

# MAKING "CREATIVE" IMAGES

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# FORMAT FOR THIS EVENING

- Short presentation covering:
  - What are “creative” images
  - Tools available for making “creative” images
  - Examples of “creative” images from recent SPS Open Exhibition
- *Plenty of time for*
  - *Practice on your own images*
  - *Discussion and problem solving*

The presentation will focus on PS CS3 but the principles are the same for other PS software such as Elements



What are “creative” images ?

# SPS OPEN EXHIBITION Creative section

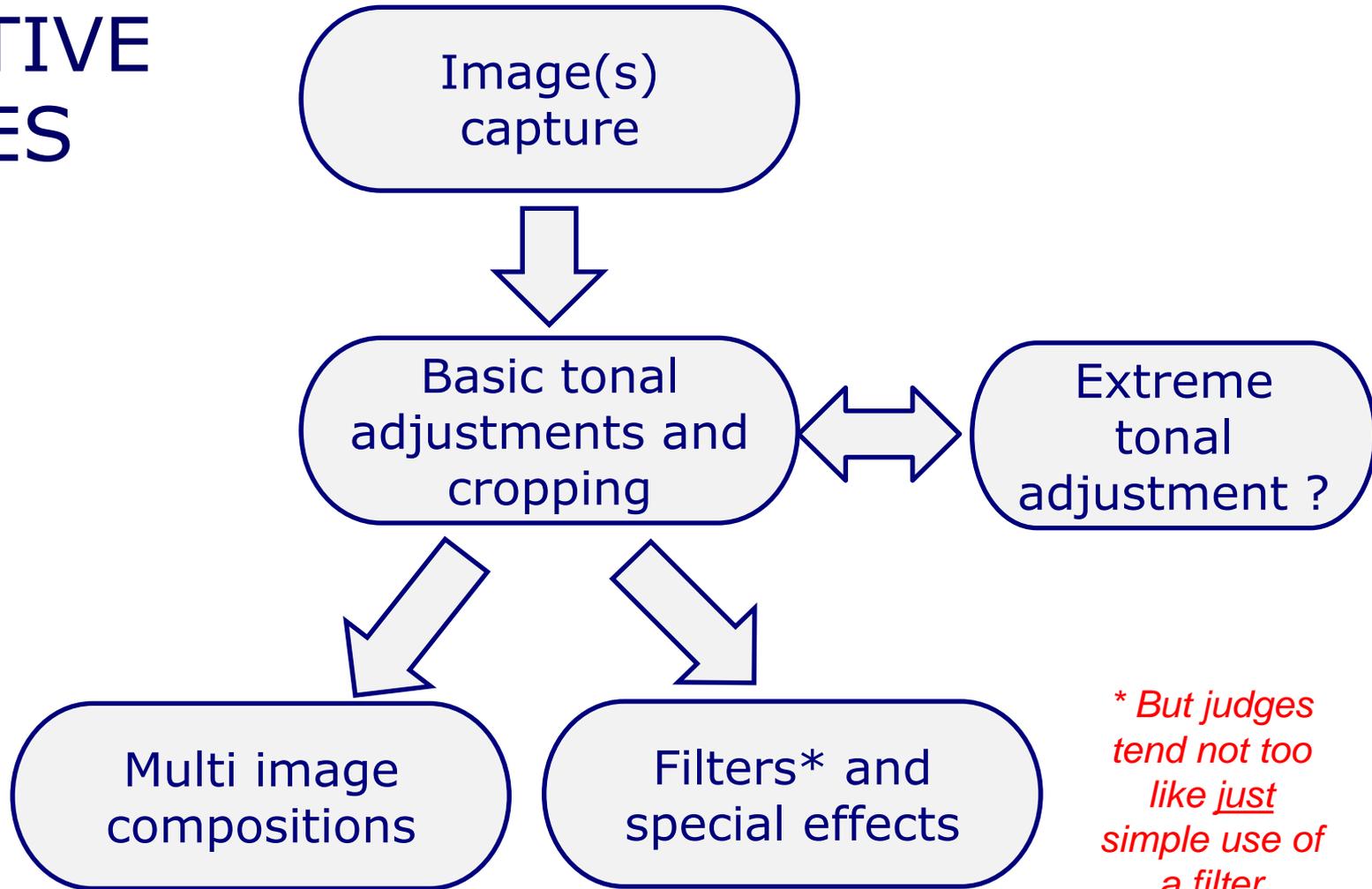
Although all images in all sections will contain an element of creativity, in this section the organisers are looking particularly for images showing an imaginative approach to produce an altered reality

