have some anxiety over how they are doing during their photoshoot. I definitely see this come up more in boudoir/intimate sessions than any other type of photoshoot. Sometimes I will show my client the back of the camera on some shots throughout their session. It’s a confidence booster for some. For others, not as much. So, always check with the client to see if they want to see the back of the camera. Not everyone does! Some like the surprise later and some just still have the rush of anxiety and need to focus. If they are doing a great job, I want them to know the magic we are creating! It’s a huge mood booster and motivator for them. Feedback at this point is so valuable.

I am big on directing my client beyond just posing. I have a conversation before and during the photoshoot on breathing. I can’t even count how many times I’ve had a client hold their breath during their shoot then get dizzy! I have them do a few relaxation breathing exercises with me to start. This not only calms nerves but can help facial expressions when shooting. Breathe in through the mouth softly, then out softly. Start slow with shooting then pick up the pace when needed. Remember, most clients aren’t used to big flashes and rapid-fire shutter clicks, so this can feel intimidating. Let them ease into it.

I’ve had clients come in for a variety of reasons, but often it’s for a confidence boost for themselves. Sometimes they are dealing with major life changes and want to document this new journey. If they want to cry, I let them. I sit with them and chat it out. It’s important to remember that this photoshoot is more than just pretty photos. This is special and a vulnerable moment for them (for better or worse). Take the time to have that connection with your client. This will bring trust into your session.
How to Relax a Nervous Boudoir Client | Shannon K Dougherty

AFTER THE PHOTOSHOOT

Once we are wrapped for the day, I do another check-in and ask how they are feeling. I like to know if they had the experience they wanted for the day. If there was anything missing, I like to rectify that in whatever way I can (do a few extra shots, go over concerns they have, whatever it may be). I am keeping their trust in giving them an empowering session.

I always thank my client again for coming, for trusting me with photographing their session, and let them know I can’t wait to share their images with them in their image reveal.

It’s important to remember that this is a significant moment for your client. They took the time to find you and trust YOU to photograph them in a way that maybe they have never been seen.

We spend so much of our time photographing that I think we sometimes forget what the other side of the camera feels like. These moments and this experience can be life-changing for people. Always take the time to check with your client on how they are feeling. Take the time to talk to them about concerns or questions. Be open to the vulnerability of what a boudoir/intimate session means for your client and I promise the photoshoot will be so empowering!

Shannon K Dougherty is an internationally published portrait and boudoir photographer based in St. Louis, Missouri. Starting in the mediums of painting and drawing, she soon turned her interest to photography. She currently works at her studio in St. Louis but loves to travel for assignments. She likes to create dramatic and emotional sessions for her clients to empower them.

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9 Important Steps to Starting a Photography Business

with Vanessa Joy
Photography is fun, so you’ve decided to take it to the next step. Starting a photography business can be a rewarding project—and if you’re serious about it, it can even become your livelihood! Like any big project, though, it takes some planning to succeed. Let’s talk about nine key steps you need to take in order to start your photography business from scratch.

1. DETERMINE YOUR BRAND

The first important step in starting up a photography business is to determine what your brand is all about. A big part of branding in photography is the style you’re known for. Granted, most of us creatives like to mix it up now and again; one day we may want to shoot with bright colors and vibrant contrasts, while the next day we’re really into noir-style sepia tones. And that’s totally okay!

However, we all have our individual strengths as photographers, and your go-to style should be the one that you can deliver to customers on a consistent basis—in other words, the one you’re most comfortable with. When you become known for a particular style, that will help your brand exposure to grow.

2. UNDERSTAND YOUR PRICING

This is a big one. After all, no matter how much you love photography, you’re running a business, not a non-profit! You need to do some market research before you set your initial prices. Find out what other photographers who offer similar services are charging. If you’re not comfortable with your skill set yet, charge a little bit lower than your competitors. But—and this is the key—don’t stay at that price level! Raise your prices as your brand, business, and confidence grow.
3. DETERMINE YOUR PAYMENT CALENDAR

You want to determine a suitable payment calendar or schedule for your business. That way you don't have to worry about when (or if!) you'll get paid, and your clients will have clear expectations as to when your fees are due.

I personally have the following payment calendar in place for weddings:

- An initial deposit several months (possibly years) in advance
- Another small payment six months ahead of the wedding
- The final balance paid in full 14 days before the wedding

That may seem a little over the top, but it's actually standard in the wedding photography business. The reality is, relationship problems happen and unexpected events occur, but that shouldn't mean that you don't get to put food on your table! The bottom line is, work out a payment calendar so that you don't have to go chasing down clients to get your hard-earned money.

4. USE CONTRACTS

This is absolutely huge: always have contracts for your business arrangements. It really is a protection for you, your clients, and any freelancers you work with. The internet is full of standard contracts for photography businesses, so you have plenty from which to choose.

Plus, I would really recommend that you consider forming a limited liability company (LLC) for your business. An LLC is a legal mechanism that separates you (the individual) from your business (the company). It's called "limited liability" because in the event that your business gets sued by a disgruntled client, they can't legally go after your personal assets, like your house, your car, etc.

5. BE ORGANIZED

You absolutely must organize your photos and files in a logical way and keep them stored in a safe (digital) place. In fact, you need to have a system in place by day one if you really want to succeed in this business.

Why is this such a big deal? For at least three key reasons:

- It helps your overall workflow. You don't have to guess what your next task is. You already know, because you have a system in place. That will save you a lot of time.
- When you get really busy, you'll already have a system in place. That's why I said you need to be organized from day one. After you're slammed with business it's the worst possible time to figure out how to get your act together.
- You'll have backup files to prevent you from losing your clients' pictures. Trust me, you don't ever want to lose a client's picture. It is not a pretty scene.
6. FIND CLIENTS BY TALKING UP YOUR BUSINESS

There are a ton of different ways to find new clients for your business: social media, your website, networking, etc. For the purpose of this discussion, I would recommend one key method to acquire new clients: announce your new business everywhere. Talk about it all the time. Chat up your friends and family members, post pics on your social media accounts, talk about the struggles you're facing—just talk it up! It doesn't cost you a cent, but it can be effective.

7. OFFER EXCEPTIONAL CONSULTATIONS

Here are the three big things you want to master when it comes to initial consultations with a potential client:

• Be convenient
• Be quick
• Be relatable

To be 100% honest, those three things will mean more to your clients than anything you can show them from your portfolio. The average client won't be able to tell the difference between good and great photography; what they can figure out is how easy or difficult you'll make the process for them, how quickly (or slowly) you follow up with their questions, and how pleasant (or dreary) your personality is. In the final analysis, those things could mean the difference between landing a client and losing one.

8. PAY YOUR TAXES

Oh yeah, you'll have to pay taxes. For one thing, you'll probably have to register for a sales tax ID, and then make sure that you're charging your clients the proper amount for sales tax.

However, the biggest tax you'll need to worry about is income tax. As a self-employed entrepreneur, you don't get the luxury of someone else taking out taxes from your paycheck—you have to do that on your own. That means you'll only get to spend a portion of that big paycheck you just received from a client. As a rule of thumb, make sure you set aside at least 30% of every check you get in a separate account for taxes. The last thing you need is a huge tax bill at the end of the year without any money to pay it!
9. DEVELOP AND STICK TO A BUDGET

Basically, you can’t throw money around blindly. When you’re just starting out, you’ll probably to work with the equipment that you have, instead of buying the latest and greatest gear that may put you into debt. Plus, you’ll need to set aside part of your overall budget to create your marketing budget. Here’s what you can do: besides the 30% that you take out of your check for taxes, put another 10% back into your marketing budget. Your marketing budget could go toward posting ads on social media, paying for dinner with a wedding planner, or whatever you need to do to advertise and grow your business.

And, in addition to that 40% for taxes and marketing, don’t forget to take out money from each check for other operating costs, like equipment rentals, business insurance, wages for your employees or contractors... the list could go on and on!

I could share a lot of other tips with you on starting a photography business, but here’s the key takeaway: start with a good foundation, and it will be so much easier to grow your brand, get new clients, and turn a profit. If you build on that good foundation and follow the nine steps outlined above, you’ll be sure to enjoy your photography business (and make money out of it) for years to come!
Why the SIGMA 85mm F1.4 DG DN | Art?

