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# Black & White Photography: The Timeless Art Of Monochrome In The Post-digital Age



MICHAEL FREEMAN  
**BLACK & WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY**  
THE TIMELESS ART OF MONOCHROME



## **Synopsis**

Beautifully illustrated and far-reaching in scope, this guide is destined to be a standard reference for years to come. Alongside the work of author Michael Freeman, you'll find the classic photography of renowned black and white photographers such as Ansel Adams, Ian Berry, Bill Brandt, Edward Curtis, Brett Weston and Edward Weston. Freeman covers all aspects of black-and-white digital photography: the fine art tradition as well as the techniques. Learn how to see and expose in black and white, digitally convert colour to monochrome and develop a black and white digital workflow using the latest software.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Even though it has been twenty years since I worked in black and white photography, I was still eager to read this book because the author, Michael Freeman, is such an insightful and skilled writer about photography. I even suspected he might show me why I should return to monochrome. Freeman begins the book by explaining that black and white imagery offers the photographic artist an opportunity to create art that color imagery inhibits because no one expects

monochrome to look like the real world giving the artist more leeway in manipulating an image. The author also suggests (perhaps facetiously) that monochrome is easier because the photographer doesn't have to worry about color. In the second portion of the book, Freeman examines what can be done on a technical level to adjust the tonality of images converted to black and white. While he makes reference to several different brands of software, his instructions are general in nature. The use of any of the softwares mentioned will require further study. In the third section, Freeman talks about the kinds of creative choices one can make in monochrome. There is even an 8-page discussion of the processing of film in the chemical darkroom, which stoked my memories of a murky compartment that I was happy to abandon for my comfortable computer. Good black and white photography requires the photographer to visualize the final monochrome image during the capture process, or, at least, to visualize how an already captured image will look on conversion. While Freeman provides a few chapters like "thinking in black and white", more will be inferred about such seeing from reading and viewing the author's step by step conversions. I fault Freeman for neglecting one technique. Lightroom and Photoshop have targeted adjustment tools that make it easy to click on a particular monochrome hue and darken or lighten it. You still have to visualize the tonality of the image to best use this tool, but it certainly makes conversions easier. For those who never shot black and white film, Freeman may open up a whole new world of creative endeavor. Freeman may even lead a few of those already working in black and white to more deeply consider their artistic processes and goals. Those of us who have difficulty keeping several pots in the fire at once can at least enjoy listening to a master chef explaining how to do it. Note: The publisher provided me with a review copy of this book at no charge.

If you've been doing photography for any length of time, you know that any book written by Michael Freeman will be among the best you can buy on any topic. Freeman's new book, *Black and White Photography*, keeps the tradition of excellence by providing photographers with a quintessential guide to creating and editing monochrome images. In this book, Freeman rightly begins at the beginning with a genuinely interesting history of photography. And since black-and-white photo was at the beginning, Freeman introduces the fundamental technical and style traditions established and refined by the masters as black-and-white shooting evolved. But you're never left with a dry, tasteless walk from Niepce's 1826 eight-hour exposure to Daguerreotypes that reduced exposure time to 20 to 30 minutes. Freeman includes the artistic philosophies and concerns of the masters including and their responses to the introduction of color films. Throughout, Freeman relates the past technologies and approaches with current technologies

and options. So if you think you can skip the history part, you'd miss important considerations for current photographers. Despite the introduction and mass popularity of color film, black-and-white photography endures both for its aesthetic and artistic impact. You'll learn the structure and characteristics of black-and-white films that serve as the basis for the looks that photographers today want to replicate when converting color digital images to monochrome. As Freeman discusses how lighting, drama, geometry, and texture become the hallmarks of black-and-white images, I realized again that black-and-white shooting demands an artistic vision in ways that color photography does not. The author discusses every aspect of monochrome images from shape and composition to tone and texture, and he clearly demonstrates how to maximize each aspect to deliver your final interpretation of the image. Abundant and beautiful images illustrate Freeman's techniques. Like most photographers know, working with 12- or 14-bit RAW images offers files that are data rich, allowing a wide range of adjustments including highlight recovery during conversion. Freeman shows conversion examples in programs ranging from using Adobe Camera Raw (ACR) with its SHL/Grayscale and Curves tools, and Adobe Lightroom to various plug-ins such as Silver Efex Pro (a plugin that sadly is no longer supported by Google). You'll learn how to think in black and white so you can pre-visualize the final image. The author spends time showing you how to adjust and perfect contrast, how to work with high- and low-key images, and how to tone-map images with and without High Dynamic Range (HDR) processing to name a few. At every turn, Freeman includes alternate options. By manipulating hue, he demonstrates how to fine-tune contrast, atmosphere and depth in the image, as well as how to adjust the appearance of vegetation and dark and light skin tones. As a photographer and author, I know that Freeman's recommendations keep with the best of industry standards. Whether you're new to monochrome shooting or returning to it after time away, this book will make you anxious to begin shooting black-and-white. Freeman leaves no stone unturned. It's with a detailed, clear-eyed vision, from capture to thoughtful processing, that the rich history of black-and-white photography is brought forward to today.

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