

Distribute and organize objects between layers and sub-layers keeping the closed state

Coming from Freehand and Illustrator I am actually used to work only with layers and sub-layers in a closed state. Not that the artwork I create is that simple, but because it is simply not necessary. My artwork quickly exceeds hundreds of objects. I make selections, objects by hand or by dragging on the artboard. By selecting layers. By line weight, color or object type. If necessary, arrange the stacking order with the bring forward or backward function or paste in front or back.

This way everything always turns out fine and you don't get frustrated. Sometimes, very occasionally, I have to delve into a layer folder to resolve ambiguities. To see why something is not working or behaving strangely. Is an object in a clip mask or something similar. Looking in a layer folder with the endless pile of objects feels like looking under the hood, behind the scenes. Or with software apps 'Show Package Contents', places you would actually rather not go.

Now it seems to me that in recent vector drawing software such as Affinity and Vectorstyler, *working with layers* quickly comes down to *working with objects in layers*. In fact, in Freehand it was even impossible to open the content of a layer!

Working with closed layers deserves more attention. Smart solutions for moving and organizing objects between closed layers are now forgotten or unseen. A few features in VS would make the artist's life much easier and clearer and would make VS unbeatable compared to its competitors.

With this document I attempt to bring a good solution to your attention. I have suggested it before but not elaborated or visualized it. Hereby.

The goal

Make it easy to distribute and organize objects between layers and sub-layers in closed state.

The concept

Two models qualify for this. The Freehand model and the Illustrator model. I analyzed both of these models based on needs. The Freehand model is the most simple. Select and assign without bells and whistles. The Illustrator model is a more complex drag & drop model with a newly to create 'selection indicator drag knob' in the leading role. The colored selection indicators are useful, but dragging and dropping the indicator is undesirable and possibly slow. Better to free scroll without things in tow and then assign it as Freehand.

The model

I translated the function into a VS model without new visual additions such as icons or symbols. The only thing that really changes significantly is the behavior of the radio button selector. It remains possible to select objects or entire layers with the button selector. Only where and what the selector indicates that what and where is selected is different in this setup.

Distribute and organize objects between layers and sub-layers keeping the closed state

Demo model setup

The demonstration setup

On the left the artwork on the artboard. In the middle the panel with layers and sub-layers keeping the closed state (no objects stack)

To the right on the grey background 'Behind the scenes'. Same layers panel but layers unfolded. Something I actually don't want to see, but it is depicted for clarity and explanation.

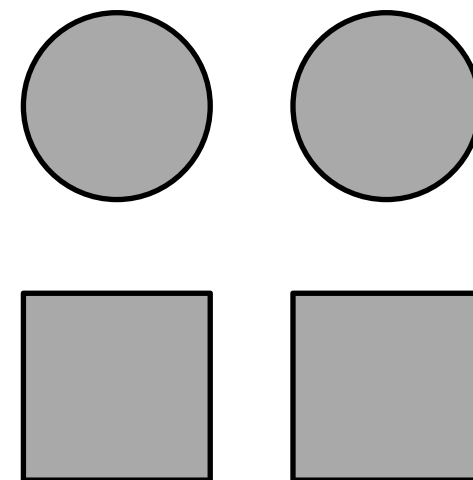
What do I want to demonstrate?

I want to show how easy it can be to distribute and organize objects between layers and sub-layers in closed state.

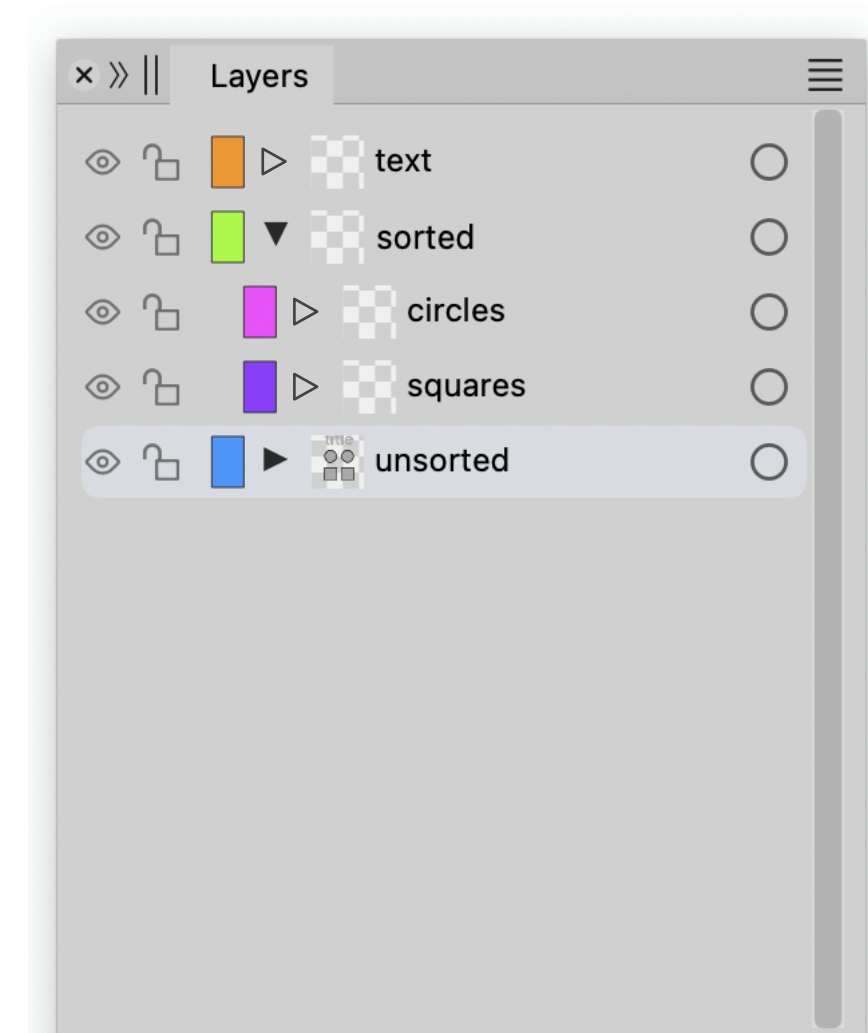
Task

Distribute and organize the artwork. A text object (word), two circles and two squares stored in layer 'unsorted'. The empty layers 'text', 'sorted' with two subfolders 'circles' and 'squares' are ready to receive the objects.