*There are no “rules” – anything goes*



Available tools in PS

# CREATIVE IMAGES



*\* But judges tend not too like just simple use of a filter*

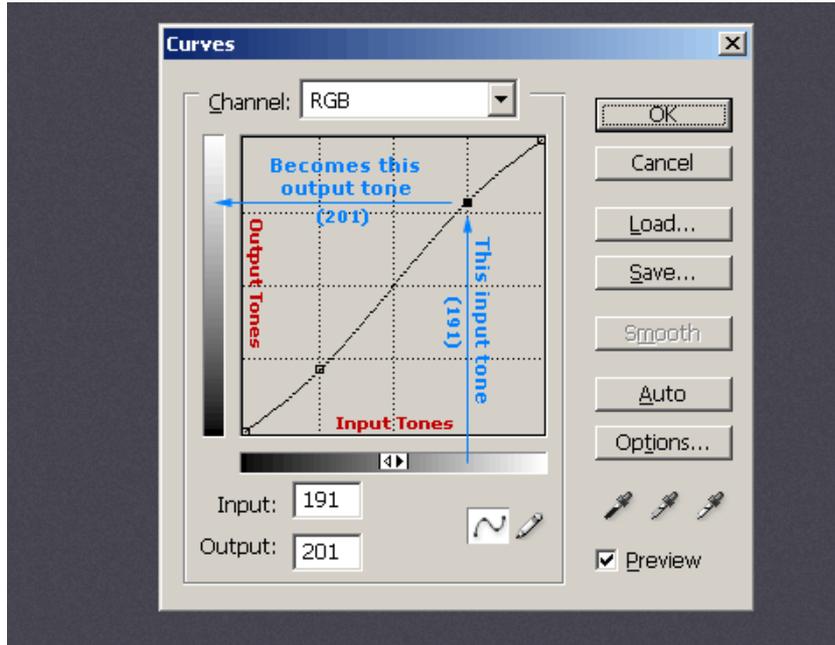
## IMAGINATION !!!!



## Extreme use of adjustment sliders

Use with care but can work to enhance mood of image

# CURVES



The levels tool only allows changes to:

- Black point
- White point
- Mid tone (grey)

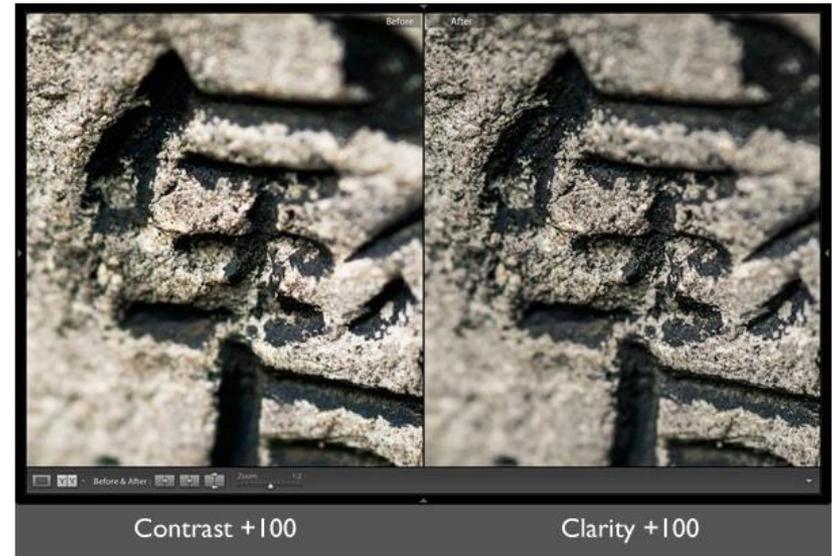
The curves tool allows you to selectively brighten or darken any particular pixel brightness value

Can adjust tonality of all colours (RGB) or selective colour channels

Normally use with care to improve overall image contrast but can produce interesting and even weird effects if stretched

# CONTRAST AND CLARITY

- Contrast darkens the shadow areas and brightens the highlights
- Clarity is a more subtle increase in micro-contrast by working more on mid tonal values
- Both can increase drama and mood and be a creative tool at extreme values



Clarity tool can bring out texture better than contrast

Normally use with care to improve overall image contrast but can produce interesting effects if stretched

# COLOUR TEMPERATURE & WHITE BALANCE

- The colour temperature of the image reflects the warmth or coolness
- Outside varies with time of day/cloud cover
- Inside depends on type of lighting
- Camera can be adjusted for different white balance settings but can adjusted later in raw converter



Normally use with care to improve overall image colour mood  
but can produce interesting effects if stretched

# SATURATION

- Saturation changes the colour intensity
- At zero the image is effectively mono (grey tones only)
- At maximum setting the image has extremely strong colours

Normally use with care to improve overall image mood but can produce interesting effects if stretched



