

# Combining Two Exposures to make one photo

It's difficult to capture extremes of lightness and darkness in the same photo. From Camera Raw you can produce two identical images which vary only in exposure.

You can also take two photos with your camera on a tripod - one exposing for the bright areas, and another exposing for the shadows (varying shutter speed and keeping your f-stop the same is best).

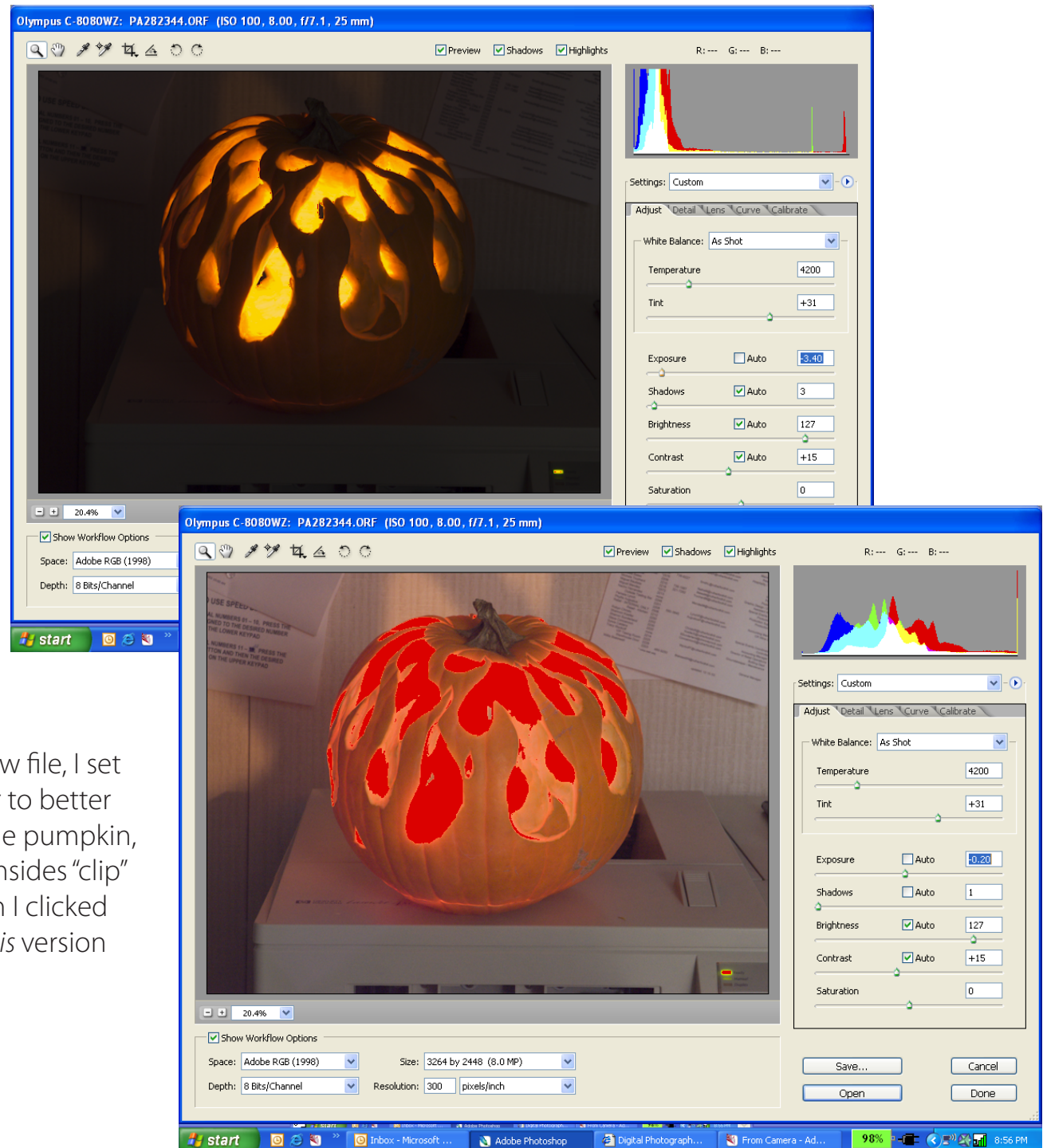
In the following example, I'll show you how I got a photo of my carved pumpkin keeping detail in both the bright, candle-lit interior and in the dimly lit exterior.



