The Invisible Story: Artistic Infrared Photography

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The Invisible Story Team



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The Light Spectrum



How Infrared Sees

What Reflects the Most Infrared Light?

Laurie J. Klein

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Objects that absorb or allow infrared light to pass through them will appear dark, and those objects that reflect infrared back toward the camera will appear light.

Highly Reflective	Typically Absorptive	Unpredictable
 Warm colors (red entries the visible spectrum) Deciduous foliage Clouds Human skin Some fabrics Some dyes Lighter rocks such as limestone 	 Cool colors (purple end of the visible spectrum) Non-deciduous foliage Dead deciduous foliage Skies Water, especially if cold Darker rocks and stones Glass, metal 	 Dyed hair Man-made fabrics and materials

Technical Aspects of Infrared

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Options for Getting Started in IR

Method	Pros	Cons
Lens mounted IR filter	• Inexpensive (\$35+)	Still subjects only
	 Any camera Fasily transported 	 Focus requires removing the filter
		Tripod is a must
Converted camera	Shoot as normal	Dedicated camera
	Tripod not required	• Conversion cost (\$250 -
	Moving subjects ok	\$350)
		 May mean carrying an additional camera

Key Decision Before Investing

Which are you most drawn to:

- The tonal qualities of black and white IR images –or–
- The false colors possible in channel swapped IR images –or–
- Both

Conversion Choices



- Single Spectrum Conversions
 - 590 nm: Super Color a lot of visible light adding significant color
 - 665 nm: Enhanced Color less visible light, less color
 - 720 nm: Standard balanced visible and IR light, limited color
 - 850 nm: Deep B&W no visible light, strong contrast between darks and lights
- Full Spectrum Conversion Any/all of the above plus a Hot Mirror filter for color

SPECTRUM COMPARISON

590 – Super Color

665 – Enhanced

720 – Standard

850 – Deep B&W



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Post Processing Infrared

Post processing is a must for creating rich, goodlooking infrared images.

The modifications that make our cameras capable of capturing light in the infrared spectrum produce images with compressed tones, unappealing red colors, and often too soft details.





Key Infrared Post Processing Factors

- Custom white balance
- Color treatment choice:
 - B&W
 - Channel swapped false color
 - Native white balanced color
- Contrast
- Sharpness
- Clarity
- The infrared "glow"

Custom White Balance



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Custom White Balance

White balance must be set in-camera and often in post. Our guide to infrared white balancing is available for free download at:

https://www.laurieklein.com/product/settingwhite-balance-in-infrared-photography/

Color Treatment Choice



Channel Swapped False Color



Native



Black & White

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Channel Swapping for False Color

Our guide to channel swapping is available for free download at:

https://www.laurieklein.com/product/createfalse-color/

The Infrared Glow

- Infrared film had no anti-halation layer
- Images made with IR film had a characteristic soft glow around bright regions and edges in the image caused by the reflection and scattering of light from the back surface of the film through the emulsion
- Many digital infrared artists choose to add the glow to get the traditional infrared look.

Glow



Tools to Add the Infrared Glow

- Photoshop
 - Diffuse Glow Filter
 - Gaussian Blur Filter for softness
- Nik Collection
 - Color Efex Pro
 - Silver Efex Pro
- Luminar
 - Glow filter
 - Mystical filter
 - Orton filter

Easy Infrared Post Processing

For the infrared photographer who wants to minimize the time spent post processing, we recommend:

• Luminar by Skylum

used either as a plug-in to Adobe or as a standalone editor available at https://skylum.com/luminar

• The Infrared Mastery II Look collection for Luminar available at https://www.laurieklein.com/product/infrared-mastery-ii/

Overview of Infrared Mastery II Look Collection for Luminar



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Learn More About Infrared



New edition released August 2020 by Amherst Publishing! Completely updated for current technology, software, and techniques. Presents recommendations on equipment, guidance on composition, detailed workflow and post processing information, and artistic tips and tricks.

Available on Amazon

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https://laurieklein.com/workshops

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