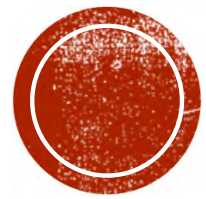# LIGHTBOX PHOTOGRAPHY

Introduction and Overview

- Gallery of ideas

- Gear and setup

- Composition ideas

- Shooting
  - Translucent subjects
  - Opaque subjects
  - Semi-opaque subjects

- Exposing for processing

- Post-processing
  - Masking and blending
  - Luminosity reversal

- Ideas for exploration

OUTLINE

GALLERY OF IDEAS
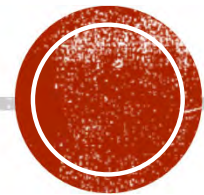
Wide range of possibilities

SUBJECT IDEAS

- Flowers and petals
- Fruits and vegetables
- Plants and weeds
- Leaves
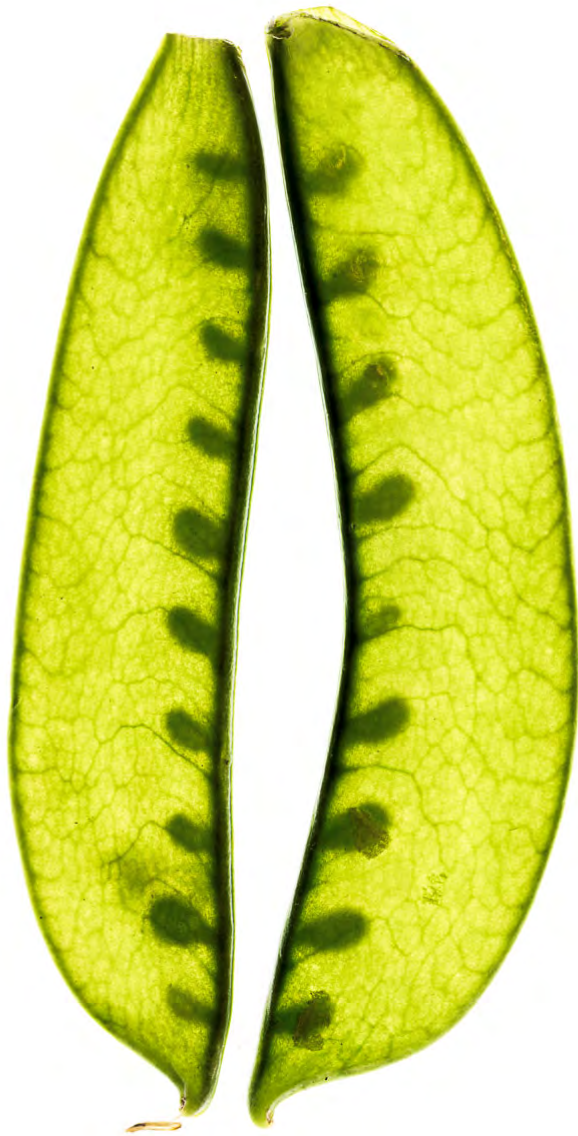- Shells
- Opaque items to silhouette

SINGLE SUBJECT

A slice of fruit or vegetable showing its profile

PAIRS OF ITEMS

- Two similar items

- Or contrasting items

- Facing pairs

- Mirrored objects

PATTERNS

- Arranged designs
- Random displays

ARRAYS

- Subjects spaced apart
- Overlaid arrangements

CIRCLES

- Single circles
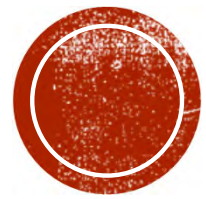
- Concentric circles

MANDALAS

MIXED SUBJECTS

- Opaque subjects
- Semi-translucent subjects

GEAR AND SET-UP

Some basic options

LIGHT PAD

- Slide sorting box works
- Light pads have more uniform light
- Desirable features:
  - Larger is better
  - LED
  - Dimmable light
- Various sizes and configurations
- Cost under $100
- Amazon has good selection

CAMERA SUPPORT

Copy stand works well

Tripod works also

LENS

- Prime lens preferred
- Zoom lenses can creep
- 40-60mm range
- Manual focus OK
- Minimum f-stop unimportant
- May need to focus close
- Can be a macro lens

TOOLS TO PREPARE SUBJECTS

- Tweezers
- Sharp scissors or pruning shears
- Sharp knife
- Mandoline
- Dust blower

!

Be cautious with a
mandoline

?

