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USER

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
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



[074]
GETTING ELEMENTAL WITH LIQUIFY
BRET MALLEY




ONLINE CONTENT

Whenever you see this symbol  at the end of an article, it means there are either downloadable practice files or additional content for KelbyOne members at <http://kelbyone.com/magazine>.

Click this symbol  in the navigation bar at the top of the online reader to access the Contents.

Whenever you see this button  in an article, click it to go to the KelbyOne site to watch courses that cover similar topics contained in the article.

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THE SUPER RESOLUTION REVOLUTION

The Super Resolution Revolution has begun! In case you missed it, something truly groundbreaking happened in the Photoshop universe back in March 2021, and not only was it something I didn't see coming, but it was also something I never imagined we'd see: the ability to dramatically increase the size of most any image without a visible loss of quality. This is a game-changer for anyone printing (or dreaming of printing) large images, because not only can we now make larger, crisper prints, but we can also take older images, captured with lower-resolution cameras, and give them new life at new sizes. Think about it: an image from a 24-megapixel camera can now (with just a few clicks) be a 96-megapixel image. An image from a 12-megapixel iPhone can now jump up to 48 megapixels, and in many cases look sharper than the original. (For more on Super Resolution, check out Terry White's "Photoshop Q&A" on [page 144](#).)

But it's not just about printing large images, it's also about cropping in tight and still having lots of resolution in your image. This is mind-blowing stuff (even if you don't print large photos or have any plans of cropping in really tight on that image you took four years ago of an eagle in flight, you still have to admire the technology behind it all).

This new Super Resolution feature powered by Adobe Sensei (that's what Adobe calls their AI-powered magic) is just the start. In a [blog post](#) from one of Adobe's top engineers, the absolutely brilliant Eric Chan wrote, "We're now looking into ways to extend Super Resolution to produce even larger and cleaner results. We'll also be exploring other potential applications of the same underlying technology, such as improved sharpening or noise reduction. Anything we can do to make images look better is fair game!" Wow! After

seeing what they've done with Super Resolution, I can't wait for what's next (whatever that may be).

I know that for some people when they see the term "AI" they feel threatened, either in a "robots-are-taking-my-job" kind of way, or that AI is making Photoshop too easy, and thus lowering the "bar to entry" so now anybody will be able to create great images. They feel they've lost the competitive advantage they had by learning and getting really good at Photoshop, but I don't see things going in either of those directions. I love the way Adobe uses AI and machine learning, because they're giving us more power and flexibility, and they're taking over tedious production tasks so we have more time to be creative, more time to experiment, and more opportunities to try new things, because we aren't taking up our time doing things that it can do better, faster, and more efficiently. There will always be a market for talent and creativity, and for you to express your vision, and I see these AI features as freeing us from things we had to do (boring production stuff), or giving us the ability to do things better than any of us could (upscaling images with incredible quality).

This is a super-exciting time to be a Photoshop user (I know, I've said that before, but it keeps getting better and better), and I, for one, can't wait to see what the Sensei-powered Photoshop future holds.

All my best,

Scott Kelby

KelbyOne President & CEO
Editor & Publisher

THE MAGAZINE FOR LIGHTROOM & PHOTOSHOP USERS

Photoshop USER

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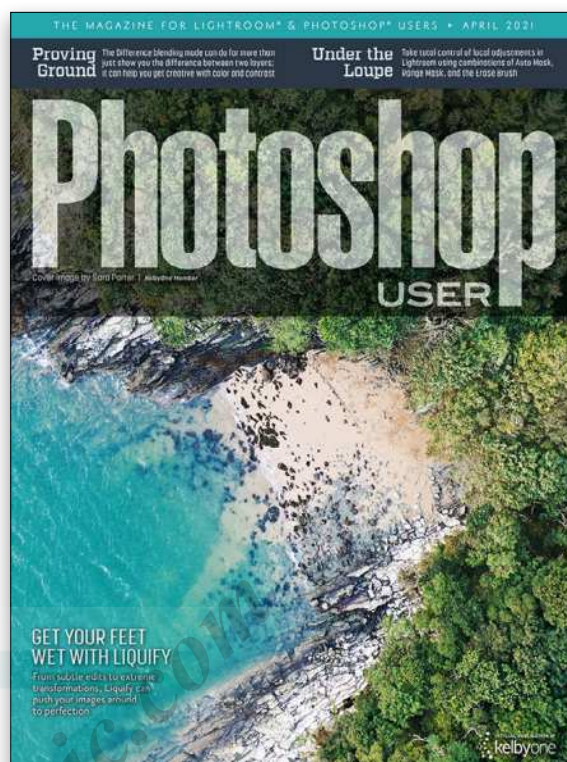
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Cover Image: Sara Porter

Each issue we feature cover art by a **KelbyOne Member**

This issue's cover is by **Sara Porter**, who has been working as a commercial and art photographer for more than 15 years. Her most recent exhibition, "50 Portraits," was a celebration of 50 classically trained musicians. Restricted in her usual work as a result of the pandemic but not one for sitting still, she gained her commercial drone qualification a month after her first flight. She's currently documenting the coastline of the Wirral Peninsula in North West England where she lives. To learn more about Sara, turn to page 17.

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COVER STORY



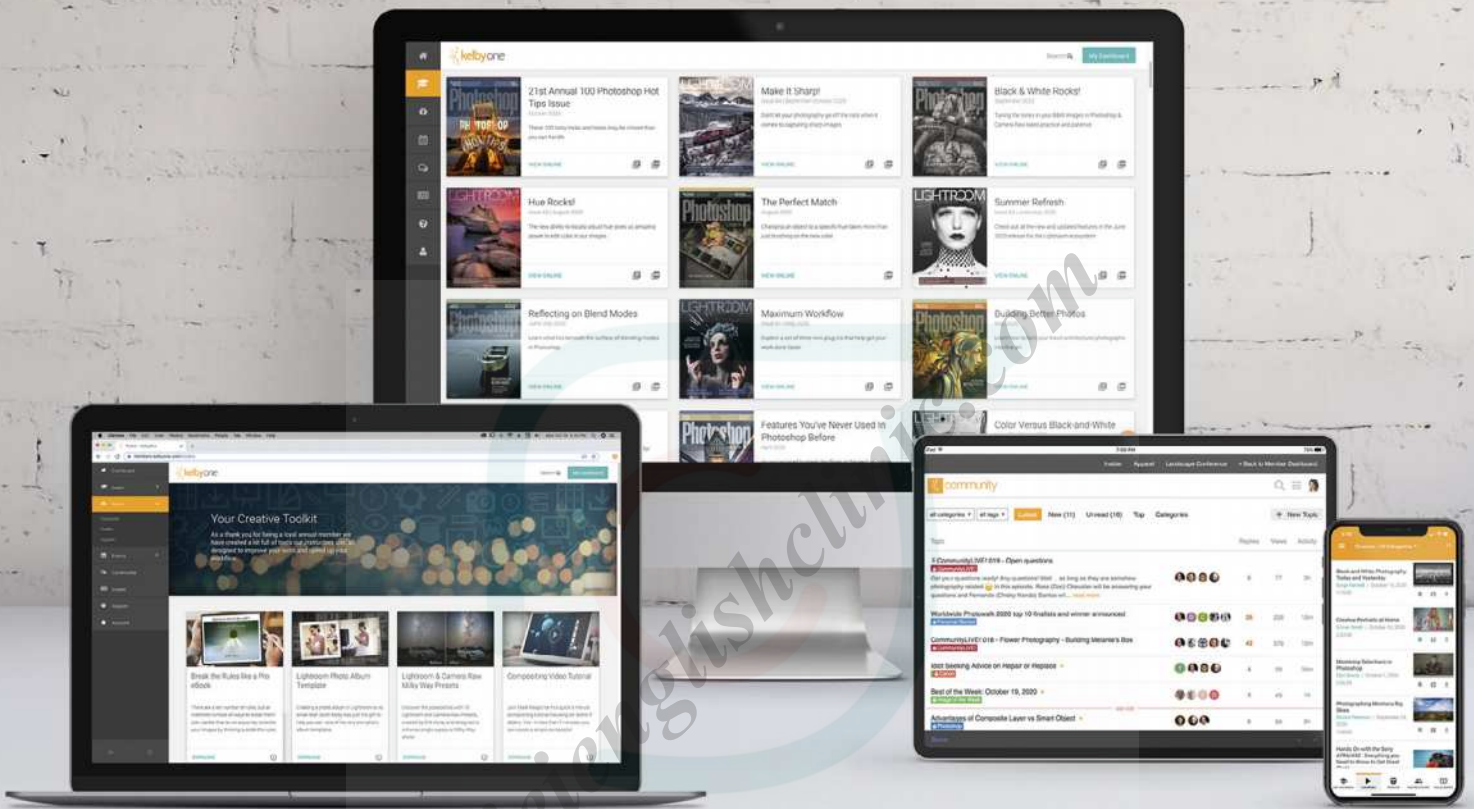
GETTING FLUID WITH LIQUIFY

BRET MALLEY  

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You can also get Photoshop, Lightroom, and photography help from the amazing members in our **Community**. You get *Photoshop User* magazine monthly along with access to more than 150 back issues, including all the issues of *Lightroom Magazine*. Then there's the **Creative Toolkit** packed with presets, eBooks, and other fun freebies. And last, but certainly not least, there are significant **discounts** available from our partners, such as Apple, B&H Photo, and Mpix.

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 **Questions & Comments**

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Member Challenge 44 | Wildlife

Member Challenges are assignments for KelbyOne members to get out and practice the skills you're learning through our courses, magazine tutorials, and online conferences. Whether it's compositing, retouching, or photographing, use the challenge as your reason to create something new. They're a great way to practice your skills, build your portfolio, and show off your work. For Member Challenge 44, we challenge you to take the best wildlife photo you possibly can. Show us all the animals! We're hot off the tails of our **Wildlife Photography Conference** so you should be ready to put all of that knowledge to work. Here's how the Member Challenge works:



- Entrant must be a KelbyOne Pro member to submit their work into the contest.
- Work must be original to the entrant.
- Only one image can be submitted per entrant.
- Work must be created within the timeline given (March 19, 2021–April 25, 2021).
- Images must be submitted by April 25, 2021, at 11:59 p.m. EST.
- The winner of this Member Challenge will be announced by May 6, 2021, on the **Insider**, where he or she will receive a Member Challenge feature post and bragging rights!
- After you've created your image, head on over to the **Member Challenge 44 | Wildlife thread** on the Community and submit your work in a comment. All the contest details, rules, and prize information can be found there, as well.

So what are you waiting for? Head out into the wild and capture a stunning wildlife image for your chance to win! But before you go, check out the winning image from Member Challenge 43 | Something Yellow (top right).



Rodolfo Ghirlando

Winner of Member Challenge 43 | Something Yellow

Back in February, we encouraged KelbyOne members to go out and create photographs with the theme Something Yellow for our latest Member Challenge. With spring finally here, all the amazing entries from KelbyOne members brought even more sunshine into our lives.

The winner of Member Challenge 43 is Rodolfo Ghirlando. Rodolfo made us feel the color yellow down in our souls with his winning photo shown above. The vibrant hues and unique shapes made this image stand out among the rest. Great job, Rodolfo!

Second place goes to Michael Vogt, with this smoky seaside scene. It definitely gets points for creativity and out-of-the-box thinking.



Michael Vogt

Thank you to everyone who participated! We're so proud of our members who challenge themselves to get out there and create new projects. That's the best way for all of us to improve as photographers. You can also check out the honorable mentions for Member Challenge 43 on the **Insider**. ■





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WHO'S WHO IN THE KELBYONE COMMUNITY

SARA PORTER @   

Sara Porter has been working as a commercial and art photographer for more than 15 years. Her most recent exhibition, "50 Portraits," was a celebration of 50 classically trained musicians. Restricted in her usual work as a result of the pandemic but not one for sitting still, she gained her commercial drone qualification a month after her first flight. One of her drone images is on the cover of this issue.

Congratulations on the cover image! Can you tell us a little about this image?

As we got to the end of the summer and lockdown had been eased, we took the opportunity to go camping in one of our favorite areas on the west coast of Scotland. I'd taken the drone with me, but it was too windy for most of the time we were there. On the last day, the conditions were perfect. I got up early and walked down to the nearby bay. I was looking at textures along the coastline and was struck by the layering between the water, beach, and the natural woodland; there was such a beautiful contrast between them. I often find with drone photography that you have one idea in your head when you go out and then, once it's up, you find yourself shooting something completely different.

You have an impressive and diverse portfolio. What would you say is your favorite thing to shoot?

For me, that's like asking what my favorite album is, in that it can be very dependent on mood. I love all the genres that I shoot, especially if there's something challenging. I like to try and create something that's imaginative from things that may seem to be mundane, and to create something unexpected for my clients. During the pandemic, I took the opportunity to experiment with a number of things, such as working with some of my old film cameras including my Polaroids. I've also had the chance to play around with Photoshop a little more without the constraints of needing to meet client deadlines.

What advice would you give to anyone looking to add drone work to their portfolio?

When the pandemic started, I took the opportunity to look at different ways of working, which is when I took up drone photography. I probably spent a month just practicing flying it and studying for my CAA permission. I'm very lucky in that I live near large, open spaces without air traffic restrictions, so I didn't need to travel to get out with it.

For anyone looking to take it up, I'd say forget about the photography at the start and just get the skills and confidence in flying it safely and within the law. Once those are mastered, you can then start to work on your photography. I'd strongly recommend completing a

qualification, as there's so much covered in terms of the criteria for flying safely.

What's your day-to-day gear that's always in your camera bag?

Given the diversity of my work, my camera bag can be just as diverse. I'm not a photographer who invests in new kit just for the sake of it being new; there needs to be a technical advantage for my work for me to make the investment. My workhorse camera for a number of years now has been the Nikon D810, which I use with AF-S Nikkor 17–35mm, 24–70mm, and 70–200mm ED lenses. I also have a well-used AF-S Micro-Nikkor 105mm lens that I've used for a lot of museum and product work. For portability, I use a Fuji X-Pro 2 with a 16–55mm XF Zoom lens.

For my drone work I use DJI drones, a Mavic 2 Pro and a Mavic Mini. I also always carry filters with me: LEE filters for the Nikon and PolarPro for the drone work.

What enticed you to join KelbyOne, and who have you learned from the most with the hundreds of classes?

You've pretty much highlighted the main reason for joining KelbyOne in that it has such a huge selection of classes and tutorials. I love being able to scroll through the courses and just choosing one that I fancy at that time. As a result, I don't think I could pinpoint just one person specifically. If I had to choose, it would probably be Scott Kelby himself. I discovered Scott's courses as a result of his book *Light It, Shoot It, Retouch It*. I really appreciated the clear, informative, and approachable style that he had with that book and loved the fact that he takes that same approach with his online courses.

What have you been able to do during the pandemic that's had a positive outcome for your work?

From the onset of the pandemic, we had to postpone a number of shoots. I often work with my husband, so I've still been able to bounce ideas off my collaborator. The past 12 months has given me more time to hone my post-editing skills, and I'm currently learning how to use Adobe Premiere Pro. Most importantly, I've been able to work on personal projects, which has enabled me to grow as a photographer. ■

Here Are Your Latest Online Courses



Personal Brand Photography: Going Beyond the Headshot

Join Gilmar Smith as she gives you an introduction into the importance of personal branding, how it can help your customers, and how it can help you stand out from competitors. Gilmar begins the class with a look at what goes into a personal branding session, tips for adding it to your offerings, and then takes you through a three-part personal branding session with a client wanting photos with a seasonal theme. Gilmar wraps up the class with a look at her postprocessing workflow.



How to Customize Photoshop Like a Pro!

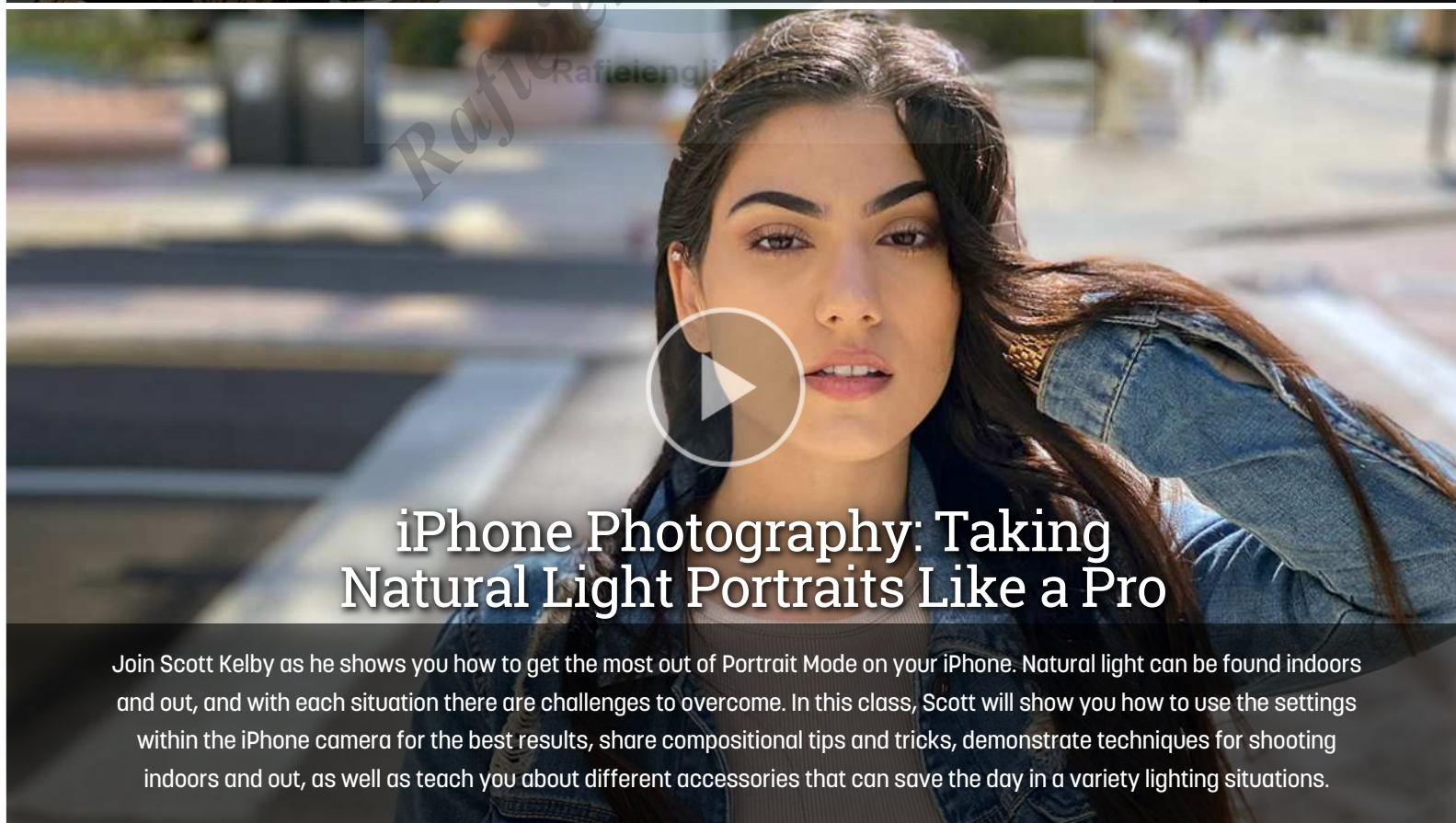
Join Terry White as he digs deep into all of the various ways you can customize Photoshop to make it work better for you. You'll learn how to customize the Toolbar, menus, keyboard shortcuts, panels, workspaces, and more. Terry will show you what preference settings you can leverage to change the interface colors, font sizes, and even certain application behaviors. By the end of the class you'll be excited and ready to set up Photoshop like a pro!

Every week, we publish at least one new training course.
Check out these brand-new courses below:



Mastering the Adjustment Brush Tool in Lightroom

Join Scott Kelby for an in-depth look at everything you need to know about using the Adjustment Brush whether you're using Lightroom Classic or the cloud-based Lightroom. The Adjustment Brush is part of a family of local adjustment tools that includes the Graduated and Radial Filters, and you'll learn about all three in this class, from the nuances of the brush settings to pro-level tips and tricks, as well as a variety of techniques for masking your brushstrokes.



iPhone Photography: Taking Natural Light Portraits Like a Pro

Join Scott Kelby as he shows you how to get the most out of Portrait Mode on your iPhone. Natural light can be found indoors and out, and with each situation there are challenges to overcome. In this class, Scott will show you how to use the settings within the iPhone camera for the best results, share compositional tips and tricks, demonstrate techniques for shooting indoors and out, as well as teach you about different accessories that can save the day in a variety of lighting situations.



REMOVING DISTRACTING OBJECTS AND COLOR GRADING FOR VINTAGE EFFECTS

My first visit to the United States was in the early 80s on a trip to the southern counties of Georgia. At the time, I was assisting an advertising photographer who had been booked to photograph the “Big D” peanut calendar. This was courtesy of the Peanut Commission of Georgia, who were our hosts and looked after us incredibly well, treating us like minor celebrities.



Having grown up watching so many American-made TV programs (not least *The Dukes of Hazzard*), much of what we encountered was very familiar. Yet, it was amusing to turn the tables and ask our Georgia hosts what they thought of us. The impression we got was they imagined the London we came from to be a cross between the movies *Oliver!* and *Mary Poppins*. Now, my father, who was brought up in London, could certainly remember the days of horse-drawn omnibuses and dense fogs, but those had long since gone by the 1980s!

This photograph I took of The Sherlock Holmes pub in London inspired me to transform a modern-day photo into

an antique scene with that famous London fog. I should mention this pub is actually located behind Charing Cross Station and therefore several miles away from the Baker Street address of the fictional detective. But leaving that small detail aside, this gave me the opportunity to demo a technique I've used every now and then to remove unwanted distractions from a street scene.

In urban environments, it can be difficult to find an angle from which to take a photograph where there isn't either a streetlamp or utility pole in the way. The first time I tried this technique was on a trip to New York, around the time Adobe released the Auto-Align feature in Photoshop.



Before

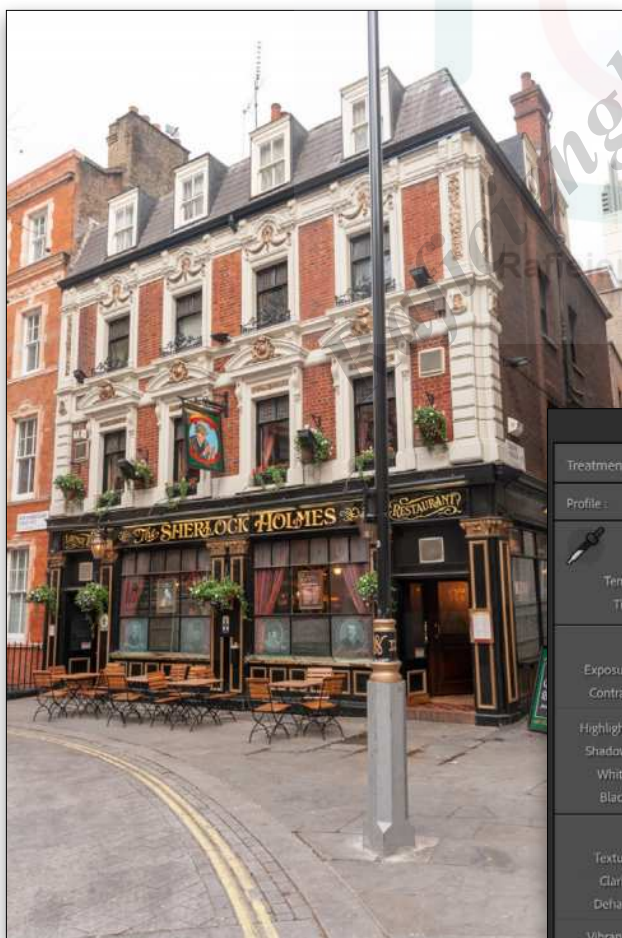


Before

The idea behind this is that you can automatically align layers with similar content to match positioning and perspective. One use is to auto-align layers of different exposures from a group portrait, add filled masks to each of the upper layers, and paint on the masks to reveal the best-looking expressions on each layer. So, if you have a group shot where everyone is looking great except for one or two people, you can use this method to combine better expressions from other exposures and have them align seamlessly.

In the steps below, I show how I applied this same principle to remove an unwanted streetlamp. To remove it was actually very simple and required little artistic skill. When I demo this technique, I say it's as easy as highlighting text with a fluorescent marker. All you need to do is take two or more photographs from different vantage points. What I do is shoot one photo from the desired viewpoint, then side-step to the left and then to the right to capture alternate views. This should be enough to select the best two photos with a big enough physical displacement between exposures of the streetlamp or whatever object it is you wish to remove from the scene.

STEP ONE: To start, select one of the two original photos and process it in Lightroom using the Basic panel controls. Here, I set the White Balance to the Daylight preset, and then adjusted the tone sliders to optimize the contrast. You'll notice that I dragged the Shadows slider to the right to bring out more detail in the darker areas. (KelbyOne members can click [here](#) to download smaller versions of these images for practice purposes only.)



Basic

Treatment: Color Black & White

Profile: Adobe Color

WB: Daylight

Temp: 5,500

Tint: +10

Tone: Auto

Exposure: +0.15

Contrast: -2

Highlights: -42

Shadows: +81

Whites: +5

Blacks: -18

Presence

Texture: 0

Clarity: 0

Dehaze: 0

Vibrance: 0

Saturation: 0

STEP TWO: Set the Clarity slider to +50 to add midtone contrast. I also increased the Texture to add more micro detail to the building.

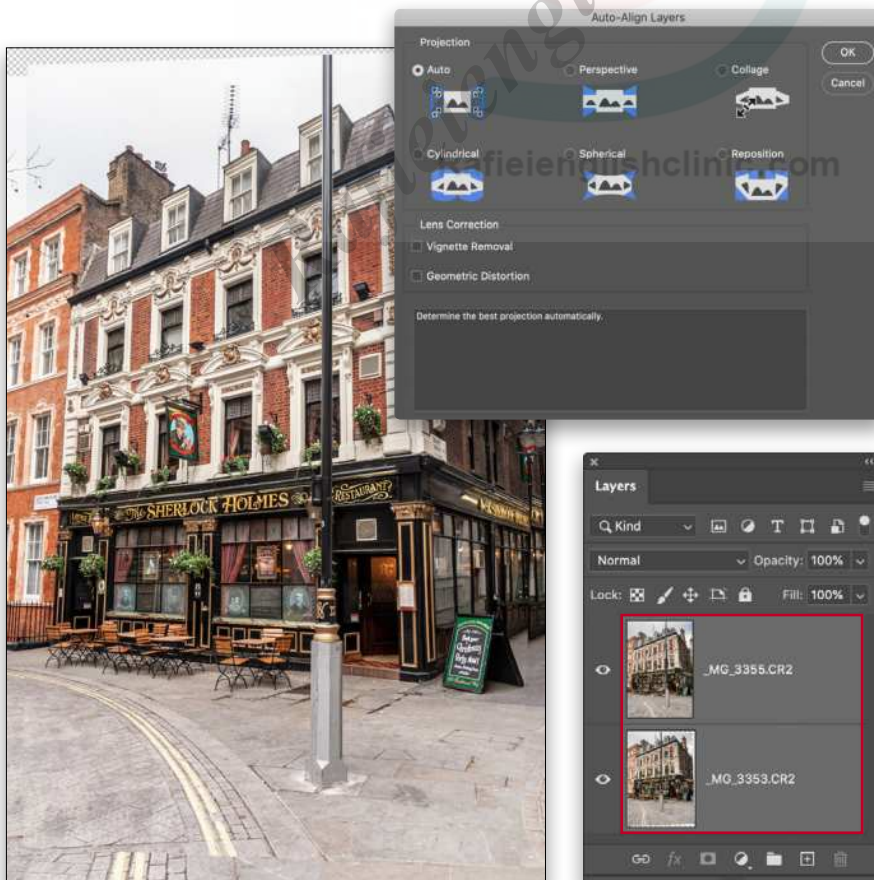


STEP THREE: The sky appeared a bit washed out in the original photo, so select the Gradient Filter tool (M) and add a gradient filter to the top of the image. Edit the settings to apply a darkening Exposure adjustment combined with a negative Highlights adjustment. Press M again to exit the Gradient Filter.





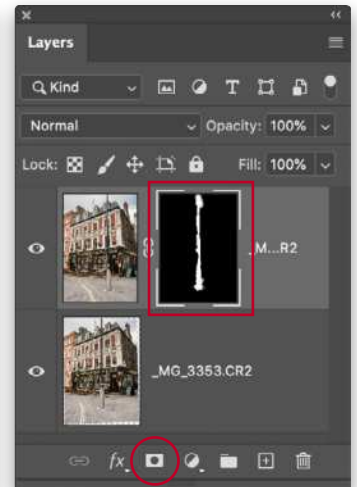
STEP FOUR: We now want to share the settings applied to the first image with the other photograph. To do this, Shift-click the other photo in the Filmstrip so they're both selected; the edited photo should be the "most selected" photo. In the Develop module, choose Settings>Sync Settings (Command-Shift-S [PC: Ctrl-Shift-S]), click the Check All button at the bottom, and then click the Synchronize button to sync the Lightroom Develop settings between the two photos.



STEP FIVE: Having synced the settings, and with both photos still selected, choose Photo>Edit In>Open as Layers in Photoshop, which will open both photos as a layered Photoshop document. In Photoshop, with the top layer active in the Layers panel, Shift-click the other layer so they're both selected, and go to Edit>Auto-Align Layers. In the Auto-Align Layers dialog, select the Auto Projection option and click OK. This applies an automated transform to align the two layers. If you're following along with the supplied images, try toggling the visibility of the upper layer in the Layers panel to see how well they now align.

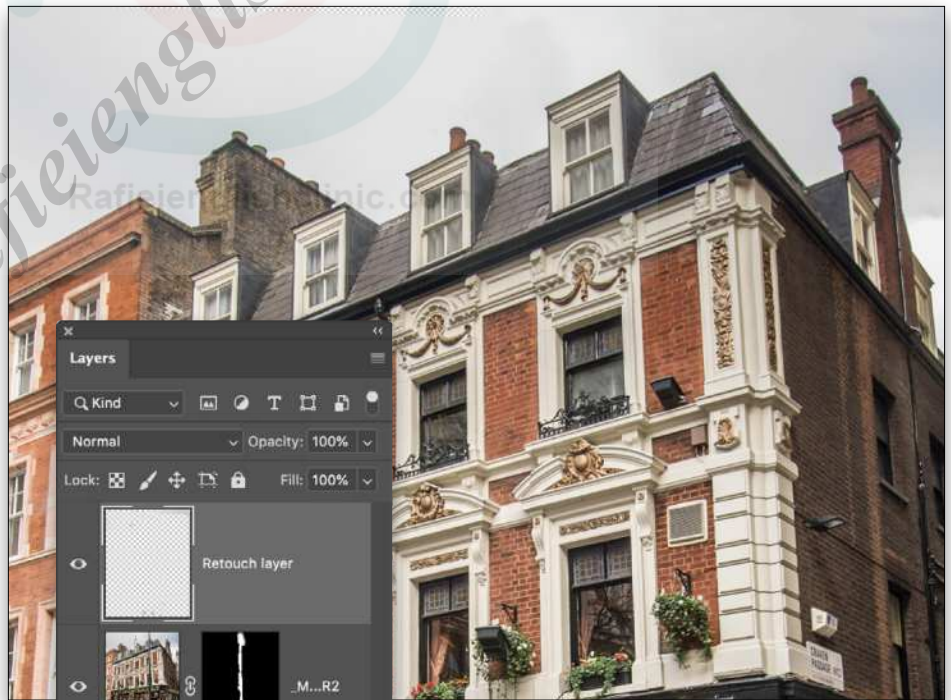
STEP SIX: Select the uppermost layer in the Layers panel. Hold down the Option (PC: Alt) key and click on the Add Layer Mask icon, which is the third icon from left at the bottom of the Layers panel. Clicking the Add Layer Mask icon with the Option (PC: Alt) key held down will add a new layer mask filled with black, which hides the entire upper layer.

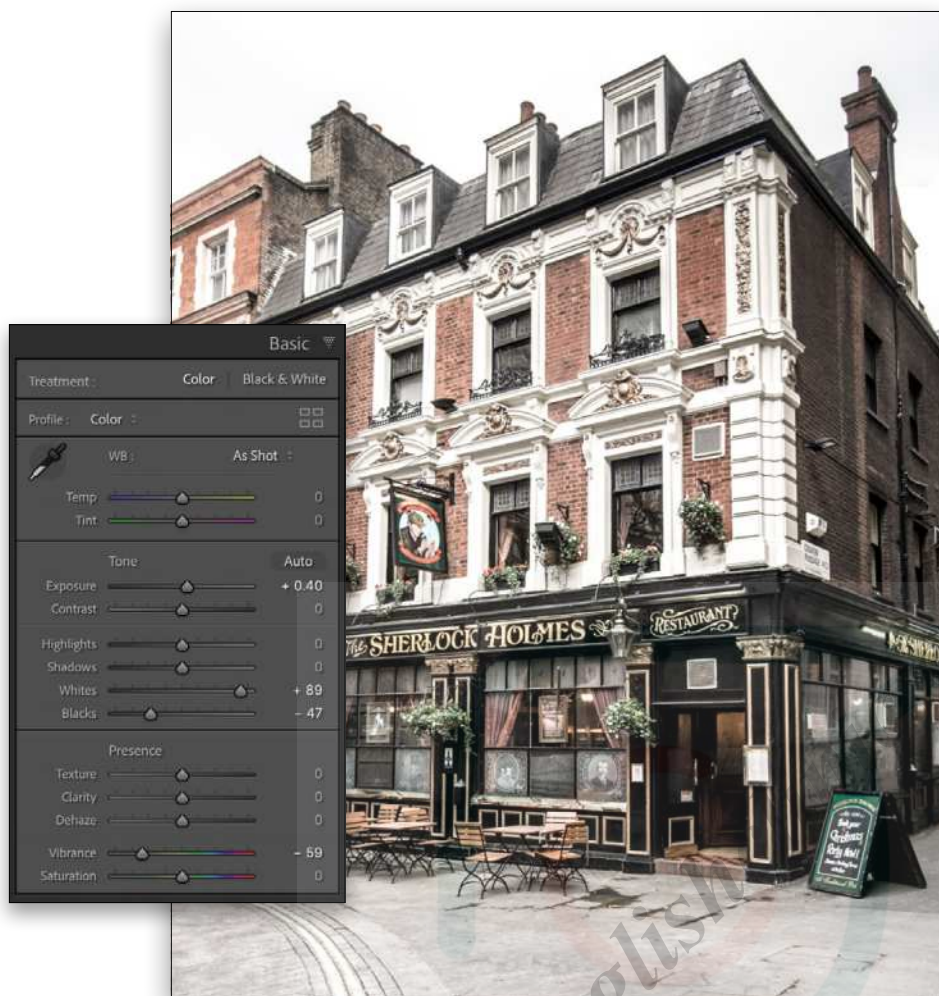
Select the Brush tool (B) and, with white as the Foreground color (D), simply paint on the image with the layer mask active in the Layers panel (highlighted in red in the image shown here) to hide the streetlamp. If you accidentally reveal any of the streetlamp on the layer below, press X to switch the Foreground color to black, and paint it away. Use the Bracket keys ([]) on your keyboard to adjust the size of your brush as needed.



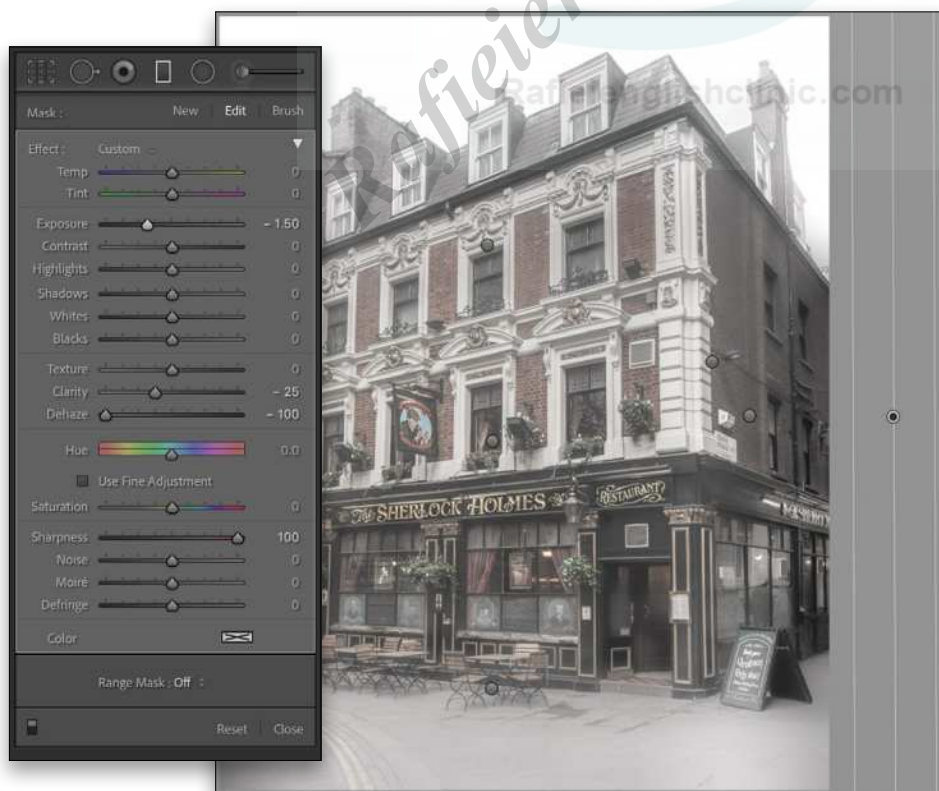
STEP SEVEN: Did you notice a television aerial and satellite dish on the roof of the pub? Let's remove them. Add an empty new layer to the top of the layer stack and use the Spot Healing Brush tool (J) with Sample All Layers checked on in the Options Bar to remove these two items. Use the Crop tool (C) to crop away any transparent or excess areas, and press Enter.

Choose File>Save (Command-S [PC: Ctrl-S]) so that the Photoshop composite image is saved to disk and automatically added to the Lightroom catalog.





STEP EIGHT: In Lightroom, I went to the Basic panel and lightened the Exposure and adjusted the sliders to desaturate the Vibrance and fine-tune the Whites and Blacks settings. Go to the Transform panel and click on the Auto button to apply an automated Upright adjustment so the verticals converge less.



STEP NINE: To add some mist and fog to the scene, select the Graduated Filter tool (M) and add a number of gradient filters. Here, I applied negative Clarity and negative Dehaze to the sides and bottom of the frame. I then added one more Graduated Filter completely off-canvas (as shown here) to apply a strong negative, global Dehaze adjustment.

STEP 10: I then went to the Color Grading panel and added color toning adjustments to the Midtones, Shadows, and Highlights as shown here. I also made changes to the Blending and Balance sliders. These adjustments gave the photograph an antique-type feel. Finally, I went to the Effects panel and added a strong negative Post-Crop Vignetting effect to darken the edges of the photo.



Final

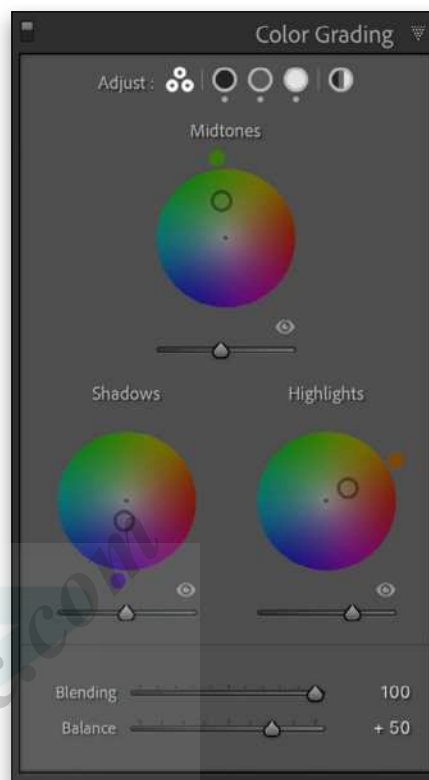
COLOR GRADING PANEL

ALL IMAGES BY MARTIN EVENING

The Color Grading panel is fairly new to Lightroom and Camera Raw. It replaces the former Split Toning panel by offering a more versatile user interface, while maintaining full backward compatibility. The Color Grading panel can therefore be used to continue creating traditional split-toning effects for black-and-white images; however, the main impetus for creating this panel is to allow users to apply advanced cinematic-type color treatments to full-color as well as black-and-white photos.

The default 3-way layout features editable hue wheels. Dragging the outer circumference pin sets the Hue color value for the relevant tone section, i.e. Shadows, Midtones, or Highlights. Dragging on the inner pin does the same thing, but also allows you to control the color Saturation. Moving the pin closer to the center applies a low saturation, while moving the pin to the edge increases saturation. Once you move the pin away from the center and release the mouse button, it then only allows you to control the Saturation along a straight line. You'll need to move it back to the center in order to control both Saturation and Hue again with the pin. The slider below each hue wheel can be used to adjust the Luminance value.

The Blending slider at the bottom can be used to control the amount of bleed between the Hue, Saturation, and Luminance settings for the Shadows, Midtones, and Highlights color settings. This slider adjustment can be quite subtle, depending on the strength of the color settings applied but, as the name suggests, allows you to fine-tune the smoothness of the color blending. Finally, the Balance slider matches the behavior of the slider in the former Split Toning panel. It can be used to adjust the offset between the Shadows and Highlights color settings. ■



[Questions & Comments](#)





HOW TO TAKE AND RETOUCH NIGHT PHOTOS WITH FOG

Night photography isn't always easy, but in this article, I'll show you how to capture the perfect shot and retouch it in Lightroom Classic for really cool and moody pictures.



First, here are my favorite tips for shooting photos at night with fog.

1. *Use a Tripod:* This is the first key point. With a tripod, you can take longer exposures and keep your ISO at 100 for best quality.
2. *Shoot RAW:* Capturing your images in the RAW file format is important if you want the freedom to develop your photos the way you want.
3. *Use Tungsten for White Balance:* Tungsten will ensure that your photos aren't too warm and it will give you a good idea of the final look.
4. *Focus on Composition:* Make sure you have a nice foreground element, middle ground, and background. At night your eyes will focus on the brightest part of the photo, so you need to compose the key element in the photo in a way that will contribute to your message.



Before

ALL IMAGES BY SERGE RAMELLI



Basic ▾

Treatment: Color Black & White

Profile: Adobe Color ▾

WB: As Shot ▾

Temp: 2900

Tint: +13

Tone: Auto

Exposure: 0.00

Contrast: +62

Highlights: -67

Shadows: +70

Whites: 0

Blacks: -46

Presence

Texture: 0

Clarity: 0

Dehaze: 0

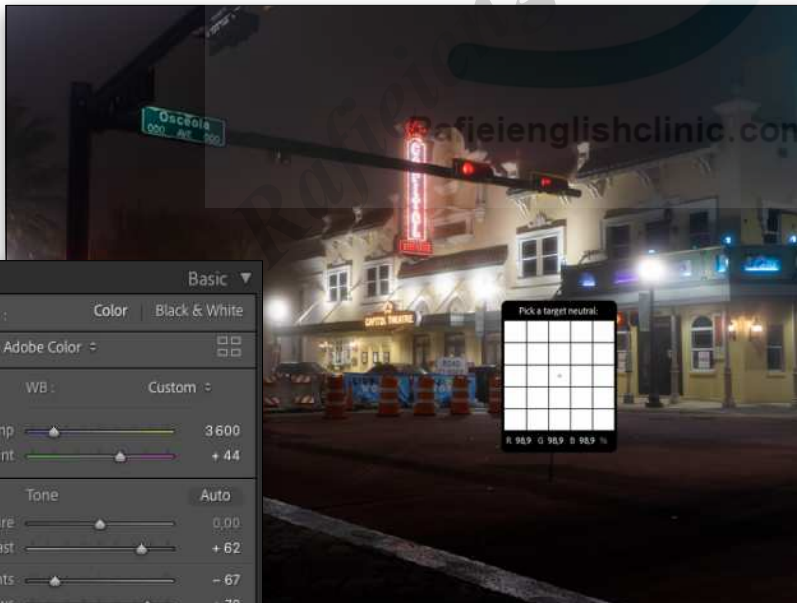
Vibrance: 0

Saturation: 0

RETOUCHING IN LIGHTROOM CLASSIC

Once you get the shot, it's time to retouch your photo.

STEP ONE: You can start with the black point, which is represented by the Blacks slider in the Basic panel. Moving the Blacks slider to the left while holding the Option (PC: Alt) key allows you to see the percentage of black pixels in your photo. The preview will turn white with color pixels representing areas that are approaching pure black; pixels that are black are pure black with no detail. In this image, we'll set it at -46 . On night photos, you don't have to bring down the Highlights very much because it can have a bad effect on the city lights, making them appear too defined as points of light instead of glowing. Here, we set Highlights to -67 . We also set the Shadows to $+70$ to open up the darker areas, and the Contrast to $+62$.



Basic ▾

Treatment: Color Black & White

Profile: Adobe Color ▾

WB: Custom ▾

Temp: 3600

Tint: +44

Tone: Auto

Exposure: 0.00

Contrast: +62

Highlights: -67

Shadows: +70

Whites: 0

Blacks: -46

Presence

Texture: 0

Clarity: 0

Dehaze: 0

Vibrance: 0

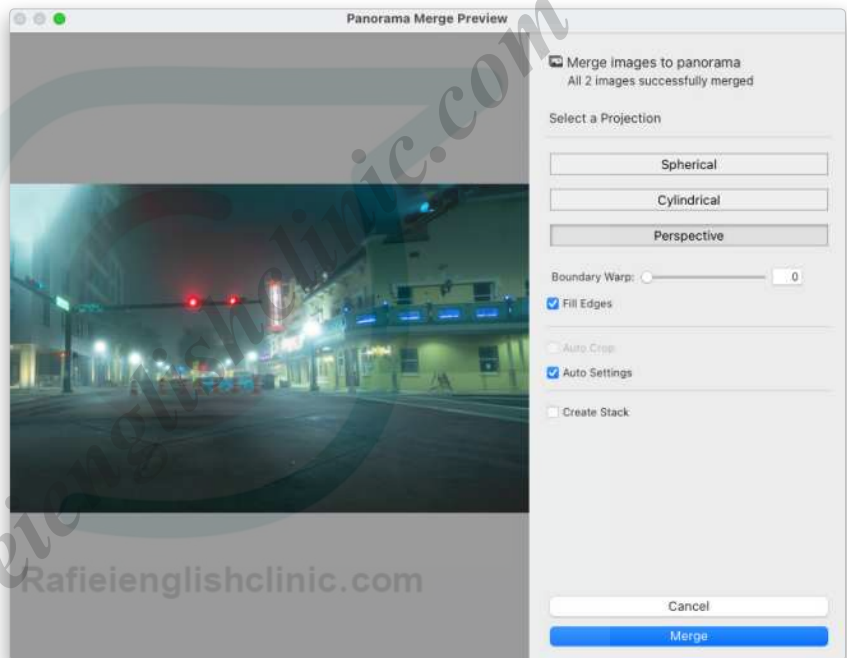
Saturation: 0

STEP TWO: Night photography can be difficult when it comes to choosing the right white balance. You have two options. The first option is to set it manually with the Temp and Tint sliders. We set them to 3600 and $+44$, respectively. Our goal is to add magenta to kill the green color cast. The second option for setting white balance is to use the White Balance Selector tool (W) in the Basic panel. You just need to click on a neutral gray part of your photo and it will adjust the colors accordingly. As you move the tool around the image, the Navigator will give you a preview of what your image will look like if you click on that spot below the tool.

STEP THREE: To make your images even more dramatic and moody, you can crop them to 16x9 for a panoramic look, which is a cinema format and works great with this photo. Press R for the Crop Overlay tool, and set the Aspect drop-down menu in the tool's panel to 16x9. Set the cropping boundaries and press Enter.

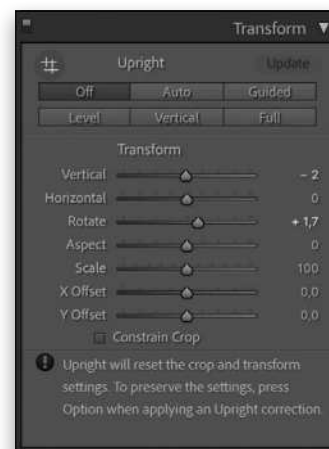
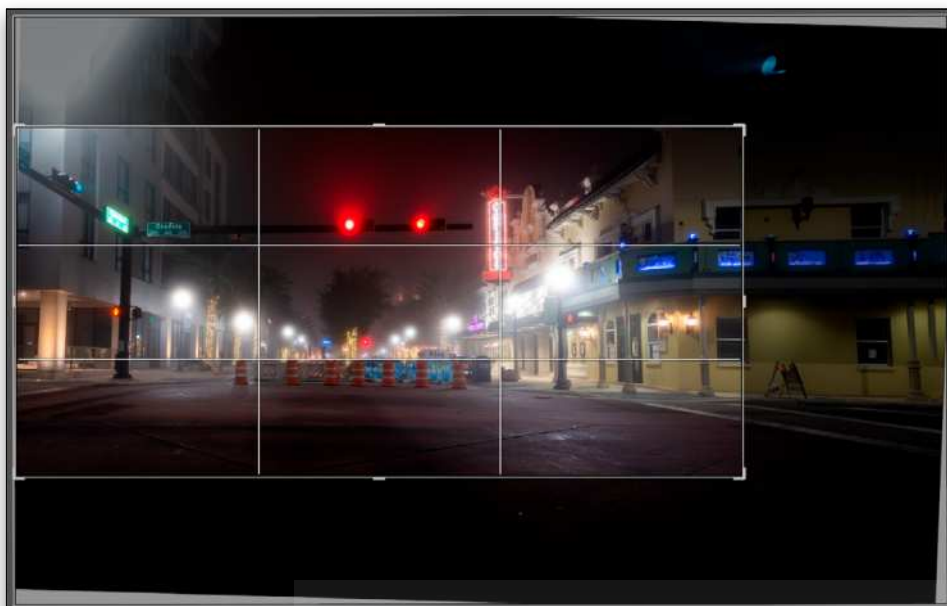


STEP FOUR: You can also create a panorama with several photos. When you capture the shots, just make sure each one overlaps the previous shot as you pan the camera. In Lightroom Classic, you just need to select all the photos for your panorama in the Library panel, Right-click on any of the selected photos, and go to Photo Merge>Panorama. Lightroom will do a great job at merging the photos together. By selecting Perspective as the Projection method in the Panorama Merge Preview dialog, you have a better chance of getting a good result, at least if you're shooting at 33mm or above. You can also select Fill Edges to have more photo to work with in the final panorama.



STEP FIVE: To speed up retouching other photos taken in the same series, select your first edited photo, and then press Shift-Command-C (PC: Shift-Ctrl-C) to bring up the Copy Settings dialog. Click the Check All button, but then uncheck the Crop option, as you'll want to crop each photo individually. Click the Copy button, select your other photos in the series, and press Command-V (PC: Ctrl-V) to paste the settings. Now just tweak the settings for each photo. As an example, I copied the settings of the first photo I edited and pasted them onto this new photo. Then I changed the Blacks to -31, Exposure to -0.20, and Highlights to -78.





STEP SIX: You can also copy-and-paste settings to any panorama you created, as we did here with our pano. We also manually cropped the photo for a better look. One very important thing is to have straight lines in your photo so there's no distortion. For that, go to the Transform panel and use the Rotate slider to straighten the horizon, and the Vertical slider so it doesn't appear the buildings are falling away from you. We set these sliders to +1.7 and -2, respectively. Play with those two sliders until you have the vertical lines of your photo straight.



Here are the final results of both our pano and the second shot in which we pasted and tweaked the settings.

I hope you've enjoyed those tips. If you get the opportunity to shoot at night with fog, go for it! It's fun and you can get amazing results. By the way, these techniques also work with night photography when there's no fog! ■

[Questions & Comments](#)

Final images



MAKING THE MOST OF LOCAL ADJUSTMENTS & THEIR MASKS

Being able to adjust specific regions of our photos without leaving Lightroom Classic is a huge timesaver, but there are some nuances to the tools that you'll want to keep in mind.



The addition of the Adjustment Brush, Graduated Filter, and Radial Filter to Lightroom Classic (LrC) years ago was a huge boon to workflow efficiency, as it allowed us to stay in LrC more often, and possibly avoid a trip to Photoshop completely. There were always situations, however, where those three tools just didn't offer the precision that was needed to successfully isolate the subject we wanted to adjust. For many years, the best we could do was use the brush within each respective

local adjustment tool to erase away unwanted areas of adjustment, but this has a few drawbacks.

Within the last couple of years, we gained the Range Mask function within each local adjustment tool, and with it a very powerful tool for refining exactly what part of the photo we want to adjust, but that has its own limitations. In this article, I want to explore scenarios where a simple erase can do the job, where Range Mask works better, and where you may just need a bit of both to get the job done.



AUTO MASK & RANGE MASK

The first tool to consider when using the Adjustment Brush is Auto Mask, which does a great job along high-contrast edges. So, for example, if I wanted to adjust the foreground rocks in this photo, I could grab the Adjustment Brush (K), check on Auto Mask in the brush settings section (bottom of panel) and, as long as I keep the crosshair in the cursor below the sky, I can brush right up to the edge without affecting the sky.

I recommend turning Auto Mask off, though, when you're brushing within a safe area, because it can sometimes miss regions that you do want to adjust if those regions aren't close enough in similarity (different tonality or hue) to where you were brushing. I also recommend turning on the Show Selected Mask Overlay, which you see in the image below in green. The overlay can be enabled by checking the box in the Toolbar below the main workspace, or by pressing the O key. Press Shift+O to cycle through the different color overlays (or go to Tools>Adjustment Mask Overlay). The overlay shows where you've brushed without even needing to have any adjustments dialed into the tool. Press O to disable the overlay when you no longer need it.



In this instance, I first want to adjust the brighter regions of the foreground rocks, so I'm going to use Range Mask to help me limit the adjustment based on luminance values. Below the brush settings, click the Range Mask drop-down menu and choose Luminance to reveal its options. The eyedropper is the Luminance Range Selector tool, which allows you to click within the affected area and select the luminance values you want to affect. As soon as you click, you'll see the control knobs on the Range slider shift to limit the adjustment to the luminance values on which you clicked. Alternatively,

you can skip the Luminance Range Selector tool and just adjust the Range manually.

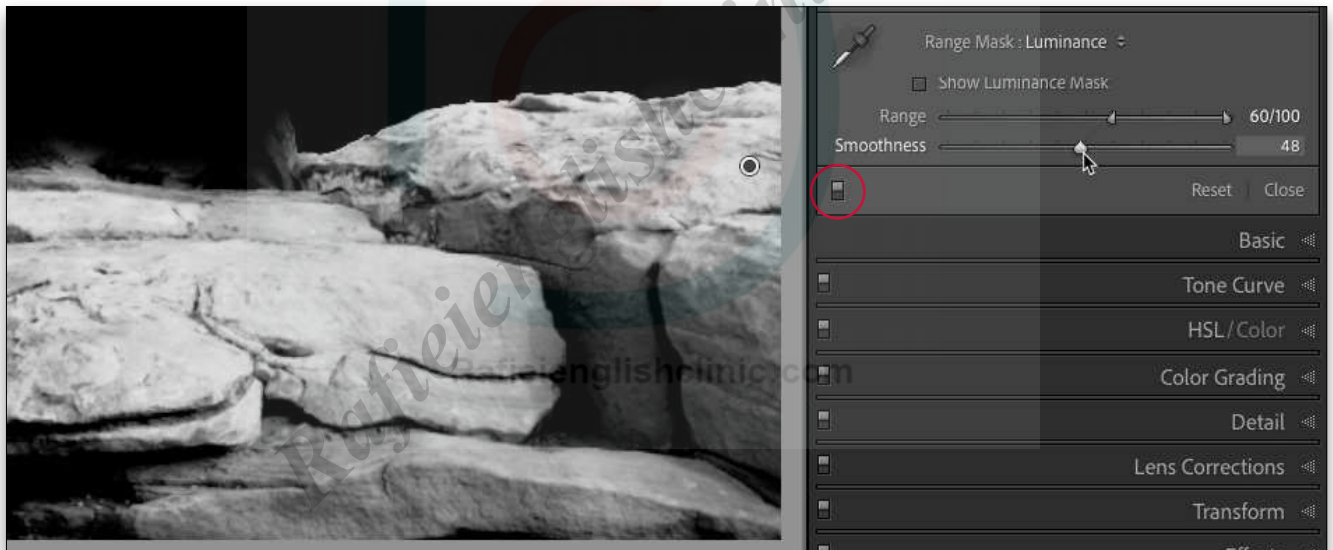
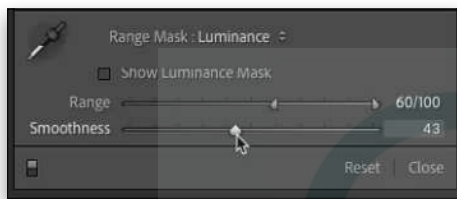
My goal is to brighten the brighter regions to add more contrast to the rocks, so I clicked on the brightest part of the rocks to set my starting range. At this point, it's a good idea to dial in some of the settings you want to use (if you haven't already), so you can see the results in real time. I'm starting with a +1 Exposure setting. With my starting range set between 55 and 100, I can see the effect of my increased Exposure. Now I can fine-tune the results to get the desired look.

