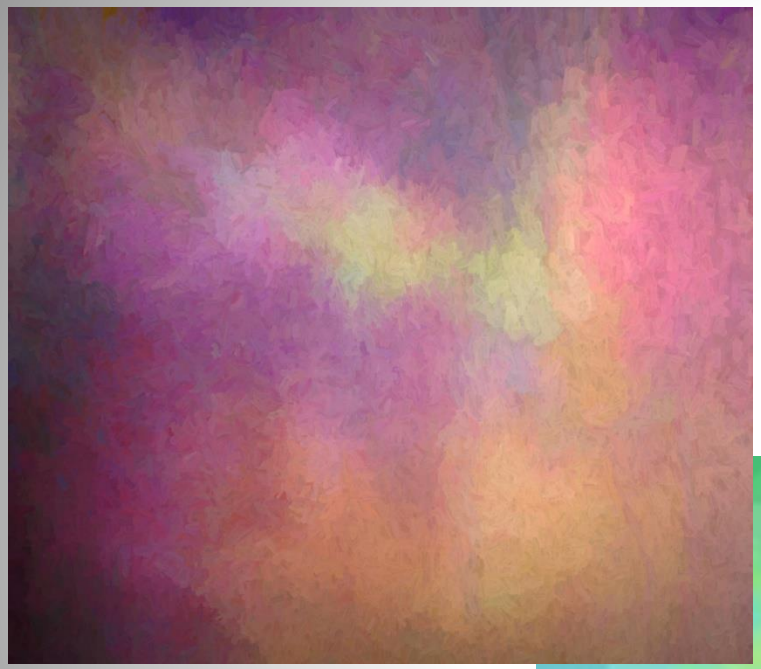
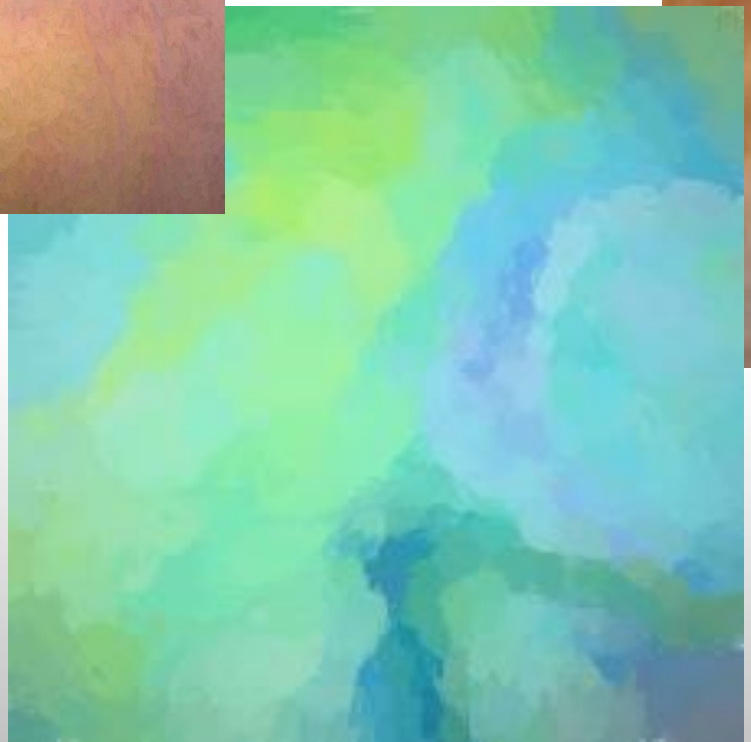
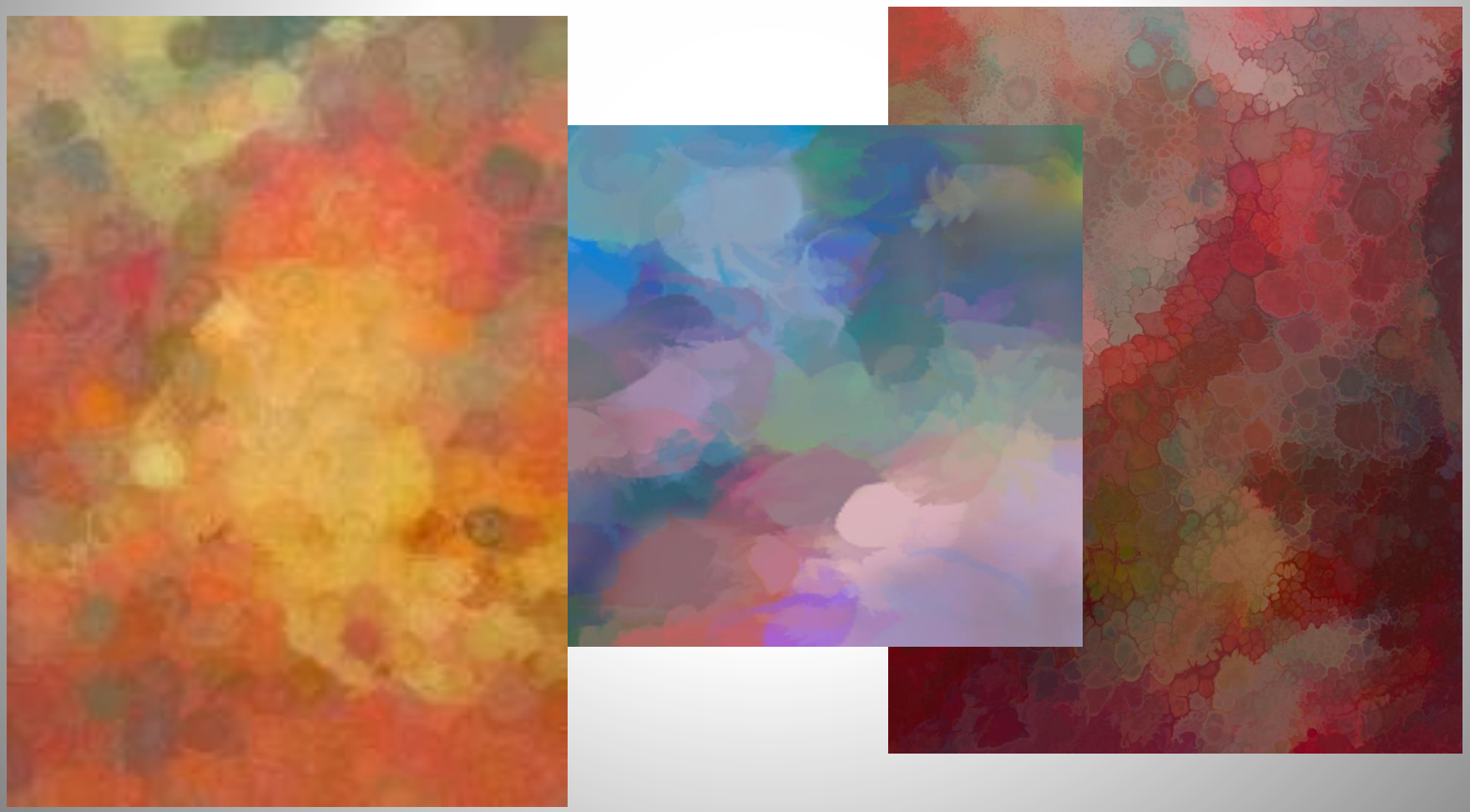
Make your own digital overlays and photo backdrops!

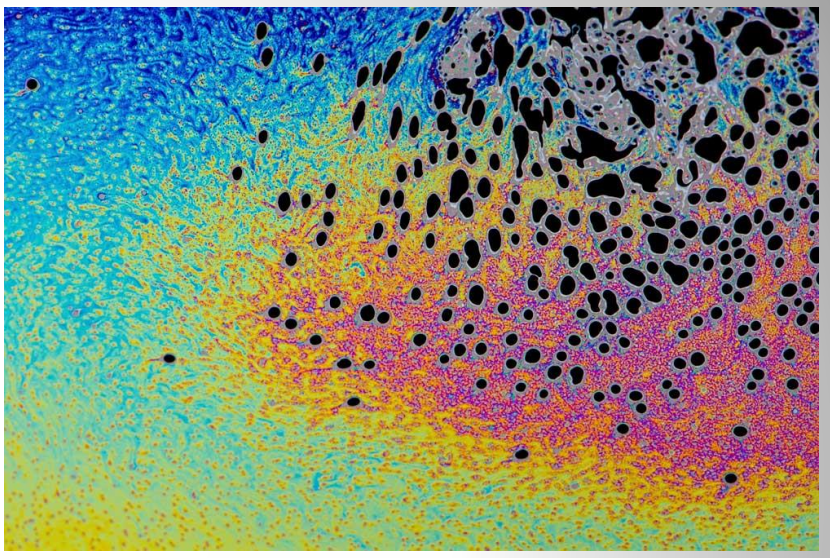


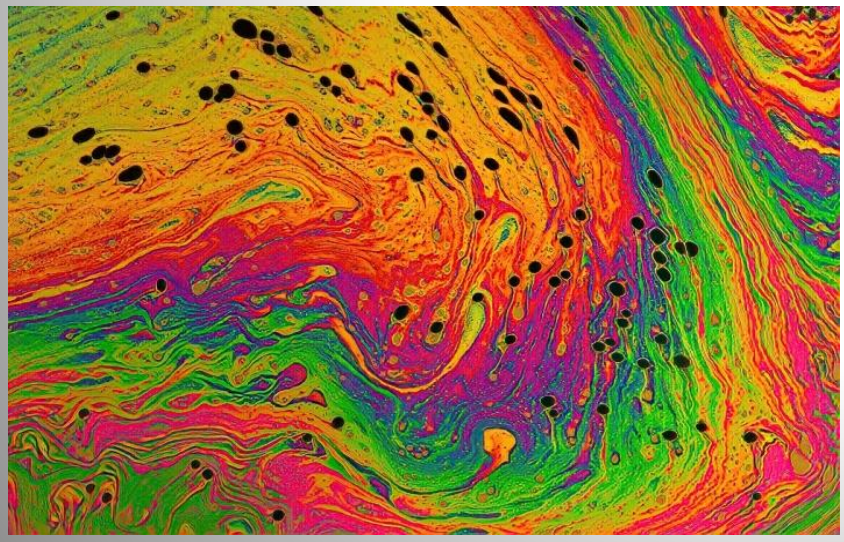


I also want to say that when you are first looking at these you might think that some of them are a little too wild and colorful to be used as a backdrop. I normally use these as macro backdrops when I am out in the field or in my home studio. When we get to the end you will see some samples of how they work. I usually make these in both a pastel version and a bright version.



Almost any file will work - here are some that I have used – rust, leaves, soap films. I like them colorful, but it's easy to make them more subdued.





So let's jump in and I will show you some things in Studio2

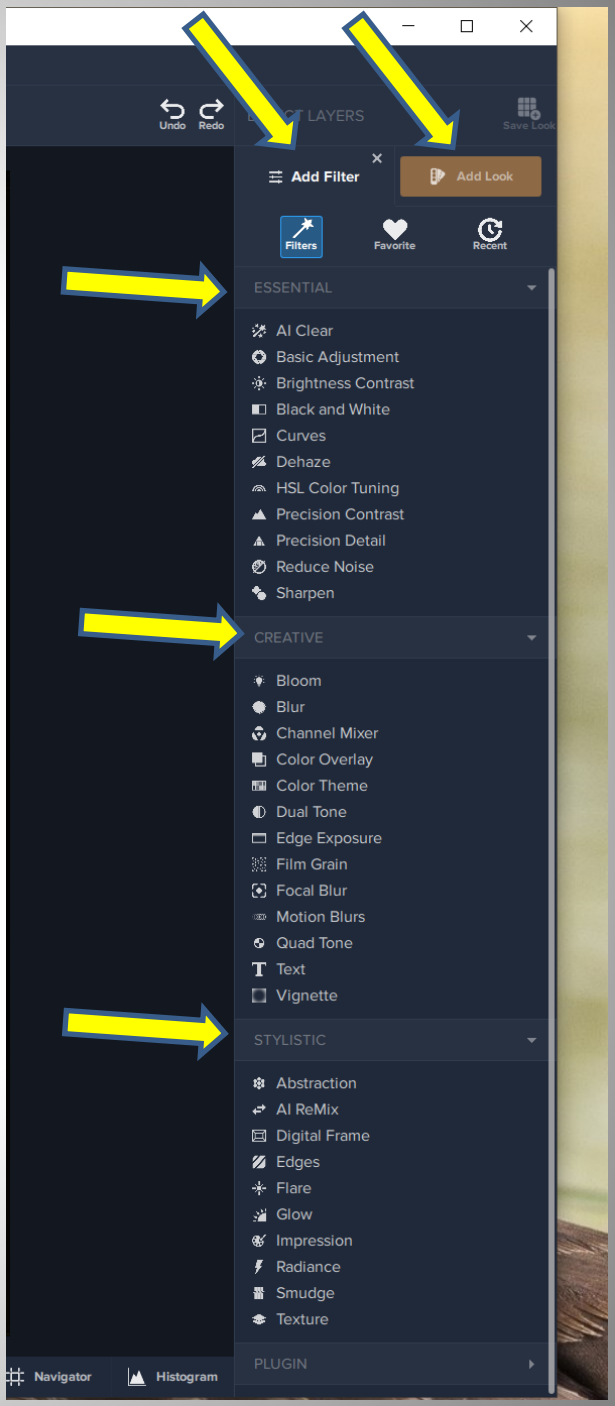
This is a picture of some rust I found on a gate.

