

EVERY PICTURE TELLS A
STORY

PART 2: CREATIVE IMAGE PROCESSING

APPROACH AND CAVEATS

- We will be talking about basic processing tools and how you can use them to tell your story.
- Processing will be demonstrated using Lightroom. I will try to stick to the generic tools but in some areas the tools in lightroom will work differently to other processing software.
- I am not an expert, I am still learning so this presentation will be based on what I have learned or worked out for myself, so far.
- There may be smarter ways to do things or things that you think I have missed You can help by joining in the discussion and sharing thoughts and ideas.

APPROACH AND CAVEATS

We will not be covering:

- Calibration of screen or camera
- Lens corrections
- Correcting the horizon or perspective
- Healing, Cloning or Spot Removal
- Cropping
- Sharpening and Denoise
- Advanced tools such as Curves, Colour Mixer, Colour Grading or Range Masking

If you want training on these please let Alex know so that she can consider it for inclusion in the programme.

THE LAST TIME

Part One: Creative Image Capture:

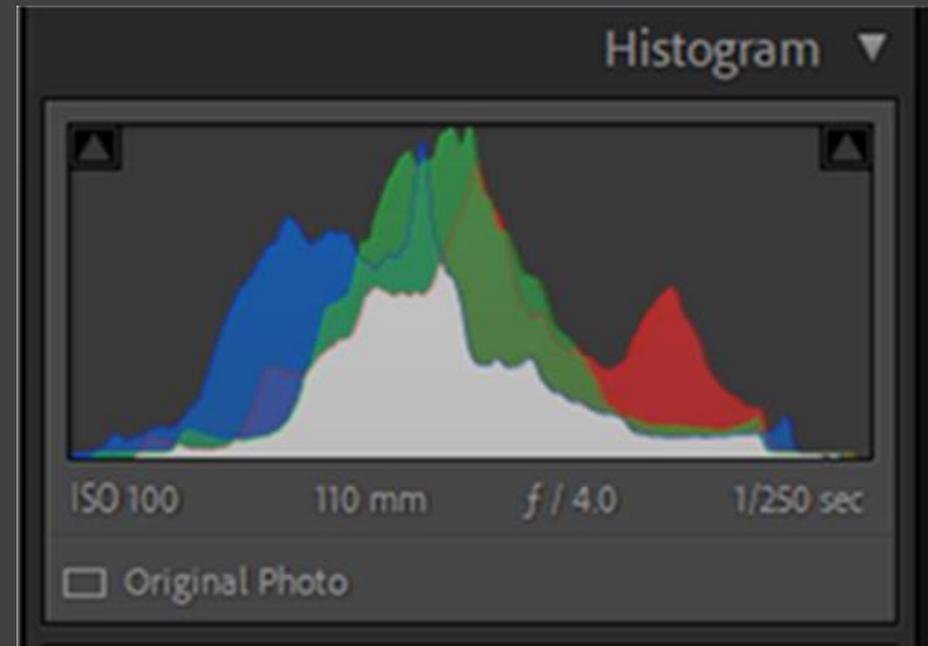
- Intuition is good but can also be limiting
- Think about your composition, what you want to say and how you are going to say it
- Tools not rules - Consider how your choice of Image aspect ratio, Point of view, Subject position and size in frame, Shutter speed, Aperture, Subject distance, Lens and Focal length can be used express your vision

OUTLINE

- The histogram
- Global adjustments
- Mono processing
- How our eyes read a scene
- Local adjustments
- Questions
- Tea Break
- Worked examples and discussion based on your own work

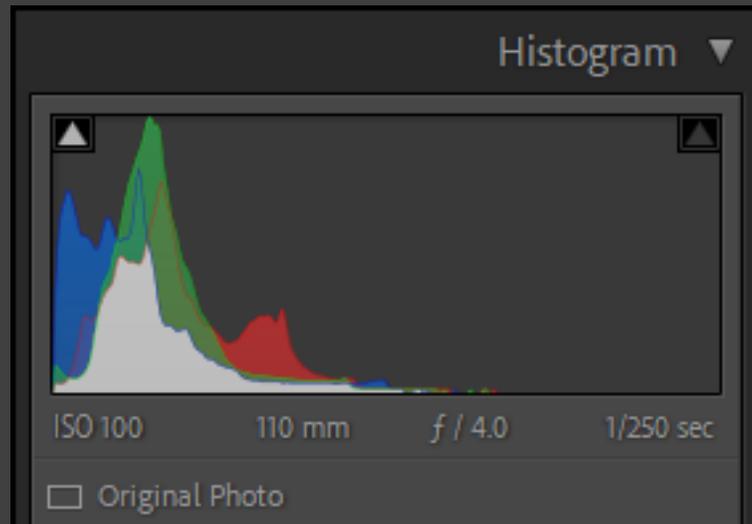
THE HISTOGRAM

Graphic representation of the distribution of tone and colour within an image.

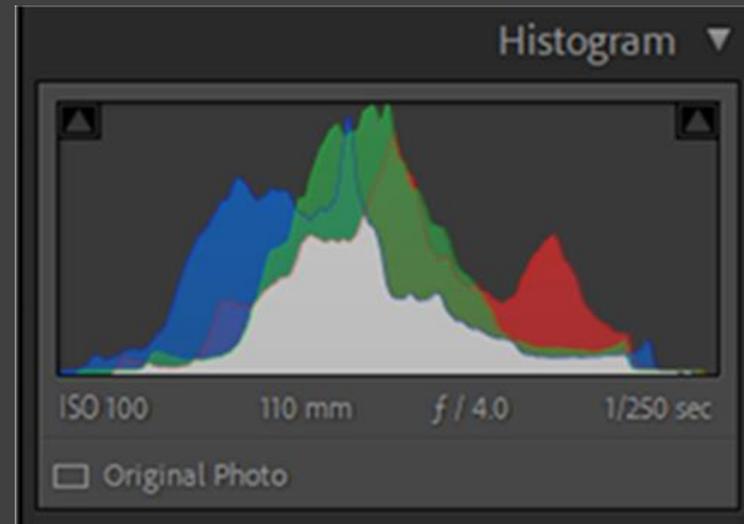


READING THE HISTOGRAM

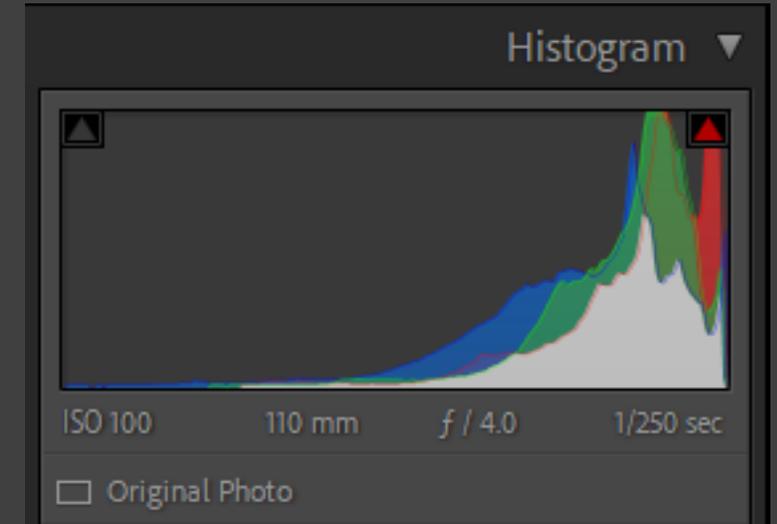
Underexposed
(Blacks clipped)



Correctly Exposed



Over Exposed
(Whites clipped)

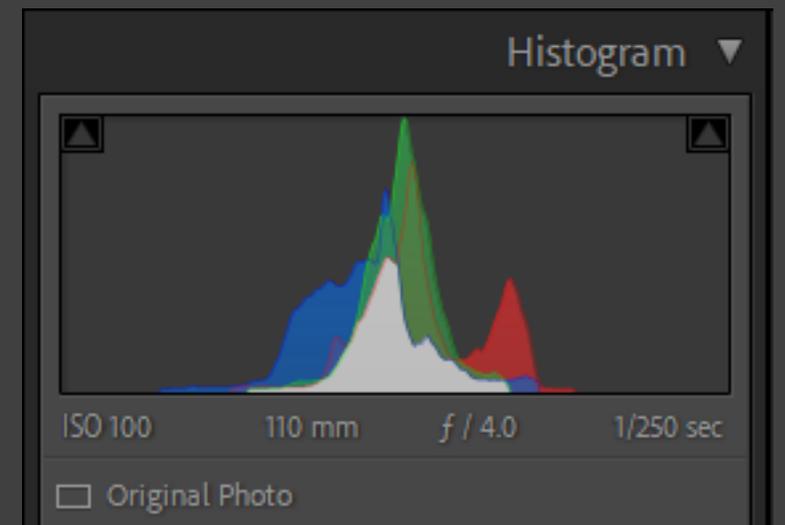
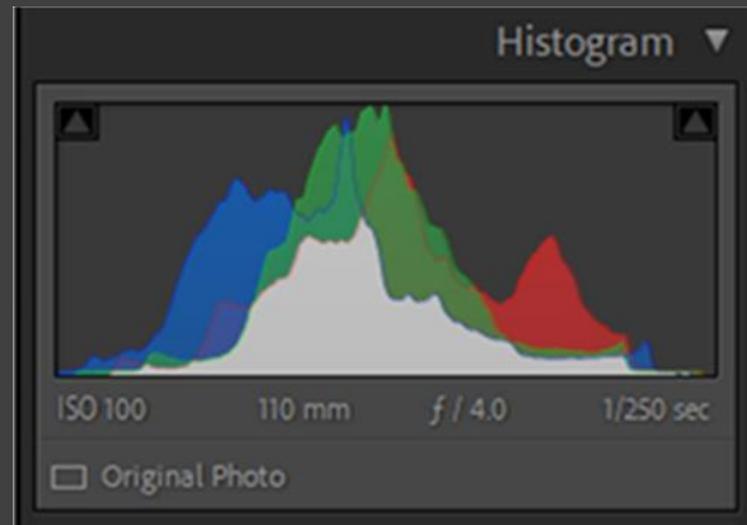
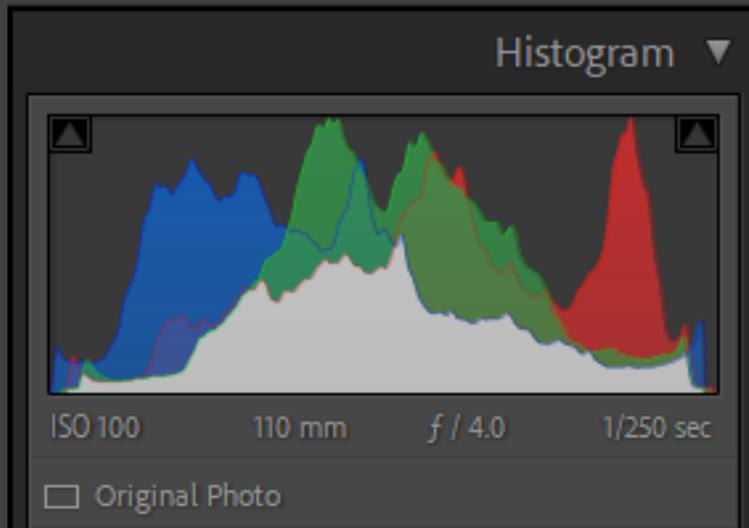


