Layer & Channel Masks

Introduction to Photoshop

Lecture outline

- Layer Masks
  - What they are and what they do
  - Creating a layer mask
  - Editing a layer mask
- Channels and Channel masks
  - What they are and what they do
  - Creating a channel mask
  - Editing a channel mask
  - Using a channel mask
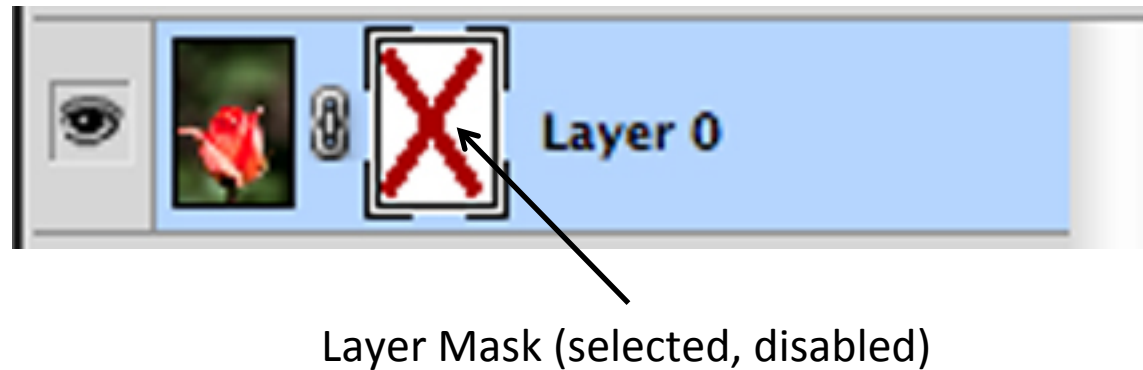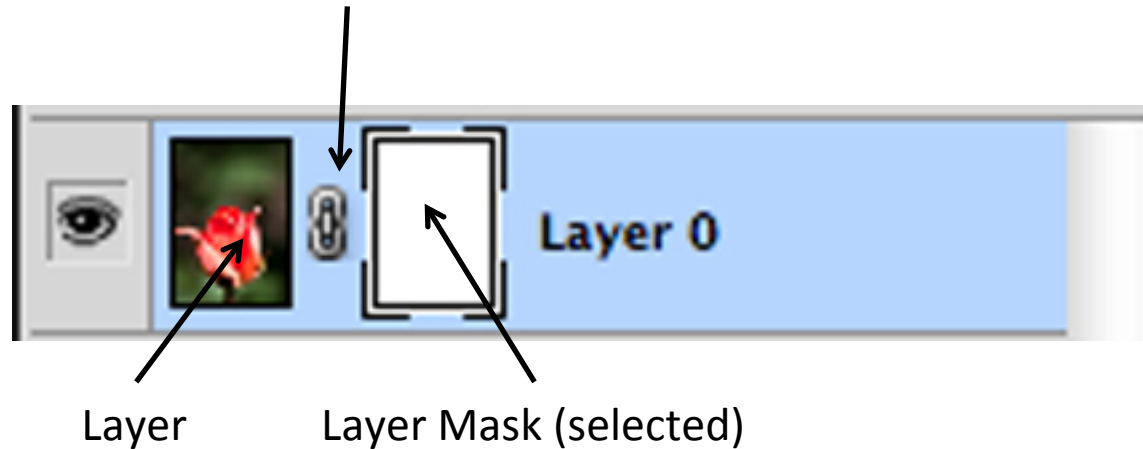 - Other uses for a channel mask

References

- Kelby, Scott, <u>How Do I ... Photoshop</u>, Chpt 5
- Whalley, Robin, <u>Essential Photoshop</u>, Chpt 9
- Whalley, Robin, <u>Photoshop Layers</u>, Chpt 5

Layer Masks

- What they are, what they do
  - A layer mask is a mask that is attached to a layer
  - The layer mask adjusts the transparency of the layer
  - Layer mask does not affect the opacity of the layer
  - Layer masks work in black, white, shades of gray
  - Layer mask mantra: white reveals, black conceals

Layer Masks

Link to show layer mask is
connected to the layer

Layer   Layer Mask (selected)