# Making composite images

A critical tool for most creative images

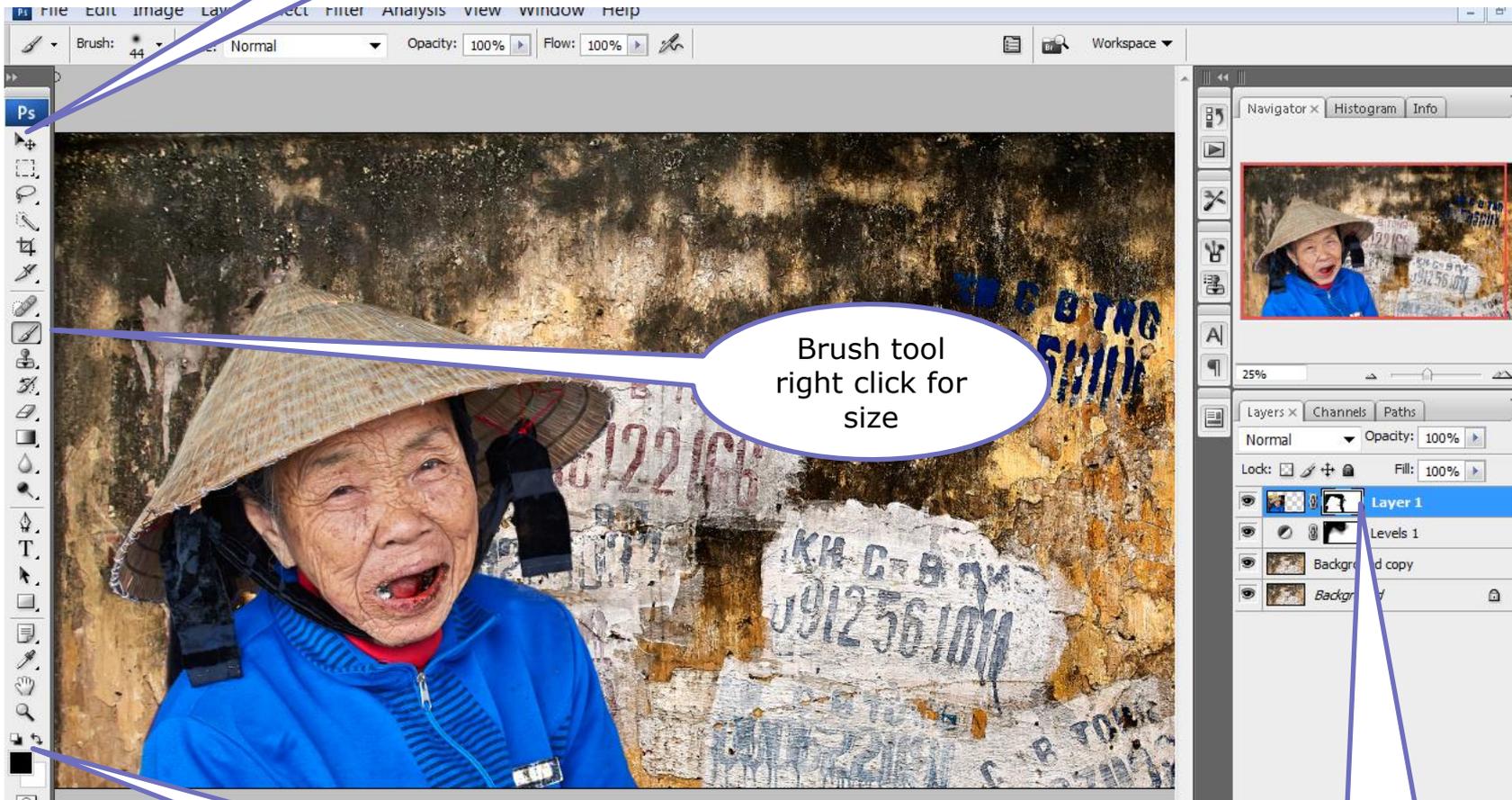
# COMPOSITE IMAGES

- Open two (or more) source images - minimise each for easier viewing
- Make rough selection of element to be copied
- Copy and paste, or drag and drop, the selection into background layer
- Place roughly in right place and resize to suit (edit>transform>scale and hold shift key to keep proportions constant)
- Can move new layer around using move tool
- Create layer mask
  - Click on mask and choose brush (adjust size/softness as necessary)
  - Use black/white brush to isolate figure by painting around edge
  - Use opacity/flow to soften edges or difficult areas like hair
- Inspect closely at high magnification. Adjust mask further if necessary. Can also add shadows (see David Eaves notes)

Note - ensure direction of light is similar to background image.  
Check shadows if bright

