Adobe Photoshop uses masks to isolate and manipulate specific parts of an image. A mask is like a stencil. The cutout portion of the mask can be altered, but the area surrounding the cutouts is protected form change. You can create a temporary mask for on-time use, or you can save masks for repeated use.
In this lesson, we will cover the following:

- **Refine a selection using a quick mask.**
- **Save a selection as a channel mask.**
- **View a mask using the Channels palette.**
- **Paint in a mask to modify a selection.**
- **Create and use a gradient mask.**

In Adobe Photoshop, you can make temporary masks, called Quick masks, or you can create permanent masks and store them as special grayscale channels, called Alpha channels.
Photoshop also uses channels to store an image's color information and information about spot color. Unlike layers, channels do not print. You use the Channels palette to view and work with alpha channels. ImageReady does not support channels except for alpha channels used for PNG transparency and weighted optimization.

-From Adobe photoshop 6.0-
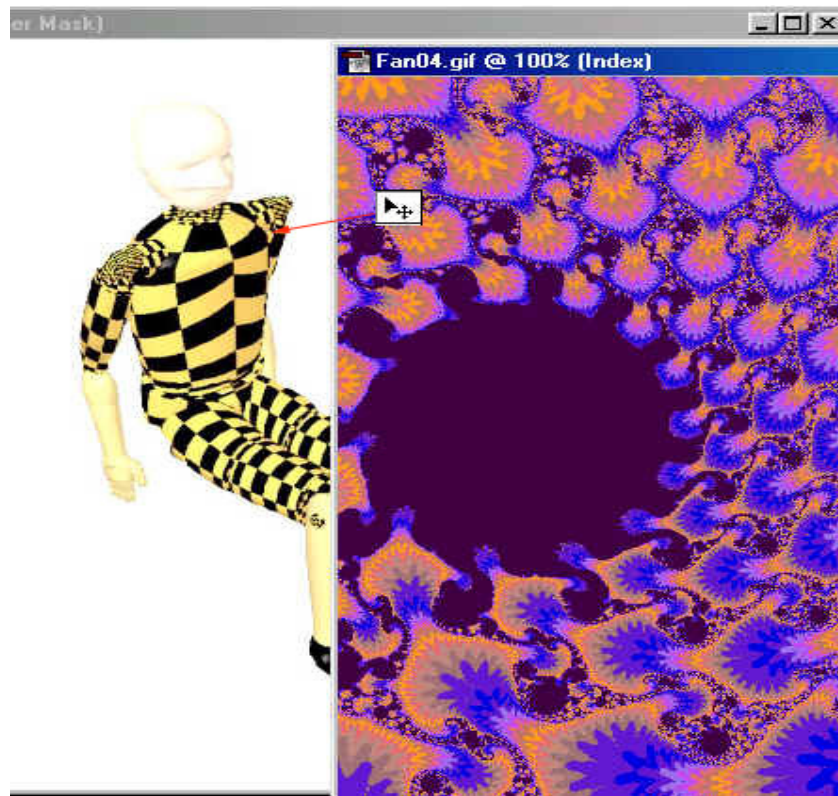
Creating a quick mask

First save images.

