



ImageSkill Software

Translucator v1.0

User's Manual

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Introduction

Translucator is a Photoshop-compatible plug-in for Windows designed by ImageSkill Software that can work with Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Photoshop Elements, Corel (Jasc) Paint Shop Pro, Microsoft Digital Image Suite etc.

Translucator extracts translucent objects (like glass, smoke, fog, fur etc.) from images in a few mouse clicks with a perfect result. The Translucator unmixes object and background colors in processed areas, so you can then place result on other background properly. The cutting objects may be used for collage, scrap-book and greeting card creation.

Using Translucator you can make a result that is unavailable with other masking programs like Adobe Magic Extractor, Corel Knock-Out, Microsoft Expression and so on.

You do not need accurately draw out an object. Mark translucent area and press Apply. The efficiency of background removing is adjusted by moving one slider only. There are addition tools for result tuning. You can receive attractive results and it takes less time and efforts.

You can use erase/restore brush for the manual correction of the resulting image.

In order to check result you can switch between original image and result one and preview the extracted object against a colored matte background.

Features at glance

- Ability to cut translucent objects like glass, smoke, fur etc
- Color unmixing for future background replacing
- There are tools for debris removing and holes filling within received mask
- You can switch between original image and result one and preview the extracted object against a colored matte background for result checking.
- 16-bit mode support

System Requirements

Computer	Pentium 400MHz
Operation System	Win98, Win200, Win2003, Win XP, Win NT3, Win NT4
Hard Drive	you must have free space about 3 Mb
RAM	64Mb
Miscellaneous	mouse or other pointing device
	You must have suitable graphic host software (see below)

Registering ImageSkill Translucator

You can order full version of this plug-in via ShareIt and RegNow services (the latest accept PayPal). If you buy Translucator through these services you receive user name and unlock key. Please, enter their carefully without additional blanks. Use copy-paste method.

If you have any trouble with unlock key, write sales@imageskill.com

Registered users receive our email newsletter containing information about new product releases and updates, free downloads, articles, tips, and special offers.

Just now, we upgrade our products for registered customer free of charge.

Getting Technical Support

If you have any trouble, questions, feature requests or notes, you can get help in one of the following ways:

E-Mail: support@imageskill.com

Web site: <http://forum.imageskill.com>

Getting Started

Masking process overview

In order to extract translucent object you must set areas where these objects are placed. You can do it using **“Mark translucent zone”** brush and **“Flood Fill”** tool. Marked parts after extraction will have some opacity values; the unmarked parts will be transparent completely.

Extracting process is started by pressing **“Apply”** button. You can adjust strength of extraction by **“Strength”** parameter. Algorithm always takes source image as starting point. So, if after extraction you lost object's part decrease **“Strength”** parameter and press **“Apply”** again. Or if you do not erase background completely - decrease **“Strength”** parameter and press **“Apply”**.

Often, the extracted objects look desaturated after extraction. You can control saturation of the extracted objects by **“Saturation”** control.

You can clean received mask by debris removing and holes filling. Check corresponded flags and run extracting process.

You can use **“Manual Eraser”** tool to correcting final mask. NOTE: The all translucent zone marks are dropped after **“Manual Eraser”** applying.

Check result of extraction using preview the extracted object against a colored matte background.

Installing and uninstalling

Run setup file. Installer finds suitable graphic hosts. Choose one of them from list. If you want to install plug-in in other folder, select item "Other path" and set path. In this case you must set "Plug-ins path" of your graphic host to setup folder.

Plug-in can work under the following graphics host properly

- Adobe Photoshop 7, CS, CS2
- Adobe Photoshop Elements 3, 4, 5
- Jasc Paint Shop Pro 7, 8, 9
- Corel Paint Shop Pro (Photo) X, X1
- Corel Photo Paint 11,12
- Xara Xtreme
- Microsoft Digital Image Suite 2006
- XnView 1.8 and older

Plug-in may be compatible with other graphic hosts as well.

In order to uninstall plug-in run uninstaller (file uninstall.exe) or use Add and Remove Programs item in the Control Panel or Start Menu.

User interface

Translucator has 4 main sections (see description below):

- A: Toolbar
- B: Extracting parameters
- C: Brush parameters
- D: View parameters

Pressing the “OK” button causes returning to graphic host with applying object extracting.

Pressing the “Cancel” button causes returning to graphic host without source image changing.