Move tool

Opacity and flow affects brush effect on mask



Brush tool right click for size

Black/white switch

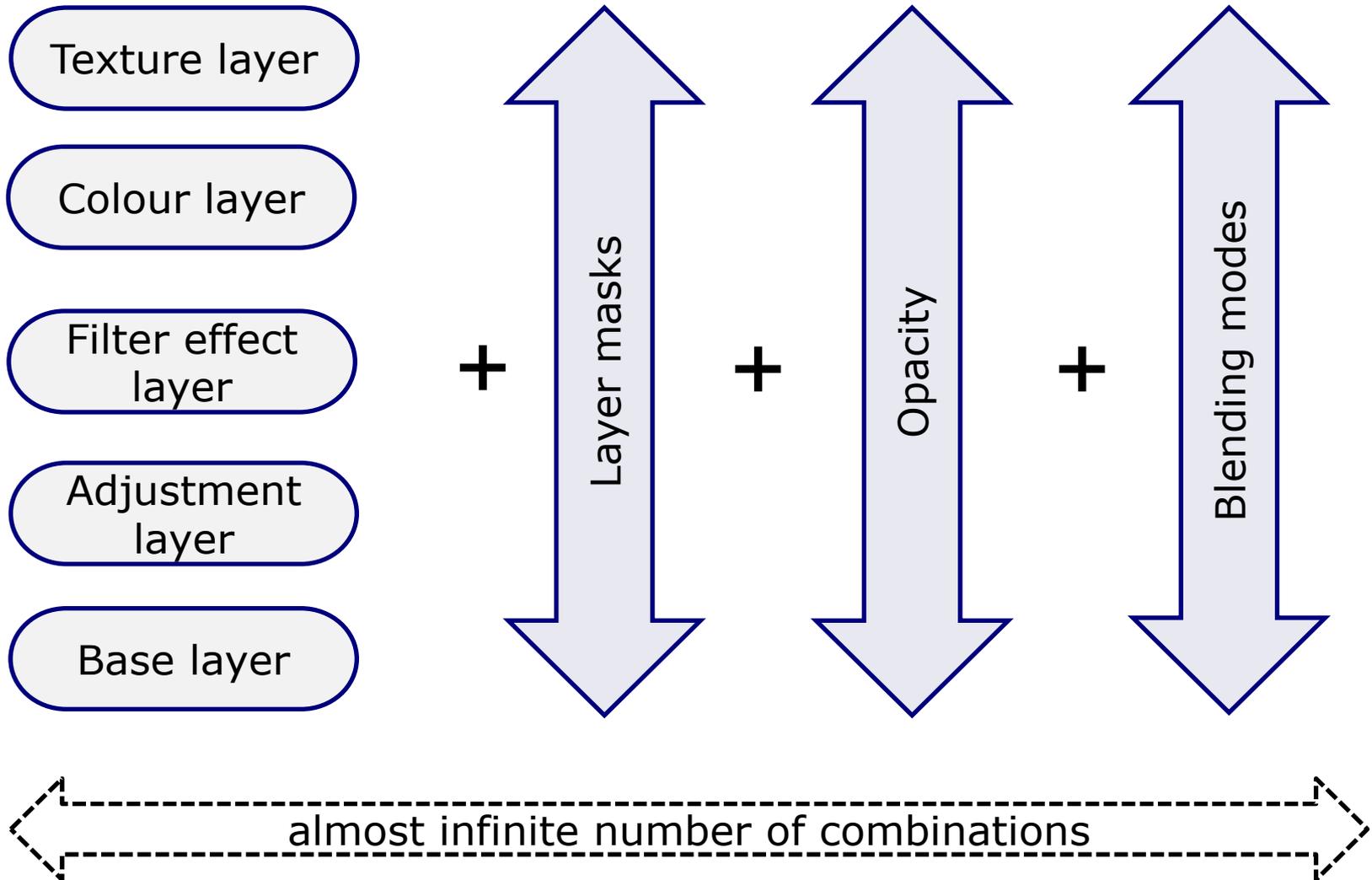
Make sure mask is live when brushing



# Filters and blending modes

Often used for creative images particularly  
texture layers or creative filters coupled  
with composite image

# LAYER COMBINATIONS

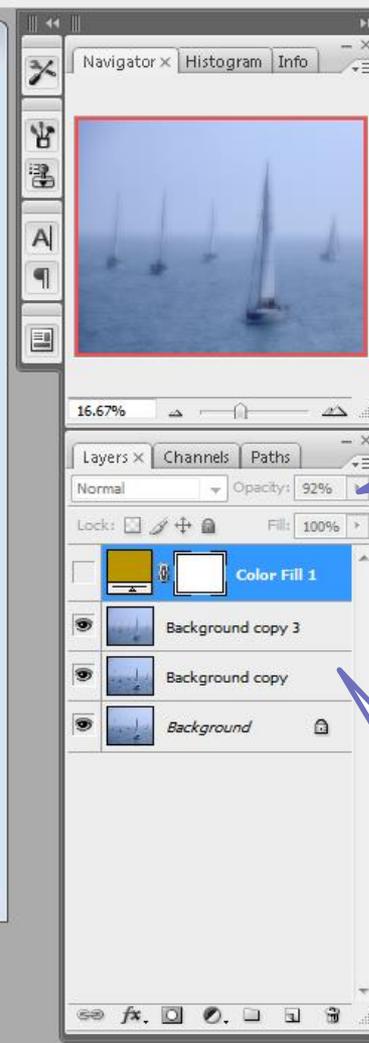


# USING FILTERS

- Can add a filter effect to one layer and blend with the layer below
- Photoshop has a number of built in filter effects and can buy others as plug-ins (e.g. Topaz)
- Note that not all filter effects work with 16 bit files
- Extreme use of filters is often not liked by judges
- But more subtle effects can be achieved by adjusting the opacity to make a more limited impact



