# PHOTOSHOP: GREEN SCREEN TECHNIQUES



Adobe Photoshop CC

Elmhurst Public Library's Creative Studios offer a variety of audio and visual technology to patrons. In addition to having Photoshop and the full Adobe Creative Cloud Suite, there is additional equipment for photography or videography projects. This equipment includes a Green Screen, white and black backdrops, cameras, and more. This handout will explain how to use the Green Screen for Photoshop.

## What is Green Screen?

Green screen photography is a special effect, used in both movies and photography, where a subject is photographed against a background of a single color (usually green or blue), and that color is removed digitally, leaving your subject on a transparent layer in Adobe Photoshop. The process of removing the green screen is often called **Chroma Keying**. This effect can be useful for a variety of projects, such as family portraits or selling items on sites such as Craigslist or Ebay. No matter what you use this effect for, it's sure to give your photos a professional look.

## Distance

The subject of the photo should be far enough from the green screen so that the screen does not reflect on the outline of the subject.

## Lighting

Lighting is probably the most important aspect of taking photos with a green screen. Both the subject and the green screen should be well lit. An evenly lit background can save a ton of time later when removing the screen in Photoshop. You will know your green screen is evenly lit when it is all the same shade of green. **Note:** *The ceiling lights in Creative Studio A produce a shadow on the Green Screen wall. For best results, ask staff for the video or photo lights.*
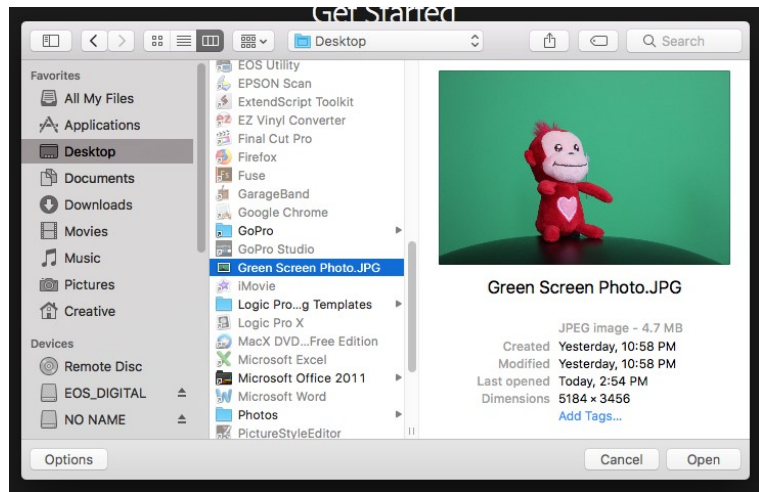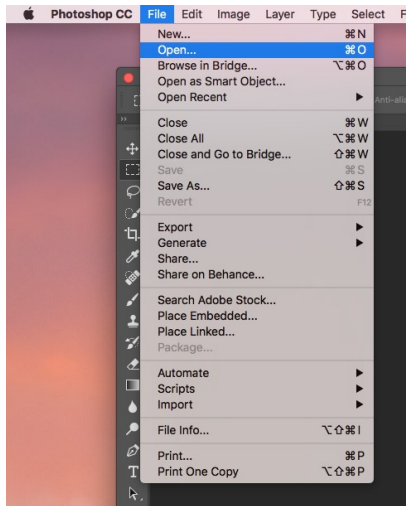