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5 LIGHT SETUPS TO MAKE YOUR VIDEOS LOOK BETTER

with Rob Adams
“What camera and lenses do you use?”

That question gets posed to me more than any other query and frankly, it’s annoying. There’s an implied ignorance that comes with that question—it assumes that good video is all about the camera gear. In truth, good video is more about two often-overlooked elements: audio and lighting.

Obviously, shooting with a camera that can deliver on image quality is important in some sense, but it’s the execution of the shot and the lighting that creates the aesthetic of a good frame or dynamic sequence. I’ll bet dollars-to-doughnuts that you can tell the difference between an amateur video or film and a top-notch one solely on the lighting. Same goes for still photography.

Here are five commonly used video lighting scenarios that you should know if you’re making any sort of film. I’ll admit these are over-simplifications because there are many ways to do each of these setups. These are simply some jumping-off points to start with good lighting on your next shoot when available light just isn’t giving what you need.

1. 3-POINT INTERVIEW LIGHTING

If you’re a documentarian and you want to elevate your production to new heights, you have to make the most boring part of the film look visually appealing. A talking head can be quite compelling if the person speaking is engaging and saying something profound. Visually speaking, a well-lit interview will make the scene.

As with any 3-point lighting setup, it’s important to have a key light, a fill light and a backlights/hairst light. Depending on the mood you are trying to create you may opt for only one or two of these elements, but the standard is three and it looks something like this.

The key light is placed on a 3/4 angle to your subject on the side of the face furthest from the camera or opposite the lens. A fill light on the opposite/near side can be achieved with a direct light source bounced off of a V-Flat, reflector or scrim. To finish, I like to have a top-down hair light suspended above to create separation off of the background by rimming light onto the shoulders and crown of the subject’s head. Just make sure none of this top light spills onto the face resulting in shadows under the eyes or rimming across the nose. I find that setting the fill light a full two stops lower than the key is a good starting point. For good measure, place a reflective card under the subject down low to bounce any reflected light up into the face to fill in under the eyes and serve as a catchlight.

Good interview lighting is a skill that never sits on the shelf very long and is very valuable to many types of productions. It can also be used for straight-up OTS (over-the-shoulder) dialogue scenes in scripted productions. Throw in a focused fourth light with a colored gel as a kicker opposite your key light and you can really up the game. A great interview lighting kit is the Westcott Flex-Panels three-light kit that consists of two 1x1 and one 1x2 bi-color, dimmable panels. A single Fiilex P360 bi-color, dimmable light with gels serves as a fantastic kicker.
2. FASHION BEAUTY LIGHT

If you’re shooting anything for fashion, glamour, product or for any sort of social media influencer, the ability to create flattering beauty light cannot be understated.

Start with a large, soft light source about 4 to 6 feet away from your subject with a high-powered light shining through a full-stop scrim. The idea is to create the largest soft source possible. Outdoors, you will need a powerful beam diffused. Indoors, double the distance of the scrim away from the subject. Try to ensure that no shadows are being cast onto your background by keeping some distance between the subject and whatever is behind. Flood as much light as you can directly on the subject at a shallow angle. On the opposite side try to repeat the same thing a 1/2 to a full-stop less.

If it’s sunny outside, use a large scrim to diffuse any harsh overhead light. If indoors, suspend a 4x6-foot or larger white surface overhead and bounce light from below to create a soft top-down light overhead.

The idea here is to make it as if your subject is standing in a giant light box with as much light coming from all directions. In the absence of a third light, a V-card can help fill in the sides or flag off any unwanted light spill.

If your subject has deep-set eyes and you’re getting shadows, use a catch light reflector (white-side-up) to fill them in. Once you have your exposure nailed down and the lighting is flat, use a sharp, high-powered focused-spot to add a kiss of rim light. It’s a high fashion look and fits a ton of scenarios.
Lighting a subject on a green screen can be tricky. If you don’t want to have to struggle in editing in order to punch out the background and make a clean composite, follow these steps to get it right in camera.

Firstly, always light your green screen before anything else. You want to try and get the light as even as possible across the whole surface from the sides and the top and bottom. Usually more than one light source is required to make this work. Two large, soft sources on either side and one from either top or bottom usually gets the job done.

If you’re outside, you’ll have an easier time with this on an overcast day. On a sunny day, a single scrim diffusing direct sunlight can get you an even green, but in-studio you’ll have to work at it. You’ll be surprised how much variance there is between what your eye perceives as a flat and evenly-lit green screen and what the camera’s sensor actually sees. If your camera or reference monitor has a waveform and a vector scope, use them to ensure that the level of luminance on the green wave is as true as possible.

Once the screen is lit, place your subject as far off the green screen as possible to avoid light from bouncing off the background and transmitting green light onto them. Nothing will make keying in post more difficult than green bouncing back onto your subject’s shoulders or hair from behind.

Finally, light your subject. Be sure to use plenty of rim light to create realistic separation of your subject off of whatever image you decide to place in the background.
4. DRAMATIC 3/4 LIGHT

This is probably the most-used lighting scenario in cinema today. It creates mood and if executed correctly makes a scene look gritty and real—almost as if only ambient available light was used.

Start with a light source far-off and only illuminating the subject from a 45-degree angle. You may or may not want to use a tiny bit of fill to bring up the exposure on the near side of the frame. Add a hair light from directly behind the subject and use colored gels to really sell the environment. This simple starting point opens up all kinds of possibilities for strip-lighting or kickers to be incorporated, giving the scene real ambience. The key is to leave the subject in near darkness on the near side of the frame. This takes practice and an environment that allows for precise control of light. Aim to underexpose slightly in camera and get ready for some serious color grading.

5. CINEMATIC ORANGE AND TEAL

Orange and teal is the go-to cinematic grading look for today’s productions. In essence, it’s simply a blending of warm (orange-tone) and cool (teal-tone) to create a look. The key is that skin tones still look natural and real despite these wild color tones because the balance between warm and cool is maintained. The mind of the viewer fills in the color gaps.

To achieve this effect, don’t rely on color grading a straight-up, color-balanced shot or scene. Use a mix of warm (orange) and cool (blue) light on dark scenes, but creative use of color balance can help make the effect easier to achieve in grading for brightly lit daytime shots.

Start with a cool light source, somewhere in the 5000K to 8000K range. Use that for your key and fill source and color-balance your image cold, making the cool light more blue. Be careful not to go too far because you don’t want to have to pull out a ton of blue from the skin tones later. Then rim or backlight using a warmer light somewhere, 3200K or less. You may want to splash a neutral color fill on the subject’s face to offset some of the cooler light. Play around with the light placement to create a balance between the warm and cool tones. They won’t generally appear to be orange and teal in camera, but more like yellow and blue or warm and cold. A little tweaking to the hue and saturation in post will give that much desired orange and teal look.
It’s important to light for dimension when aiming for this style because if the scene is flat-lit it’ll end up looking muddy and brown. Play with using each of the two extremes as kickers and highlights. It’ll take a lot of practice to get it right, but if you can nail it consistently, you’ll be a Director’s dream.

All five of these scenarios are tools that every filmmaker should be proficient with, so study how each is used and applied to a given circumstance.

Rob Adams is a veteran wedding filmmaker and educator. During his 22 years filming weddings he has helped to define modern wedding storytelling with his blending of visuals and spoken dialogue. He has been a frequent contributor to Shutter Magazine and has spoken at various photo and video conferences around the globe.

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IT’S TIME TO UPDATE: TOP FEATURES OF LIGHTROOM CLASSIC V9.3

with Dustin Lucas
It’s Time to Update: Top Features of Lightroom Classic v9.3 | Dustin Lucas

Whether you are an expert or fear all things tech, upgrading your computer’s operating system and applications is a must. Of course, many experts will advise against upgrading to the latest version as there are always bugs. The same applies here when it comes to the latest version of Lightroom Classic v9.3 (released in June).

It wouldn’t be the first time I’ve seen someone who was three or four operating systems behind the current one and paying monthly for a program they can’t install. For those of you who are in this situation, this upgrade might sting a bit, but you need to check into upgrading your computer’s OS first. In this article I will walk you through the best practices of upgrading to v9.3 and how to keep older Lightroom versions if you prefer to keep them installed as a backup. Next, we will dive into the performance and UI updates that make Lightroom more enjoyable. Some really cool features in this upgrade include local hue adjustment, new develop presets and creating ISO adaptive presets. ISO adaptive presets is an upgrade I have been waiting for years to be included. There are a lot of little features too, so we will cover all of that as well.