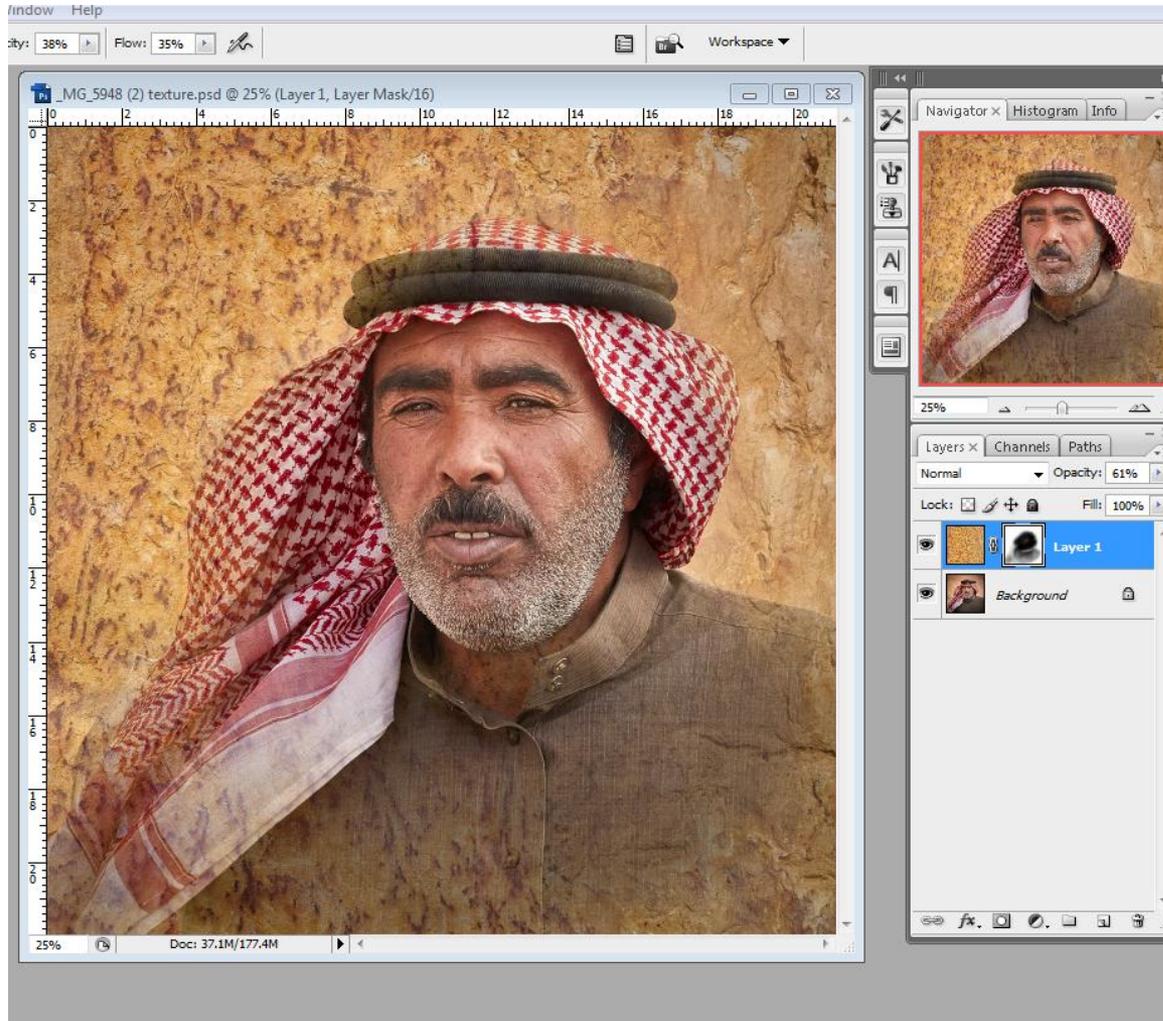
# BLENDING FILTER LAYERS



Opacity  
"softens"  
the layer  
effect

Layers with  
filter applied

# TEXTURED OVERLAYS



- Can sometimes create interesting effect by adding a textured layer

# BLENDING MODES



- Photoshop allows different ways of blending the layers



# WHAT DO BLEND MODES DO

- The blending mode controls how the pixels in the different layers interact with each other
- Normal default – no interaction between layers (top layer dominates)
- There are then five other groups within which each mode broadly has the same effect
- However, the maths behind this is complex and the effects are often unpredictable to the average user
- Often best to experiment and see what happens

# PS BLENDING MODES

Commonly  
used modes



Normal
Dissolve
Darken
Multiply
Color Burn
Linear Burn
Lighten
Screen
Color Dodge
Linear Dodge
Overlay
Soft Light
Hard Light
Vivid Light
Linear Light
Pin Light
Hard Mix
Difference
Exclusion
Hue
Saturation
Color
Luminosity

Darken Modes

Lighten Modes

Contrast Modes

Comparative Modes

Composite Modes  
(Hue, Saturation, Luminosity)



