

CC 2015 Ready



# KNOW HOW TRANSFER

the photography knowledge hub



ALCE | Advanced Local Contrast Enhancer

User Manual - Version 2.3.1 - July 2015





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## Know-How Transfer – The Photography Knowledge Hub

A new platform by the same team who developed ALCE, formerly RBG Group or Bigano and associates.

Everyone dealing with photography and digital imaging will find a unique mix of instructional and how-to content here. We offer applications specifically designed by photographers for photographers, as well as effective tutorials and free resources. Our mission is to create a community, a Central Hub of Photography Knowledge, where photographers can exchange experiences, share information and grow their skills. [Read more about our team here >](#)

Many of them come from the school of the great Dan Margulis and still have a very special relationship with him. I'm pleased to report here what he wrote about this group taken from his famous post "La Dolce Vita - An era ends":

*They say that Italians get emotional at times like this, and that Italians love beautiful things. I admit to feeling a bit Italian myself as I write this. I \*have\* developed an emotional attachment to the country, no doubt. And the relationships I have entered into with several of my students in that country have evolved into something, well, profoundly loving. The old joke has it that in heaven, all lovers are Italian. Right off-hand I can think of a couple of exceptions to this generality, but there is no need to go off-topic. The truth is that it is a land of love and great beauty, made all the more beautiful professionally by seeing the new and sophisticated imaging algorithms being developed by Davide with Marco Olivotto, and by seeing how Alessandro, Daniele Di Stanio, Tiziano Fruet and others have brought first-class color instruction into a country where it was rarely found previously.*



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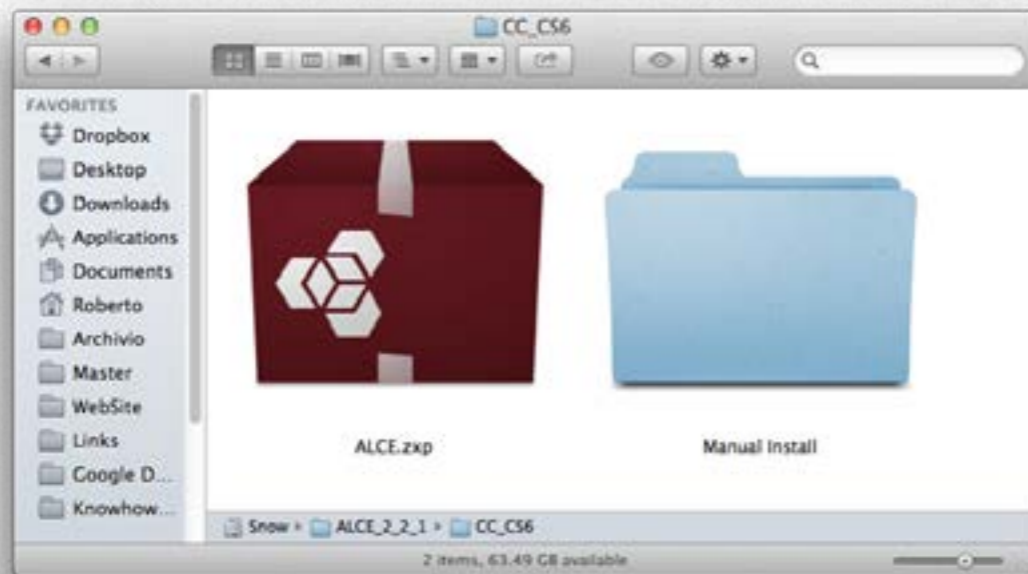
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# 1. Unzip the Downloaded Folder

This is what the downloaded folder contains, there are different folders for CS3, CS4, CS5 CS6, CC, CC 2014 and CC 2015



The install file valid for CC 2015, CC 2014, CC and CS6, WIN and MAC is the com.RBG.ALCE.zxp file in the “CC 2014, CC, CS6 - Version 2.3” folder”, the install files for earlier versions are in separate folders, as described in the following sections.

Another folder contains the manuals, at the moment available in english and italian.

The folder “Optional Manual Install” contains the files to install manually in case something goes wrong with auto install.

We do hope that this manual may support all your needs.

For further information visit the [ALCE page >](#)

or write to

[support@knowhowtransfer.com](mailto:support@knowhowtransfer.com)

Copy and paste this link to email it to a different device

[http://www.knowhowtransfer.com/download/manuals/alce\\_manual\\_en.pdf](http://www.knowhowtransfer.com/download/manuals/alce_manual_en.pdf)



## 2a. Install ALCE on Photoshop CC 2015

Until CC 2014 all our apps were installed via Adobe Extension Manager that has been discontinued. It no longer works in CC 2015. At the moment ALCE must be installed manually. Please follow carefully the instructions below and the install process will be easy.



**1. Unzip the Install Folder and copy the folder “CC 2015 on the Desktop.**

**2. Run Photoshop as an Administrator**



**2. Copy “ALCE.jsx” and “ALCE\_batch.jsx” in**

64 bit: C:\Program Files\Adobe\Adobe Photoshop CC2015 (64 Bit)\Presets\Scripts

32 bit: C:\Program Files (x86)\Adobe\Adobe Photoshop CC (32 Bit)\Presets\Scripts

**3. Copy the folder “com.RBG.ALCE” in**

WIN 22/64 bit: C:\<username>\AppData\Roaming\Adobe\CEP\extensions

**NOTE: The folder AppData by default is hidden.**

To reveal it go to Folder Options/View/Show Hidden files . [Read more here >](#)

**4. Restart Photoshop**

**1. Unzip the Install Folder and use the folder CC 2015**

**2. Copy “ALCE.jsx” and “ALCE\_batch.jsx” in**

Macintosh HD/Applications/Adobe Photoshop CC2015/Presets/Scripts

**3. Copy the folder “com.RBG.ALCE” in**

User Library/Application Support/Adobe/CEP/Extensions

**In MAC the folder Library by default is hidden.**

To reveal it go to Finder/Go menu and press the ALT key.



**4. Restart Photoshop**



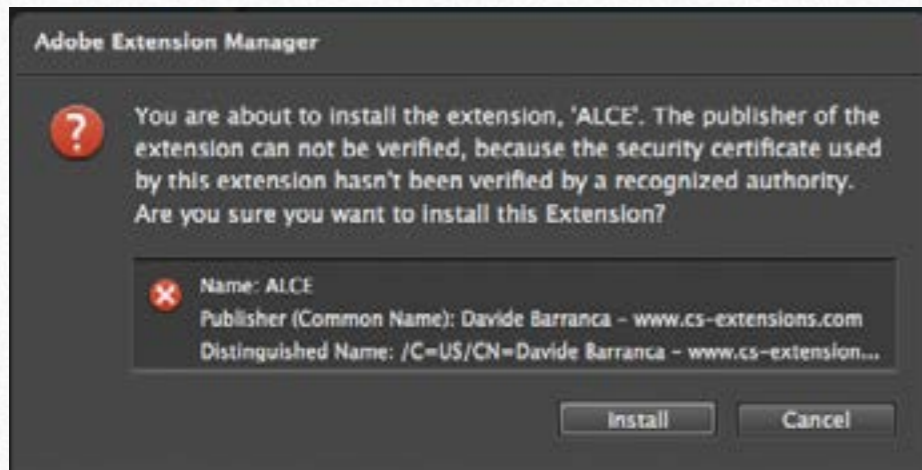
## 2b. Install on CC 2014, CC and CS6 - requires Adobe Extension Manager CC or CS6

MAC users simply double click on the com.RBG.ALCE.zxp file.

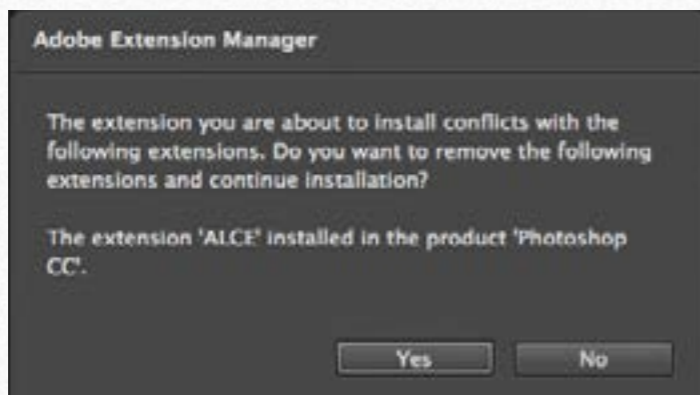
WIN users must run Adobe Extension Manager as an administrator (right click and choose "Run as an administrator" option).

Then install from the up right corner of this application, locating the path in which your com.RBG.ALCE.zxp file lays.

