Adobe® Customer Support

Floating Selection Changes in Photoshop 4.0 General Information

Adobe Photoshop 3.0.x and earlier's Select > Float (Command+J [Macintosh], Ctrl+J [Windows]) command, which copies a selection into a temporary layer that "floats" above the active layer, is replaced with Photoshop 4.0's Layer > New > Layer Via Copy (Command+J [Macintosh], Ctrl+J [Windows]) or Layer Via Cut (Shft+Command+J [Macintosh], Shft+Ctrl+J [Windows]) commands. These commands turn your selection into a new active layer positioned just above the last active layer and deselects the original selection. With the creation of a new layer, the risk of "losing" a floating selection is gone.

Additionally, in Photoshop 3.0.x, some actions (e.g., pasting, dragging-and-dropping, using the text tool), create "floating" selections. In Photoshop 4.0, these actions create a new layer.

In Photoshop 4.0, as in Photoshop 3.0.x, when you move a selection with the Move Tool, you create a floating selection in the layers palette. To defloat the selection, choose Layer > Defloat (Command+E [Macintosh], Ctrl+E [Windows]). The Defloat command merges the selected pixels to the layer below it, but the pixels remain selected.

Whereas in Photoshop 3.0.x, when you deselect or defloat a floating selection to merge it with the pixels of the layer below, in Photoshop 4.0 you can now use the Merge Down command. To merge down, select the layer you want to merge, then choose Merge Down (Command+E [Macintosh] or Ctrl+E [Windows]) from the Layers palette pop-up menu.

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