Don't ask me how I
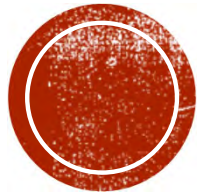know

SAFETY
WARNING

MY SETUP

- Smith Victor copy stand
- HSK A2 light pad, 18 X 25'' ($70)
- Zeiss Milvus 50mm f/2 makro lens

PATTERNS AND ARRANGEMENTS

An opportunity for creativity

ARRANGING SUBJECTS

- Array subjects attractively
- Composition techniques apply
- Possibilities:
  - Individual subjects
  - Facing pairs
  - Mirror images
  - Circles and curves

Fans

Spirals
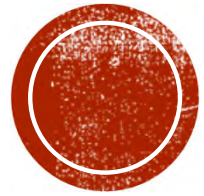
Geometrical patterns

Pictorial designs
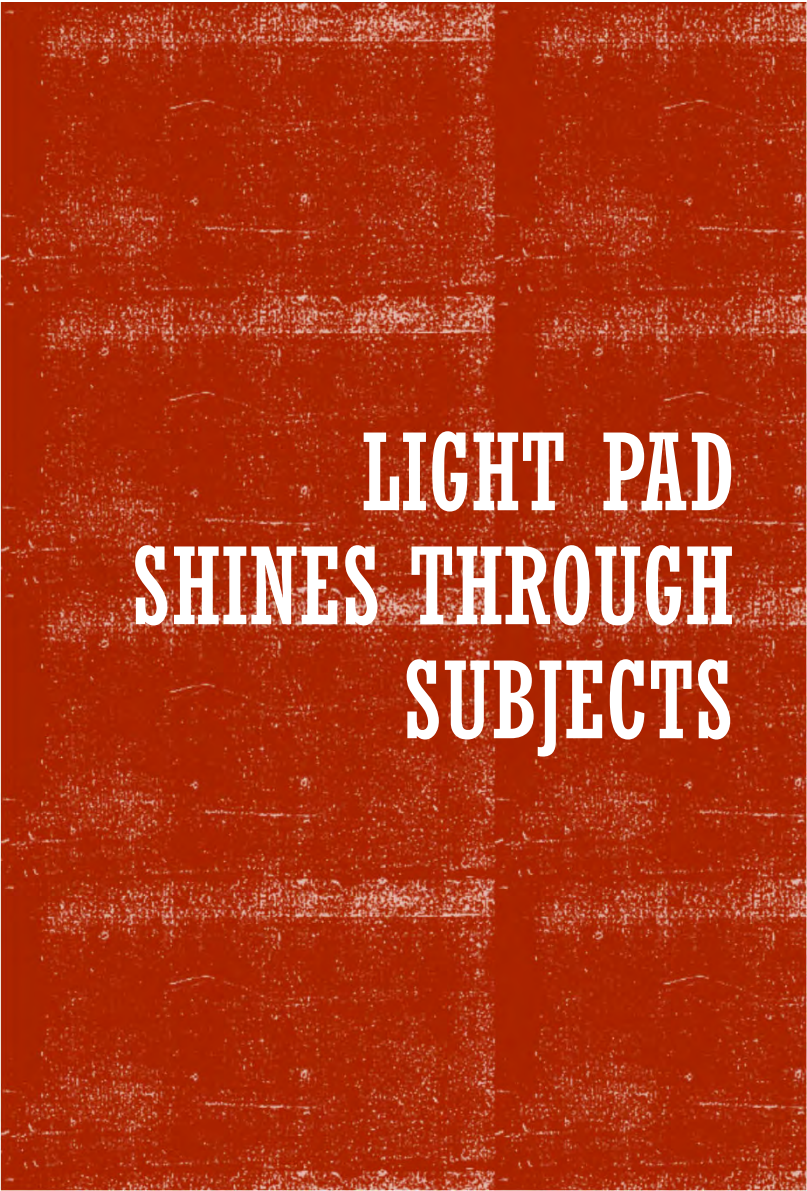
Extreme close-ups

Random placement

OTHER IDEAS

MAKING IMAGES

Techniques vary with subjects

TRANSLUCENT SUBJECTS

Backlit by light pad

LIGHT PAD SHINES THROUGH SUBJECTS

- High key photography
- White background
- More delicate effect
- Reveals internal structure

