

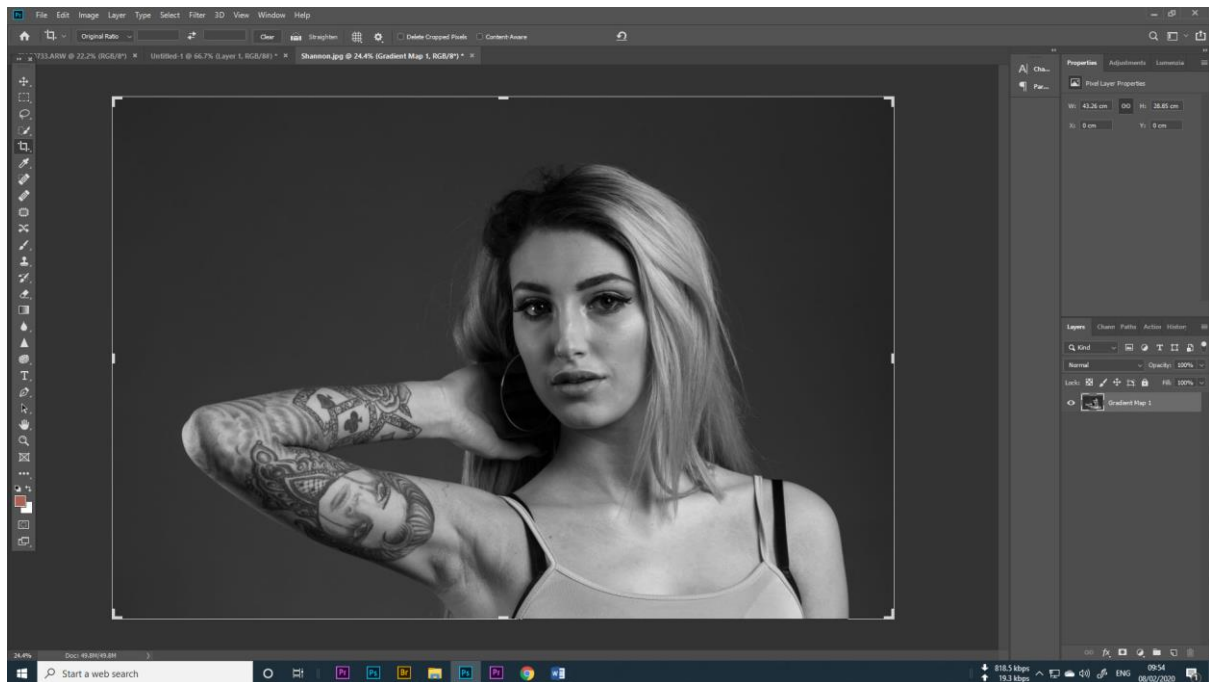
Colorise a Black and White Image

When it comes to colourising a black and white photograph you have to think of it more like an artist of old. The key point is to choose your palette of colours carefully, and know how to change things if the image isn't looking quite right!

Let's start with a black and white image. In the past we would have created a new layer, chosen a colour (usually by guesswork), painted on the image and changed the blending mode of the layer to Colour to allow the detail to show through. This was fine for simple pictures, but involved a lot of careful brushing and it was difficult to correct anything which had gone awry.

