

## NOT ALL GRAIN IS FIBRE.

Photographic "speed" is the measure of sensitivity to light of a Digital Sensor or a film. Lower sensitivity to light occurs when one dials in a low ISO or if one uses a film with ISO 400 or less. This requires a longer exposure and is referred to as "slow".

Higher sensitivity using ISO 600 and upwards with film or digital can shoot the same subject with a shorter exposure time and is referred to as "fast".

However, using a higher ISO may cause effects which might not enhance one's image. Photographers who have used fast film will remember **grain**, which gave the image a "gritty" appearance; the faster the film, the greater the gritty texture.

Now, photographers who shoot Digital may see an artefact known as "noise" created by the digital sensor in the camera which is a different effect...and it can be equally as much a nuisance as grain. The higher the ISO, the more "noise". This appears as tiny coloured specks.

Low ISO [slow] is most commonly used for portraits except in unusual circumstances. If one wants fine lines, smooth surfaces with little texture or to show fine detail such as flower stamens or petals, a patterned white satin wedding dress or shots of something elegant like artfully manicured nails, a low ISO will do the job. Old work worn hands shot on fine film or digital show up beautifully with slow shots.

If you want **grain** or **noise**, "up" the ISO [fast]. If you want concrete to look like concrete or to accentuate sandy surfaces or if you want a smooth surface to look as irregular as a bitumen road surface, a high ISO is the way to go. Dirt and/or rust on vehicles may do well "fast". A farmer's dirty torn hands can respond well to an ISO in the middle range.

If shooting Digital, noise can be a nuisance, but if the **only** way to grab your image is to shoot **fast**, do it and clean it up afterwards, either in your camera or on your computer.

Long exposures, such as night shots, will always bring some noise to your image. High ISO can give slightly fuzzy edges, and low ISO can give sharp edges.

Long exposures at night, using low or high ISO **print film**, will always appear grainy.

When using **low** ISO **slide film**, I have found Fujichrome 100 is most successful for night shots.

Considered use of grain can produce some stunning effects, but used incorrectly it can thoroughly degrade an otherwise good image.

If shooting Digital "fast" there will be noise and very little grain, but if wanted, grain can be added in the computer, to the degree which creates the best image in the eye of the photographer.

### Noise Grain

