

Russell



Brown

on Layers

*Russell
Brown,
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at Adobe
Systems,
shares
some*



*super tips
for
working
with
layers
in Adobe*

*Photoshop™
3.0.1*

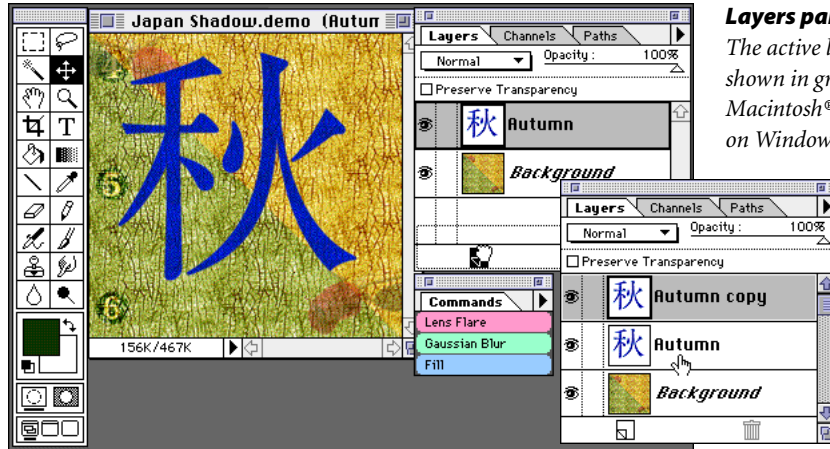




Drop shadows are easier to create using layers in Photoshop 3.0. In this example, the Japanese characters are on their own layer (Autumn). The area around the characters is transparent, indicated by the gray checkerboard, allowing the background to show through.

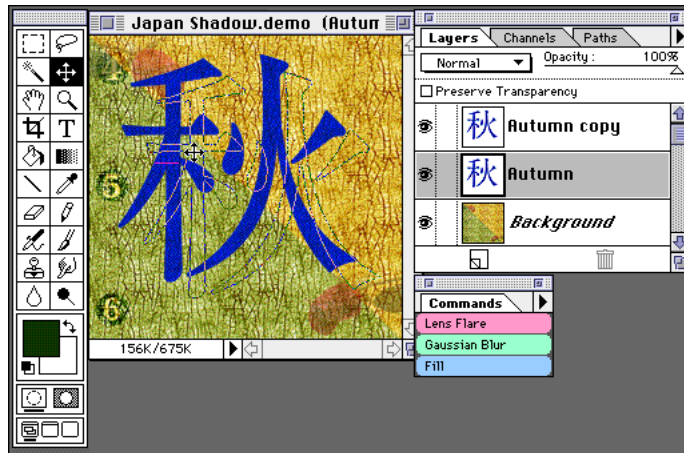
#1: DROP SHADOW USING LAYERS

1. Make a copy of the first layer (Autumn) by dragging the layer name to the New Layer icon at the bottom of the palette. This copy (Autumn copy) is placed on top of the original layer.



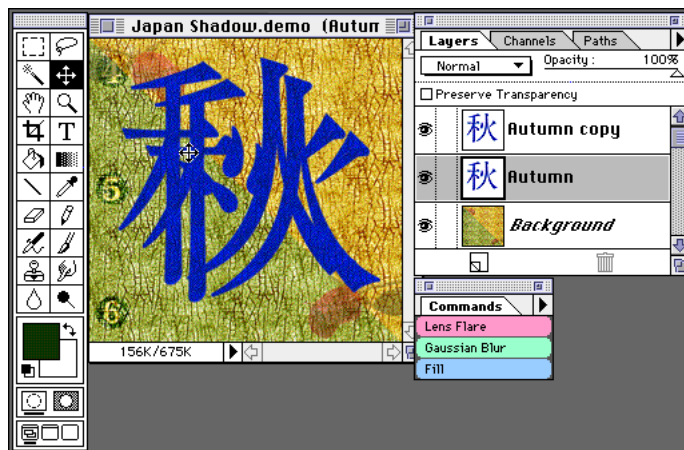
Layers palette
The active layer is shown in gray on the Macintosh® and in white on Windows®. The eye icons let you turn layers on and off.

2. Select the original Autumn layer in the palette, and then use the move tool to offset the layer (which is underneath the copy).



Moving the layer
Only the outline of the image shows when being moved.