If I want to expand the range of affected tonal values I can drag the left control knob on the Range slider to the left, and if I want to reduce the range of affected

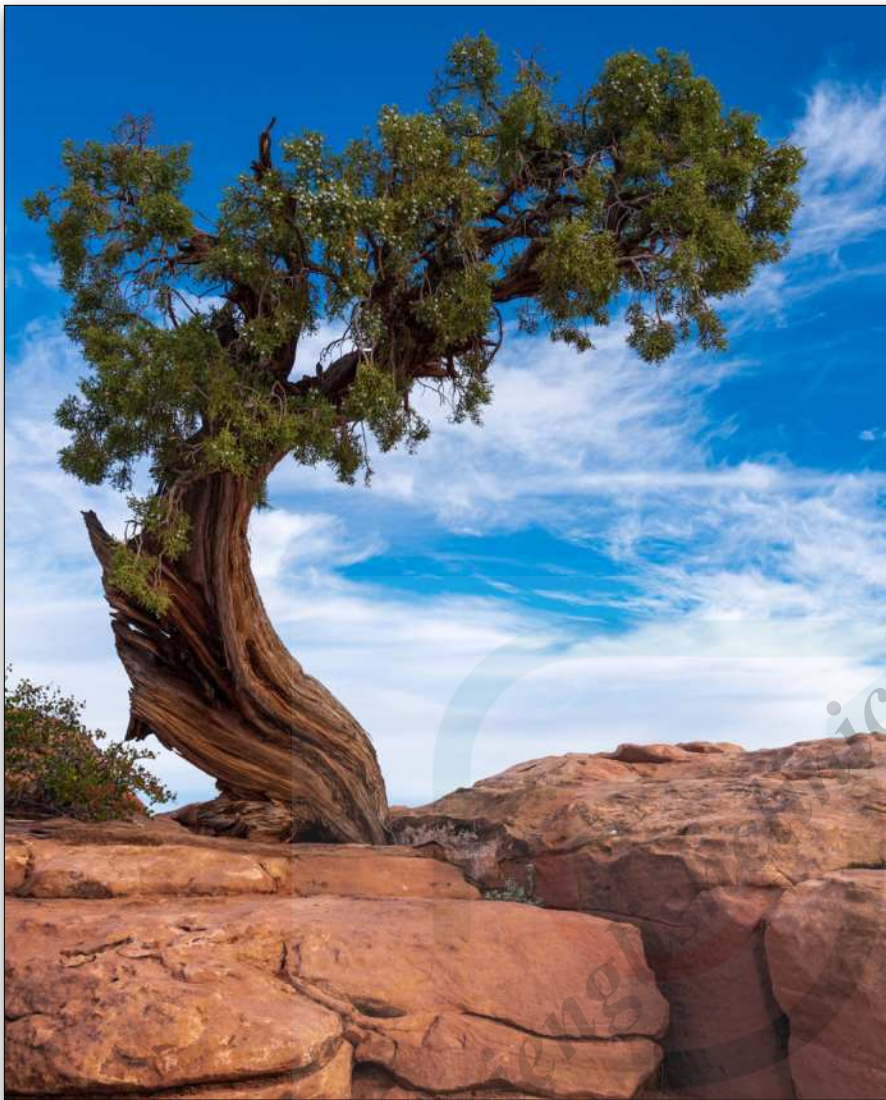
tonal values I can drag the knob to the right. I settled on a range of 60 to 100. The Smoothness slider can be used to smooth the transition between the affected and unaffected area to further refine the result.

There are a couple of options to visualize the mask while you tweak it. First, check Show Luminance Mask to see the mask (affected area) appear under a red overlay. Alternatively, hold down Option (PC: Alt) while you move either the Range or Smoothness sliders to see a grayscale version of the mask, with the white areas corresponding to the affected areas, and black areas representing the areas removed by the mask. It's also helpful to see a before and after view of your adjustment by toggling the switch in the lower-left corner of the adjustment panel up and down (down disables that panel's adjustment).

The Adjustment Brush, Auto Mask, and Range Mask make a powerful team for focusing your adjustment exactly where you want it to be, with a lot of control.



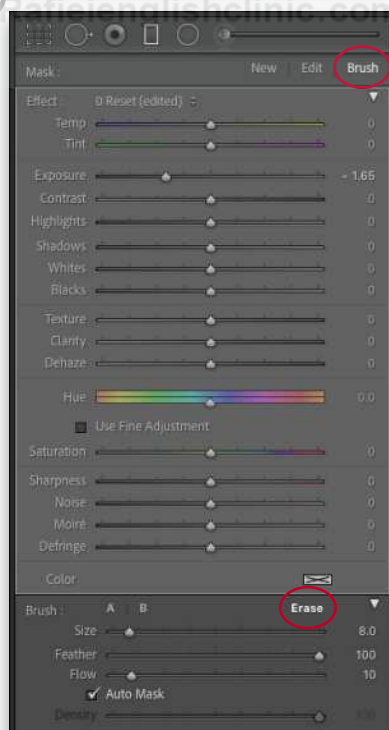
“I recommend turning Auto Mask off, though, when you're brushing within a safe area, because it can sometimes miss regions that you do want to adjust if those regions aren't close enough in similarity (different tonality or hue) to where you were brushing.”



GRADUATED FILTER, RADIAL FILTER & BRUSH

Let's look at another example where I want to use a Graduated Filter across the sky to darken and slightly desaturate the sky furthest from the sun in a gradual fade; but not affect the foreground at all. After selecting the Graduated Filter (M) from the Toolstrip (or any of the local adjustment tools), I suggest double-clicking the Effect label at the top left to reset all adjustments.

I started by clicking on the left side of the image and dragging at an upward angle toward the sun on the right (see next page). I then dragged the outer lines of the Graduated Filter far apart for a large gradient from darker to lighter and, while I'm getting what I want in the sky, it's darkening the foreground too much (it can help to zoom way out to see beyond



the photo to resize a large gradient outside the edges of the photo).

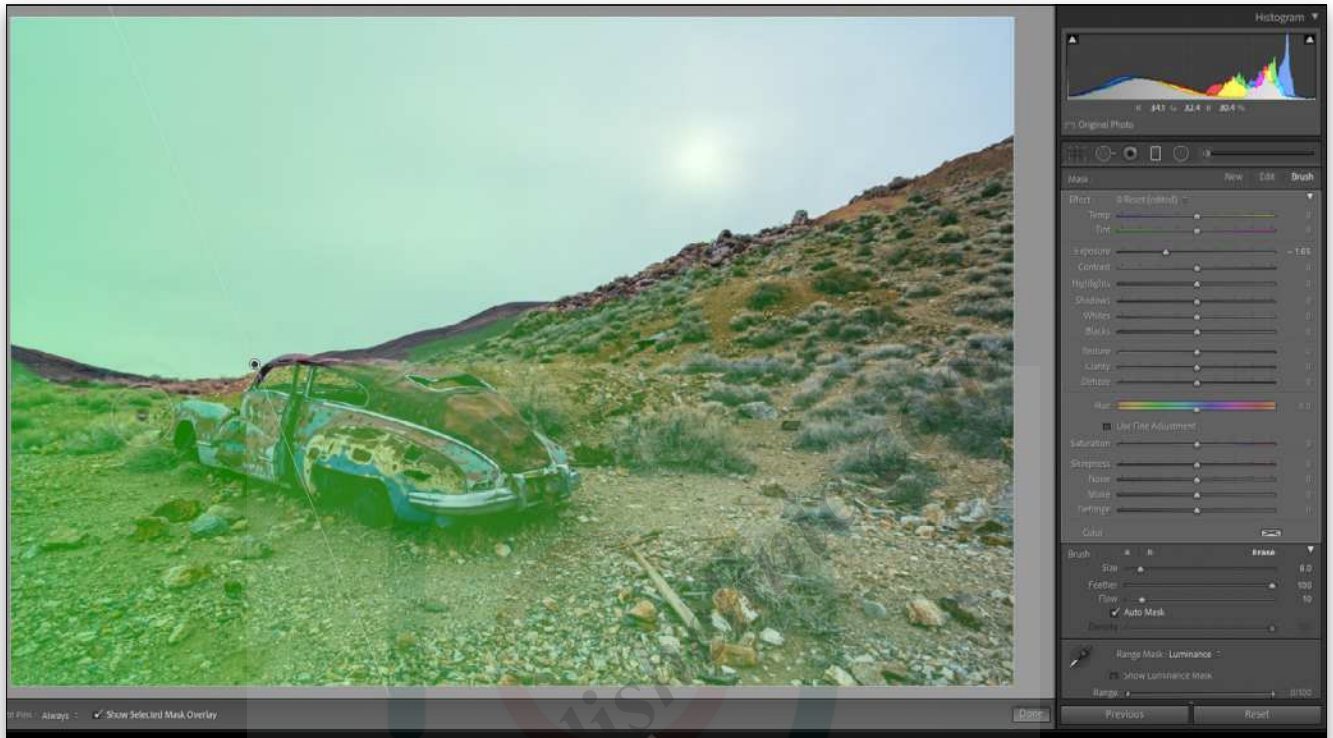
Due to the similarity of luminance values between the darker sky and the foreground, the Luminance Range Mask isn't going to help me here and, while I could try using Color Range Mask, I think there's enough contrast between the sky and the ground that I can use the erase function of the Brush within the Graduated Filter.

There are a few things to keep in mind when erasing a Graduated or Radial Filter:

- Erasing removes the filter where you click-and-drag the brush. You can use lower Flow values in the brush settings to build up or fade out your brushstrokes, but you're completely erasing the adjustment.
- If you use the A or B Brush to brush on settings, you're painting with the full amount of whatever settings are included, meaning that you're not painting with a gradient. As a result, if you accidentally erase part of the gradient you want to keep, it's better to undo that move than to try to paint the gradient back in (or it won't blend well).
- Use lots of short strokes to erase in case you need to undo a stroke due to a mistake; otherwise, you may have to undo more than you want.
- Once you erase part of the mask, you don't want to move the pin associated with that adjustment, or the part you brushed will no longer align with the area you wanted to remove from the adjustment. So make sure the Graduated or Radial Filter is where you want it before you erase.

To that end, I selected the Brush within the Graduated Filter's adjustment panel (not the separate Adjustment Brush up in the Toolstrip), and clicked Erase in the Brush settings section. After enabling Auto Mask, I painted in a series of short strokes just along the edge between the

foreground and the sky to let Auto Mask prevent erasing the filter from the sky region. This worked very well. You can press-and-hold the Spacebar, then click with the mouse to zoom in to 100% to see the edge better as you brush (repeat that move with the Spacebar to zoom out).



Once I cleaned up the edge against the sky, I disabled Auto Mask, increased the Brush size, set Feather to 0, and erased the rest of the foreground.

From there I wanted to make the car stand out more from the foreground, so I grabbed the Radial Filter (Shift-M) and drew an oval around the car. I clicked-and-dragged on the outer line to rotate the oval, and used the control

points to resize it for a tight fit around the car. I then checked the Invert box below the Feather slider to set the area inside the oval to be what's affected. Increasing the Feather amount will start to fade the adjustment from the area outside the car, but to really limit the affected area further, I'll use the Color Range Mask to tighten it up.



Choosing Color from the Range Mask drop-down menu, I grabbed the Color Range Selector and, while holding down the Shift key, I clicked five different colors on the car to sample the color ranges to include in the adjustment. When you click with the Color Range Selector on the image, you'll see an eyedropper icon appear; when you hold the Shift key, you can add a total of five eyedroppers. Dialing down the Amount slider tightens it up a little more. Now it's time to dial in the desired settings, such as increasing Exposure, Texture, Clarity, Saturation, and Sharpness, to make the car pop off the ground.

Again, toggling the switch to see the before and after of this panel's adjustment shows me that, although I can see some overlay spray outside the car, due to the high

Feather and Color Range Mask, there's actually very little visible impact from my settings outside the car. If needed, I could use the Brush to erase with a low Flow and clean up anything that was visually standing out from my adjustment.

Using all of these tools together gives us an amazing amount of control and power to adjust locally in a variety of situations. We just may need to experiment with the right combination of tools and masks to get the job done. ■

Questions & Comments

ALL IMAGES BY ROB SYLVAN



Final



ANTHROPICS PORTRAITPRO 21

“Maximum Workflow” last looked at PortraitPro back at version 18 in Issue 49 of *Lightroom Magazine*. It seems like a long time ago, but not really. To match the current year, Anthropics did a version jump from v19 to v21, so we’ve really only missed one version. Version 19 included better performance enhancements and tool improvements, among other things. Since we did an in-depth look at the control set with v18, in this article we’ll focus on some of the newer features in action.

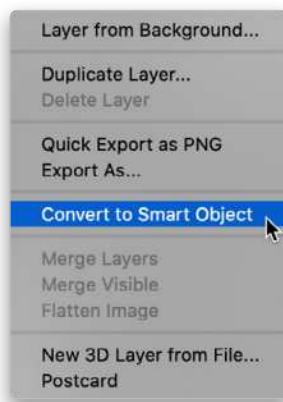


If you’re not familiar with PortraitPro, in simple terms, it’s a portrait retouching app. It does far more than basic skin smoothing, though. You can reshape faces and even add new light or makeup to a face. Examples of the new features are that you can change the sky, color tone the photo, or even use Lighting Brushes to change shadows and brightness.

We’ll look at the Photoshop plug-in version, but it works similarly with Lightroom. You probably have Photoshop as part of the Creative Cloud or Photography package, so we recommend first opening the file in Photoshop from Lightroom (if

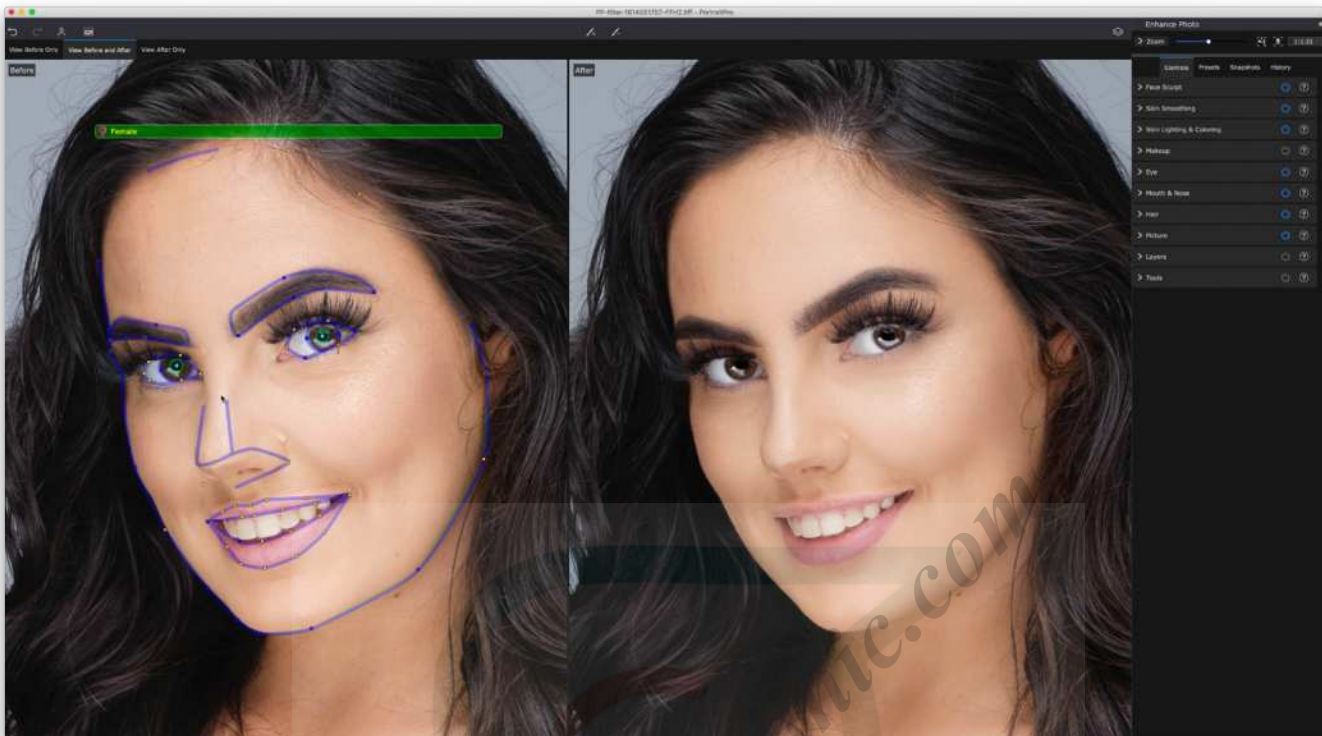
Lightroom is your tool of choice) to make use of smart filters. The beauty of smart filters is that you can easily edit the plug-in settings at any point in the future: An

easy choice given that it’s one minor step in addition to your normal, destructive Lightroom plug-in workflow.



RUNNING PORTRAITPRO 21

Inside Photoshop, Right-click on your layer in the Layers panel, and from the context menu, choose Convert to Smart Object. (If you’re starting from Lightroom, choose Photo>Edit In>Open as Smart Object in Photoshop to automatically prepare it for

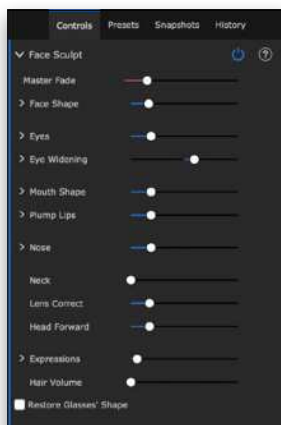


smart filters in Photoshop.) From the Filter menu, choose Anthropics>PortraitPro. PortraitPro will open and begin detecting faces automatically.

It's critical at this point to fix any issues with the face selection. Generally, the selection is close, but those minor misses can lead to strange artifacts if not corrected. For example, you don't want whitening on lips instead of teeth, or have Face Sculpt warp the face unintentionally.

A BRIEF LOOK AT THE UI

As the deeper mechanics of PortraitPro have been covered already, we'll only give them a cursory look as a refresher. Each header covers a specific set of tools related to the panel's name. As we've already mentioned Face Sculpt, let's start there.



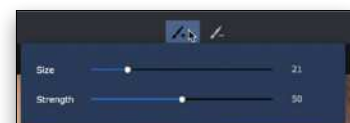
The first slider in the panel is Master Fade, which you'll find in most of the panels. PortraitPro will automatically do most of the work it feels the image needs, and Master Fade allows you to tune the strength of that work. If you find something visually wrong in your image, seek out a slider, or subsection, with the appropriate name that covers that area of the image for tweaking. The plug-in is straightforward, and working visually is best.

Use the before and after tools to make sure you're not overdoing it. Above the top right of the photo is the Flip to Before icon, which may suit you better than using the View Before and After option, as subtle changes are harder to notice in side-by-side comparisons.

THE NEW CLONE TOOL

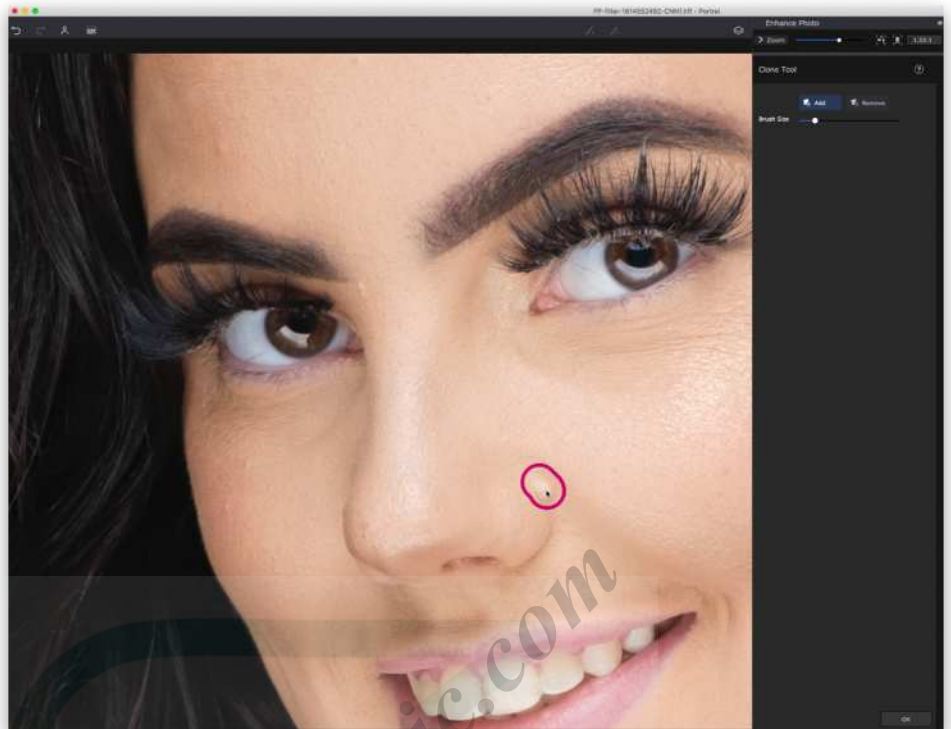
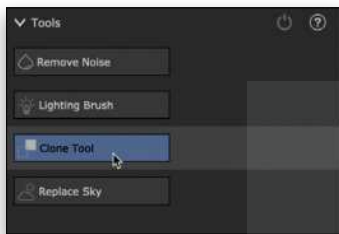
New to PortraitPro 21 is the Clone tool, which is for larger areas not generally amenable to the Retouch Brush. You should, of course, make use of the Spot Removal menu in Skin Smoothing and the Retouch Brush before moving on to use the Clone tool.

The Retouch Brush is located above the center of the image, next to its companion the Restore Brush.



Change the Size and Strength to suit your remaining spots and brush over them to remove them.

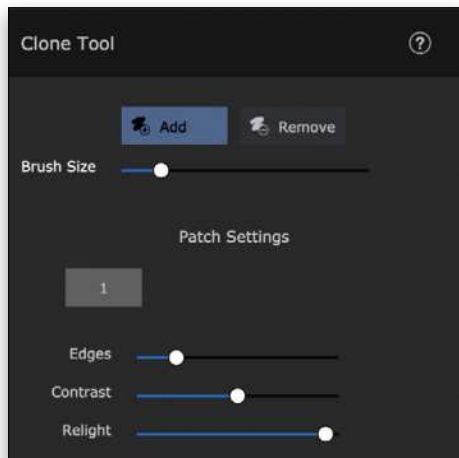
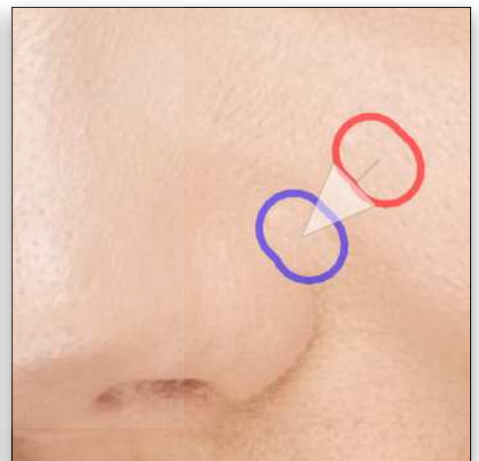
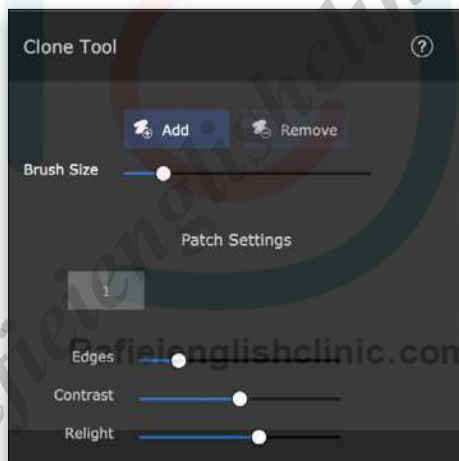
When you're ready to clone, go to the Tools panel and click on the Clone Tool button. This opens a new window with the original image. Click Add to create a new clone, and simply draw around the area you want to fix. You'll see a dark pink outline as you draw, which will be replaced by purple and connected to a matching red outline when you're finished drawing.

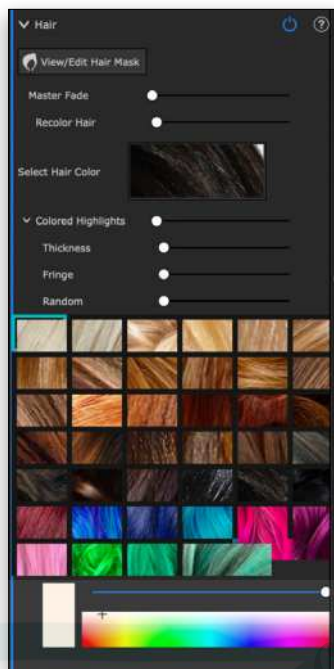


The red indicates the source area for the clone, which you can drag about to find a better source. Here, the source looks good, but needs a slight tweak.

Each clone you make has three Patch Settings: Edge controls the blend of the edges of the source to match the destination; Contrast allows you to match the contrast between the source and destination for a better blend; and finally Relight, which is what we need here, changes the luminosity to match. It's subtle, but increasing Relight to 94 darkened the clone enough to blend well in this example.

Click OK when you're done to return to the main interface, allowing you to see the retouched version of the spot. You can return to the Clone tool at any point to make changes.

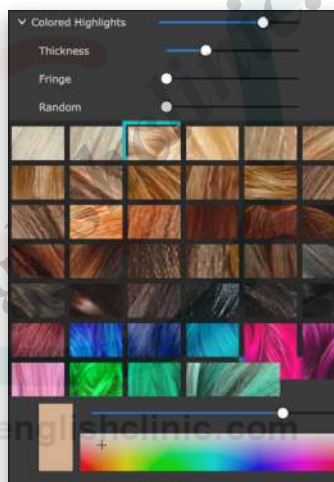
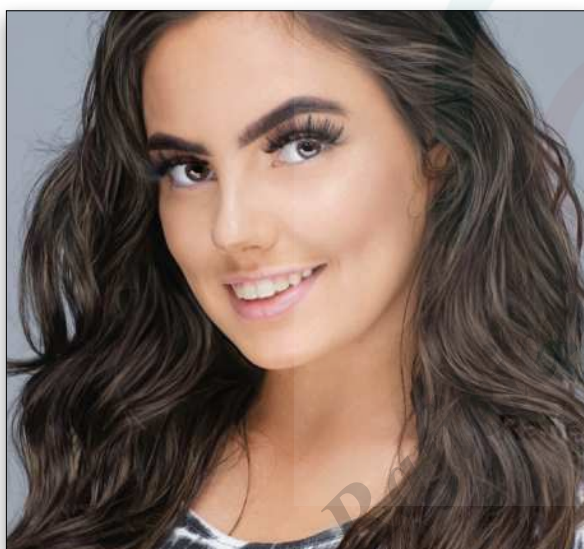




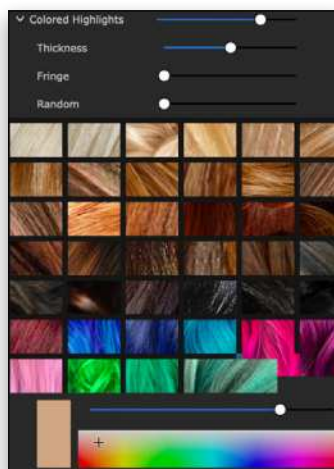
HAIR HIGHLIGHTS

Salon got you down? Can't decide what you want from your colorist? Don't worry! PortraitPro has your back. The new Colored Highlights option gives you a way to add a highlight color to hair.

Click Colored Highlights in the Hair panel to open the section. You have two ways to select a color for the highlight. The most obvious is the predefined colors in the hair swatches. You're not limited to that, though; you can also choose any color from the color picker below the swatches.

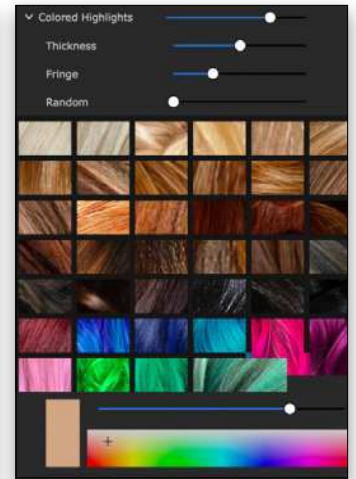


Select a hair color to begin. You'll notice as you select a swatch, the color picker will update to match. Use your swatches to get close to the color you want and then update the color picker to get a more exact look.

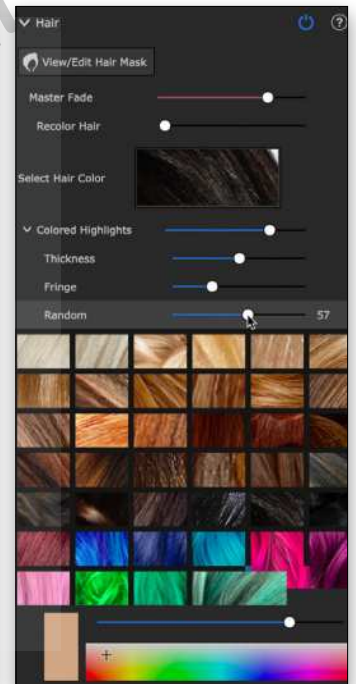
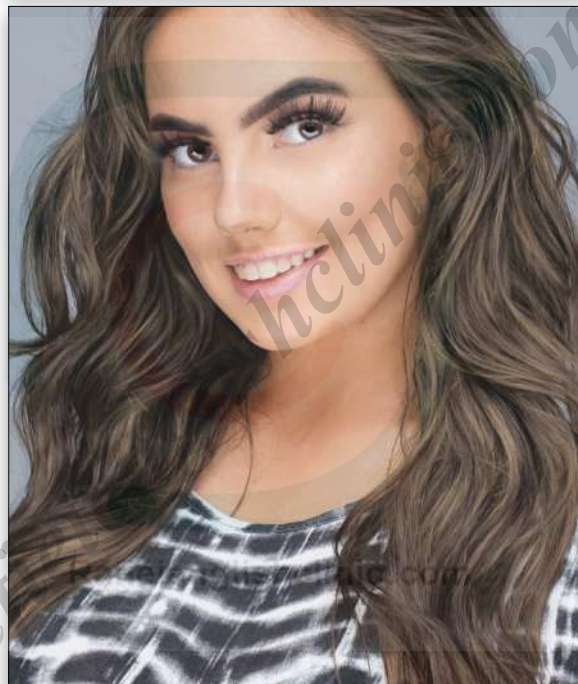


To change the balance of the highlights, drag the Thickness slider. Set to its maximum value, the original hair color will be mostly gone. This setting is obviously to taste, but we've gone with 51 here.

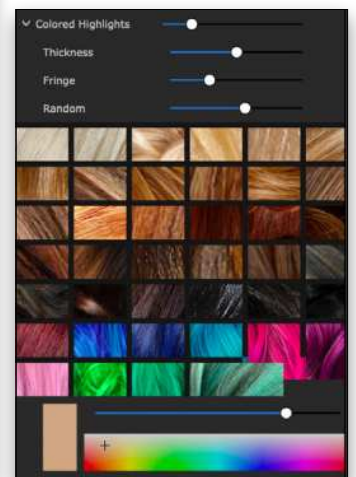
If you'd like to change the balance of the highlights at the top of the head, use the Fringe slider.



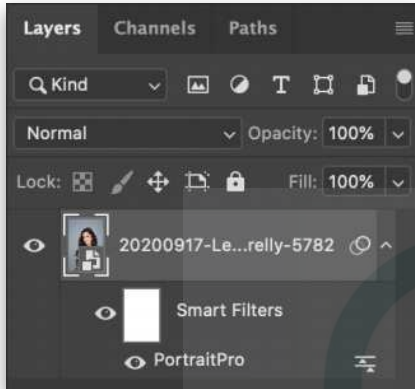
The pattern of the highlights isn't fixed and you can experiment with different patterns using the Random slider. Here it's at 57, for example.



Finally, you can tone down the overall effect using the dedicated Colored Highlights slider. This will move the Master Fade slider, as well, but that can be changed separately again if required.

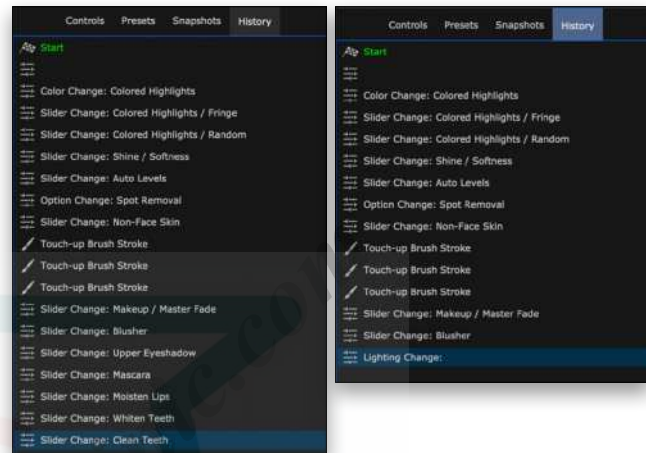


When you're ready to go back to Photoshop, use Return from Plugin in the File menu, press F12, or click on the fourth icon at the top left of the plug-in. Back in Photoshop, the edited layer will now show with Smart Filters turned on in the Layers panel, and with PortraitPro below it. You can double-click on "PortraitPro" at any time to reopen the file into the plug-in with all settings intact. If you started in Lightroom, save the file in Photoshop to return it to Lightroom. While this may be an additional step for Lightroom users, it's well worth it in the long run.



HISTORY

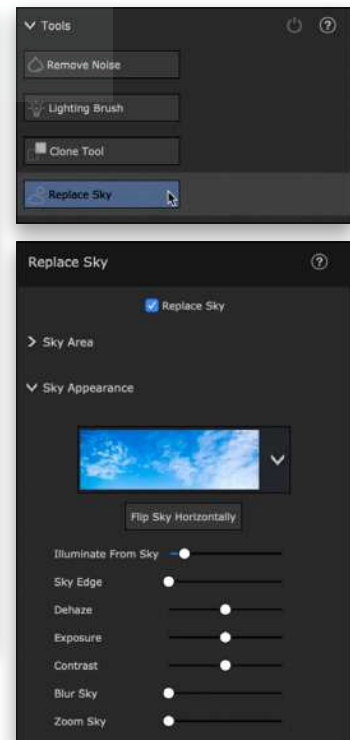
A feature in most editors, but just making its way into PortraitPro, is the History panel. To access it, click on its tab near the top right of the plug-in. A full list of steps will be available. By clicking on a step, you revert to the image at that point. If you go back to Controls and make changes, all future steps from that point will be changed.



SKY REPLACEMENT

To change the sky in a photo, go to Tools and choose Replace Sky.

The tool will open with a new sky. Clearly in this example, the tool has missed some parts of the sky around her hair and left arm that we'll need to fix.

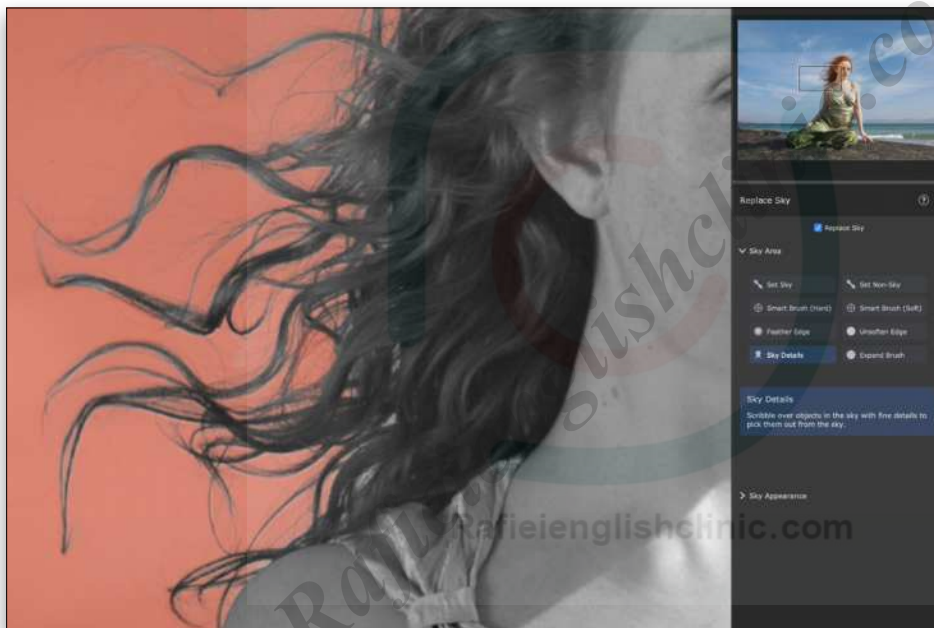




Expand the Sky Area section and then click on Set Sky. Drag along areas to include them in the sky mask, as we did here around her left arm.

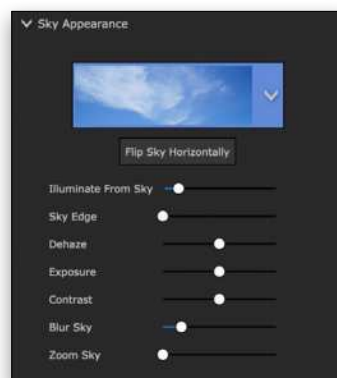
For fine details like hair, click Sky Details and paint along the hair.

Go back to Sky Appearance when you're happy, and from the sky list, choose a sky that works for the image. There are a lot of dramatic and epic skies in the list, but that doesn't mean they're the best choice for your photo.



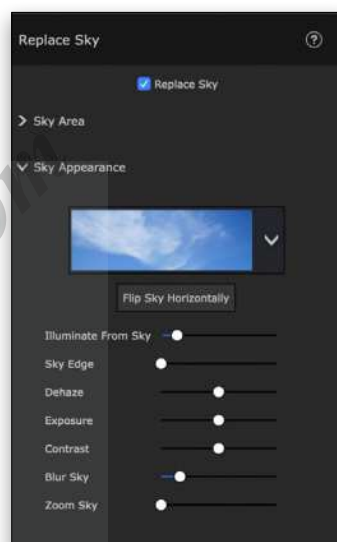


Looking at the horizon in this image, it's clear that it's out of focus, so we need to blur the clouds to match. Setting the Blur Sky slider to 15 looks better.



Often you may find the direction of light in the image doesn't match the clouds in the new sky, or the pattern angle doesn't suit. Use Flip Sky Horizontally to fix this.

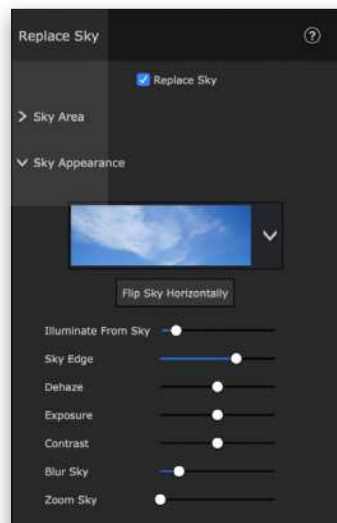
If you have an edge like the mountains here, you may want to try Sky Edge to get a different blend. It can especially help if you have a halo along an edge. Click OK when you're done to return to the main plug-in.



Original sky



New sky

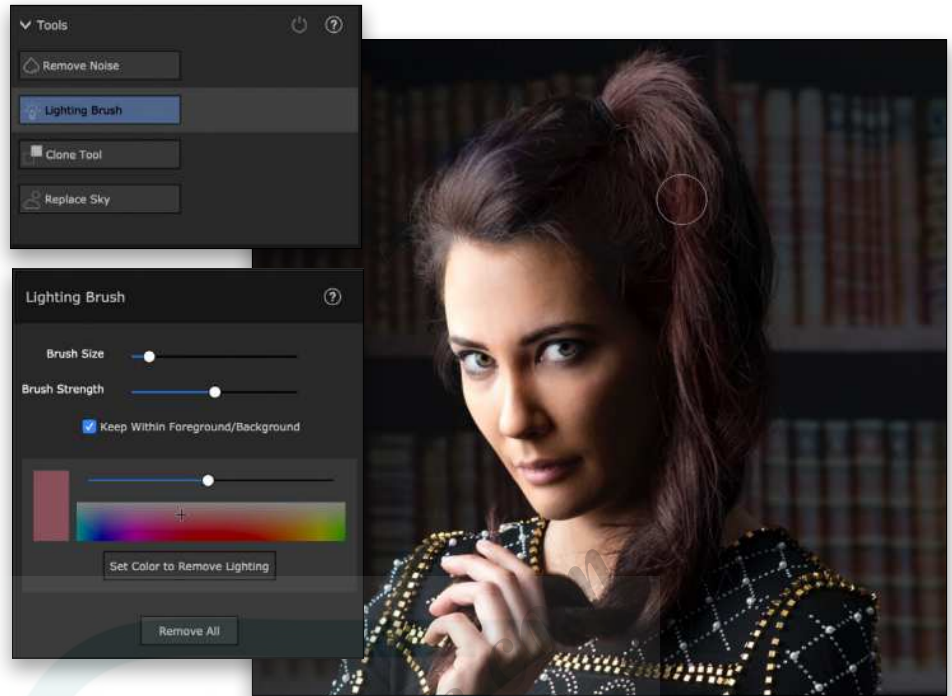


LIGHTING BRUSHES

Lighting Brushes, located in the Tools panel, allow you to paint color onto parts of the image. As with other tools, it opens a new window where you edit outside the main edits.

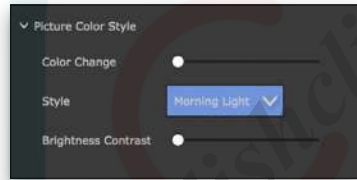
Use the Brush Size and Brush Strength, combined with a color to lighten or darken areas. The slider above the color picker controls the luminosity of the brush.

If you want to remove the brush effects, you can paint them off with a mid-gray tone, or click the Set Color to Remove Lighting button. Alternatively, click Remove All to start again.



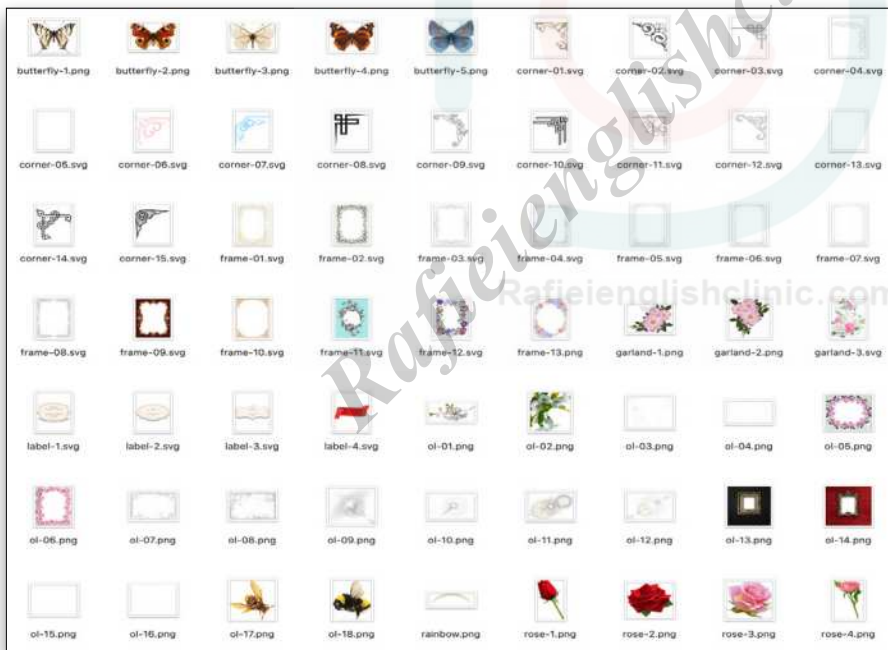
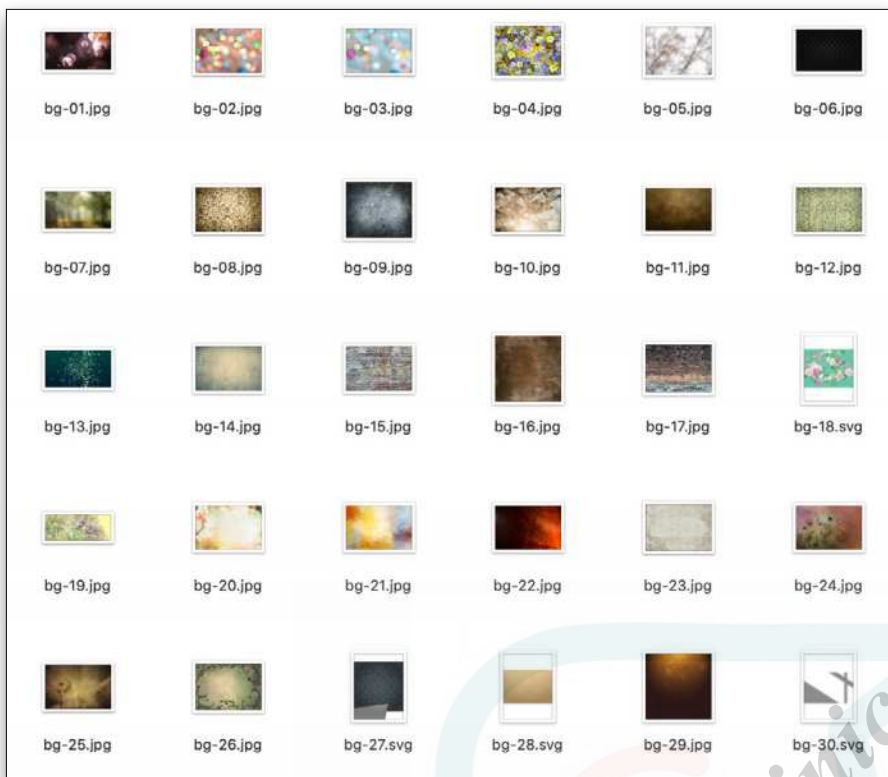
COLOR STYLES

You can now choose from a range of color styles inside the Picture panel. Open the Picture Color Style section to access



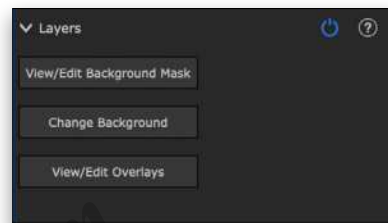
this feature. The Color Change slider sets the strength of the effect, which is initially set to zero so the effect isn't applied. Choose a Color Style from the Style drop-down menu.

Color Change will automatically change so you can see the effect of the Style that you've chosen. Tweak this to suit the image. You can also change the Brightness Contrast to change the look of the style.



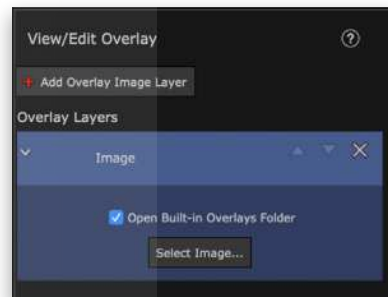
FREE STOCK IMAGES

It was probably obvious from when we replaced the sky that PortraitPro ships with a wealth of stock photos that you can add to your photos for free, and Version 21 adds even more of these. In addition to the skies, you can find new background and overlay images in the Layers panel.

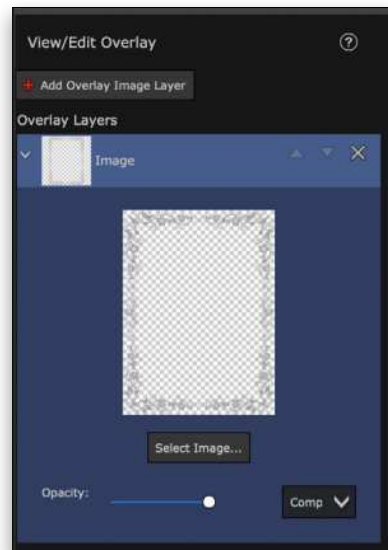


To add an overlay, simply go to Layers and choose the View/Edit Overlays option.

Click Add Overlay Image Layer, and choose an image from the folder.



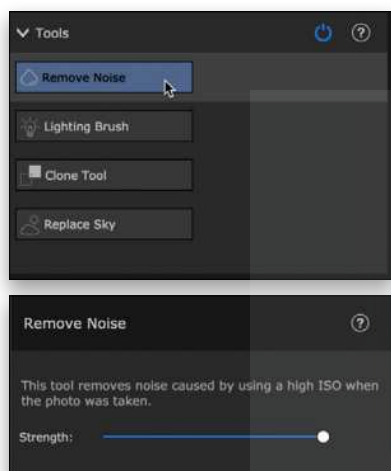
You'll now have the image visible in the Layers panel. You can repeat this for more layers.



Here's our image with the frame that we selected.

DENOISE

In situations where you're forced to use high ISO, the denoise tool can be useful. To use it, go to Tools and choose Remove Noise. The tool will run automatically, showing a progress bar as it works. After PortraitPro reduces the noise, your only slider for editing the changes is Strength.



THAT'S A WRAP!

The new features in PortraitPro 21 are a good addition to the program. The key thing to remember is that they're adding to the program as a whole, especially for standalone use. Photoshop might provide more cloning options, but for someone not using Photoshop, the Clone tool is a welcome boon.

Options such as Sky Details in Replace Sky really help retain fine detail, such as hair, with the masks. Plus, there's a huge wealth of skies, as well as backgrounds and overlays, included in the program. The core aspect of retouching feels much improved, which was part of the v19 update. We feel the default settings aren't as aggressive as previous versions, making them look a lot more natural. Good retouching shouldn't be noticed. ■



Example of image with free stock image frame



Remove Noise before



Remove Noise after

platypod® the worlds most compact tripod base



Photo © Gilmar Smith 2020

The Platypod Ecosystem

Founded in 2014, Platypod built its brand around quality and utility for artists to establish expanded perspective and vision. Our products offer unlimited combinations of tools forming an ecosystem of inspiration for photographers in areas of macro, architecture, landscape, hiking and traveling situations where tripods dare not go.





A WORKMAN'S PORTRAIT

My father was a pressman. He worked at a print shop on a massive and thunderous four-color press. As a boy, the machine was like a huge metal beast whose body was made up of fast-spinning cylinders and formidable handles, levers, and buttons. The constant k-thunk, k-thunk sound it made as it spit out sheet after sheet of paper on a wooden palette was hypnotic. Seeing him astride the machine as if here were taming it filled me with awe and respect.



His work clothes were blue jeans and a work shirt, the latter which bore his name in embroidered cursive. The clothes were covered in chaotic patches of color from the heavy inks that he applied to the printing plates.

It's one of the reasons why workmen, people who work with their hands and bodies, have fascinated me. It's not just the clothing they wear, but the way they carry

themselves, often free of pretensions and self-consciousness. The years of hard labor can be both obvious and subtle, resulting in a combination of elements that reveal the uniqueness of the person.

It was that quality that drew me to this construction worker I encountered in downtown Los Angeles. I approached him and asked him a few questions about

the construction project on which he was working. He generously answered my questions after which I asked if I could take his photograph to which he kindly agreed.

Even before asking him, I had already noted the quality of the light. Though the sun was coming from behind him in the east, sunlight was being reflected off skyscrapers behind me. This resulted in a hard fill light that illuminated his face and the older office in the distance. I placed the sun purposely along the edge of his construction hat, creating a sunburst.

Even though the reflected light provided naturally occurring fill light for his face, preventing him from being rendered as a silhouette, I recognized that the high-contrast scene posed challenges, especially concerning exposure.

I underexposed the photograph to retain as much high-light detail as possible in the sky, but still retain good quality shadows that I could tweak in Camera Raw and Photoshop. Though the image didn't look ideal on the back of my camera's LCD screen, I knew from experience that I had all that I needed to produce a quality photograph.



Before

PHOTOGRAPHING WITH CHALLENGING LIGHT

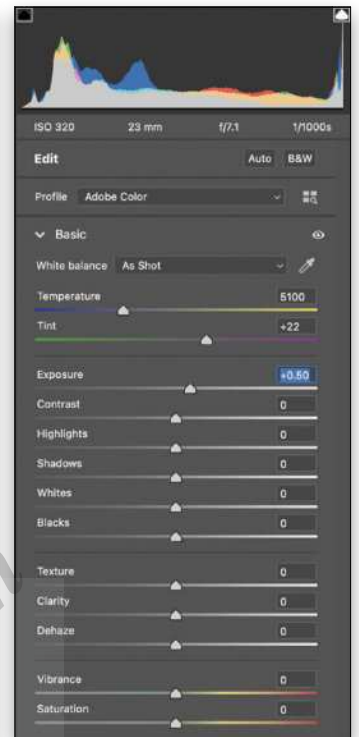
When photographing under circumstances with challenging lighting, and one doesn't have the benefit of a reflector or strobe to control contrast, exposure is a primary consideration. It's important to be familiar with the dynamic range of the camera, beyond mere specifications. The experience of photographing under such circumstances and processing the images later in Photoshop provides the photographer valuable insight into the capabilities and the limitations of the camera. Even the most advanced cameras have their limits, and it's important to be well versed on what those are. This results in choices that ensure the resulting file maintains as much information throughout the entire tonal range, even when shooting and saving images as RAW files.

By making such informed choices when taking the image, the work in Camera Raw and Photoshop is more about enhancing the photograph, rather than repairing problems and mistakes. *Note:* The following Adobe Camera Raw steps will also work in Lightroom Classic. KelbyOne members can click [here](#) to download a downsized DNG of this file to follow along.

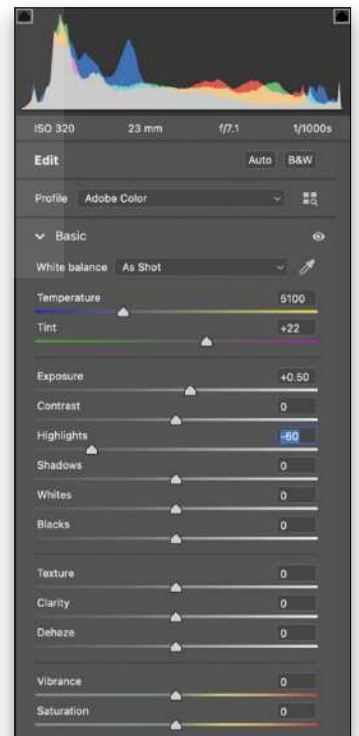
STEP ONE: After opening the image in Photoshop's RAW converter, Adobe Camera Raw, click on the black and white triangles in the upper left- and right-hand corners of the Histogram. When enabled, clipped highlights appear as a red overlay over the photograph; clipped shadows appear as a blue overlay.

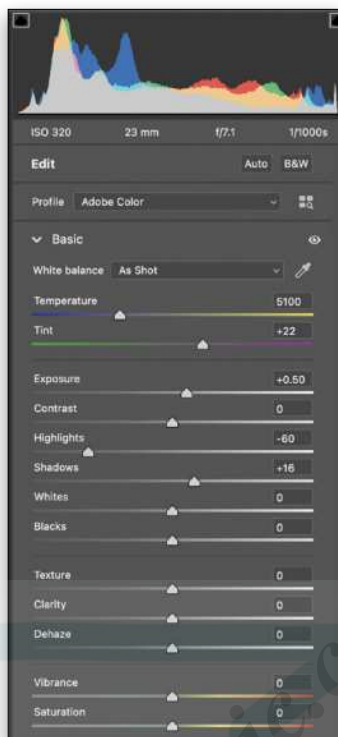


STEP TWO: To address the overall underexposure, go to the Basic panel and increase Exposure by +50. This results in brightness on the face, vest, and dark T-shirt.

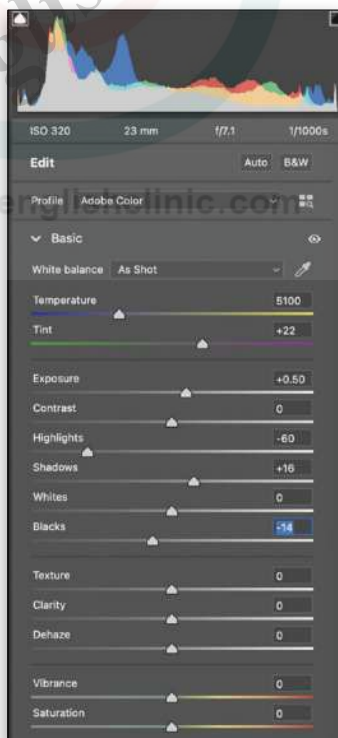


STEP THREE: Darken the highlights and eliminate the blown-out highlight in the upper left-hand corner by reducing the Highlights to -60. The red overlay disappears, and subtle highlight detail is revealed in the sky.



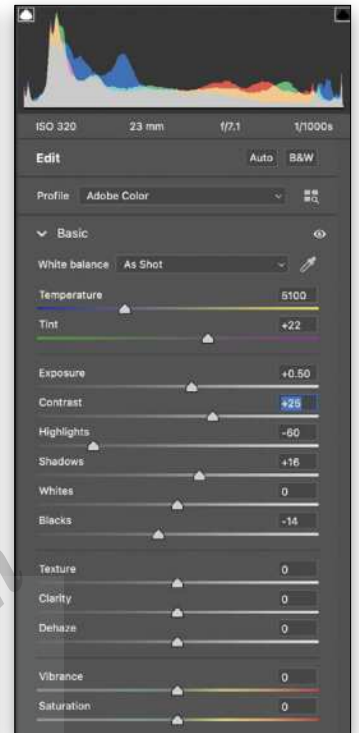


STEP FOUR: Reveal some shadow details by setting the Shadows slider to +16.

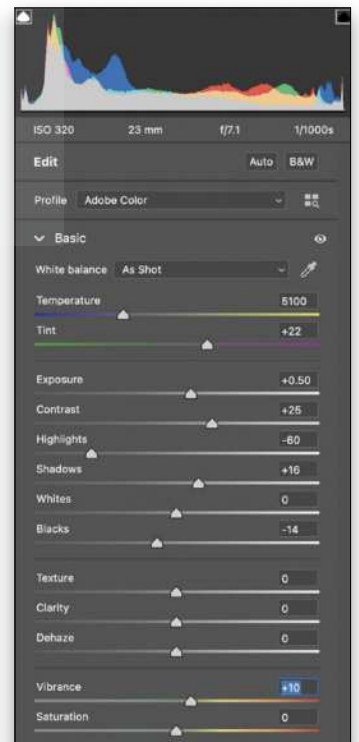


STEP FIVE: To increase contrast, adjust the Blacks slider to -14, until you see the blue overlay on the lower half of his vest. Though some detail is lost here, it doesn't negatively impact the overall look of the image.

STEP SIX: Increase the contrast by setting the Contrast slider to +25. This largely impacts the midtones and doesn't result in the clipping of shadows or highlights.

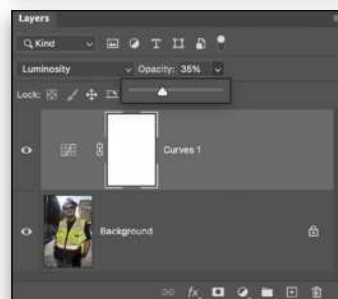
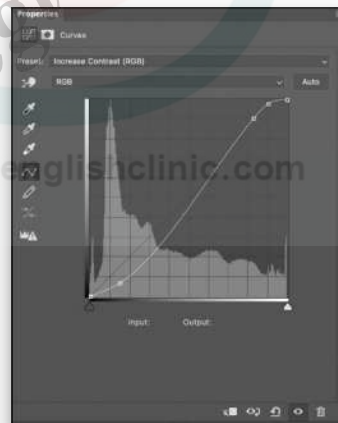


STEP SEVEN: To increase the punch of the colors, adjust the Vibrance to +10. Click Open to launch the image in Photoshop. If you're working in Lightroom Classic, go to Photo>Edit In>Edit in Adobe Photoshop 2021.