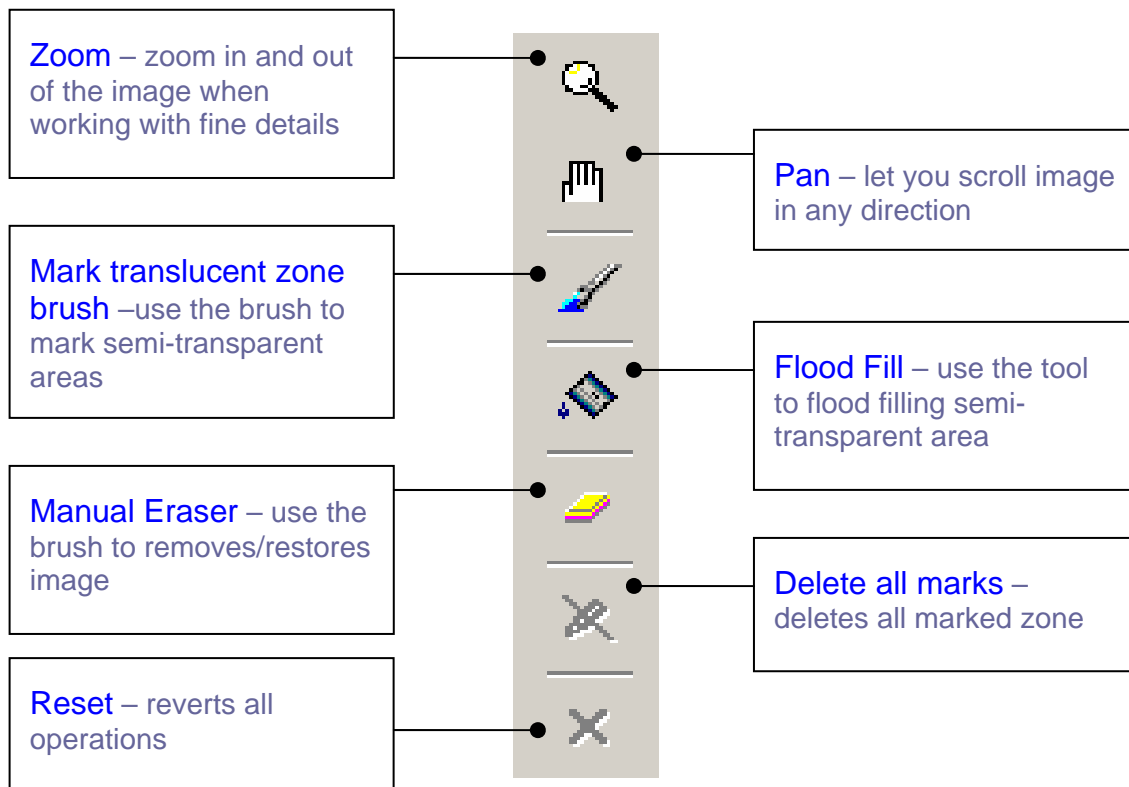
The “Help” button runs short HTML help.

The “Apply” button runs extracting process. You need to press “Apply” button after any parameter's changing.