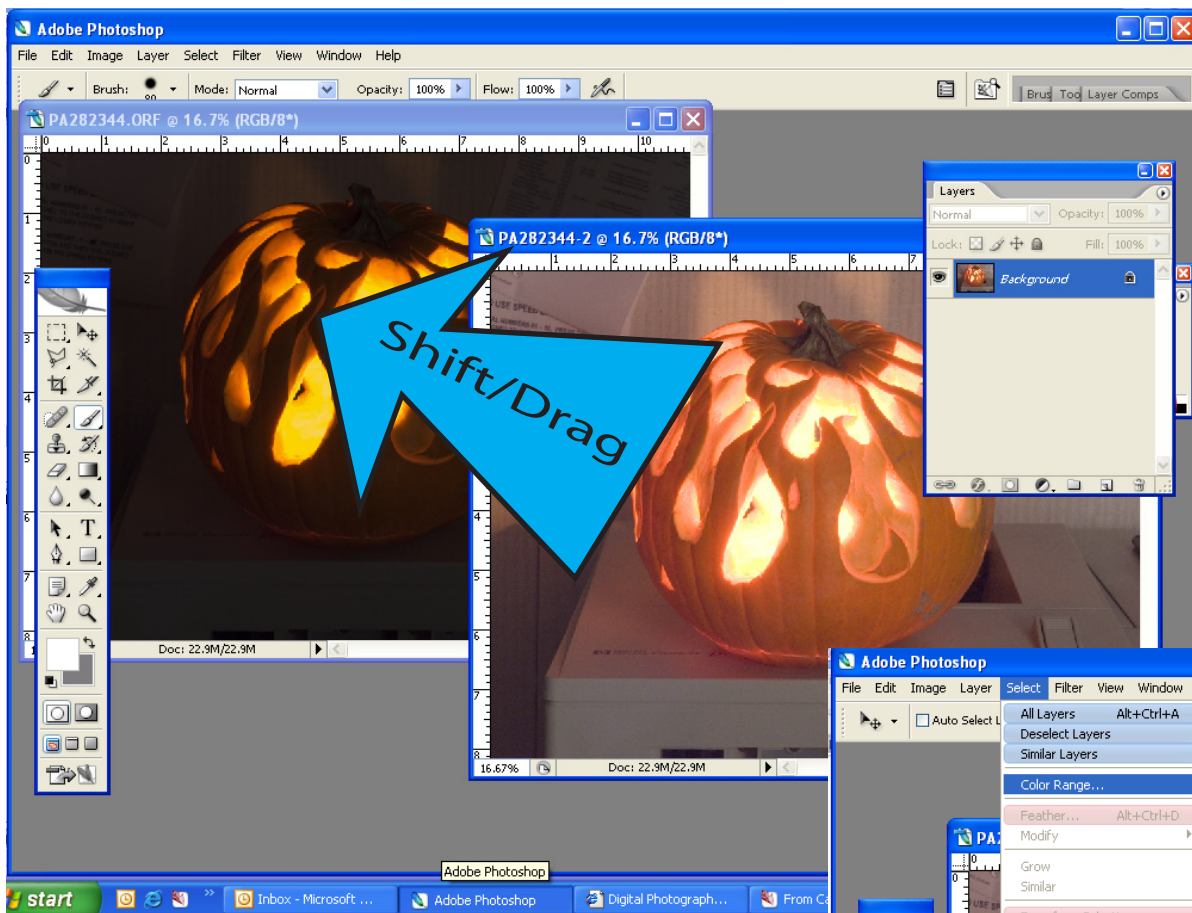
In the Camera Raw dialog box you can check the two boxes at the top, and you'll see overexposure (no highlight detail) as red, and underexposure (no shadow detail) as blue.

