25 - Create swatches from your own pictures
A Photoshop Tutorial © by Sylvia DiGeorgio
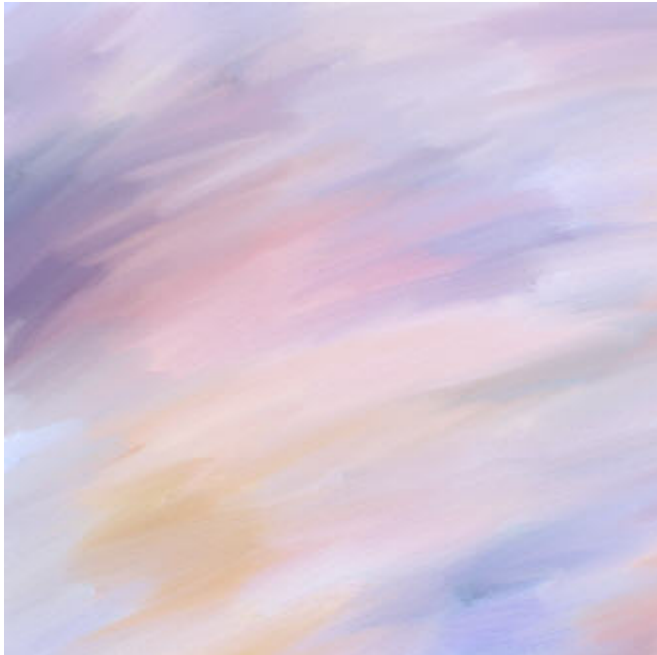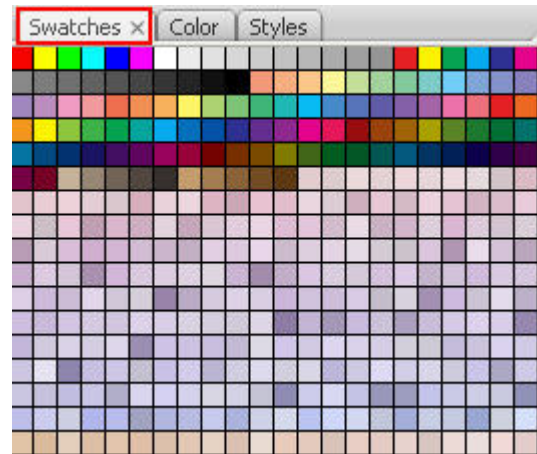

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Note: As these screenshots have been taken from Photoshop CS3,
the settings shown on your version of Photoshop might be slightly different.

1. **Open the picture** you want to make a set
   of swatches of.

2. Go to **Image → Mode → Indexed color**.
   Leave the default settings as shown on Fig.
   3.

   If you have more than one layer,
   you'll be asked if you want to
   flatten the picture.
   Accept the option to flatten as
   we're going to undo this step after
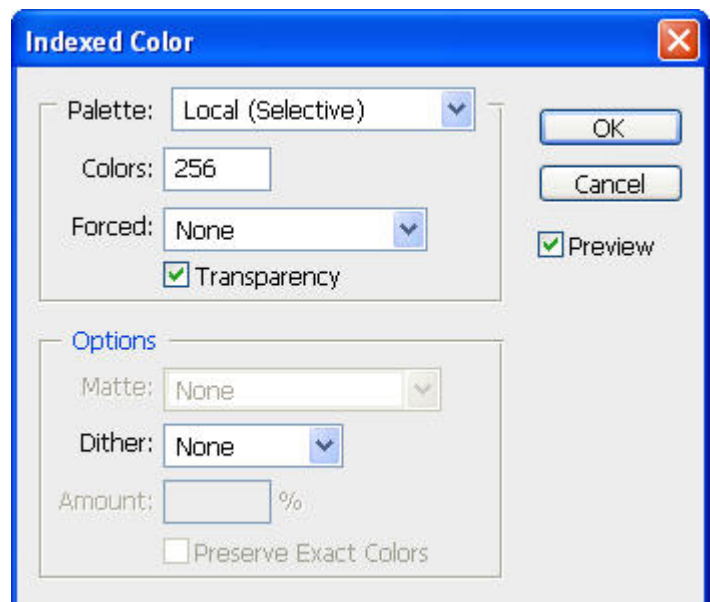   *we're done creating the swatches.*

Fig. 3

3. Now select **Image → Mode → Color Table.**

4. Click on **Save** (Fig. 4), choose the place where you want to save your swatches, name your file, and click OK to close the dialog box.