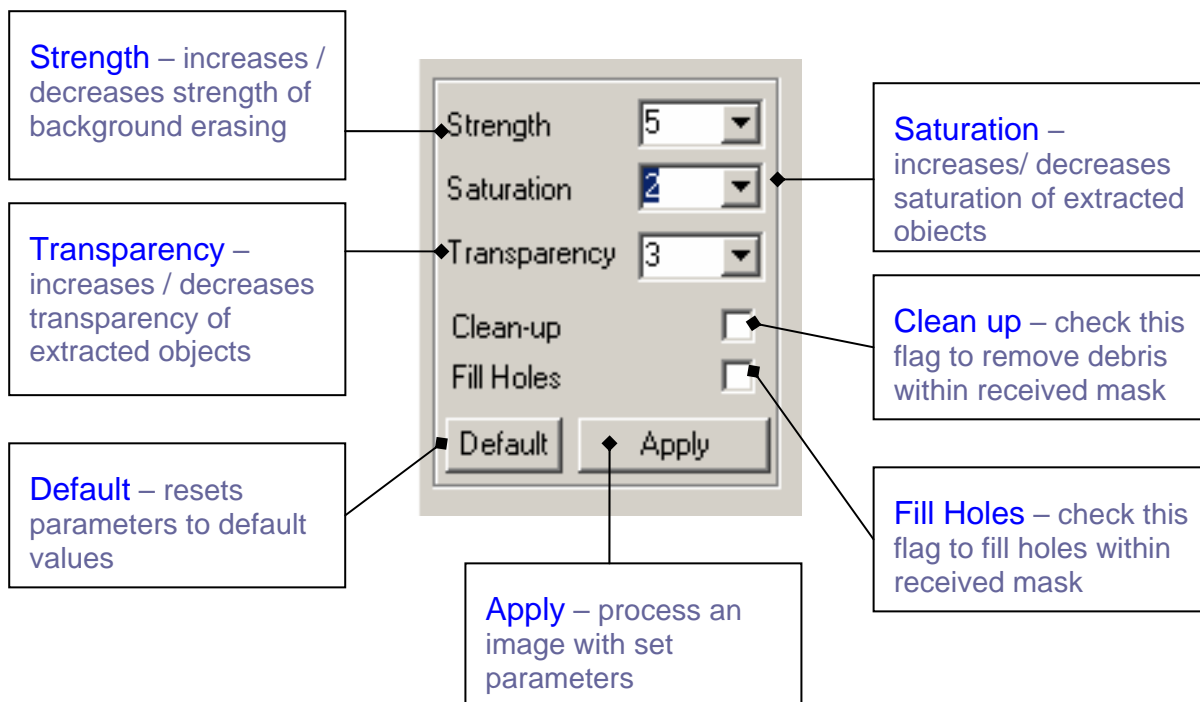


Current image zoom factor, progress bar and prompting line are placed into bottom of main window.

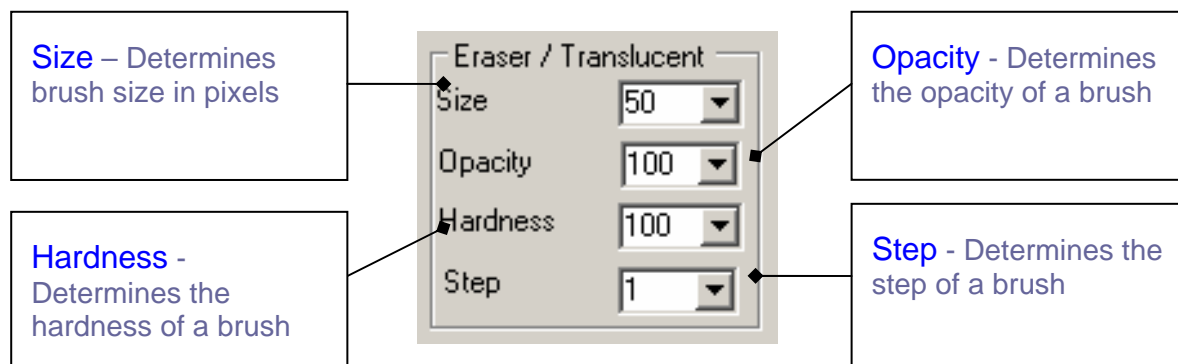
A. Toolbar



B. Processing parameters



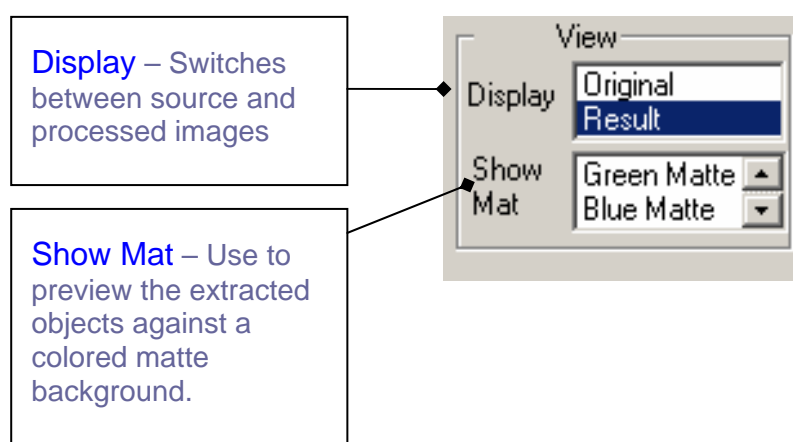
C. Brush parameters



The diagram shows a control panel titled "Eraser / Translucent" with four dropdown menus: Size (50), Opacity (100), Hardness (100), and Step (1). Four callout boxes provide definitions for each parameter.

- Size** – Determines brush size in pixels
- Opacity** - Determines the opacity of a brush
- Hardness** - Determines the hardness of a brush
- Step** - Determines the step of a brush

D. View



The diagram shows a control panel titled "View" with two dropdown menus: "Display" (Original, Result) and "Show Mat" (Green Matte, Blue Matte). Two callout boxes provide definitions for each option.