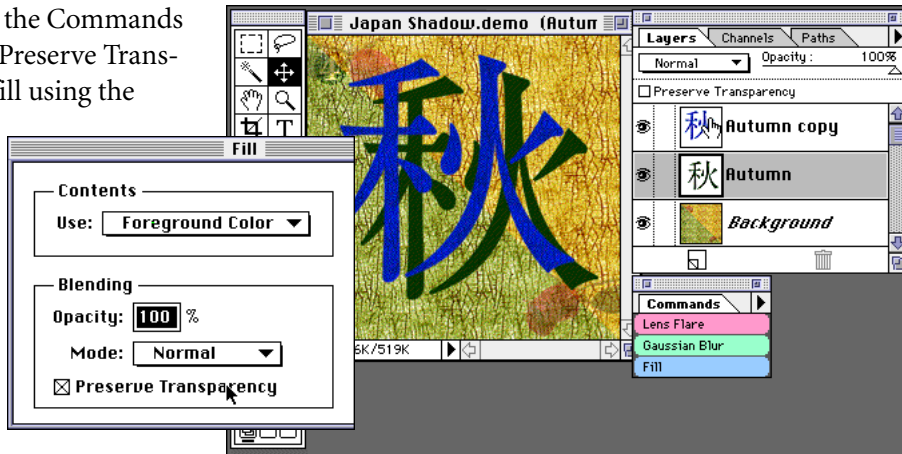
3. Release the mouse button when the layer is slightly offset. This will become the drop shadow. At this stage, the original and the copy are the same color.



After moving
The moved image regains its color when the mouse button is released.

DROP SHADOW USING LAYERS

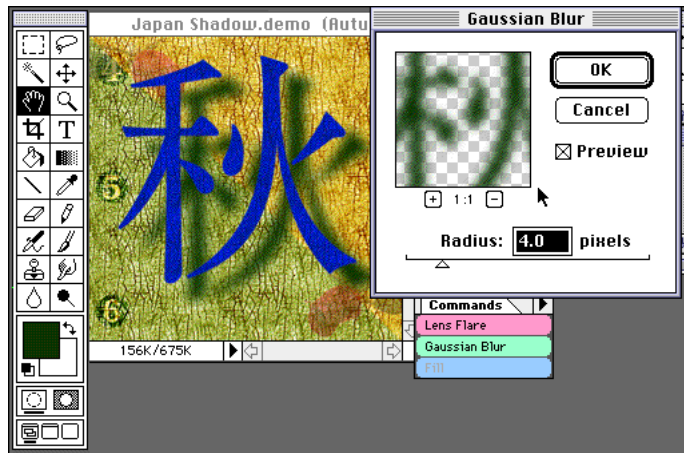
4. Click Fill in the Commands palette, select Preserve Transparency, and fill using the foreground color.



Preserve Transparency

There are typically a thousand ways to do everything in Adobe Photoshop, but selecting Preserve Transparency is the trick that makes this technique the fastest way to create a drop shadow, with the fewest steps.

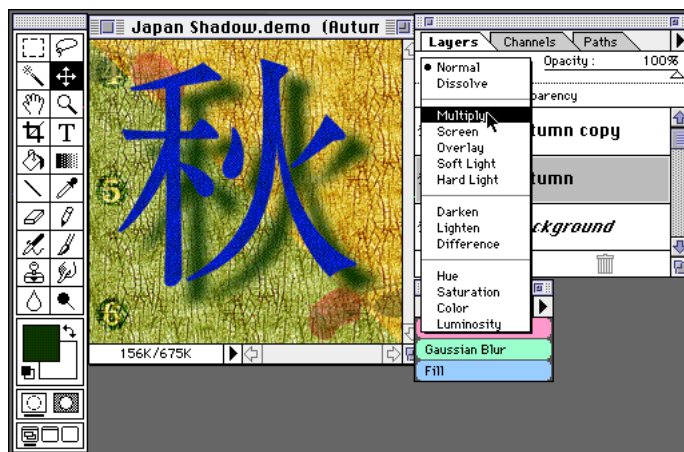
5. Use the Gaussian Blur filter (Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur) to soften the shadow. Here we used a radius of 4 for a 72-ppi image. For higher resolution images, you'll need to use a higher radius value.



Shadows

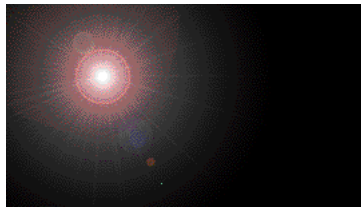
Shadows add the illusion of three dimensions, and are rarely hard-edged. Blurring the shadow adds realism and makes the main image stand out.