I didn't do anything to it – I just opened it in my photo processor, and exported it as a .tiff file without reducing the size at all.

Tip:

You are going to want to keep your file as big as possible so that you are not limited. I plan to have a few of mine printed on vinyl for use in my indoor studio (you'll see why that's laughable in a bit), so I need to print them out at a 5 ft X 7 ft size.

When you first bring your image into Studio2 you will notice on the right of the screen are an “Add Filter” button and an “Add Look” button. If you click on the “Add Filter” button you get this menu.



There are three categories:

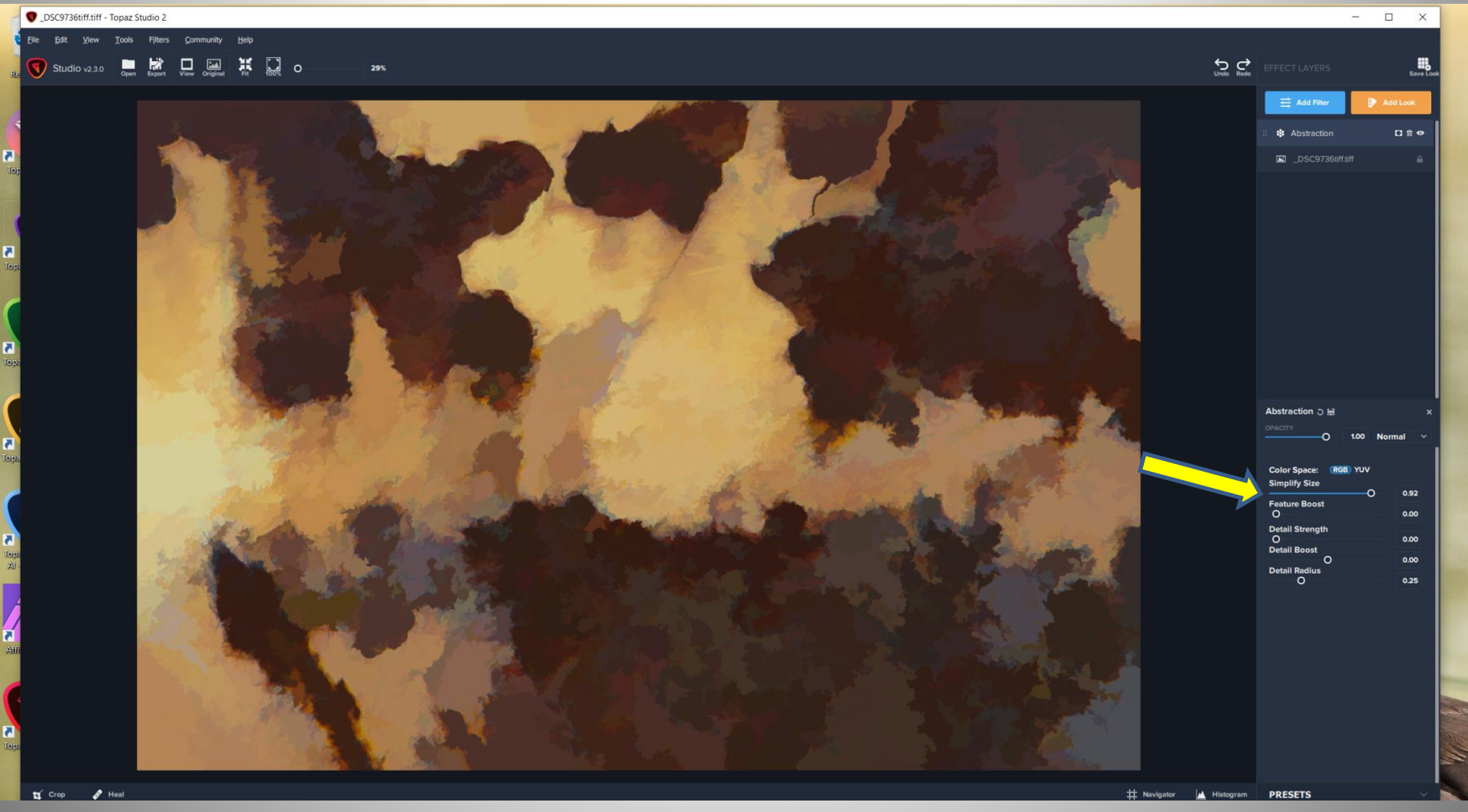
Essential, which has all the regular adjustments like Curves, Sharpen, Noise and HSL color tuning.

Creative, which has things like Blurs, Color overlays, Add Text and Vignettes.

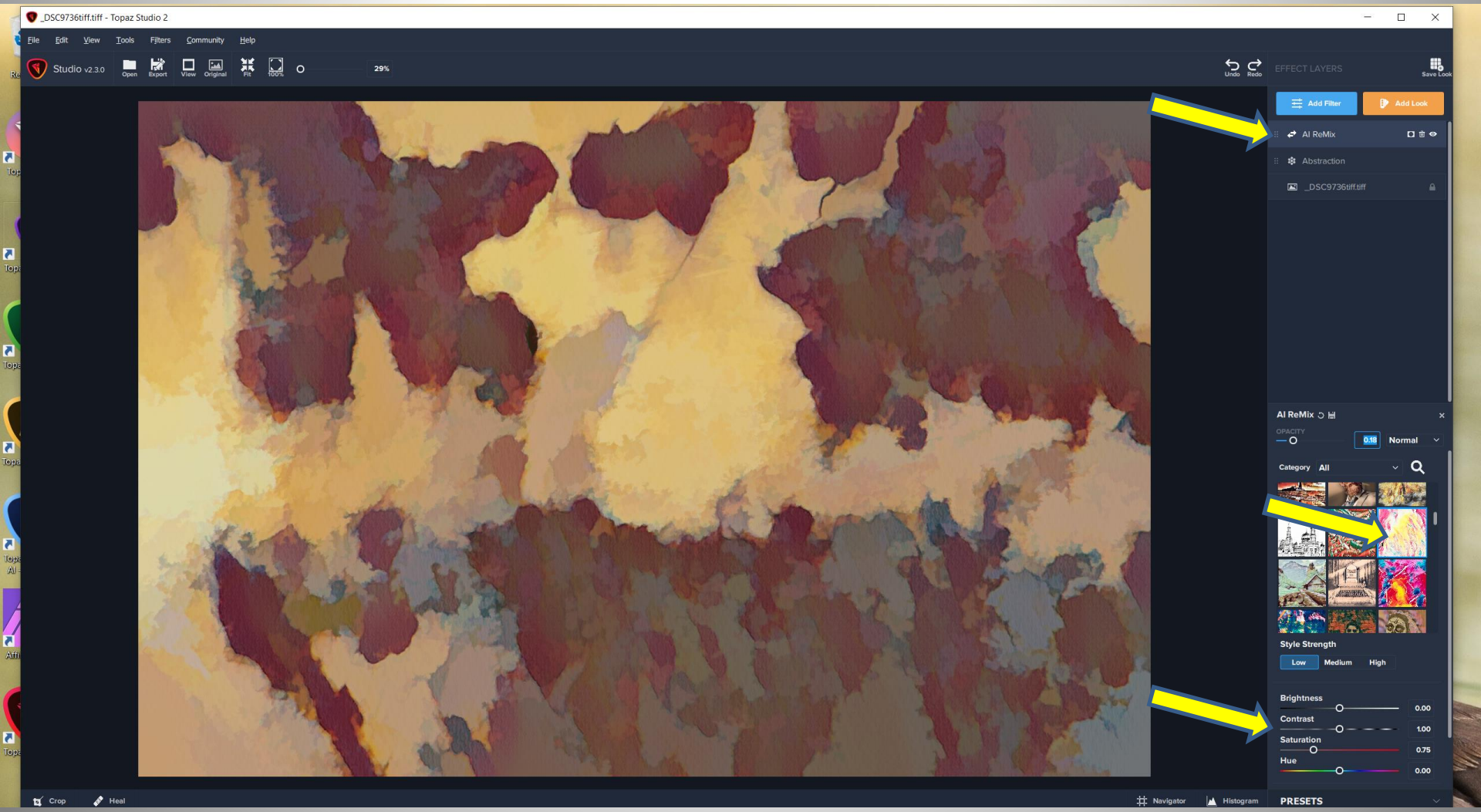
Stylistic, which has some art-type adjustments like Glow, Frames, Textures and Edges

Here is my rust image. I have applied a Filter. I like the Impression filter in the Stylistic catagory. I like the round brush, but many more brushes are available. Then you can further play with the sliders and blend modes!

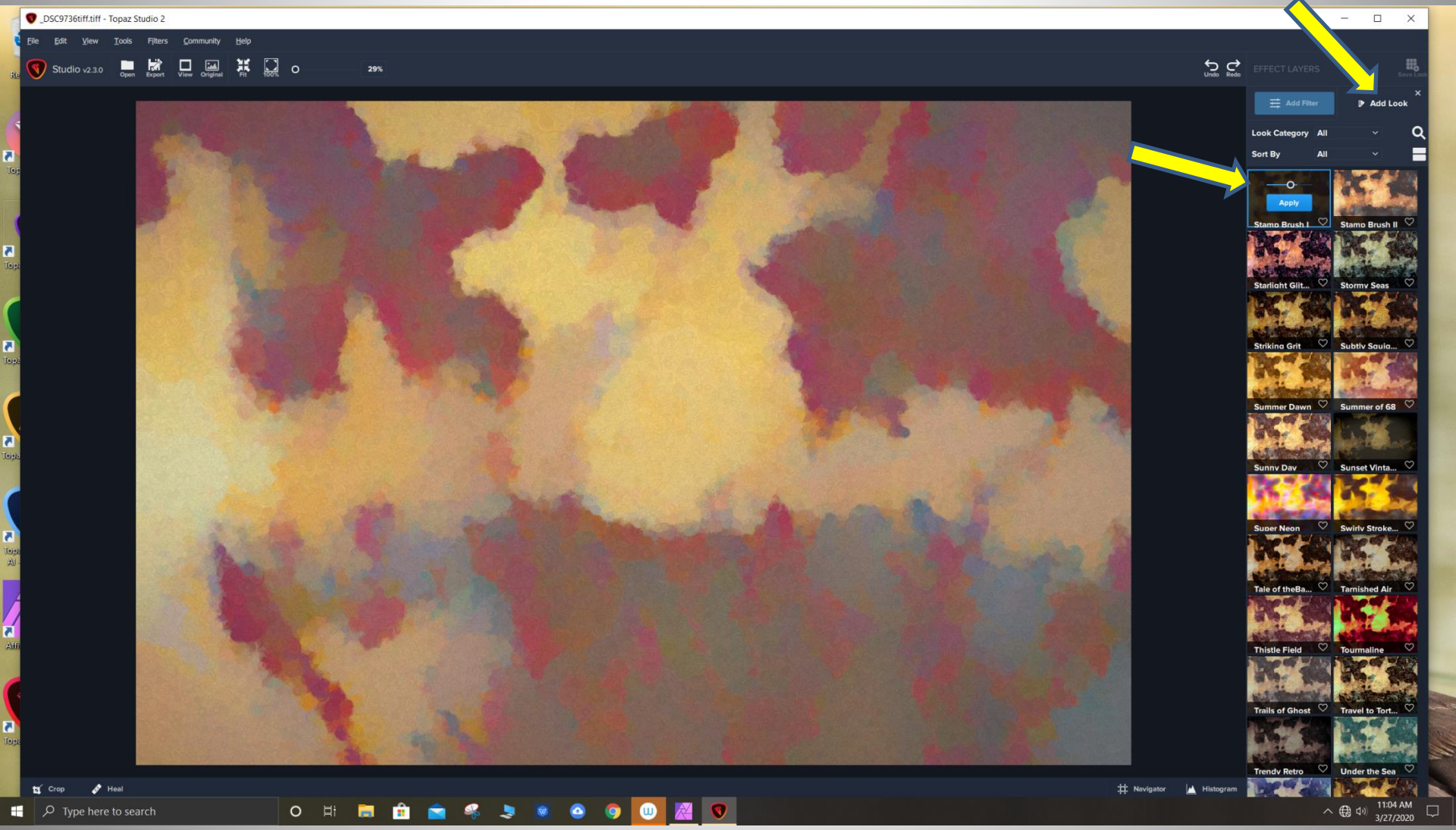
This is a different Filter - the Abstraction Filter. It is also in the Stylistic menu. You can play with the sliders and play with the blend modes. For this one I slid the Simplify slider to the right quite a bit.