COLOR ARRAYS

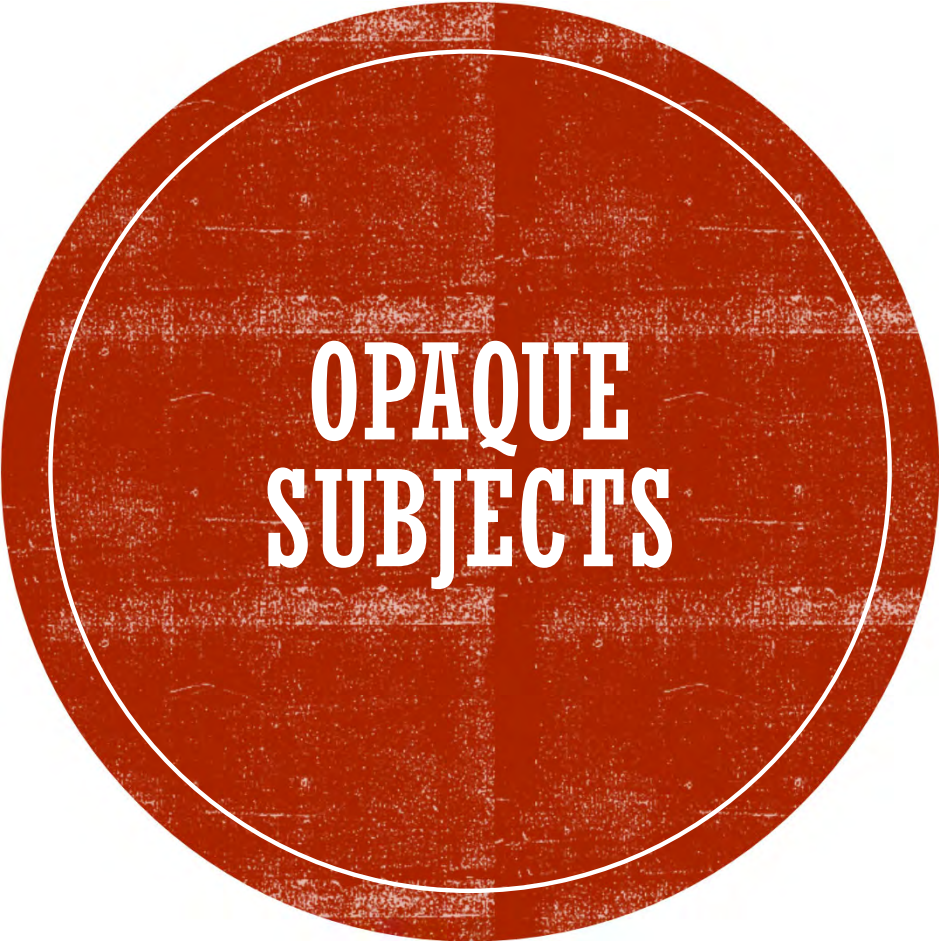- Leaves make good subjects
- Seasonal

B&W OPTION

Backlighting reveals structure

Emphasizes form over color

OPAQUE SUBJECTS

Different procedures needed

NEED DIFFERENT LIGHTING

- Front lighting shows surfaces
- Side lighting reveals texture
- Light pad is white background
- Can use colored raking light
- Light pad may shine through some subjects

