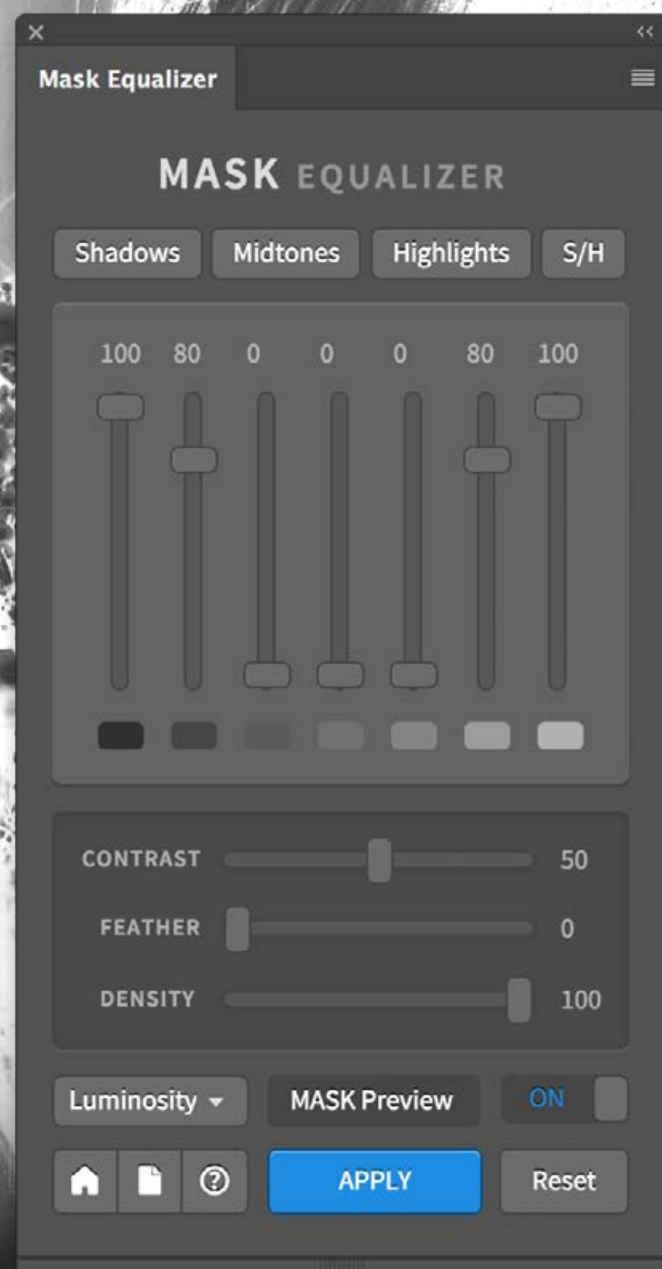




KNOW HOW TRANSFER

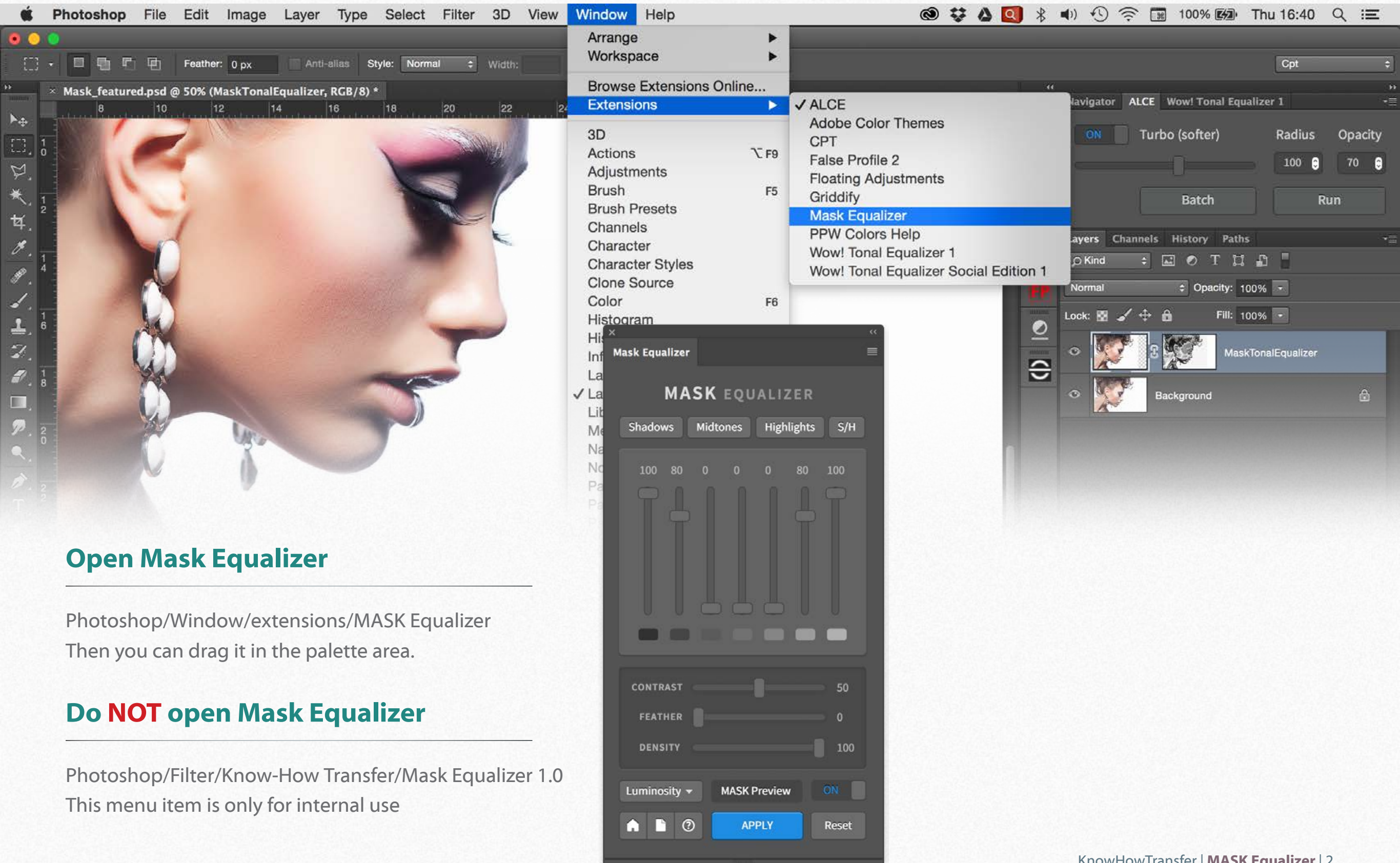
the photography knowledge hub

[Open Mask](#)[Tutorials](#)[The Panel](#)[Presets](#)[Sliders](#)[Layers](#)[Double Preview](#)[Feathering](#)[Mask at Work](#)[FAQ](#)[Product Page](#)

Mask Equalizer

User Manual - Version 1.1.3 - March 2017

Open Mask Equalizer



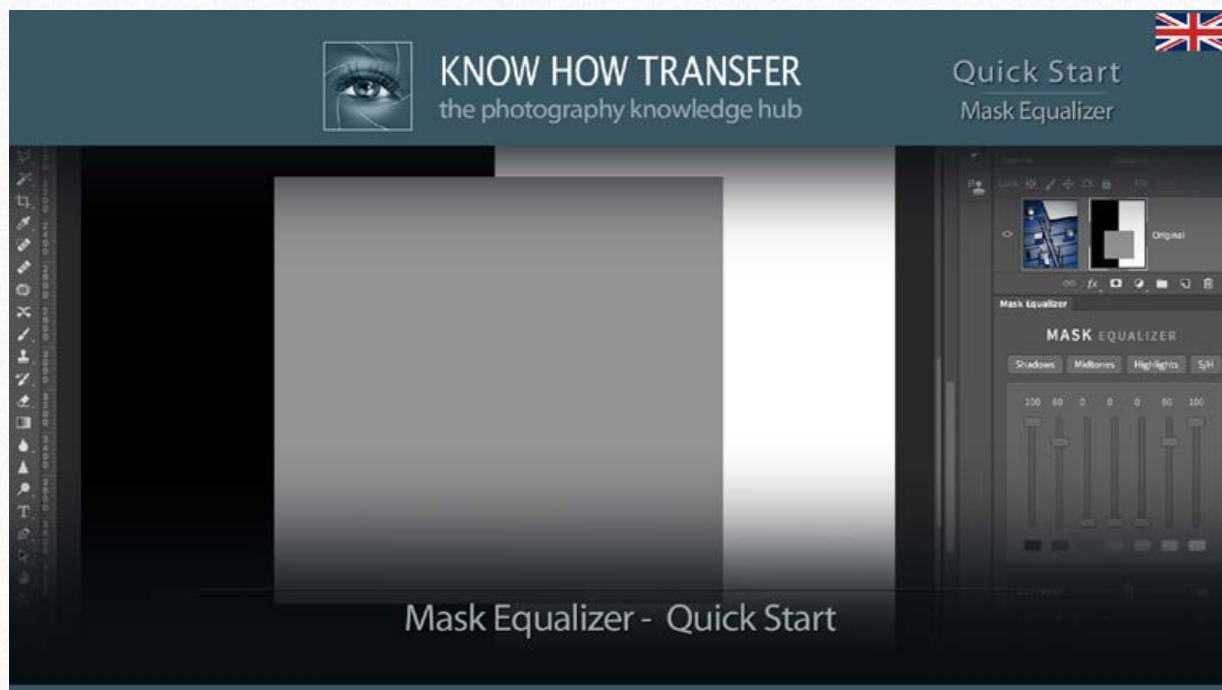
Open Mask Equalizer

Photoshop/Window/extensions/MASK Equalizer
Then you can drag it in the palette area.