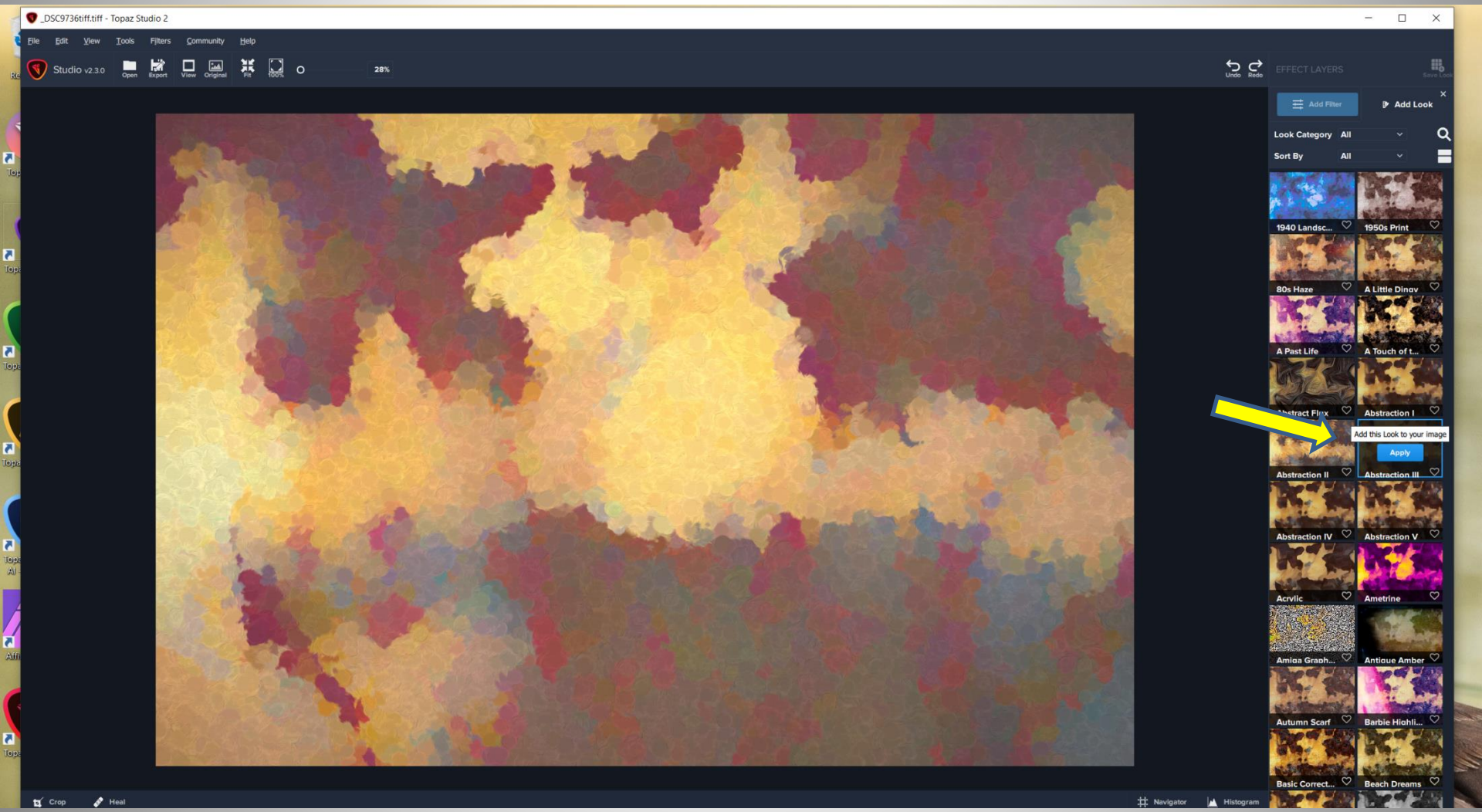
Next: another Filter – Remix in the Stylistic section. Within Remix are many filter choices. I chose the Chillwave selection for this one. Again, you can play with the sliders, opacity and the blend modes – or use another Remix choice altogether, there are quite a few of them.



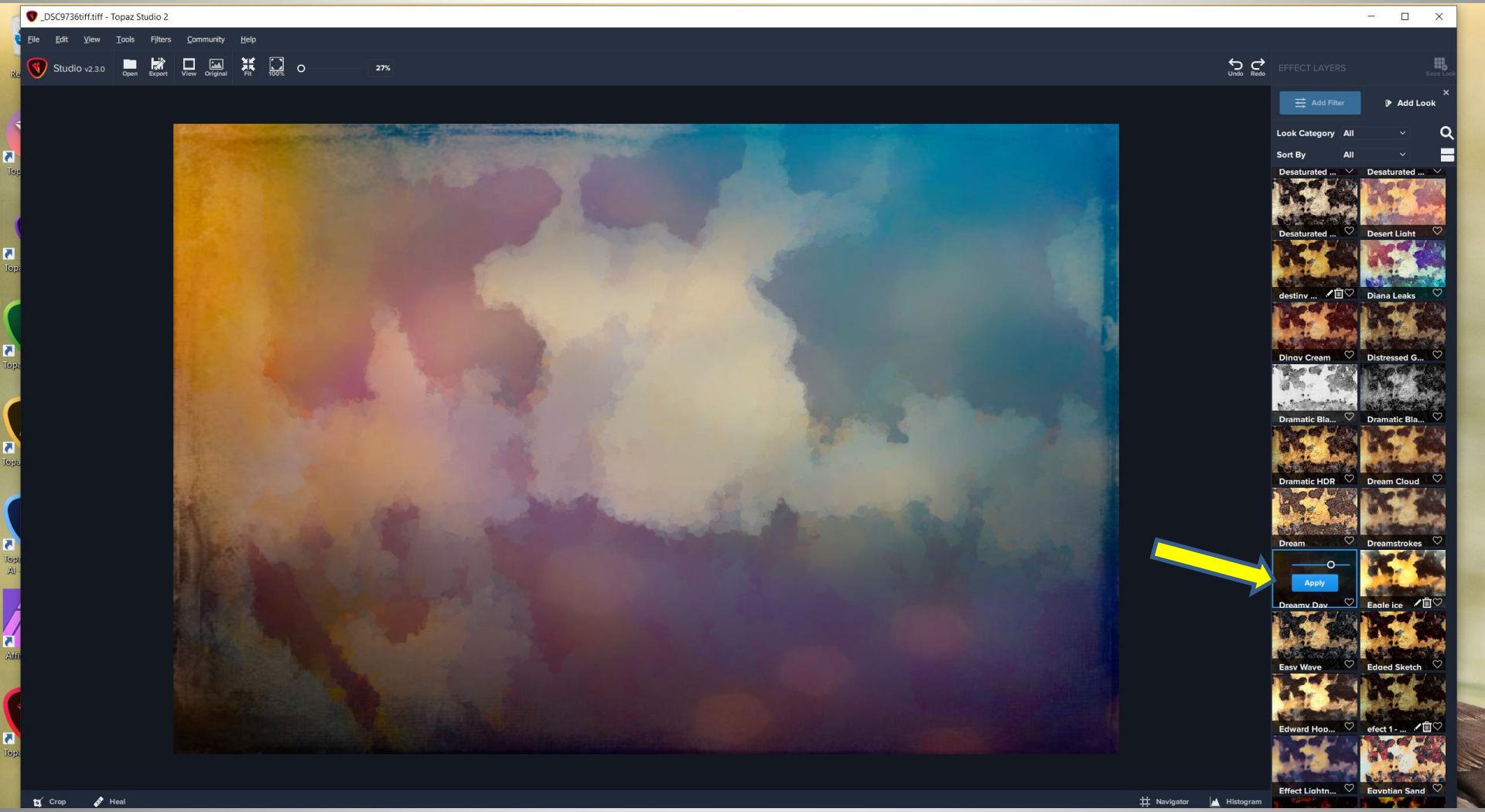
Next we hop over into the “Looks” category. Looks consists of over 300 presets. You can sort them in a couple of different ways so you don’t have to scroll through all 300 every time. In addition, you can save your own Looks that you develop yourself. This Look is called Stamp Brush 1.



Or maybe you would like the Abstraction III Look
If I choose this look and then edit it in any way, I can then save that look as my own custom Look.

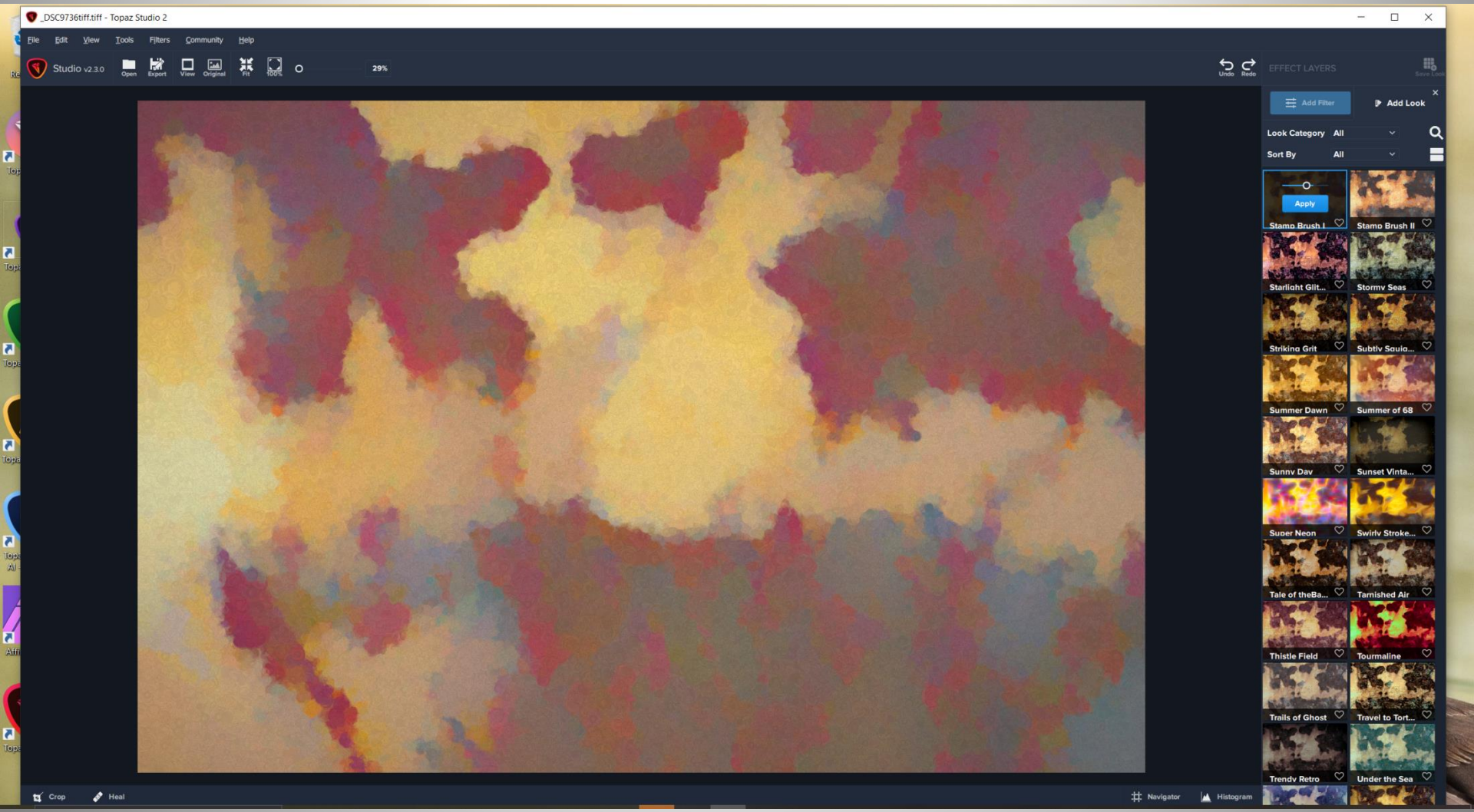


Or maybe the Dreamy Dav Look. Every one of the over 300 Looks is totally editable in many ways, and can then be saved.