LEGUME COLLAGE

Needs top or side lighting to reveal subject colors and texture
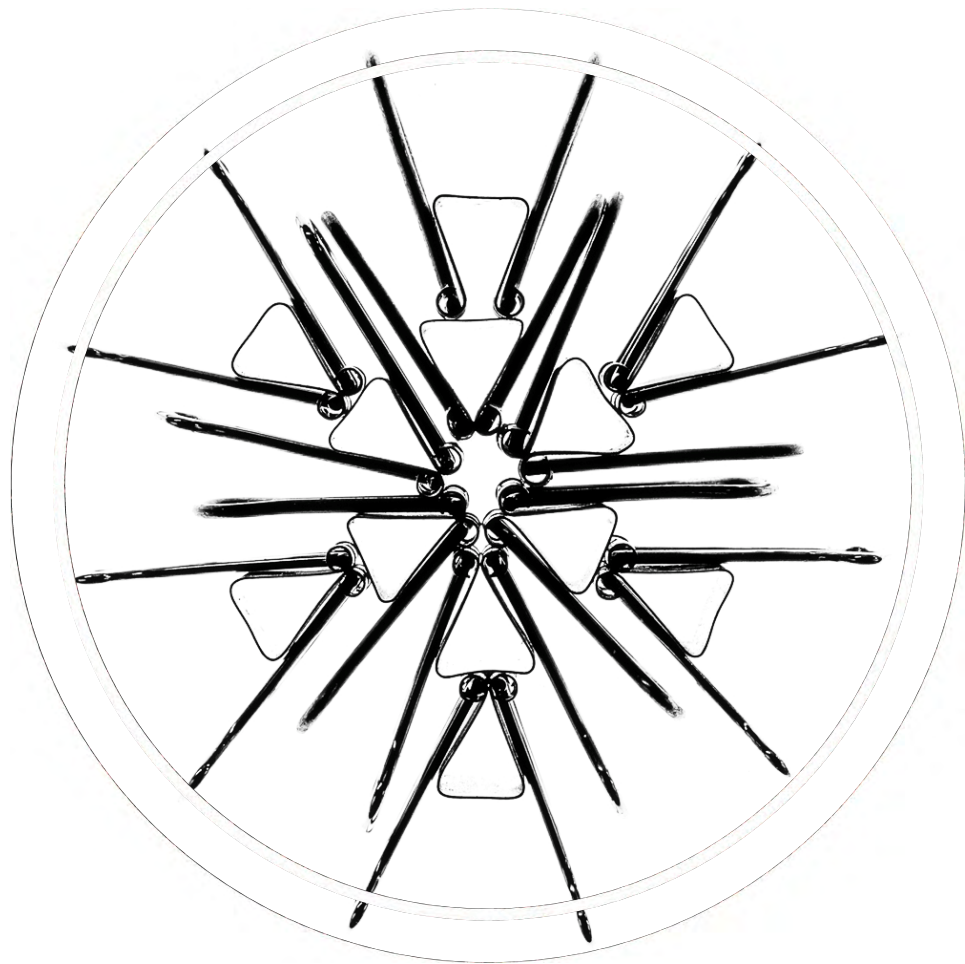
Light pad provides white background