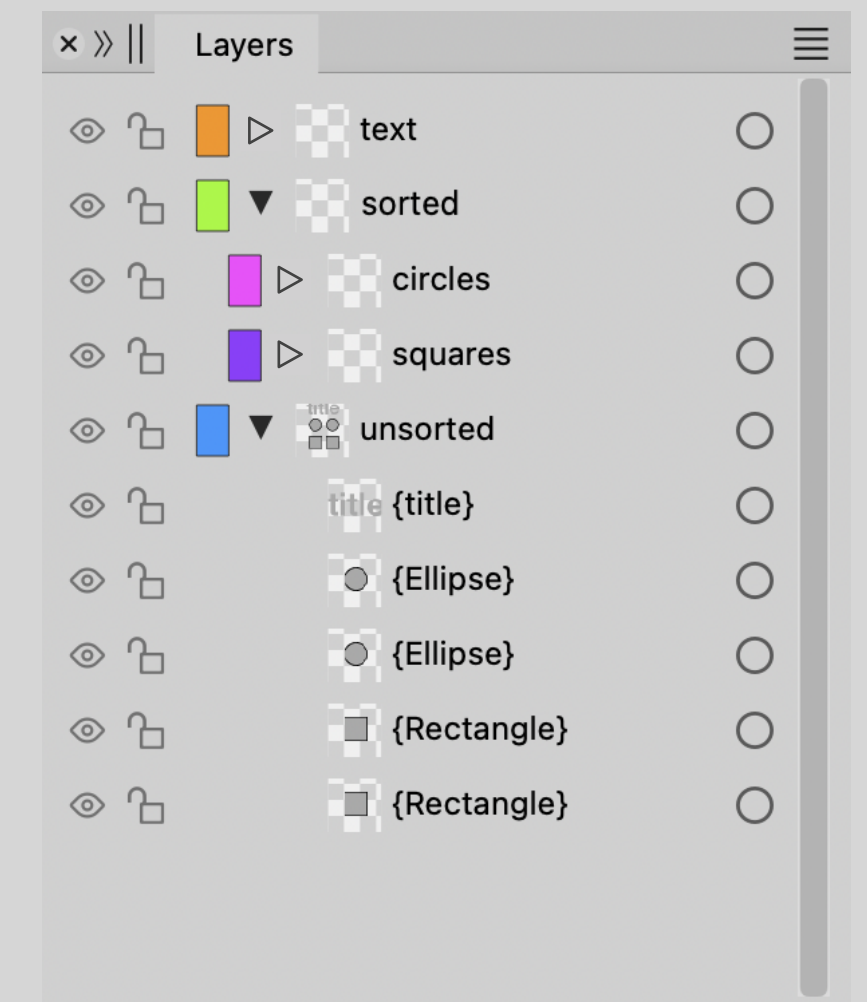
title



Artwork on artboard



Layers panel



Behind the scenes

Distribute and organize objects between layers and sub-layers keeping the closed state

