# Creating a Brush from an image in Photoshop

Virtually any image/photo can be used to create a Brushtip in Photoshop. Then the brush can be converted to make it usable in Paintshop Pro as well.

In this tutorial we will make a Photoshop brush from a waterfall image and then convert it to a brush for Paintshop Pro.

➢ Begin by opening Photoshop and loading a web – downloaded image of a waterfall. The image should be of a high enough resolution.
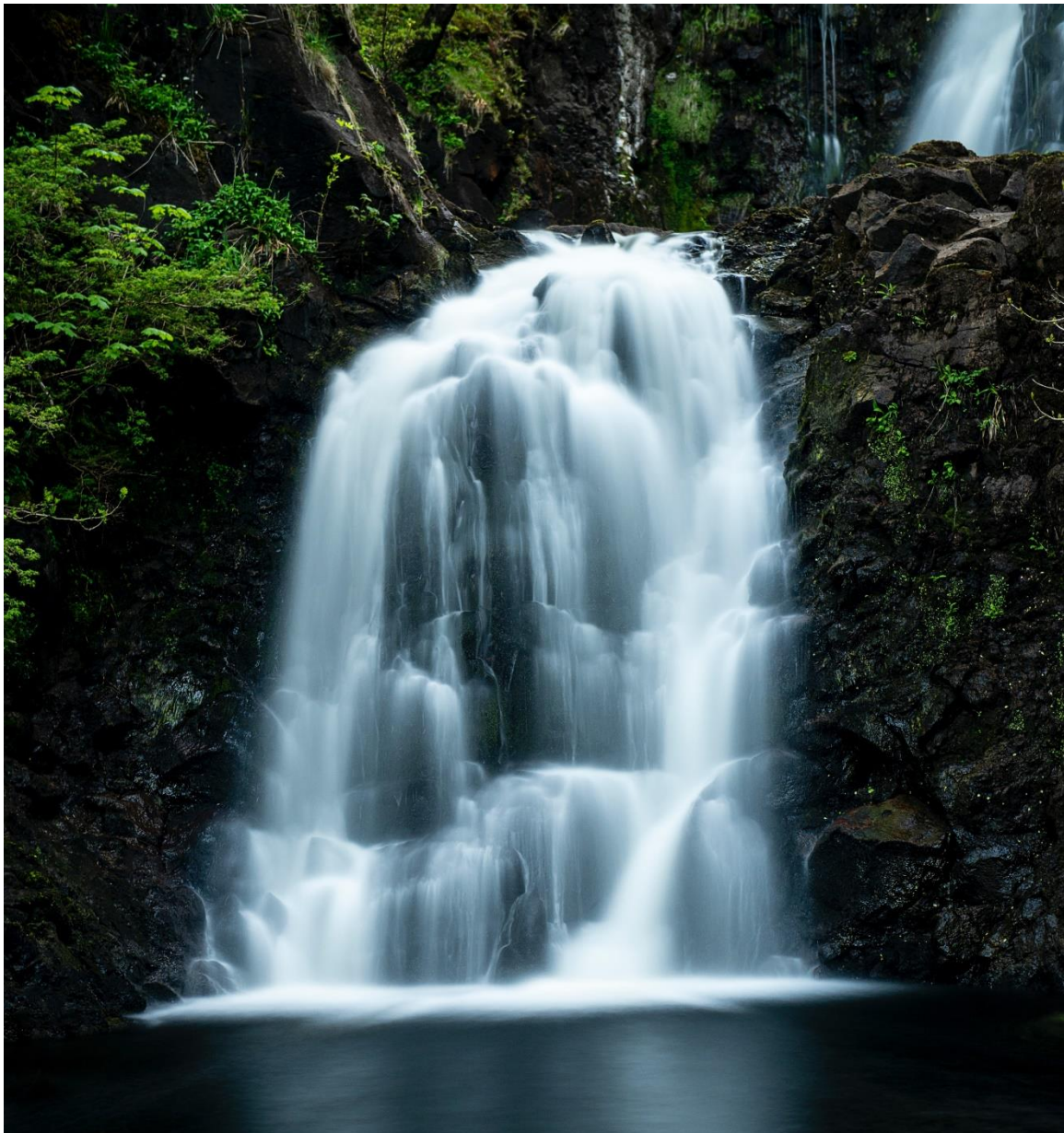
The brush creation works best when we are able to define a good level of contrast between the waterfall and the surrounding area. To enhance the contrast we will look for which colour channel offers the best existing contrast.
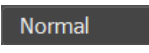
➢ Select the **Channels** tab in the right pane.
➢ Click to view each channel to see which one gives the best contrast between the waterfall and the surrounding rock. In our case, it was the **Red** channel.
➢ Duplicate the **Red** channel by highlighting it first, then right-click it and selecting **Duplicate Channel…** and name it the default: **Red copy**.
➢ Make the **Red copy** channel visible by clicking it and make the **Red** channel invisible by clicking it next. (highlight it)