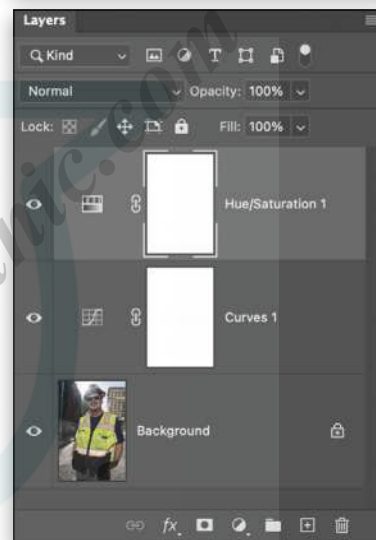
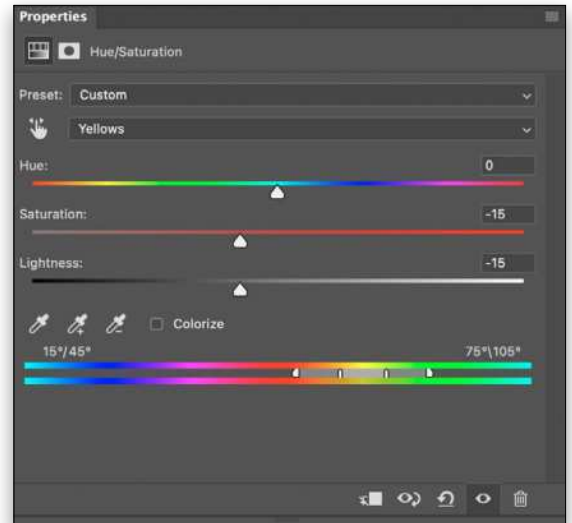




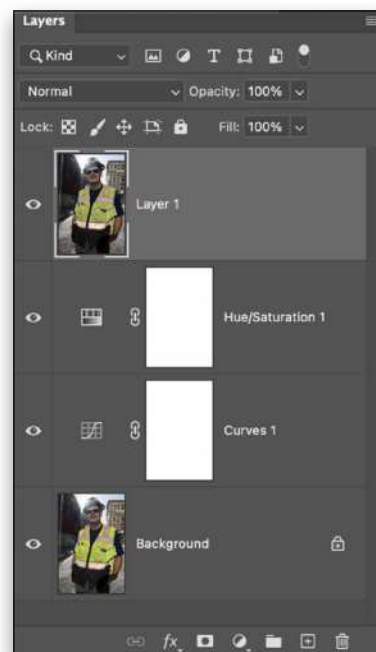
STEP EIGHT: To eliminate the distraction of the sawhorse leaning against the sign on the left, use the Crop tool (C). Depress the Shift button while dragging in the top-left corner of the crop boundary to retain the proportions of the frame. Press Enter to commit the crop.



STEP NINE: The image could do with some more contrast enhancement, but you don't want to increase the color saturation, especially with the vest. Create a Curves adjustment layer (Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Curves). In the Curves Properties panel (Window>Properties), go to the Preset drop-down menu and choose Increase Contrast (RGB). Then in the Layers panel, select Luminosity for the blending mode and reduce the Opacity to 35%.



STEP 10: The color of the vest is too saturated and is a distraction. To reduce its prominence, create a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer (Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Hue/Saturation), and then select Yellows in the drop-down menu below the Preset drop-down menu in the Properties panel. Reduce both the Saturation and Lightness to -15.

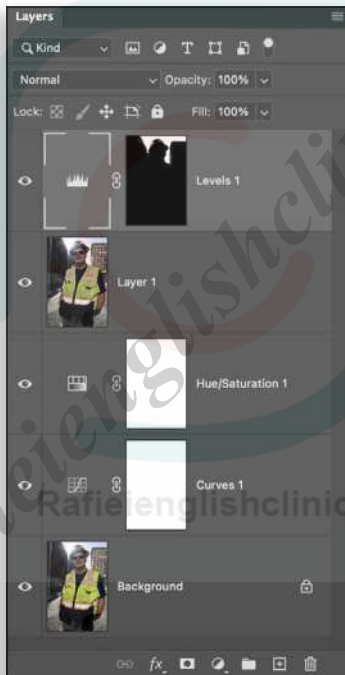


STEP 11: Consolidate all those changes into a new merged layer at the top of the layer stack by simultaneously pressing the Shift-Command-Option-E (PC: Shift-Ctrl-Alt-E) keys.

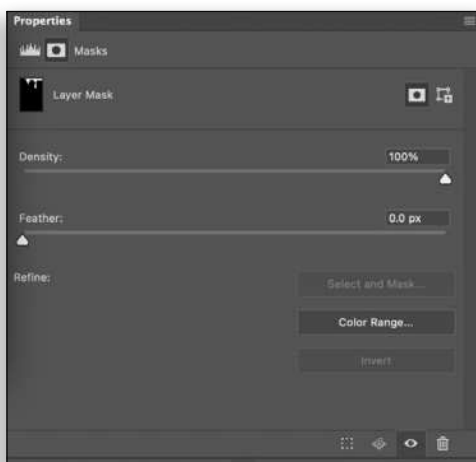
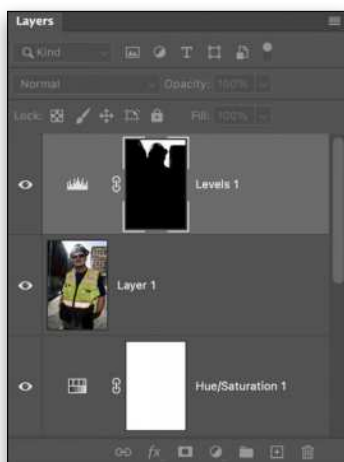


STEP 12: To make adjustments to the sky, go to the menu bar and choose **Select>Sky**. This creates a selection around the sky that appears as marching ants at the top of the frame.

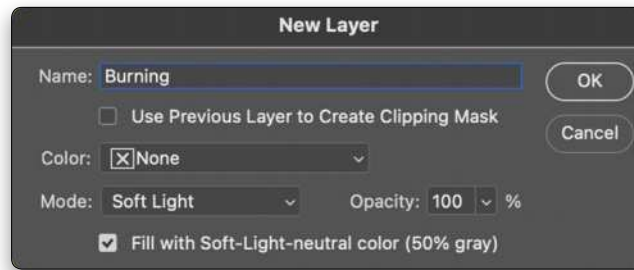
STEP 13: With the selection enabled, create a Levels adjustment layer (**Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Levels**). The adjustment layer will use the current selection to create its layer mask. Adjust the Levels control in the Properties menu by dragging the shadow slider on the left to 52 and the mid-tone slider to 0.65.



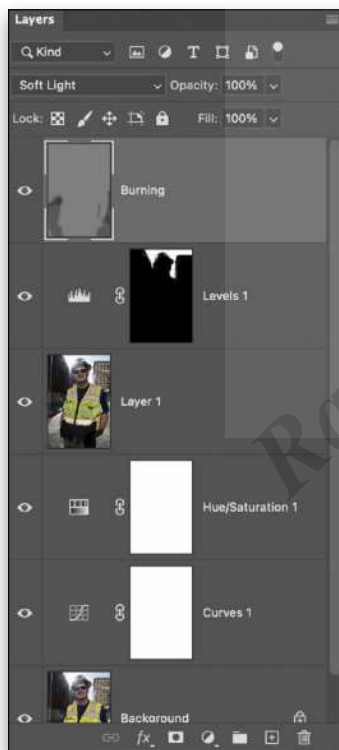
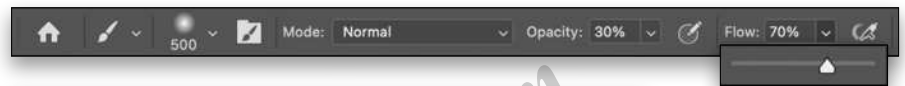
STEP 14: To soften the edges of the mask, click on the layer mask thumbnail in the Layers panel to make it active, and then go to **Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur**. Set the Radius to 4.5 pixels and click OK.



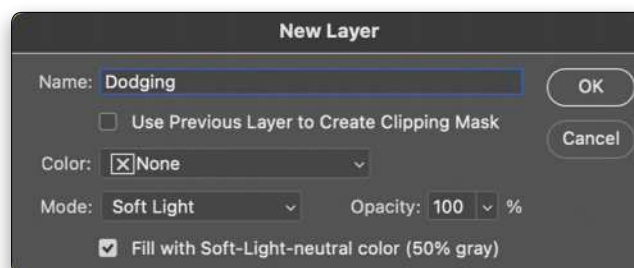
STEP 15: To darken the street on either side of the subject, create a burn layer by holding the Option (PC: Alt) key and clicking on the Create a New Layer icon (+) at the bottom of the Layers panel. In the New Layer dialog that appears, select Soft Light for the Mode and click on the checkbox for Fill with Soft-Light-Neutral Color (50% Gray). Name the layer “Burning” and Click OK.



STEP 16: Press D to set the Fore-ground color to black, select the Brush tool (B) with a soft round brush, and set its Opacity to 30% and Flow to 70% in the Options Bar. Then paint on the area of the street until darkened slightly.



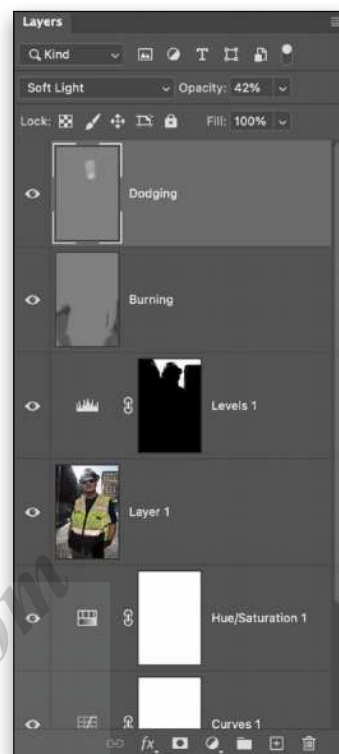
STEP 17: To brighten the face, create another new layer while pressing the Option (PC: Alt) key. As before in the New Layer dialog, select Soft Light for the Mode, and click on the checkbox for Fill with Soft-Light-Neutral Color (50% Gray). Name this layer “Dodging” and click OK.



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Final



STEP 18: Press X to set the Foreground color to white, and with the Brush tool still set to an Opacity of 30% and Flow of 70%, paint the face until sufficiently brightened. To refine it, reduce the layer Opacity to less than 100%, such as 42% as shown here.

And we're done! If you started out in Adobe Camera Raw, press Command-S (PC: Ctrl-S) to save your document, set the Format to Photoshop to maintain all the layers, navigate to where you want to save the file and click Save. If you started in Lightroom Classic, save and close the file, and your image will be sent back to Lightroom. ■

 Questions & Comments



Q. Why are some of my pictures grayed out in the Import dialog? What could be the problem?

- A.** The appearance of the thumbnails in the Import dialog shows whether the photos are available for import or not. There are three main states to look out for:
1. Photos with a clear thumbnail are checked and ready to import.
 2. Photos shown with a vignette are unchecked photos, but they can be selected for import by toggling the checkbox.
 3. Dimmed photos that don't have a checkbox can't be imported, either because they're already in your current Lightroom catalog at that location, or they're already in your catalog at a different location and you have Don't Import Suspected Duplicates checked in the File Handling panel on the right.



Q. Is Command-S (PC: Ctrl-S) really working in Lightroom? When I look at the saved images outside Lightroom, I don't see the edits I made. For example, if the original image was under-exposed and I've corrected that in Lightroom, the image still looks like the original, with no evidence of that exposure correction.

- A.** Lightroom isn't like most photo-editing software. It's a nondestructive metadata editor, which means that it stores your edits as a list of instructions, and only applies the edits to the image pixels when you export the photo as a copy. It doesn't touch the original data, so you can go back and change the edits later without degrading image quality.

When you use the Save Metadata to File command (under the Metadata menu in the Library module, and under the Photo menu in the Develop module), or its shortcut Command-S (PC: Ctrl-S), Lightroom just writes the text instructions to the header of most file formats, or as a separate XMP file for RAW files.

Other than Lightroom and the Adobe Camera Raw plug-in, most other software can't understand these text instructions, so if you view the original photo in other software, it won't show the changes.

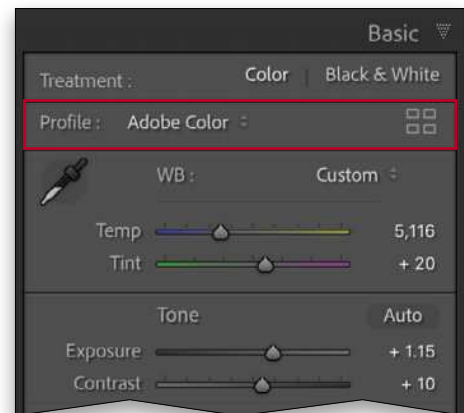
If you want to view your edits in other software, or send the edited photo to someone else, you must use the File>Export command, and save a copy of the photo as a JPEG, PNG, PSD, or TIFF.

Q. When I import my photos, initially they look like they did on the back of the camera, but then they change. How do I make them look like they did in the camera?

- A.** When you shoot in your camera's RAW file format, the data isn't fully processed by the camera. The mosaic sensor data is recorded in the RAW file, and this sensor data must be converted into an image using RAW processing software. Each RAW processor interprets the RAW data in a slightly different way. As a result, the photo won't look exactly the same in Lightroom as it did on the back of the camera. There isn't a right or wrong rendering; they're just different.

The initial preview you see in Lightroom is the JPEG preview embedded by the camera, so it has the manufacturer's own RAW processing applied. Lightroom then renders its own preview, ready for you to start editing. This is why it looks like Lightroom is changing the image.

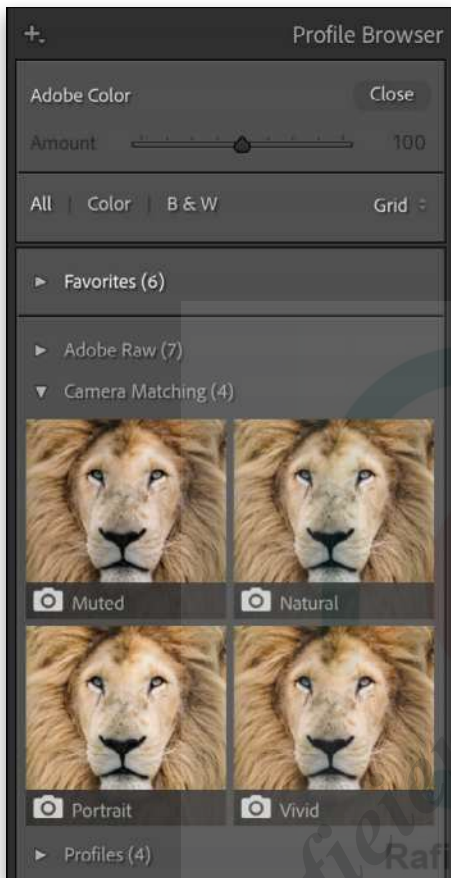
If you prefer the camera's manufacturer's rendering, Lightroom ships with many camera-matching profiles that emulate the camera style settings for many popular cameras. These are found under the Camera Matching heading in the Profile Browser, which is accessed using the icon of the four rectangles at the top of the Basic panel.



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If you'd like these camera-matching profiles applied to the new photos by default, go to Lightroom Classic (PC: Edit)>Preferences, click on the Presets tab, and in the Master pop-up, select Camera Settings.



Q. In migrating from a very old MacBook Pro and Lightroom 5 to Lightroom Classic on a new MacBook Pro, I encountered a problem. When I moved the catalog to my new computer, the old “folder directory” transferred, as well. It has multiple subfolders that are meaningless and restrict the viewable portion of my folder names (see attached screenshot of my Folders panel). How do I remove these spare folders?

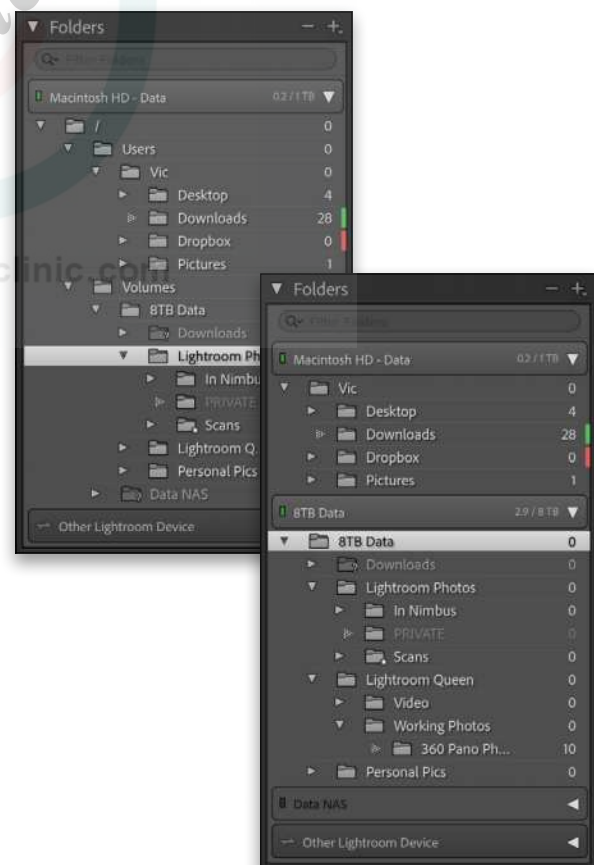
A. Your screenshot made it easy to see what's happened. Lightroom's simply showing a few too many parent folders, and that's very easily fixed. I've reproduced the same scenario on my computer to illustrate the problem and solution, so the folder names are slightly different on these screenshots, but the same principles will apply.

First, back up your catalog in case you make a mistake, then go to the Library menu and uncheck

Show Photos in Subfolders. By doing so, the folder counts update to show only photos stored directly in the folder, rather than a composite view of all of its subfolders. We only want to remove folders that have a photo count of 0, otherwise we'd delete photo records from the catalog too.

Next, Right-click on the “/” folder at the top of the Folders panel and choose Hide This Parent. Then do the same on the Users folder, and again on the Volumes folder. At this point, your external drives may seem to disappear from the Folders panel, but don't panic. Just restart Lightroom, and your external drives will reappear as separate volumes, rather than being listed under Macintosh HD. You might then want to use Hide This Parent on the external drive's top folder (shown as 8TB Data here in my screenshots) to maximize the viewable width of the panel.

Finally, go back to the Library menu and recheck Show Photos in Subfolders to return to the composite view you were using before. ■



If you have a Lightroom question that you'd like Victoria Bampton to answer in the pages of *Photoshop User* magazine, send it to letters@photoshouser.com.



This month we'll take a look at the Lightroom ecosystem, with a focus on how the desktop-based Lightroom Classic fits into the cloud-centric Lightroom components.

WHAT IS THE LIGHTROOM ECOSYSTEM?

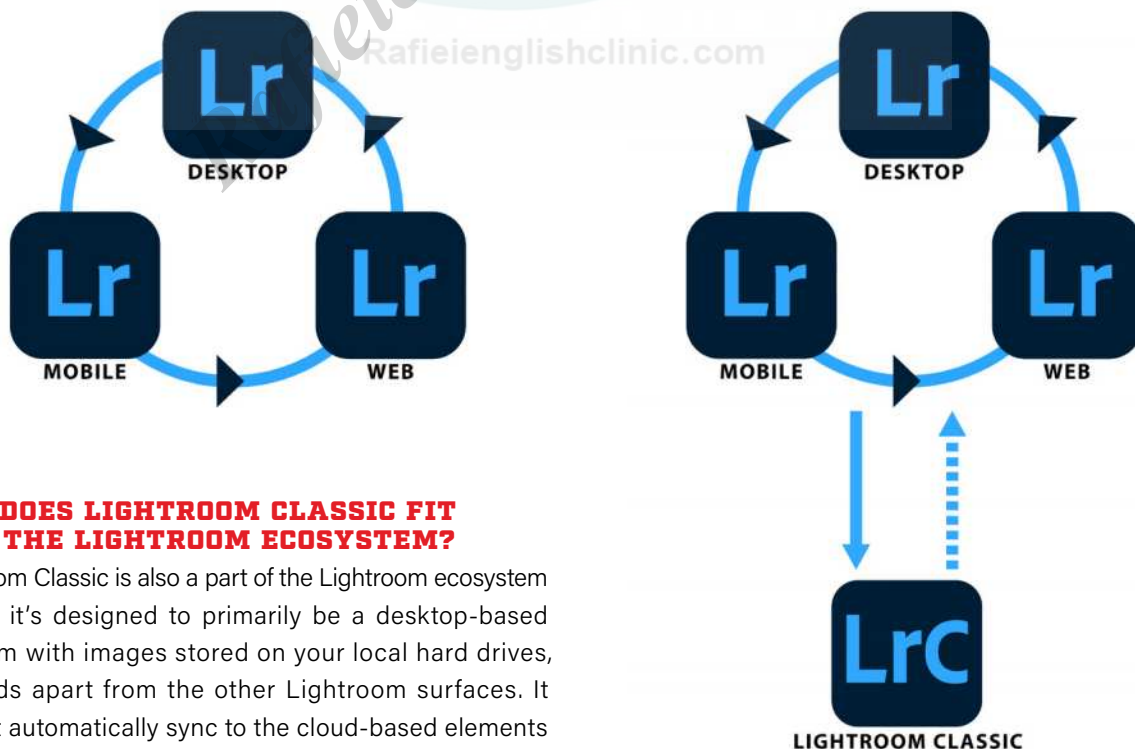
The Lightroom ecosystem encompasses all of the different variations of Lightroom. It most often refers to the cloud-centric Lightroom, which is installed on your desktop or laptop computer, as well as the Lightroom for mobile app for phones and tablets and Lightroom on the web, where you can access your images via a web browser. Photos imported to any of these surfaces are uploaded to the Adobe cloud and will automatically be available on the other surfaces. Because of the way Lightroom intelligently manages the storage of your images, you can always view all of your photos, even if the original file isn't stored on your local hard drive.

Note: With the desktop version of Lightroom, your original photos are always backed up to the Adobe cloud, but you can also choose to store a copy of all originals and all smart previews on your computer's hard drive (for these options, see Local Storage in the program's Preferences). You can also designate specific albums for local storage (Right-click on the album and select Store Album Locally).

And it's important to understand the differences in syncing behavior with Lightroom Classic.

CAN YOU USE BOTH LIGHTROOM CLASSIC AND LIGHTROOM?

The technical answer to this is yes, but the real-world answer is that for your primary image archive you should stick to one or the other. The main reason for this is that, when syncing is enabled in Lightroom Classic, *all photos* imported to any surface of the cloud-centric Lightroom ecosystem will also be downloaded to your Lightroom Classic catalog. The only items from Lightroom Classic that are synced to the Lightroom ecosystem are collections that you've chosen to sync. This difference is represented by the solid arrow and the dashed arrow in the illustration shown below. I use Lightroom Classic for my main image library, and the cloud-based Lightroom program is only for the mobile images I import into the Lightroom for mobile app.

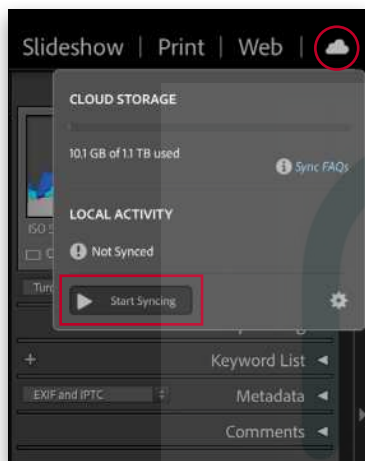


HOW DOES LIGHTROOM CLASSIC FIT INTO THE LIGHTROOM ECOSYSTEM?

Lightroom Classic is also a part of the Lightroom ecosystem but, as it's designed to primarily be a desktop-based program with images stored on your local hard drives, it stands apart from the other Lightroom surfaces. It doesn't automatically sync to the cloud-based elements of Lightroom, but you can choose to turn syncing on.

ACTIVATE SYNCING IN LIGHTROOM CLASSIC

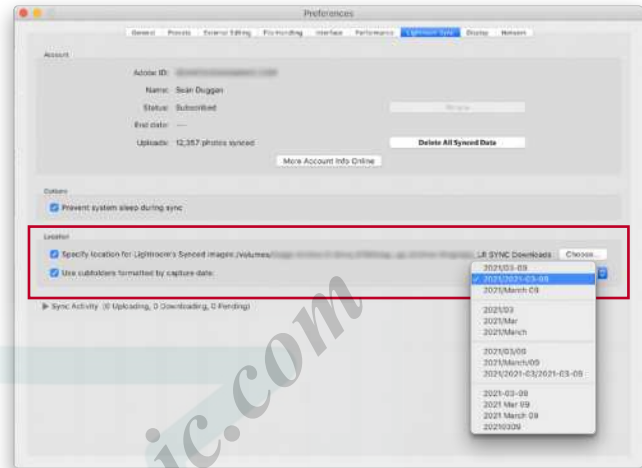
The cloud icon in the upper-right corner of the Lightroom Classic interface is where you manage the sync behavior. Click Start Syncing to begin the sync process. You can only sync one Lightroom Classic catalog at a time, using your Adobe ID. If another catalog is currently being synced, a message to this effect will appear giving you the option to sync the current catalog instead. If you do this, any photos that were already synced to the other catalog will be added to the newly synced catalog. *Note:* Syncing is supported in Lightroom Classic versions 8.2 and later.



SPECIFY A CUSTOM FOLDER FOR SYNCED IMAGES

Choose Lightroom Classic (PC: Edit)>Preferences and click on the Lightroom Sync tab. In the Location section, enable the checkbox for Specify Location for Lightroom's Synced Images, then click Choose and navigate to the folder you want to use. If you click the checkbox for Use Subfolders Formatted by Capture Date, you can select from several folder-naming options to automatically organize the synced images by date (these are the same choices that are available in the Destination panel of the Import dialog). Specifying your own folder where the synced images are placed gives you more control over how these files are organized.

Note: The forward slash in the folder-naming choices represents a nested folder structure. So, 2021/2021-03-09 indicates that images will be placed in a folder for the year (e.g., 2021), and within that folder a new folder will be created for the date the images were created (e.g., 2021-03-09).



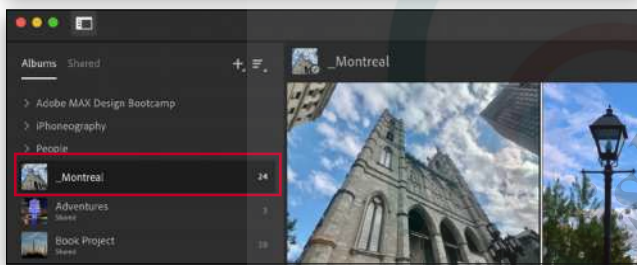
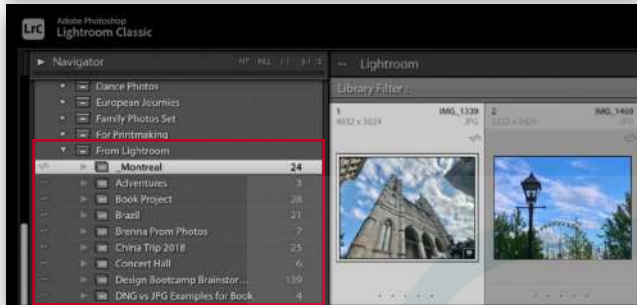
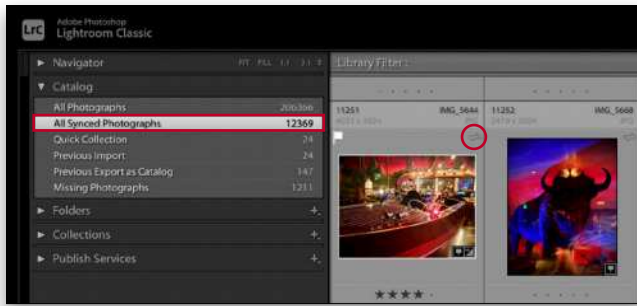
WHAT GETS SYNCED: LIGHTROOM TO LIGHTROOM CLASSIC

As mentioned earlier, once you turn on Lightroom Classic syncing for an account that's also associated with the cloud-based Lightroom, those photos will begin downloading to your computer and will be added to your Lightroom Classic catalog. These will be the full-size original files, even if they're RAW or DNG files. Develop/Edit setting, flags, ratings, captions, and smart previews will all sync from Lightroom to Lightroom Classic, and vice versa, but keywords do not. Files larger than 200 MB and PSB files also do not sync to Lightroom Classic. Videos are subject to partial syncing; if a video is added to Lightroom desktop or Lightroom for mobile, it will be downloaded to Lightroom Classic, but once it arrives, the file will no longer be synced to the Lightroom cloud.

WHERE TO FIND SYNCED FILES IN LIGHTROOM CLASSIC

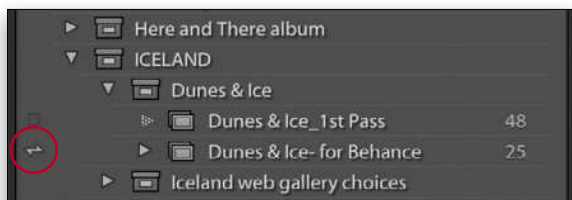
In the Catalog panel on the left side of the Library module there's a collection named All Synced Photographs. You'll notice that all of the images here have a bidirectional arrow symbol at the upper right of the thumbnail. If you want to find the folder in your catalog where a synced image is stored, Right-click on it and choose Go to Folder in Library. You can also find synced images in the Collections panel in a collection set named From Lightroom that contains

albums that have been created in Lightroom desktop or Lightroom for mobile.



WHAT GETS SYNCED: LIGHTROOM CLASSIC TO LIGHTROOM

Even though all the files from Lightroom are synced to Lightroom Classic, that sync relationship doesn't go the other way. If you want to sync files from Lightroom Classic, they need to be in a collection. You can sync any collection to Lightroom by clicking on the small empty square to the left of the collection's name in the Collections panel. A bidirectional arrow symbol will appear indicating that the collection is



synced, and in Lightroom desktop or Lightroom for mobile that synced collection will appear in the Albums list. When you create a new collection, there's also an option to Sync with Lightroom. Smart previews of your photos are uploaded in this process. This is a

handy way to carry albums of your best images with you so that you can show them to other people when you're on the go.



TURN OFF SYNCING FOR COLLECTIONS

To stop syncing a collection in Lightroom Classic, simply click on the bidirectional arrow symbol next to the collection's name. The photos will be removed from other devices but the images and the collection they're in will remain in Lightroom Classic.



TURN OFF SYNCING FOR PHOTOS NOT IN COLLECTIONS

You can turn off syncing for photos that originated in Lightroom desktop or Lightroom for mobile by locating them in the All Synced Photographs collection in the Catalog panel. Select the thumbnails that you no longer wish to sync, Right-click on them, and choose Remove from All Synced Photographs. The photos will be removed from Lightroom desktop, Lightroom for mobile, and Lightroom for web, but will remain in your Lightroom Classic catalog. You can accomplish the same thing in the All Synced Photographs collection by selecting thumbnails and pressing the Delete (PC: Backspace) key.



Tip: If you need to find the unsynced photos again, be sure that they have keywords that you can use to search

for them. You can also Right-click on the thumbnail and choose Go to Folder in Library, so you know where to locate them *after* syncing is turned off for them. Just be sure to return to the All Synced Photographs collection to do the actual unsyncing operation.

REVIEW IMPORT SETTINGS IN LIGHTROOM FOR MOBILE

Depending on how you use the Lightroom for mobile app, there's a setting that could cause problems: Auto Import from Camera Roll. This may be turned on by default when you first install or update the app.

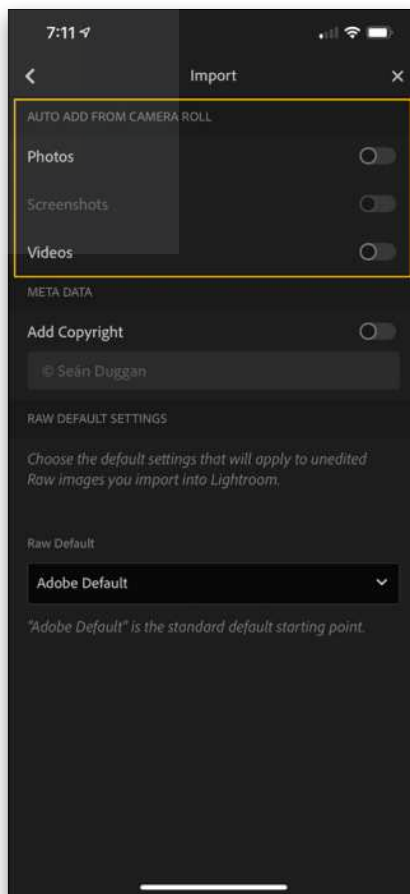
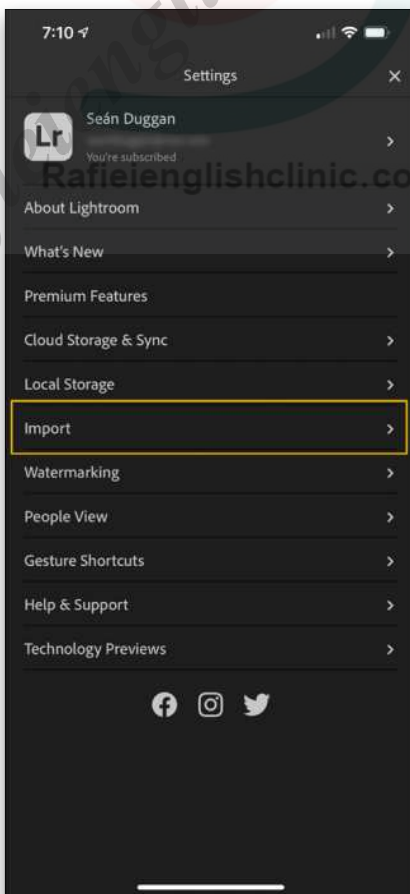
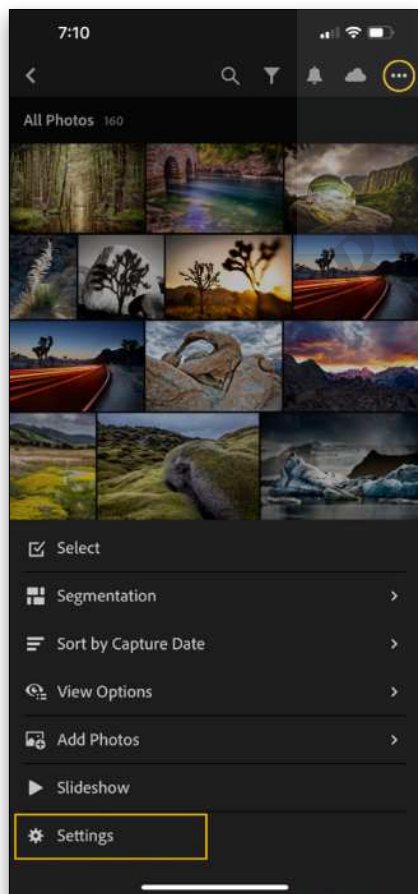
In the Lightroom for mobile app on your phone or tablet, tap the gear icon or the three dots in the upper-right corner and then choose Settings>Import to see how Auto Import from Camera Roll is configured. As the name implies,



this will automatically import any photo you take with your phone into the Lightroom for mobile app, no matter whether it was taken with the native camera app on your device or another camera app. I tend to want only specific photos I take with my phone to be imported into the Lightroom for mobile app, so I turn this off. Every photo I take with my phone doesn't need to go into Lightroom—but to each their own. Just make sure it's set up the way you want it. ■

ALL IMAGES BY SEÁN DUGGAN

Questions & Comments





PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER WITH LIGHTROOM AND FRESCO

In recent issues, I've talked a lot about the "what" and the "why," explaining Adobe's landscape of mobile apps, what they do and on which mobile platforms they run. The fun part is, of course, the "how" (to use them), so I'd like to begin to explore the unique powers of these applications and how they work together.

In pulling from past articles (as I know you now understand the "what"), I wanted to combine the superpowers of two focused applications: **Adobe Lightroom** for the workflow, editing, and sharing of photographs, and **Adobe Fresco** for powerful drawing and painting, optimized for both touch and stylus. To take it a step further, though, we'll use them together. Given the unique powers of the iPad, let's use it and an Apple Pencil, but I should note, everything we're about to do can also be done on the iPhone with your fingertip!

LET'S START WITH LIGHTROOM

Since day one, my dream for the iPad was that I could directly import RAW images into this device that fits so nicely into my camera bag. Turns out, this didn't happen overnight; we needed more powerful hardware, a fully functional Lightroom, and some critical changes to the operating system, namely the support for opening and editing RAW files and (most recently) the ability to import them directly into Lightroom. Now that this has all been solved, all you need is the appropriate (Lightning or USB-C) SD card reader or USB interface (as this can connect to a multi-card reader, or

even a hard drive). From there, it's just like the desktop—in most cases, it's even faster.

Let's go from the unedited RAW image that I shot to something more like what I saw and felt (which is really the joy of photo editing). Below is my image, without any edits:

For the most part, Lightroom's interface is laid out in the order I use it, so let's start at the upper right. The first myth I want to bust here is the value and power of Auto; I promise that this is faster than any manual method and probably better. If not, you can tweak the result, but I challenge you to move six sliders faster. This is *always* my first step.

Immediately following Auto is Profiles. Once limited to camera profiles, this is now a treasure chest of



Original image



Modern 03 profile selected



Image with Color Mix edits



Final image in Lightroom

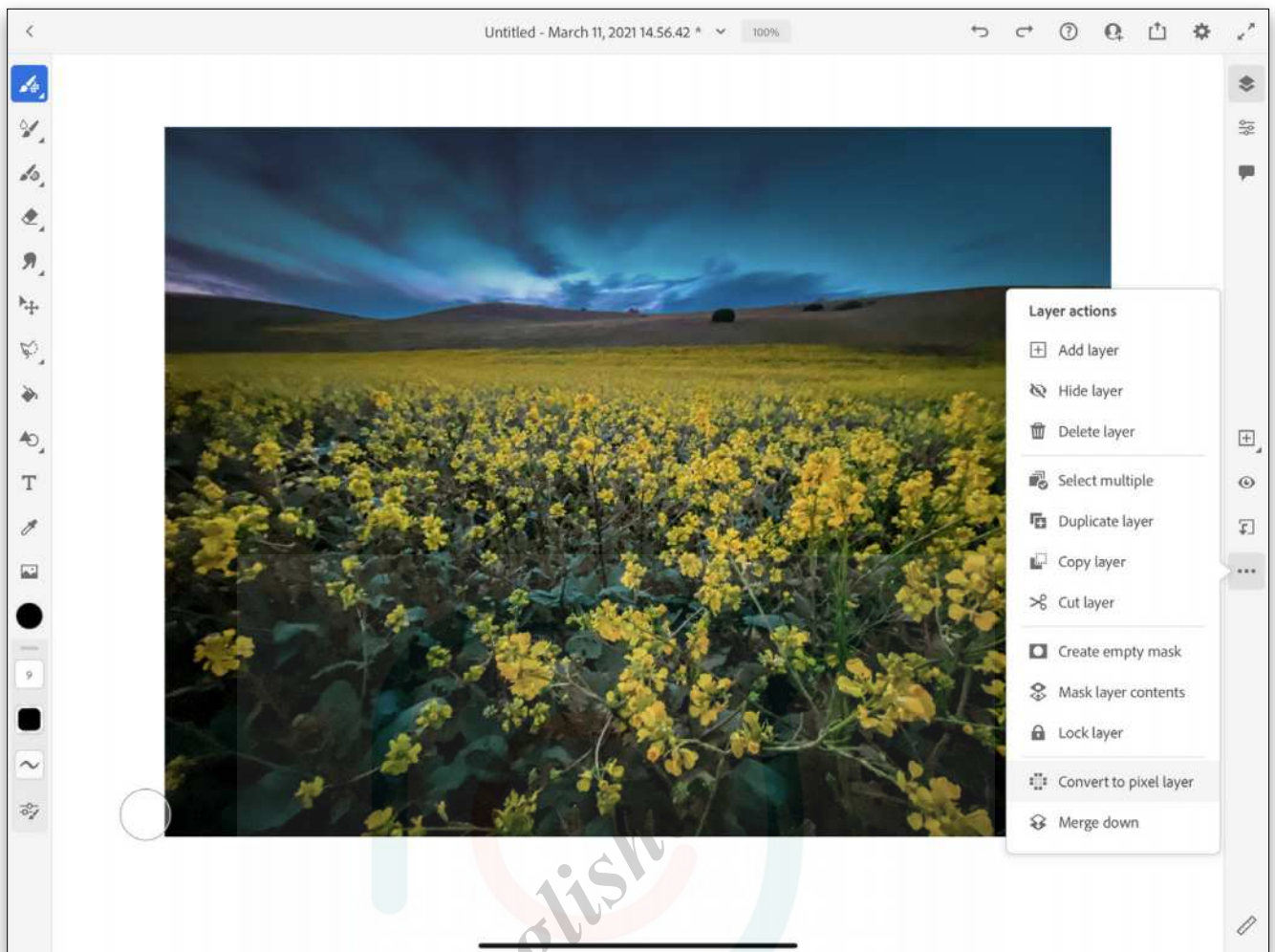
dramatic Creative Profiles. Unlike presets, Creative Profiles happen before your edits and are meant to play with your follow-on edits. These profiles are how Lightroom translates colors, and they're fast, WYSIWYG, and easy. What follows is the original image with one of my favorite Creative Profiles, Modern 03. *Tip:* You can favorite the profiles you like most, and quickly navigate to those in the Favorites group.

My next step is color, where I assess what's missing from my image. I like my composition, and I'm at peace with the color temperature. Only the sky feels off to me, so my edit is via the Color Mix in the Color panel: subtle changes to Hue, Saturation, and Luminance of the blue areas of the image. If you don't want to guess exactly which color needs to be edited, you can use the targeted adjustment control (the target icon just above the color swatches) to identify a color by touching a tone directly in the image.

Effects, the next step in my edit, are a lot of fun. Minimizing Texture softens the clouds in the sky; amplifying Clarity introduces midtone contrast to make the flowers pop; and Dehaze removes atmospheric haze from the image. Lastly, I use a vignette to pull the viewer into the field of flowers. I like to first crank up the Vignette slider so it's easier to see, and then set its parameters (Midpoint, Roundness, and Feather). After that, I back down the Vignette slider to the appropriate amount.

Before leaving Lightroom, I'll just say that, like Auto, I always Enable Lens Corrections, a toggle found under Optics.

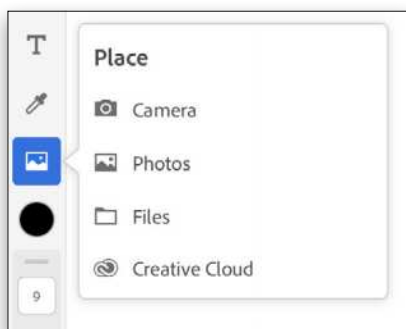
I use some subset of those controls for nearly every image; if I want to re-use the effects, I can save a preset or copy-and-paste to any number of other neighboring files. Lightroom is fast, easy, and powerful!



PAINTING IN FRESCO

I mentioned in a past article that I found my way to photography because I couldn't paint or draw—true. That said, the magic of Fresco's Live Brushes can be leveraged on photos, so let's take a look at how this is done.

In Fresco, I can create a canvas size of my choice and use the Place tool to navigate to Creative Cloud where I find my Lightroom assets, just as I left them.



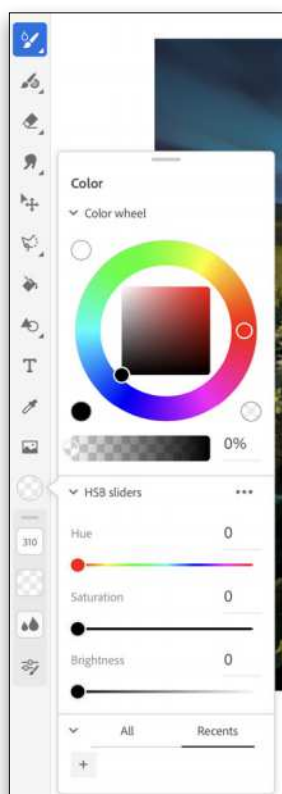
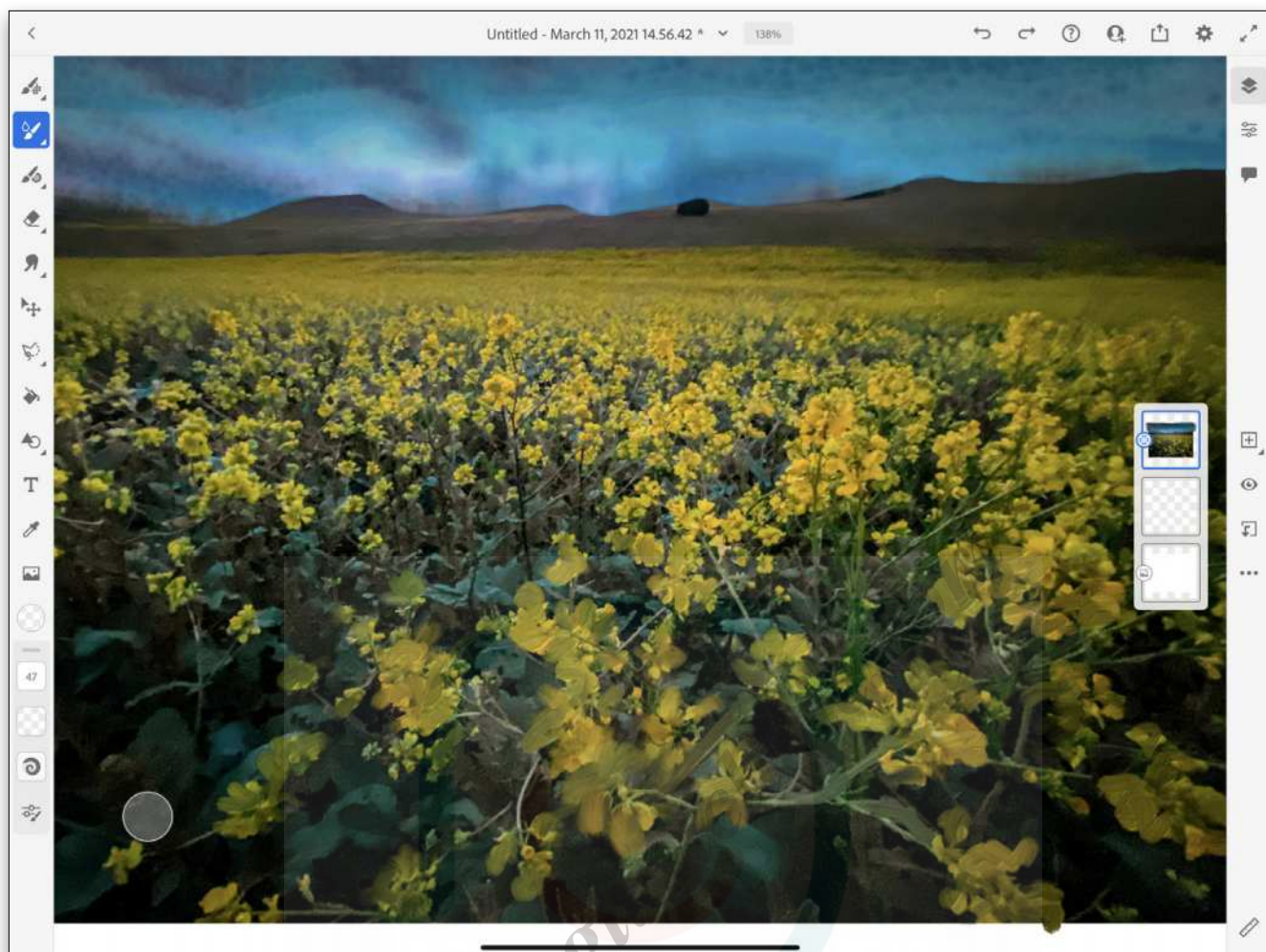
Now, I want to convert the image into pixels so I can paint with the contents of the photo. On the right side of

the screen, there are three important dots (...), where I'll choose Convert to Pixel Layer.

Lastly, I'll select my Live Brushes and one of the Watercolor brushes, then navigate to the brush dynamics and remove all color from the brush (see next page).

Now comes the fun part: painting. Feel free to experiment with flow, size, and brushes as you paint over the pixels in the image. (I used a combination of two Live Brush types: Watercolor for the sky and Oil for the foreground.) You're moving paint around, but you've already solved for the content and composition. This can be a separate layer that uses a photo to trace, or as in my case, a photograph that I'm painting over.

Drawing and painting can be detailed and methodical, especially when leveraging the precision of an Apple Pencil, or it can be freeing and playful, without a sense of where you might end up. I find that painting over photographs is an easy way to



get to know Fresco, and that the skills you build over an existing image all lend themselves to the blank canvas.

If you want to take Fresco further, there are rich learning resources in the home screen of the application and a treasure trove of Live Streams available [here](#).

I hope you've learned some tips for accelerating your photo workflow in Lightroom and embracing the unique tools in Fresco, either of which can lead you on a long, powerful, and focused creative journey. ■

ALL IMAGES BY BRYAN O'NEIL HUGHES

 Questions & Comments



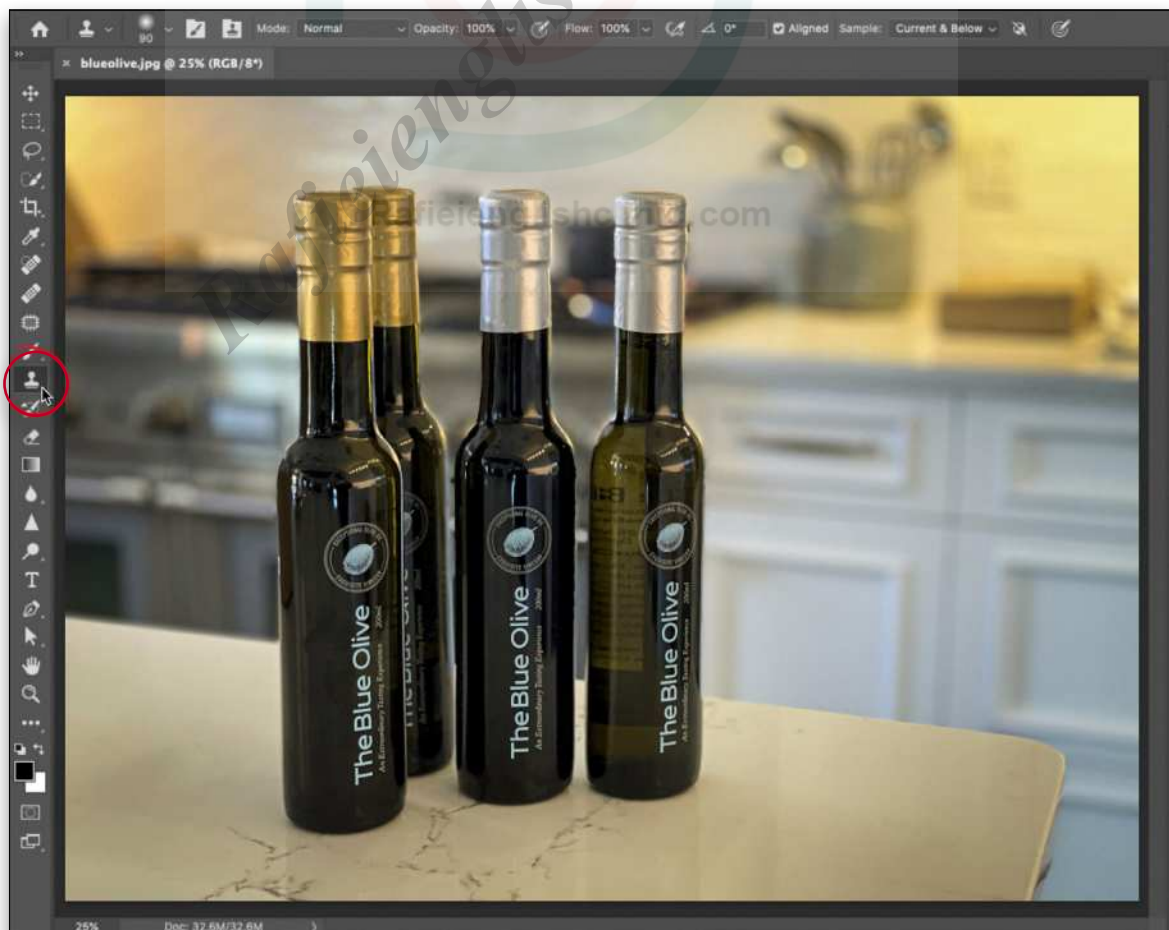
THE CLONE STAMP TOOL IN PHOTOSHOP

Welcome to my relatively new column that debuted a couple of issues ago. Last time we talked about one of the biggest reasons that I jump over to Photoshop from Lightroom in the first place, which is to remove unwanted “stuff” in my photo, and we went over the Healing Brush and Patch tools. This issue, we’re going to cover a feature that’s been in Photoshop for more than 30 years (yes, it was in Photoshop 1.0, and it’s so good I still use it daily). It’s the Clone Stamp tool, and it’s awesome for removing stuff you don’t want by covering it with something that’s similar nearby. When you use the Clone Stamp tool in conjunction with the tools we learned last issue, there’s just about nothing you can’t remove without a trace.

The Clone Stamp tool is well-named because it makes a clone copy of an area you choose, and it lets you copy that area right over the thing you want to delete. It works way better than it sounds. Here’s how to get started with this awesome tool:

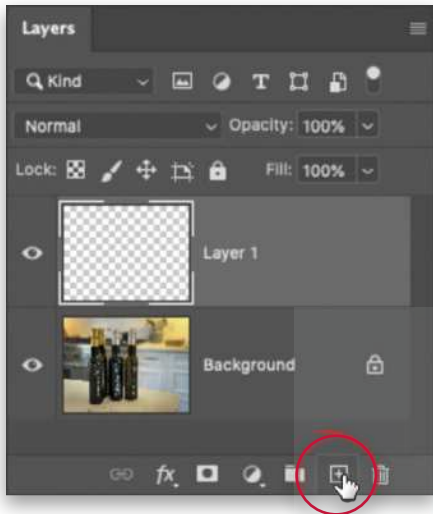
STEP ONE: Get the Clone Stamp tool from the Toolbar. Its icon looks like a rubber stamp, but if you were born

after the year 2000, you probably don’t know what a rubber stamp is since we stopped using them even before 2000, so I know, and your parents remember, but that’s about it. I circled it here in red just in case (it’s probably time for Adobe to choose a new icon, but I digress). For now, let’s get that Clone Stamp tool. You can also press the letter S on your keyboard to activate it.





STEP TWO: Now this step isn't 100% necessary, but it will help make life easier for what we're going to do in this project, which is to clone an extra bottle of olive oil over on the right side of the counter. Even though we haven't talked about layers yet (and we will, in depth soon, but not today), just know that by creating a layer, the clone bottle we create will actually float above our image, so we can move it, resize it, and stuff like that without messing with the original image



below it. More importantly for this project, if we make a mistake and "paint outside the lines," we can easily erase it, so that's the main reason we're doing it here. Go to the Layers panel and click the Create a New Layer icon at the bottom of the panel (circled here in red).

There's an important setting up in the Options Bar at the top of the Photoshop interface, and that's the Sample drop-down menu. Make sure it's set to Current & Below. If it's set to Current Layer, when you go to clone in the following steps, nothing will happen because you're working on an empty layer. There's nothing there to clone.

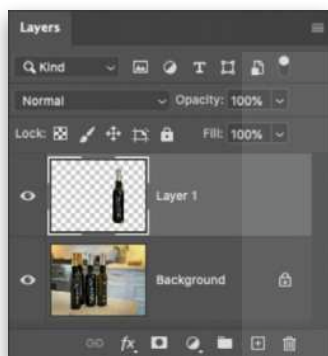


STEP THREE: The way the Clone Stamp tool works is like this: You hold down the Option (PC: Alt) key and click once on the thing you want to clone. In this case, we're going to make a clone of the third bottle from the left. When you hold the Option (PC: Alt) key, you'll see your cursor change into kind of a target-looking icon. That lets you know it's ready to "sample" an area for cloning. In this example, we're going to click the tool once on the neck of the bottle to let Photoshop know that's the thing we want to clone (I circled where I clicked here in red; apparently, I like circling things in red).



STEP FOUR: Now move your cursor over the area where you want the clone to appear (in our case, to the right of the existing four bottles) and start painting it in. You can see here the bottle is starting to come in, and you can also see that there are two cursors: (1) the + cursor on the left shows the area from which I'm cloning (also known as "sampling"), and (2) the round brush tip cursor on the right shows where I'm cloning to. Also, you can change the size of your brush by using the Left and Right Bracket keys ([]) on your keyboard (they're to the right of the letter P on a standard US keyboard).

STEP FIVE: Keep painting with the Clone Stamp tool until your clone is fully painted in (as shown here with the “new” bottle). Yeah, there’s some spillover where you’re seeing the cloned background on either side and top of the bottle. That’s called “a hack job” in the biz, but that’s why we put it on its own separate layer, so we could erase those spillover areas after the fact so it doesn’t look like a hack job.



STEP SIX: Now switch to the Eraser tool. Its icon looks like (wait for it...wait for it...) an eraser. You can press the letter E on your keyboard to activate it. In the Options Bar at the top of the Photoshop interface, select Brush in the Mode drop-down menu, and carefully erase those spillover areas outside the bottle (remember to use the Bracket keys on your keyboard to resize the brush as needed). Here are two tips that might help: (1) Go slowly because you’ll be much more accurate in your erasing, and (2) you can erase in a straight line if you click the cursor where you want the line to start, hold the Shift key, and click the cursor one more time where you want the line to end. It will erase in a straight line between those two points you clicked.





STEP SEVEN: Okay, so now you have the basic idea of cloning: It makes copies (clones) of stuff. But how do we use it to remove distracting stuff? Let's zoom in on one of the bottles (as shown here), and let's say you want to remove the text on the front of the bottle. You'd start by sampling an area nearby, so it kind of has the same lighting, texture, and stuff like that. Here I held the Option (PC: Alt) key and clicked just to the left of the text. You don't want to get too close, however, because if you do and that little + sign crosses over onto where you're cloning, it will start to reclone the text, which you don't want (this will become clear the first time you try cloning and get that + sign cursor too close to what you're cloning).

STEP EIGHT: Now move your cursor over the area you want to clone over and start painting (as shown here with the text) and, as you paint, it will make a copy (clone) of the area where you Option-clicked (PC: Alt-clicked) and paint that right over the text. This is why it's so important to clone nearby, so you get the same lighting and texture, but not too near that it starts to copy over itself. It's a balancing act, and one thing that can help if it starts to clone over itself is to make your brush size smaller; the bigger the brush size, the more chance you'll wind up having it clone over itself.

