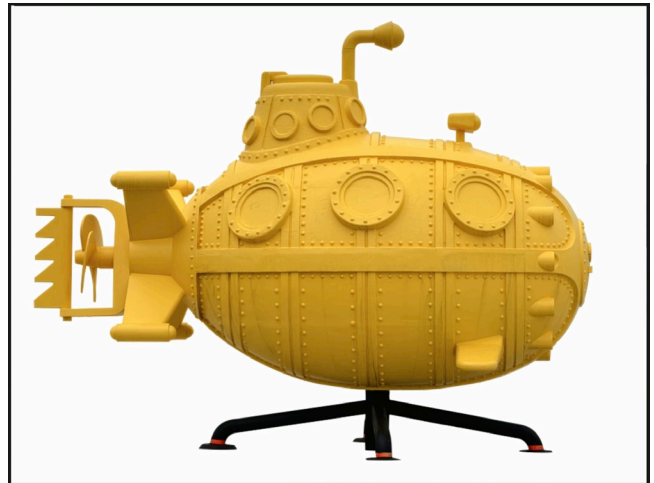




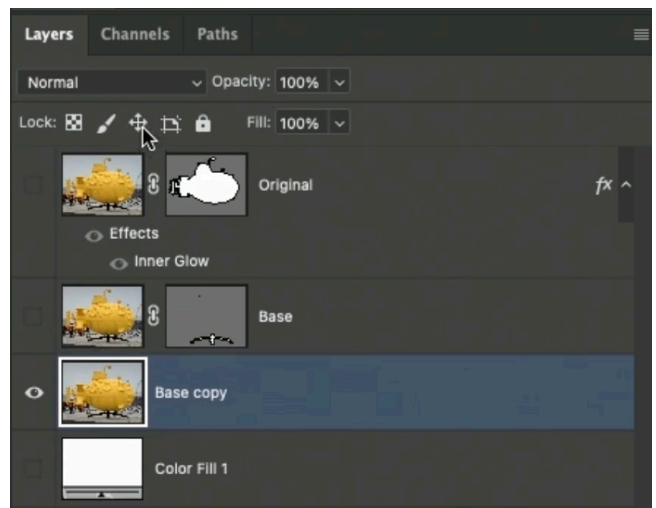
Natural Shadow 2.0

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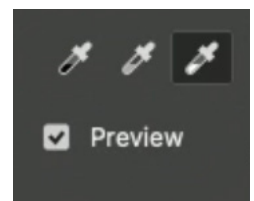
In a previous lesson, we learned how to remove the background from an object using the Pen Tool. When placing that object on a new background, it will need to have an appropriate shadow in order for the result to look natural. That's what we're going to learn how to do in this lesson, using some more sophisticated techniques than what were used in previous shadow lessons.



In the lesson example, the masked object is contained on two layers, each of which isolates a different area using a vector mask. We want a version of the original image beneath these layers, so we'll simply duplicate one of the layers, delete its vector mask and place that layer beneath the two masked layers. This bottom image layer will become the shadow. We'll also turn off the visibility for the top two masked layers.