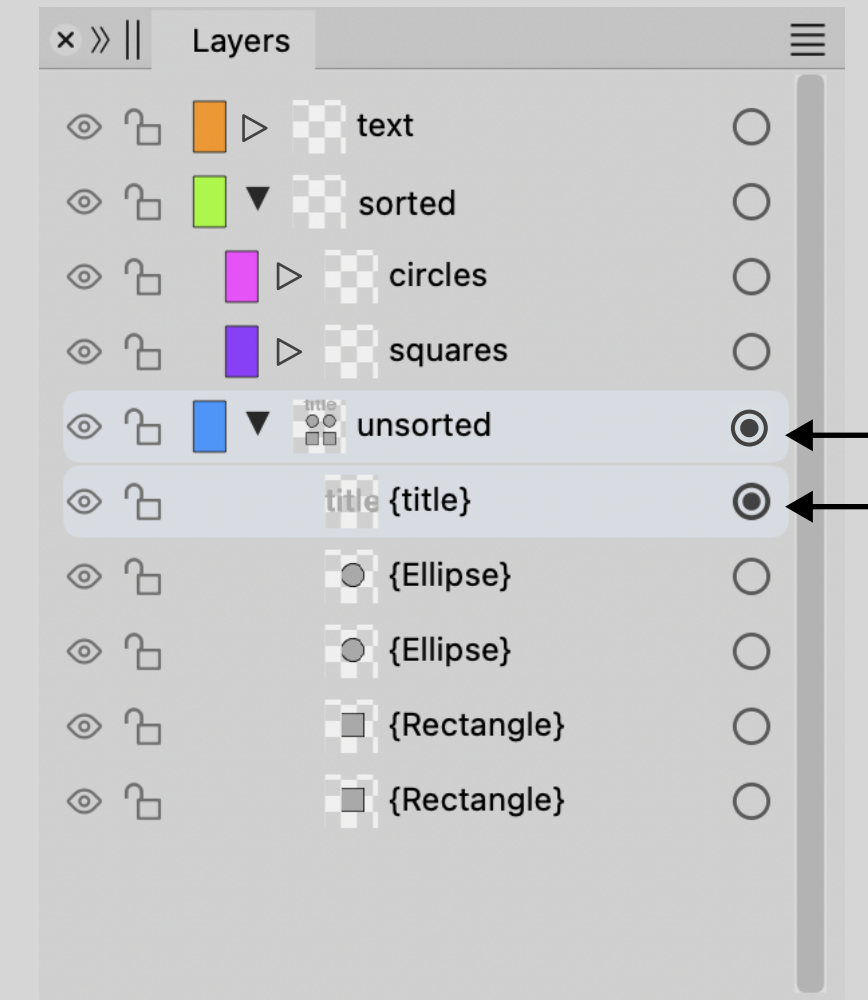
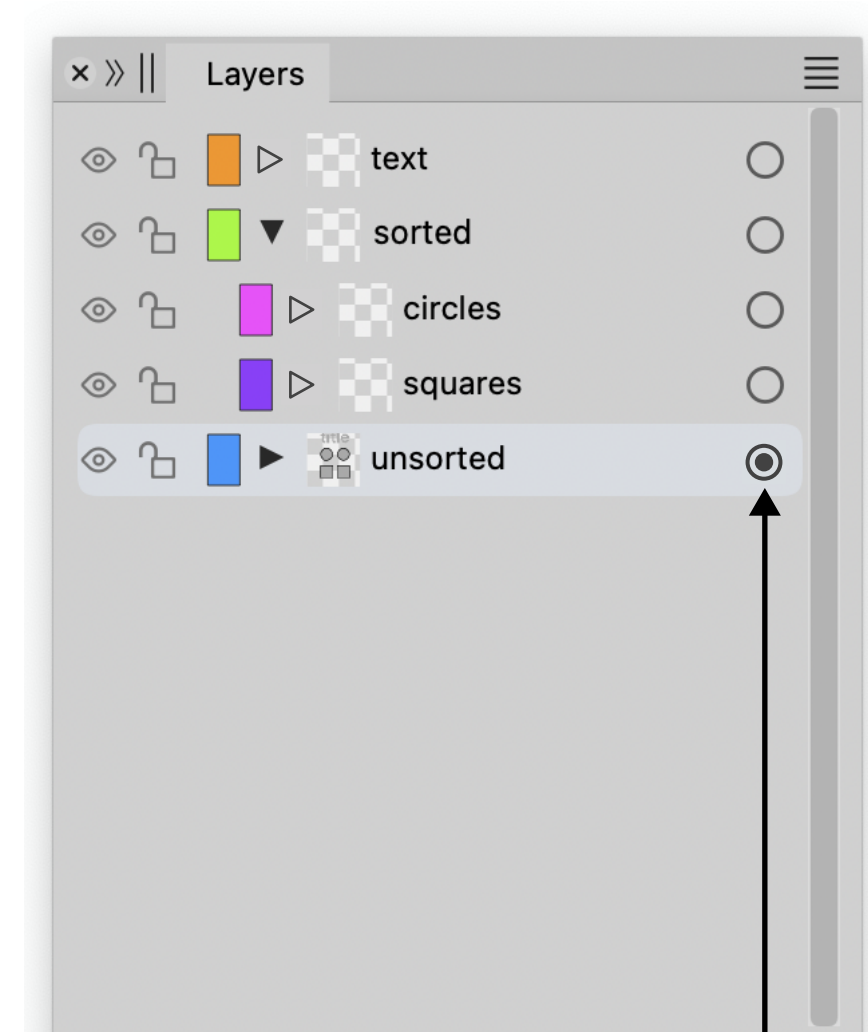
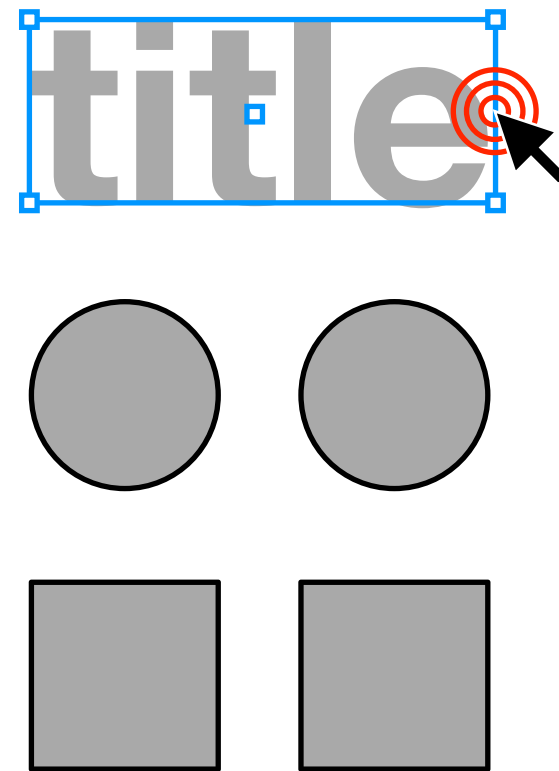
The demo model

Action 1

bring the text object (title) from the layer 'unsorted' to the layer 'text'

Step 1

Select the text object on the canvas.



New! Layer should give a selection indicator 'ON' indicating that inside objects are selected

Distribute and organize objects between layers and sub-layers keeping the closed state