- Display** – Switches between source and processed images
- Show Mat** – Use to preview the extracted objects against a colored matte background.

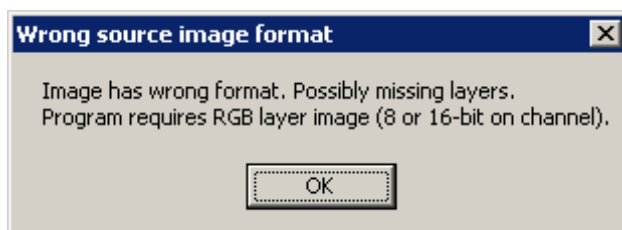
Working with Translucator

All example commands and image are valid for Adobe Photoshop Elements 4.

Source data

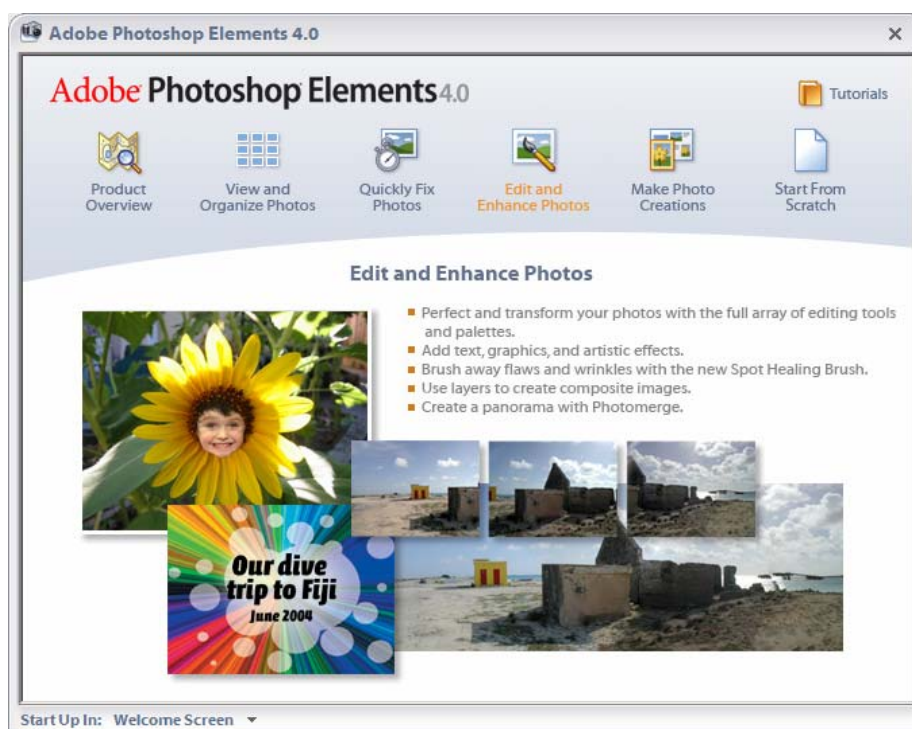
Plug-in can process RGB layer data with 8 or 16 bits/channel only. If your image has no layer you must create one at first.

If you try to run ImageSkill Translucator under other image data (CMYK, Background RGB, LAB, Grayscale etc) you receive the following message

