



Grab Your Super Hero Masking Tool

Session # 150133
Adobe Photoshop CS6

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Every super hero dons a mask to hide their identity. Masquerade revelers search for the perfect mask to hide their identity during the huge celebration. Photoshop offers a mask as a tool to "hide" those parts of an image that you do not want your viewers to see. With this tool, you can master easy editing jobs that will not take away from your original image. They also give you the opportunity to go back and undo editing that otherwise would be lost.

Layer Masks

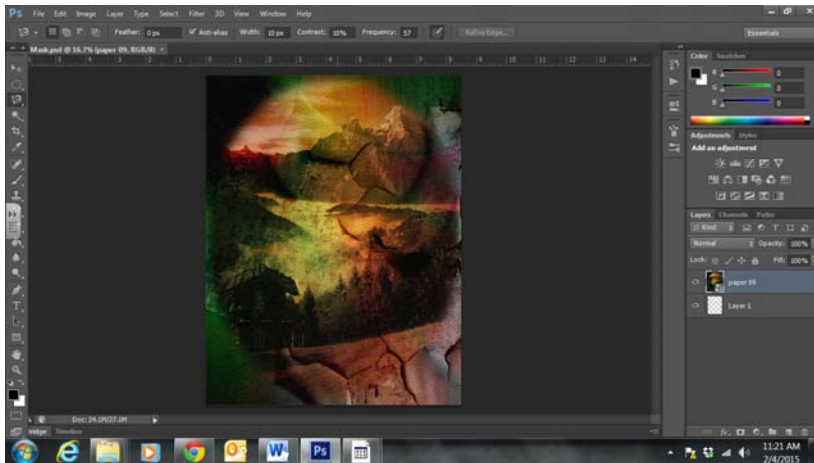
The first step to learning masks is to see the power behind the tool. We are going to create a picture similar to this one.



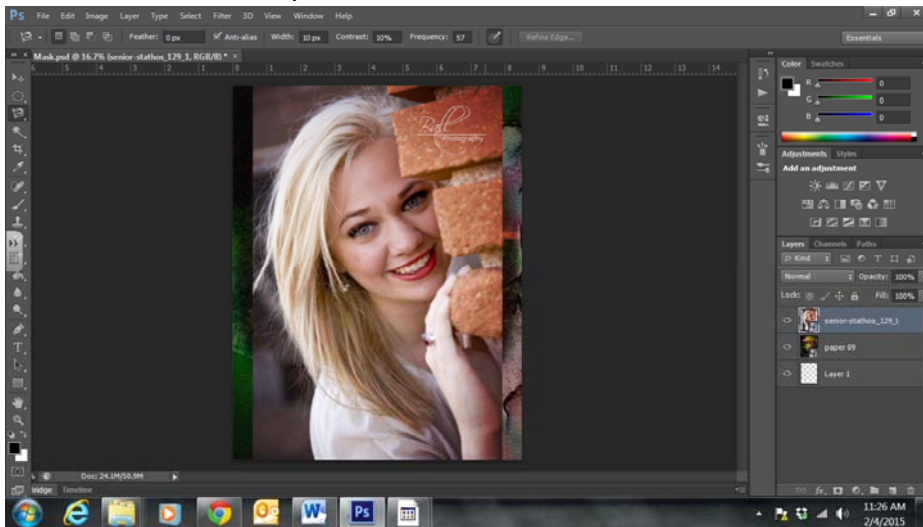
Used with permission from Ball Photography.

The project will include choosing the main picture, selecting it and removing the background, and placing it on top of the background that we have chosen.

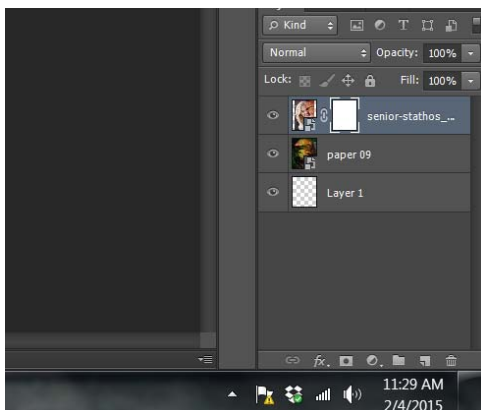
1. In Photoshop, create a new document. Place the background image on a new layer.