Do NOT open Mask Equalizer

Photoshop/Filter/Know-How Transfer/Mask Equalizer 1.0
This menu item is only for internal use

Tutorials



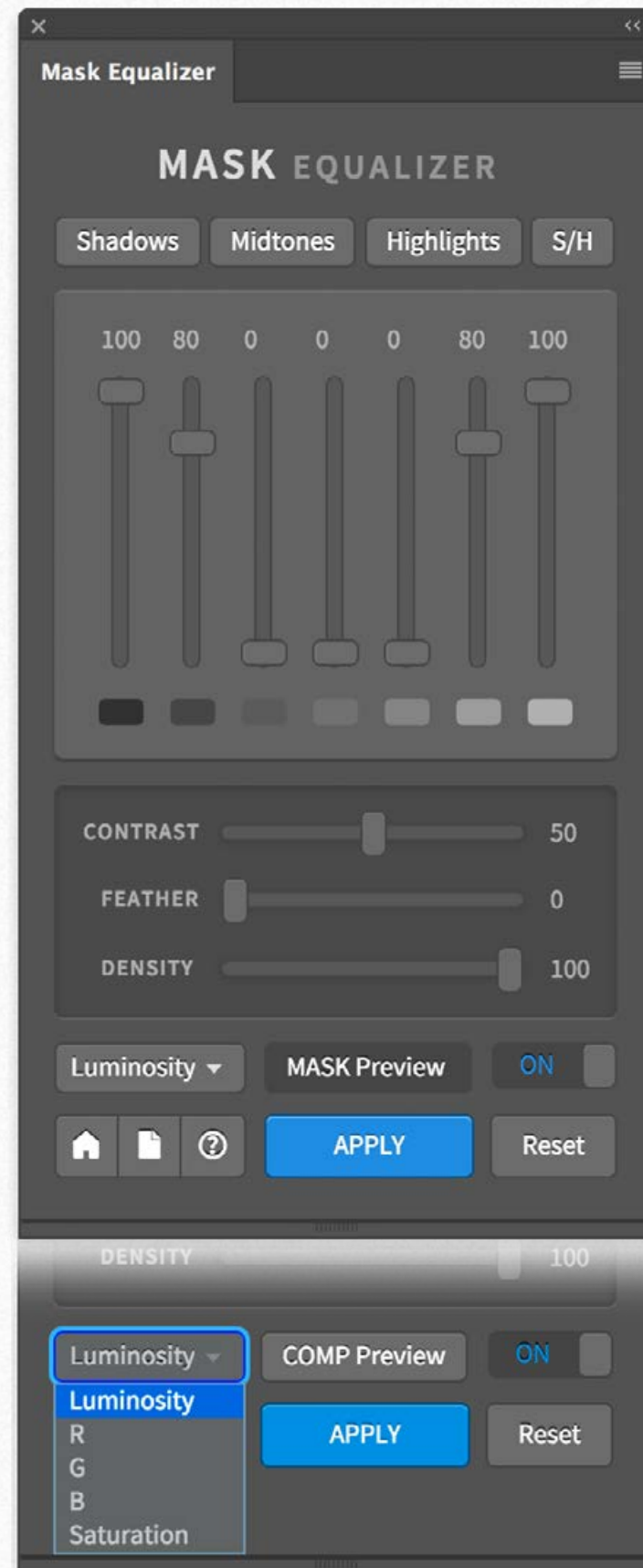
Tutorial Page

The panel in compact and extended mode



*Pull this small handle
to open the panel in full mode*

According to your needs you can compact the panel or extend it in full mode in order to access to advanced options.



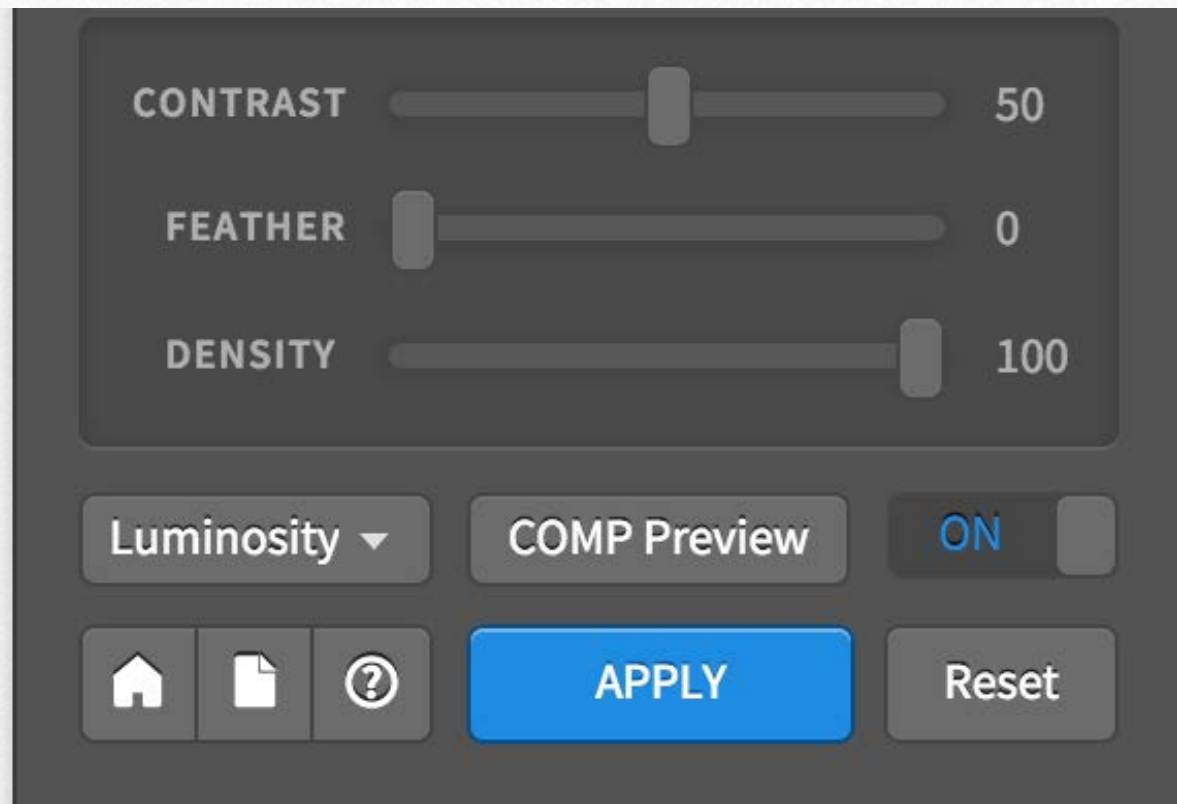
Easy presets section. Four buttons to create the most common mask: highlights, shadows, mid tones and, the most used, shadows and highlight. Pressing the buttons the sliders set accordingly. Check the preview and proceed or tweak them manually.

Intermediate sections. Tonal range (luminosity) sliders. Left to right blacks, shadows, shadows/midtones, midtones, midtones/highlights, highlights and whites. Starting from the presets, or from scratch you will be able to easily and quickly create even the most complex mask.

The sliders in this third section allow changing the opacity of the mask, feather it, or tweak its contrast while keeping the mid tones unchanged. The use of these options, usually complicated, is made easy by the MASK and COMP Preview which will allow you to work perceptively.