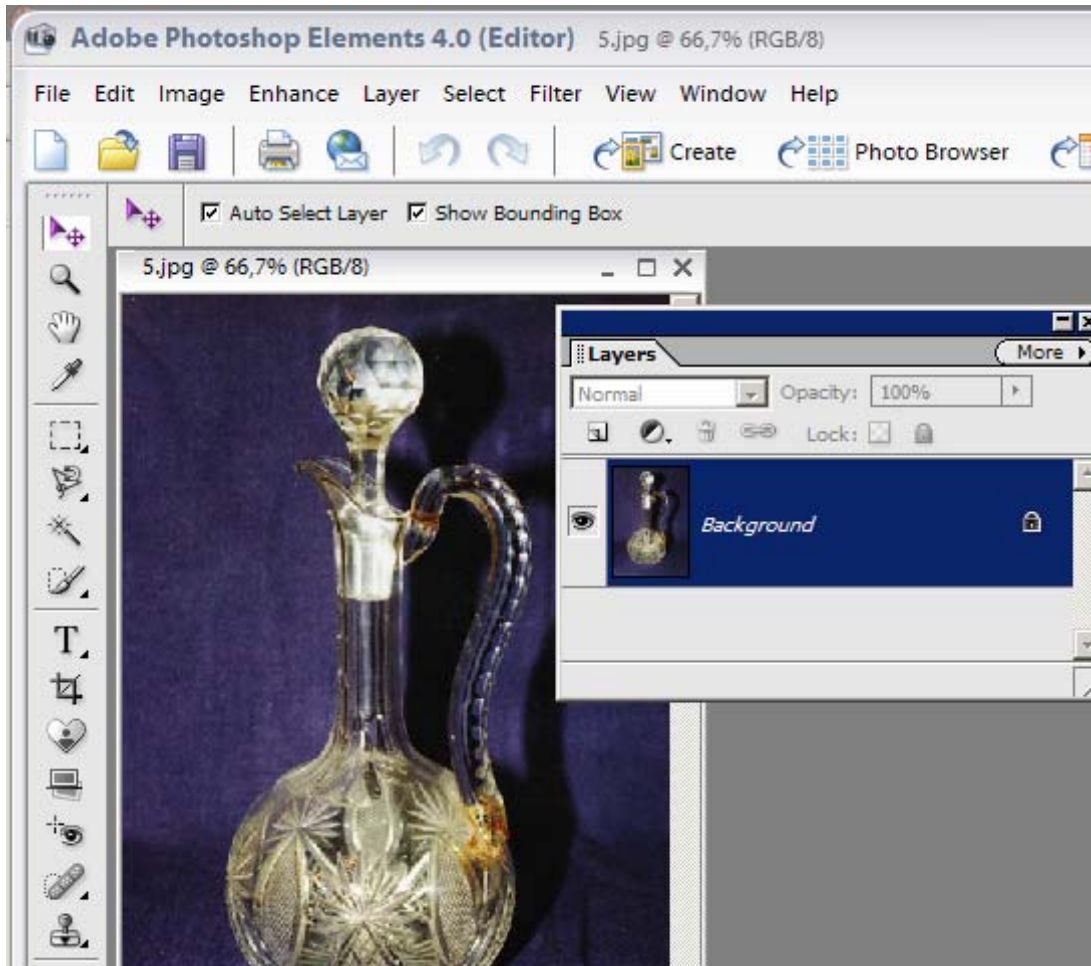


Starting Translucator

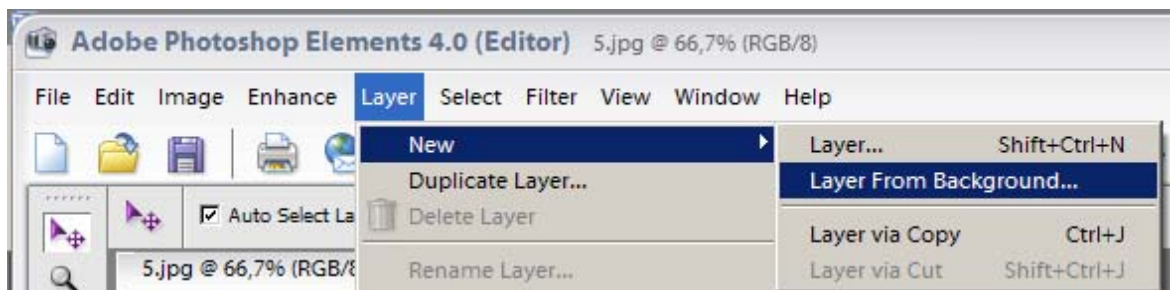
Run your graphic host (for example Adobe Photoshop Elements 4 – run it in “Edit and Enhance Photos mode”). If you run it in other mode, a few possibilities like layers will be locked.)



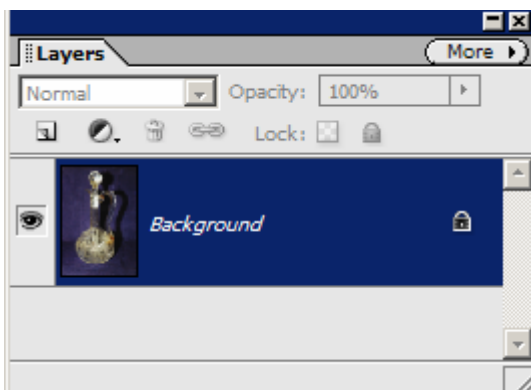
Open an image (for example camera shot in JPG graphic format). This is background image in RGB graphic format 8-bit/channel. This image has no layer data yet. You can check it by "Layers" window. (Use menu item "Window->Layers").



