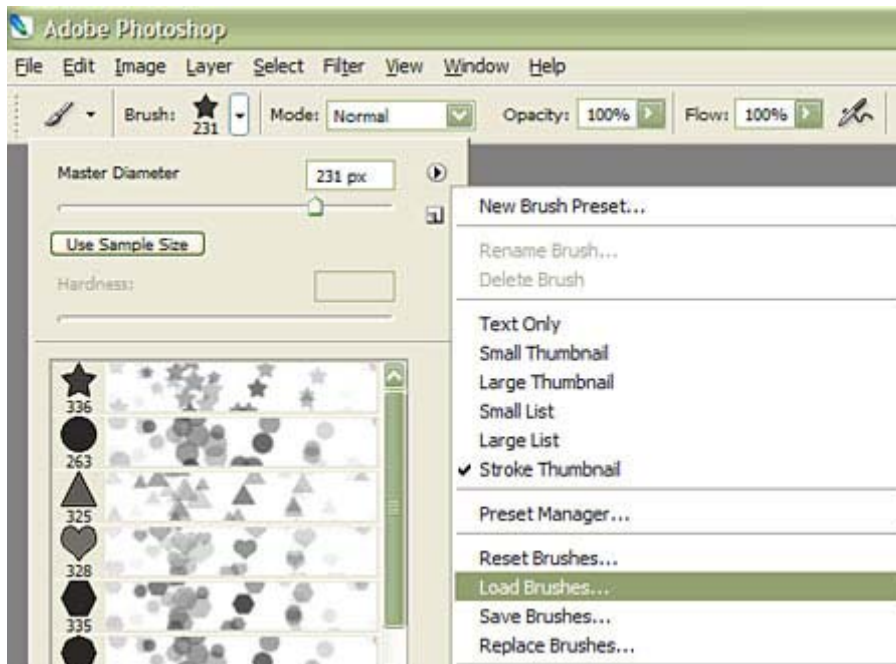## BOKEH BRUSH SET INSTRUCTION GUIDE by Kim Hill
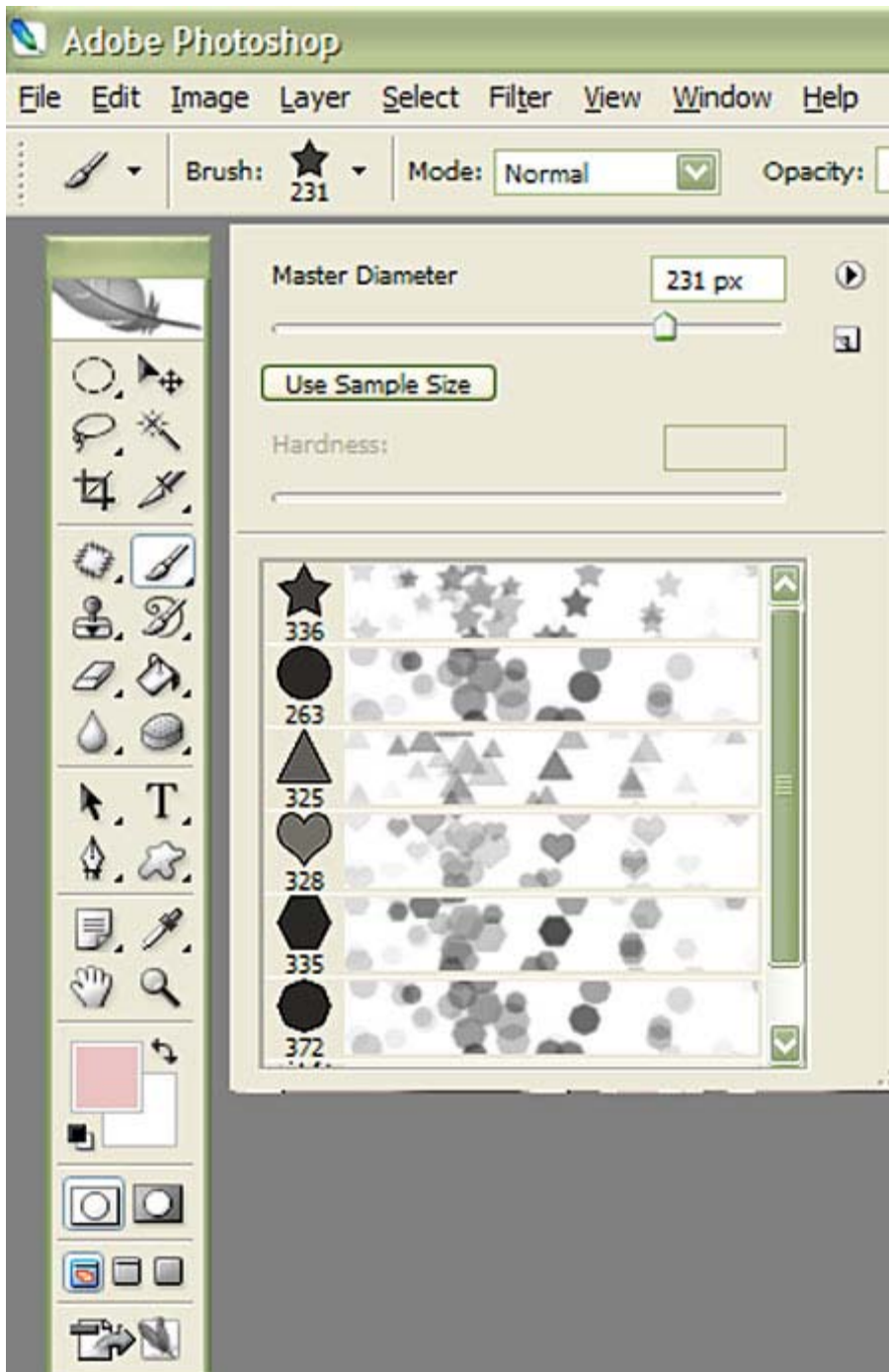
If you have any questions about this instruction guide or the brushes that are not answered here, please email me directly at kim@photosbykimhill.com

