Movie 6 (Chapter 8 extract)

Cross-processing Effects

Preserving the image luminosity

Some of the techniques described in this chapter involve applying a series of extreme image adjustments or multiple adjustment layers. Therefore, there is always the potential risk that if you are not careful, you will lose important highlight and shadow detail. A solution to this is to make a copy of the original background layer and place it at the top of the layer stack, set the layer blending mode to Luminosity and fade the opacity. This will allow you to restore varying percentages of the original image luminance detail.
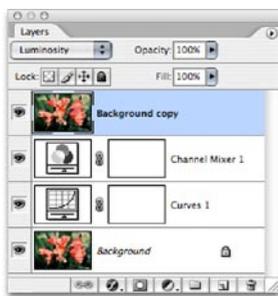
Figure 1.1 You can restore the original image luminance information by copying the background layer, dragging it to the top of the layer stack and setting the layer blend mode to Luminosity and then adjust the layer opacity to restore some or all of the original luminosity.
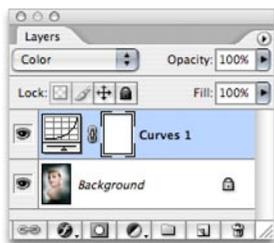
Cross-processing

The Cross-processing technique has long been popular among fashion and portrait photographers who are fond of distorting colors and bleaching out the skin tone detail. You can replicate cross processing effects quite easily in Photoshop and do so without the risk of 'overdoing' the effect and losing important image detail. There are two basic cross-processing methods: E-6 transparency film processed in C-41 chemicals and C-41 negative film processed in E-6 chemicals. The technique shown on the next two pages aims to replicate the cross curve effect you typically get when using a C-41 film processed in E-6.

In the example shown on pages 3–4 (340–341 in the book), you will notice how I manage to make the shadows go blue, while the highlights take on a yellow/red cast. The technique outlined here is another of those which I have adapted over the years and this most recent update is I think more flexible. As with all the other coloring effects described in this chapter, the main coloring adjustments are applied as adjustment layers using the Color blend mode. This helps you to preserve the original luminosity, but if you want to simulate the high contrast cross-processed look, then use the Normal blend mode instead and in addition to that consider deliberately increasing the contrast in the RGB composite channel as well (which will also boost the color saturation). The other thing you can do to adapt this technique is to explore alternative color channel adjustments and try using different color fills and layer opacities.

Model: Lucy Edwards @ Bookings

**1** Here are the steps used to create a cross-processing effect that simulates C-41 film processed in E-6 chemicals. You can adapt this technique by using different channel curve adjustments and using different fill colors. To start with I added a Curves adjustment layer which was set to the Color blend mode. I then adjusted the curves in the individual color channels as shown in the screen shots below.

3
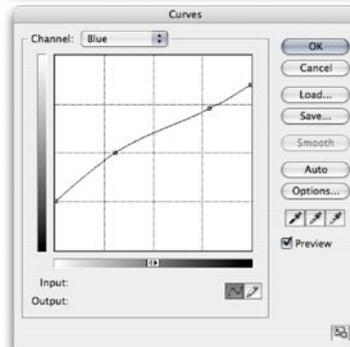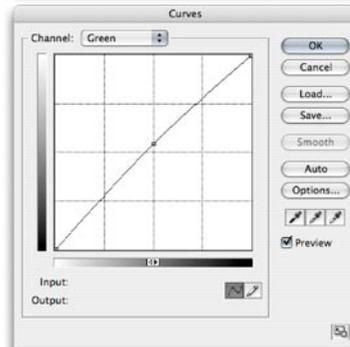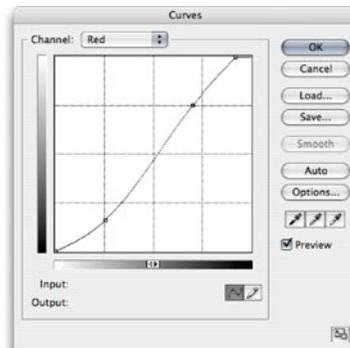
2 The curves channel adjustments applied in step 1 added a blue/cyan cast to the shadow areas and added a red/yellow cast to the highlights. Because the Curves adjustment layer was set to the Color blend mode, the luminosity was unaffected.
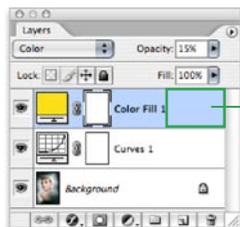
Double-click in this area of the Layer to open the Layer Style dialog.
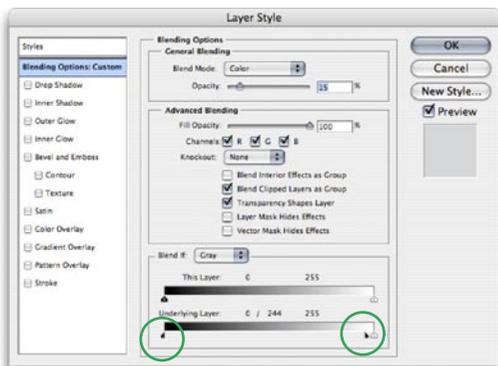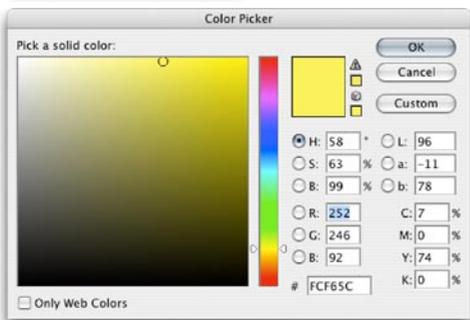
3 I then added a Color Fill layer which was also set to Color mode at an opacity of 15% and selected a strong yellow fill color. I then double-clicked the Fill layer and adjusted the Underlying layer blend options. I ⌥ alt clicked on the Underlying Layer shadow point triangle slider and dragged to separate the dividers and split them in two. I dragged the right hand shadow slider across to the right. This created a transitional blend between the underlying layer and the fill yellow layer above.