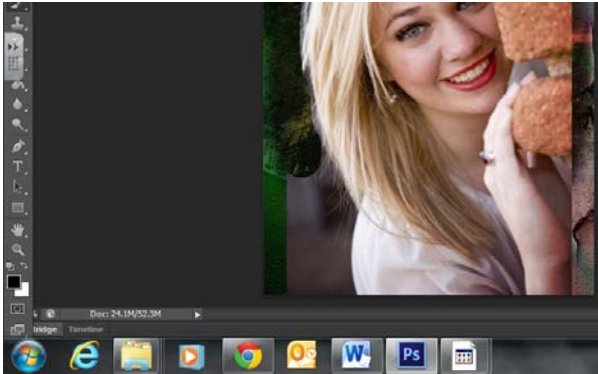
2. Use the Place command from the File menu to add your main image. You will notice that it is added to a new layer.



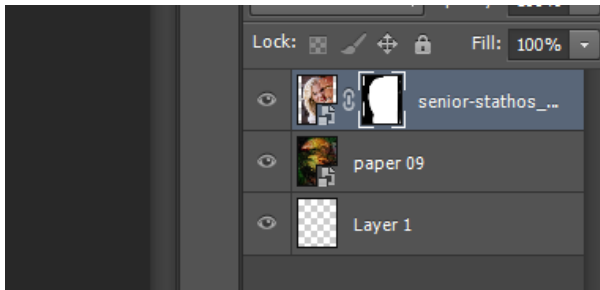
3. The next step is to remove the background portion of the portrait that we do not want to use. There are two ways that you can do this.
4. At the bottom of the Layers panel, click on the Add Vector Mask button, the third button from the left side (rectangle with a circle inside it). You will notice that a white rectangle has been added to your portrait layer. The border around it also show that it is selected. This is the mask.



5. Use the brush tool to paint the portion of the mask that we want to hide. I start out with a large, hard brush to take out the majority of the area. Then I switch to a smaller soft brush to get up close to the image. Choose black for the color.



You can see the area you “painted” in the mask area on the Layers panel.



6. Now you are ready to finalize your image, flatten the layers, and save it as a jpg. Just be sure to resave it as a .psd (Photoshop) file before flattening the layers to maintain the layers so that you can come back to make adjustments if necessary.

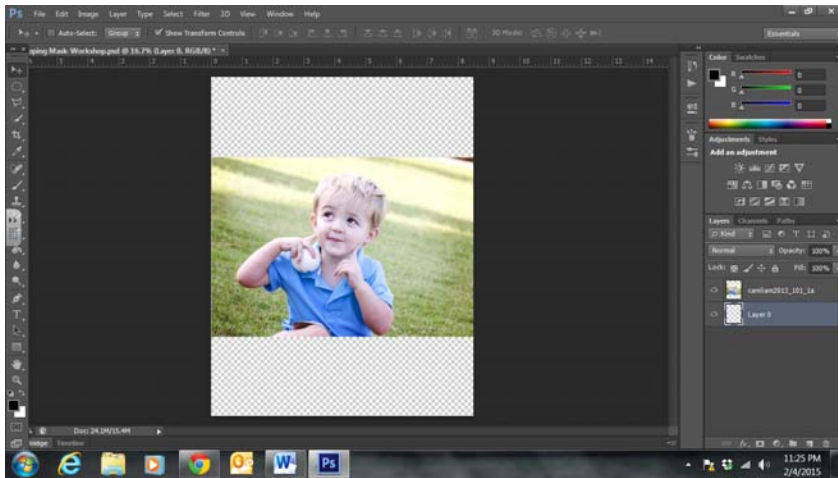
Clipping Masks

Clipping masks are very similar to layer masks in the fact that you are using the mask to hide certain portions of your image. But clipping masks are different because they work from the contents and transparency of a layer. Clipping masks were used to create this collage of pictures.



