

# START



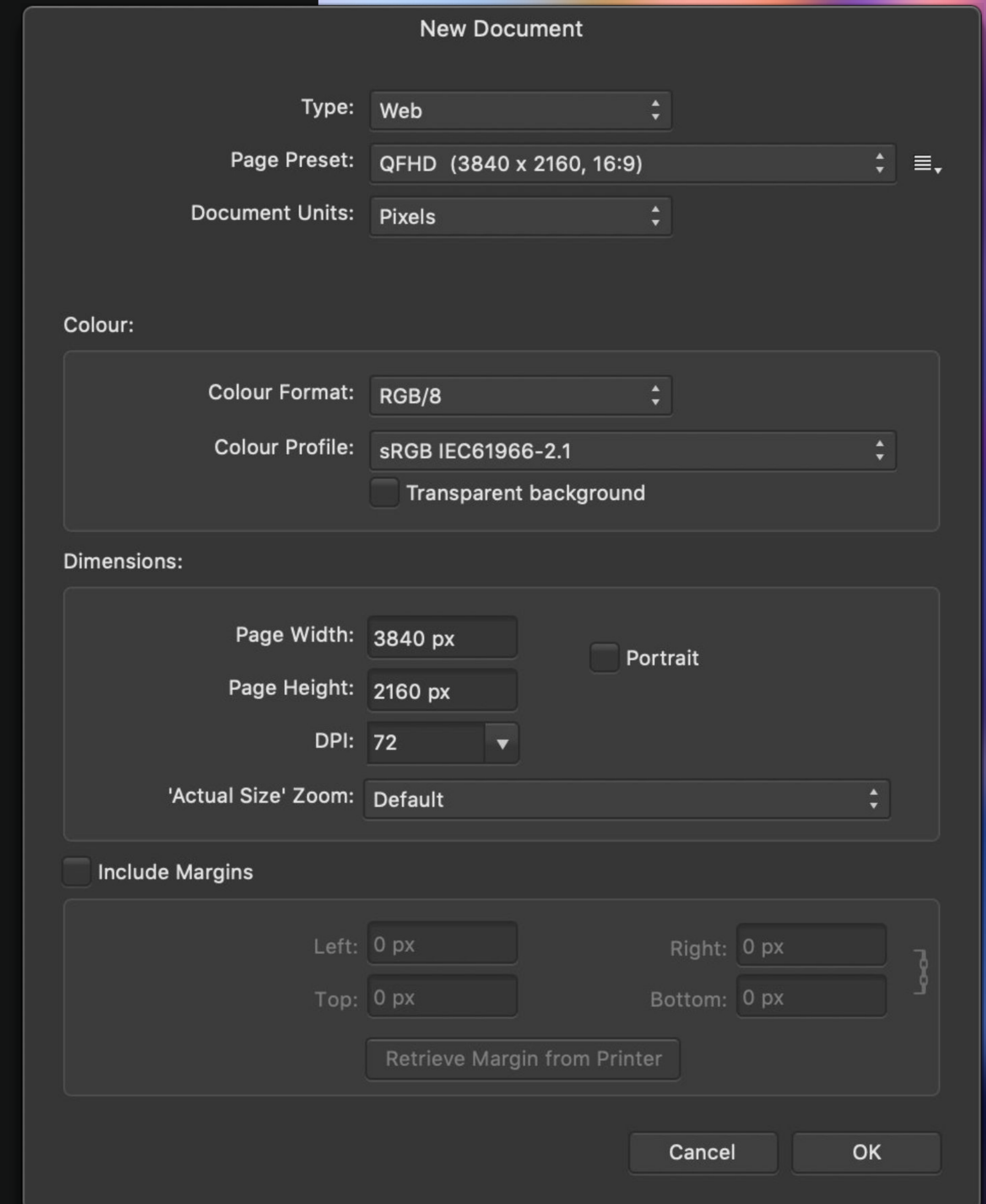
AFFINITY  
**Photo**

# Starting a document

Ordinarily you would start with an image which will automatically determine the document resolution. You can open an image by drag-dropping it onto the apps UI or by going to File>Open.

You can also create a new document from scratch using File>New.

Select the document dimensions via the preset examples or enter custom sizing. You can also determine the colour format and profile here: Affinity apps are fully colour managed and perform document-to-screen profile conversions.



The image shows a 'New Document' dialog box with the following settings:

- Type:** Web
- Page Preset:** QFHD (3840 x 2160, 16:9)
- Document Units:** Pixels
- Colour:**
  - Colour Format:** RGB/8
  - Colour Profile:** sRGB IEC61966-2.1
  - ☐ Transparent background
- Dimensions:**
  - Page Width:** 3840 px
  - Page Height:** 2160 px
  - DPI:** 72
  - 'Actual Size' Zoom:** Default
  - ☐ Portrait
- ☐ Include Margins
  - Left:** 0 px
  - Right:** 0 px
  - Top:** 0 px
  - Bottom:** 0 px
  -

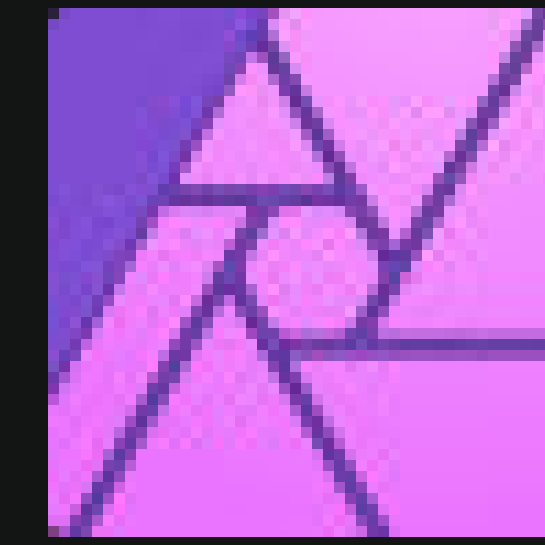
Buttons: Cancel, OK



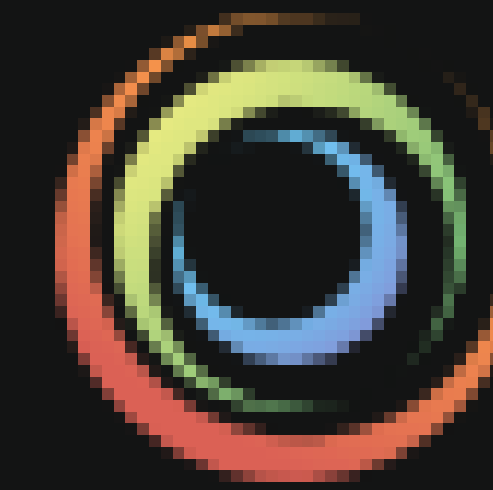
# Switching personas

Personas are different workspaces for different tasks. You can instantly switch between them by clicking the Persona icons at the top left of the interface.

Most of your image editing will be performed in the main Photo Persona, where you'll find major functionality like tools, adjustments, live filters, layer control, brushes, colour swatches and channels.