**Next Launch Photoshop , Go to File > Open-Crash.jpg the image that you just saved.**

Next **Open** **the two image files,** **Fan.jpg and refin.jpg**.
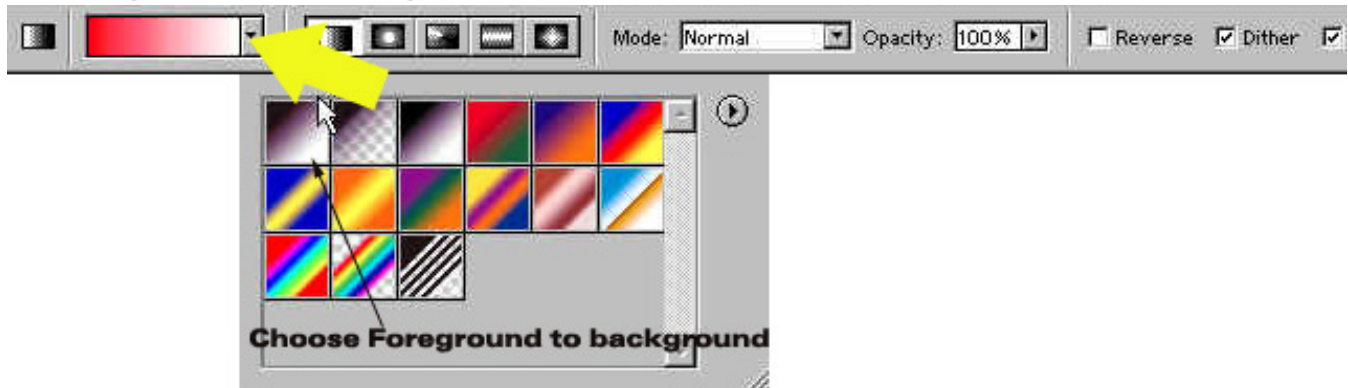**Minumize** **the** **refin.jpg** .

Copy Layer **the** **Fan image**, **Drag using the** **MoveTool** **the Copy layer of the Fan.jpg onto the** **working image** **of** **crash**.


Go to the **layers palette** **and** **click** **on the** **Mask icon** **at the** **bottom of the palette** **or on the bottom of the tool bar.**
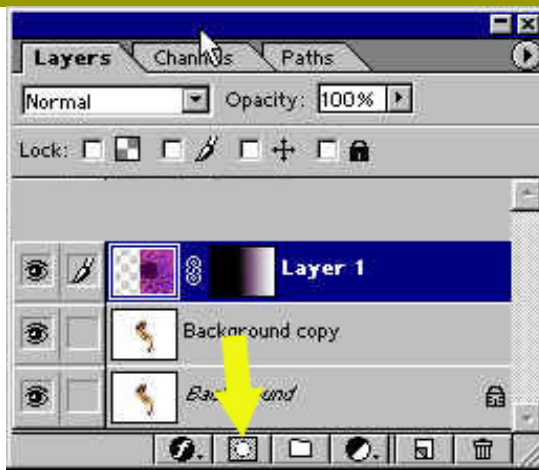
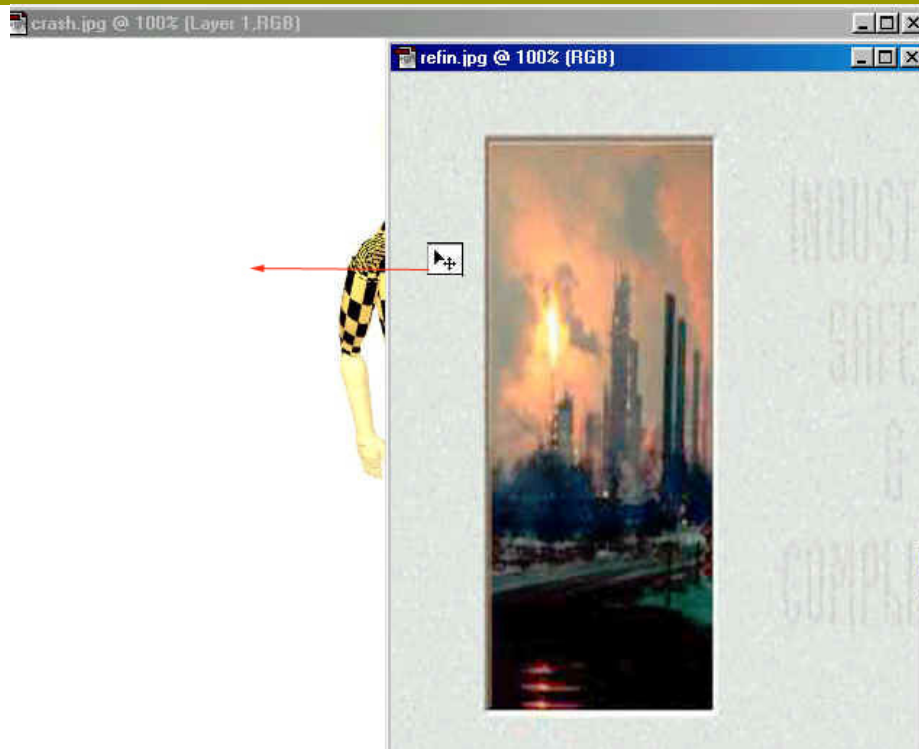**Now choose the Gradient tool and Go to the Gradient Option bar and select the upside down triangle(Foreground to Background).**

