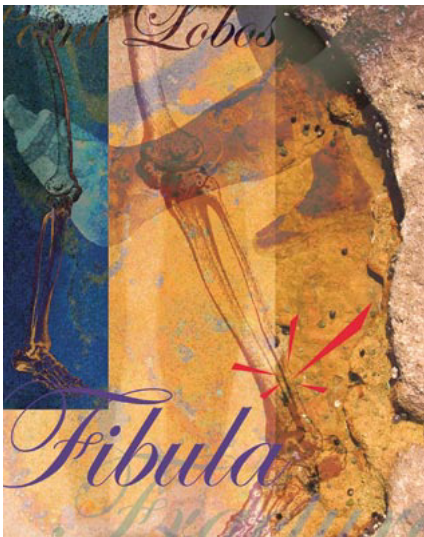


Adobe Studio on Adobe Photoshop CS

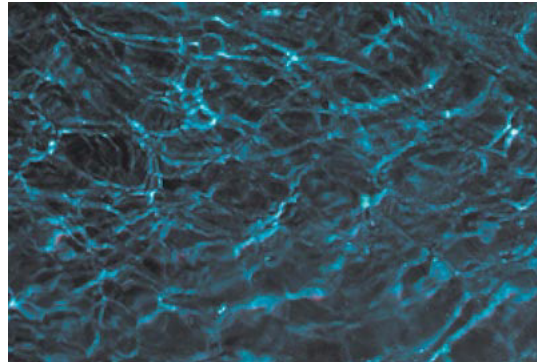
Merge images into a masterpiece

Adobe® Photoshop® offers many, many ways to blend images together. Here are three different ways using layer masks, layer styles, and layer groups. Each one creates a different effect. The easiest to learn and use is layer-mask blending: Create a gradient layer mask to blend smoothly from one layer to another. If you're more adventurous, play with layer-style blending. The results will depend on the images you start with and their highlight and shadow values. And if you want to mask several layers at once without having to flatten them, use the layer-group blending technique.



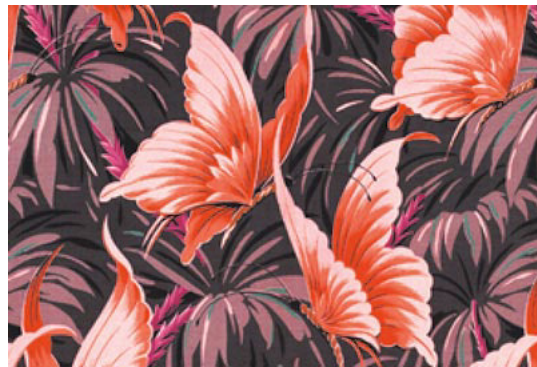
Layer-mask blending

1 Open or create an image file.



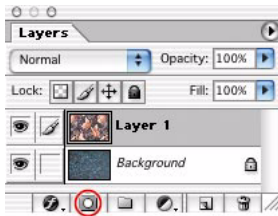
Open an image file

2 Open another file and select the move tool. Position the image windows so that you can see both of them on-screen at once. Use the move tool to drag and drop the image of one file onto the other, pressing Shift before you release the mouse button to center the layer on top of the other layer.



Open a second file

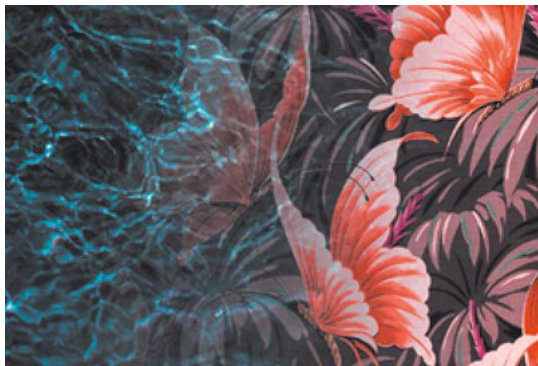
3 With the new layer still selected, click the Add Layer Mask button in the Layers palette. Notice that the foreground and background colors switch to white and black.



Add a layer mask to the new layer

4 Select one of the gradient tools. In the tool options bar, click the arrow button to the right of the gradient swatch to display the Gradient pop-up palette, and choose the Foreground to Background gradient. Draw a gradient on the layer mask. The white areas of the gradient will reveal the top layer, and the black areas will reveal the layer underneath.

Try different gradients and angles for different effects.



