

## Black and white photography

Vakhtang Egiazarov

Tbilisi Georgia.



### Article History

Received: 27.08.2025

Accepted: 26.09.2025

Published: 05.10.2025

### Corresponding Author:

Vakhtang Egiazarov



### Cite this Article

Vakhtang Egiazarov, Black and white photography (2025) *GRS Journal of Arts and Educational Sciences, Vol-1(Iss-4).1*

Photography is an art that can portray life in many ways and show us a single moment from different angles. Black and white photography, which was born in the early 19th century, was the only reality before the advent of color imaging, although its importance did not end with the use of film. Monochrome images have retained their dominant place in art. Despite the development of technology, which made it possible to successfully capture beautiful colors on film, black and white photography still has a completely different charm. Black and white photographs usually evoke nostalgia and a feeling of eternity. The absence of color takes them out of the context of time, which makes them more universal and historical.

Black and white photographs create a mysterious and interesting atmosphere that is characteristic of them. Two completely opposite colors perfectly express the spiritual state of the photo. The sharp contrast of black and white adds drama and intensity to the photo. It is the contrast that gives the image strength and creates a sense of depth. In the absence of color, black and white photography emphasizes the roughness and smoothness of surfaces. Color is a powerful but sometimes distracting element, with its volume, the viewer's gaze is focused directly on the texture, shape, geometry and emotion of the subject. Black and white portraiture is considered one of the most intimate forms of photography. The absence of color in a black and white portrait removes superficial elements: the color of clothing, makeup and focuses all attention on the person's face, eyes and expression. Photographers such as Henri Cartier-Bresson and Dorothea Lange were able to convey the spiritual state of a person, pain and joy, using only light and shadow. The black and white aesthetic and the essence of documentary photography together create a powerful and emotional narrative. The goal of documentary photography is not

only to capture a fact, but also to convey its essence, spirit and emotional weight. Even though today's technology offers thousands of colors, many documentary photographers still choose to shoot in black and white. This is not just nostalgia for the past, it is a conscious choice that gives the photo more power.

That is why Dorothea Lange's black-and-white photographs and Henri Cartier-Bresson's street shots are as relevant and powerful today as they were when they were taken. They are no longer simply documents of the Great Depression and Paris, they have taken on a significant place in black-and-white photography. The absence of color in the frame gives the main role to composition, the play of light and texture, or such details as the uneven surface of the road, worn clothing, cracks in the wall. These details allow the viewer to physically experience the events.

Documentary photographers who favored black and white used its power effectively. Sebastião Salgado's works, which depict working people and environmental problems, are characterized by sharp contrasts and deep blacks. This dramatic style emphasizes the gravity and grandeur of the subjects of his photographs. Robert Capa is one of the most famous war photographers, whose black and white shots are still shocking and realistic today. Monochrome photographs will always be relevant in photography.