We want to manipulate the image now, in order to extenuate the white falls and minimize-blacken the surrounding area. There are two ways to do this.

1. Press **Ctrl-L** to open the **Levels** window:
➢ Moving the **Input Levels** center dart to the right will darken the darker levels.
➢ Moving the right dart left will enhance the whiter levels.
➢ Moving the **Output Levels** dart adjusts the light-dark level of the whole image.
➢ Move the center dart a bit to the right and the right dart a bit to the left.
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2. Click on **Image** in the top menu and then on **Apply Image** to open the **Apply Image** window:
➢ **Layer** should be **Background** and **channel** should be **Red copy**.
➢ Try different **Blending** values to get the best contrast without washing out the white waterfall. **Overlay** or **Multiply** will likely be the best.
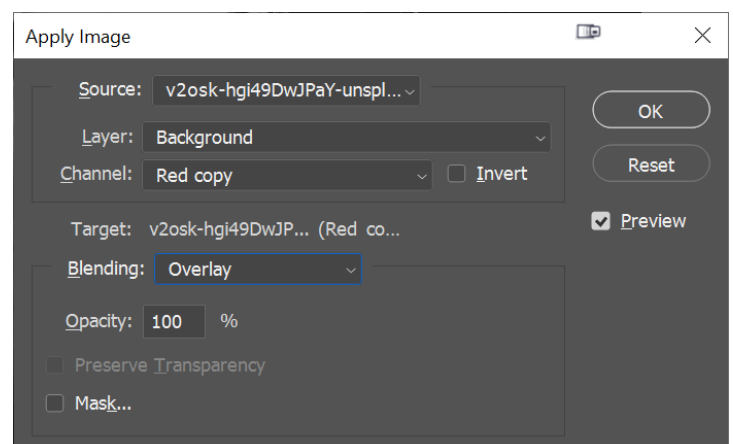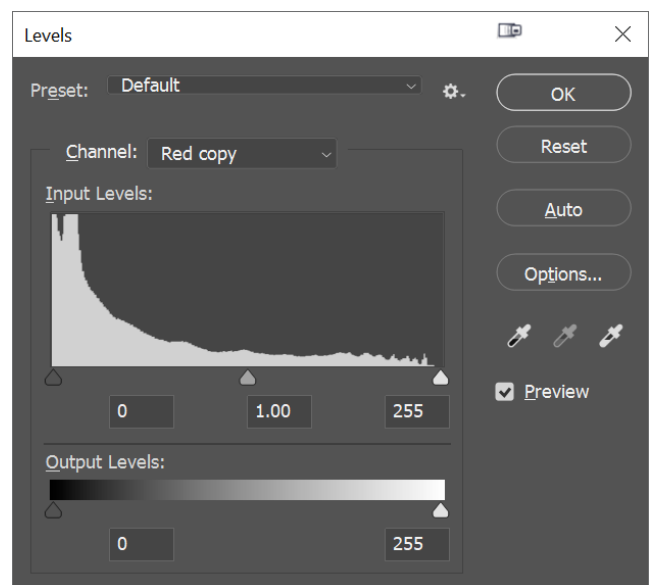
Now to fully isolate the waterfalls from the background area we will paint the rest of the area with a black brush.