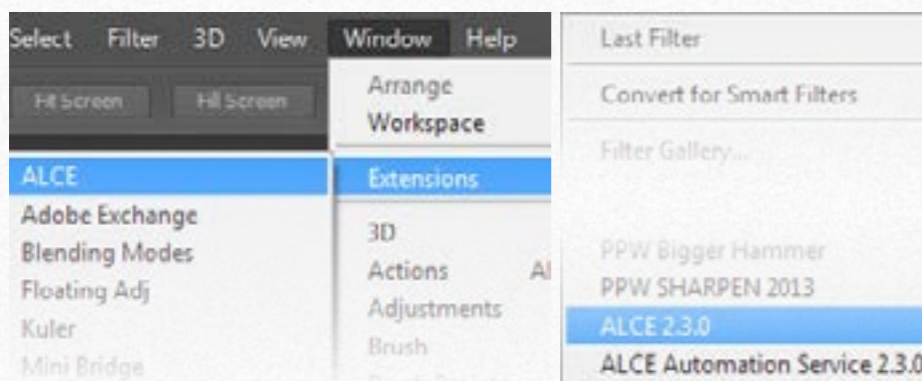
The application on CC 2014 must be installed with Adobe Extension Manager CC 2014. On CC with AEM CC and so on. Accept the disclaimer.



Now AEM will alert you that the "developer of the application" is unknown. Please trust in us. We know him. The reason why is that the verification system used by Adobe cause the expiration of the installed application. This means that without any apparent reason or notification your installed application will no longer work. So please accept and proceed.



If you should have an older version of ALCE, AEM will ask you to remove it. Ok! It's done. All this procedure is the same independently if you are installing on CC 2014, CC, CS6, or older versions, just be sure to pick up the right .zxp file. Now you can open Photoshop.



ALCE works both like an Extension and as a Filter.

You can find ALCE as a panel from the Photoshop menu Window/Extension/ALCE.

The Filter versions are under menus:

- Filter/ALCE 2.3.0
- Filter/ALCE Automation Service 2.3.0



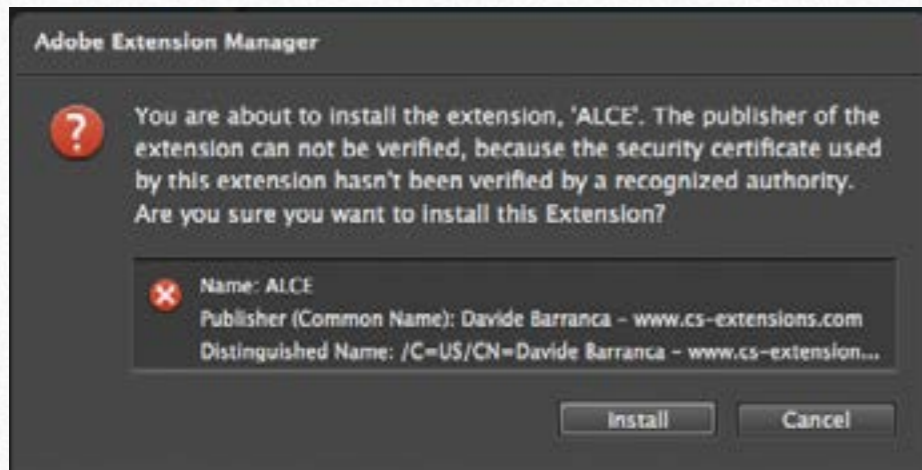
## 2c. Install on Photoshop CS5 - requires Adobe Extension Manager CS5

MAC users simply double click on the ALCE21.zxp file in the "CS5 - Version 2.2.1" folder.

WIN users must run Adobe Extension Manager as an administrator (right click and choose "Run as an administrator" option).

Then install from the up right corner of this application, locating the path in which your ALCE21.zxp file lays.

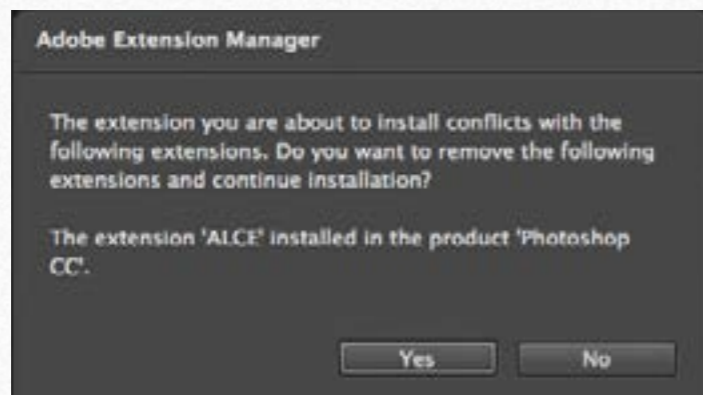
The application on CS5 must be installed with Adobe Extension Manager CS5. Accept the disclaimer.



Now AEM will alert you that the "developer of the application" is unknown. Please trust in us. We know him. The reason why is that the verification system used by Adobe cause the expiration of the installed application.

This means that without any apparent reason or notification your installed application will no longer work.

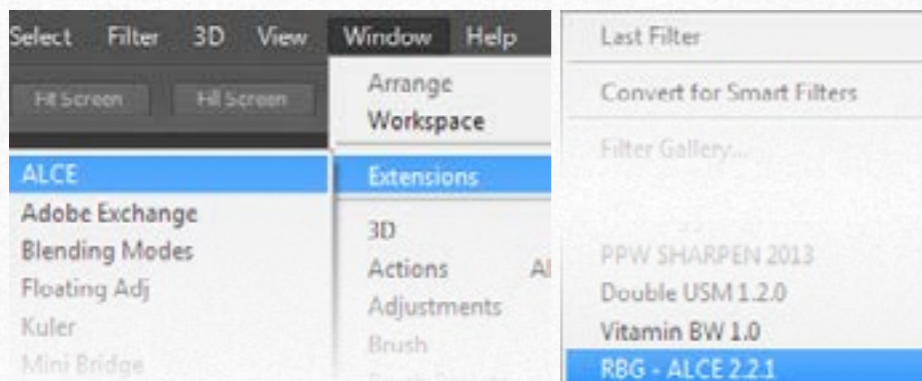
So please accept and proceed.



If you should have an older version of ALCE, AEM will ask you to remove it.

Ok! It's done. All this procedure is the same independently if you are installing on CC 2014, CC, CS6, or older versions, just be sure to pick up the right .zxp file.

Now you can open Photoshop.



ALCE works both like an Extension and as a Filter.

You can find ALCE as a panel from the Photoshop menu Window/Extension/ALCE.

The Filter versions are under menus:

- Filter/RBG - ALCE 2.2.1
- Filter/RBG - ALCE Automation Service 2.2.1



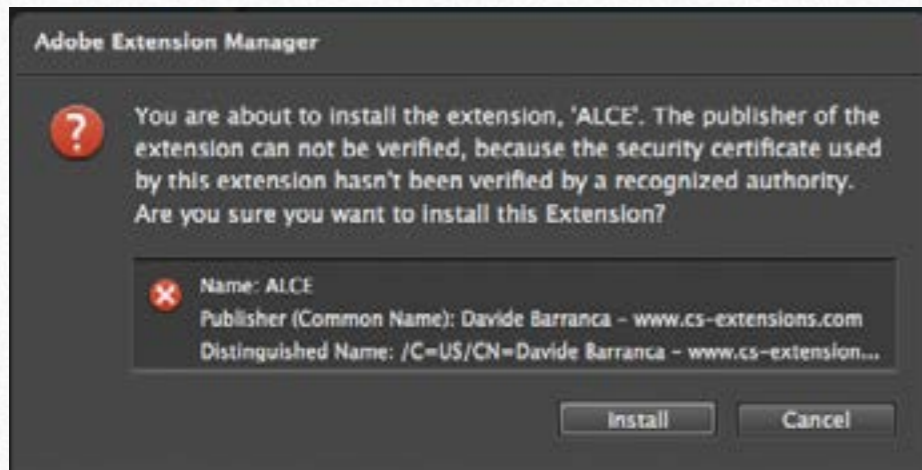
## 2d. Install on Photoshop CS4 - requires Adobe Extension Manager CS4

MAC users simply double click on the ALCE21.zxp file in the "CS4 - Version 2.2.1" folder.

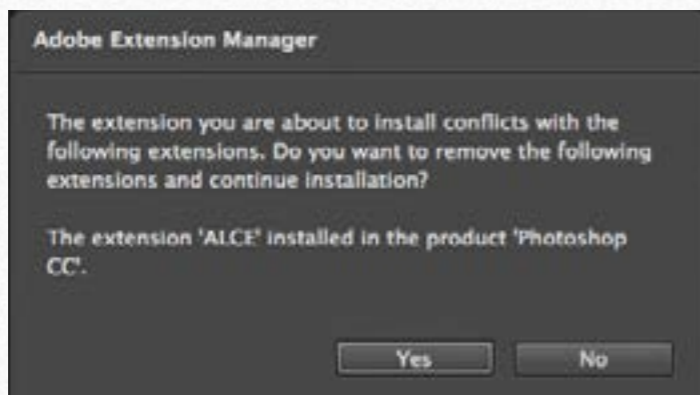
WIN users must run Adobe Extension Manager as an administrator (right click and choose "Run as an administrator" option).

Then install from the up right corner of this application, locating the path in which your ALCE21.zxp file lays.