The demo model

Action 1

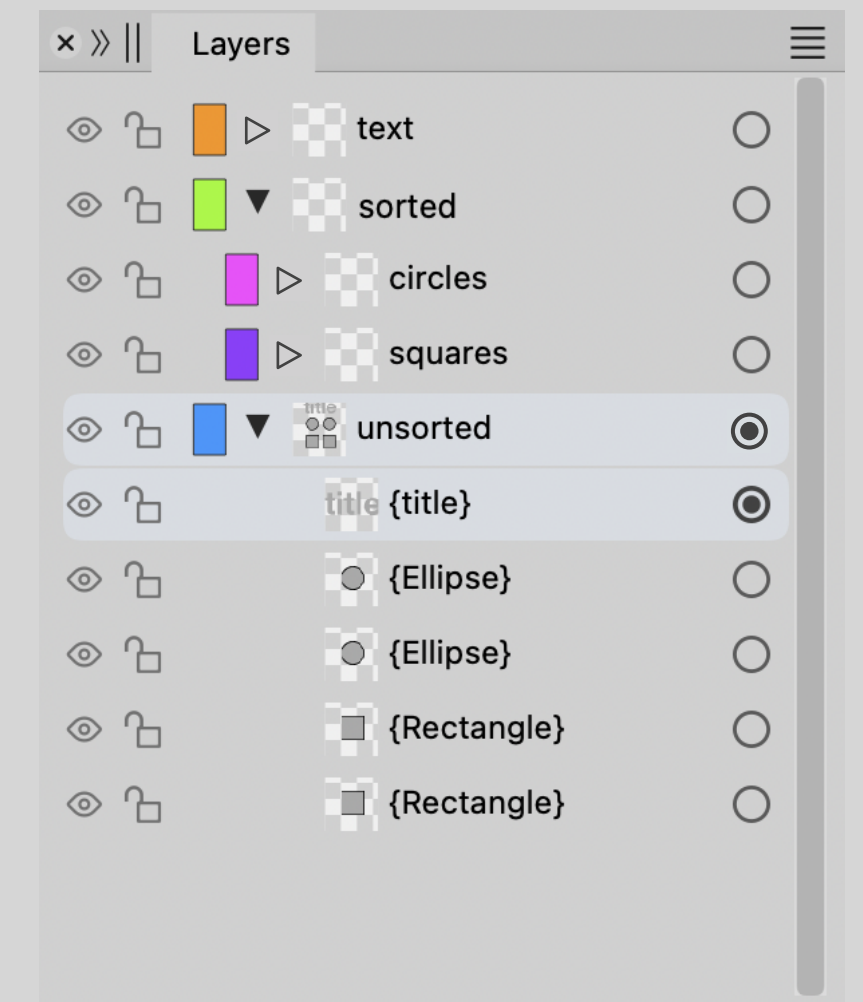
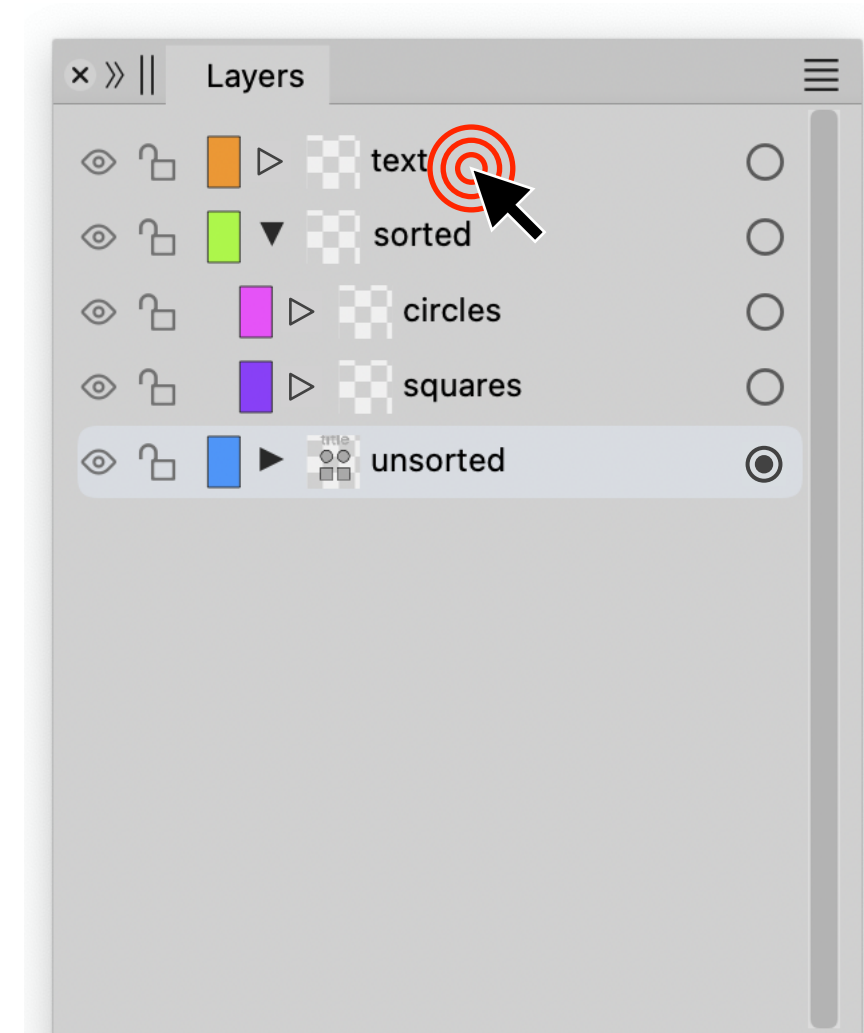
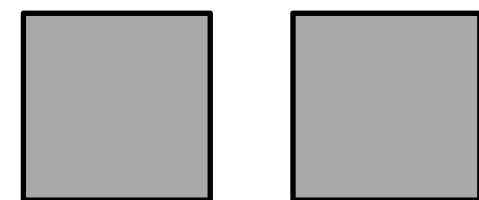
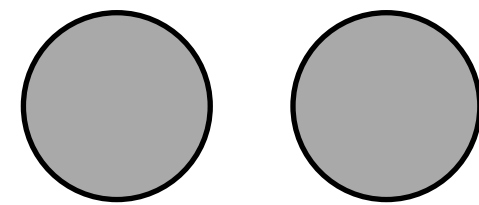
bring the text object (title) from the layer 'unsorted' to the layer 'text'

Step 2

Modifier 'M'+ click on target layer.

Note

a + modifier key is not necessary but is useful. Protect yourself from unwanted movements that might otherwise be made easily and accidentally. (see page 15; Reference Freehand, Note)



Distribute and organize objects between layers and sub-layers keeping the closed state

The demo model

Action 1

bring the text object (title) from the layer 'unsorted' to the layer 'text'