READING THE HISTOGRAM

High Contrast

Mid Contrast

Low Contrast

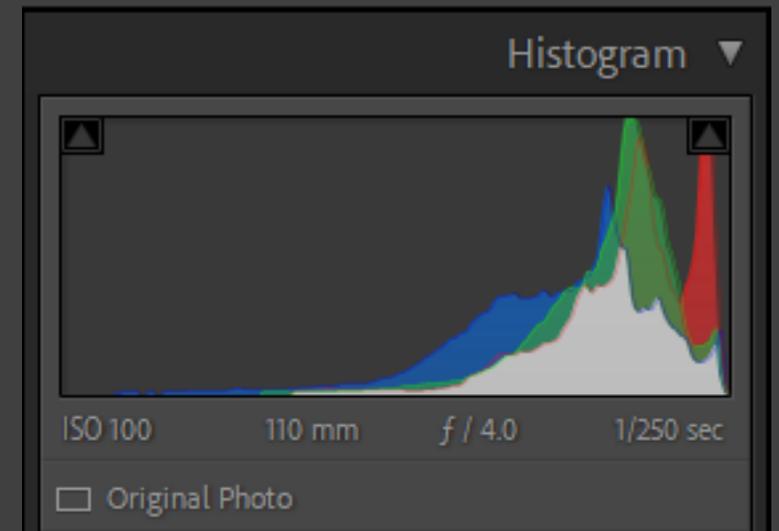
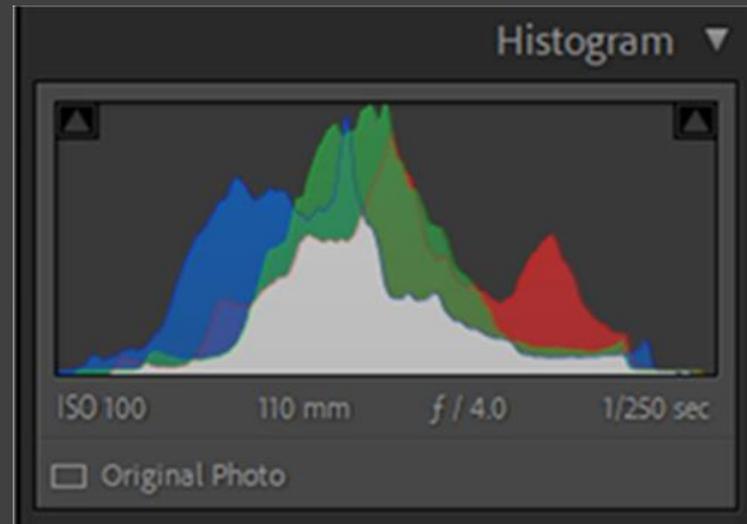
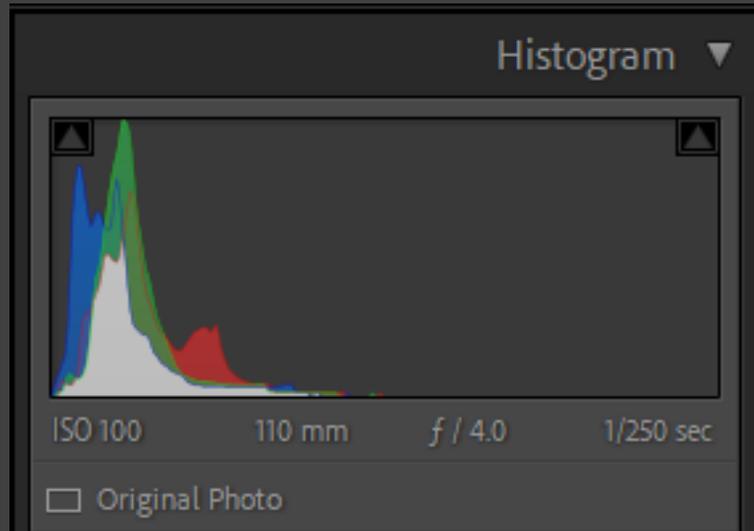


READING THE HISTOGRAM

Low Key

Full dynamic range

High Key



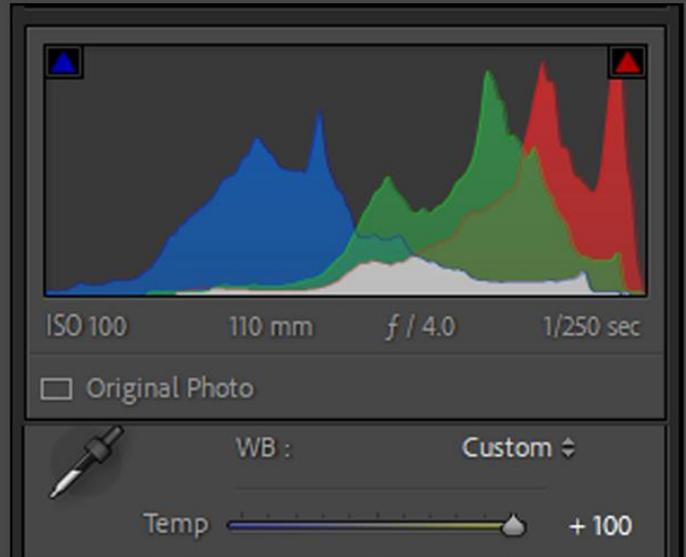
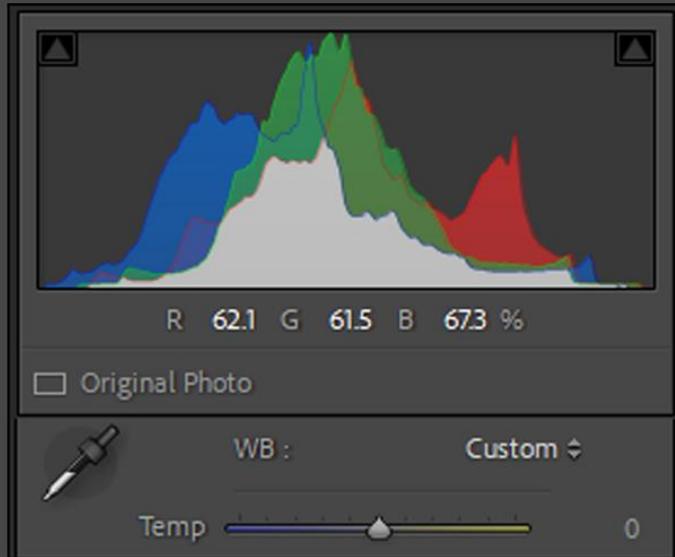
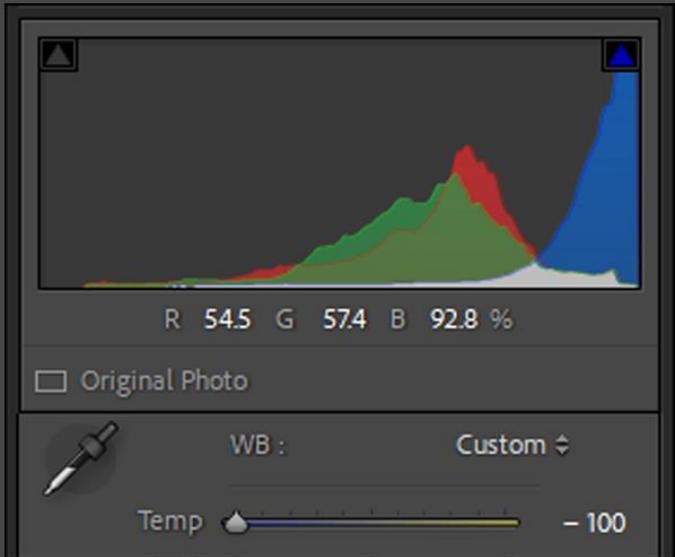
GLOBAL ADJUSTMENTS

- Colour Temperature
- Tint
- Exposure
- Whites
- Highlights
- Blacks
- Shadows
- Contrast
- Clarity
- Texture
- Dehaze
- Saturation
- Vibrance

THE COLOUR TEMPERATURE TOOL

- Measurement of the colour of light, expressed in degrees Kelvin.
- White light is between 5000 to 5500 degrees kelvin, lower temperatures appear more yellow/orange and higher temperatures appear more blue.
- It may seem contrary but we describe blue light as “cool” and yellow/orange light as “warm”.
- Your camera’s “White Balance” can be set to a fixed temperature or, if set to “auto”, it will assess and set the colour temperature based on the scene.
- You can adjust white balance in lightroom using the “Temp” slider or the eye dropper tool 
- You can see how the tool boosts the Blue and Red+Green channels in the following slide.