Okay, there's your start into the world of cloning. Next issue, we'll look at when to use the Healing Brush and when you should use the Clone Stamp tool instead. I hope you found this helpful, and we'll catch you again next issue. ■

 Questions & Comments



GETTING ELEMENTAL

with
Liquify

Liquify is a powerful tool and, like all powerful tools, it can be used for good or evil—just like magic! (If magical powers were real, of course.) Okay, perhaps that's a terrible example; however, I think you get the point. Liquify in Photoshop is one such powerfully manipulative and controlling super-tool that can be wielded for harm or leveraged thoughtfully for good.

By Bret Malley





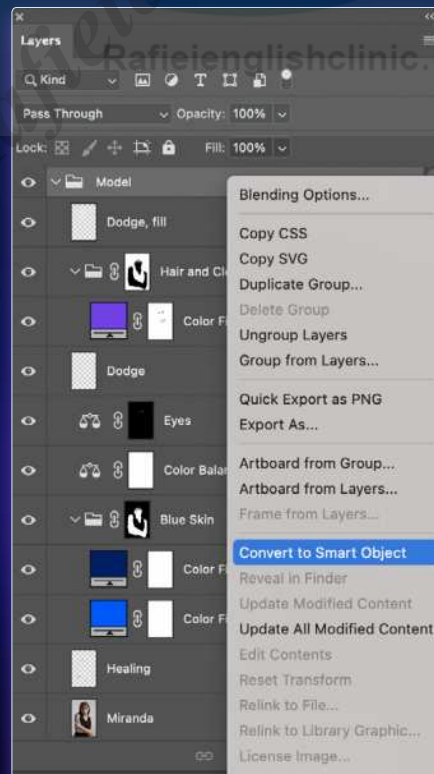
Sticking with my oversimplified and judgmental point of view of Liquify, we all too frequently see dramatic distortions of body image that can be damaging, because it often propels unrealistic and unattainable form and aesthetic, especially for women. Or sometimes the edits just look disturbingly horrible and deeply wrong. In either case, the very same reality warping features used for ill, can also be employed for more subtle, positive, corrective, and even creative forces; after all, with great power comes great responsibility, right?

So let's take a tour of what's at our fingertips in Liquify, while dodging the morality bullet by making an alien elemental character (and hopefully not offending blue alien people too horribly in the process). In all seriousness, there is need for concern given this feature's history, but instead of making this an ethics essay, let's explore the tool's features and get elemental with Liquify!

STARTING OFF RIGHT WITH SMART OBJECTS

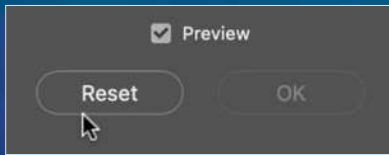
To get the most out of Liquify, it's a good idea to convert the main layer on which you're working into a smart object to unleash its nondestructive capabilities. This way, after you make that dramatic liquify alteration but later realize that perhaps it was a terrible decision, you can easily go back into Liquify and readjust, reconstruct, or reset as needed. Nifty, right?

Start by opening the image with which you want to work in Photoshop. Model Miranda Jaynes helps us out by starting off as a great humanoid base model from which to work in the project we're showing here. As we want to keep this nondestructive and play within a flexible workflow, Right-click on the subject's layer (or layer group folder in the case of retouch edits or making her blue, as in this example) and select Convert to Smart Object. Okay, now let's dive headfirst into Liquify.



FACE-AWARE LIQUIFY

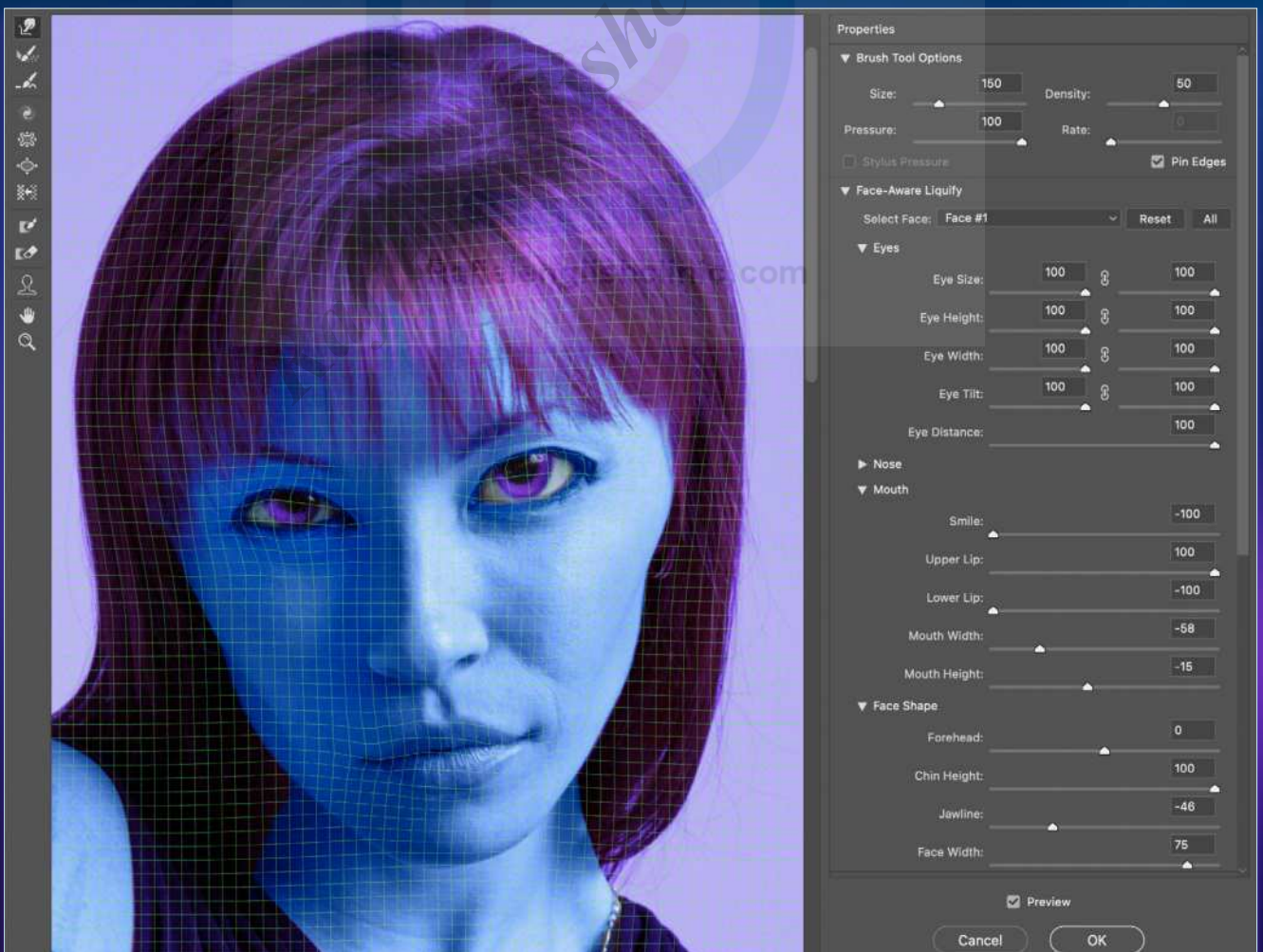
To pull up the Liquify filter's interface, go to the Filter menu and select Liquify (or press Command-Shift-X [PC: Ctrl-Shift-X]). If you're new to Liquify, don't be intimidated by all of the sliders, settings, and tools within its workspace; you can always reset what you do here by holding down Option (PC: Alt) and clicking the Reset button where once it said Cancel.



Let's start with the Face-Aware Liquify settings. Generally, these should be used just like changing out a camera lens, or perhaps changing the angle or point of view for a more flattering look for the subject. These Face-Aware Liquify settings can also be used quite well for overall image improvements, balancing, or aesthetics. When edits go too far, we get the alien look,

and unless you're actually making an alien elemental (as we happen to be here), it's not usually a great look for humans. Less is more, and if no one can tell that you used the Liquify Face-Aware features, then in most cases, you used just enough.

The less common uses are often the most fun, so let's push some settings to their extremes while trying to pull off a convincing effect. Starting with the eyes, we're going to drag all their settings to the maximum, then do it all again as a second pass of the filter effect (see tip below), just to make sure we're past the threshold of this still being a human. In this elemental character, the eyes need to be much larger, spread apart, and slightly tilted. Dragging the sliders to their extreme settings is a great start (sorry, Miranda!). The same goes for the other sections of Face-Aware; tailor your elemental base as needed. You can see the settings that we used here for the Mouth and Face Shape. If you want to see the grid in your image, turn on Show Mesh in the View Options section, and select your Mesh Size.



Getting Elemental With Liquify

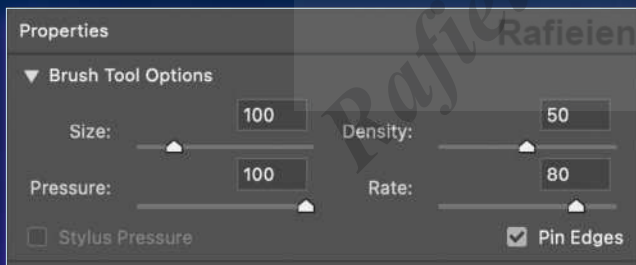
Tip: Once a layer is turned into a smart object, you can pile on multiple filters and iterations of filters nondestructively. This can be handy for those times you need to make an edit so dramatic that maxing out a setting's slider simply isn't enough. Alien eyes often need a couple passes of Face-Aware distortion, for example.

THE FACE TOOL: If you prefer to control these adjustments with a bit more hands-on tactile sensation, then make use of the Face tool (A) in the Toolbar on the left. As you hover the tool over different parts of the face (eyes, nose, mouth, and face), you'll see various control points on the face itself that correspond to the Face-Aware Liquify properties on the right. This drag-to-adjust method is a good way to finesse the same settings while making the edits feel more like sculpting instead of algorithmic as with the sliders.



PREPPING TOOL SETTINGS

Glancing at the left side of the Liquify interface, you'll see an array of tempting tools. Most of these can be controlled by the Brush Tool Options at the top of the Properties panel on the right. You'll definitely want to play with these settings as you brush over your image with the different tools. While some of these brush settings are unique to Liquify, they're also fairly self-explanatory. And just like the traditional Brush tool, you can also use the Bracket keys ([]) on your keyboard to change the brush Size as you work in Liquify.

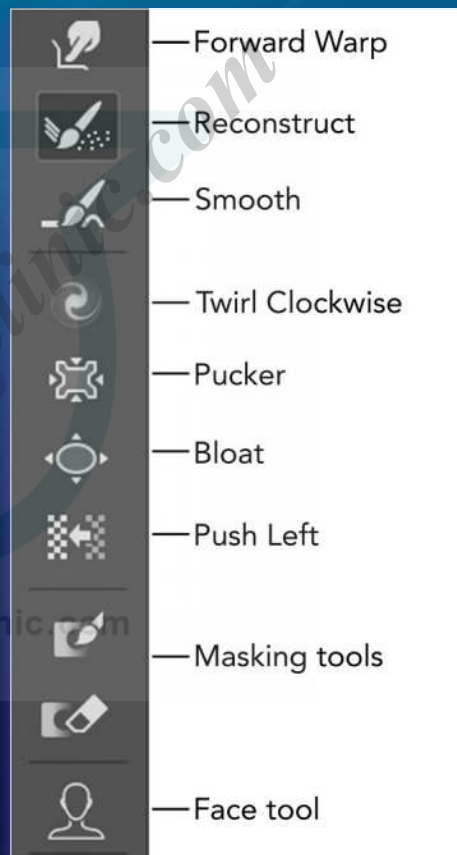


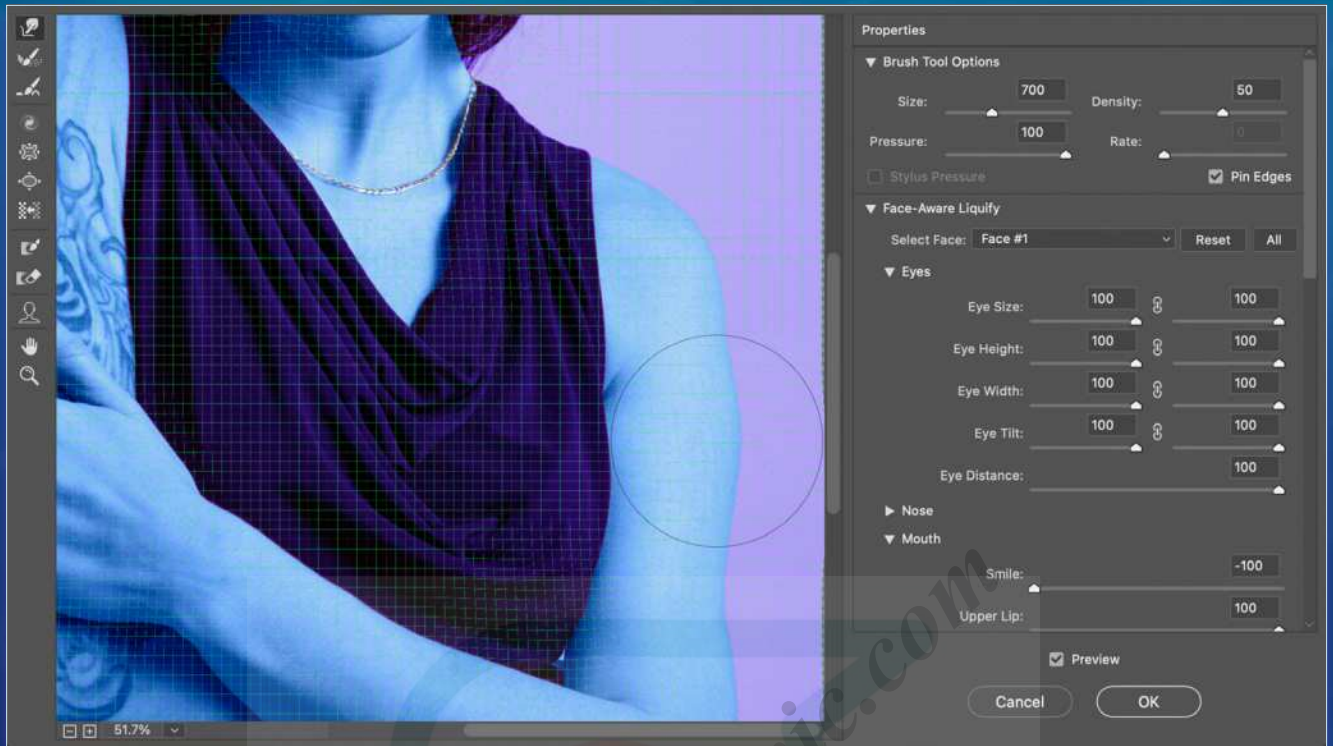
For those of you who are new to Liquify, here's some general advice as you begin experimenting with these tools: If you notice a tool is affecting too much toward the outer edges of the brush radius as you paint, try bringing down the Density so the center has the greatest power. Keep adjusting it until you find a balance that feels intuitive as you work. A low Density can make your Liquify adjustments appear pointed, so like always, adjust settings in moderation. If things are still too powerful, bring down your Pressure, which is how much of the tool's warping effect is applied with each stroke. With a low Pressure, you can use multiple strokes to slowly sculpt the effect.

Checking on Pin Edges is helpful for those times when you're adjusting either large swaths of the image right up to the image's edge, or anytime you may need to push or pull those pixels working close to an edge in general.

RIGHT TOOL FOR THE TASK

Now let's break down how these tools work and how best to use them. While each has a purpose, some more obvious than others, all of them can make quite dramatic alterations, and some can even save you from bending the fabric of reality too far!





FORWARD WARP: First we have the Forward Warp tool (W), which is often akin to performing surgery with Thor's hammer Mjölnir (not that I have much experience with that). The general rule of thumb is that less is more with this tool (gentle taps with that hammer); however, in the case of our elemental, we need to reforge this character's proportions somewhat dramatically, and Forward Warp is perfect for this.

The main focus of this tool is often working with shape (versus working with form). Specifically for our elemental, we'll add some additional muscle shape to her arms. Increasing the brush Size to 700 and brushing gently outward from the arm allows for the proper shape alteration. Small strokes for small shifts work best, so keep each stroke minimal as you work with this tool to build up the effect, even on elemental aliens.

Tip: If you notice any tool going unexpectedly overboard as you work, revisit the Brush Tool Options and dial things back for more subtlety.

RECONSTRUCT: If you find that you've gone too far with Forward Warp (or any of the Liquify tools for that matter), try the Reconstruct tool (R), as this will paint the area back to its original default mesh, Liquify's grid for calculating and showing how pixels are shifted, moved, twisted, or expanded. This tool is essentially the rewind-back-in-time super power of the bunch.

Over in the Properties panel, the Rate slider lets you control how intensely it reverts back toward the original default mesh as you click-and-hold on the image without moving the cursor (if you make a stroke with the Reconstruct tool, the Rate setting has no effect). Combine this with the Pressure setting and you can revert back toward the original mesh with meticulous perfection as you work. This can be useful by intentionally making a warp that's a bit too dramatic at first, then using this tool to soften and pull back the effect to taste.

SMOOTH: The Smooth tool (E) is awesome for those times when you get a bit too extreme and shift something abruptly in a visually awkward or obviously unnatural direction. Like Reconstruct, this will soften those alterations as you paint over an adjustment. Specifically, this feature averages the distortion within the mesh and results in a smoothed-out effect, just as the name implies.

TWIRL CLOCKWISE: Thankfully, the Twirl Clockwise tool (C) also does what its name implies, and can help for those moments when you need a twisting alteration. Just click-and-hold on the area you want to affect, and watch it warp in a circular motion. One helpful aspect to this tool is the ability to change the direction of the twirl effect by holding down Option (PC: Alt) while you paint on the image; this makes it spring from clockwise to counterclockwise.

PUCKER: When you need something more concave or shrunk down a bit more, the Pucker tool (S) is fantastic for this. Just click-and-hold and everything inside the brush will start being pulled toward the center of the brush. As with the other tools, use it in moderation until you get the hang of it—and always have a reason for its use!

BLOAT: The Bloat tool (B) is the Pucker tool's counterpart and is exceedingly helpful for warping out more form and adding dimension as it expands the mesh outward from the center of the brush radius. In the case of our elemental, you can use this tool to give additional muscle and help warp water (or other textures) to match the subject's form. We'll cover more on this soon, so keep reading.

PUSH LEFT: This tool is quite helpful when a sideways nudge is all that's needed. Its namesake comes from content being pushed to the left of the trajectory in which you're painting. Say, for example, you paint straight up with the Push Left tool (O); it will do exactly as advertised: push the content (that's inside the brush radius) to the left as you paint. Keep in mind, though, it's always to the left of the trajectory of the brush, so think of your brush radius as a small (and quite round) toy car. What's to the left of where you're driving? That's the direction in which the mesh is warped. Need something pushed screen-right? Try dragging downward instead. Like all toy cars, play with it and you'll get a handle on it—and have fun!

FREEZE AND THAW MASK TOOLS: The Freeze Mask tool (F) also does what its name implies; any part of the image you don't want warped, puckered, bloated, twirled, etc. (Liquify sounds like a day spa of horrors), be sure to paint a Freeze Mask in those areas. This can be useful for shifting edges of a subject but not the background or some other element that shouldn't be distorted. Freeze Mask is essentially the Do Not Disturb sign. You can turn the mask overlay on and off using the Show Mask option in the View Options section of the Properties panel, and you can even select the Mask Color.

And if you ever paint on too much Freeze Mask in an area, well thankfully, you have a Thaw Mask tool (D). These two tools are equivalent to painting with black and white on an actual layer mask. Speaking of which, if you created a mask or a selection before you entered

Liquify, then poke around in the Mask Options section in the Liquify Properties panel, as you can leverage existing masks, premade selections, or even transparency to freeze areas of your image.

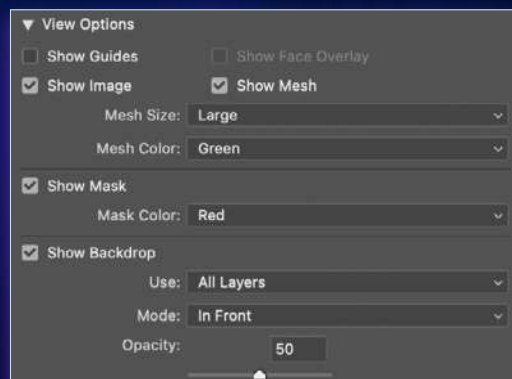
OTHER HELPFUL FEATURES

Similar to working with masks and selections in Liquify, there's also the ability to apply the previous mesh or a mesh that you've saved. This can be useful for creating a matching Liquify effect or if you want to save out different versions of a Liquify experimentation, which can be liberating, as it allows you to attempt a few variations before deciding on the final effect.

One caveat is that a loaded mesh will stretch to fit the full width and height of the layer that's currently loaded in Liquify. So if the saved mesh is for the exact same layer content and proportions, it will match wonderfully; however, if it's from a source with different proportions, well, it's like trying to match one image's width and height to another. Fair warning!



The View Options in the Properties panel is also an important consideration as you work, and knowing where to turn these off and on can save a lot of irritation. I recommend starting with Show Image, Show Mask, and Show Backdrop all toggled on, at least at first as you begin working. If one of these interferes with what you're doing, then turn it off or on, as needed. This is one of those personal workflow preferences, so knowing where they are and testing them out is always a good idea to find out what works (and doesn't) for your own Liquify process.



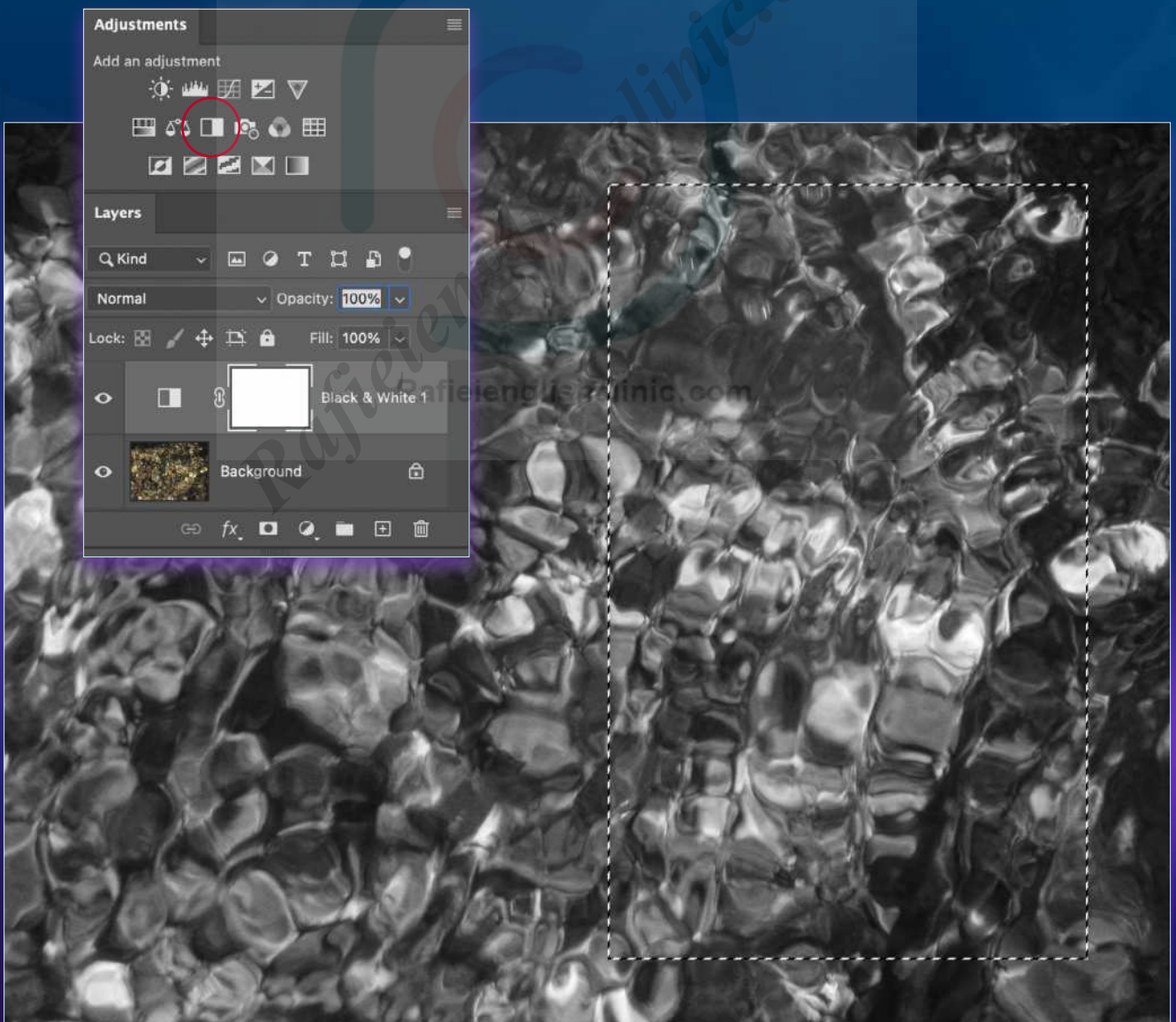
LIQUIFY FOR ELEMENTALS

Now that we've covered the main features of Liquify, let's get creative and see what elements we can bend to our will, or in this case, our subject. As is the case with most Photoshop features, there's their original intent and purpose, and then there's their creative application and experimentation. Bending and sculpting the water in this project is a good example.

To start, it takes a bit of previsualization to imagine where certain ripples might look best, or could be interesting and fitting once warped into place. In general, take areas of water that you imagine as having potential, and Liquify them little by little, section by section, to your subject as you go. As you get the hang of previsualization, the process of actually editing the water and elements becomes a bit more formulaic and straightforward, as well, even as you experiment.

STEP ONE: After your main subject is touched up to alien proportions, it's time to bring in the elements for your elemental. In our case, we're making a water elemental, so open an interesting water image candidate into its own tab within Photoshop. It's important to shift this layer into just its tonal values so it can be used nicely with a number of blending modes in the main composite. In the Adjustments panel, click the Black & White icon (half-black/half-white square in the second row) to create a new Black & White adjustment layer. In the Properties panel (Window>Properties), alter the settings to allow for some contrast and variation in the ripples.

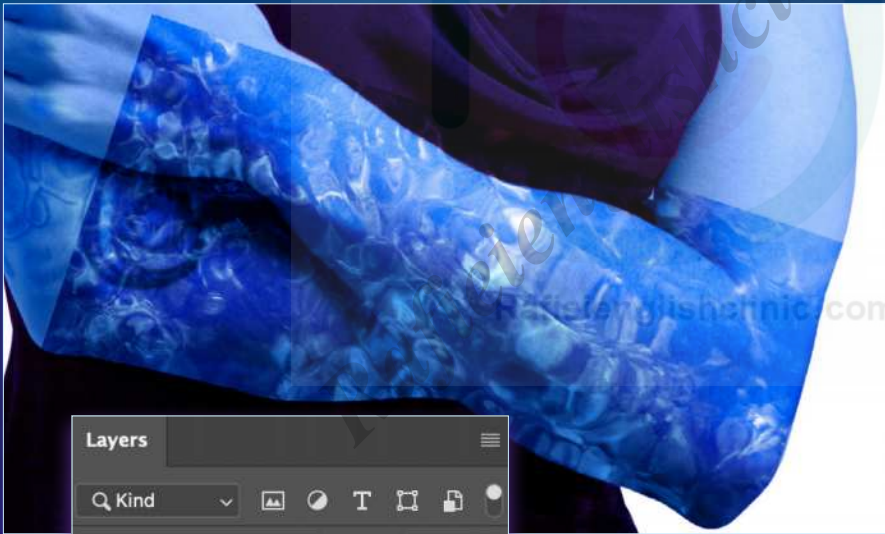
Using the Rectangular Marquee tool (M), make a rectangular selection of an area of the water you'd like to use for your subject's forearms.



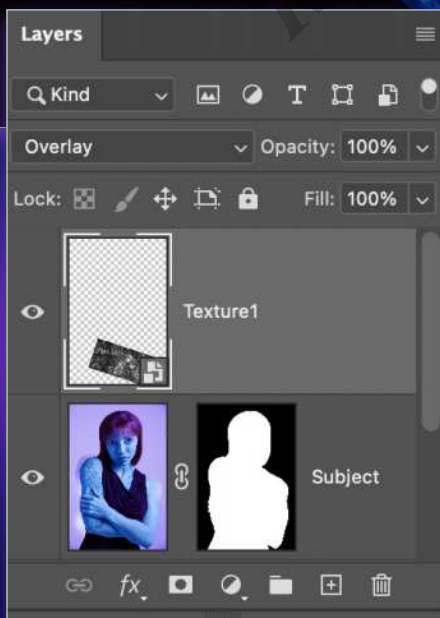
Getting Elemental With Liquify



STEP TWO: Copy the selected area along with the adjustment layer by pressing Command-Shift-C (PC: Ctrl-Shift-C), which is the command for Copy Merged. Paste (Command-V [PC: Ctrl-V]) this content into the main elemental composite file, and place this water layer directly above the subject's layer (or group) in the Layers panel. Use Free Transform (Command-T [PC: Ctrl-T]) to resize, place, and rotate as necessary. Press Enter to commit the transformation, and then turn this layer into a smart object. While turning every new elemental texture into a smart object may not be necessary, it's a good idea to do this at least for the first few, as you get your feet wet with this process.



STEP THREE: In the Layers panel, change the smart object's blending mode to either Overlay (recommended for most cases), Multiply, or Screen, depending on the base subject and the water image you use. Other blending modes can also have a great effect here, so play around a bit to see what's working. As you work, you can always come back and change this later.



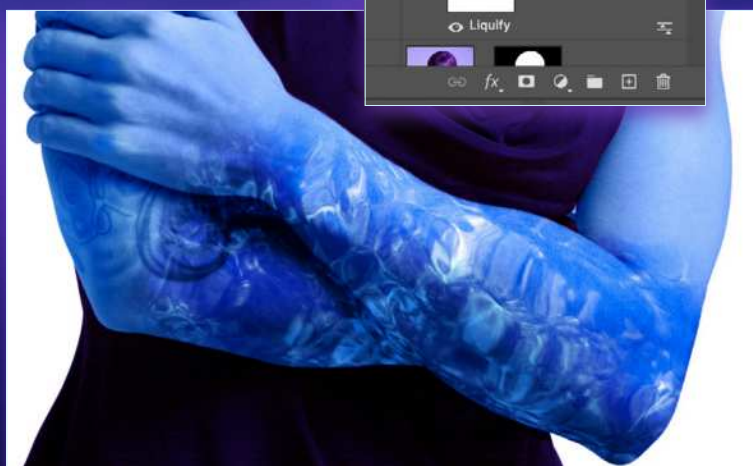
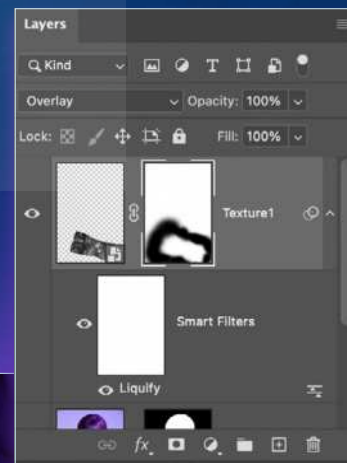
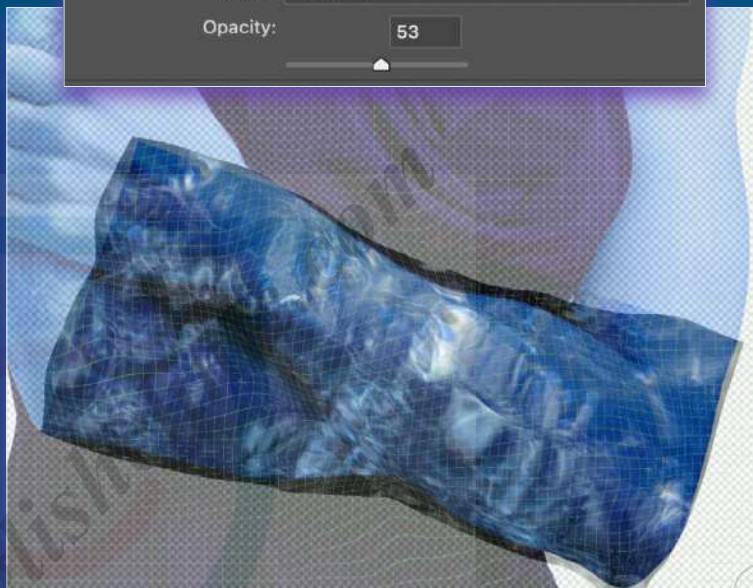
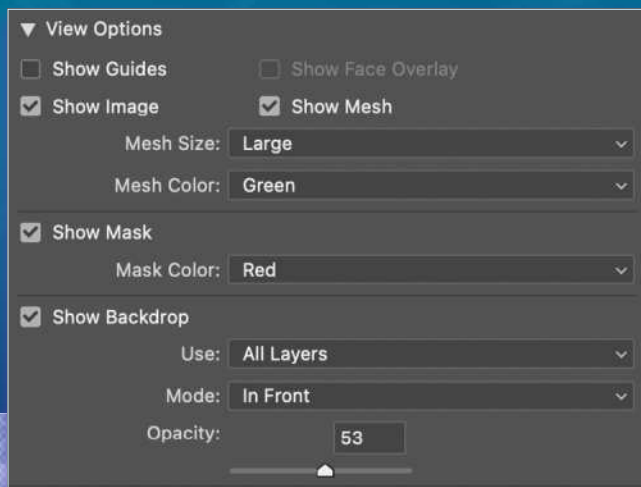
STEP FOUR: Now it's time to use Liquify for the fitted illusion. With the water texture smart object layer active in the Layers panel, add the Liquify filter to pull up its interface and various tools. Be sure to turn on Show Backdrop in the View Options section of the Properties panel, and then play with the Mode and Opacity until you can see the subject to which you're shaping the water.

From there, start distorting to taste. The Bloat tool is helpful for making the water appear as if it's bulging and bending around the more muscular areas of the arm. Using Pucker along the outside edges of the arms can help make this effect even more dramatic, as if the water were wrapping around the arm.

Forward Warp is good to use on the edges of the water to help them stay a bit ripply; however, for your first round of adding texture, I suggest saving this for the last step so that you can affect the shape of the subject along with the water texture (more on this step in a bit). Note that we still have areas of the water outside the arms; we'll mask out those areas in the next step. Once your water warping matches more of the subject's contours, apply the Liquify effect by clicking OK.

Tip: Preview the before and after as you work to be sure your edits are going in the right direction. At the bottom of the Properties panel, there's a small and unassuming Preview checkbox just for this—invaluable for finding out just how crazy you've gone with these tools. Use the Reconstruct tool for areas that you've pushed too far.

STEP FIVE: With the Liquify distortion complete for this layer, it's time to mask out the edges outside the arms, making sure not to leave any digital grease as you work. Click on the Add Layer Mask icon (circle in a square) at the bottom of the Layers panel, switch to the Brush tool (B), press D then X to set the Foreground color to black, and begin painting along the edges with a soft round brush at 100% Opacity. Mask out the hard water edges on the arms, as well. Also, be sure to play around with various blending modes to find one that best fits the look.





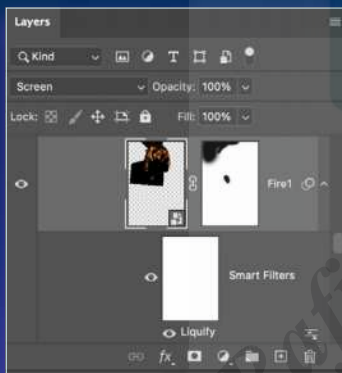
Tip: Alternatively, you can paint in the water (or any texture) by beginning with a Hide All mask. To give this a go, click on the Add Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the Layers panel while holding down Option (PC: Alt) to add a mask filled with black instead of white. Starting with a black mask hides everything on the layer, and allows you to use a soft round brush set to white to paint where you want the water or texture effect to be visible. This is especially good for adding in details along the way.

STEP SIX: Rinse-and-repeat for the remaining water pieces. Choose varying sections of water while still giving the water a consistent look throughout the subject. For any fire or light-painting effects, the process is exactly the same in Liquify, with one notable change to the blending mode: Instead of Overlay, Screen is a wonderful option for making those darks roll off into transparency, leaving just the glowing light effects.

KEEP PLAYING

Now, it's just a matter of finessing the subject's mask and background; applying some nondestructive dodge-and-burn effects using a gray layer set to the Overlay blend mode; and doing one last Liquify warping to adjust the subject for those final touches. Adding some extra ripples and distortion to the subject's shape is a nice way to really sell the watery texture and elemental substance.

To create those goosebumps of epic proportions, combine the various textures along with the cutout subject into one last smart object, allowing you again to apply a final nondestructive Liquify pass. Focus this time on the Forward Warp tool and sculpting some of that water to ripple outside the previously solid and smooth shape of the arms. Once the entire subject, along with the textures, is a smart object, you can



also add various filters and effects, such as those from Boris FX Optics, or even apply the Camera Raw Filter for adding that final polish and color adjustment. For our final image, I also decided to flip her horizontally.

In the end, it's always refreshing to go all-out elemental and strange with these effects; just keep in mind that not every image or subject will need DNA resequencing as this one did. No matter what, always have fun with your imagery, and please Liquify responsibly! ■



Final

Questions & Comments

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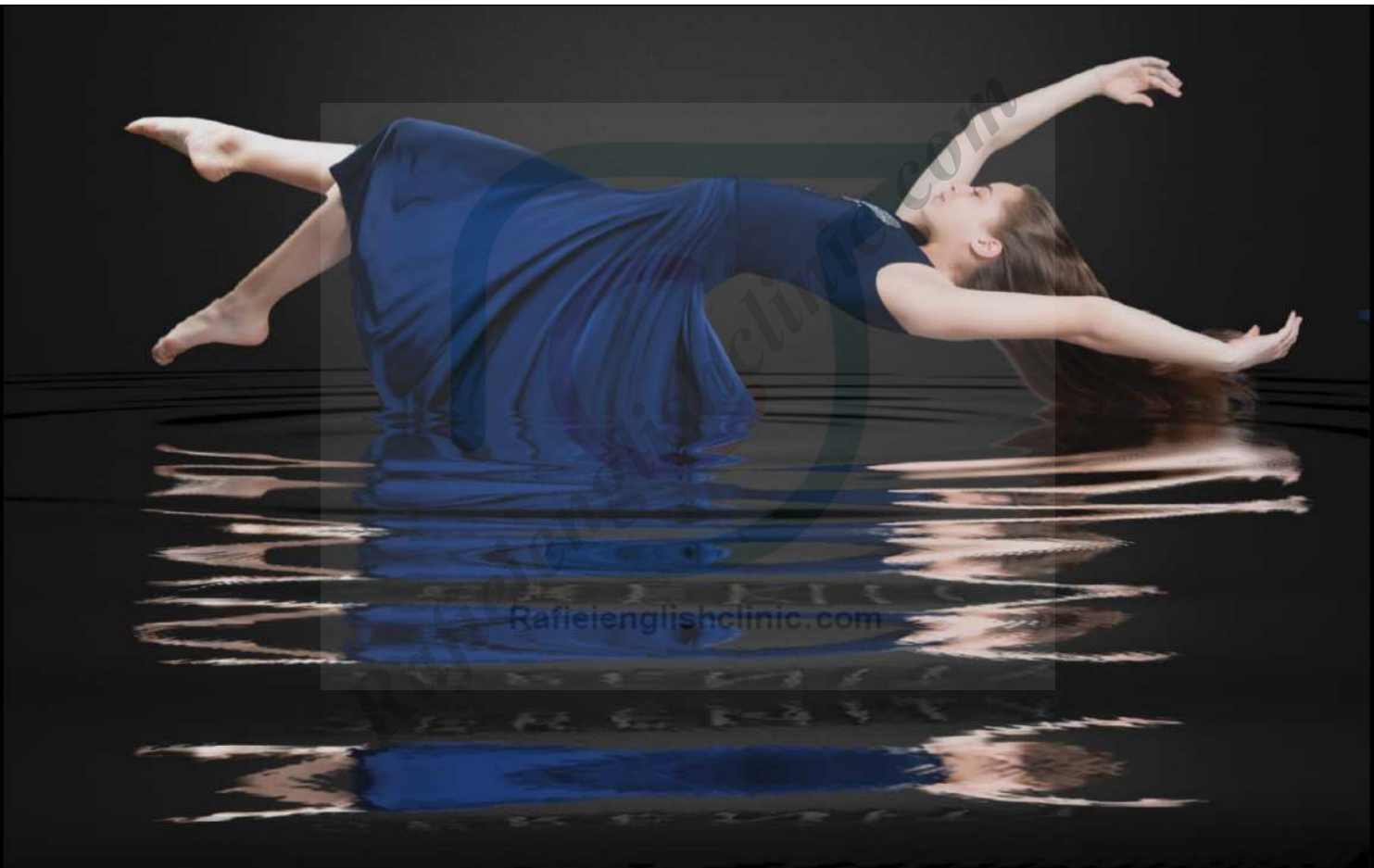


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GOING A STEP FURTHER WITH 3D REFLECTIONS

Recently, I was asked about 3D reflections in Photoshop and it reminded me that I covered this basic technique a few years ago in the July 2017 issue of *Photoshop User*. This time around, however, let's take things a bit further by creating more depth using numerous 3D elements in one scene. The results are pretty insane, plus they're customizable to suit various looks.



STEP ONE: Once again, it all starts with an image. For the purposes of this tutorial, we'll keep the starting image rather basic, but once you see how simple these elements come together, you can experiment with multiple elements in one scene.

If you'd like to download the low-res watermarked version of this image to follow along, click [this link](#), log in with your Adobe ID, and click the Save to Library button. Right-click the image in the Libraries panel (Window>Libraries), and choose Edit to open it in Photoshop. To make it easier to work with the image, increase the resolution of the practice file. (We normally don't recommend enlarging images, but this is only

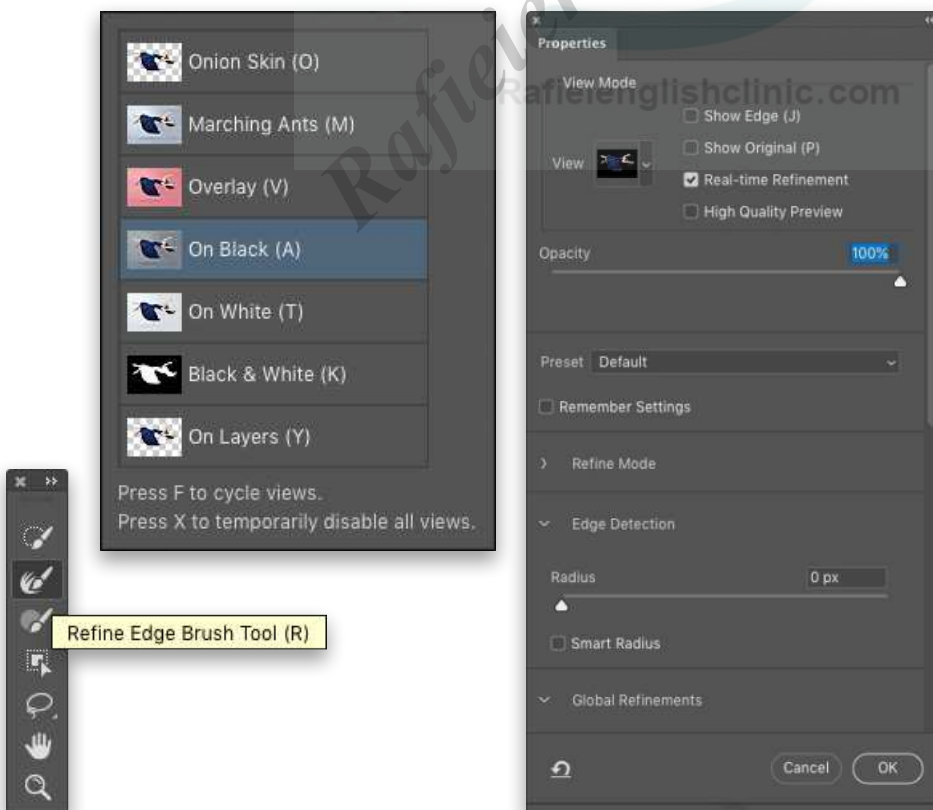


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for practice purposes.) Go to Image>Image Size, turn on the Resample checkbox, select Preserve Details 2.0 from the Resample drop-down menu, set the Width to 2,000 pixels, and click OK.

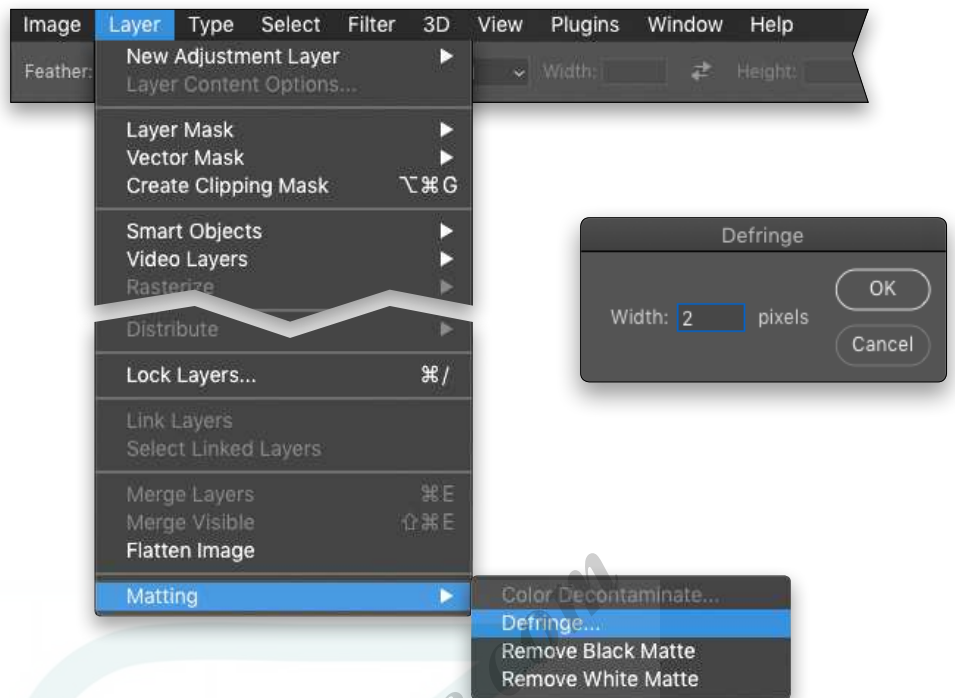
STEP TWO: Since the floating girl is on a solid background, it will be easier to extract her from the image. Simply go to the Select menu and choose Subject. (This works well even on images with moderately busy backgrounds, so give it a try.) Once the selection is made, go to the Options Bar and click the Select and Mask button.



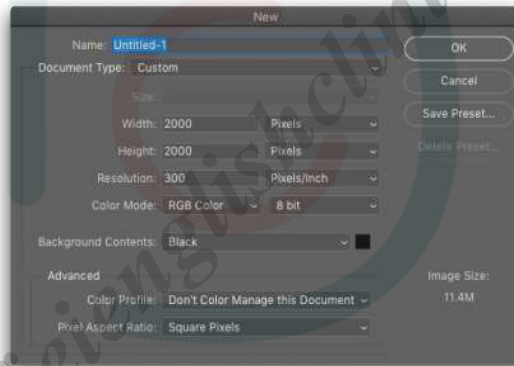
STEP THREE: When the Select and Mask workspace appears, go to the View drop-down menu in the Properties panel and set it to On Black (A). Then, set the Opacity to 100%. In the Toolbar on the left, select the Refine Edge Brush tool (R), and use the Bracket keys ([]) on your keyboard to resize the brush. Brush a little along the edges of the hair to clean up some of the fringe background. In this case, we're only focusing on the hair because we're going to use Defringe to clean up the rest of the edges.

Back in the Properties panel, go to the Output Settings and set the Output To drop-down menu to New Layer, and click OK.

STEP FOUR: You'll see in the Layers panel Photoshop has created a new layer for the extracted subject and turned off the original Background layer. Under the Layer menu, go to Matting all the way at the bottom and choose Defringe. Set it to 2 pixels and click OK.

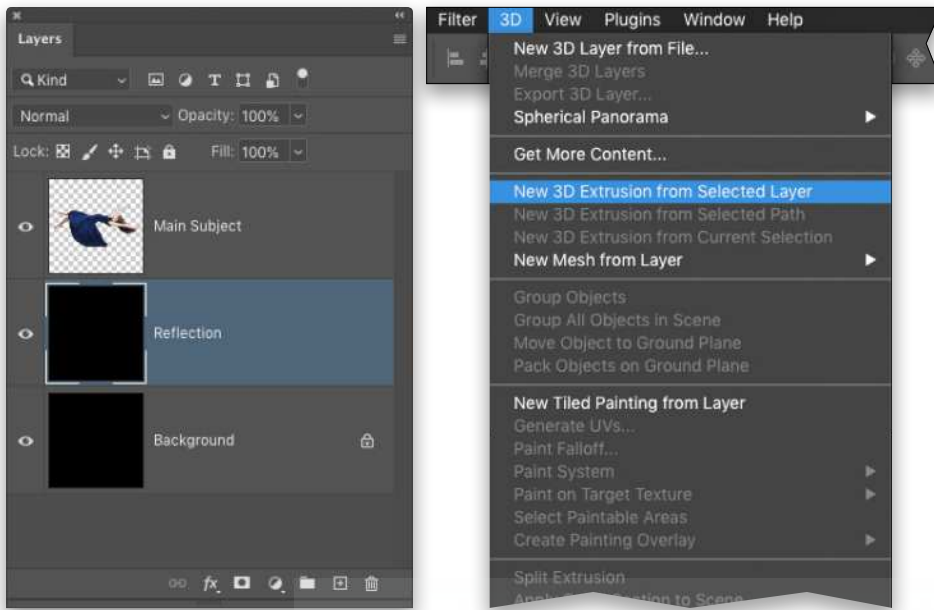


STEP FIVE: Go to File>New to create a new document that's 2000x2000 pixels at 300 ppi, and set the Background Contents drop-down menu to Black. Oh, you can name the file here, as well, if you're so inclined. 😊 Click OK.



STEP SIX: Go back to the image of the extracted floating girl, and use the Move tool (V) to drag-and-drop her into the new square canvas. Use Free Transform (Command-T [PC: Ctrl-T]) to scale the subject to fit within the canvas area as shown here. Press Enter to commit the transformation.



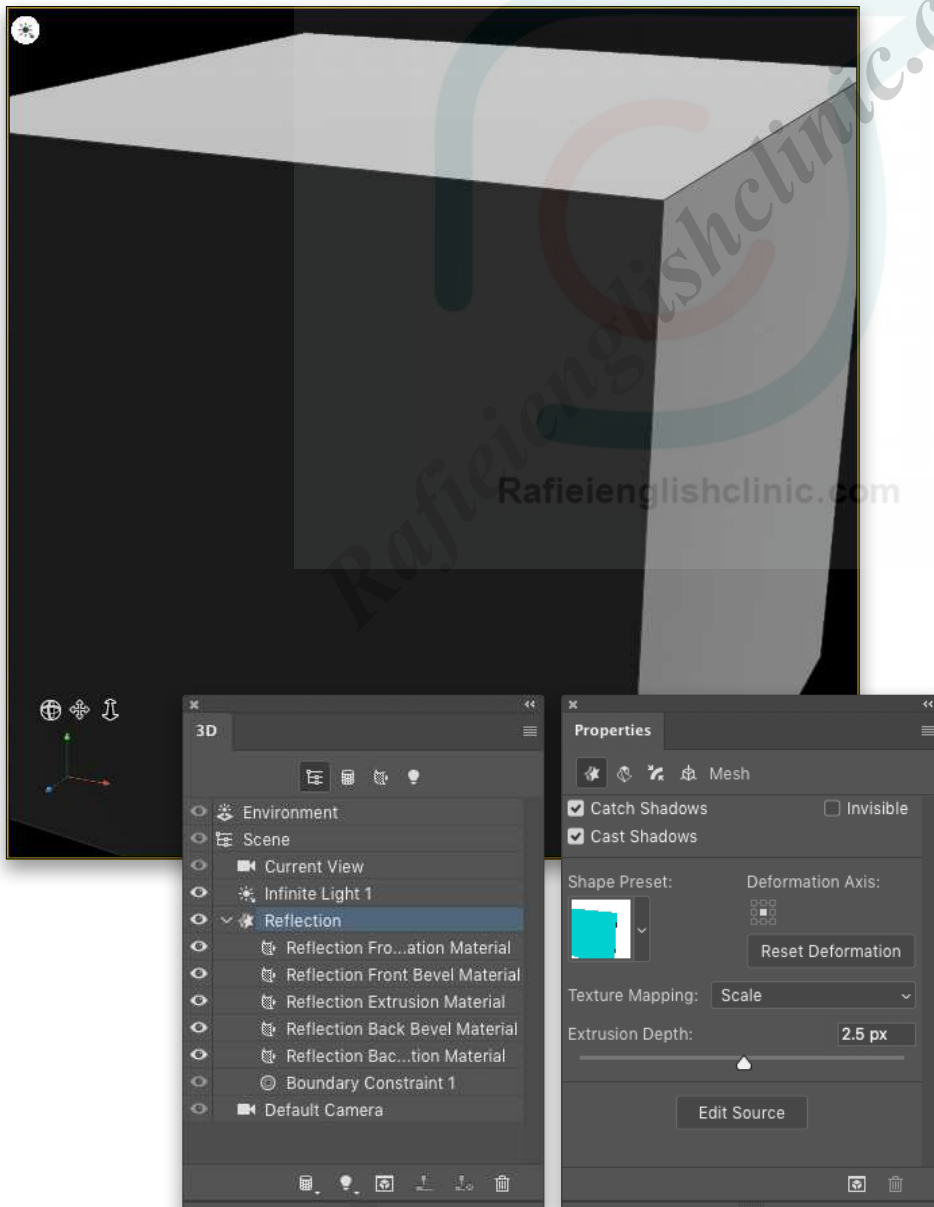


STEP SEVEN: Click on the black Background layer in the Layers panel and press Command-J (PC: Ctrl-J) to copy it to a new layer. Double-click the duplicate layer's name and rename it "Reflection." Also rename the subject layer to "Main Subject."

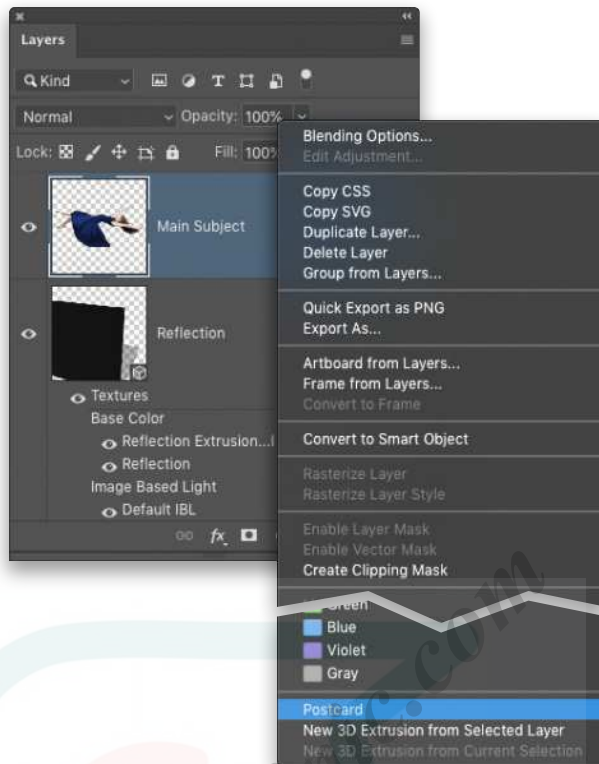
STEP EIGHT: With the Reflection layer active in the Layers panel, go under the 3D menu and choose New 3D Extrusion from Selected Layer. (Note: If the 3D options are grayed out, make sure your document is in RGB mode [Image>Mode>RGB Color].) If Photoshop asks if you want to switch to the 3D workspace, click Yes.

Open the 3D panel (Window>3D), and click on Current View. With the Move tool active, you'll see a set of 3D tools in the Options Bar to the right of 3D Mode-J. If you grab the Rotate the 3D Object tool in the Options Bar (it's the first one) and click-and-drag outside the black square to rotate the view, you'll see the box has more depth than we need.

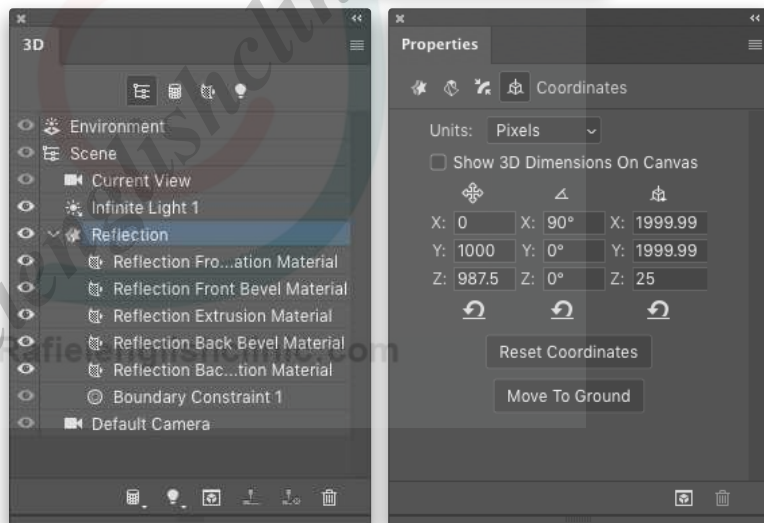
In the 3D panel, select the Reflection object in the list. Open the Properties panel (Window>Properties) and set the Extrusion Depth to around 2.5 pixels. Click on Default Camera back in the 3D panel to return to the original angle. We'll return to this layer in a moment but let's convert the subject for 3D in the next step.



