

# Layers 3:

## Anatomy of the Layers Palette in Corel® Painter™ (continued)

John Derry



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The second installment in this series, *Layers 2: Anatomy of the Layers Palette in Corel Painter*, began with the dissection of the commands found within the Layers Palette Menu (accessed via the Layers Palette menu arrow). This installment will finish up our tour with a description of the remaining visible layer controls found at the top and bottom of the Layers palette.

### Layer Controls

The *Layer Controls* occupy the uppermost area of the *Layers* palette, above the *Layer List*. Some of these controls (*Layer Compositing Methods*, *Impasto Layer Composite Depth*, *Opacity Control*, and the *Layer Lock*) operate on an individual layer basis. The remaining controls (*Preserve Transparency* and *Pick Up Underlying Color*) are applied globally to all layers.

### Layer Controls: Layer Composite Method

Painter's *Layer Composite Methods* serve the same purpose as Photoshop's *Blend Modes*. A *Composite Method* is a mathematical formula that dictates how the pixels of a layer will combine with the pixels on the layers and Canvas beneath it. For example, *Composite Methods* can be applied to a layer to darken/lighten, increase/decrease contrast, or adjust the color of the imagery beneath it. A powerful feature of *Composite Methods* is that they do not permanently alter the image; only the visual display of the combined pixels is altered.

Painter can save files in the Photoshop *.PSD format*, enabling the exchange of imagery created in both applications. For the most part, Painter's *Composite Methods* are compatible with Photoshop's *Blend Modes*. Painter has some *Methods* (*Gel*, *Colorize*, *Reverse-Out*, *Shadow Map*, *Magic Combine*, *Pseudocolor*, *GelCover*) that do not have an equivalent in Photoshop. In these cases, Painter substitutes the nearest visually equivalent Photoshop *Blend Mode* when saving a *.PSD* file. In a few cases, some *Composite Methods*' (*Soft Light*, *Hue*, *Saturation*, *Color*, *Luminosity*) mathematical formula slightly varies from Photoshop, resulting in a slightly different appearance in each application.

### Layer Controls: Impasto Depth Composite Method

The *Impasto Depth Composite Methods* work in conjunction with Painter's *Impasto Layer*. This layer type is associated with the *Impasto Brush Category*. *Impasto* brushes apply their color with the added visual quality of virtual three-dimensional depth. As *Impasto* brush strokes are overlaid, a visual sense of height is displayed through the use of a virtual light source. The result is a striking simulation of a physical paint surface.

*Impasto-enabled* brushes can be applied to multiple layers. How overlapping *Impasto* layers visually combine is controlled by a layer's *Impasto Depth Composite Method* (*Ignore*, *Add*, *Subtract*, *Replace*). By default, *Impasto-enabled* layers are set to the *Add* method. This method maintains the apparent buildup of virtual height of overlapping *Impasto* layers. The *Ignore* method disables the virtual height appearance completely, flattening the brushstrokes on the layer. The *Subtract* method inverts *Impasto* height—*Impasto* strokes will appear to remove depth rather than add to it. The *Replace* method applies *Impasto* strokes to any underlying *Impasto* art by completely pushing them to the bottom of any existing apparent height.

### Layer Controls: Preserve Transparency Checkbox

The *Layer Opacity Control* is used to adjust a layer's transparency level. Both a slider and numeric input field are provided for adjustment. The use of layer opacity is a key tool for non-destructively adjusting the appearance of overlapping layer art.

### Layer Controls: Layer Opacity Control

When artwork is applied to a layer, the art is accompanied by a stealthy *visibility mask*. It is the *visibility mask* that enables the artwork to be seen on an otherwise transparent layer. As long as *Preserve Transparency* is *disabled*, brushstrokes and imagery can be applied anywhere on a layer. With *Preserve Transparency enabled*, pixels can be applied only to existing non-transparent imagery. For example, this is very useful for changing the content of brushstrokes without changing their shape.

### **Layer Controls: Pick Up Underlying Color Checkbox**

*Pick Up Underlying Color* is one of Painter's major fulcrum points. It is this control that enables *smearly-style* brushes applied on a layer to interact with the color on any underlying layers. This enables the progressive buildup of a painting without permanently over-painting any underlying imagery. Utilizing this non-destructive technique provides far greater flexibility and editing than working on the Canvas or single layer.

### **Layer Controls: Lock Layer Button**

The *Lock Layer* button is used to avoid accidentally changing a layer. By locking the layer, it cannot be painted on or moved by the *Layer Adjuster* tool. The arrow keys can be used to nudge a locked layer.

### **Layer Shortcut Icons**

The *Layer Shortcut Icons* are located at the bottom of the *Layer Palette*, below the *Layer List*. These controls provide convenient access to oft-used tools and commands.

### **Icon: Layer Commands Pop-up**

The *Layer Commands Pop-up* provides a list of primary layer commands (*Group*, *Ungroup*, *Collapse*, *Drop*).

### **Icon: Dynamic Plugins Pop-up**

The *Dynamic Plugins Pop-up* provides access to Painter's *Dynamic Plugins*. *Brightness and Contrast*, *Equalize*, and *Posterize* are used to non-destructively adjust underlying imagery. *Burn*, *Tear*, and *Bevel World* apply visual effects to existing layer imagery. *Glass Distortion* and *Kaleidoscope* apply creative effects to underlying imagery. The *Image Slicer* exports a graphic into separate images and reassembles them into an HTML table (used for creating rollovers). *Liquid Lens* and *Liquid Metal* are self-contained media layers used to both create unique imagery as well as alter underlying art.

### **Icon: New Layer Button**

The *New Layer* button is used to create a new default layer.