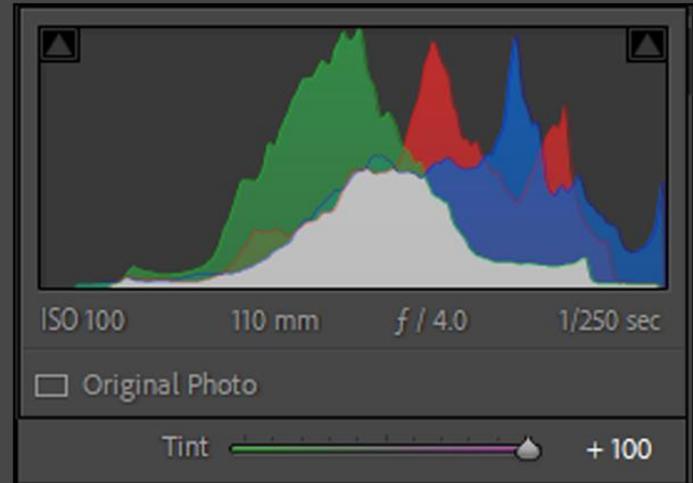
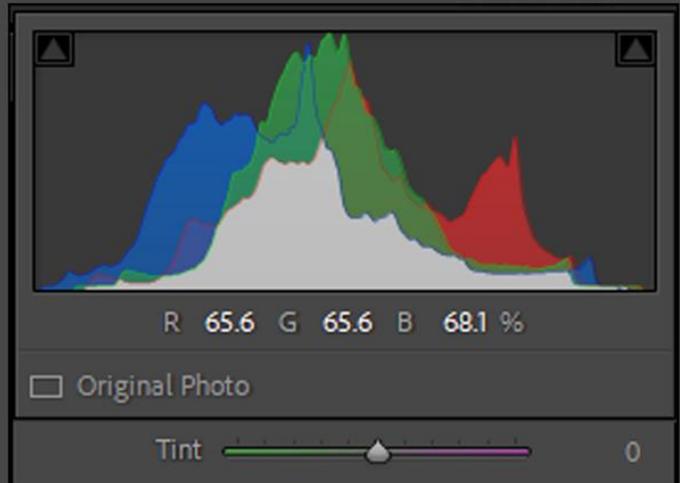
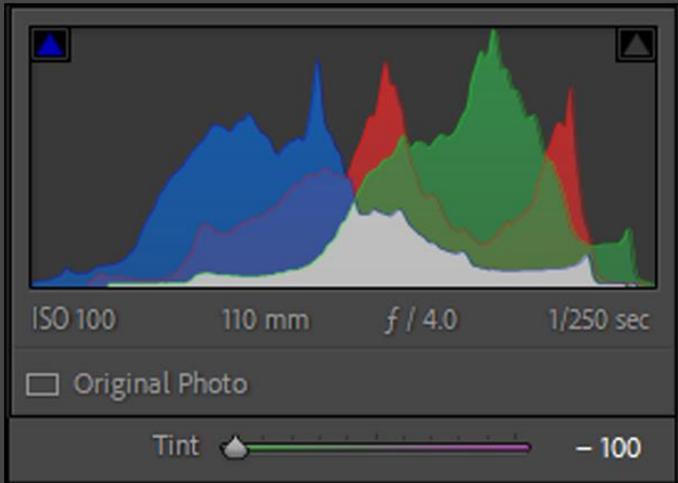
THE COLOUR TEMPERATURE TOOL



THE TINT TOOL

- As you can see the Temp tool makes the image more Yellow or Blue.
- The tint tool has the same effect but makes the image more Red or Green.
- You can see how the tool boosts the Green and Blue+Red channels in the following slide.
-

THE TINT TOOL

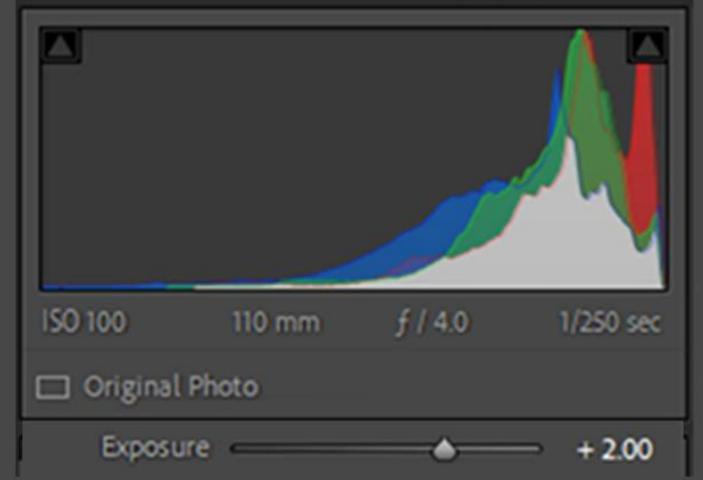
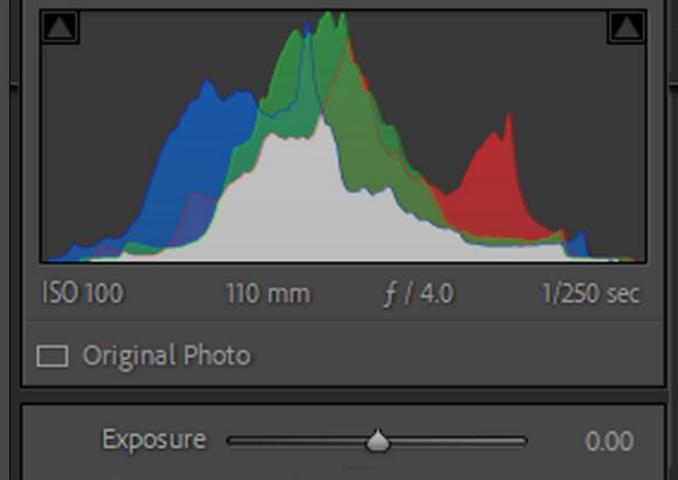
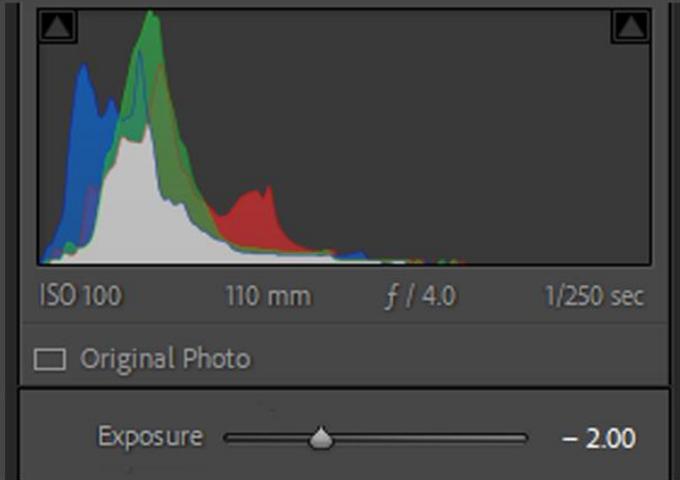


THE EXPOSURE TOOL

- The “Exposure” tool in Lightroom mimics the effect of using higher or lower ISO settings in your camera
- The tool allows you to adjust an image by the equivalent of up to five f stops in either direction
- Provided there is no black or white clipping it can be used to adjust for incorrect exposure in camera*
- In conjunction with other tools it can also be used to manipulate the final look and feel of your image (including High Key, Low key and how midtones appear)

* As it is an ISO type adjustment increasing exposure accentuates noise in the image

THE EXPOSURE TOOL

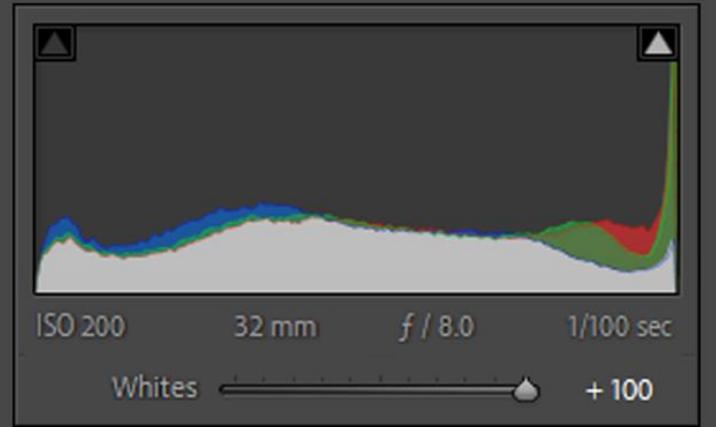
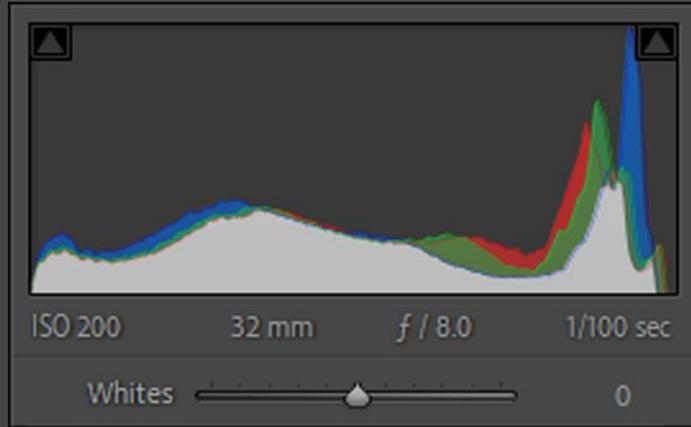
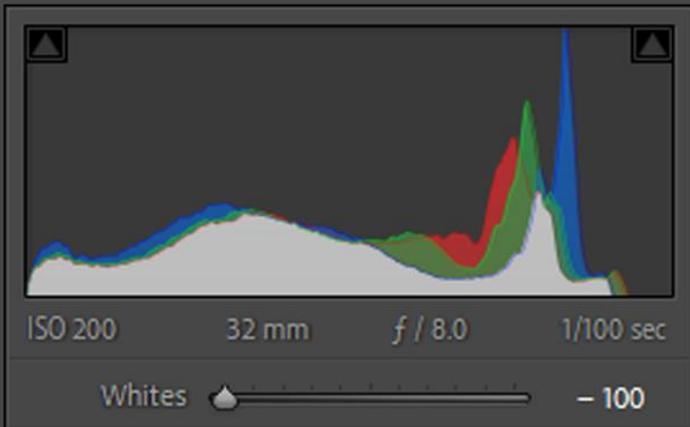


THE WHITES TOOL

The “Whites” tool sets the bright white point in the image by extending the dynamic range represented in the histogram to the right.

