Introduction to flower photography and processing techniques

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**Focus Camera Club - Moncton
November 28, 2024**

Plan

- **Biography**
- **Flower photography**
  - o **Why flowers?**
  - o **Gear**
  - o **Compositions**
  - o **Lighting**
  - o **Photographers / books**
  - o **Photo editing**

Kodachrome 64, 1985

Bio

- **Photography since high school:**
  - **Minolta X-570**
  - **Slide film (Kodachrome 64)**

- **Educational side of photography**

- **Types of photography:**
  - **Landscapes / Nature**
  - **Night photography**
  - **Moon photography**
  - **Long exposures**
  - **Light painting**
  - **Still life \ Portrait**
  - **Architecture**
  - **Flowers**

110mm, f/8.0, 2.5s, ISO100

Why flowers?

- **Good for photographers who wants to practice** (*see Martin Osner*)→
  - **Documentary photography**
  - **Art photography**
  - **Fine art photography**

- **Subjects are everywhere:**
  - **Parks, home, flower gardens**
  - **Flowers, wildflowers and plants**

- **Good for:**
  - **Selling prints**
  - **Greeting cards**

- **My new *point of departure***

50mm, f/2, 1/250s, ISO100

Gear

- **Lens and accessories:**
  - **Your camera kit lens**
  - **Magnification** (e.g., 18-150 canon RF - 0.44x at 50mm)
  - **Extension tubes**
  - **Diffuser** (-1 stop)
  - **Polarizing filter** (-1 to -2 stops)
  - **Telephoto lens**
  - **Macro lens, lensbaby, etc.**
  - **Tripod**

- **Handheld vs. tripod**

- **Outdoor vs. studio**
  - **Gear will be different**
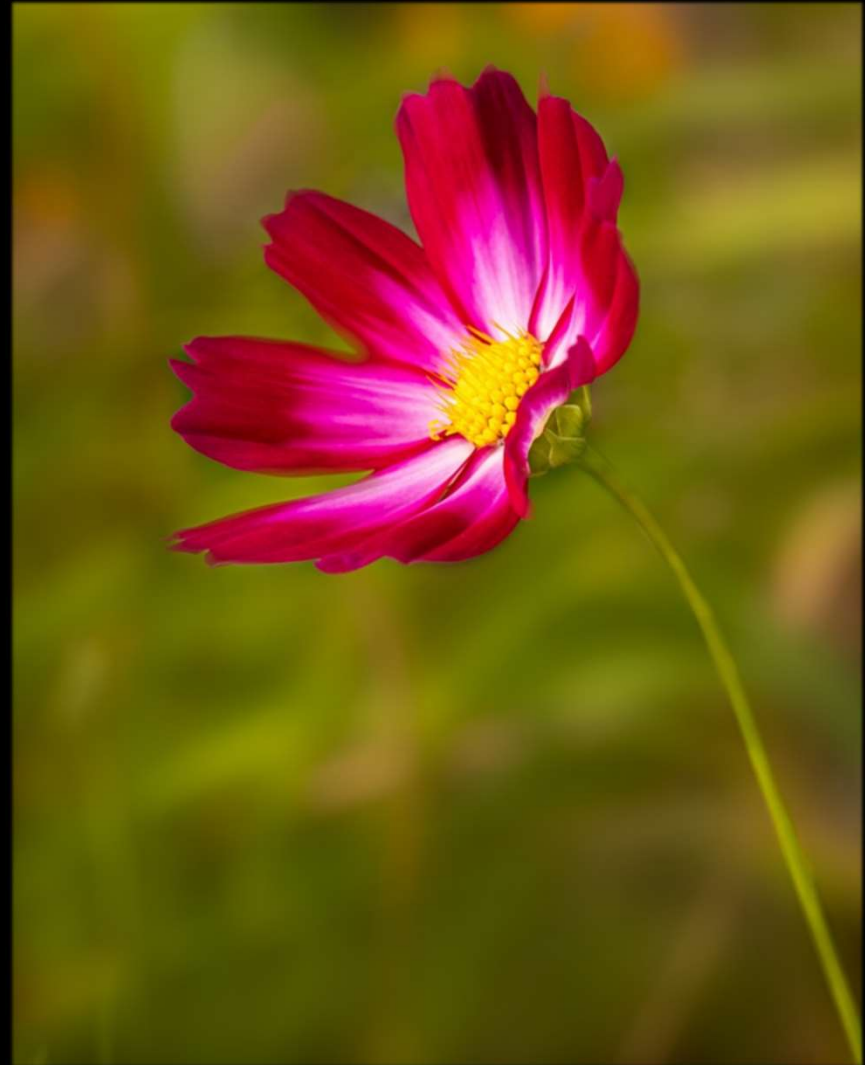
50mm, f/8, 1/200s, ISO200

Composition (1)

- **Background is a key element**
  - **Depth of field (f2.8, f4, f8...)**
  - **Good _figure to ground_ relations** _(subject to background)_
  - **The flower is your model**

- **Focusing on which part of the flower?**
  - **Focus on the part of the flower that demands attention** _(stamen, dark areas, center of the flower, etc.)_

- **Outdoor conditions:**
  - **Lighting and wind conditions**
  - **Generally, ISO 100 to 800**

50mm, f/2, 1/160s, ISO200

Composition (2)

- **Height of your composition:**
  - **Eye level**
    - *Generally, the best*
    - *Negative space should be where the flower is looking*
  - **Above**
    - *When symmetry is present*
  - **Underneath the flower**
    - *Unique view of the flower*

- **Height of the flower**
  - *Easier to blur the background*

- **Number of flowers**
  - *Single, two, three, many, etc.*
  - *Generation*

115mm, f/6.3, 0.3s, ISO100: LED light

Lighting

- **Overcast days / in the shade**

- **Time of day**

- **Light diffuser**

- **Edge of sunlight**

- **Artificial lighting (LED, flashes)**

- **Direct sunlight (polarizing filter)**
  - **Whites and reds**
  - **Look for shadows within the flower**

100mm, f/6.3, 1/160s, ISO160

Flower Photographers

- **Flower photographers:**
  - **Anne Belmont**
  - **David DesRochers**
  - **Dirk Ercken**
  - **Rosie Lalonde**
  - **Cherry Larcombe**

  - ***Books:***
  - **Molly Hollman**
  - **Karin Connolly Daley**
  - **Gemma Ryder**
  - **Tony Sweet**