*Poorly lit with ceiling lights*

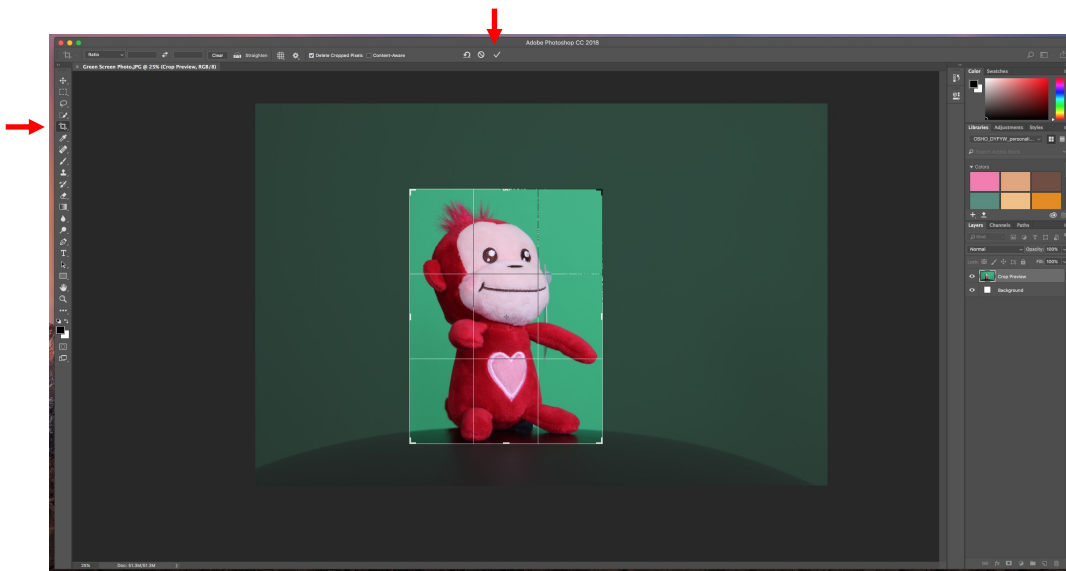

*Properly lit with video lights*

## Open Your Image

Open the photo you intend to chroma key in Photoshop. In Photoshop, click **File** and then **Open**. Locate the photo you want and double click it.
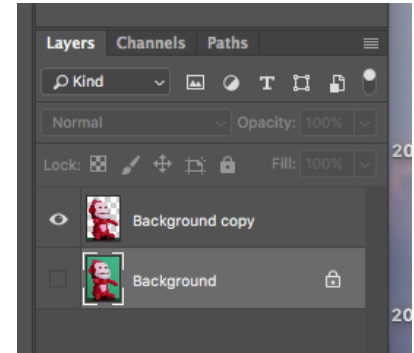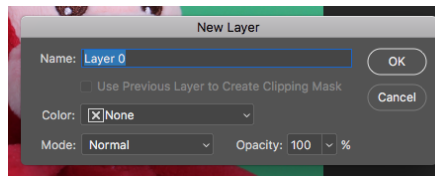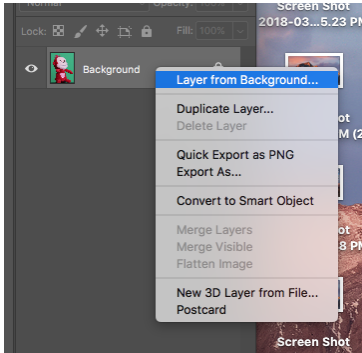


## Crop

Using the  **Crop** tool, located on the vertical panel on the left side of the screen, crop out as much of the extra green screen as possible, careful to not remove any of your subject. To complete the cropping process, click the checkmark on the top panel.
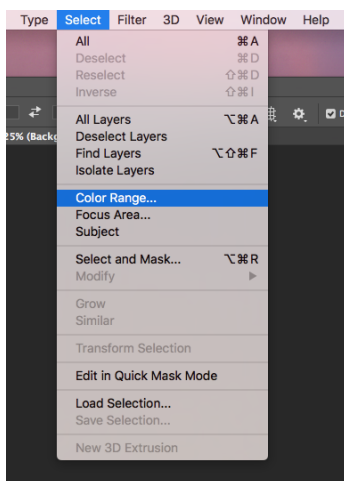
## Duplicate Layer

Before removing the background, right click on the image in the layers panel and choose **Duplicate Background.** In the New Layer window, click **OK**. Then, hide the original **Background** layer by clicking the
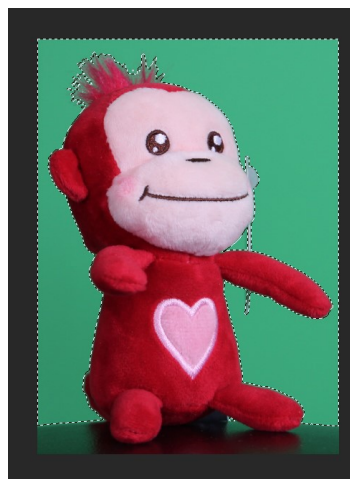
eye icon next to **Background** layer.
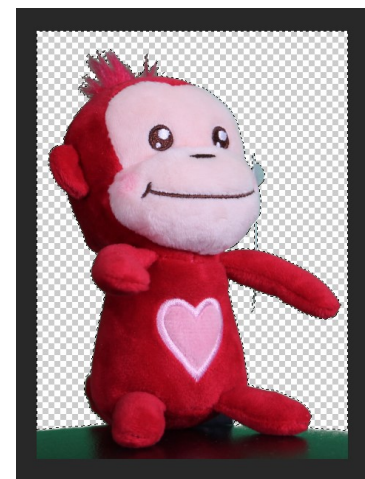