Fourth section. It contains the priceless double preview. By default it shows the MASK Preview (as a black & white mask). Toggling the button it shows the COMP Preview that is the image with the mask applied. This section also contains the advanced users menu to use different channels: r, g, b, saturation, etc. instead of the default luminosity channel.

Additional buttons



ON: Go back and forth from original to the mask applied preview.

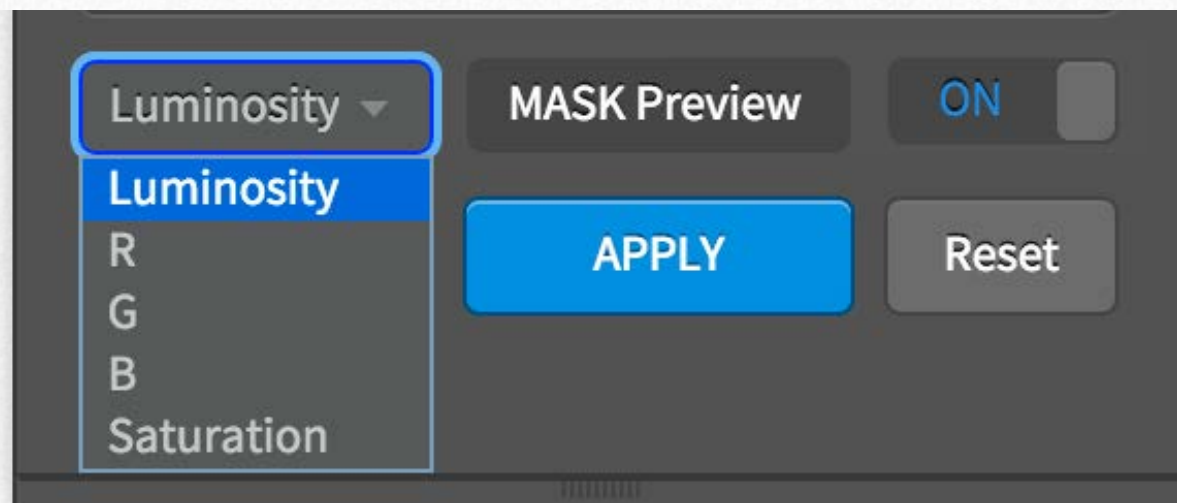
HOME: Links to MASK Equalizer web page

?: Info on version release

APPLY: In general you will not use it. When you re-open MASK Equalizer, the sliders will set to the last values applied. In this case you must press APPLY to activate MASK.

RESET: Set all vertical sliders to 0

SMALL HANDLE: Use it to switch the panel from compact to full mode



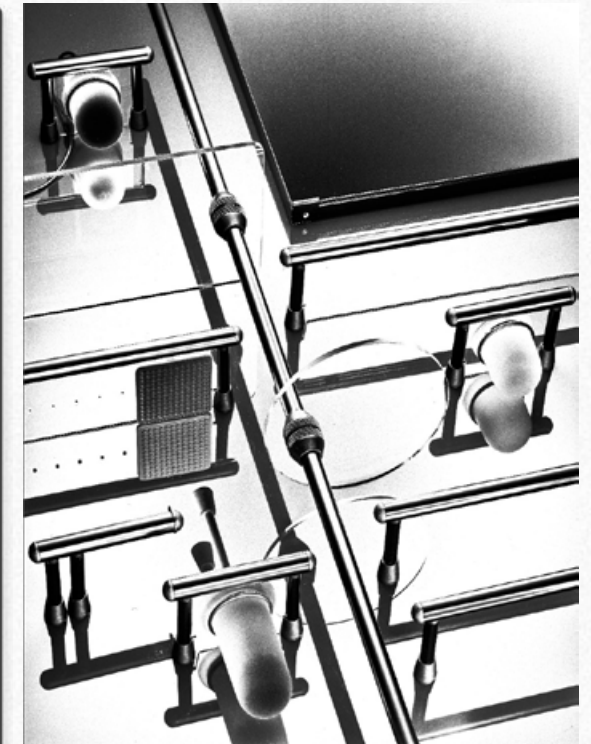
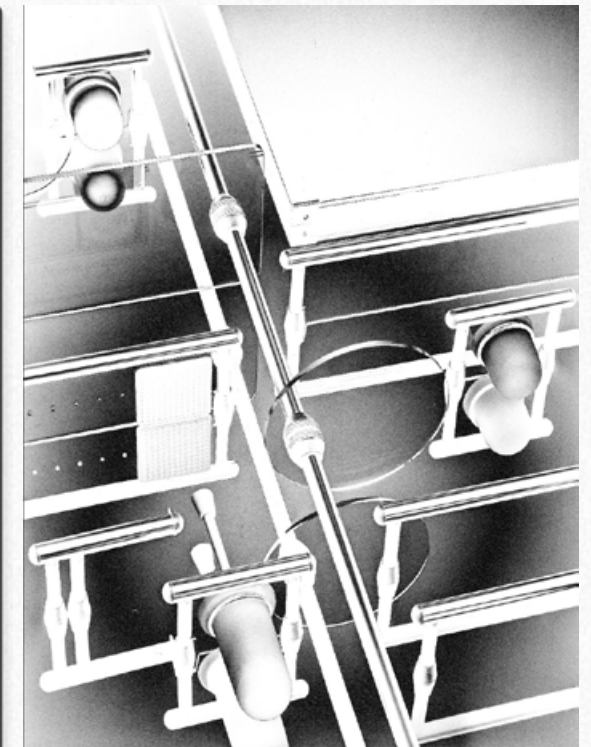
CHANNELS MENU: CHANNELS MENU: By default, MASK Equalizer works in Luminosity mode uses the tonal bands of the L channel of Lab.

Alternatively, you can use one the three channels of RGB or the Saturation channel of HSB.

The presets

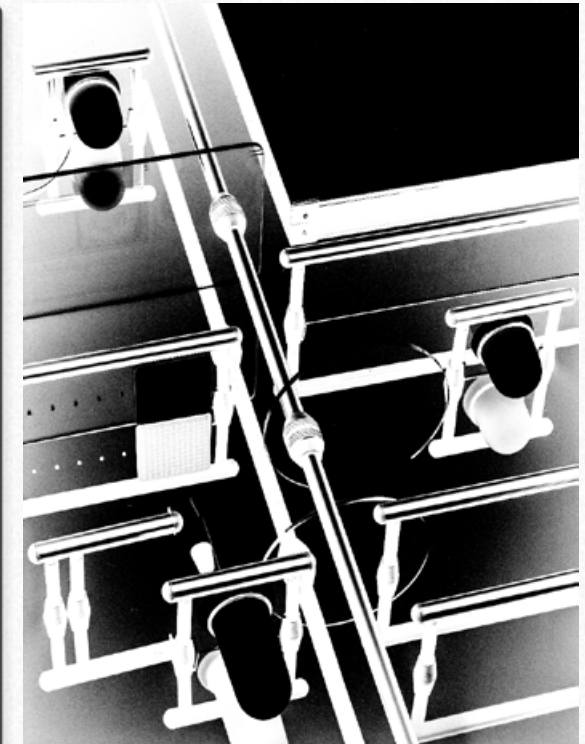
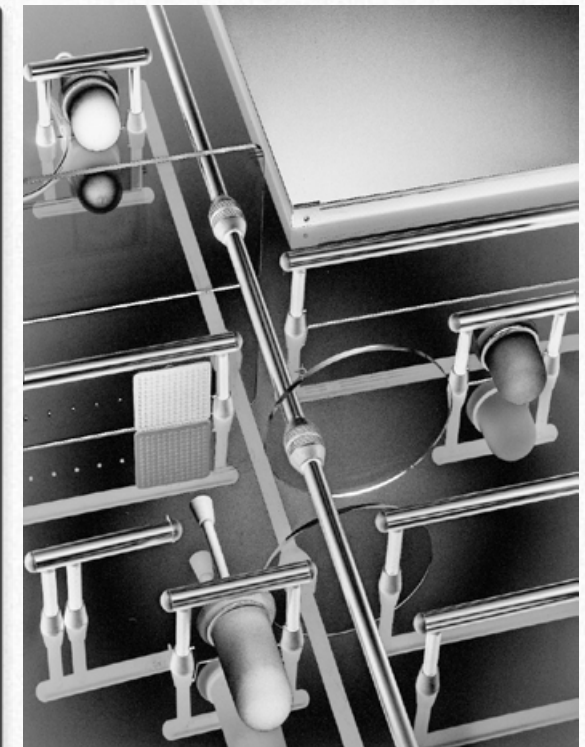
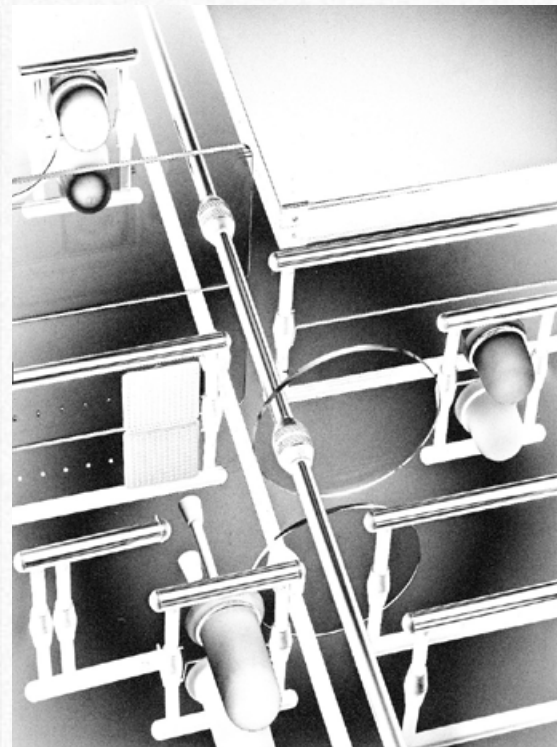
To start you have four presets buttons that cover the most common needs.

