

Layers and Masks

Like cookies and milk, you can't
have one without the other

The Adobe Ecosystem

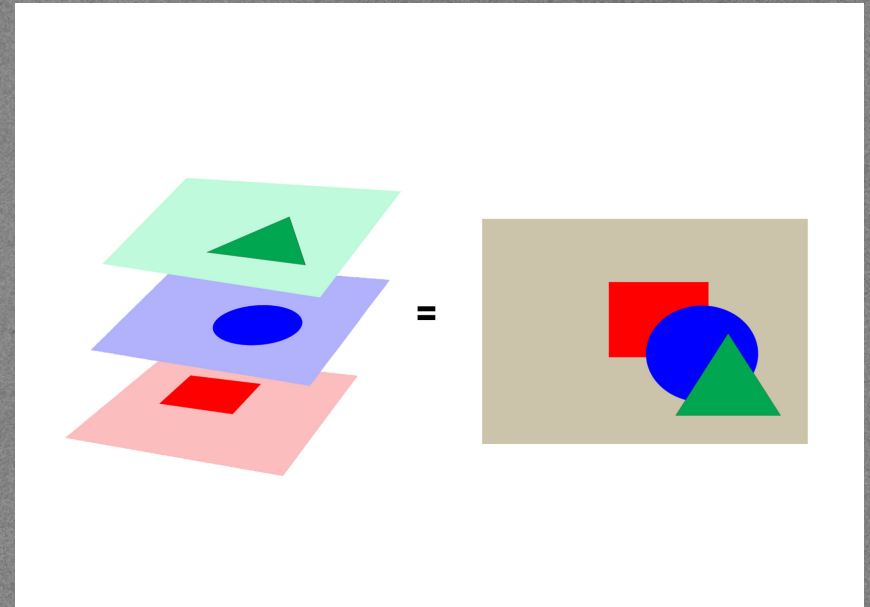
- Multiple applications for same tasks
- Users also have a choice of alternative ecosystems
- Principles apply to other apps (On1, CaptureOne, Affinity)
- Within an app, there can be many ways to do essentially the same thing
- For photographers, best choices are Lightroom and Photoshop, and possibly Bridge and ACR if not using Lightroom

Lightroom or Photoshop

- Lightroom
 - Great for Digital Asset management
 - Great for most edits
 - Recent versions acquired more features of PS (ie. new masking features, AI)
- Photoshop
 - Better for more complex edits and plugins as layers (Topaz, On1, DXO/NIK, Luminosity)
 - Necessary for composites (ie. replace background/sky) and artistic stylization filters
 - More power with Layers and masks

What are Layers?

- A stack of images or adjustments
- When viewed you see overlapping objects
- Most modern editors accommodate layers
- Non-Destructive workflow



Types of layers

- Pixel Layer
 - A 2D grid of points, each point represented by three values that create the color of that pixel; RGB, LAB, CMYK (Photos)
 - Refer to Andy's deep dive into color
- Vector--Points, lines, arcs and shapes defined by location in a cartesian coordinate plane (Text, Scaling)
- Adjustment--A 'recipe' for altering pixel value

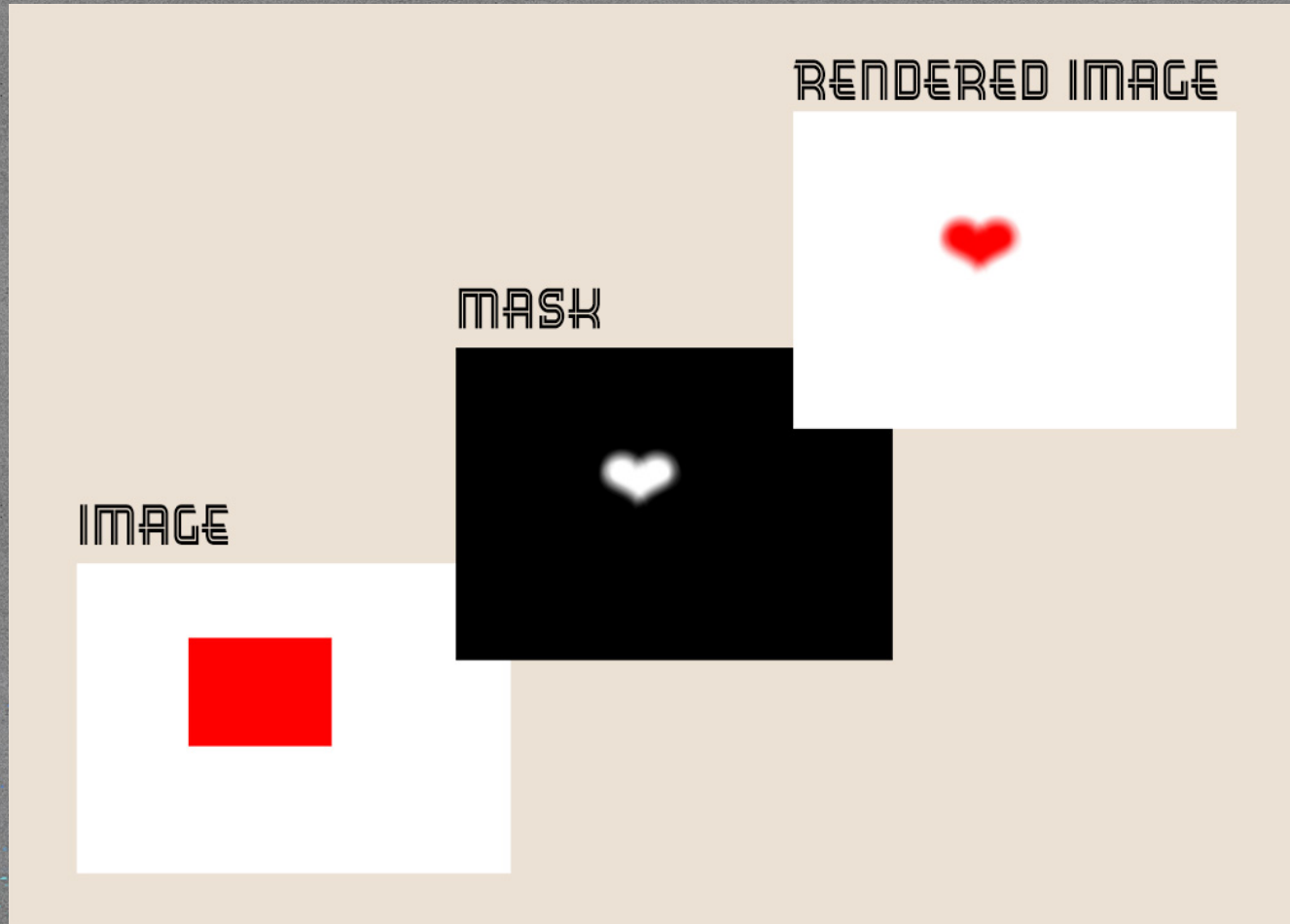
What is a layer mask?