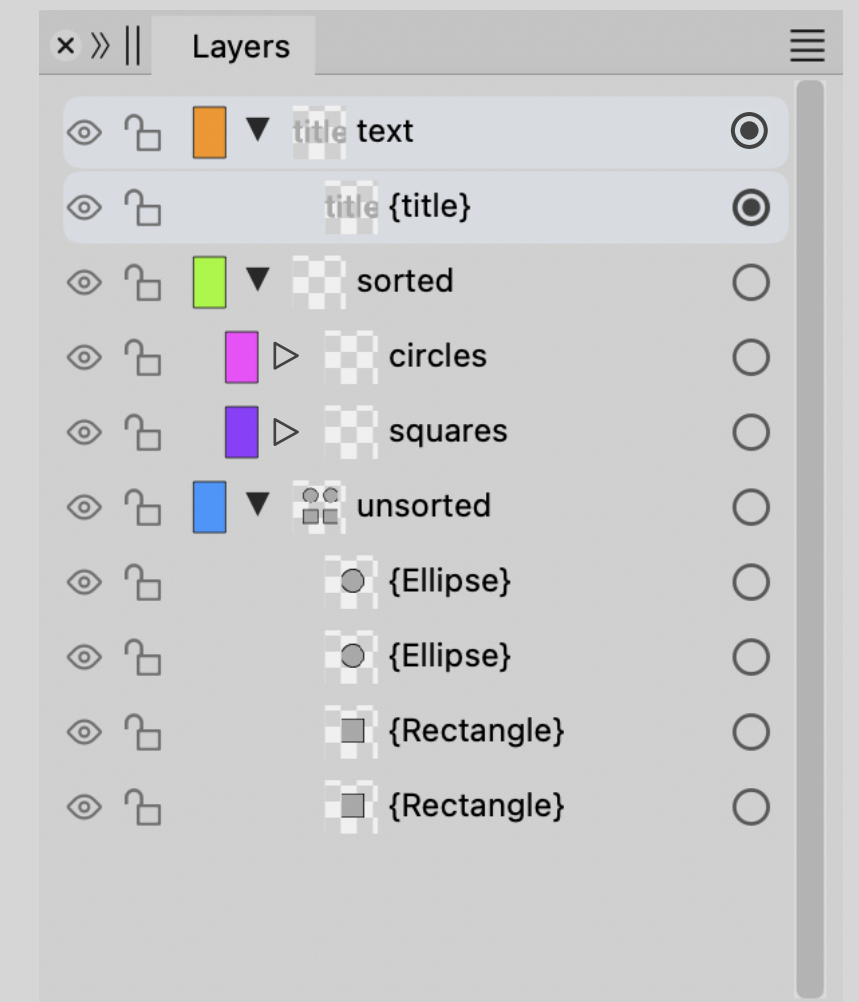
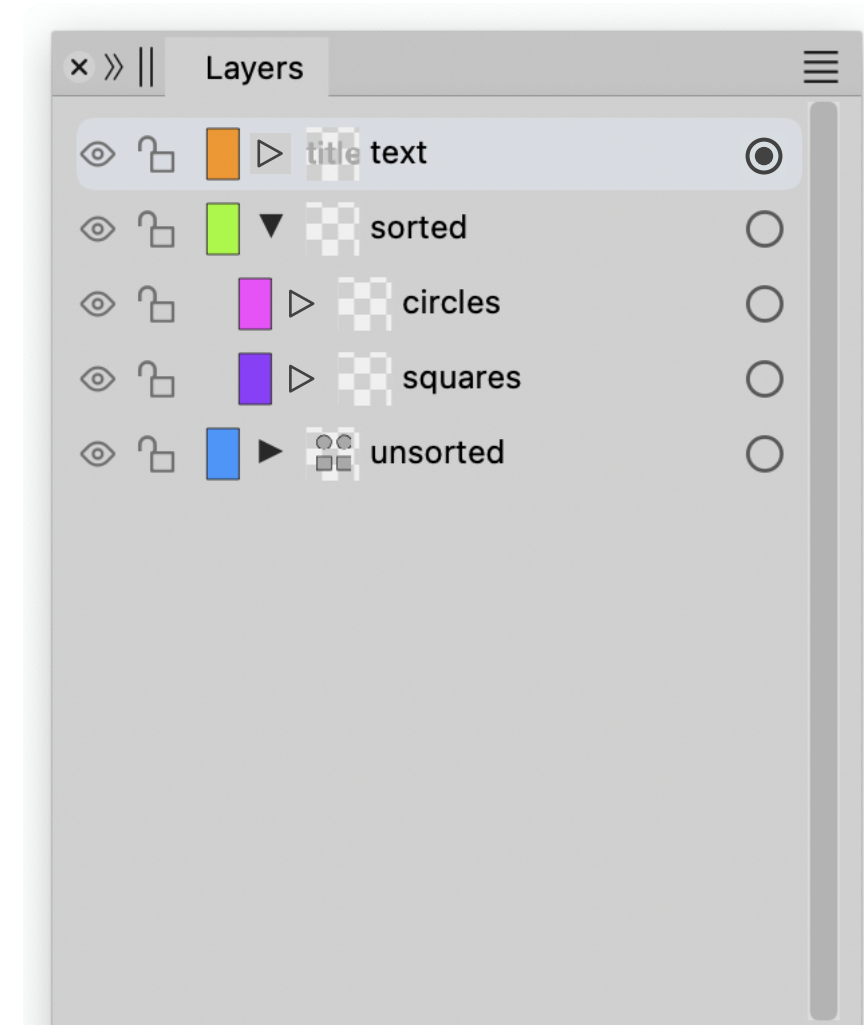
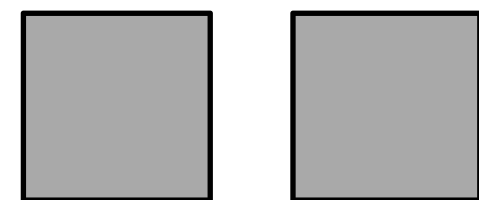
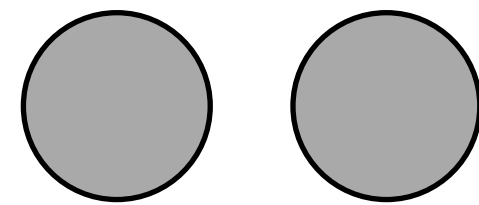
Step 3

Text object has moved to designated layer while keeping the selection.

Deselect, job done

Note

keeping the selection (radio button 'ON') is in addition to being logical, a good indicator or visual check that indicates that object has arrived.



Distribute and organize objects between layers and sub-layers keeping the closed state