BEST PRACTICES OF UPGRADING LIGHTROOM

Before upgrading, I recommend backing up your current Lightroom Classic app. (These steps are for Mac users and incompatible for PCs.) Once you open your Adobe Creative Cloud manager app you will see a notice for “Upgrade available.” (fig 1) Depending on what version you currently have installed (listed to the left), you can click the upgrade link to start the process. To get started, open Finder and navigate to your Lightroom Classic app. (fig 2) Right click, choose Rename, and change the app name to “Adobe Lightroom Classic v8.4.1.” (fig 3) You will see why this is important after we install the update; the “Adobe Lightroom Classic” app gets overwritten from v8.4.1 to the v9.3. (fig 4)
It's Time to Update: Top Features of Lightroom Classic v9.3 | Dustin Lucas

I always do this when upgrading Adobe apps because if the upgraded version is a dud then I don’t have to reinstall. This is a simple time saver and good backup strategy. Another awesome tip is you can duplicate Lightroom Classic to allow multiple instances of the app to be installed. Simply right click, choose Duplicate and open the “Adobe Lightroom Classic v8.4.1 copy” app. (fig 5) You’ll see a completely new instance of Lightroom Classic in the dock. This means you can have two completely different catalogs open at once. For anyone that creates a new catalog per client or event, this is a game-changer. Let’s proceed with updating to v9.3 and soak in all the new features. (fig 6a)

PERFORMANCE & VISUAL IMPROVEMENTS

First thing I noticed was there is a new “LrC” app icon in the dock to match the other new Adobe apps. It doesn’t add anything but is worth taking note so we can differentiate between older versions with the square corners. The biggest changes to User Interface or UI in v9.3 were made to Sync, Tone Curve and HSL/Color. I do not use Sync in Adobe Creative Cloud, however, you now have quicker access as it’s added to the Module tab at the top of your catalog. This tab allows you to monitor storage capacity and sync status, and change preferences by clicking the gear in the lower right corner. (fig 7)

Tone Curve adds some visual improvements to make it easier to choose how to adjust. At the top of the editing panel you can choose the target adjustment tool, parametric curve with sliders, point curve for manual adjustments, and separate RGB channels showing where the color shifts on the point curve. (fig 8) Also, you can reset each RGB channel separately if you make a mistake or want to start over. Copying and pasting is now possible with the new Tone Curve features. (fig 9)

The HSL/Color panel has a simple visual layout now displaying color pins at the top to choose how to adjust HSL per color. (fig 10) Let’s move into the next Develop feature: hue local adjustments.
HUE LOCAL ADJUSTMENT & CENTER CROPPING

Lightroom brushes, or local adjustments, have had some pretty sizable upgrades in the past, adding presence sliders, range mask and auto mask, and all the hotkeys to make editing more efficient. Now we can fine-tune hue within our masks on Develop effects. This means you can shift colors specifically with a brush for more accurate results as opposed to the select a color option. (fig 11a) This isn’t a massive upgrade, but a new feature nonetheless.

While in Develop mode, we can strike the “r” key to open the cropping module. Straightening is a simple task done by holding the command (Mac) or ctrl key and clicking and dragging the cursor over a line to correct to. Then you can continue to hold command (Mac) or ctrl and arrow right to go to the next image. One thing that had bugged me is there wasn’t a cropping overlay for centered subjects. Almost every other compositional standard was available, but not for centering. Well now we have it, and you can toggle cropping overlays by striking the “o” key. (fig 12)

PRESETS & ADAPTIVE ISO

Presets are synonymous with Lightroom like actions are to Photoshop. Adobe added quite a few new presets to the defaults, finally including color profiles mixed in with lens corrections, chromatic aberration and noise reduction. These can all be found in the pre-built group called “Default.” Another group has been added called “Optics” for lens correction and chromatic aberration. (fig 13)

What is odd is that no sliders are applied in the manual setting section, just a checked box.

Now for the exciting new feature added to Lightroom: adaptive ISO capabilities. This allows you to create a preset applying different levels of luminance noise reduction and sharpening. As you add more luminance noise reduction and it softens the image, this incrementally adds sharpening to correct this effect. This really changes the way I can build presets and work efficiently.

Here is how you set them up. Start by filtering your images in grid/Library mode by ISO speed. (fig 14) Then, choose the lowest ISO speed, adjust luminance noise reduction to your preferred setting as well as the amount for sharpening. (fig 15)
Keep in mind these are the only two sliders used for this feature. Then, go to your high ISO speed, choose an image and make the proper adjustments to noise reduction and sharpening. (fig 16) Next, you select only those two images, go to Develop mode, and create a preset by holding shift + command (mac) or ctrl (PC) and striking the “n” key. (fig 17) Check the box next to sharpening and noise reduction as well as the new option at the bottom, “Create ISO adaptive preset.” (fig 18)

Once you create the adaptive ISO preset you can apply it in Library mode by selecting all images, then navigate under Quick Develop on the right to click on the Saved Preset field to find the preset in the drop-down menu. (fig 19)
After it’s applied to all images, you can see the different settings between ISO speeds. (fig 20abcd) This is really cool and helpful to add a little more automation to my workflow. Now keep in mind this does not account for the increase/decrease in exposure or shadow recovery made on high ISO speed images that may require more noise reduction, but it should get you 90% of the way there. That’s plenty for me!

THE RESULTS

Hopefully your upgrade process is as simple as clicking the upgrade link in the Adobe Creative Cloud manager app. Fear not if you install and this program runs terribly. You can uninstall and revert back to v8.4.1. Lightroom Classic v9.3 has been stable for me using it daily on dozens of jobs and editing my pictures. The new features have been well-received and I’m even seeing a slightly better performance out of it, which is always welcome. It’s time for an upgrade and what better time than before busy season picks up.

Dustin Lucas is a full-time photographer and educator focused on the wedding industry and the academic world. After achieving his Master of Fine Arts degree, a career opportunity opened once he began working with Evolve Edits. Through teaching photography classes and writing about photography, Dustin continues to expand his influence on art and business throughout the industry.

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Creating Black & White Images with Rich Tones

with Angela Marklew
"Color is descriptive. Black & white is interpretive."

- Elliott Erwitt

Since I’m primarily a beauty photographer, I know it might seem antithetical to create a black & white beauty image. Black & white lends itself to a more editorial concept, highlighting texture and shape to convey mood. I love shooting in black & white when I’m photographing anything hair-focused or more emotion-driven, and when I’m asked for straight-up portraiture.

**TIPS FOR SHOOTING BLACK & WHITE**

1. **FORGET ABOUT COLOR TEMPERATURE**

   You’re not shooting in color, so don’t worry about the color temperature of your light source(s). Use this as a reason to mix sources you might not otherwise use.

2. **FOCUS ON LIGHT QUALITY**

   “Hard” and “soft” light are the key concepts here. Think about your source and how it affects and interacts with your subject and the background.

3. **THINK ABOUT CONTRAST**

   Most simply, this is the difference in brightness between two objects when they appear side by side. Contrast will work hand-in-hand with light quality. When choosing your lighting style, think about what kind of image you want to make. Photos with high contrast are typically more dynamic and intense while low-contrast photos appear softer and more muted.

4. **USE SHADOWS TO CREATE VISUAL INTEREST**

   Since there isn’t color to break up the visuals and make things look interesting in your shot, shadows can become a major compositional element. Use shadows to add texture and depth.

5. **PREVIEW THE SHOT IN BLACK & WHITE**

   During editing, but by previewing the images in black & white during capture, you can make lighting adjustments so you’ll have minimal work to do in post. It’s also extremely helpful to see how makeup, background and wardrobe colors will translate into grayscale.

6. **TONALITY IS IMPORTANT**

   The number one thing to remember: not all images will look good in black & white. Although you can simply take any color image and convert it to grayscale, I get the best results if I walk into a shoot knowing the final outcome will be black & white. I allow this to dictate my lighting and color choices, which translate into shades of gray and tonality. It’s crucial to understand what would work better in black & white or color, and this is something that can be mastered with practice.