- A means of selectively showing or hiding the contents of a layer
- “Black conceals and White reveals”
- Shades of gray for degrees of visibility (similar to opacity, but differentially applied)
 - The closer the mask tone to black, the lower the visibility
 - The closer the mask tone to white, the higher the visibility

Types of Masks

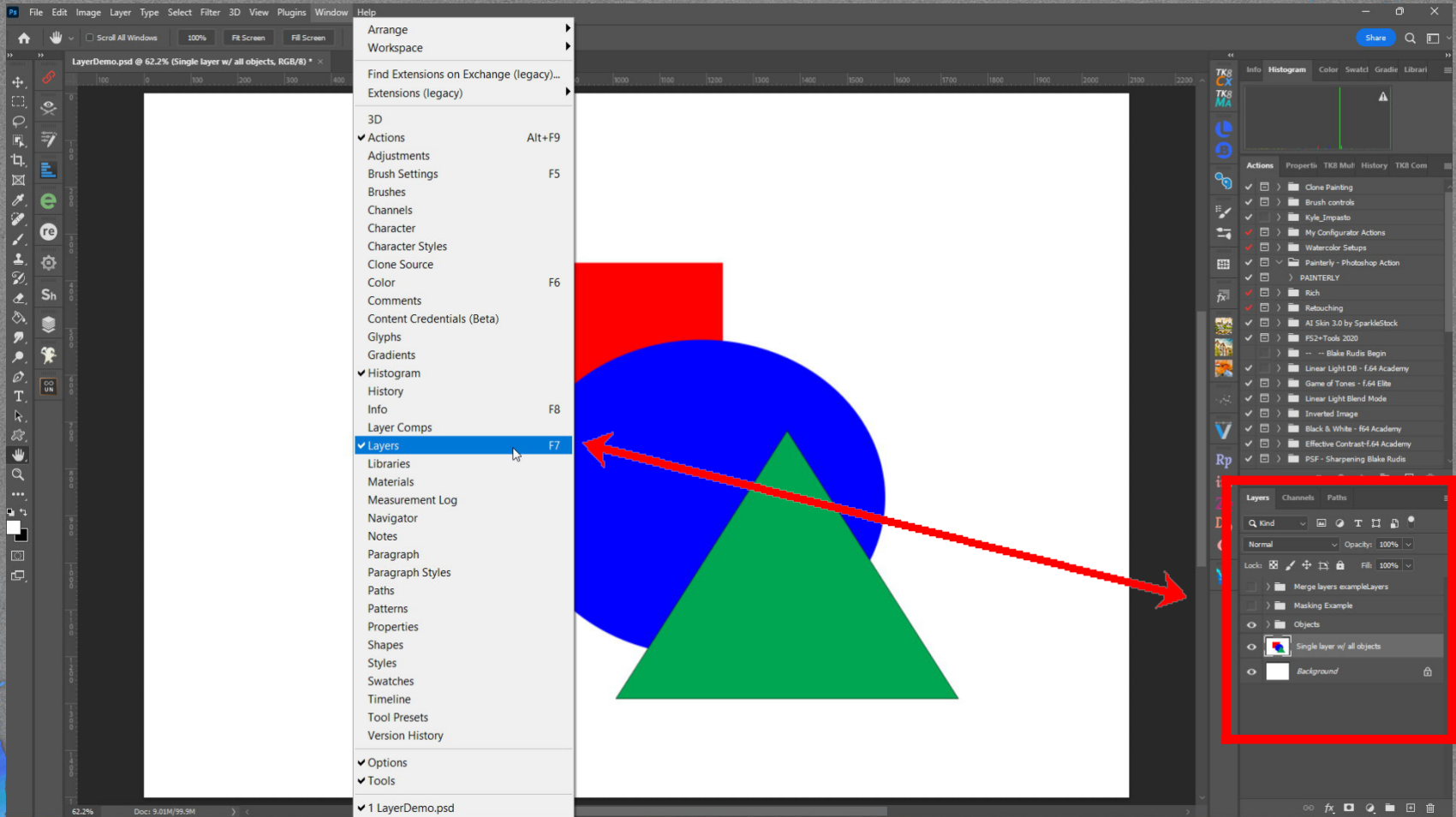
- Pixel masks
 - Black, white and shades of gray
- Vector masks
 - Lines and shapes
- Clipping masks
 - Constrain this layer to only affect the non-transparent pixels of the layer immediately below

