Creating a
HAND-TINTED EFFECT
DIGITALLY
by Georgianna Lane

Hand-tinting (or hand-coloring) black and white photographs was a popular technique used before the introduction of color film. It remains an artistic option for those who wish to enhance monotone images. But the traditional materials used – oil creaints, thinners and chemicals, can be a deterrent. Here is one way to create this lovely effect digitally. The steps are shown in Photoshop but can be done in any program that supports layers.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

Original color image

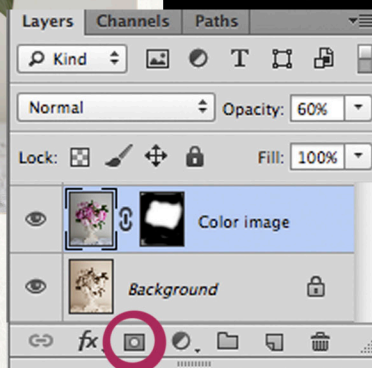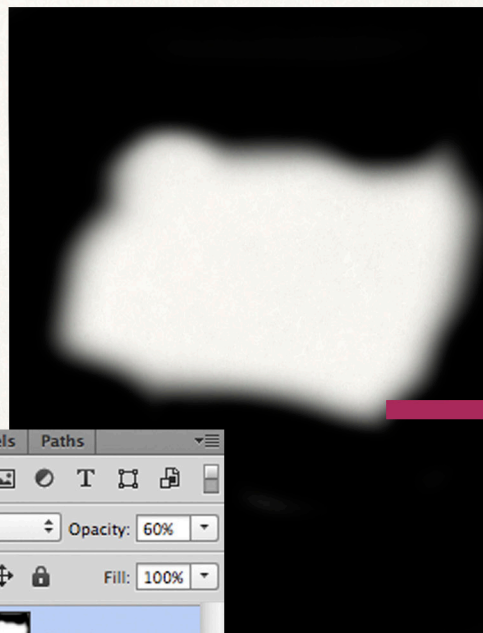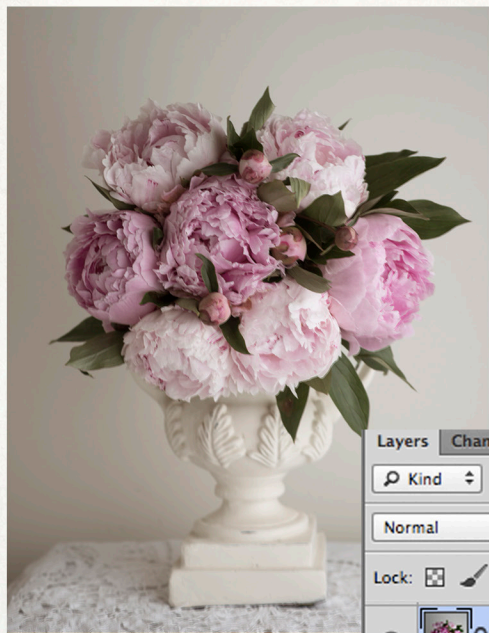Sepia or Black and White
converted version

Texture

1. To begin, choose a full color image which has a good balance of color saturation and contrast. I chose one of my studio shots of a bouquet of peonies, which lends itself to this vintage treatment.

2. Make a copy of the color image and convert the copy to sepia, black and white or other monotone. I converted mine in Lightroom 4 using a sepia-toned preset but you can also do this with a Photoshop action, other preset or manually by reducing saturation and warming up the temperature.

3. You don't have to use an additional texture to create this effect but I do in this example. If you decide to, choose one that has a complimentry vintage feel but that will not overwhelm the image. This is one of my favorites, from Jerry at Shadowhouse. You can download it **here.**

This technique relies on the use of *layer masks* in Photoshop. You could simply erase parts of the image instead of using masks, but I am a strong proponent of layer masks. In fact, they are one of my favorite tools in Photoshop and I've been using them on a daily basis since they were first introduced in the 1990s. They give you much more control and a more professional result. So, if you are not familiar with them or don't use them, this would be a good opportunity to study and practice a bit.

Instead of painting color onto a black and white or sepia image, we are going to delicately tint the sepia layer with parts of an identical color layer. This is faster, easier and, I believe, gives a more natural final result.

Bottom Layer   Color Layer at 60%

4. Using the sepia image as the bottom or background layer, drag the color image on top of it and reduce the opacity to 60%.