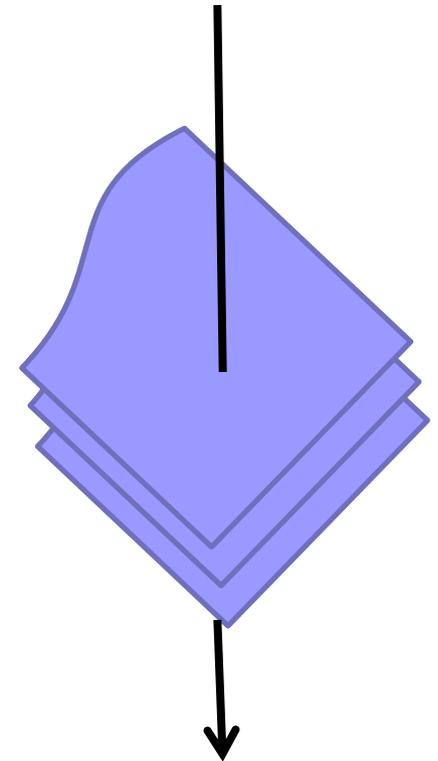
NOW FOR SOME  
PRACTICAL WORK TO  
TRY YOURSELF OR SORT  
PROBLEMS



How do layers and layer masks work ?

# HOW DO PS LAYERS WORK

- Imagine a series of clear acetate sheets stacked on top of each other
- As you look down through the stack the images on each sheet “add together” to form the overall image
- To adjust the overall image you can
  - Add or remove layers
  - Put masks over some layers so only certain parts of the image can be seen
- At the end the sheets can be combined together to form a final image- “flattened”



# TYPES OF LAYER

Layers can include any or all of:-

- A copy of the background (bottom) layer
- A new imported image
- Part of an image
- A solid colour, including black and white
- Empty (a blank layer)
- Adjustment layers (levels, brightness, mono etc.)

# WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH LAYERS?

- Layers can be:
  - Duplicated
  - Switched on and off
  - Deleted
  - Faded by reducing opacity
  - Blended in various ways (blend modes)
  - Change order by dragging above or below adjacent layers
  - Worked on individually by selecting
- Layer Masks – allow parts of a layer to be hidden
  - white reveals, black conceals

# MORE ON LAYERS

- **Adjustment Layers** – by default include a layer mask. Adjustment layers should always be used for common adjustments as they allow infinite modification with no degradation of the original file.
- **Linking** – links an adjustment layer to the layer below (otherwise it affects every layer below it). Press and hold alt key and hover over junction of layers

# LAYER TIPS

- Easiest to move around image and expand/contract using “navigator” tab
- Carry out any adjustment
  - On new layer not on “background”
  - For multiple adjustments or complex cloning use separate layers
  - In both cases easier to go back one stage if mistake rather than losing all corrections
- Can save work in progress on image (including layers) but only as large TIFF or PSD file
- Only when happy with final image should you “flatten” image and save for final output as TIFF or JPEG file

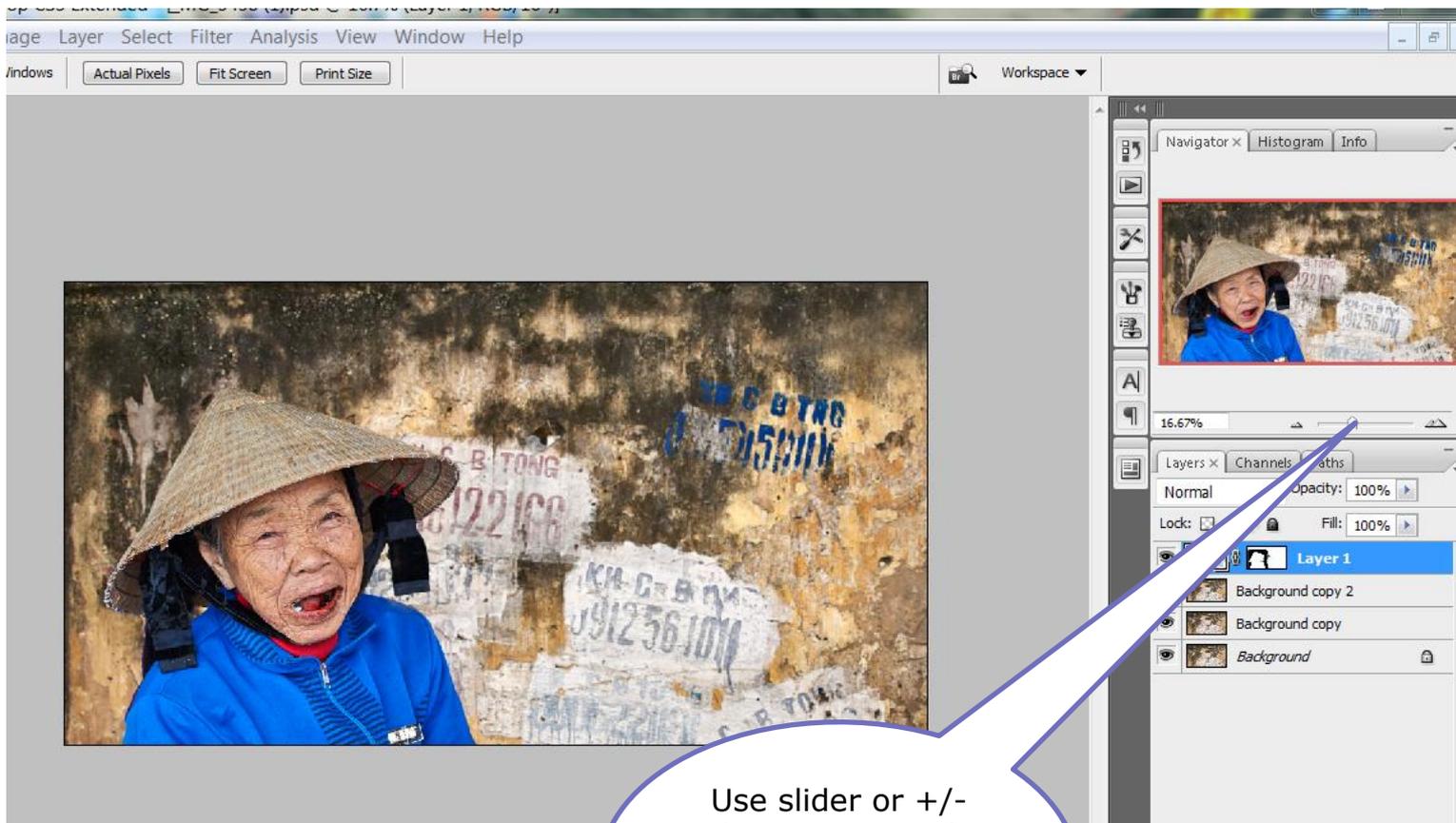
# PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS

