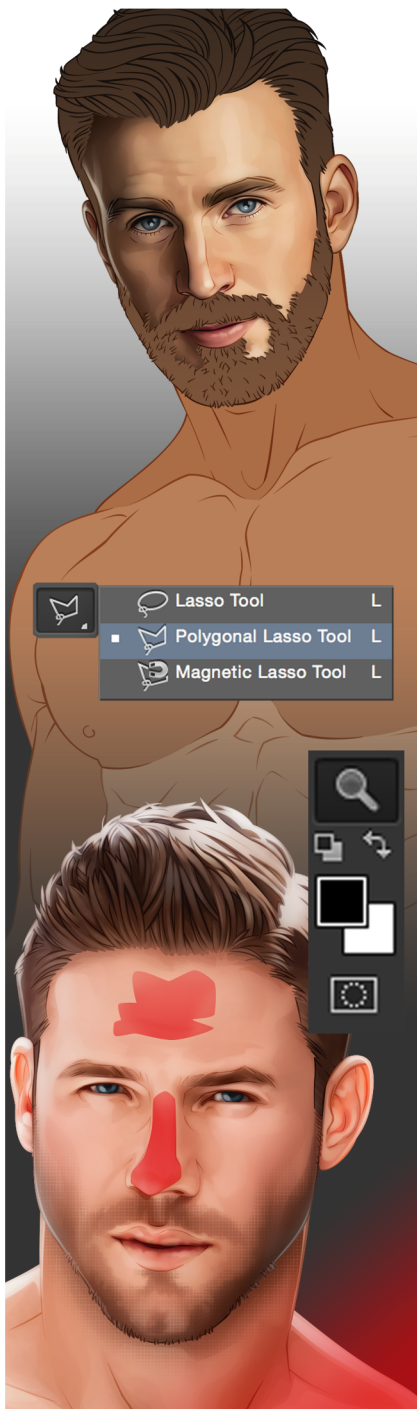


# The Führer's Journal

## Entry 11

Dec 2019

Dear reader I want to thank you for taking the time to read this journal, I'll do my best to keep it interesting... In the eleventh entry I'm going share some tips and tricks regarding **The Selection Tools**.



FÜHRER.

There are many ways to get to the same result in **Photoshop**. The steps we take to make illustrations are always changing, but despite the creative process there are a few tools that we always use, over and over again.

The **selection tools** are so frequently used that sometimes I forget to mention them, is like they become an inherent part of my process, and I've realized that I have some peculiar ways to use them so I will try to list some of them and hopefully you could find it useful.

**The Lasso tool:** My personal favorite is the polygonal lasso, ever since I started working in Photoshop many years ago, I found this one the safest one, because you can see where the selection will be before making it, is very stable (you don't need to have a steady hand) and it can be used with mouse, tablet or display and is basically the same thing, obviously is a lot slower with the mouse, but is super practical and easy. **Pro tip:** for rounded selections, you can avoid the square; geometric effect by zooming in a lot, the polygonal lasso used in 700% zoom can look very smooth.

The standard lasso tool is very good for things that should look random and uneven, like foliage or fur; I always use it for beards or body hair shading. If I want to make a very soft selection, I'll use the standard lasso cause I don't have to be so precise, and then soften it with **Command+F6** (Ctrl+F6), this will blur the edges of the selection so you can get very soft effects with it, ideal for skin or gradients, or anything that needs to be treated separately but you don't want the edges to show; it will save you a lot of blending.

**Quick Mask Mode:** Another one of my favorites, you enter it by typing **Q** or click on the small square right underneath the color selector. Basically is a masking mode, the goal is to fill in all the areas you want to select, and you can use the brush tool (with all it's different settings) to **paint** on the area you want to select, the bucket tool to select large areas, or the gradient tool to make a very soft vanishing selection; I like to combine it with the lasso tool or the pen tool, and you can go in and out of it as much as you need to, you can make very intricate and sophisticated selections in there, all the selected areas appear red in the masking mode, and when you go back to normal mode (type **Q** again) you'll get the dotted line around them, and it can also be softened even further with the **Ctrl+F6** command.