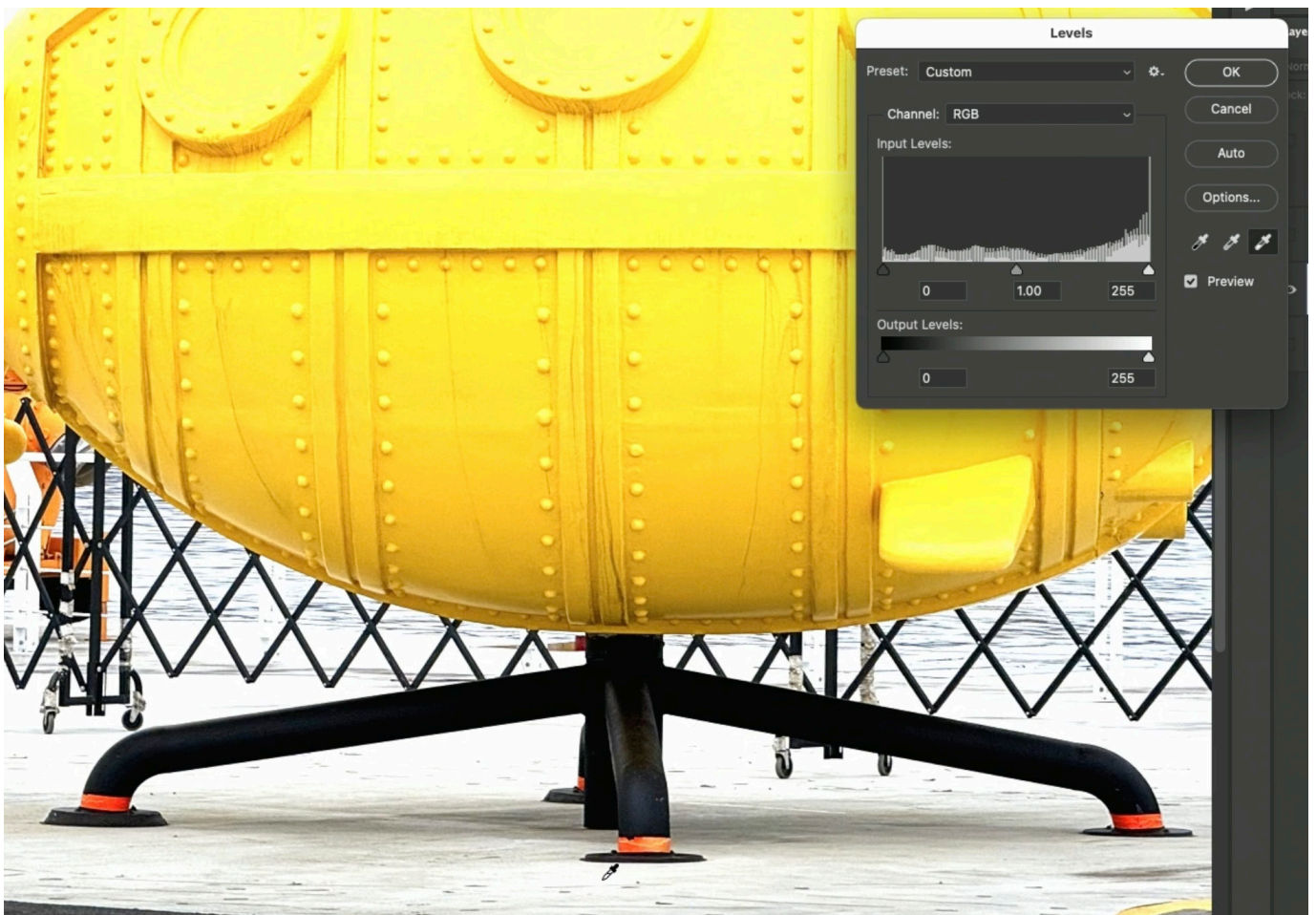


You can see the statue's natural shadow in the image. We want to take the areas surrounding that shadow and fill them with white. To do this, we will first use Levels. We'll click on the Image menu and choose Adjustments > Levels. On the right side of the Levels dialog, there are three eyedroppers. We'll click on the white one (on the right) to make it active. When you click on the image with this eyedropper, it will force the area where you click (the tonal range) to become white.





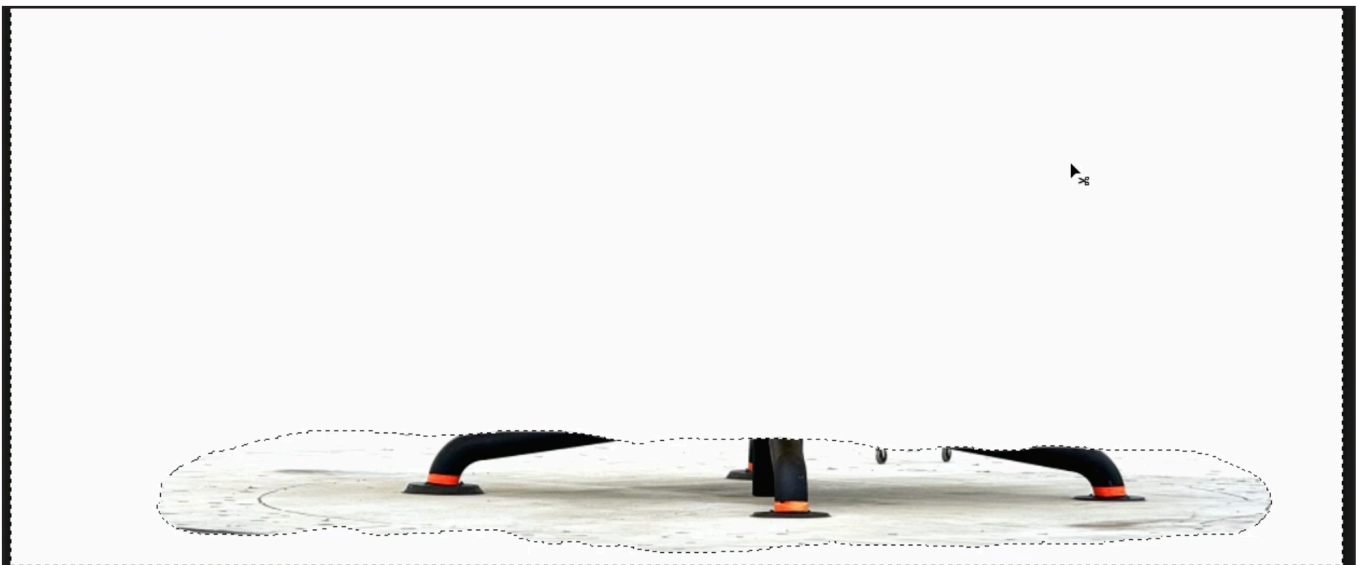
We will click on an area just outside the shadow, on the concrete the statue is sitting on. That area (and anything brighter than that area) will become white. We'll click OK to exit the Levels dialog.



