

# Film WITHOUT FILM



MASTERING  
DIGITAL IN  
THE TIMES  
OF FILM  
NOSTALGIA



stefan.chirila  
PHOTOGRAPHER  
WORKSHOP

[www.stefanchirila.com/workshop](http://www.stefanchirila.com/workshop)



Is this Film? - No.



The film look:

I. What is the film look?

II. What causes the film look?

III. How to achieve the film look.

# I. What is the film look:

Film types differ by design, in order to produce sales due to style preference. But there are things people associate with the film look:

## 1. Pastel colours ...and the such

This usually happens in film when the image is shot overexposed (brighter than should be) and then processed for the correct brightness.





The greens tend to appear bluer.

Colour contrast is increased; yellows are brighter and more saturated.

Shadows are lifted (lighter), while blacks are still intact and strong. Shadows and highlights sometimes display colour casts (green or blue in shadows, peach in highlights).

## 2. The Feel

More importantly than colour accuracy, is the feeling of the image.

Film looks soft and organic. Highlights are diffused and progress gradually. They do not easily reach overexposed white, and often have a peach bias to them. Shadows hold detail and often feature colour biases such as blue or green. Skin tones tend to be pastel.





## II. What causes the film look:

Colour theory studies in the days of film resulted in tweaks in colour response to produce more pleasant tones.

# III. How to achieve the film look:

Main tools in digital:

- RGB Colour CURVES
- RGB Colour CHANNELS

RGB because:

- Reproduces most visible colours
- Easier to replicate film using the same variables

# III. How to achieve the film look:

Every film type looks different ...but:

## 1. The greens: Greens tend to look blue

Approach: In RGB channels, increase the amount of blue, in green, from 0 to the desired amount.

Approach: Use the HUE control, to move the green hue toward blue.



# III. How to achieve the film look:

Every film type looks different ...but:

## 2. Colour casts: colour casts in shadows or highlights

Approach: Using RGB colour curves you can increase or decrease the three main colours red, green and blue. By decreasing one, the results look as if you increased the other two equally. Decrease red, looks as if you increase green and blue, producing a cyan cast.

Red - Cyan; Green - Magenta; Blue - Yellow.

# III. How to achieve the film look:

Every film type looks different ...but:

## 3. Lightness:

To mimic a film-like lightness response; use the curve adjustment tool to boost the low mid tones, while leaving the blacks black.



# III. How to achieve the film look:

Every film type looks different ...but:

4. **Skin tones:** To make them pastel and golden/orange rather than red, there are a few things we can do:

Approach: Add contrast in the lower mid tones of the colours using the RGB colour curves

Approach: in RGB colour channels: remove blue from red; and/or add/remove green to/from red

Approach: use the HUE adjust tool to modify the red/orange tones

Approach: create red/mid cast in lower mid tones using RGB colour curves





The End  
Questions?