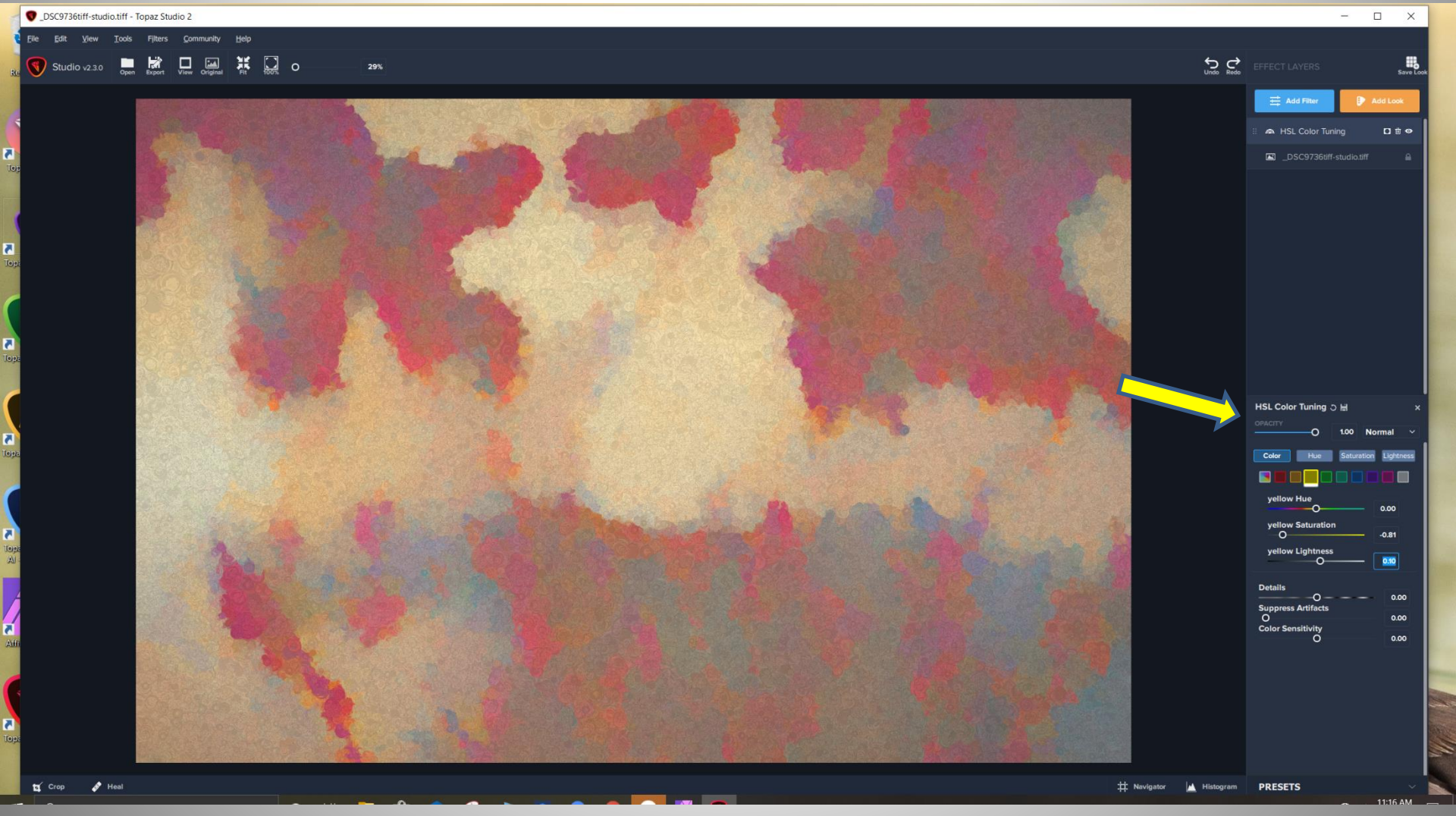


I like the Stamp Brush Look for this one.

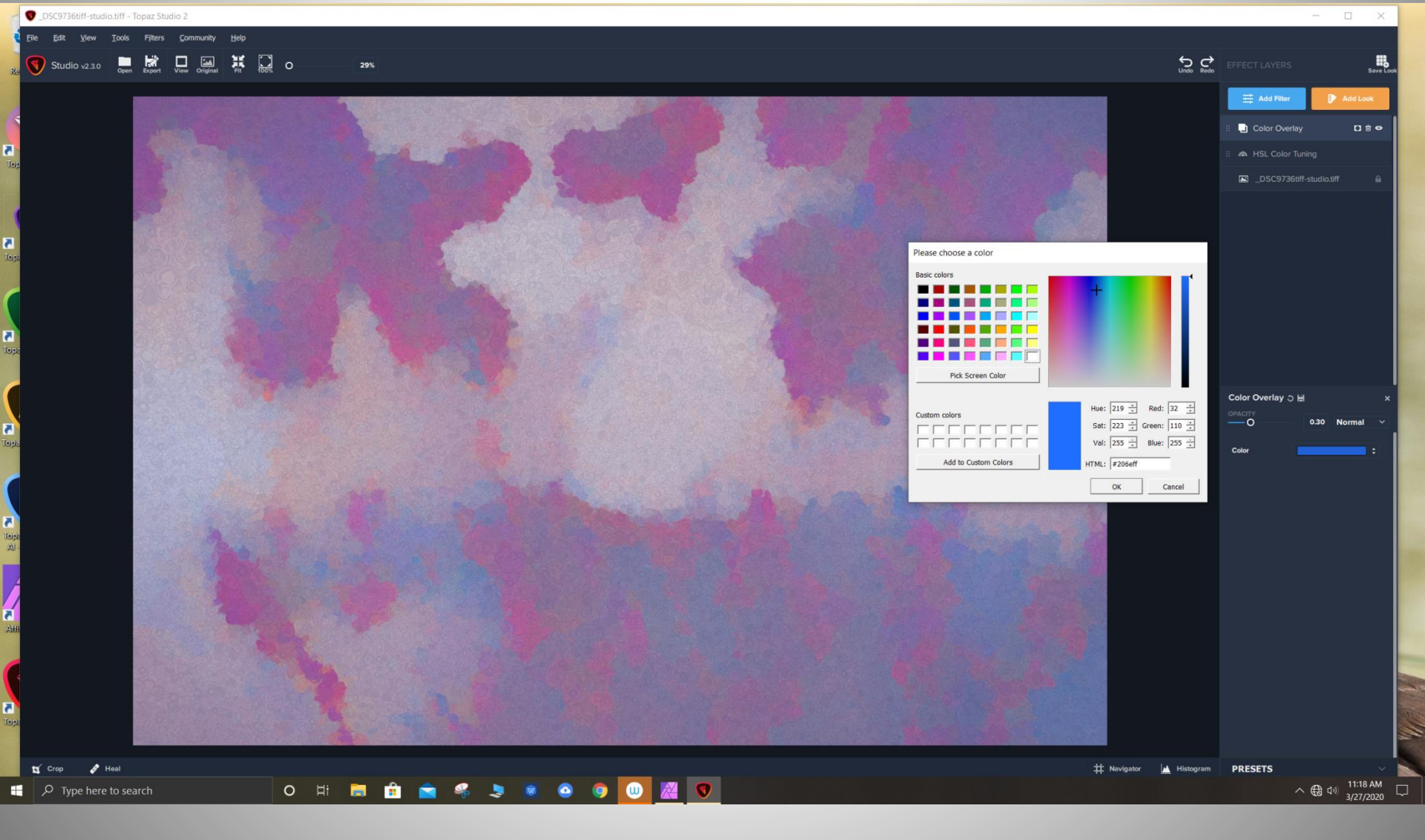
You can stop right here if you want to – this would make a great background – OR…



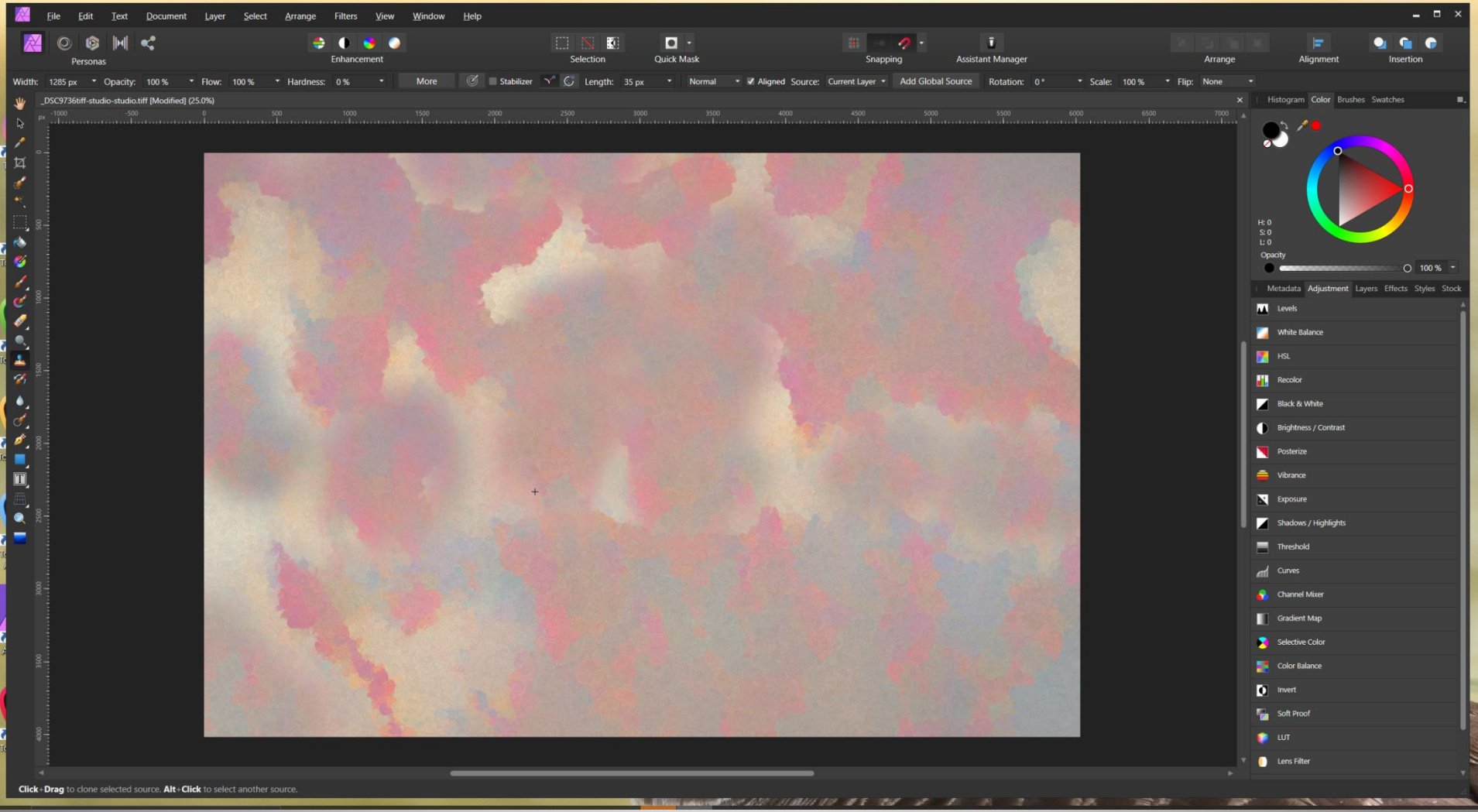
For further fun, you can use things like the Basic Edits Filter and use the HSL Adjustment, maybe tone down that yellow a little bit. All of the Looks and Filters continue to stack on top of each other as you add them.



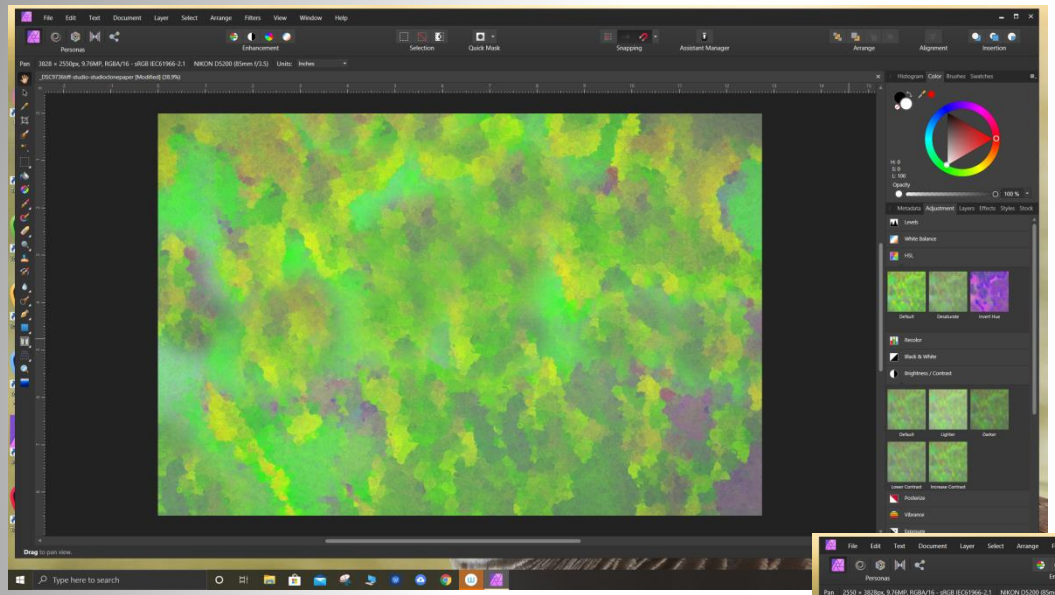
Or maybe you want to apply a color overlay!
I saved this one too!
Note that big empty patch in the middle? We can fix that.