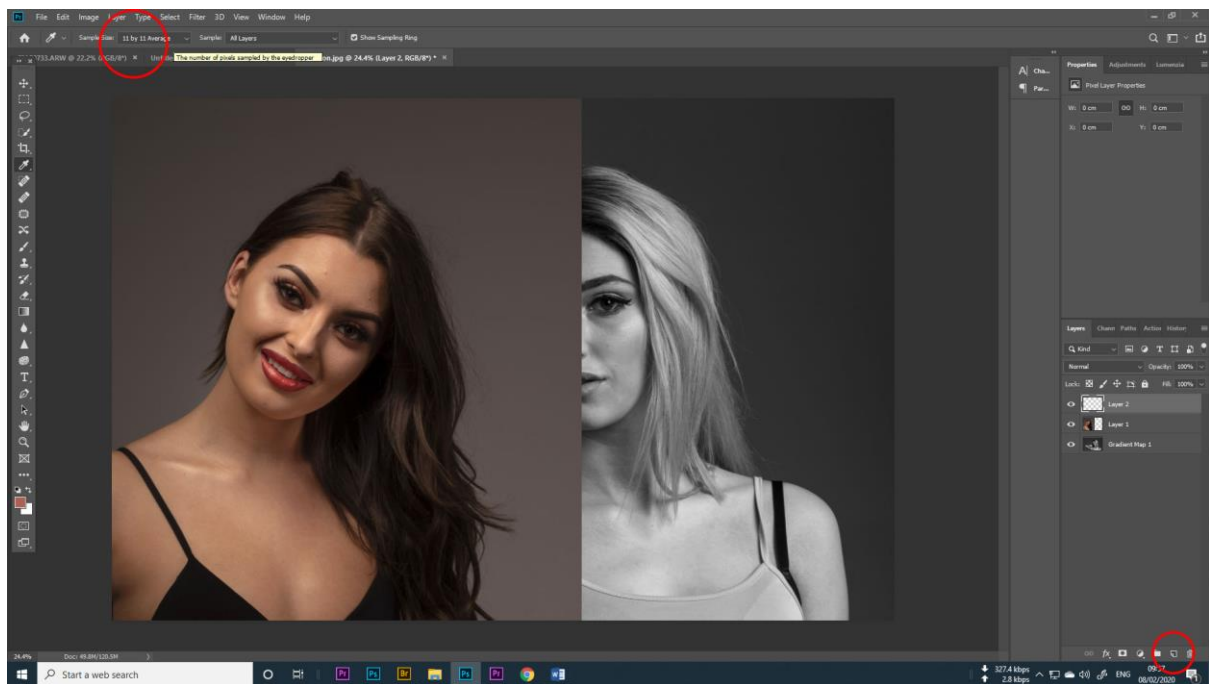
This technique, although a little bit more complicated, allows you to work non-destructively.

Open your black and white image.



Try to find another pic but in colour with similar lighting or tones which you can 'borrow'. Drag this image on top of the black and white image.

Make a new blank layer above both of these layers.

