Key Concepts

Photoshop Elements LAYERS

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The use of ***Layers*** is one of Photoshop's most important features, if not *the* most important one! Instead of making edits and additions to an image on a single level where all changes are permanently and irreversibly made, Layers gives us a less frustrating way to work by allowing us to build an image from a series of image parts each contained in its own layer. Additionally, Layers give us the flexibility to return to the image at a later date and change the layered elements of our picture while protecting the original. You will quickly realize that Layers are the best thing since sliced bread (although I don't want to minimize the importance of sliced bread in any way)!

- ★ When working in Photoshop, always think ***Pixel Preservation!*** The idea here is to use *Photoshop* tools and techniques in such a way that you maintain as much of your original image as necessary, remembering that filters, edits, resizing, and other image enhancements tend to destroy or otherwise degrade the original pixels in your image.
  The use of Layers is the key to Pixel Preservation!
- ★ Keep the ***Layers Palette*** prominently displayed by either moving it to the top of your palette bin. If you have a large monitor, you can "tear-away" the Layers Palette and place it onto your work area.
- ★ ***To Change Thumbnail Size*** in the Layers Palette click on the microscopic "More" arrow at the top-right of the Layers Palette to reveal a pop-up menu. Select "Palette Options."
- ★ An ***Active Layer*** is the layer that you are currently working on. When you "select" or "target" a layer in the Layers Palette by clicking on it, it becomes shaded, indicating its Active status. The **eyeball icon** just to the left of the layer toggles its ***visibility*** on and off.
- ★ When moving a selection with the ***Move Tool***, a ***Bounding Box*** identifies the selection and allows you to make ***Transformations*** to the image, such as ***Scale, Skew,*** and ***Distort.*** This can be rendered invisible by de-selecting "Show Bounding Box" in the Move Tool's Options Bar.
- ★ Selections from an existing layer can be plopped into a new layer by selecting menu:LAYER>NEW>**LAYER VIA COPY** (to place a copy of the selection into the new layer), or **LAYER VIA CUT** (to move the selection to the new layer).
- ★ ***Layer Opacity*** changes the transparency of the layer. As it becomes more transparent, more of the layer(s) beneath it can be seen. *Remember this one -- a very handy tool!*
- ★ It's a good idea to ***name your layers*** in a descriptive way. This will make it easier to quickly identify your layers later on. Double-click on the layer name to change it.
- ★ To create a ***New Layer*** you can click on the tiny New Layer icon at the top of the Layers Palette. By ***control-clicking*** (Command-click on Mac) the New Layer icon, the new layer will be created underneath (or behind) the active layer. If you press **control-shift-N** (command-shift-N on) you will be given the opportunity to name your layer as it is created.
- ★ Menu:EDIT>**REVERT** returns your image to the way it is stored on disk since the last Save operation. Your image reverts to how it looked when you first opened it.
- ★ The ***Background Layer*** cannot be moved unless it is converted to a ***Regular Image Layer***.
- ★ Layers are stored only in the native ***.PSD*** file format as well as .TIF. When saving to .JPG, the layers are ***flattened*** down to one layer. Always keep your .PSD version for future changes.
- ★ Copy layers from one image to another by dragging the layer from the source image layer palette.

NOTES

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