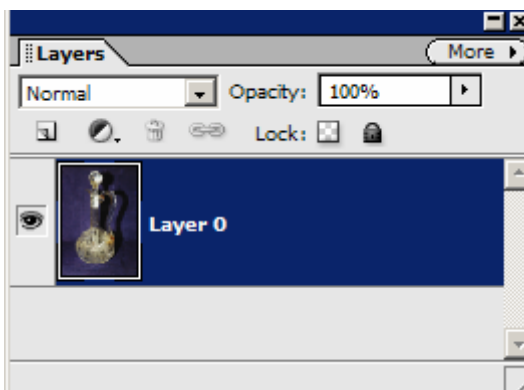
You must create layer (i.e. add a channel for transparency) in order to run Translucator. Use menu item "Layers->New->Layer form Background..."



You can check layer creation using the "Layers" window.



Before layer creation



After layer creation

Now you can run the Translocator plug-in. (use "Filter->Image Skill->Translocator" menu item).




ImageSkill Translocator is started now.

Extracting translucent objects


In order to extract translucent object you have to mark it using “**Mark translucent zone**” brush and/or “**Flood Fill**” tool. After extraction marked parts will have some opacity values; the unmarked parts will be transparent completely. Marked areas are shown by semi-transparent blue color. So, unmarked areas will be fully transparent (or will be erased) after pressing “**Apply**” button.



Choose “**Mark translucent zone**” brush from toolbar. 

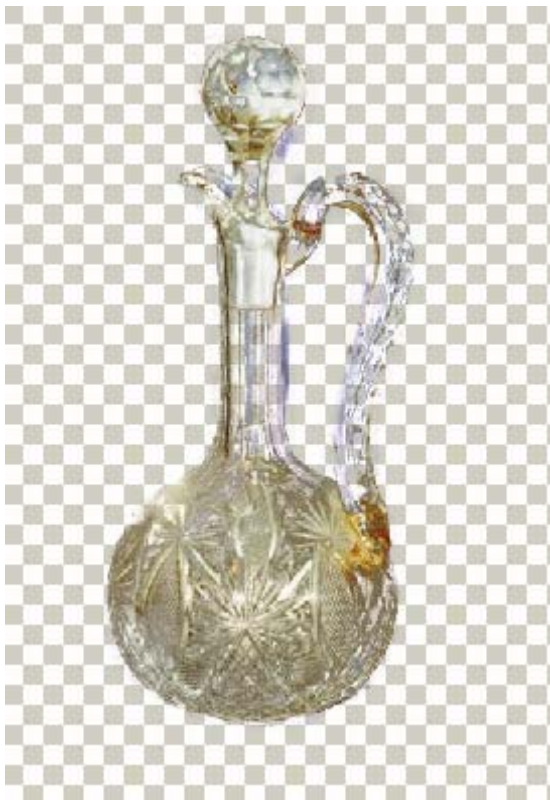
Click and drag to mark object's place.

You can change brush size using “**Brush size**” parameter.

You can drop all marks using “**Delete All Marks**” tool. 

Choose **"Flood Fill"** tool from toolbar  and click to flood fill marked area.

This tool flood filling wide area bounded image size and marks, prepared by **"Mark translucent zone"** brush.