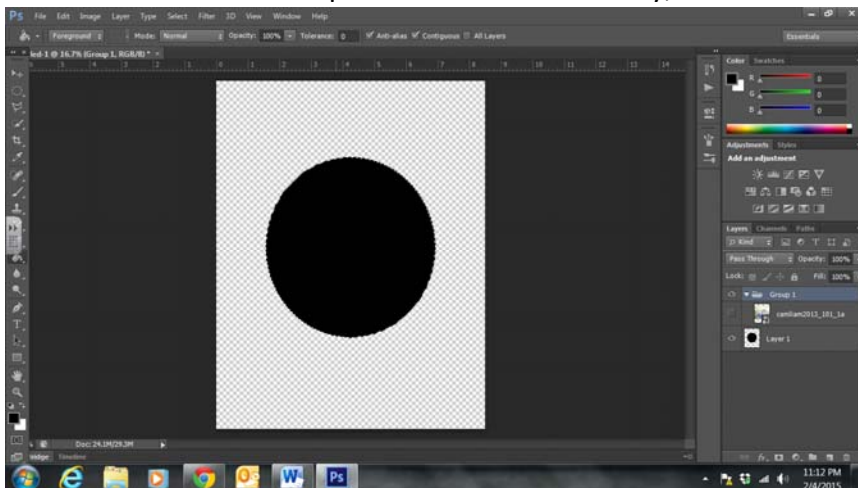
These steps will show you the basic concept:

1. Create a new document with a transparent background.
2. Place the picture that you want to be clipped on a new layer.



At this point, you may have to rasterize the image layer to make sure that you will be able to make changes to it. Right click and chose “Rasterize” from the menu.

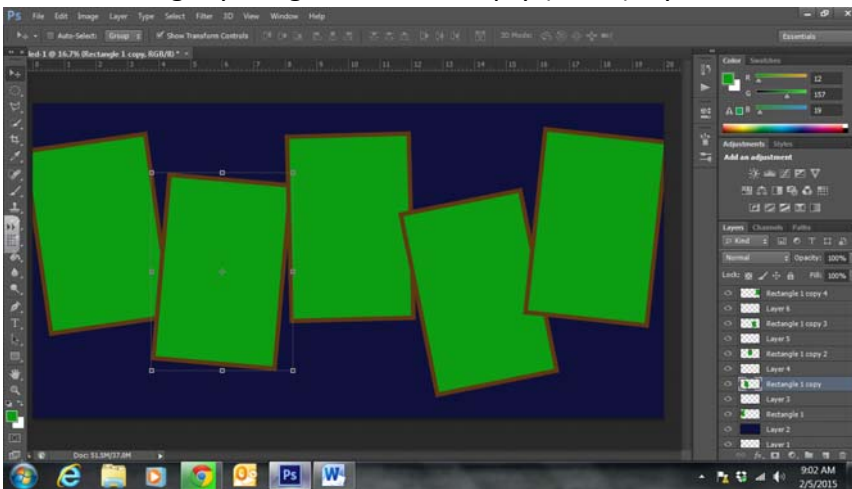
3. Since your image is covering up your new layer, we will hide the image layer for now. Click on the eyeball icon on the image layer to turn it off. Don’t worry...it is still there.
4. On the new transparent layer, choose the shape marquee tool that you want to use. In this example, I used the elliptical marquee tool. Be sure to check the tool properties and make sure the feather property is set at 0 to give your shape a hard edge. Use your bucket tool to fill the shape with a color. Obviously, I used black.



5. Click the eyeball icon on the image layer to turn on the image again. To “clip” the image layer to the transparent layer with the colored shape, click on Layer > Create Clipping Mask. The keyboard shortcut is Alt + CTRL + G.

Now that you understand the basic concept behind clipping masks, let's go through the steps to create a montage similar to the one shown above.

1. The first step is to set up your document. I created a new document and made it 10x20 inches landscape.
2. I added a fill layer with my color of choice.
3. On a third layer, I created my shape. This time I used the shape tool. I added a solid color fill, which can be any color of choice since it is going to be the mask.
4. Since my pictures are all the same size, I duplicated that layer by dragging the shape layer to the Add New Layer button...four times.
5. I went to each layer and moved and rotated the shapes in the position I want.
6. Before adding my images, I added empty (blank) layers between each shape layer.