   **Pro Tip:** A good exercise to help you begin to visualize in black & white is to ask yourself, “Why do I want to eliminate color from this composition?”

   **Color is descriptive. Black & white is interpretive.”**

   - Elliott Erwitt
I’m going to share with you how I use four different lighting scenarios: direct sunlight, open shade, soft studio lighting and hard studio lighting to create dynamic images that work perfectly in black & white. I’ll also talk a bit about the best method to use for your conversion in post-production.

DIRECT SUNLIGHT

The sun is a hard, small light source. Direct sunlight is ideal for creating images with a lot of contrast, which I find naturally translate well into black & white. It allows for a ton of experimentation when it comes to using shadows as compositional elements.
OPEN SHADE

On the opposite end of the lighting spectrum, open shade will act as a large, soft source, producing beautiful lower-contrast images. This will give you very smooth shadow gradation, so tonality becomes an important aspect when creating contrast within the image. Keep in mind that when working in open shade, you will often need a reflector to bounce some light back and fill in the shadows, as they can quickly get muddy-looking.

Pro Tip: It is possible to “mix” these two types of available light. When the sun is at a low angle, face the sun and place your subject between you and the sun so the subject’s back is to the sunlight. The direct sunlight will kiss the side of your subject’s face/ body and illuminate the background, while keeping an even shadow over the majority of the face.
SOFT STUDIO LIGHTING

For this look, you'll want to create the biggest, softest light you can. My go-to method for doing this is using a big scrim to diffuse the light from a single strobe bounced into an umbrella. I typically set the light and scrim on the camera’s right side, facing my subject at an approximate 45-degree angle. On the subject’s shadow side, you can set up a reflector to fill in the shadows. For maximum fill, I typically use a 60-inch round silver reflector placed just out of frame. If I want a little more drama, I'll use a white reflector placed a few feet away from the subject.

Images © Angela Marklew

Exposure: f4.0 @ 1/160 ISO 160
Exposure: f16 @ 1/160 ISO 160
Exposure: f6.3 @ 1/160 ISO 100
Creating Black & White Images with Rich Tones | Angela Marklew

HARD STUDIO LIGHTING

For hard lighting, I almost always opt for a single source. This is when I will utilize modifiers like snoots, grids, a small beauty dish or strip softbox. With each modifier, experiment with the distance your light is from your subject and how that affects the shadow placement and fall-off.

BLACK & WHITE CONVERSION

Now that you’ve visualized your shot in black & white and captured the image, it’s time to actually create the black & white version. These conversions can be done in either Lightroom or Photoshop. I typically do my black & white conversion after skin retouching, so I use Photoshop.

There are two common tools you have when converting to black & white, and the second is definitely superior to the first.

First, you can simply desaturate the image by creating a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer and pulling the Saturation slider all the way to the left. This method typically creates very washed-out looking, monochrome images.

The better way to convert an image is to use a black & white adjustment layer. In the Properties dialog box you will see sliders for red, yellow, green, cyan, blue and magenta. You can use these to control how the specific colors in the photo are rendered into grayscale. (In Lightroom, you would choose “Treatment: Black & White” in the Basic adjustment panel and then scroll down to the HSL sliders.) Drag a color slider to the left to darken areas of that tone in the image and drag to the right to lighten them. This gives you control over how similar valued colors are converted into grayscale.

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There are also a number of plugins that emulate different film stocks, one of the more popular being Nik Silver Efex Pro. The Nik software gives you a starting point for different black & white film stocks and provides options for adjusting the tonality (by using the color sliders and color filter presets), and adjusting the amount of grain.
Creating Black & White Images with Rich Tones | Angela Marklew

Born and raised in Ontario, Canada, Angela knew from an early age she wanted to be a scientist. Starting her career in environmental chemistry, she ultimately ended up working with explosives for the Canadian government. She then quickly realized she was not built for a 9-5 so she sold her house, packed up her things and moved across the continent to try her hand at photography.

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REMEMBER

• When you remove color, shapes will play a more important compositional role. To visualize in black & white, only pay attention to lines, shadows and shapes.

• Shooting in black & white may cause the important elements in your photo to change. For example, if shooting a color portrait, your subject may have a vivid eye color or hair color that is integral to your composition. When shooting this same subject in black & white, you may need to compose differently as you no longer have the color to act as a focal point.

• Use lighting to sculpt the shape of your subject’s face or draw attention to certain features. Black & white also helps distill down the emotion of your subject, helping the viewer focus on things like facial expressions and gestures.

• Contrast is your friend! Don’t be afraid to experiment with both high contrast and low contrast situations. One is not superior to the other. Your subject and what you want to convey will dictate which you should use.

• Most importantly, converting an image to black & white will not make a weak image stronger. Don’t use black & white as a way to “save” an unsuccessful image. Practice visualizing and previewing your image in black & white to ensure that you start with a strong photograph.

Images © Angela Marklew

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EDITORIAL BEAUTY & FASHION PHOTOGRAPHY
Using Multiple Lights to Create Maximum Contrast in Black & White

with John Gress

Image © John Gress
It’s very popular right now to create really soft Rembrandt lighting with lower contrast and decreased saturation. These subtle tones look great in color, but if you convert them to black & white, you’ll have a muddy gray mess. When you’re shooting for monochrome, contrast is key.

There are a number of ways you can create contrast in the studio. I love to use multiple lights, sometimes with hard modifiers, and then refine the look with negative and positive fill to create a full range of tones and make my images pop.

I am going to show you three variants of the same basic setup that will let you get a trio of distinctive looks, and then we’ll finish things off with a creative film noir setup.

**MY NOT-SO-ORIGINAL IDEA**

Back in 2008, I figured out that I could create a white background that also lit up my subject by placing a large softbox right behind the person I was photographing. I remember thinking that I had discovered something new (and would never show it in a behind-the-scenes photo on the then-popular Model Mayhem). Thankfully, over time I became more confident in my skills and stopped being so secretive. But really, I noticed a lot of people were doing this and my original idea wasn’t so original.

Here’s how it works: You put the person about a foot from the softbox. The modifier will not only create a white surface, but it will also wrap around your subject and give off the equivalent of two edge lights and a hair light. Then, you can use whatever modifier you would like to light the person from the front. I found the trick is to only have the softbox in the back, when metered right next to the face of the diffuser, about one stop brighter than your camera’s settings. Anything more and you’ll get haze; anything less and you’ll see the wrinkles in the diffusion fabric. Keep in mind that cheaper or older lenses and filters will haze more than new ProGlass filters.

You could just bounce light back from the front with a reflector to create your “main light,” but you’re going to spend a lot of time finding the exact position to put the subject in with their particular skin tone. So, I would suggest adding a second light in the front.

Let’s get started with our first setup and we’ll go from simple to more advanced.

My favorite modifier to shoot against is my Elinchrom 190 cm indirect outbox, mostly because it is so large. However, I also have some very old and moderately inexpensive Chimera 4 1/2 x 6-foot softboxes that I will use as well. You could also just use a large umbrella with a diffuser.
Using Multiple Lights to Create Maximum Contrast in Black & White

John Gress

SETUP 1

I placed the model, David, in front of the softbox and then boomed a white beauty dish directly over my camera. This was to create a really dramatic headshot that looked like it was taken with at least five lights—two edge lights, one hair light and one main light, plus one or two on the background. I also used a 20x30” piece of white foamcore below his chest and just out of the frame to fill in the shadows.

A white beauty dish is a great choice whenever you want to show off a models angles, because it is directional, yet forgiving. It created great light on the top of his cheekbones, which then fell off the sides of his face, leading to darker tones which would then transition into the edge light coming from the softbox behind him. This setup will create a lot of contrast because you will have a full range of tones going from white to dark on your subject’s face.

The shadows under his chin were too dark, so I just added a small white card parallel to the floor just below my frame.

One of the things that I hate seeing in photos is light from my edge lights spilling around onto the sides of the model’s nose. So, if that happens in this set-up just move the model closer to the camera and that will increase the angle of incidence and it will eliminate the problem. Because the model will be farther from the rear softbox you may need to increase the power output of that light.

