

Seeing in Black and White

by Dennis Fritsche

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John Sexton's "Two Chairs"



Dennis Fritsche "Cold Shoulder"

On a New Quest

- In 2013 I attended a workshop in Mono Lake/ Eastern Sierra with Charles Cramer and John Sexton.
- During the portfolio reviews, John said of my work, “Those aren’t very photographic.”
- I’ve been on a quest since then to understand what that means and how to achieve it.

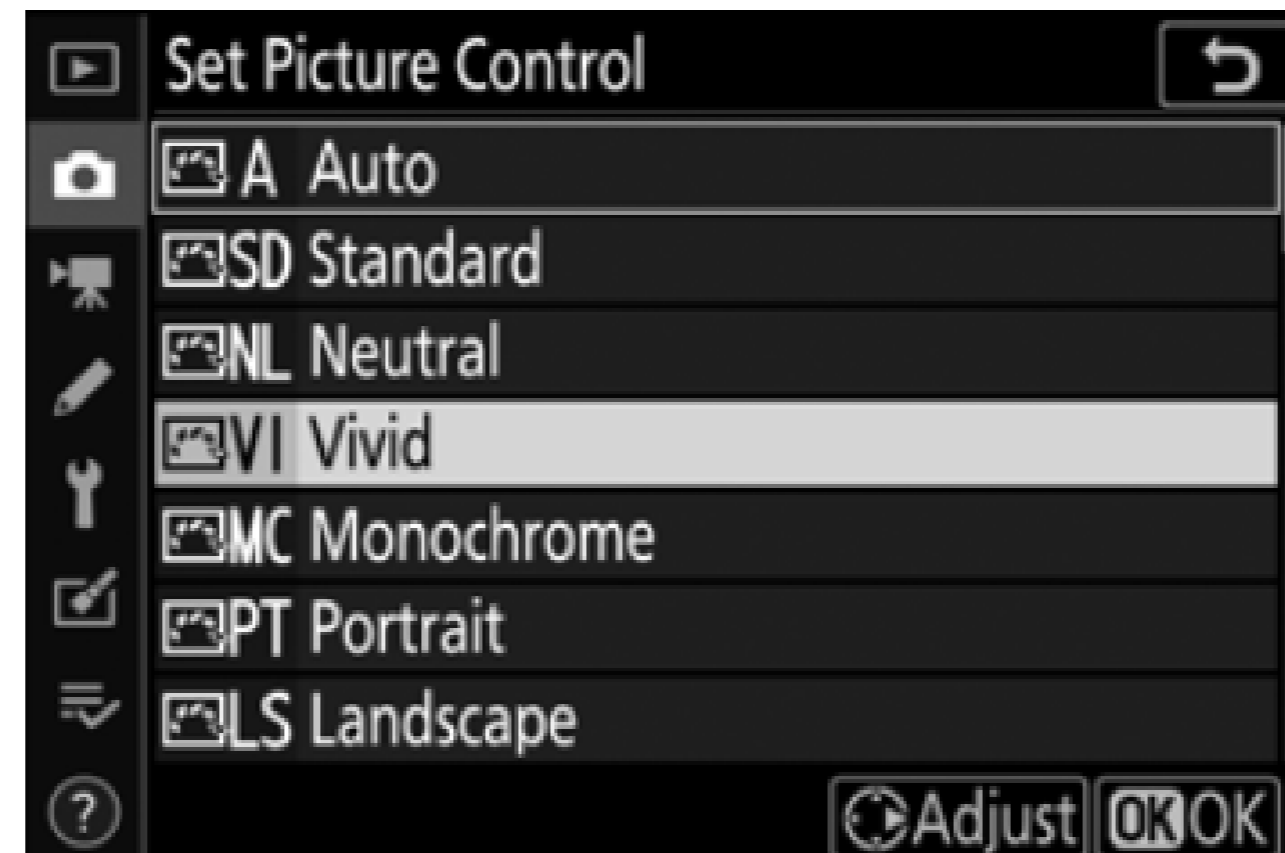
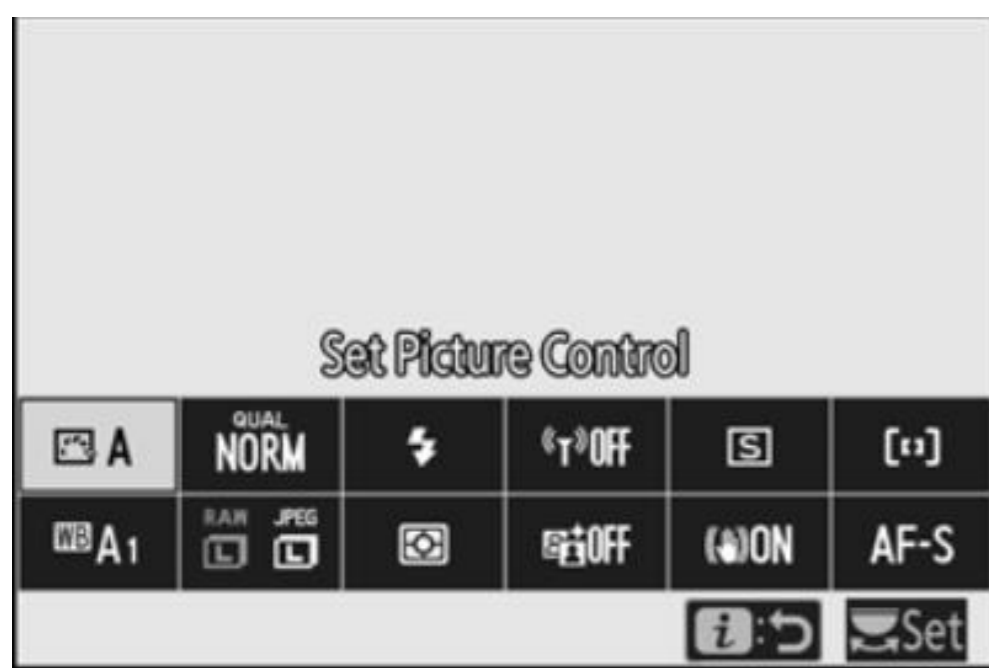