Now we want the majority of the image to be covered in white (except for where the shadow is). To do this, we'll use the Lasso Tool to make a selection that encases the entirety of the shadow. Then we'll invert the selection (Select menu > Inverse) so that it's the rest of the image that is isolated instead.



Now we can fill the selection with white. We'll click on the Edit menu and choose Fill. In the Fill dialog, we'll set the Contents menu to White and click OK. We can then deselect (Command+D).

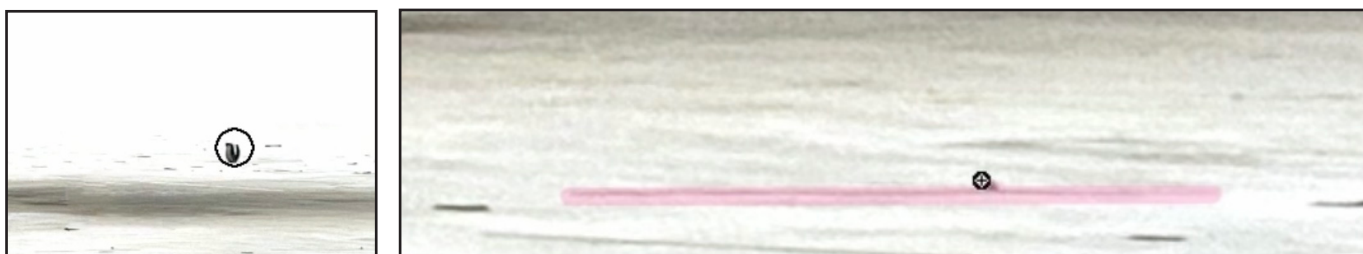


Next, we'll get rid of the legs of the statue that remain in the layer. We already have those legs isolated using a vector mask on another layer (this mask was created by isolating the legs with the Pen Tool.) You can load a vector mask as a selection by holding down the Command key (Ctrl on Win) and clicking on the mask. You'll see the marching ants selection appear around that statue base.

In this example, when we zoom in on the selection, we can see that it's not perfect in that a small amount of the statue base extends beyond the selection. To fix this, we'll make the selection a bit larger by clicking on the Select menu and choosing Modify > Expand. In the Expand dialog, we'll just expand the selection by a few pixels (three in this case).



With the selection isolating what's left of the base, we can use the Remove Tool to paint over the selection in order to delete what's left. Again, we'll deselect the selection. To further clean up the area, we'll paint with white over any blatant dark spots. We can also use the Remove Tool to paint inside any areas of the shadow that don't look natural. For example, there was a seam line that was residual from the base that we were able to get rid of with the Remove Tool.



There is some noise in the shadow that it will make it appear unnatural on the white background we want to use. We'll lessen this with the Camera Raw filter, which can be accessed via the Filter menu.

In the Camera Raw window, we'll zoom in on the shadow so that we can see the effect of the adjustment and we'll expand the Detail Panel, which contains the setting for noise reduction. We'll increase the Noise Reduction slider and then experiment with the Detail slider to find the setting that looks most natural.

We can also experiment with the sliders within the Effects Panel. The Texture slider will control fine details. Dragging to the left will soften the details and dragging it to the right will exaggerate them. The Clarity slider will control the contrast in the smaller details. In the lesson example, we dragged both of the above sliders to the left.

In the lesson example, we dragged both of the above sliders to the left. We'll click OK to close the Camera Raw window and return to Photoshop.