While using a softbox background is a great choice for creating a simple white setup, it doesn’t allow you to control the brightness of all of the lights hitting the model’s features. During a commercial shoot, I will use a white paper backdrop lit by two lights, one or two hair lights and two edge lights. This way I can have total control over each aspect. I might also just want a colored or black background.
SETUP 2

I started off by placing a V-Flat, black side facing me, in front of my background softbox so that it was centered in the middle with part of the white surface visible on both sides and the top. A homemade 4 x 8-foot V-Flat is probably going to be too large—that’s why I like to use ones from V-Flat World, which are 40 inches wide and 80 inches tall. If you don’t have either one you can use a piece of black foamcore from an art supply store; you’re just going to have to find a way to mount it or maybe just lean it up against the face of the modifier. Black fabric would work, too. The point is that this black surface is going to be our background for this look.

Setup 2 Diagram

Then I placed the model, Akshay, directly in front of the V-Flat and had him turn to the right with his left side facing the camera. Then I had him turn a little more to his right so the light escaping from the left side of the V-Flat wrapped around his nose and illuminated his left eye. I then moved myself over to the left so that I was basically perpendicular to him, not the softbox. In this example, I photographed the model shirtless and cropped the shot just above his pants to give the illusion of nudity.

Using my light meter to read the brightness on the model, I set up my camera at the metered exposure. While tethering to a computer, I corrected my exposure on the camera or light until the brightness season it to taste.

To frame your shot with more of your subject’s body, a low light stand always helps. I usually use an aluminum kit stand rather than a C-Stand, because a C-Stand is often too tall. If at any time you feel that the top of the model’s head needs more light, just raise the light stand a little bit and that will increase the spill over the top.

If you are in a room with a lot of lightly-colored reflective surfaces, you may need to set up black panels (V-Flats, black side towards the model) around the front of your subject and possibly on the floor to block light from reflecting back into your shadows.
Now let’s go to our next setup: a very dramatic headshot. I shot this by posing the model, Amir, in front of a 120cm softbox with a 20 x 30-inch piece of black foamcore in front of it. I didn’t use a V-Flat or a larger softbox because I already had the 120 set up and I was being lazy. Shooting on such a narrow background was a challenge.

I lit Amir from the front using a Nicefoto SN-29 Optical Snoot with a vertical strip gobo. When I use this specialty modifier, I like to use an LED modeling light so I can see where the stripe of light is going to land and can keep the modifier from overheating, which happens with a halogen modeling light. This particular modifier is a generic brand and can be found on Amazon with a Bowens mount, which can be modified to other mounts easily, for about $200. If you’re interested, I have a review on my YouTube channel.

To finish the look, I added a V-Flat, white side out, on camera left for fill. The light falling on his hair from behind is probably 1–2 stops darker than his face. You’ll just want to adjust the power of your lights so the rim light is noticeable, but not too bright.
Using Multiple Lights to Create Maximum Contrast in Black & White

| John Gress |

**SETUP 4**

For the fourth setup, I created a film noir look reminiscent of old Hollywood detective movies.

To light up our model, Spencer, and our stylist, Pablo (the whisper was his idea), I used a standard reflector with a 10-degree grid for my main light so the light would be focused only on them.

Then I added a 3-foot strip softbox above the background to create a rim light. The selection of this modifier was probably a mistake because I feel the softness coming from it lacks the proper grittiness for this scene. If I were to do it again, I would use a standard reflector with a narrow grid to increase the specularity of the highlights coming from the source. The light falling on the top of his head from this modifier was probably equal to the light coming from the main light.

Next, I boomed a regular snoot over the scene to illuminate the model’s magnifying glass and to simulate the light coming from the desk lamp. This particular generic brand modifier was fairly inexpensive on eBay. If you don’t have one, you could substitute a standard reflector with a very narrow grid. The exposure of the light landing on the table from this modifier was probably the same brightness of the main light.

To finish the look, I added my optical snoot on the far left with a mini blind gobo to give the photo a late-night feel. If you don’t have an optical snoot you could also use another reflector with a grid fairly far away from your model and then place real mini blinds in the middle. The closer the mini blinds are to the light the sharper the shadows will be.

**POST-PRODUCTION**

Finally, I prepared my images in Lightroom and added a lot of contrast and clarity with a little grain to finish out the look.

For over 20 years Chicago photographer & director John Gress has created stunning photography and videos for some of America's largest companies and international media outlets. His work has included national lifestyle advertising, portraits and videos for the beauty industry and action photography of professional athletes.

**website:** johngress.com  
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Impactful Portraiture in Black & White

with Peter Hurley

Image © Peter Hurley

Shutter Magazine · September 2020
Looking back over my career for the last 20 years, there is a distinct line of when my work went from predominantly black & white to taking an immediate turn to color. It happened when I captured that first medium format digital image in 2004 and I never looked back.

I truly do miss my old film days when my work was concentrated on cranking out black & white headshots of actors as my career was ramping up. I toiled tirelessly with my Kodak 120mm Tri-X in order to get the look I wanted. I would spend weekdays shooting and processing my film in my New York studio apartment and then would drive out to New Jersey on weekends to print in my darkroom that I set up in my mother’s basement. It was a grind that all came to a screeching halt when I went digital.

My biggest source of inspiration has always been Bruce Weber. I consider him my mentor, and his encouragement was the only reason I picked up a camera in the first place. I’ve always loved his work; his black & white imagery can be mesmerizing. He first helped me by starting my modeling career. He gave me a bunch of black & white prints that he photographed of me that I’ll cherish forever. There’s something about a print that I’ve always loved and his are something to behold. They are printed on beautiful matte fiber paper and have a low-contrast grainy feel to them that is absolutely gorgeous. I don’t think there’s anything quite like the combo of shooting film and printing on fiber—and nobody does it better than Bruce.

Even though I love Bruce’s work, I never found a way to take his influence and incorporate it into my own. His work is so inspiring, but to me his creativity is where his true genius lies. That’s just not something anyone can emulate and I felt fortunate enough to be there to witness it. I continued to study other photographers and encountered the work of Richard Avedon. I was immediately drawn to his black & white portraits on clean white backgrounds. I knew that was the direction I needed to go. I built my entire business around natural light headshots photographed on white. The simplicity of them seemed to catch on and I found myself at the forefront of the headshot industry in New York City.
But times change, and as a photographer it makes sense to adapt. My transition to digital was quick. I made the decision at the right time because actor’s headshots were about to trend toward color and I wanted to be ahead of the change. The second I began shooting my Contax 645 with an Imacon 132C digital back my black & white output took a big hit. I wasn’t sure how to convert it in order to get the look I wanted, so most of the time I just worked on my color. That’s a trend that has continued on to this day.

My curiosity as an artist toward discovering a distinct look for my work has always been prevalent, whether I’m working in black & white or color, and I’m constantly searching for inspiration. Recently I’ve found myself drawn to the black & white work of Platon, Nigel Parry and Richard Burbridge. I’ll scour the web or flip through magazine after magazine looking for anything that strikes a chord with me. Pinterest boards can store images that I want to go back to and I love having black & white images show up in my Instagram feed. One of my favorites to swipe through is @starsofthescreen. It consists of beautifully curated headshots of celebrities in black & white and is worth a look. I consider myself a student of the game and studying is something that I will always partake in. I’m constantly looking for inspiring work to share with the photographers that I teach through my Headshot Crew coaching program.

Exposure: f4.0 @ 1/125 ISO 200
So, once I’ve got some inspiration, then it’s time to think about how I’m going to shoot my images with a black & white conversion in mind. It’s always been interesting to me when an image calls for it. There’s just that little voice inside you that says, “You know this one is gonna rock in monochrome.” Then I start the process that to this day I still haven’t quite pinned down. It always starts with how much contrast I’m looking to get out of the image. Do I want to crush the blacks and how hot do I want my highlights? I’ll mess with any kind of slider I can get my hands on until I start to see what I’m looking for.

Exposure: f5.6 @ 1/80 ISO 200

Image © Peter Hurley
These days I’m always shooting tethered into Capture One, so I just start there by working some sliders. I’ll check in on black & white by dropping the saturation to -100 and tweaking the contrast slider up a bit and taking a look. At times I’ll be happy and be done with it while other times I’m just getting started. I go back to my original color shot and move over to the black & white panel to enable it and start going to town. I’m most concerned about the skin tone and making sure I capture highlights, midtones and shadows in the image, so I have to be careful how I mess with it. Detail in the skin is probably number one on my list. I always have the thought of film and printing on that fiber paper in my head, but now it’s a completely different animal.

