

DDIMAGES PHOTOSHOP TUTORIAL 10

How to create a digital graduated neutral density filter effect

I am presuming that you have landscape image where you need to use a graduated neutral density to correct the exposure for the sky at the time of taking the image.

There are two ways in which you can approach this.

- (1) The best way is to expose two images at the taking stage, one of them correctly exposed for the sky and one correctly exposed for the land.(sometimes this is not possible due to fast moving clouds, or something else moving in the landscape.) If this is the case use method 2.
- (2) Take one image at the taking stage with the exposure average to show detail in both the sky and the land.

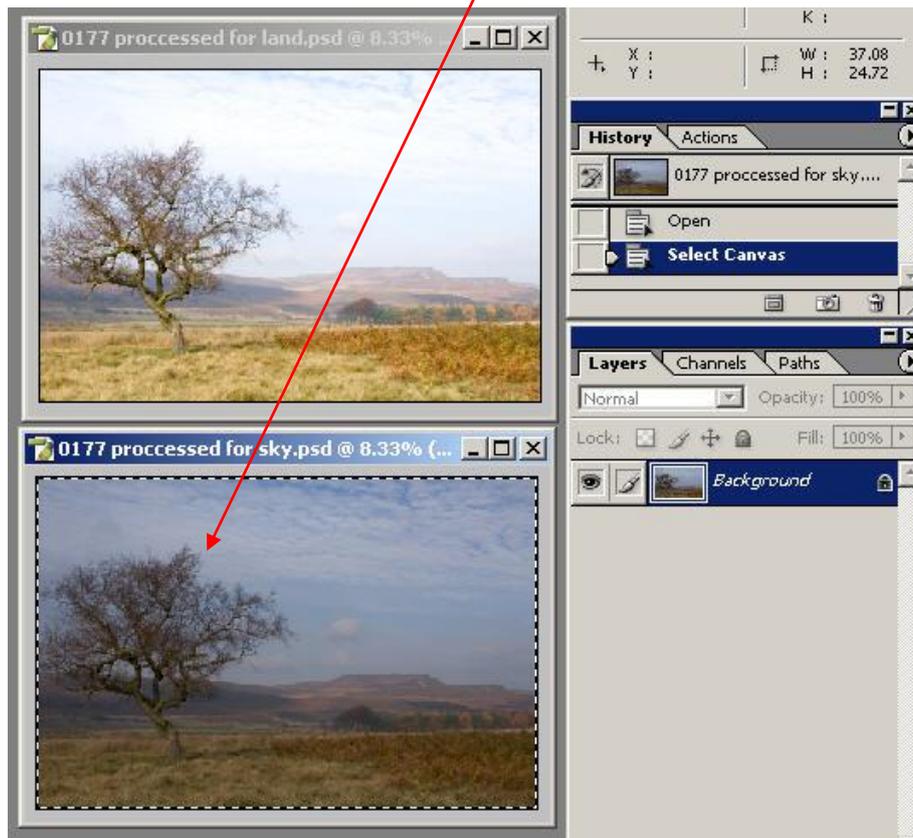
In this tutorial I am using method 2 and from the single Raw file image I have processed one image to correctly expose the sky and one image processed to correctly expose the land.

I now have 2 new Photoshop .psd images.

