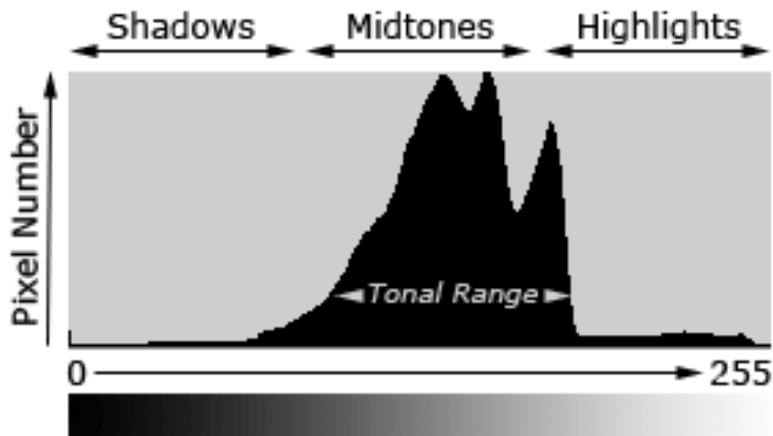


REFINING YOUR MONO IMAGES

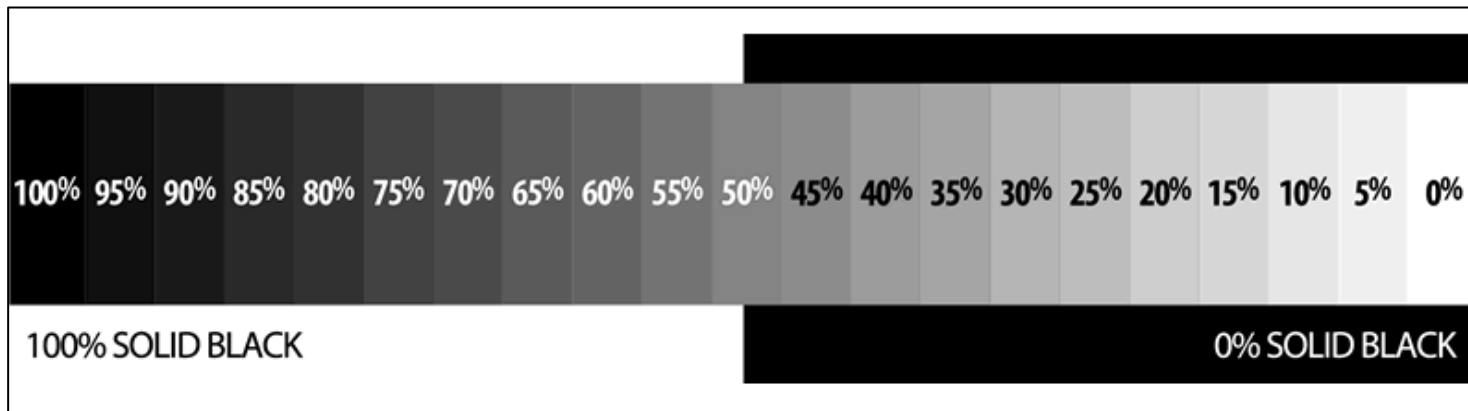
Bob Breach

MONO PRINCIPLES

- Emphasise form, contrast and texture. Often good for graphic shapes
- Normally use full tonal range - pure blacks and whites
 - But sometimes a more extreme approach works (high key/low key- see later)
- For best results likely to need selective tonal adjustments of part (or parts) of the image using layers or layer masks



Mono is all about managing your tonal range



What is the main point of interest in the image and how can you adjust the image using mono tools to emphasise this