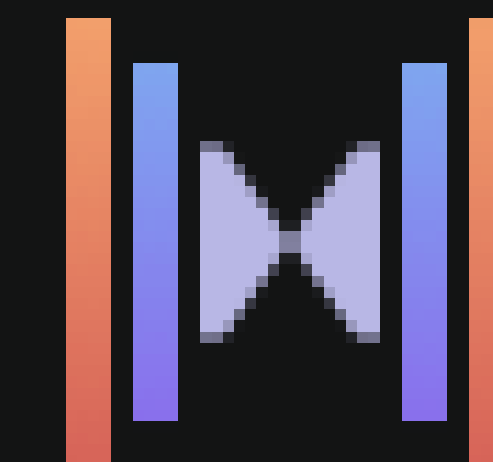
**Photo  
Persona**



**Liquify  
Persona**



**Develop  
Persona**

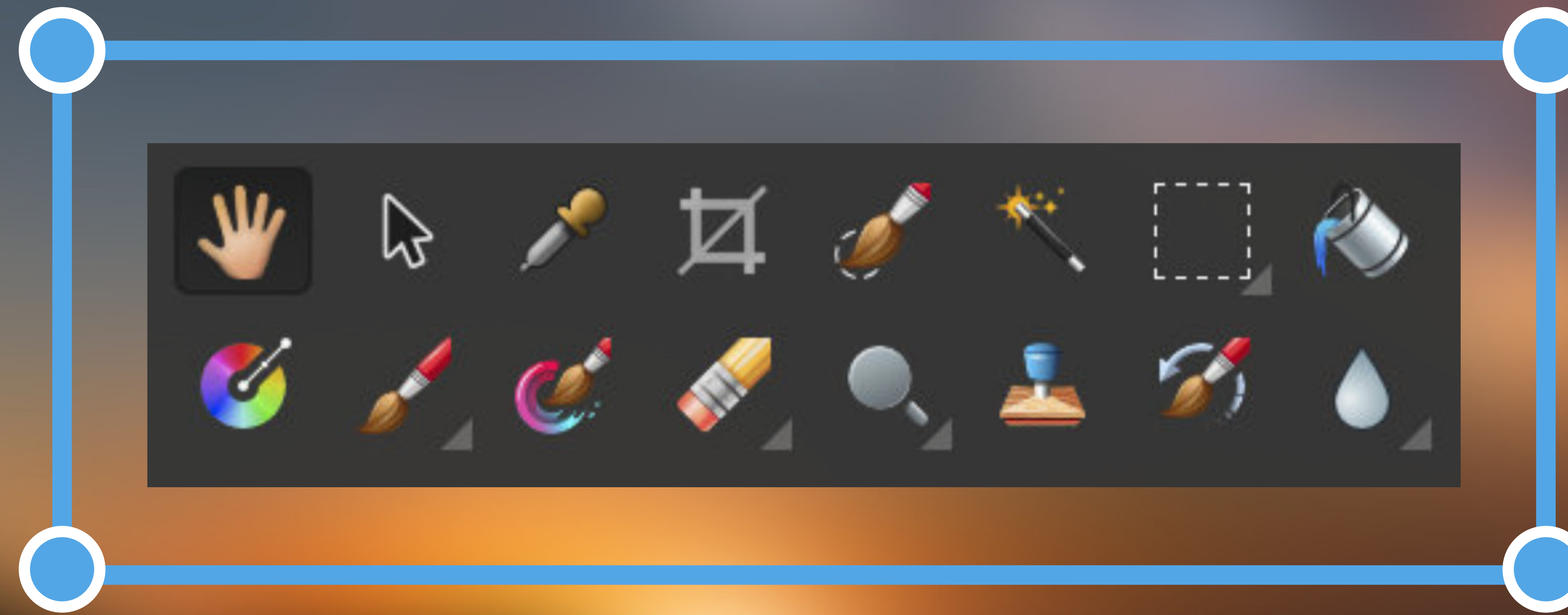


**Tone Mapping  
Persona**



**Export  
Persona**





# Tools setup

View Tool **[H]**

Move Tool **[V]**

Crop Tool **[C]**

Selection Brush Tool **[W]**

Flood Select Tool **[W]**

Flood Fill Tool **[G]**

Paint Brush Tool **[B]**

Erase Brush Tool **[E]**

Dodge Brush Tool **[O]**

Clone Brush Tool **[S]**

Inpainting Brush Tool **[J]**

Pen Tool **[P]**

Rectangle Tool **[U]**

Artistic Text Tool **[T]**

Zoom Tool **[Z]**

All the familiar and essential tools are shown on the left of the screen. Most of these have the same keyboard shortcuts you may be used to (also listed below next to the tool name).

Some tools are grouped and share the same keyboard shortcut so you can cycle through them, e.g. retouching tools like Healing Brush, Patch, Blemish Removal and Inpainting all use **[J]** by default



# View > Studio = Settings for panels

Here you can set up all your panels which provide various functionality to aid with editing.

The default panel layout is designed to be lean and efficient, but you can expose additional panels and customise the layout to suit your workflow—you can group panels together as 'tab groups' and dock/float them as desired.

- 32-bit Preview
- ✓ Adjustment
- ✓ Assets
- Batch
- ✓ Brushes
- ✓ Channels
- Character
- ✓ Colour
- ✓ Effects
- EXIF
- Glyph Browser
- ✓ Histogram
- ✓ History
- Info
- ✓ Layers
- Library
- ✓ Macro
- ✓ Navigator
- Paragraph
- Scope
- Snapshots
- Sources
- ✓ Stock
- ✓ Styles
- ✓ Swatches
- Text Styles
- ✓ Transform

Show Left Studio

✓ Show Right Studio

Hide Studio

⇧ ⌘ H

Reset Studio



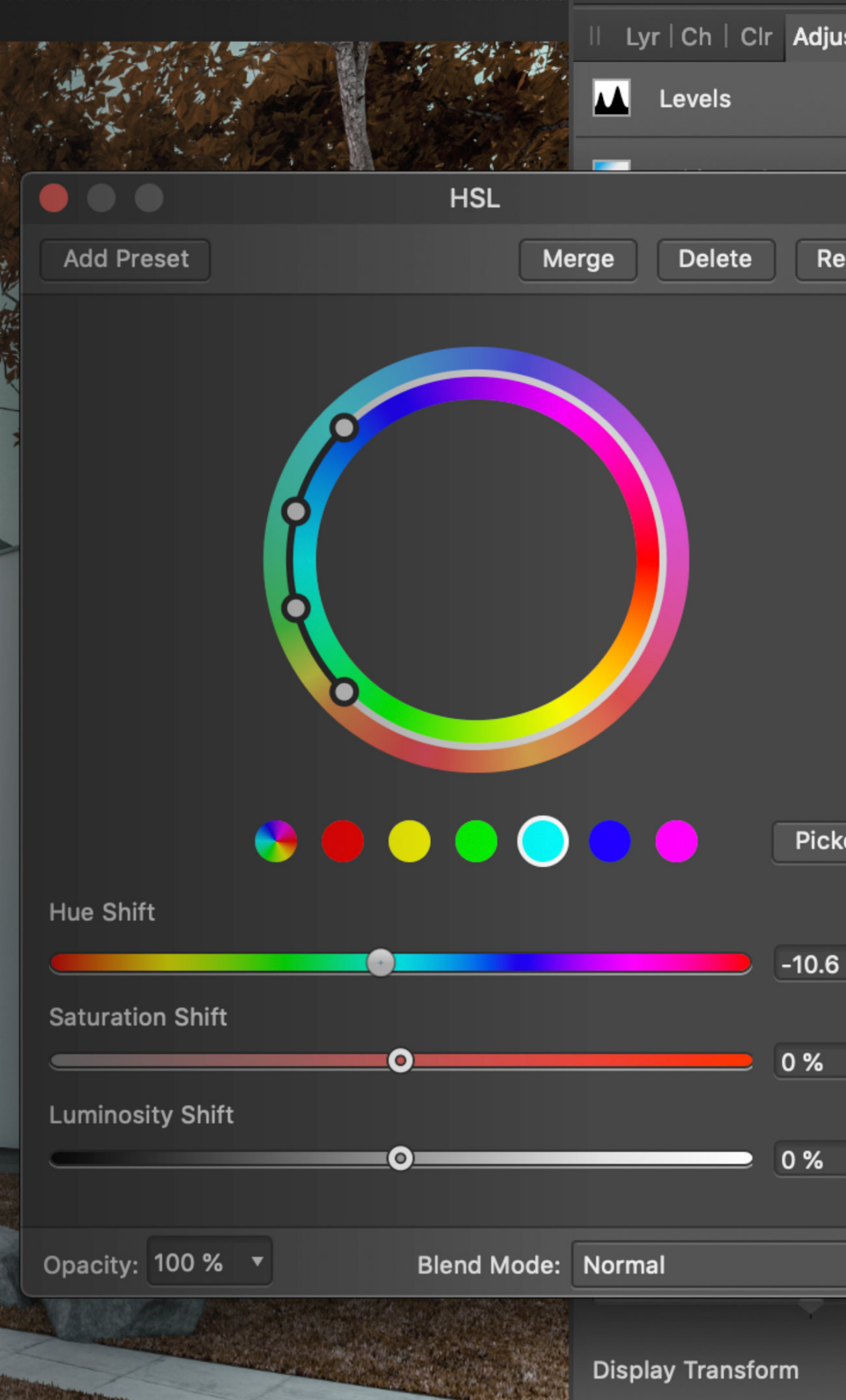


# Personas



## PHOTO PERSONA

Where most of your time will be spent. This is the main image editing workspace which has all the main tools, adjustments, filters, live filters, raster tools, layer manipulation, the undo history and other image editing features.