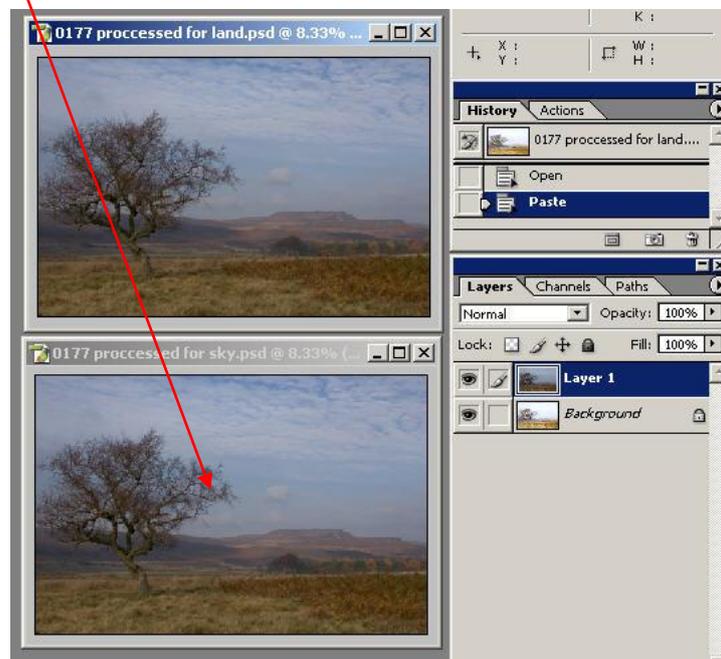
1. 0177 processed for sky
2. 0177 processed for land



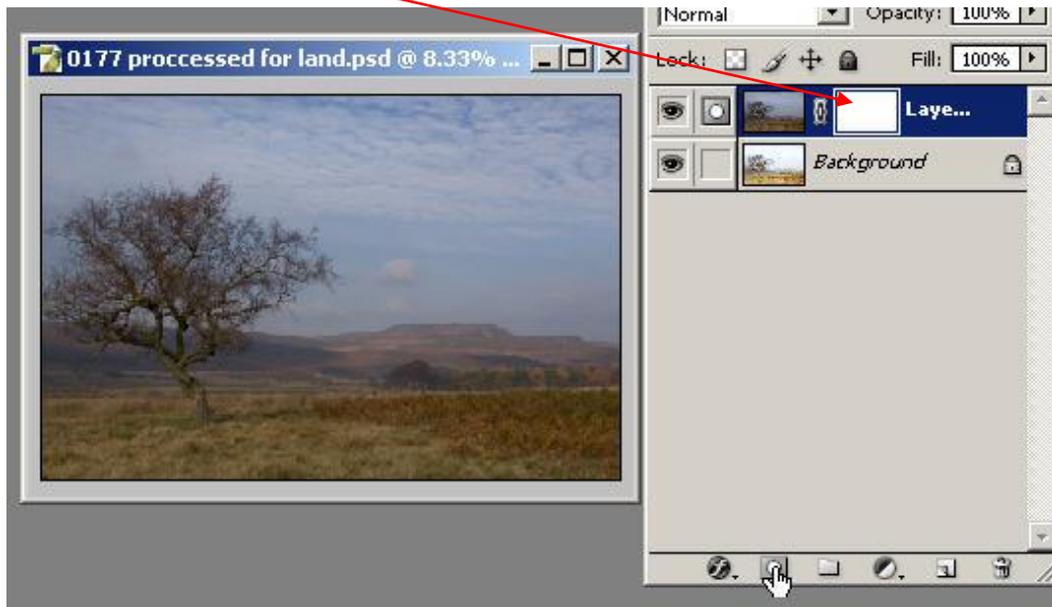
1. Start by selecting the dark image (Select/All or Ctrl+A) and copying it (Edit/Copy or Ctrl+C)



2. Select the Light image and paste (Edit/Paste or Ctrl+V) the dark image on top of it. In the layers palette, you will now have two layers. The image on the screen will be dark. The original single layer dark image can now be closed.