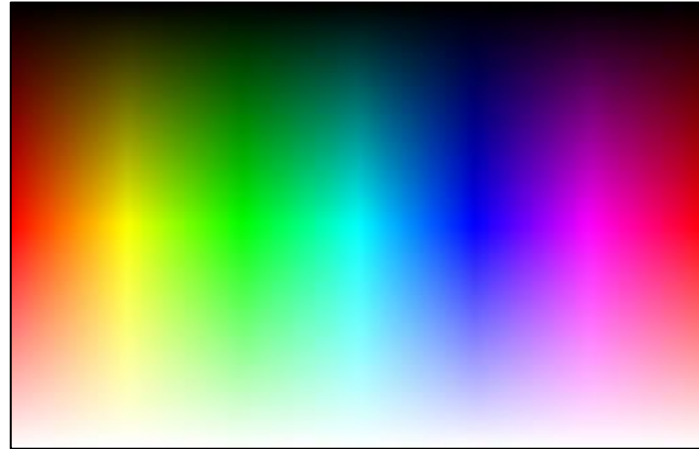
RAW, TIFF OR JPEG

- Raw
 - Much more control over image quality
 - Capture maximum (and better) range of tones
- TIFF
 - Larger files but better quality with no image degradation
 - Choice of 8bit or 16 bit
 - 16 bit much better (65000 grey tones compared to 256)
 - Not all Photoshop filters work with full 16bit TIFF
- JPEG
 - Smaller file but lower overall quality
 - Also importantly much lower tonal range

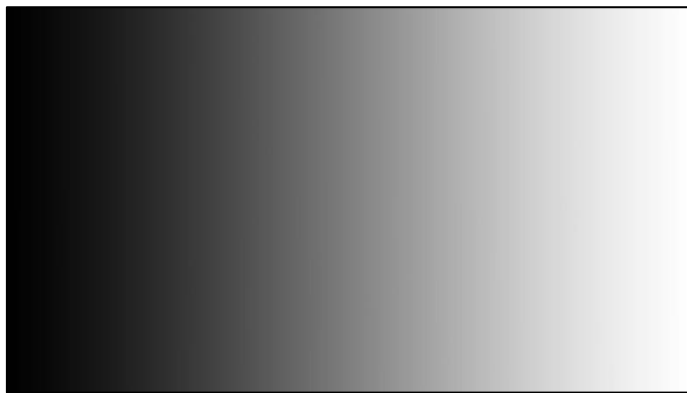
If possible always do most of your mono conversion work on raw or large Tiff files

- 1. Print from TIFF*
- 2. For DPI carry out as much correction as possible as Tiff before saving as jpeg*

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE

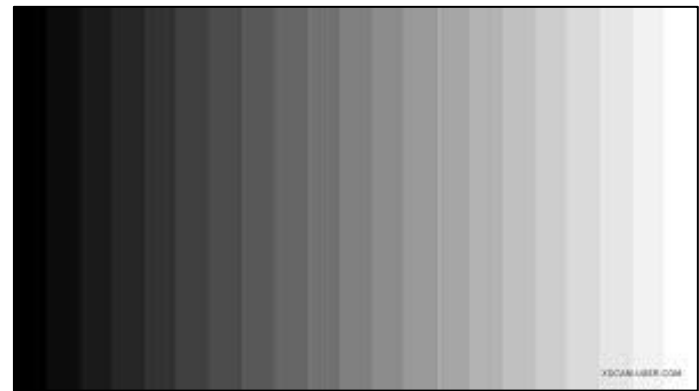


Raw/16bit Tiff



Much smoother tonal graduation

Jpeg



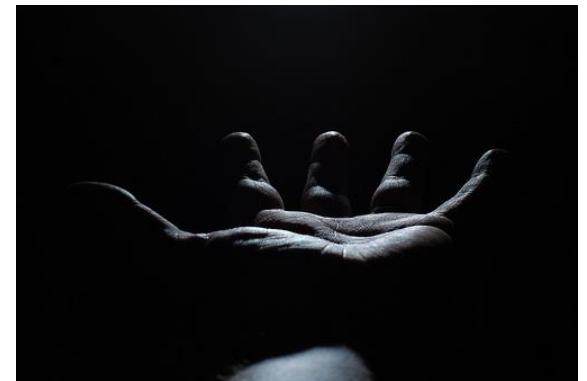
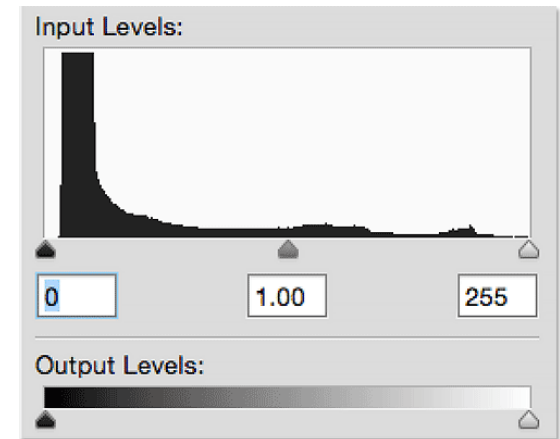
Much less grey tone variation