Simplistic Masking Example

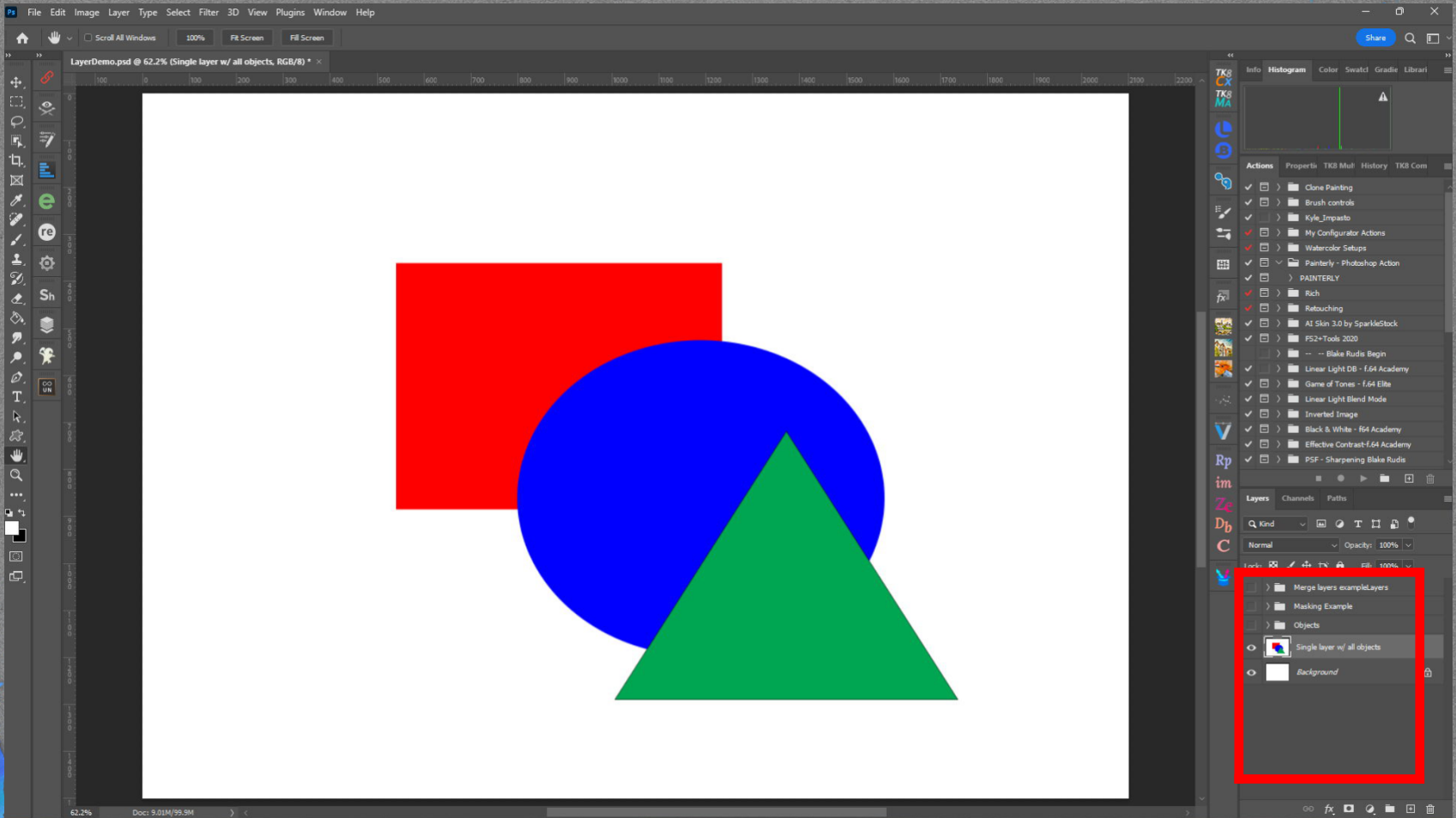


Photoshop Interface

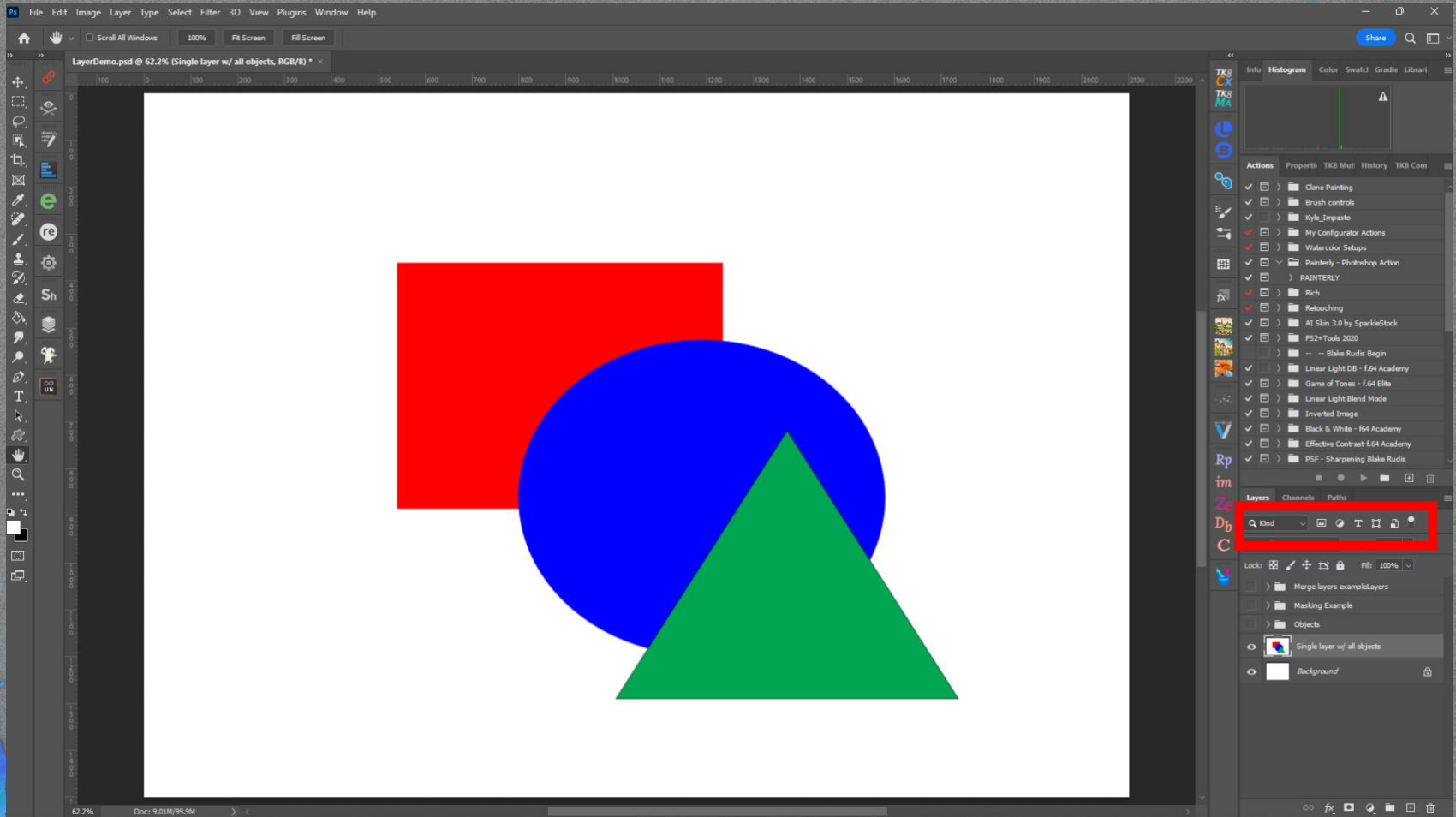
Show Layers Panel



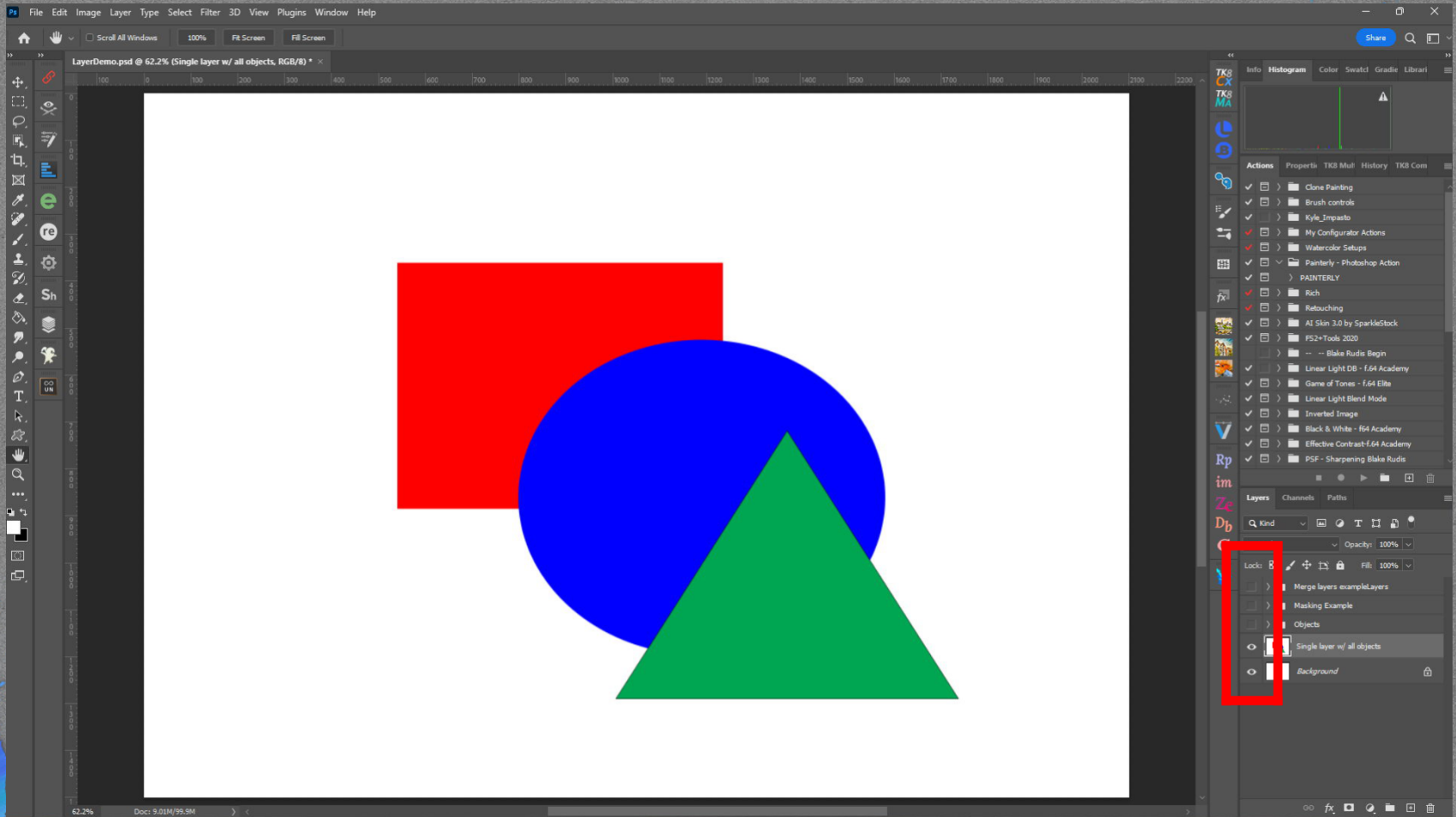
Layers



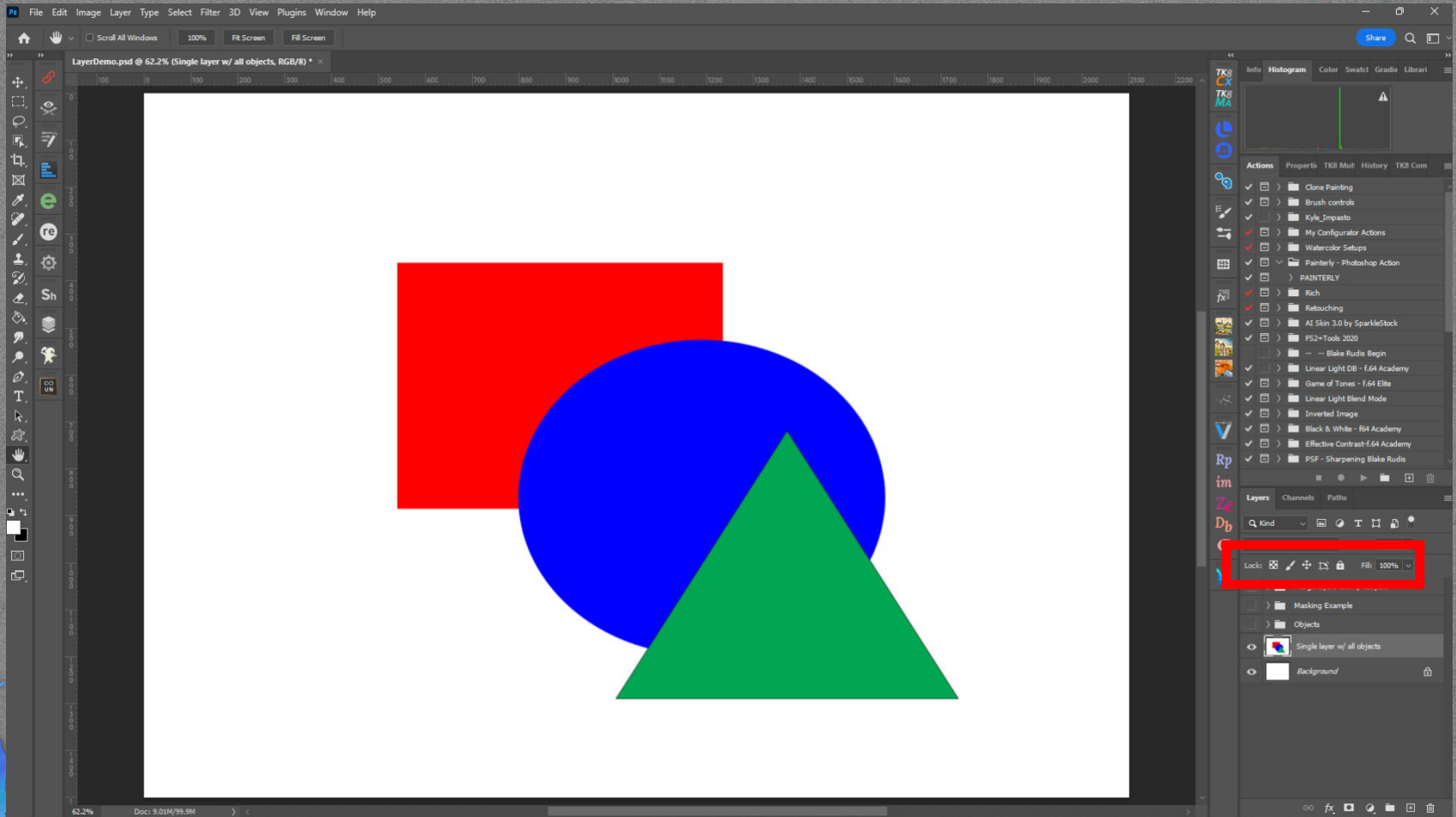
Layer Display Filter



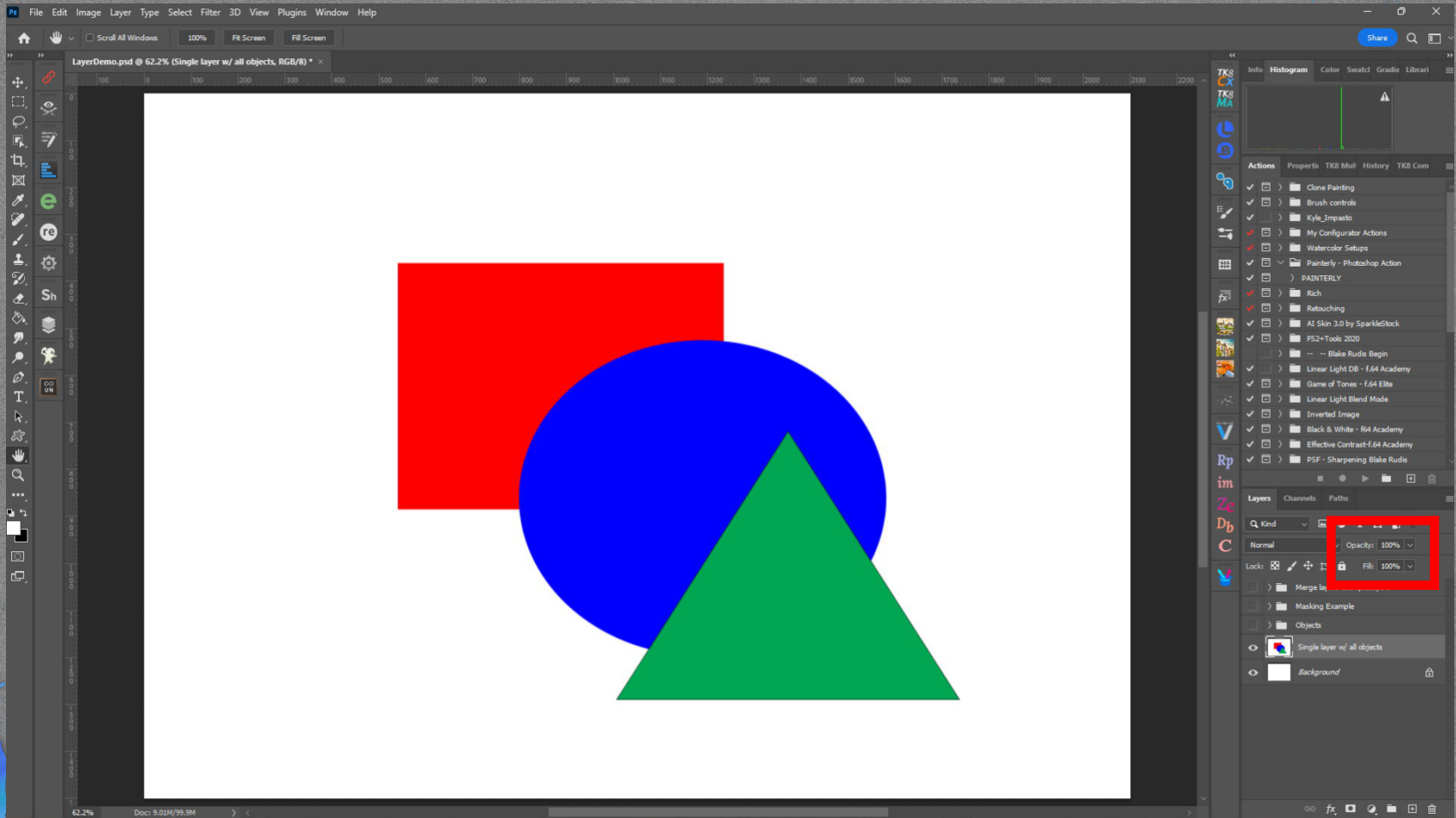