Now Drag the Gradient from the right side to the middle (if the fan image is still covering to much of the crash dumby then don't go as far to the middle as you did the first time), this is what it should look like.
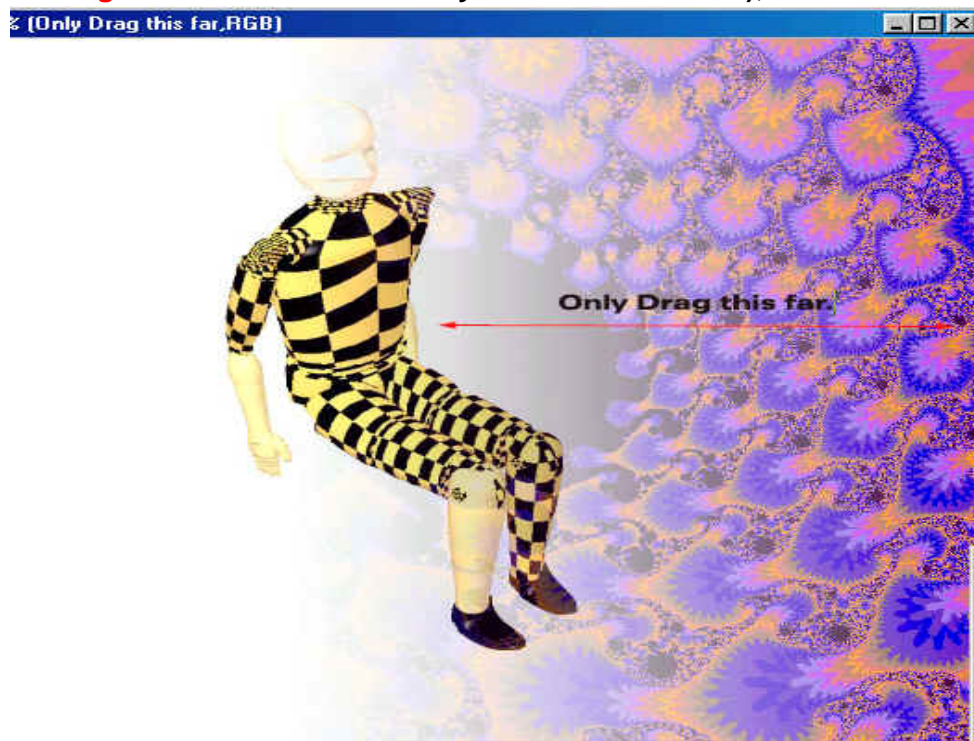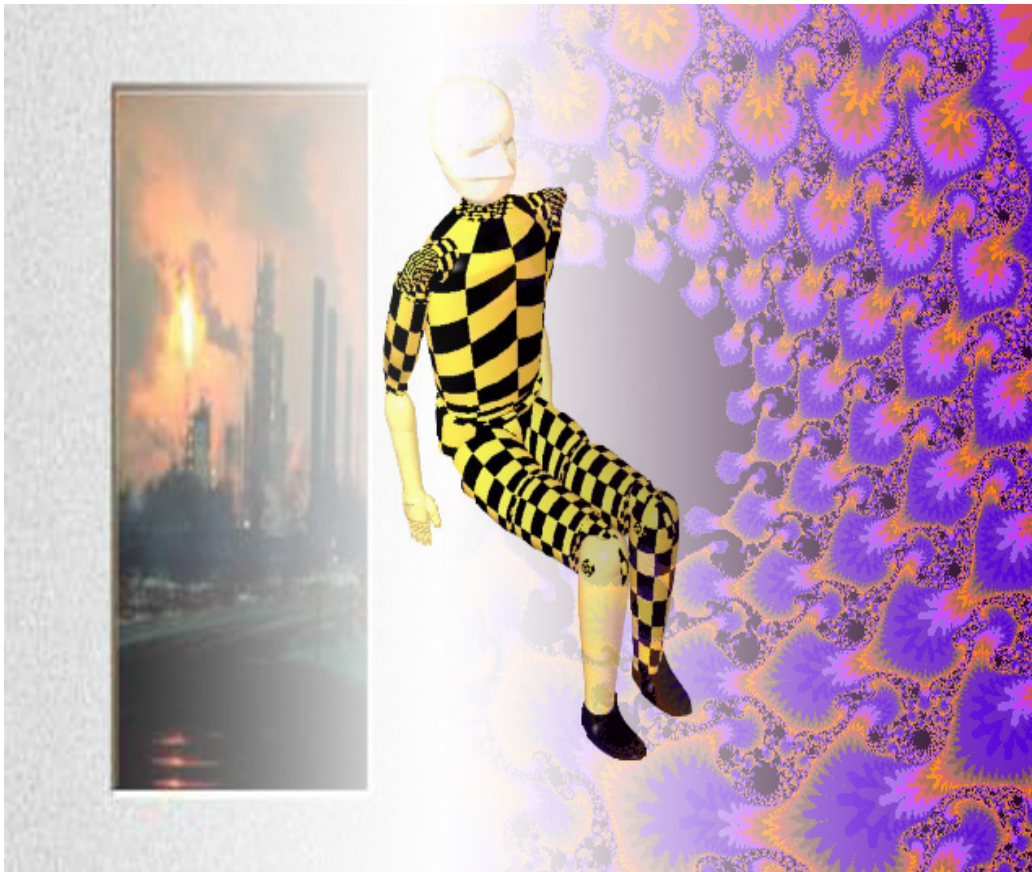