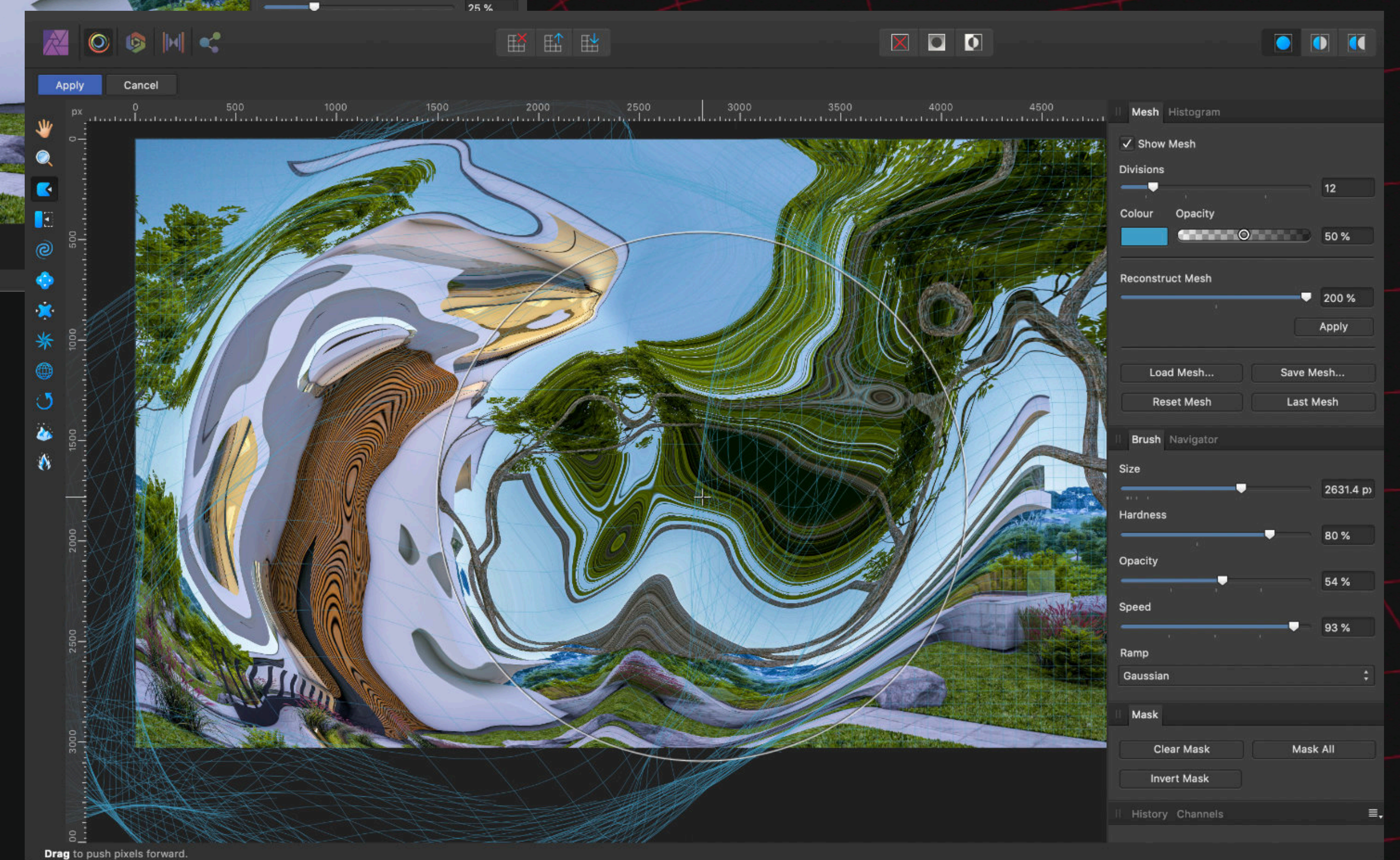
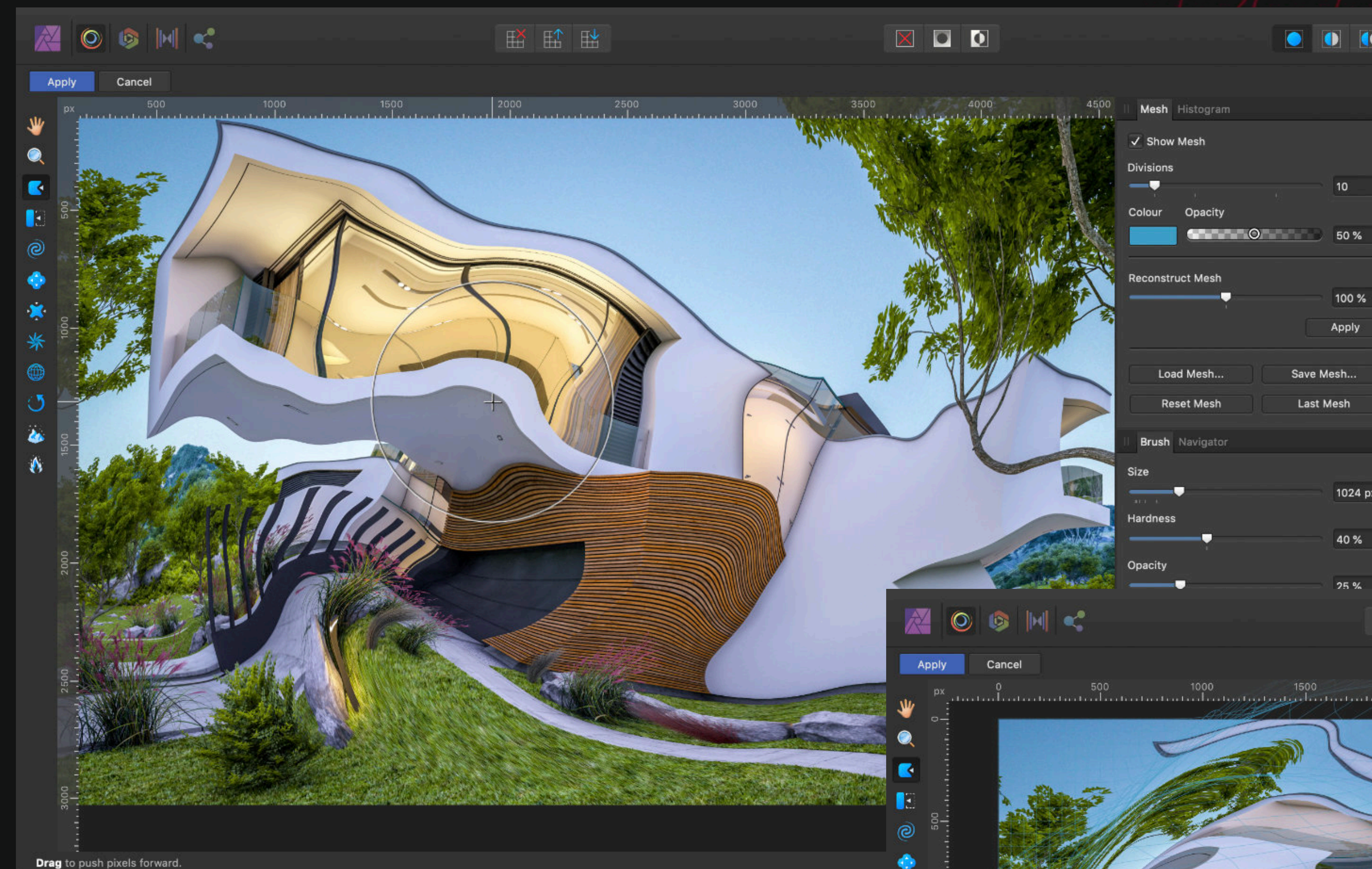




## LIQUIFY PERSONA

A dedicated workspace for mesh distortion work, giving you a full screen layout in which to distort the currently selected pixel layer using a variety of tools.

You can use the Freeze Tool to isolate particular areas for editing. The Thaw Tool will remove isolated areas once you have finished editing them.





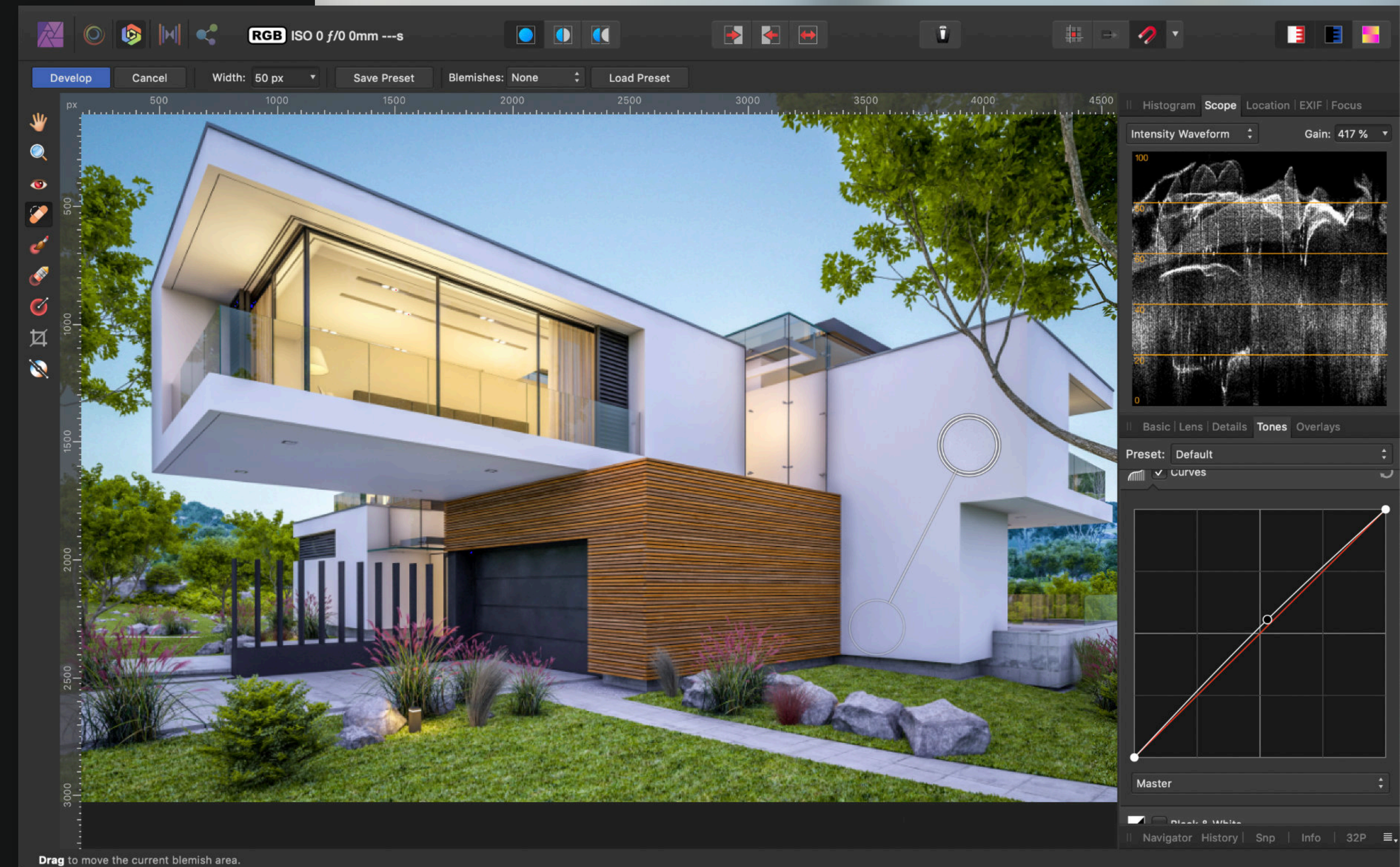


## DEVELOP PERSONA

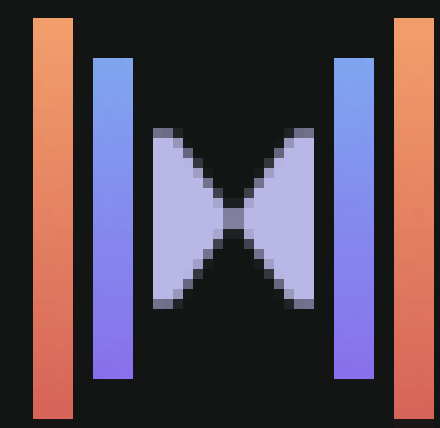
Opened by default when you load a RAW file. Provides a more intuitive, slider-based approach for making initial adjustments to the image you're developing.

