

GRADIENT PROOFING

Gradient proofing is a technique that allows one to create one hard proof that contains many levels of a particular adjustment. By analyzing the physical proof and determining where on the proof the optimal amount of change occurs, one can then accurately apply that amount of change to the entire image.

Example:

This image needs saturation.



From experience I know that it's difficult to judge optimal saturation onscreen. What may seem to be an appropriate amount onscreen may not translate to enough once ink hits paper. Rather than making incremental proofs and wasting lots of ink and paper this technique allows one to make one physical proof and then precisely determine the perfect amount of saturation (or contrast, hue adjustment, noise, etc).

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Gradient Proofing for a Saturation Adjustment

#1. At the top of your layer stack add a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer in Saturation Blending Mode..



#2. Now add Saturation to your image with the Master slider. Make your adjustment significantly more extreme than you need.



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#3. Select the blank mask attached to the Hue/Saturation layer. Using the Linear Gradient tool set Black to White draw a gradient from the left to the right.



#4. Your image should now show no Saturation increase on the left edge and full Saturation boost on the right. The Gradient mask is Black on the left which blocks the saturation increase 100% on the left edge of the image. The gradient's density gradually decreases as it moves right letting through more saturation. On the extreme right of the image the mask lets 100% of the adjustment through.



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#5. Now print this image. When the proof is ready, view it under an appropriate light and determine, on the proof, at what point in the proof the Saturation feels right. Select the Gradient Mask on the Hue/Saturation layer and locate your point in the screen and sample that with your dropper.



#6. All that needs to be done to complete the adjustment is to confirm the Gradient Mask is selected, and then fill the Mask with the Foreground Color. Filling the Gradient Mask with the optimal greyscale allows the entire image to be adjusted to the same level as the area on the proof you selected as the perfect amount. This technique will also work with other type of image adjustments.

Experiment!