The histogram is stretched but the pure black point is preserved.

THE WHITES TOOL



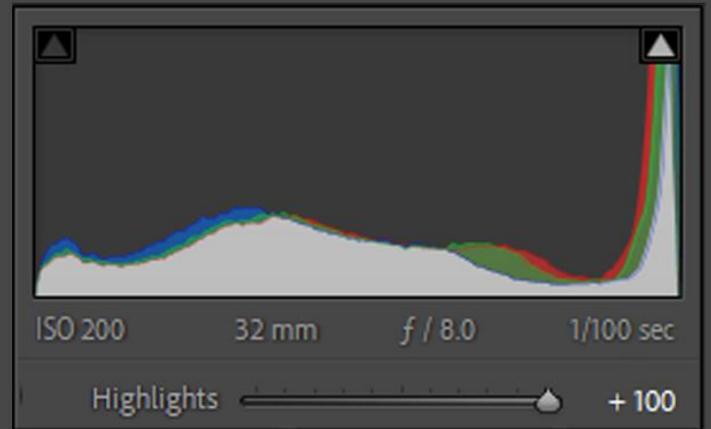
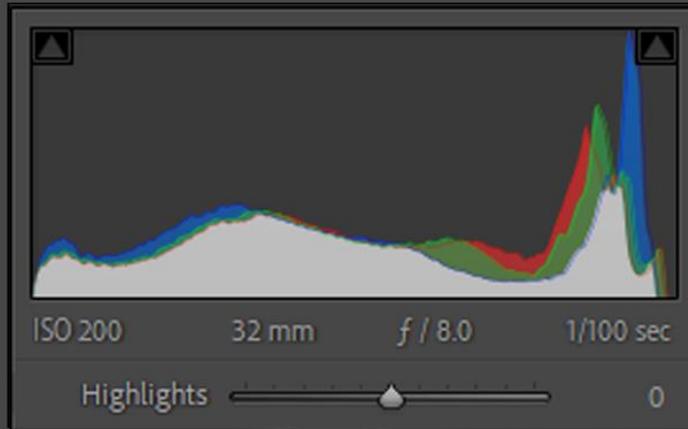
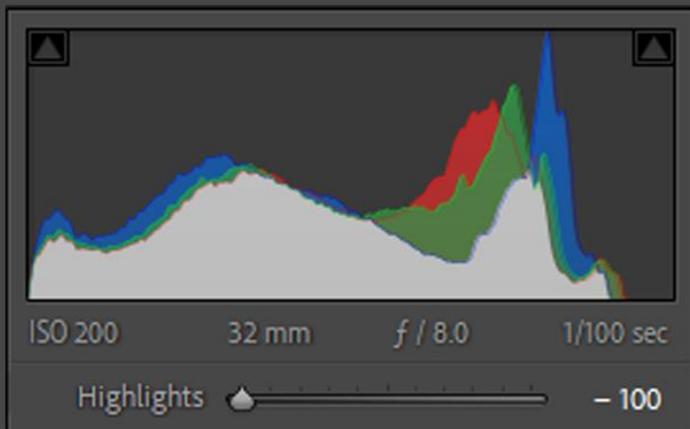
THE HIGHLIGHTS TOOL

The “Highlights” tool lightens or darkens the the lightest parts of the image.

The pure black point is preserved.

This tool can be used to bring back details in the bright areas by moving the slider to the left

THE HIGHLIGHTS TOOL

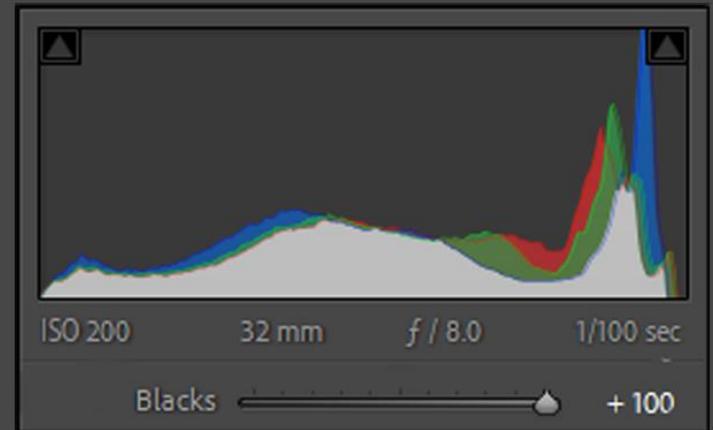
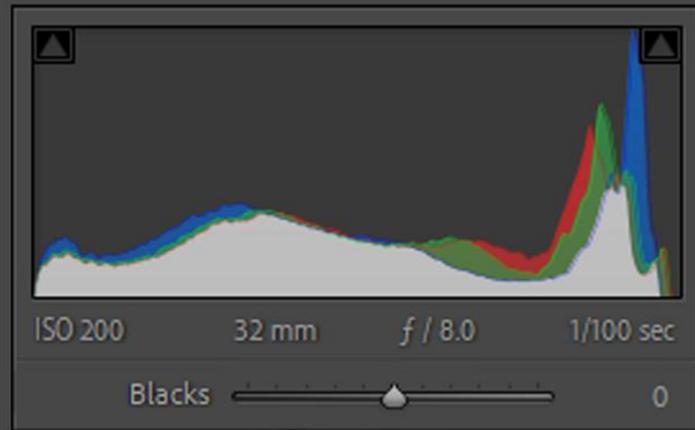
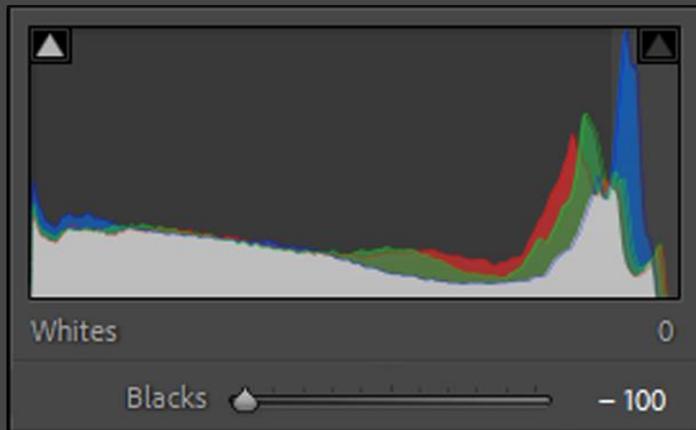


THE BLACKS TOOL

The “Blacks” tool sets the pure black point in the image by extending the dynamic range represented in the histogram to the left.

The histogram is stretched but the bright white point is preserved.

THE BLACKS TOOL



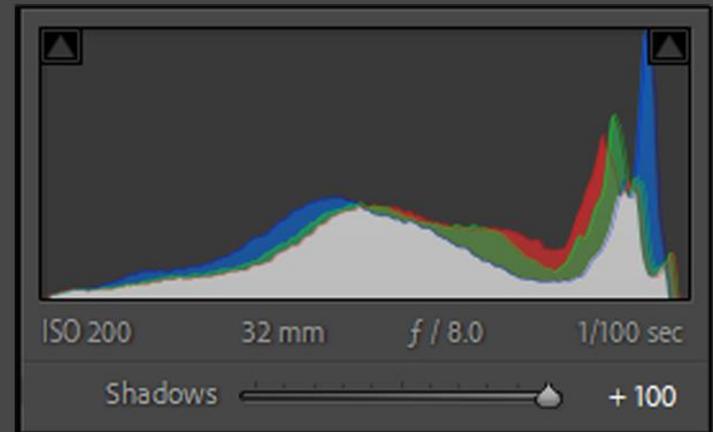
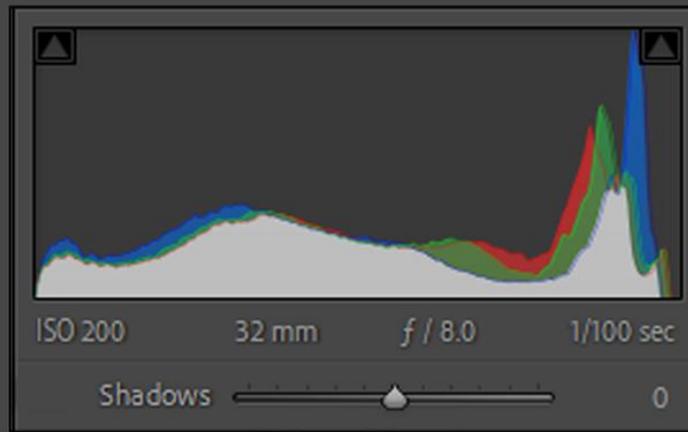
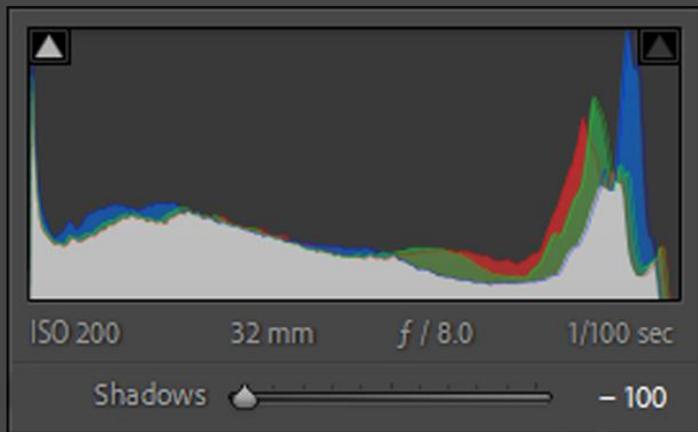
THE SHADOWS TOOL

The “Shadows” tool lightens or darkens the darkest parts of the image.