Here I've opened my pumpkin photo in the Camera Raw dialog box, and I lowered the Exposure slider until I wasn't "clipping" (blowing out) the bright areas inside the pumpkin, then I clicked "Open" (as a Photoshop document).

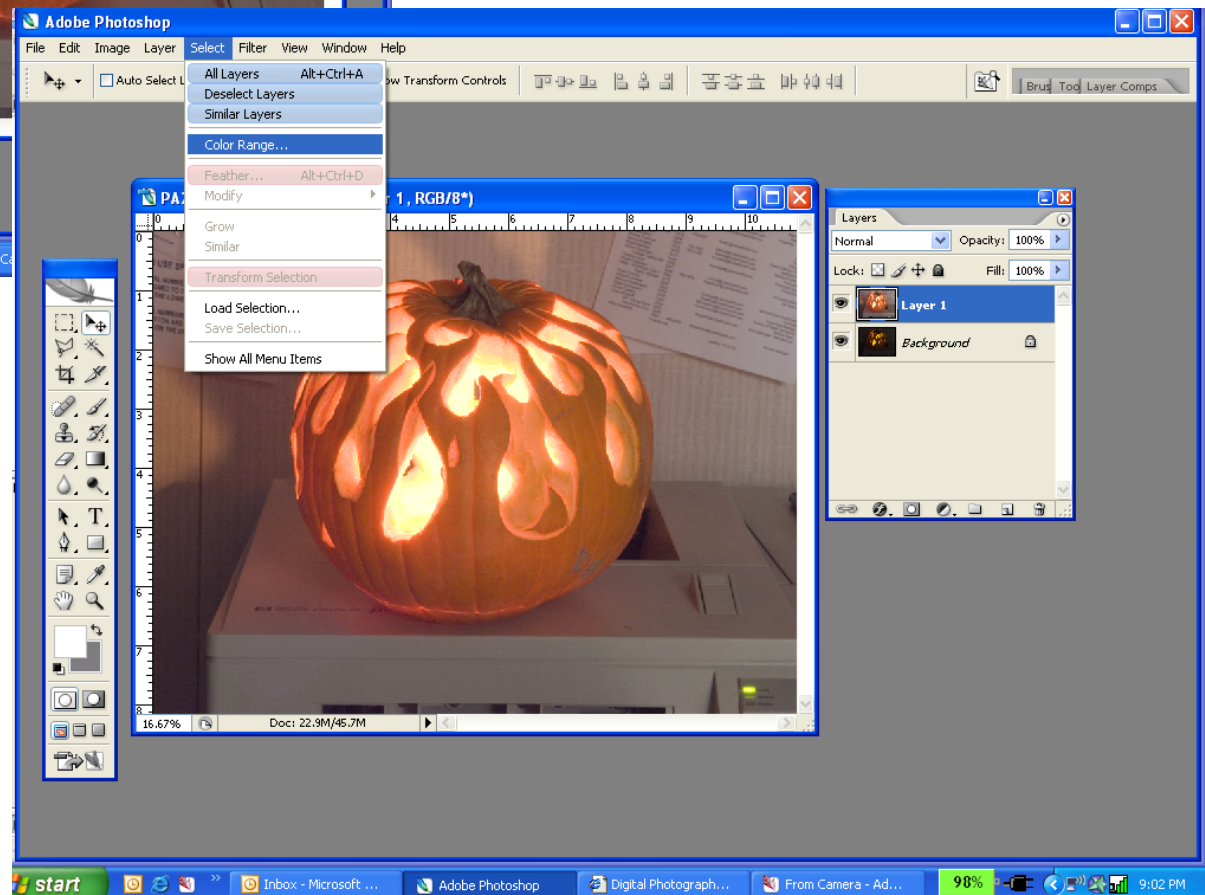
Re-opening the Raw file, I set the Exposure slider to better show the skin of the pumpkin, letting the bright insides "clip" (see the red?). Then I clicked "Open," bringing *this* version into Photoshop.