6. Combine the drop shadow with the background using the Multiply mode in the Layers palette.



Multiply mode

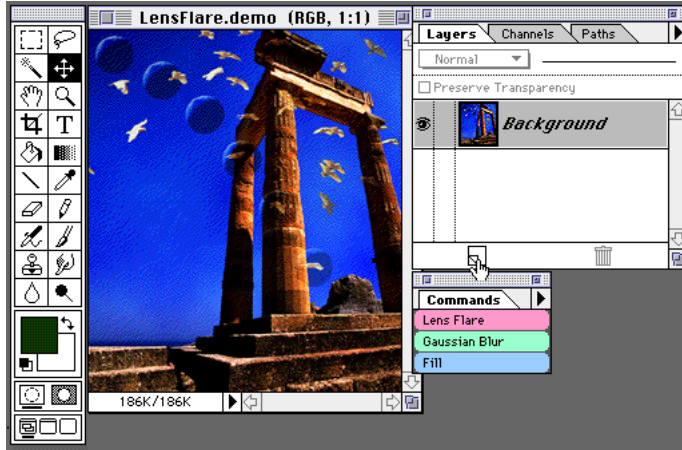
The Multiply mode is the equivalent of placing two transparencies over each other and viewing them illuminated by a light table. The result is a darker combination of the two images.



Photoshop began its life as a darkroom inside a computer. From simple cropping to dodging and burning, many of Photoshop's features simulate professional photographic effects. The Lens Flare filter simulates a common photographic artifact that even modern cameras have failed to eliminate.

#2: LENS FLARE

1. Create a new layer by clicking the New Layer icon in the Layers palette.

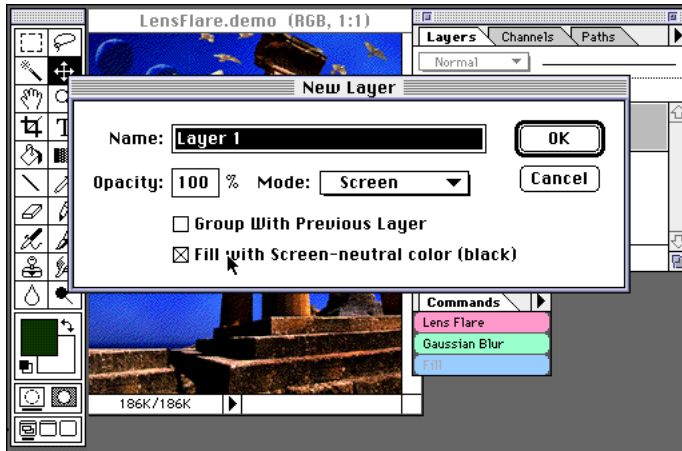


Commands palette

A super-user way of making command selections less tedious is to load commands into the Commands palette. Then all it takes to choose a command is a click in the palette.

2. The New Layer dialog box appears. Select Screen from the Mode pop-up menu.

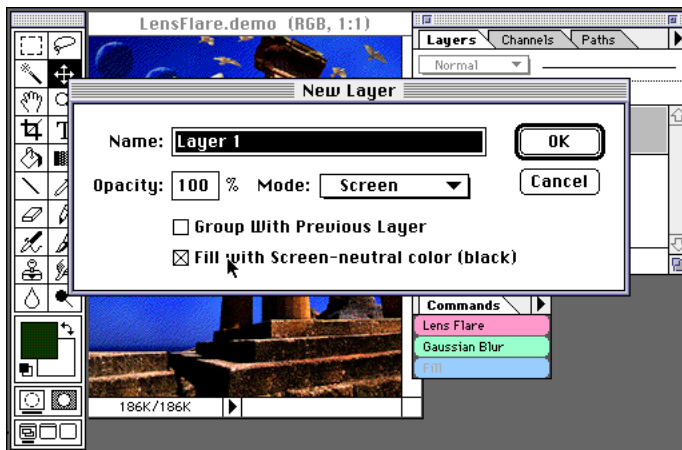
Super tip: Hold down the Option/Alt key (Option on the Macintosh; Alt with Windows) to create a new layer without opening the New Layer dialog box.



Screen mode

Screen mode looks at the color information in each channel and multiplies the inverse of the blend and base colors. The result is always a lighter color. Screening with black leaves the color unchanged. Screening with white produces white. The effect is similar to painting over an area with bleach.

