Nikon Capture NX "How To..." Series

Article 24 - How to blur the background to accent your subject.

Purpose: The subject in the foreground is entirely in focus, but the background is a little distractive. Blurring the background will draw the viewer to the subject. This effect may be accomplished using the Gaussian Blur tool.

Before: The background in this image is not as blurred as expected.

After: While the foreground remains unchanged, the background is blurred to make the main flower stand out.

Answer

Process:

Step 1 - Open an image.

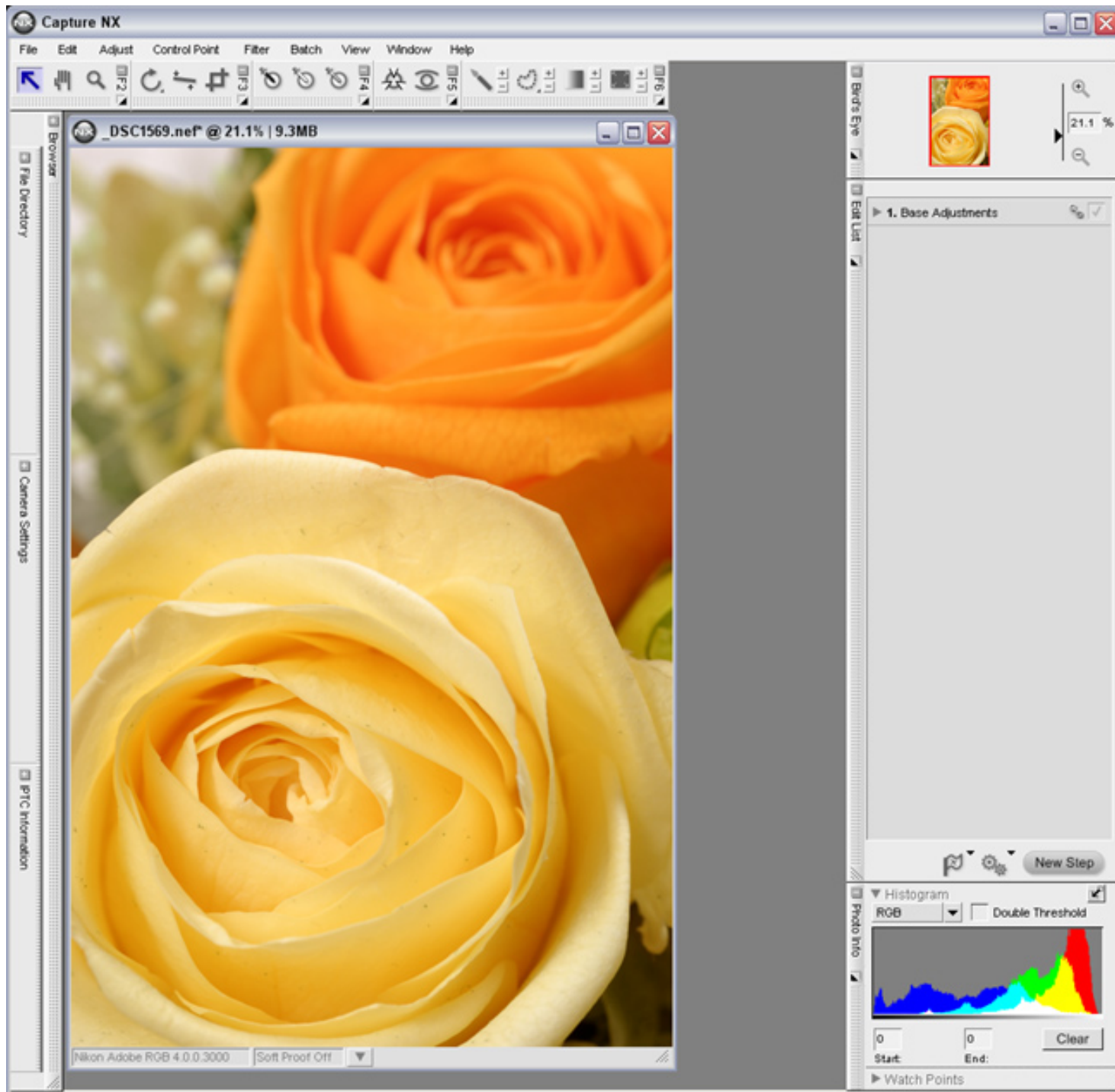**Step 2 -** Blur the entire image.

Step 3 - Set blur characteristics to increase gradually toward the background.

Step 4 - Adjust the effective blur range.

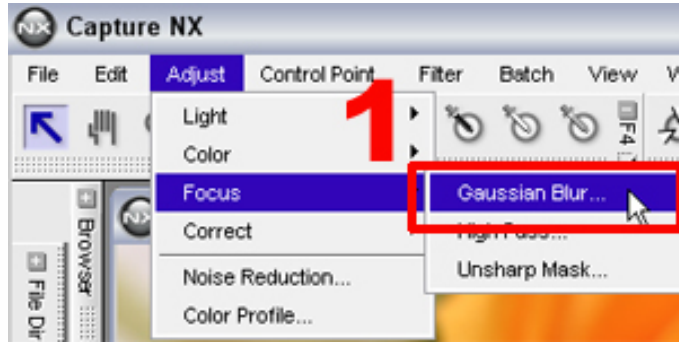**Step 5 -** Adjust blur intensity using the Opacity setting.