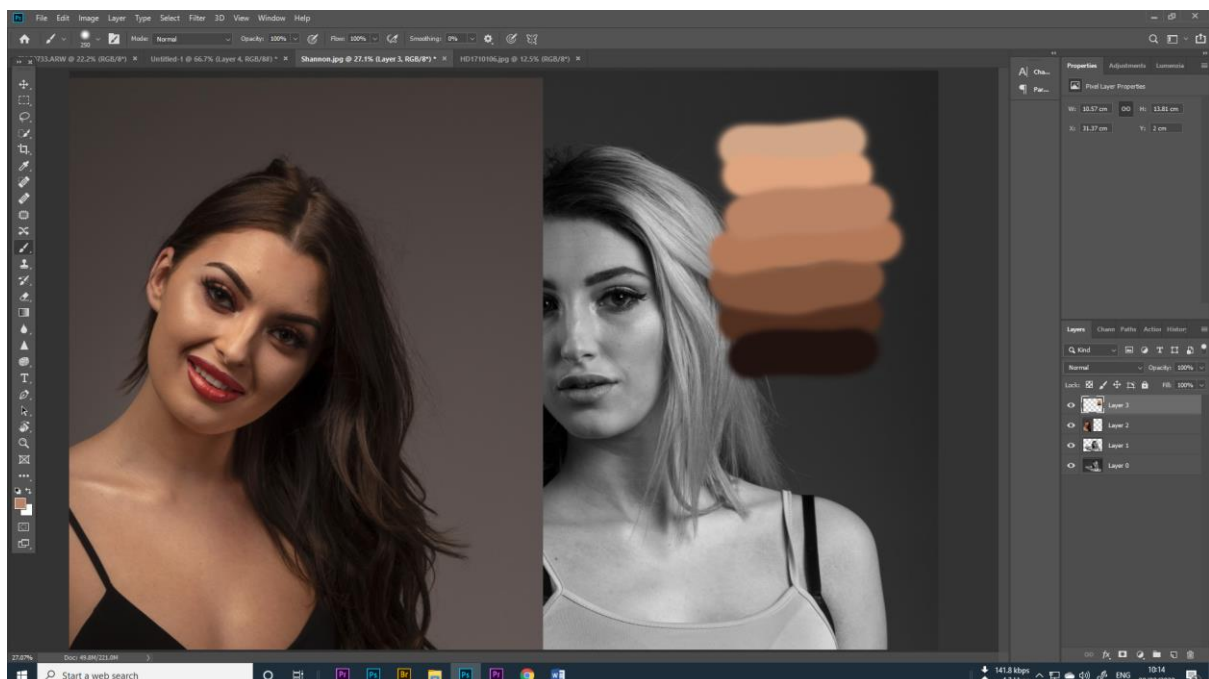


Select the brush tool and make sure the sample point is 5x5 or 11x11 pixels (can change this using the eyedropper tool, I, see above).

Alt+Click of the lightest part of the colour face to select this colour. Make sure the blank layer is active and paint on this at 100% opacity.

Now, select other colours from the image and paint them on the top layer to make your own palette of colours.

If it was a portrait image, I would probably make a good selection at this point with a layer mask.



You can delete the colour picture layer now as it's no longer needed.

NB. Always keep the colour palette layer at the top so we don't change the colours.

Then, select the Gradient Map adjustment layer.

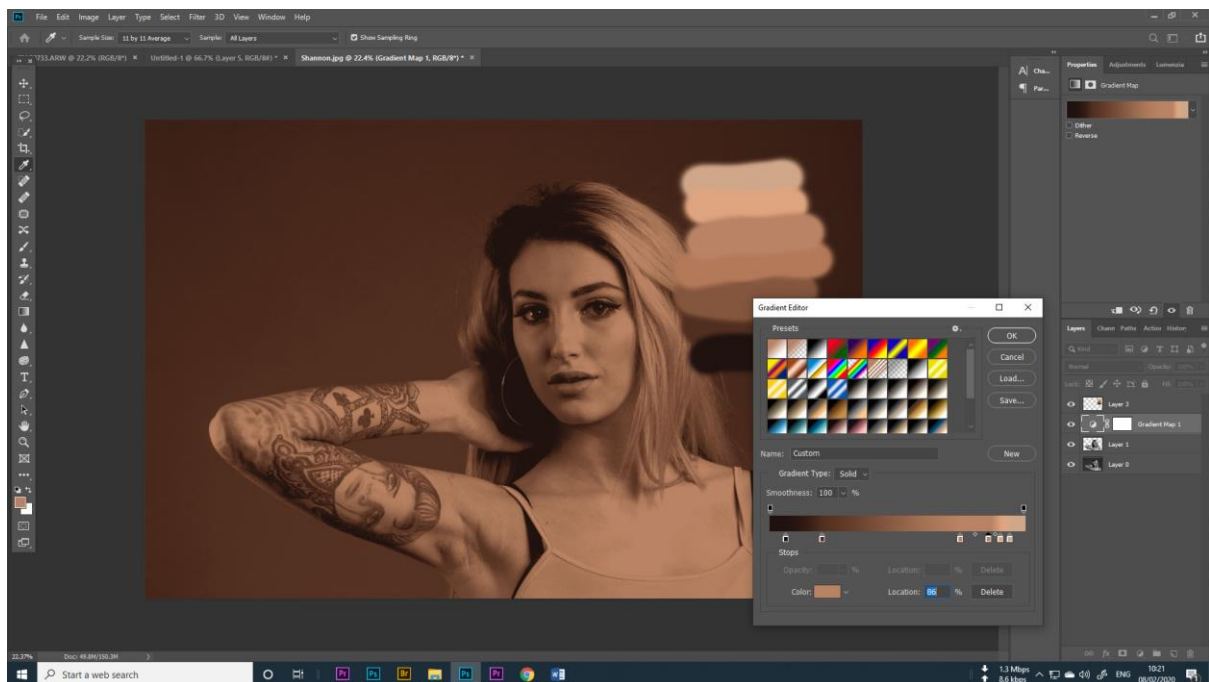
Make sure the gradient and not the mask is selected.