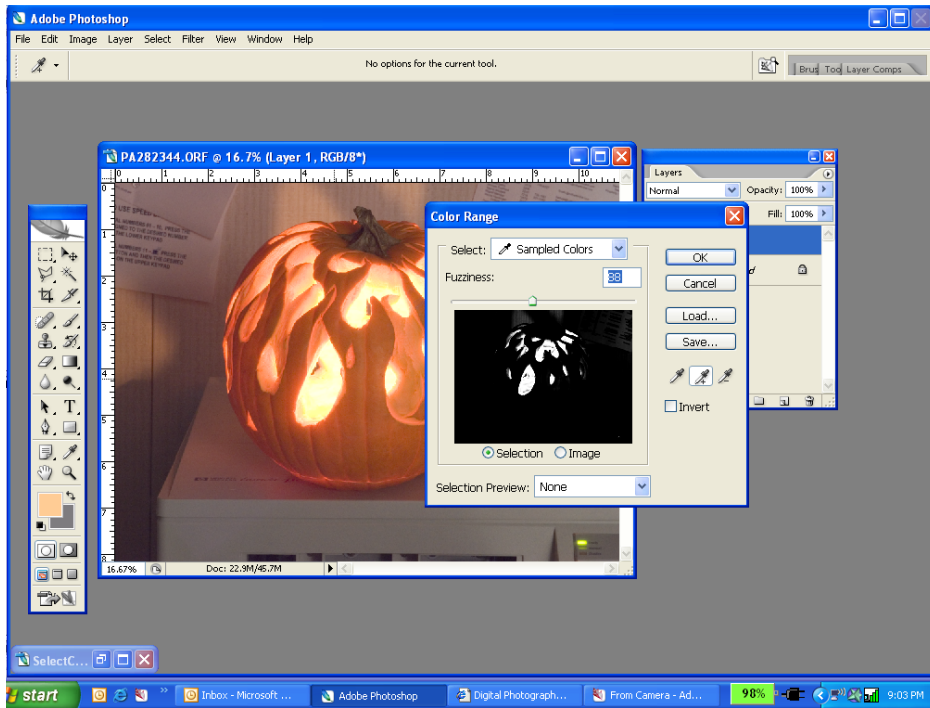




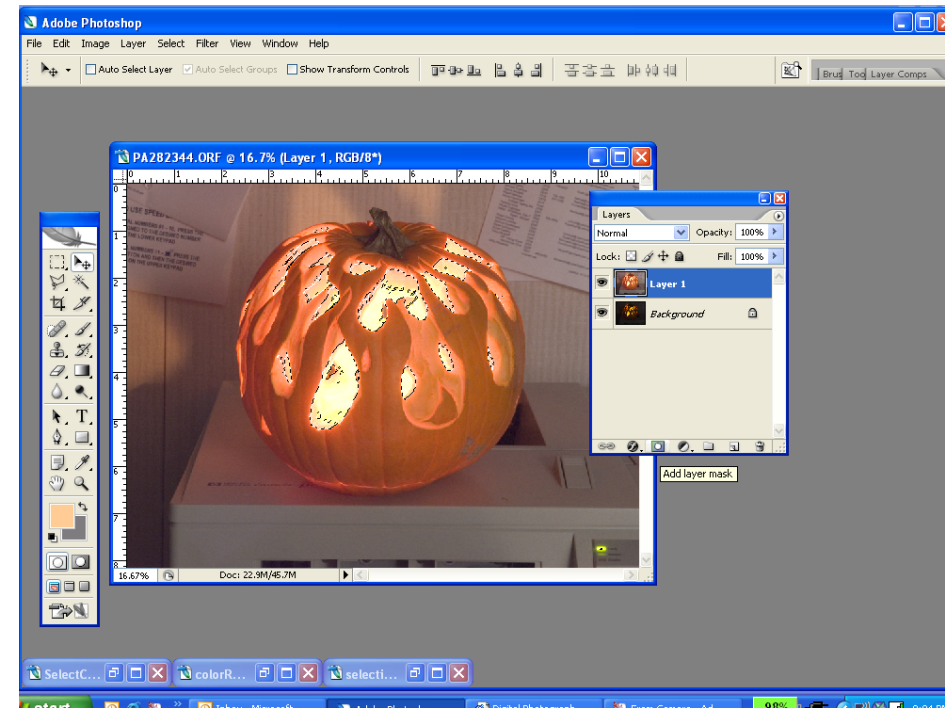
Below, You can see the two layers in the same document. Now I go to Select>Color Range...