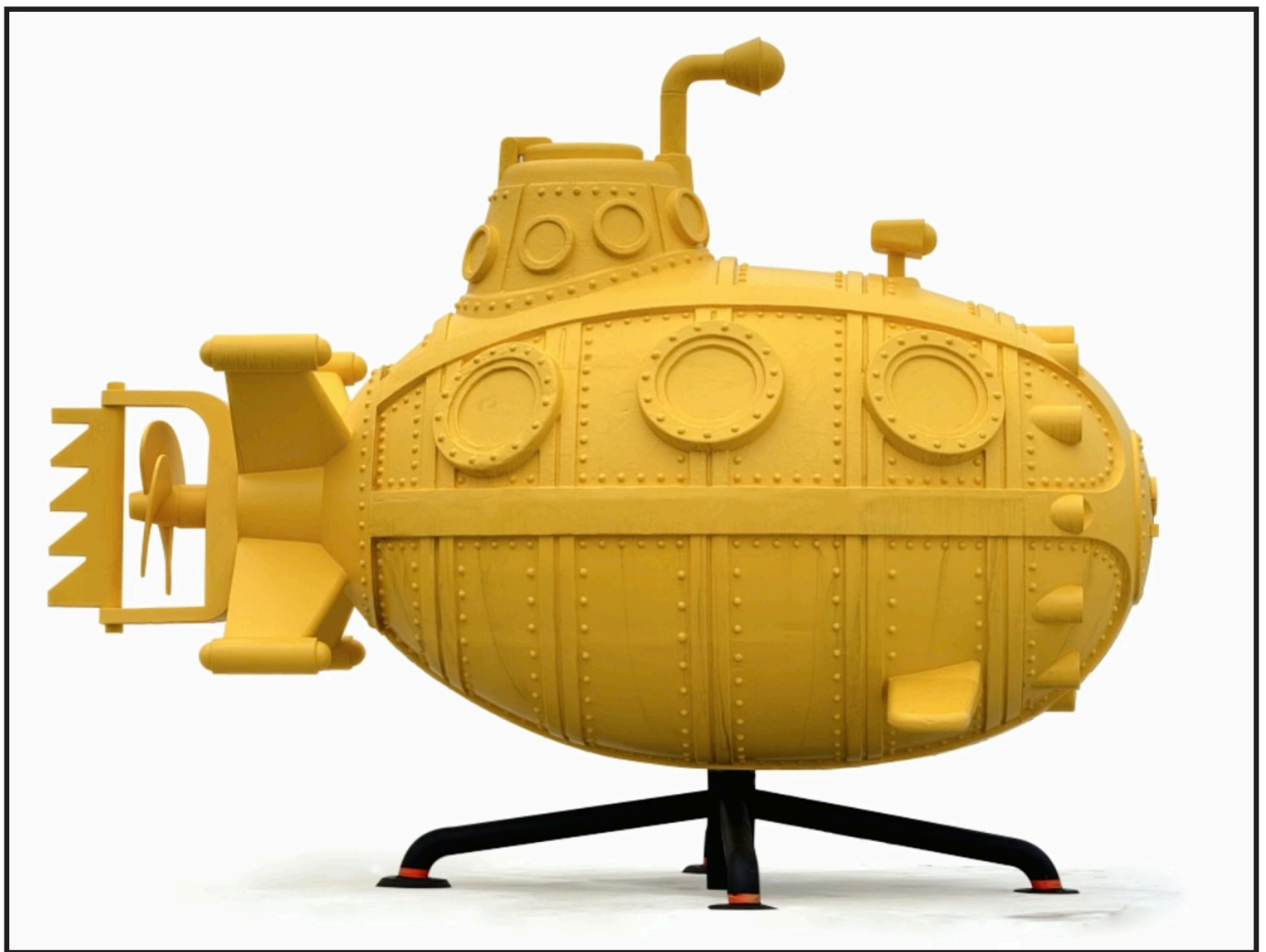


Now we have the shadow, but the edge of it is too well defined and looks abrupt. We can use the Healing Brush to fix this. The Healing Brush will give us a selective blur for those edges. With the tool active, we'll sample from an area outside of the shadow by holding down the Option key (Alt on Win) and clicking on the area. Then we'll paint over the edge of the shadow. We'll continue to sample from areas outside of the shadow and then paint along the edges until they've all been softened. (see screen shot on next page)

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We'll turn on the layers for the statue to see how it looks with its reconstructed shadow.



Use shadow on a different background We can also use this shadow on a completely different background. In the lesson example, we took the layers that contain both the submarine and the new shadow and we placed them in another Photoshop document, above an image layer of an underground walkway. We positioned the layers so that the submarine would appear to be sitting on the walkway. Then, we'll use the Blending Mode menu at the top of the Layers Panel to change the mode of the shadow layer to Multiply.