Fig. 4
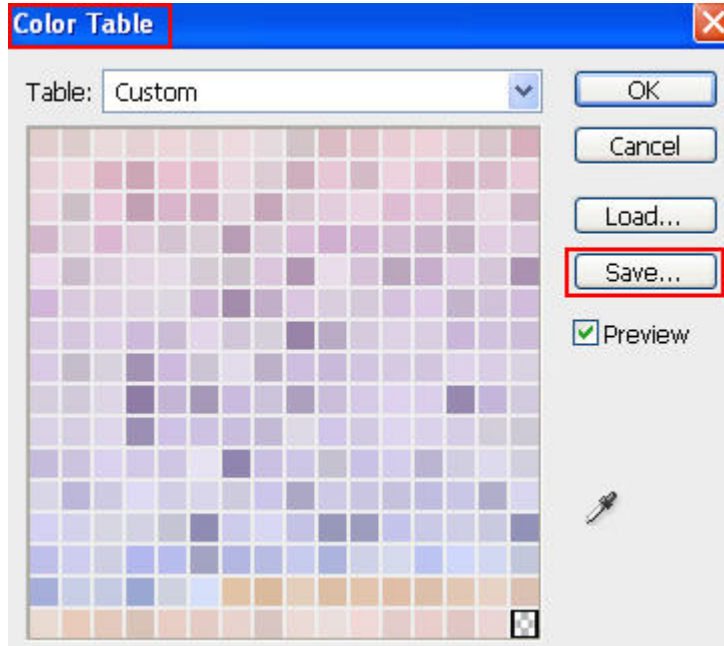
5. Now **open the swatches palette** (Window, Swatches), click on the little triangle (see Fig. 5), and select "**load swatches**".
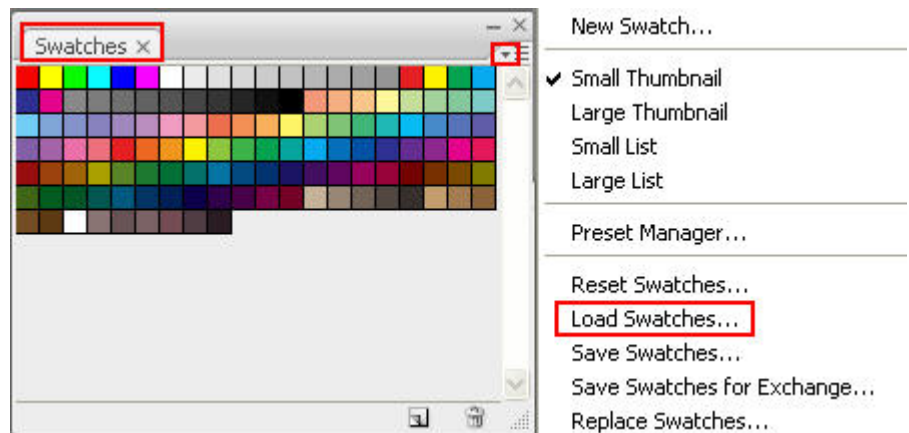

Fig. 5

6. In the "Files of type" drop-down menu (see Fig. 6), **select "Color Table (*.ACT)**, select the file you just created and click on **Load**.

Fig. 6

7. The colors contained in your picture are now visible **underneath the previous set of swatches** (see Fig. 7).

8. **Undo the indexing of colors** with Ctrl Z / *Cmd Z.*

You're now back to the original picture.

Fig. 7

You're done! OK, so now you have a new set of swatches.

What do you do with them?

You can use them to paint **new backgrounds**, to **adjust colors** in your painting, to **match colors from other pictures**.
Swatches are also helpful to **keep consistency of colors for web design**.
They're also very useful if you work on **portraits**, one click and you have access to **skin colors**, **hair colors**, etc.
You'll find them practical too to adjust the color of the **sky**, of the **grass**, the **ocean**, whatever you're working on… You can have sets for **winter colors**, **fall colors**, etc. There's no limit to their use.

Edit your set of swatches

- **To remove a color**: **Ctrl click** (*Cmd click*) on any color in your swatches.

- **To edit your set**: select the **Swatches palette**, click on the **triangle** (see Fig. 8) and select **Preset Manager**.
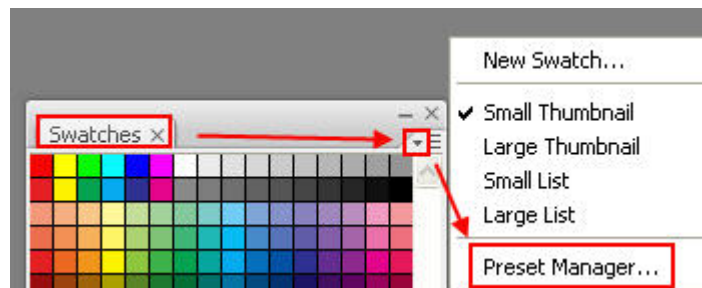

Fig. 8

- **To organize the sets:** once you're in the **Preset Manager** (see fig. 9 below), you can select the swatches and **move** them around, **rename** them, **delete** them, etc. Don't forget to save your set if you modify it…
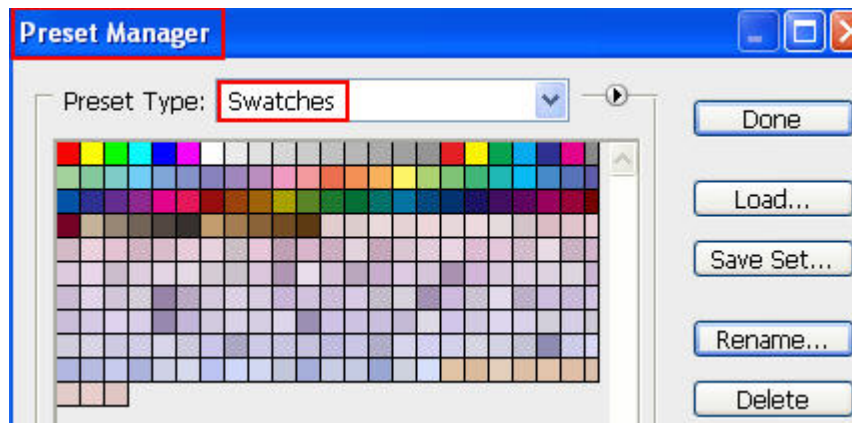
Fig. 9

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