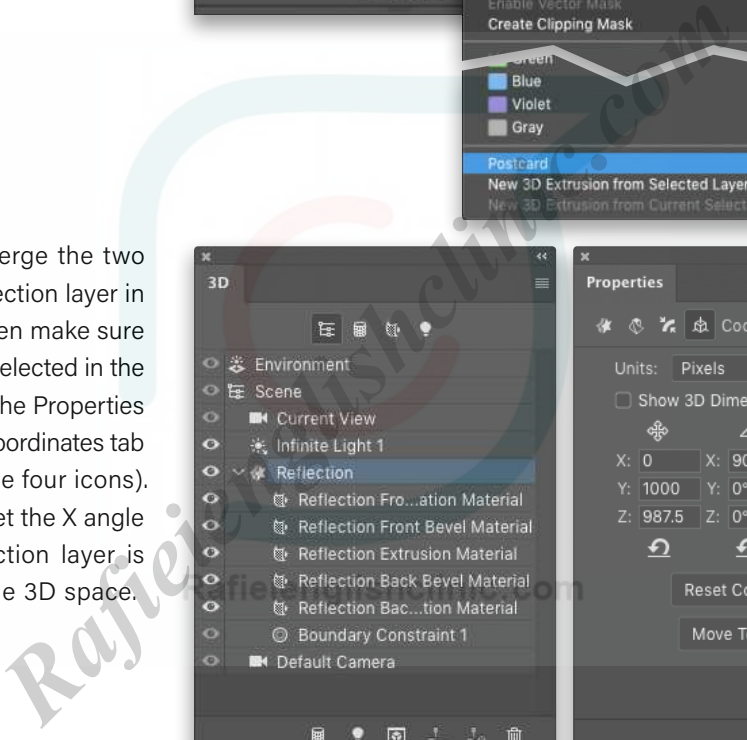
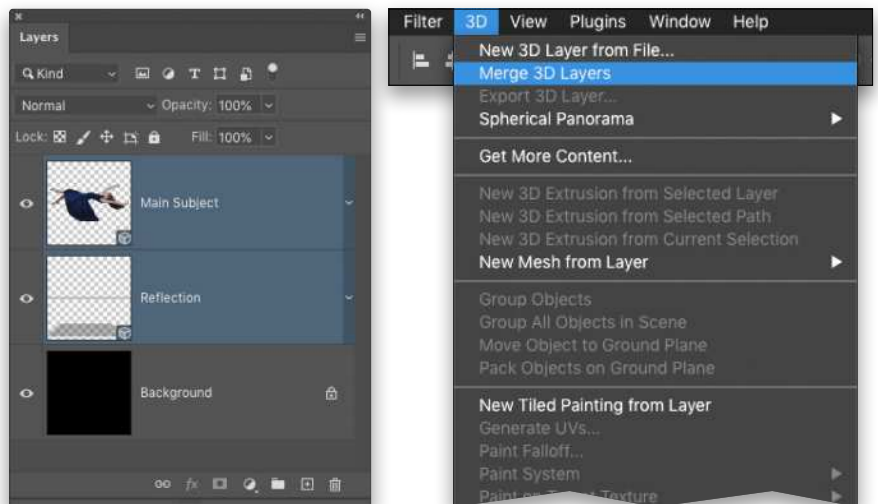
STEP NINE: Right-click to the right of the Main Subject layer's thumbnail in the Layers panel, and choose Postcard at the bottom of the menu. This will place the flat image in a 3D space, allowing it to interact with the Reflection layer; however, we first need to merge them together.

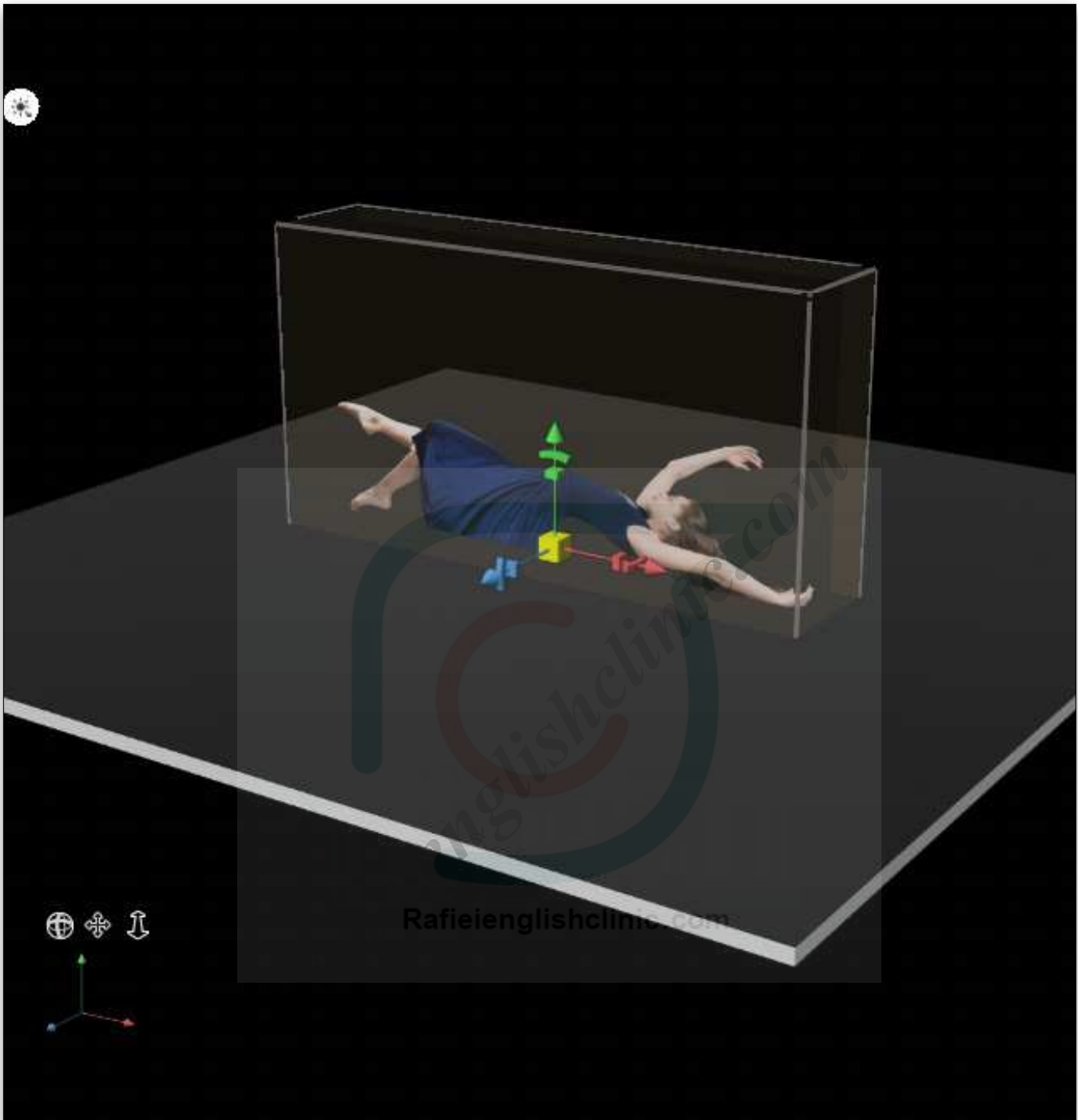


STEP 10: Before we merge the two layers, click on the Reflection layer in the layers panel, and then make sure the Reflection object is selected in the 3D panel. Jump over to the Properties panel and click on the Coordinates tab at top (it's the last of the four icons). In the middle column, set the X angle to 90°. Now the Reflection layer is a horizontal plane in the 3D space.



STEP 11: Even though both layers have been converted to 3D, they're still separate layers. We need to combine them into a single layer so they can interact with each other. With the Main Subject layer active in the Layers panel, Shift-click the Reflection layer so both layers are selected, and then go under the 3D menu near the top and choose Merge 3D Layers.

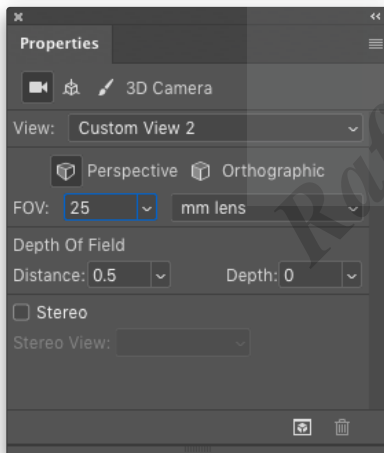
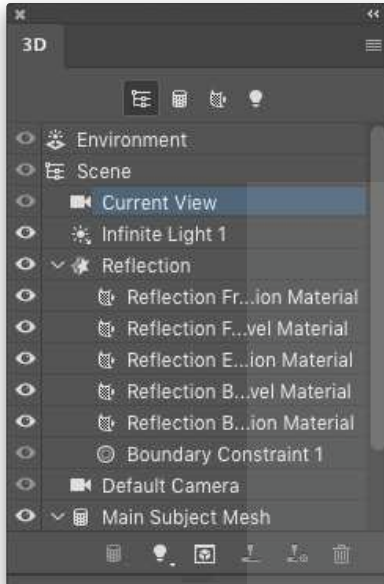




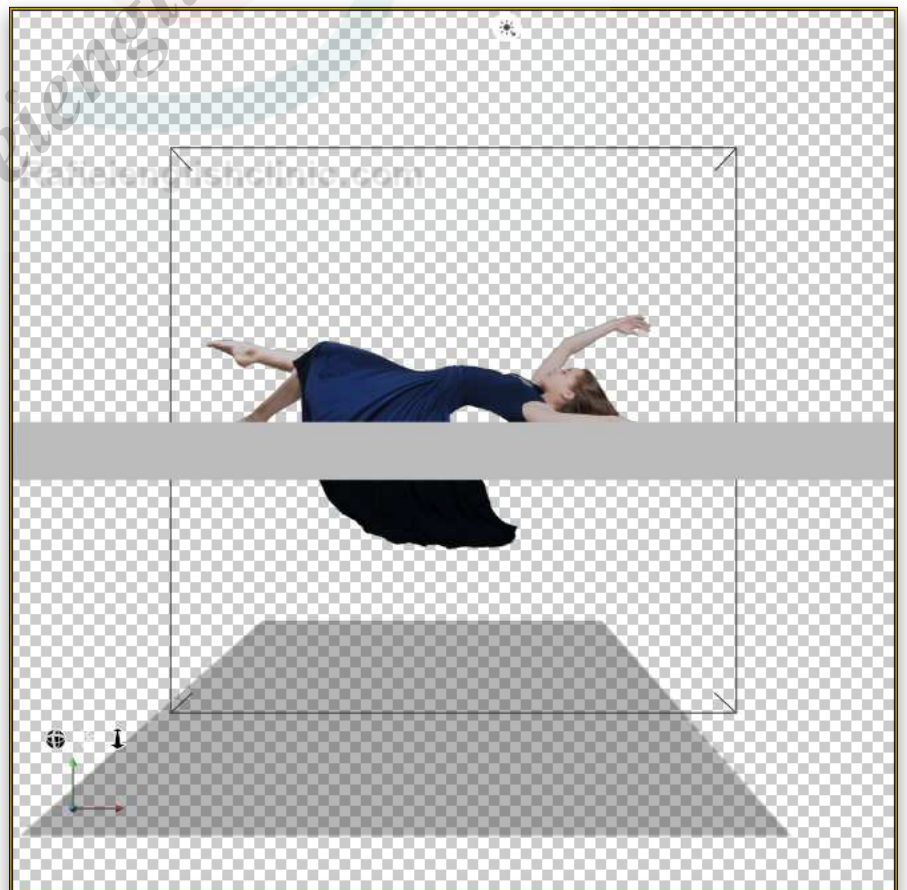
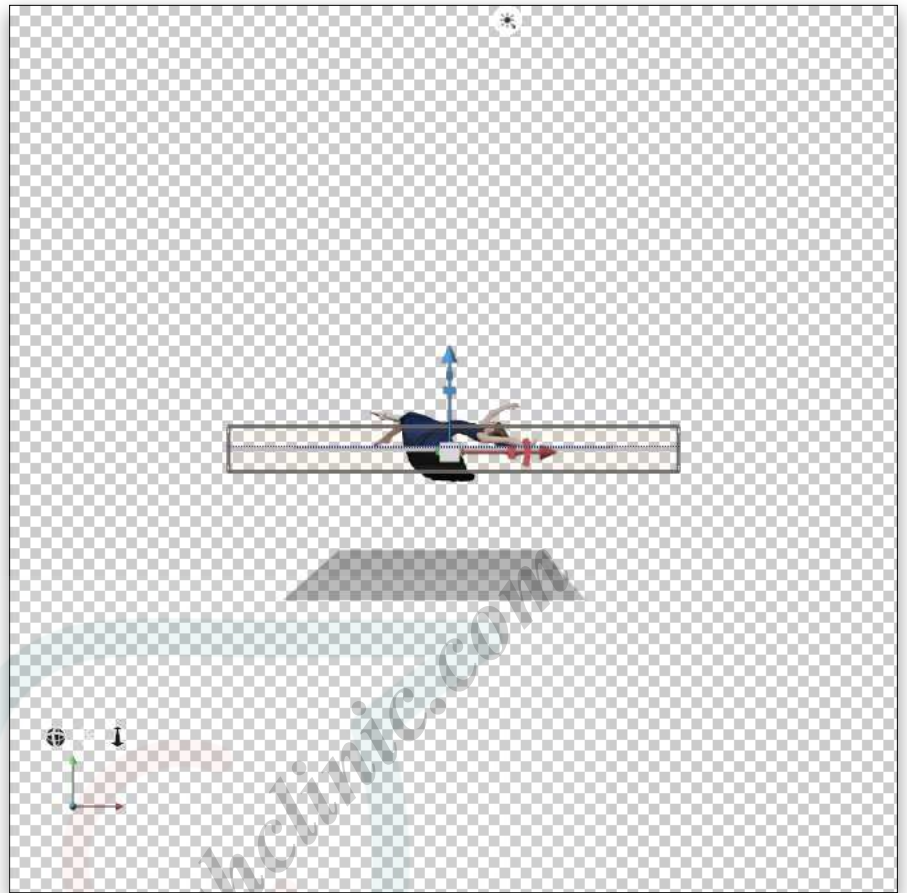
STEP 12: Select the Orbit the 3D Camera tool in the Options Bar and make sure Current View is selected in the 3D panel. Then, click-and-hold on the black area above the subject and drag around to change the angle of view. You can see the Main Subject is at the correct angle to the reflection surface but we need to resize her and raise her above the surface.

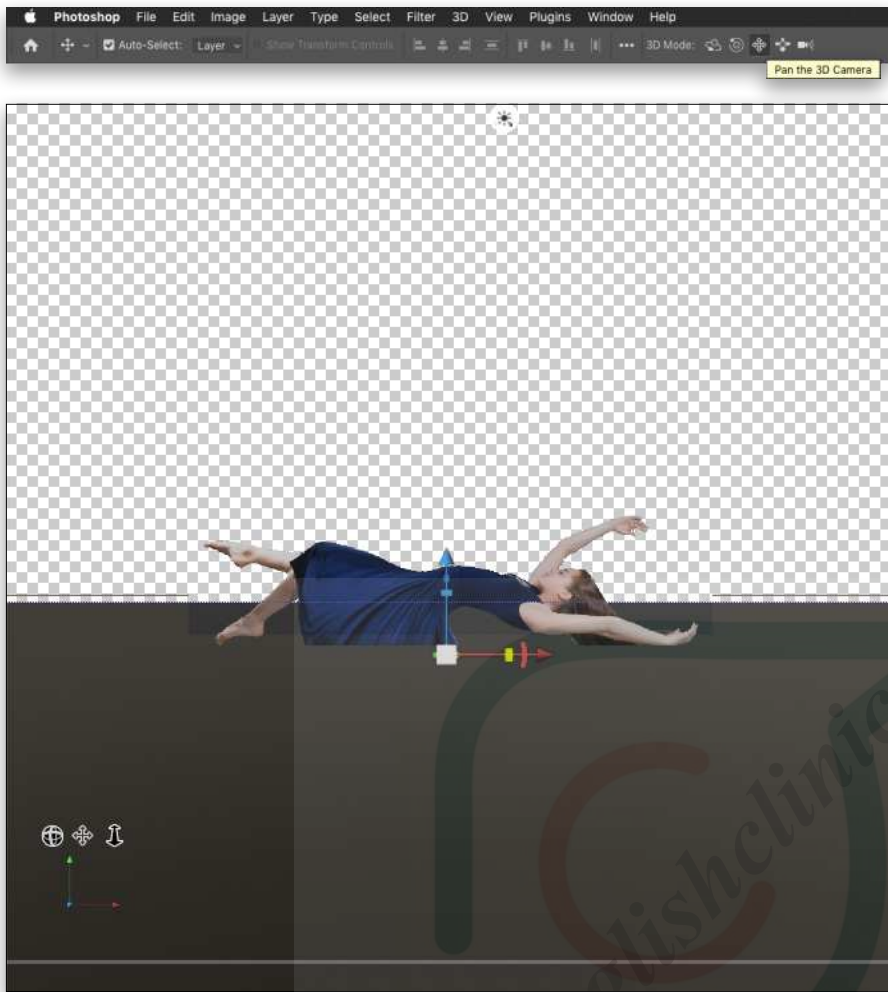
Click on the Main Subject Mesh object in the 3D panel, and you'll see a widget appear in the image consisting of a cube with three arrows coming out of it. Place the cursor over the cube at the center of the widget, and when it highlights yellow, click-and-drag downward to scale down the subject. Click-and-drag the green arrow head that's pointing straight up to move the subject above the surface. You can use the other widget features to scale and position the object in relation to the surface as needed.

STEP 13: Back in the 3D panel, click on Default Camera, and then select Current View. In the Properties panel, set the FOV to a 25 mm lens. This will give you a wide angle that will make the object appear small at first. (You can turn off the Background layer by clicking its Eye icon in the Layers panel so you can see the subject better.)



Select the Slide the 3D Camera tool in the Options Bar, hold down the Shift key, and click-and-drag downward to bring the camera closer to the object.

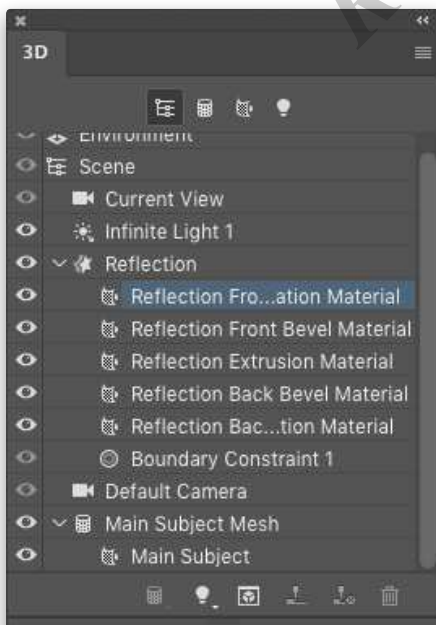




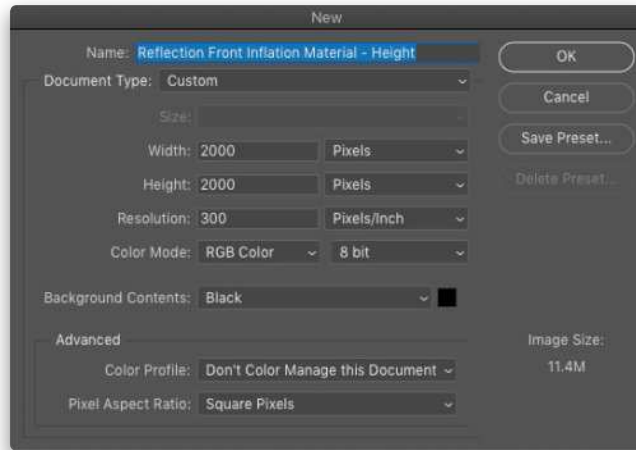
STEP 14: Select the Pan the 3D Camera tool, and click-and-drag downward to move the camera just above the reflection plane until its gray foreground edge is just out of view at the bottom of the image.

Click on the reflection plane in the canvas to make it active and to reveal its widget. On the red arrow, hover your cursor over the small red rectangle until it changes to yellow, and then click-and-drag to the right to scale the plane horizontally until the back corners go beyond the canvas edge.

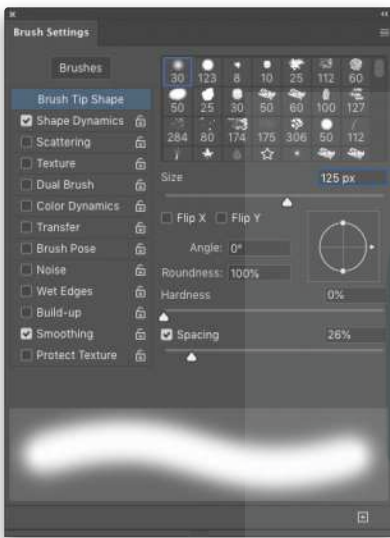
Once done, go to the View drop-down menu in the Properties panel, and choose Save. When prompted, name the camera and click OK. This way you can return to this view quickly by clicking its name in the 3D panel.



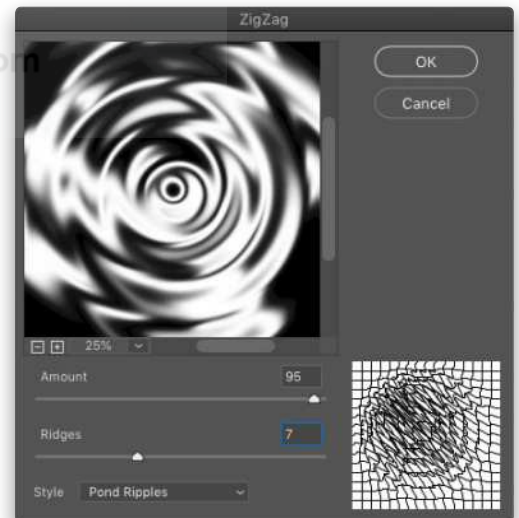
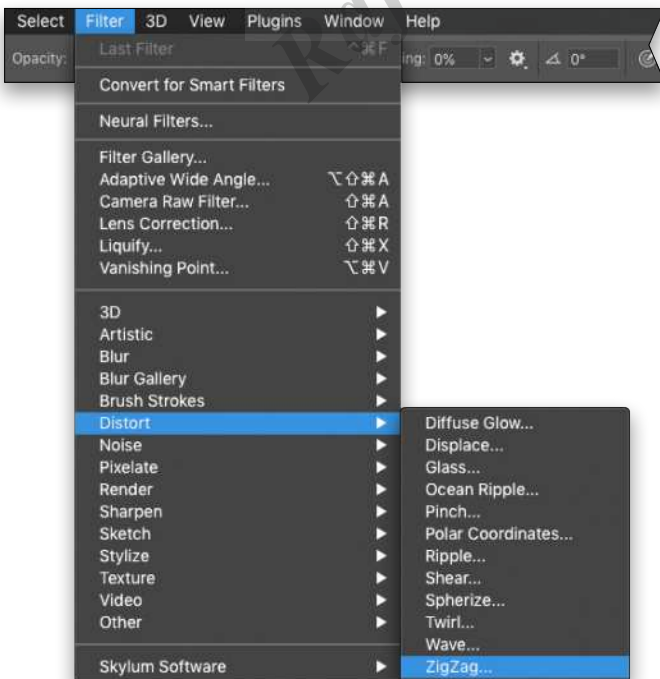
STEP 15: In the 3D panel, below the Reflection object, you should see the material layers. Select Reflection Front Inflation Material. In the Properties panel, click the folder icon to the right of Height and choose New Texture in the drop-down menu.



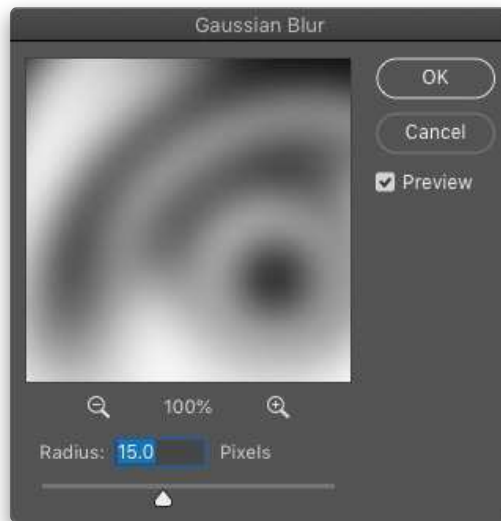
STEP 16: In the New dialog, set the document size the same as the original file, 2000x2000 pixels. Also, keep the Background Contents set to Black and click OK.



STEP 17: When the document opens, go to the Toolbar and select the Brush tool (B). Choose a standard Soft Round brush, and set the size to around 125 px in the Options Bar or Brush Settings panel (Window>Brush Settings). Press D then X to set the Foreground color to white, and then paint some random strokes around the middle area of the canvas as shown here. Just a few strokes should do; you can change this later if you want.



STEP 18: Go to the Filter menu, to Distort, and choose ZigZag. Start by setting the Style to Pond Ripples, and then set the Amount to 95 and the Ridges to 7. Click OK. Press Command-J (PC: Ctrl-J) to duplicate the Background layer. Use Free Transform (Command-T [PC: Ctrl-T]) to scale the layer to fill more of the canvas.

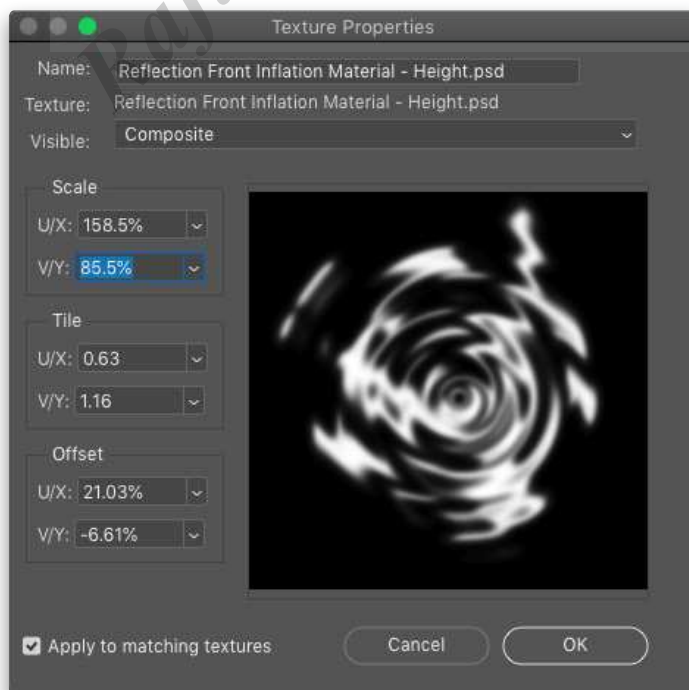
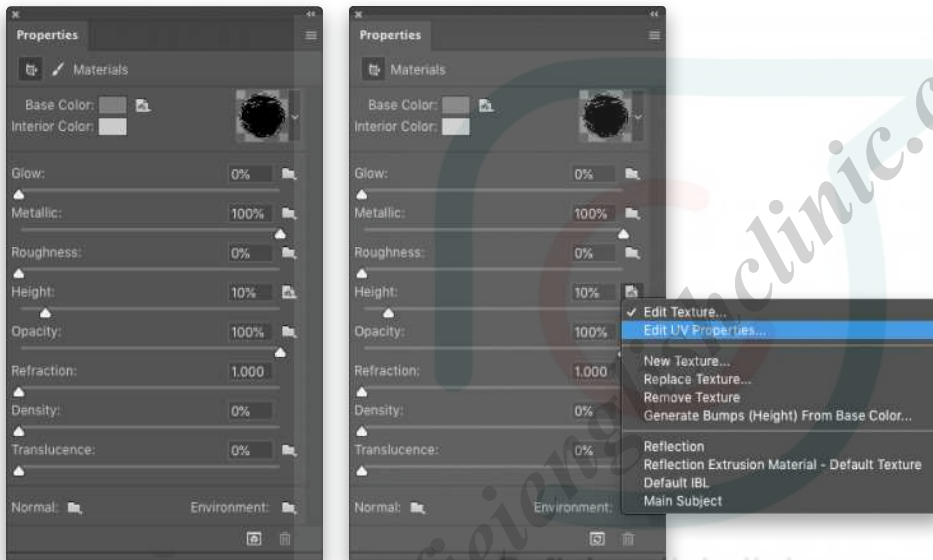


STEP 19: Go under the Filter menu, to Blur, and choose Gaussian Blur. Set the Radius to around 15 Pixels (this a good setting with which to start but you may need to experiment with higher or lower settings). Click OK.

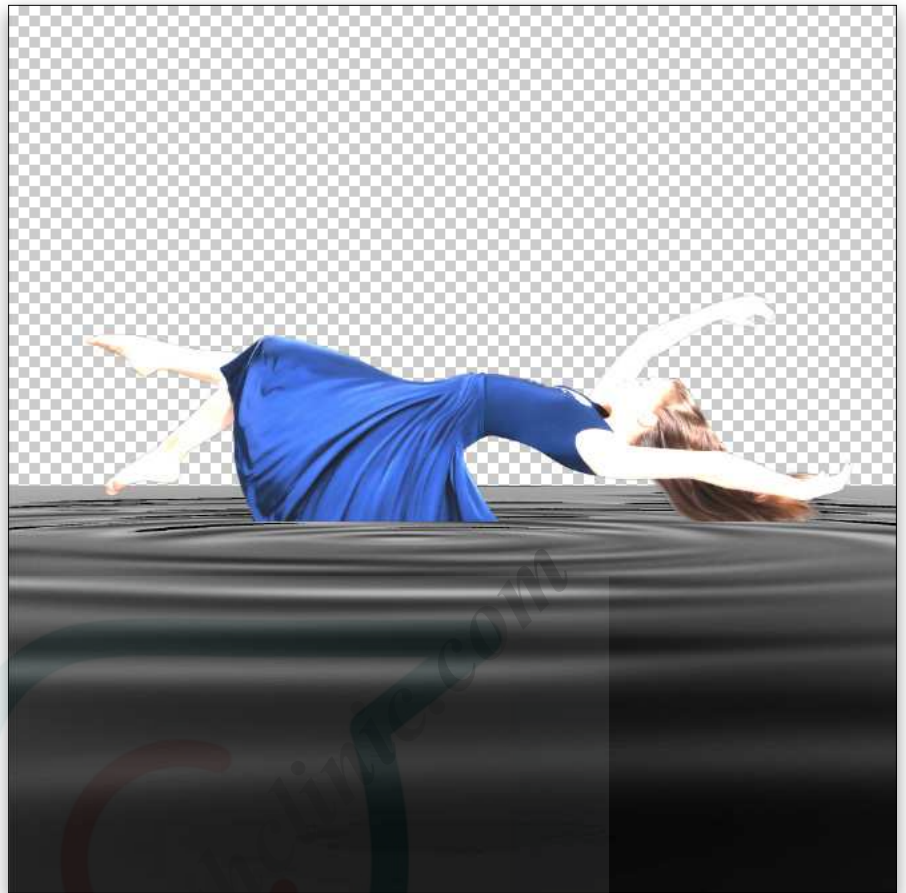
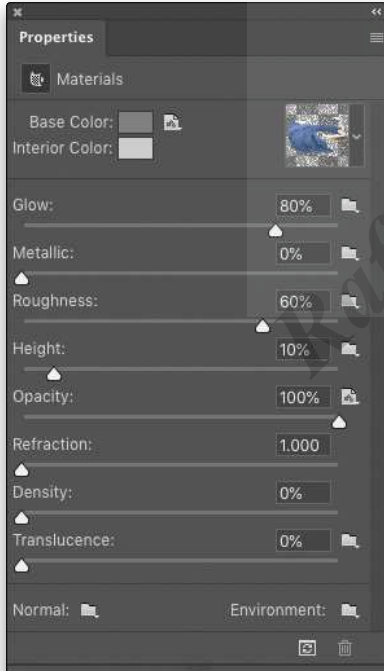
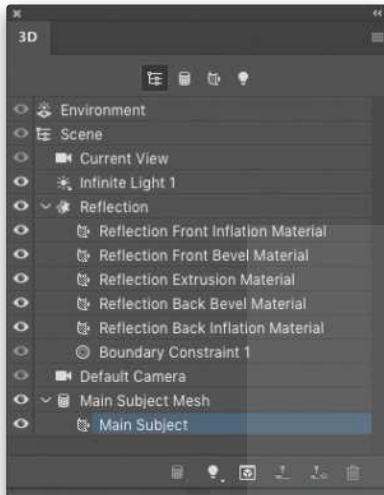
STEP 20: Close the document and save the changes. Go back to the 3D panel and select the Reflection Front Inflation Material again. In the Properties panel, set Metallic to 100% and the Roughness to 0%. Now you can see the ripple effect in the reflection surface.

The texture may seem stretched and out of position, which is due to the scale of the object and the angle of view. You can modify the position and scale of the ripple texture by selecting Reflection Front Inflation Material in the 3D panel and, in the Properties panel, click the folder icon to the right of Height again, but this time choose Edit UV Properties.

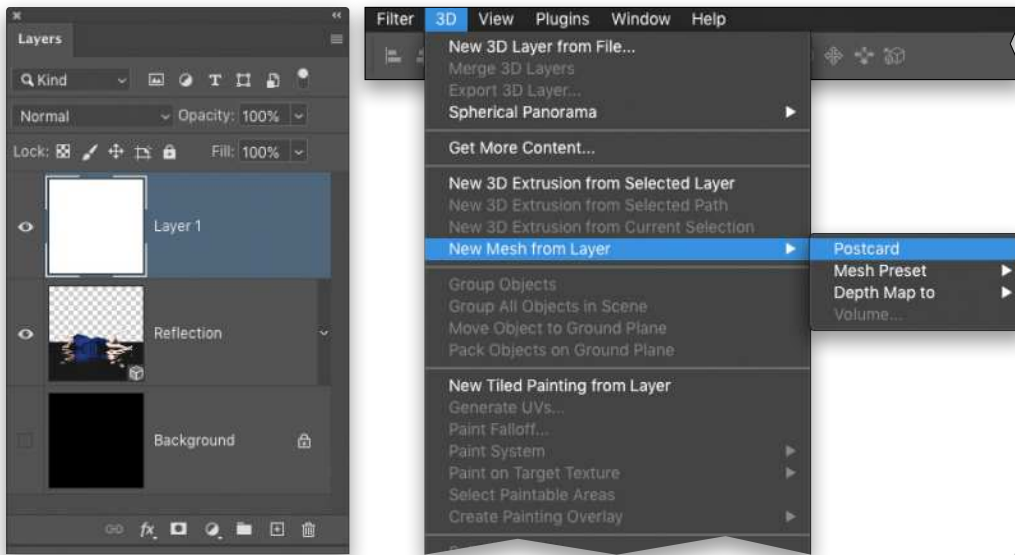
Now adjust the Scale and the Offset in the Texture Properties dialog. I like to place the cursor over the name of each of the fields and click-and-drag to use the scrubby slider. You'll see the texture change in the object as your drag to change the values. Click OK when done. (Remember, you can edit the original ripple image by going to the same menu next to Height and choosing Edit Texture.)



STEP 21: Back in the 3D panel, select the Main Subject material layer. Then, over in the Properties panel, set the Glow to 80% to make the subject illuminate the scene. The subject will appear blown out on the canvas, but this is just how it looks in draft mode; it will be fine when the scene is rendered.

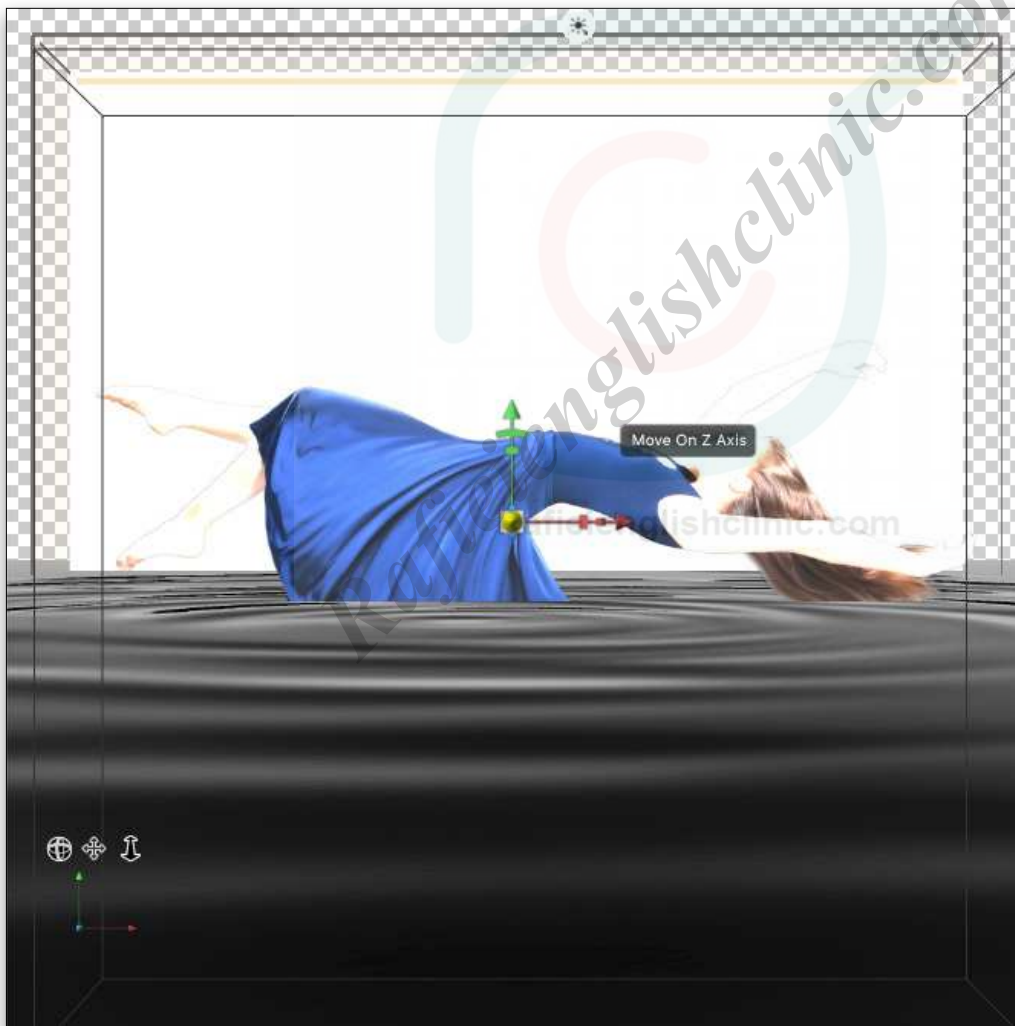


STEP 22: At this point, we can start a render to get an idea of how it will look, so go under the 3D menu and choose Render 3D Layer. Depending on your computer, it can take a while to render the entire scene, but you should quickly be able to see how the subject and the reflection interact. Remember, if you want to adjust the way the reflection looks, just choose Edit UV Properties as we did in Step 20. You can press Escape at any time to cancel the render, and use the 3D tools to reposition the subject or 3D camera as needed.



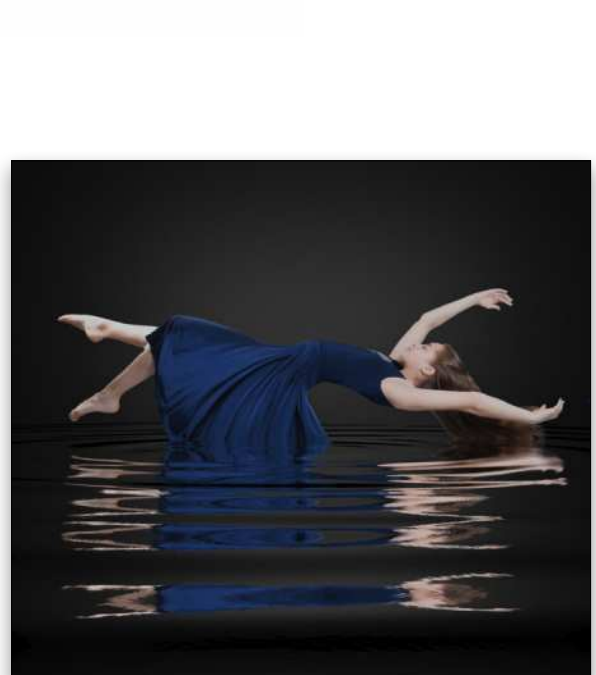
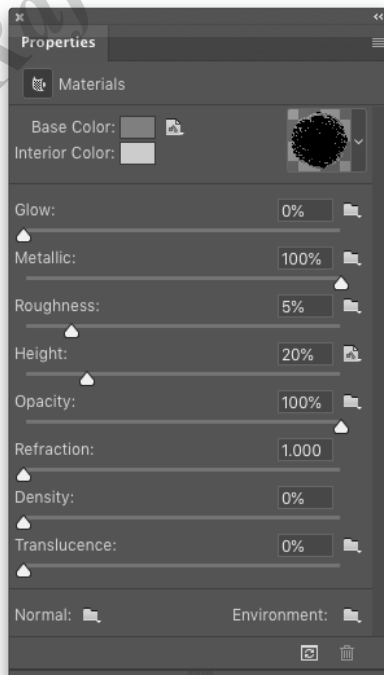
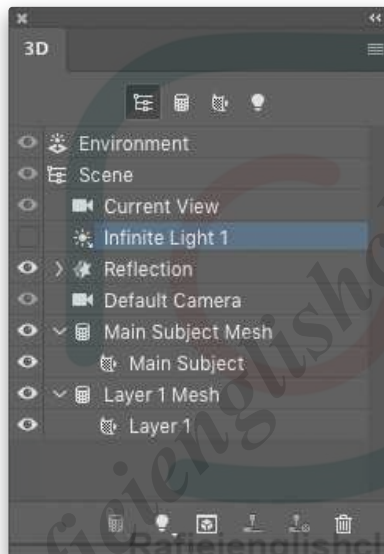
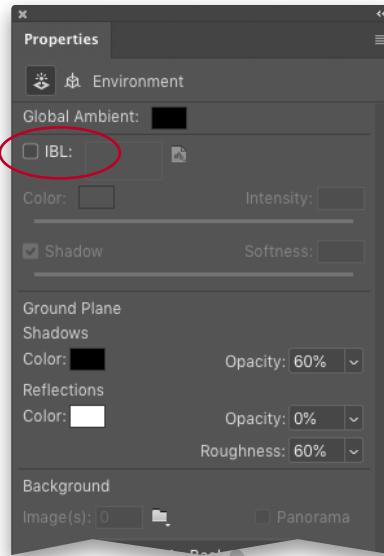
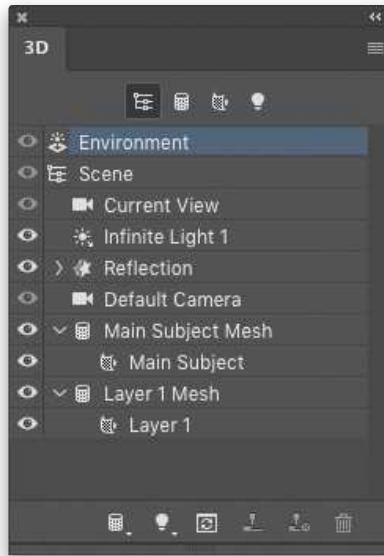
STEP 23: Now we need a backdrop. In the Layers panel, create a new blank layer above the 3D layer, and press Option-Delete (PC: Alt-Backspace) to fill it with white. Go under the 3D menu, to New Mesh from Layer, and choose Postcard (this is the same thing we did earlier in Step Nine, just in a different menu). Then press Command-E (PC: Ctrl-E) to merge this 3D layer with the existing 3D elements.

Click directly on the white postcard in the image to bring up its widget, and highlight the blue arrowhead (it may be hard to see since it's pointing directly at you) and click-and-drag upward to push the object back in space behind the subject. Keep pushing it back until the subject's shadow disappears. If you see the edges of the white postcard, just scale up the object using the widget.



STEP 24: Okay, it's time to turn off the lights. Choose Environment in the 3D panel and then, in the Properties panel, turn off the IBL. Back in the 3D panel, turn off the default Infinite Light. Your image should go black except for the subject (which possibly could appear light gray). That's because the subject is now the sole source of light in the scene. Go ahead and initiate another render.

Note: You may notice that the reflection is distorted around the edges. This just means the backdrop object needs to be a little bigger. Click on the backdrop object, highlight the scale node on the red arrow on the widget, and then click-and-drag to the right a little to scale the backdrop on that axis.



STEP 25: If you want the reflection to fade a little, then just reselect the Reflection Front Inflation Material in the 3D panel and, in the Properties panel, increase the Roughness amount to around 3–5%.



With the basic scene built, you can modify the scene in a variety of ways. Here's a [quick video](#) on some ideas of how to do just that.

When modifying the scene, you'll need to turn the lights back on so you can see what you're doing. Remember

to turn off the IBL and Infinite Light before you initiate the render again. Here you can see how just adding a glow to the subject adds dramatic lighting to everything in the scene. ■

[Questions & Comments](#)



CREATE A WANDA VISION-INSPIRED MAGICAL TRANSITION EFFECT

One of the most intriguing properties to come out of Marvel Studios is the short Disney+ series *WandaVision*. Not only is it deliciously weird, oddly mysterious, and abounding with fun fan theories, but it also has some great effects that we don't often get to see in small-screen productions. The marketing materials feature one of those effects where the border to the "Hex" is seen and the characters are half in and half out. With a bit of Photoshop magic, we can create a similar effect ourselves, all without having super powers infused by an Infinity Stone!

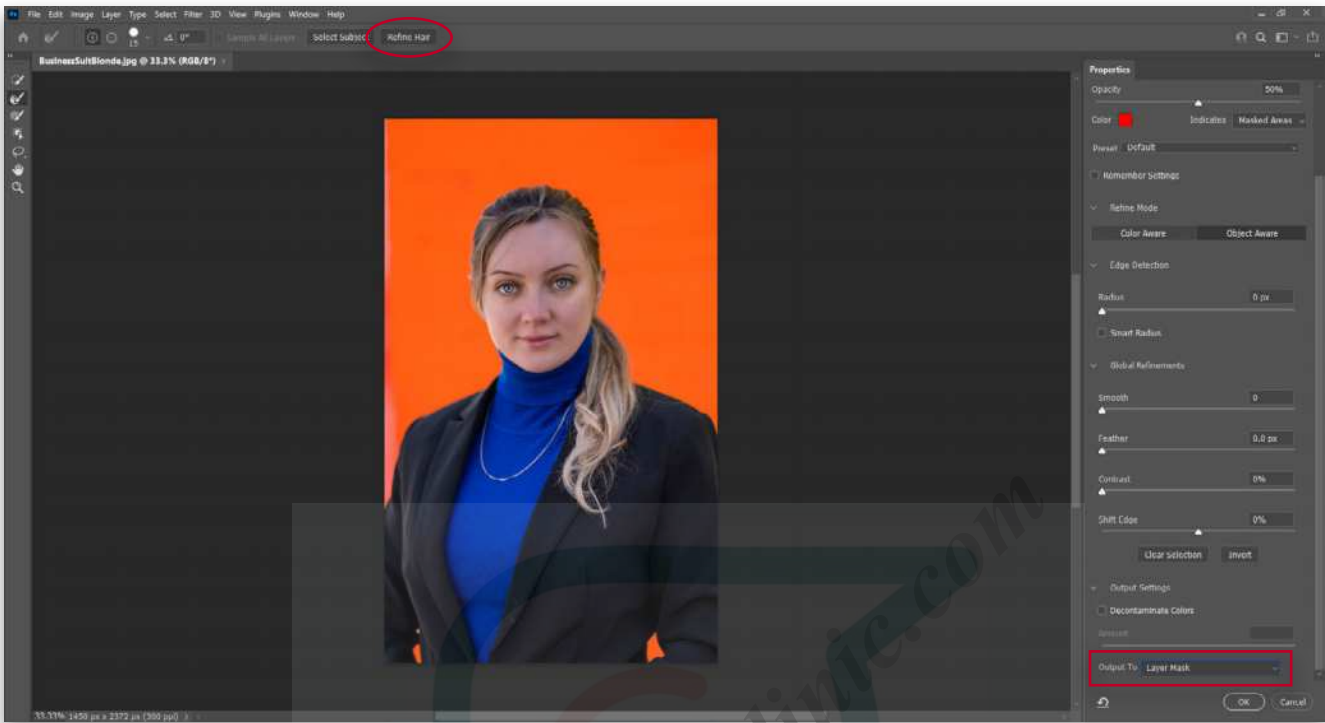


We've provided the base portraits to use on this project, *BusinessSuitBlonde.jpg* and *FurCoatBlonde.jpg*. [KelbyOne members may download these two files by clicking [here](#) or visiting members.kelbyone.com/magazine. All files are for personal use only.] The effects are also powered by a handful of Adobe Stock images. It's possible to use the smaller, watermarked versions to learn the technique so you can use your own images later on.

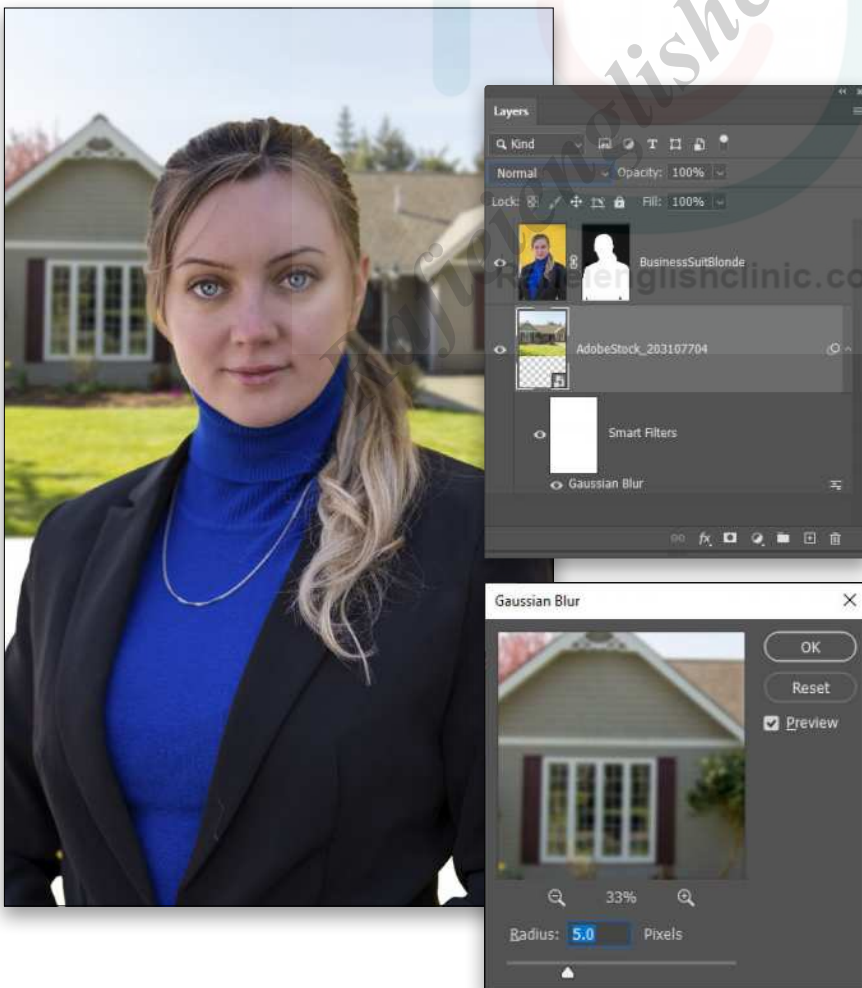
STEP ONE: Open the photo *BusinessSuitBlonde.jpg* in Photoshop. This will be the base photo on which the entire effect is built, but first that yellow background needs to be replaced. Go to **Select>Subject**, and follow that with **Select>Select and Mask**. Then click the **Refine Hair** button in the Options Bar and, in the Output Settings in the Properties panel, set the Output To drop-down menu to **Layer Mask**. Click OK. Double-click the



Kirk Nelson



House: ©Adobe Stock/Sharon

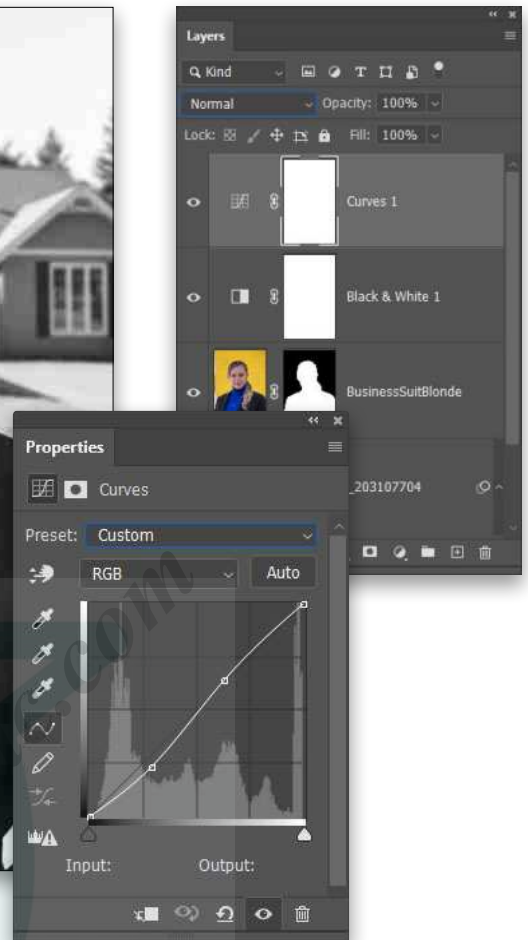
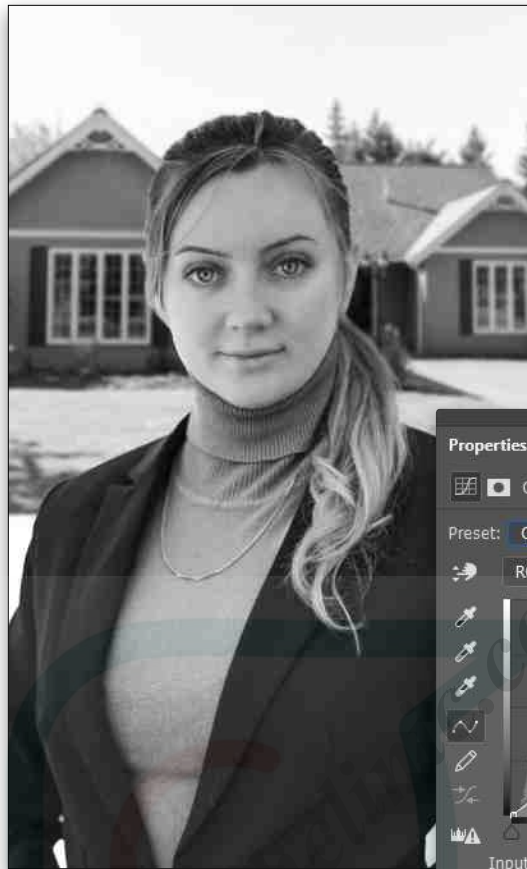
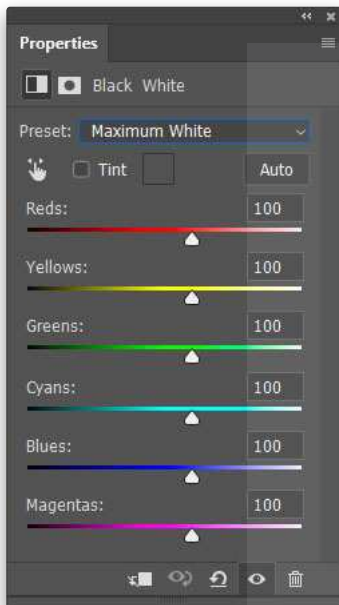


layer's name in the Layers panel and rename it "BusinessSuitBlonde."

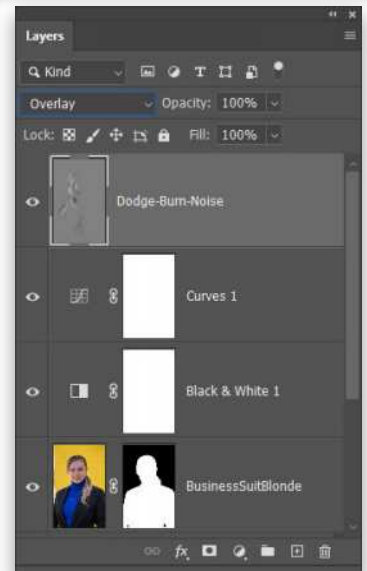
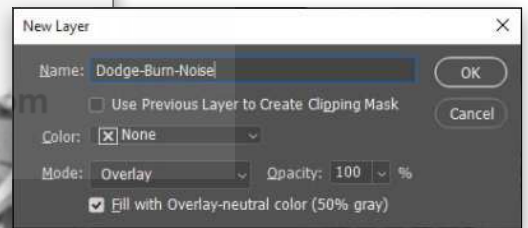
STEP TWO: Grab an image of a suburban house to go into the background (in this case, this image from Adobe Stock works well). Place it into the composition with Edit>Place Embedded. If you'd like to download the lower watermarked version of this image from Adobe Stock to follow along, click [this link](#), log in with your Adobe ID, and click the Save to Library button. Drag the image from the Libraries panel (Window>Libraries), and drop it into your working file.

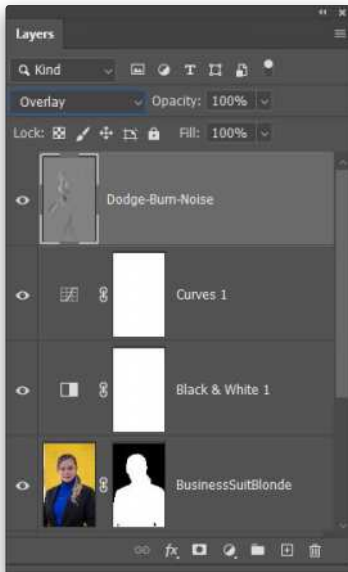
Resize and position the image so it fills the background behind the model. Don't worry about the empty space behind her in the bottom half; that will get covered up later. Once satisfied with the placement, press Enter, and then drag the house layer below the subject layer in the Layers panel. Go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur, use a Radius of 5 pixels, and click OK.

STEP THREE: Add a Black & White adjustment layer (Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Black & White) to the top of the layer stack, and set the Preset drop-down menu in the Properties panel (Window>Properties) to Maximum White. Then add a Curves adjustment layer (Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Curves) and create a subtle S shape with the curve in the Properties panel to enhance the contrast.