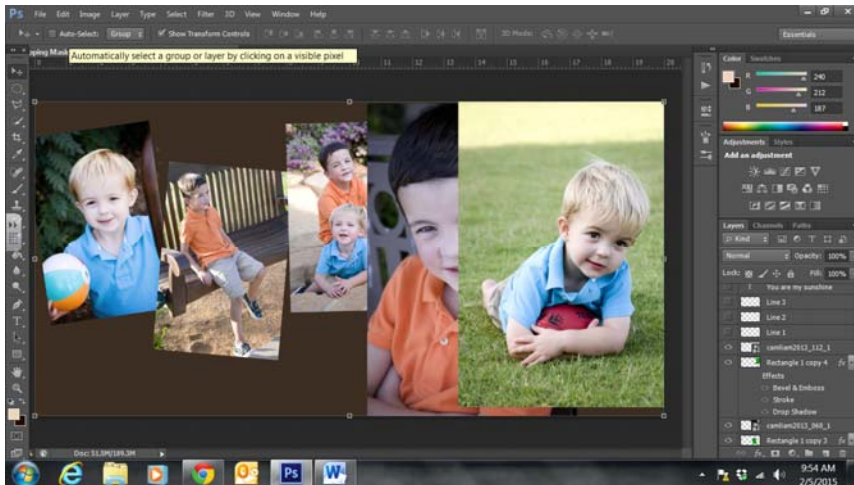
7. Now it is time to place your images. Go to each blank layer and Place your image.



8. Following the same steps above, you are going to clip each layer to the shape layer below it. You can go to Layer > Create Clipping Mask or use the shortcut ALT+CTRL+G.



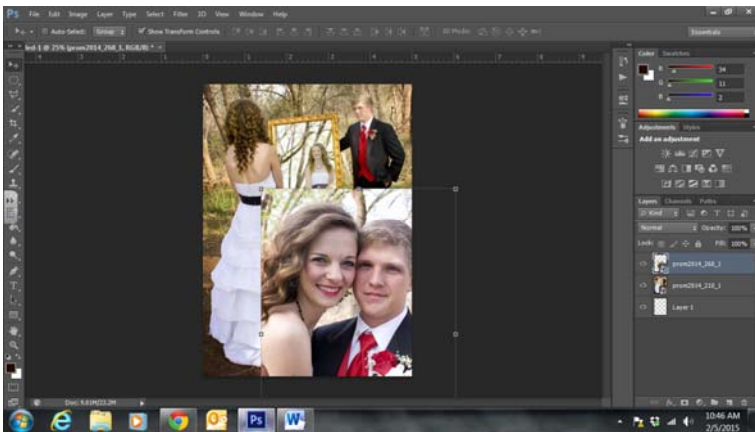
9. Again, go to each layer and use your Move tool to resize each picture to fit inside your shape. You may also have to rotate it to fit the orientation of your shape.



10. Now all that is left to do is to add those special extra touches to make your image complete. Save your working Photoshop file as a .psd to maintain the layers. Then flatten the layers and save as a .jpg file. Send it off to your favorite printer and, when it arrives, frame your masterpiece.

Following these steps you can create some very interesting “illusions” in your pictures. Let’s create an image similar to this one.

1. Set up your document. For this project, I have two images to use. The background image is of a girl looking at her reflection in a mirror. When shooting these shots, I also pose the subject with an empty mirror. The second image is a pose that will fit well in the frame. Both pictures are placed in the document on separate layers.



2. Now you need to create your mask. Add a new layer between the two image layers. Sometimes the Rectangle Marquee tool will work, but that is not the case here with the girl’s arm covering the bottom corner of the page. So I am grabbing my Polygonal or Magnetic Lasso tool. Mark the inside area of the frame on the empty layer you just added. At this point, it is usually a good idea to zoom in on the frame to make it easier to select. I also hid the top image for now (click on the eye icon on that image layer).



3. While still on the empty layer with the frame selected, use your Bucket tool to fill the area with a solid color...any color. Deselect the area (CTRL+D).

- Turn the hidden image layer back on (click on the eye icon again). Clip the layer to the empty layer with the selected area layer. Remember, the clipping mask is going to control what is seen through its mask based on its transparency and content. So the transparency area will hide the part of the image from the couple together while the filled shape will let that part of the image show through.



- Horn, trumpets, and flutes play at this point to celebrate a beautiful illusion for two special people on a very special night.

As you can see, you can use the Marquee tool or Shape tool to create your Mask holders (as I call them). You can also use letters as shapes. The trick is to set your letters up as you want them, then rasterize them. NOTE: Once the text is rasterized, you cannot edit it as text.