You can however enter this workspace from any valid pixel layer, meaning you can take advantage of it when you need to make quick adjustments.

Bear in mind, however, that committing changes in the Develop persona is a destructive operation—you can make a duplicate of your pixel layer beforehand if required.







## tone mapping persona

Traditionally used with 32-bit floating point HDR documents. This maps out-of-range (unbounded) pixel values into standard dynamic range where a typical display can represent them.

It uses global tonal compression and local contrast enhancement to achieve this. You can also apply tone mapping to any valid pixel layer if you wish to compress the tonal range or add local contrast to enhance texture/structure.





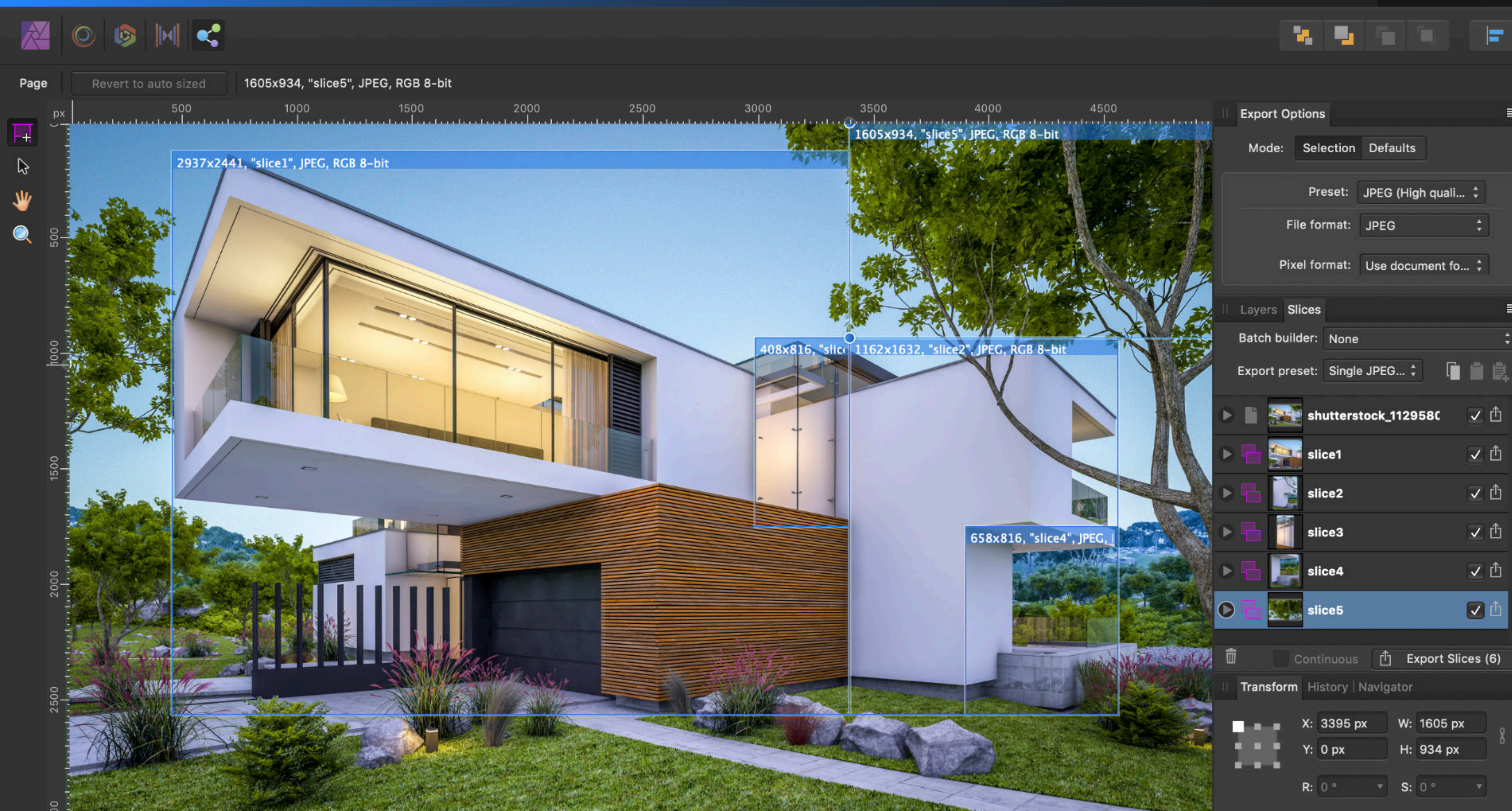


## EXPORT PERSONA

Gives you fine-grained control over exporting regions of your documents.

You can hand-draw “slices” or create them from layers and export them separately. You have a full choice over export formats and other options for each slice.

Continuous export allows exported files to be re-exported and updated in the background as you work on your document.

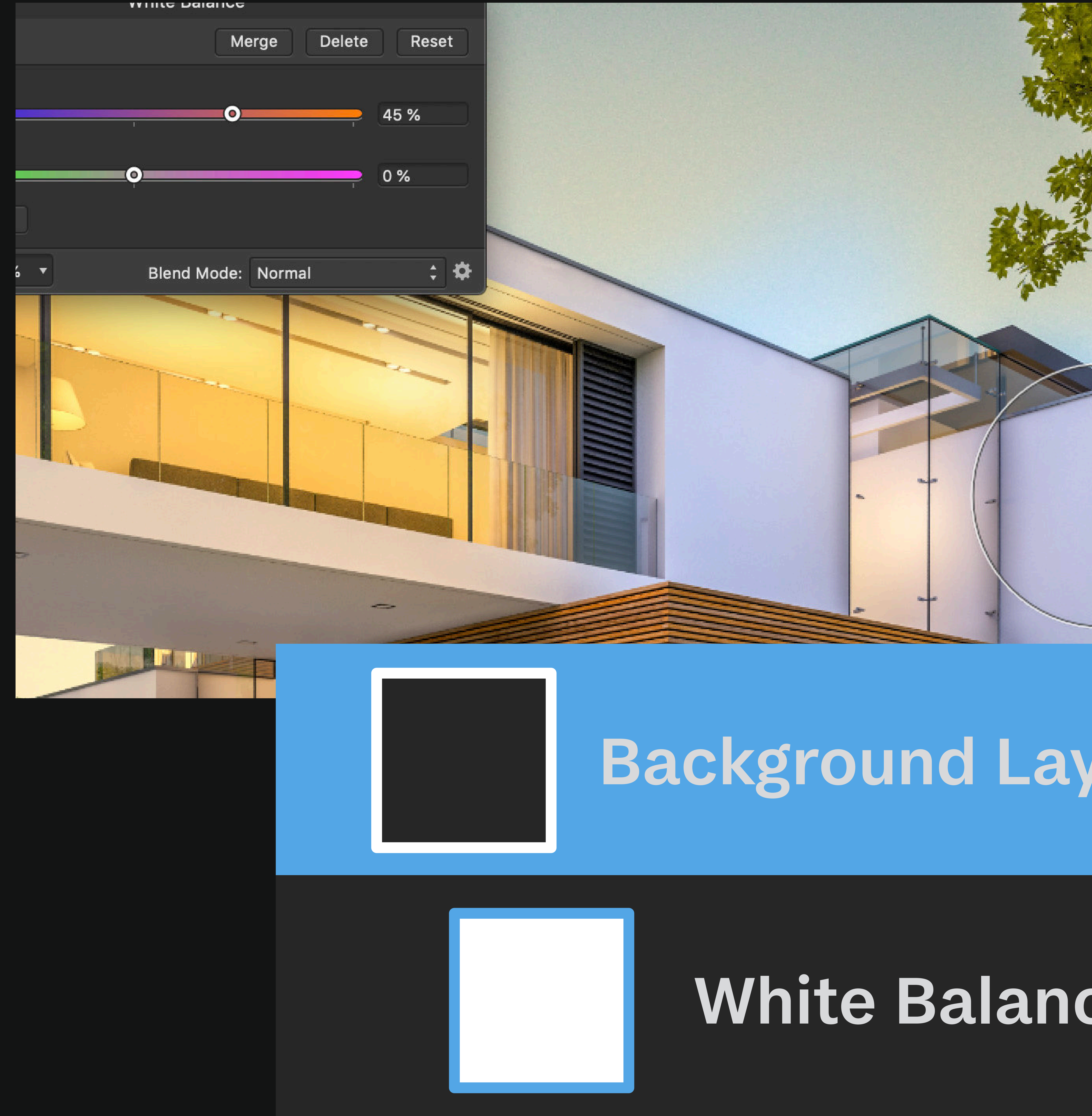




# Masking and blending

There is no need to clip masks to adjustment layers and live filter layers—they inherently have their own masks.