Making a Black and White Photograph in the Digital Age

- In most instances we start with a color digital image and convert to black and white in post processing.
- Good exposure principles apply – expose to the right but do not lose highlight detail.
- There are many software tools to convert to black and white
 - Lightroom
 - Photoshop
 - Other post processing programs
 - Nix Silver Efex
 - Innumerable plugins and presets
- After trying many over the years, I settled on Lightroom Classic
- Demo later

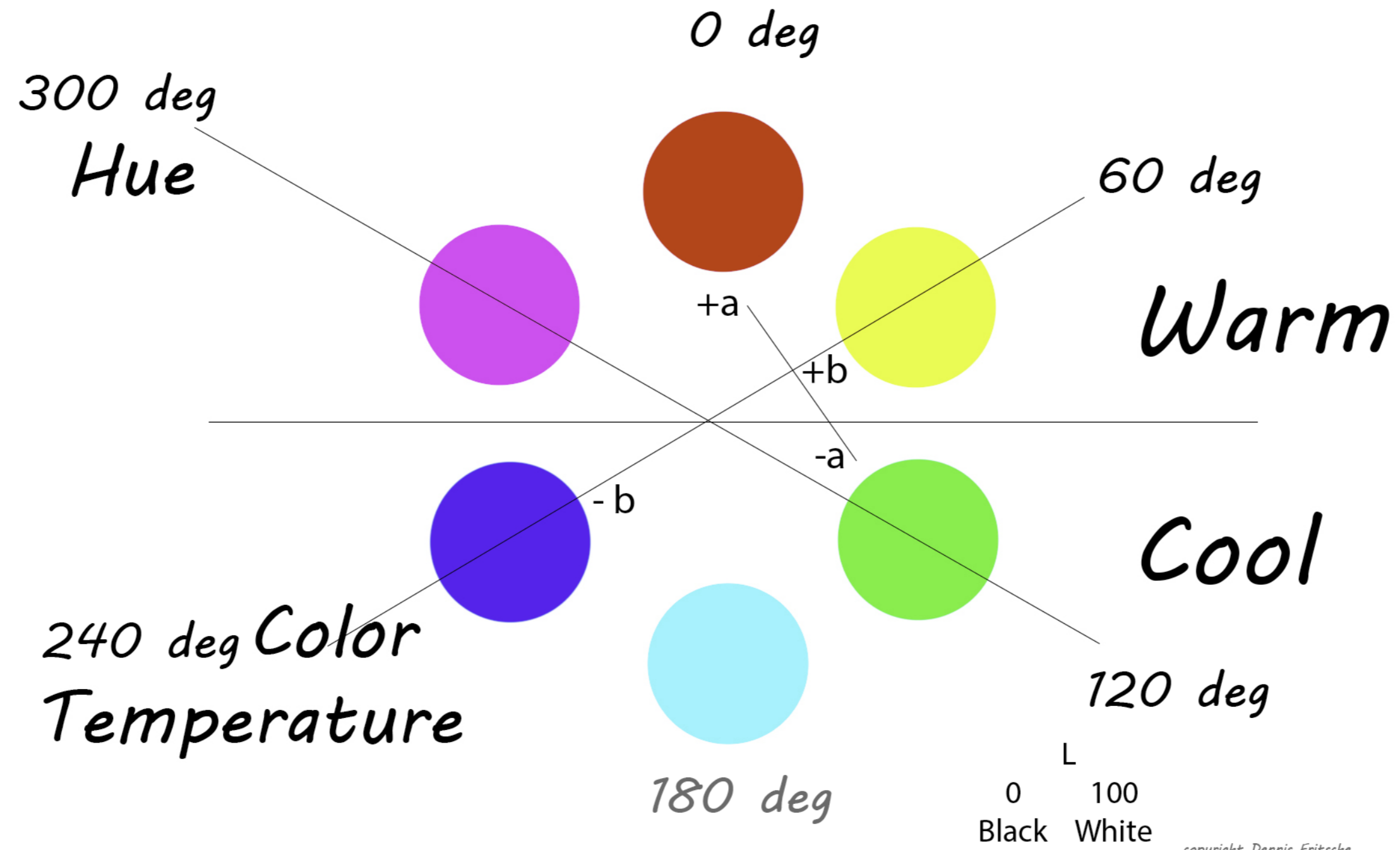
Other Options

- Black and White film and scanning negatives to digital and process
- A camera that shoots only monochrome
 - Leica M
 - Phase 1
 - Modified color cameras from MaxMax
- Using the monochrome modes in your camera along with Lightroom Classic
 - Your camera has different picture modes called different things by the manufacturer
 - The monochrome modes can be fine tuned to simulate color filters, different contrast, etc
 - If you shoot RAW, you will see monochrome on your camera but Lightroom will by default show the color version
 - Now you can setup LR to simulate the mode you set on the camera on initial display
 - This starts you out in monochrome and maybe gets closer to “photographic”?