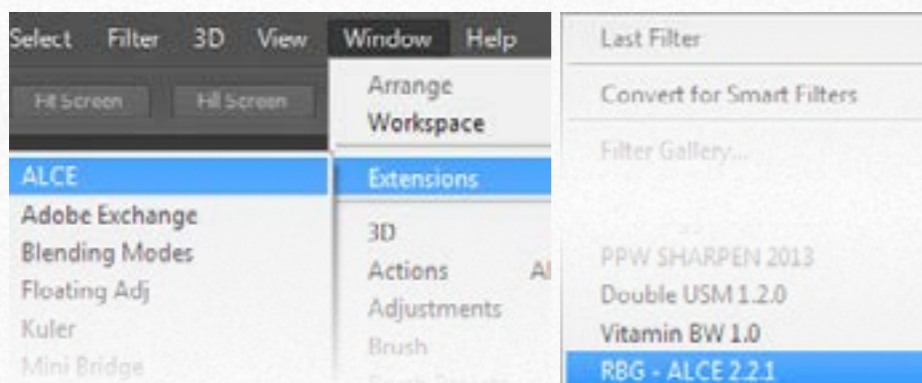
The application on CS4 must be installed with Adobe Extension Manager CS4. Accept the disclaimer.



Now AEM will alert you that the "developer of the application" is unknown. Please trust in us. We know him. The reason why is that the verification system used by Adobe cause the expiration of the installed application. This means that without any apparent reason or notification your installed application will no longer work. So please accept and proceed.



If you should have an older version of ALCE, AEM will ask you to remove it. Ok! It's done. All this procedure is the same independently if you are installing on CC 2014, CC, CS6, or older versions, just be sure to pick up the right .zxp file. Now you can open Photoshop.



ALCE works both like an Extension and as a Filter.

You can find ALCE as a panel from the Photoshop menu Window/Extension/ALCE.

The Filter versions are under menus:

- Filter/RBG - ALCE 2.2.1
- Filter/RBG - ALCE Automation Service 2.2.1



## 2e. Install on Photoshop CS3

The CS3 version of ALCE works only as a Filter, the panel version is not available for this release. To install you need to follow this manual install:


1. Quit Photoshop
2. Open the "CS3 - VERSION 2.2.1" folder and copy/paste the two elements in the following paths:




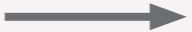



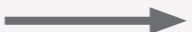



## 2f. Optional Manual Install - CC 2015 / CC 2014

In case of problems with the main installer use the files stored in the "Optional Manual Install" (WIN odr MAC versions) folder that contains three sub-folders. Copy the the three folders in the locations as shown. Then restart Photoshop.


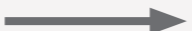

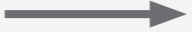




**CC 2015**  
**CC 2014**

 Know-How Transfer (Plugins Folder)		<p>CC 2015 - 64 bit: C:\Program Files\Adobe\Adobe Photoshop CC2015 (64 Bit)\Plugins          CC 2015 - 32 bit: C:\C:\Program Files (x86)\Adobe\Adobe Photoshop CC2015 (32 Bit)\Plugins          CC 2014 - 64 bit: C:\Program Files\Adobe\Adobe Photoshop CC2014 (64 Bit)\Plugins          CC 2015 - 32 bit: C:\C:\Program Files (x86)\Adobe\Adobe Photoshop CC2014 (32 Bit)\Plugins</p>
 Know-How Transfer (Script Folder)		<p>CC 2015 - 64 bit: C:\Program Files\Adobe\Adobe Photoshop CC2015 (64 Bit)\Presets\Scripts          CC 2015 - 32 bit: C:\C:\Program Files (x86)\Adobe\Adobe Photoshop CC2015 (32 Bit)\Presets\Scripts          CC 2014 - 64 bit: C:\Program Files\Adobe\Adobe Photoshop CC2014 (64 Bit)\Presets\Scripts          CC 2015 - 32 bit: C:\C:\Program Files (x86)\Adobe\Adobe Photoshop CC2014 (32 Bit)\Presets\Scripts</p>
 com.knowhowtransfer.wow		<p>CC 2015 CC 2014- 32/64 bit: C:\&lt;username&gt;\AppData\Roaming\Adobe\CEP\extensions  <b>NOTE: The folder AppData by default is hidden.</b>  <b>To reveal it go to Folder Options/View/Show Hidden files . <a href="#">Read more here &gt;</a></b></p>




**CC 2015**  
**CC 2014**

 Know-How Transfer (Plugins Folder)		<p>CC 2015 Macintosh HD/Applications/Adobe Photoshop CC2015/Plugins/          CC 2014 Macintosh HD/Applications/Adobe Photoshop CC2015/Plugins/</p>
 Know-How Transfer (Script Folder)		<p>CC 2015 Macintosh HD/Applications/Adobe Photoshop CC2015/Presets/Scripts/          CC 2014 Macintosh HD/Applications/Adobe Photoshop CC2014//Presets/Scripts/</p>
 com.knowhowtransfer.wow		<p>CC 2015 - CC2014 User/Library/Application Support/Adobe/CEP/Extensions/  <b>NOTE: The folder Library by default is hidden.</b>  <b>To reveal it go to the Finder/Go menu and press the ALT key.</b></p>



## 2g. Optional Manual Install - CC / CS6

In case of problems with the main installer use the files stored in the "Optional Manual Install" (WIN odr MAC versions) folder that contains three sub-folders. Copy the the three folders in the locations as shown. Then restart Photoshop.




CC  
CS6

Know-How Transfer (Plugins Folder) → CC - 64 bit: C:\Program Files\Adobe\Adobe Photoshop CC (64 Bit)\Plugins  
CC - 32 bit: C:\C:\Program Files (x86)\Adobe\Adobe Photoshop CC (32 Bit)\Plugins  
CS6 - 64 bit: C:\Program Files\Adobe\Adobe Photoshop CS6(64 Bit)\Plugins  
CS6 - 32 bit: C:\C:\Program Files (x86)\Adobe\Adobe Photoshop CS6 (32 Bit)\Plugins

Know-How Transfer (Script Folder) → CC - 64 bit: C:\Program Files\Adobe\Adobe Photoshop CC (64 Bit)\Presets/Scripts  
CC - 32 bit: C:\C:\Program Files (x86)\Adobe\Adobe Photoshop CC (32 Bit)\Presets/Scripts  
CS6 - 64 bit: C:\Program Files\Adobe\Adobe Photoshop CS6(64 Bit)\Presets/Scripts  
CS6 - 32 bit: C:\C:\Program Files (x86)\Adobe\Adobe Photoshop CS6 (32 Bit)\Presets/Scripts

com.knowhowtransfer.wow → CC - 64 bit: C:\Program Files\Common Files\Adobe\ CEPServiceManager\Extensions\  
CC - 32 bit: C:\Program Files (x86)Common Files\Adobe\ CEPServiceManager\Extensions\  
CS6 - 64 bit: C:\Program Files\Common Files\Adobe\ CS6ServiceManager\Extensions/  
CS6 - 32 bit: C:\Program Files (x86)Common Files\Adobe\ CS6ServiceManager\Extensions/

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CC  
CS6

Know-How Transfer (Plugins Folder) → CC: Macintosh HD/Applications/Adobe Photoshop CC/Plugins/  
CS6: Macintosh HD/Applications/Adobe Photoshop CS6/Plugins/

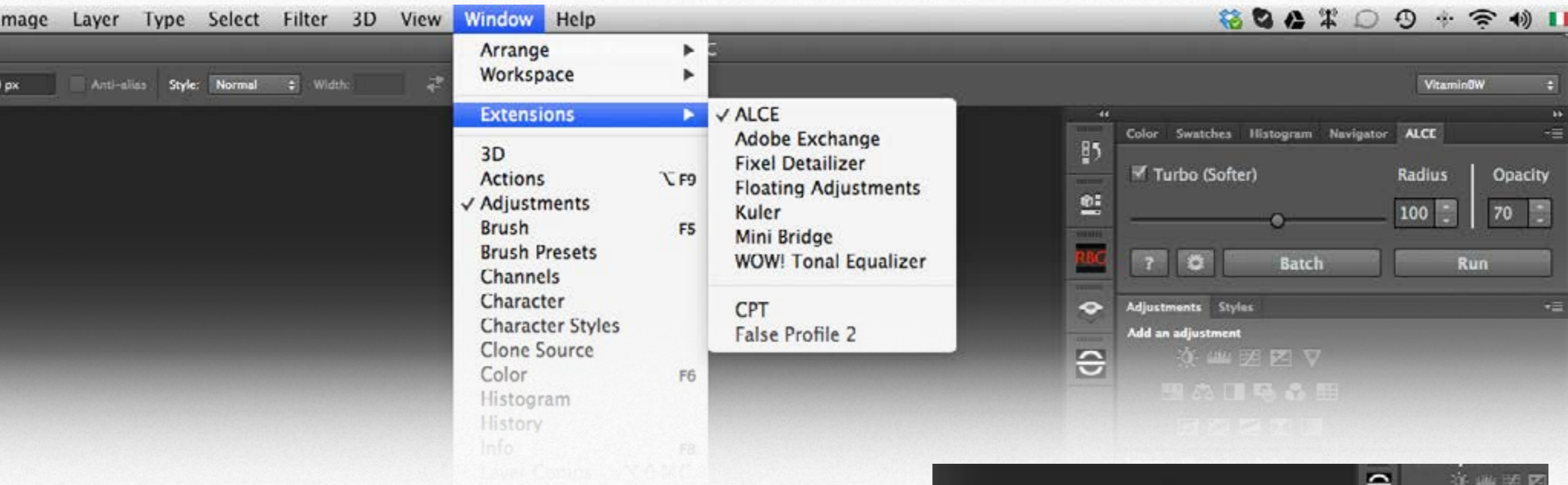
Know-How Transfer (Script Folder) → CC: Macintosh HD/Applications/Adobe Photoshop CC//Presets/Scripts/  
CS6: Macintosh HD/Applications/Adobe Photoshop CS6//Presets/Scripts/