50mm, f/*, 1/60s, ISO800

9

Books

- **The book by Molly Hollman (Flower and Plant Photography) is the best book on the subject that I read this past summer.**
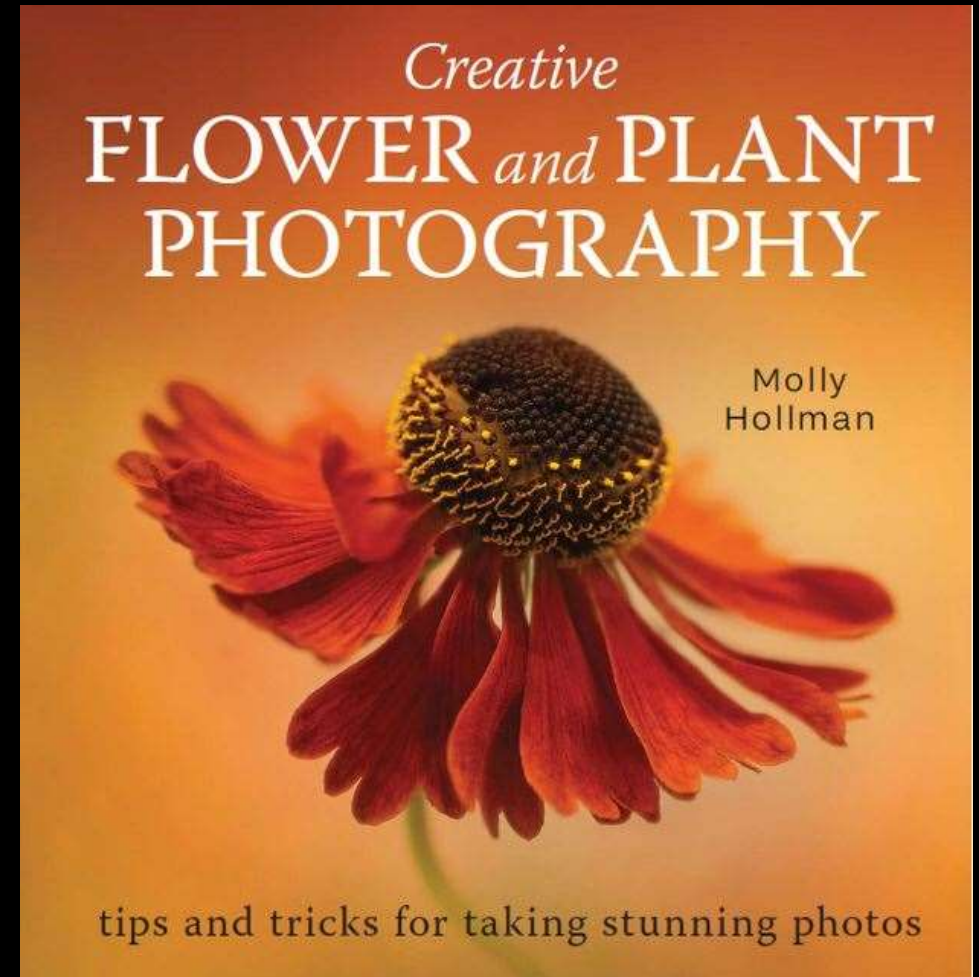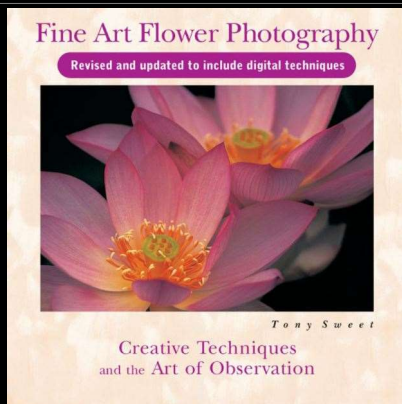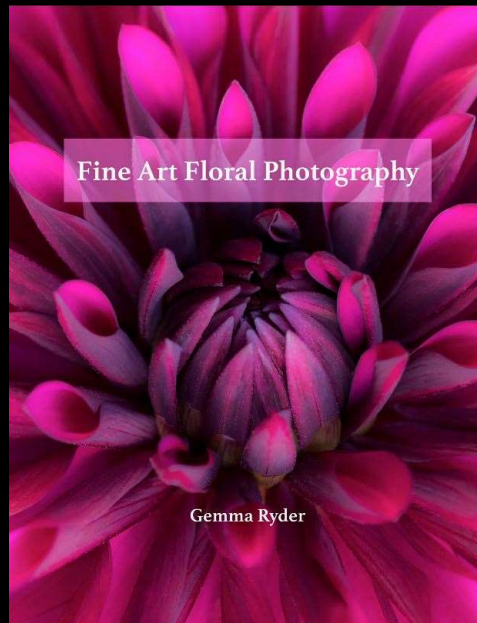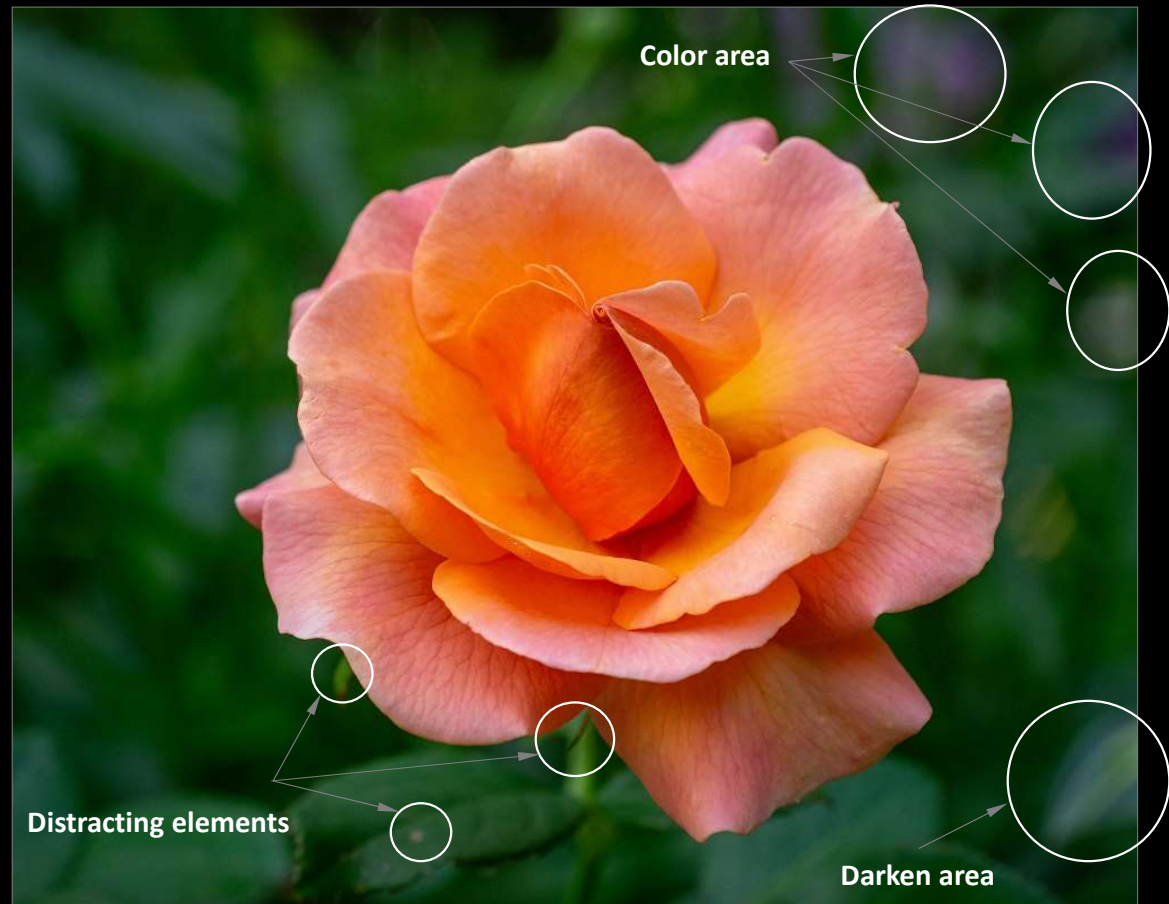
Photo Editing