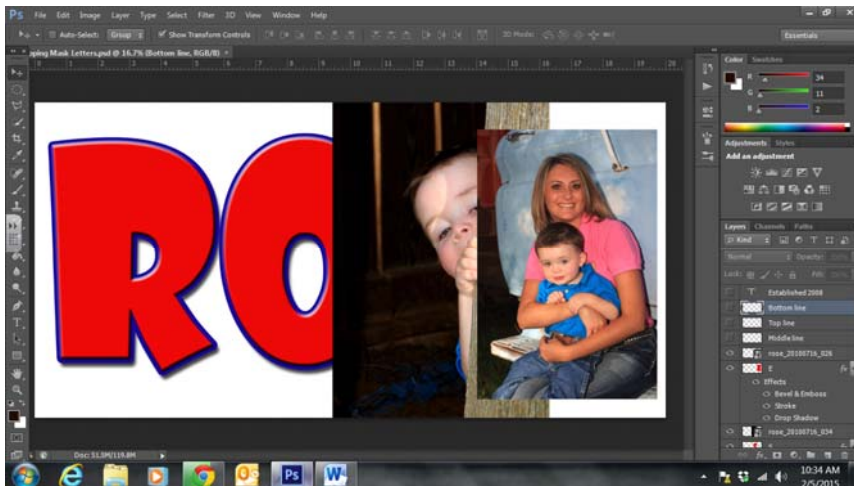
- Set up your document the same way you did with your montage.
- Add the letters that you will be filling with images. You will want a thick easy font. As you can see from this image, each letter is on a separate layer.



3. Rasterize each letter. Remember, once your letters are rasterized, you will not be able to edit them with the text tool. So make sure you have everything exactly as you want it. If not, it's not the end of the world. I have had to restart more times than I would like to admit. As you can see from this image, I have already added the effects I want each letter to have.



4. Add your image layers above each letter layer. Place your images on each layer, then clip (ALT+CTRL+G) the images to the letter layers below them. Resize and adjust the images as needed.



5. Add the other "touches" to make your masterpiece complete: lines, text, brushes, etc.

Fun Projects

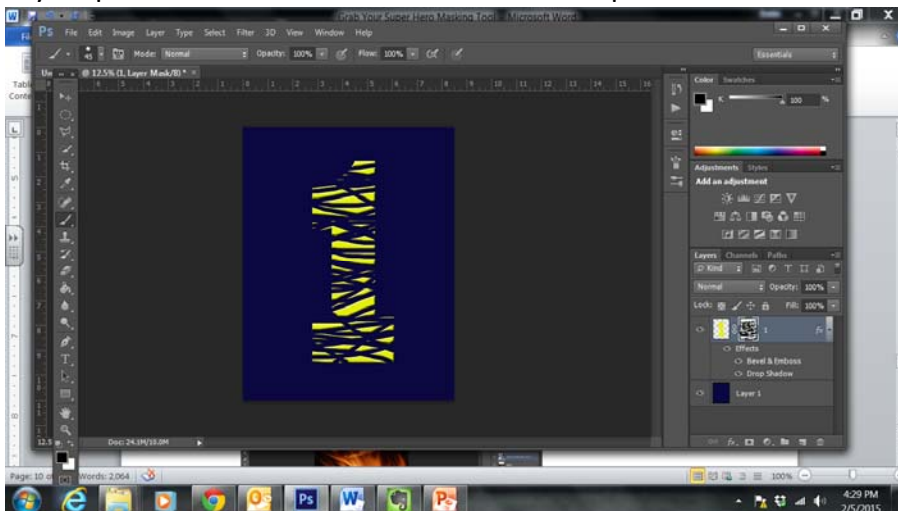
String Art

Use a layer mask to make your image look like a bunch of string piled into an image.

1. I'm going to use two simple layers to create this effect. I have a layer with a dark blue background. I added a text layer with a bright yellow #1. Since the number (text layer) is going to be an image, I will have to rasterize this layer.



2. Add a layer mask to the top image. Using a small black brush, begin scribbling across the top image to create the string effect. If you mess up, just change your brush to white and you can add the mask back to the image.
3. To add perspective and depth to the "string," use the effects icon at the bottom of the Layers panel to add Bevel and Emboss and Drop Shadow.