PSE up to version 8 has layers, including adjustment layers with masks, but no layer masks per se. These were introduced for versions 9 and 10.

There is a work round for earlier versions which is:-

- Create an adjustment layer (any)
- Drag below the image layer
- Group image with adjustment layer (control G with image layer selected)
- Painting on the mask will now affect the image layer

# THE NAVIGATOR TAB



Use slider or +/- keys to expand image. Move red square to navigate around image

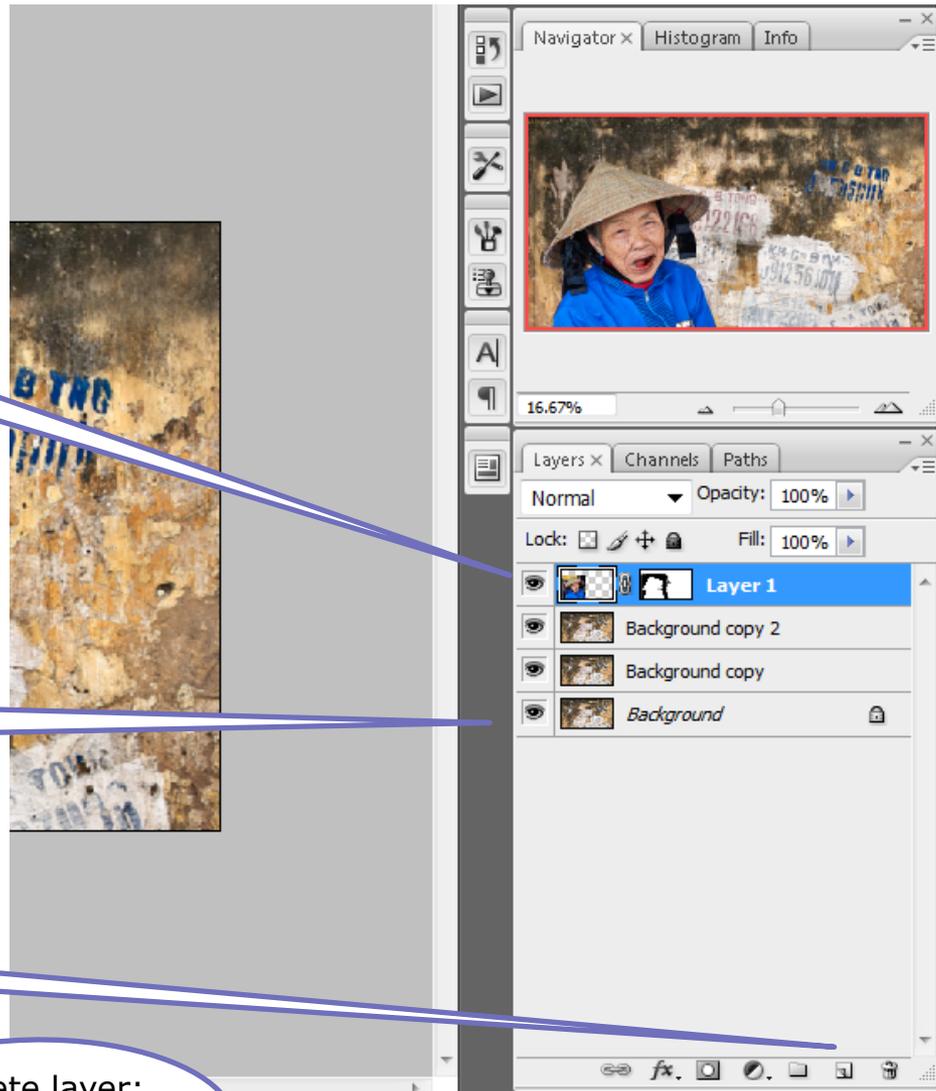
# USING LAYERS

Click to switch layer visibility

Background layer

Duplicate layer: drag and drop