Step 1: This is a close-up shot of two flowers. Background blurring will be increased to emphasize the yellow flower in the foreground.
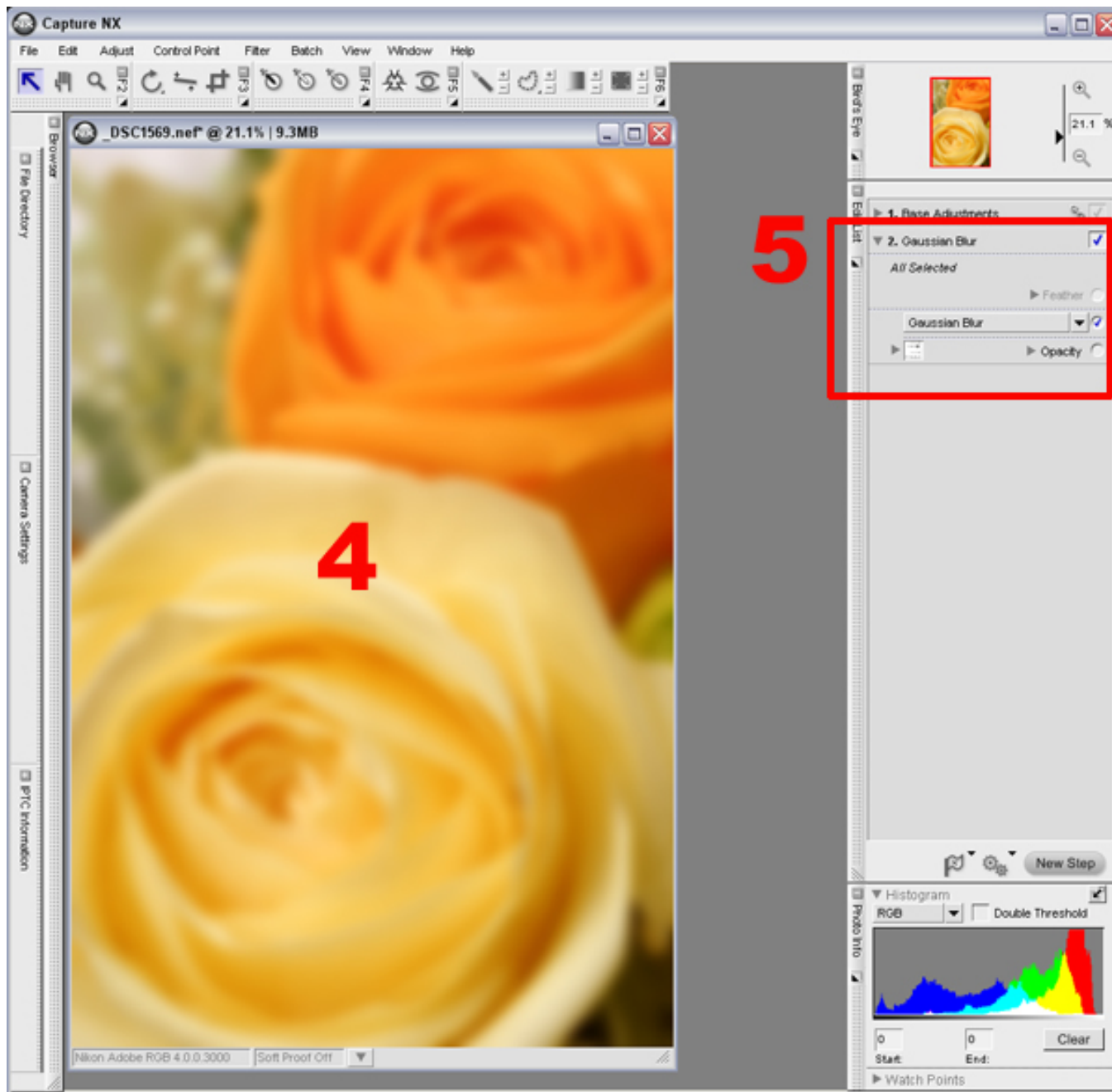
Answer

Step 2 - Blur the entire image.

Answer

1) Select "Gaussian Blur…" from the "Focus" submenu in the "Adjust" menu.

2) In the "Gaussian Blur" dialog, set "Radius" to 30px, and "Opacity " to 100%.

3) Click "OK" to apply the "Guassian Blur".

4) The entire image is blurred.