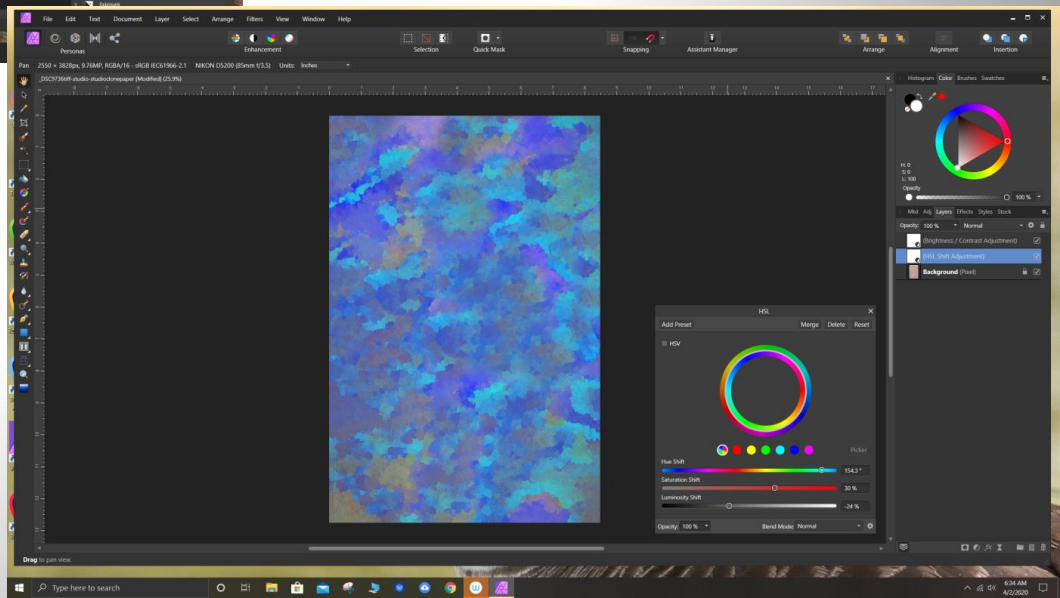


When I got done fooling around with it, I brought it into my photo editor and used the clone brush to fill in that big spot of yellow in the middle that I didn't like. Studio2 does have a "heal" tool, but I like my clone tool better.



While I was in my photo editor I decided to apply a LOT of contrast and two different hue/saturation adjustments. I could have done the same thing in TS2.



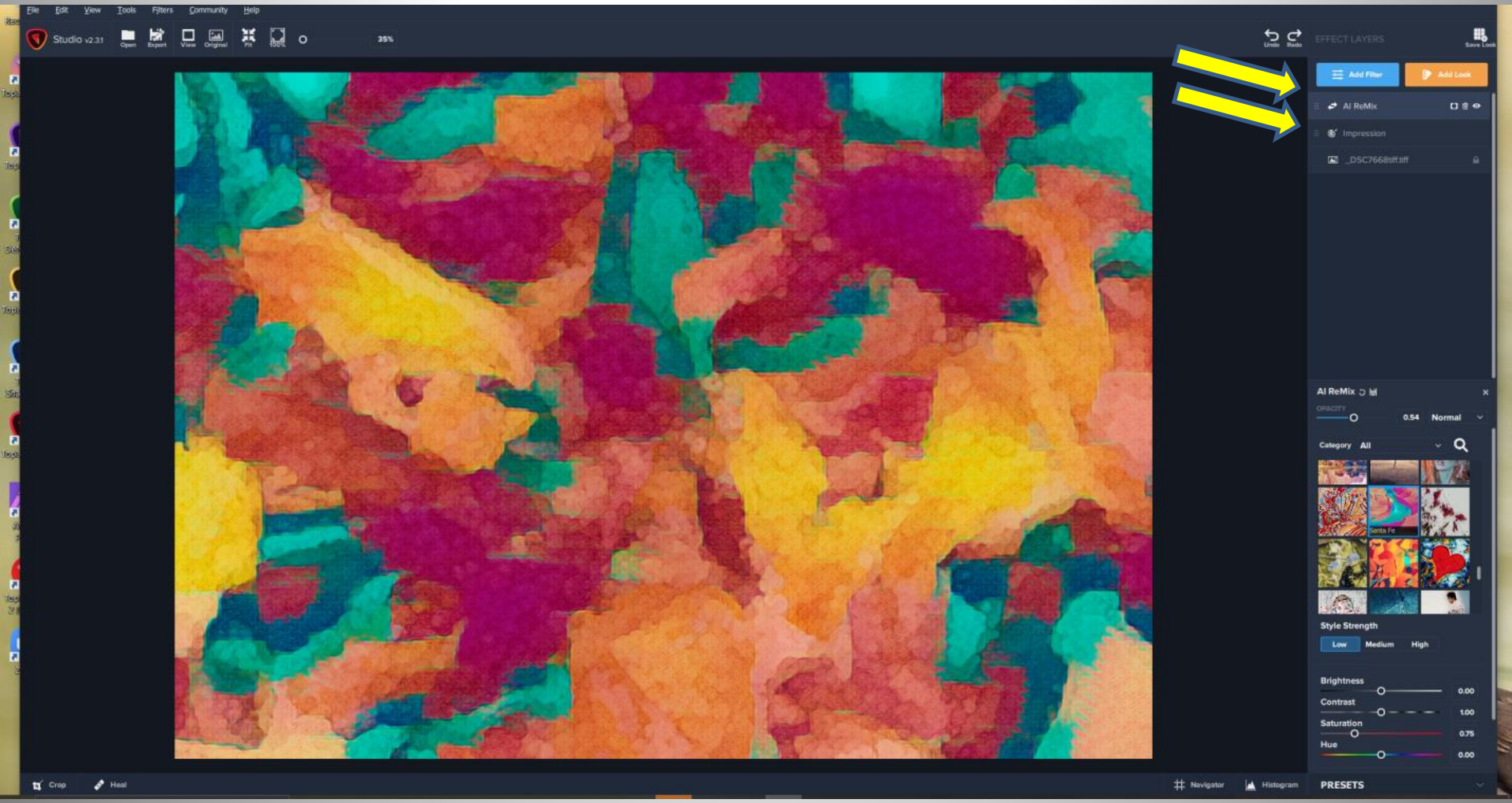


This is the final image after I got done fooling around with it. I printed this out on cardstock and of course I saved it as a .tiff for use as a digital background replacement, texture or an overlay.

To show you that you can use pretty much anything to make a background - I saved some tulip petals from the garden and put them in a pile on some white poster board and took a photo. It could be a pile of anything! It could be a pile of clothing or spaghetti with sauce - whatever!

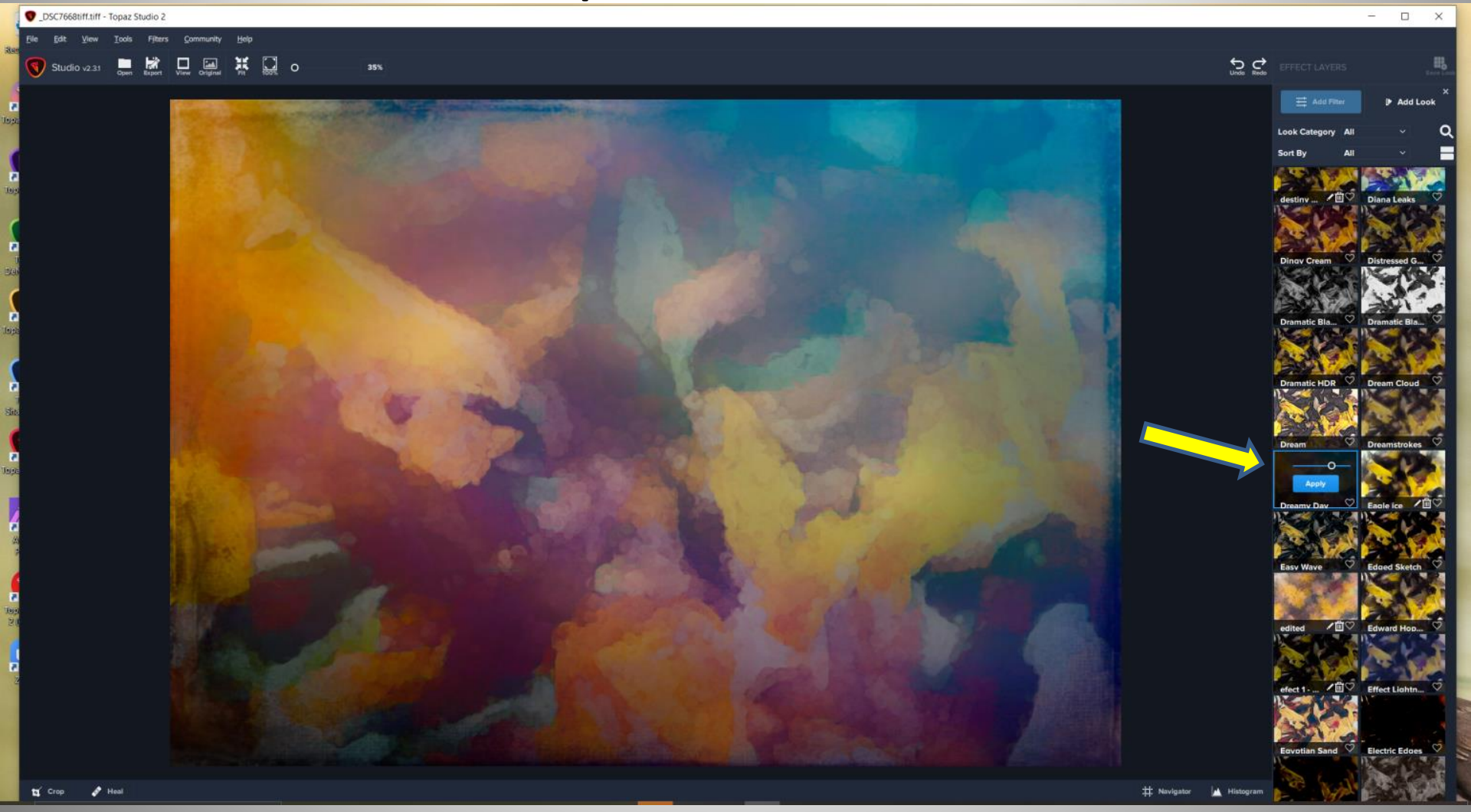
Here is the resulting .tiff file that I will bring into TS2

I applied the Impression filter and then I applied the Remix filter over that. You can see here how they are stacked. You also have the ability to turn items on and off or delete a filter altogether or mask it partially off.

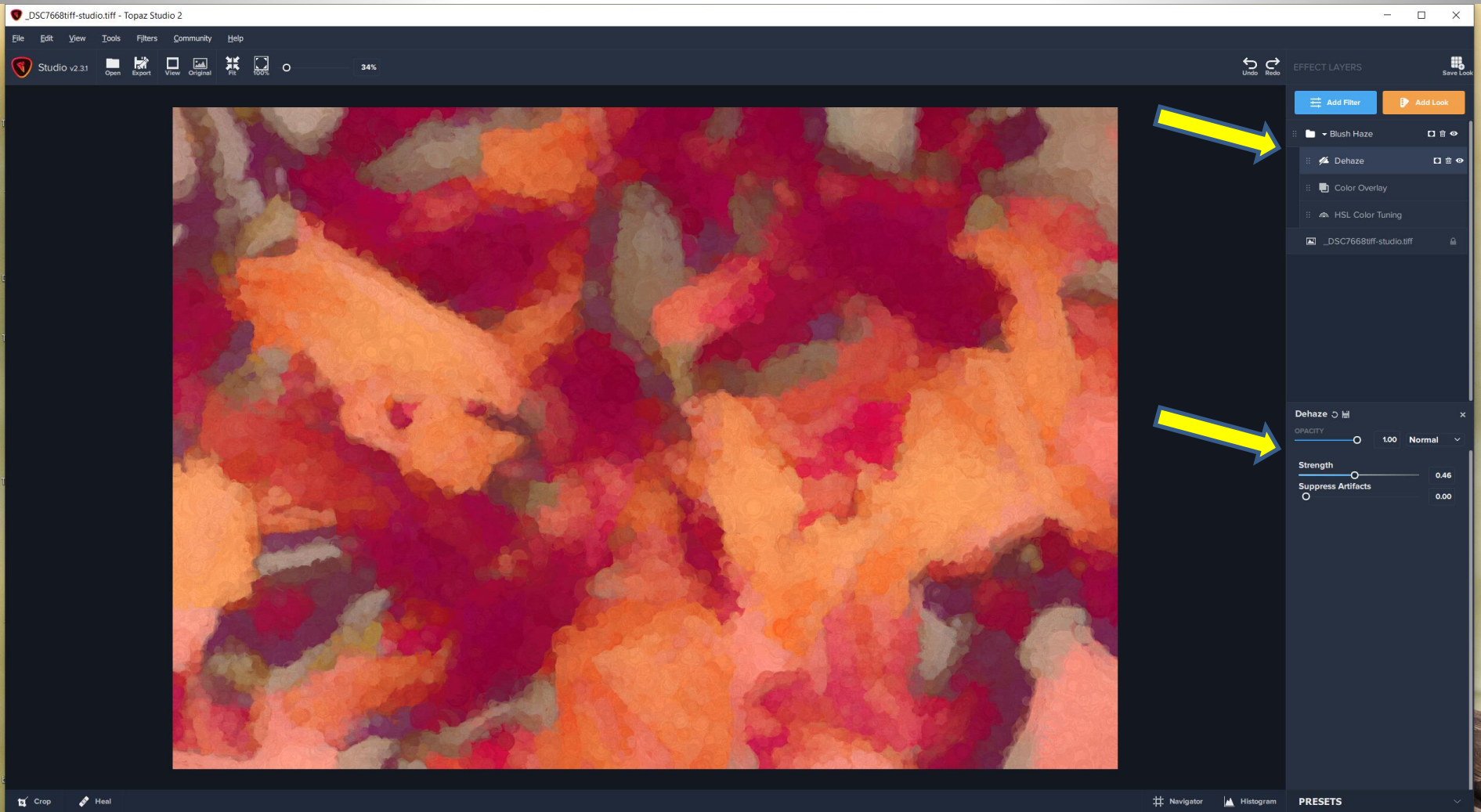


This is the same flower petal photo but it's had the Impression "Filter" applied more strongly and then the Dreamy Dav "Look" applied on top. I saved and printed this one as well.