The bright white point is preserved.

This tool can be used to bring back details in the dark areas by moving the slider to the right.

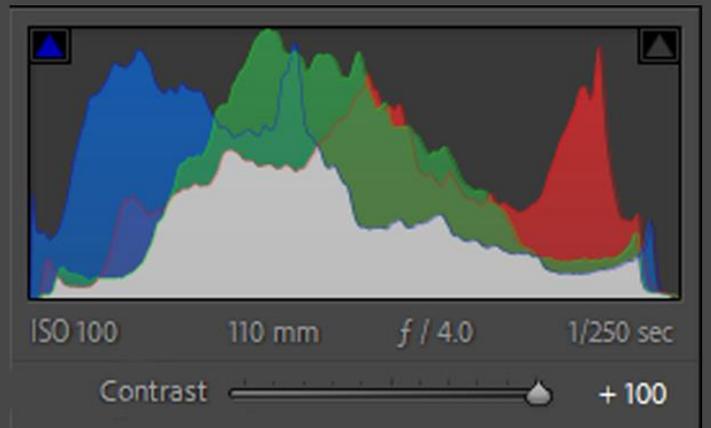
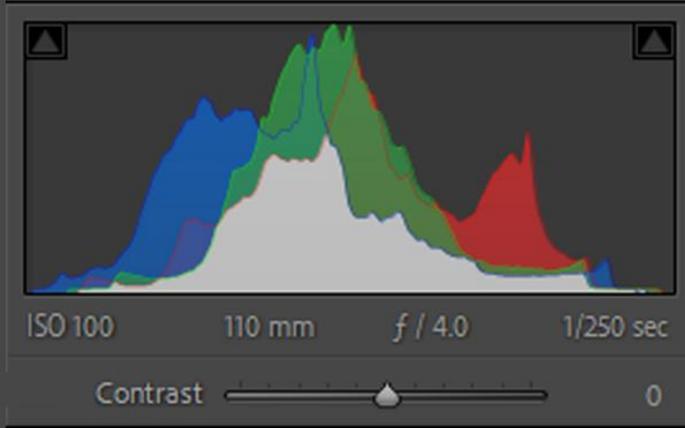
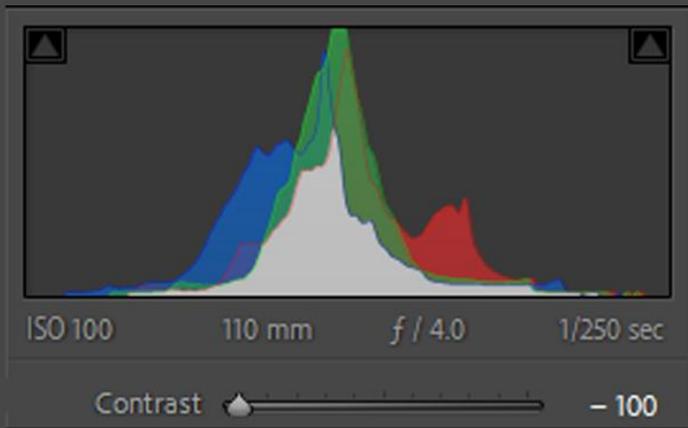
THE SHADOWS TOOL



THE CONTRAST TOOL

- Images with high levels of deep blacks and bright whites are “High Contrast”
- The contrast tool increases or reduces contrast in the whole image:
 - To increase contrast it makes the bright areas brighter and dark areas darker.
 - And to reduce contrast it does the reverse.
- In the following slide note how it amplifies the luminance of the RGB channels and extends the histogram.

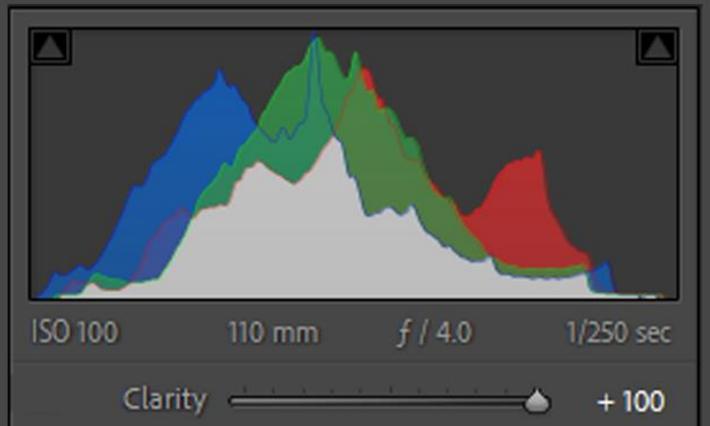
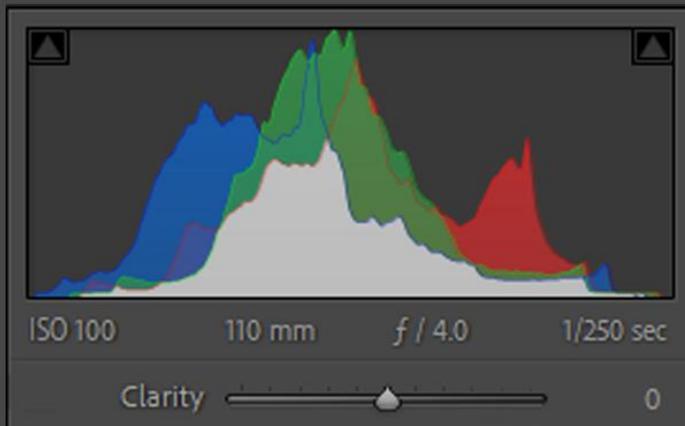
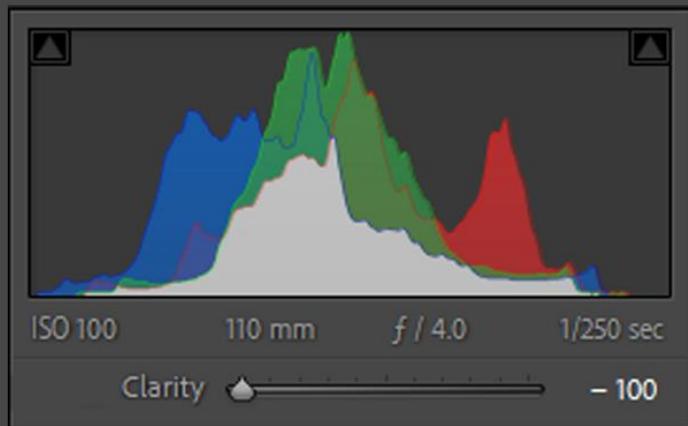
THE CONTRAST TOOL



THE CLARITY TOOL

- The clarity tool increases or reduces overall contrast in mid tones.
- In the following slide note how the luminance of the RGB channels is changed but the dynamic range is not affected significantly.

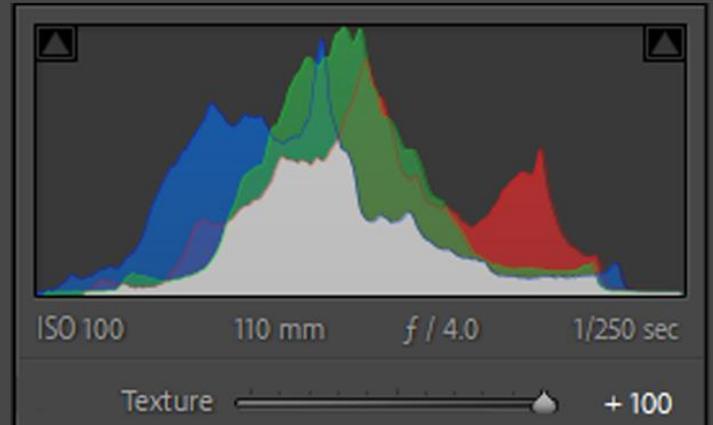
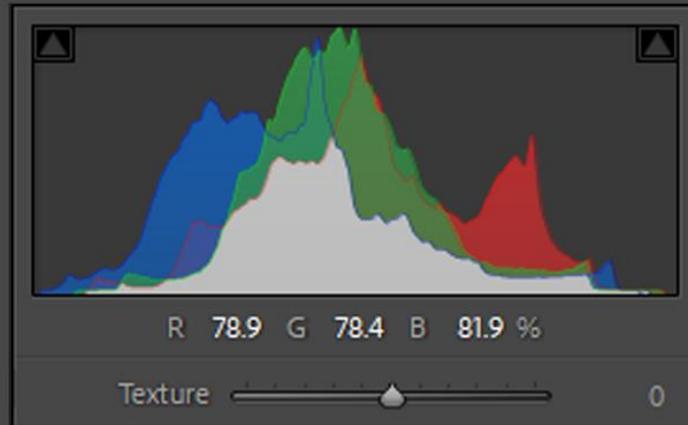
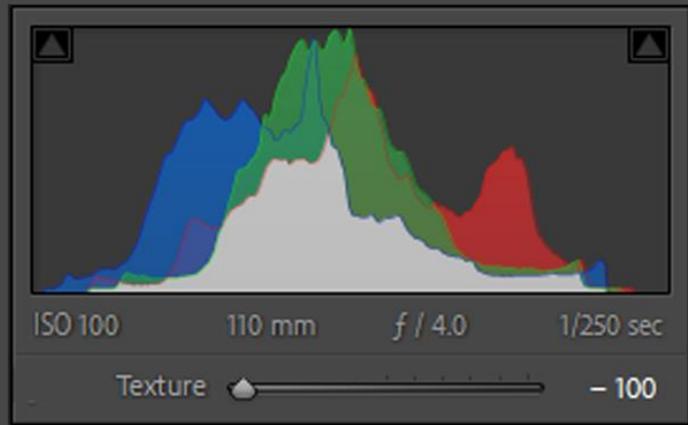
THE CLARITY TOOL



THE TEXTURE TOOL

- The texture tool increases or reduces contrast in the areas with highest detail
- Closely related to sharpening
- In the following slide note how the changes are mainly small changes in the dark and light parts of the histogram.