Layer Mask (selected, disabled)
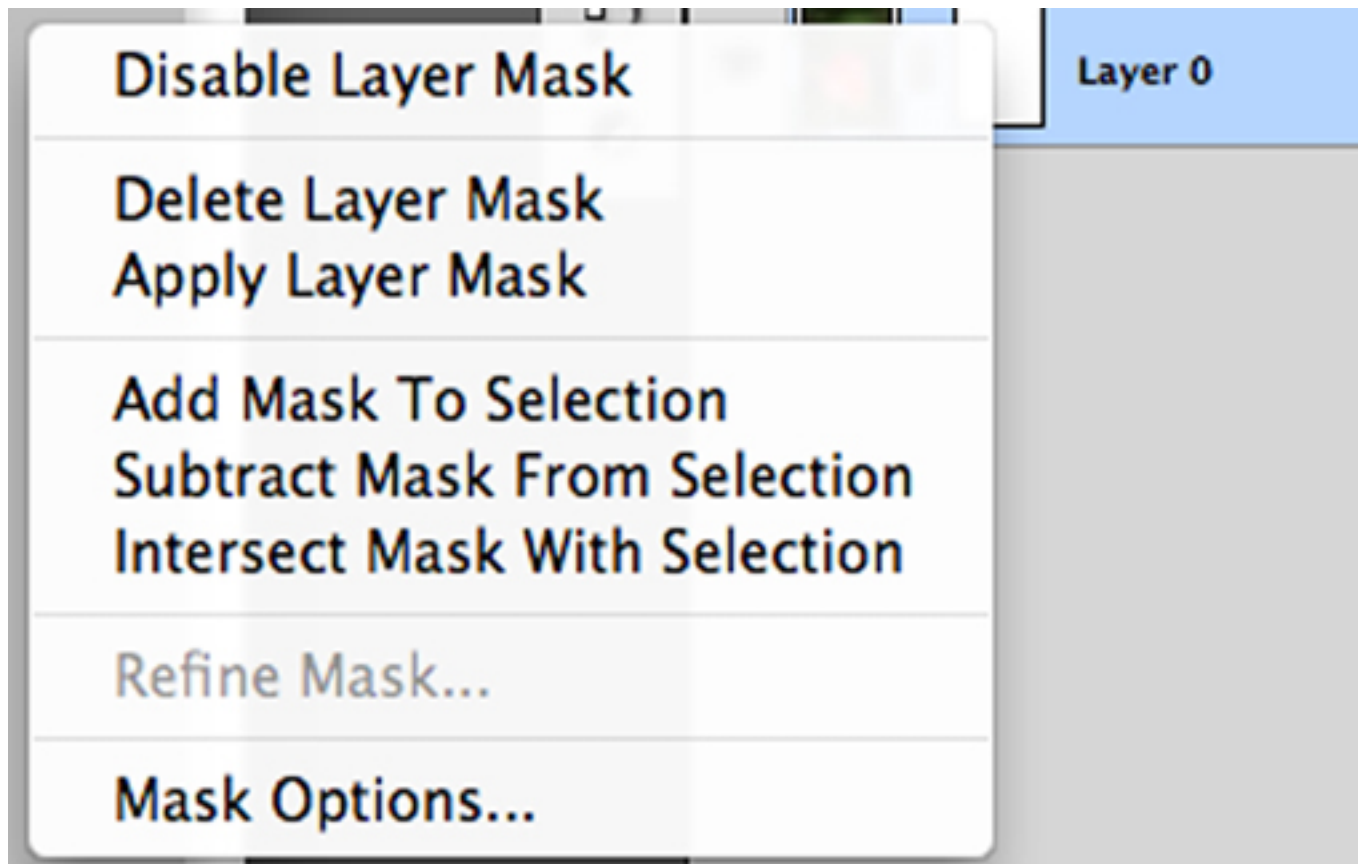
Layer Masks

- Creating a layer mask
  - Menu: Layer → Layer Mask → Reveal All / Hide All
    - Reveal All = layer mask filled in with white
    - Hide All = layer mask filled in with black
    - Other options: Delete, Apply, Disable, Unlink
  - At the bottom of the layer panel

Click on icon to make a layer mask for the current active layer

Layer Masks

- Control-click or mouse right click on layer mask:

Disable Layer Mask

Delete Layer Mask
Apply Layer Mask

Add Mask To Selection
Subtract Mask From Selection
Intersect Mask With Selection

Refine Mask...

Mask Options...