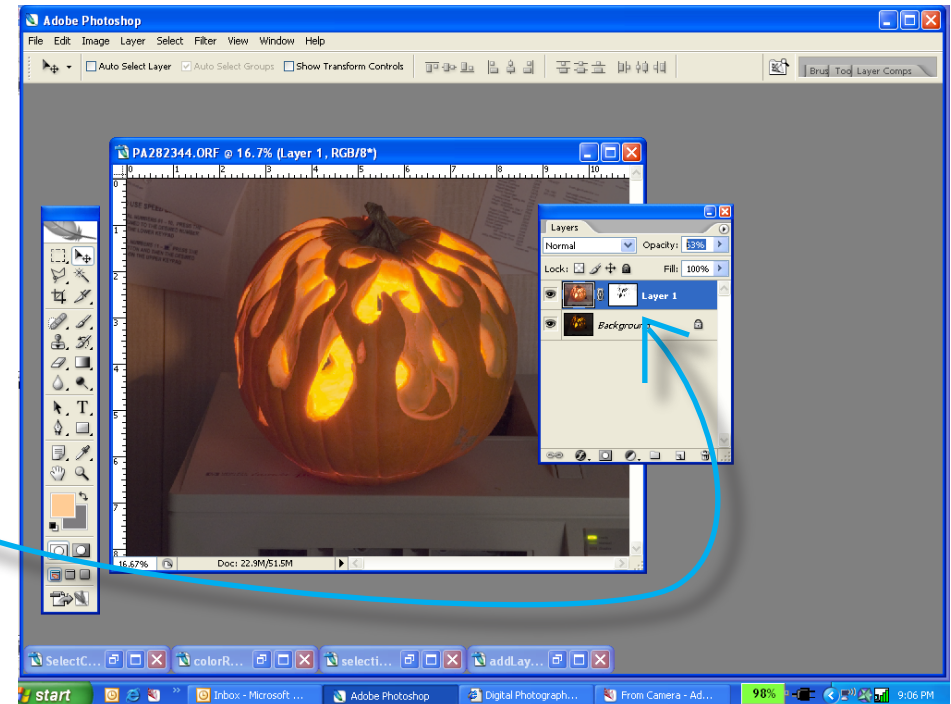
Using my Move tool (black arrow - "v"), I Shift-Dragged the brighter image (with the blown-out inside area) onto the darker image (where I can't see the skin well).



Using The + (middle) eyedropper in the Color Range dialog box, I select the overexposed insides of the pumpkin.



When I Click OK, I have a selection (above right). I Select Inverse (shift-control-I). Then I click on the Layer Mask icon in the Layers palette, and the overexposed selection is masked out (Zoom in and look at the mask on that layer now).



No longer having to worry about the blown out areas (because they're masked out), I can now reduce the opacity of the bright top layer, allowing the darker layer below to blend with it.