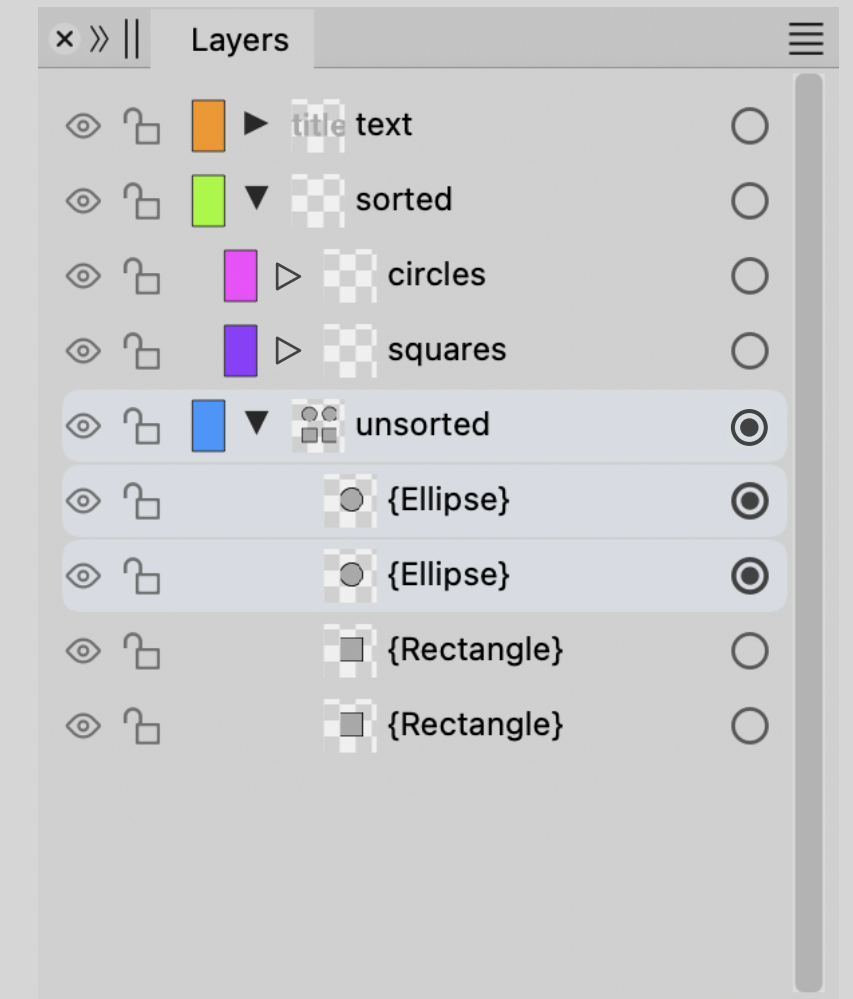
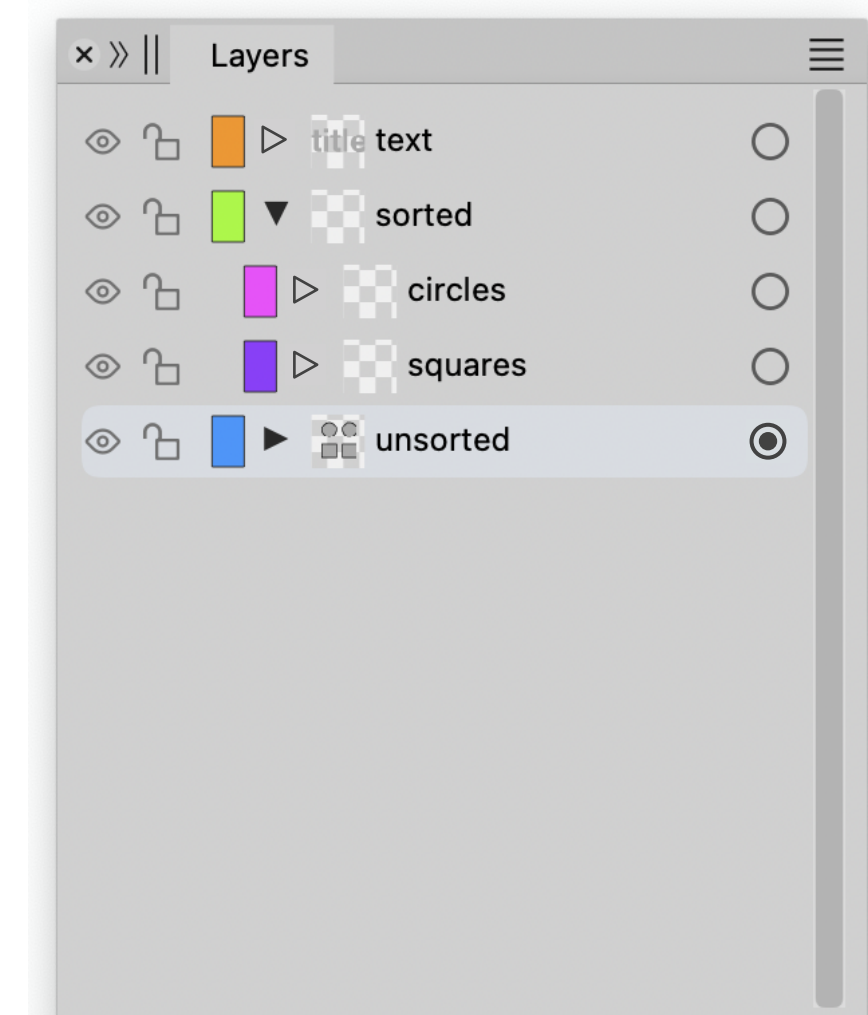
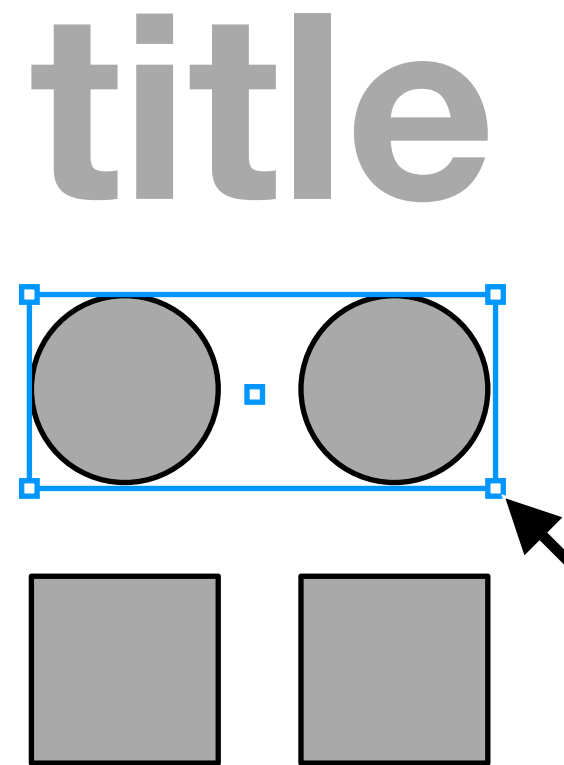
The demo model

Action 2

bring the circle objects from the layer 'unsorted' to the layer 'circles'

Step 1

Select the circles object on the canvas.