Once you got it, Now Drag the last image (refin) in to the working area.

Do the same process as we did on the fan image.

- **Select a mask Tool.**

- **Select the Gradient tool and Options (Foreground to Background).**
- **Drag from the left side to the middle this time.**

The cool thing about this project is that the crash image is on the bottom layer.
Quick masks are temporary. They disappear when you deselect. However, any selection can be saved as a

mask in an **alpha channel**. Think of alpha channels as storage areas for information. When you **save a selection as a mask**, a **new alpha channel is created in the channels palett**e. (An image can contain up to 24 channels, including all color and alpha channels.) You can use these masks again in the same image or in a different image.

Using alpha channels

In addition to the temporary masks of Quick Mask mode, you can create more permanent masks by storing and editing selections in alpha channels. You create a new alpha channel as a mask. For example, you can create a gradient fill in a blank channel and then use it as a mask. Or you can save a selection to either a new or existing channel.

An alpha channel has these properties:

- Each image can contain up to 24 channels, including all color and alpha channels.
- All channels are 8 - bit grayscale images, capable of displaying 256 levels of gray.
- You can add and delete alpha channels.
- You can specify a name, color, mask option, and opcity for each channel. (the opacity affects the preview of the channel, not the image.)
- All new channels have the same dimensions and number of pixels as the original image.
- You can edit the mask in an alpha channel using the painting and editing tools.
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Storing selections in alpha channels makes the selctions permanent, so that they can ve used again in the same image or in a different image.
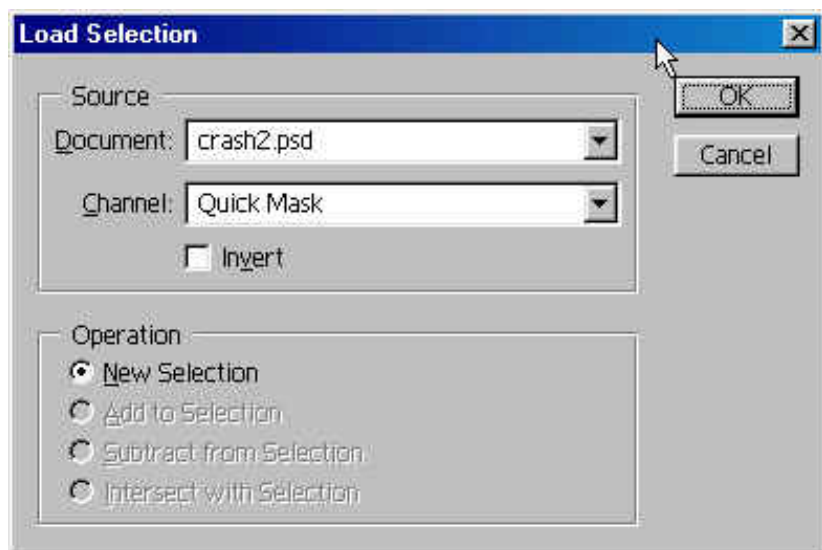
-From Adobe Photoshop online Help-