Simply select the layer and you can begin manipulating its mask. This includes inverting it (Layer>Invert), painting on/off with the Paint Brush Tool [B], and loading mask information from channels.



# Mask layers

Mask layers can be added using the Mask Layer icon on the Layers Panel or via Layer>New Mask Layer.

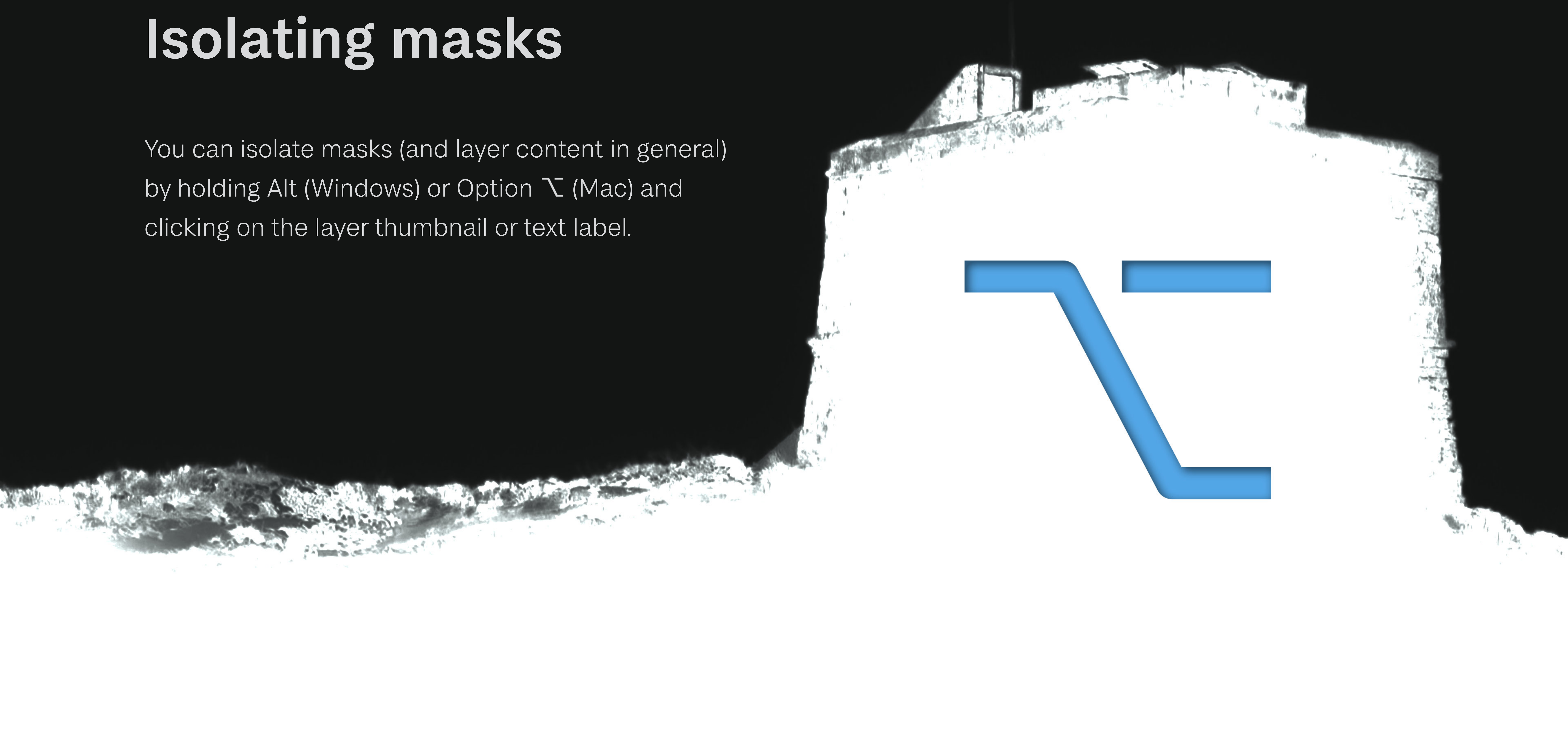
If you have an active selection, that will be used to create the mask. You can also add an empty mask by holding Alt (Windows) or Option ⌘ (Mac) when adding the mask.





# Isolating masks

You can isolate masks (and layer content in general) by holding Alt (Windows) or Option ⌘ (Mac) and clicking on the layer thumbnail or text label.





# Blend modes

There are a comprehensive number of blend modes which are available to use in all Affinity apps.

They preview in real time as you scroll through them so you can get instant feedback on how the current layer looks with them applied.

✓ Normal

Darken  
Multiply  
Colour Burn  
Linear Burn  
Darker Colour

Lighten  
Screen  
Colour Dodge  
Add  
Lighter Colour

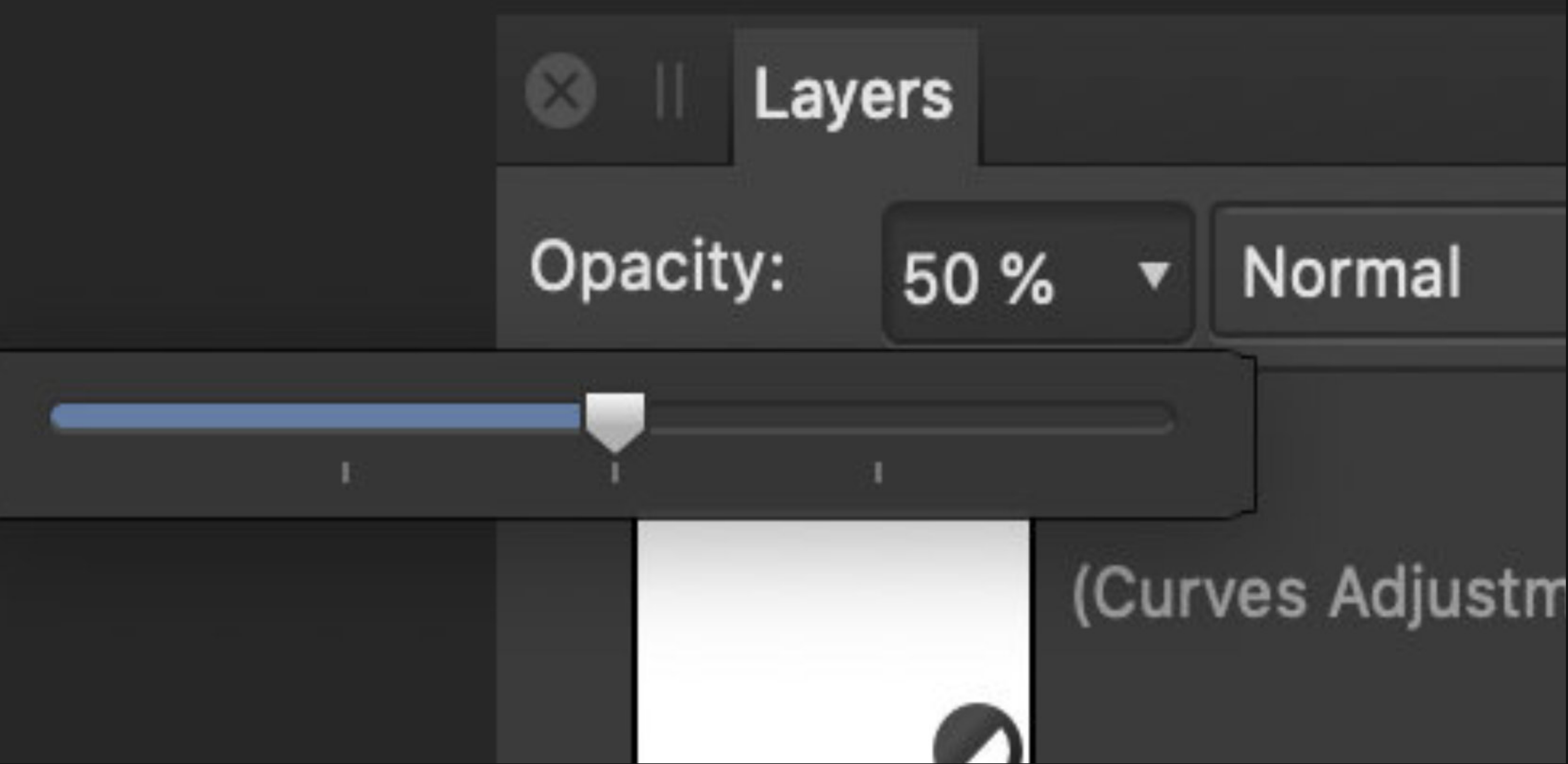
Overlay  
Soft Light  
Hard Light  
Vivid Light  
Linear Light  
Pin Light  
Hard Mix

Difference  
Exclusion  
Subtract

Hue  
Saturation  
Colour  
Luminosity

Average  
Negation  
Reflect

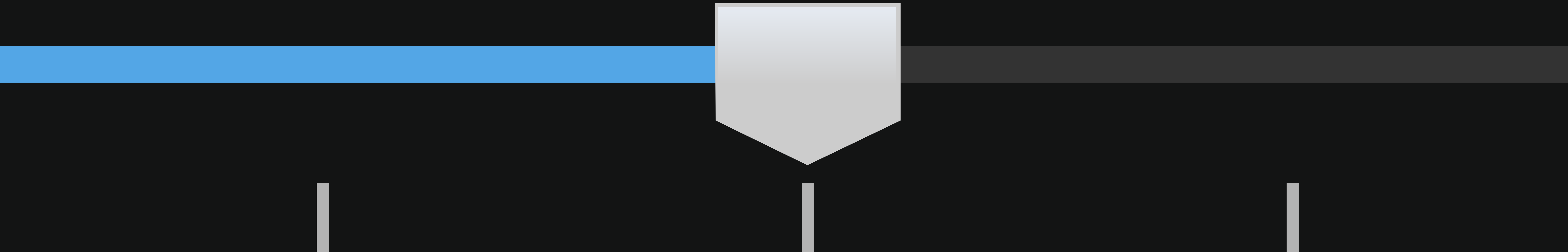




# Opacity

Opacity is controlled using the percentage option next to the blend mode dropdown.