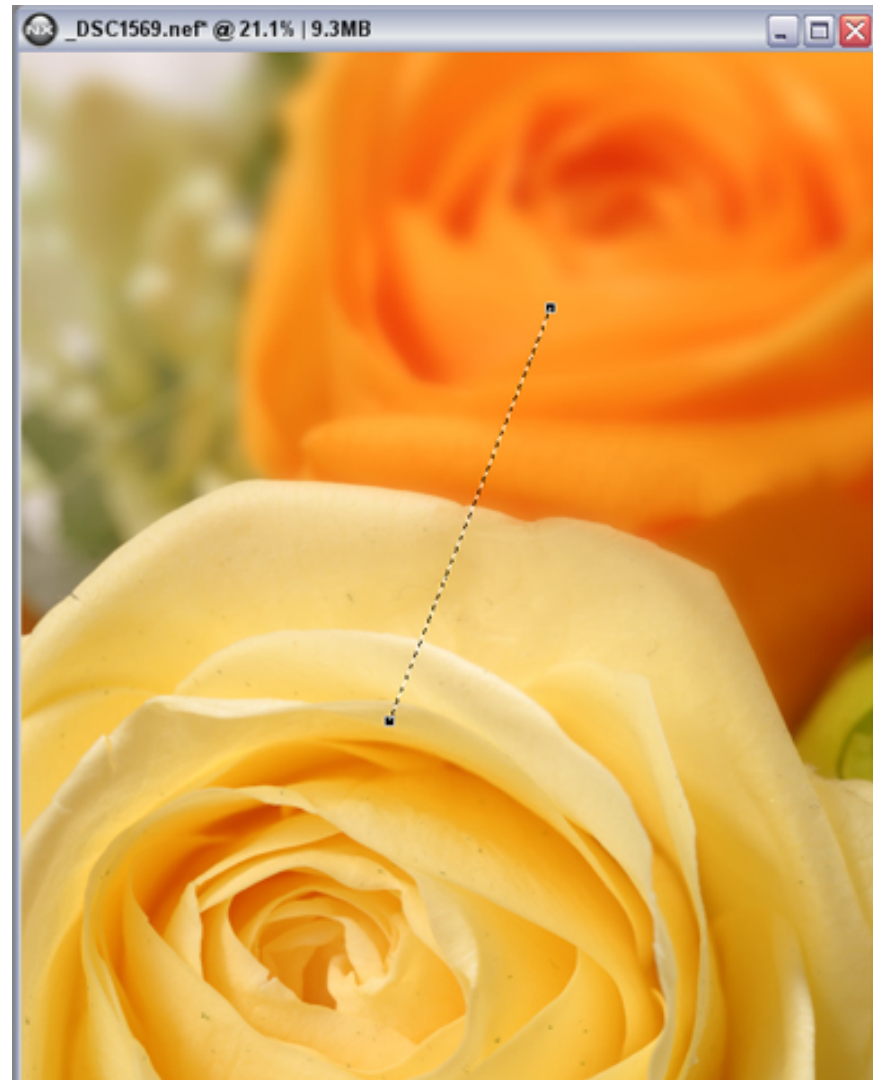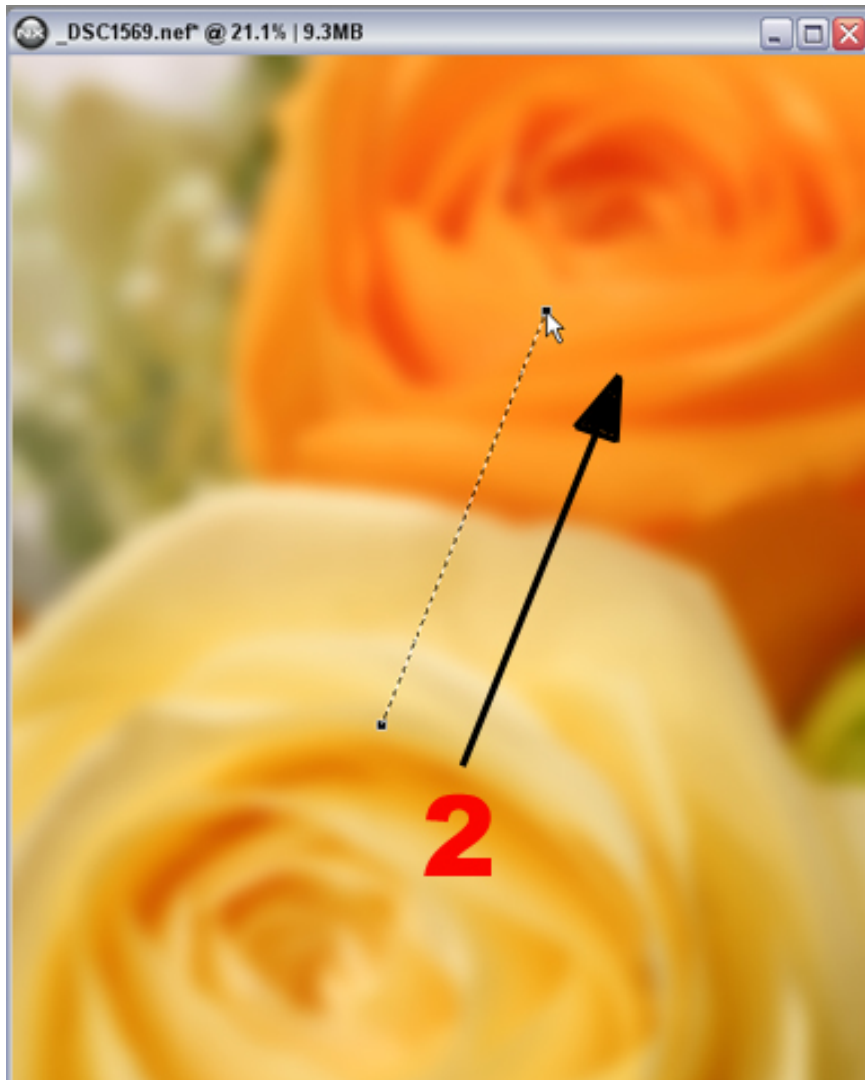5) A "Gaussian Blur" step is added to the "Edit List."

Answer

Step 3 - Set blur characteristics to increase gradually toward the background.