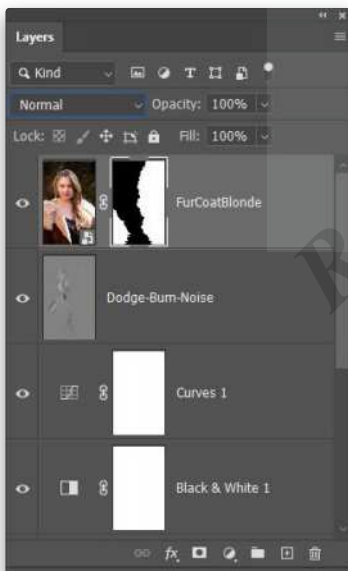
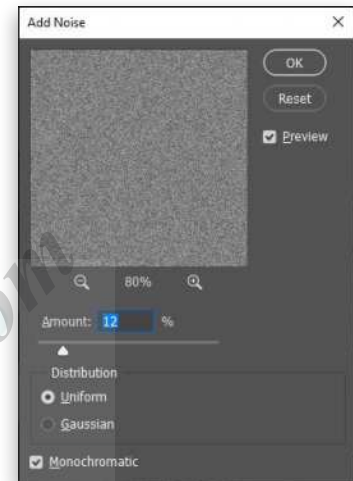


STEP FOUR: Use the Layer>New>Layer command to get the New Layer dialog. Name the layer "Dodge-Burn-Noise" and set the Mode to Overlay. Before clicking OK, enable the option for Fill with Overlay-Neutral Color (50% Gray). Once the layer is in place use the Dodge tool (O) to brighten the lighting on the side of her face closest to the light source and the Burn tool (nested below the Dodge tool in the Toolbar) to darken the shadows a bit.



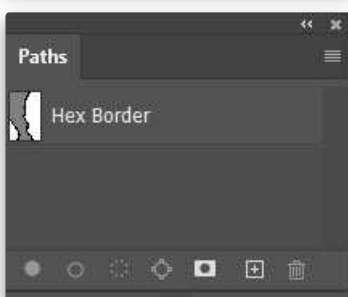


STEP FIVE: Go to Filter>Noise>Add Noise, and set the Amount to 12%, Distribution to Uniform, and check the Monochromatic box. Click OK. This adds some grain to the image and makes it reminiscent of old sitcom TV shows.



STEP SIX: Use File>Place Embedded to place the photo called FurCoatBlonde.jpg from the download files. Press Enter to commit the image. Place it above the Dodge-Burn-Noise layer in the Layers panel. This image is already sized to match up with the previous photo, so if you're using a different set of photographs, it would be necessary to transform the photos so they align.

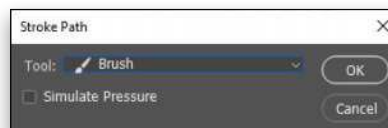
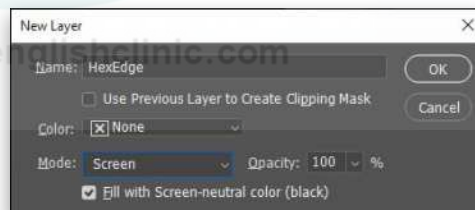
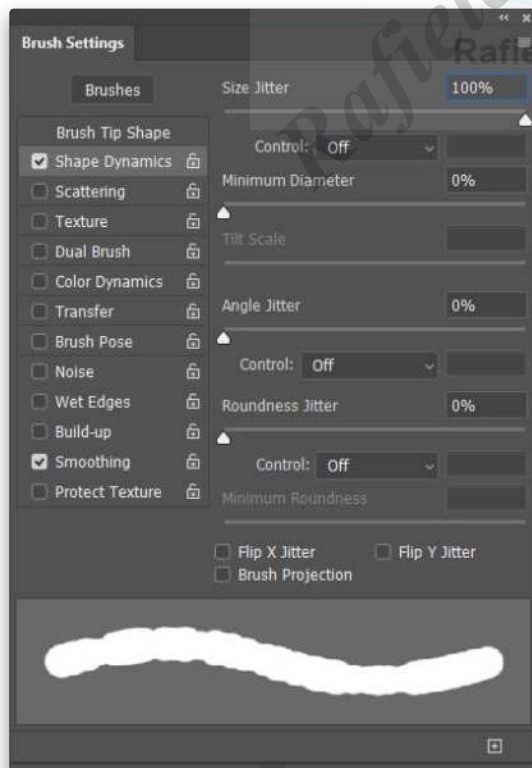
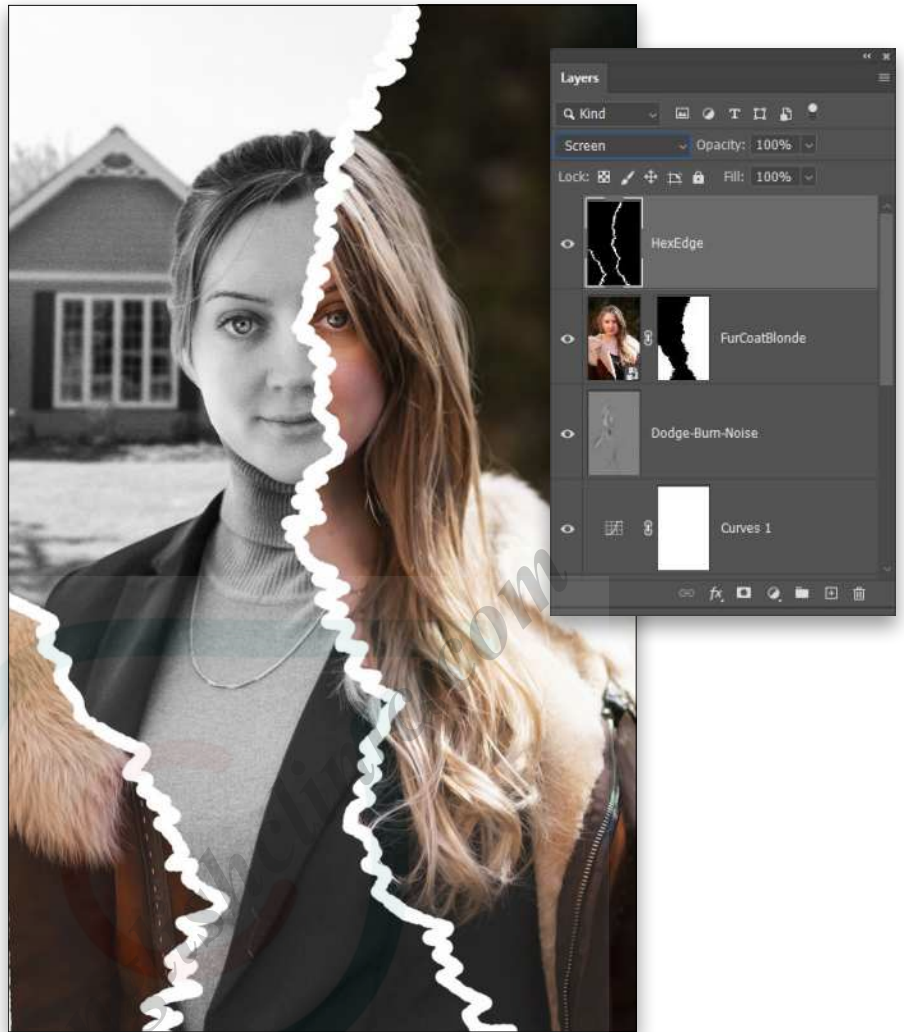
Go to the Paths panel (Window>Paths) and look for the built-in path called Hex Border (feel free to draw your own paths using the Pen tool [P] if you like). Command-click (PC: Ctrl-click) the path in the Paths panel to load it as a selection. Click the Add Layer Mask icon (circle in a square) at the bottom of the Layers panel to use the selection as a layer mask.

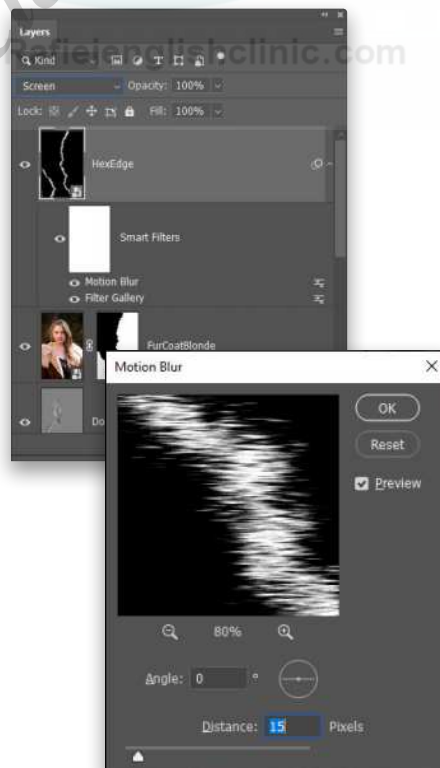
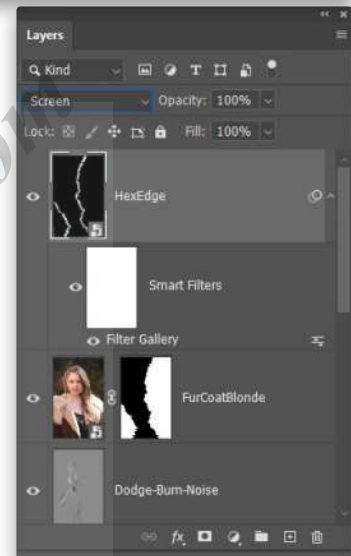
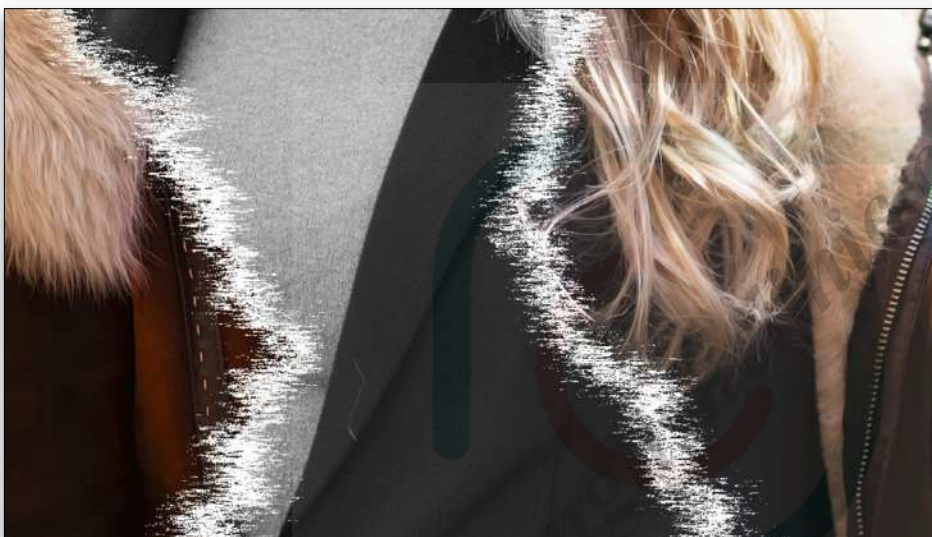
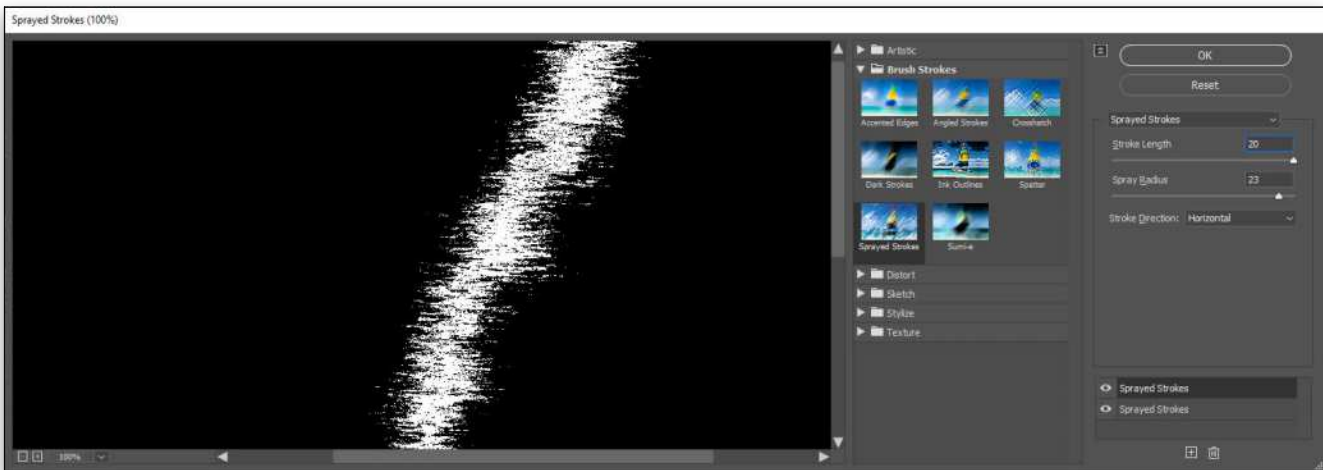


STEP SEVEN: Add a new layer above the FurCoatBlonde layer using the Layer>New>Layer command again. Name this layer “HexEdge,” set the Mode to Screen, enable the option for Fill with Screen-Neutral Color (Black), and click OK.

Then grab the Brush tool (B) and press D then X to set the paint color to white. Open the Brush Settings panel (Window>Brush Settings), select the Hard Round brush, and set the brush tip Size to 35 pixels. Enable the Shape Dynamics on the left side of the Brush Settings panel and set the Size Jitter to 100%.

In the Paths panel again, Right-click on the Hex Border path and select Stroke Path from the context menu. When prompted, make sure the Brush tool is selected in the Tool drop-down menu, and click OK. This generates a painted border along the path. (Afterwards, click in the empty space in the Paths panel to deselect the path so you can see the brushstroke.)





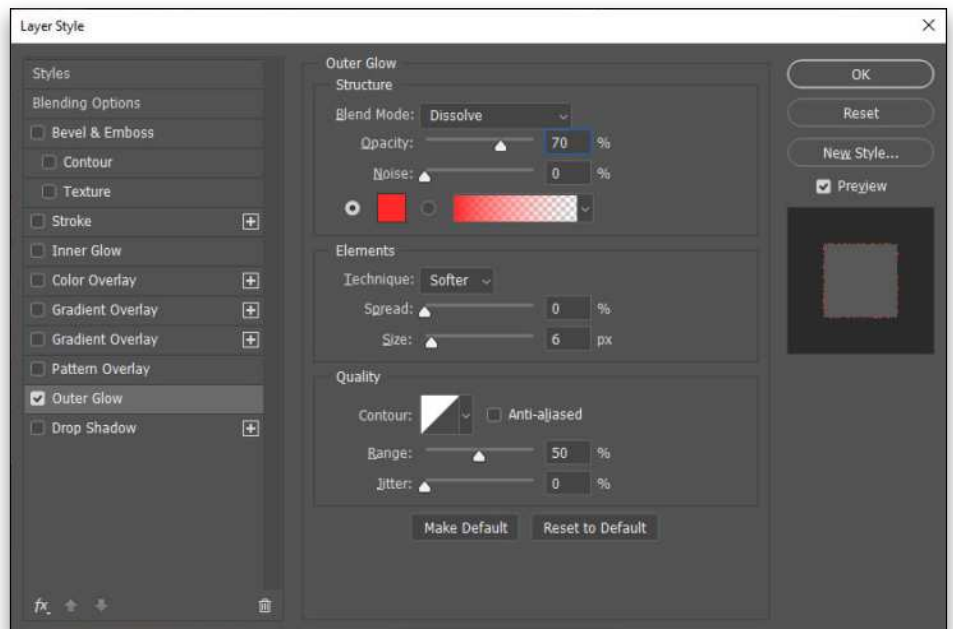
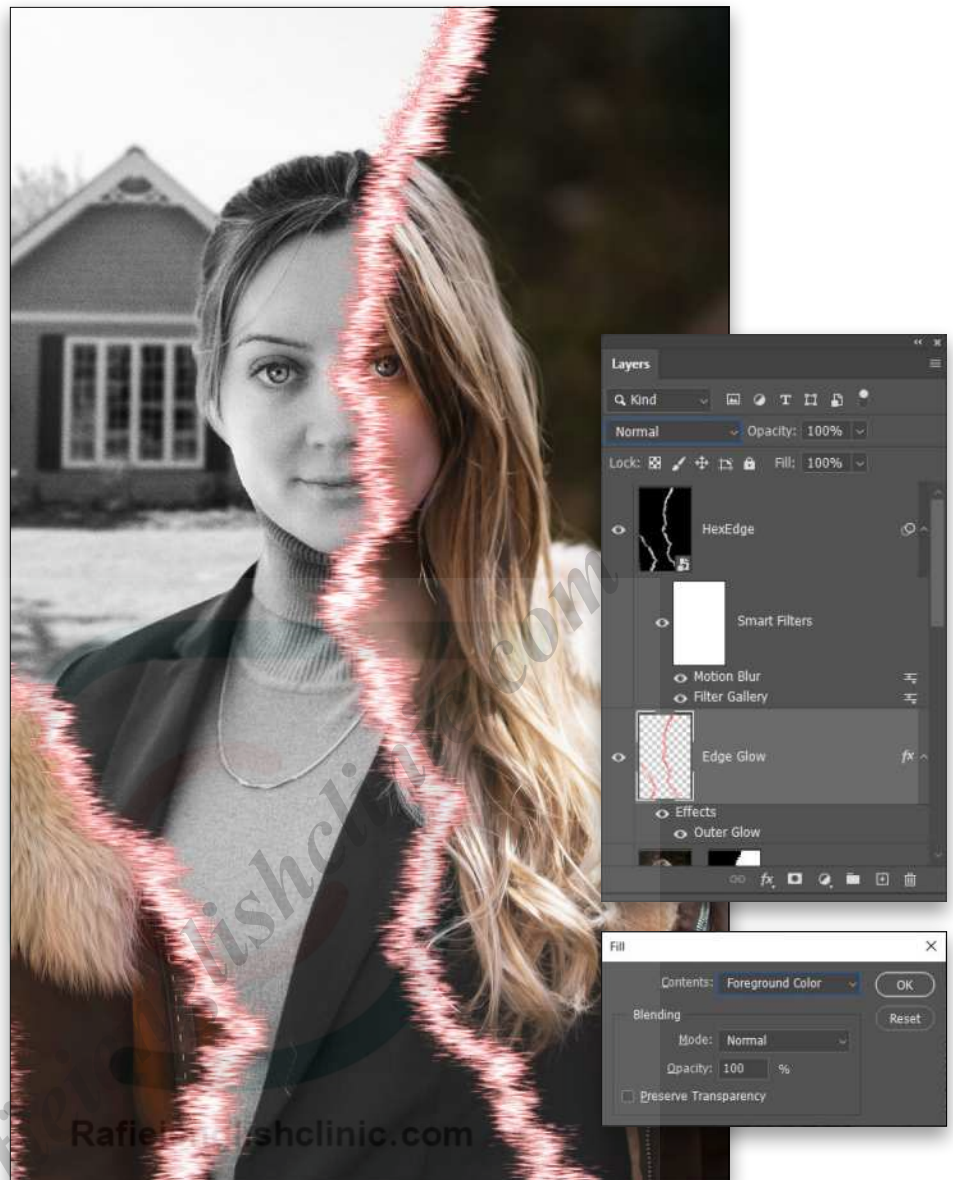
STEP EIGHT: Go to Filter>Convert to Smart Filters to turn the layer into a smart object. Then go to Filter>Filter Gallery and in the Brush Strokes folder choose the Sprayed Strokes filter. Set the Stroke Length to 20, Spray Radius to 23, and Stroke Direction to Horizontal. Then in the lower-right portion of the window, click the plus icon to duplicate the filter so it's applied twice. Click OK.

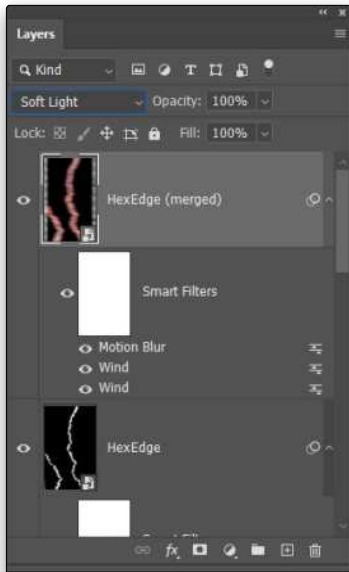
STEP NINE: Next, go to Filter>Blur>Motion Blur. Set the Angle to 0°, the Distance to 15 pixels, and click OK. This stretched, static effect will serve as the basis for the rest of the transition effect.

STEP 10: Temporarily set the HexEdge layer blend mode back to Normal in the Layers panel so the black fill is visible. In the Channels panel (Window>Channels) Command-click (PC: Ctrl-click) on the RGB channel to select the luminous pixels, which are the pixels in the white scatter effect. Set the blend mode of the HexEdge layer back to Screen, add a new layer beneath the HexEdge layer, and call the new layer “Edge Glow.”

Click on the Foreground color swatch near the bottom of the Toolbar, set the color to a bright red (#ff2e2e), and click OK to close the Color Picker. Fill the selection by using Edit>Fill, setting the Contents dropdown menu to Foreground Color, and clicking OK. Then press Command-D (PC: Ctrl-D) to cancel the selection.

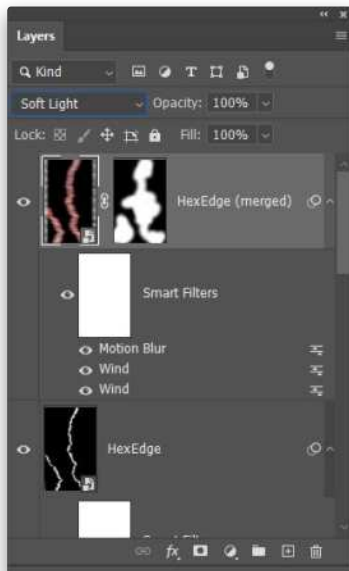
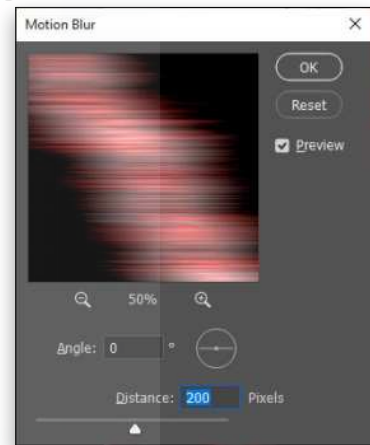
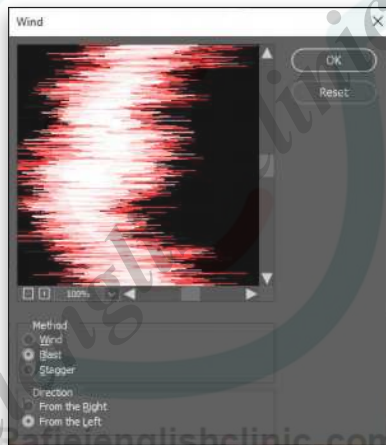
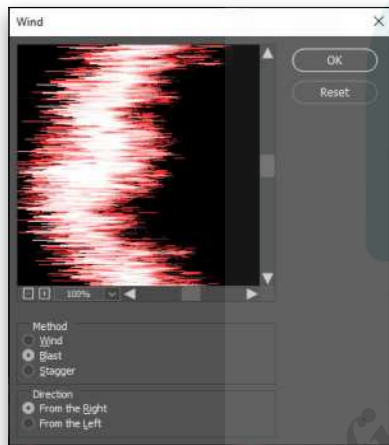
Add an Outer Glow layer style (Layer>Layer Style>Outer Glow) with the same red color, Opacity at 70%, Spread at 0%, and Size at 6 px. Then comes the crazy part: set the Outer Glow Blend Mode to Dissolve. Yes, Dissolve! Click OK. [For more on the Dissolve blend mode, check out the “Photoshop Proving Ground” on page 130 this issue.—Ed.]





STEP 11: With the Edge Glow layer active in the Layers panel, Shift-click the HexEdge layer so they're both selected. Hold down the Option (PC: Alt) key and go to Layer>Merge Layers to create a merged copy of those two layers.

Turn this layer into a smart object, set the blending mode to Soft Light, and go to Filter>Stylize>Wind. Set the Method to Blast and the Direction to From the Right. Click OK, and run the Wind filter again, but this time set the direction to From the Left. Follow this with the Motion Blur filter set to an Angle of 0° and Distance of 200 pixels. Click OK.



STEP 12: The merged layer tends to darken the rest of the image and needs to be constrained to the edge area of the glowing Hex effect. Hold down the Option (PC: Alt) key and click the Add Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the Layers panel to add a layer mask filled with black, which completely hides the layer. Then use the Brush tool again set to white with a much larger and Soft Round brush (be sure to turn off Shape Dynamics in the Brush Settings panel), and paint on the mask to reveal the effect only along the glowing edge.

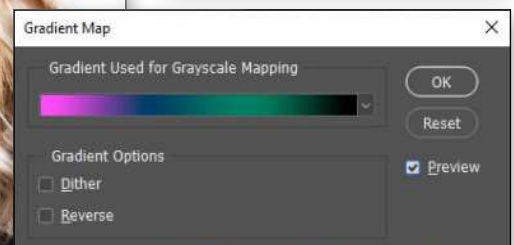
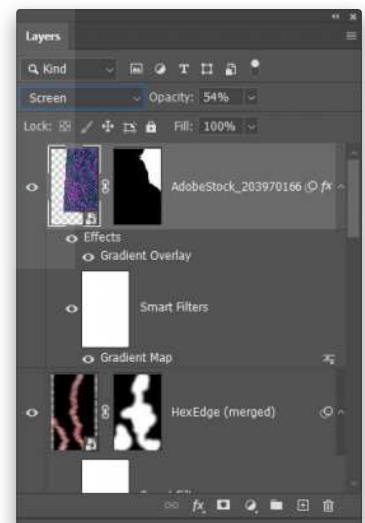
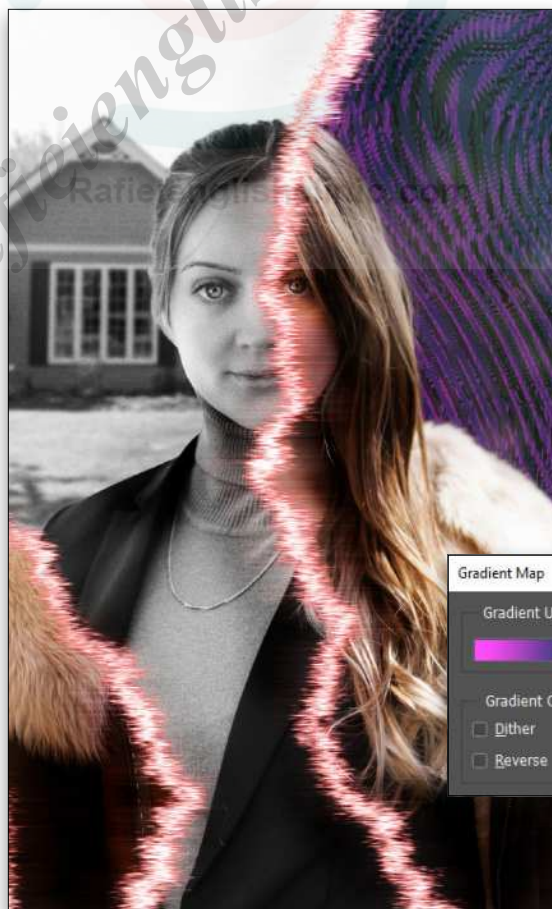
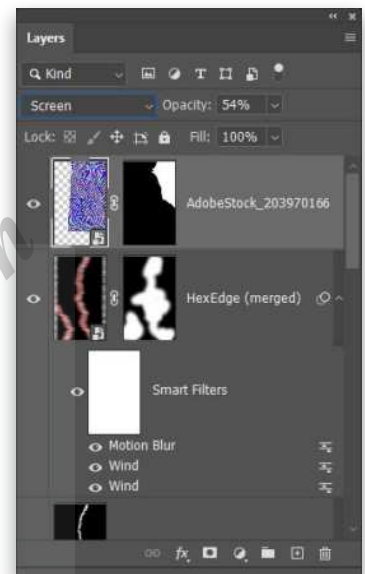
STEP 13: Now we're going to place the Adobe Stock image of the colorful static ([click here](#) to download the preview image from Adobe Stock, and then drag the image from your Libraries panel into your working file). Transform the texture to cover the top-right portion of the image, and then rotate it into position. Set the blending mode to Screen and reduce the Opacity to 54%.

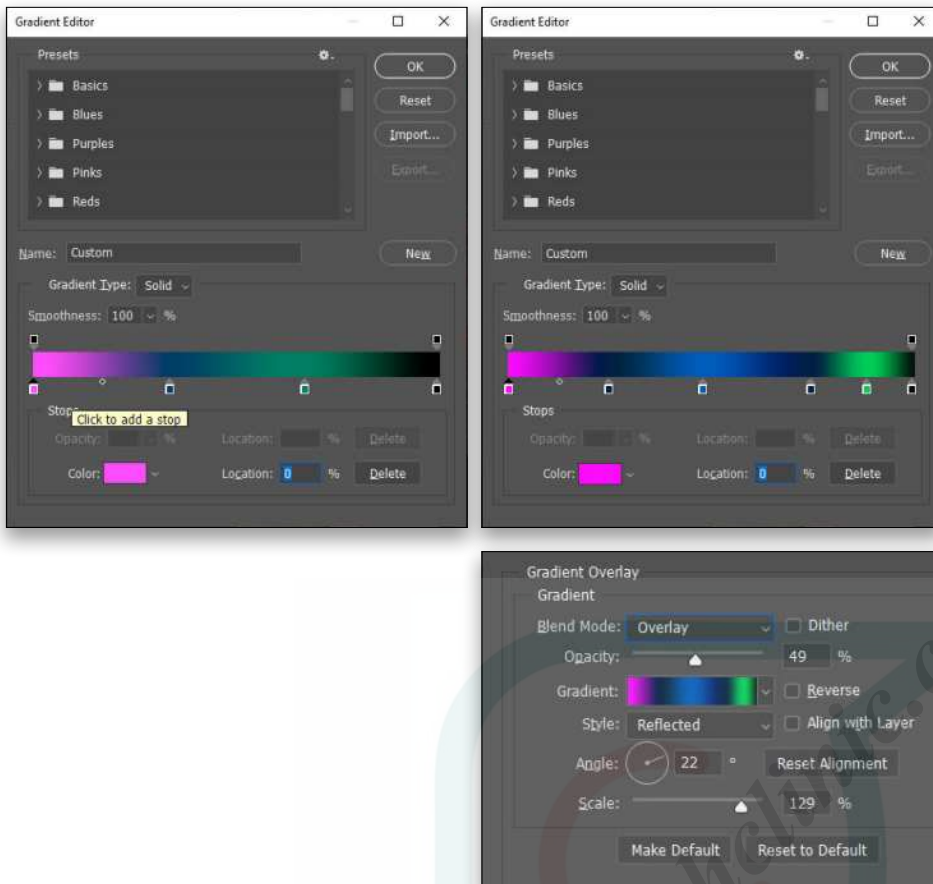
The static should look like it's behind the model, so a layer mask is needed. First, make the FurCoatBlonde layer the active layer and go to Select>Subject. Inverse that selection with Select>Inverse. Hold down the Shift-Command-Option (PC: Shift-Ctrl-Alt) keys and click on the layer mask thumbnail for the FurCoatBlonde layer in the Layers panel. This will intersect the selection with that mask and create the perfect selection for generating the mask on the static texture layer. So click on the static layer to make it active, and then click the Add Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the Layers panel.

STEP 14: Click on the static texture layer's thumbnail in the Layers panel, and go to Image>Adjustments>Gradient Map. In the Gradient Map dialog, click on the gradient bar to open the Gradient Editor (see next page). Edit the gradient to have four color stops equally spaced apart (click below the gradient ramp to add color stops). Double-click each of the color stops to edit its color using these colors: bright magenta (#ec4eff), navy blue (#1f4065), sea green (#277e64),



Callch: ©Adobe Stock/vitmann



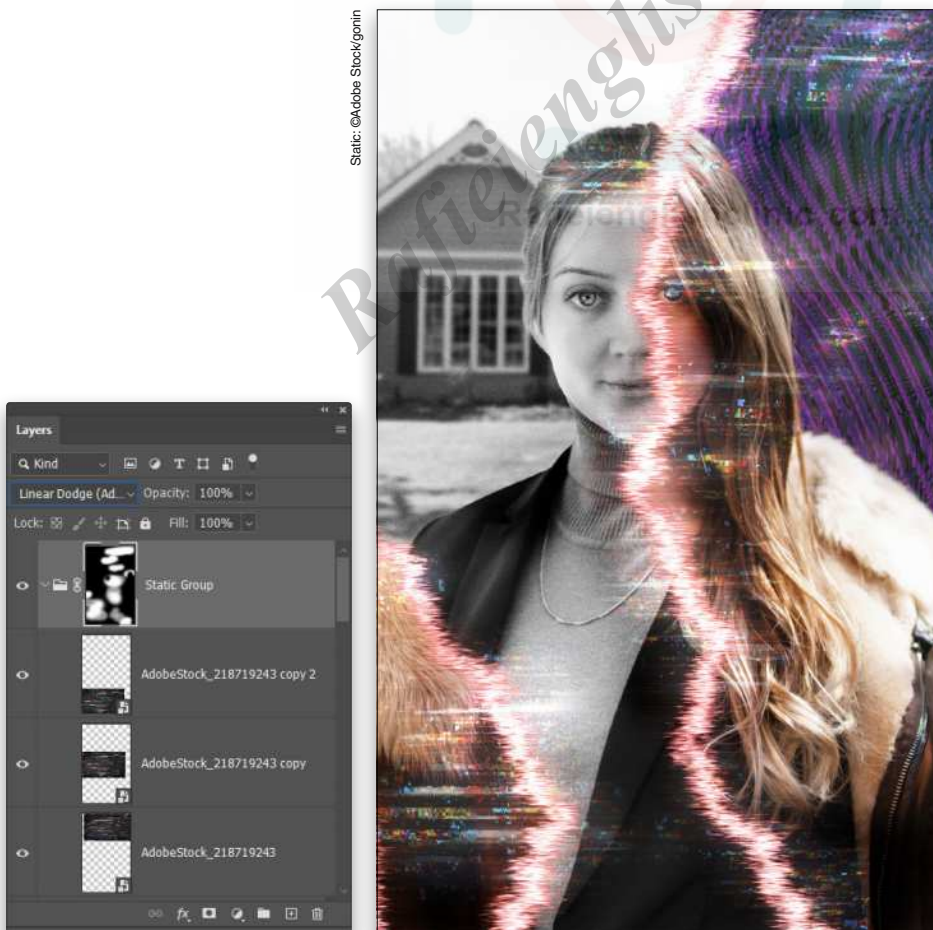


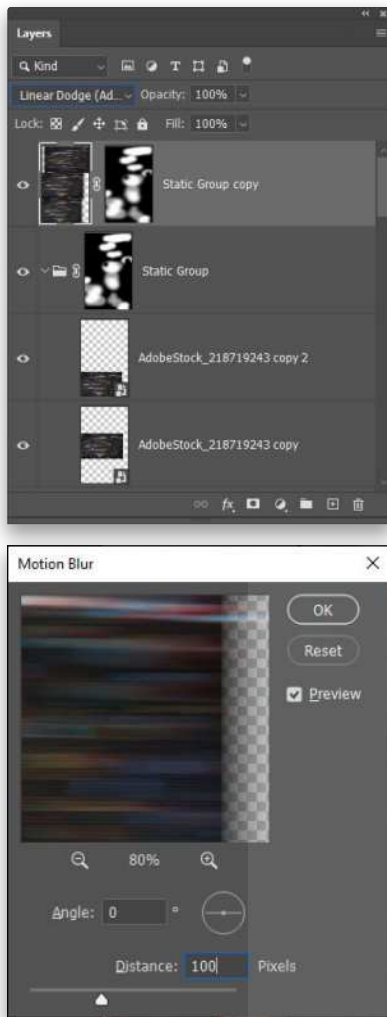
and black. Click OK to close the Gradient Editor, and then click OK to apply the Gradient Map.

Then add a Gradient Overlay layer style (Layer>Layer Style>Gradient Overlay) using another custom gradient this time with six color stops: magenta (#db13ff), midnight blue (#012445), royal blue (#045cb7), midnight blue again (#012445), bright green (#04cc62), and black. Click OK to close the Gradient Editor. Back in the Layer Style dialog, set the Blend Mode to Overlay, Opacity to 49%, Angle to 22°, and Scale to 129% before applying the layer style.

STEP 15: Now we're going to place another static texture Adobe Stock image into the composition ([click here](#) to download the preview image). Size this stock image down to be about 30% of the composition's size and press Enter. Press Command-J (PC: Ctrl-J) twice to duplicate the stock layer twice and use the Move tool (V) to position the three copies so most of the canvas is covered.

Then select all three stock layers in the Layers panel and press Command-G (PC: Ctrl-G) to group those all together. Name this group "Static Group," and set the group's blending mode to Linear Dodge. Add a black-filled layer mask to the group to hide the full effect. Use a white brush on the mask to reveal the effect in small areas of your choice.





STEP 16: Duplicate the group, right-click on the duplicate group, and select Merge Group from the context menu. Then apply the Motion Blur filter again with a Distance of 100 pixels. Click OK to add the final touch, completing the *WandaVision*-inspired magical transition effect.

Crafting a magical border barrier is a concept that may not come up very often. But learning how to use various filters, brushes, and effects in Photoshop is really the best takeaway from a project like this. It's all about finding new ways to apply the tools you have to create new and interesting effects. ■



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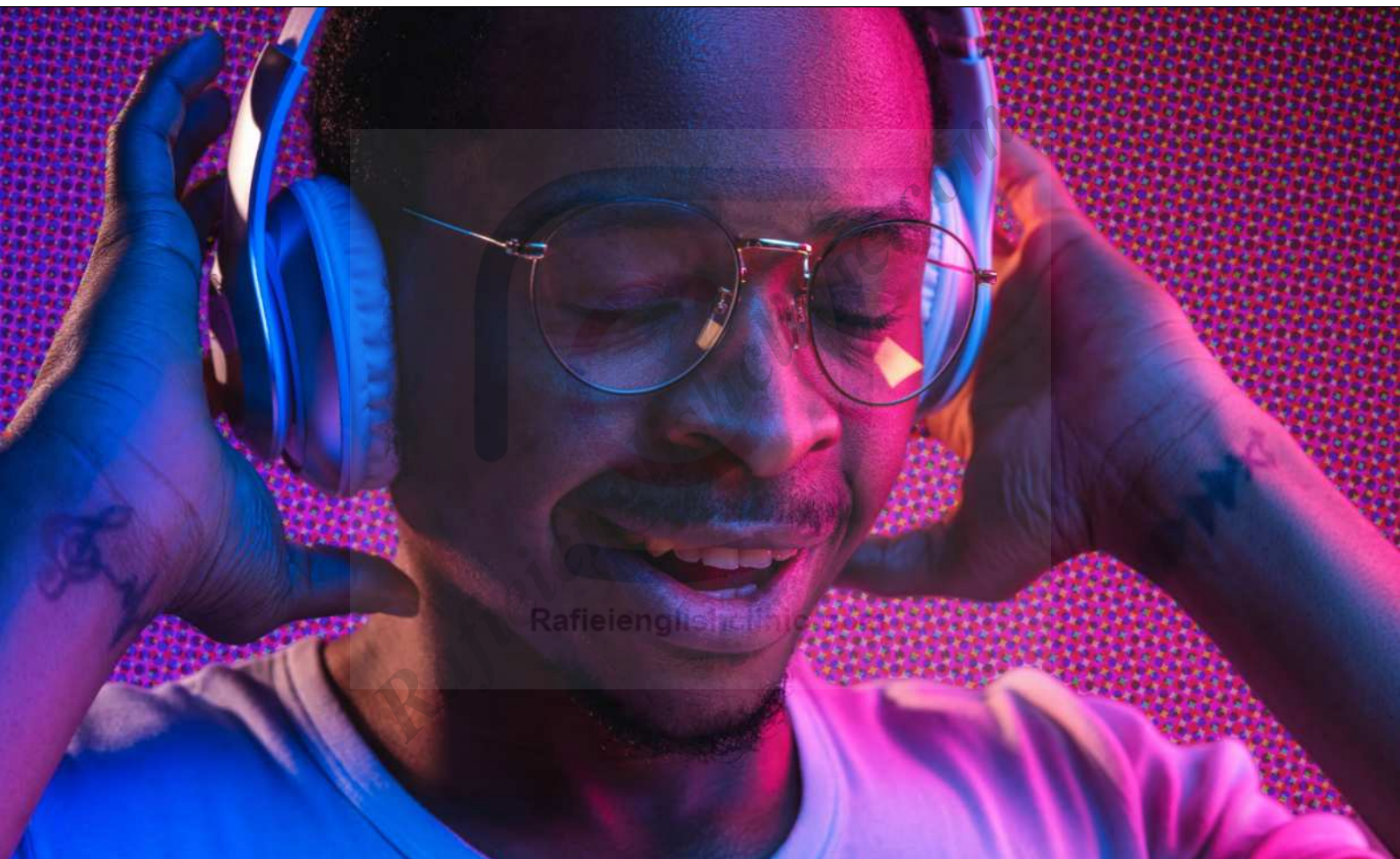
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CREATING A HALFTONE PATTERN

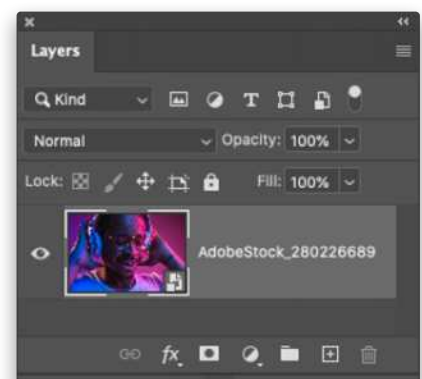
If you look closely at a professionally printed newspaper or magazine, you'll notice the images are made from millions of tiny dots (typically circles, but sometimes diamonds or squares). To prevent overlap, the dots are printed at specific angles according to ink color, creating a pattern called "halftone" (versus the "continuous tone" of an inkjet print). In this issue you'll learn two ways to create a halftone pattern for a pop-art feel.



CREATING A CMYK HALFTONE PATTERN

This method produces a multitude of cyan, magenta, yellow, and black dots offset at different angles, just like a commercial offset printing press would make.

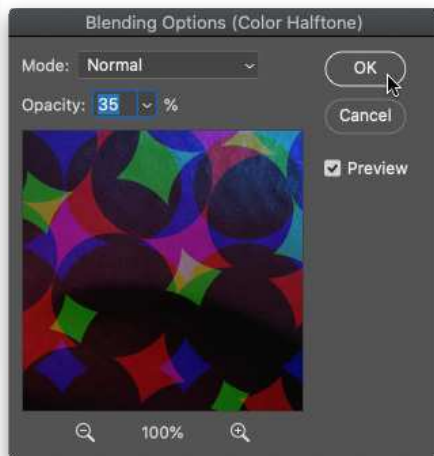
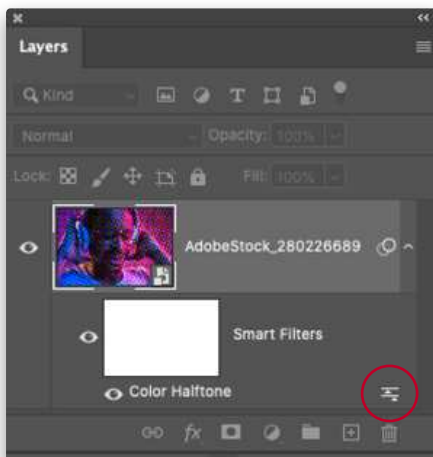
STEP ONE: In Photoshop, choose File>Open As Smart Object and navigate to the image you want to open. If you're starting in Lightroom, select a thumbnail in the Library module, and choose Photo>Edit In>Open as Smart Object in Photoshop. Alternatively, in Photoshop you can activate the image layer and choose Filter>Convert for Smart Filters. Either way, you're placing a protective wrapper around the image layer so the filter you'll run next happens to the wrapper and not the image.



©Adobe Stock/masler1305



Before



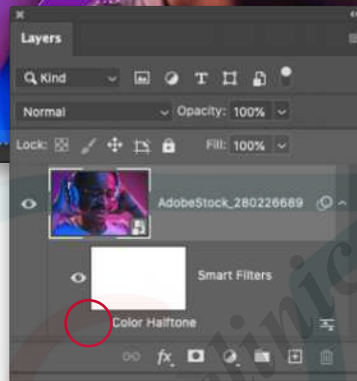
If you'd like to download the low-res watermarked version of this image to follow along, click [this link](#), log in with your Adobe ID, and click the Save to Library button. Right-click the image in the Libraries panel (Window>Libraries) and choose Edit to open it in Photoshop, and then convert it to a smart object as described above.

STEP TWO: Choose Filter>Pixelate>Color Halftone. In the dialog that opens, enter a Maximum Radius of 64 pixels (try 8 pixels on the Adobe preview image). Leave the Screen Angles at their default settings; these are the different print angles mentioned earlier. Click OK and Photoshop applies a color halftone pattern to the image.

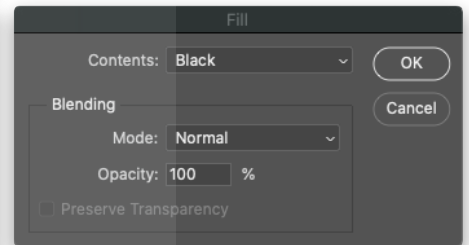
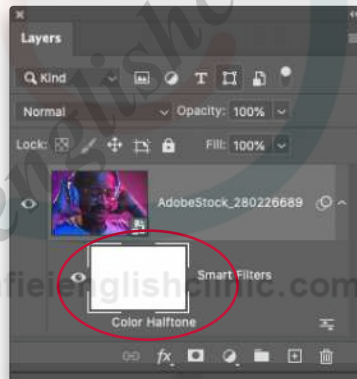
STEP THREE: To adjust opacity of the halftone filter, double-click the blending options icon to the right of the filter in your Layers panel (circled). In the Blending Options dialog that opens, you can see a close-up of the halftone pattern in the preview box. In the Opacity field, enter 35% and click OK.

Tip: Because you ran the filter on a smart object (i.e., you used smart filters), you can go back and tweak the filter settings at any time. Simply double-click the filter name in the Layers panel to reopen the Color Halftone dialog and adjust the radius.

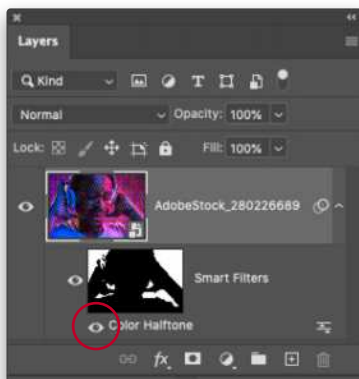
STEP FOUR: To apply the halftone pattern only to the background, use the filter mask that Photoshop automatically made when you ran the filter. You can make a selection before or after running the filter, so let's do the latter. Turn off the visibility Eye for the Color Halftone filter (the area where it used to be is circled here) in the Layers panel to temporarily hide it, and then choose Select>Subject.

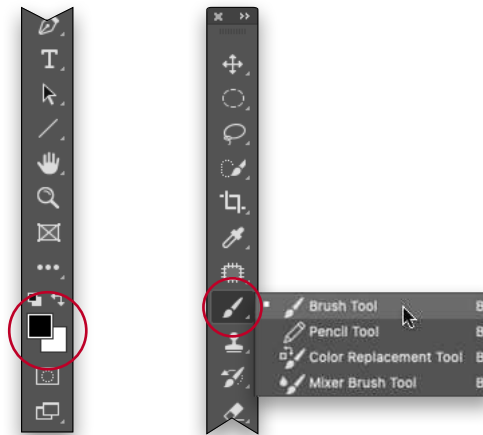
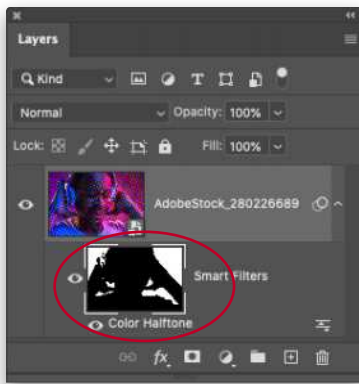


STEP FIVE: Click the filter mask thumbnail in your Layers panel (circled); white brackets will appear around its corners. In the realm of masking, black conceals and white reveals. To hide the filter from the selected area, we need to fill it with black. To do that, choose Edit>Fill. In the dialog that opens, set the Contents drop-down menu to Black and make sure Mode is Normal and Opacity is 100%. Click OK.



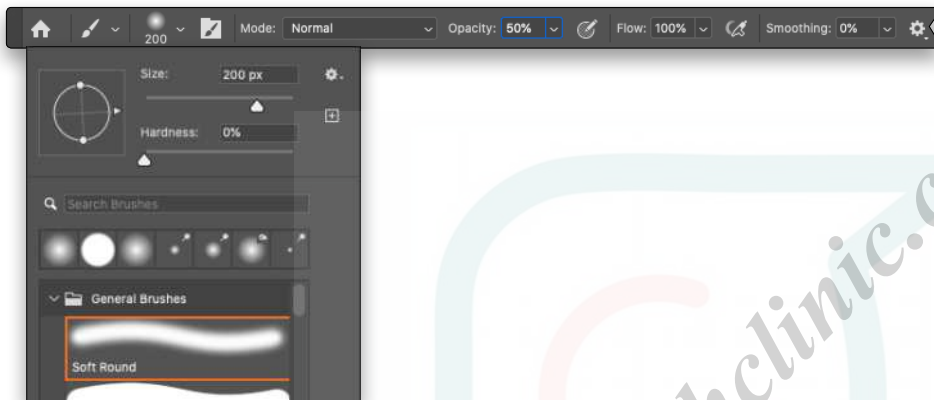
STEP SIX: Choose Select>Deselect or press Command-D (PC: Ctrl-D) to get rid of the selection (marching ants). Turn on the visibility of the Color Halftone filter in your Layers panel by clicking the empty spot to the left of the filter's name (circled).



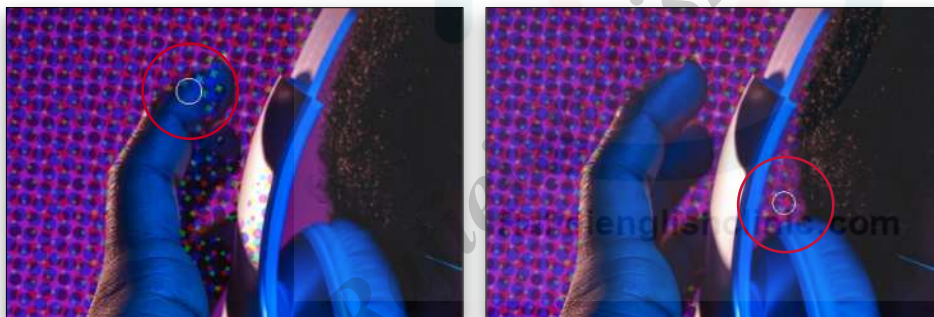


STEP SEVEN: Let's refine the filter mask. Start by activating the filter mask again in the Layers panel (circled).

STEP EIGHT: Take a peek at the color chips at the bottom of your Toolbar (circled) and press the D key on your keyboard to set them to the default of black and white. Remember the rhyme, "black conceals and white reveals." Since we need to hide the filter from his hand at the upper left, press the X key to flip-flop your color-chips so that black is on top.



STEP NINE: Grab the Brush tool (B) in the Toolbar (circled) and in the Options Bar, use the Brush Preset Picker to choose a Soft Round brush that's slightly smaller than the area you need to hide (200 px was used here; try 40 px on the Adobe preview image).



STEP 10: Paint across the area where you need to hide the filter with black (left image). To reveal the filter, press X on your keyboard to flip-flop your color chips so white is on top and then paint across that area. In this example, that's the area just above the earphone (right image). In the Adobe preview image, you may need to reveal the pattern between his left hand and face, as well. Adjust brush size as necessary as you go. *Tip:* Use the Bracket keys ([]) on your keyboard to quickly adjust the size of the brush.



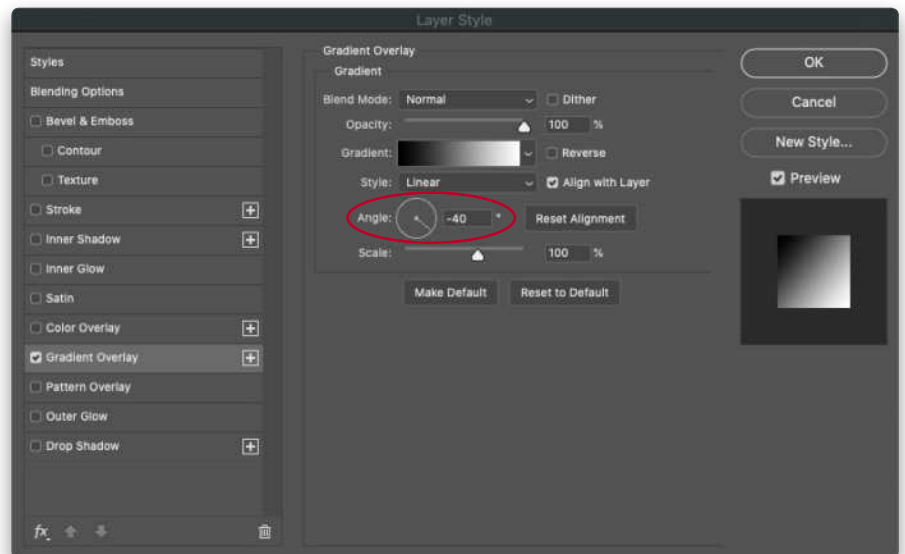
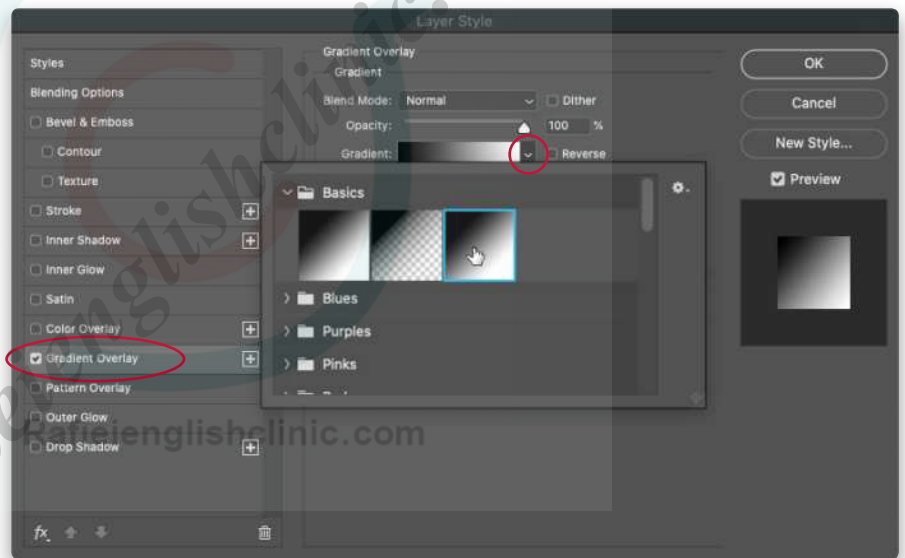
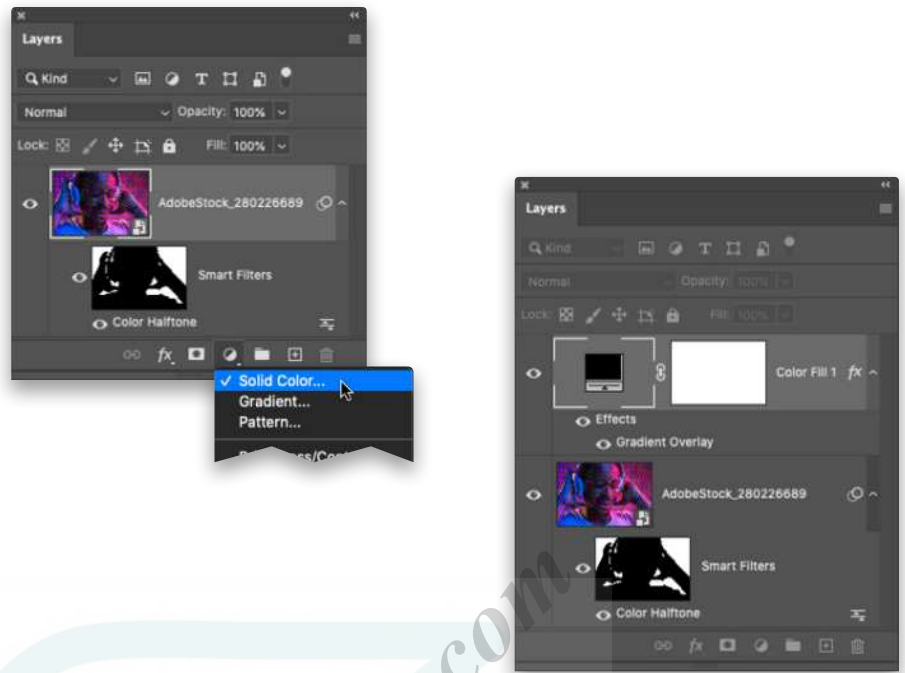
As you can see, the half-tone pattern added some nice energy to the finished piece.

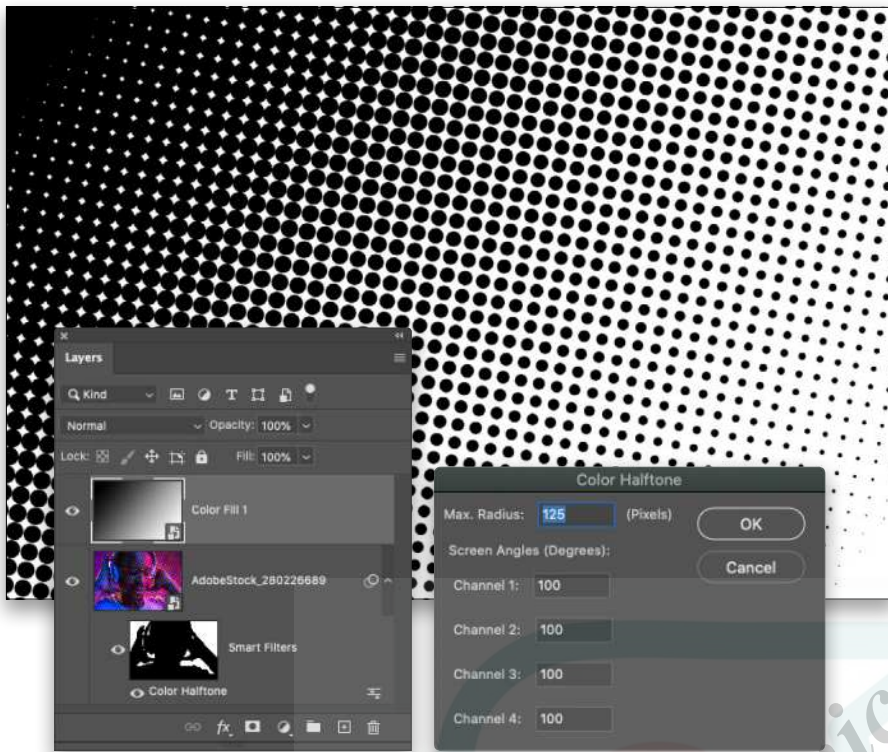
CREATING A TWO-TONE HALFTONE PATTERN

This method produces a pattern of solid black dots that you colorize yourself: you'll pick one color for the dots and another color for the background. Using adjustment layers in conjunction with the Color Halftone filter makes this technique a snap.