Layer Visibility



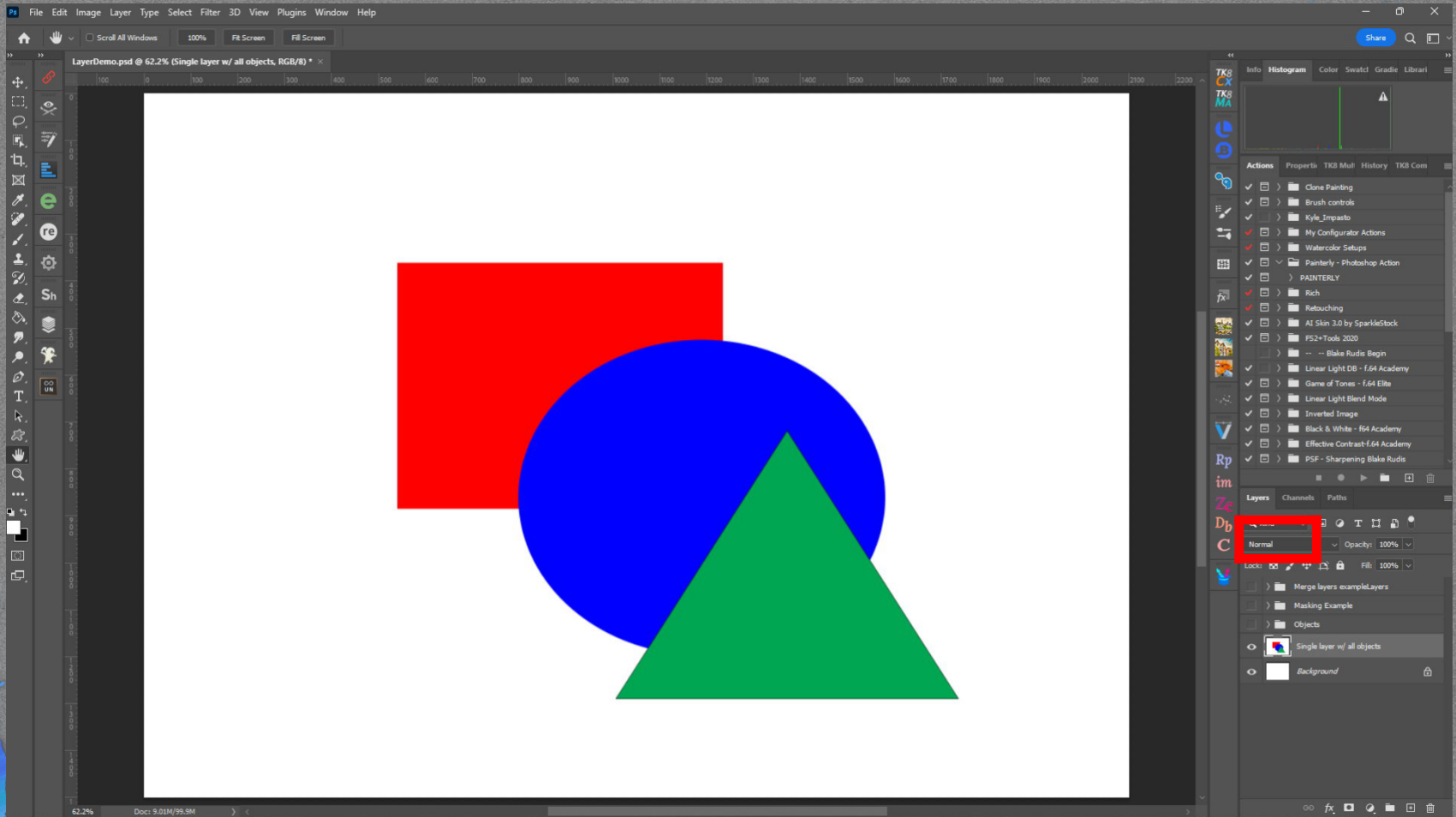
Layer Locking



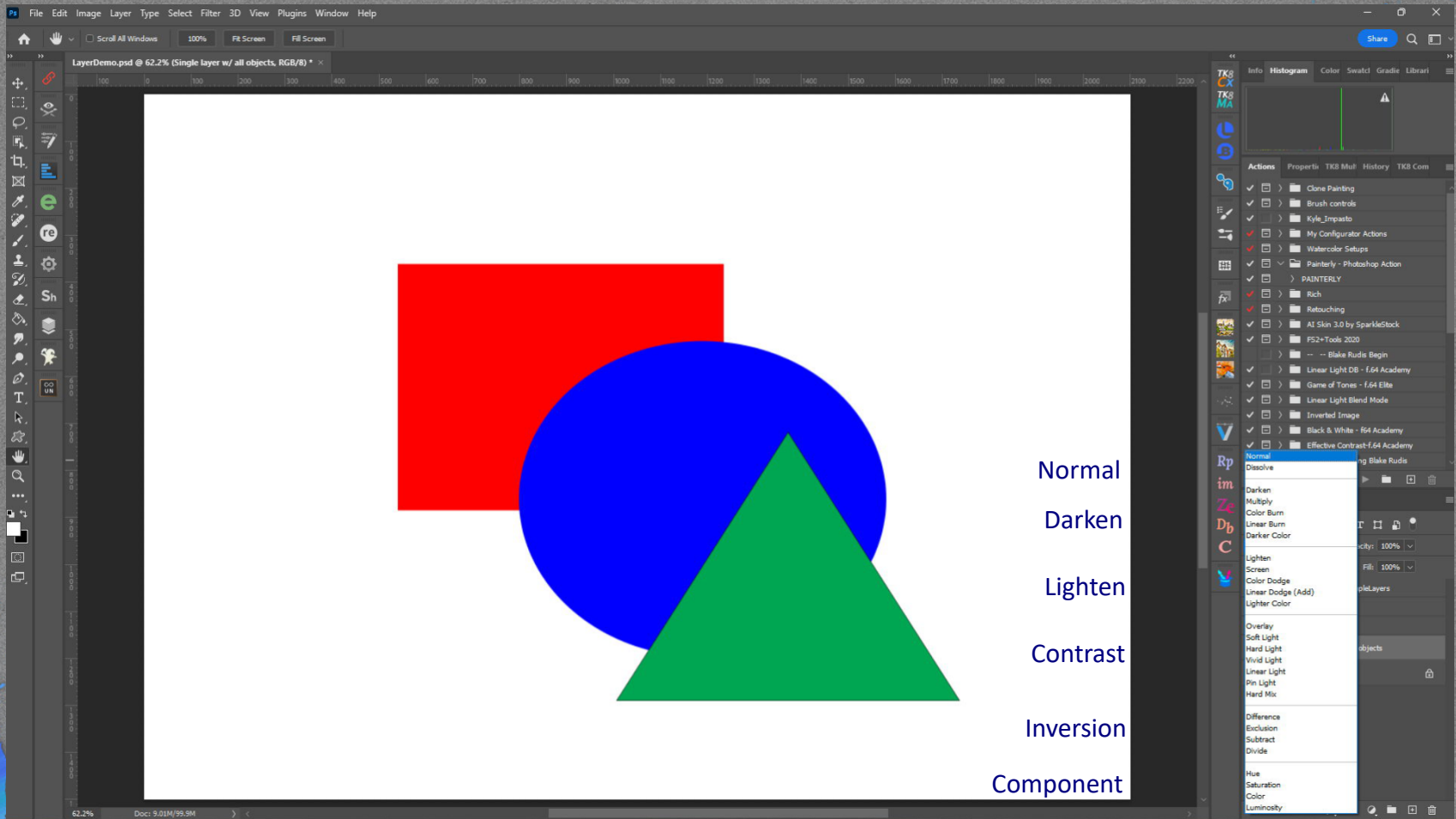
Layer Opacity and Fill



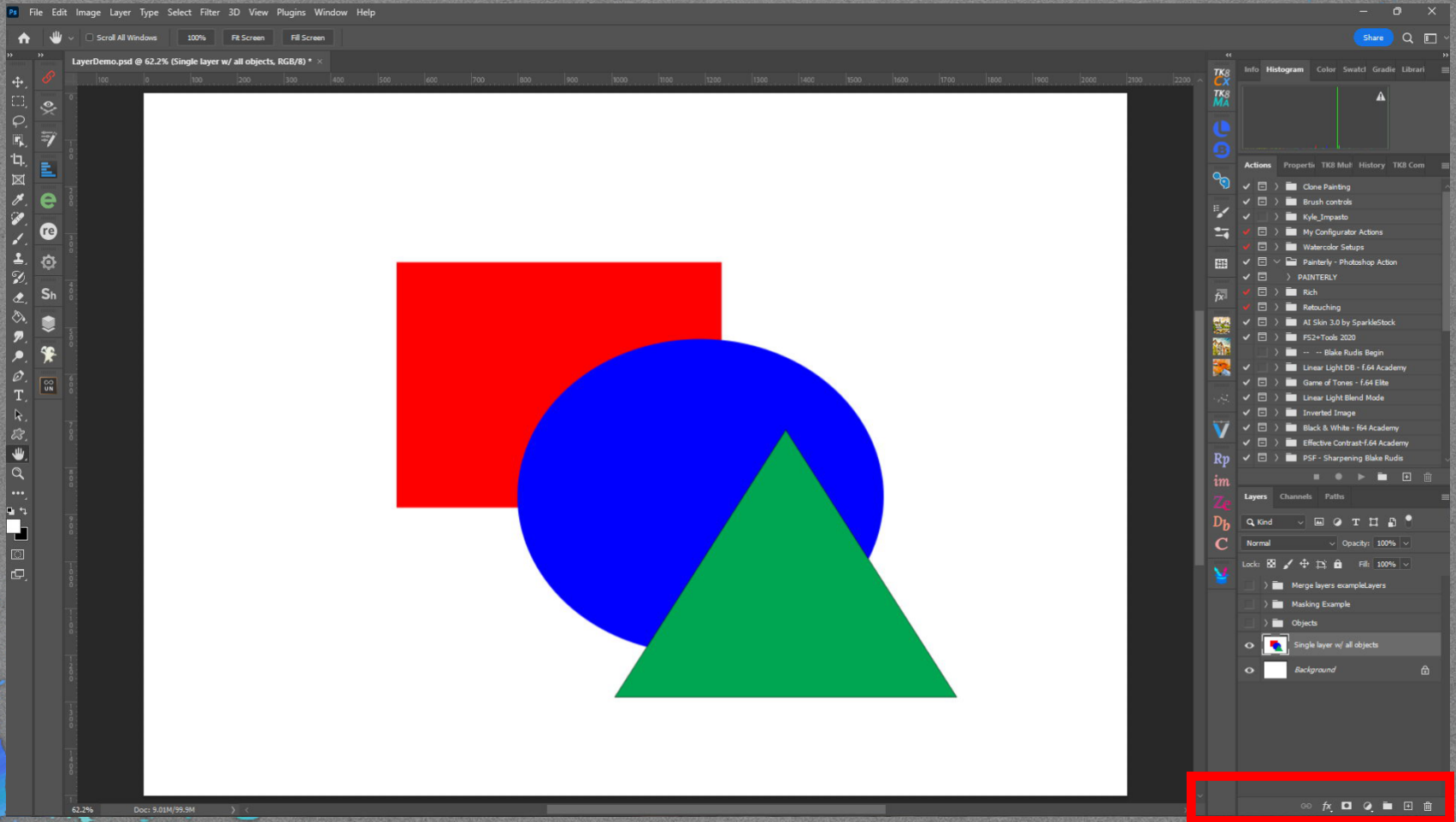
Layer Blend Mode



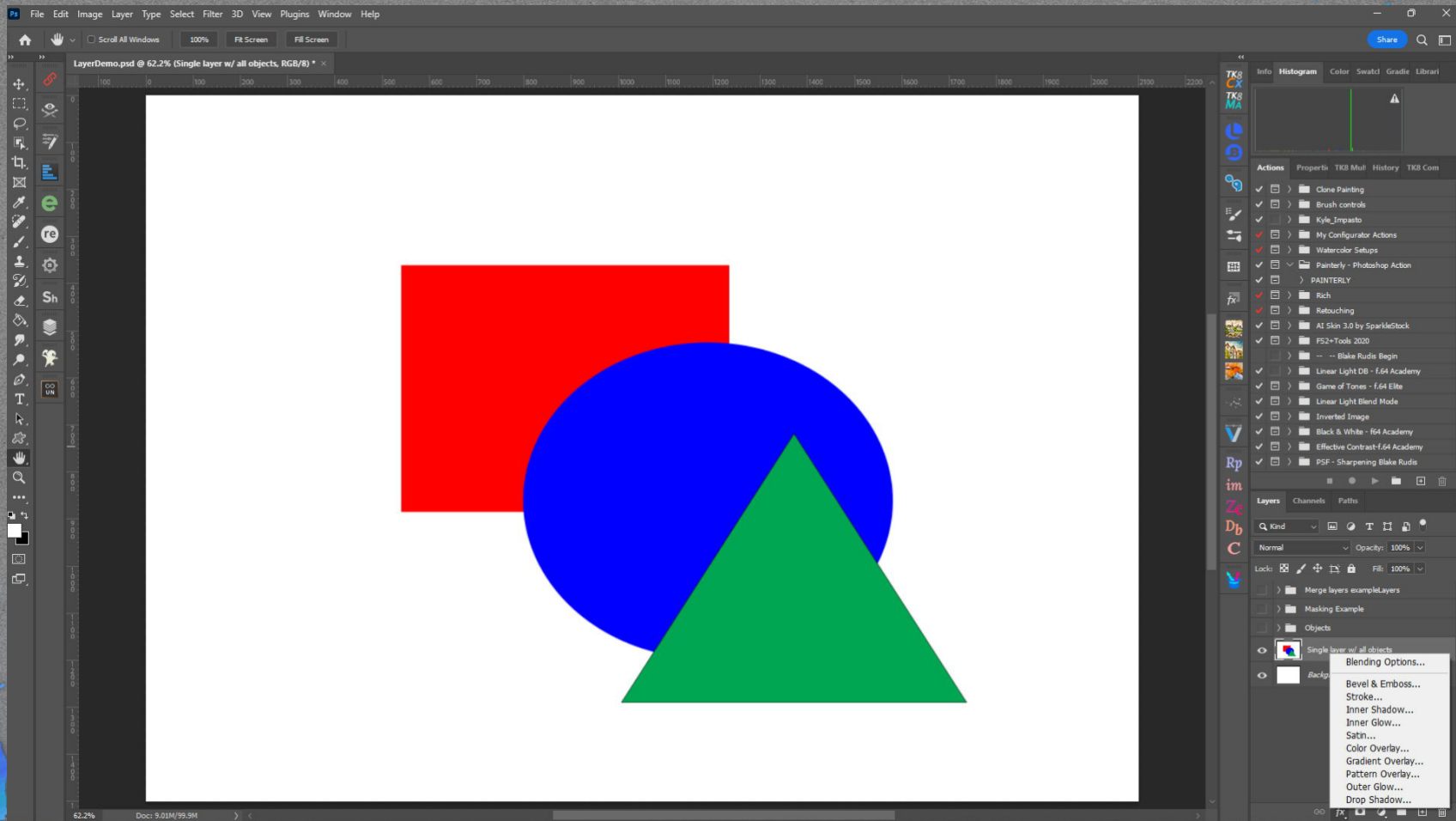
Layer Blend Modes



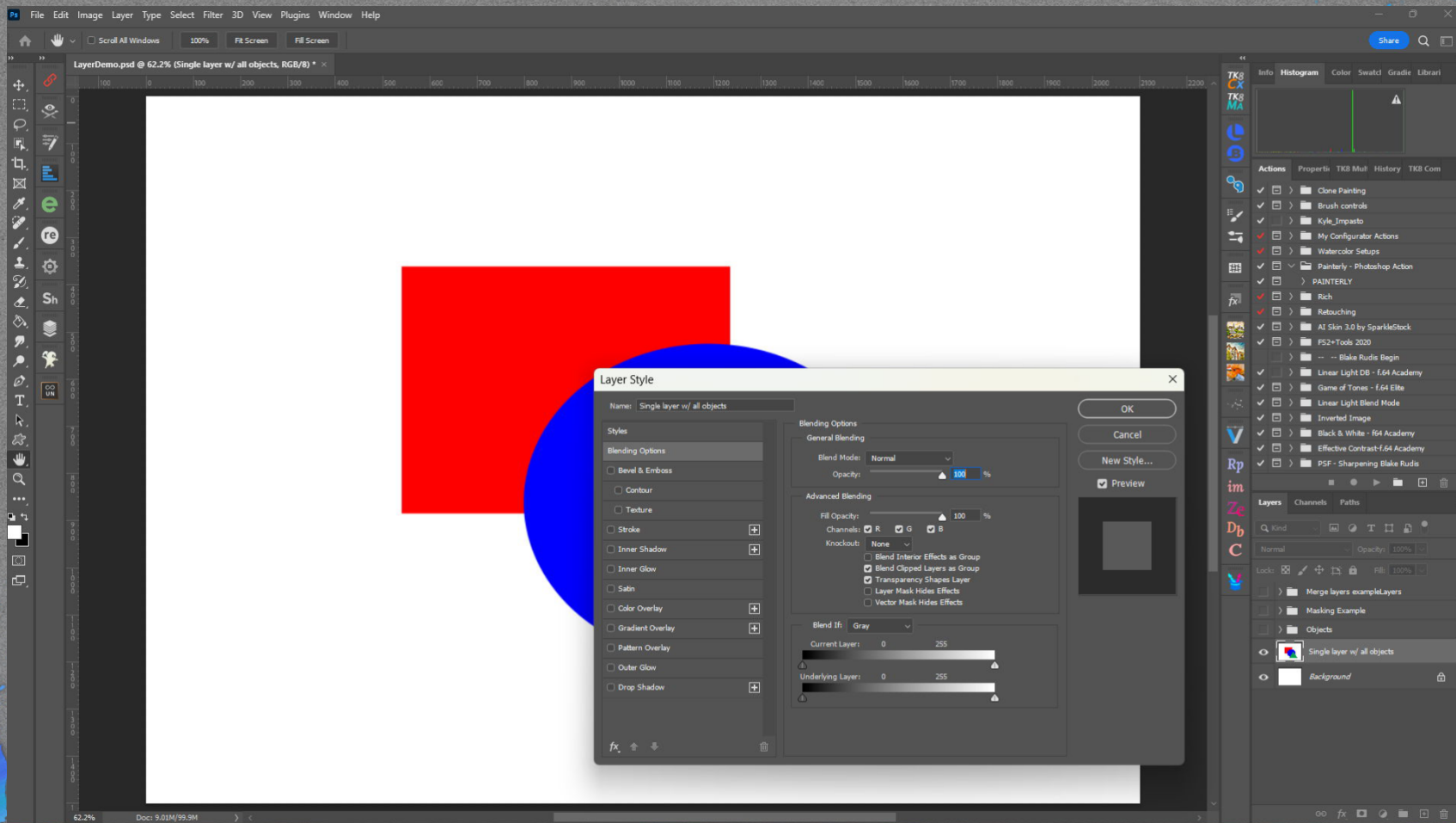