One layer image blended into another

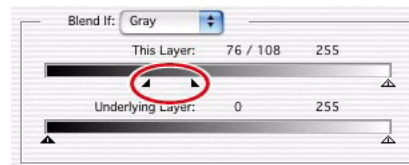
Layer-style blending

- 1 Follow steps 1 and 2 of the Layer Mask Blending technique.
- 2 Double-click the layer thumbnail of the dragged-and-dropped upper layer in the Layers palette to open the Layer Style dialog box. To make the darkest areas of the top layer drop out, drag the black shadow triangle beneath the This Layer slider to the right.

All pixel values that fall into this range will disappear from view and reveal the layer underneath.

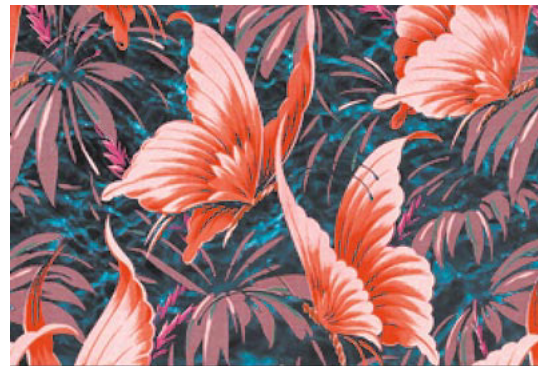
3 To soften the transition from layer to layer, split the shadow triangle by holding down Option/Alt and drag one side away from the other. (The triangle turns into two half triangles.) When you like the effect, click OK.

The lower layer is now revealed through the darkest areas of the upper layer.



Option/Alt-drag the triangle to soften the transition

4 If desired, edit and re-edit by double-clicking the layer to display the Layer Style dialog box and making additional adjustments.



Lower layer revealed through the dark areas of the upper layer

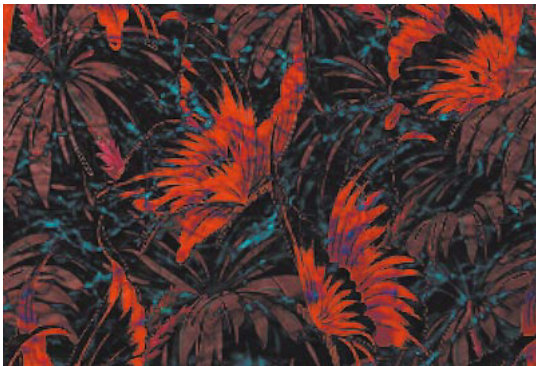
- 5 To make the lower layer show through the highlight areas of the upper layer, open the Layer Style dialog box again. Reset the black shadow slider to 0. Move the white highlight triangle for the This Layer slider to the left. Option/Alt-drag the triangle to split it for a smoother image transition.
 - 6 When you are satisfied with the preview, click OK.
- The result shows the lower image revealed through the lightest values of the upper image.



Lower layer revealed through the light areas of the upper layer

7 Change the blending mode of the upper layer for a different effect.

In this example, the upper layer's blending mode was set to Difference with the Blend If options set to the values used in step 5. The water texture shows through in the darker areas, and the water image appears in the lighter areas, for a batik-like effect.



Difference blending: Lower layer revealed through the light areas of the upper layer

Layer-group blending

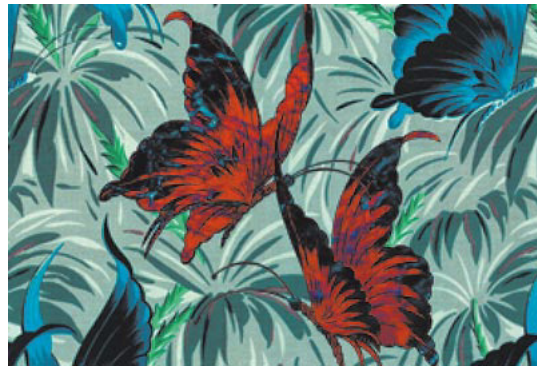
1 Open a file that has two or more layers. One of the layers should have a silhouette or shape that you want to use as a mask for one or more of the other layers. Position the silhouette or shape layer below the layers it will mask.

This example uses two butterflies.

2 Option/Alt-click the line between each of the layers you want to group. The thumbnail becomes indented, and the base layer name is underlined to remind you that the base layer masks the layers above it.

Once the layers are grouped with that base layer, the other layers adopt the transparency mask of the base layer.

In this example, the two layers that make the batik image created in the preceding step 7 are masked by the two butterflies. The Background layer is now the lowest layer and is not part of the layer group.



Upper layers revealed through the layer group base

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