

Warm *and* Cool

USE ADOBE PHOTOSHOP'S *BLEND* COMMAND TO ALTER SELECTIVE COLORS WITHOUT COMPLEX MASKS

BY KATRIN EISMANN

Excerpted by permission from the forthcoming book, "The Creative Digital Darkroom" by Katrin Eismann and Sean Duggan (O'Reilly Media).

As we look through the viewfinder to compose an image, we are really seeing the image in our mind's eye, which is rarely what the camera records. The camera cannot appreciate composition, color, and detail, or revel in juxtaposition, irony, and beauty. For years, photographers have been using color correction and color balancing filters to refine how color film captures and renders a scene. In the digital darkroom you can enhance your images with subtle to dramatic color enhancements that mimic and expand upon traditional photography color filters and gels, to selectively warm and cool the hues in an image, and experiment with creative raw processing with Adobe Photoshop Camera Raw and Lightroom.

COMBINING COLOR TINTS

As with everything creative, a one-size-fits-all approach isn't the norm. In many cases you'll want to warm and cool different areas in the image to create the effect pictured in **Figure 1**.

To warm the gentleman's skin, add a Photo Filter Warming Filter (LBA) and increase the density to 33% (Layer > New Adjustment Layer > Photo Filter...). In **Figure 2**, you see that this also warms the sky, which should remain blue. Making a mask with so many important details—such as the man's hair and the bird's feathers—would be a daunting undertaking.

To create an effective mask based on color, use the Blend If command on the adjustment layer to control where Photoshop applies the warming effect. Select Layer > Layer Style > Blending Options. The area to concentrate on with this technique is the Blend If area in the lower part of the dialog box.



Original



Final

Figure 1: Warming the gentleman's face and cooling the sky creates a more dynamic image. ©Katrin Eismann



Figure 2. Warming the image improves the skin tones but ruins the blue sky.

To work along, you can download the image at www.ppmag.com/images/birdhandler.jpg. Push your color boundaries and visit www.ppmag.com/web-exclusives for more from Katrin Eismann on creative raw processing!



Figure 3: Pushing through the blue of the original sky allows the man to be warmer and the sky cooler.



Figure 4: Separating the Blend If sliders creates an imperceptible transition that blends the colors perfectly.



Figure 5. Adjusting the Blend If sliders allows the blue to be enhanced, which frames the man and the bird beautifully.

which in this case removed the unwanted warmth from the sky. To refine the transitions, hold down opt/alt and drag the small triangles to separate the triangular sliders into two parts. The further you move apart the split triangles, the greater the transition you create. In **Figure 4**, you can see that the man's face and the hawk are warmed while the sky is the original blue.

To enhance the blue of the sky, repeat this technique by adding a new Photo Filter adjustment layer and choosing Cooling Filter (80). Select Layer > Layer Styles > Blending Options; in this case, the desired color blue cools the darker areas of the man and the hawk too much. By moving the This Layer shadow slider far right, the blue effect is concealed (*Figure 5*). Opt/alt-drag the shadow slider to split the slider and create an imperceptible transition.

The key to working with Blend If is to understand that moving the active This Layer sliders conceals the effect, while moving the Underlying Layer sliders reveals the layer's tones or colors through This Layer. ■

The topmost gray sliders are excellent controls for blending images based on tone. To control how colors blend, use the Blend If pull-down menu and drag to the color you want to control. In this example, it's blue, as we're trying to stop the effect from warming the sky.

The This Layer sliders control the blues on the active layer—in this case, the Photo Filter layer—while the Underlying Layer sliders control the blues on the layer directly underneath. To bring back the lighter blue sky of the original image, move the triangular highlight slider of the Underlying Layer to the left, as in **Figure 3**.

There are no right or wrong numbers when using these sliders; simply move the appropriate slider until you see the desired effect,

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