3. Fill the new layer with black (the screen-neutral color).

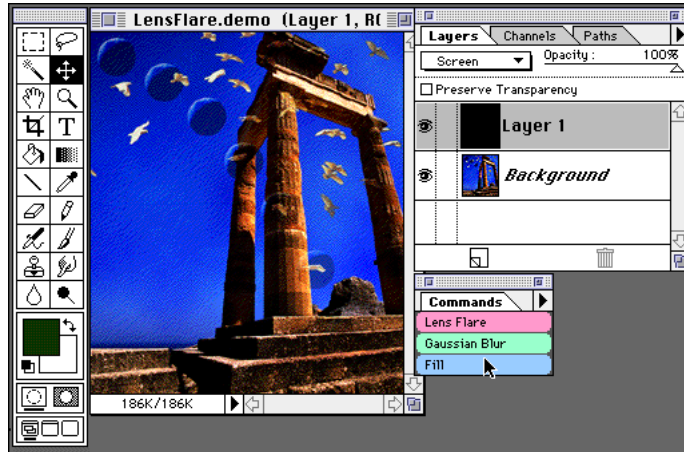


Screen-neutral

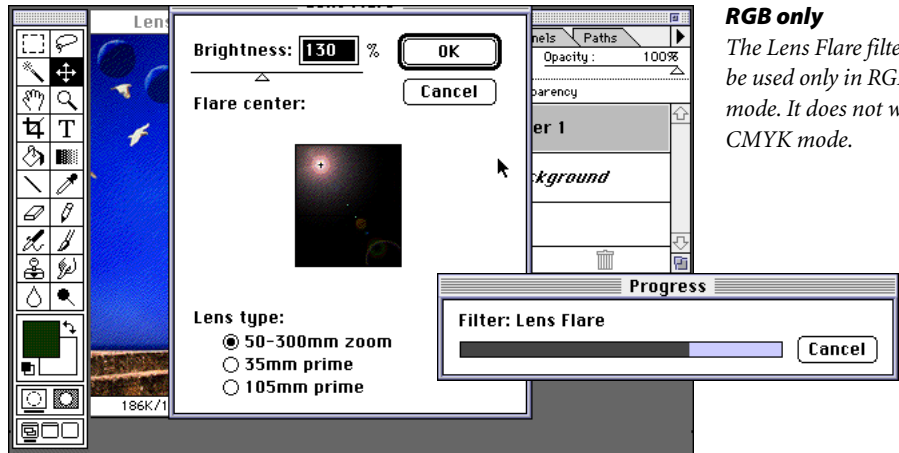
Filling with a screen-neutral color ensures that the background of the new, screened layer is neutral—that is, transparent.

LENS FLARE

4. The new layer appears above the background layer. Make sure that the black layer is selected for the next step.



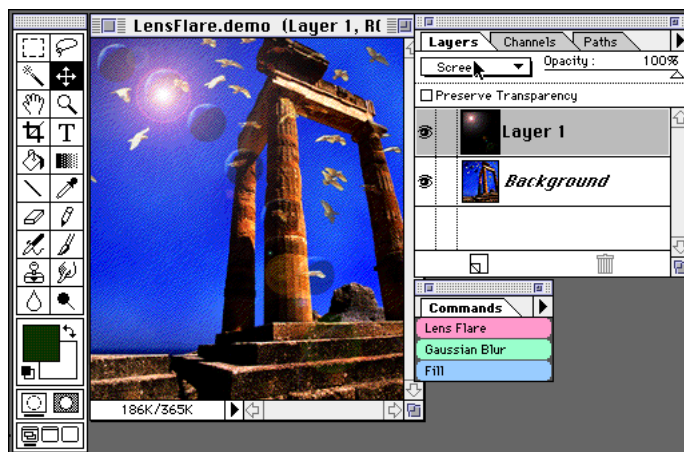
5. Run the Lens Flare filter on the black layer only. In this example we used a brightness of 130%.



RGB only

The Lens Flare filter can be used only in RGB mode. It does not work in CMYK mode.

6. Et voilà! A beautiful lens flare. Use the move tool to drag the flare anywhere on the image. If desired, adjust the layer's opacity for different effects.



Flexibility

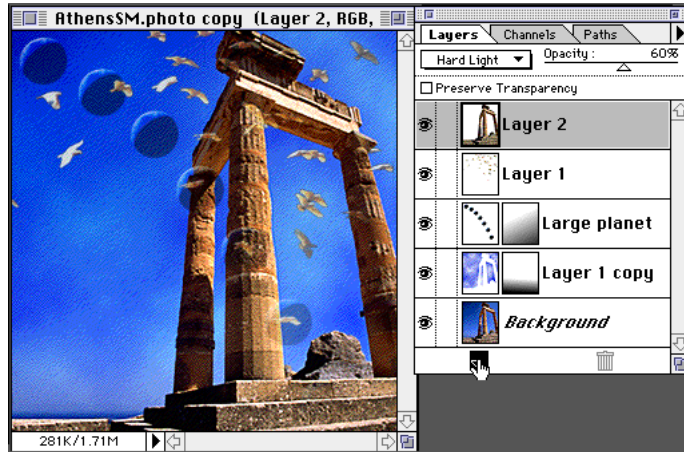
By applying filters to layers, you can make unlimited changes without affecting the underlying image.



