



BeadyBugs' Photoshop Tutorial 2

How to change your photo's background colour

Introduction

This tutorial will show you how to add a coloured and/or graduated background to your bead photo. You can use Steps 3 and 4 together, or individually

depending on the effect you are after. There are many ways of tackling this in Photoshop, but this is my preferred method.



From this

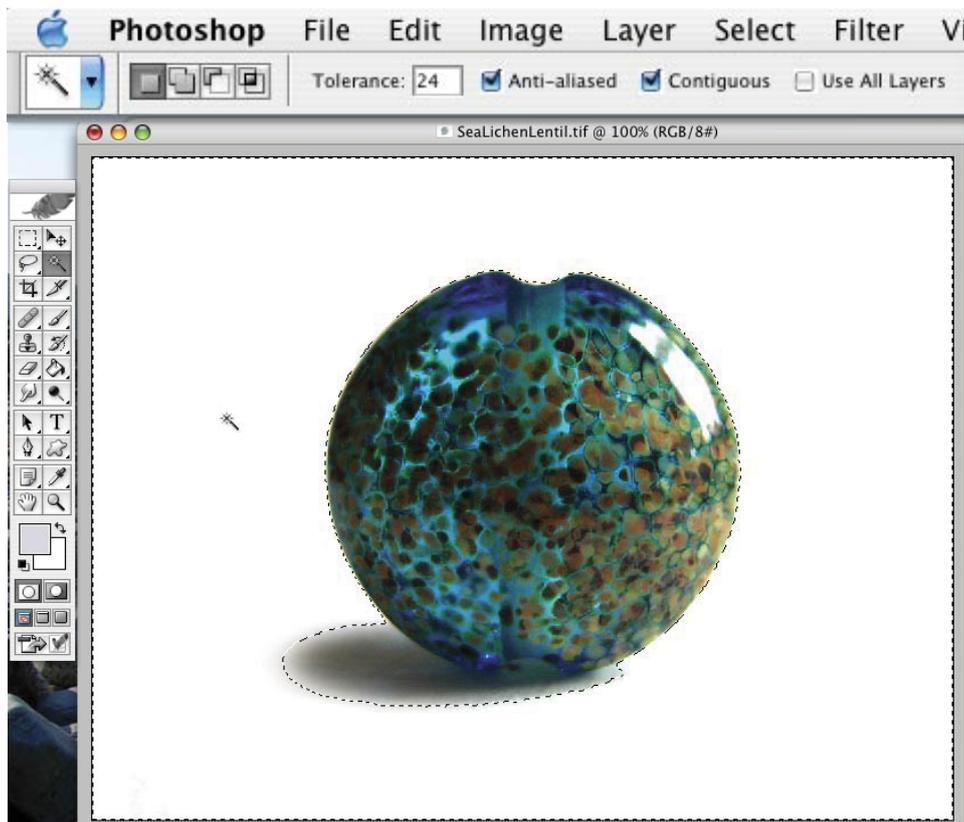


..to this

1. Selecting the background

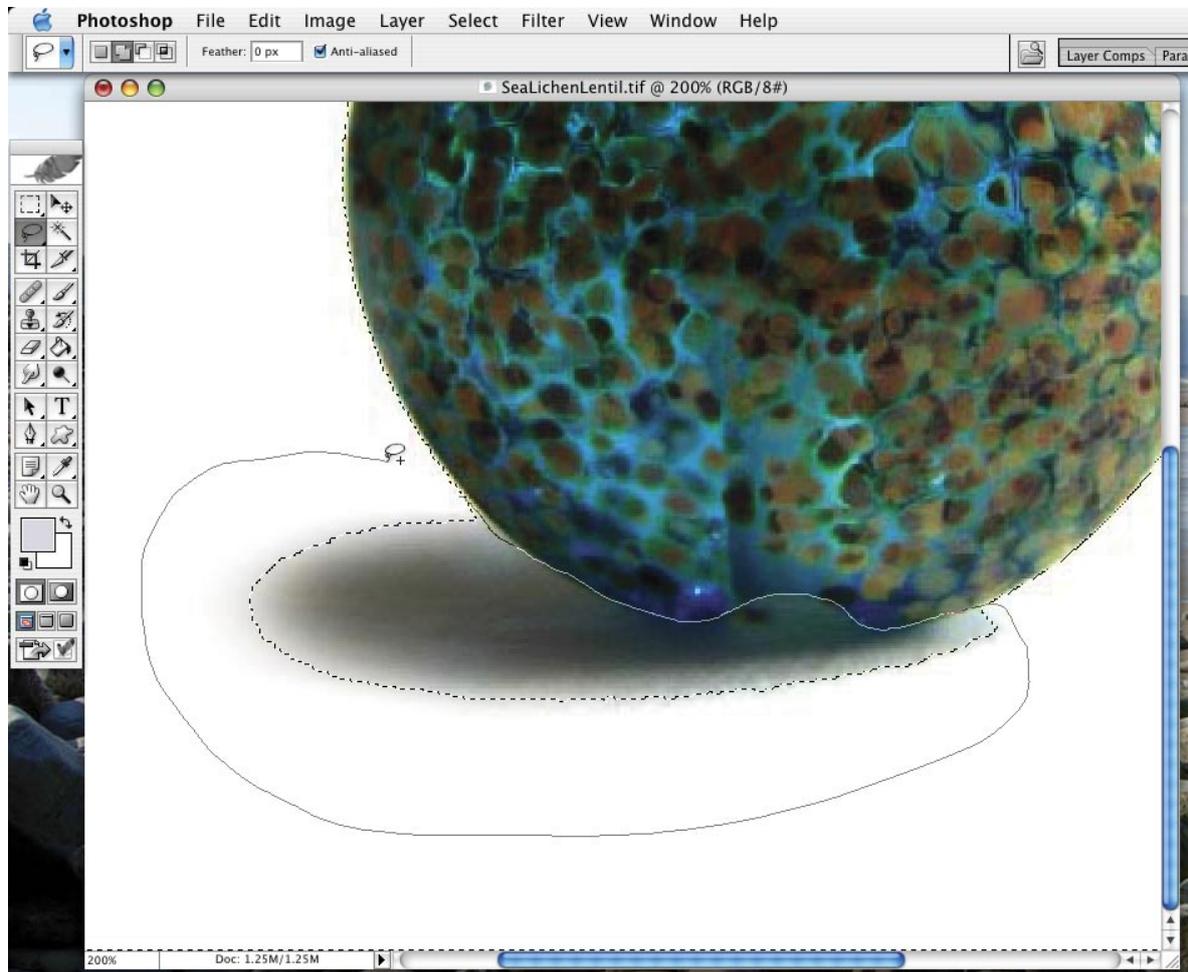
For the purposes of this exercise, I am using the previously cleaned up bead photo from Tutorial 1. A clean and simple background and well defined objects makes this easier to do, but is not essential. In the tools palette select the magic wand and use the following suggested settings.

Then click on the white background with the wand, and your selection will be surrounded by a dashed line. If there are multiple white areas in your background, you can add these to your selection by holding down the shift key, and clicking the wand over them one by one.



To complete your selection of the background (if you have a shadow that is too similar to the colour of the bead for the wand to pick it out), click on the lasso tool in your tools palette and make sure **Feather is set to 0**. It may help to zoom in closer to your image at this point. (Menu bar>View>Zoom in or zoom out)

Then whilst holding down the shift button, draw around the shadow (accurately along the edge of your bead) and it will be added to your selection. If you need to remove any bits, hold down the Alt key whilst drawing with the lasso. Your background should now be fully selected.



2. Putting the bead on a separate layer

Now we are going to invert the selection, soften the edge so the bead doesn't look 'cut out' and put the bead on a separate layer so we can manipulate the background and leave the bead untouched.

Do the following:

- a) Menu bar>Select>Inverse
- b) Menu bar>Select>Modify>Contract (2 pixels)*
- c) Menu bar>Select>Feather (1 pixel)*
- d) Menu bar>Layer>New>Layer via copy

The bead is now on a new layer leaving the background image intact and ready to be altered.

