

Non-Destructive Editing

Art & Design

Working so that every decision can be undone tomorrow, not only today.

The habits that keep a file editable by somebody else.

Instead of

Erasing pixels

Flattening layers

Applying a filter directly

Cropping and discarding

Painting adjustments onto the image

Do this

Layer masks; paint black to hide

Groups, and layer comps

Smart objects and smart filters

Crop with delete pixels turned off

Adjustment layers, clipped if needed

File hygiene

Name every layer as you make it

Keep a flattened export separate

Version the file; do not overwrite

Link large placed assets rather than embed

Why

Clients change their minds

So will you, next week

A mask is reversible; an eraser is not

The test: could somebody else open this file in a year and change the headline colour without rebuilding it?