

(<http://forums.dpreview.com/...../readflat.asp?forum=1006&thread=18550924>) focused on putting light in windows. This one deals with outside lights such as streetlamps. The techniques differ because the kind of light in each case is different.

I'll call them "diffuse light" and "direct light" (though those terms might not be technically correct). These cutouts from Steve's village shot illustrate the difference:

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Direct light

My definitions: If the light is filtered through a shade or curtain, as in these windows, that's diffuse light and is best created on a blank layer in hard-light blend mode. If the light illuminates details like the brick wall and planter above, that's direct light. Create it on a vivid light layer. (Sometimes color dodge mode will work better. It pays to experiment

with both.)

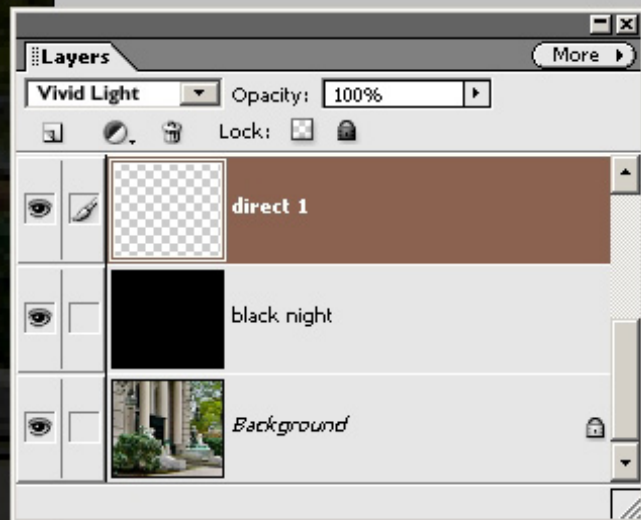
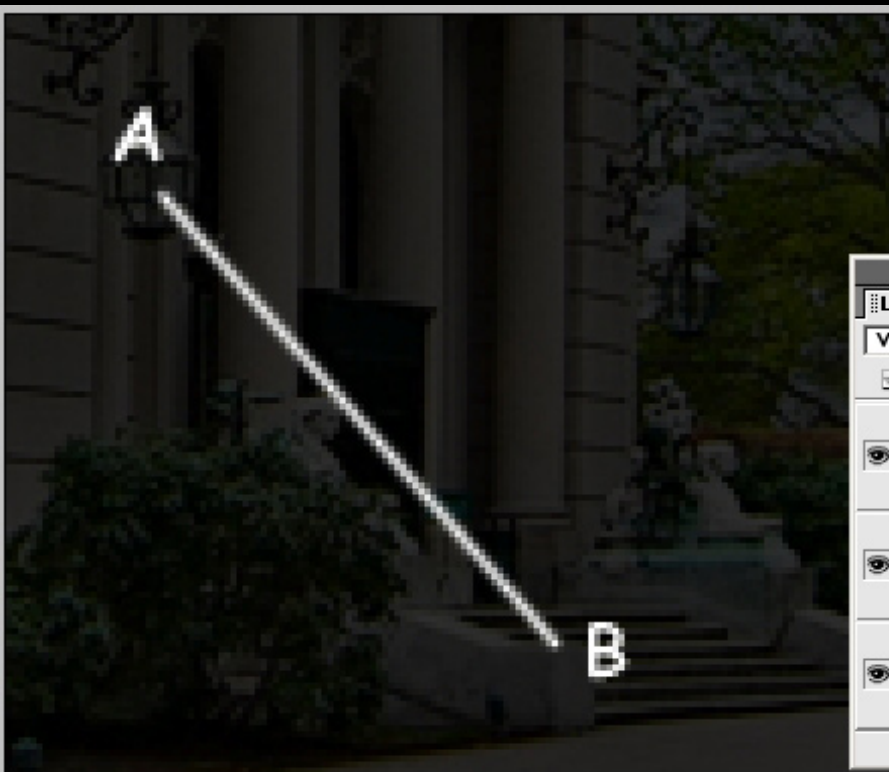
As before, I'll do this with beginners in mind. This is a crop of Bill's photo of the Elms in Newport.