Click on the gradient and then double click the little paint pot (if you hover over it it should say Color Stop) on the left under the gradient. This brings up the colour picker, so select your darkest skin tone from your palette layer.

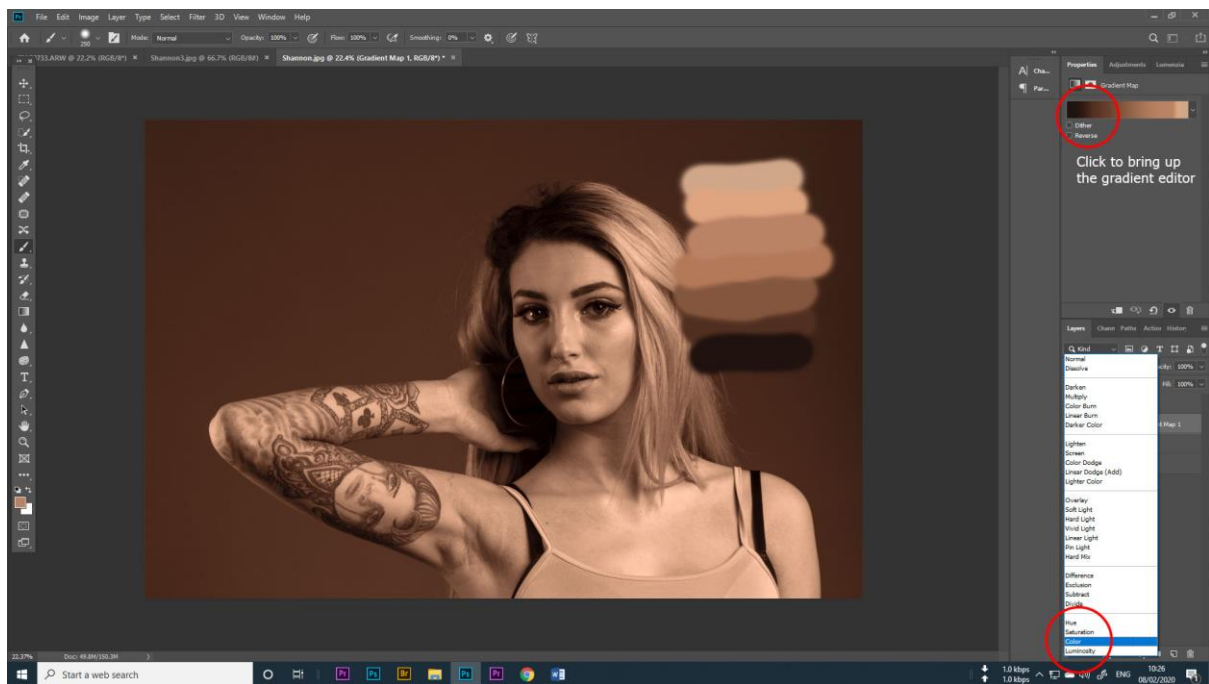
Click the right-hand paint pot and choose your lightest skin colour layer.

Now, to make another colour in between click under the gradient, a little pot appears and change the colour to one of the other palette colours.

Drag the pots to change the amount of darker/lighter pixels in the image until it looks about right.