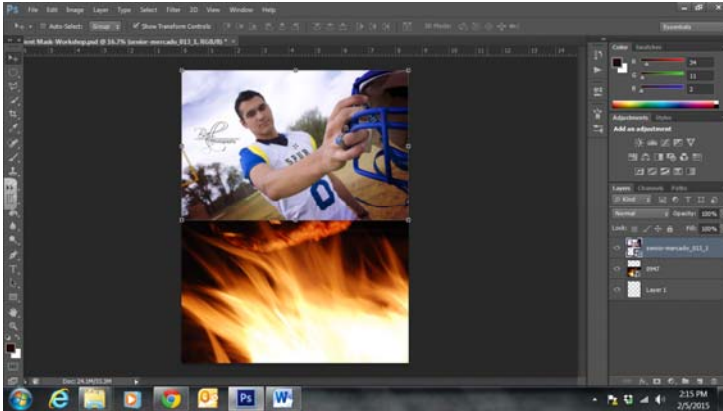


4. That is it. Save your file as a Photoshop file. Flatten the layers and save as a jpg.

Hollywood Posters

Use a Gradient Masks to create those wonderful posters you see in the movie theaters.

1. For this project, you will need two images: one for the background that will fade into the second image. Arrange the two images on their separate layers as you want them to work.



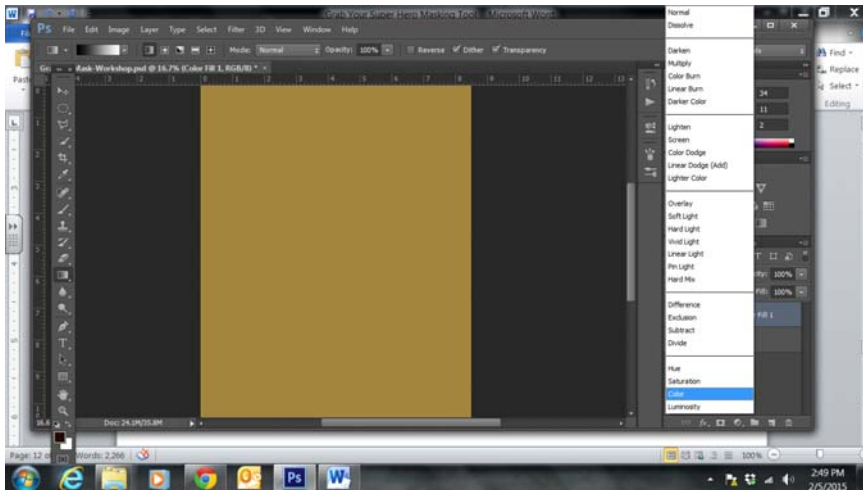
2. One thing I had to do here was change the position of the layers. I moved the fire image to be over the football player portrait. Now I am ready to blend the two images together with a layer mask.
3. Make sure you have the top layer selected. Click on the Add A Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the Layers panel.
4. Click on the Gradient tool which is located underneath the Bucket tool. In the properties bar at the top, click on the pull-down arrow in the Gradient Picker. Choose the black, white gradient in the top row.
5. Hold down your shift key and drag the gradient tool from the top to the bottom to blend the two images together. You will notice that the layer mask that you added on the top layer is the element selected.



6. Let's work on the color. Flatten the image to one layer. You will probably have to select all the layers and then you will have the option to flatten. Then click on Image > Adjustments > Desaturate.
7. The tutorial suggests adding some "noise" to make the pictures blend together more seamlessly. Do that by clicking on Filter > Noise > Add noise. It also suggests anywhere between 2-6%. Just try it out and do what you like best. Make sure Distribution is set to Gaussian and Monochromatic is checked.



8. The last step is to add color to your image. At the bottom of the Layer panel, click on the Add New Fill or Adjustment Layer icon in the middle of the row. Choose Solid Color from the top of the list that opens.
9. Choose your choice of color from the color picker. Click okay and your image will be filled with the solid color. Don't worry; it is supposed to do that. Change your Blend Mode to Color.



10. Your image is finished. If you want to change the color, just click on the color icon on the top layer. The color picker will open up and you can change to whatever color you desire.



Textured Masks

Take your knowledge of using masks, and apply it using textures.

<http://designshack.net/articles/software/how-to-turn-photographic-textures-into-masks-in-photoshop/>