Distribute and organize objects between layers and sub-layers keeping the closed state

The demo model

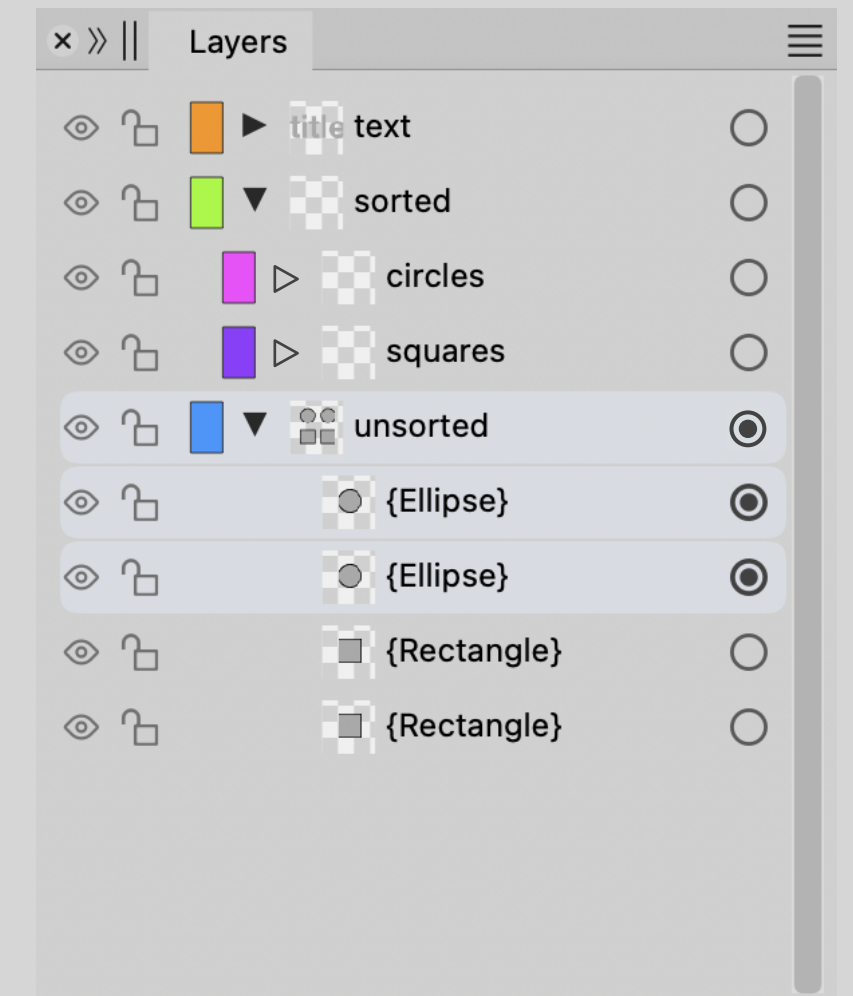
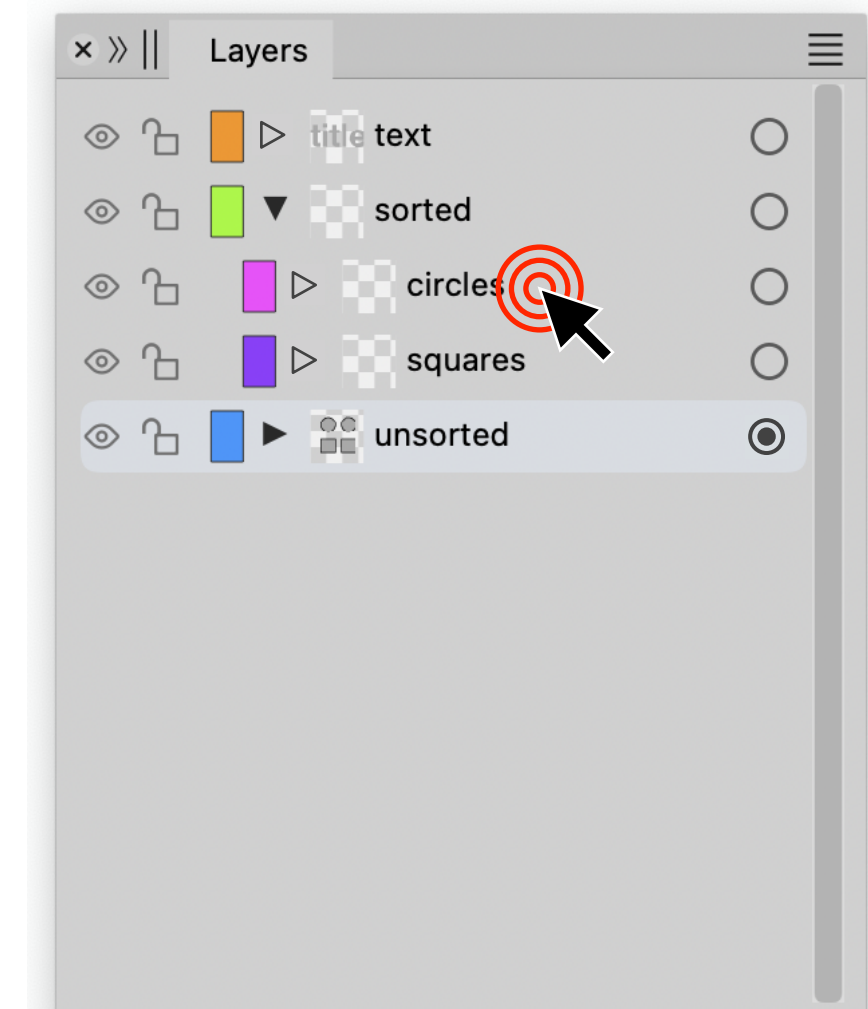
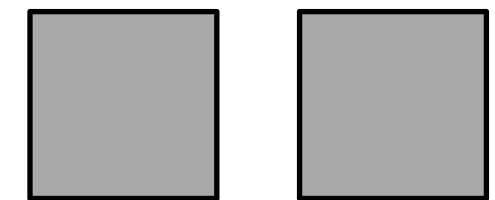
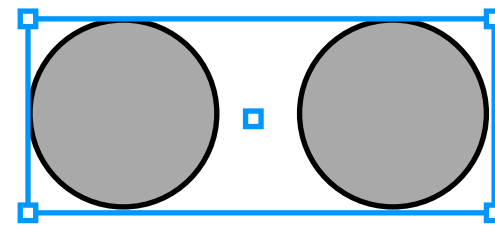
Action 2

bring the circle objects from the layer 'unsorted' to the layer 'circles'

Step 2

Modifier 'M'+ click on target layer.

title



Distribute and organize objects between layers and sub-layers keeping the closed state