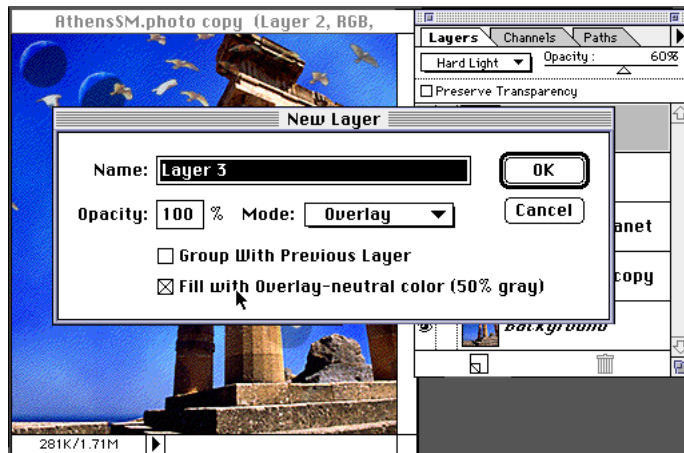
Currently, it's not possible to make overall image adjustments to a layered document. Adjustments affect only the layer that is selected. This super technique shows a simple solution that lets you control all layers in a document. In this example, we want to give an overall warmer appearance to the image.

#3: GLOBAL LAYER ADJUSTMENT

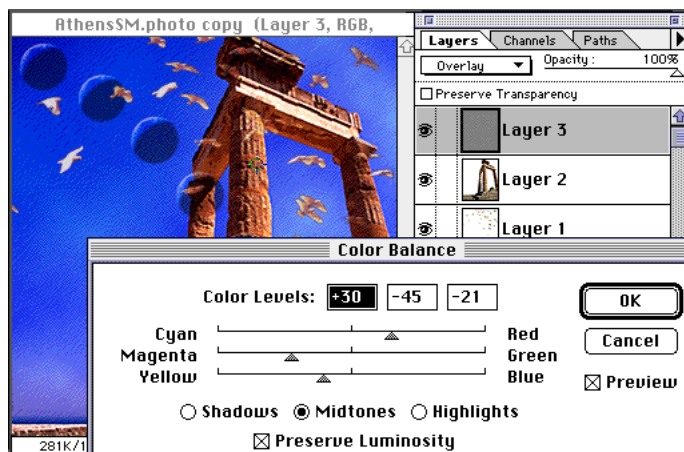
1. First create a new layer that will sit on top of all other layers by clicking the New Layer icon in the Layers palette.



2. In the New Layer dialog box, select the Overlay mode, and select Fill with Overlay-neutral color (50% gray). This makes the background of the new overlay layer neutral—that is, transparent.



3. Select this new layer in the Layers palette, and press Command/Ctrl + Y to bring up the Color Balance dialog box. Adjust the color balance for the layer. Because this layer is in Overlay mode, it affects the appearance of all layers below it. It doesn't change the layers; it merely tints them. Amazing, but true.

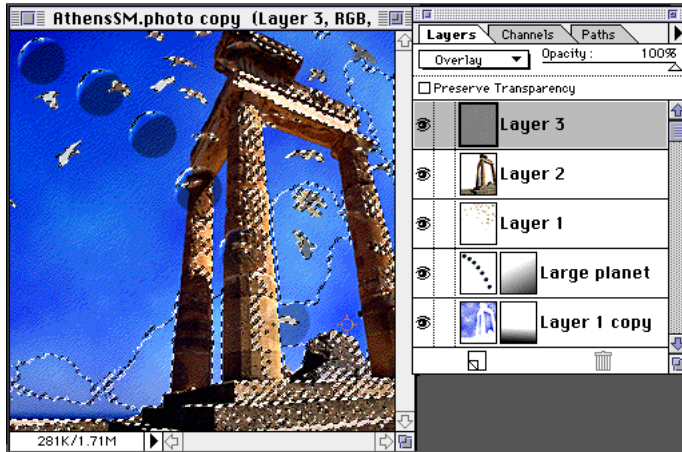


Shortcuts

Throughout this document, "Command/Ctrl" means Command on the Macintosh and Ctrl on Windows. "Option/Alt" means Option on the Macintosh and Alt on Windows.