com.knowhowtransfer.wow → CC: User/Library/Application Support/Adobe/ CEPServiceManager/Extensions/  
CS6: User/Library/Application Support/Adobe/ CEPServiceManager/Extensions/  
**NOTE: The folder Library by default is hidden.**  
**To reveal it go to the Finder/Go menu and press the ALT key.**

ts Plugins (s



### 3a. How to find ALCE as a panel within Photoshop (except CS3)

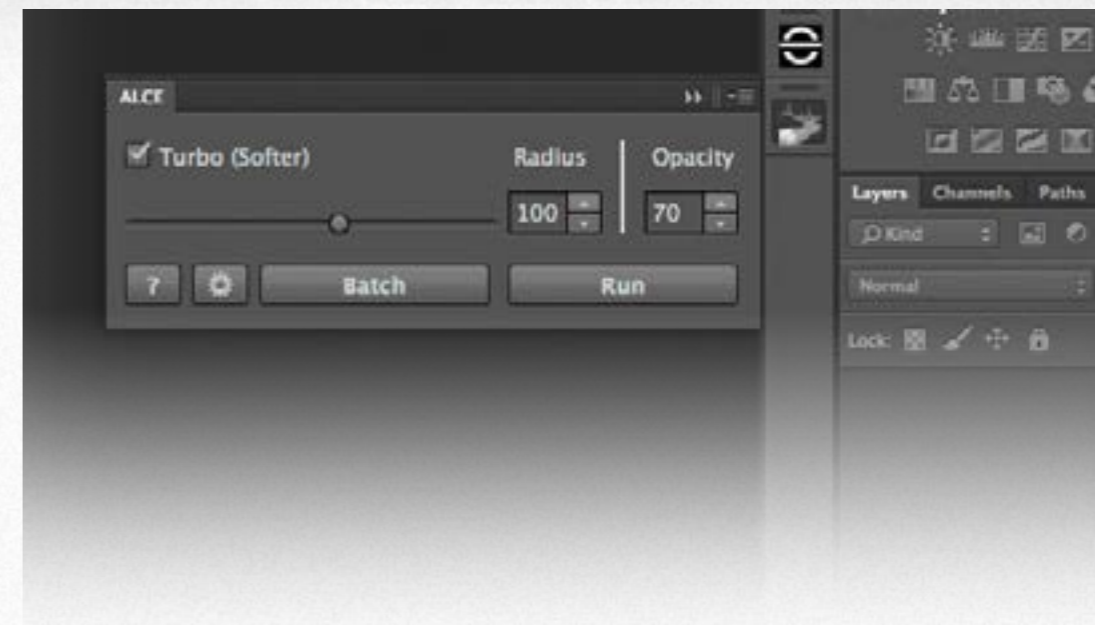


#### 3a. Open ALCE as a Panel: Menu Window/Extensions/ALCE

You can access the panel selecting Window/Extensions/ALCE.

The ALCE panel is a proper one so you have all the possibilities to visualize and arrange it as you do with all the other panels within Photoshop.

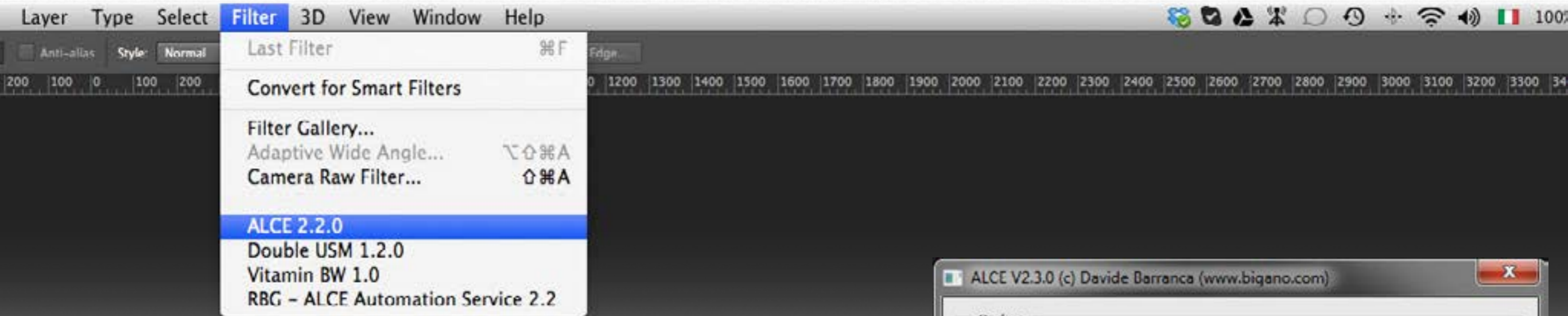
You can drag the ALCE panel within a group of other panels (see above), or you can also visualize ALCE as a collapsible icon in the bar and dock /undock it (see on the right).



*Tip: If you have just installed the extension and don't see it, just quit and restart Photoshop.*



## 3b. How to find ALCE as a filter within Photoshop (included CS3)

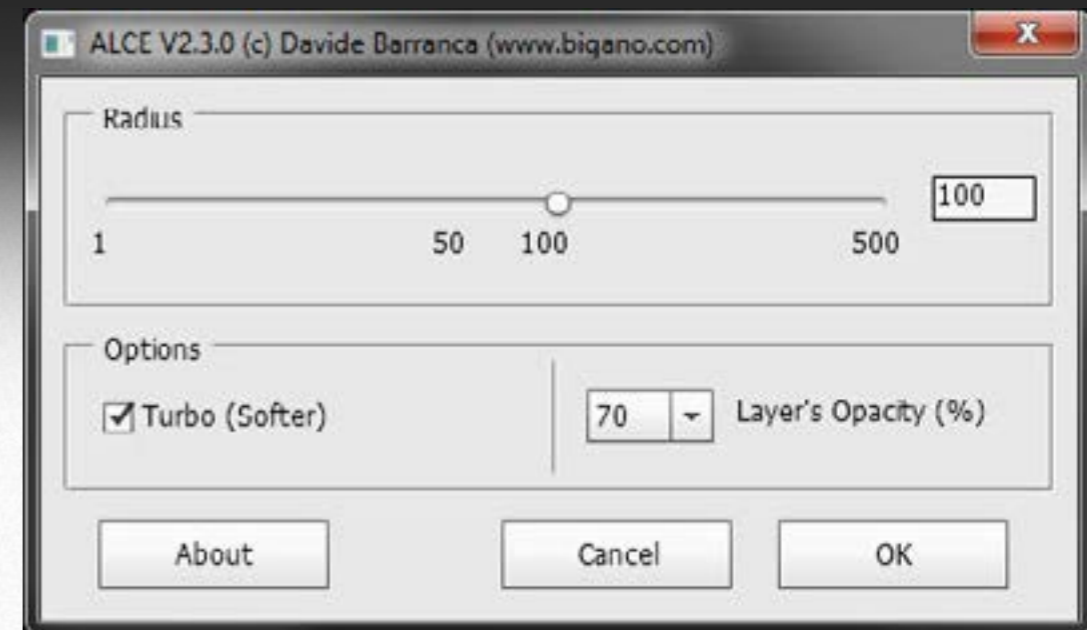


### 3b. Filter version: Filter/RBG - ALCE 2.3.0

Since version 2.1 you can find the very same functions we just seen above from the Filter menu. You can spot two new entries, "ALCE 2.3.0" and "ALCE Automation Service 2.3.0", at the menu's bottom.

These are the default access point to ALCE if you're running version CS3.