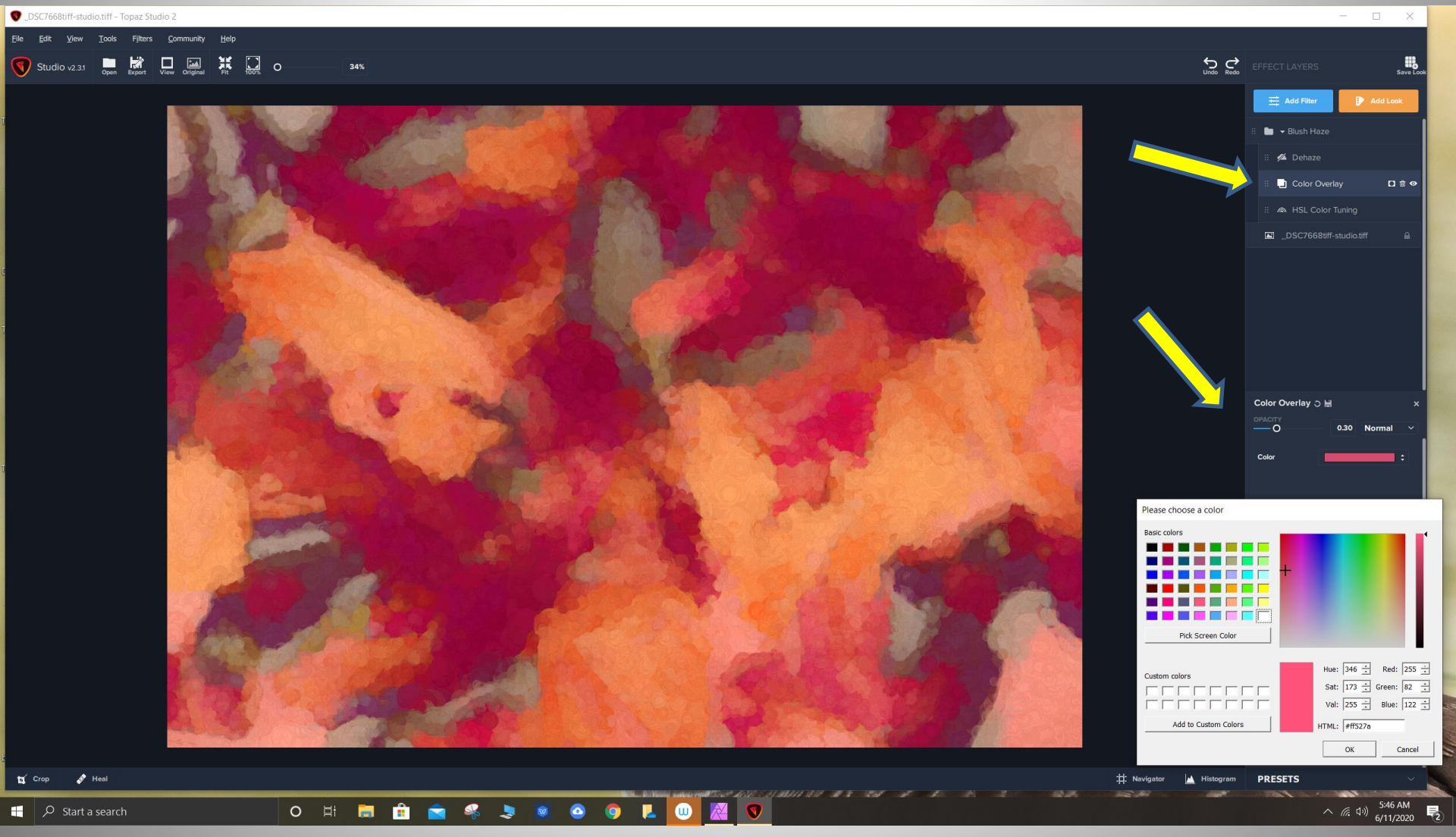
You can take ONE photo and make 100's of backdrops and textures from it!



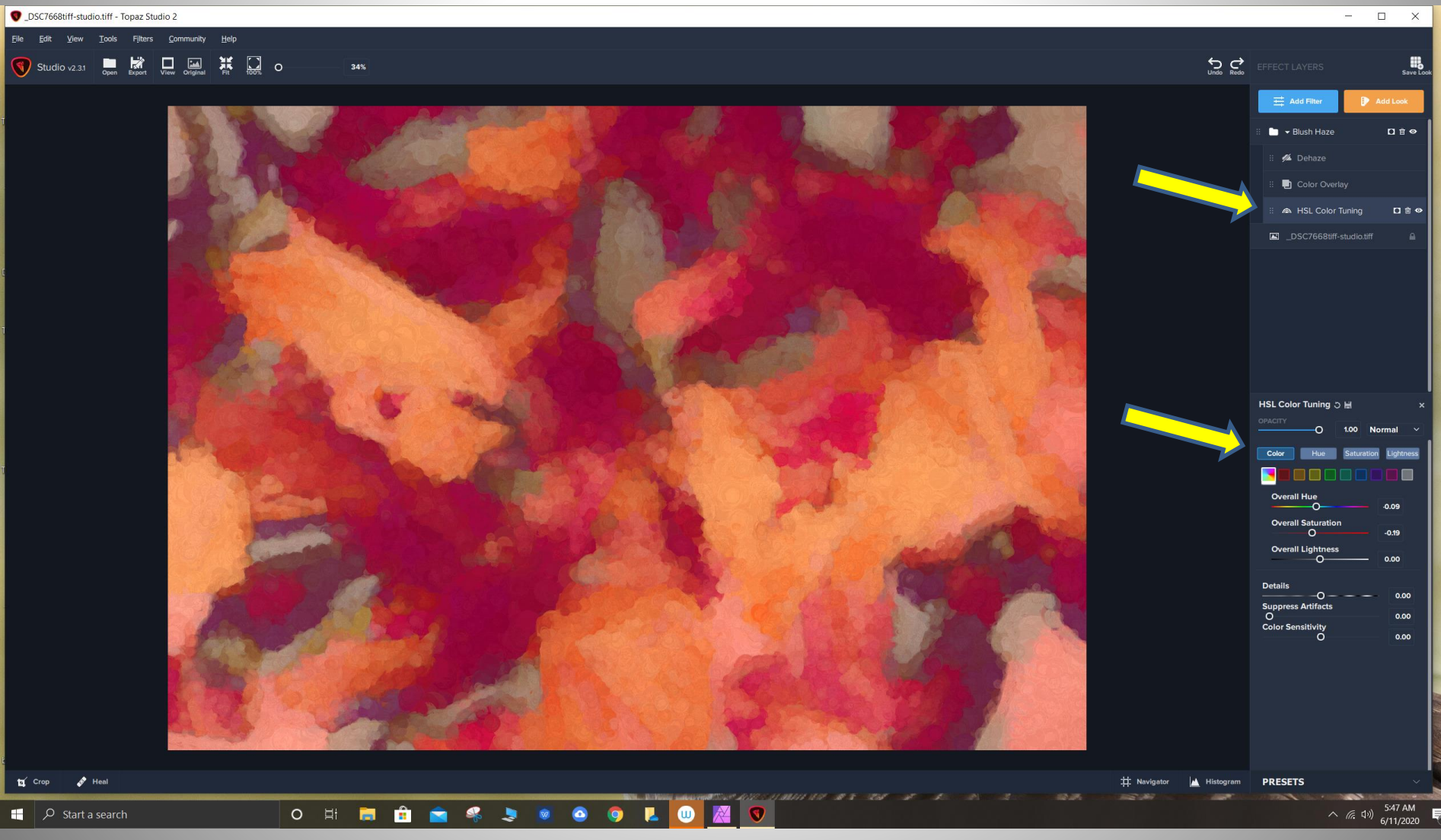
When you add a “Look”, inside of each look are further adjustments. Here the Blush Haze Look is applied to my flower petals. You can see all three of the adjustments that make up that “Look” and you can edit them independently. The three adjustments that make up the Blush Haze “Look” are Dehaze, Color Overlay and HSL Color Tuning. Here I have opened up the Dehaze adjustment and we can adjust it by changing the Blend mode, the Opacity and the Strength.



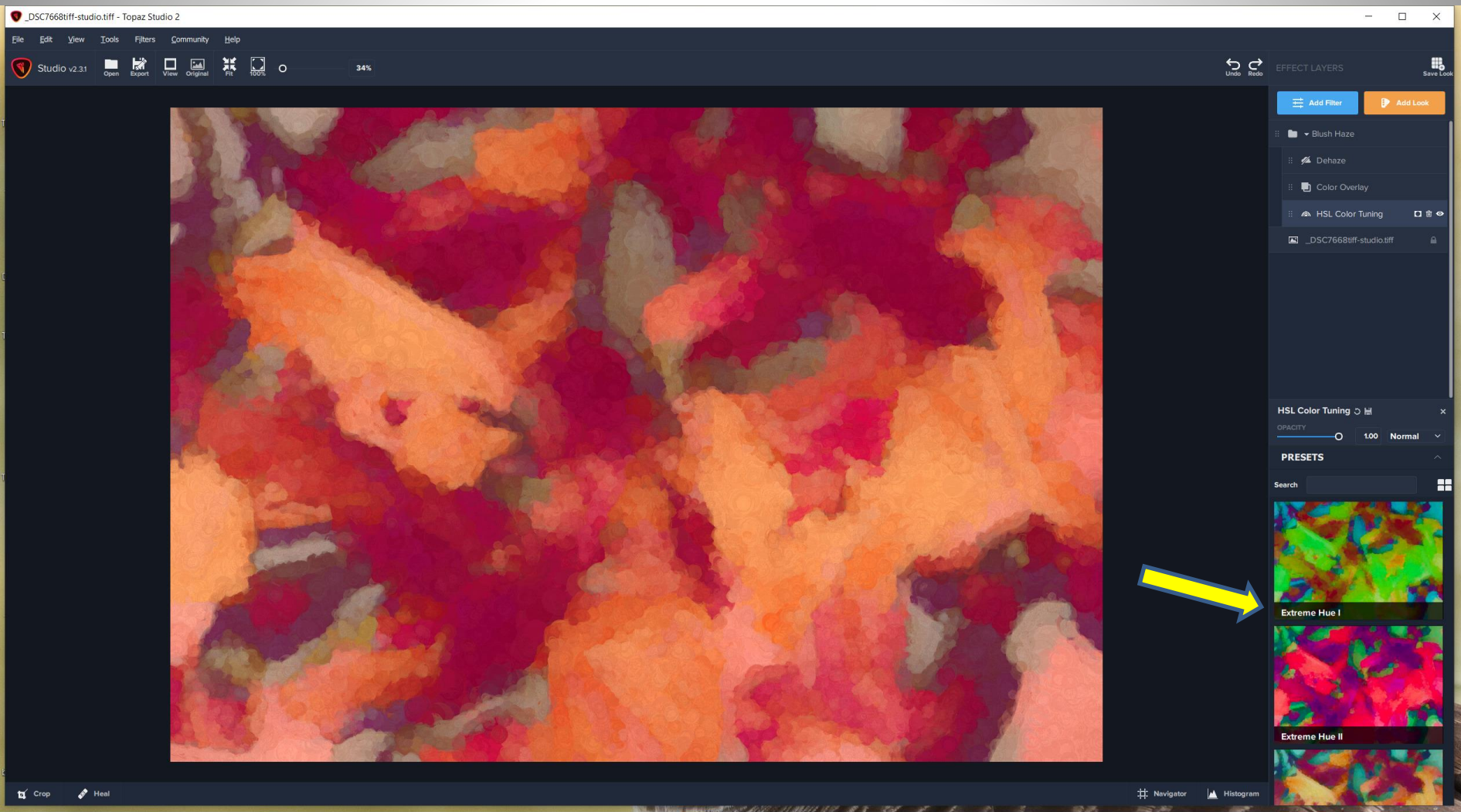
Next I have opened up the Color Overlay adjustment. You can change the color of the overlay, the blend mode, and the opacity.



