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TMSAutoMaske.tiff ¬ Interval Masking

This tool is used for quickly masking ªsimilarº parts of an image. This is done by creating a temporary mask, which is used only for display and isn't a part of the image. The advantage of the temporary mask is that it can be modified in real time and adjusted precisely to the outlines of the objects you want to mask. After you've finished your mask, you can transfer it completely or partially to the image mask.

Work Area
To mask an image, switch to the ªEdit Elementº mode. Next, define the area of the image with which you want to work. You can either click <*Image*> to select the complete image or press the <*Selection*> command and mark the area of the image you want to process. All further operations will only affect the part of the image you've selected.

Observe Clipping
If you activate this option, the temporary mask is only created within the specified area and is confined by a clipping path.

After you've selected your work area, the cursor changes to an eyedropper :
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Determine Color Interval
The areas of an image that are to be added to your mask are picked according to a specific color value, the reference color. When you click on a spot in the image using the eyedropper, all pixels with a

ªsimilarº color are selected.

The eyedropper button is set to white to indicate that the sampling function is activated:

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determine;¬Each time you click in the image, the pixel under the eyedropper is used as a reference color and all pixels with a ªsimilarº color are selected for the temporary mask, and any previous reference color and masked areas are discarded. Holding down the *Shift* key when clicking in the image will add the current color value to the previous one, enlarging the masked area. A plus sign appears in the cursor to indicate this mode. Conversely, pressing the *Ctrl* key while clicking on a selection removes the selected color and reduces the masked area. A minus sign appears in the cursor to indicate this mode. Pressing the *Backspace* key will undo your previous action.

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With this slider control, you can determine what constitutes ªsimilarº colors; that is, you define the size of the *color interval* (;¬;TMSAutoMaske.rtfd;channel;¬). The higher the value you set, the more the colors may differ and still be considered ªsimilarº. This makes the mask larger. A small value defines ªsimilarº more narrowly and reduces the size of the mask.

Hint: The slider can also be moved using the *Cursor-left* or *Cursor-right* key, decreasing or increasing the set value by 0.1.

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From this pop-up list you can choose the sampling rate for the eyedropper: <*Exact*>, <*Fine*>, <*Medium*>, or <*Coarse*>.

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The <*Inverse*> option inverts the masked area, excluding all previously selected pixels and including those that had previously been unselected.

Display
Masked Area
You can use this color well icon to change the color in which your temporary mask is displayed.

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Redraw
This command redraws the image. If the color you've set for the masked area isn't transparent, a special (and faster) procedure is used to render the mask on screen. However the display of a mask drawn in this way may be undone by controls in other panels. In these cases, redrawing using this command restores the display of the masked areas.

Transfer Temporary Mask to Help Mask
The idea behind interval masking is to build up a mask from different parts. Several temporary masked areas can be combined in a help mask, which in turn, can be transferred to the image mask.

Note: Unlike work masks created with the Masking tool, a help mask can not be used in other modules, and it is lost after leaving this Temprorary Interval Masking tool.

For transferring masked areas to the help mask, several tools are available:

Brush Mask

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A brush is used for marking those parts of the temporary mask that are to be transferred to the help mask.
Pressing the *Ctrl* key removes from the help mask the brushed areas belonging to the temporary mask. This mode is indicated by a minus sign inside the brush cursor.
Holding down the *Shift* key adds all brushed areas to the help mask, regardless of whether or not they belong to the temporary mask.
If you press both the *Shift* and *Ctrl* keys, the brushed areas will be removed directly from the help mask, whether or not these areas belong to the temporary mask.

Fill Mask

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Clicking in your image with this tool activates a filling algorithm that extracts a contiguous area from the temporary mask and transfers it to the help mask.
Pressing the *Ctrl* key removes the extracted area from the help mask.
Holding down the *Shift* key applies the filling algorithm directly to the help mask without regard for the temporary mask.
If you hold down both the *Shift* and *Ctrl* keys, the filled area in the help mask will be removed, whether or not these areas belong to the temporary mask.

All

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The temporary mask is completely added to the help mask. This command can also be executed by pressing the *Space* key.

