



PHPC

After



Before

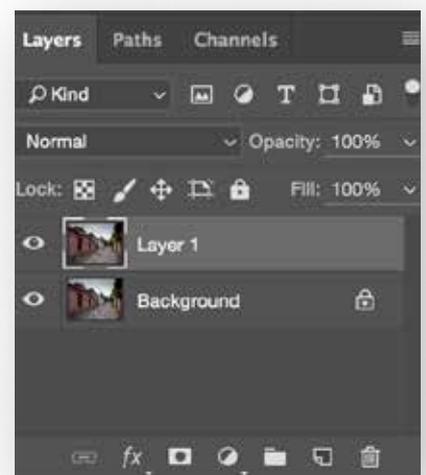


This technique replicates the **tonal contrast** effect that is available in plug-ins such as Topaz, Nik, On1 and Macphun. With this technique it is possible to replicate the effect using Adobe Photoshop only but since it involves a few steps it is best to set up as an Action to save time. It should also be noted that the filter - **Surface Blur** – is unfortunately one of Photoshop's slowest. Also the technique should be used in conjunction with a layer mask to hide parts of an image, such as out of focus areas, where tonal contrast detracts from the overall effect. For clarification the 'Before' image above, is straight out of the camera with no adjustments. I have assumed that the user has some basic knowledge of Photoshop.

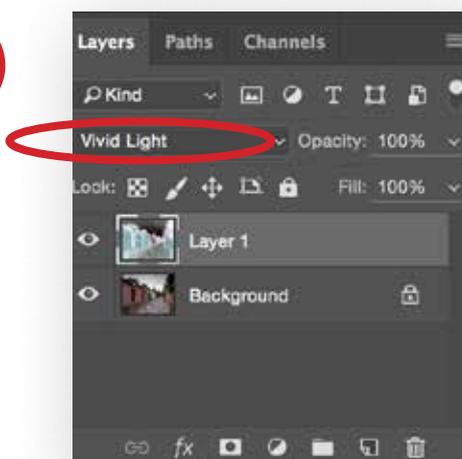
Below are the steps required to create **tonal contrast** in Photoshop. PC keyboard shortcuts are contained in brackets.

1

Make adjustments in Lightroom, Aperture etc to taste and open file in Photoshop. Duplicate the layer via Cmd + J (Ctrl + J)



2



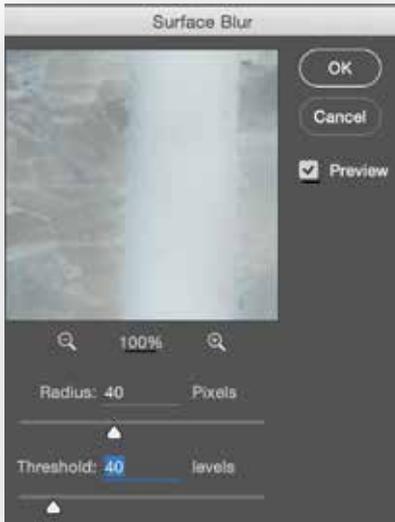
Change the blending mode from Normal to Vivid Light and invert the top layer via Cmd + I (Ctrl + I)

3

With Layer 1 selected go to menu and select Filter/Blur/Surface Blur



4



When met with a dialogue box change Radius to 40 and Threshold to 40. Do not change these amounts. Select OK. A progress bar will be seen.

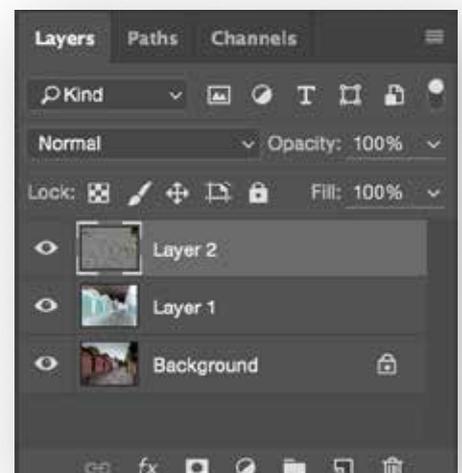
5

After the surface blur filter has been applied your image will look something like this. You will now Stamp Visible (Create a merged layer) via Cmd+ Option +Shift + E (Ctrl +Alt + Shift + E)



6

Delete layer 1. This layer is now superfluous as the next step is made to the merged layer (Layer 2). Remember Layer 1 was inverted and as a result the desaturate filter will not work properly.

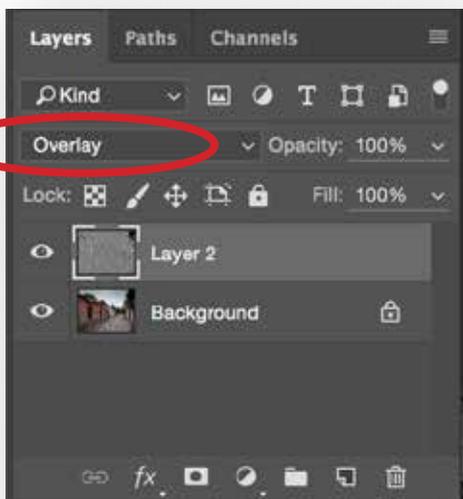


7

With Layer 2 selected go to the menu and select Image/Adjustments/Desaturate.



8



Change blending mode from Normal to Overlay. The process is complete. Reduce Layer Opacity to decrease the effect if required.

9

It is strongly recommended at this point that you introduce a layer mask (click on the rectangle with a hole punched in it). If the mask is white use black to paint out the effect. If the mask is black paint with white to allow the effect.

You can increase the effect by duplicating the layer Cmd + J (Ctrl + J).

Given the number of steps required it is also suggested that an Action be put in place to speed up the process.

Thanks for viewing and I hope that you find this document useful. My gratitude to **Scott Kelby** who I saw demonstrate this technique about 4 years ago.

