

# Layers 2:

## Anatomy of the Layers Palette in Corel® Painter™

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The first installment in this series, *Comparing Adobe Photoshop & Corel Painter Layer Palettes*, used Photoshop's Layers feature as a comparative tool for detailing Painter's own Layers palette. This installment will focus on the anatomy of Painter's Layers, providing you with an explanation of its various features. Like the first installment of this series, this article serves as basic foundational information to provide the groundwork for the installments to follow. If you are a seasoned Painter veteran, you may find this installment fairly basic. However, I see so many basic questions asked regarding layers that I thought it would be useful to really pick this subject apart with a fine-toothed comb!

### Layers Palette Components

#### The Palette Bar

No, this isn't a drinking establishment frequented by artists. The *Palette Bar* is common to all of Painter's palettes and provides an anchor for the palette it is associated with. The palette disclosure triangle, located at the left side of the Palette Bar, toggles the palette to its expanded and collapsed states by clicking on it. On the right side of the Palette Bar, you'll find the *Close Box* and *Layers Palette menu arrow*.

#### The Layers Palette Menu

The *Layers Palette Menu* is accessed by clicking on the palette's menu arrow. This menu contains a host of useful palette-specific commands (many of which are duplicated elsewhere), from creating a new layer to converting text to vector shapes.

The *New Layer*, *New Watercolor Layer*, and *New Liquid Ink Layer* commands create a new layer of the designated type. These layer types can also be created via icons at the bottom of the Layers palette.

The *Thumbnail* commands (None, Small, Medium, Large) control the size of the Layers palette preview thumbnails.

The *Group* commands (Group, Ungroup, Collapse) are used to

organize multiple layers. It is common to have several layers associate with one pictorial element within an image. Grouping these layers enables the entire set to be temporarily treated as a single object. The Group can be opened and a specific layer adjusted when necessary. The *Collapse* command flattens all layers in a Group to a single layer entry.

The *Select All Layers/Deselect* commands provide a quick way to select all of the current layers, as well as deselect any currently selected layers. Note that the *Layer Adjuster Tool* has the option to *Auto-Select* layers (Layer Adjuster Property Bar). With this option enabled, you can click and drag from one corner of a layer-bearing image to the opposite corner and select all layers. The *Lock/Unlock* command is used to prevent a layer from being inadvertently modified (moved, painted on, etc.).

The *Drop* commands (Drop, Drop All, Drop and Select) flatten selected layers to the Canvas.

*Photoshop users: Note that there is no equivalent to the Merge command. In order to merge multiple layers, they must first be grouped, then collapsed.*

The *Delete Layer* command removes a layer—never to be seen again.

The *Show/Hide Layer Indicators* command provides a visual cue (4 rectangular brackets representing the corners of the the visible pixel area of the selected layer) of the currently selected layer.

The *Layer Attributes* command displays the *Layer Attributes dialog*. This dialog is use to rename a layer. The *Position* numeric input field, *Top* and *Left*, are used to determine and adjust the position of a layer. The *WWW Map Clickable Region* checkbox and its associated *Region* radio buttons are used in conjunction with the *Image Slicer Dynamic Plugin*. These commands are used to export a set of image elements and reassembled as an HTML table. The *Note* text box, when used in conjunction with the Image Slicer, stores a URL associated with an Image Slicer element. In all other cases, the Note text box can be used to save information about a layer.

The *Options* command would be more appropriately named the *Liquid Ink Layer Options* command as it is solely used to display a Liquid Ink layer's Attributes dialog. This dialog can also be quickly accessed by double-clicking on a Liquid Ink layer entry in the Layers palette.

The *Convert to Default Layer* command is used to rasterize some of special layer types (Text, Shapes, Dynamic Plugins), converting them to strictly pixel-based layers. This conversion discards any unique information (vector data), so use it with caution.

The *Revert to Original* command is used to restore layers that have been acted upon by some of the *Dynamic Plugin* layers (Burn, Tear, Bevel World). Unfortunately, this command appears to be broken in Painter IX.5 (at least on the Mac). To work around this, use the *Off* checkbox found in the respective Dynamic Plugin dialog, then apply the *Convert to Default Layer* command to the layer.

Addendum: I have been informed that Revert to Original's broken state behaves a bit differently on Windows (XP Home). On the Windows version, the Off box cannot be checked. This eliminates the workaround I describe for Macs. Be advised that the only recourse at this time is to utilize Undo to back out of the situation.