TEA LEAVES

Light pad gives white background

Top lighting reveals surface

SILHOUETTES

Common objects make interesting arrays

TRY HUMOR

It doesn't have to be all serious

BLOSSFELDT EFFECT

Karl Blossfeldt, German photographer

Pioneer in macrophotography

Photographed weeds and stems

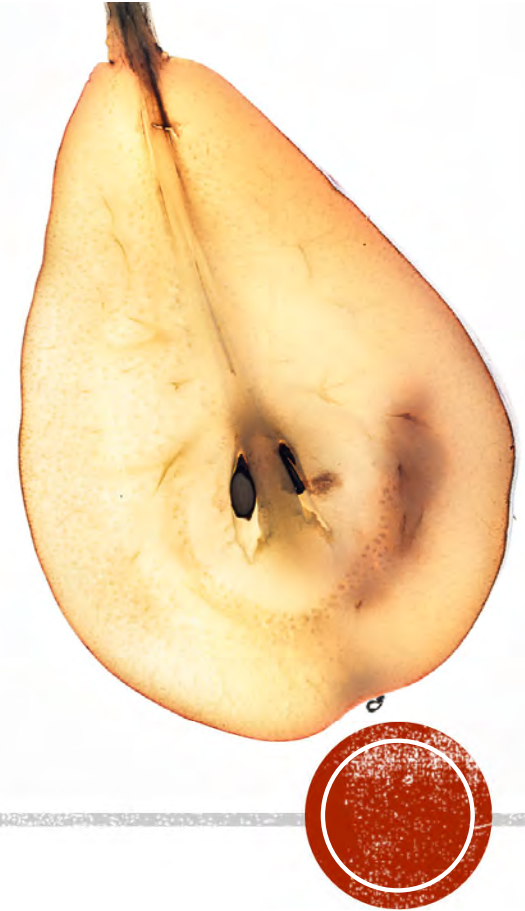Close-ups in B&W

Many close-ups were extreme

SEMI-OPAQUE SUBJECTS

Combine back and front lighting

PEAR SECTION

Side lighting reveals surface color and texture

FRUIT SLICE

- Thin slices
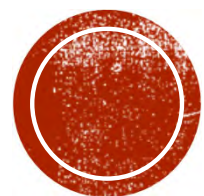- Iconic shapes effective

PEACOCK FEATHER

Color important for some images

EXPOSING IMAGES

Expose for post-processing

EXPOSURE TECHNIQUES

- Multiple exposures (HDR)
- Capture whites and blacks fully
- Up to 7-9 exposures
- 1 EV difference
- Manual exposure
- Low ISO
- Vary shutter speed
- Keep f-stop constant
- f/8 to f/11 is good
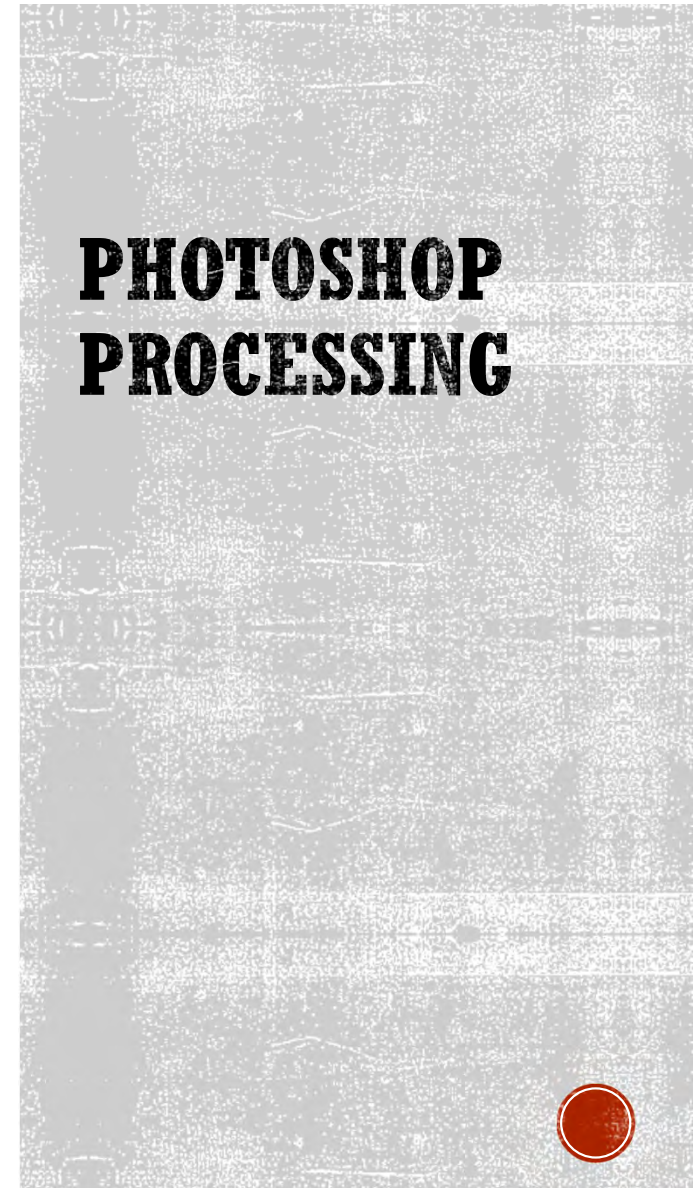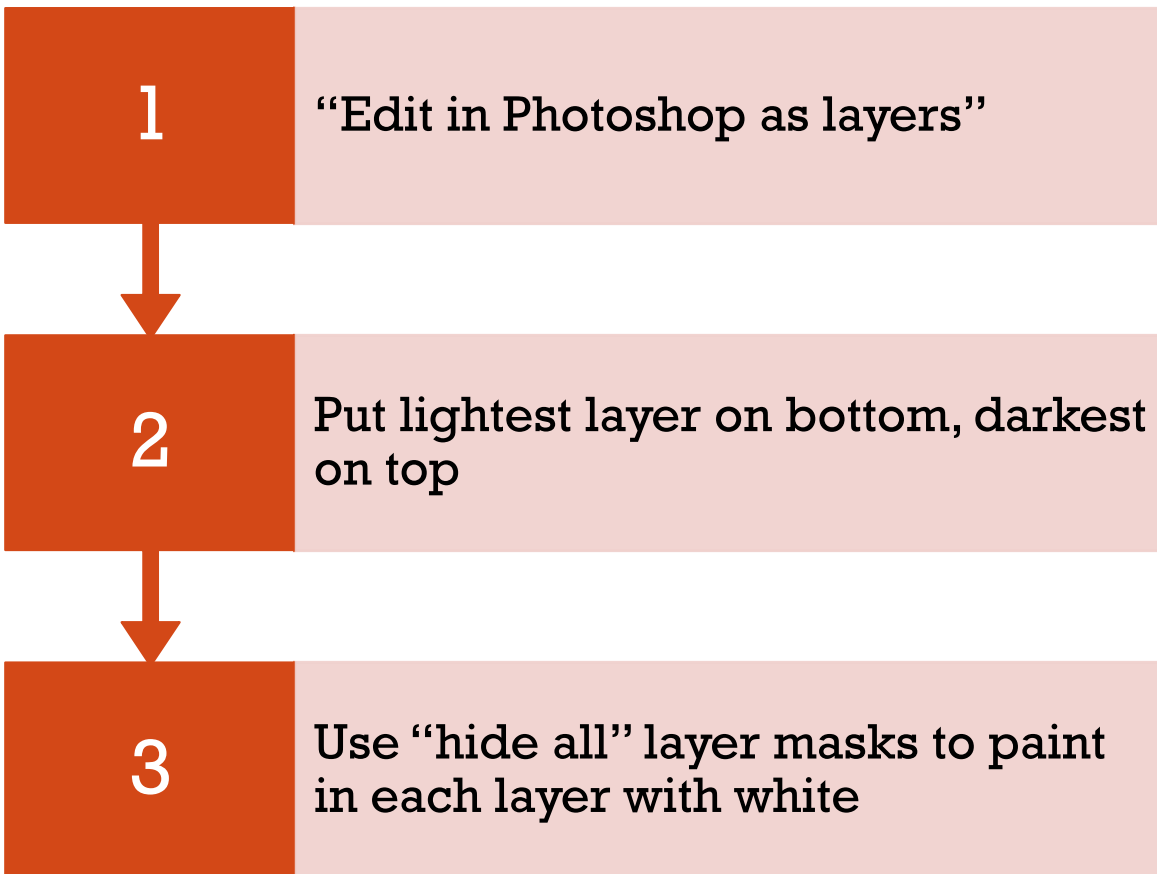- f/16 to f/22 if more depth of field needed