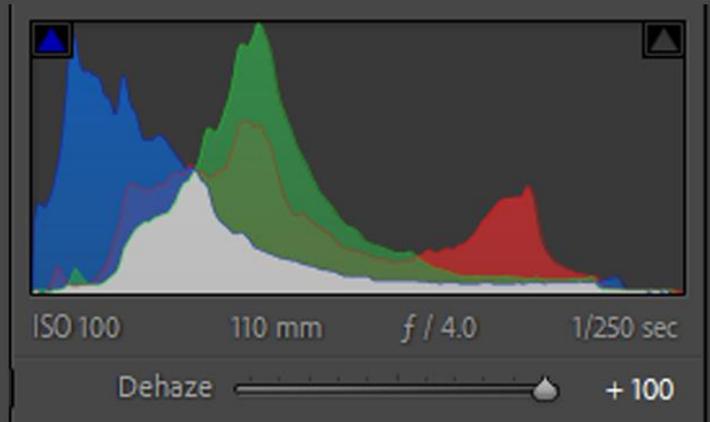
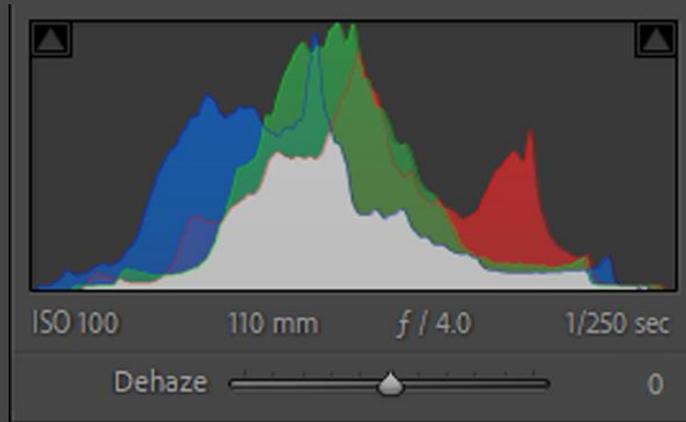
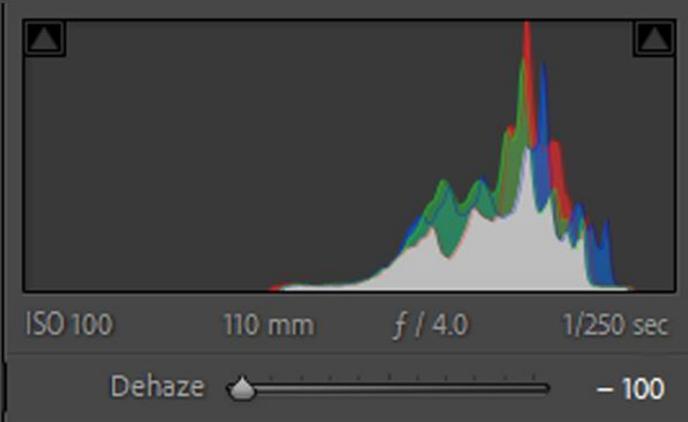
THE TEXTURE TOOL



THE DEHAZE TOOL

- The dehaze tool increases or reduces colour contrast in areas that have less detail.
- Affects the blue channel the most.

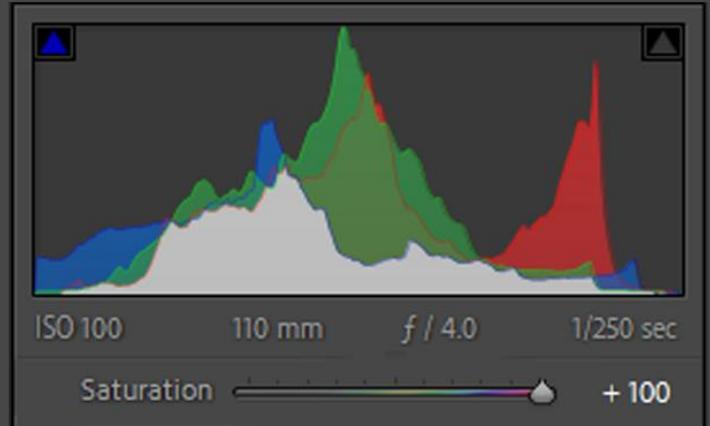
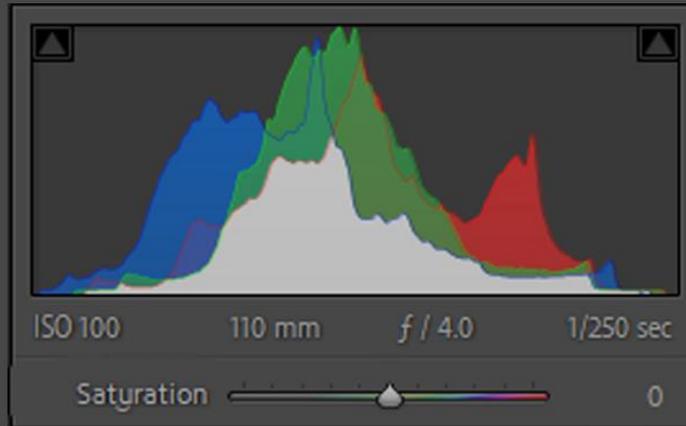
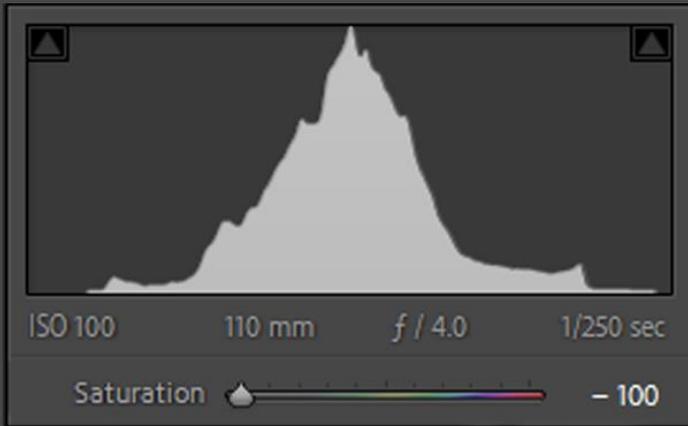
THE DEHAZE TOOL



THE SATURATION TOOL

The saturation tool increases or reduces the intensity of all colours in the image.

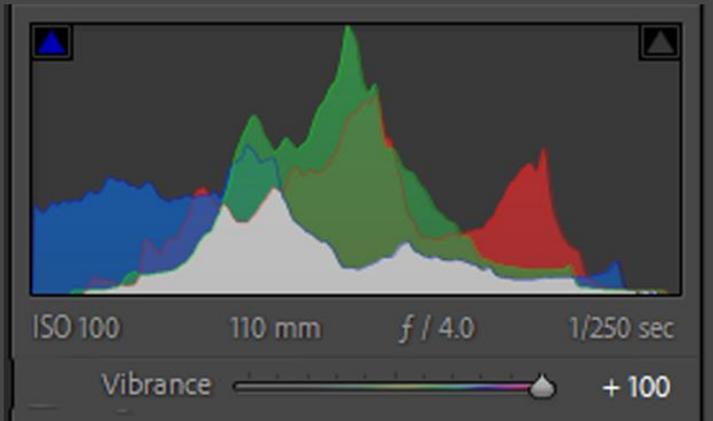
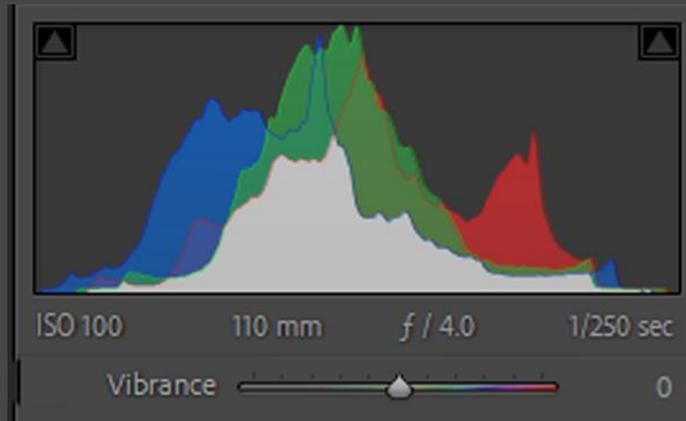
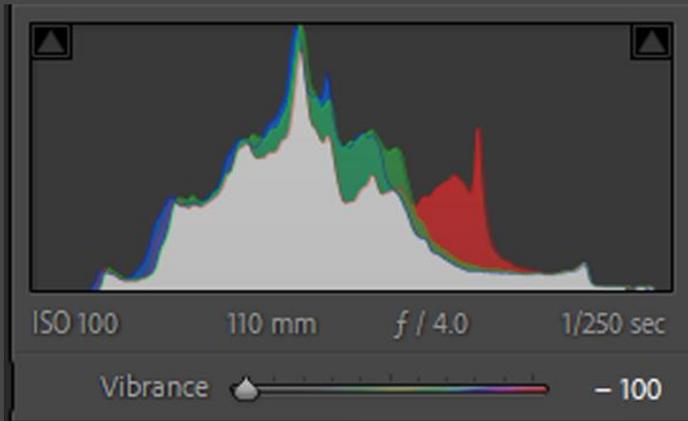
THE SATURATION TOOL



THE VIBRANCE TOOL

- The vibrance tool increases or reduces the intensity of the less saturated colours in the image.
- Particularly good at preserving skin tones.
- Comparison of the next slide to the saturation slide makes the differences a lot clearer.