You can also use keyboard shortcuts: the number keys 1-9 will set 10% though to 90% opacity respectively, and 0 will reset to 100%. You can set intermediate percentage values by typing two keys in quick succession, e.g. typing 2 then 5 will set 25%.

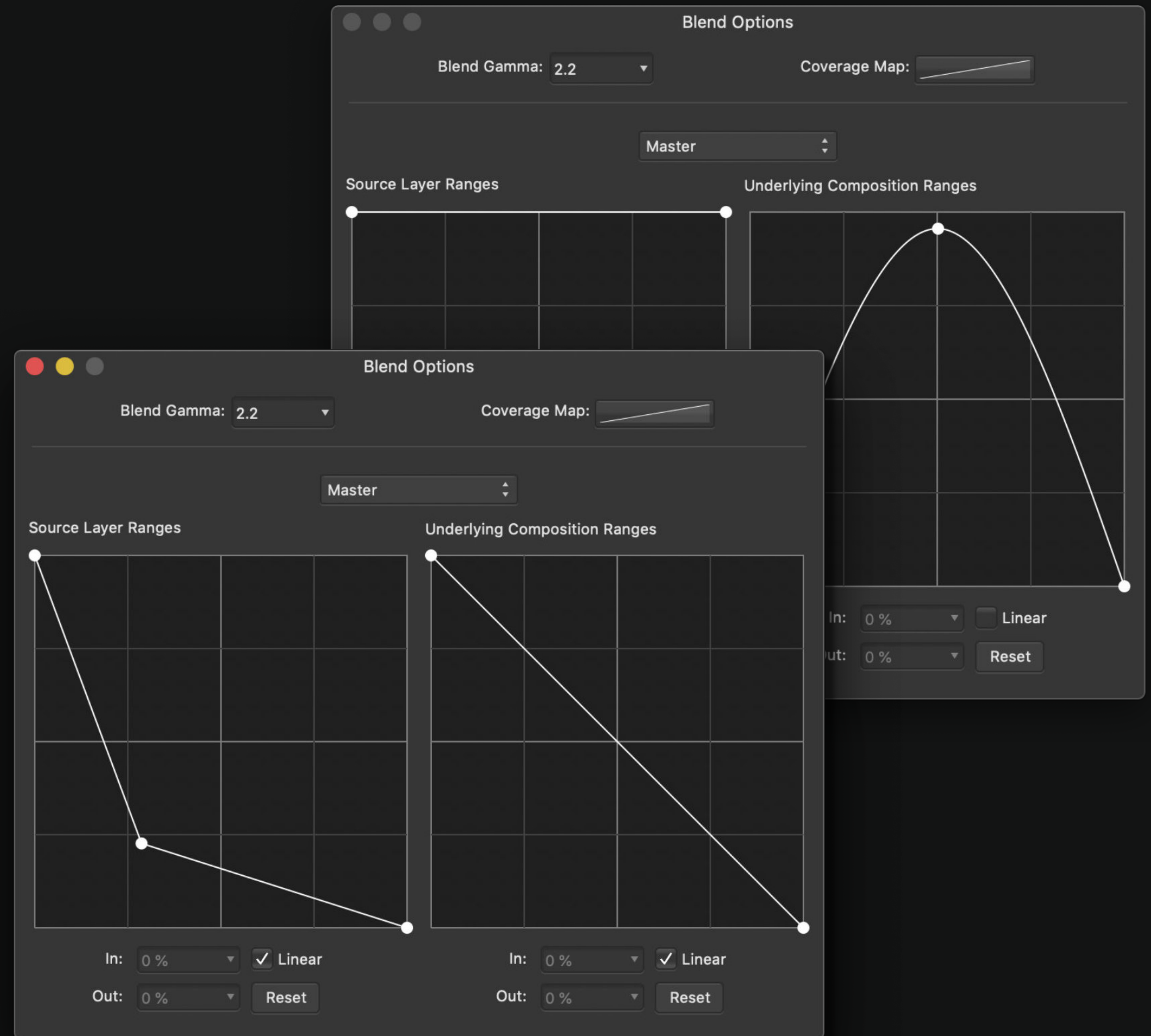




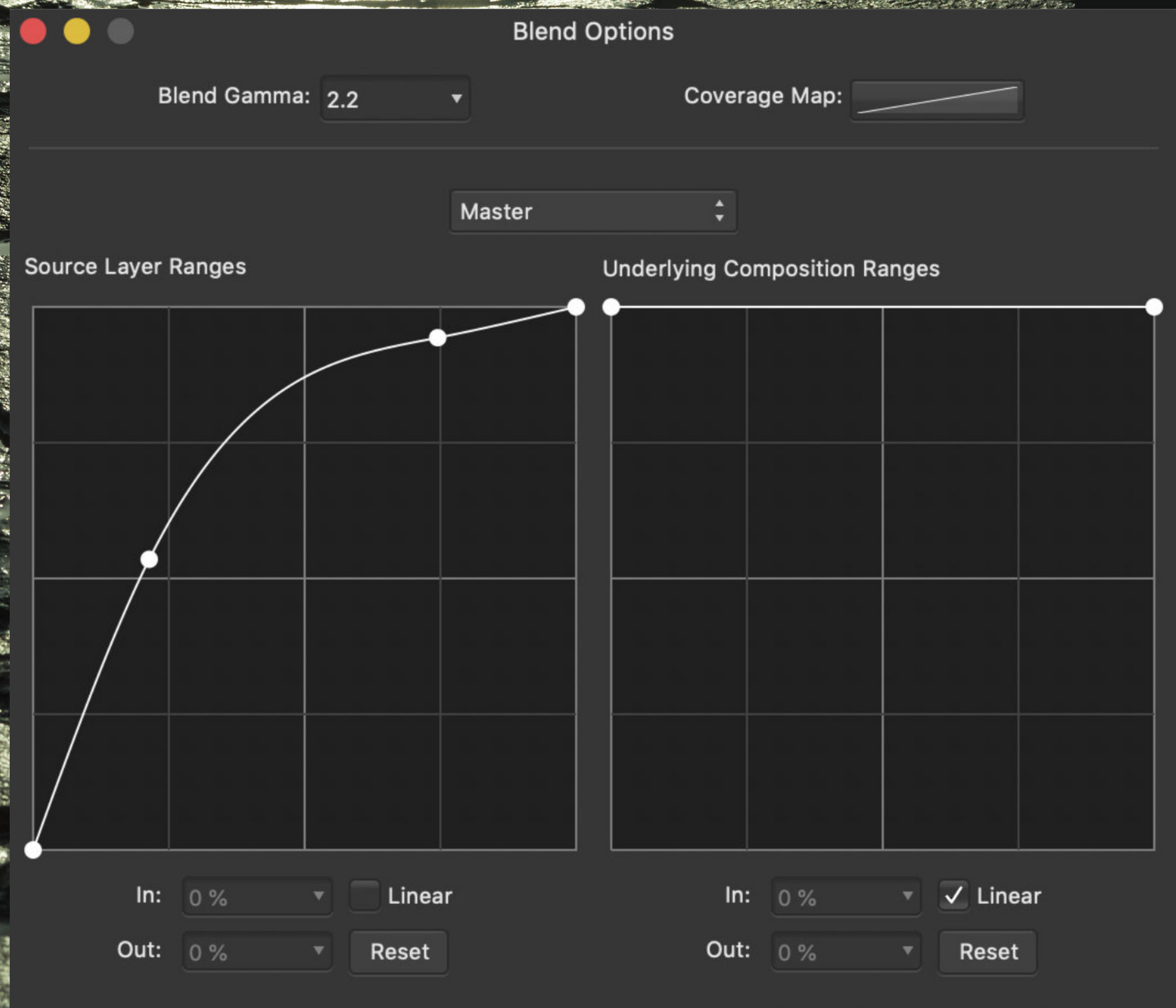
# Blend ranges

If you are looking for the equivalent of Blend If, Blend Ranges offers a more comprehensive set of blending options.

The Blend ranges dialog is accessed by using the cog icon next to the blend modes dropdown.







**This dialog gives you complete control over how layers blend based on tonal range (from absolute black to absolute white).**

**Source Layer Ranges** controls how the layer blends into layers beneath it—like using Opacity but with variable tonal range.

**Underlying Composition Ranges** controls how layers beneath the current layer blend through—more complex but better for textural blending results.

**Blend Gamma** alters the gamma power ramp of blending—defaults to 2.2 which is your typical non-linear gamma curve. For a linear blend, change it to 1.

**Coverage Map** controls the antialiasing strength of the edge blending for layer content.

You can use this option on its own without changing anything else—useful for fine tuning edge sharpness of vector shapes.



