PHOTO-PAINT
COLORS-3

In previous articles we have discussed the ways in which colour is created. In particular, we talked about RGB, CMYK and HSB colour models. This month we're going to explore the HSB model in greater detail.

You will recall that a few articles ago we used masks to colourise a grayscale image. This month, we'll go in the other direction. I am sure you all have seen ads that are in grayscale with the exception of one small element. We are going to do this type of thing now with my favourite image **(Figure 1)**. Along the way, we'll segue back into masks-you'll learn some new tricks!
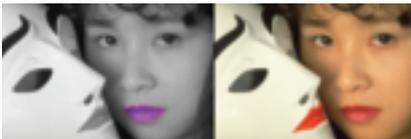
Figure 1

1. Open women.cpt from your Retlab Samples directory. Immediately save the file as women-in grey.cpt.

2. Our task is to mask the lips. Use the **Magic Wand Mask** tool. Set the **Colour Tolerance** to 3 in the Property Bar. Using the **Shift** key to get into the Additive mode, simply click on the lips until you get close to masking everything. Don't worry about getting all of it. **Figure 2** provides an example of 'good enough' to take you to the next step.
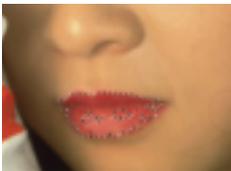
Figure 2

3. Now use your **Brush Mask** tool to refine the mask. Add and subtract as necessary so that your mask looks like **Figure 3**.

Figure 3

Smooth and Remove Holes

Examine **Figure 4** closely: The edges are a bit rough and there are places where you may have missed masking, so…

1. Choose **MASK**/*Mask Outline>Smooth* (Figure 4). This will smooth the overall edges of the mask. Set your **Radius** to 3 and **OK**.
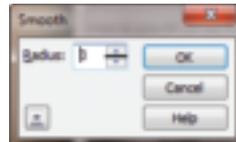

Figure 4

2. Now, choose **MASK**/*Mask Outline>Remove Holes*. Your mask should be pretty good now and should look similar to **Figure 5**. We're not done yet, however. There is one more thing you should do, and it's a better learning experience to first do the wrong thing! So…

Figure 5

3. Make a checkpoint (**EDIT**/*Checkpoint*) so you can come back to this point.

4. Now we want to turn everything grey EXCEPT the lips. The first thing you need to do is invert the mask by choosing **MASK/***Invert* or simply click the **Invert mask** button in the Standard Toolbar.

5. Now let's take advantage of our HSB colour model. Remember that Saturation represents the colour's purity. Removing the Saturation leaves only the black/white component. So choose **IMAGE**/*Desaturate*. Note: Version X5 users have a new additional option: **IMAGE**/*Grayscale*. These two options yield slightly different results. X4 and earlier users can only desaturate. More on this in an upcoming article.

What's Wrong?

You've now reached a point at which the lips are in colour, with the rest of the image in grey value. But…

1. Turn OFF the mask marquee so you can see the results of your work so far. Note the harsh demarcation between the grey and red (**Figure 6**). What we need to do is soften that boundary.

Figure 6

Enter feathering to the rescue. Feathering softens the edges of an object by gradually increasing the transparency off the edge pixels. You can specify the width of the feathered section and the transparency method you want to use. You can feather both objects and masks, but certainly from a learning standpoint, it is easier to see on an object, so…

2. Choose a solid fill of any colour and add a rectangle as an object anywhere on your image. Your image might now look like **Figure 7**.
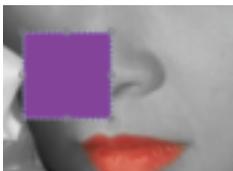
Figure 7

3. Now choose **OBJECT**/*Feather* and apply a 20-pixel Curved feather (**Figure 8**).
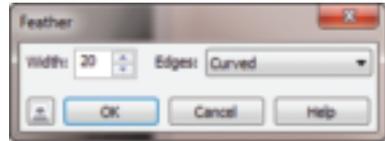

Figure 8

4. Your image should now appear as in **Figure 9**. Feathering applies a graduated transparency to the edge of the object. Note that with an object, the feather is directed from the outer edge inward. With Masks, you have more control over how feathering is applied, including the ability to feather outward.
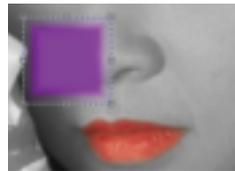

Figure 9

5. Choose **EDIT**/*Restore to Checkpoint* and turn the Mask Marquee back ON. Your image should appear as in Figure 5 again.

6. Choose **MASK**/*Mask Outline>Feather*. When applied to masks, Feathering causes the mask to be applied in a graduated transition, softening the applied effect at the edges. Furthermore, you can decide the direction with which to apply the Feathering: **Inside, Middle, Outside** or **Average**. Apply the settings shown in **Figure 10**. Your mask will appear now as in **Figure 11**. You can see it has expanded.
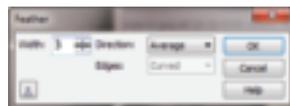

Figure 10

Figure 11

7. Now invert the mask and desaturate as you previously did. Notice how much nicer the transition is this time (**Figure 12**).

Figure 12

Changing the Lip Colour

You've learned from our discussion on HSB that this is the easiest way to change only the colour value, so…

1. Once again invert the mask so that only the lips are selected.

2. Now choose **ADJUST**/*Hue/Saturation/Lightness*. (Yes, it's true, HSL is not quite HSB, but the two are similar. The Hue portion works exactly the same). By sliding the Hue control, you are simply moving around the colour wheel. You can predict the result from the **Before After** colours. I find the lips are too saturated, so reduce the saturation. Play with these settings. I chose the settings in **Figure 13** to get a nice result.

Figure 13

Cool, huh? You can now see the ability to apply masks is really powerful. That's why we will spend more time discussing this topic in the next several articles.

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