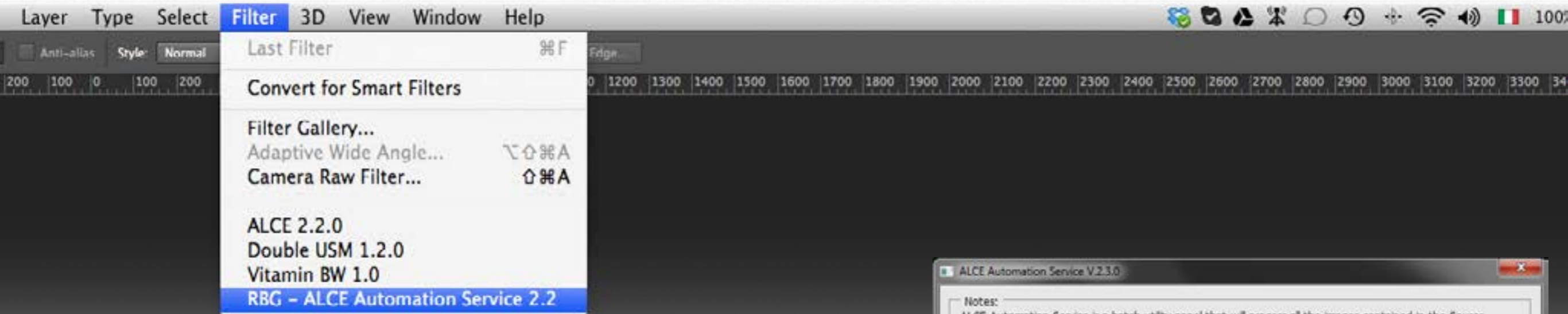
In this case, the ALCE window will look a bit different, but functionally speaking it's the very same as the panel.



*Tip: You must use Filter/ALCE 2.3.0 when you are recording an action, if you try to use the panel version it will not be recorded.*



## 3c. How to find ALCE, Batch version



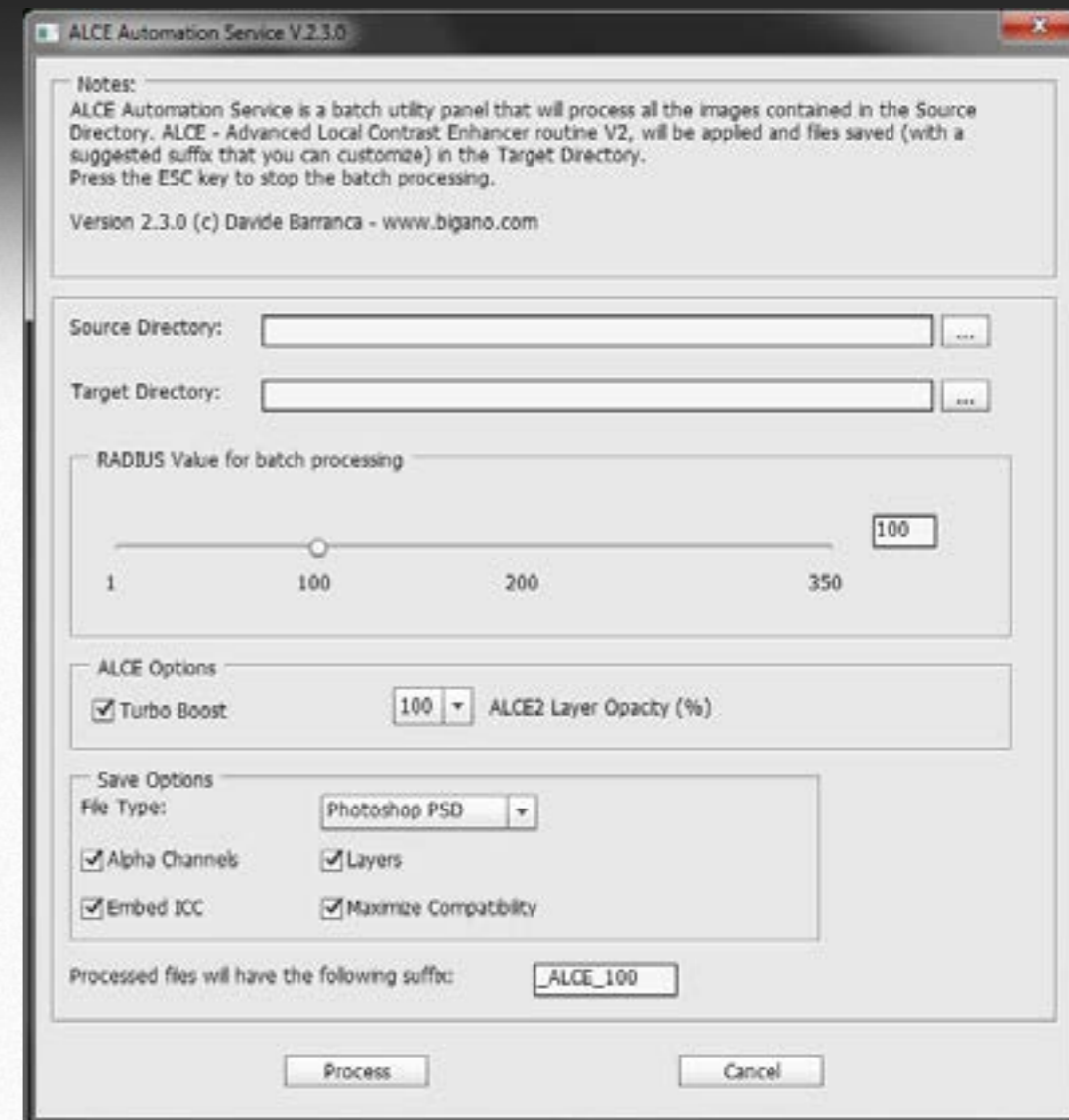
### 3c. Batch version: Filter/ALCE Automation Service 2.3.0

If you need automation to process entire folders of images all with the same radius and opacity, choose Filter/ALCE Automation Service 2.3.0.

Here you can choose the folder the images are collected in (Source Directory) and the folder you want the processed images to be put in (Target Directory) clicking the "..." buttons. All the files in the Source directory will be processed by ALCE with the chosen radius, and saved in the Target directory according to the specified Saving options (File Type, Alpha Channels, Layers, Embed ICC and Maximize Compatibility). Eventually, you can customize the proposed file suffix, that will be added to the processed file.

When you're done, click the "Process" button: ALCE Automation Service will open every image file with a known extension in the Source Directory, process them, and save them in the Target Directory without affecting the original files.

*Tip: If you're on a Mac, be aware that images without extensions won't be processed.*





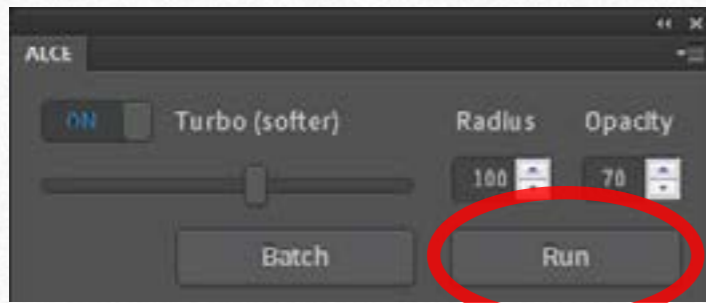
## 5. How to apply ALCE to your pictures

### 5.1 Image types supported

ALCE works on every raster image that's been opened in Photoshop (for instance PSD, TIFF, JPEG, etc.).

To process raw files (DNG, CR2, NEF, etc) you must first open them with Adobe Camera Raw (or the raw converter of your choice) and then open them into Photoshop. ALCE supports all the following color modes: RGB, CMYK, Grayscale, Lab either in 8 bit and 16 bit; you can not process Duotone, Bitmap, Multichannel or Indexed Colors files or 32 bit files.

### 5.2 One click processing



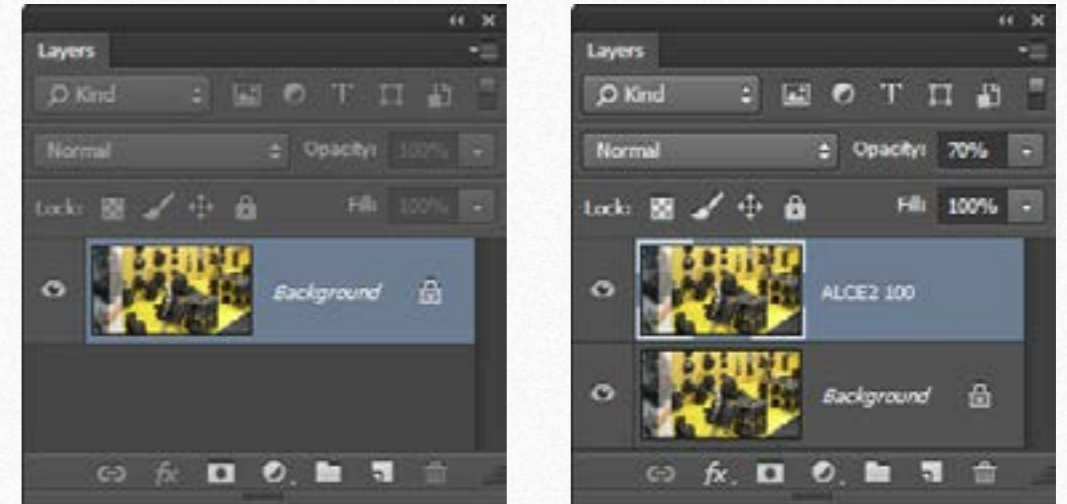
To get a quick ALCE test drive, open a picture, launch the ALCE then simply click the Run button with the default value of 100. The routine will start (it may take a while depending on the file size and the computer you're using) then the result of the processing will be pasted on the top of the original image. Is the processed version any better than the original? Chances are that the answer is yes. But the more you know, the more you'll be able to squeeze out from this Local Contrast enhancement routine.