Shadows Midtones Highlights and Shadows + Highlights added. This last one is the most common. You can, of course, modify them.



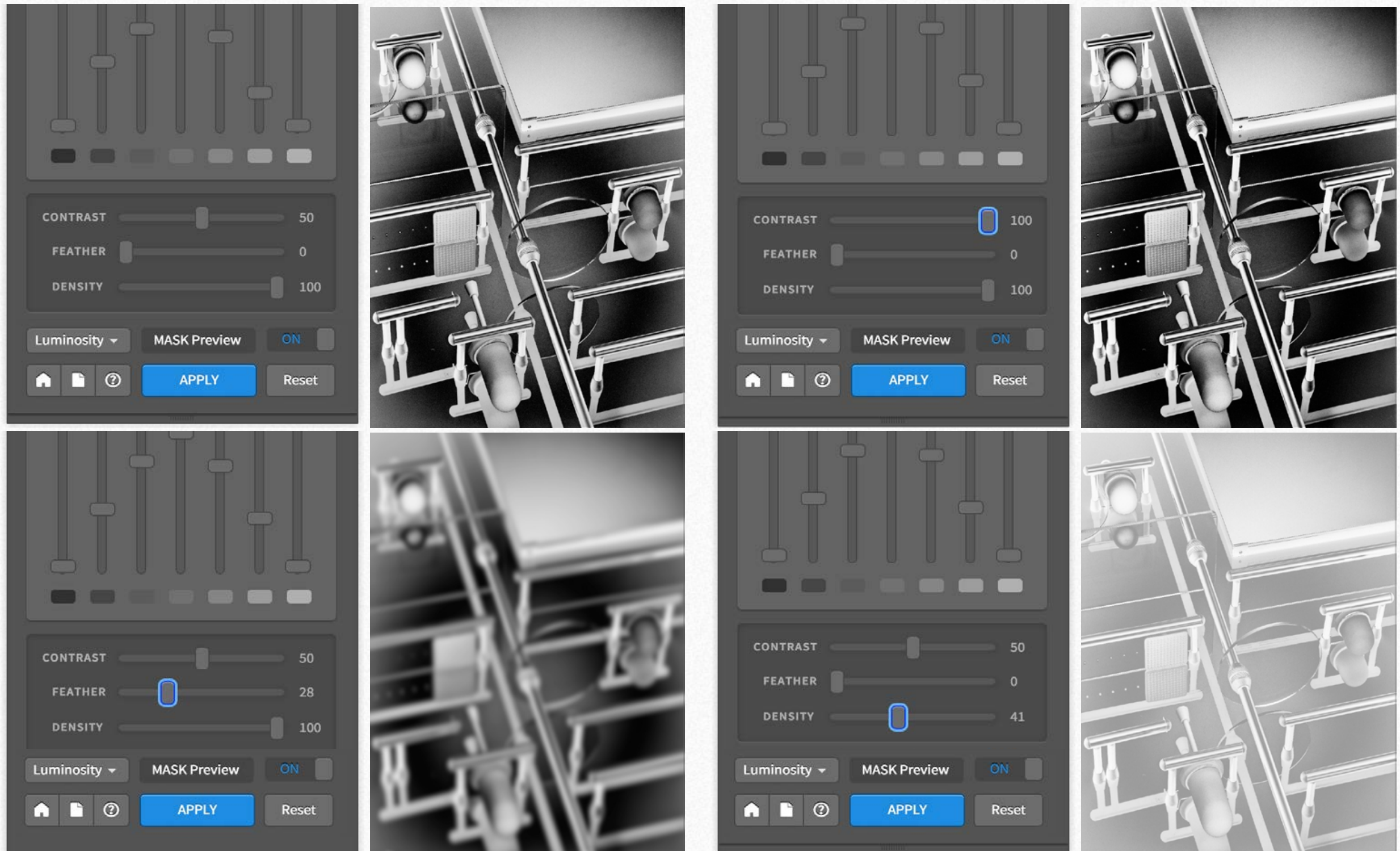
Vertical sliders

Multiple tonal ranges (luminosity) sliders. Left to right, blacks, shadows, shadows/mid tones, mid tones, mid tones/highlights, highlights, and whites. Starting from the presets, or from scratch, you will be able to **easily and quickly create even the most elaborate mask**.



Horizontal sliders

The horizontal sliders allow changing the opacity of the mask, feather it or tweak its contrast while keeping the mid tones unchanged. The use of these options, usually complicated, **is made easy by the double preview which will allow you to work perceptively.**



How to move the sliders

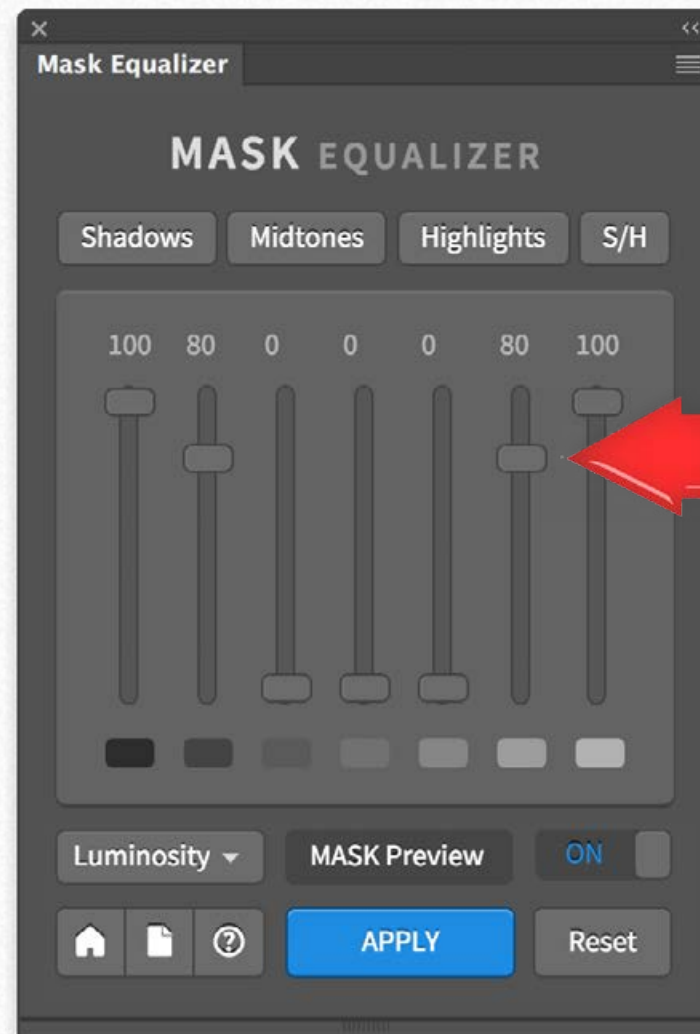
The sliders must be used differently depending on whether you are using CC 2015 and above, or previous CC versions.



Drag and release or point and click

CC 2015 and above

Click where you want to place the slider or drag it: the preview will be applied only once released the mouse button.