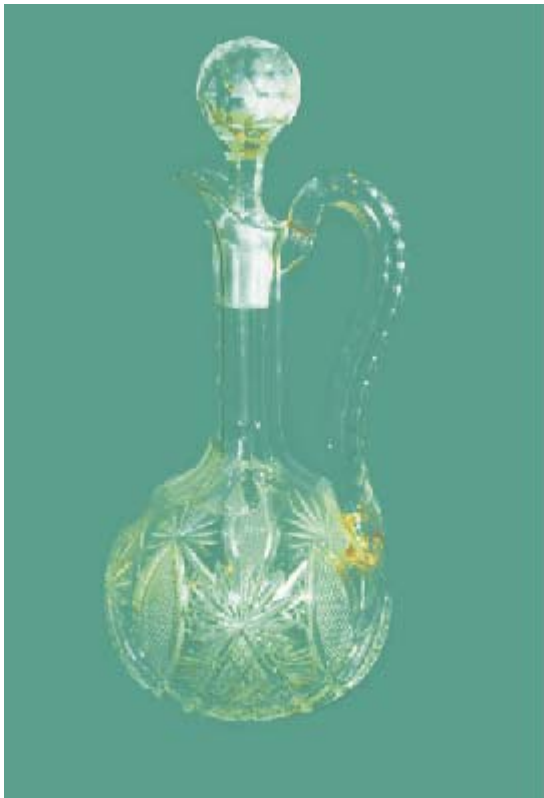
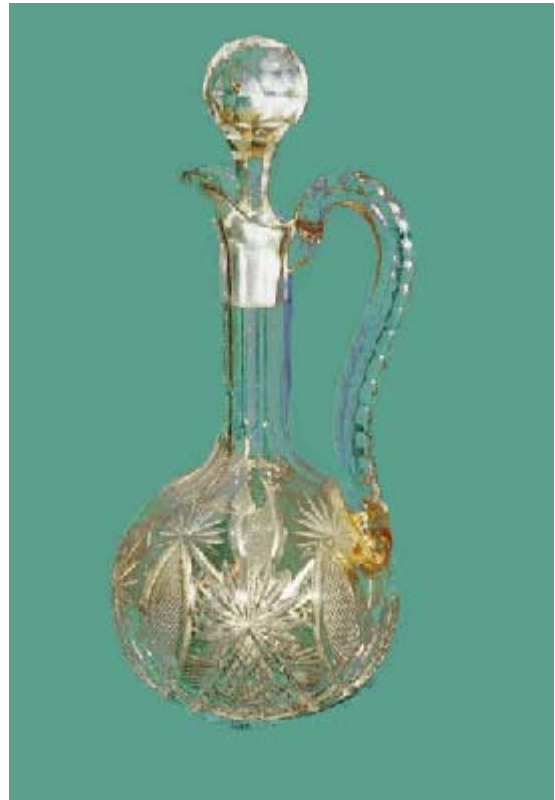


Press **"Apply"** button to start extraction.

NOTE: You must press **"Apply"** button after all parameters have been changed.

Check result of extraction using color matted background. Usually use Cyan as background color – all defects on this color are more visible than on other color. Set **“Show Mat”** parameter to **“Cyan Matte”** in View section.

There are 8 predefined colors: None (Background is fully transparent), Cyan, Gray, Black, White, Red, Green, Blue.



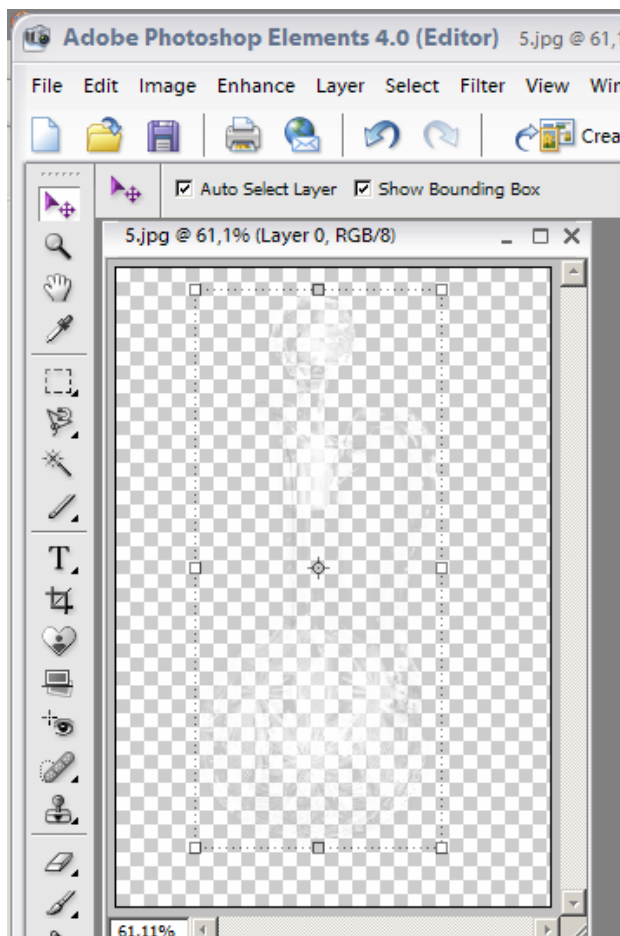
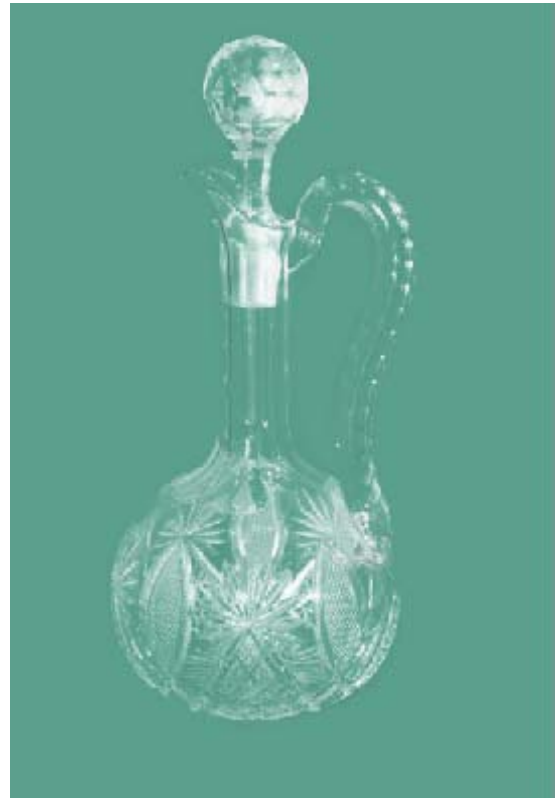
Set **“Strength”** parameter to 9 (we want to remove background colors more), **“Saturation”** to 10, and check **“Clean Up”** flag. Then press **“Apply”** again.