### **Icon: New Watercolor Layer Button**

The *New Watercolor Layer* button is used to create a new *Watercolor media layer*. This layer is used in conjunction with the *Watercolor Category* brushes. This layer type encapsulates the physical behavior of traditional watercolor.

### **Icon: New Liquid Ink Layer Button**

The *New Liquid Ink Layer* button is used to create a new *Liquid Ink* media layer. This layer is used in conjunction with

the *Liquid Ink Category* brushes. This layer type mimics the qualities of a viscous ink medium.

### **Icon: Add Layer Mask Button**

The *Add Layer Mask* button is used to create a *layer mask* for the currently selected layer. *Layer masks* enable precise non-destructive control over the visibility of layer art.

### **Icon: Delete Layer Button**

The *Delete Layer* button deletes the currently selected layer(s) from the layer list. The *Canvas* cannot be deleted.

### **Anatomy Class Is Finished!**

We're finally through dissecting Painter's *Layers Palette*. In the next installment, we'll delve into Painter's various layer types. Until next time...

*Viva la Painter!*

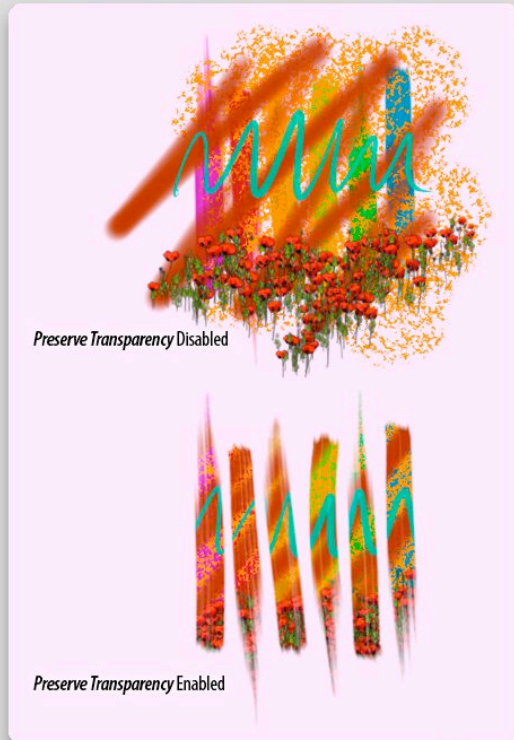
*John Derry is a pioneer of digital painting and one of the original authors of Corel® Painter™. Since 1985, he has leveraged his background in drawing and painting to advance the look and experience of traditional art-making tools on the computer. John has a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in Fine Art and is a practicing artist and photographer. He is currently serving as Corel's Painter Ambassador-at-Large. John's Web site is at [www.pixlart.com](http://www.pixlart.com).*

# Anatomy of the Layers Palette (continued) in Corel® Painter™

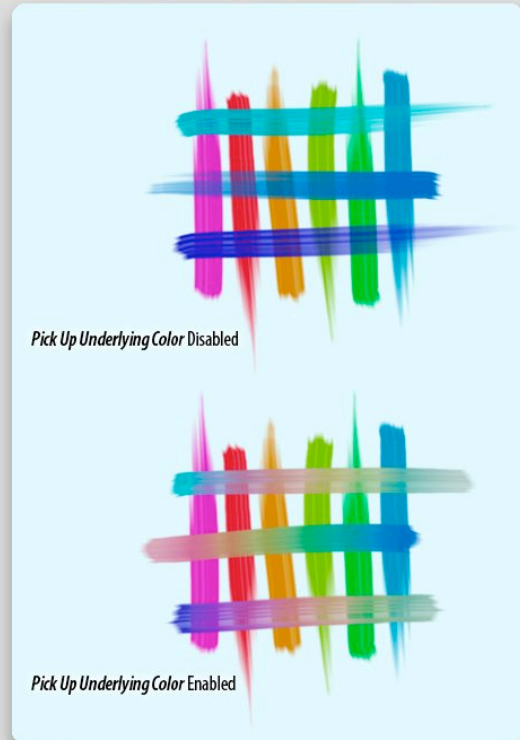
*John Davis*

## Layers Palette Layer Controls Schematic

### Preserve Transparency Toggle



### Pick Up Underlying Color Toggle



## Layer Compositing Methods

Painter Methods / Photoshop Modes  
Compatibility Matrix

Painter Composite Methods	Photoshop Blend Modes
Default	= Normal
Gel	= Darken *
Colorize	= Color *
Reverse-Out	= Normal *
Shadow Map	= Multiply *
Magic Combine	= Lighten *
Pseudocolor	= Normal *
Normal	= Normal
Dissolve	= Dissolve
Multiply	= Multiply
Screen	= Screen
Overlay	= Overlay
Soft Light	= Soft Light †
Hard Light	= Hard Light
Darken	= Darken
Lighten	= Lighten
Difference	= Difference
Hue	= Hue †
Saturation	= Saturation †
Color	= Color †
Luminosity	= Luminosity †
GelCover	= Normal *

\* No Photoshop-Painter equivalency.  
† Conversion will result in visual difference.

- ✓ Default
- Gel
- Colorize
- Reverse-Out
- Shadow Map
- Magic Combine
- Pseudocolor
- Normal
- Dissolve
- Multiply
- Screen
- Overlay
- Soft Light
- Hard Light
- Darken
- Lighten
- Difference
- Hue
- Saturation
- Color
- Luminosity
- GelCover

- New Layer
- New Watercolor Layer
- New Liquid Ink Layer
- Add Layer Mask
- Delete Layer

## Impasto Layer Composite Depth

