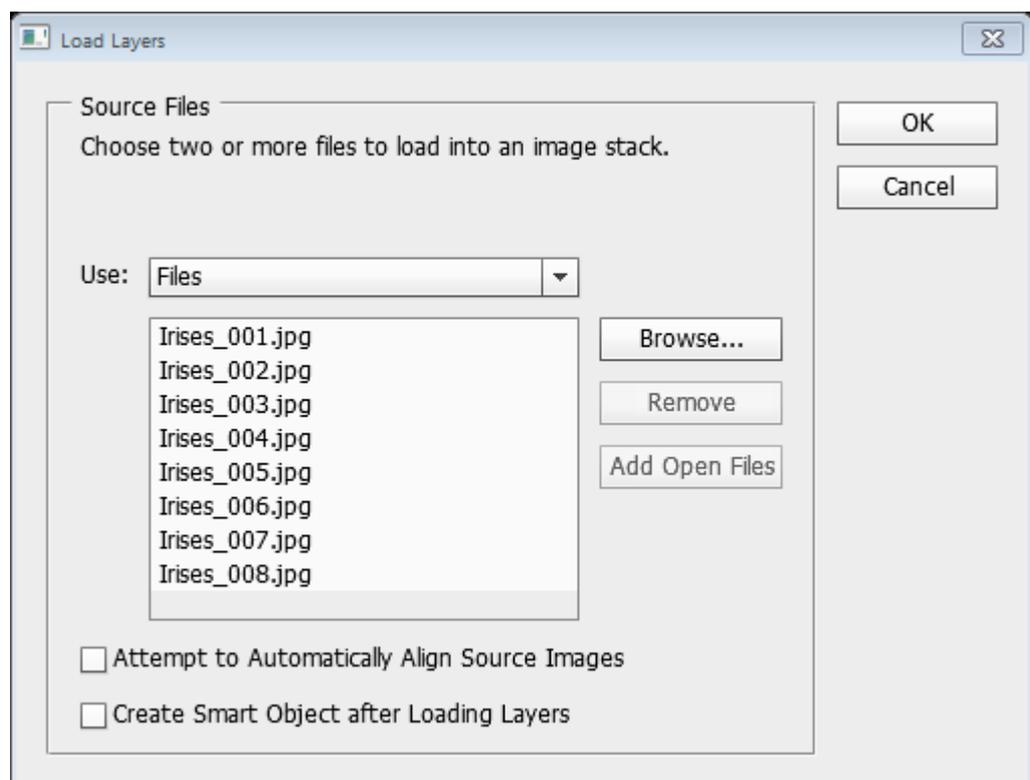


Photoshop – transparency through layers

- Works best with subjects where the light already ‘shines through’ e.g. flowers, leaves etc.
- Things look transparent because of contrasts
- Subject on a light box
- 8-9 or more exposures: under exposure, normal and extreme over exposure - helps with transparency

Photoshop tasks

1. Set up Photoshop so that the layers pallet is visible (Window ⇨ Workspace ⇨ Photography)
2. Open as stack in Photoshop
 - File ⇨ scripts ⇨ Load files into stack
 - On the pop up screen ⇨ Browse ⇨ find the files and select them all using “shift + right click” on the first one then the last one, click on ‘open’
 - Note: check boxes are unchecked - click OK on this screen:

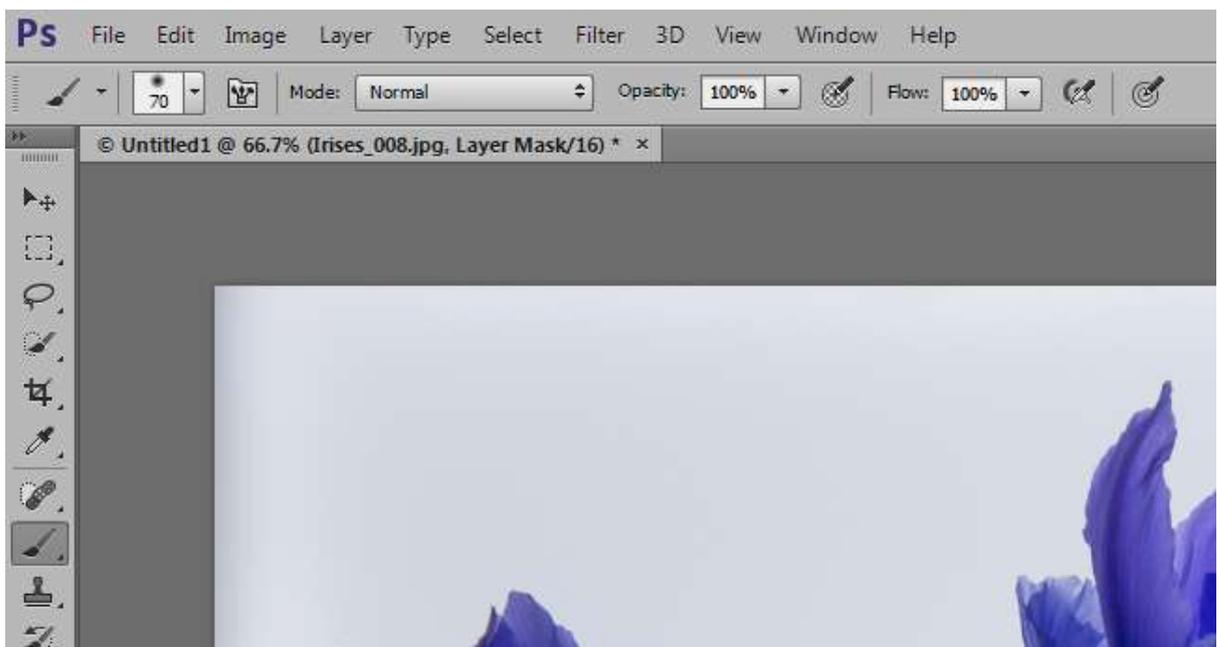


3. The files should load and the darkest (most under exposed) exposure should be on top of the stack with the lightest on at the bottom. If they aren't just drag and drop them in the right sequence.
4. Create a mask for each layer – click on a layer and then drag it to the layer mask icon at the bottom of the layers pallet. When done the screen should like this:

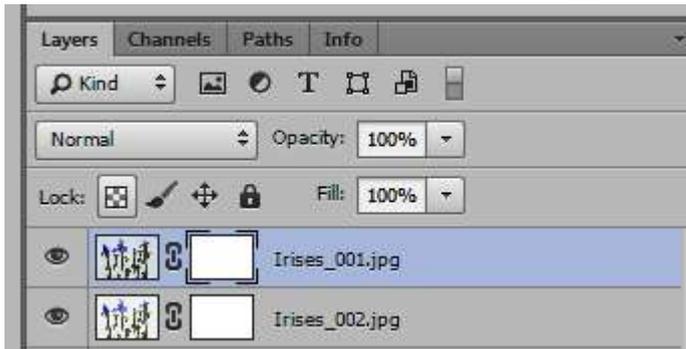


The objective is to accentuate areas of local contrast to make the flowers appear more transparent. Do this by ‘dogging and burning’ using a brush with black or white and painting on the masks just created.

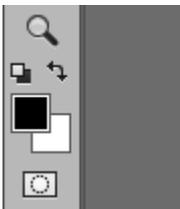
5. Select the brush tool; you will need to vary the size, opacity and hardness as you work. Left square bracket - [will reduce the size of the brush and right increase it -]



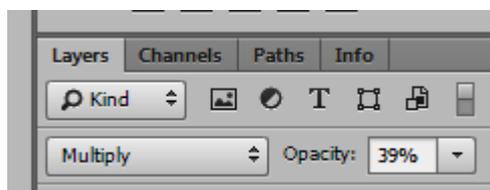
6. Click on the top layer and make sure the focus is on the mask not the image. Just click on the white mask. A boarder should appear around the mask like this:



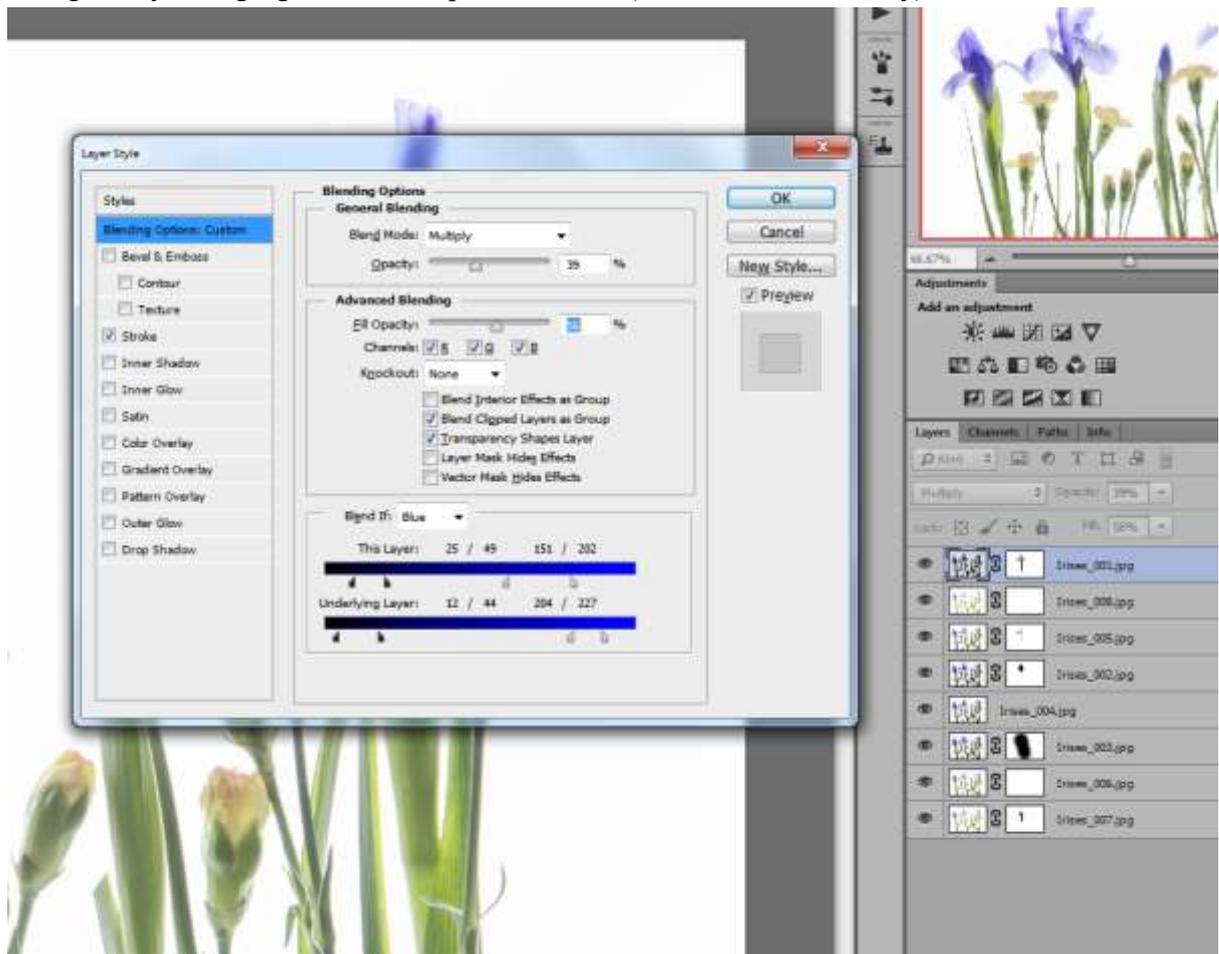
7. Make sure your foreground colour is set to black, keyboard 'X' switches between foreground and background colour. The default colours are black and white if they aren't keyboard 'D' sets it back to the default of white foreground black background :



8. With the brush set to black and an appropriate size paint over the image to reveal the lighter layer below. Try changing opacity for effect. If you make a mistake just change to white (press X) and go over it
9. **White reveals, (the layer being worked on), Black conceals (so the layer below shines through)**
10. Proceed to the next layer and do the same thing. Make lighter areas lighter still.
11. That process will only get you so far. Other things to try:
- Turn layers on or off (click on the 'eyeball')
 - Change the order of the layers (drag and drop them in the sequence)
 - Change the opacity of the layers
 - Change the blending mode of the layer...try multiply for darker layers and screen for lighter layers



- Change the layer styles options – double click on the image icon in the layer you want to change – try changing ‘blend if’, split the slider (hold down the alt key),



12. Add a de-saturated layer and blend using luminosity to add dynamic range

13. Add a layer filled with white and paint in selected areas at about 10% opacity to add more ‘transparency’

Effect is subject dependent - Not all the steps work well for all subjects, some subjects don’t work at all.

Like most things there’s probably a different way of achieving the same result, but this is how I did it!

Photoshop techniques:

- Layers – stacking images
- Masking – ‘painting in’ (and out) using black or white and brush
- Blending layers – screen, multiply, luminosity

References

“Photographing Flowers: Exploring Macro Worlds” by Harold Davis (Kindle edition on Amazon US\$16.47) Hint: get a tablet like an iPad and the kindle application. Photo books are much cheaper that way