

Monochrome Conversions

To make effective monochrome conversions you need to pre-visualise what you are trying to achieve by deciding if a colour is going to be rendered as a dark or light tone.

In CS3 use adjustment layers and the *Black and White* filter – this allows you to adjust the tone that individual colours will convert to in monochrome. It is possible to apply several corrections in the same layer. Sometimes however a global adjustment will not always give a suitable result over all the image – (a good example is if blue and cyan are adjusted to create more contrast in the sky any shadows areas containing a cyan component will also be darkened which is undesirable.) A mask can be applied to the *Black and White* adjustment layer to leave a monochrome sky with the rest of the image still coloured. If a further a Black and White adjustment layer is now applied with a different adjustment it will not affect the area that has already been converted to monochrome. Using a series of *Black and White* adjustment layers and masking it then comes possible to exercise very great tonal control over the image.

If you do not have the black and white filter HUE AND SATURATION can be used, make a HUE AND SATURATION adjustment layer, and desaturate the image. Then choosing the individual colours from the drop down box adjust the lightness control to give the desired tonal effect. If you create different tones for a colour in different parts of the image paint a mask to that part to bring back the original colour. Then apply a further HUE AND SATURATION layer in a similar manner- it will not affect the area that is already monochrome.

If you are converting from RAW using ACR - a similar type of process can be achieved using Smart Objects and layer masking. Open the image in Camera Raw and make the first tonal conversion required then SHIFT Open to open it as a Smart Object; apply an appropriate layer mask to this layer. Then FILE>PLACE to reselect and then reopen the RAW file, apply adjustments to this file and then click OK and then the TICK on the top tool bar, apply appropriate masking to the new layer. Double clicking the layer icon will reopen ACR allowing further editing of the tones.

A similar type of process can be achieved from other RAW to monochrome converters in which multiple adjusted images are imported and stacked and then treated with layer masks or the use of the eraser tool to create the final image – though this process is very memory hungry.

Jon C Allanson LRPS CPAGB BPE2*