The *Watercolor Layer* commands (Lift Canvas, Wet Entire Layer, Dry) are used in conjunction with layers created via the *New Watercolor Layer* command (a new Watercolor layer is also automatically created when a Watercolor Category brush is initially applied to an image). The Watercolor layer provides a physical modeling simulation of the medium of watercolor.

The *Lift Canvas to Watercolor Layer* command is used to promote imagery on the Canvas to a new Watercolor Layer. This is especially useful for interaction of the Watercolor brushes to a photograph or artwork created with non-Watercolor brushes. The *Wet Entire Watercolor Layer* command applies the current Water palette settings (Brush Controls > Water) to a selected Watercolor layer. The *Dry Watercolor Layer* command halts the watercolor physical modeling process at the moment it is invoked. This allows for stopping a specific Watercolor Layer process at an appealing visual moment.

The *Digital Watercolor* commands (Dry, Diffuse) are used in conjunction with the Digital Watercolor category brushes and should not be confused with the Watercolor category brushes used with the Watercolor layer.

The *Digital Watercolor* brushes provide a simplified watercolor appearance, foregoing the complexities of the Watercolor layer. Digital Watercolor brushes are applied to a default layer; however the Digital Watercolor-applied layer does then contain special wet data that enable the interaction of additional Digital Watercolor brushwork—even when the image has been saved. The *Dry Digital Watercolor* command discards the wet data and converts the layer's imagery to a default pixel-based layer. The *Diffuse Digital Watercolor* command applies the current *Diffusion* amount (Digital Watercolor Brushes > Brush Property Bar) to the currently selected Digital Watercolor imagery. The command can be used repeatedly to increase the diffusion.

The *Convert Text to Shapes* command transforms *Text* layer data to a vector-based *Shapes* layer. This is particularly useful for customizing font characters utilizing the *Shape Selection Tools* (Tool Palette) to move/add/delete selected vector points.

### The Layers Contextual Menu

The *Layers Contextual Menu* is accessed via the right mouse button (CTRL + Click on a one-button mouse) when the cursor is positioned over an entry in the Layer palette. The *Layer Attributes* palette can alternately be accessed via this menu. The *Duplicate* command creates a copy of the selected layer. The *Delete* command removes the currently selected layer(s). The *Commit* command—like the *Convert to Default Layer* command—rasterizes a layer type containing special data. The *Revert to Original* command—as mentioned above—is broken in Painter IX.5 (see above for the workaround). The *Select Layer Transparency* command loads a selection based on the selected layer's transparency mask. This is useful for duplicating a layer element while retaining its transparency data.

### The Layers Palette Menu

I thought I was going to fully describe the Layer palette in one installment, but it literally is like peeling the layers of an onion! In the next installment, I'll finish the Layer Palette anatomy lesson and cover Painter's layer types.

*Viva la Painter!*

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# Anatomy of the Layers Palette in Corel® Painter™



## Layers Palette Schematic

**Layers Palette Menu Arrow**

**Layer Composite Method**  
 Layer Opacity Slider  
 Preserve Transparency Checkbox  
 Pick Up Underlying Color Checkbox

**Expanded Layer Group Disclosure Triangle**

**Collapsed Layer Group Disclosure Triangle**

**Floating Object Parent Layer**

**Layer Mask Thumbnail**  
 Pixel layer selected  
 Mask layer selected  
 Black Outline denotes selected layer element

**Layer Hidden Icon**

**Layer Visible Icon**

**Impasto Depth Composite Method**

**Lock Layer Button**

**Floating Object Layer Icon**

**Reference Layer Icon**

**Text Layer Icon**

**Shape Layer Icon**

**Dynamic Layer Icon**

**Liquid Ink Layer Icon**

**Watercolor Layer Icon**

**Locked Layer Icon**

**Gel Layer Icon**

**Current Layer Highlighting**

**Pixel-based Layer Icon**

**Canvas Layer**

**Layer Commands**  
 Dynamic Plugins  
 New Layer  
 New Watercolor Layer  
 New Liquid Ink Layer  
 Add Layer Mask  
 Delete Layer

**Layer Attributes Palette**  
 You can double-click on a layer entry to access the Layer Attributes dialog.

**Layer Contextual Menu**  
 Right mouse-click on a layer entry to access the Layer contextual menu.

**Layer Attributes**  
 Name: Layer 2  
 Position: Top: 0 Left: 0  
 WWW Map Clickable Region  
 Region:  Rectangle Bounding Box  Oval Inside Bounding Box  Polygon Region  
 Note: Use this area to record image-related information: brushes, image sources, etc.  
 Cancel OK

*When WWW Map Clickable Region is checked, this text-editable area is alternately used to store a URL.*