Modify Help Mask

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The <*Modifiers*> pop-up list offers several commands for modifying the help mask:

Fill Spaces
This command fills spaces (holes) in the help mask. The size of the spaces to be filled can be specified with the slider on the left. Whether a missing pixel will be added to the mask or not depends on the neighboring pixels. For example, if you set the slider to 8, all pixels surrounding the ªholeº pixel must already belong to the mask or the pixel will not be added. On the other hand, if you set a value of 4 or less, only 4 or fewer neighboring pixels must already be part of the mask before the missing pixel will be added. In other words, smaller values result in larger spaces being filled.

Fray Edges
The edges of the help mask are frayed. The impact of the fraying is controlled with the slider on the left.

Shrink
This command causes the edges of the masked area in the help mask to be reduced by one pixel, shrinking the size of the mask.

Invert
This command inverts the help mask.

Delete
This command completely deletes the help mask.

Transfer Help Mask to Image Mask
The <*Transfer*> command adds the temporary help mask to the image mask.

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This command brings up an additional panel, which offers options for how to integrate the help mask:

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Figure: The Transfer Parameters panel

You can select the kind of transition the edges of the help mask will have. The effects of the different transitions are shown in the samples. To select a transition style, click on the sample:

Hard Edges
The help mask is transferred to the image mask without any modification of its edges. The protection of the mask is determined with the <*Protection Level*> slider control.

Smooth Edges
The protection level of the help mask at the edges will gradually be reduced to 0, producing a smooth transition.

Smooth Edges (enlarged)
The transition of the edges is softened as with <*Smooth Edges*>, but the smoothing is done in the unprotected area of the help mask. In other words, the mask is enlarged by the area used for the smoothing effect.

Smooth Edges (reduced)
The smoothing of the edges occurs within the protected area of the help mask.

Edge Width
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This parameter defines the width of the edges of the help mask.

Protection Level
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This control is used for determining how protective the help mask will be. A setting of 100% allows no changes to the masked areas at all. A setting of 0% simulates the deletion of the mask.

Destination
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Here you can decide whether you want your mask to be saved in the image mask or in the transparency (alpha) channel.

Cancel
This command cancels the transfer of the help mask.

Transfer
This command transfers (adds) the help mask to the image mask.

Expert Mode
Clicking this switch extends the panel to display additional options for setting the color intervals used for picking the mask colors:

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channel;¬Color Channel Intervals
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Figure: The portion of the Interval Masking panel for setting color intervals

These controls enable you to define the size of the color intervals

used for picking the mask colors. The definitions that you make here are the basis for the settings you create with the color interval slider (;¬;TMSAutoMaske.rtfd;intervalslider;¬).
By checking the corresponding buttons, you can confine the comparison of pixel colors to particular color channels (CMYKHIS). In the figure above, only C, M, and Y are activated, meaning that only these channels will be used when comparing the color of each pixel with the reference color. The number set with the <*Determine Interval*> slider behaves as a multiplier of the value of each channel.

Example:
Assume the values shown in the figure above are valid and the slider in <*Determine Interval*> is set to 2.0. As a result, a pixel is only added to the temporary mask if the value in its cyan channel doesn't differ by more than 20% from the cyan value of the reference color (10.00*2.0=20). The same applies to the magenta and yellow channels. Black, hue, intensity, and saturation are not considered, because they are not activated.

Defaults
This command resets the settings in the expert mode to the default values.

Display Channel
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This portion of the panel shows a grayscale version of your image or the selected part of it. Only the selected channel (<*C*>, <*M*> ,<*Y*> ,<*K*> ,<*H*>, <*I*>, or <*S*>) is displayed. This makes it easy to identify which channel provides the best background contrast for the object you're masking.

Hints: As mentioned before, drawing temporary masks is faster if no transparency is used in the mask color. This process uses a lot of memory, though, so to reduce memory overhead you should use only preview data when working on large images. When transferring the help mask to the image mask, the original data will be used.

You should build up your mask from small areas that can be selected with the <*Selection*> command. This is easier than trying to adjust a single interval that exactly ªcoversº the desired object as a whole.