Before going any further, let's have a look to the way ALCE integrates with the existing image layers.

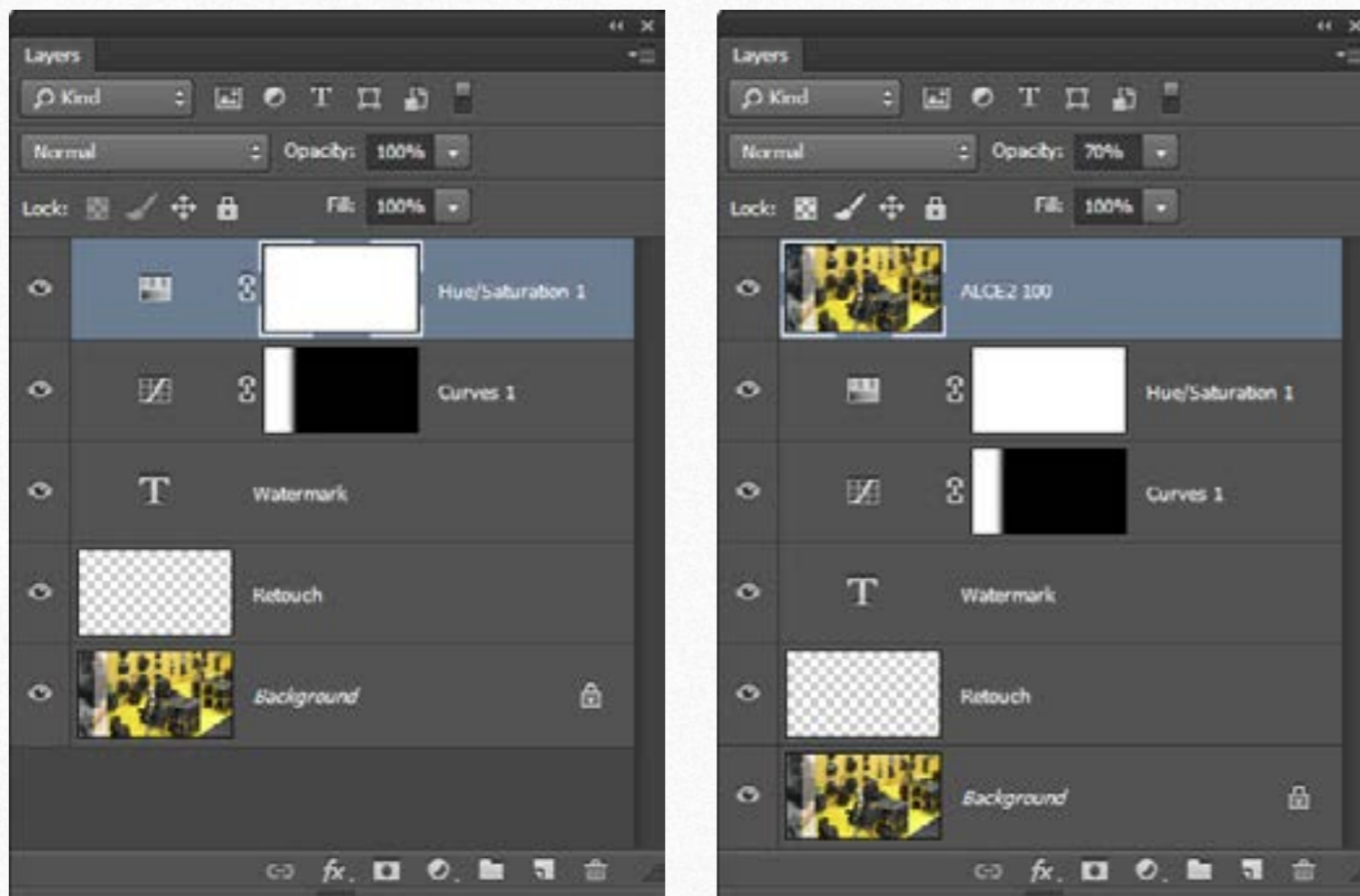


### 5.3 Layer structure

When you apply the ALCE routine at, say, 100 value, it will create a new, processed layer that's called "ALCE 100" on the top of the existing layers. If you run it on a flattened image, the layer palette will look like this (before and after):



But you can even apply it to a file which has a more complex layer structure, without any risk of damaging the original corrections, like here:



ALC2E doesn't apply the routine depending on the selected layer, but on a merged version of all visible layers. The result is pasted as a new topmost layer, and named accordingly to the chosen value ("ALCE 100" for instance). In the next section you will learn more about the value, which is actually a radius, and how to pick up the more appropriate for your needs.



## 6. The Radius

### 6.1 Global versus Local

To apply a global contrast adjustments usually means, at least, to set a white and a black point (more properly called an highlight and a shadow) into a picture that may lack them.

You can do this in a number of ways (Levels or Curves adjustments, for instance). The picture pops and the global contrast is boosted: we'll stick with a B/W picture first, in order to focus our attention to contrast only, and not color.



If you really understand this improvement, you can also spot some areas in the picture, that, although better than the original, can be even more boosted. We can't do that in a global fashion, for this would introduce extreme clipping in the shadows and the high ights - that is, we can't mess the entire picture to make a small particular better.

It would be nice if we could select smaller regions within the picture: and then adjust the contrast within each region differently, depending on every region's specific features. This way we could boost the contrast not globally, but locally.



The picture that follows is the same, but this time you'll see the before and after comparison from the (globally) corrected version, and the ALCE processing (local contrast).



The difference is quite strong - local contrast adjustment makes dull the version that, compared to the original in the page before, seemed so stronger. ALCE doesn't actually select any region within the picture (it works in a more sophisticated fashion) but you've got the idea: divide the image in smaller zones, then contrast each zone depending on its particular features. You'll see that the zones area and the radius are somehow linked, and this is also connected to the "local-ness" of the effect.



## 6.2 How Local is your Contrast?

Short answer: it depends on your radius. The smaller the radius, the more Local the Contrast. Let me show you an example:



*Original*



*ALCE 80*



*ALCE 20*

Now you may, at least intuitively, grasp that the radius controls how wide is the area of the zones we, ideally, were dividing the picture into; that is, the smaller the radius is, the finer is the “tiling”, the more local is the contrast; on the other hand, the larger is the radius, the broader is the “tiling”, the less local is the contrast.

Pay attention that the radius is not a relative value, but an absolute one (currently, its units are pixels). Which translates in plain english that the effect depends on the image size (in pixels): to apply an ALCE 50 to a 6MP image or to a 39MP one leads to very different results. The image content (the subject) also play a role as we’ll see in a moment, but we’re speaking about raw size now.

As a rule of thumb, you’ve got to use larger radii with larger pictures, to match perceptually the effect of smaller radii with smaller pictures.

For instance: a 3000x4000px image with ALCE 50 is perceptually very close to ALCE 25 applied to the same image downsampled (before processing) to 1500x2000px.



### 6.3 Radius ranges (small, medium, large)

With a little bit of practice, you'll easily learn what kind of radius to apply in order to get the effect you've in mind.

Look at this comparison:



*Original*

*Small*

*Medium*

*Large*

Image size has surely to be taken into account, but the picture subject plays an important role. Unless you're in an angry mood, you wouldn't smash the portrait above with a too small radius (it emphasizes all kind of skin issues), while preferring the second or third version is a matter of taste.

Basically, depending on the picture size, we can define three radius ranges (remember that the value is expressed in pixels):

1. **Small:** approx. from 1px to 10px
2. **Medium:** approx. from 20px to 80px
3. **Large:** approx from 100px up to the maximum of 500px

I've left a big gap between each range, because it's impossible to theoretically define a range too strictly: it depends on image size (measured in pixel) and image content (the subject, as we've seen). Let's have a look to each case.