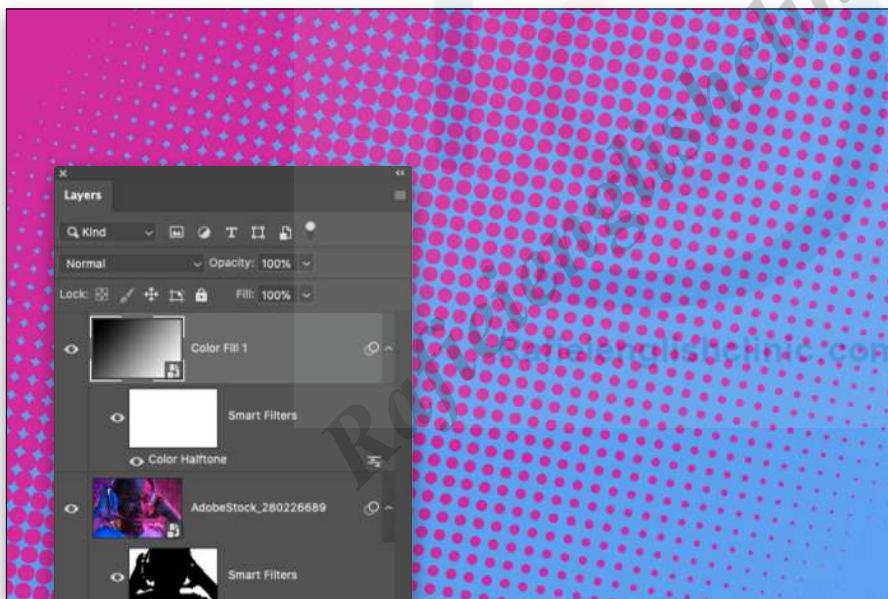
STEP ONE: Click the half-black/half-white circle at the bottom of the Layers panel and choose Solid Color. When the Color Picker opens, click OK. It doesn't matter what color the layer is because we'll add color in the next step.

STEP TWO: Double-click below or to the right of the Color Fill 1 layer's name to open the Layer Style dialog. Click Gradient Overlay (circled) in the list on the left, and set the Blend Mode to Normal and the Opacity to 100%. Click the down-pointing triangle next to the Gradient preview (also circled) to open the Gradient Picker and, from the Basics folder, choose the Black, White preset. Click the same triangle to close the preview panel. Now set the Style to Linear and the Angle (circled) to reflect the direction of your halftone dots (-40° was used here). Set the Scale to 100% and click OK.

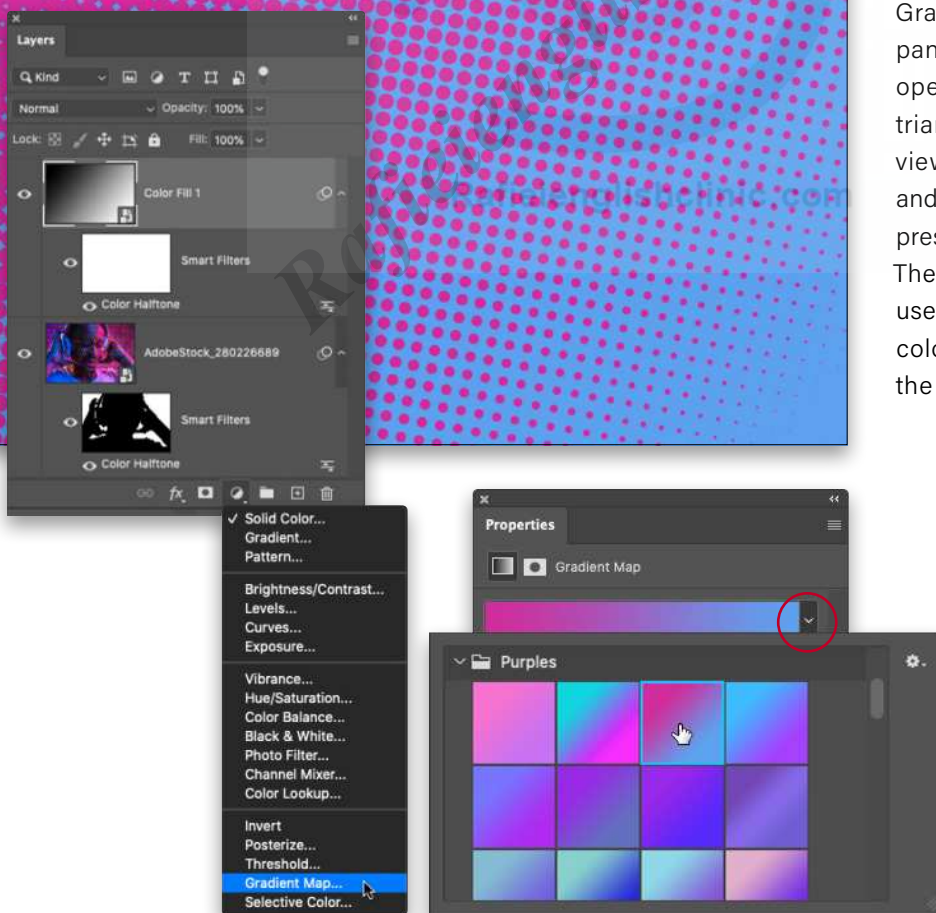




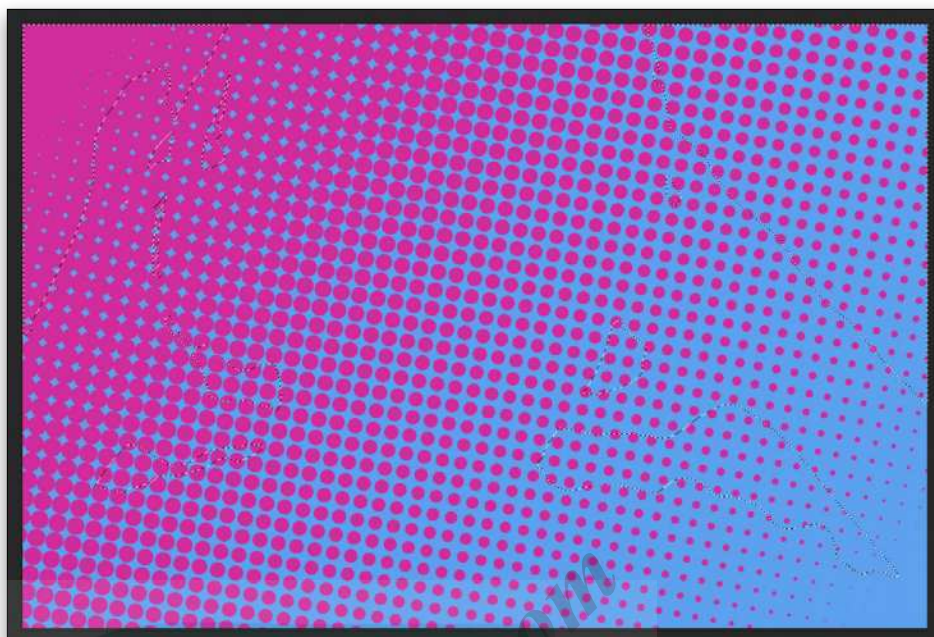
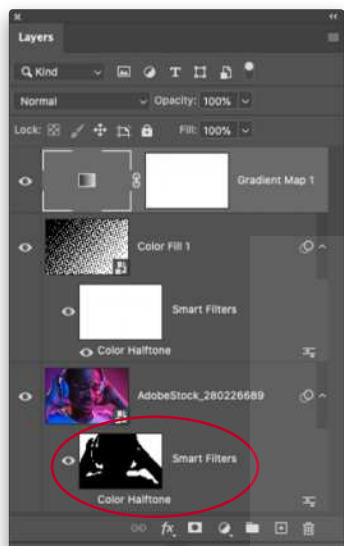
STEP THREE: Choose Filter>Convert for Smart Filters to turn the Color Fill 1 layer into a smart object. Now choose Filter>Pixelate>Color Halftone. In the dialog that opens, enter a radius of 125 pixels (for big dots!) and then set all four Channel fields to 100 to produce overlapping and thus solid color dots (try a radius of 15 pixels on the Adobe preview image). Click OK. Notice the angle of the pattern matches the angle you set in the previous step.



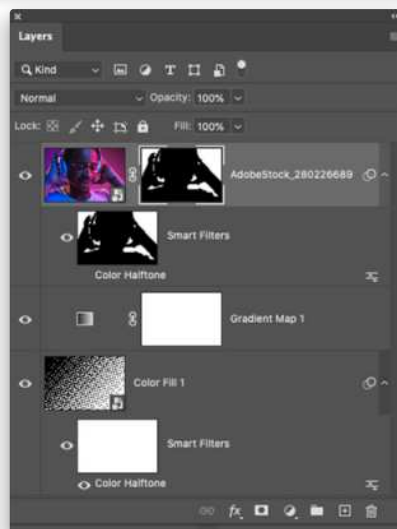
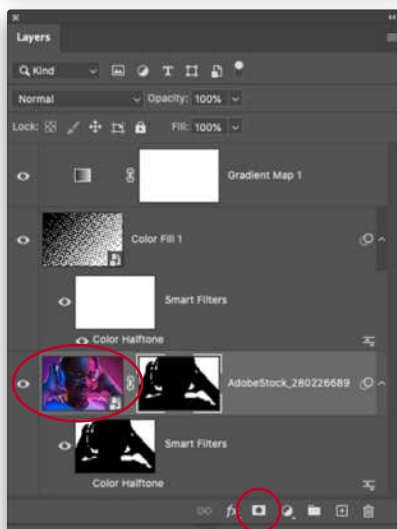
STEP FOUR: Now let's colorize the new pattern. Click the half-black/half-white circle at the bottom of the Layers panel again and choose Gradient Map. In the Properties panel (Window>Properties) that opens, click the down-pointing triangle next to the Gradient preview to open the Gradient Picker and, from the Purples folder, pick a preset (Purple_03 was used here). The first color in the gradient is used for the dots and the second color in the gradient is used for the background.

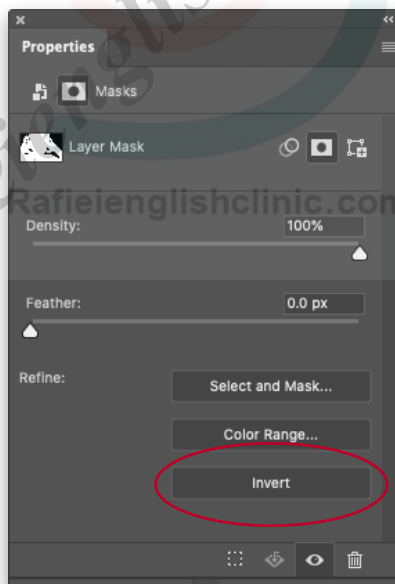
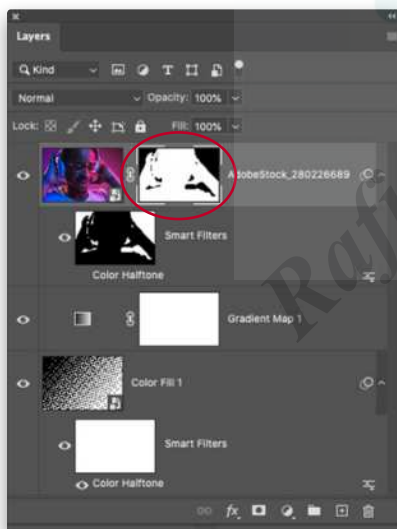


STEP FIVE: Turn off the visibility Eye on the first Color Halftone filter you made. Now Command-click (PC: Ctrl-click) the filter mask thumbnail (circled) to create a selection of the filter mask we made earlier. You should see marching ants atop the pattern.



STEP SIX: Click the image thumbnail (circled) and then click the circle-within-a-square icon at the bottom of the Layers panel to add a layer mask. Photoshop will use your selection to create the mask. Click the top layer, Gradient Map 1, and Shift-click the second layer, Color Fill 1, to activate them both, and then drag them down beneath the image layer to the bottom of the layer stack.





STEP SEVEN: Since black conceals and white reveals, we need to flip-flop the colors in the layer mask you just made. That way you conceal the background and reveal the area inside the selection. To do that, double-click the layer mask (circled) and, in the Properties panel that opens, click the Invert button (also circled).

Remember, you can double-click the filter's name in the Layers panel to reopen the Color Halftone filter and tweak the Radius. You can also double-click the Gradient Map adjustment layer and fiddle with different gradient presets. Until next time, may the creative force be with you all! ■

 Questions & Comments



A HELPING HAND WITH COMPOSITES

Self-portraiture has always been a form of expression for me, as well as a way to learn, practice, experiment, and test new techniques. Nowadays, people want to feel a personal connection with brands or the person who's selling a product to them. Self-portraiture has been my tool of choice when it comes to building my personal brand. It also allows me to share my photography and retouching style with complete freedom.



For this article, I created a series of simple self-portrait composites. I'll show you every step of my workflow: how to shoot, put together, and retouch a simple composite series that will catch your audience's eye.

PLANING A COLOR PALETTE

The planning of a conceptual photoshoot is just as crucial as the photoshoot itself and the retouching. Making mistakes at the planning stage can cost you hours of retouching or even ruin the project altogether. My best advice is to pick a color palette in advance to make sure the colors on your final image don't clash.





TIPS FOR SHOOTING IMAGES FOR COMPOSITES

When shooting for composites, use the same camera settings for all the shots: Don't zoom in or out and don't change the aperture, shutter speed, or ISO. Shoot every element (in this case, the hands wearing different colored gloves and holding phones of various colors) with the same quality and direction of light. If you're shooting with artificial light, don't change the settings or move the light. If you're shooting with natural light, try to shoot at the same time of day, and pay attention to the direction and quality (harsh/soft) of light. All that will make things easier when it's time to put all the layers together in Photoshop.

STEP ONE: OPEN IMAGES AS LAYERS IN PHOTOSHOP

If you're coming from Lightroom, Command-click (PC: Ctrl-Click) to select all the pictures you want to use in the composite, and go to Photo>Edit In>Open as Layers in Photoshop. If you're starting in Photoshop, go to File>Scripts>Load Files into Stack, click the Browse button, select all your images for your composite, click Open, and click OK in the Load Layers dialog. Either way, you'll end up with a single file in Photoshop with each image on its own layer.

STEP TWO: ORGANIZE LAYERS

When creating these kinds of composites, you want to place your plate image at the bottom of the layer stack. In this case, the plate image is my self portrait. Option-click (PC: Alt-click) the Eye icon of the plate image in the Layers panel to hide all the other layers in the layer stack for now.

STEP THREE: EXTEND THE CANVAS

I noticed that I shot the image very tight and didn't have much space to add all the hands with the phones. A simple trick to fix that is to grab the Crop tool (C) and extend the canvas a little. In this case, I decided to crop the image square, and I extended the crop boundary a few pixels beyond the left and right edges of the canvas. Press Enter to commit the crop. This will leave you with empty pixels to either side of the image.



STEP FOUR: FILL THE EMPTY PIXELS AFTER CROPPING

To fill the empty pixels, you can use different tricks such as the Clone Stamp tool (S), Content-Aware Fill or, since this was shot on a solid color backdrop, the easiest one, Liquify! Just go to Filter>Liquify, and use the Forward Warp tool (W) to drag areas of color to the edges of the image to fill the empty pixels. You can use the Bracket keys ([]) on your keyboard to change the size of the brush as needed. [For more on Liquify, check out the feature article in this issue on page 74.—Ed.]



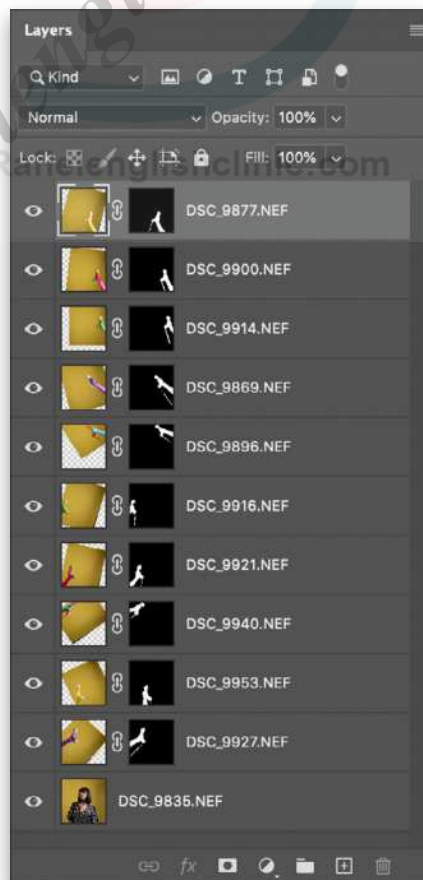


STEP FIVE: ROUGHLY PUT TOGETHER THE COMPOSITE

The next step is to create rough layer masks to visualize how the final composite will look. Don't worry about perfect edges at this stage; you don't want to waste time making perfect masks only to find out the pictures you selected don't go well together.

I usually use the Quick Selection tool (nested below the Object Selection tool [W] in the Toolbar) to create a selection first without refining the edges or making any changes to the selections. Start by making the first layer visible above the plate layer by clicking where its Eye icon should be, and then click on the layer in the Layers panel to make it active. Make your rough selection, and then click the Add Layer Mask icon (circle in a square) at the bottom of the Layers panel. Photoshop will use the selection to create the mask, hiding everything on that layer except for what was selected. Repeat this process for each layer.

Once you've made all of your selections and created the masks, it's time to use Free Transform (Command-T [PC: Ctrl-T]) to place, resize, and rotate all the elements into position. This process may take a lot of moving around while you experiment. Once everything is placed where it's supposed to be, you can move on to cleaning up the layer masks.



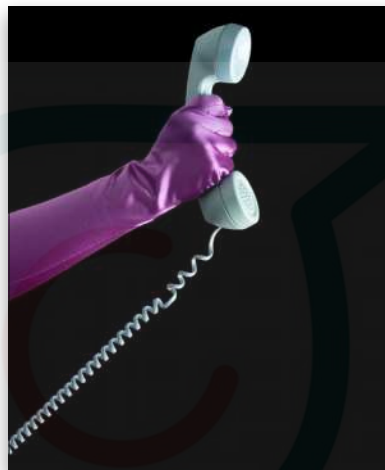
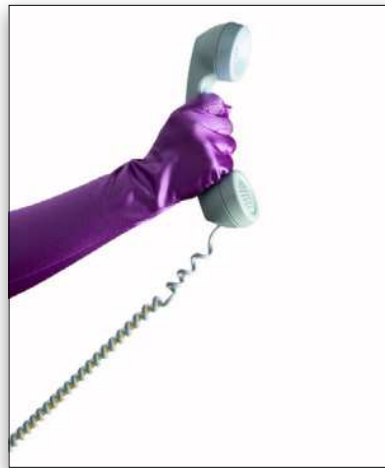
STEP SIX: REFINE THE LAYER MASKS

A good practice when putting composites together is cleaning up each mask individually.

A trick I use when refining masks is to add a white Solid Color fill layer (Layer>New Fill Layer>Solid Color) and a black Solid Color fill layer below the layer I'm cleaning, and turning off all the other layers above. Make sure to toggle the visibility between these two Color Fill layers to spot any dark or light edges.

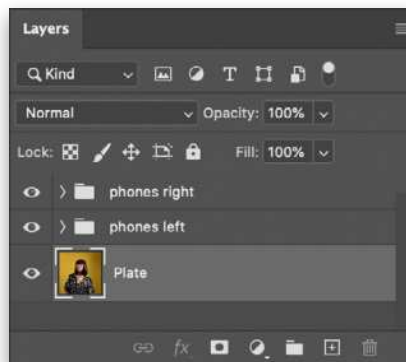
In this case, I don't mind seeing a yellow cast on the parts of the layers that are against the backdrop because I intentionally shot these images on the same background and environment as the plate image. But in the areas where the phones, gloves, or phone cords are against the polka-dotted shirt, the edges need to be nice and clean. To edit a mask, use the Brush tool (B) set to black to hide areas, and white to reveal areas.

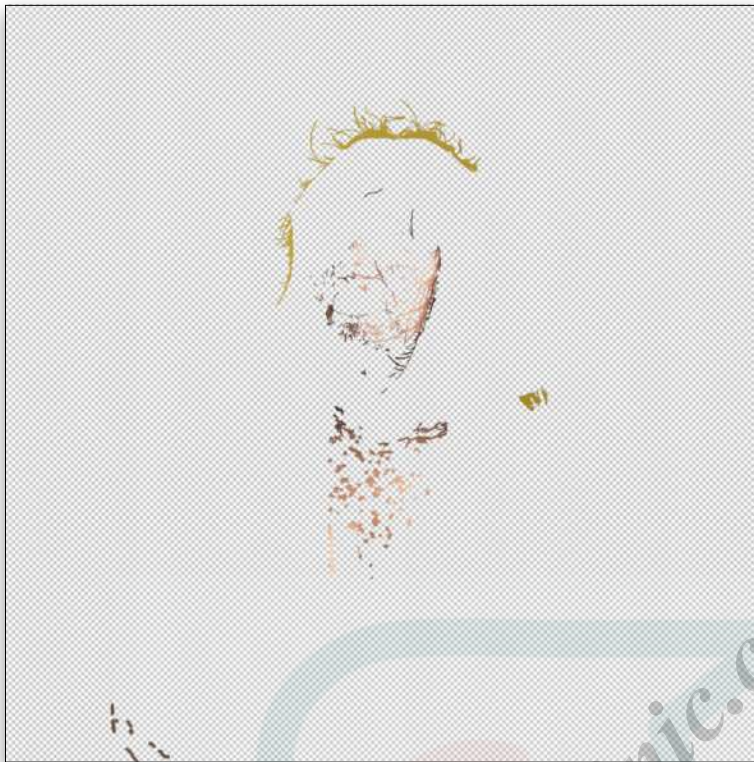
When you're shooting images for a composite on different colored backgrounds or environments, make sure to view your selections on those white and black Color Fill layers to spot color casts and edge nuances. When you're done cleaning up the masks, you can delete the white and black Color Fill layers.



STEP SEVEN: KEEP YOUR LAYERS PANEL TIDY

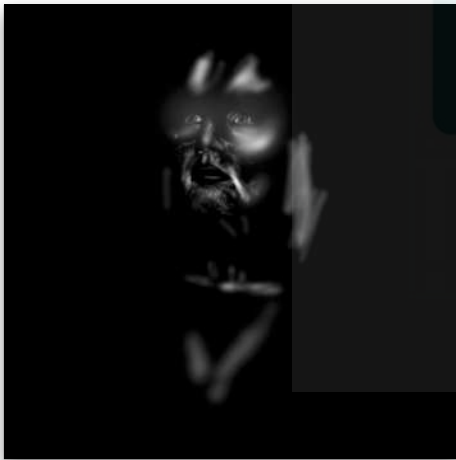
The key to saving a huge amount of time when you're retouching is to organize layers into groups and rename them. To rename layers and groups, just double-click their names in the Layers panel. To create groups, either Shift-click to select contiguous layers, or Command-click (PC: Ctrl-click) to select noncontiguous layers, and then click the Create a New Group icon (folder) at the bottom of the Layers panel, or press Command-G (PC: Ctrl-G). You can always drag-and-drop layers into a group after it's been created, as well.





**STEP EIGHT:
SKIN CLEANUP**

Always retouch the subject separately from the other layers. I do that by adding a blank layer on top of the plate layer and using the Healing Brush tool (nested below the Spot Healing Brush tool [J]) and the Clone Stamp tool (S). Ensure that for both tools you set the Sample drop-down menu in the Options Bar to Current & Below. Then, just Option-click (PC: Alt-click) to select the area from which you wish to sample, and paint over the area that you either want to heal or clone. The difference is that the Healing Brush tool blends in the sample area with the area you're healing, while the Clone tool just replaces the clone area with the sample area.



Areas that have been dodged



Areas that have been burned

**STEP NINE:
DODGE AND BURN**

If there's one technique every photographer needs to master, it's dodge and burn! You can completely transform an image just by darkening and lightening areas. When it comes to dodging and burning, my rule of thumb is to use a soft brush at 100% Opacity and 1% Flow in the Options Bar and work gradually. Make sure to zoom in and out to check your work because it's easy to get carried away! [For more on dodging and burning, [click here](#).—Ed.]



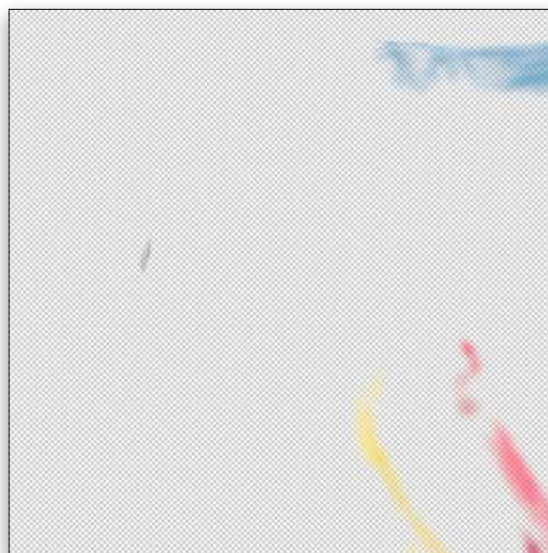
Before dodge and burn



After dodge and burn

STEP 10: CLEAN UP THE HANDS AND PHONES

Now it's time to clean up the hands and phones. You can use the same technique we used to clean up the skin in Step Eight: Add a blank layer above the phones' layer groups and use the Healing Brush and Clone Stamp tools set to Sample Current & Below in the Options Bar to clean up the gloves and phones.



Step 11

STEP 11: FREQUENCY SEPARATION FOR RETOUCHING HIGHLIGHTS IN THE GLOVES

Frequency separation is one of the most useful techniques in Photoshop, not only for retouching skin but also retouching just about anything in a photo. One of my favorite ways to use it is by creating a blank layer between the high- and low-frequency layers to fix the image's colors. If you're not familiar with frequency separation, it allows you to separate the picture's texture (high frequency) and its color/tones (low frequency) into different layers.

For example, I wanted to take care of the very bright highlights on some of the gloves. So starting with the pink glove on the right, I selected a soft brush at 100% Opacity and 3% Flow, and then Option-clicked (PC: Alt-clicked) on a dark area of the pink glove to sample that color. I then brushed with that color on the highlights. The gloves' texture is intact because the high-frequency layer that contains the texture is placed above the blank layer on which I'm painting. You can easily use this technique to fix color nuances in any photograph. [For more on frequency separation, check out Kristina Sherk's course, [High-End Skin Retouching in Photoshop](#), as well as her Photoshop User article on "[Frequency Separation for Clothing Wrinkles](#)."—Ed.]



Before frequency separation



After frequency separation



Before Selective Color



After Selective Color

STEP 12: SELECTIVE COLOR ADJUSTMENT LAYERS

Selective Color adjustment layers (Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Selective Color) are the Pixie Fairies of color. You can use them to precisely change colors on a picture, including bringing out specific colors, muting colors, or color-grading the image.

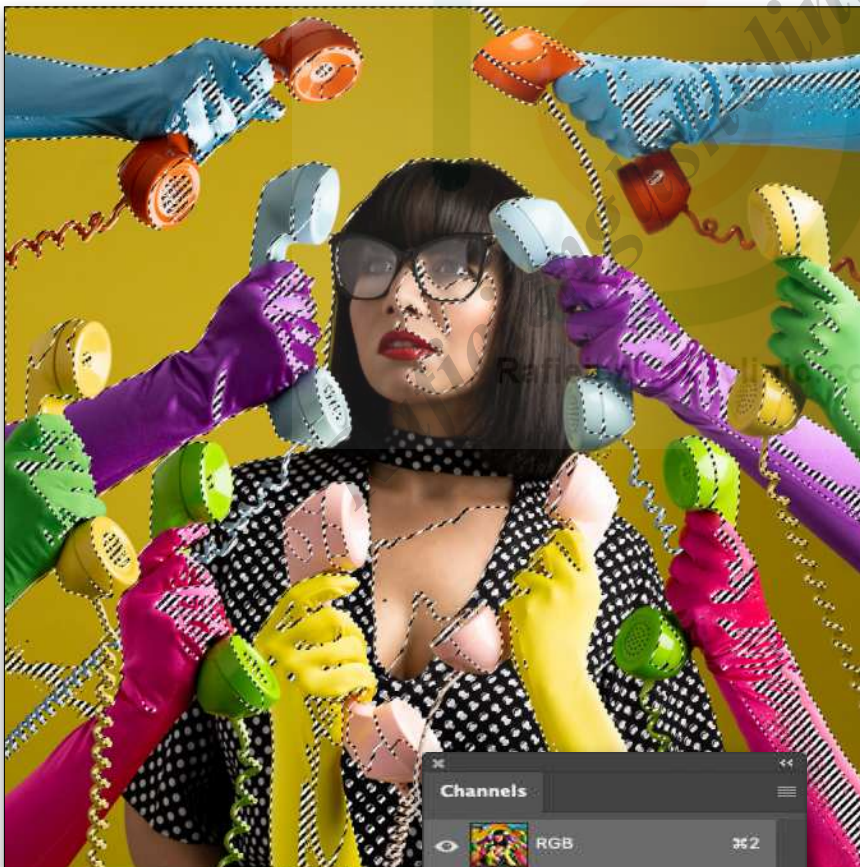
This process consists of moving every slider under every color in the Colors drop-down menu in the Properties panel (Window>Properties) until you find the sweet spot. There's no formula to it: every picture is different. You just have to play around and trust your eye and creativity.

STEP 13: USE A LUMINOSITY MASK TO FIX BRIGHT AREAS

You've probably heard about luminosity masks being used by landscape photographers, but did you know that you can use them for all types of photos? Here I'll show you the easiest and fastest way to use a luminosity mask, but know that you can make lots of them to target different areas of light and shadows in an image. For this article, we'll keep things simple.

Go to the Channels panel (Window>Channels) and Command-click (PC: Ctrl-click) on the RGB thumbnail. Marching ants will appear around the brightest areas of your image.

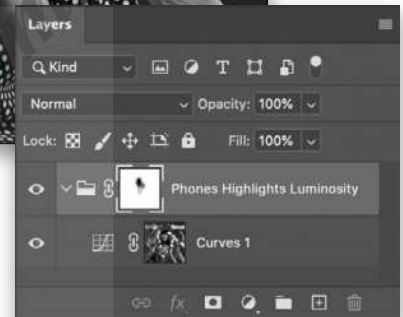
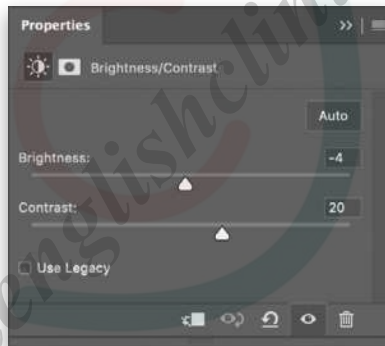
With the selection active, go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Curves. The selection will load as a layer mask in the Layers panel. Below is what the mask looks like in my image (see next page). To see the mask in your image, Option-click (PC: Alt-click) the layer mask thumbnail in the Layers panel; Option-click (PC: Alt-click) it again to return to the color image.



Now, with that layer mask targeting the bright pixels of the image, drag down the brights on the Curves adjustment layer (the upper portion of the curve in the Properties panel). In this example, I want to preserve the highlights on my face, but if I brush directly on the luminosity mask on the Curves adjustment layer, I'll ruin the mask. So the best way to brush out the effect from my face is to put the Curves adjustment layer with its luminosity mask into its own layer group, add a mask to the group, and brush the effect off my face with the Brush tool set to black. [To learn more about luminosity masks, [click here](#).—Ed.]

STEP 14: BRIGHTNESS AND CONTRAST ON THE FACE

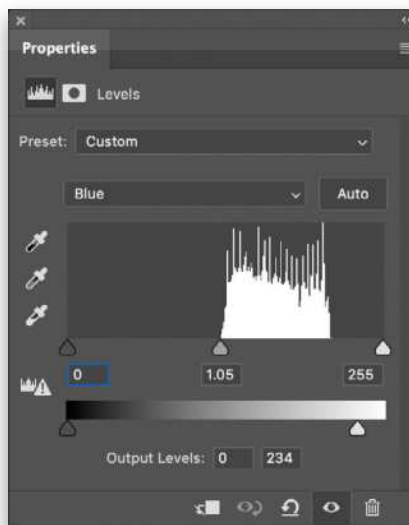
I wanted to add a little bit of punch to the face (no pun intended), so I added a Brightness/Contrast adjustment layer, lowered the Brightness to -4 and raised the Contrast to 20 in the Properties panel. I only wanted the effect on the face, so I pressed Command-I (PC: Ctrl-I) to invert the mask from white to black, which hides the entire effect, and then brushed in the effect with a soft white brush.



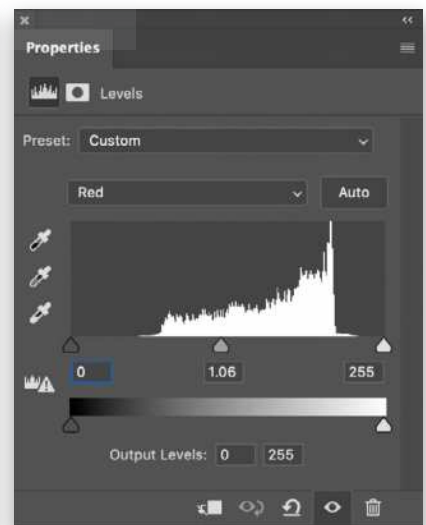
STEP 15: USE LUMINOSITY MASKS TO COLOR GRADE

Using luminosity layer masks when color grading gives you more control of how the tones affect the image's different brightness levels. I recommend you color grade an image in two different layers, one with a luminosity mask and one without. You'll easily see how the tones blend seamlessly and nicely with the luminosity mask compared to the layer without the mask.

Here's a trick that will help save you time when using luminosity masks: Once you've made your first mask, instead of going back to the Channels panel and loading a selection for each adjustment layer, first add the adjustment layer you want to use, and then



Levels layer adding yellow to whites



Levels layer adding red to midtones



Final image



ALL IMAGES BY GILMAR SMITH

Option-drag (PC: Alt-drag) the thumbnail of the existing luminosity mask onto the layer where you want to use it. Photoshop will ask if you want to replace the layer mask. Click Yes to copy the mask to the new layer.

So in this case, for example, I added a Levels adjustment layer on top of the layer stack, and then Option-dragged (PC: Alt-dragged) the luminosity mask from the Curves adjustment layer to the Levels adjustment layer to copy the mask. Then I made my color-grading adjustments, adding yellows to the whites and a tiny bit of red to the midtones as shown on the bottom of the previous page.

Once you create the first image in a series, doing the rest of them is a piece of cake because it's just repeating the exact same steps when putting together the composite and making color adjustments. ■

Questions & Comments



GETTING CREATIVE WITH THE DIFFERENCE BLENDING MODE

It's often worthwhile to take a look at and explore tools that don't get much attention. This month, I want to take the Difference blending mode out to the "Proving Ground" and show off some of its potential.



©Adobe Stock/oneinchpunch

Difference blending mode uses a simple mathematical formula that returns the absolute value of the difference between two pixel color values. Let's take an example of two gray layers: the top is RGB (128, 128, 128), and the lower is RGB (51, 51, 51). The difference between these values is $128 - 51 = 77$, or RGB (77, 77, 77). When these layers are swapped so that the darker gray is on top, we still get the same result. This is different from Subtract

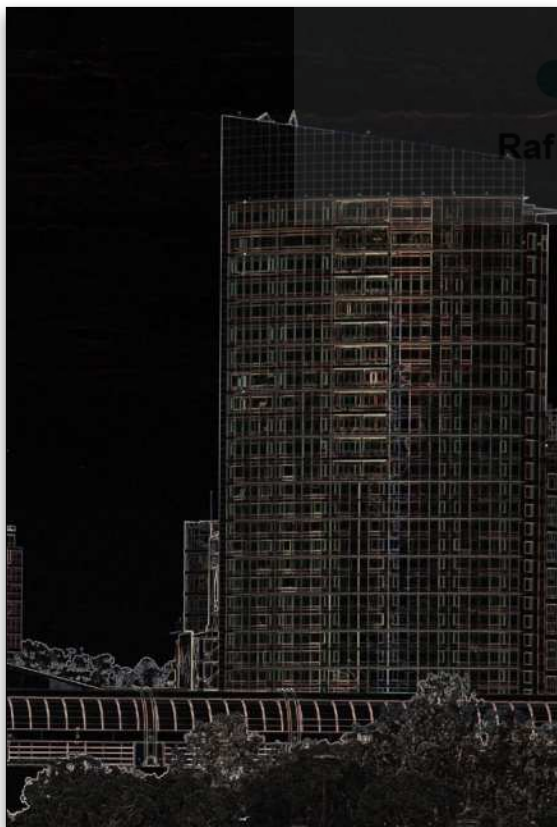
blending mode, which would give $51 - 128 = -77$. But in Photoshop's world, you can't get darker than 0 or full black, so any negative result gets clipped.

Traditionally, Difference blending is used to align layers for compositing, such as stitching together screenshots when you can't get everything in one pass, and often when stacking astrophotography layers. The idea is that there's no difference between identical elements, so you can use

Scott Valentine



Result of Find Edges on San Diego Bay image



Result of inverting Find Edges

those points for alignment. In these cases, you usually switch back to the Normal blending mode after you align the layers.

DIFFERENCE FOR CONTRAST

But there are a few other uses that are a little less obvious. A quick way to increase edge contrast in hazy images, for example, is to duplicate the photo layer (Command-J [PC: Ctrl-J]), then apply the Find Edges filter (Filter>Stylize>Find edges).

From here, press Command-I (PC: Ctrl-I) to invert the filtered copy.

Finally, set the copied layer's blending mode to Difference. Lower the Opacity to 0%, then slowly bring it back up until you get contrast in areas of interest. Use a layer mask to hide the effect where you don't want it.



Before



After

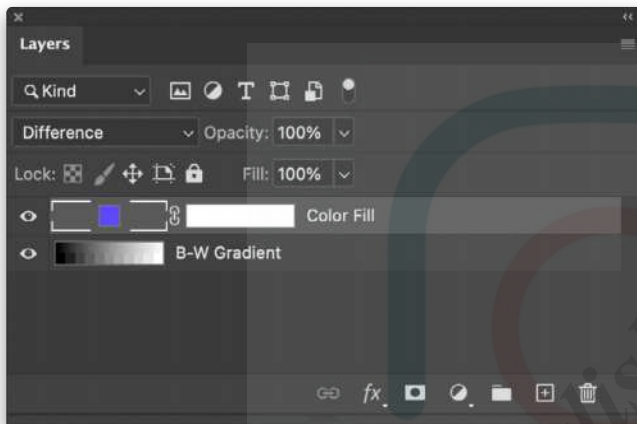
Notice that Difference has no effect where the blend layer is black. That's because black is zero in RGB, and subtracting zero doesn't change anything. Everything else gets blended with the base layer, increasing contrast along the edges. As mentioned, the Opacity of the Difference layer controls the strength of the effect.

DIFFERENCE FOR COLOR

Let's move into a more practical and creative use of Difference: color! First, we need to take a look at a more concrete example of what Difference actually does. In this image, the bottom layer is a black-to-white gradient for reference, with a Solid Color fill layer (Layer>New Fill Layer>Solid Color) above that (KelbyOne members can download a copy of this file by clicking [here](#)).

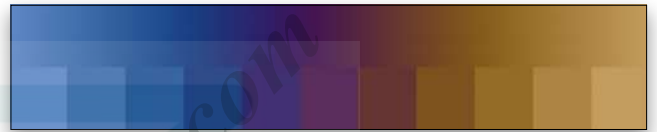


Gradient with Color Fill layer turned off



Layer stack

When you set the Color Fill layer to Difference blending mode, it suddenly becomes a range that turns out to be a suite of complementary pairs. In the example image shown here, the solid fill color is R: 63, G: 117, and B: 190. Notice that where it's black (R: 0, G: 0, B: 0) on the left side of the gradient, nothing changes; you see the original blue color of the Color Fill layer. Blending with white (R: 255, G: 255, B: 255) on the opposite end of the gradient creates an inversion, and the result there is R: 192, G: 138, and B: 65. Each of the other gray values are similarly paired up, creating color inversions for each set of two moving in from the ends.



Result of Color Fill layer set to Difference above gradient layer

There are two really useful ideas that come from this result: we can easily create a complementary color palette; and we can apply the results to photos. Here's an example of placing the Color Fill layer (set to Difference blending mode) above a desaturated photo to add mystery and drama.

©Adobe Stock/andreiu88



Before



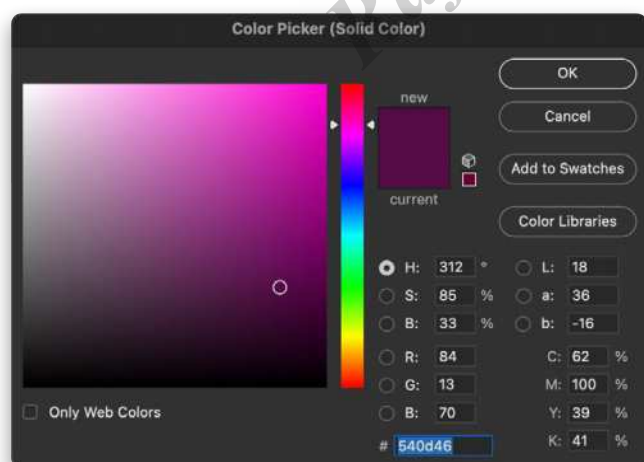
After adding Color Fill layer set to Difference

The color fill is a deep plum (R: 64, G: 11, B: 62). Again, the black areas take on the fill color directly, while the lighter shades take on the inverse color. Built-in color harmony! This technique tends to work best on images that have low saturation but high contrast in large features. When you apply this trick to color images, the results can be unexpected—which isn't always a bad thing. It's just more difficult to control. To preserve the duotone effect with complementary colors, work with a gray or very desaturated image.

Tip: You may find it necessary to add a Black & White or Hue/Saturation adjustment layer between your photo and Color Fill layer. This will help you control any odd or unexpected color conversions by first letting you create a black-and-white version of your image.

To start your fine-tuning, double-click on the Color Fill layer thumbnail to open the Color Picker so you can adjust the color settings. You're going to work with the HSB set of controls for this part. Start with relatively dark, saturated colors so that the dark areas stay dark. Click the radio button next to (H)ue and start adjusting the vertical color slider to find a general range you like. While you can click in the Color Picker area directly, I find that this particular technique is best approached by changing only one parameter at a time.

When you have the basic colors you want, choose the (S)aturation radio button and make further adjustments. Finally, move to the (B)rightness control and fine-tune if necessary.



Color Picker dialog

At this point you should have a reasonably good idea of the color range, so close the Color Picker and reduce the Fill slider in the Layers panel to decrease the effect.

If you find you still want some blacks to show through, use Blend If on the Color Fill layer: double-click to the right of the layer's name to open the Layer Style dialog, and drag the Underlying Layer black slider a little to the right. Hold Option (PC: Alt) and click on the slider to "split" it and drag each half for a graded transition from black to color.

EXPERIMENTING WITH DIFFERENT TYPES OF IMAGES

The same technique can be used with portraits, although I find that even more restraint is necessary to keep things from getting muddy and unappealing. In this Adobe Stock image, I needed both Black & White and Curves adjustment layers below the Color Fill layer to control saturation and contrast.



After

©Adobe Stock/master1305

Of course, nothing says you have to stick with classical color toning. You could use bright, vibrant colors to create some eye-catching graphic looks.



©Adobe Stock/ksiantyn

Before



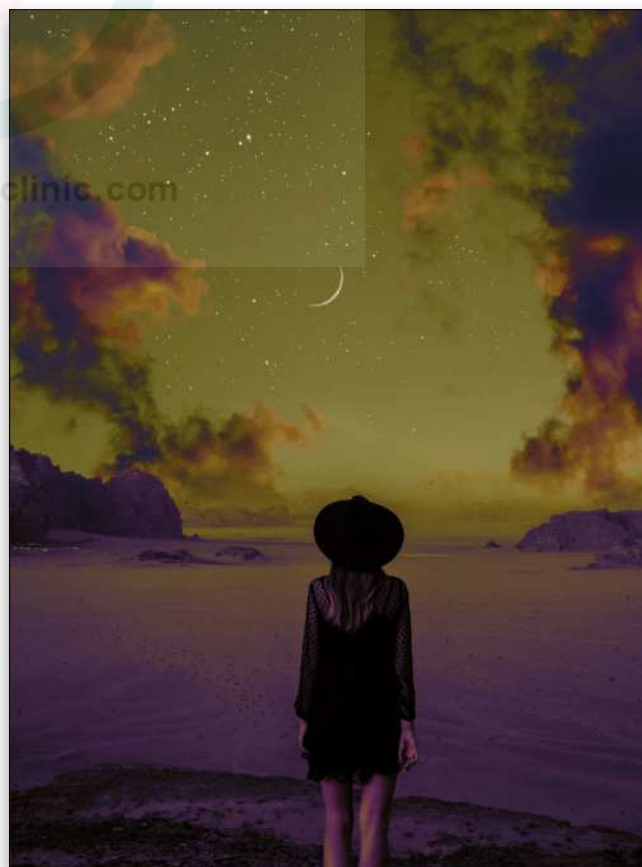
After

Here are a couple more examples showing the flexibility of using Difference blending with a solid color.

©Adobe Stock/Mapria Пороковееа



Before



After



Before



After

© Adobe Stock/ryland21

CREATING COMPLEMENTARY COLORS

I mentioned earlier that you can also use this trick to generate complementary color palettes. Using the provided PSD file, simply choose different colors for the Color Fill layer following the same method above: Select your Hue, then adjust Saturation and Brightness. You can also create pastel colors this way by lowering Fill.



Three additional color ramp examples

Using this approach, you can create custom gradient maps by assigning sampled colors. Just keep in mind that the left side of the gradient maps to black, exactly as in

the example gradient above. With your own gradient maps, you can get exquisite control over your color treatments, and push into more complex color-grading options.

When using Difference, keep in mind that anything blending with black remains unchanged, and anything blending with white is inverted. Use this knowledge to guide your base image adjustments, so that you can control the blending more precisely.

Bonus Trick! A great way to explore different looks and just idle away some time is to play around with patterns. Grab the Gradient tool (G) and load up any preset color gradient. Set the tool blending mode to Difference in the top Options Bar, and get to work: Drag out in random directions on the same layer. The gradient you create will interact with whatever is already on the layer and, after a while, you'll find that you can create interesting patterns and color ranges. Start with a simple Black, White gradient in one direction, then drag 90° to that. Once you're comfortable, start trying new gradients or mix things up with other blending modes. Have fun with it! ■

 Questions & Comments



DAVE CLAYTON

DESIGNING IN PHOTOSHOP



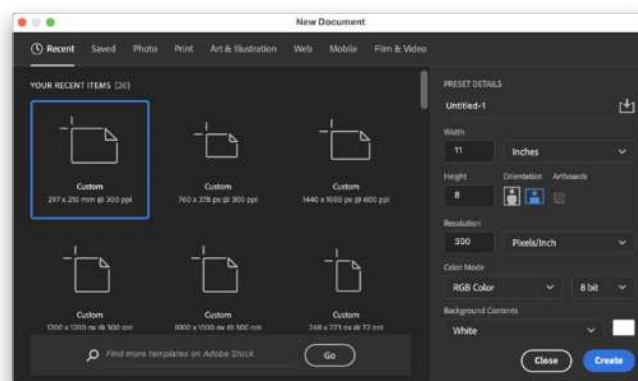
STENCIL EFFECT

Banksy, a very famous street artist, recently added a new piece to a wall in Nottingham, UK, which was promptly purchased and removed from its location. Banksy is renowned for his street art, and in this tutorial we're going to show how you can create your own Banksy-style art right inside Photoshop by simply using a couple of photos, a few effects, blending, a little bit of text, and a whole lot of fun!

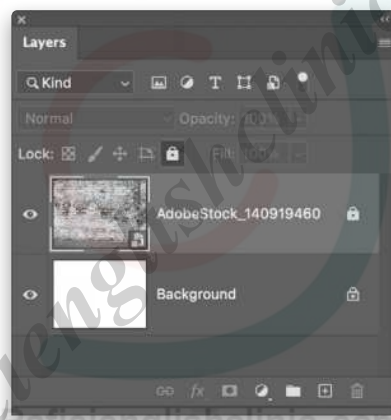


We'll be using a couple of photos from Adobe Stock but all you need is a grungy looking outdoor wall and a subject, in this case a photo of a young girl with a superhero cape. If you do use your own photos, make sure the subject and the wall are both shot from the same height so that you don't have any weird perspective issues.

STEP ONE: Let's begin by creating a document. As this is only for fun and the purposes of this tutorial, start by going to File>New and making a document 11x8" at 300 ppi. Click Create.



©Adobe Stock/rangizz



STEP TWO: Go to File>Place Embedded, navigate to where your wall image is saved, and click Place. If you'd like to download the low-res watermarked version of this image to follow along, click [this link](#), log in with your Adobe ID, and click the Save to Library button. Drag the downloaded image from the Libraries panel (Window>Libraries) to your new document in Photoshop.

Use the bounding box to resize the image to fill the frame so that you have a good amount of wall with which to work, but enough of the sidewalk to see it's a street shot. Press Enter to commit the transformation, and lock this layer down in the Layers panel by clicking on the Lock All icon (padlock), which is the last icon to the right of the word "Lock" in the Layers panel.

STEP THREE: Open the image of the subject that you want to place in the street scene. We specifically chose an image with a plain background to make it easier to get a decent selection of our subject. Because the final image will be a rough and grungy one, your selection in the next step doesn't need to be absolutely on point; you can have some rogue pixels. You can click [here](#) to download the low-res version of the file that we're using from Adobe Stock, then Right-click on the image in the Libraries panel, and choose Edit to open it in Photoshop. Go to Image>Image Size, turn on Resample, set the Width to 2,000 pixels, select Preserve Details 2.0 in the Resample drop-down menu, and click OK (we normally don't recommend enlarging images, but this is for practice purposes only).

©Adobe Stock/Konstantin Yuganov



STEP FOUR: Go to Select>Subject to have Photoshop automatically make a selection of the subject in your image. With a plain background, this makes a pretty good selection that's accurate enough for what we need for this project. So with your subject selected, just make a copy of it using Command-C (PC: Ctrl-C).

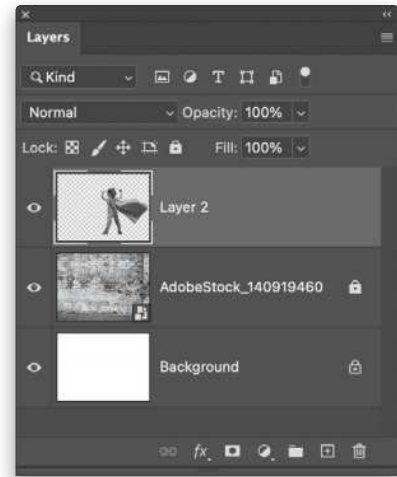
Then go to your document with the wall and press Command-V (PC: Ctrl-V) to paste the subject. Press Command-T (PC: Ctrl-T) for Free Transform. Resize her proportionally and position her on the right side of the wall where there's some lovely natural grunge; we want to make this as realistic as possible when we blend her into the wall. Press Enter to commit the transformation.



STEP FIVE: We want both her feet to be touching the sidewalk and her right foot is just a little higher than the left, so we're going to use Puppet Warp to pull that leg down a little. With the young girl layer active in the Layers panel, go to Edit>Puppet Warp, and you'll now see the figure covered in lots of little triangles. We need to add some pivot points to her right leg. Notice that the cursor has changed to a push pin-type icon. Simply click to drop pins on her ankle, the back of her knee, and the very top of her leg.

Then, using the ankle point, click-and-pull the leg down to bring the foot to the sidewalk while also bending the leg a little to the left to make it sit flat on the sidewalk. It's only a subtle change but enough to make it look "right." Press Enter to commit the warp effect, at which point you may need to tweak her position again using the Move tool (V).





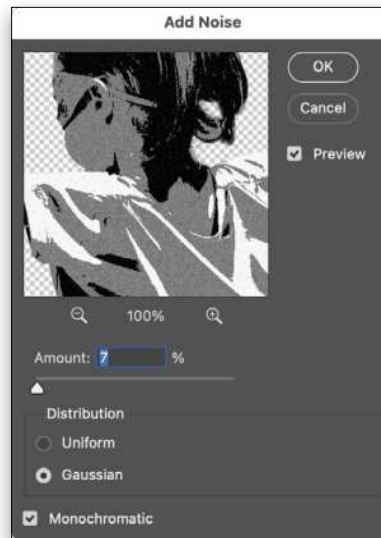
STEP SIX: Next, we need to desaturate the subject layer, so either press Shift-Command-U (PC: Shift-Ctrl-U) or go to Image>Adjustments>Desaturate. We don't need any color in the subject, as we want her to look stenciled with black, white, and gray paint.



STEP SEVEN: Go to Image>Adjustments>Posterize. Depending on your image, you'll need to experiment with the Levels setting in the Posterize dialog. For this image, we used a Levels setting of 3 for a nice mix of white, gray, and black. Click OK to commit the change.



STEP EIGHT: Before we blend our subject into the wall, let's add a little noise to the figure by going to Filter>Noise>Add Noise. Add an Amount of 7%, set Distribution to Gaussian, and check the Monochromatic box (you can experiment with these settings but it's really just to give it a rougher, grainier, street-weathered look). Click OK.



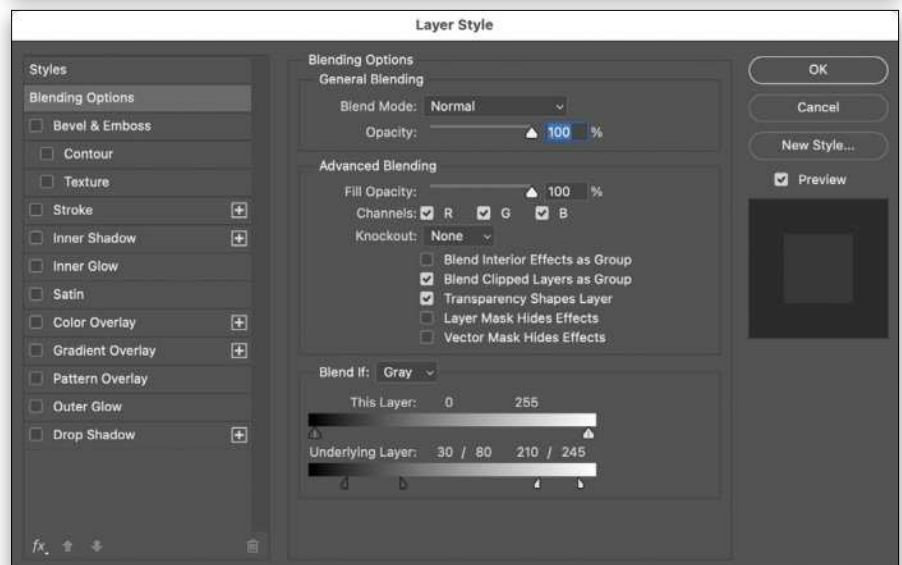
STEP NINE: Next we need to start playing with some blending, but instead of going with a blend mode, we're going to use the much underused, but extremely effective Blend If controls in the Layer Style dialog. Double-click the subject layer's thumbnail in the Layers panel to bring up the Blending Options in the Layer Style dialog.

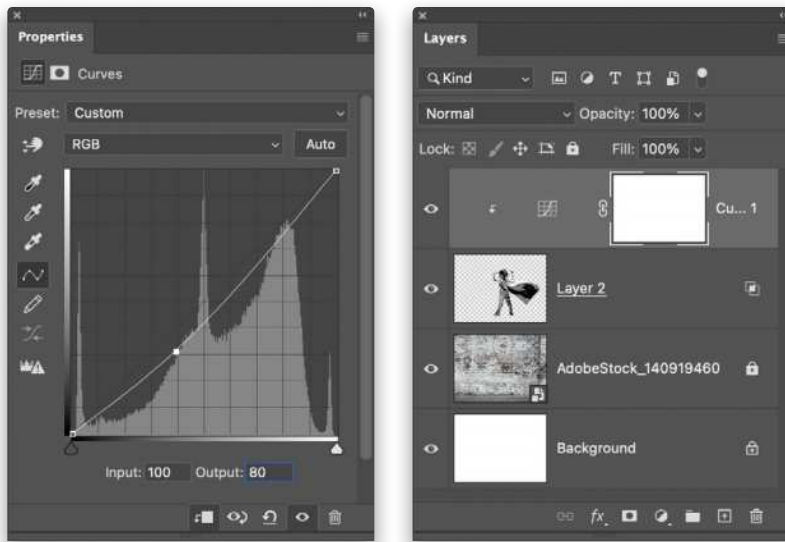
At the bottom of the dialog, you'll see the Blend If controls. Leave the Blend If drop-down menu set to Gray. We're going to ignore the This Layer option and focus on the Underlying Layer controls. In this case, the underlying layer is the wall.

To give us a little more control over the blend, Option-click (PC: Alt-click) the little black slider below the left side of the Underlying Layer ramp; this will split it, allowing you to move each half independently.