I believe that most photographers are afraid of juicing up their contrast on a black & white image and everything kind of blends into a mushy gray look. Commitment to my blacks is key for my work. I’m also always thinking about the person, clothing and background prior to shooting that will determine what I’m going to do with the image in post. I’ve always been drawn to gray hair on a black background. That look was specifically inspired by Yousuf Karsh’s shot of Ernest Hemingway as you can see in some of my work. I also like shooting dark-skinned individuals on white backgrounds and light-skinned individuals on black backgrounds. I also often have my subjects wear the same color as the background, so white on white, gray on gray, and black on black. I’m not sure how any of this came into play, but it definitely became my thing.
Impactful Portraiture in Black & White | Peter Hurley

After moving through life in a haphazard way, Peter Hurley found himself with a camera in his hands at the ripe old age of 30. His prowess behind the camera fueled his desire to educate, and his coaching/referral platform for photographers called Headshot Crew comprises the largest group of headshot specialists in the world. He calls New York City his home where he lives with his beautiful wife and precious twin daughters.

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Each photographer needs to develop their eye to create a black & white conversion that works for them and can gain them some consistency in their work. I’ve really only discussed my Capture One process, but there are a number of other things that I’ll try within Photoshop as well as using plugins. Bottom line is to find what feels best to you and your workflow. You’ve got to create your own digital recipe for your black & white conversion. Use photographs you’ve found that you are drawn to and concentrate on replicating that look to create your own conversion process. Bounce the images off other photographers whose work you respect and put together an entire black & white portfolio on your site. I think anything we can do right now to show a range of talent in our work will definitely be beneficial down the road. And hey, if you start booking based on your new portfolio and your ability to create stellar black & white images, then that’s major SHABANG in my book!
My love affair with black & white photography started when I saw an amazing image by acclaimed photographer, Richard Avedon: “Dovima with Elephants, Evening Dress by Dior.”

I stood mesmerized by the simple yet powerful image. That image changed my very thought process. I went from being a very literal photographer (what you see is what you get) to a photographer who was drawn to a more interpretive style of imagery. There is something powerful in the ability to capture images in purity, and not being tainted or moved by the color in an image. Black & white photography does that for me. The lack of color creating hues of dark and light, black & white are very pure and each person interprets a scene based upon their private thoughts.

Here are four things I keep in mind when deciding whether an image will be color or black & white.

- Impact. Will the story be more impactful? Can you hide distracting elements?
- Interpretation. Will the lack of color hinder or help how the viewer sees the story?
- Isolate. Can I isolate what is important more effectively in black & white?
- Illumination. How will you light your subject? And where will the main light be in relationship to your camera?

Speaking of lighting, I’d like to address the way I lit a few of my captures to produce the effect I was looking for. I used a single Profoto studio strobe with a softbox to light the subject’s face. The softbox was about 5 feet from the subject, at about a 90-degree angle. My vision was a bit of Hollywood glamour. To ensure a softer light I placed the softbox as close as possible to the subject.
Let’s take a look at the silhouette for a moment. The image to the left was the last of a series of images captured of a local dancer. Here are the steps taken to capture this picture.

I purchased a large piece of 40% opaque plastic (about 6 x 8 feet in size) and placed it on two heavy-duty light stands with clamps. I then placed the plastic about 4 feet from a southern-facing window with light streaming in. The subject was then placed on a small box about 2-3 inches from the plastic (behind) to capture. I choose to meter for the light and captured the image. The same concept can be done with strobes. When photographing in this style, keep in mind that the shape will be a bit distorted, and the arms should be kept away from the body to avoid bulking up the subject.
Here is an image I captured in real time during my client’s wedding. Mom was very self-conscious about being photographed before hair and makeup, so I decided to make it all go away and photograph into the window to make her feel a bit more comfortable.

“Light is light,” I always say, “in black & white.” The use of existing light sources to create drama literally anywhere, anytime is one of my very favorite concepts. I have the ability to use anything from a flashlight to spotlights in the ceiling as a main light without being overly concerned with color temperature. This is especially effective when under the time constraints of a wedding day.

To be effective at using this technique, practice seeing light direction in everyday experiences like watching movies (preferably old black & white films), watching your children play, or just having lunch with friends.

Another great thing about rehearsing how you will light a certain subject is that when you have reduced mobility (as was the case below), you are able to capture in real time and get something amazing.

I like to ask myself, what am I trying to say in capture? Am I trying to showcase an emotion, a particular mood, or maybe simply showcase the best feature of a bride in her gown?
Bambi Cantrell is one of the world’s most decorated and sought-after professional photographers of our time. Bambi is one of the elite Nikon Ambassadors, and is a recipient of the prestigious Triple Master of Photography awarded by Wedding Portrait Photographers International. Whether it’s a wedding, an engagement session, a traditional portrait sitting or a boudoir style session, Bambi approaches every photo shoot with the same goal in mind: to produce interesting, flattering images for her clients that reveal both their inner and outer beauty.

With the hard work of capture done, now I am ready to edit the images and print them. My personal preference for black & white conversion is to use Exposure X5. (I do all conversions after capture, not in camera.) I came from the film days, so it is nice to see some of the black & white conversions that emulate film, like recording and infrared.

The bottom line is whether you’re photographing for black & white images or color, learn the difference between an f-stop and a bus stop, print and frame your work, and look at life in shades of gray, not hard and fast rules.

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COLOR VS. BLACK & WHITE

with Ian Ross Pettigrew
PHOTOGRAPHY GEAR, TOOLS, AND PLANNING A SHOOT

When I’m planning a shoot and I’ve decided it would make a good black & white image, I start thinking about the background colors and wardrobe that will affect the final product.

With film, photographers have always retouched their images. Nowadays, knowing Photoshop and Lightroom (or Capture One) allows you to do the same thing. If you are going to be working in black & white, I’d suggest always shooting in RAW because there is simply more latitude to work with.

My workflow starts with bringing the images into Lightroom (I also shoot most of my portrait work tethered and in Capture One). I use both Capture One and Lightroom, but prefer Lightroom. This is where I make my major adjustments to the file. Because of its handling of colors, you can make such a wide range of adjustments. For example, if your subject is shot on a blue background and they are wearing a blue top, you can make separate adjustments to the black & white file in terms of brightness, etc. Skin tones vary; some people have more red than orange in their skin tone, so making adjustments with backgrounds and clothing with these particular colours can be somewhat difficult, especially orange. See the example of the girl in the red dress on a red background. This particular red allowed for lots of latitude with adjustments in tone and brightness.
The same goes for the two images of the WWII Veteran. This image lends itself well to both color and black & white. The blue and green tones on the background and his wardrobe allowed me to play around with the darkness of those while lightening up the face and hands, driving the focus more to those areas. This begs the ultimate question: Which is better, colour or black & white? Search for the portraits of Robert De Niro by Martin Schoeller and Platon. Both are fantastic, and both are instantly recognisable as that photographer. One is not better than the other. It’s art. It’s subjective.
After the Lightroom stage, I bring the image into Photoshop and start to do the more delicate retouching, like removing stray hairs and blemishes. If it’s a beauty or fashion image, I probably spend more time on the skin texture. Like the iconic photos marked up for the darkroom, I’ll do the same digitally, altering colours, adding dodge and burn where needed, sharpening up or softening areas. I’ll probably spend more time here than in Lightroom. Sometimes I’ll import an image into Lightroom and spend about 5–10 minutes on my major adjustments. There are some useful plugins you can utilise to help expedite your workflow if you use them judiciously. In Photoshop there’s PixelSugarc and Nik Collection, which has Silver Efex. In Lightroom there are many companies that make decent presets, but I usually use my own. It’s pretty easy to overcook something, so you have to know where to draw the line.
I’m not loyal to any one particular brand, especially when it comes to cameras. Over the last 10 years, I think I’ve used almost all the big names: Canon, Leica, Nikon, Hasselblad. For the last couple of years, I’ve used Sony and I’m quite happy, but if something else came along that piqued my interest, I’d be tempted to try.

What happens is this: I get the image in my head first, then it’s about the process of translating that idea from my head to the page. How exactly that is done, and with what gear, is irrelevant to me. Most of the work shown for this article was done with either my current Sony A7RII or with my old Canon 5DIII. 21 megapixels is certainly more than enough for today’s work, since we mostly view on digital.