- **Lightroom Classic**
  - **Crop**
  - **White balance**
  - **Exposure / Tone**
  - **Masking**
  - **Sharpening/Denoise**

- **Photoshop**
  - **Removal tool**
  - **Dodge and burn**
  - **Work on background**
  - **Color some areas**
  - **Blur some areas**

Color area

Distracting elements

Darken area

Lightroom Classic (1)

Crop tool:

1. Crop image and rotate
2. Set aspect ratio if desired (4:5)
3. To change from landscape to portrait, press *x*
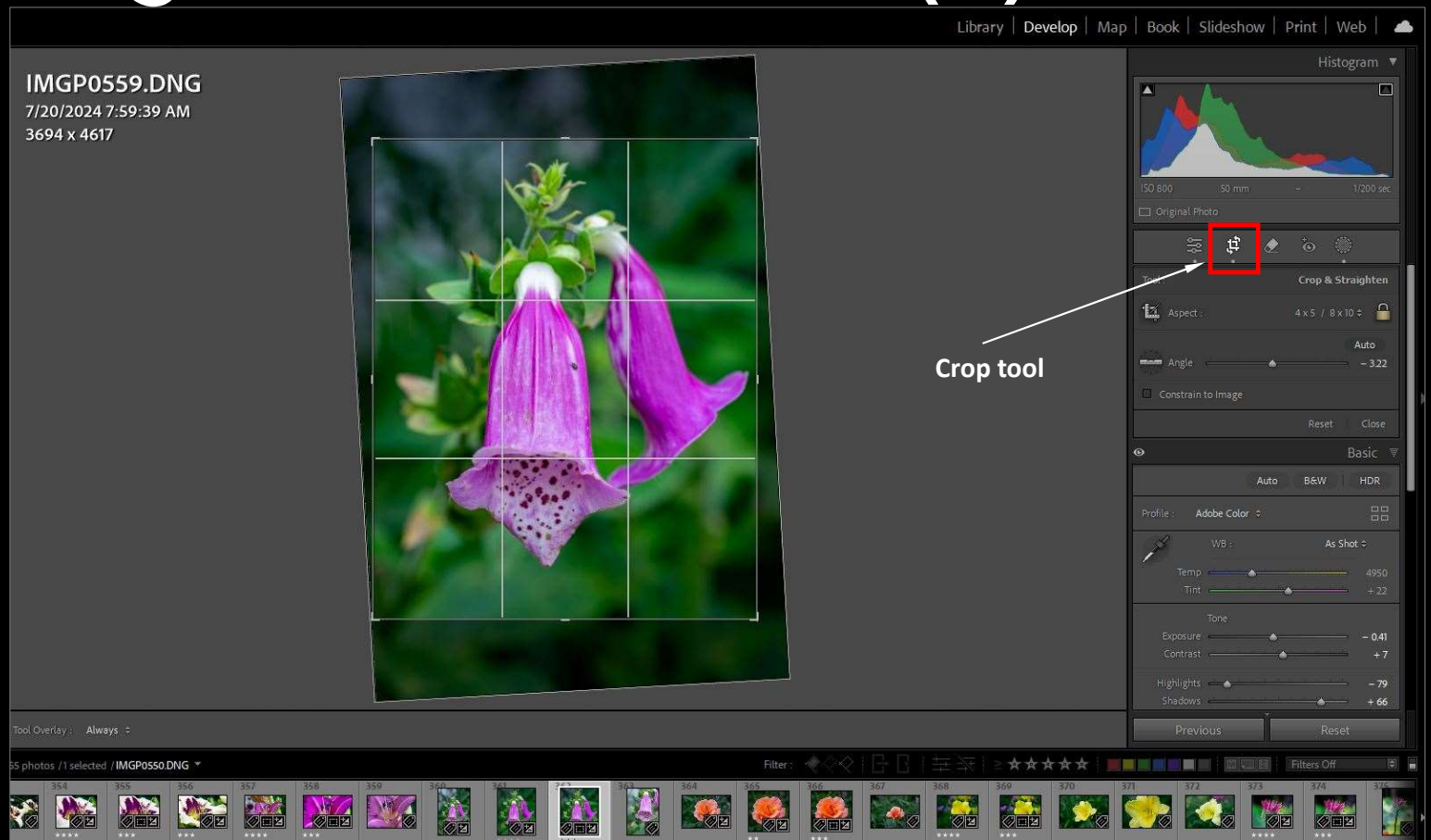
Lightroom Classic (2)
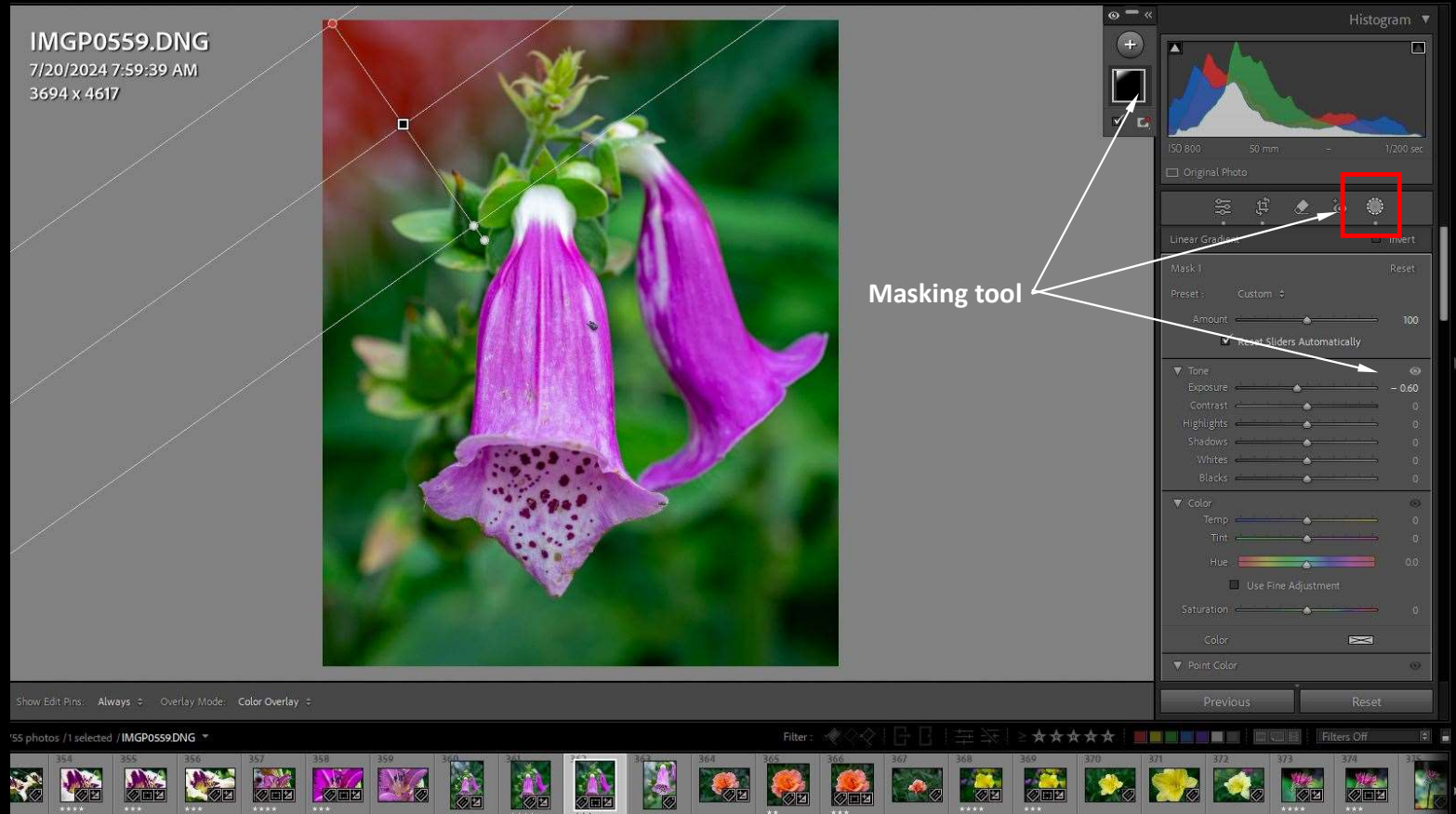
Basic menu:

1. White balance (as shot)
2. Tone
   - Auto = *Ctrl + u*
3. Presence
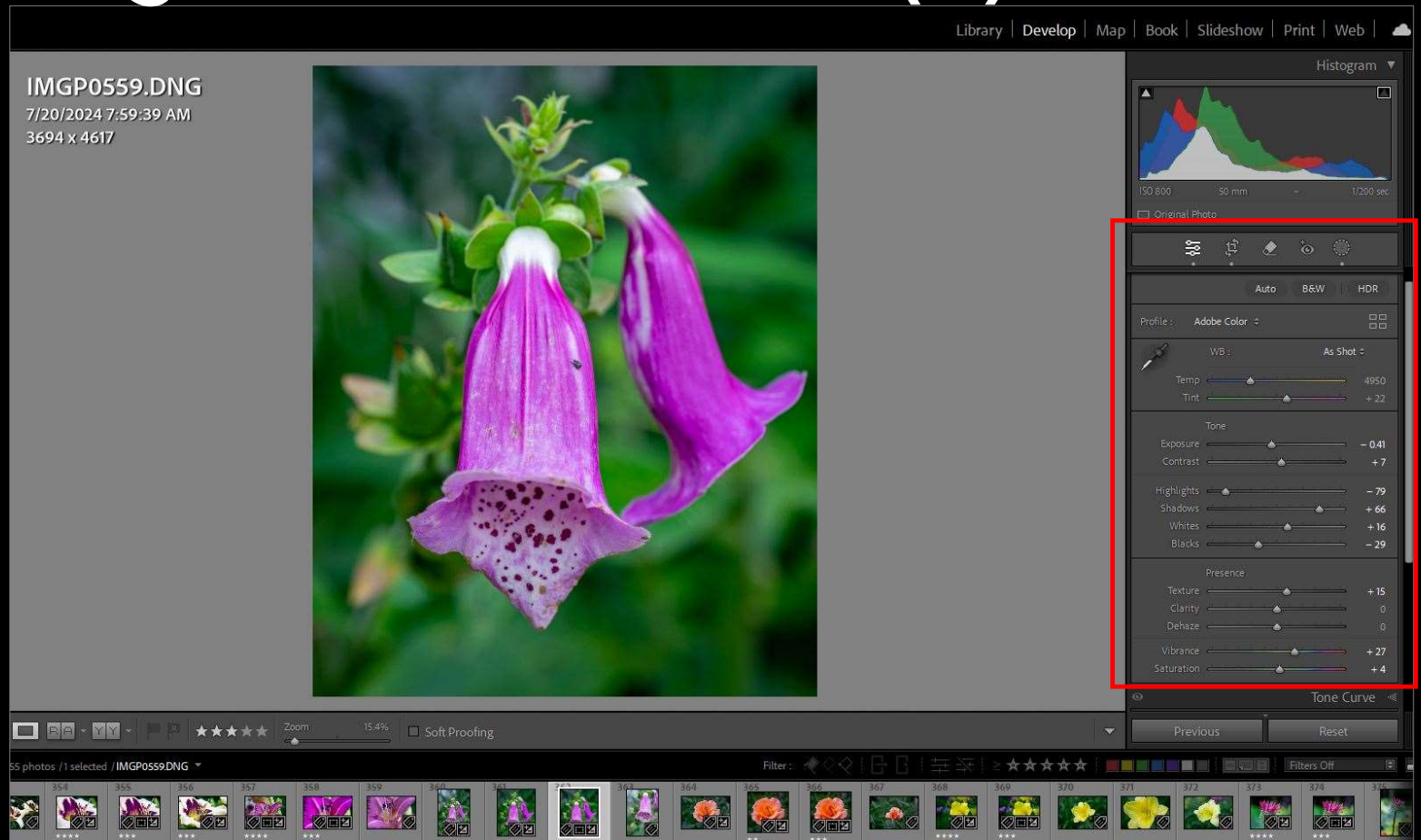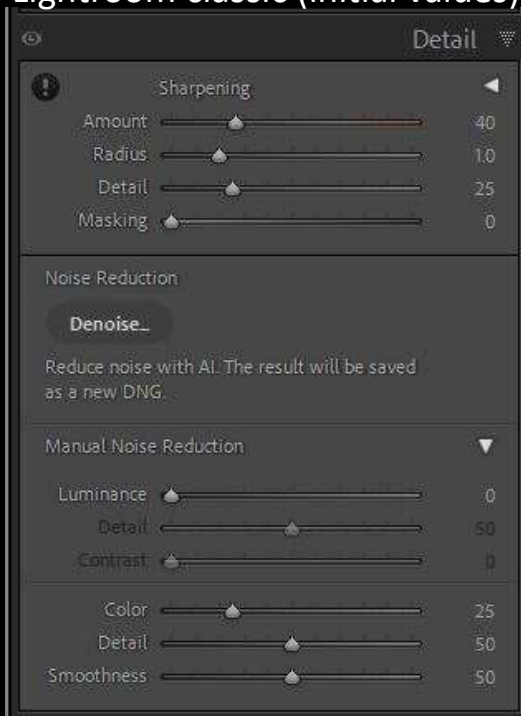
Lightroom Classic (3)