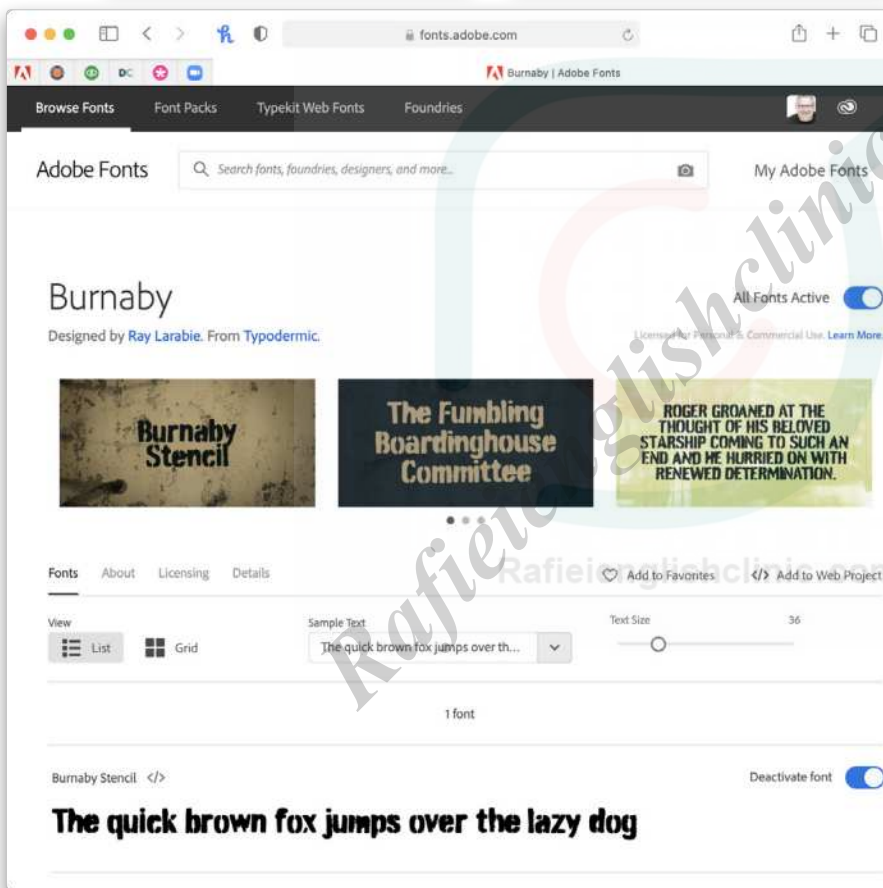
Set the left half of the slider at 30 and the right half to 80. Split the white slider on the right and set the halves to 210/245. This enables us to control the amount of blend for each of the dark and light colors in the image.

You can alter these to suit your own art but these settings were just right for this image. Click OK. If you reposition the figure with the Move tool, the blend adapts nicely with the brick texture underneath, and the overall effect makes the paint look worn and weathered.





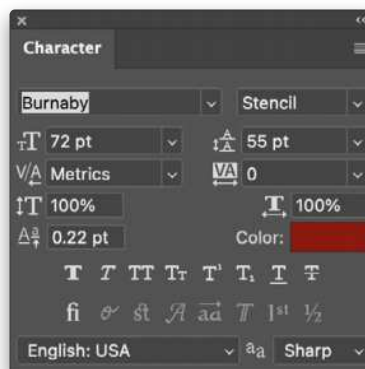
STEP 10: If you want to either darken or lighten the subject, just add a Curves adjustment layer by going to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Curves. In the New Layer dialog, check on the Use Previous Layer to Create Clipping Mask option, and click OK. This clips the adjustment to only the layer below. Then in the Properties panel (Window>Properties), drag points on the curve for a more desirable setting. In this example, we darkened the subject by slightly dragging down the lower half of the curve as shown here.



STEP 11: Now that we've made our Banksy-style stencil image on the wall, we'll add some text for impact. For this we're going to use a guerrilla-style stencil font from Adobe Fonts called **Burnaby Stencil**. Go to Type>More from Adobe Fonts, and when the web-page opens, make sure you're logged in with your Adobe ID, and then search for and activate the Burnaby Stencil font.

Back in Photoshop, select the Type tool (T) from the Toolbar. In the Options Bar, select Burnaby in the fonts drop-down menu, set the size to 72 pt, click on the Center Text icon, click on the color swatch, set the text color to a darkish red (#ac0000), and click OK to close the Color Picker.

Type the words "BE YOUR OWN HERO" on the left side of the wall, pressing Return (PC: Enter) after the words "YOUR" AND "OWN." Select all the letters with the Type tool, and in the Character panel (Window>Character), alter the leading to around 55 pt to close up the space between each line of type a bit. Click the checkmark in the Options Bar to commit your type.



STEP 12: With the type layer still active in the Layers panel, press Command-T (PC: Ctrl-T) for Free Transform. Click-and-drag outside the bounding box to rotate the text slightly to the left about 5°, just so it's not perfectly straight on the wall. Press Enter to commit the transformation.

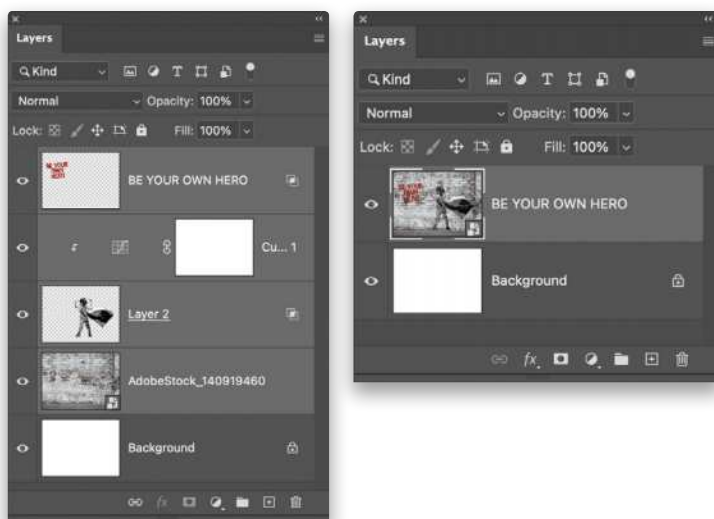


STEP 13: Now we're going to repeat what we did with the girl figure. First, we'll add some noise using the same settings as before. If you go to the Filter menu you should see the last filter you used at the top of the menu, which in this case is Add Noise. Just click on Add Noise and it will automatically apply the last settings used without bringing up the dialog.



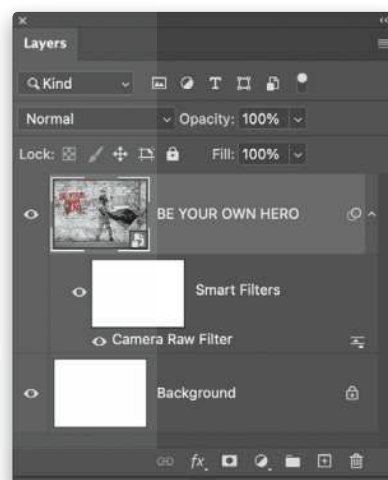
STEP 14: Next, double-click on the type layer's thumbnail in the Layers panel to bring up the Blending Options. Using the Blend If options again, Option-click (PC: Alt-click) the bottom sliders to split them, setting the darker halves to 30/115 and the lighter halves to 215/235. This allows some of that paint to fade and bring the brick texture through the text layer to make it as weathered as the stencil image.





STEP 15: Unlock the wall layer by clicking on the padlock icon to the right of its name in the Layers panel. With the wall layer active, Shift-click the top text layer to select all the layers in the Layers panel except the Background layer. Right-click on any of the selected layers, and choose Convert to Smart Object.

STEP 16: Go up to Filter>Camera Raw Filter, navigate down to the Effects panel, and drag the Vignetting slider to -70 to put a spotlight effect on the wall to highlight the message and hero. When you click OK, this will be applied as a smart filter to the smart object layer, which means you can go back and finesse it or turn it off anytime you want.



Final

And that's it! You've easily created a cool, grungy Banksy-style effect with just two images, some text, and a little Blend If control, plus some added noise.

Don't forget to share your own work in the [KelbyOne Community](#) forum or leave any feedback or suggestions for future "Designing in Photoshop" tutorials. ■

Questions & Comments



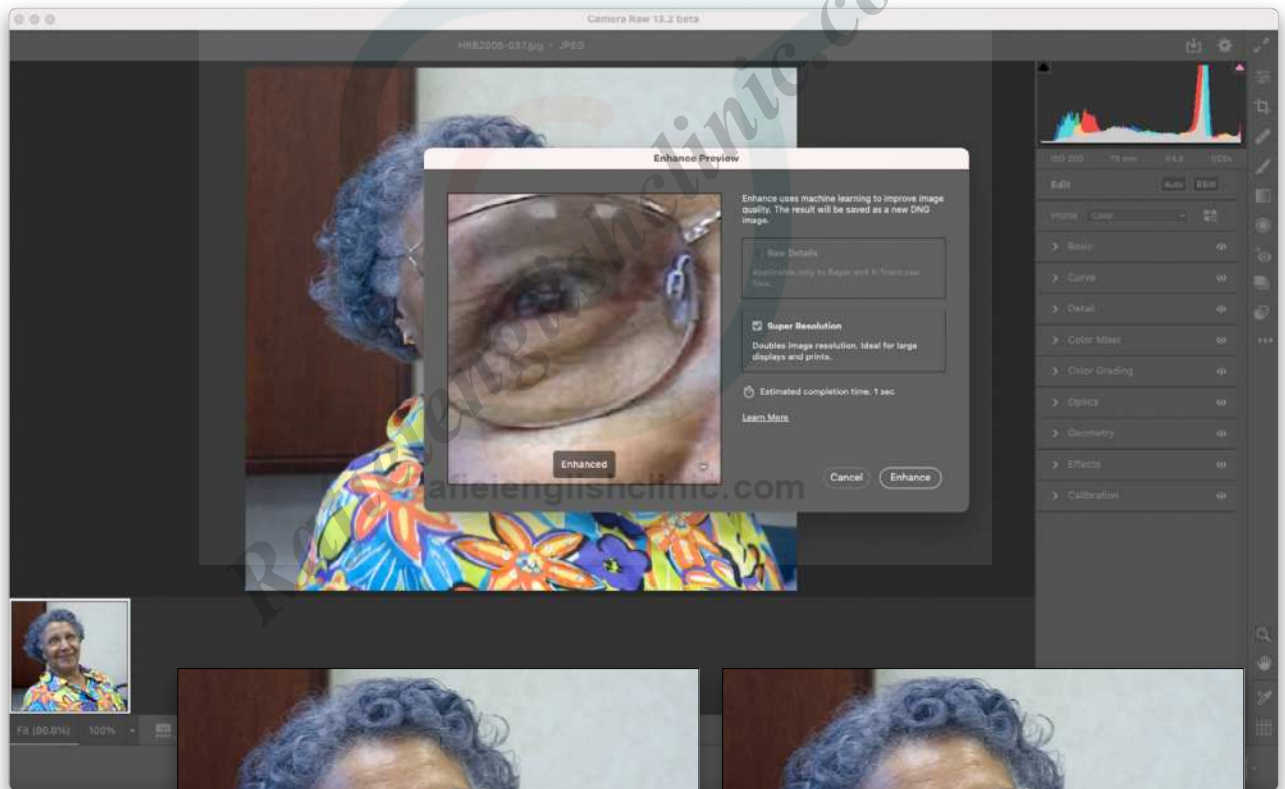
Q. How can I increase the resolution of my image and still maintain quality?

A. This question has been asked since the beginning of time. You have a relatively small image (postage stamp) and you need to make it large enough to make a decent print or even share on social media. In recent years, Photoshop has gotten much better algorithms for increasing the size of an image via Image Size. In the March 2021 update of Camera Raw, however, we now have “Super Resolution,” which basically doubles the resolution of your image while maintaining quality. And yes, you even can use it on JPEGs.

Start by choosing Open from the File menu in Photoshop. Select your JPEG image, choose Camera Raw from the Format pop-up menu, and click Open.

Once your image opens into Camera Raw, Right-click on the thumbnail in the Filmstrip and choose Enhance. When the dialog appears, you can preview the new image and click Enhance to create it. This will create a *new* DNG (RAW file) in the same location as the original JPEG, and it will place it next to the original in the Filmstrip in Camera Raw.

This new DNG is now twice the resolution of the original. I know what you’re thinking: “Can I run it again and double the resolution of the one I just doubled?” The answer is yes if you save it out as a JPEG first before trying to run it on the same image again! At some point you’ll probably notice that you start to lose quality, but in most cases you can get away with running it at least twice.



Original image: 815x774 pixels



Enhanced image: 1630x1548 pixels

Q. I don't quite understand or know how to use swatches. For my company's official colors, I have a library with the colors and fonts. Why would I want to use swatches?

A. Before we had Creative Cloud Libraries, each of the creative desktop applications, such as Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, etc., had their own Swatches panel (Window>Swatches).

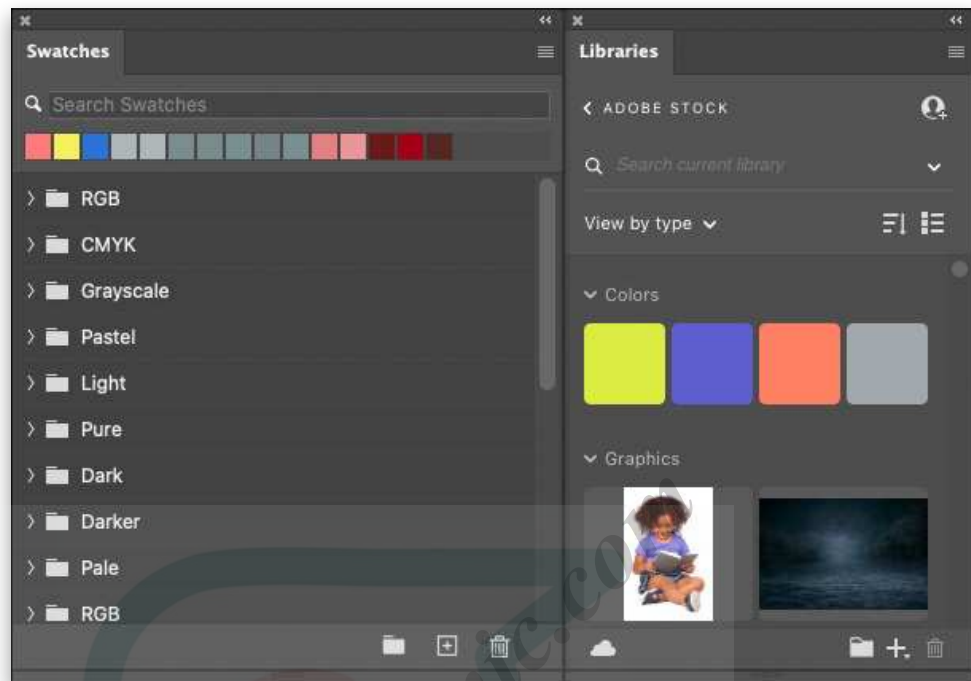
You can add as many new swatch colors as you want by clicking the Create New Swatch icon at the bottom of the Swatches panel, and they'll be there each time you open an image in Photoshop; however, they won't appear in your other applications.

Now with Creative Cloud Libraries, you can add swatches directly to a Library in the Libraries panel (Window>Libraries), or when you create a new swatch in the Swatches panel. In the Color Swatch Name dialog that appears, there's an Add to My Current Library checkbox that's on by default. With that option turned on, the new swatch will automatically be added to your current Creative Cloud Library.

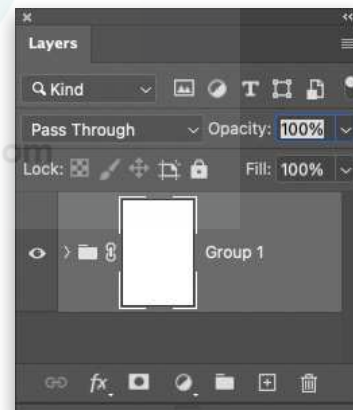
The advantage is that the same CC Library will be available in all your Creative Cloud desktop apps and many of the mobile apps too. Also CC Libraries can be shared with others, which is great for creating company style guides.

Q. How can I apply the same mask to multiple layers?

A. You've probably noticed that, when you have more than one layer selected in the Layers panel, the Add Layer Mask icon is grayed out at the bottom. This is because you can only add a mask to one layer at a time. Although layer masks can be copied to different layers, it's not an effective workflow.



Instead, add the layers to a new layer group first and then add a mask to the group. Whatever you do on that group mask will visibly apply to all the layers in the group.



Q. What is the difference between saving a file as a PSD vs. PSB?

A. Both PSD (Photoshop Document) and PSB (Photoshop Big) are file formats that you can create in Photoshop. Both formats are pretty much identical in the features they support, such as layers; however, PSD files support documents up to 30,000x30,000 pixels, whereas PSB files support documents up to 300,000x300,000 pixels. In most cases, the average person will never need to save a Photoshop document as a PSB file, but if you get ambitious

with your resolution or you're creating hundreds of layers, it's good to know that you can save your file as a PSB and keep right on working.

Q. Is there a way to put the same text on multiple artboards but also only update one instance and have them all update?

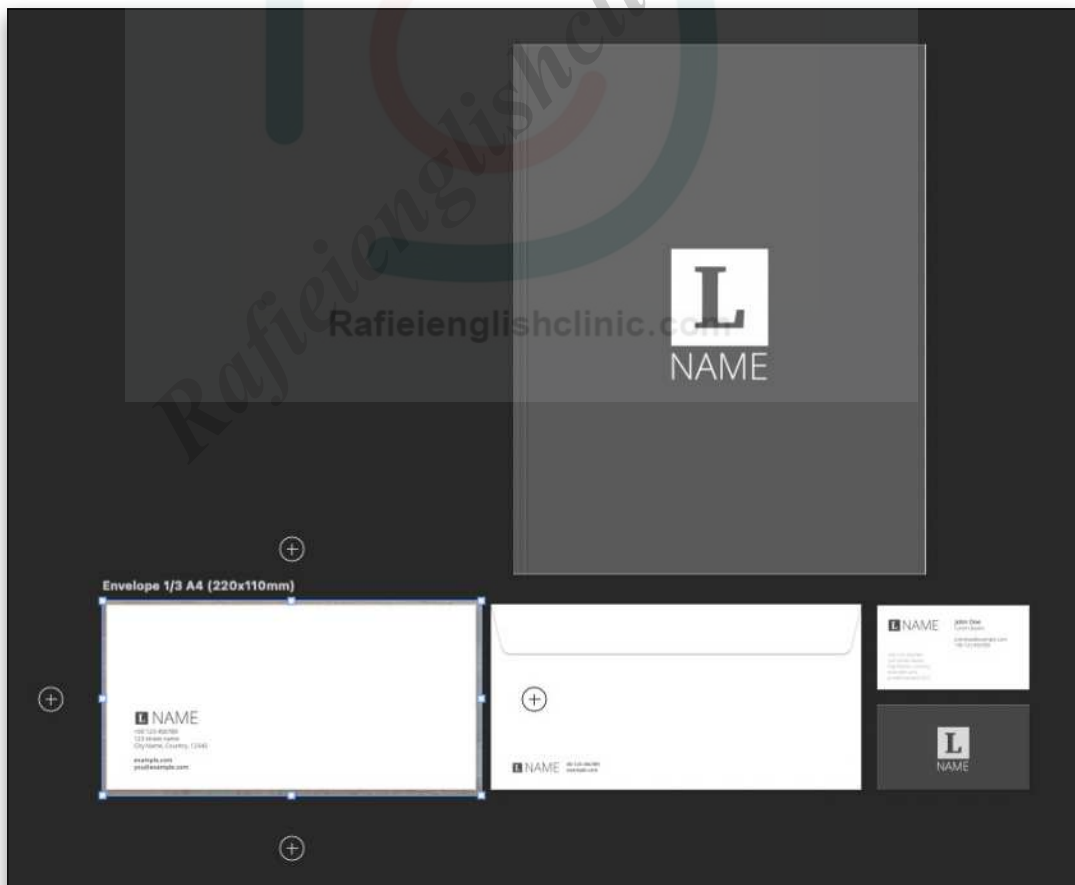
A. Working with multiple artboards in Photoshop is a great way to have multiple “pages” at different sizes for design work. The most common example is a letterhead, envelope, and business card (click [here](#) to learn more about artboards). In this example, you'd probably put many of the same elements on each artboard, such as the company name, address, etc. While you can certainly just copy the layer to each artboard, the problem comes in if you're still making changes. For example, if you want to change the color of the text or you made a typo, you'd have to make those changes three times. This is where Creative Cloud Libraries come to the rescue.

Create the first instance of the text you want to replicate on any one of the artboards. Then add that layer/text to your Libraries panel (Window>Libraries) as a graphic. Now delete it from the artboard on which you originally created it. You'll have three empty artboards and your text in the CC Library.

Drag the text from the Libraries panel to each artboard one after the other. Feel free to size the text as an object or rotate it as needed. Now whenever you want to make a change to all the instances of the text, double-click on it in the Libraries panel and click the pencil icon that appears at the top left of the graphic's preview. It will open like a smart object in a new window. Make any changes you want, and then close and save it. It will update every artboard on which you placed it, as well as in any documents in which you used it. ■

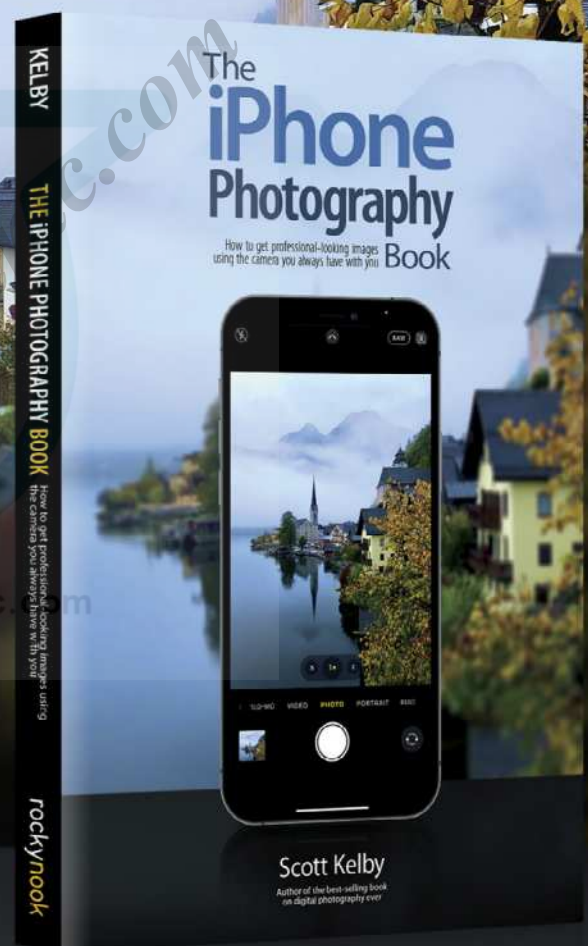
ALL IMAGES BY TERRY WHITE

Questions & Comments



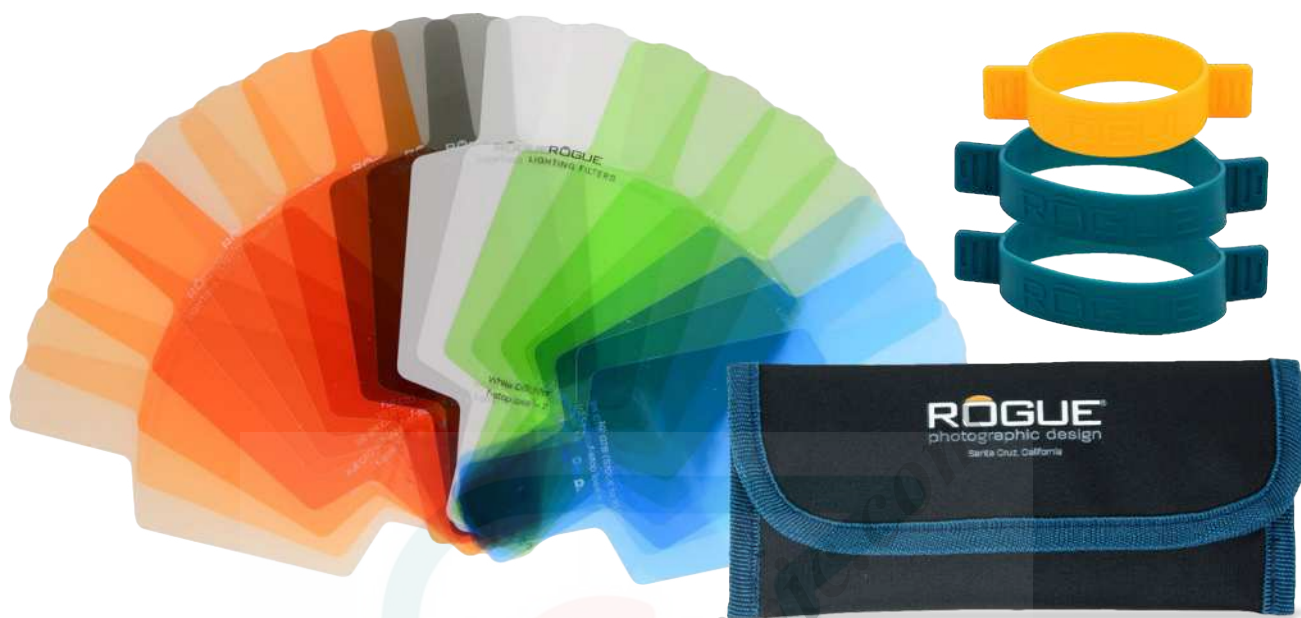
If you have a Photoshop question that you'd like Terry White to answer in the pages of *Photoshop User* magazine, send it to letters@photoshopuser.com.

Get professional-looking images using the camera you *always* have with you



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Imagine if someone took the same photographic techniques, principles, and tools used by high-end and professional photographers, but applied them to shooting with an iPhone. Imagine the type of images you'd be able to create using those same ideas. Well, Scott Kelby has done just that in his latest book—*The iPhone Photography Book: How to Get Professional-Looking Images Using the Camera You Always Have with You*.



Rogue Flash Gels: Color Correction Kit v3

▶ **More Gels, More Bands, Full Instructions** | Review by Erik Vlietinck

Version 3 of the Rogue Flash Gels: Color Correction Kit includes a full set of LEE Filter gels, including two gels of each color: 1/8 CTO, 1/4 CTO, 1/2 CTO, Full CTO, 1/4 CTB, 1/2 CTB, 1/4 Plus Green, 1/2 Plus Green, 0.3 Neutral Density, and White Diffusion (2 stops). Also included are two regular sized rubber bands for normal flash heads and one for smaller flashes, as well as an instruction guide.

The original Color Correction Filter Kit had 18 correction gels, including three 1/4 CTO, 1/2 CTO, Full CTO, Plus Green, 1/2 CTB, and White Diffusion (2 stops). It also included three Rogue attachment bands (blue only), the gel pouch, and instructions.

Expomaging, the company that designed, developed, and markets the Rogue Flash Gels, was the first and still is the only company to print directly onto the gels to help users identify and use them in the field. That, by itself, makes the Color Correction Filter Kit v3 a must-have.

Furthermore, Expomaging was the first to introduce the tabbed gel bands for attaching gels to flashes. They're excellent quality, fasten really well, and the tabs make it so much easier to attach a gel filter, as you have something to hold on to when stretching the bands. The tabbed attachment bands are designed to fit the full range of on- and off-camera flashes on the market, including the super small flashes such as the Nikon SB400 and the Godox TT350 for mirrorless cameras, as well as full-sized flashes for professionals.

Gels are still superior to postproduction adjustments because the light from the flash wraps around your model, which AI still can't do in a natural way. In addition, thinking about the light makes you a better photographer. ■



Company: Expomaging, Inc.

Price: \$2995

Hot: Full range of gels; easy to mount; helpful info on the gel; tabs on rubber bands

Not:



DEVONthink To Go 3v

► *Keep Your Documents Synced Across All Your iOS Devices* | Review by Erik Vlietinck

DEVONthink To Go 3 for iOS isn't a completely new user experience when compared with the previous version, but it has been improved on such a scale that it certainly feels like it's a completely new app. The list of new features to start with is impressive. It supports multiple windows and the pointer on iPadOS, dark mode, context menus, OCR conversion of scans and images to searchable PDFs on your device, Shortcuts actions to automate everyday tasks, and an integration with other iOS apps that surpassed my wildest expectations.

DEVONthink To Go 3 lets you open documents in other apps directly from the Share sheet, supports Mac-style document annotations and ratings, has the familiar Mac-version unified inboxes, tags, color labels, trash groups, new global smart groups, and more. Its iCloud, end-to-end, encrypted sync is based on CloudKit and much faster and more reliable than the previous approach. Another wish that's come true is the ability to open context menus for the database, documents, and groups lists by long-pressing an item.

Version 3 is not all about "out with the old, in with the new," though. There are major improvements, as well. For example, it's on par with the Mac version where Markdown support is concerned, having been upgraded to MultiMarkdown 6 with CriticMarkup. Markdown documents now support item links to content, such as images and videos, and item links in their metadata section for accessing CSS stylesheets. A New Document Assistant now uses the standard camera interface for photos and videos, which is more familiar than a proprietary subsystem, and allows zooming the image.

In short, DEVONthink To Go 3 has become a powerhouse free-form database that's on par with the Mac desktop version. ■

5.0 ★★★★★

Company: DEVONtechnologies

Price: Perpetual license: \$3999 (Upgrade: \$1999);
Subscription: \$1.99/month or \$14.99/year

Hot: Fast sync; image ingestion and OCR support; true, portable, free-form database manager

Not:



WANDRD Tech Pouch

▶ *Organize Your Gear for Easy Access* | Review by Dave Williams

WANDRD is a family business that has been turning out high-quality luggage for travelers and photographers from their Colorado base since their inception some six years ago. In that short time they've produced some exquisitely designed luggage made specifically with people like us in mind. Their most recent addition, the Tech Pouch and Toiletry Pouch ranges, are made to the same high standards.

The goal for the Tech Pouch range was to create a solution for a problem they identified and that resonates among all of us: accessory storage. When we're on the move it can be tricky to organize our tech gear, and never more has that been true than now. Our gear requires a myriad of cables, connectors, adapters, and other such accessories, which I often misplace or simply lose. The Tech Pouch range from WANDRD, which comes in three sizes, is a system engineered around the very items we use. The pouch is split into compartments which are segmented by mesh. This mesh makes it easy to see and access what each pocket contains. On top of that, there's an additional outside pocket that's fleece-lined to protect our most precious gadgets. Each pouch can be used as a standalone piece and secured with an optional carry strap, or attached to the larger products in the WANDRD range with the use of webbing loops (small carabiners.)

Organization is one of the things we often overlook as artists, prioritizing our creative processes over something as trivial in comparison as putting a cable in the right place. The Tech Pouch system from WANDRD makes this process a whole lot easier and helps us to keep all our tech accessories securely in one place so we don't have to think about where we last had them. The design is on point and is a harmonious balance of creativity and functionality. ■

4.5



Company: WANDRD

Price: From \$58.33 with strap;
from \$35.24 without strap

Hot: Well crafted; highly functional

Not: Slightly pricey for a pouch



OWC Envoy Pro FX

► *Extremely Fast, Robust External SSD Drive with Separate Cable* | Review by Erik Vlietinck

OWC is on a releasing spree of small, extremely robust, and very fast external bus-powered SSD drives. Not that long ago, we had the tiny Envoy Elektron which is USB 3.2 Gen 2 only; but the latest to hit the streets is the Thunderbolt 3 and USB 3.2 Gen 2-compatible Envoy Pro FX.

The new drive is very small (but about twice the size of the Envoy Elektron), quite heavy at 244 g, drop- and crush-safe, and dust- and waterproof certified (IP67). The FX supports a maximum performance of up to 2800MB/s and comes with a pluggable hybrid Thunderbolt 3/USB 3.2 cable of 80 cm with a converter USB-A plug integrated.

The actual performance of the Envoy Pro FX is exemplary. Driven by Aura Pro P12 SSD modules inside, the tests I ran on my mid-2017 27" iMac showed a maximum obtainable speed of 2400MB/sec read and 1800MB/sec write with the AJA System Test set to 1GB 4K 10-bit YUV files. As always, Blackmagic Design's Speed Test gave slightly lower results at 2286MB/sec read and 1624MB/sec write speeds.

The OWC Envoy Pro FX is ideal for everyone who needs to work in the field with either a computer, a tablet, or a smartphone. With its separate cable, it's the ideal drive for photography, video, and backups on the road, as well as in the office. I would even recommend it as a portable OS boot drive, e.g. for security reasons: the FX is fully compatible with macOS and Windows built-in encryption.

And it looks great too: Its charcoal-gray aluminum chassis has deeply grooved fins, which, by the way, turn the entire enclosure into a highly effective heat sink for maximum heat dissipation and throttling-free performance. Even when using the Envoy Pro FX to render a lengthy 4K video, the drive remained cool and the speed didn't drop. ■

5.0

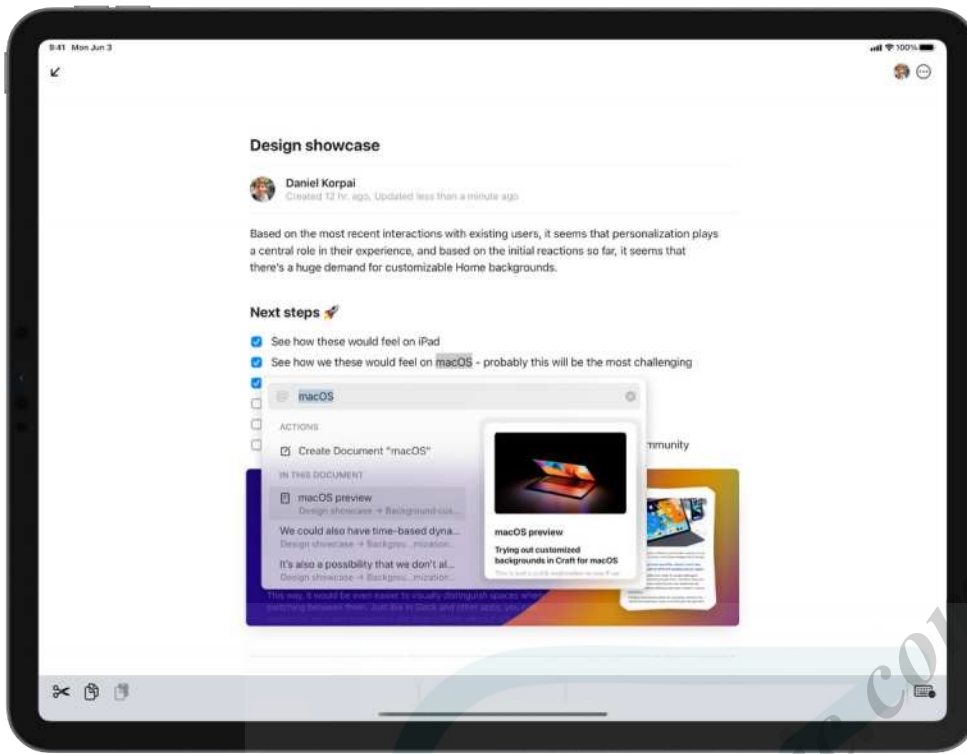


Company: OWC

Price: 240 GB: \$199; 480 GB: \$229; 1 TB: \$319; 2 TB: \$499

Hot: Very, very fast; separate cable with USB-A converter integrated; no throttling; looks

Not:



Craft

► *Good Looks, Much Power* | Review by Erik Vlietinck

I first stumbled across Craft sometime around the end of 2020, but back then, I thought it was just another app like Bear, Notes, and Drafts. Craft looks splendid but it certainly doesn't stop there. A fine example is linking notes together. The Craft concept of a note is semi-hierarchical. You start with a folder in which you create and store documents. These hold pages with paragraphs that are blocks. The pages but also the blocks can be your notes.

You can link documents, pages, and blocks together. Linking is as easy as typing "@" upon which a pop-up list will appear that gets populated with notes that contain your subsequently entered characters. Mind you, the list will have suggestions for notes containing the characters entered regardless of the level or whether it's a different note. That means you can link to a note in a document that lives in a different folder—without ever having to remember that—or in the same note on which you're now working.

Every link you create is listed in the note to which you connected, and backlinks are automatically added. Furthermore, your blocks can actually be turned into pages within pages. For example, if you have a block with one sentence such as "The secret life of photographers is no longer secret," and you realize this merits more elaboration, then it's easy to turn that into a heading of a new note in Craft by clicking the block's right arrow.

One criticism is that Craft doesn't produce plain text or Markdown files; instead, its file format is based on JSON, an open source format that's not exactly designed to give a pleasing reading experience. One of the export formats is Markdown, though. Craft has its own synchronization service that works blazingly fast and should be secure enough for most users. ■



Company: Luki Labs Ltd

Price: Personal—Free; Professional—\$4.99/month or \$44.99/year

Hot: Design; user experience; suitable for note-taking for projects but also for simple things like a shopping list; notes linking; planned features

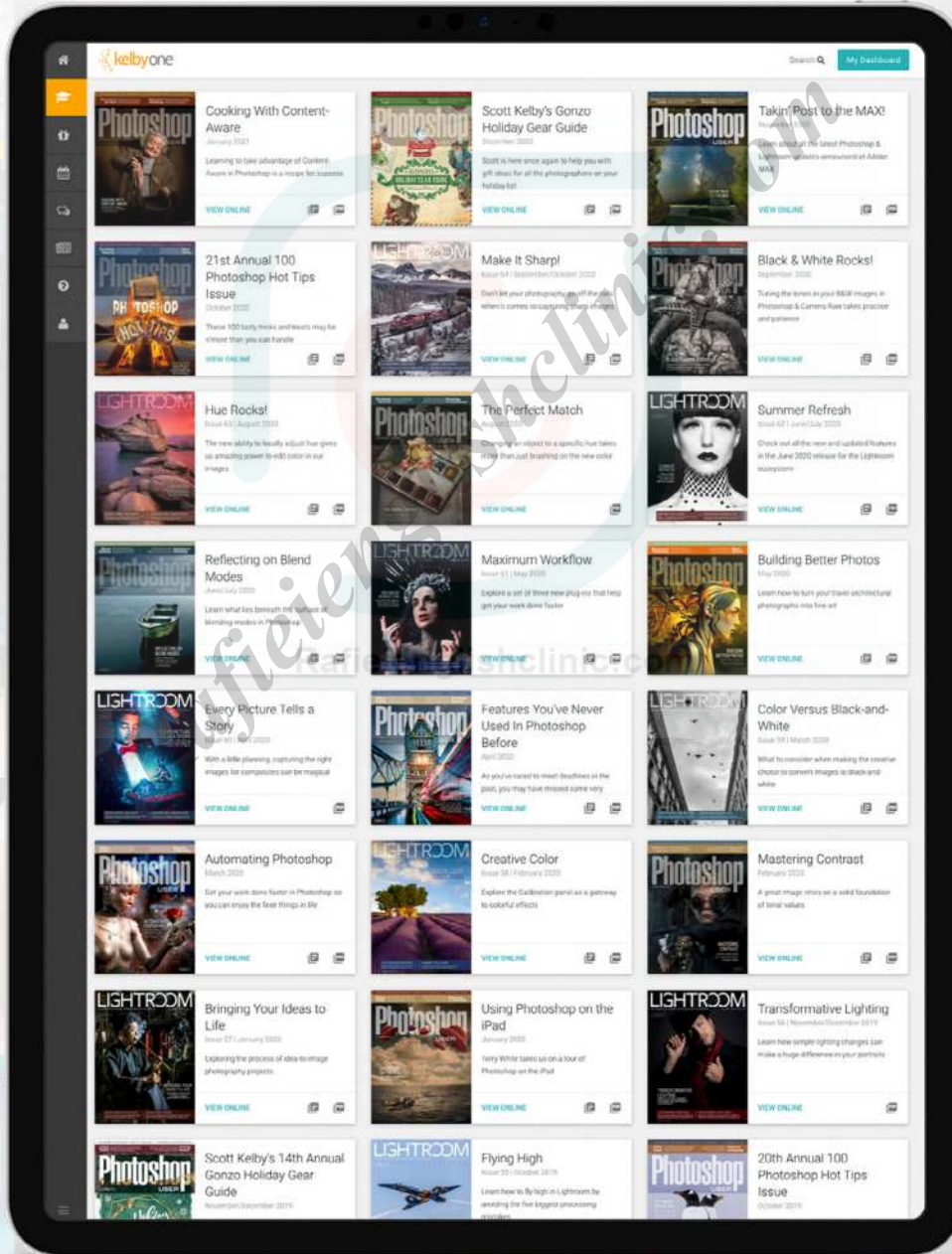
Not:

A vast library to help you

Develop

your images, your skills,
and your photographic vision!

KelbyOne Plus and KelbyOne Pro members can search, read, and download 150+ back issues of *Photoshop User & Lightroom Magazine*



where photography clicks



Photograph Restoration and Enhancement: Using Adobe Photoshop CC 2021 Version

► *Vickie Ellen Wolper* | Review by Peter Bauer

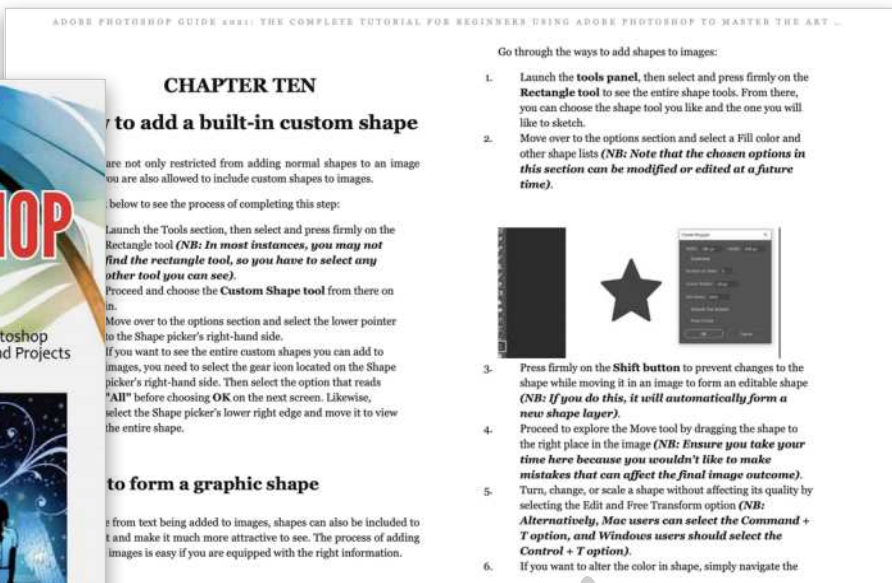
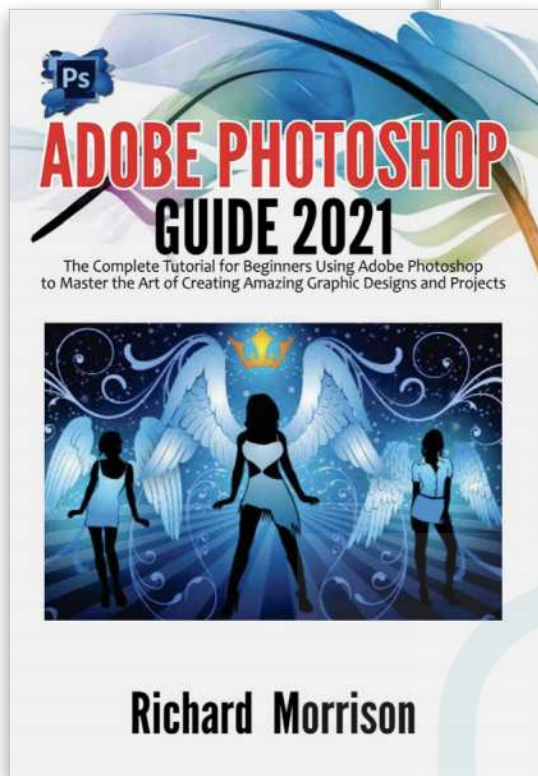
The organization of this book is a bit of a puzzle. For example, the section on color management is tucked into the middle of Chapter 6, following painting and using the Brush tool and just before “Ten Tips to Maximize Print Quality While Minimizing Cost and Waste.” Interestingly (for a book published in 2020), there are more pages devoted to scanning printed photos than to digital images. And on the subject of images, there are “companion files” and video clips available, but you need to email the publisher for access to them. The author writes in a clear and conversational manner. Instructions are efficient and well-organized, and the step-by-step projects illustrate the chapter content very well. Some of the projects, however, seem to jump back and forth between chapters. If you work through this book starting with Chapter 1, you should have no problem tracking the progression. ■

4.0 ★★★★★

Publisher: Mercury Learning and Information

Pages: 432

Price: \$31.49 (Kindle); \$59.95 (paperback)



Adobe Photoshop Guide 2021: The Complete Tutorial for Beginners Using Adobe Photoshop to Master the Art of Creating Amazing Graphic Designs and Projects

► **Richard Morrison** | Review by Peter Bauer

This book reads like a very poor translation, although the author was born in London and attended the London School of Economics. Steps are skipped, commands are sometimes capitalized and sometimes not, and the reader will often see "NB," which stands for nota bene, the Latin phrase "note well." The sentence(s) that follow, however, are often nonsensical. Some instructions are simply bizarre. For example, the author writes "press firmly on the Shift button for some seconds." It's normally "press and hold down the Shift key." (Note well, it's "key" not "button.") And you'll likely be frustrated if you try this sequence: "1. Launch Adobe Photoshop. 2. Locate and select edit. 3. Then look for the option that reads "Step backward several occasions" and select it." Um, the Edit menu is grayed out unless you open an image after launching Photoshop, and there's simply no "Step backward several occasions" command! ■



Publisher: Independently Published

Pages: 105

Price: \$4.95 (Kindle); \$12.99 (paperback)



Do you feel like some of your Photoshop tasks are taking too long, or there are too many clicks between here and there? This feeling is real, and it has a name: We call it “inefficiency,” and I’m here with the cure. Your monthly dose of Photoshop tips will knock out the “in” of your inefficiency. Read on!

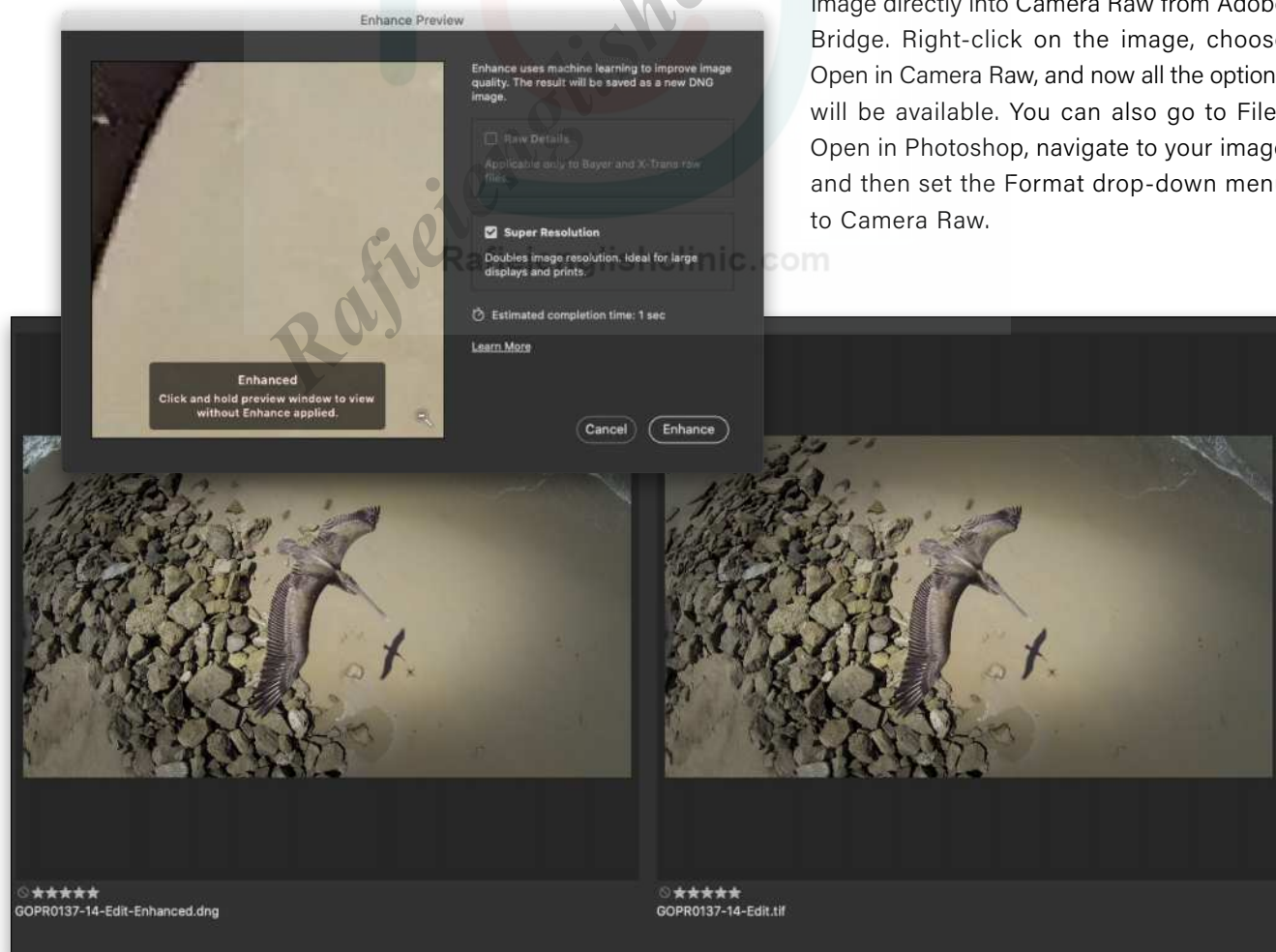
SUPER RESOLUTION IN ADOBE CAMERA RAW

Super Resolution is an amazing new feature in Adobe Camera Raw that allows you to double the resolution of a RAW, JPEG, TIFF, or PNG. In Camera Raw, Right-click on the image and choose Enhance (like on the TV shows). A dialog will appear where you can choose Super Resolution. In a second (or many seconds if it’s a big file and you have a slow computer), a new DNG will be created with “Enhanced” in the file name. Nope, you can’t apply it more than once to an image. Nope, not even if you fool it by changing the name—nice try, though. (But there is another workaround; check out Terry White’s “Photoshop Q&A” column on page 144 for more.)

WHERE ARE MY CAMERA RAW OPTIONS?

I’ve been called a liar before, because people open Camera Raw as a filter in Photoshop and the new Enhance feature is missing (see previous tip). In fact it gets worse: There’s no Crop & Rotate tool and, to add to the conspiracy, other options are missing too. What? Is your Camera Raw broken? Nope. If you choose Filter>Camera Raw Filter when you have an image open in Photoshop, all the options that resize an image will be missing. This is on purpose because you can use the Camera Raw filter on layers, so you don’t want to resize your document by accident. This would cause all the layers to interpolate (redraw), which could cause all kinds of issues. What you want to do is open your

image directly into Camera Raw from Adobe Bridge. Right-click on the image, choose Open in Camera Raw, and now all the options will be available. You can also go to File>Open in Photoshop, navigate to your image, and then set the Format drop-down menu to Camera Raw.



 Questions & Comments

KEEP OLD VERSION OF PHOTOSHOP

Whenever you update Photoshop and it's a full version (usually around the Adobe MAX timeframe), you get the option to keep or delete the old version of Photoshop. Always choose to keep it. *Fun fact:* You can run more than one version of Photoshop on your computer at the same time. The reason you want to keep the old version is twofold: First, in case something doesn't work, such as a plug-in or extension, or there's a bug that prevents you from completing your projects, you can open the older version and still get stuff done. The second reason is to verify that all your presets and actions are running okay and have made the trip safely to the new version.

HDR + PANORAMA

HDR (high dynamic range) allows you to see more details in the highlights and shadows of an image at the same time. A panorama allows you to extend the size of an image by stitching together two or more images. Sometimes you want to do both at the same time. This process produces stunning images. Here's the thing: You have to do it in the right order. If you make multiple panoramas first, and then try to HDR merge the multiple panos, it will fail. If you merge all your HDRs first, however, and then stitch the merged HDRs into panoramas, it will work. If you're lost, it's okay; there's an easier way. Open all the bracketed photos in Camera Raw, select them all in the Filmstrip, Right-click on one of the images, and Choose Merge>HDR Panorama.

THE PLANETS ALIGN

An alternative method to HDR is what I call "exposure stacking" where you place an underexposed photo above the same photo that's properly exposed. This way you can mask out the top photo and then paint in the highlights, without it looking fake. In order for this to work, the photos need to be perfectly aligned. Fortunately, Photoshop can do this for you. With both photos in the same document, one above the other on different layers, click on one of the layers in the Layers

panel to make it active, and then Shift-click the other layer so they're both selected. Choose Edit>Auto Align Layers, make sure Auto is selected, and then click OK. Now they'll be perfectly aligned for you.

MAKE A DROPLET

Actions are very useful. They're like tiny robots in Photoshop that do everything for you. Well, *you* have to do it at least once to record those steps. But after the steps are recorded and saved, they're called actions, and you only need to click on them in the Actions panel (Window>Actions) and click Play, and they'll perform all those tasks for you. Actions are well worth learning if you don't already use them. But, did you know those actions can live on your desktop, or in a folder on your computer, and you can run them just by dropping an image onto them, without even launching Photoshop first. These are called droplets. Get it? "Drop-lets." You drop your—nevermind. Choose File>Automate>Create Droplet. Choose where you want your droplet to be created, the action you want to run, and the location where you want the edited image to be saved. Try it; it's fun.



enhance

DON'T FORGET TO TAKE OUT THE EMPTIES

It's been a long, hard, but fun Photoshop session, and your Layers panel is looking a lot worse than you are after an all-nighter. One way to clean up your Layers panel is to get rid of any empty layers. Now, you could go through each layer to see if it's empty (*extra tip*, press Command-I [PC: Ctrl-I] for Invert to see if you get an empty layer warning) so you can delete it, or you can do all of this cleanup work in a jiffy. Just go to File>Scripts>Delete All Empty Layers.

COPY PRESETS TO A NEW VERSION OF PHOTOSHOP

This ties into the "Keep Old Version of Photoshop" tip on the previous page: How do you easily migrate everything from an older version of Photoshop to a newer version? It's like getting a new apartment, and you need the old furniture moved from the old apartment to the shiny, new space. Easy, right? Edit>Presets>Migrate Presets. This should copy everything from your old version of

Photoshop to the new version. First, verify that everything hasn't already migrated when you installed the new version, as often happens. I usually check my brushes as a quick way to see if my old presets made it okay.

REFINE HAIR

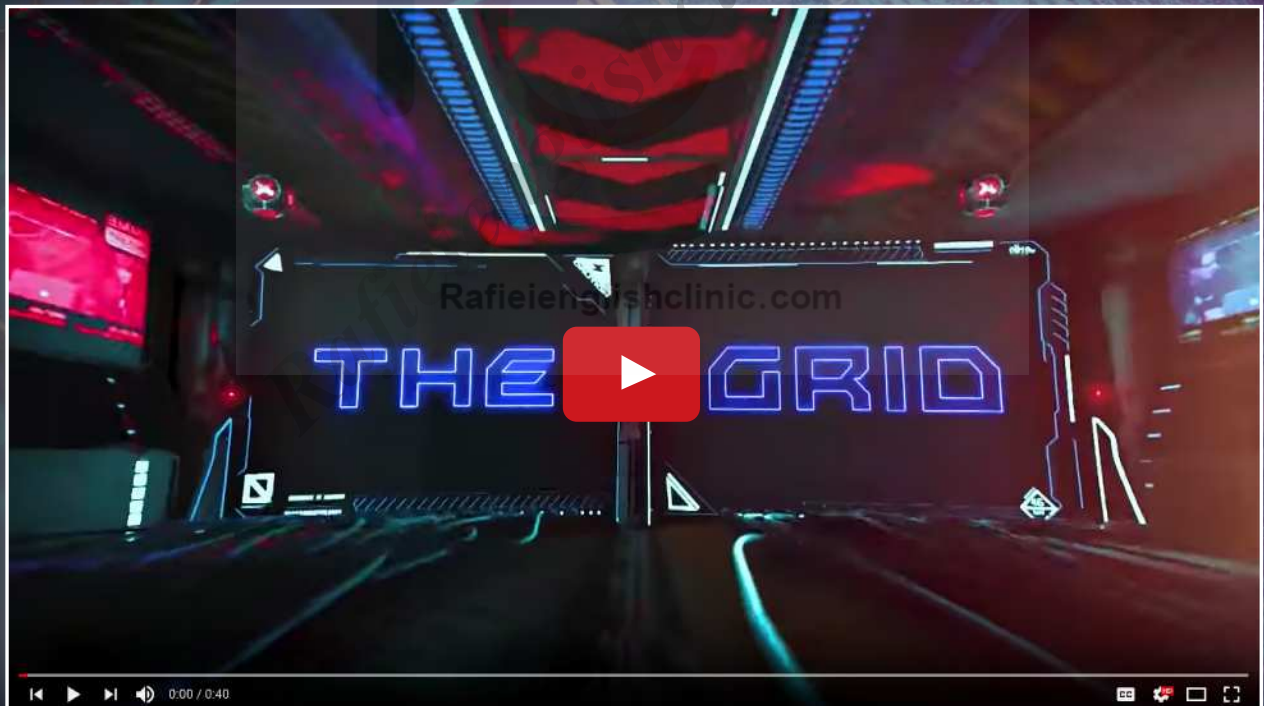
An option that was recently added to Photoshop can help you cut out hair and get nice edges. Once you've made your selection with your favorite method (e.g., Select Subject, Quick Selection tool, Lasso tool, etc.), it's time to refine the edges. With your selection active, click on the Select and Mask button in the top Options Bar. You'll see a button appear in the Options Bar that says "Refine Hair." Click that button, and your hair will "automagically" look better. (Not *your* hair, to be clear, but the hair in the photo.) This is the equivalent of running the Refine Edge Brush tool (R) around the hair. A shortfall, though, is that if you use this on animals with fur, only their heads will get this treatment. You'll still need to run the Refine Edge Brush tool around their bodies. ■



THE GRID

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Learning Light

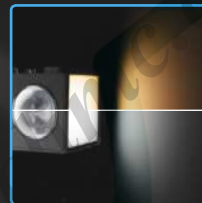
Designed by Scott Kelby

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Center column rotates to change lighting options

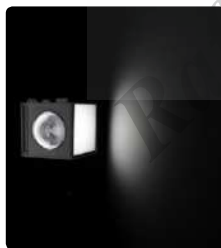


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Direct Light



Diffused Light



Fresnel



Gobo



See how different light patterns look on your subject



Split



Rembrandt



Butterfly



Loop

Designed by Scott Kelby

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Scott is a photographer, designer, and award-winning author of more than 80 books, including *The Flash Book*, *Light It*, *Shoot It*, *Retouch It*, and *The Digital Photography Book Series*. He's Editor of *Photoshop User* magazine, and CEO of the KelbyOne Online Educational Community.

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