Layers	Channels	Paths

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Normal ⬍ Opacity: 60%

Lock: ⊠ 🖌 ✛ 🔒   Fill: 100%
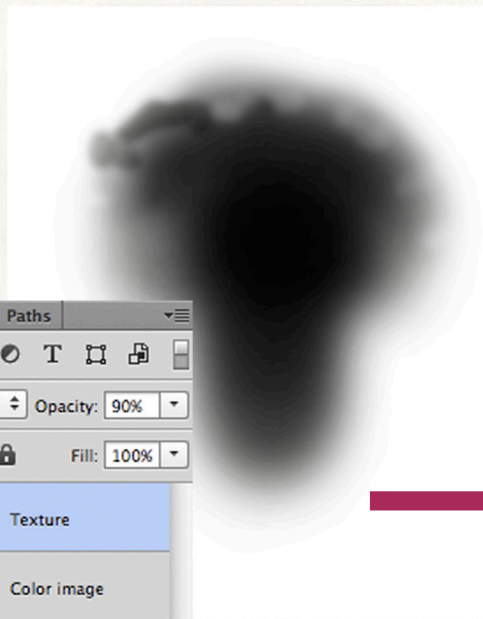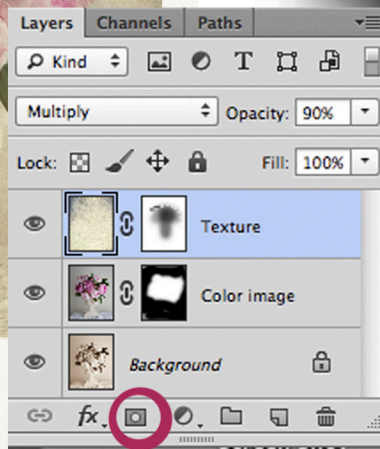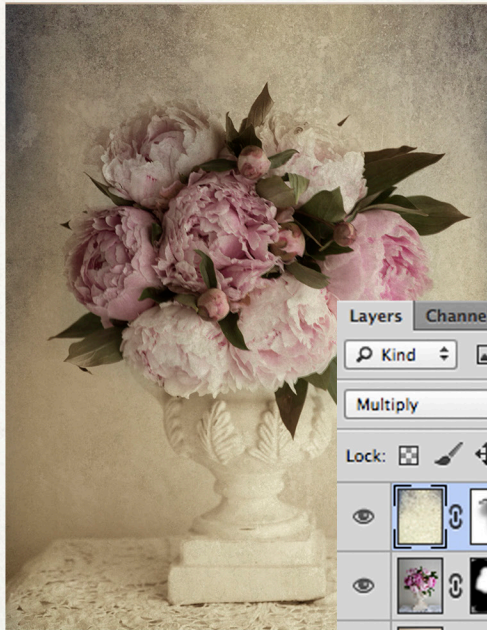
👁 Color image

👁 *Background* 🔒

🔗 *fx* ▣ ⊘. ▢ 🗑

5. Add a layer mask to the color layer by clicking the icon on the bottom of the layers palette, next to the *fx* symbol. Using the airbrush tool, select a soft brush at about 50% opacity, set to paint with black, and gradually paint (hide) the color layer to reveal the sepia layer beneath. You want only a subtle amount of color to remain. Your mask will be black in the areas that are hidden and white in the color areas that remain visible. The beauty of layer masks is that you can switch back and forth from painting with black to painting with white (use "x" on the keyboard to toggle) and restore to view parts of the image that were hidden. This gives fine control as you decide you want more or less of a particular section showing.

Texture 90% Multiply

6. Drag the texture layer on top of the color layer and adjust to fit using the Transform tool (the original texture is square). Reduce the opacity to 90% and change the blend mode to Multiply.

Final Image

7. Add a layer mask to the texture layer by clicking the icon on the bottom of the layers palette, next to the *fx* symbol. Using a soft brush at about 50% opacity, set to paint with black, gradually paint (hide) the texture layer to reveal the other layers beneath. Remember that the black areas of your layer mask indicate the hidden part of the layer. Variations: You can try using the color layer as the bottom layer and sepia/black and white layer on top; vary the opacities and blend modes; use multiple textures.

Good luck! I'd love to see what you create, so email me your results at gl@georgiannalane.com