1) Select the "Minus Gradient" (-)

2) Drag the Selection Gradient cursor from the foreground flower, which should be in focus, toward the background (top of the image). Let go of the mouse button and the changes will take effect.

3) The effects of this procedure gradually increase blurring toward the background. Fine adjustment of blur characteristics will be performed later, if necessary.
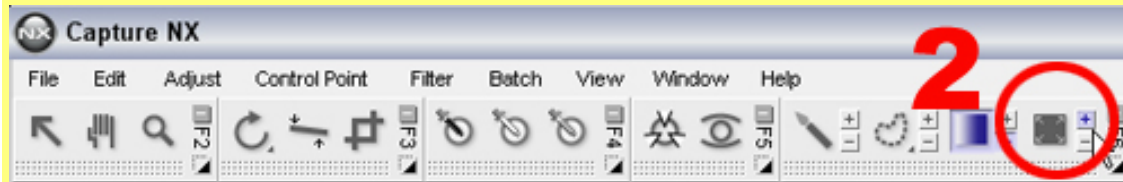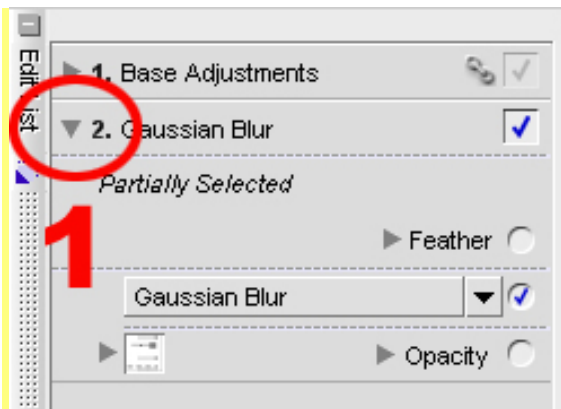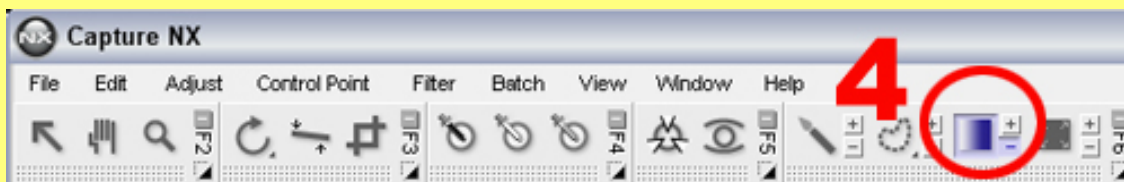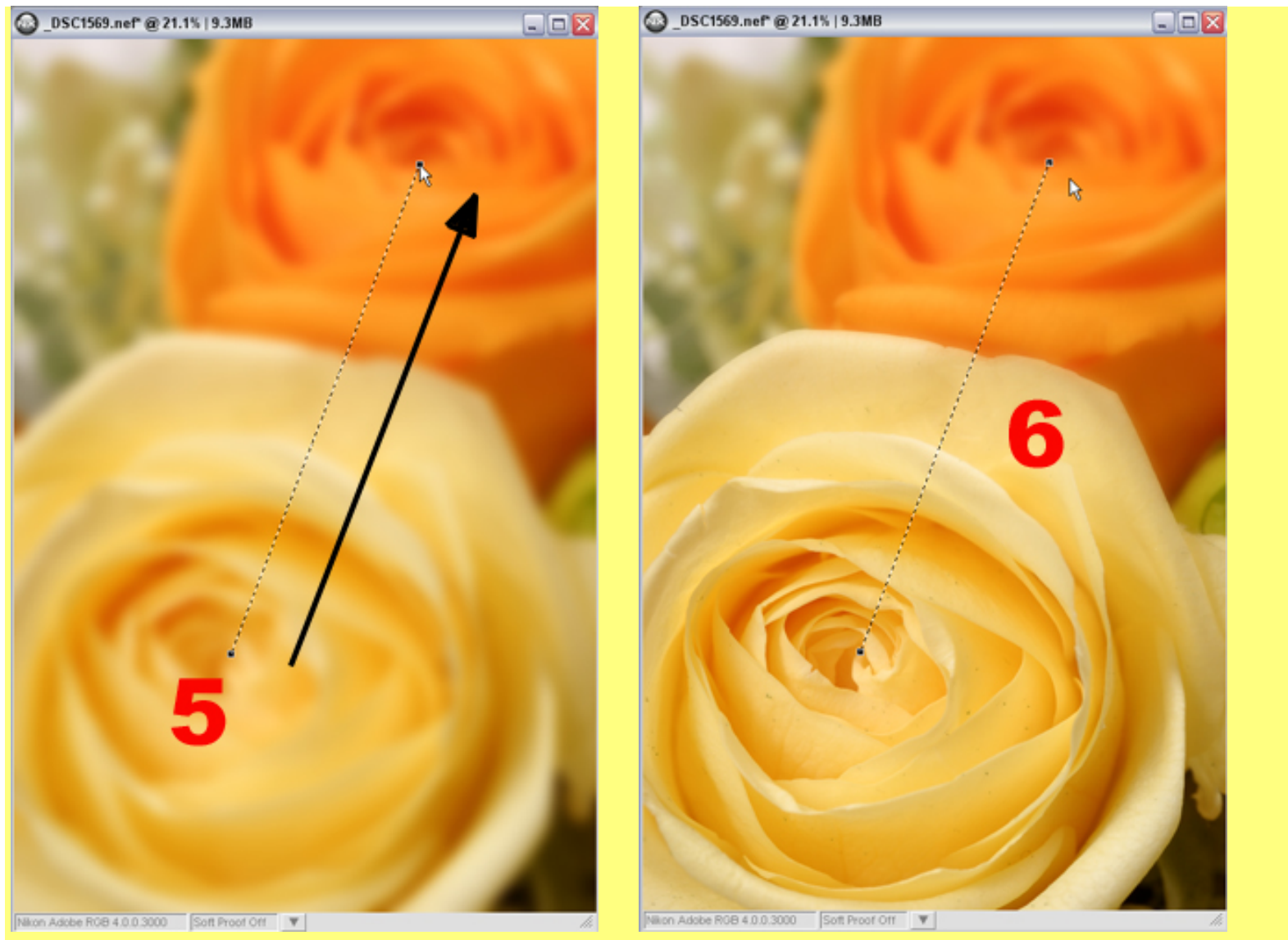
Answer