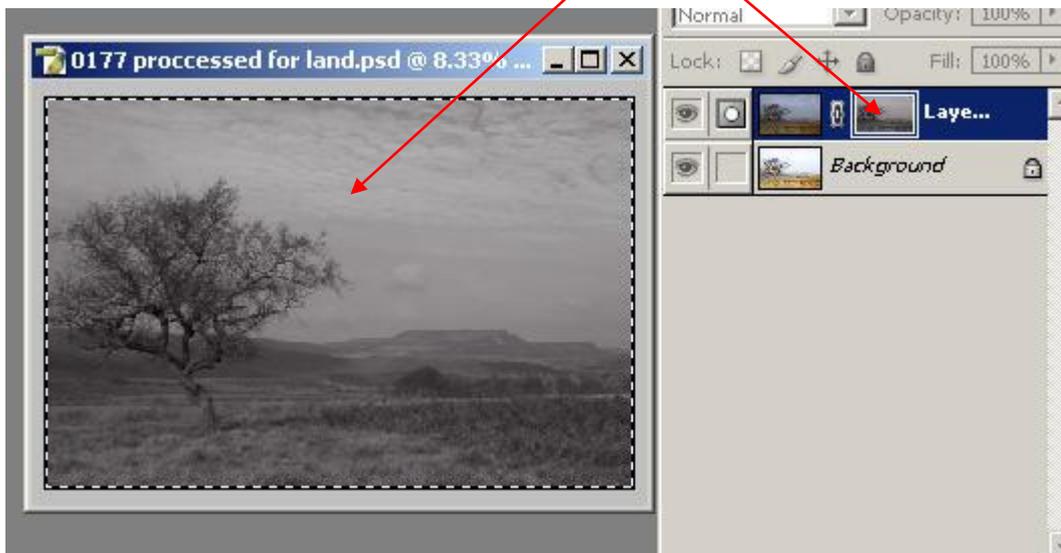


3. Add a layer mask to the top layer (the dark one) by clicking the Add layer mask button on the bottom of the Layers palette. You should now see a white rectangle next to the dark layer.

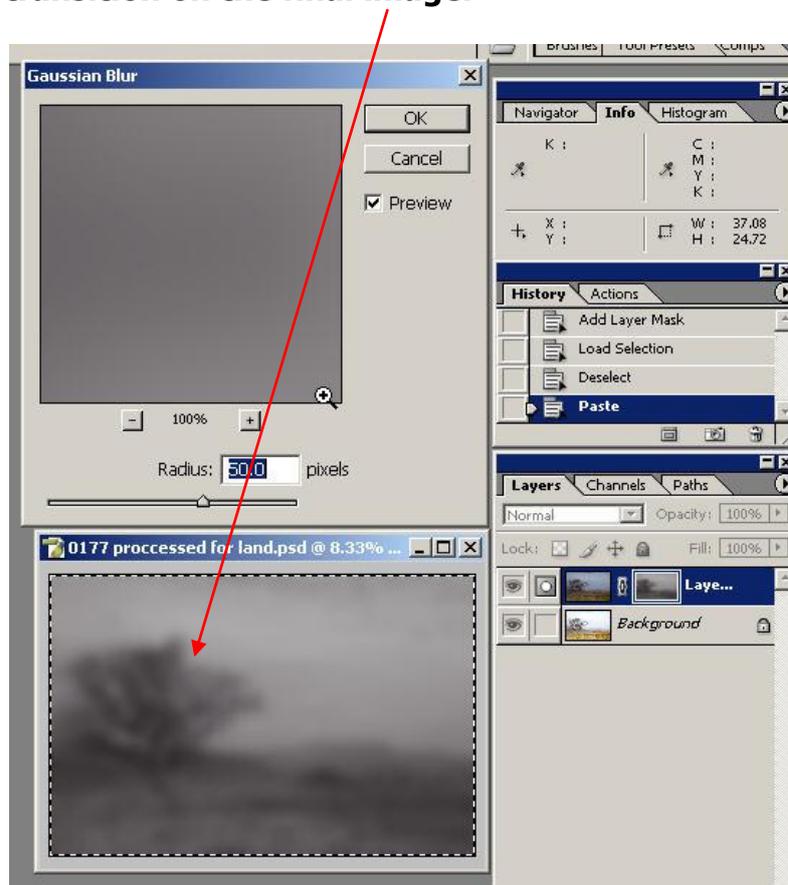


4. In the layers palette, select the lower layer (the light one) and use Ctrl+A to select the image, then Ctrl+C to copy it.

5. Now hold down the Alt key and click on the white Layer mask on the top layer and paste (Ctrl+V) the image into it. This will give you a B&W version of the image on the layer mask.