POST-PROCESSING

Use a program with layers and masks

Photoshop

On1 Photo Raw

Others

Arrange layers from light to dark

1	"Edit in Photoshop as layers"

2	Put lightest layer on bottom, darkest on top

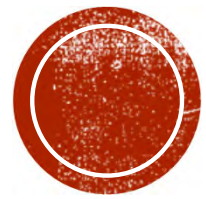|	
3	Use "hide all" layer masks to paint in each layer with white

PHOTOSHOP PROCESSING

SOME TIPS

- Use eyedropper to set background layer to lightest image background

- Create "Hide all" layer masks

- Choose soft brush

- Adjust opacity and flow of brush as needed
  - 50% is good start

- Paint in desired features from lower layer with white

- Don't need to use all layers

- Experiment with blending modes

- Use Adjustment Layers to modify saturation, brightness

AN EXAMPLE
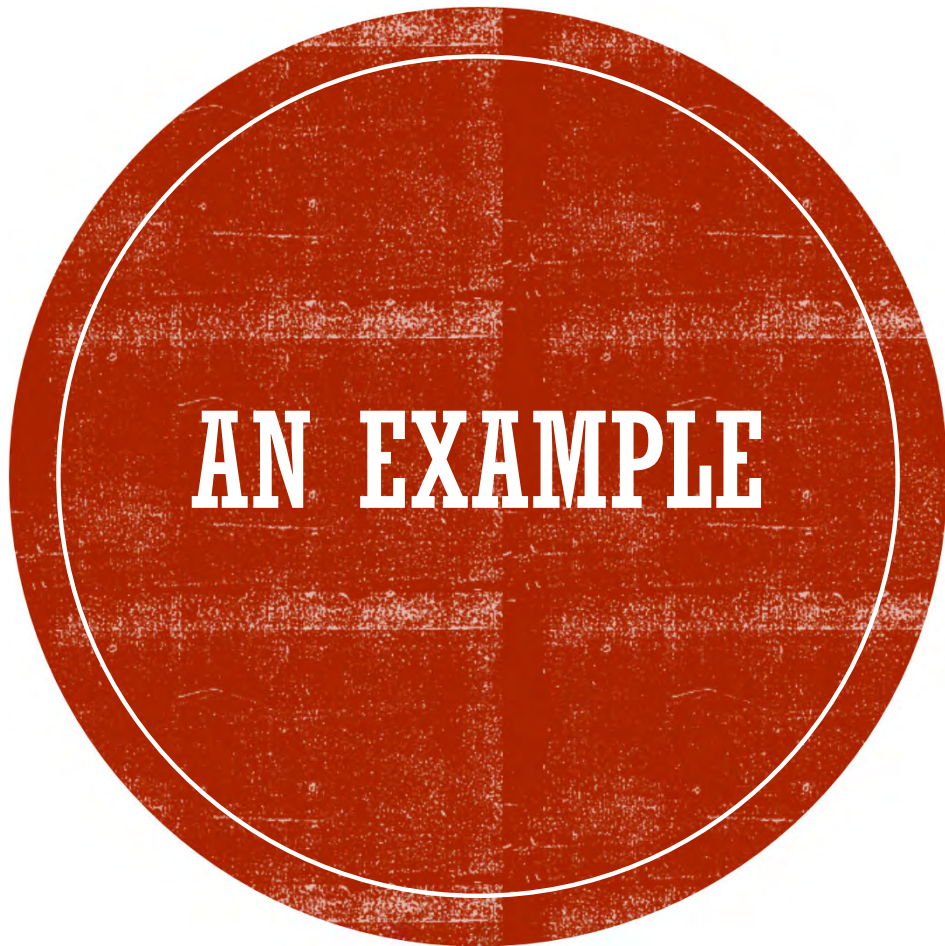
Blending layers for lightbox photos