Correcting the gradient process:

To correct the procedure performed in **Step 3**, follow the instructions below:

1) Be sure that the "Gaussian Blur" step in the "Edit List" is expanded (open).

2) Select the "Fill Image" tool (+ Fill / Remove Tool).

3) The entire image is again blurred.

4) Select the "Minus Gradient" (- Selection Gradient).

5) Drag the "Selection Gradient" cursor again, adjusting the positioning or length as necessary, and check results."

6) View the results.

Answer

Answer

Capture NX

File   Edit   Adjust   Control Point   Filter   Batch   View   Window   Help

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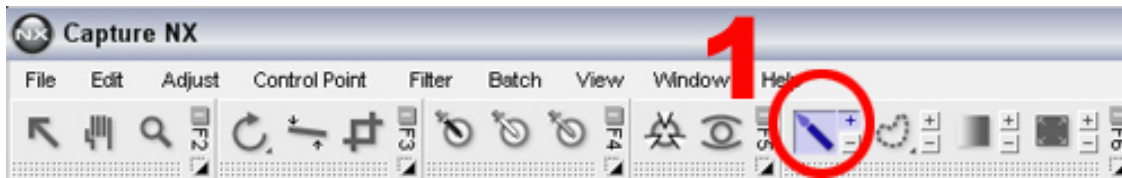**Step 4 -** Adjust the effective blur range.

For natural blurring characteristics, use the "Plus Brush" (+ Selection Brush) to adjust the effective blur range.
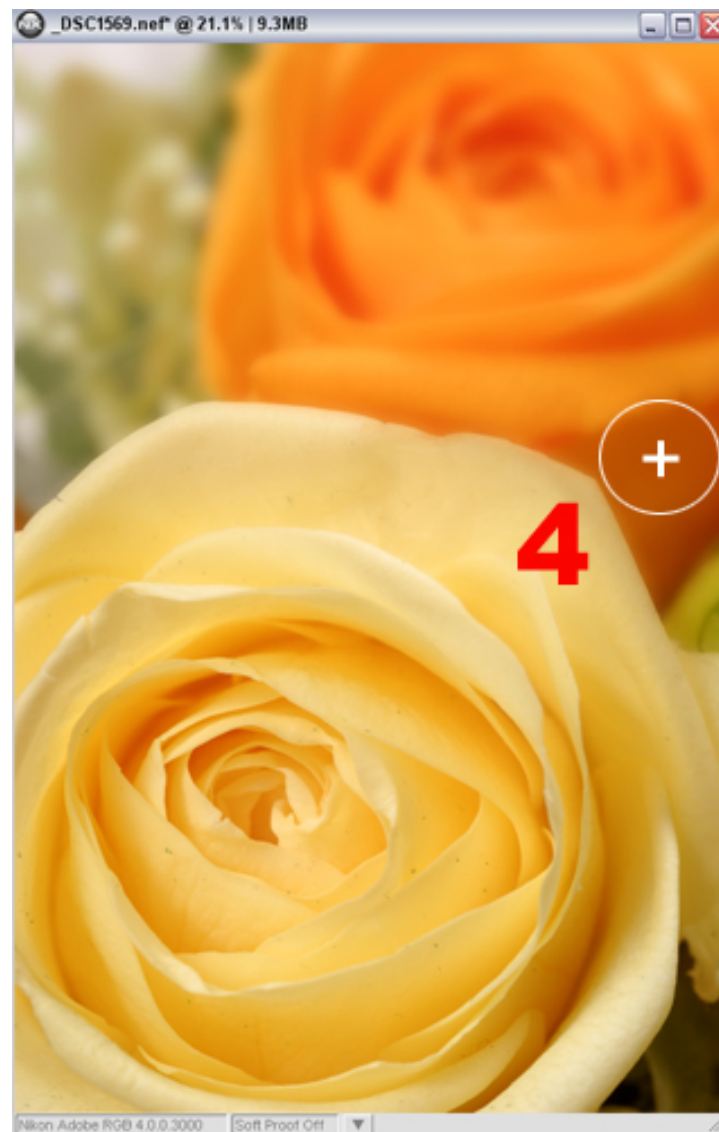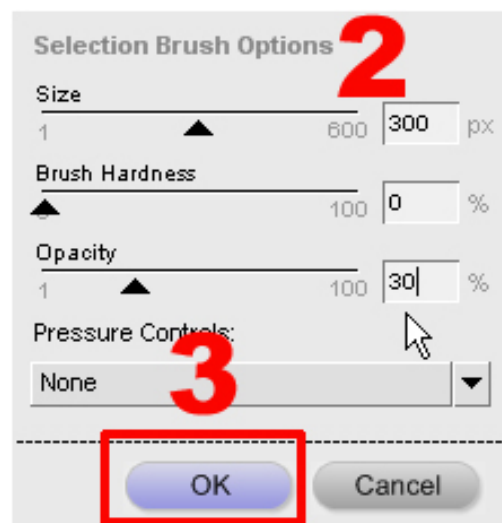
1) Select the "Plus Brush"

