

Index Color Separations

Index color is a mode in Photoshop that uses only 256 colors with a dithered pixel pattern. Before the turn of the century web artists used this mode to compress and save space on web pages. When used for screenprinting, your ppi becomes your “dot size”. What is printed is a square of individual color without colors overlapping so pure color is usually used. Screen artists can usually use up to 150 ppi image resolutions when making Index Color Separations.

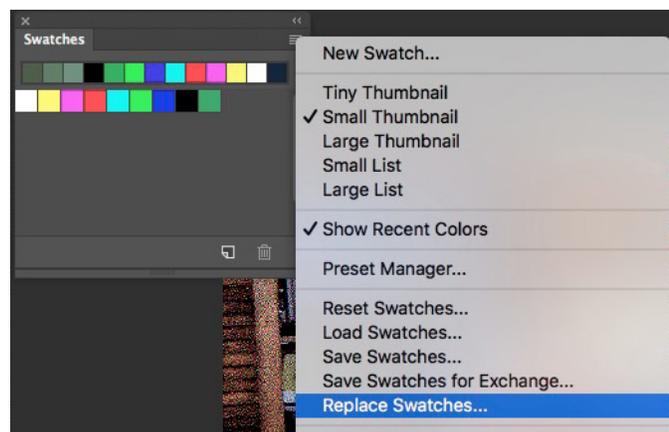
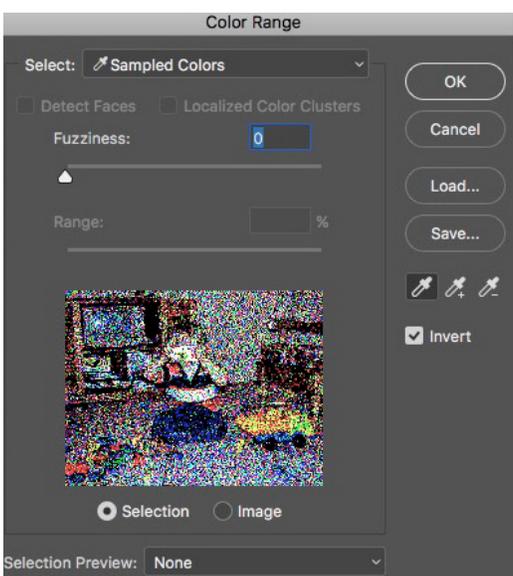
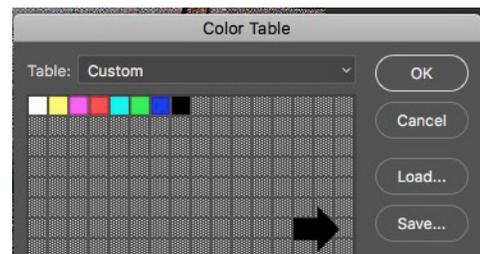
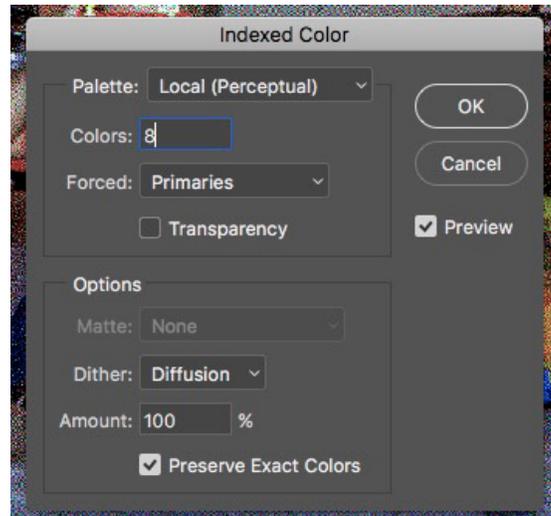
First open an image and size it to your finished image size at 100 – 150 ppi. From the Image menu choose Image > Mode > Indexed Color. Set the menu that pops up to match this image. The color box specifies how many colors your separation will have. Since your paper is probably white you will have one less than this number. This number needs to be in a range of 8-256.

Next you export your swatches table for your image. Use Image > Mode > Color Table to do this. In the Color Table select Save and save your color table to a place and with a name that you can find. I suggest in the folder with your image.

Next you need to make this color table show up in your swatches. From the swatch menu select Replace Swatches, find this color table and replace the standard swatches with your swatch.

This will attach your color table to the second line in the swatches.

Next you will select the colors in your image one at a time using the Select > Color Range command. This will make a selection of the color you choose.



Move the Fuzziness slider to 0. Open up your swatches panel so it's visible in your work area. Click the left eye icon then select the first color of your color table in your swatches. Press OK and that color will be selected in your image.

From the Select Menus use Select > Save Selection creating a new channel in your image. Name this the color you had selected with the eye dropper.

Now deselect your selection (Command D) and use Color Range again to select the next color on in your color table swatch. Again save it as a new channel and rename it. Do this for all of the colors in your color table. Your Channel palette will be filled with extra channels, one for each color.

If you want to see what your effort has produced, you will need to colorize each of these channels with the color they were sampled from. To do this double click on a channel (see #1). Change the channel to Spot Color and click on the color chip (see #2). Click the eye dropper in the Colors window (see #3) and select the correct color that matches this channel from you swatches menu (see #4). Continue colorizing each of your added channels as colorized spot channels. Once you are done select each channel and make sure the Index channel is turned off. This is what your image will look like if you match your inks to your color swatch.

To make your transparencies, select the color you wish to print on transparency film. Select Print to print this onto laser transparency film. At the bottom of the print dialog box is an option for Printer Marks. Select Registration Marks and Labels