OTHER TECHNIQUES

Some options for advanced processing

SWAPPING LUMINOSITY CHANNELS

- Use Photoshop

- Convert RGB to LAB mode

- Select L (Luminosity) channel

- Invert the channel

- Reconvert from LAB to RGB mode

- Changing the A and B channels can be used to create special effects

LUMINOSITY INVERSION

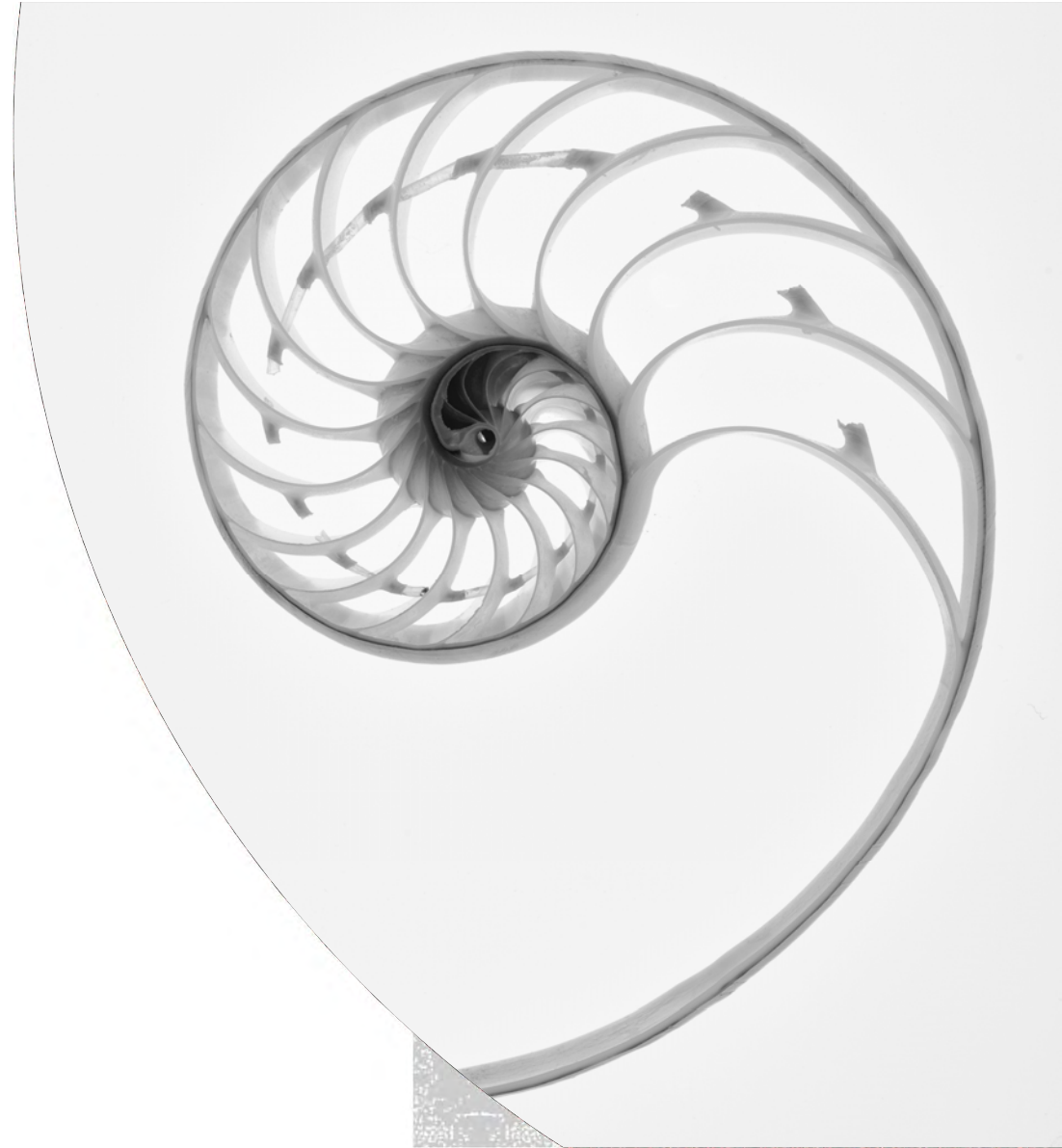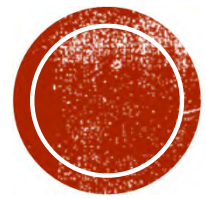|	
Convert	Convert RGB to LAB mode • > Image/Mode/LAB
Select	Select L (Luminosity) channel
Invert	Invert the channel • > Image/Adjustments/Invert • > Or, Cntl-I
Reconvert	Reconvert from LAB to RGB mode • > Image/Mode/RGB