Masking:

1. Select the masking tool
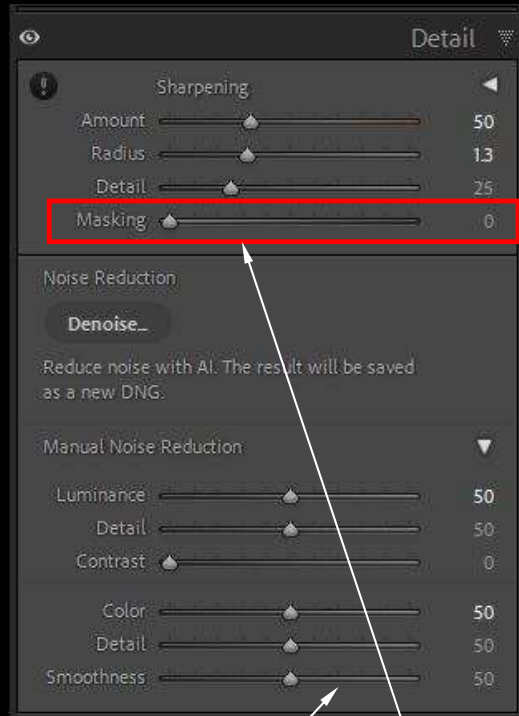2. Used a linear gradient
3. Reduced exposure by (-0.6)

Lightroom Classic (4):

Detail menu:

Lightroom classic (initial values)

My personal initial values which I have in a _preset_

66mm, f/6.3, 1/500s, ISO200   15

- **If I do any sharpening my initial values are**
- **Zoom _in_ and _out_ to see if you have improvements**
- **You may want to apply Sharpening only to Masking area (press Alt and move masking slider = apply to white only)**
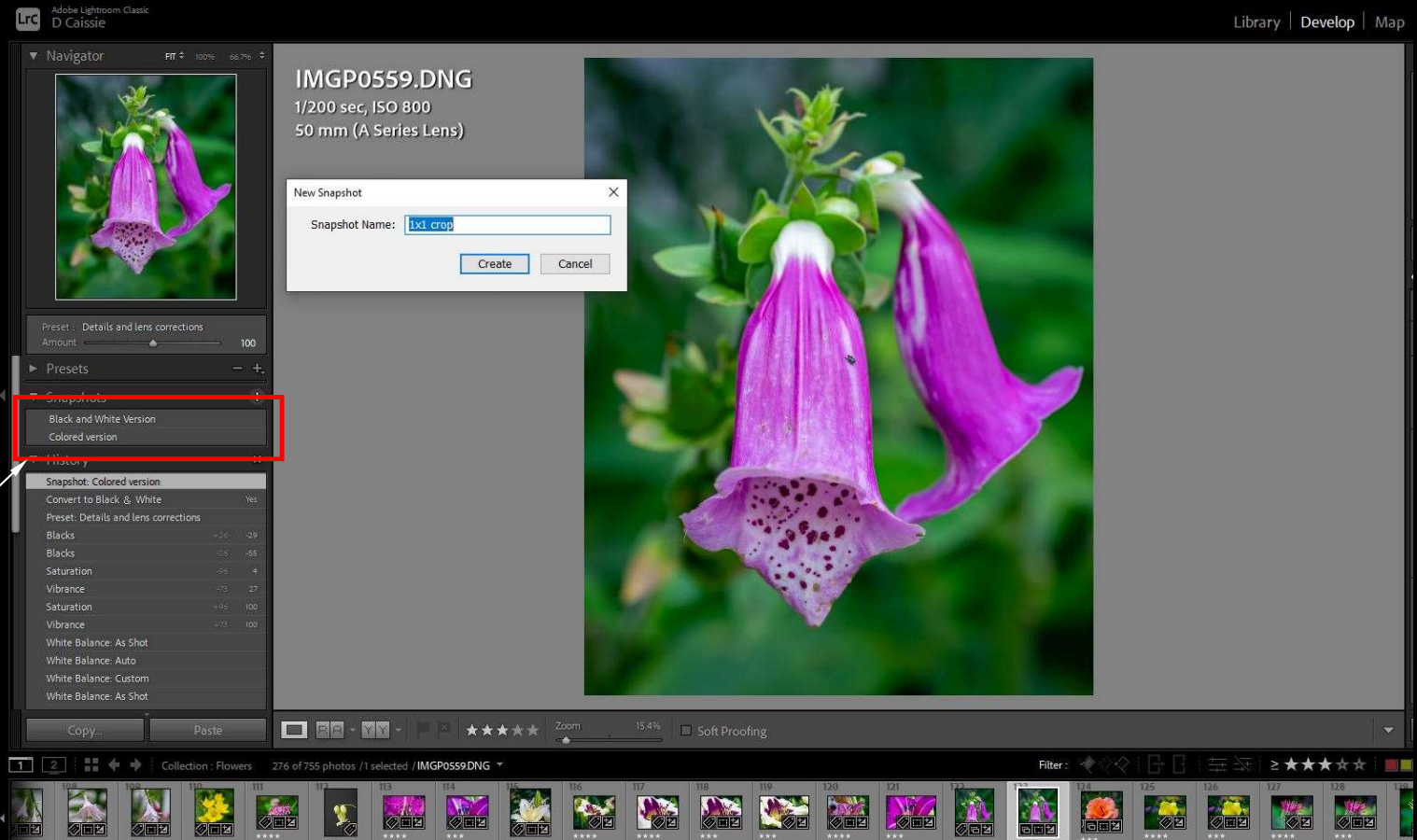
Lightroom Classic (5)