Bokeh is a Japanese term for the subjective aesthetic quality of out-of-focus points of light in a photographic image. Achieving bokeh in camera is easiest when setting the aperture to the widest open position such as F 1.4 or F 2.8. The subject will be in focus and all the background blur should have a bit of bokeh. If your lens doesn't open up quite that much, you can still achieve good blur and then mimick bokeh during the processing in photoshop by using these bokeh brushes.

First, you will need to load the brushes into your brush palette. Click on the brush icon in the toolbox. Then go up to the options bar at the top of the screen and click on the upside-down triangle next to the picture of the brush. A fly-out menu will open up revealing your brush choices. At the top right corner, there is another triangle – click on that and another fly-out menu will open up with additional options. This time, choose LOAD BRUSHES. A navigation window will open. Locate the .abr file that you saved after downloading and select that and then click LOAD.

Next, open the image you want to apply Bokeh to. Once all your standard editing is complete, create a new layer at the top of your layers stack. Select the bokeh brush shape you want to use from the brush palette. To do this, first click on the brush icon in the toolbox. Then go up to the options bar at the top of the screen and click on the upside-down triangle next to the picture of the brush. A fly-out menu will open up revealing your brush choices. The bokeh brushes you just loaded will be at the bottom of your brush palette so you may have to use the vertical scroll bar to get down far enough to see them.
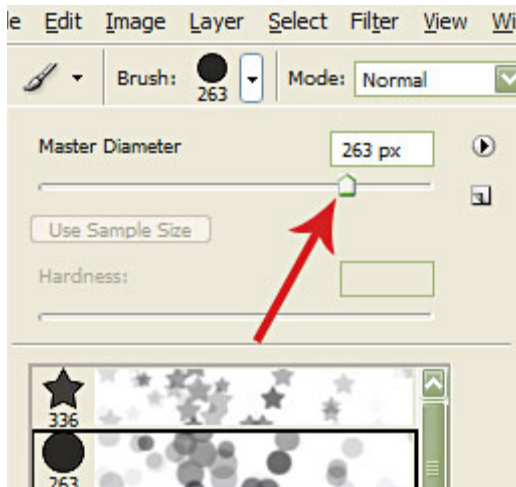
Now it's time to pick the colors you want your bokeh to be. I would recommend choosing colors that are within the range of color already in your image. So if your background blurred area is in shades of green, then I would pick green and yellow as the colors to use. With these brushes, the color will vary as you stroke the brush and it will toggle between the colors you place in the foreground and background of your paint palette shown here. By clicking on the EYEDROPPER tool, and then hovering over an area of your image, you can then point/click to fill the foreground with the color you are pointing to. Then use the toggling arrows in the paint area to move that color to the background. Select the eyedropper tool again, hover it over your image on another different color, then point/click to put the second color in your paint palette. You should now have two colors in the paint swatch area for your brush to toggle between.