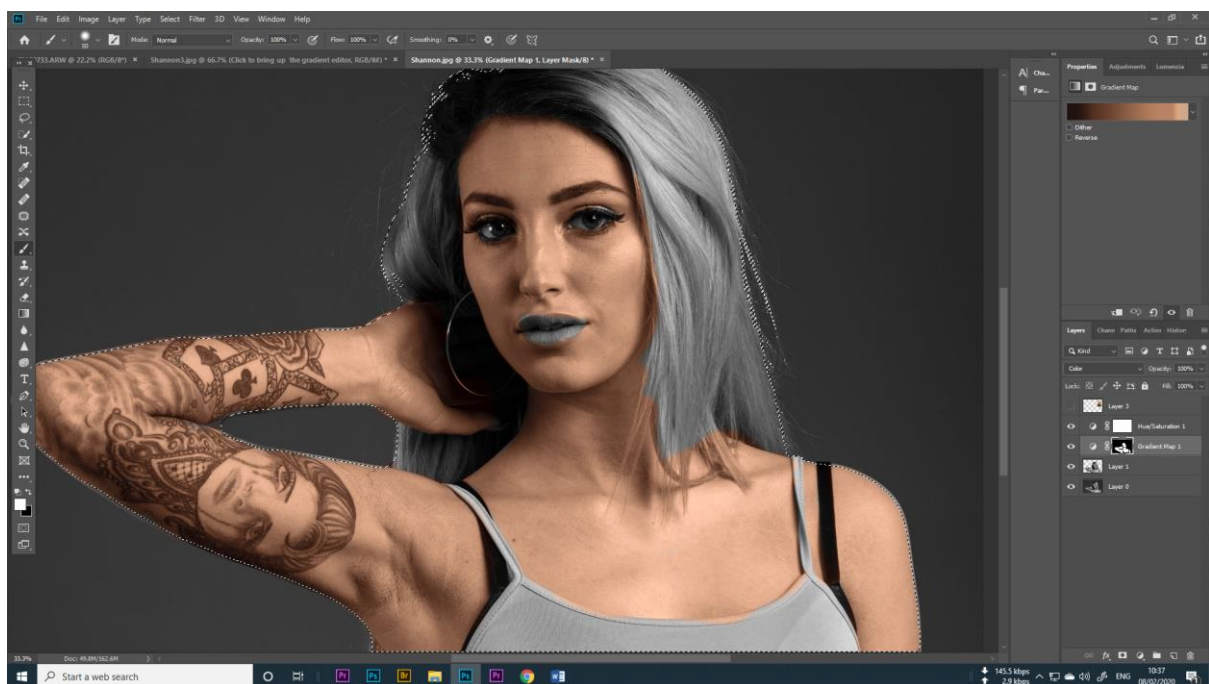
Change the blending mode of this adjustment layer to Colour.



I switched off the palette layer.

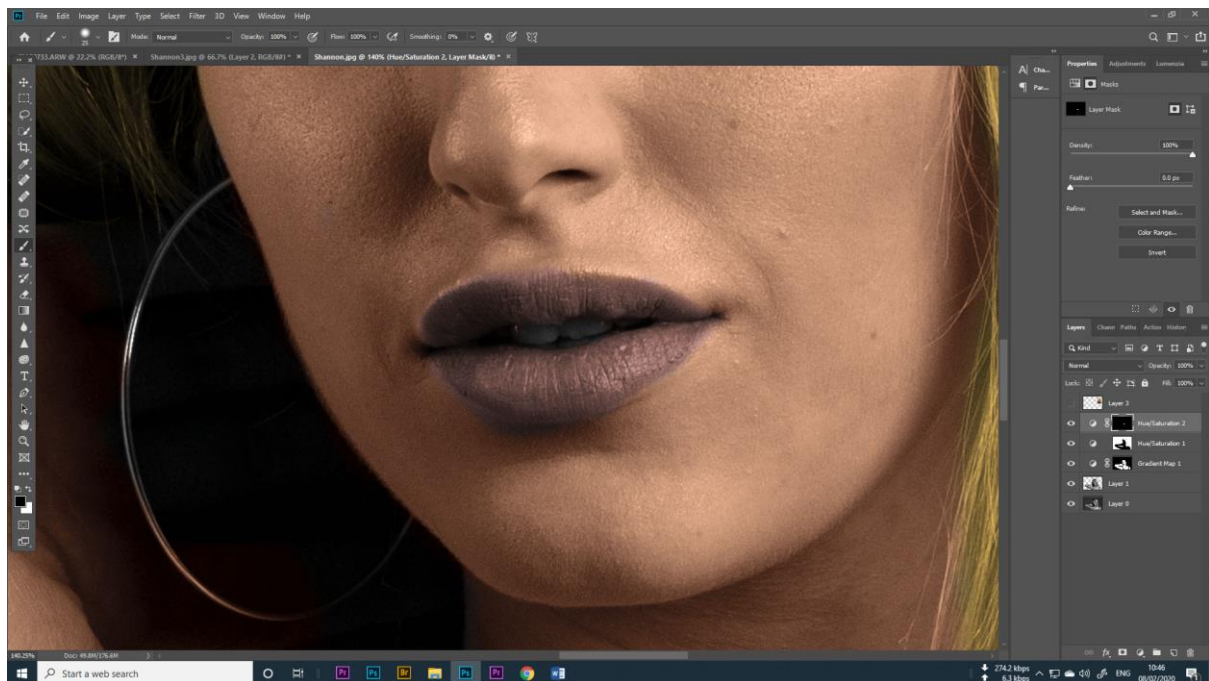
I then used the mask I had made earlier to only paint in the skin tones.