THE VIBRANCE TOOL

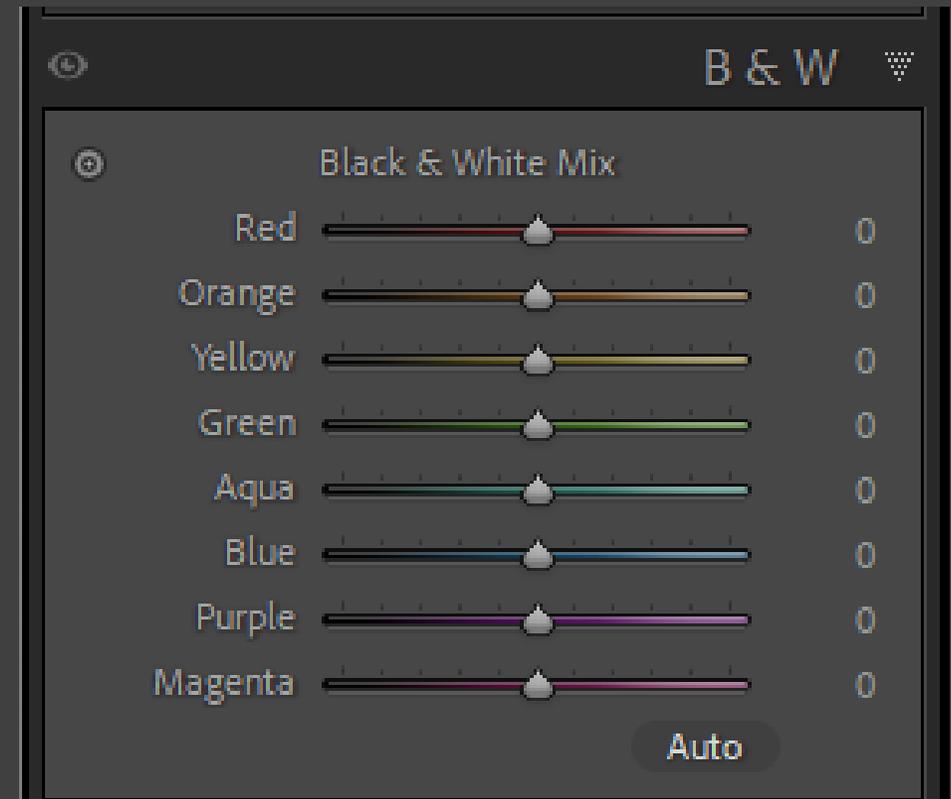


MONO PROCESSING

- Do NOT desaturate your image to create a mono image.
- Doing so removes the ability to adjust mono tones using colour adjustments.
- Select the B & W processing option in your software. In lightroom this is the  button in the “Basic” development panel.
- This converts the colours in your image to grayscale but preserves the ability to adjust colour tones and thus adjust the tonal balance in your mono image.

MONO PROCESSING

- All of the global tools that we have covered so far work in Mono as well.
- In Lightroom the B & W colour mixer looks like this.
- Moving the slider for a colour to the right lightens the grayscale parts of the image related to that colour and moving it to the left darkens them.



MONO PROCESSING

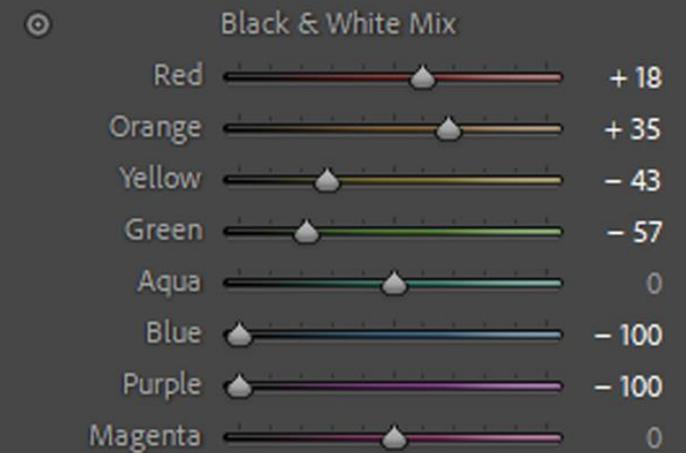
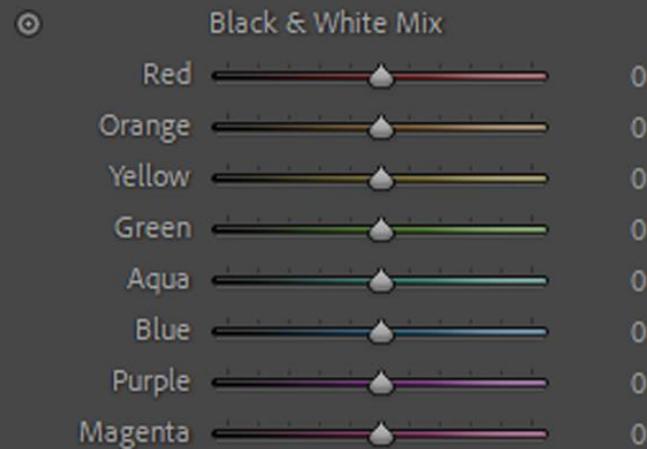
Colour original



Mono conversion



Mono processed



LOCAL ADJUSTMENTS

By now your processed image will be looking pretty good but is it good enough?

Its time to talk about.....

LYIN' EYES

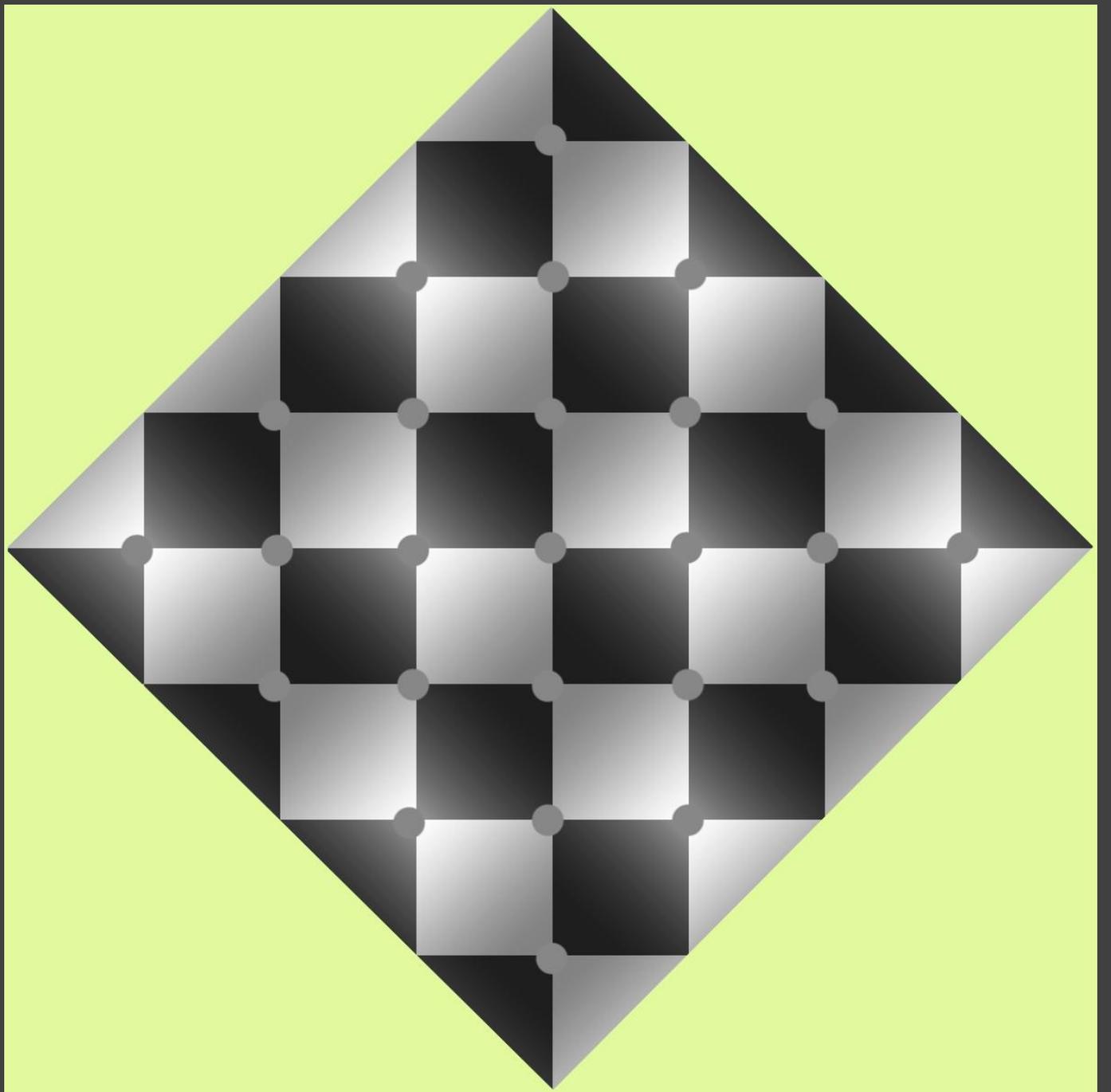
They say the camera never lies so why doesn't your image show the scene like it felt at the time?