Point and click

Do not drag and release

Dedicated Tutorial

CC and CC 2014

Because of an Adobe issue, while you drag the slider the preview is continuously applied. This greatly slows down the preview. Simply click where you want to place the slider.

Do not drag the slider

Mask and Comp preview

The double live preview is the priceless wonder-option of MASK Equalizer. You can preview the black & white mask or just the image with the mask already applied. Switching from mask to image (comp) preview you will be able to refine the mask avoiding posterization and halos.



A quick example. The original was very flat. So we used Wow! (with preset "Enhanced Black Control") Adding shape and mood. However blacks were too dark, and whites, already in the original were not well detailed.

Toggle the button to show the MASK Preview as a black & white mask or the COMP Preview that is the image with the mask applied.



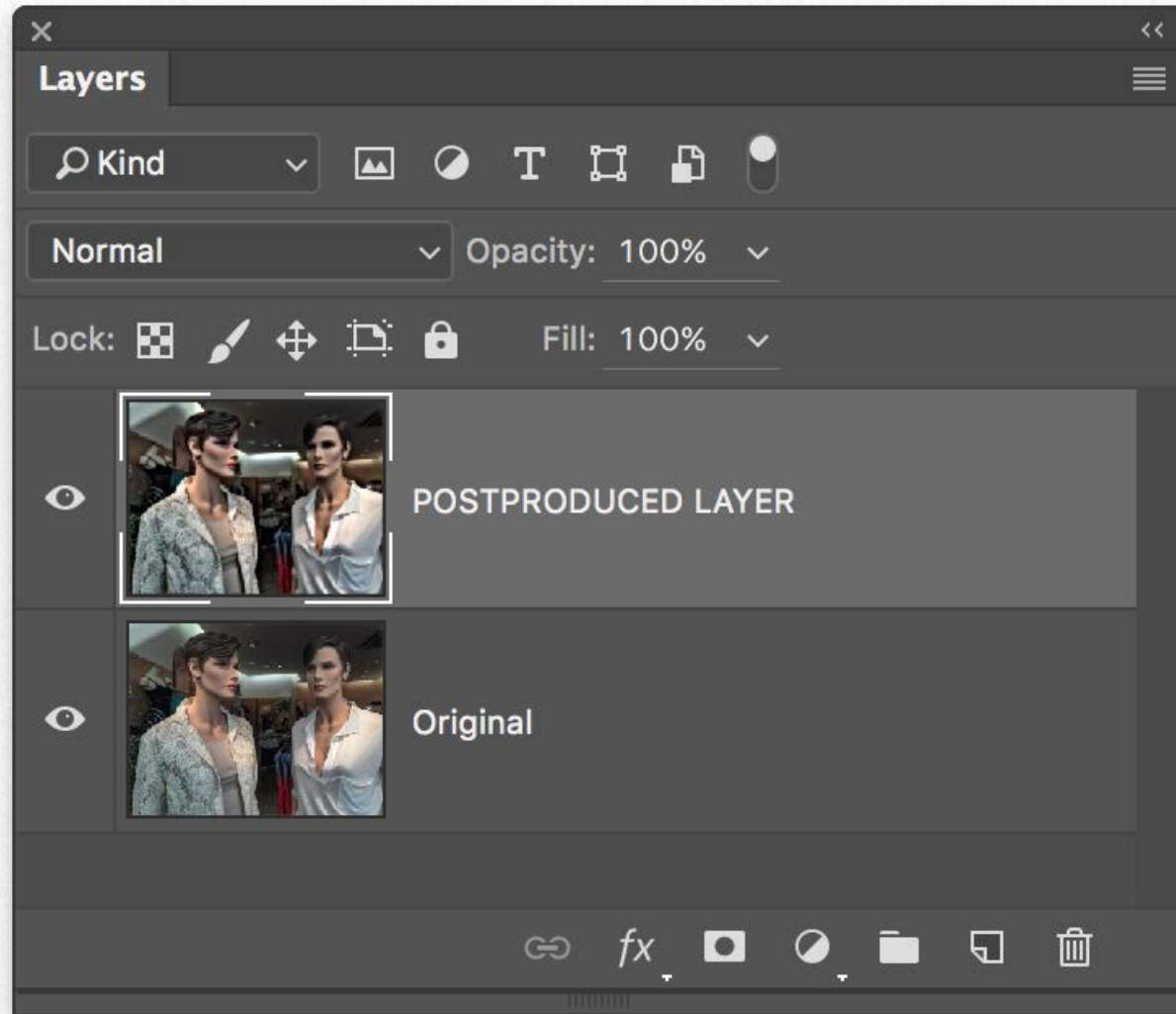
Mask preview (Mask button)



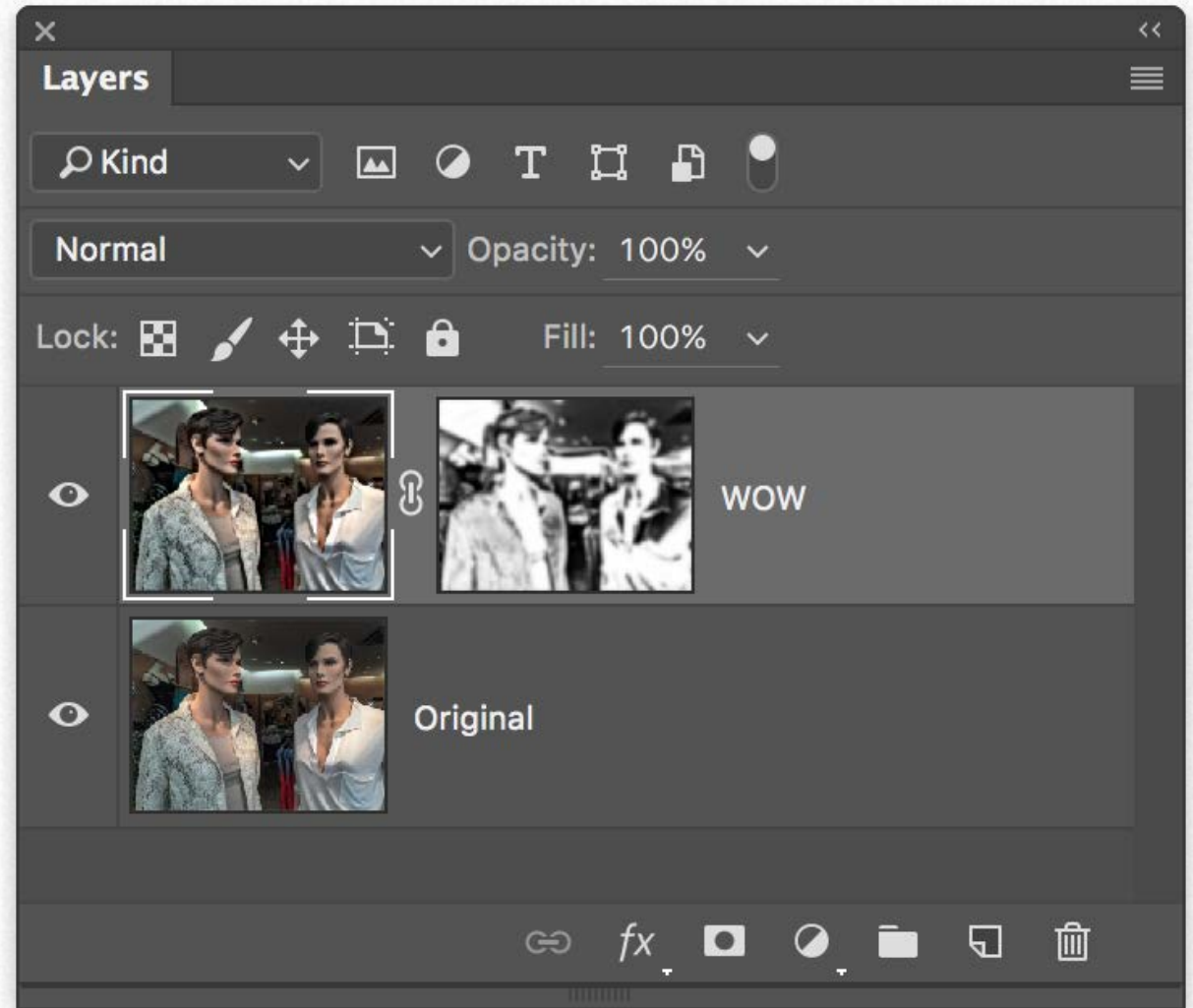
Comp preview (Comp Button) and the final result after adding a 50 feathering to avoid banding in the neon lights.