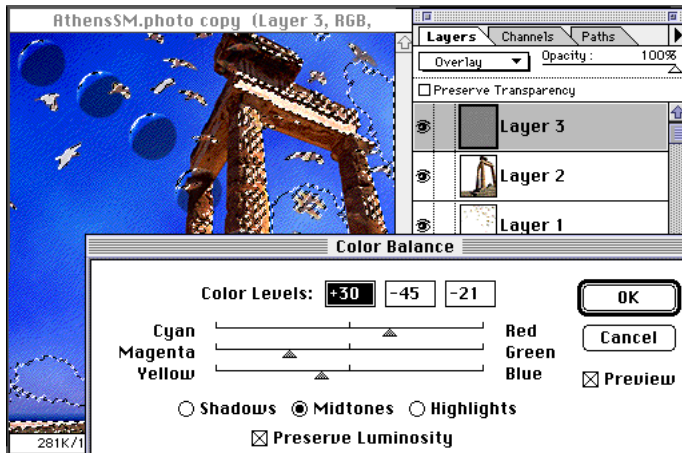
GLOBAL LAYER ADJUSTMENT

4. To apply color changes to only the highlights of the image, undo step 3 (Command/Ctrl + Z), and then press Command/Ctrl + Option/Alt + 0 to load the luminosity values for the entire image.



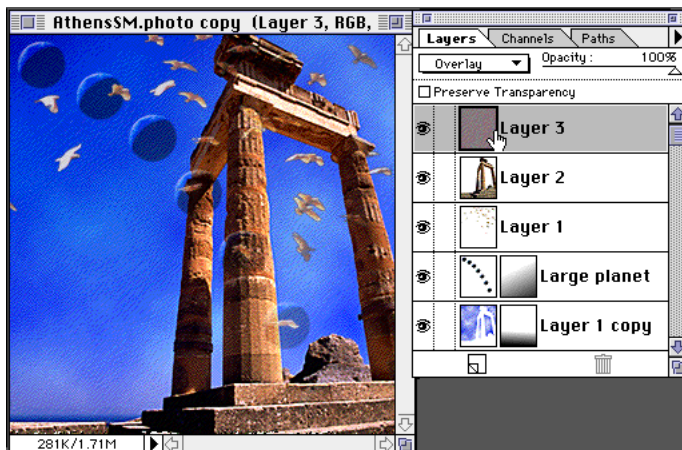
Luminosity values
Loading the luminosity values as a selection lets you easily adjust just the highlights in an image.

5. Press Command/Ctrl + Y to display the Color Balance dialog box, and adjust the sliders as desired.



Super tip
To reload the last used settings in Color Balance, press Command/Ctrl + Option/Alt + Y. Using the Option/Alt key to open a dialog box reloads the last used settings for many other controls in Photoshop, such as Hue/Saturation, Replace Color, and Levels.

6. Press Command/Ctrl + D to deselect the image. The slightly warmer tone given to the overlay layer affects all the layers below. There you have it—global layer adjustments to an entire image, without altering the individual layers.



Experiment
You can create several overlay layers to try multiple variations on your color adjustment.



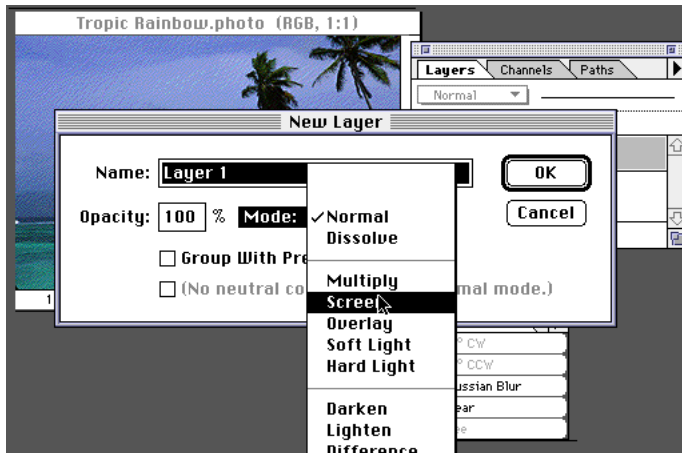
It's easy to make a two-color blend in Adobe Photoshop, but how can you make a multicolored rainbow blend, like the one found in this image? Well, it's easy, too.

#4: RAINBOW BLEND

1. Create a new layer by clicking the New Layer icon in the Layers palette.



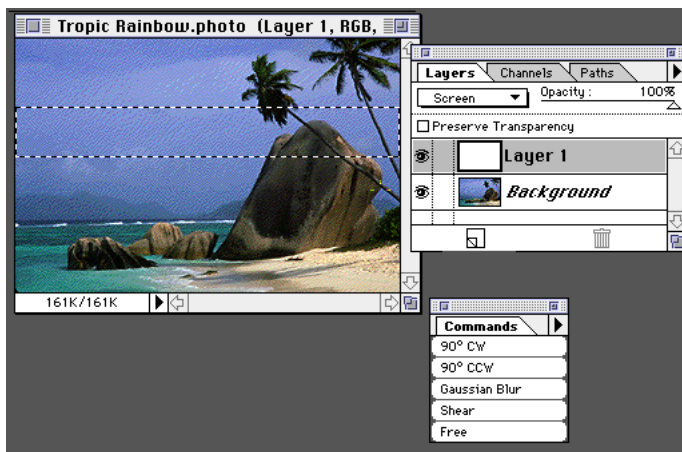
2. In the New Layer dialog box, select Screen mode.