➢ Select the basic **Brush Tool**: 🖌 and then select a soft, round brush tip. 🔘
➢ Use the brush to erase all the areas around the falls you wish to blacken. Further away from the falls use the normal brush mode: `Normal`
➢ Closer to the falls, you may want to use Overlay mode: `Overlay` or a smaller brush diameter to be more precise.
➢ To make sure all the background area has been cleared of any image elements, used a hard brush as a final sweep: 🔘 Make sure the black level is 0,0,0.
➢
➢ To select the waterfall to make as the brush, press **Ctrl** and click on the image in the **Red copy** in the right pane. The image selection "ants" will be moving about in the waterfall image.
➢ Click on the **Layers** tab in the right pane.
➢ At the bottom, click on the **Add a layer Mask** icon: ⬤ The layer mask will be created to the right of the main image with a faint image of the falls loaded in it.

Create a new document to move the cleaned waterfall image to. Click **File/New** and set up a 5000 by 5000 or properly sized pixel workspace at 300 pixels/inch resolution and a **white** background.

➢ Select the original image file again at the top of the display area.
➢ With the **Layers** tab still on, make sure the waterfall layer mask is selected to the right pane
➢ Click on the original waterfalls image to select it.
➢ Press **V** to select the image and drag it up to the white 5K by 5K workspace area, then release the mouse button. The image should appear in the white 5K by 5K workspace.
➢ Change the foreground colour to black
➢ Press **Alt** and **Delete** to fill the image with black:

➢ Now that the image for the brush preset is prepared, select **Edit** from the main menu and then select **Define Brush Preset**. A **Brush Name** window will open:

➢ Give the brush a name and click on **OK.**

| Brush Name | | | × |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 5000 | Name: Sampled Brush 14 | | OK Cancel |
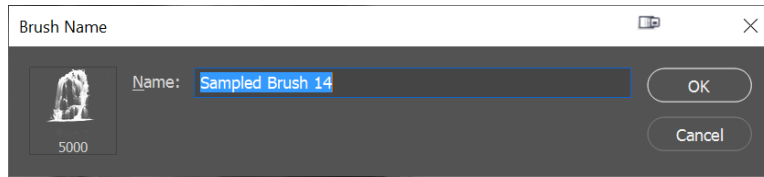
The brush is created and immediately appears as a brush outline, ready to be placed.

The brush also now exists in the list of brush presets under the name that was given.

➢ Remember to change the foreground colour to **white** again and load some other image.
➢ Select the newly created brush and size it to the appropriate value for the scene.
➢ The outline will follow the mouse. Click the mouse to apply the brush.



**Export Photoshop Brushes**

➢ In Photoshop; select **Window/Brushes**
➢ Double-click the folder containing the brushes to be exported or just the select the whole folder itself.
➢ Right-click on the brush file or the folder name and select: **Export Selected Brushes…** from the displayed list.
➢ Navigate to where you wish to place the brush's **.abr** file.

# Converting Photoshop Brushes for use in Paintshop Pro

In Paintshop Pro, you're supposed to be able to import Photoshop .abr type Brush files so that any brushes created for Photoshop can be also available in Paintshop Pro.