Saving a Selection as a mask

Go to Select > Load Select.   **Then in this window click OK.**
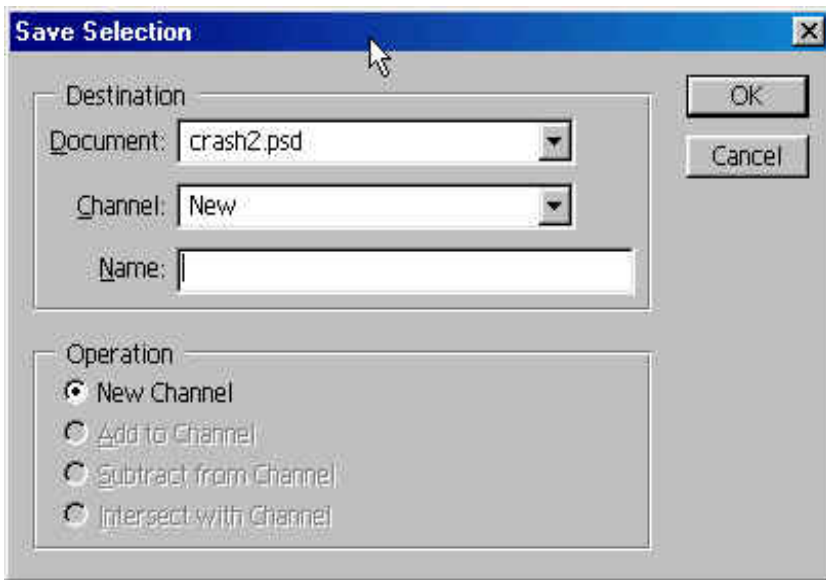
This was the last mask that we made so it's selected, now we can save it. To do this Go back to Select > Save Selection.
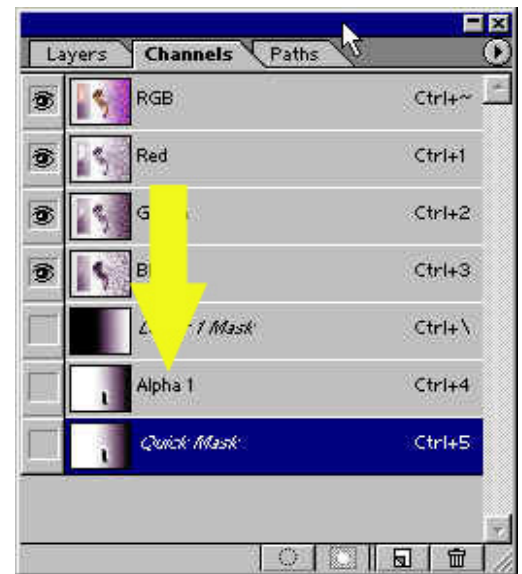
Click on OK, and in the channels palette there is now a new channel called alpha 1, which we just created.

Saved mask

Editing a Mask

You can use most painting and editing tools to edit a channel mask.

- **Hide all channels except for alpha 1 and the screen is now a gray scale**
- **Painting with white erases the mask and increases the selected area.**
- **Painting with black adds to the mask and decreases the selected area.**
- **Painting with Gray values adds to or subtracts from the mask in varying opacity, in proportion to the level of gray used to paint.**