## 6.4 Small radii

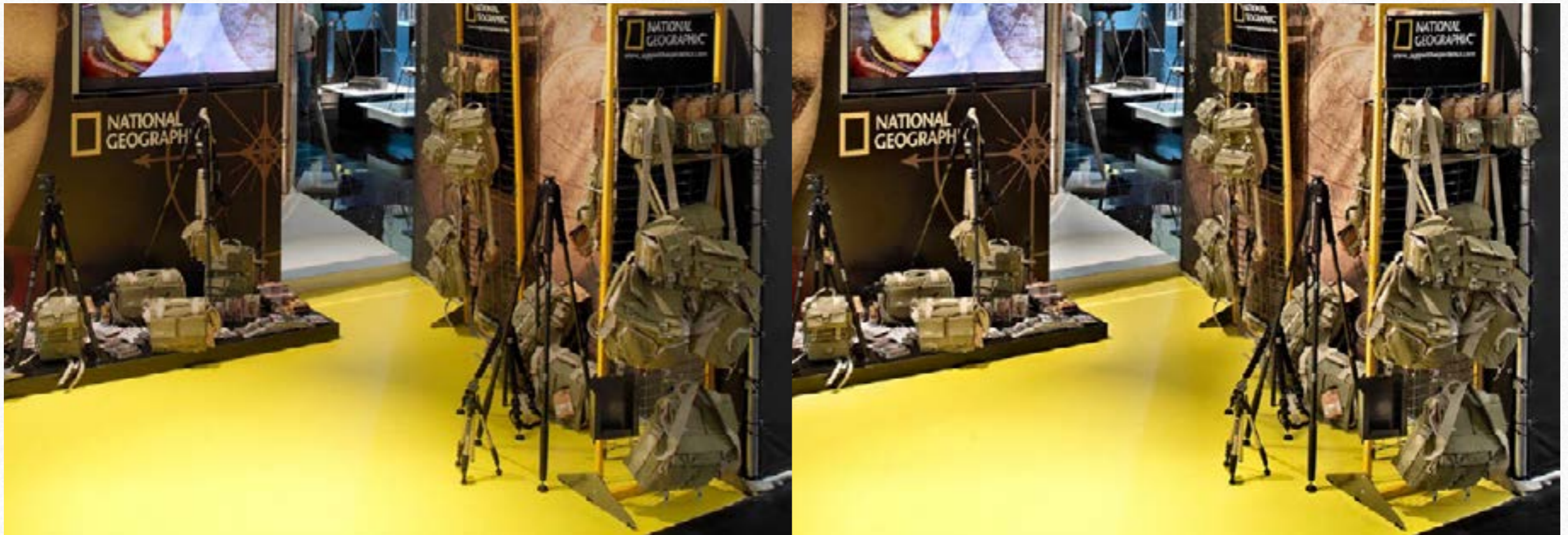
A radius of 1px or similar gives a traditional UnSharpMask-like effect, slightly better for someone, and definitely better in some circumstances.





## 6.5 Medium radii

The medium range is the one where the Local effect is stronger - it may lead to unwanted halos from time to time, but luckily there is plenty of techniques to get rid of them. Please have a look to the “Working with ALCE” video by Marco Olivotto on our website - more info about this and its companion video “Introducing ALCE” in the Video training section at the end of the document.





## 6.6 Large radii

There are surprisingly a huge lot of pictures that benefit from a large radius ALCE processing. Depending on the filesize, you can easily and carefree apply up to a 350px radius (please note that you've to check the "Radius Extended Range" checkbox in order to access values greater than 200). It may take a while to complete the processing of a very large file with a 200px radius, depending on the performance of the computer Photoshop is running on, but the small wait is usually worthwhile.





## 7. ALCE test Action

### What is this Action for

ALCE test Action is a Photoshop action which automatically creates eight ALCE layers with different radius values, from 1 to 350. You can choose ALCE to be applied with or without Turbo (Softer) option to see the difference between the two methods. From the direct comparison between the different layers you will learn how different values works better than every theoretical explanation.

*Tip: choose three of your typical files with different features like portrait and landscape, high contrast and low contrast subjects, images with and without Unsharp Mask and local contrast applied.*

*Run this action and compare the results.*

*To see how the same radius value affects different sized images, you should also try to resize you test files (before applying ALCE), for example at 50% and 25% of original size. Now apply the same ALCE value (eg. 50) to all the different versions of the image and look how the same radius affects them in different ways.*

### Where to find and how to install this Action

In the downloaded folder, along with ALCE installers and manuals, you will find “z ALCE Test Action” folder, Which includes “ALCE Test Action.atn “ file.

To install this actions just double click on the file and, if requested, choose to open it with Photoshop. You can also choose “Load Actions...” from the Action panel’s menu in Photoshop, and locate the .atn file to install.





## 8. Tweaking

If you feel the ALCE effect is not following your taste, there are a number of ways to correct it. We will review few basic and intermediate techniques. For more advanced processing please have a look to the Video Training, at the end of this document.

### 8.1 BASIC - Opacity

The radius seems to be right, but the effect is too strong. We can easily correct this by lowering the opacity of the ALCE layer. You find the layer opacity control in the upper right corner of the Layers panel.



*Original*

*ALCE 60 at 100% opacity*

*ALCE 60 at a lowered, 60% opacity*



## 8.2 BASIC - Saturation

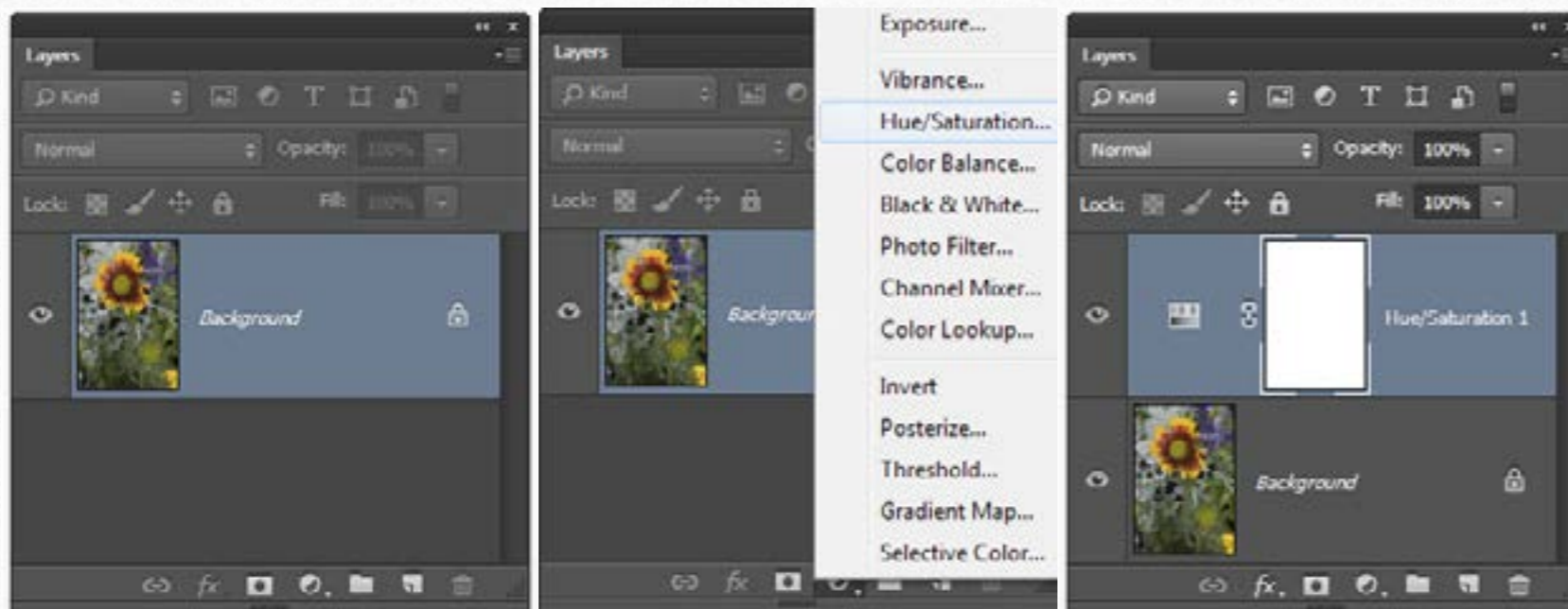
It may happen that you feel ALCE processing result, while gaining in contrast compared to the original, loses in saturation. Actually, this isn't a bug - along with a boost in contrast, we would expect a raise in saturation: ALCE doesn't do this (for several good reasons), so you have to compensate, depending on your taste, with a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer.



Original

ALCE

ALCE + Saturation



*Tip:*

*We suggest a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer (see screenshots aside). How much? It depends to the image and your taste. Usually +15 on the Master channel could be a good starting point.*

*Please note that more sophisticated ways to correct the saturation are possible; check bright areas for oversaturation issues before saving.*



### 8.3 INTERMEDIATE - Blending modes

If you've ever found that ALCE processing layer is doing, somehow, too much lightening or too much darkening to your picture, you can tweak the effect with blending modes. You access layer blending modes dropdown list up in the Layers palette. We will focus on Darken and Lighten blending modes:



*Original*

*ALCE (Normal)*

*ALCE (Darken)*

*ALCE (Lighten)*

**Normal** is what you're used to. The layer is opaque and if you pile ALCE on the top of the original, you see ALCE (and not the original).

**Darken** applied to ALCE layer keeps the ALCE layer areas where it is darker than the original (basically, you get the darkening halos and lose the lightening ones). Actually, Darken could be named "don't lighten".

**Lighten** applied to ALCE layer keeps the ALCE layer parts where it is lighter than the original (basically, you get the lightening halos and lose the darkening ones). Actually, Lighten could be named "don't darken".