Screen mode

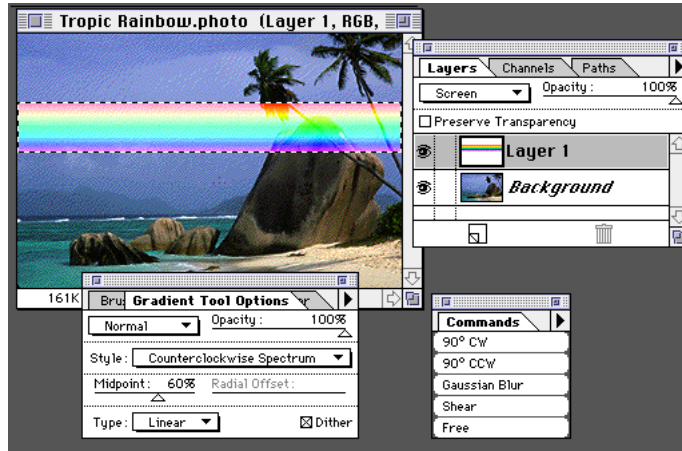
Screen mode looks at the color information in each channel and multiplies the inverse of the blend and base colors. The result is always a lighter color. Screening with black leaves the color unchanged. Screening with white produces white. The effect is similar to painting over an area with bleach.

3. With this new layer selected, use the marquee tool to make a selection roughly the width that you want the rainbow to be. Next, select the brightest red in the spectrum for the foreground color, and a bright magenta for the background color.



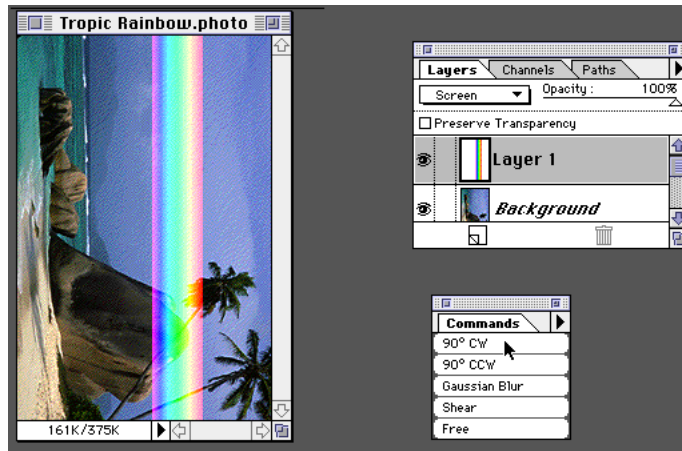
RAINBOW BLEND

4. Double-click the gradient tool to open the Gradient Tool Options palette. Set Style to Counterclockwise Spectrum, and set Midpoint to 60%. With the gradient tool selected, place the cursor at the top of the selection. Drag to the bottom of the selection, holding down the Shift key to constrain the gradient to a perfect vertical axis.



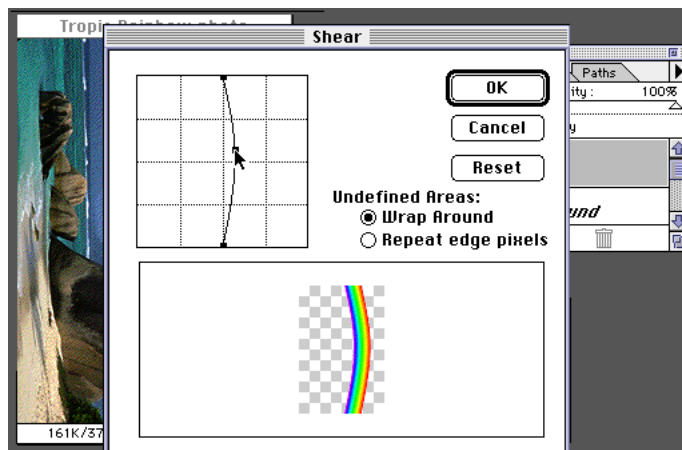
Midpoint slider
Setting the midpoint to 60% increases the amount of red in the gradient, making it look more like a rainbow.