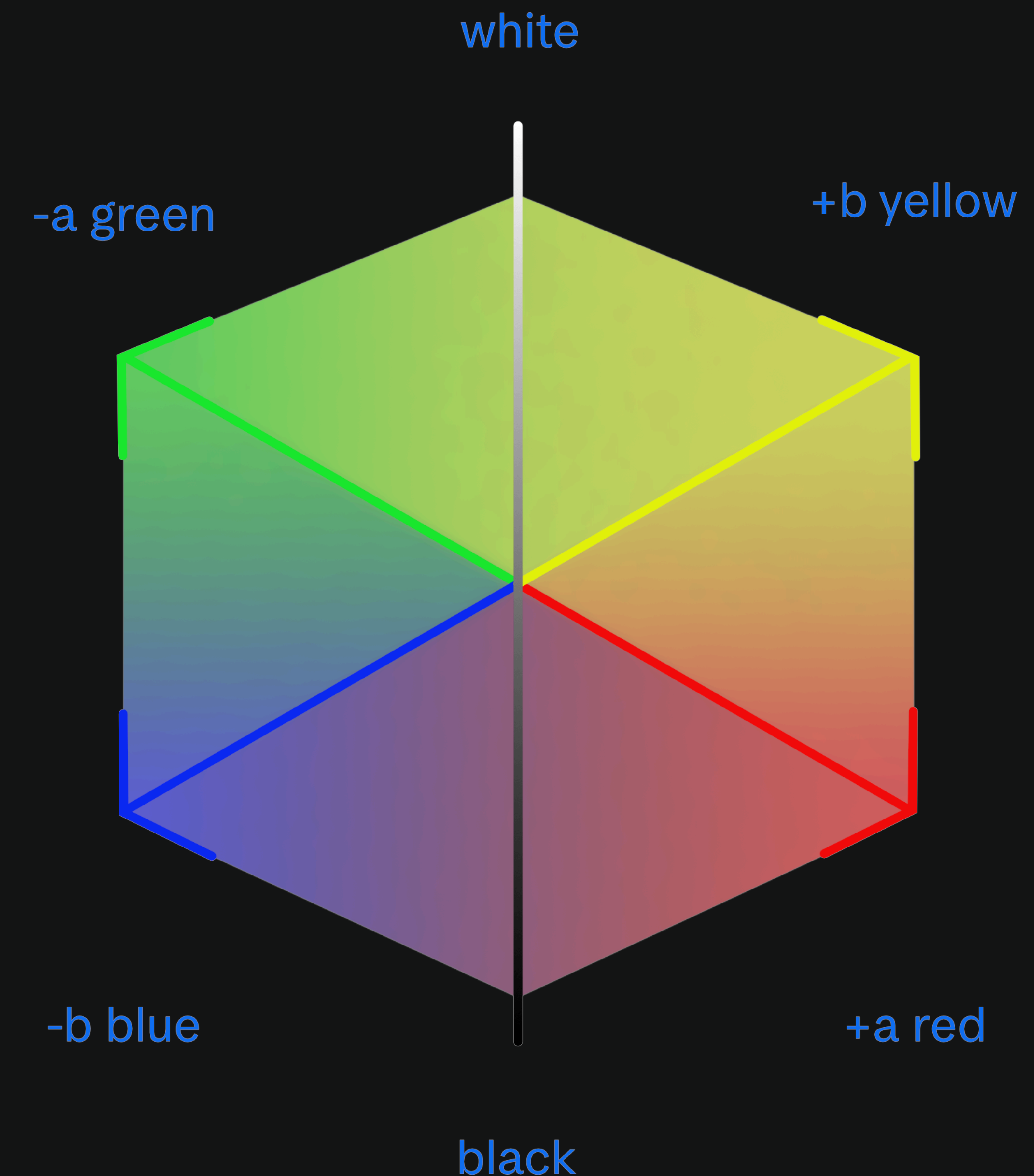
# Colour formats and bit depths

The Affinity apps support Greyscale, RGB, CMYK and LAB colour formats.

RGB supports 8-bit, 16-bit and 32-bit per channel bit depths. 8-bit and 16-bit are non-linear integer formats, whereas 32-bit is a linear floating point (unbounded) format.

In 32-bit, a huge advantage is that all adjustments and filters can be used with the exception of Dust and Scratches, Bilateral Blur & Median Blur.

Additionally, all blend modes can be used in 32-bit, though some may clamp out-of-bound values to between 0-1.



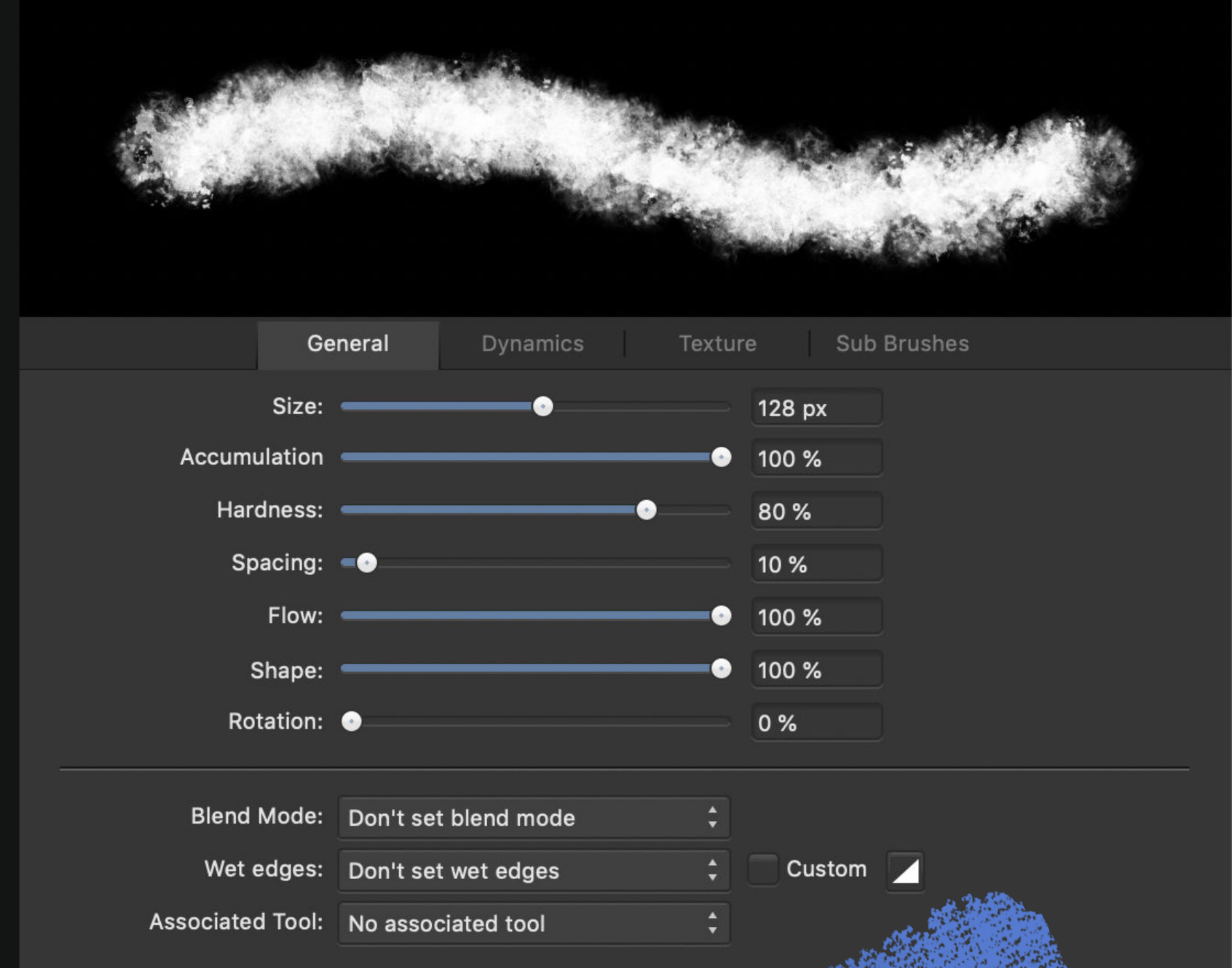


# Brushes

The Affinity apps have a native *.afbrushes* brush format but will also import .abr brush files including those with dynamics.

Brushes can be edited either by double-clicking on the brush within the **Brushes Panel** or by rightclicking on the brush and choosing **Edit Brush**.

Current brush settings can be changed on the Context Toolbar.