The image of the WWII Veteran was shot with the Fuji GFX 50s, their medium format camera. The files that come out of this are fantastic. If I had better resources, I would certainly shoot most of my black & white portrait work on medium format film. Monetarily speaking, almost all of my clients want colour and not black & white images. Most of the good paid portrait work is corporate or through ad agencies, and even stock photography. I don’t think I have ever had one client request to work in black & white. So, it’s something you do for love. The one camera I have always wanted to try is the original Leica M-Monochrom, which was 18 mp CCD sensor. Something about the files that came out of that camera...

One piece of gear I do like are all Sigma lenses. I’ve used them on all my systems in the past. For lights, I’ve used the PCB Einsteins or AlienBees for years now. You can’t beat the price. For various situations I’ll change up the lighting modifier, but for the most part I stick with a deep octabox of varying sizes. I like simple. I find a lot of portraits I see from other photographers get way too complicated with lighting, like using four or five lights. I usually stick with one or two. Sometimes we aren’t always blessed with the best spaces to work with, so you are limited to what you can bring and how much room you have to set up.
Ian is a Graphic Designer who happens to take photos. Over 20 years as an Art Director makes the difference in his work. You can learn technical skills as a photographer, but having a great eye is what really matters. He was lucky to work with many great photographers, and was mentored by some great creative minds in the Canadian advertising industry - it taught him how to work with people, how to connect with his subjects, and most importantly how to see things with a designer’s eye.

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6 EDITING TIPS FOR BLACK & WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY

with Michael Anthony
Black & white photography can be beautiful. You can use black & white imagery to direct a viewer’s attention to the most important parts of an image. We often use black & white photography as a method for focusing on the emotion in an image. In fact, there are only two reasons that we will convert an image to black & white. Both have to do with eliminating distractions.

First, we will convert an image to black & white when the emotion in the photograph is conflicting with the color. You see, when the main “subject” of an image is the emotion, then a black & white conversion will often help to eliminate any distractions that can prevent a viewer from getting lost in the emotion.

The second time we will remove color from an image is when the color of the tones in the image conflict with each other. This most often happens when shooting in strong mixed lighting. We see this most when photographing the beginning of wedding receptions when there is still strong daylight coming through the windows, but you have overhead lights on above.

In this case you have two options: either use lighting to overpower one of the sources of light or convert to black & white. While the former is ideal, it’s not always practical, so in those cases a black & white conversion is necessary.

When you decide to convert to black & white, there are some steps you can take to make sure you get the best outcome. Converting to black & white should never be done simply by reducing the saturation of a photograph. Instead, there are some tools built into Adobe Lightroom that will help you get the perfect conversion every time.

Here are 6 editing tips for black & white photography.

1. USE THE ADOBE MONOCHROME PROFILE

Adobe’s built-in monochrome profile allows you to do a simple black & white conversion while still maintaining the ability to adjust the luminance levels of each color channel. You can do this by either selecting the monochrome camera profile in Lightroom or by pressing the keyboard shortcut “V.”

Once you do this, you can scroll down to where the HSL tab normally is, and you will see luminance sliders for each of the colors that were originally in the photograph. Here you can do things like brighten up the orange channel, which will brighten up skin tones, and darken the blue channel, which will typically darken things like skies.

Doing it this way allows you to save more time dodging and burning by quickly making the adjustments you need.
You can also utilize the ability of Lightroom to create presets from often used settings. Many photographers that have used our Elevate Preset system have seen massive benefits to their ability to cut time off their editing.

When I was doing a Facebook Live a few weeks back to show how our presets worked, a member asked me, “What is the biggest benefit to using presets?”

My answer was twofold. By utilizing presets, you gain both time and efficiency, and both of those things will help to make you more money.

2. WHEN CONVERTING IN LIGHTROOM, ADD TONING USING CURVES

While true monochrome images are absent of all color, for stylistic edits we can add toning to our black & white images. I usually utilize cooler tones in my black & white photos, however, you can utilize slightly warmer tones as well. Just be incredibly careful not to overdo these effects because it can come off as cheesy very easily. Double-check that you applied any curves adjustments at all to have done this right.

When I first started in image competition, a term I heard a judge use to describe how post-production should go was “invisible editing.” In other words, you should never know that editing was done to a photo if it was done correctly.
3. ADJUST YOUR BLACK & WHITE POINTS

This tip is not exclusively for black & white edits, however, I do tend to be a lot more careful about my black & white points when editing an image in monochrome.

At the end of an edit I will typically adjust my black & white output to give an image a slight matte finish on both ends of the toning spectrum. This ensures that when I print this image I will have consistent tones on the paper.

You can do this in a number of ways, but I typically drag the left end of the tone curve slightly upward and drag the right end of the tone curve slightly downward. If you are utilizing Lightroom to do this, then you would want your output to be adjusted by only one or two points (between 1-5 for blacks, and 250-254 for whites).

Doing this will not affect the overall aesthetic of an image much, but it will add depth to the photo while removing all blotchiness from the actual print.
4. ADD MORE CONTRAST THAN USUAL

With black & white images, you can add more contrast than you would in a similar color photo. The reason for this is because when you add contrast to a color photo, you are increasing saturation. However, because there are no colors in a black & white photo, you don’t have to worry about your color tones.

I tend to like my images to be a bit punchier, so by adding more contrast than I typically would, I usually have better results.

There is a way to do this correctly, and that is not to use the contrast slider. In fact, if you are looking for better black & white pictures, adjust your contrast by utilizing the black & white sliders or the tone curve in Lightroom. This will give you a much better overall outcome than by adjusting the contrast slider alone.

5. MAKE USE OF LUMINOSITY MASKING IN LIGHTROOM

One of the best features in the newest version of Lightroom is the ability to utilize luminosity masking to do selective editing. This allows Lightroom to seek out areas of an image that are bright or dark depending on what you want, and it will allow you to mask those areas much easier with the brush tool.

To do this, grab your brush tool and paint over an area that you want to adjust. Then select the mask button and select luminosity mask. Grab the eyedropper and select an area that is close to the luminance levels that you are trying to target, and then adjust the sliders to dial it in perfectly. You can press “o” to use your mask overlay and see what you are doing.
6 Editing Tips for Black & White Photography | Michael Anthony

6. USE POINTS OF CONTRAST TO DRAW YOUR VIEWER TO YOUR SUBJECT

The last tip I have for you is to emphasize contrast in areas where your subject is in the image. This works because our eyes are typically drawn to either interrupted lighting or color patterns, or the strongest points of contrast in an image. In last year’s Black & White Edition, I told you to look for dark or light backgrounds to photograph your subject on. This will create contrast with your subject’s face and potentially draw a viewer into it.

Remember, black & white photography should be used when the situation calls for it. If you are converting any portraits to black & white, then I highly recommend including a color version for your client as well to save you the trouble of having to create it when the client inevitably asks for it. That is one time-saving tip that I can promise you will use often.

For more information about this article, make sure to check out the accompanying video on Behind the Shutter’s YouTube channel.

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THE VERSATILITY OF A GRAY BACKDROP

with Jess Hess
The Versatility of a Gray Backdrop | Jess Hess

Backdrops usually aren’t cheap. Good ones definitely aren’t. The costs can really go uphill if you’re adding several colors and styles to your arsenal. You’re gonna need something dark, and something bright! Maybe something with a floral pattern, and of course one with an old masters pattern. And you’d add the pink one too if you didn’t just spend your whole paycheck on the four before it. You’ve also got to do some major organizing to make space for all your new stuff. For folks on a budget or with limited space, having a variety might not be doable. Thankfully, you can satisfy many of your desires with just one backdrop.

Gray backdrops are the often-overlooked top dog of the background world, and they become heavyweight champs when you use gray seamless paper. Regardless of brand, seamless paper in any color provides a smooth, even, non-reflective surface on which to shoot. Seamless paper looks glorious in camera and cuts editing time in half. No wrinkles like in many fabrics, and no uneven background lighting due to those wrinkles. Seamless paper comes in a variety of colors too, pretty much any shade you can think of. It is sold on rolls at varying widths, so you can have something compact for a small in-home studio or something wide for shooting entire families. Being sold on rolls is also terrific because getting rid of old, crinkled, or dirty paper is as simple as cutting it off. Most of you probably aren’t new to the world of seamless paper, but if you are, I suggest treating yourself and picking up a roll.