As you can see in my sample image above, I already have a bit of yellow bokeh in the blurred area which was captured in-camera. I want to make this more pronounced so I'm using a combination of yellow and green paint colors.
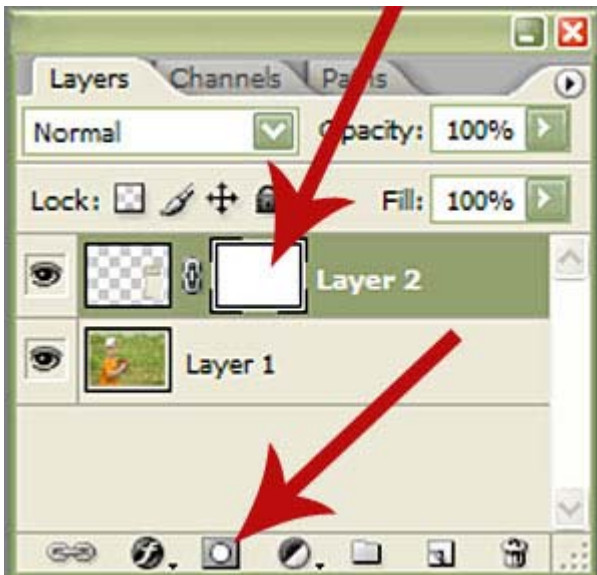
For this demonstration, we will use the CGE_Bokeh-Circle. Now depending on how big you want your bokeh circles to be, the default size may be too big or too small. I'm going to adjust the size of my brush to fit the sample bokeh that is already there, which appears to be around 160 pixels. You can adjust the size of the brush by using the master diameter slider shown here:

Next, create a new blank layer at the top of your layer stack. And stroke the brush on the areas where you want to see more bokeh. As you can see, the brush has given you a scattered effect with a slight variance in the colors. Toggle between the paint swatches to vary it even more.

Now it's time to tweak it just a bit further. You will need to remove the bokeh that is on top of your subject. You can either zoom in really close and carefully erase it, or you can apply a layer mask and brush it away in a non-destructive manner. I prefer to use a mask because if I make a mistake it is easily fixed. So for this tutorial, we will use the mask. To do that, click on the layer mask icon at the bottom of the layers palette. It is the 3rd image from the left. After you click it, you will see a white box next to your layer of bokeh. This is the mask and you will use this to paint away the excess bokeh using a paintbrush and black paint. If you make a mistake, switch your paint color to white and brush over the error to reveal the bokeh again. MAKE SURE YOU CHOOSE A DEFAULT HARD ROUND BRUSH TO USE ON THE MASK.

Now you can see the sample image has bokeh removed from the subject. But we're not done yet.

Last thing to do is change the blending mode and lower the opacity until it looks good to you. To change the blending mode, go to the layers palette and where you see the word NORMAL, click on the arrow to reveal a drop-down menu of choices. I prefer either Overlay Mode or Soft Light Mode. But scroll through them all to see if you find one that you prefer. This is shown in overlay mode at 100% opacity.

It looks a bit too much, still. So I'm going to lower the opacity of this to 50% for a more realistic look. If you like a

less-defined look, you can go to FILTER>BLUR>GAUSSIAN BLUR and set it to around 8 pixels (more or less depending on your preference and the size of your image).

And that is all there is to it. Here is another glimpse at the starting image so you can see the difference. Have fun playing!!!