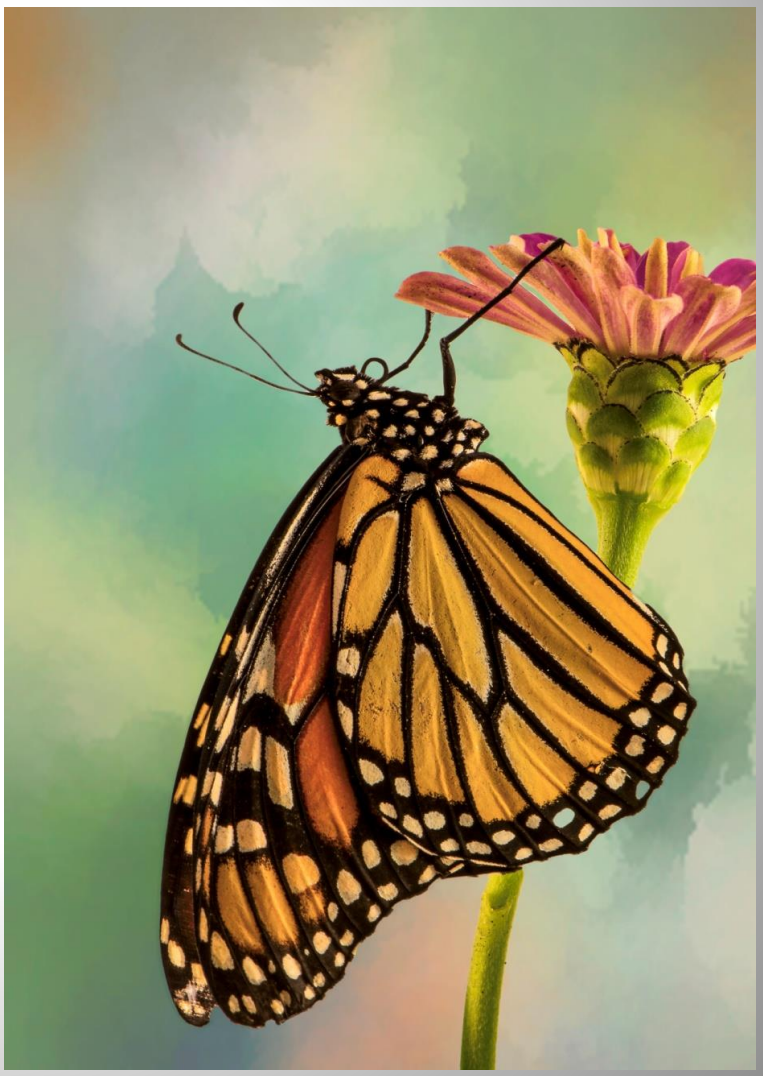
Finally is the HSL Color Tuning adjustment within the Blush Haze Look. Multiple adjustments in here. Color, hue, saturation, lightness, blend modes, opacity and more.



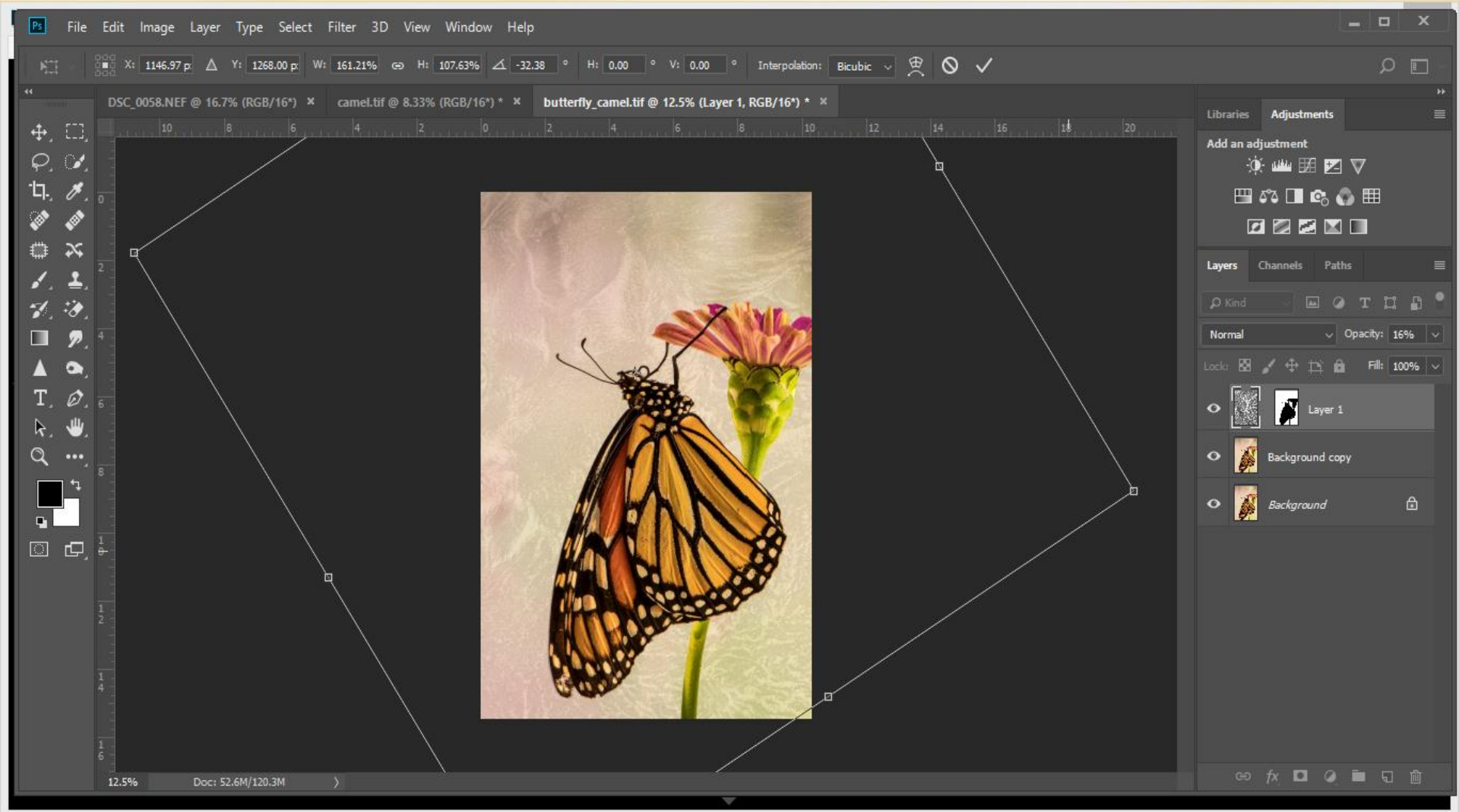
And even MORE – some of the adjustments within the “Filters” and “Looks” have Presets! It’s actually mind boggling what you can do.



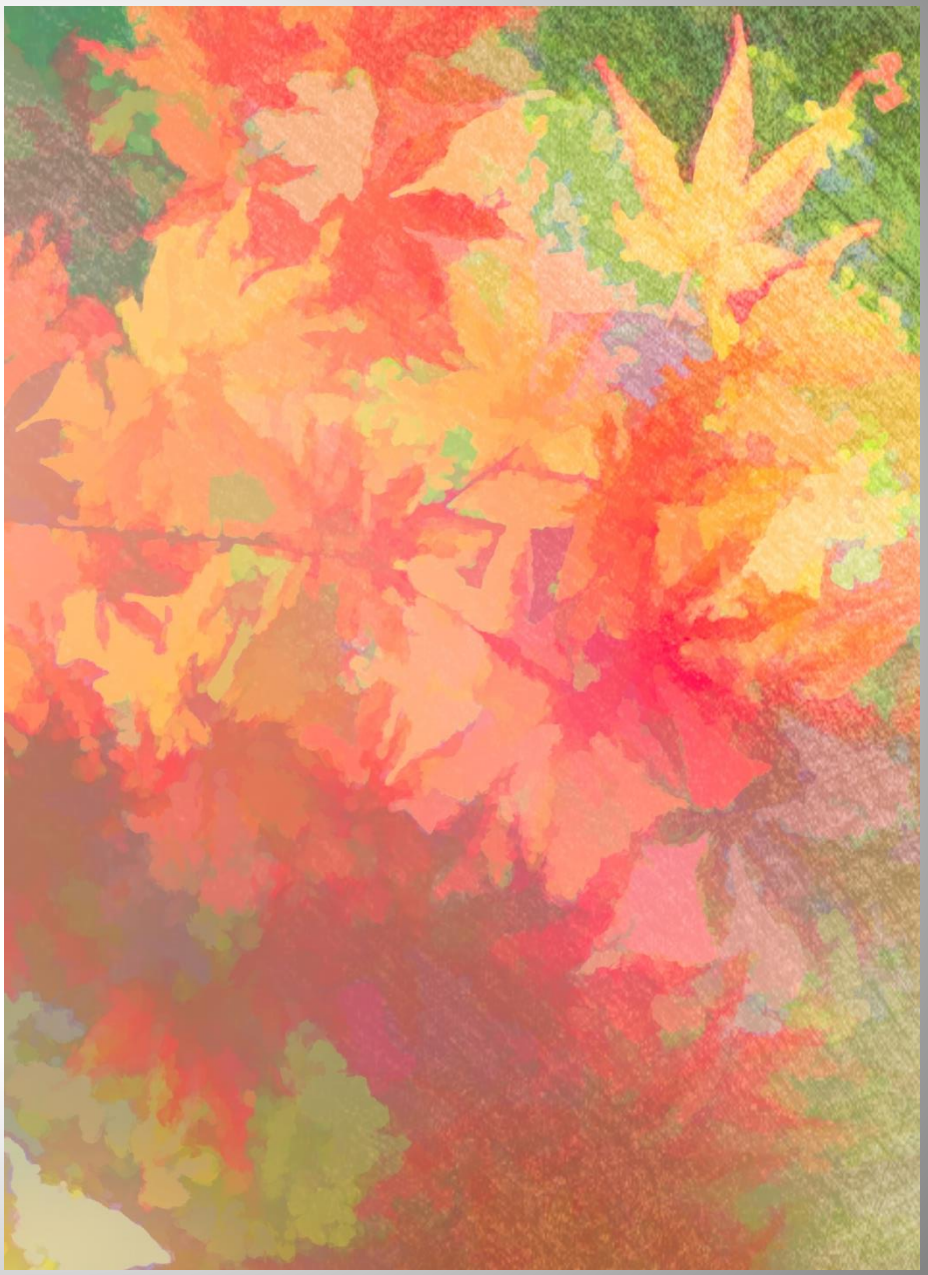
On the left is a background I made. Here I have used it as a digital background replacement for the butterfly from inside my photo editor. TS2 does not support layers – yet. I did a further HSL adjustment and also stretched it, changed the opacity and I turned it sideways. It's on a separate layer so you can continue to refine it and make it look exactly how you want it to look for your project.



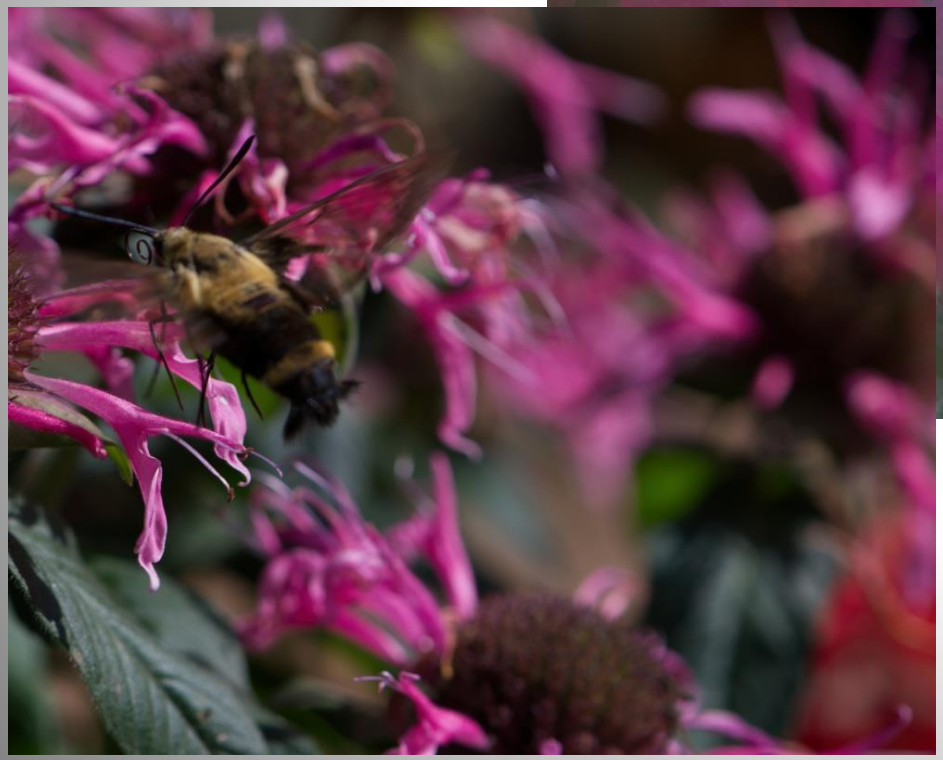
When you are using your digital backgrounds you don't have to use them straight up. Here you can see I have used one as just a texture without the color. I have converted it to black and white, stretched it out, rotated it and reduced the opacity to 16%. So now it's just a simple texture.

