

## Case Study #02

# PHOTOGRAPHING FABULOUS FLOWERS

The use of black and white in flower photography is a powerful, but underutilized tool. As discussed in the flower guide, monochrome can be used to showcase a flower's shape, texture, and tone. Let's take a closer look at what makes an image a good

candidate for black and white by analyzing the rose image.

The rose in the image was initially shot in color, but its potential for a black and white image was immediately obvious.



Photograph by Leanne Cleaveley



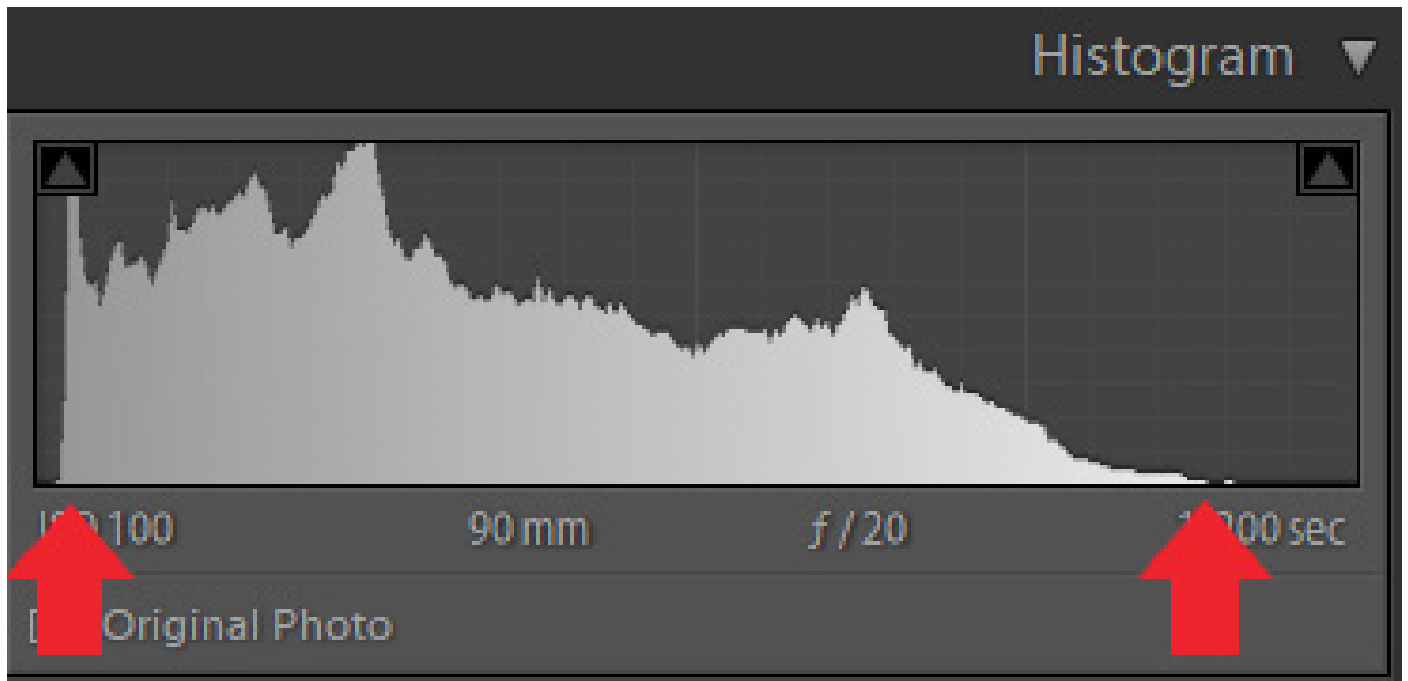
Photograph by Leanne Cleaveley

The image was shot with a 90mm macro lens at f/20. An external flash was used to cast a diffused light just across the top parts of the petals. This created some contrast in the bright petals and dark shadows in between. It also helped highlight the petals' texture.

The shape of the rose is quite pleasing, with a gentle spiral. The image was composed with the golden spiral in mind so that the viewer's eyes would follow that spiral in to rest on the middle of

the flower. You can see the middle falls close to, but not exactly, in the "sweet spot" as determined by the overlay.

The depth of field allowed for just enough of the edge of the petals' texture to show, while leaving the rest softly out of focus. You can almost feel the silky soft texture when looking at the in-focus parts of the petals. The out-of-focus parts add to the overall "softness" of the image.



Photograph by Leanne Cleaveley

As seen in this image, the photograph has a satisfactory tonal range. Although there is no pure white, the range is wide enough as it extends

from black to almost white. This is something to look for when shooting in monochrome or with a monochrome conversion in mind.





Photograph by Leanne Cleaveley

Another factor that led to the conversion of this image from color to black and white was how the image appeared in color. The color photograph, seen in the image above, isn't bad itself. For all of the reasons mentioned above (tonal range, texture, shape, and contrast), the photo is decent.

However, the fact that the whole photo is pink, with no other color for contrast or interest, just makes it seem somewhat boring. Now remember that this is simply an opinion, but when you consider that most flower photographs are in color, you need to also question if the colors are working for or against you in an image.

In this case, I decided that the color wasn't adding anything to the photo. And for that reason, combined with the other above factors, it was easy to see that this photo was better suited to black and white.

We don't see many black and white flower images, so they tend to stand out for their lack of color. Flowers are often photographed with color in mind. Next time you are taking a flower image, ask yourself whether your photograph has the tonal range, contrast, texture, and shape to make it a good candidate for black and white.