Invert the gradient map mask (make it black). Cntl+click on the mask to make a selection and paint with white where the skin tones should be.



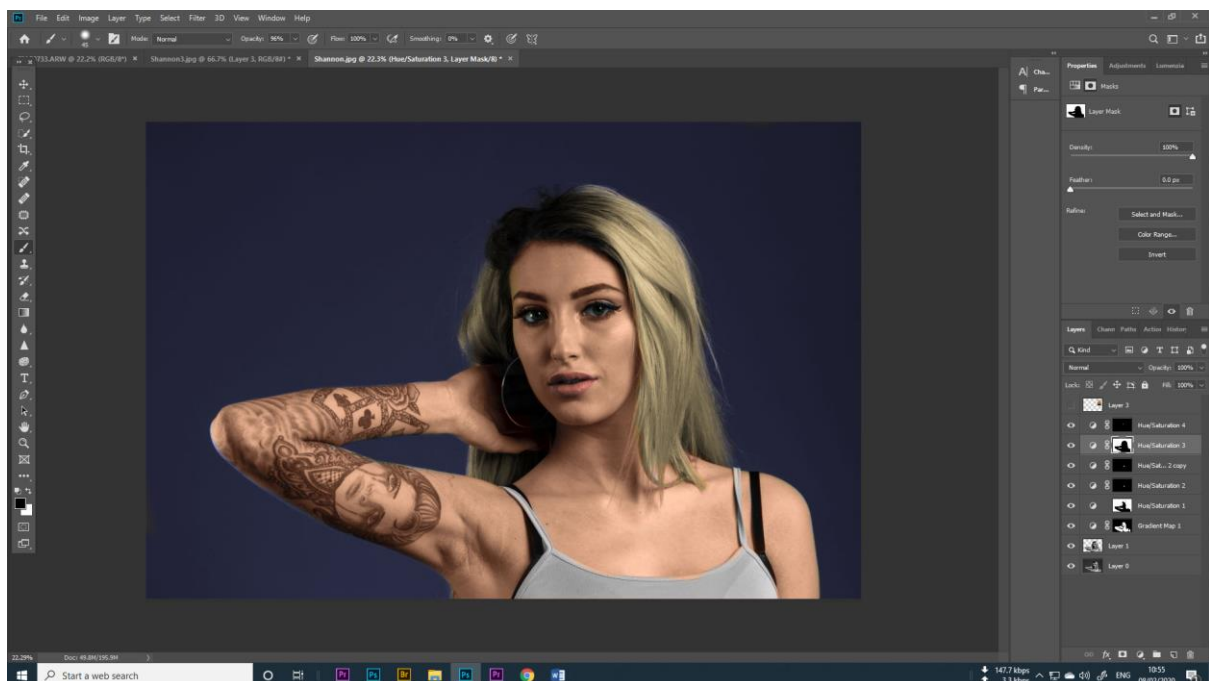
Make a HSL adjustment above this. Make sure the mask isn't selected then tick the box Colorise. Move the hue slider to get the colour you want (use the saturation and lightness sliders too to get the right colour). Invert the mask by Cntl+I (should turn black) and with a white brush paint back the

parts you want to be this colour. Here I did the hair. This is non-destructive as you can always double click on the layer to go back in and change the colour or use the mask to add/remove parts.



Do this for the other parts of the image.

I did separate HSL adjustment layers for the eyes, background and lips. Remember, if you think the effect is too strong, drop the opacity of the layer until it looks right.



Done!