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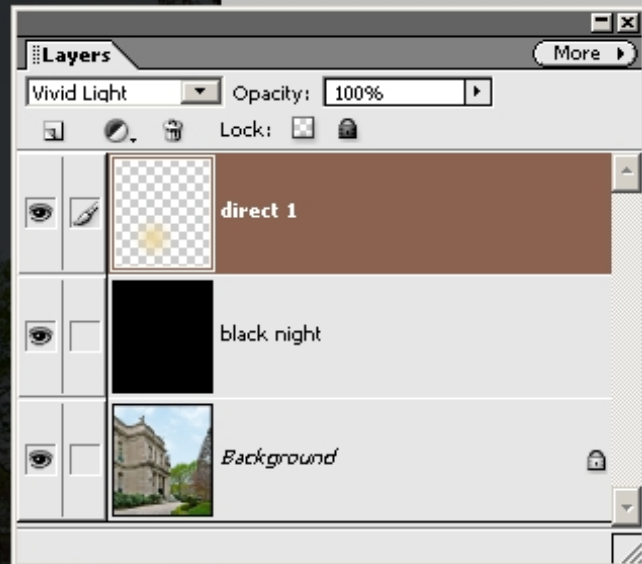
As before, for the "black night" layer I'm using a normal layer filled with black and reduced to about 82% opacity. Use your eye.

I'll do the lamp on the left first. For the direct light illuminating surrounding details, I'll add a blank layer, "direct 1," in vivid light mode. I'm zooming in and adding a guideline where I'll make the gradient. Here's what you should have at this point (without the guideline):



I've chosen a muted peach color for the gradient, EBD89E. It's a good idea to experiment with different hues at this point. Even small changes in hue and brightness can make big differences in how the light appears in the gradient. Experiment. It took me three or four tries before I hit on EBD89E as a good hue for this image.

As in the last tut, set the gradient to go from the foreground color to transparent, and click the icon for a radial gradient. Be sure the vivid light layer, "direct 1," is the active layer. Click the gradient tool at A, drag to B, and release. Here's what you should now see:



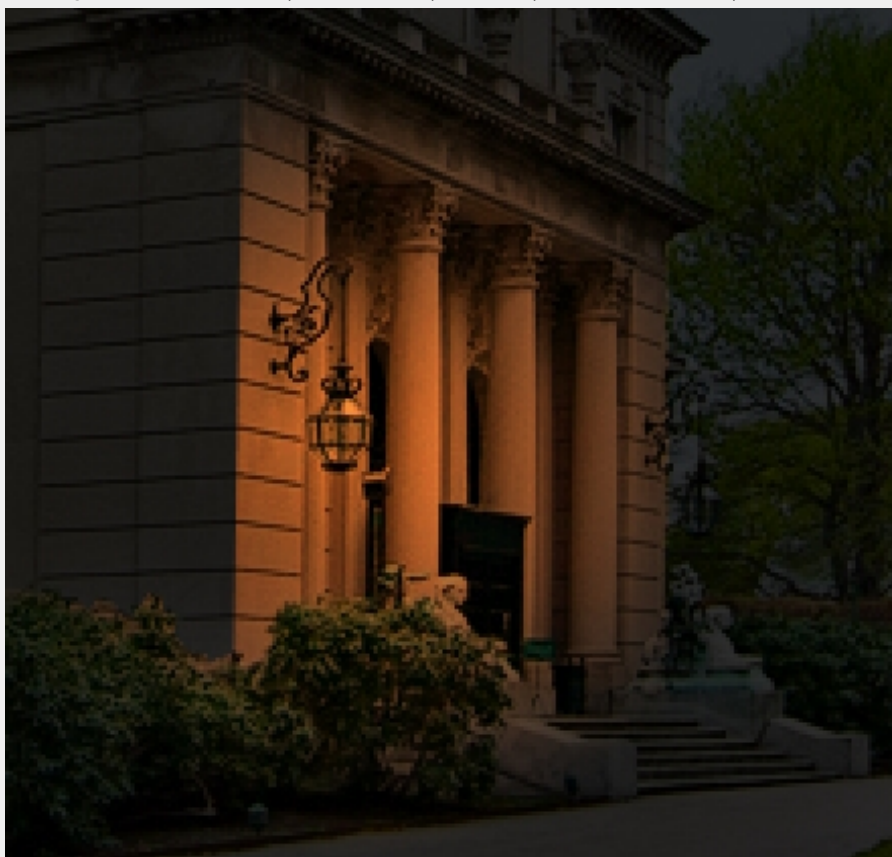
At this point it's important to look carefully at the details in the image and figure out where the light from that lamp would strike, and where it wouldn't. Given the lamp's position, it couldn't bend around that vertical corner on the left (our left) and illuminate the setback side of the portico. But it would reach the tops of the shrubs on the left. The lamp also wouldn't illuminate the sky and trees beyond the right vertical edge of the portico. So I'll use the polygonal tool to lasso those parts of the gradient and delete them. Here's where I lassoed and will delete:





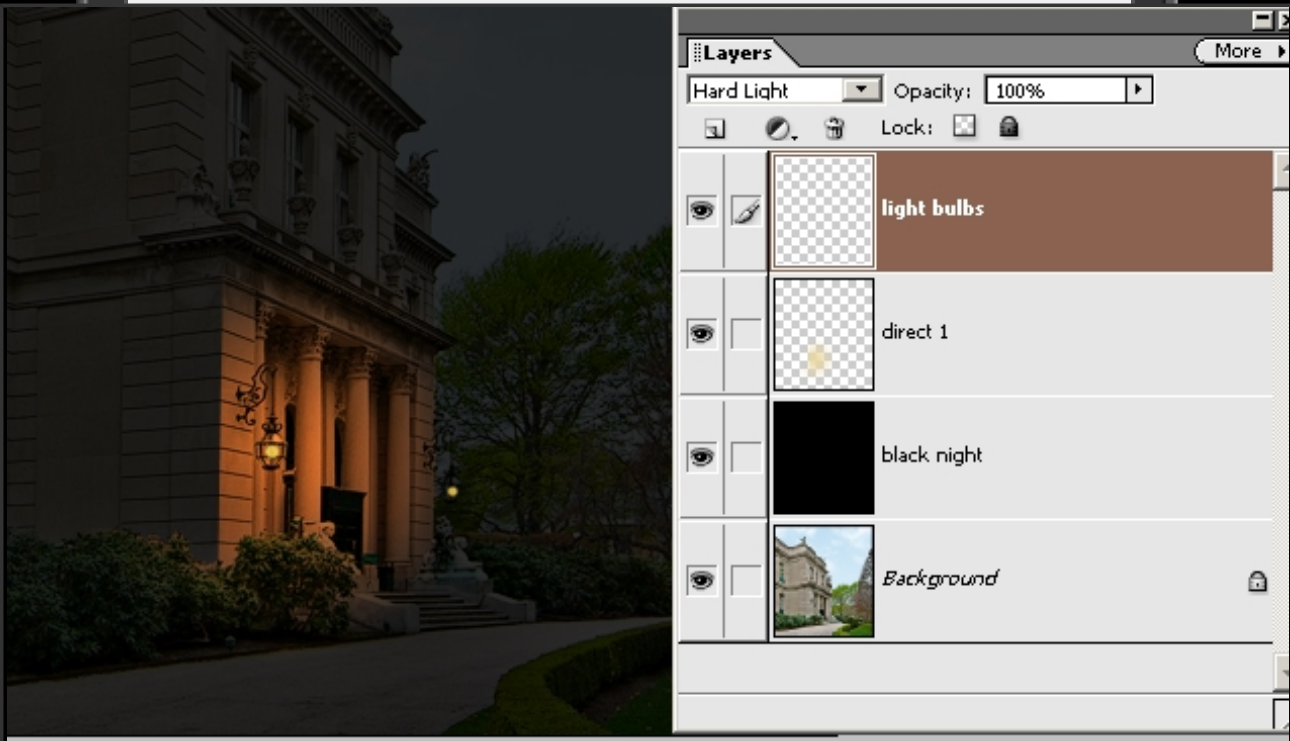
Here's what's left of the gradient:

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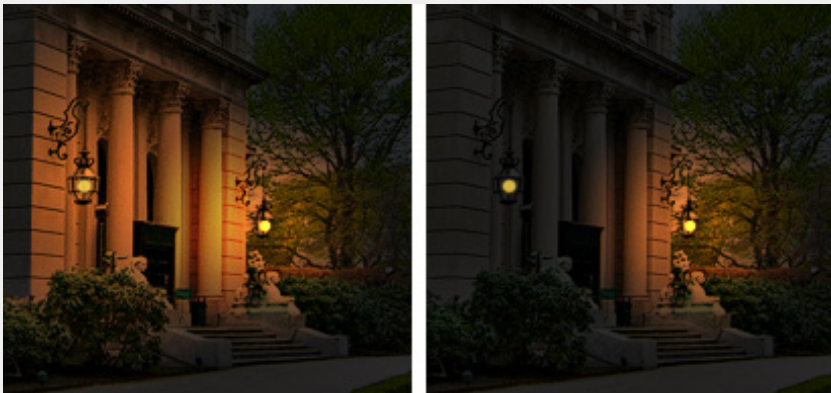
Now we need an indication of the light bulb. For that, make a new blank layer in hard light mode. I'm using the same peach color that I used for the gradient. Round brush, hard edge, 100% opacity, 5 px diameter. Zoom in on the lamp and click two or three times where the bulb would live. While I'm at it, I'll make a bulb for the other lamp on this same layer. Here's what you should have at this point:

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Taking the same steps as before, I'll put a gradient on the second lamp. So I create a new blank layer, "direct 2," and set it in vivid light blend mode. Here's what we get:

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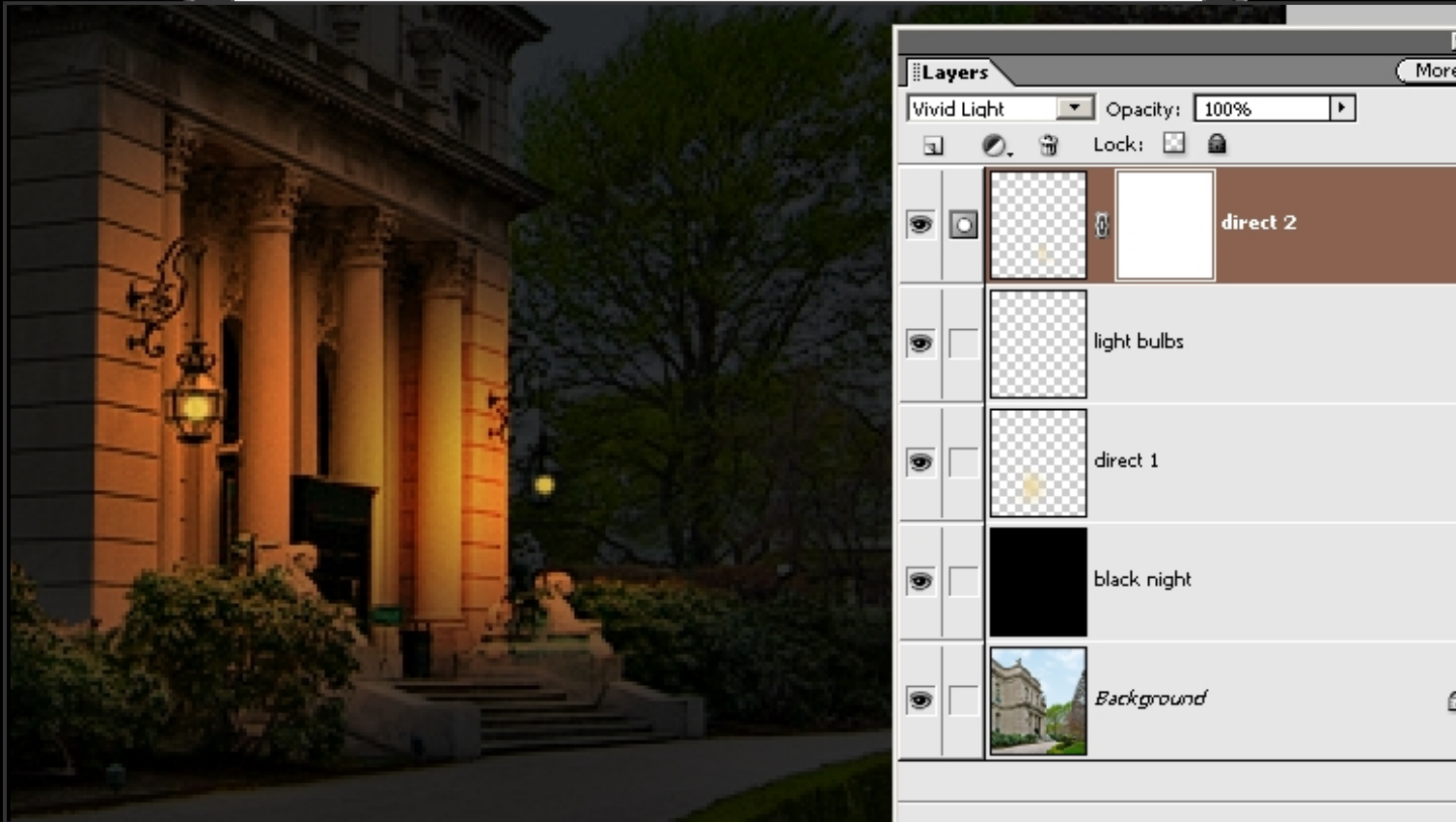


Notice that this looks too bright (left). That's because the gradients overlap. Turn off the left gradient ("direct 1" layer) and you can see that the right gradient looks about right. So we'll need to come back and do some erasing where they overlap, until the brightness looks realistic. First I want to look at where the light falls to the right of the portico. It looks to me like the light would reach the tops of the shrubs on the right, but not the trees and sky behind them. So I'll select that area with the polygonal tool and erase that part of the gradient.

After that, I go back to the bright area where the gradients overlap. To correct that, I'll put a layer mask on the "direct 2" layer (you could used "direct 1" if you wanted to). With both gradient layers visible, I'll paint on the mask with a soft black brush low opacity (10% or less) until the too-bright overlap is dimmed enough to look realistic. If you take out too

much gradient, switch to white and paint it back in. Before I start painting, here's what I'm working with:

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After fixing the gradient overlap, one last touch. I'll add another blank vivid light layer, "direct extra," and touch in a little more direct light. Using a soft brush at very low opacity (2%), I'll put just a bit more illumination on top of the shrubs left and right of the steps, a little on the pavement in front, and just a fringe on that tree across the driveway. It looks to me like the light would catch that a little. Here's what I end with:



Four things I would emphasize for realistic results:

1. Try both vivid light and color dodge modes for the direct light (gradient) layers.
2. Experiment with *\*small\** changes in color in these modes; they're very sensitive to color changes.
3. After you place a gradient, study the image closely and figure out where the light would fall and where it would be blocked by solid objects. Erase carefully wherever light should not reach.
4. After the gradients are in place, adjust opacity as needed for brightness. You can also use hue/sat to adjust the hue.