MONOCHROME

- Some images work well in monochrome
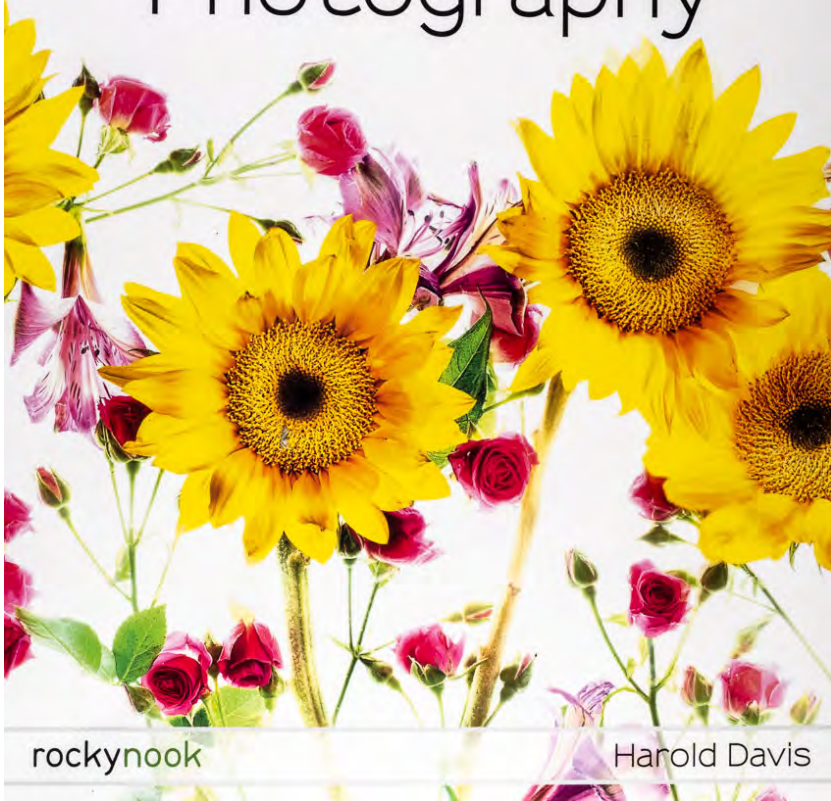- Convert using your favorite method

GOOD RESOURCES

For deeper exploration

Creative Garden Photography

rockynook   Harold Davis

HAROLD DAVIS IS A GREAT RESOURCE

- *Creative Garden Photography* has a wealth of ideas
- His books on flower photography and Photoshop techniques
- His YouTube broadcasts give more detail
- Zoom training sessions at low cost
- www.digitalfieldguide.com/learning

GIVE IT A TRY

- Get subjects from your garden or yard
- Weeds and grasses from ditches
- Good Covid activity
- Low-cost activity
- May already have a good lens
- Used 50mm lenses are cheap