LYIN' EYES

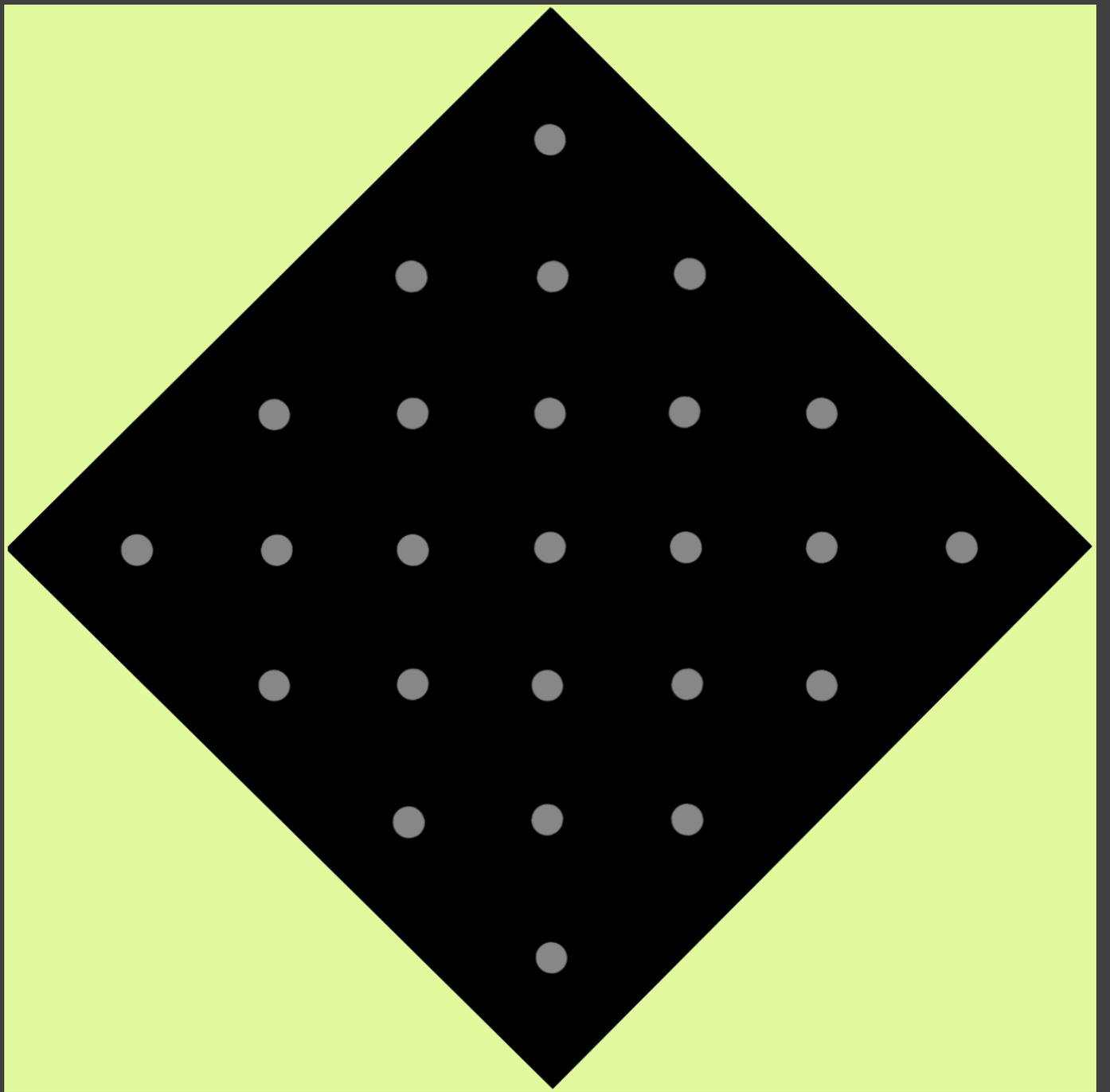
1. You are creating a two dimensional representation of a three dimensional scene.
2. Your eyes see differently to a camera.
3. Seeing is different to feeling.

Let's deal with how we see first.....

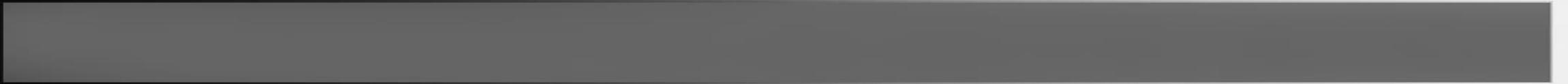
How many
shades of
grey are the
dots?



Just the
one!



How about this next one is it one
shade of grey?





Again just the one shade!

WHY IS THIS?

TRY THIS VISUAL EXPERIMENT?



1. Hold your arm out with your thumb and index finger extended
2. Focus on the end of your thumb.
3. Without changing your point of focus note how much detail you can see on the end your index finger.

HOW OUR EYES READ A SCENE

Your eyes have a very narrow area of sharp focus.

They build up an overall picture by scanning the scene

They are drawn to areas that:

- Have high contrast
- Have high detail
- Are brighter

THE OLD MASTERS KNEW THIS

Meleager and Atalanta
by
Jacob Jordaens



LOCAL ADJUSTMENTS

In the darkroom “Dodging and burning” techniques were used to enhance an image.

Dodging and burning means selectively lightening or darkening parts of the image.

Your software will allow you to use any of the global tools in selective parts of the image.

So you can dodge, burn and a lot more using “Local Adjustments”.

The aim is to create, or enhance, the feel that you want the image to convey and to direct the viewers eye through the image in the order that you want.

WHY MAKE LOCAL ADJUSTMENTS?

- Add depth to the image
- Eliminate distractions
- Balance the key elements of the image
- Lead the eye through the image in the way that you want
- Make the subject stand out
- Create the feel that you want

SOME SUGGESTIONS

It is not as complicated as it may seem. Having made your global adjustments you will be well on the way to achieving the feel that you want and the majority of local adjustments you will make will be small “tweaks” in contrast, detail, lightness and darkness. Here are some suggestions to get you started:

To make the subject stand out consider:

- Lightening the subject
- Increasing subject Clarity to add contrast in the subject
- Increasing subject Texture to make the subject appear sharper and more detailed compared to the rest of the image.
- Adjusting the contrast between the subject and the rest of the image.
- Using dodging and burning on the highlights and shadows in the subject to create more 3D “pop”. This can be done by making the adjustments strongest towards the edges of the subject but you need to be careful to keep this consistent with the direction and strength of the light.

SOME SUGGESTIONS CONTD.

To add depth to the image consider:

- Your eyes see more detail, more contrast and stronger colours in the foreground so try using a gradient adjustment to boost these in your image.
- You see less detail, less contrast and weaker colours, possibly with some haze, in the distance so consider using a heavily feathered brush to make these adjustments along the horizon/far background.
- Using gradients to darken the top and/or the bottom of the image can achieve a similar effect to the background adjustments and can also be used as an alternative to a Vignette to help direct the eyes. This can also be effective with sunsets.
- Things that are warmer in tone can feel closer to the viewer and things that are cooler can feel further away. Consider warming the foreground and cooling the background.

SOME SUGGESTIONS CONTD.

To eliminate distractions consider:

- If the distraction is an element that is not required or detracts from your story clone it out.
- If it is important or plays a minor part but it is “too loud” consider toning it down by:
 - Reducing contrast between the distracting element, its surroundings and the subject (colour and lightness)
 - Reducing contrast and texture within the distracting element

ALL THE WORLDS A STAGE

A reminder from last time – as with composition it may help to draw analogies with the theatre when considering local adjustments.

- The lead actor (s) - your subject
- The supporting actors and cast - characters that help tell the story
- The props - the objects that help tell the story and create the setting
- Front stage - foreground setting
- The backdrop - background setting
- The lighting - creates mood and focuses attention

LOCAL ADJUSTMENTS

Raw image



With global adjustments



With Local adjustments



Global adjustments

Highlights -100

Shadows - 100

Texture +12

Clarity +18

Dehaze +7

Local adjustments

Subject:

Exposure + 0.4

Background:

Highlights -100

Whites -100

Saturation - 66

Vignette added

LOCAL ADJUSTMENTS

Raw image



With global adjustments



Shadows +54
Clarity +12

With Local adjustments



Foreground Texture + 31
Subject Exposure + 0.41
Subject Highlights - 100
Subject Texture + 41
Hills Exposure + 0.54
Hills Dehaze - 15

SLEDGEHAMMER

You don't need a sledgehammer to crack a nut.

It is very easy to go too far, particularly when the fashion is to push up the contrast to add punch to images. This can drown out more subtle messages and your message can be lost.

Some suggestions:

1. After making an adjustment pull the slider back until the adjustment retains the effect you want without being lost completely.
2. Leave your processed image a day or two and look at it again with fresh eyes.
3. Adjust as necessary and repeat step 2.

QUESTIONS

NO MORE HEROES?

YES THERE ARE SO...

HERE WE GO AGAIN

How many song titles did you
spot in this presentation?

SONG TITLES

1. Every Picture Tells A Story - Rod Stewart
2. The Last Time - Rolling Stones/Taylor Swift
3. Lyin' Eyes - The Eagles
4. Sledgehammer - Peter Gabriel
5. No More Heroes - The Stranglers
6. Here We Go Again - Ray Charles/Aretha Franklin