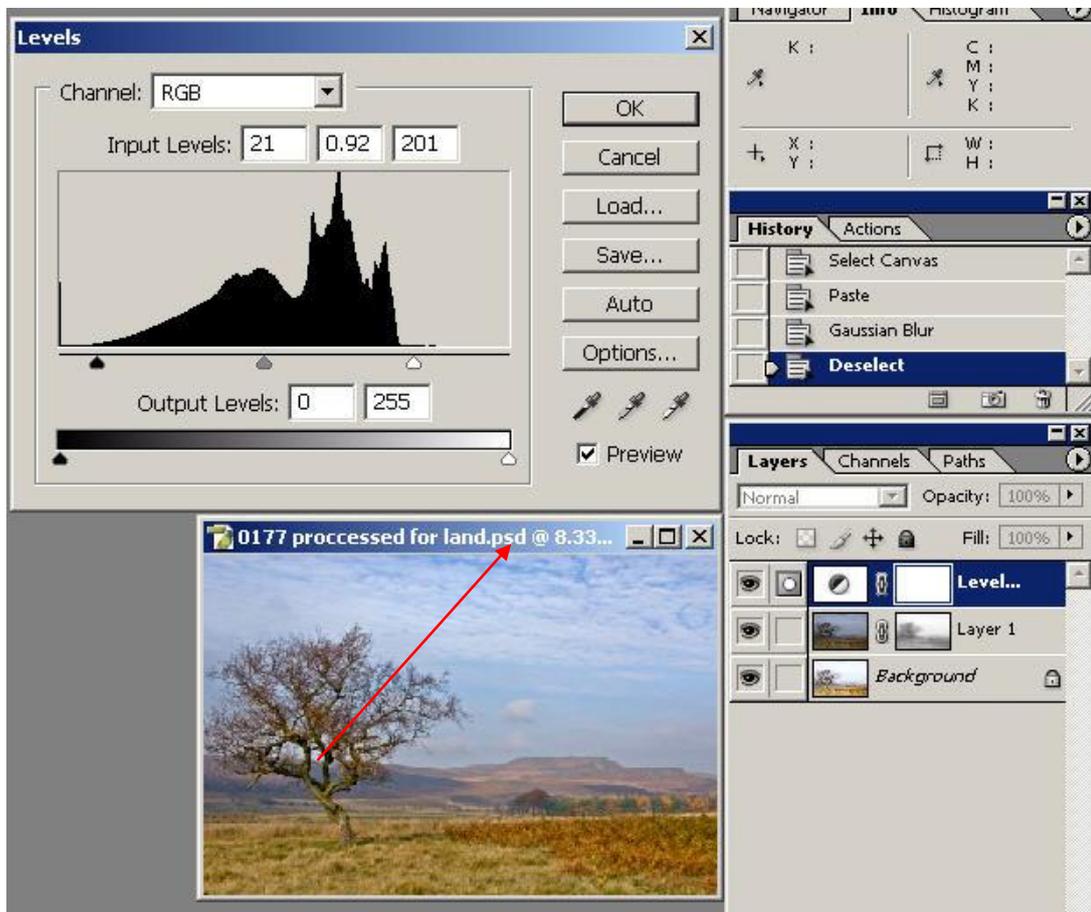
6. Now go to Filter/Blur/Gaussian blur and select a level of about 50 pixels and click OK. The B&W mask will now be very blurred which will avoid a hard edge transition on the final image.



NOTE: In this image the level of blur was set at 50 pixels you may need to change this amount to suit your image.

Please also note: The mask can be modified if you need to by clicking on the layer mask, selecting the brush tool at a reduced opacity and painting on the image (in white to reduce the masking) and (inblack to add more masking)

7. If you now click on the Background layer you will see your image. It will have a metallic look to it, but with a little brightness and contrast adjustment done using Curves or Levels, you will have an image that contains far more dynamic range than you could have achieved on film.



8. Here is the finished image after a levels adjustment.

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