How Mask Equalizer works with pixel layers



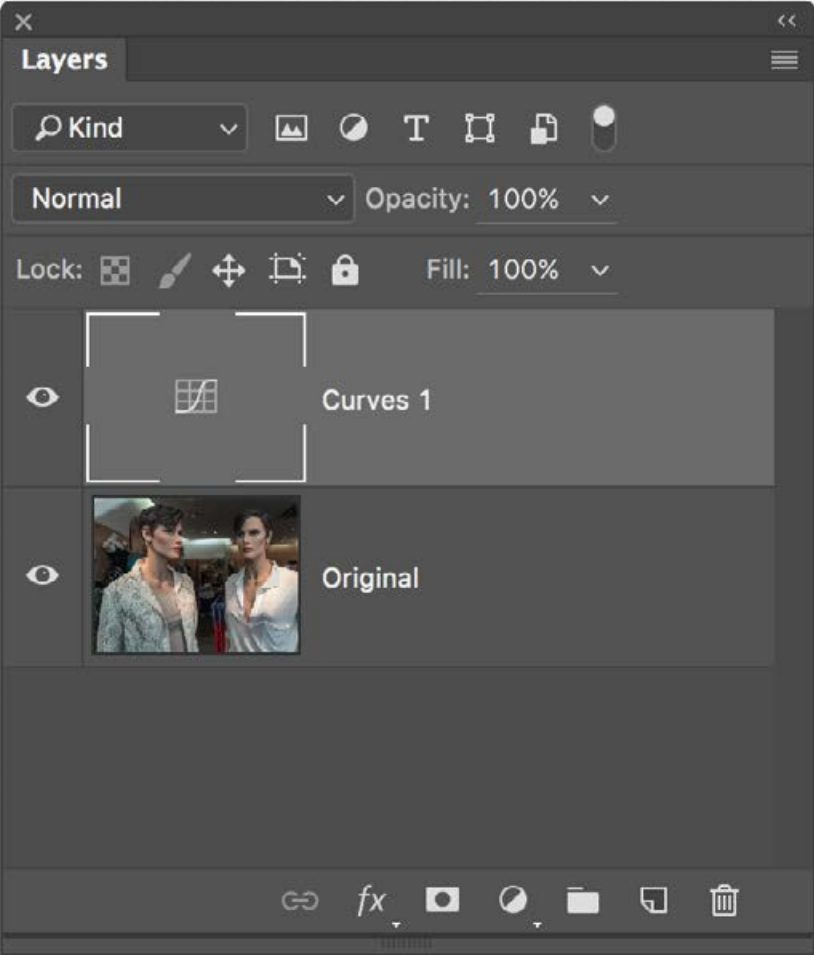
BEFORE: Start with the original layer and with a second layer already post-produced. For instance, you may have added a layer mask, a version with a lot of clarity or an application of Know-How Transfer (Wow!, VitaminBW, ALCE, NEXT, etc.) or third party.



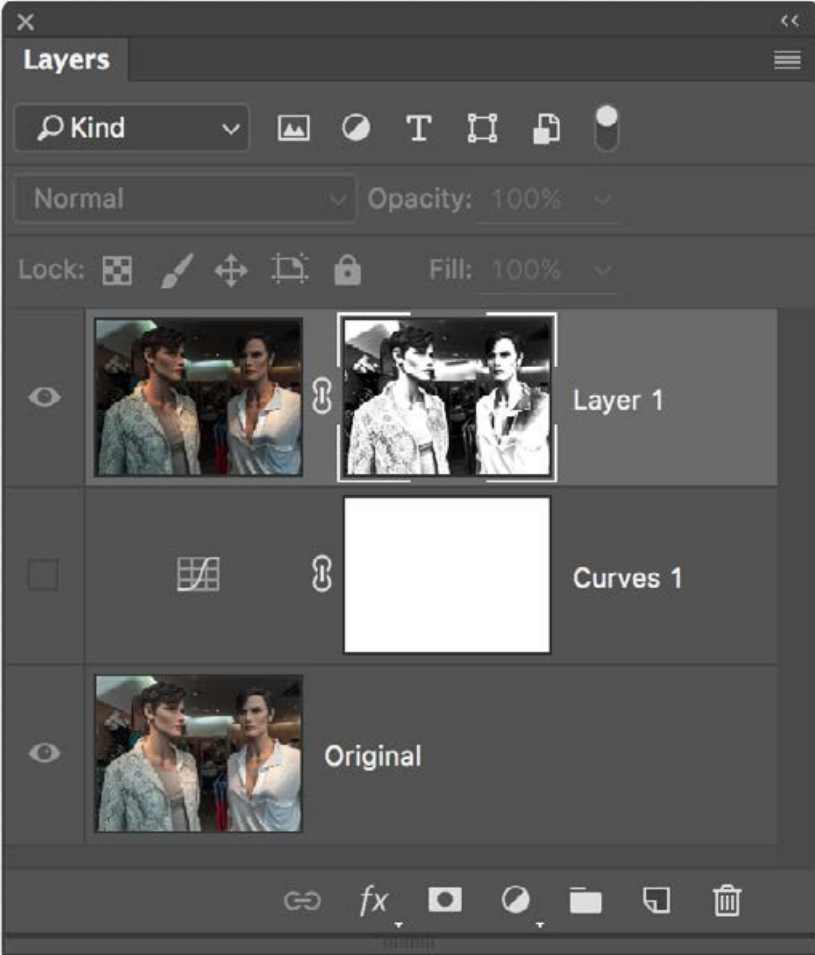
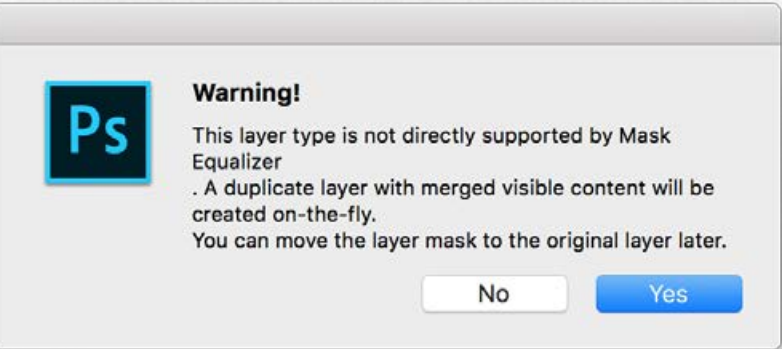
AFTER: The mask created was added to the previously selected layer.

NOTE: MASK Equalizer works with RGB files only, 8, 16 or 32 bit.

How Mask Equalizer works with adjustments layers

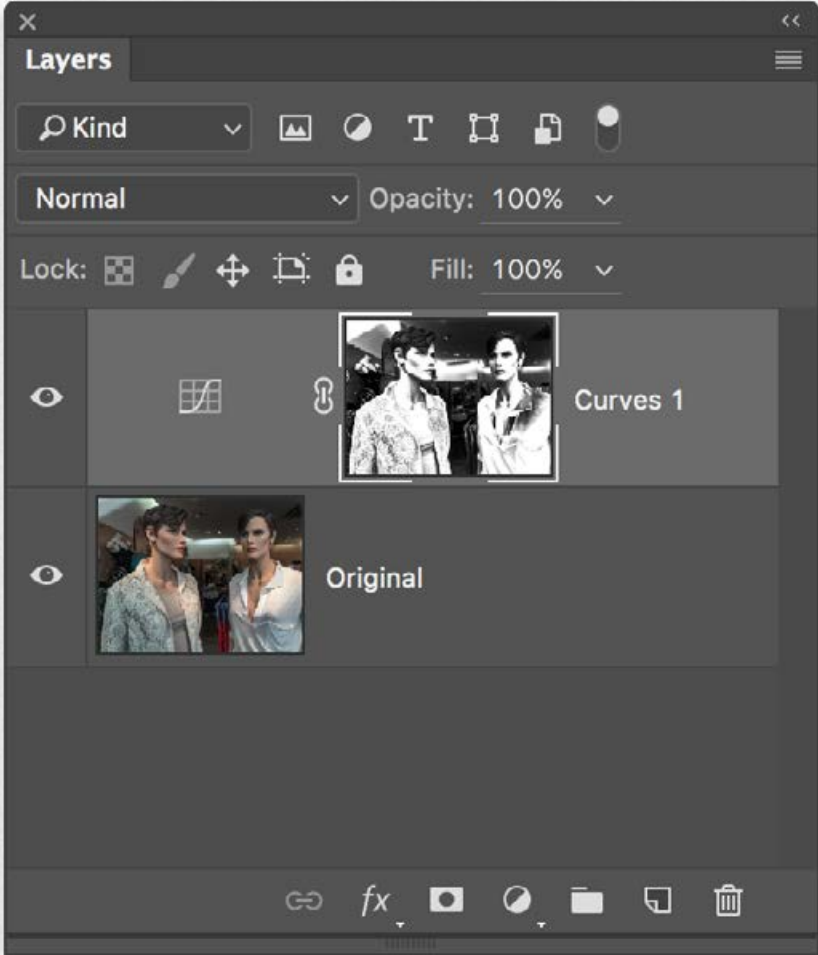


BEFORE: add an adjustment layer.



