

Ask Me Anything

Reference Material - 20210119

Tim Grey Oct 9, 2020

Today's Question

I continue to see references to luminosity masks and I am confused. Are there distinct advantages to using luminosity masks [in Adobe Photoshop] versus what can be accomplished readily with other software?

Tim's Quick Answer:

A luminosity mask is simply a layer mask (or selection) that is based on brightness levels in an image. These enable you to target adjustments to only the highlights or shadows in an image, for example. I highly recommend using the Color Range command rather than the various shortcuts that are often what I find most photographers are referring to as luminosity masks.

More Detail:

Most often, when I hear photographers talking about luminosity masks, they are referencing techniques where selections are created somewhat automatically based on the brightest or darkest pixels in an image. These approaches are interesting, but I find the Color Range command in Photoshop to be far more flexible for this purpose.

A luminosity mask is most helpful when you want to apply an adjustment to all of the brightest areas of a photo or all of the darkest areas. The Color Range command makes it easy to create a selection of those areas with control over the specific range of tonal values being selected. You can even create a selection based on middle tone values rather than highlights or shadows.

To get started, open an image and choose Select > Color Range from the menu. In the Select popup at the top of the Color Range dialog choose the option that suits the area of the image you want to select, which for luminosity would mean choosing either Highlights, Midtones, or Shadows.

Once you have selected an option you will see a Range control. For Highlights or Shadows this enables you to define the cutoff between what is a highlight versus a shadow for purposes of the luminosity-based selection. For Midtones you will

have two sliders that enable you to define the range of tonal values to be selected.

You can also fine-tune the Fuzziness slider to expand or contract the selection relative to similar tonal values. When you're finished click the OK button to create the selection. That selection can then be used as the basis of a targeted adjustment for specific areas of the photo based on the luminance values.

Nikon Focus Shift Shooting - Create Amazing Focus Stacks!

The Focus Shift Shooting Video Workshop is still selling like crazy - **but** - time is running out on the \$14.97 sale price. I've already extended it (much) longer than planned, so you should probably grab this today if you want to make sure you get the discounted intro price :)

Again, this course is nearly 6 hours and includes 20 videos - all jam packed with easy to follow, step by step instructions and demos. Plus, you can learn everything you need to create jaw-dropping image stacks in a single day. Tomorrow at this time you can be an expert at focus stacking with Focus Shift Shooting!

<https://bcgwebstore.com/product/focus-shift-shooting-digital-workshop-for-nikon/> (Note Focus Shift Shooting is currently available on the Z5/6/7, Z6 and Z7 MKII, and D850, D6, and D780.)

I came across this video from Marcus McAdam, a British photographer, who is a presenter on Photography Online. He also leads workshops global including Isle of Skye and Lacock, birthplace of Photography. I found the video very interesting and wondered if it is something our members would like. – Brian C

<https://youtu.be/R4DLhi16JpE>

Michael Frye I'm excited to announce a new online course, called [Landscapes in Lightroom: Advanced Techniques](#).

This might be a useful guide for members, and for any future PPC trips . It is free to download so can expect some adverts. Russell

<https://www.photopills.com/articles/landscape-photography-guide>

Also

Hi PhotoPillers,

I'm happy to announce that we've just updated all our photography guides to 2021...

Check them out:

[Photography Guides Collection 2021](#)