➢ To do this in Paintshop, simply select **File/Import** and then select **Custom Brush.** Then this dialog opens….
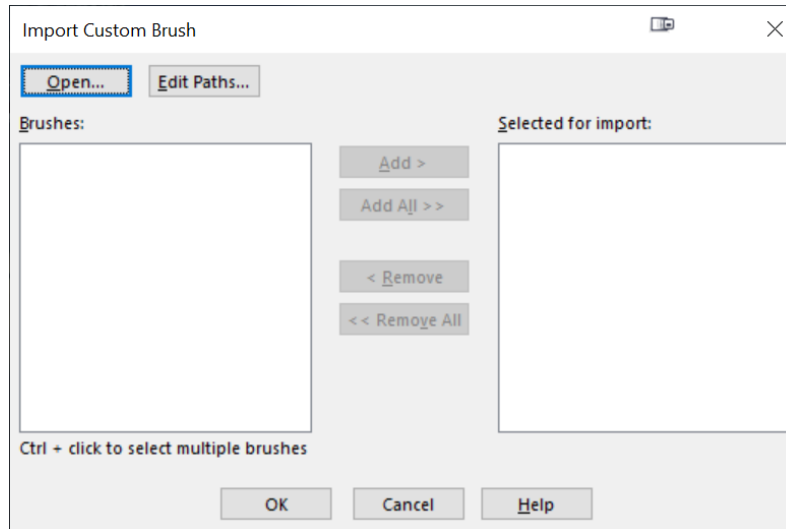


➢ Click on **Open…** and navigate to the folder where your Photoshop brushes .abr file or files are.
➢ When you click on the .abr file, after a few seconds the brush images should show up in the left; **Brushes** window. Then you can click on the center **Add All >** button to add them to Paintshop.

Now sometimes, when you click the **Open..** and then click on the .abr file, nothing happens… the brush images don't show up in the left window, above.
If this happens there is a freeware converter, called **abrMate 1.1** that can be downloaded & installed to make the conversion to a PS7 file type which will work.
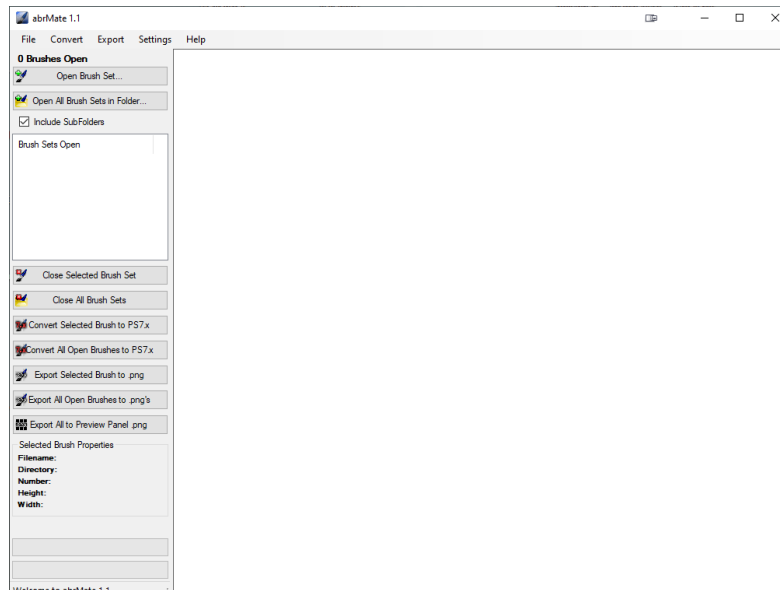
➢ Now with the abrMate opened, click on **Open Brush Set** and navigate to the .abr file to be converted.
➢ Alternatively you can click on **Open All Brush Sets in a Folder** to open and load multiple .abr files in subfolders into the right window.
➢ Click on **Convert All Open Brushes to PS7.x** to do the conversion of all brushes shown in the window.

A progress bar will appear and you are prompted to save this conversion as a new .abr files. (in the originating folder by default)
Each file will be converted and a new file name beginning with "PS7-" will be appended as a prefix.

Once completed, the converted file should be properly seen by Paintshop Pro following the process outlined in the beginning of this tutorial.