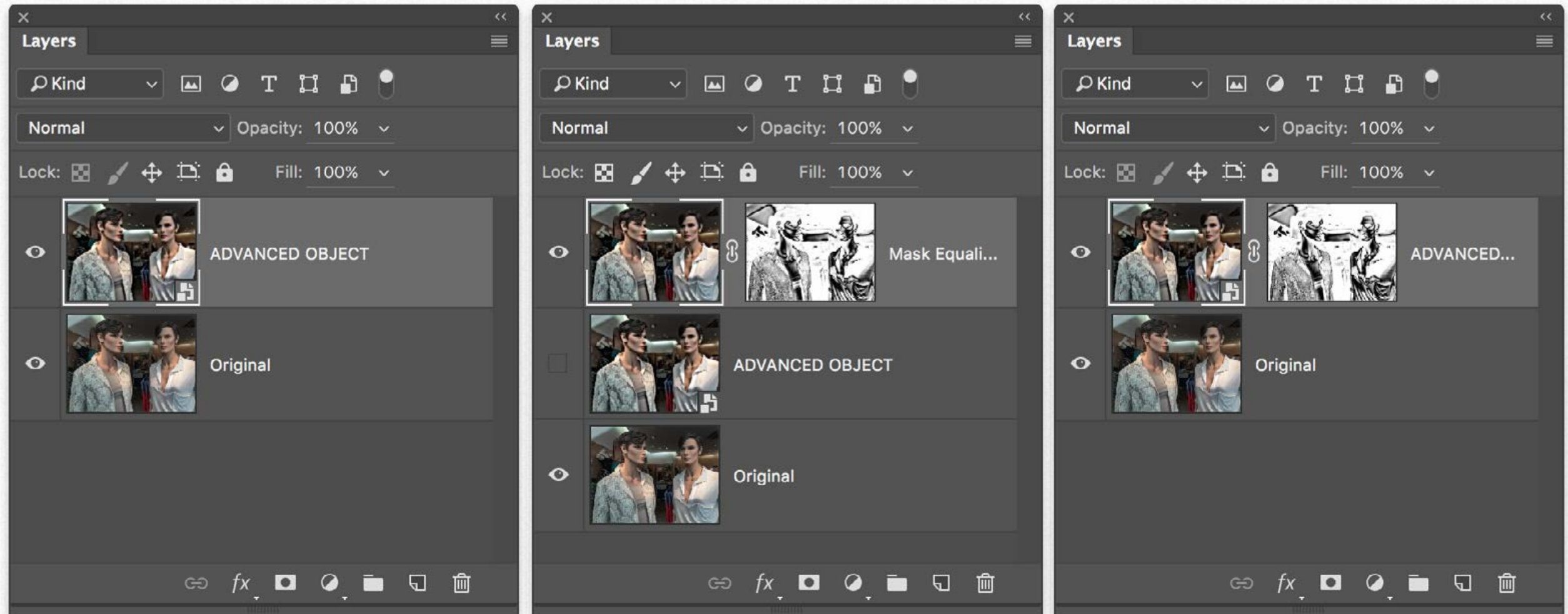
AFTER: As MASK Equalizer cannot work on adjustment layers it creates a composite layer on top and deactivates the adjustment layer as this allows to see the preview also in this case.

NOTE: A PS window will alert you that a duplicate layer will be created on top.



THE MASK ON THE ADJUSTMENT LAYER: The user must simply drag the mask to the adjustment layer, activate it and trash the temporary layer.

How Mask Equalizer works with advanced objects or groups



BEFORE: Similar situation as the previous page but with an advanced object.

AFTER: As MASK Equalizer doesn't work with advanced objects it creates a composite layer on the and deactivates the selected advanced object as this allows seeing the preview also in this case.

NOTE: A PS window will alert you that a duplicate layer will be created on top.

THE MASK ON THE ADVANCED OBJECT:
The user must simply drag the mask to the advanced object, activate it and trash the temporary layer.

Feathering. Mask blurring. Case 1

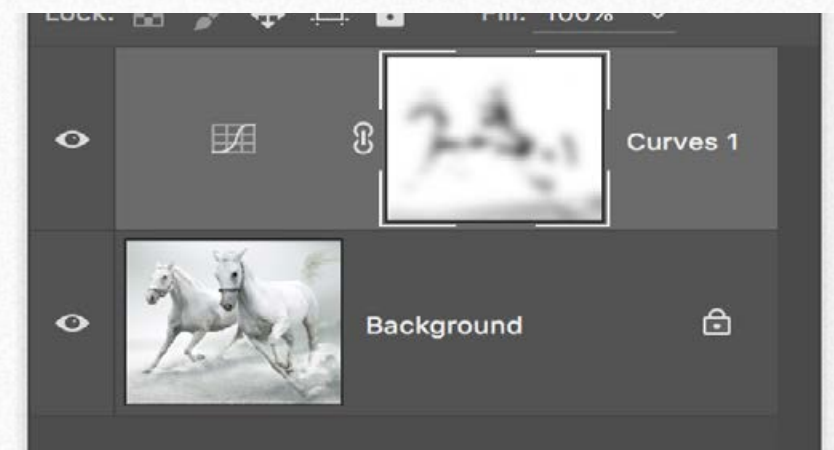


MASK PREVIEW: we added a shadow mask to a curve adjustment layer: judging from the mask preview it looks fine.



COMP PREVIEW: once switched to Comp Preview you may notice an unacceptable posterization.

RIGHT IMAGE: FEATHER 50: posterization has been removed. Usually, we suggest feathering the mask at the end of the process as a sharper mask is easier to be judged.



Feathering. Mask blurring. Case 2



MASK PREVIEW: The mask, judging from the Mask preview seems to be perfect.



COMP PREVIEW: Once switched to Comp preview you may notice an unpleasant effect along the borders.



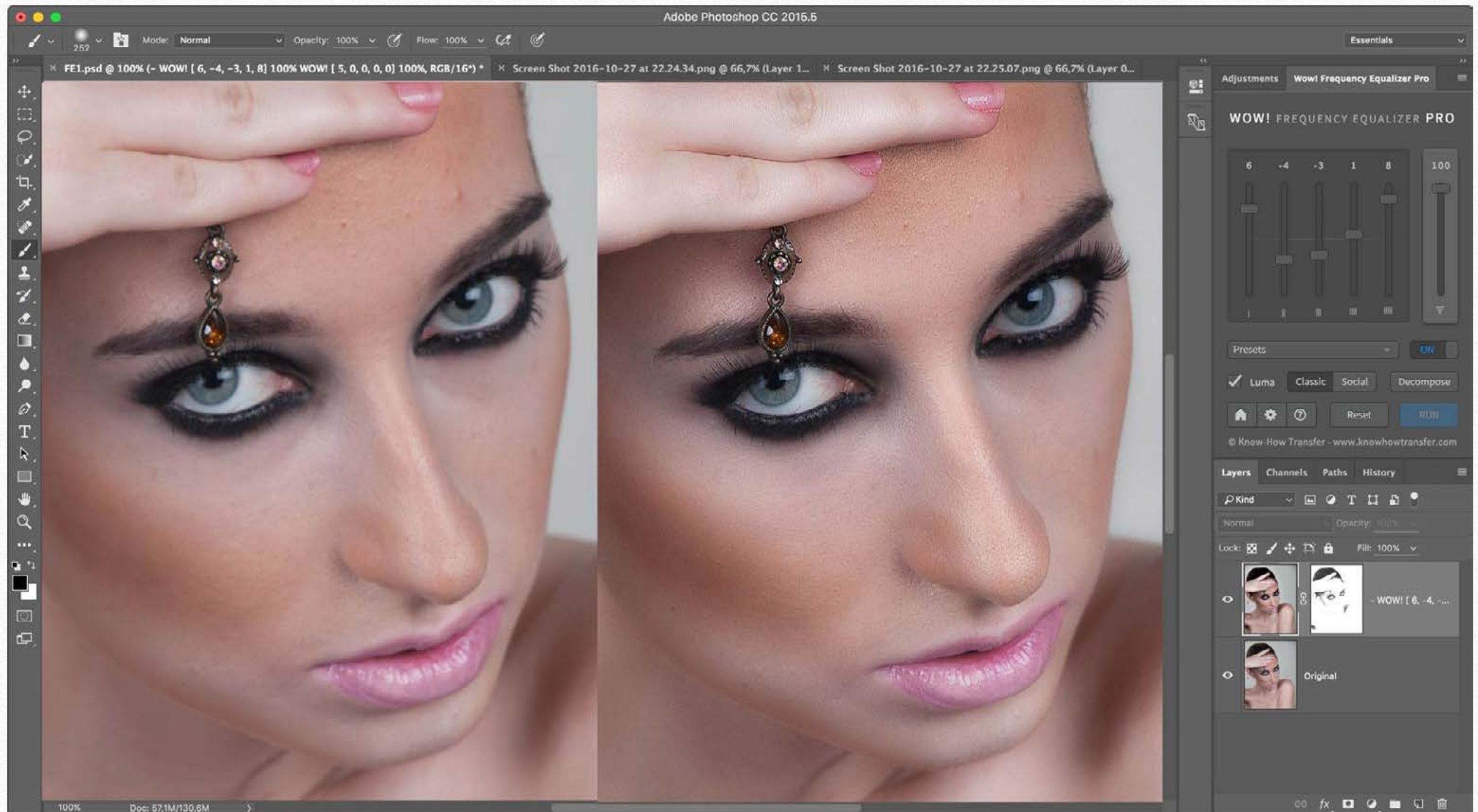
FEATHER 35:: The gradations have been greatly improved. Please notice that this correction is perceptive. The user does not need to be an expert.