“Strength” has range from 1 to 10. The lower value corresponds to less background removing, the larger value – more background removing. Default value is 5.

You can make glass “more transparent” if set **“Saturation”** parameter to -50 (i.e. you desaturate the decanter at all).

Often after background removing your transparent object looks desaturated. You can adjust saturation of your object by **“Saturation”** control. It has range from -50 to 50. The lower value corresponds to less saturation, the larger value – more saturation. Default value is 0.

You can also adjust opacity of extracted object by **“Transparency”** control. The lower value corresponds to less transparency, the larger value – more transparency. Default value is 2.



Press **“OK”** button to return into Photoshop Elements.

Our extraction result looks like as fully transparent object.

You can put your extracted object into other image for collage creation. The image below is combined from 3 images: background image (boat in coast), waterfall and decanter, extracted on previous steps.



Using Translocator you can extract glass, smoke, fog, water, clouds, wool, fur etc and even not-transparent objects.

FAQ and Troubleshooting

I can not run Translucator or Translucator is grey out in graphic host's effect menu.

Graphic hosts disable the plug-in if the current image is not suitable for use with Translucator. Image must be in RGB format with 8 or 16 bit/channel and must have a layer (i.e. image must have 4 channels: R, G, B, and Alpha). If image has CMYK, LAB, Grayscale or something other format, you have to convert it to RGB. If image has no layer you have to create it at first.

Why my marked zone disappears?

All marks are removed when you select "Manual Erasing" tool . Use this tool at final stage of extraction.

What does happen if my image already has transparent area?

When you process image with transparent areas, the final transparency in such points will not less than source transparency. I.e. plug-in does not increase alpha value in transparent areas.

How does plug-in process selection?

The Translucator affects to selected area only. The unselected area is still unchanged. The unselected area is shown a red semi-transparent color in main plug-in window. Plug-in deals with the bounding box selection.

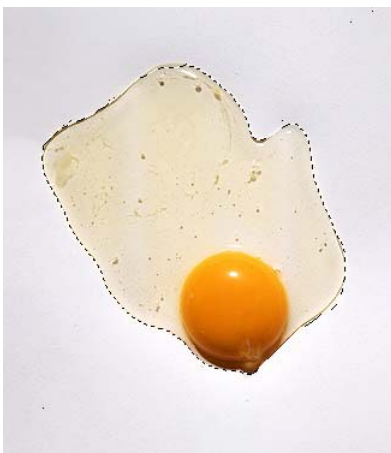


Image with selection



The unselected areas is filled by semi-transparent red color



Result of processing

What to do when object too much is erased

Try to decrease “**Strength**” parameter and press “**Apply**” button again. Check flag “**Fill Holes**” in order to fill small holes into extracted object.

What to do when background not enough is erased

Try to increase “**Strength**” parameter and press “**Apply**” button again. Uncheck flag “**Clean Up**” in order to remove debris within received mask. Try to correct marks of translucent zone.

Translucator unmixes object's and background's colors for calculation alpha value in each point. When you mark translucent zones, do not afraid of mark background. It is better than unmark translucent object.

NOTE:

If you did not find answer on your questions, write your questions to support@imageskill.com or send them to support forum <http://forum.imageskill.com>