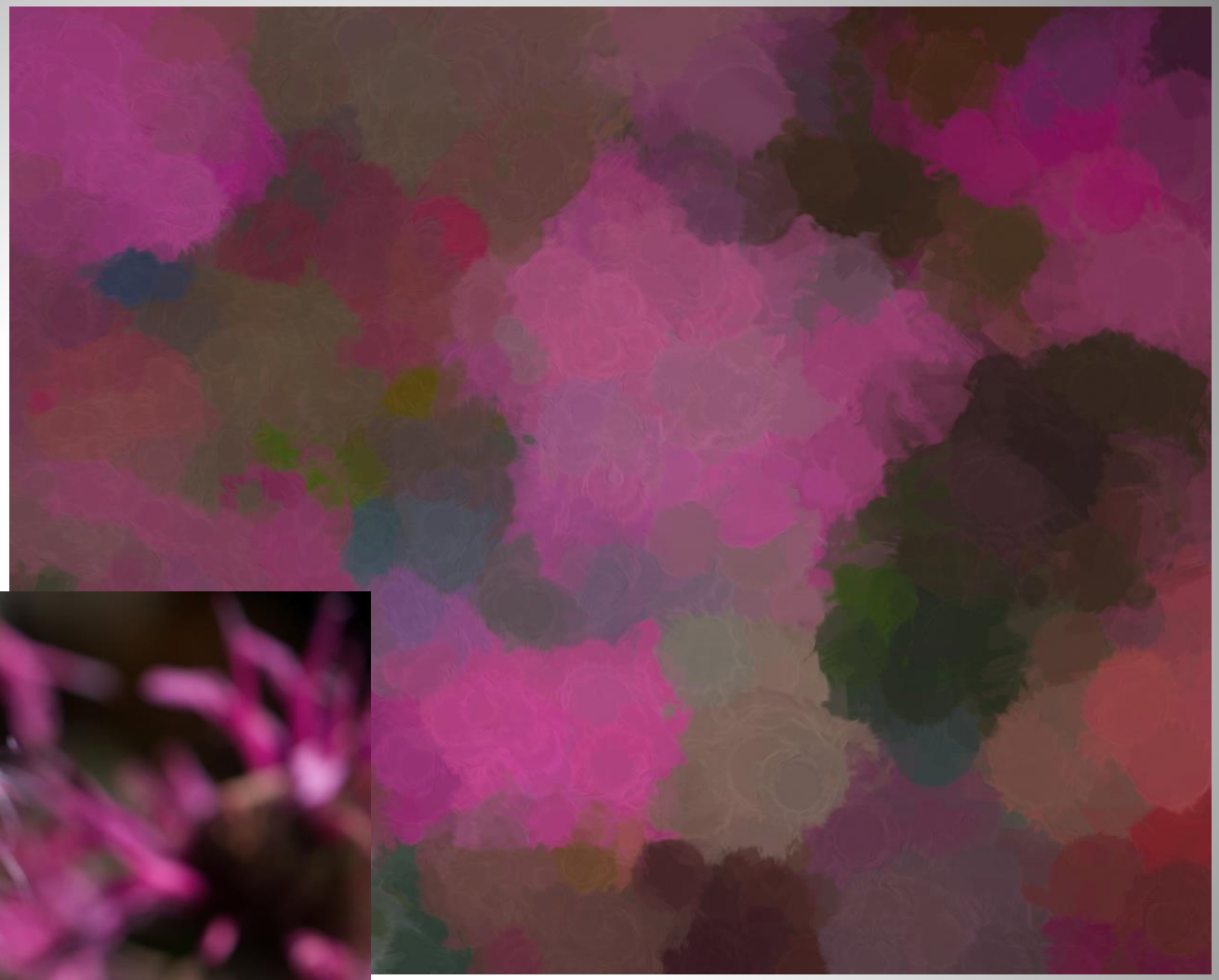


Some leaves I shot in Florida and the resulting background.



An out-of -focus and facing the wrong way hummingbird moth in my monarda plant and resulting background



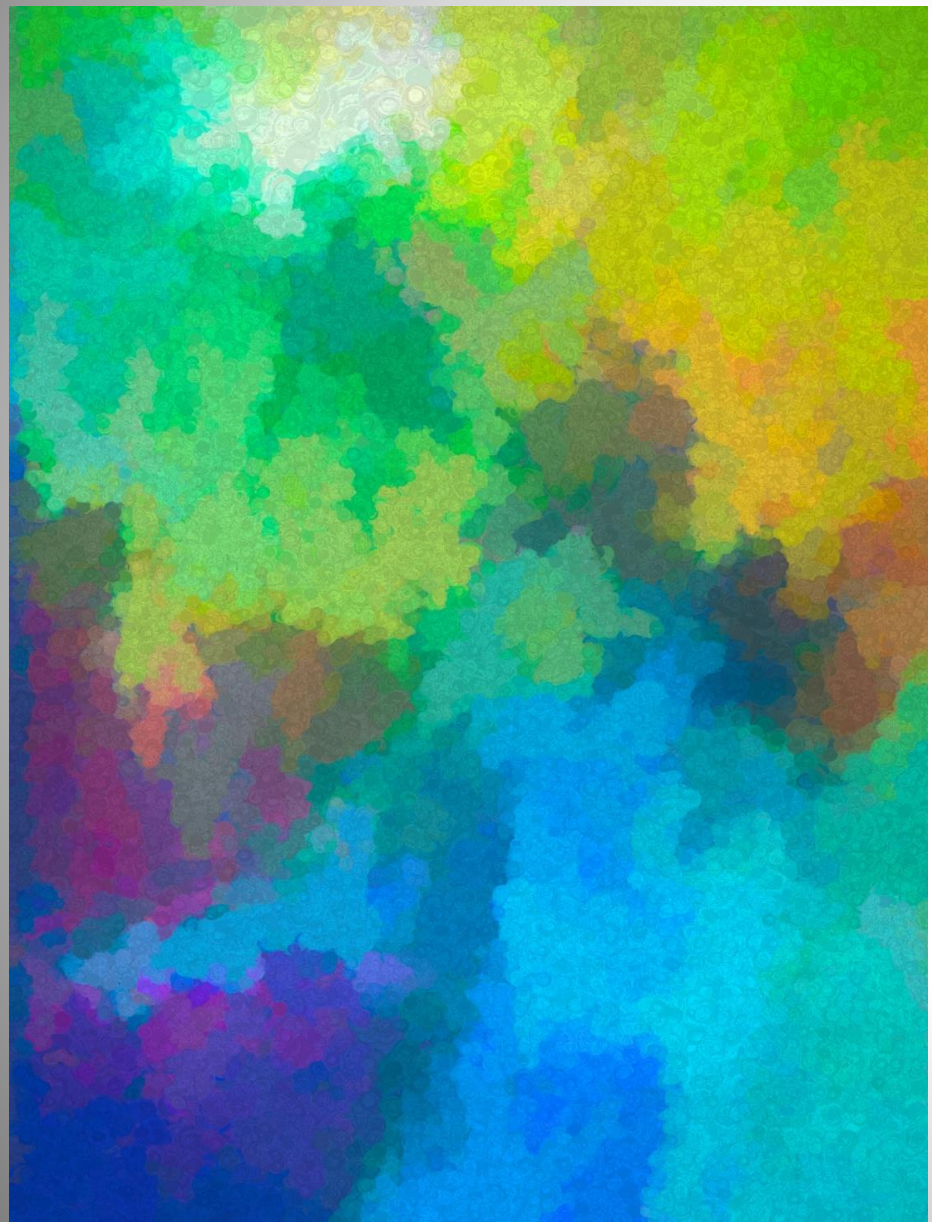


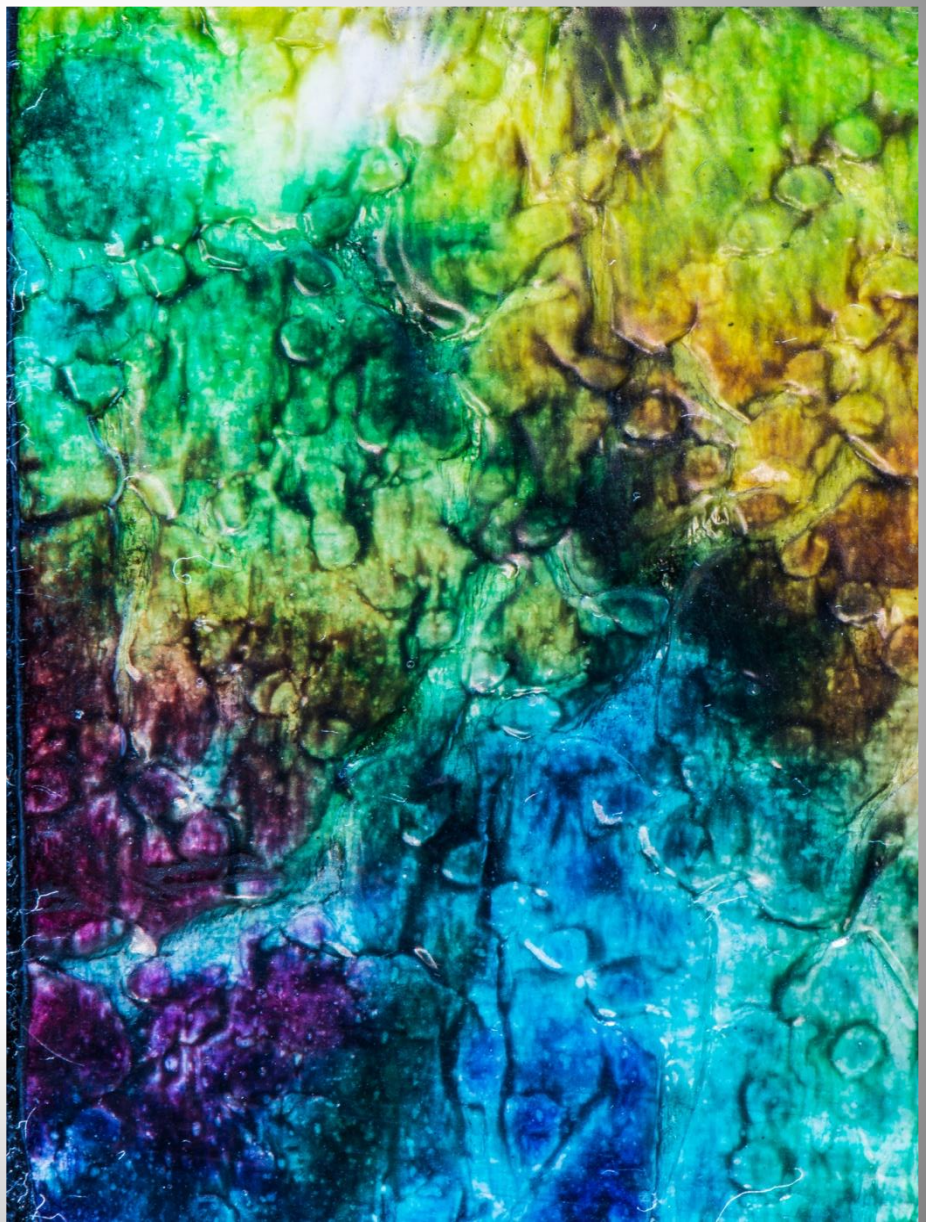
Don't ditch your unwanted photos!

Make backgrounds, overlays and textures!

On the right- I took a photo of a section of a silk scarf I painted. On the left is the resulting background.

When I paint, I use paper towels to clean my brush. On the right is a photo of a used paper towel and on the left is the resulting background.





A BAD BEE

A GREAT BACKDROP

You can take all of your unwanted photos and turn them into some really great backdrops for shooting, digital replacement backgrounds and textures.

Here is a background I created.

Here it is used as a studio backdrop for this magnolia blossom. In my bathroom shower studio – background taped to the shower wall.

I would like to talk briefly about some of the other tools inside of TS2. It's not just for making backgrounds and overlays! It actually has some great editing tools.

While it does not support layers "yet" – there is a work-around for that in the filters menu. You can import any photo into the Texture file folder for custom textures, you can even make your own Texture file folders and categories. In addition, you are able to use them and manipulate them pretty much like a layer as far as resizing, opacity, masking and so on.

There is quite a good masking tool, and so Filters and Looks are able to be masked off of parts of your image and you can copy your mask and apply it to additional Filters and Looks.

I did this entire edit in TS2.