Layer 0

Layer Masks

- Editing layer mask
  - Use the brush tool to paint in black, white, or gray depending on how much of the layer below the currently active layer you want showing
    - When painting, use around a 20% opacity on the brush, build up the mask slowly
  - Use the gradient tool to fill the layer with a black → white (or white → black) gradient
  - Option / Alt clicking on the layer mask will show it on the canvas

Channels and channel Masks

- Image modes
  - Photoshop has different image modes
    - Grayscale: no color data
    - Indexed color: GIF images (256 colors)
    - RGB color (default): JPEG / Adobe color space
    - CMYK color: printer colors
    - Lab color: L * a * b mode
      - L=lightness, luminosity data
      - a=blue to yellow colors
      - b=green to magenta colors
    - 8, 16, 32 bit color space
    - Each mode has different channels

Channel Masks

- What they are, what they do
  - A channel mask is a mask that is special to the image
  - The channel mask keeps selections
  - The channel mask is edited like a layer mask
  - Channel masks work in black, white, shades of gray
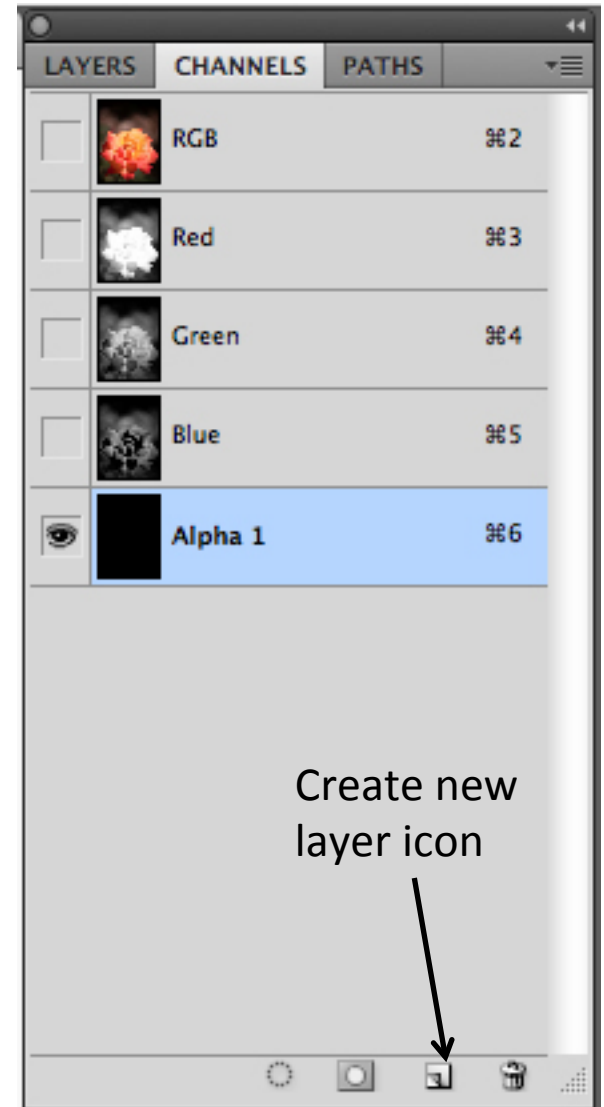 - Channel mask mantra: white reveals, black conceals

Channel Masks

- ## RGB image mode
  - ### 3 different channels
    - Red: red color data
    - Green: green color data
    - Blue: blue color data
  - ### Alpha channel
    - Like a layer mask in that it uses black, white, gray
    - Used to hold selections
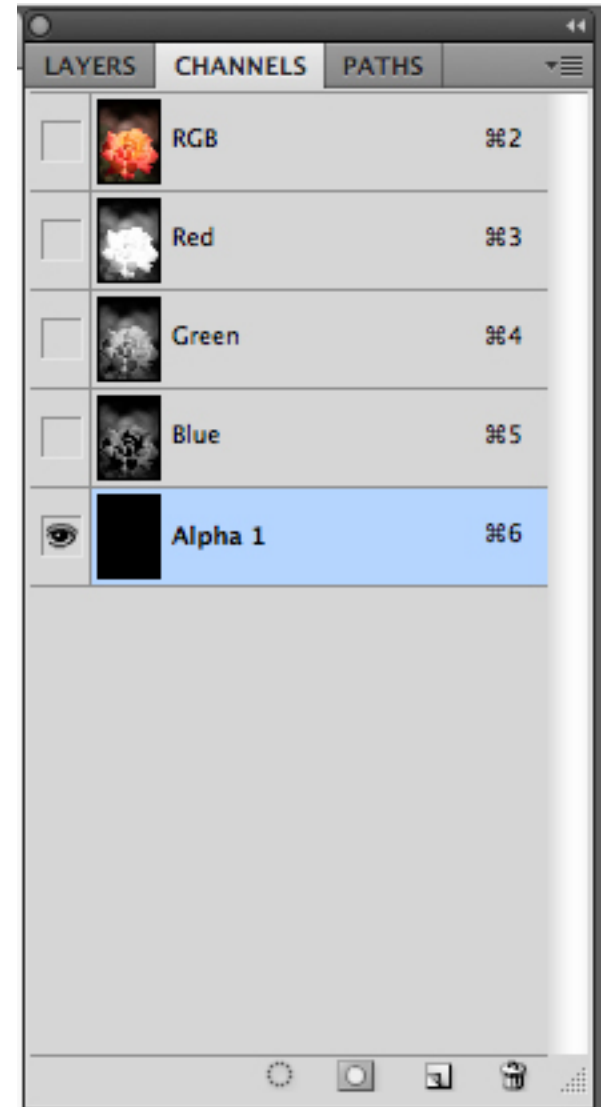   - Works with luminosity data