MANAGING TONAL RANGE

- Key with mono is to get good tonal range unless deliberately aiming for low/high key image
- Bring out subtle shading to emphasise tone, contrast and texture in key part(s) of the image
- Need to avoid
 - Completely burnt out areas(unless intentional)
 - Bright areas that take the eye away from the main subject, particularly at the edge
 - Blocked out shadow areas (i.e. solid black) unless intentional silhouette effect

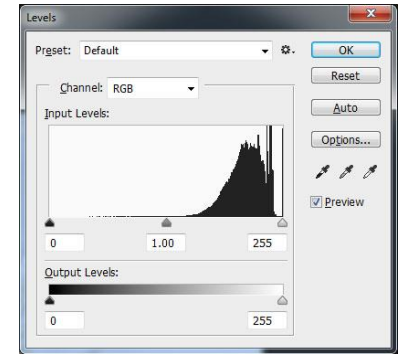
LOW KEY LIGHTING

- A low-key image is one that contains predominantly dark tones and colours
- Conveys atmosphere and mood which is usually dramatic and full of mystery
- Creates striking contrasts through reduced lighting where shadows are now the primary element of the composition
- Can work with colour but often better with mono



HIGH KEY LIGHTING

- A high key image is one that is mostly bright, with a range of light tones and whites and not very many blacks or mid-tones
- A high key image tends to be upbeat, optimistic or youthful
- Often also used with an added diffuse layer or less saturation to create a soft mood

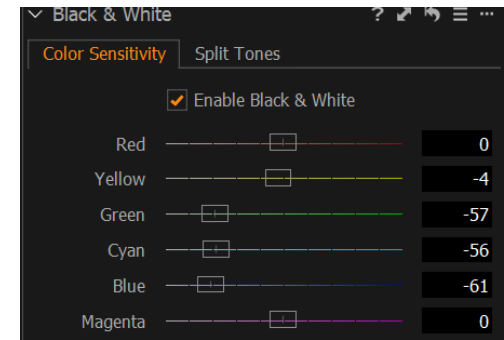


- Can create in studio
- Or in post processing
 - Convert to mono or desaturate
 - Use levels and curves (where necessary in layers)
 - Add light Gaussian blur and/or reduce clarity/vibrance

FIRST STEPS IN MONO

- Make sure that basic exposure etc corrections are made
- Overall image composition best checked after mono conversion (removes colour distractions)
- But may be necessary to crop to improve image composition
 - *Depending on which software you have and which file type , the available mono tools may vary or have different names.*
 - *Experiment to find out what works best for you*