Now, we are talking about gray backdrops specifically. Say you have a client who wants you to photograph her two children. She wants them photographed separately with plain, monotone backgrounds. She wants one on a solid white backdrop and the other on a solid black one. Easy enough, but if you haven’t got one or the other (or either) you’re likely going to look into purchasing them for your session. Buying a backdrop or two significantly cuts into profits too, which is never fun. With a gray seamless backdrop, you have both of those options available to you already.

Simply put, a gray background (or any background) is going to look different depending on how much light is hitting it, and the direction in which it’s hit. By illuminating the backdrop brighter than your subject, and using settings that keep the subject exposed while leaving the background overexposed, you are going to get a white background. Do the opposite, and keep light off the background and the background underexposed, and it’s going to appear dark. You can certainly have darker or lighter colored backdrops by controlling the lighting in the same way, but gray is more valuable because being desaturated makes blacks and whites achievable and allows you to add colors easily in post. Remember, many shades of gray do have warm or cool undertones, but it’s usually not a big deal because the slight correction takes mere seconds in Photoshop. However, no undertones are certainly best. I prefer Savage brand Thunder Gray, Storm Gray, and Fashion Gray.

Exposure: f4.0 @ 1/320 ISO 100
To turn a backdrop white, what I typically do is set up one or two speedlights in the background, aimed directly at the backdrop behind my subject. I more often than not keep those speedlights at full power. In the foreground, I set up the light however I want it. I expose for the subject and foreground light, allowing the background to become way overexposed. Usually this results in a pure white backdrop. Depending on your settings and light, sometimes there may be slight dark spots along the edges, but that’s no problem at all to take care of in post. Usually just playing around with your settings will yield you the results you want.

To turn a backdrop black, we must remove all light from the backdrop. Now my background lights are completely off, and I am only shooting in the foreground. To achieve a pure black background, you have to ensure that all light is kept from hitting the backdrop. If you are shooting on a slow shutter speed you’ll need to beware of ambient light coming from lamps or windows. With a faster shutter speed, ambient light is usually no issue. My studio is practically made of windows and I’ve managed to shoot with pure black backgrounds simply by shooting really fast. If you are shooting with continuous light and need a slow shutter speed, you can block off windows and shut off lamps. You can also use a black card (I use black poster board from Walmart for $2) and attach it to the side of your lightbox closest to the backdrop. This works as a “barn door” and directs the light at the subject and away from the backdrop. For a foreground light, angle it to the side as not to have any spill onto the backdrop. You can also use or make barn doors for the key light, or you can shoot with a grid to focus the light directionally and keep it off of the backdrop.
The Versatility of a Gray Backdrop | Jess Hess

It’s also fun to play around with the position of your key light. If you want a little bit of luminance in the backdrop, try moving your light and/or removing the grid. Or, try changing your camera and key light settings to bring up the exposure on the backdrop while keeping the exposure correct on the subject. Or, of course, you can add background lights aimed directly at the backdrop.

It’s incredibly easy to play around with your light to create shadows, depth, and moods. You can shoot so many different looks in a short time with ease.

Let’s jump back to that imaginary client. She shows up for you to photograph her children. Upon arrival, however, she wonders if she can change her background color selections to blue and green. A stark difference from the black and white you had planned for. If you purchased new backgrounds, you’re not in a good position. If you’ve got your gray backdrop and some gels, you’re all set. For this, we’re going to use the same setup we would use to get a white backdrop, except we are going to use colored gels on our lights. With a monolight or two aimed at the background, you’re going to get a better color across the backdrop than with small or not-so-powerful lights. I use one or two speedlights, which aren’t always powerful enough to be perfect, but definitely powerful enough to get the shot I need.

**Pro Tip:** Remember that as long as you have the correct color behind the hair, the rest is easy to edit in post. Concentrate as much of that colored light as you can on the area directly behind the subject’s head. With gels, the 50% gray really picks up color better than other shades.

As stated previously, if the color doesn’t stretch to the edges of your image you can do a little Photoshop magic to tidy it up. Or, you may like the light fall-off, which I definitely do. The following images were all shot on the same gray backdrop.
The Versatility of a Gray Backdrop | Jess Hess

Want to get extra creative with it? Add a pattern or texture. More often than not when adding a texture or pattern to a backdrop, I create or upload the texture or pattern onto a new layer. I then mess with the opacity and possibly add some field blur if it’s a pattern that looks too “sharp” to look realistic. Then I change that layer’s blend mode to “soft light,” create a layer mask, and paint black onto the layer mask over the subject to remove the backdrop from them. I’ve found you can barely see some textures over the subject which makes removing them a breeze. Some other textures require a little more time and care when masking them out.

If you want pastel colors that are hard to achieve with gels, another option is to just shoot the gray as gray and light it evenly, then paint a color on a new layer over the backdrop. Lots of blending modes work with this, depending on the look you want. Color, Multiply, and Vivid Light are the blend modes I use most often. You can paint it on haphazardly then add a layer mask and mask out what shouldn’t show.
Another tip when masking (especially around hair) is to remember your brush opacity. If you can’t be exact with the background and hairline, it shows. It helps to change the brush opacity to 20%, zoom in closely, and paint over the hair with multiple strokes, going over large patches of hair a higher number of times. The lower opacity helps to blend the two layers better because it only masks a little bit at a time, which gives you way more control and makes things look more presentable.

Image © Wurmwood Photography

Exposure: f1.8 @ 1/640 ISO 50

Exposure: f4.0 @ 1/500 ISO 100
The Versatility of a Gray Backdrop | Jess Hess

Jess Hess is a professional fine art and conceptual portrait photographer based out of Dayton, Ohio. At her Wurmwood Photography studio, she blends vibrant colors and unusual ideas with classic portraiture for her own unique take on portrait photography. Her studio is located in a large 200-year-old church (called Castle Morningstar) situated in the middle of a graveyard, making her client experience unique from start to finish—and the clients even more unique! She spends her spare time educating other photographers, renting out her space to local artists, making costumes and props, and hosting photographic events in the “castle.”

website: wurmwoodphotography.com | Instagram: @wurmwoodphotography

Want to get even more creative? Add multiple layers of color or texture, or swap out the background entirely! With no color cast, masking out the background is usually quite simple and I prefer it to a green screen.

With patience and trial and error you can master the gray backdrop and use it to its full potential. Conquering the gray backdrop will save you time, money, and precious studio space. By experimenting with different lighting setups and editing techniques, there’s absolutely no limit to what you can create, and it makes creativity and options on a budget possible.

Images © Wurmwood Photography

Exposure: f4.0 @ 1/600 ISO 100

WIN THIS BACKDROP:

Salzburg

This gently distressed piece is an ode to that special memory. This drop features a blue-gray tone with accents in shades of amber and clay.

bit.ly/3fBaBMM

ENTER NOW!

bit.ly/3fBaBMM
final inspiration

photographer | john gress
model | jaquez sims

exposure f/5.6 @1/200 iso 400
lighting elinchrom elc 500 pro hd heads. mini spot lite with a gobo cut out of cine foil, elinchrom indirect litemotiv strip softbox (13 x 69”), elinchrom rotalux stripbox (35 x 90cm / 14 x 35”)
location egg studios nyc
gear canon 5d eos mark iv
canon ef 70-200mm
f/2.8L is ll usm (70mm)

Image © John Gress
Profoto brings professional flash to smartphones
Changing the rules of photography

Profoto announces a major milestone by bringing the Profoto B10 flash series to mobile photography. With AirX technology you can now use your smartphone to capture images using studio quality flash. This allows professional photographers, for the first time in history, to use the full power of their flashes no matter the capturing device.

Future Ready
Profoto B10 with AirX

Profoto announces a major milestone by bringing the Profoto B10 flash series to mobile photography. With AirX technology you can now use your smartphone to capture images using studio quality flash. This allows professional photographers, for the first time in history, to use the full power of their flashes no matter the capturing device.

In a rapidly changing industry with smartphone image creators and more progressive professionals approaching photography in radically different ways, this innovation brings opportunities to all. It means that new types of image creators can start shaping the light in their images, but also makes the smartphone an exciting addition to any photographer's toolbox.