Channel Masks

- Creating a channel mask
  - Open up the channels in the layer panel
  - Click on the create new layer icon at the bottom of the panel
  - Alpha channel will appear below the other channels and will be filled in with black
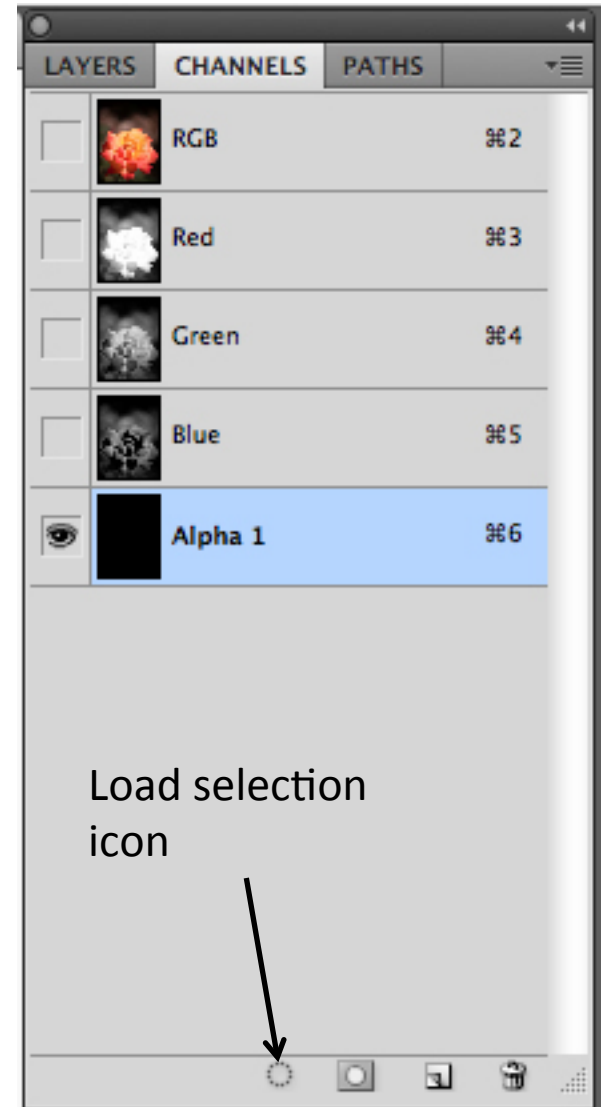

Create new layer icon

Channel Masks

- Editing a channel mask
  - Use one of the other channels to make your selection
  - Make the alpha channel active and then fill in the selection with white or gray
  - Edit as you would a layer mask

Channel Masks

- Using a channel mask
  - The channel mask has your selection saved
  - Click on the load selection icon
  - Make the RGB channel visible
  - Switch back to the layers tab
  - Make a new layer via copy [cmnd + j / ctrl + j]

Load selection icon

Channel Masks

- Other uses
  - Special effects
    - Fill alpha channel with Clouds filter (Menu: Filter → Render → Clouds)
    - Run the Difference Clouds filter (Menu: Filter → Render → Difference Clouds) four or five times [cmnd + f / ctrl + f]
    - Do a [cmnd + l / ctrl + l] to bring up Levels adjustment, move the right slider (white) to the left, move the gray slider (brightness) also to the left or right as desired
    - Load the selection, go back to layers, make a new layer and then fill it