Digital Photo Imaging

How to color correct in Photoshop and create a Duotone

There will be many, many times that you find yourself having to color correct a photograph, due to the White Balance being off because the camera may read one lighting situation but it’s another. There can also be issues with mixed lighting, where the natural light from the window is lighting the room in addition to the overhead lighting, etc.

As with anything with Photoshop, there’s several different ways to get the same outcome, but here is what I do when I color correct my images. One thing to remember is that on the web and for our purposes in class we are staying in RGB mode- which means that all the colors in the photograph are made up of Red, Green and Blue in varying degrees. When a subject is too much of one color, use the compliment of the color to reduce it. In computer language, that would be Cyan/Red, Magenta/Green, and Yellow/Blue.

To color correct an image:

Go to Image on menu bar-

Image > Adjustments > Color Balance.

Slide the bars to where it looks good.

You may also use photo filters to counteract what’s going on- ie if it’s too yellow go to the blue filter.

Go to Image > Adjustments > Photo Filter

Change the photo filter to whatever temperature is the opposite of what the cast is- ie use a blue cooling filter if the photo is too yellow and vice-versa.

Image > Adjustments > Cooling Filter

You can adjust the opacity of the filter as needed.

Another quick and easy way to color correct is to let the program decide for you- sometimes it works perfectly, sometimes not so much, or it may need tweeking. Go to Image > Auto Color. If it looks good leave it there, otherwise you can then go back to changing the brightness/ contrast or adjust the color balance from there.

To change to duotone, which is one color plus another color (two tone):

Go to Image on menu bar

Image > Adjustments > Mode Greyscale

A menu will come up asking if it’s okay to discard color information- YES.

Another menu will come up with Duotone Options-

Preset > custom

Type > Duotone

Ink 1 > Black

Ink 2 > click on the second box, and you will have a menu pop up- it will say

PANTONE Solid Coated- use that.

Scroll with your little eye dropper to the browns and select a brown you like. You can see what your photo looks like as you do it. When you find one you like, Click OK.

I then go back to

Mode > RGB so that I can tweek the color a little more and save it as a JPEG.

Put your work on a three- photograph template, naming it Color Correction at the time- the top photo should be the original, second color corrected, and third sepia.