Note: You do not always need to _create a virtual copy_ of your image when you need different versions, use Snapshots!

Snapshots:

1. Create a _snapshots_ for different versions of your image
2. Color vs. B&W
3. 4x5 crop vs. 1x1

Go from Lightroom to Photoshop

- **Go into the top menu under _Photo_**
- **Then find _Edit in_**
- **Select _Edit in Adobe Photoshop 2025_**

Or

- **When in Lightroom Classic you can simply press _Ctrl + e_, which will bring you directly in Photoshop**

Clean-up your flower:

1. Duplicate background layer (click on layer and press *Ctrl + j*)
2. Rename layer to "*Removal tool*"
3. Click on the removal tool (*j*)
4. Select area to remove, then accept
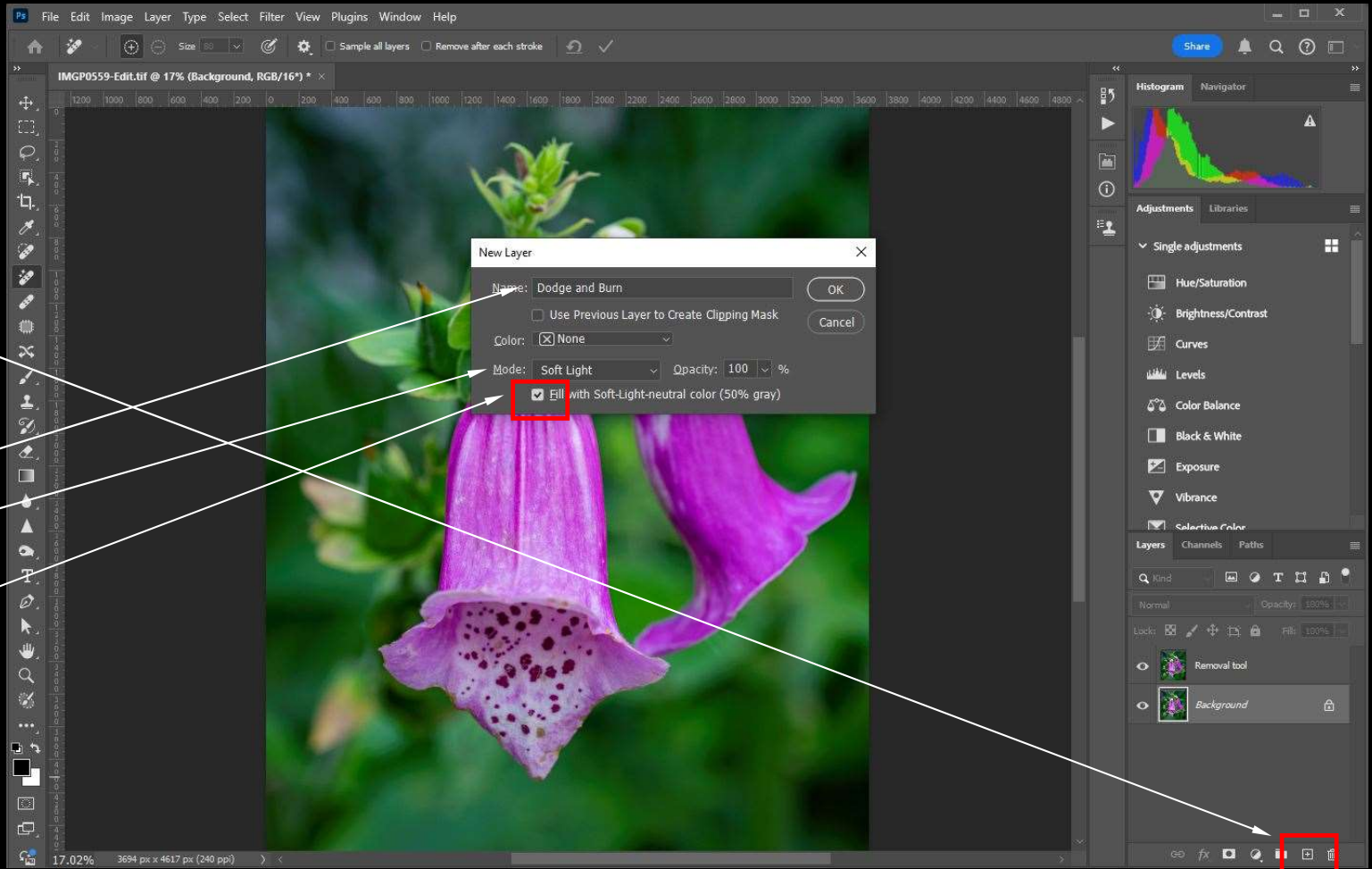5. To change the size of the brush for your selection, use *[* or *]*
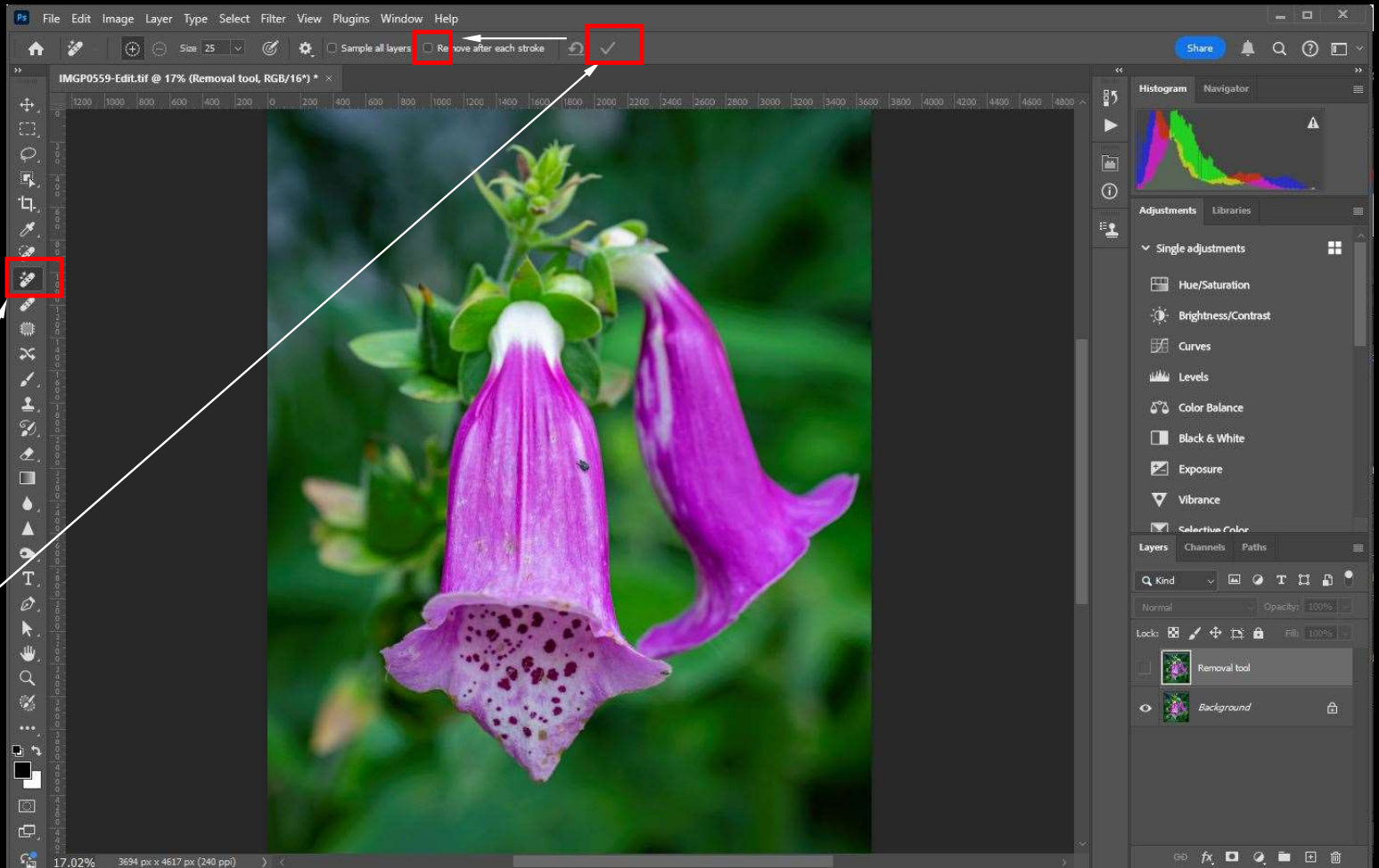
This is the cleaned-up version of the flower.
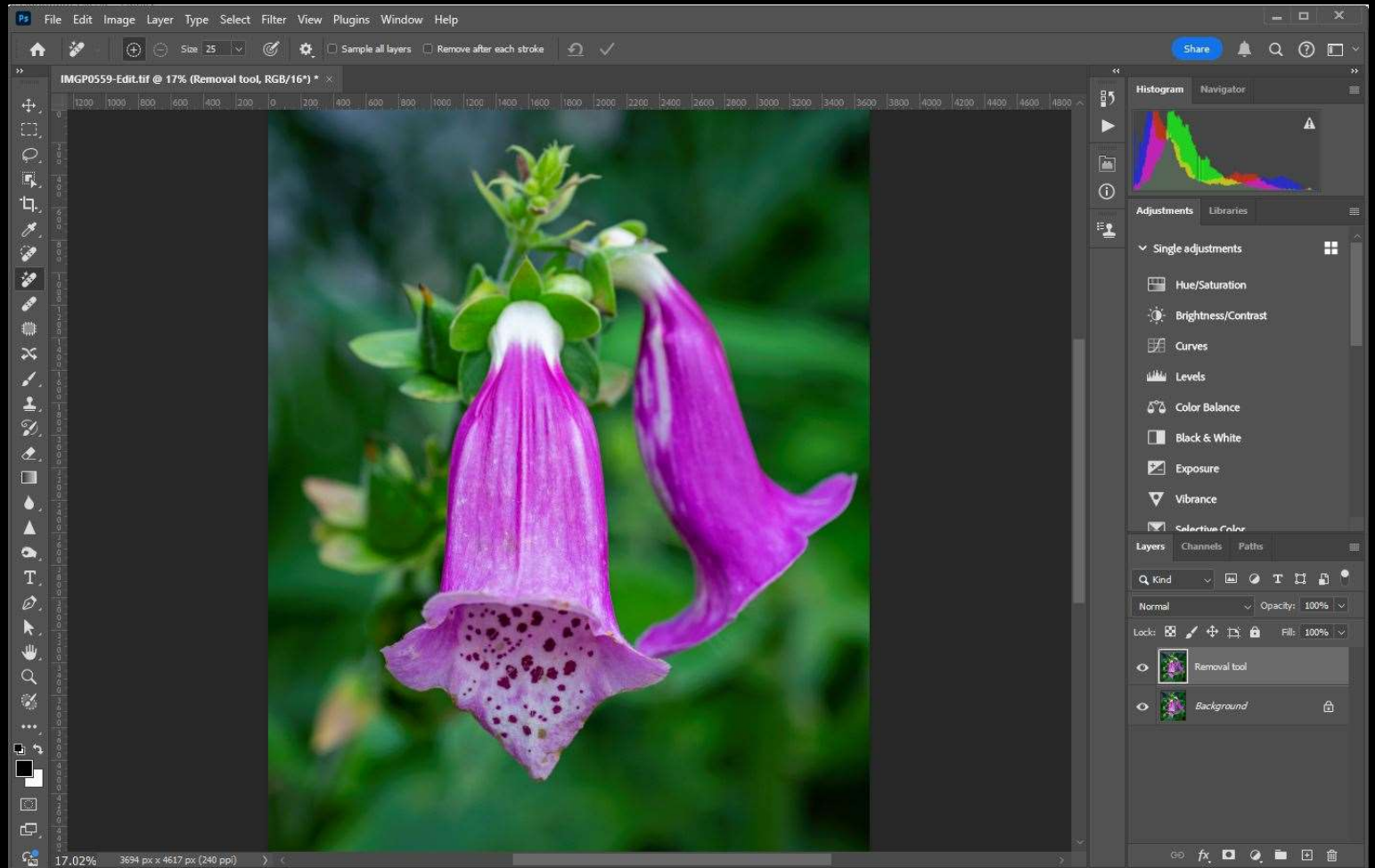
Create a Dodge and Burn layer:

1. Press *Alt* and the following icon to create a new layer
2. Rename your layer "*Dodge and Burn*"
3. Select the mode "*Soft Light*"
4. Click on (*Fill with soft-light-neutral color 50%*)
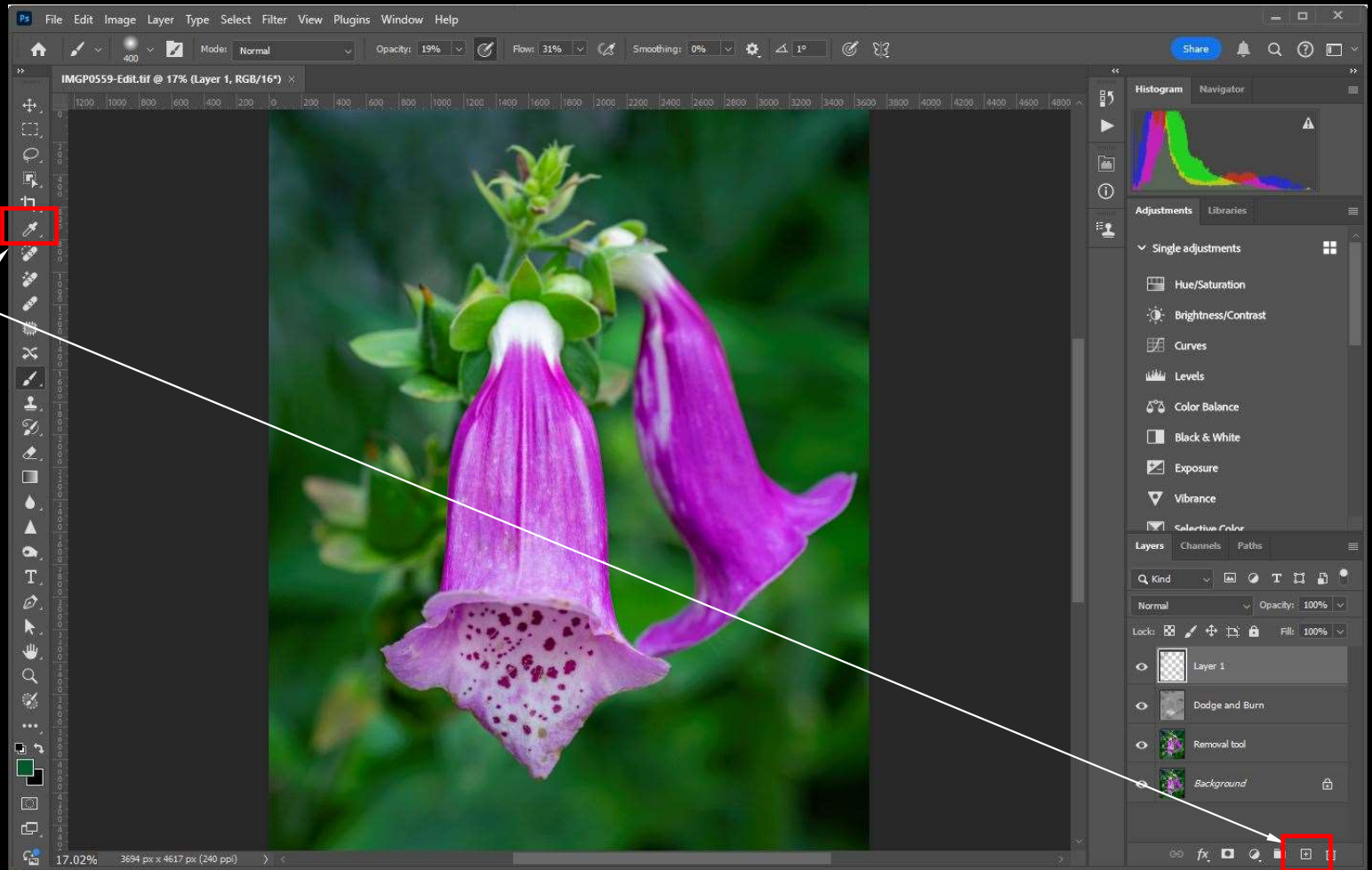5. Then click *OK*

Dodge and Burn on the image:

1. Use the brush tool (*b*)
2. Make sure you are on the default b&w (press *d*)
3. Painting with foreground white will lighten and painting foreground black will darken (press *x* to change from black to white and vice versa)
4. Select preferred *opacity* and *flow*

Color some areas:

1. Click on the following icon to create a transparent layer
2. Click on Eyedropper tool (*i*) (Samples: All Layers); select a color
3. Use the brush tool (*b*), to paint
4. Change *opacity* and *flow* as needed
5. Keep selecting different colors using (*Alt + click*)
6. When done, save document (*Ctrl + s*)
7. Your document will be saved in Lightroom with (*NameFile-Edit.tif*).

Thank you!

Questions?