2) Position the mouse cursor over the "Selection Brush" and right click (hold down the CONTROL key on a Macintosh). The "Selection Brush Options" dialog will be displayed. Here we have set "Size" to 300px, "Brush Hardness" to 0%, and "Opacity" to 30% (modify settings as necessary for individual image characteristics, such as size and composition).

3) Click "OK".

4) "Paint" (drag the cursor) over any additional areas of the image that should be blurred. As we have used the default "Opacity" setting of 30%, blur applied in this procedure is only slight. To increase blur intensity, "paint" over the same area repeatedly. Repeated application of slight blurring is effective for achieving natural results.
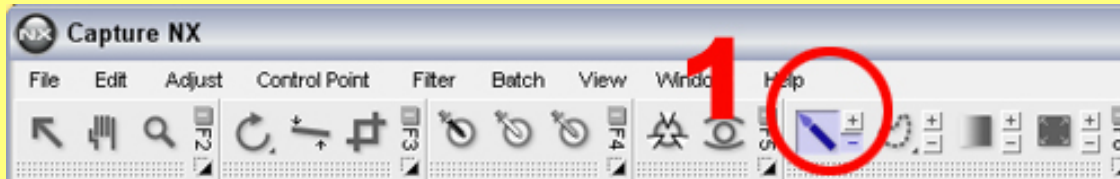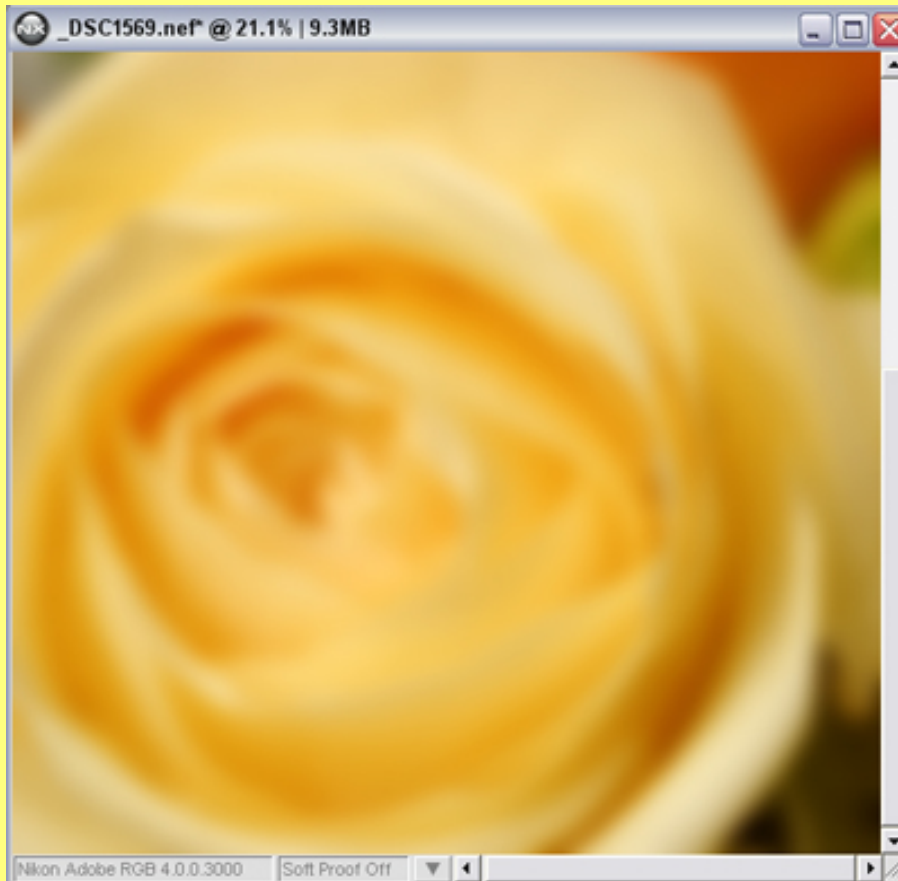
Answer

Answer

What to do if a portion of the image is blurred and shouldn't be:

If an area of the image is blurred that shouldn't be, use the "Minus Brush" (- Selection Brush) to 'erase' blurring.
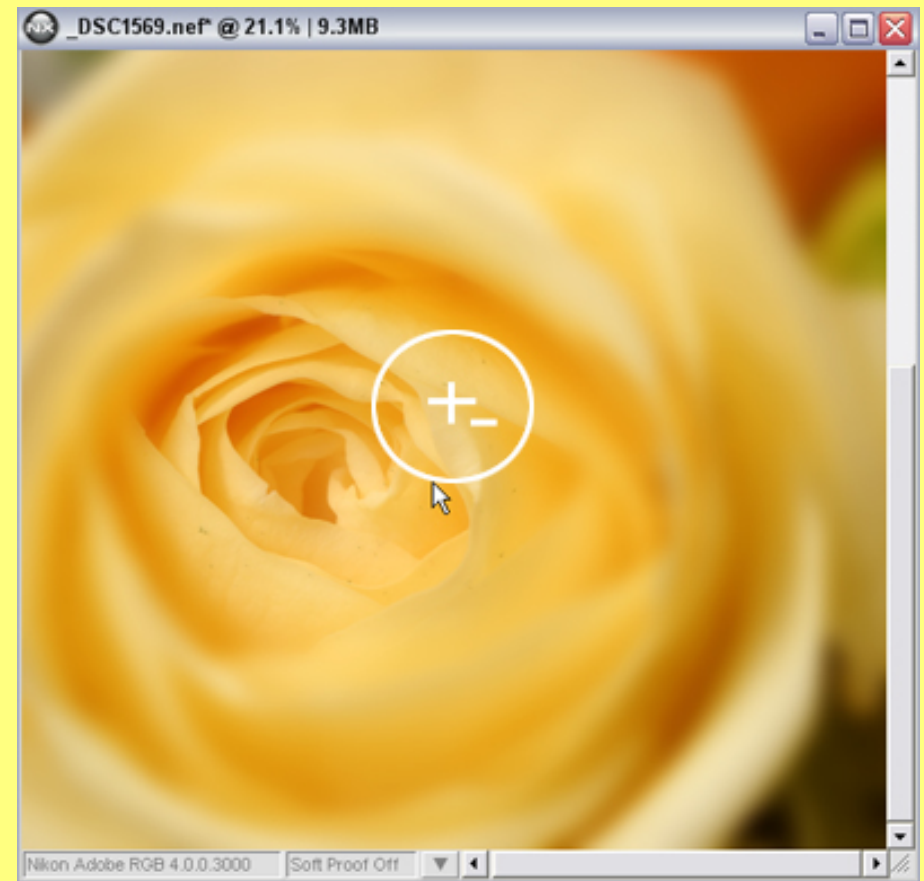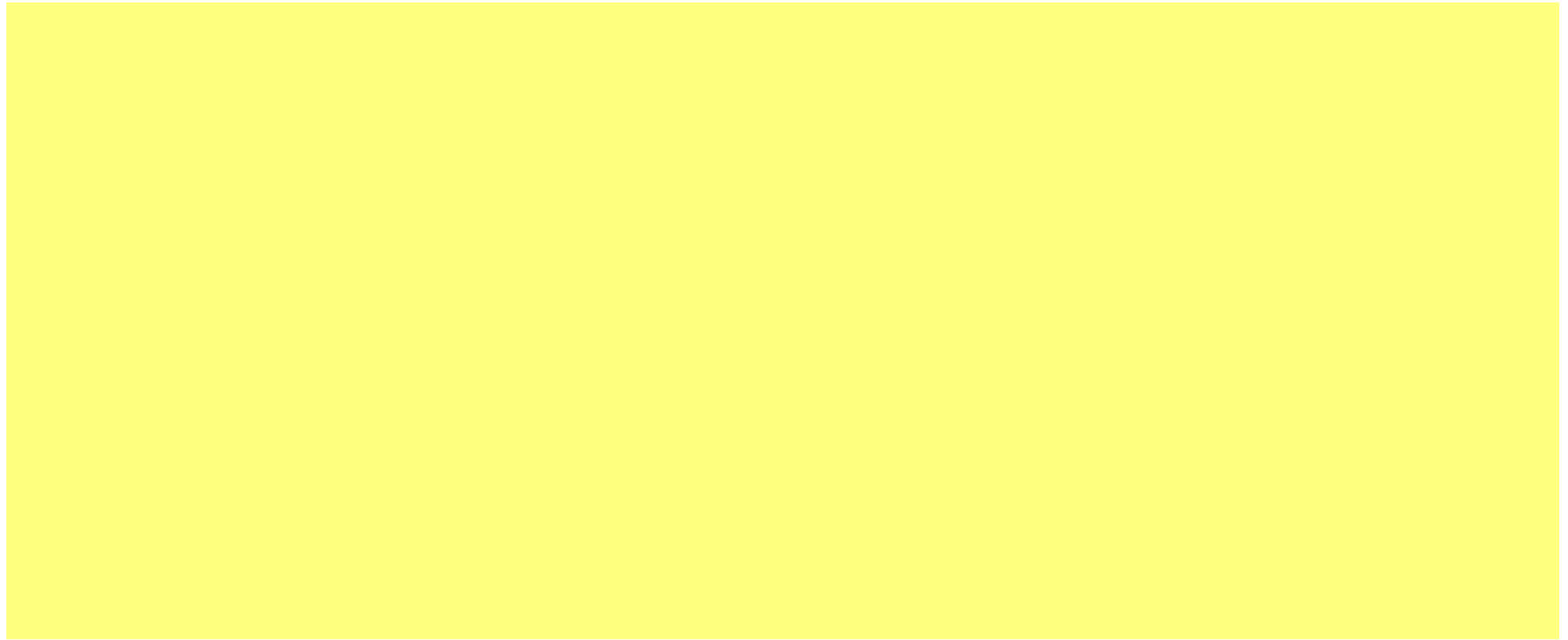
1) Select the Minus Brush.