Mask Equalizer with Wow! Frequency Equalizer

This plug-in that creates sophisticated luminosity masks with one click shines used together with Wow!

Thanks to Mask Equalizer you can push the sliders of Wow! Without worrying about blacks details or lights unwanted areas.

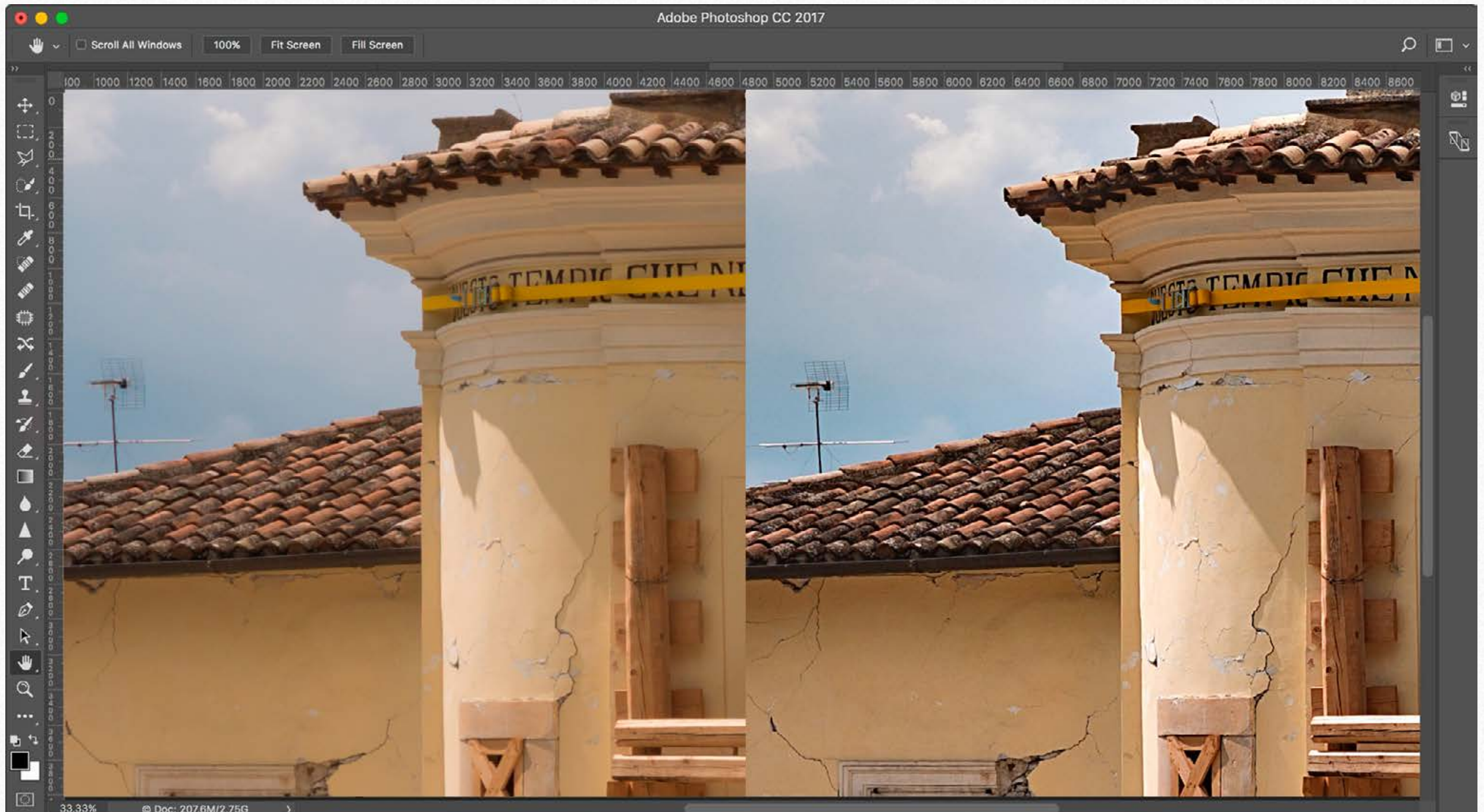
Just apply the highlights+shadows presets, a quick adjustment and a bit of feathering will fix this issues. As a final touch, opacity slider will help you to control the amount of the effect. This before after below is a one-step application.



Mask Equalizer with Wow! Pro and Decompose

The two plugins work even better in non-conventional techniques using the Decompose function in Wow! Pro. Mask Equalizer, in this case, makes the difference for a next level control of contrast, local contrast, sharpness, highlights and shadows detail.

Now launch “Decompose” first and reduce the opacity of the “Base” layer, i.e. 50. Now add a shadow or shadow/highlight mask to the “Decompose” group. Now drag the layer mask from the temporary layer to the “Decompose” group, activate it and trash the temporary layer. Finally, you can tweak the opacity of the base layer. Contrast, local contrast, saturation, and sharpness will be improved with a natural result and no halos.



Mask Equalizer with Camera Raw

Mask Equalizer is a perfect complement with Camera Raw. You can export two or more versions and add a layer mask on the top layer.

Fixes the ugly rendition of blacks with clarity and many other issues.

Out of this example, Mask Equalizer is a must have tool virtually in any digital workflow.



Additional step for pre-CC 2014 users

We mean the first version of CC, released in 2013. 2014 and later are OK.

Move the in folder **com.knowhowtransfer.maskequalizer**
from CEP to CEPServiceManager4 folder

This below is the path for WIN

C:\Program Files (x86)\Common Files\Adobe\CEP\extensions\

C:\Program Files (x86)\Common Files\Adobe\CEPServiceManager4\extensions\

This below is the path for MAC

Macintosh HD/Library/Application Support/Adobe/CEP/extensions

Macintosh HD/Library/Application Support/Adobe/ CEPServiceManager4/extensions/

If you don't see the folder **CEPServiceManager4** create it manually and inside create a folder named **extensions**. Please type them as they are. Names are case-sensitive.

Embed the user manual in the panel

1. [Download the latest version of the manual](#)

2. Copy it in the proper folder.

MAC: Macintosh HD/Library/Application Support/MASK

WIN: C:\Program Files\Common Files\Know-How Transfer\MASK



You can now access the user manual trough the book icon at the bottom of the panel.



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About Know-How Transfer The Photography Knowledge Hub

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.](#)

Many of our team come from the school of the great Dan Margulis and still have a very special relationship with him. We are pleased to report here what he wrote about this group in his famous post “La Dolce Vita - An era ends”:

La Dolce Vita. An Era Ends By Dan Margulis

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 offhand 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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Links and credits

Mask Equalizer © knowhowtransfer.com / bigano srl

Plugin developed by KnowHowTransfer

GUI Panel Design by Davide Barranca

Images credits:

cover © Irina Gromovataya- depositphotos.com

other images © Roberto Bigano

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