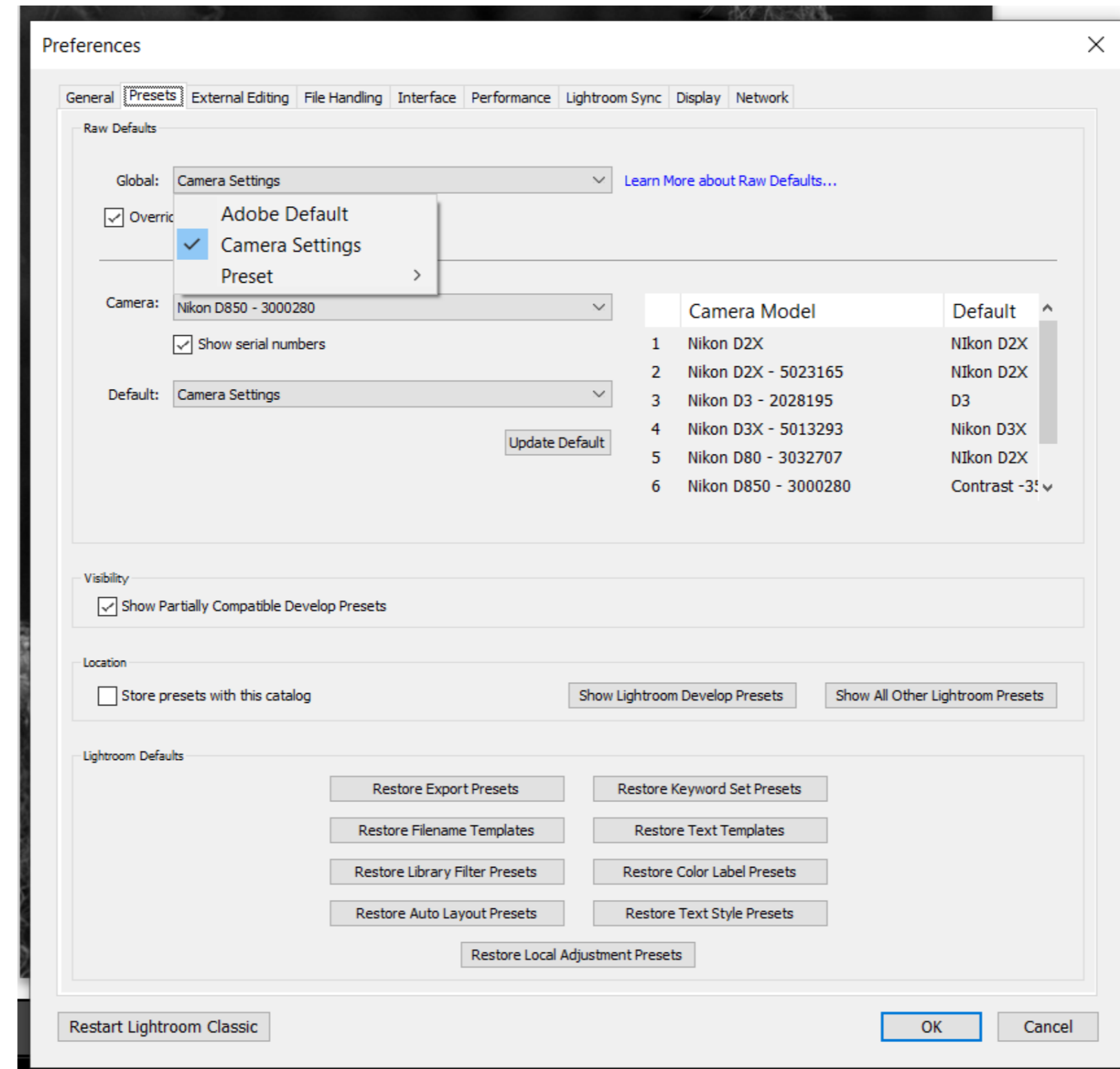
MC – Monochrome allows filters to be set
Green, Yellow, Orange, Red

Color Wheel and Filters



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Set Preferences in Lightroom Classic to Honor Camera Settings



Thoughts on Processing

- Know what you want the photograph to look like. Don't rely on arbitrary presets.
- Less is more. I backed away from Nik Silver Efex and plugins because they often are over processed
- Let the image guide the processing decisions
- Consider toning your images
- Start at low contrast, print and examine. Then adjust contrast. Contrast slider is often not the best way to adjust contrast.
- Learning local adjustments is critical. As Ansel Adams says
“Dodging and burning are steps to take care of mistakes God made in establishing tonal relationships.”

Printing

- Another Anselmism, “The negative is the score and the print is the performance.”
- I print from Lightroom to an Epson Surecolor P900
- Use ABW (Advanced Black and White) not icc profiles for best results
- ABW also does an excellent job of toning
- Papers are an important part of realizing your vision
 - Warm/cool/neutral
 - Gloss/Matt
 - Fine art or photo paper

Demos and Recent Work