Another thing I love about this tool is that all the actions go to the History window, so you can go back and forward if you need to, I use this a lot when I'm shading skin, and I even use one selection many different times by "**saving it**" for later...

Now here's the trick, Photoshop has its own *"Save selection"* feature in most versions, but I never liked it/ understand it completely, what I do is create a new **empty layer** and fill in the selection with the paint bucket, like filling-in the masked areas in that empty layer, so if I make any new selections (smaller ones or deselecting some areas) I can go back whenever I want to, I just **Ctrl+ left click** on the small thumbnail of the layer, that selects all the filled (opaque) pixels of such layer and you have the selection back.

**The added benefits:** you can leave it in the exact position where you need it to be, or move it around, transform it with **Ctrl+T**, you can blur it, or do anything you would do to any layer, and that gives you infinite variations to your selection.

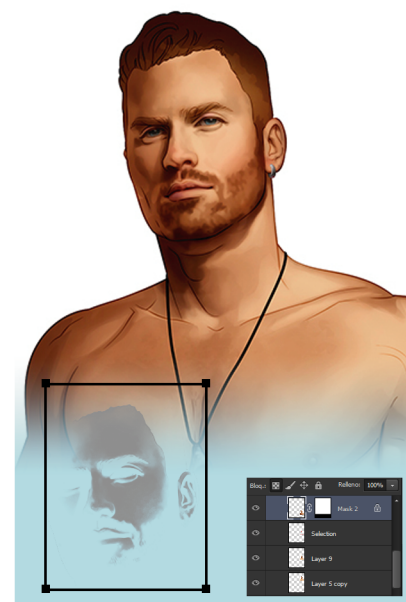
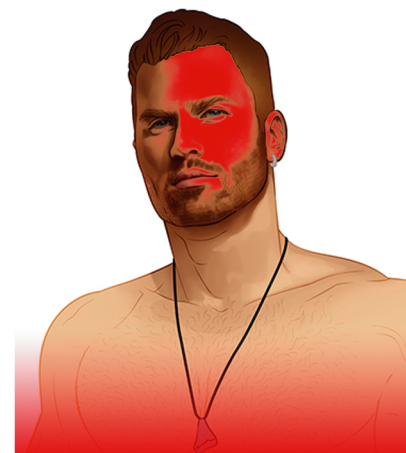
I always keep those layers turn off and properly labeled until I'm sure I won't need them anymore, and then I delete them. You can even use those layers as a *"deselecting"* mask, for example, you made a selection, but you want to leave some areas out of it... many times, maybe is like the nose, and when you're coloring the face, sometimes you can paint over the nose, but sometimes you really need to leave out so the painting only affects the surroundings; so you can create a layer to save the **nose area** and use it to select and deselect it as many times as you want, combine it with other selections and always have the certainty that the colors won't bleed out or smudge your so carefully selected nose, without the need to separate it from the face layer (which is very helpful for filters and effects).

**Combining selections:** How many times have you spend a long time selecting a large, intricate area, and then you accidentally double click and ruined the whole thing, every time it happens I want to throw the computer out the window; it happens to everyone, even the most skilled artists deal with this all the time, a good trick is to make **small selections**, especially if you're working on tight angles or a large area, if you feel a little insecure about completing the whole selection at once, select one part, and then another part and keep adding little by little so if you double click by accident, you only ruin a little bit, and not the entire thing. Make sure you have the *"add selection"* mode turned on, is on the far left corner of the menu bar, or press the shift key, a little + sign will appear next to the lasso cursor.

You can use this technique to combine different tools for different parts of the selection, you can do a little with the polygonal lasso, and then use the pen for a curve, or maybe go to the quick mask mode and modify it some more, if you master the selection tools, you can save a lot of time when coloring, I like to think about it like using **stencils and spray-paint**.

Thanks again for reading and don't forget to comment or message me what topics you would like to see in future entries. Take care.

Martin.



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