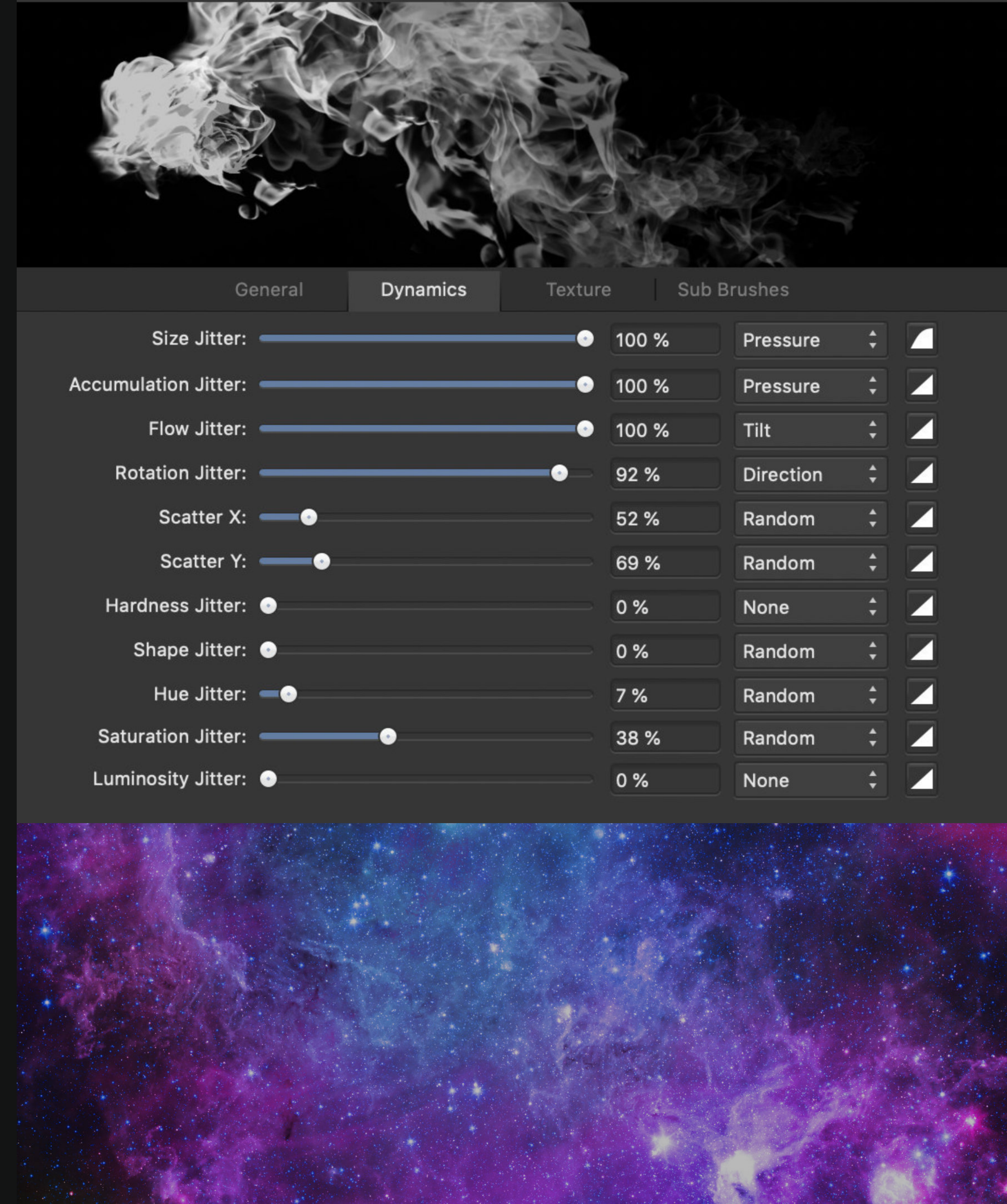
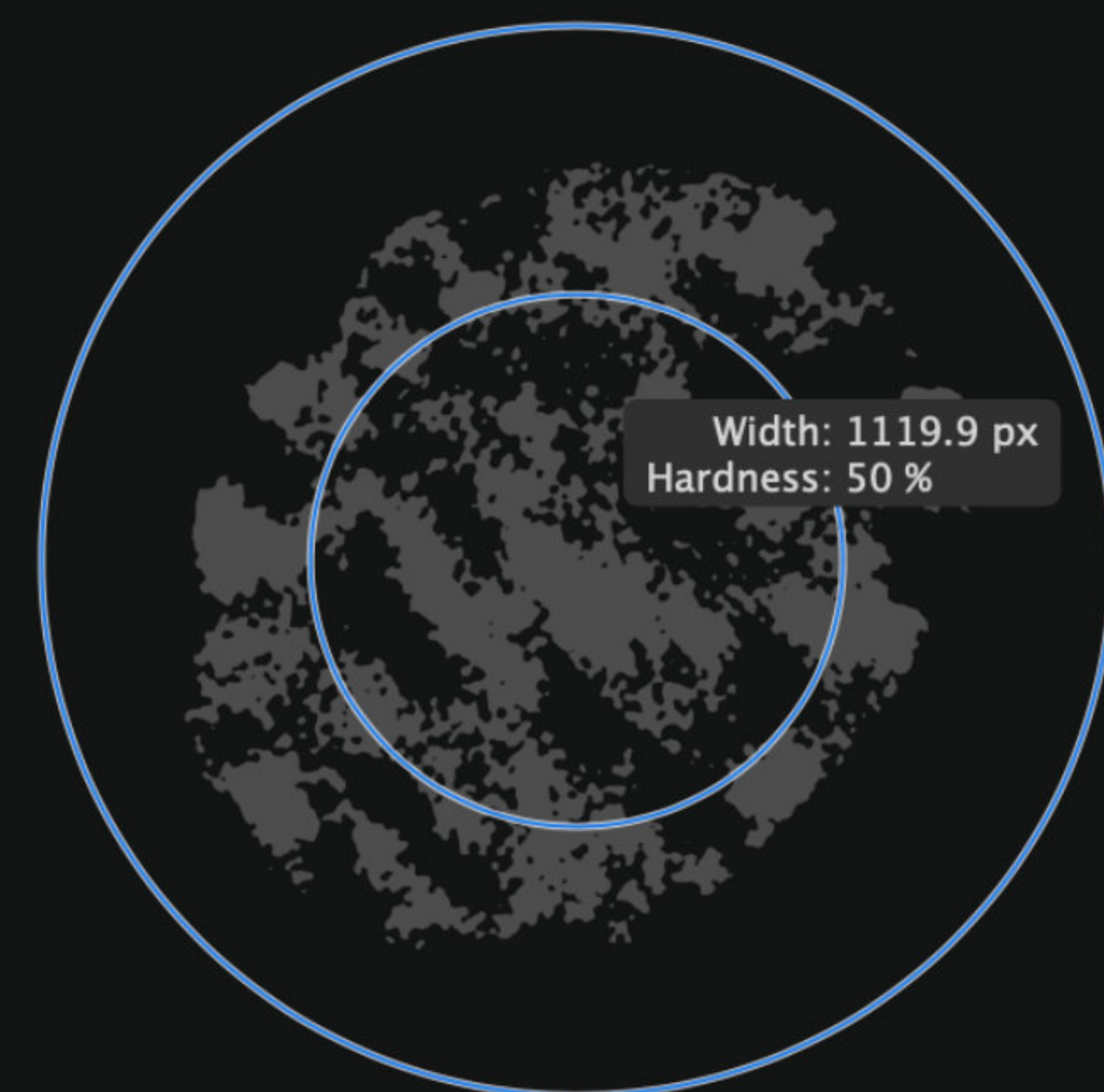


A modifier can be used to alter both brush width and hardness on-the-fly:

- On Mac, this modifier is **Ctrl+Option**  $\backslash$  + **Left click and drag**.
- On Windows, this modifier is **Alt+Left click & drag+Right click & drag**.
- Dragging up/down will change **Hardness**.
- Dragging left/right will change **Width**.

Brush dynamics can be edited via the **Dynamics** tab.

You can assign various controllers to each brush property. Compatibility includes Wacom and Huion tablets and the Apple Pencil on the iPad versions.







The Affinity apps have a feature called **Sub-Brushes**. This allows you to add additional brushes to a brush nozzle—each sub-brush can be fully customised with its own comprehensive settings and dynamics, meaning you can layer different brushes and apply them with each brush stroke.

Use cases may involve random scattering of bitmap brushes (e.g. trees/foliage for Architectural Visualisation work) or complex layering of brushes for raster painting & masking.



# Non-destructive behaviour

The Affinity apps do not have one single solution for a 'smart object' equivalent—instead, various operations within the apps are designed to be intrinsically non-destructive.

- Layer transforming, scaling, rotating and shearing is all performed non-destructively at draw time.
- Layers always retain their original resolution and quality should you need to manipulate them at a later date.
- Layer manipulation is achieved via the Move Tool **[V]** or by using the **Transform Panel** (located at the bottom right of the interface by default).
- Gradient and solid colour fills should be added to Fill Layers (**Layer>New Fill Layer**) instead of Pixel Layers. This will stop them from being rasterised and allow them to be re-edited at any time.
- Many destructive filters are also available as live filter layers, located under **Layer>New Live Filter Layer**. These behave like adjustment layers, meaning you can alter their settings at any time, change their opacity and blend mode, and also mask them.
- The retouching tools and **Flood Fill Tool** all have layer target options on the context toolbar (e.g. **Current Layer and Below**). This allows you to work on separate pixel layers without modifying the original image content.

Width: 77.8 px ▼

Opacity: 100 % ▼

Flow: 100 % ▼

Hardness: 80 % ▼

More



☐ Stabiliser



Length: 35 ▼

✓ Current Layer  
Current Layer & Below



## The Affinity apps make a distinction between Pixel Layers and Image Layers:

**Pixel Layers** are 'mutable' (editable). They contain raster content that can be changed e.g. by using tools like the Paint Brush Tool **[B]** and Inpainting Brush Tool **[J]**.

Pixel layers originate from new empty layers, developed RAW images, rasterised layers or image data that is copy-pasted.

**Image Layers** are 'immutable' (constant). They are created when you place images, either by drag-dropping them over the document or by going to **File>Place**.

Image layers contain the original image data, e.g. compressed JPEG information and cannot be directly edited. You can apply non-destructive behaviours to them (adjustment/filter layers, masks, clipping layers) but using a tool such as the Paint Brush Tool **[B]** will 'rasterise' an Image Layer to a Pixel Layer.

*You can rasterise any layer type to 'bake' its current resolution and clipped masks/adjustments/filters by right-clicking and choosing 'Rasterise', or by going to Layer>Rasterise.*