5. Press Command/Ctrl + D to deselect the rainbow, and then rotate the entire image 90° clockwise by selecting Image > Rotate > 90° CW.



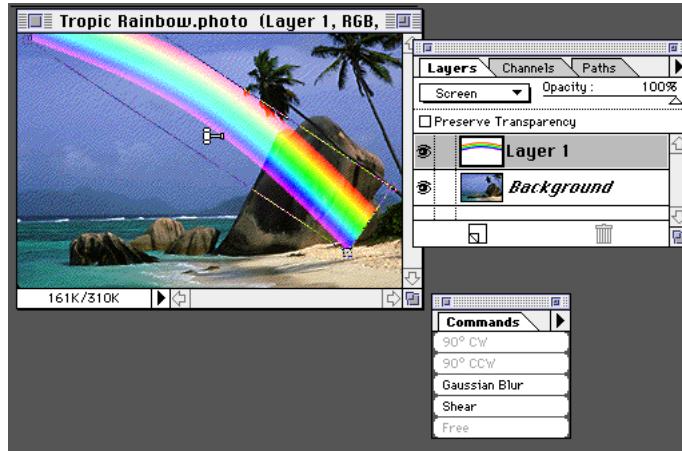
Commands palette
A super-user way of making command selections less tedious is to load commands into the Commands palette. Then all it takes to choose a command is a click in the palette.

6. Run the Shear filter on the layer by choosing Filter > Distort > Shear. Move a point along the curve slightly; the preview will indicate the arc in the rainbow. Click OK. Next rotate the entire image 90° counterclockwise, by selecting Image > Rotate > 90° CCW.

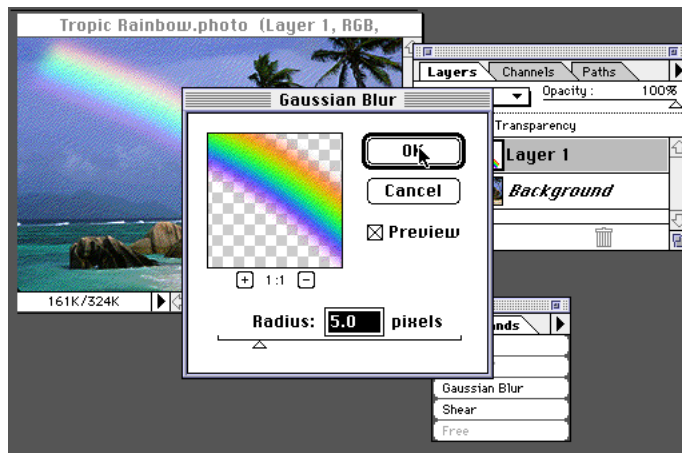


RAINBOW BLEND

7. Now choose Image > Rotate > Free. Drag one of the handles to adjust the angle of the rainbow. When the angle is as you want it, click inside the selection.



8. With the layer still selected, choose Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur. Use a radius value that gives the rainbow a soft blur in the preview window. Then select the move tool, and move the rainbow into its final position.



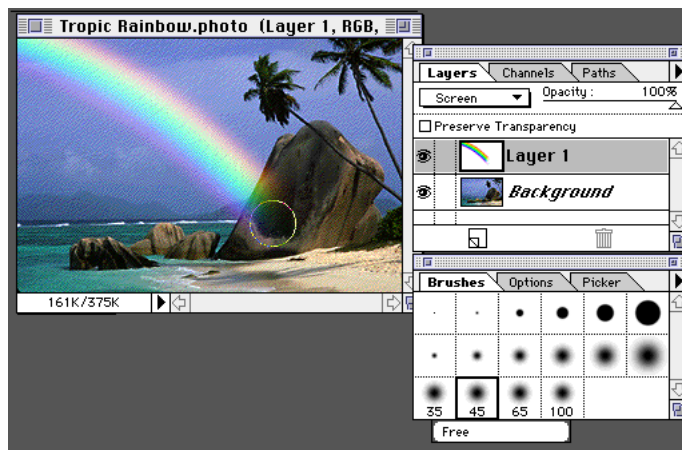
Clipped layers

If you run a filter on a layer that extends beyond the boundaries of the image, the image beyond the boundaries will be clipped off. To run a filter on this type of image, first move the entire artwork into view.

9. Now select the eraser tool, and erase any extra rainbow in front of your image. Fantastic!

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Brush shortcuts

There are some great shortcuts in Photoshop for selecting brush size and opacity. The [key selects the next smaller brush;] selects the next larger; { selects the first brush; } selects the last. 1-0 changes a brush's opacity to 10 times the number (or to 100 for '0').