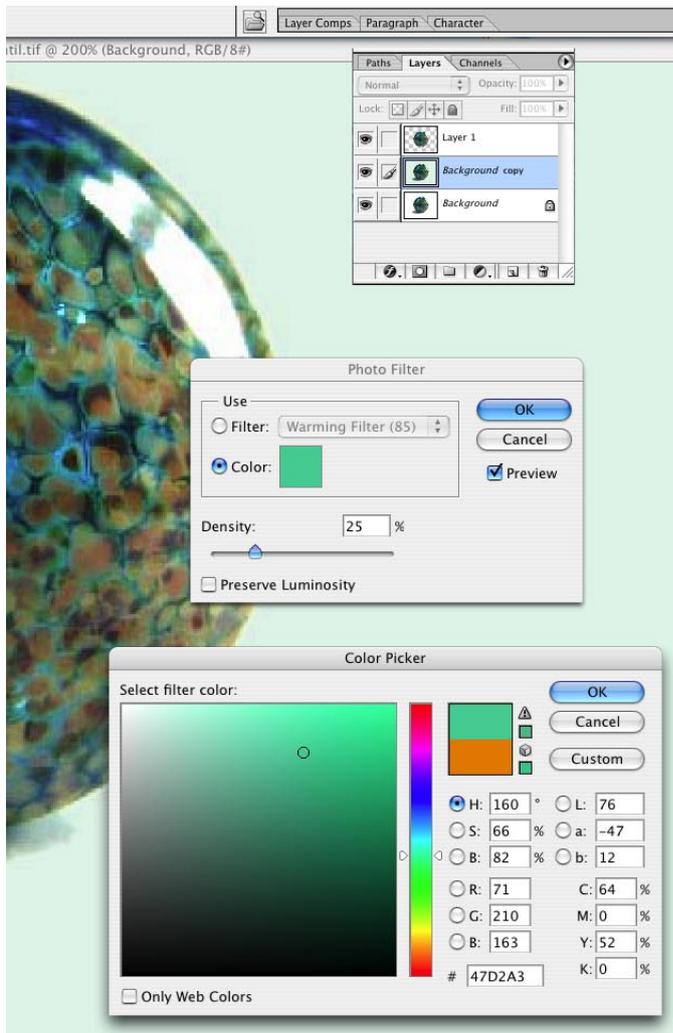
*adjust if necessary



3. Adding colour to the background

This step can be used with or instead of Step 4. To alter the colour of the background and shadow, we are going to use a photo filter. I find this is the easiest way to add colour - other ways I've tried seem to make the shadow go odd colours. You may want to select and duplicate the background layer at this point (Menu bar>Layer>Duplicate) and work on the copy. Should you choose to revise the colour at a later date, it's easier to do this on the unadulterated white version.

In the layers palette, click on the background layer (or copy of the layer if you've made one) then go to: Menu bar>Image>Adjustments>Photo filter. Tick the 'Preview' box so you can see what's happening to your image, untick the 'Preserve Luminosity' box, click the 'Colour' button, then click in the colour box to bring up a colour picker where you can choose the colour you want as your background. Once you've done this and clicked OK, you can alter the density or strength of the colour in the Photo filter panel using the slider. When you are happy with this click OK.

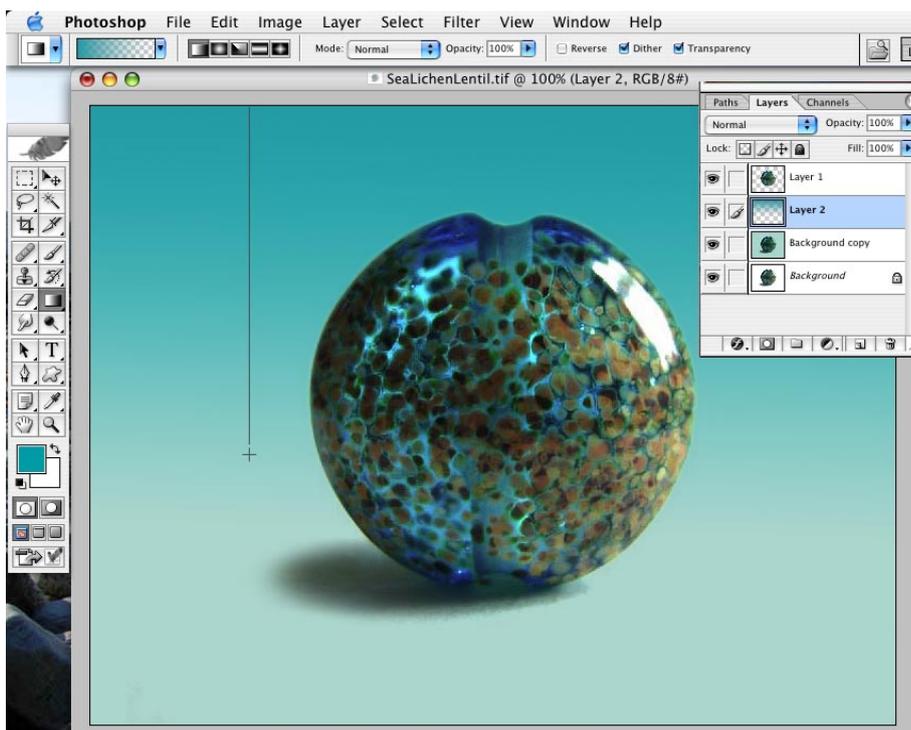


4. Adding a gradient effect

This step can be used with or instead of Step 3. Working over the white background, you can add a subtle graduated background to your image, or add extra depth to the tinted one as shown in the image to the right.

