

What Ever Happened to the Art of B&W Photography

Gone are the days when photographers used black and white film. The introduction of color, around thirty to forty years ago, replaced black and white in the global market, the same has occurred today, with digital replacing color film. Everywhere you go, you see digital cameras and camcorders. The only place you will see black and white film being used almost exclusively is in the area of newspaper photojournalism. Even some of the world's best magazines use digital photographs. An Internet search is about the only other place you will find people using B & W, or by visiting the local art galleries and museums. There are very few B&W photographers left. But I guess that's progress.

What happened? Most of the great B&W photographers, including American photographer Ansel Adams, French photographer Eugene Atget, British photographer and Bill Brandt, have died, leaving just their legacies. Today, people have realized the ease of digital, thus making B&W a lost art. Gone are the days of the real photographers, when you had set up the shot properly the first time, to keep from wasting film. Digital allows you to shoot the same shot over and over, until you get it right.

For those of us who can, remember back before digital and computers, when all you could buy were film cameras, and had to use darkrooms to develop your negatives and print that great photograph you had just taken? This was photographic art, setting the timer on the enlarger for the proper exposure time, dodging this area, or burning that area to produce that award winning photograph. I can remember when I couldn't wait to get into the darkroom. Some of the most memorable moments in my freelance career, were the times I did print work. Now it's almost impossible to find anyone who uses a darkroom or knows the art in using one. Alas, those were the days.

One last question to ponder: Do you know what the four basic fundamental concepts of photography are, the ones that allowed us to take those award winning photographs without wasting film, the ones that enable us to spot the snapshots? Well, if you don't, they are lighting, exposure, composition, and camera angle. These four basic fundamentals were essential back in those days and they are still a vital part of photography today. By knowing how to use these fundamentals, you can drastically improve your photographic ability. To find out more about the world of photography, search the Internet site www.photography.com, or www.mastersof-photography.com to find out more on some of the greatest photographers that ever lived.