

This past school year I made the transition from analog to digital. For the first project it was just the printing but for each project since I have shot and printed digitally. I made the decision to make this change now while I still had people around me to assist and educate me to help make the transition a little smoother.

When I shoot film I feel that each frame I capture needs to be calculated and perfectly planned before I let myself press the shutter. That is because I know once the roll is complete there is still a lot of work to be done. For the most part now when I use film I will send it out for processing and have 4x6 prints made instead of printing contact sheets. Once I have the prints I will lay them all out on my bed or floor and begin to remove prints and pair others until it is down to the select few that I really like and then I will approach sequencing by moving the prints around to create interesting lines or juxtapositions. With analog it is a very tactile and organic experience - I try to approach digital with the same ideas but it still works a little different.

When I shoot digital I always seem to bracket which is something that I hardly ever do with film anymore. I pay as much attention to framing and setting up the shot with digital as I do with film but with digital I feel the freedom to move around and try slightly different angles. The beauty of digital is that I can go home right after shooting and plug in my card and have my whole day right in front of me ready to be edited. I begin by separating my raw files from my jpegs so I can preview the images quicker and then from there I make a selection and start copying the files into an edited folder. I will study the different angles and exposures that I used and see which ones work the best. Once I have selected all the images that I am interested in pursuing further I will then go in and start moving the files around to try different sequencing. I use the film strip file preview and work through and make changes to my selection and try to create the same pairings as I would if I was sorting them out in my bed.

The one thing that really scares me about digital is the ability to delete images as you shoot. For the most part I try to avoid this practice because you never know what you may not be seeing in the LCD screen that would show up in a print. Something wonderful happens when I am shooting film and I discover secret shots on my contact prints or something appears that I did not see when I was composing

the shots. By quickly deleting these mistakes on your digital camera you really lose the sense of wonderment that you feel when you get a roll of film back.

The one major component to digital that I am not sure I will ever get over is the instant gratification that I get when I shoot. As soon as the shutter is released I can look at what has been captured and make adjustments immediately to correct any mistakes instead of waiting to get a roll of film back only to discover that an error has been made and the whole thing will have to be shot all over again. The only downside to this is the fact that some people that shoot digital have an obsession with checking the screen after every shot they take. I was at a concert recently where there was a photographer taking pictures of a band on stage and after every frame he shot he would look at the image and smile or laugh and then jump on the stage to show the band. It was the most obnoxious photographer behaviour I have ever witnessed. Although it did teach me to check once or twice for exposure and then shoot as if the screen did not exist.

For me I do not think there will ever come a time when I will give film up entirely. There is something about it - maybe a connection to the past, to a process that has not changed in over a hundred years. I am not sure what it is that always draws me back to film but I think that pull will always be there for me. Although there is a lot of talk right now of film becoming an item of the past I think that it is the industry reacting the same way that it reacted when people thought black and white photography would become obsolete once colour came along. I think there will always be a market for film even as digital advances and surpasses the quality of film. The process of actually being in the darkroom will never get old for me - it is something that I will always return to and I know that I cannot be the only one out there that feels the same way.