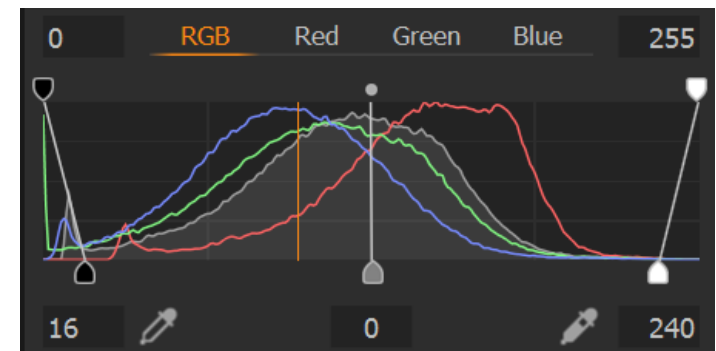
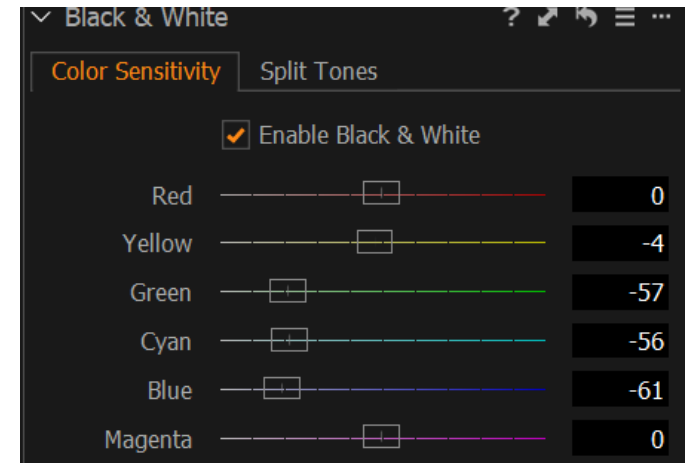
MONO CONVERSION



- Can use a range of mono conversion tools depending on software available
- If available, colour channel raw converters give best mono conversion
- Or in PS, Elements
 1. B/W converter – the best way
 2. *Channel mixer*
 3. *Desaturate*
- Adjust sliders to modify the darkness/lightness of the different colour channels

MAIN TOOLS FOR MONO

- Mono tool
 - Adjusts brightness of tones in different colour channels across whole image
 - Note that if change colour temp of raw file then effects are altered
- Levels tool
 - Controls range of tones from pure black to pure white across whole image
 - Use two end sliders to add more black or white tones
 - Can also adjust mid-tones using middle slider



All mono tools interact with each other –try different tools in a mix and match approach

OTHER TOOLS FOR MONO

■ Curves

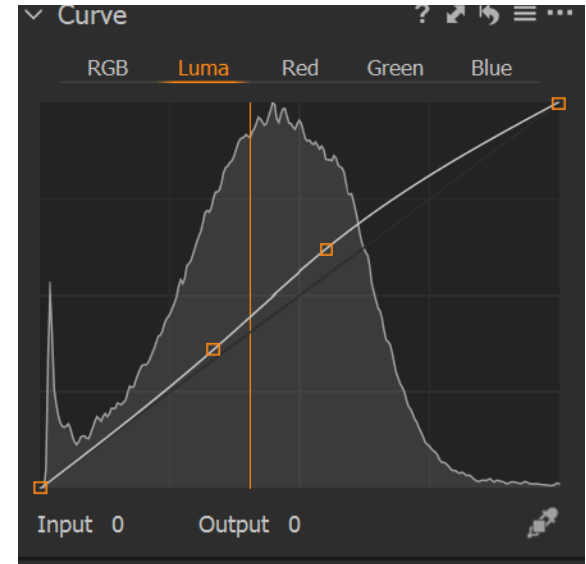
- Can control brightness of different tones within image
- S shaped curve can improve contrast
- Use picker tool to choose tone to adjust and fix on curve
- Care not to overdo

■ Highlights/shadows (raw only)

- Can bring back details in shadows and recover burnt out highlights

■ Contrast/clarity

- Often better to use clarity tool – more subtle than contrast




SELECTIVE ADJUSTMENTS

- Although mono, curves and levels tools used on the whole image can often give you the result you require
- You may still find it useful to make adjustments to just part of the image using layer masks to locally adjust brightness, contrast etc

See Chris Mallett session earlier about how to do this

MONO CONVERSION TIPS

- If you change the colour temperature you also change the red/blue balance which means the colour slider impact is changed
- Single colour toning is allowed in mono competitions (*colour layer to add single tone to whole image*)
- You can split tone (different colour for highlights and shadows) but then not eligible for “mono”



**NOW TRY TO TEST
SOME OF THESE
APPROACHES USING
YOUR SOFTWARE**