Layer Operations



Layer Styles



Layer Styles



Adjustment Layer

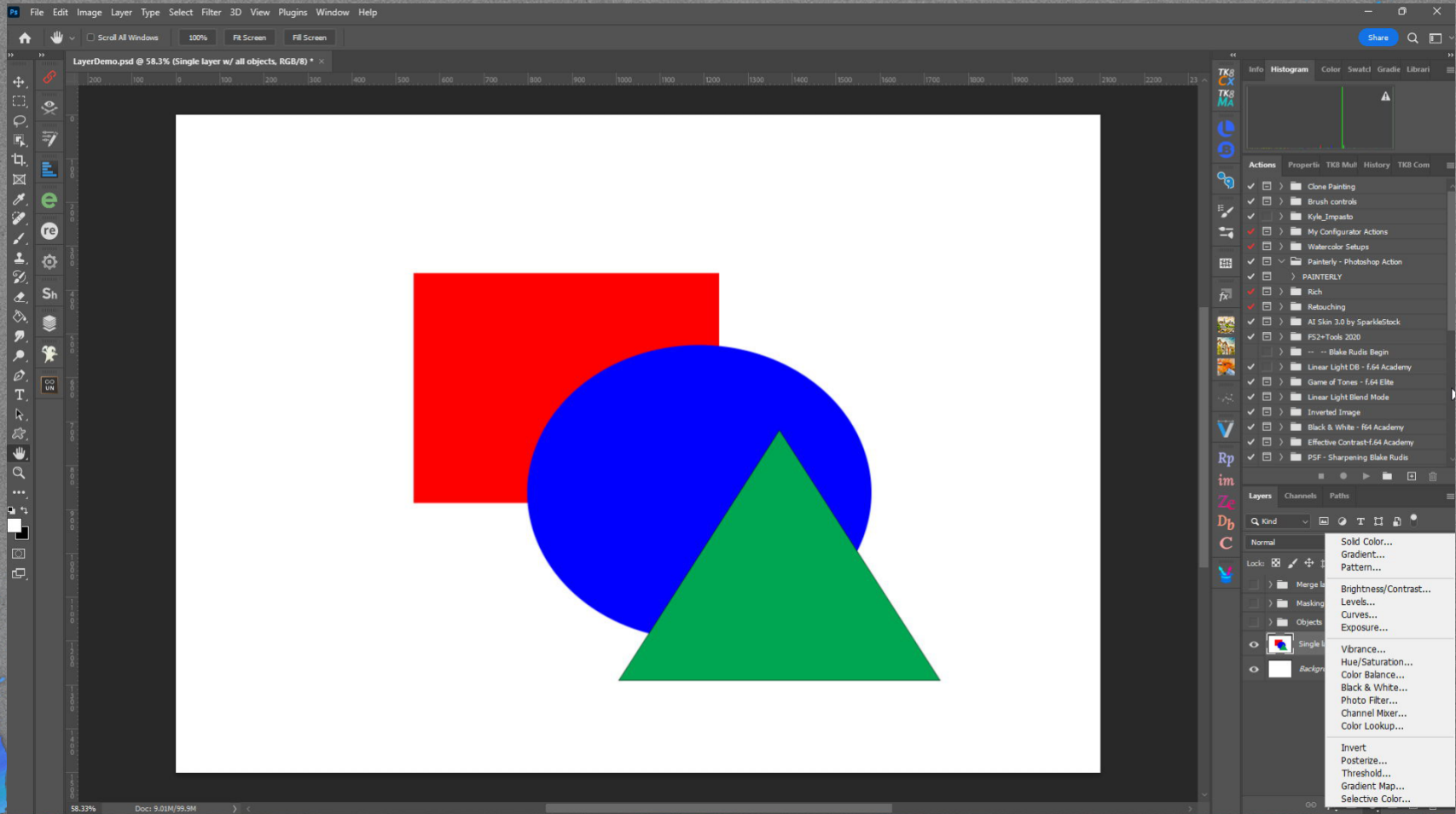
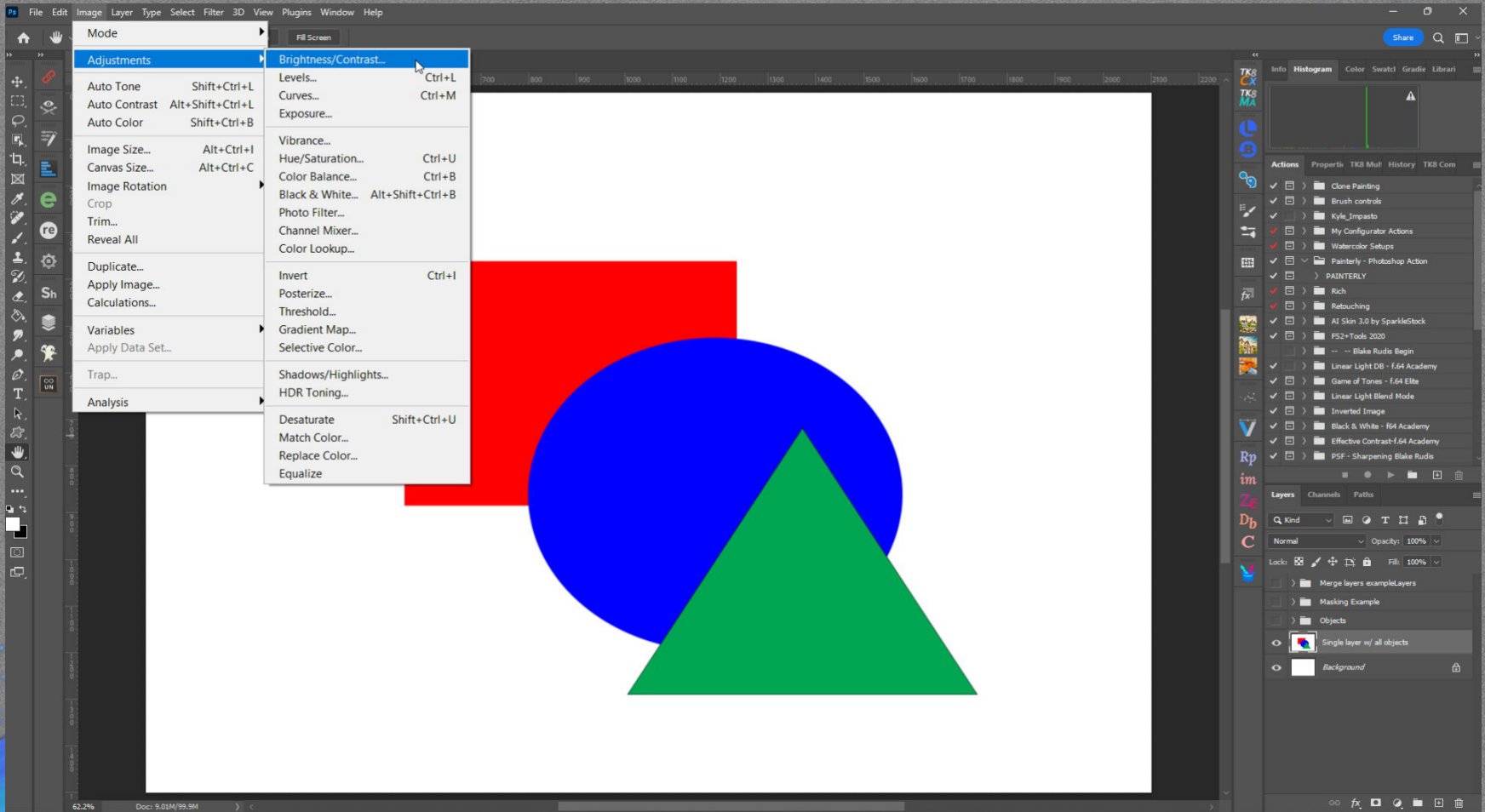
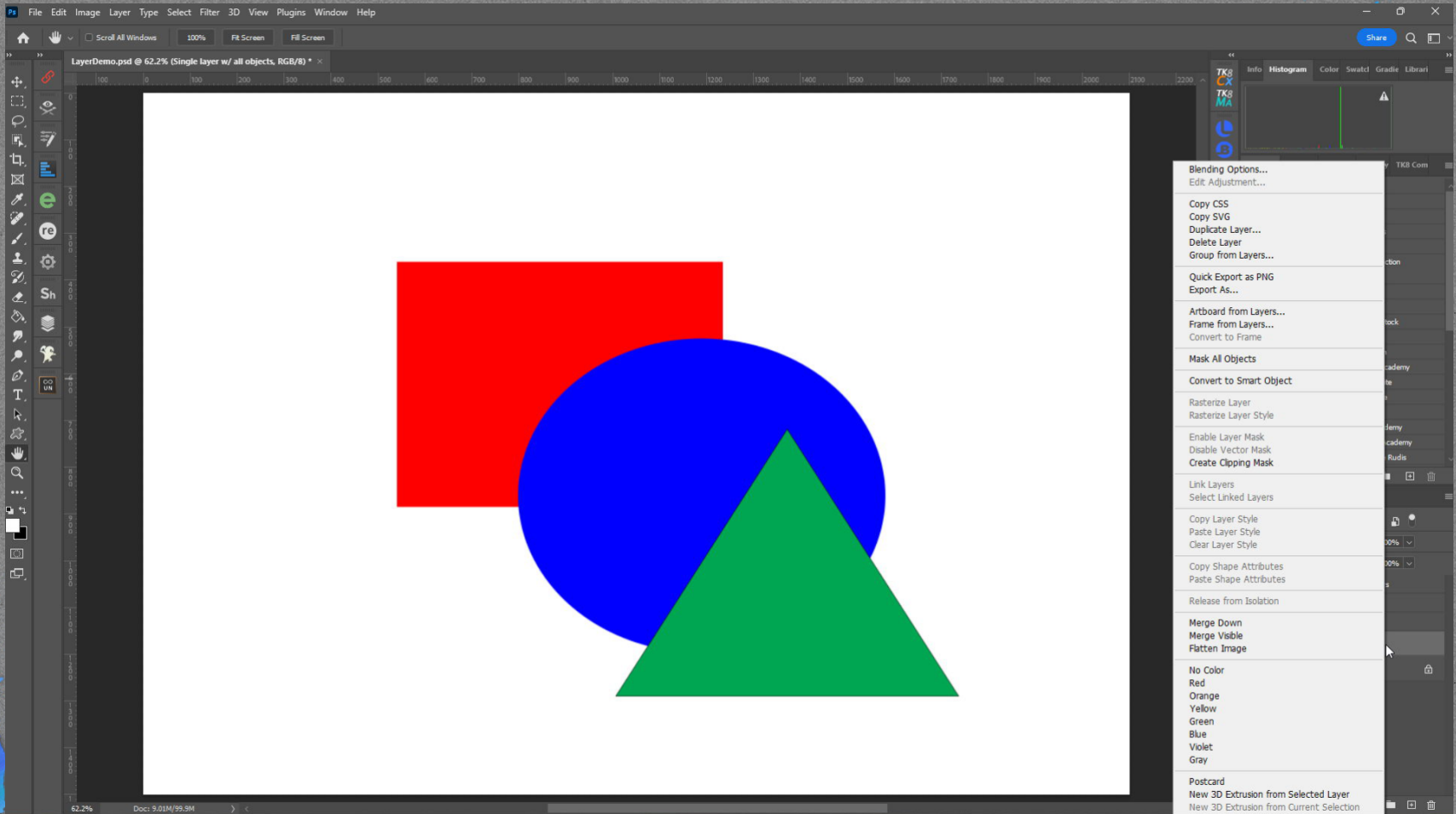


Image Adjustments



Layer Context Menú



Photoshop Interface

Why Layers

- Anything that changes the values of pixels on the pixel layer is destructive
- Layerd workflow can be non Destructive (Can be destructive)
- Apply Stylization Filters
- Painting and Drawing
- Compositing
- Sky and Background Replacement
- Dodge and Burn
- Luminosity/Color Masking

Resources

- Some links for further information
- Great for learning Layers and Masks and a lot more
- **Photoshop Cafe, Collin Smith**
 - [Adobe Photoshop Layers explained \(photoshopcafe.com\)](http://photoshopcafe.com)
- **PHLEARN Tutorials, Aaron Nace**
 - [Tutorials Archive - PHLEARN](#)
 - [How to Use Layers & Masks in Photoshop | Day 3 - YouTube](#)
- **Photoshop Training Channel, Jesus Ramirez**
 - [Photoshop BLENDING MODES - 8-Minute CRASH COURSE! - YouTube](#)
 - [Blending Modes Explained - Complete Guide to Photoshop Blend Modes - YouTube](#)
- **f64 Academy, Blake Rudis**
 - [Free Photoshop Tutorials - f64 Academy](#)
 - [Basic Layers and Masking in Photoshop - f64 Academy](#)