Lab Color effects

This is not a cross processing effect per se, but this technique sure can mess with the colors in your images in some pretty interesting ways. I would suggest that this effect is best applied to medium or high resolution images and that the source image should be fairly free of artifacts. I found that you can also create some interesting variations if you invert the colors while the images are at the Lab mode stage.

Adobe Photoshop CS2 for Photographers
www.photoshopforphotographers.com

1 Here is another type of Photoshop cross-processing effect for RGB images. It involves the use of the Lab color mode to enhance the colors and the enhanced lab mode image is then brought back into RGB mode again as a new layer. To start with I opened an RGB image and created a duplicate copy by choosing Image ⇨ Duplicate...
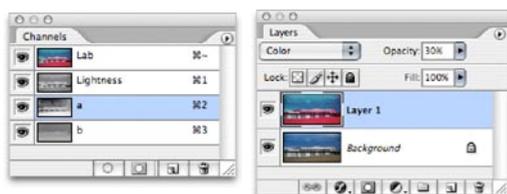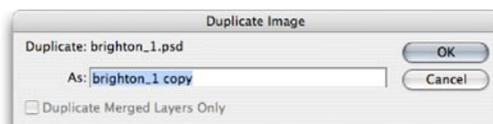

2 I converted the duplicate image to Lab color mode by choosing Image ⇨ Mode ⇨ Lab Color. The Lab color image contains a Lightness channel with **a** and **b** color channels. I went to the Channels palette and selected the **a** channel first and expanded the channel contrast by choosing Image ⇨ Adjustments ⇨ Equalize. This produced the extreme color shift shown in the image here. I then clicked on the Lab composite channel in the Channels palette (it is essential you remember to do this so that all three channels are selected again) and copied the enhanced image across to the original image as a new layer. You can do this by either choosing Select ⇨ All and copying and pasting the image contents. Or, you can select the move tool and drag the Lab image across to the original RGB version. Make sure that you hold down the *Shift* key as you do so. A *Shift* drag will ensure that the layer is centered when you let go of the mouse. There is no need to worry about the color space mismatch. Photoshop will automatically convert the file back to RGB mode again as you make a copy and paste.
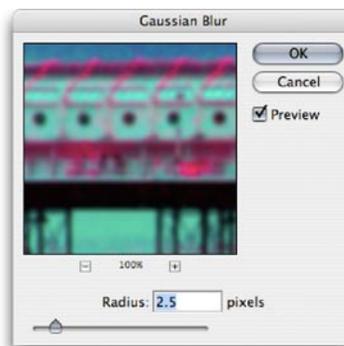
3 I set the new layer blend mode to color and the layer opacity to 30%. This Lab coloring technique is inclined to generate harsh pixel artifacts, so I chose Filter ⇨ Blur ⇨ Gaussian Blur and applied a 2.5 pixel radius to soften the image layer slightly. Because the new layer is using the Color blend mode, this blurring will not affect the sharpness of the image luminosity.
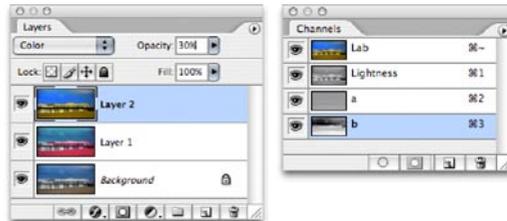
4 I returned to the Lab copy image and went back a couple of steps in the history palette and selected the **b** channel this time and then repeated the steps described in stage 2. I applied an equalize image adjustment and then copied the newly enhanced composite lab image across to the original RGB version, this time bringing it in as layer 2. And as before, I set the blend mode to Color, the opacity to 30% and applied a Gaussian blur to the new image layer.

5 Here is the finished result. As you can see, when using the Lab Color process described here, you can end up with two brightly colored, semi-transparent layers. The fun starts when you adjust the relative opacity of each and experiment with different amounts of opacity in these two layers.