2) "Paint" (drag the cursor) over the area of the image that should not be blurred to reduce blur intensity.
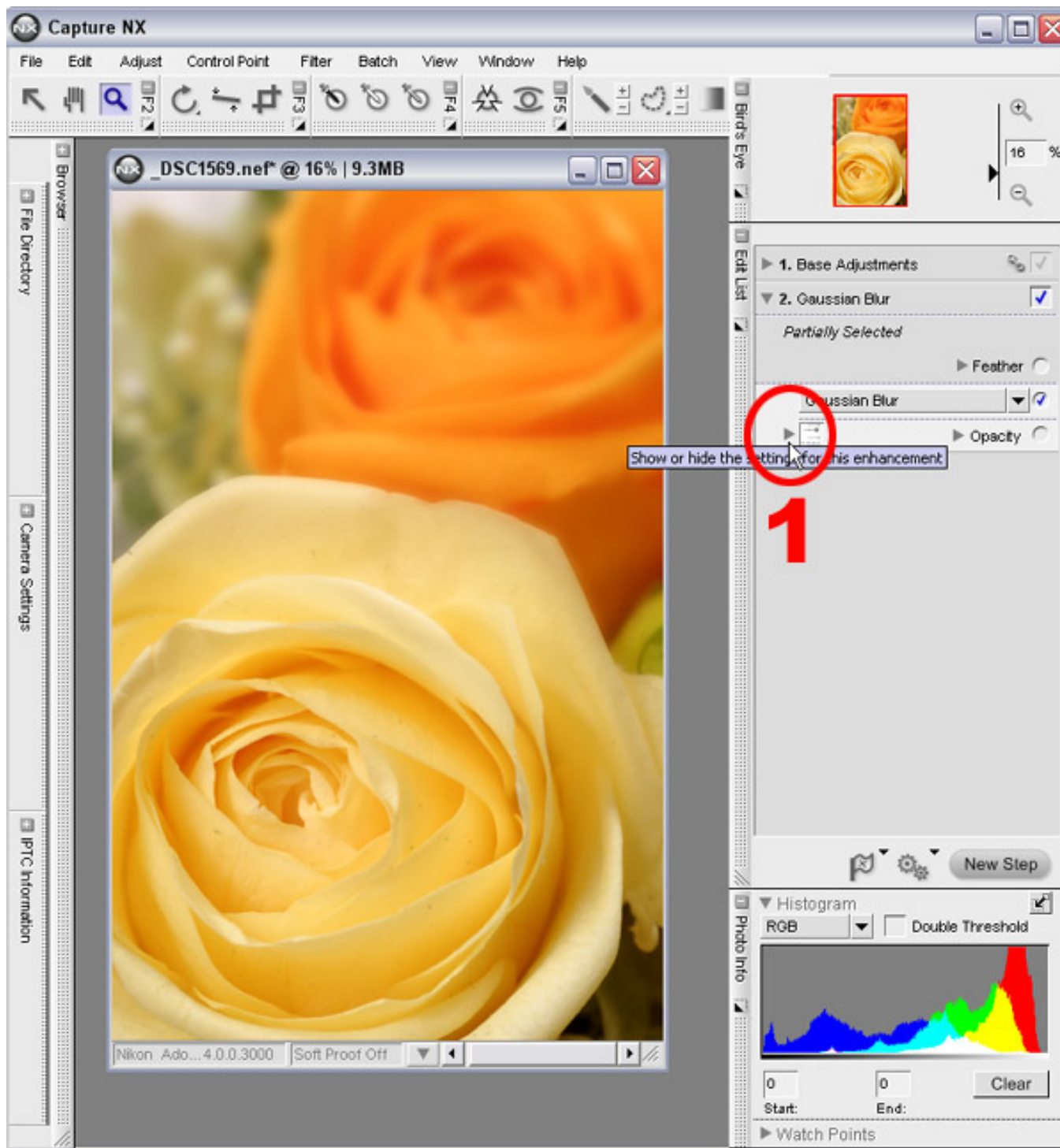
Answer

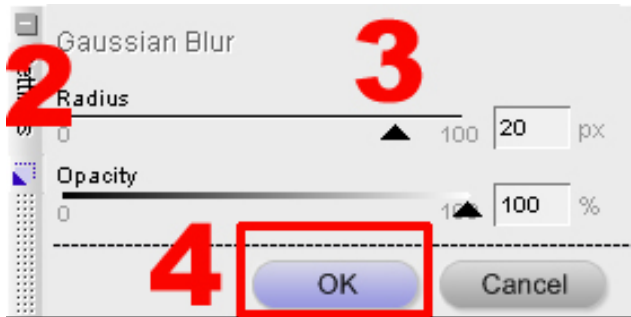**Step 5 -** Adjust blur intensity using the "Radius" setting.

1) Click the show / hide triangle for the "Gaussian Blur" step in the "Edit List".

Answer

2) The "Gaussian Blur" dialog will be displayed.

3) Use the "Radius" slider to reduce the setting value, gradually reducing blur intensity,. Here we have reduced the value to 20 px.

4) Click "OK".

5) Blur intensity is reduced.

Answer