## Select and Remove Green Screen

Next, click **Select** from the **Application Menu** and then **Color Range**. The **Color Range** window will appear and your cursor will change to the eyedropper tool. Press and hold the *Shift* **key** on your keyboard while clicking all around the green screen. You'll know you've removed all of the green screen when the preview of your image in the Color Range window shows your subject as a black silhouette and the background appears white. When you have removed all of the green, click **OK**. Now that the screen is selected, press *Delete* or *Backspace* on your keyboard to remove it from your photo.
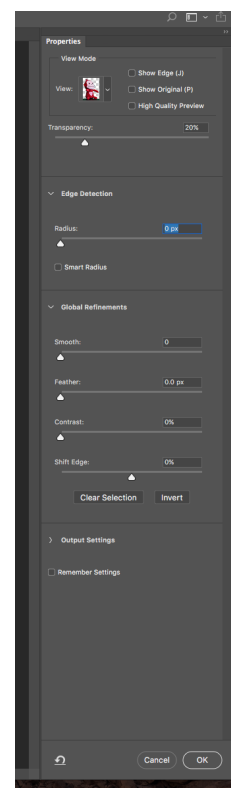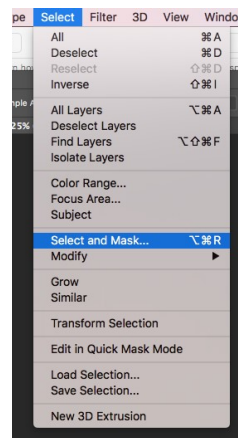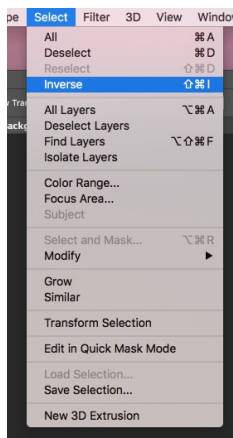


*Background selected*

*Background removed*

## Adjust Edges

To make the edges of your subject a little smoother, click **Select** from the Application Menu and then **Inverse** to select your image. Next, click **Select** from the Application Menu and then **Select and Mask**. The "Select and Mask" window will appear on the right. In the "Edge Detection" and "Global Refinements" sections, experiment with the sliders until you are happy with your image. Click "Ok."
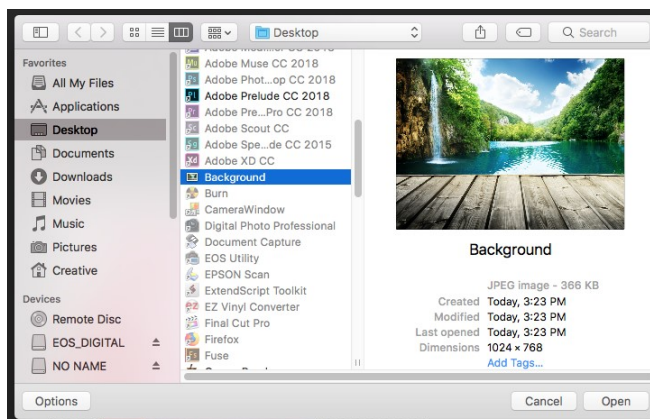
## Copy Your Subject

Copy your image so you can paste it into your background. Press *Ctrl* **and** *C* on your keyboard at the same time or click **Edit** and then **Copy**.
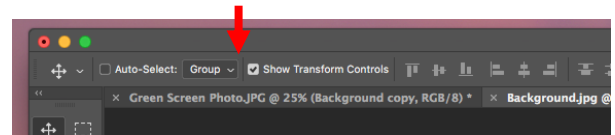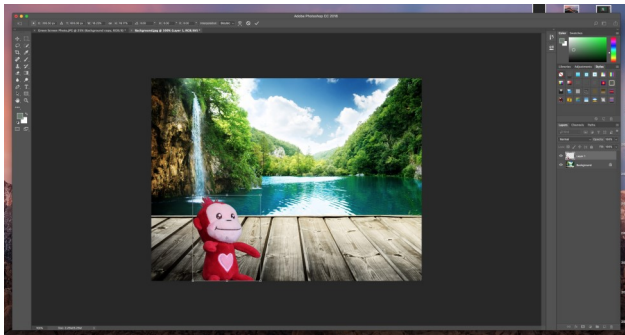
## Open the Background Image

Next, open the background image you want to place your subject into. Do this by clicking **File** and then **Open**. Just as you did before, locate the photo you want and double click it. (*Google Images* is a great source.)

## Paste and Resize

Lastly, paste your subject into the photo by pressing *Ctrl* **and** *P* at the same time on your keyboard or by clicking **Edit** and then **Paste**. To move your subject, either click and drag it or use the arrow keys on your keyboard. To resize your subject, click and drag any of the squares located in the corners of the box surrounding your image. When you are happy with both the size and location of your subject, press the checkmark on the top panel.





If the **Transform Controls** are not appearing around your subject, check to make sure "**Show Transform Controls**" is selected in the upper right.

## Blending Images

You can use the  **Eraser** and  **Blur** tools, located on the vertical panel on the left side of the screen, to help blend the subject into the background as needed. Adjust the **Levels**, found in the **Image** menu, to help match the lighting of the two images.

## Saving Your Image

You should save a Photoshop (.psd) and JPEG version of your image. To save your image as a .psd file, select **File** then **Save As**. Choose **Photoshop** as your format option. To save your finished image as a *JPEG*, first merge the layers by selected **Layer** and then **Merge Visible**. Then go to **File** and **Save As**, and save your image as a JPEG.