Create a new layer, between your background and bead. Then select the 'gradient' tool in your tool palette, and choose a gradient fill that has solid colour at one end, and transparent at the other, or it will obliterate your shadow.

Choose a colour in your colour palette. Click and hold at the top of your image, drag the gradient tool down then release, and you have created a graduated background.



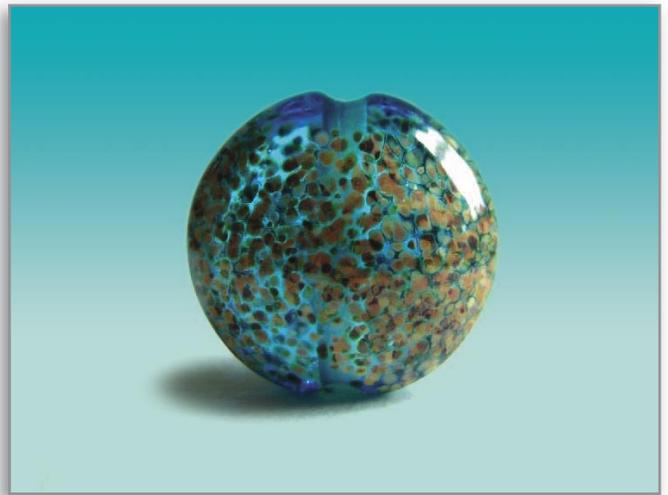
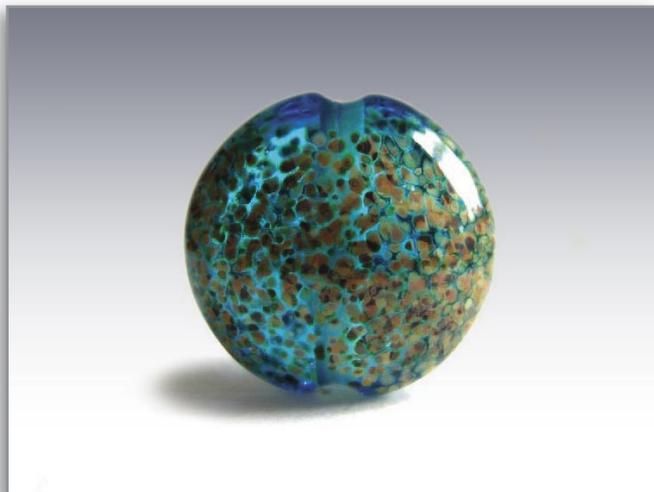
5. ...and finally

Once you are happy with your image, you should save a layered copy of it (Photoshop document or PSD) as this will make it easier to alter at a later date should the need arise. Then flatten, resize (if required) and save in a different format, i.e. TIFF or JPEG depending on what you are going to use the image for.

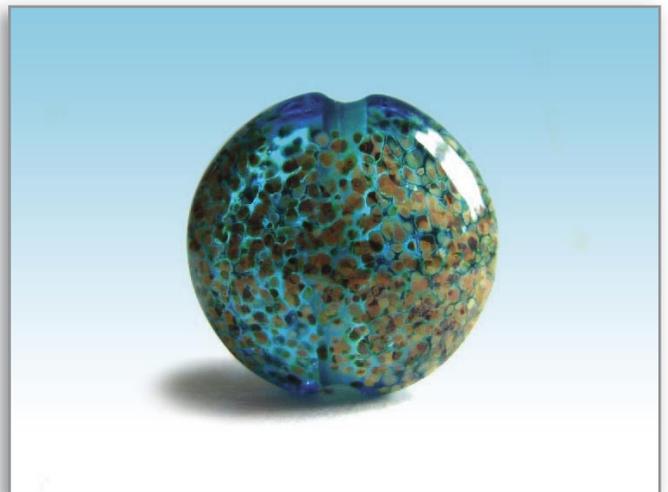
Here are a few examples of different colours or effects you can achieve - have a play!

Background examples

This one is a grey gradient over the original white background. (*Miss out Step 3*)



Pale blue gradient over the white background. (*Miss out Step 3*)



White gradient over a green tinted background. (*Use Steps 3 and 4*)



And technically speaking, once the bead has been cut out and put on a separate layer, you can paste any image you like behind it, and airbrush in a shadow. But whatever you choose to do, have fun and enjoy!