**Aquiplicity 2025: The Industrial Art Composer**

**User Manual**

**1. Welcome to Aquiplicity - by Tracy Rose**

Welcome! You're about to use a powerful and creative tool designed for artists, photographers, and anyone with a desire to experiment. Aquiplicity doesn't just edit photos; it **composes** them.

The core idea is to take a stack of images (called "layers") and blend them into a single, unique "master image." The software intelligently decides which pixels to show from which layer based on their color difference from a base image. You can then use a suite of intuitive tools to further refine your creation, painting and patching areas to achieve the perfect artistic vision.

Let's dive in and make some art!

**2. The Workspace: At a Glance**

Your screen is divided into three main sections. Understanding them is key to a smooth workflow.

**A. The Controls Panel (Top)**

This is your command center.

* **Image Input:** The button to select image files from your computer. This is always your first step.
* **Compose! :** The magic button. After you've adjusted the Threshold, click this to re-blend all the layers into a new master image.
* **Undo:** Made a brush stroke or lasso selection you don't like? This is your best friend. It undoes your last creative action.
* **Reset:** Wipes the slate clean. Removes all images and resets all settings to their default state.
* **Threshold Slider:** The most important setting for composition. It tells the software **how different** a pixel's color needs to be from the base layer to be included in the final image.
  + Low Threshold (e.g., 5%): Very selective. Only pixels that are *very* different from the base image will be pulled from the upper layers.
  + High Threshold (e.g., 75%): Less selective. Many more pixels from the upper layers will be used, covering up more of the base image.
* **Brush Size Slider:** Controls the diameter of the **Patch Brush** tool.
* **By Tracy Rose:** A fun button that sets the Threshold to a preset value (13%) favored by the creator.
* **Dark/Light Mode:** Toggles the interface theme for your viewing comfort.

**B. The Thumbnail Strip (Left)**

This vertical strip shows all the images you've loaded.

* **Layers:** Each image is a "layer." The image at the top (Layer 0) is your **base layer**. Images below it are stacked on top in ascending order.
* **Removing a Layer:** Click the small **'X'** that appears when you hover over a thumbnail to remove that image from the project. This will require you to Compose! again.

**C. The Working Area (Center)**

This is your canvas and where the action happens.

* **Main Canvas:** Displays your final, composed master image. This is where you will use the creative brush and lasso tools.
* **Save Master Image:** Once you are happy with your creation, click this button to download it as a PNG file.
* **Status Bar:** Located at the bottom, this text provides crucial feedback, instructions, and error messages. **Always pay attention to the status bar!**

**3. Your First Composition: A Step-by-Step Guide**

Creating your first piece is easy. Follow these steps.

**Step 1: Upload Your Images**

* Click the **Image Input** button (it may say "Choose Files" or similar). Select two or more images from your computer.
* **Pro Tip:** For the best results, use images that have the same dimensions (width and height). The tool will resize images to match the first one you upload, but starting with matching sizes prevents distortion.
* The first image you select becomes your "base" (Layer 0).

**Step 2: Automatic Composition**

* As soon as your images are loaded, the software will automatically perform the first composition using the default Threshold setting. You will see the result appear on the main canvas.

**Step 3: Experiment and Re-Compose**

* Look at your result. Is it what you envisioned? Maybe you want to see more of the underlying image, or less.
* Move the **Threshold** slider left or right.
* Click the **Compose!** button.
* Observe how the master image changes. Repeat this process until you have a base composition that you like.

**4. The Creative Tools: Refining Your Masterpiece**

Once you have a good base composition, it's time to get hands-on. These tools allow you to modify the master image with precision and artistic flair.

**The Patch Brush (The Main Event!)**

This is your primary tool for detailed work. It allows you to "paint" parts of an underlying layer back onto the master image.

**How to Use:**

1. Simply **click and drag your mouse** on the canvas. No special keys are needed!
2. As you draw, you will see a **translucent pink line** representing your brush stroke.
3. When you **release the mouse button**, the magic happens.

**How it Works:** The tool is incredibly smart. When you *first click down*, it looks at the pixel directly under your cursor and identifies which original source image it came from. Your entire brush stroke, no matter where it goes, will now "paint" using pixels from that **same source image**.

**Example:** Imagine a part of your master image shows a blue sky from Layer 2. If you click down on that blue sky and start drawing over an area that shows a tree from Layer 3, your brush stroke will "reveal" more of the blue sky from Layer 2, effectively painting over the tree.

**The Patch Lasso (Ctrl + Drag)**

This is for changing larger, well-defined areas.

**How to Use:** Hold down the **Ctrl** key (or **Cmd** on a Mac), then click and drag to draw a closed shape (a "lasso").

**How it Works:** Like the Patch Brush, it identifies the source layer from where you *started* the lasso. When you release the mouse button (while still holding Ctrl), the entire area inside your lasso is filled with pixels from that source layer.

**The Blend/Feather Lasso (Alt + Drag)**

This tool is for softening and blending, not replacing.

**How to Use:** Hold down the **Alt** key, then click and drag to draw a lasso shape.

**How it Works:** This tool takes all the pixels *already inside* your lassoed area and applies a blur effect to them. It's perfect for smoothing harsh edges between different parts of the composition or creating a soft, dreamy focus.

**The Gradient Overlay Lasso (Shift + Drag)**

This is a more advanced artistic tool for creating atmospheric effects.

**How to Use:** Hold down the **Shift** key, then click and drag to draw a lasso shape.

**How it Works:** The tool analyzes the colors at the beginning and end of your lassoed region. It then creates a beautiful, smooth gradient between these two colors and overlays it semi-transparently across the entire area inside your lasso. It's fantastic for adding color washes or subtle lighting effects.

**5. Troubleshooting & FAQ**

* **Why can't I click the "Compose!" button?**  
  You need to have at least two images loaded in the Thumbnail Strip.
* **Why isn't the Patch Brush or Patch Lasso working?**  
  These tools require a composed image to work with. Make sure you have at least two images loaded and have clicked Compose! at least once.
* **The application seems slow or has crashed.**  
  You likely uploaded very high-resolution images. The status bar provides a warning for this. For a smoother experience, try reducing your image sizes to something manageable (e.g., under 4000 pixels wide) before uploading.
* **My lasso disappeared when I let go of the key!**  
  This is intentional. For the Lasso tools (Ctrl, Alt, Shift), you must keep the key held down for the entire action, from mouse down to mouse up. If you release the key first, the action is cancelled.

Enjoy creating with Aquiplicity 2025!