As a more advanced tip, I suggest you to run ALCE, then duplicate the ALCE processed layer twice so you have Original, plus two identical copies of ALCE, one on top of another. Rename them ALCE\_Darken and ALCE\_Lighten, then change the blending mode of these two layers respectively to Lighten and Darken. The overall effect of the two combined layers should now equal the ALCE single layer in Normal mode. Fine, so what?

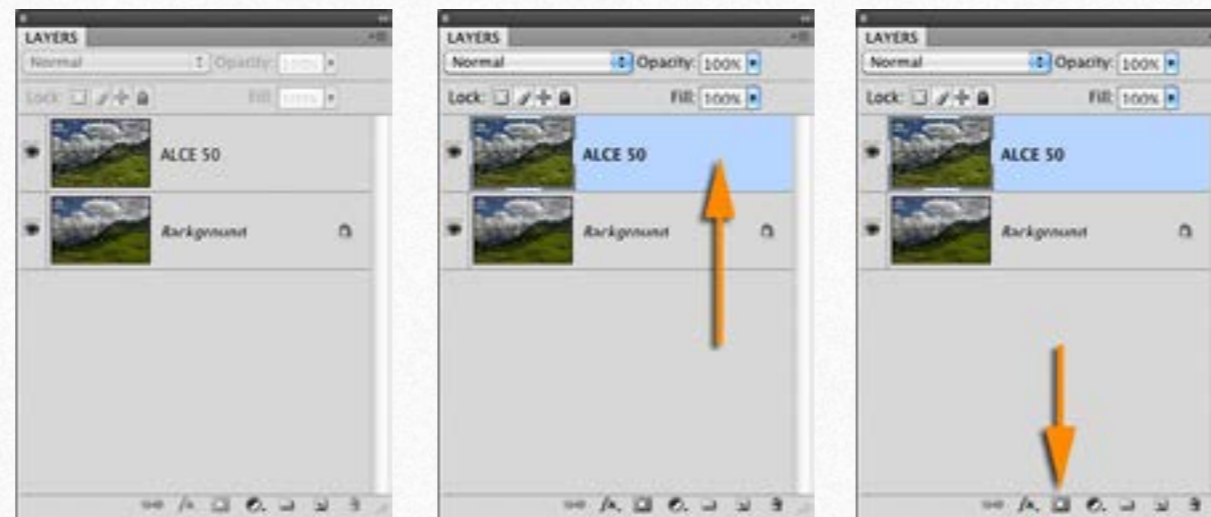
The interesting part is that you can now play with opacity of the two Lighten and Darken layers: this way you can boost or lower independently the dark or light halos of the ALCE effect. Say, Darken 75% and Lighten 40%.



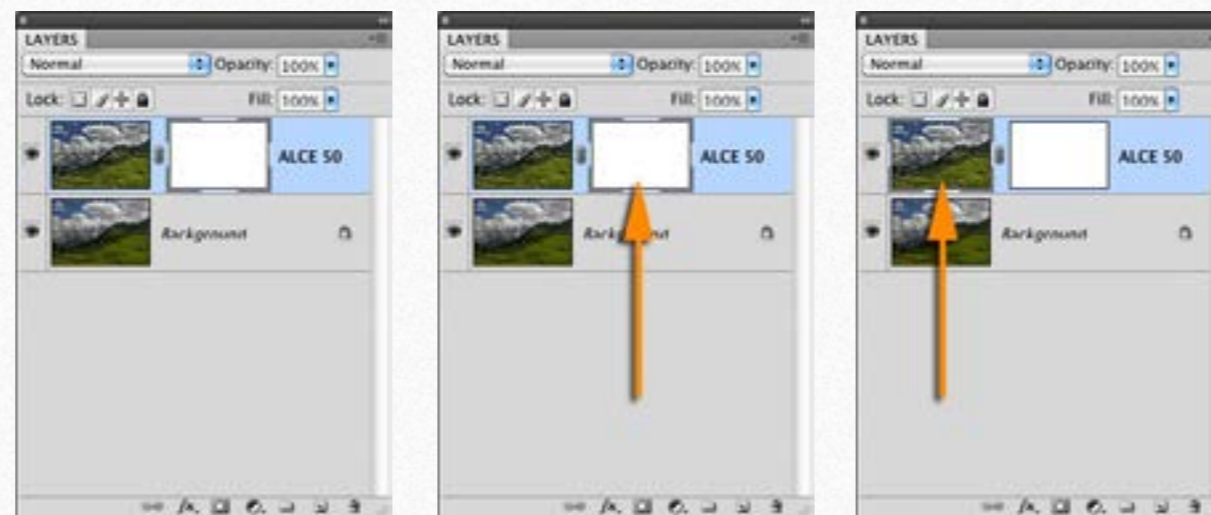
## 8.4 INTERMEDIATE - Layer masks

It may happen that the ALCE effect is very good everywhere in your picture, except in a small area; where it may add unwanted detail, or maybe it produces halos. One way to locally control the ALCE effect is by means of layer masks; this kind of trick already is in the arsenal of pro retouchers for sure, but it's worth mentioning it here anyway as an intermediate topic.

Here is how to add a layer mask, let's say you have a background and an ALCE layer. First select the layer (click on the ALCE layer in the Layers, it becomes light blue), then click on the small icon in the bottom of the Layers palette as shown in these screenshots:



This way you're adding a blank (white) layer mask to the ALCE layer. Please note that a small line appears in the icon corners, meaning "selected"; when you single-click the layer icon, or the layer mask icon, you're selecting one or another:





With a white layer mask, nothing seems to change, and that's fine. White in a layer mask means that the "actual" layer is fully visible. Now pick up the brush tool from the toolbar and start painting with black into the layer mask. To do this click once into the layer mask icon if you notice that you're painting not into the mask, but into the ALCE layer. A small border will appear around the mask icon, which means: you're doing things to the mask, and not to the layer. What you should see is that where you've painted, the ALCE effect disappears, that is: black in a layer mask hides the associated layer content.

Basically, you can create a layer mask to the ALCE processed layer, and paint black into the mask where you want to hide, to "erase," the effect.



*Original*

*ALCE*

*ALCE with active layer mask*

So you've seen that black hides, but what about gray? To paint the mask with 50% (mid) gray, is the same than lowering the opacity of the layer to 50% (that is: shades of gray are shades of opacity in the show/hide game).

That's all for now, about ALCE elaboration in this User Manual: I've shown here some basic to intermediate techniques of ALCE post-processing. The topics covered should be enough for you to start working with it. To learn more about advanced topics, please read the following section.





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## 9. Free Video Training

We're proud to offer for free two sets of english spoken training videos recorded by Marco Olivotto.

The first one, "Introducing ALCE" is about installation, theory and basic use (it also contains an easy explanation of what the radius really mean).

The second one, "Working with ALCE" is about image processing and our local contrast routine. Marco shows 10 real world examples of image elaborations and challenges each picture with different techniques.

They are a great source of information for both the beginner and the expert user - you'll enjoy them. The videos are on our website and on a dedicated Vimeo channel.





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## 10. FAQ

For any question about purchasing, installing and trouble shooting please visit our dedicated FAQ page at the following address:

<http://www.knowhowtransfer.com/alce/faq>





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## 11. Links and Credits

ALCE © knowhowtransfer/bigano.srl/Davide Barranca  
ALCE is developed by Davide Barranca  
This manual is designed by Marco Diodato

**ALCE Page >**

Buy ALCE here >

Store Home Page >

Products RBG Home Page >

**bigano.com >**

Images credits: Cover image ©depositphotos.com - other images: Roberto Bigano





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## 12. A brief Presentation of our Products

### **ALCE - Advanced Local Contrast Enhancer >**

An easy-to-use and powerful Photoshop tool to effectively improve and finely tune the local contrast of an image. His smart algorithm avoids the clipping issues typical of methods like shadows/highlights. **Buy >**

### **Double USM - Advanced Control of Dark and Light Halos >**

A sharpening tool working separately on Dark and Light halo's components of an image. With a double set of sliders and his high quality preview, Double USM fills the gap. For traditional, hiraloam or creative mixed sharpening. **Buy >**

### **PS Projects - Files Manager for Photoshop >**

PS Projects is a script that lets you create, load and modify Project files – i.e. collections of images in any format, from any folder in your hard drive as file references, that for some reason you might need to open in Photoshop often. **Buy >**

### **VitaminBW - Single and Triple Tone Black&White Converter >**

An original approach to B&W Conversion with a very clean and simple interface. Get easily the best possible B&W conversions. Simply press the "Single Tone" or the "Triple Tone" button to be quickly introduced to advanced conversion techniques. **Buy >**

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### **False Profile - Tonal range control with low or high gamma >**

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Restores the Adjustment Layers' bigger, floating windows look and behavior which was the norm back in CS3. It allows the creation of 10 Adjustment kinds as big, floating windows, and the modifications of existing adj. layers. **Get Free >**

### **Hasselblad 3F 16bit Raw Scan Service >**

3F is a file similar to a raw file, but scanned from an analog original. We will scan your film with the Hasselblad hi-end scanners. Send us your originals from a 35mm to a 13x18cm/5x7", color or black and white, negative or positive.

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