Delete layer: drag and drop

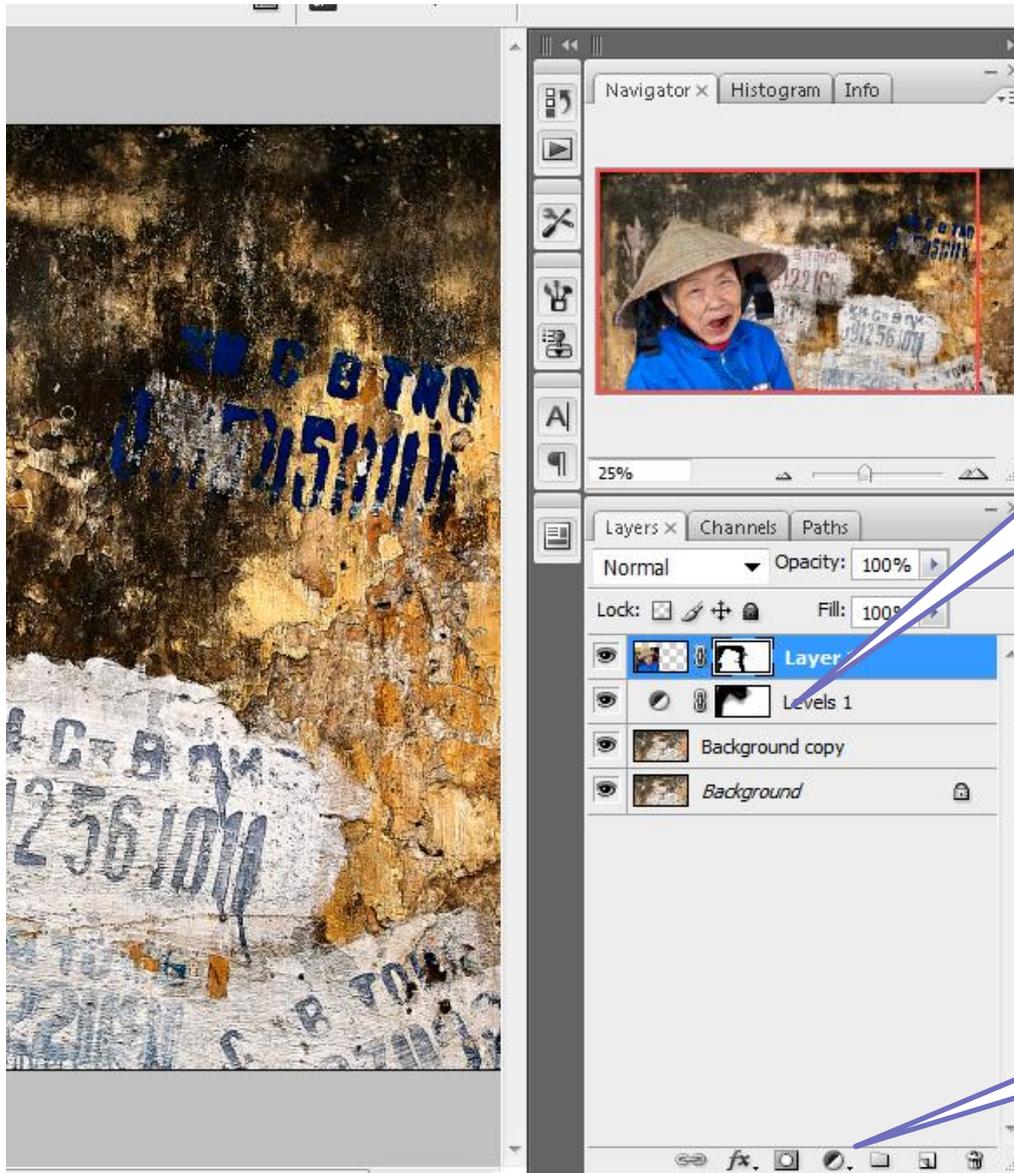




# USING ADJUSTMENT LAYERS

- Can add adjustment layer which can be masked so applies to only part of the image
- Can also add a filter effect to one layer and blend with the layer below e.g. Gaussian blur
- Each layer can have the opacity adjusted to change how much is added to the layers below
- Can also change the way the layers blend with each other

# ADJUSTMENT LAYERS



Layer mask:  
"paint" to  
define area of  
mask which  
applies  
adjustment to  
layer below

Use  
black/white  
switch to +/-  
mask

Adjustment  
layer:  
click from  
drop down  
menu