The demo model

Action 2

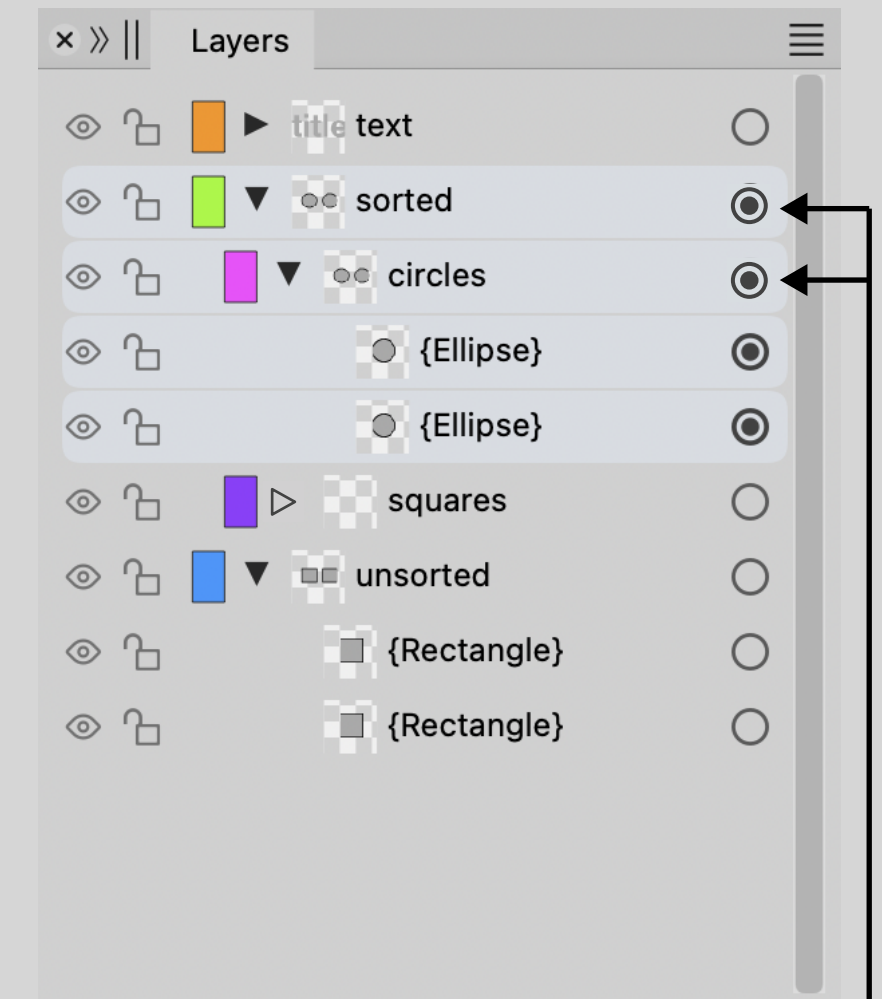
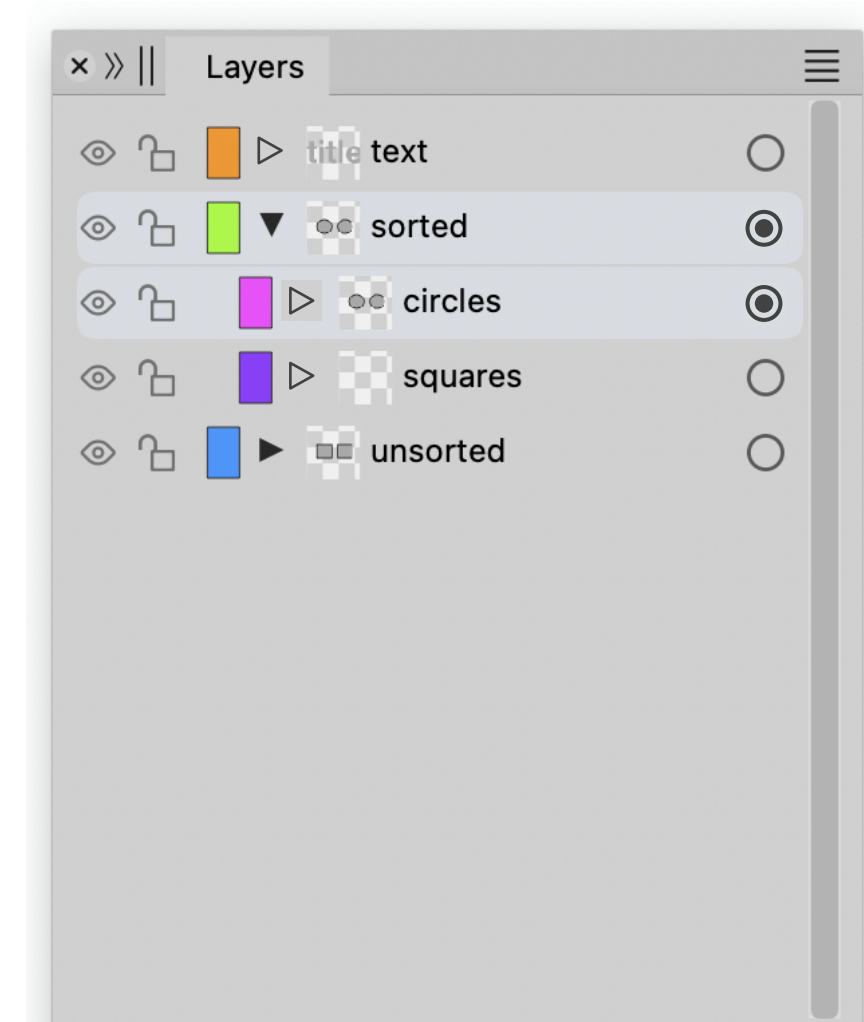
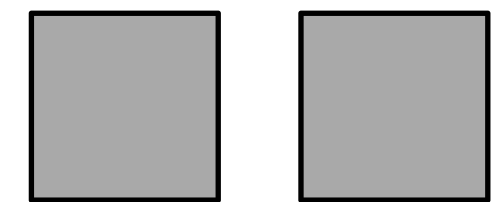
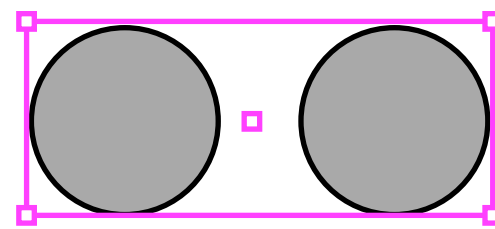
bring the circle objects from the layer 'unsorted' to the layer 'circles'

Step 3

Circle objects has moved to designated layer while keeping the selection.

Deselect, job done

title



New! Parent layer should give a selection indicator 'ON' indicating that a child layer with inside objects is selected

Distribute and organize objects between layers and sub-layers keeping the closed state

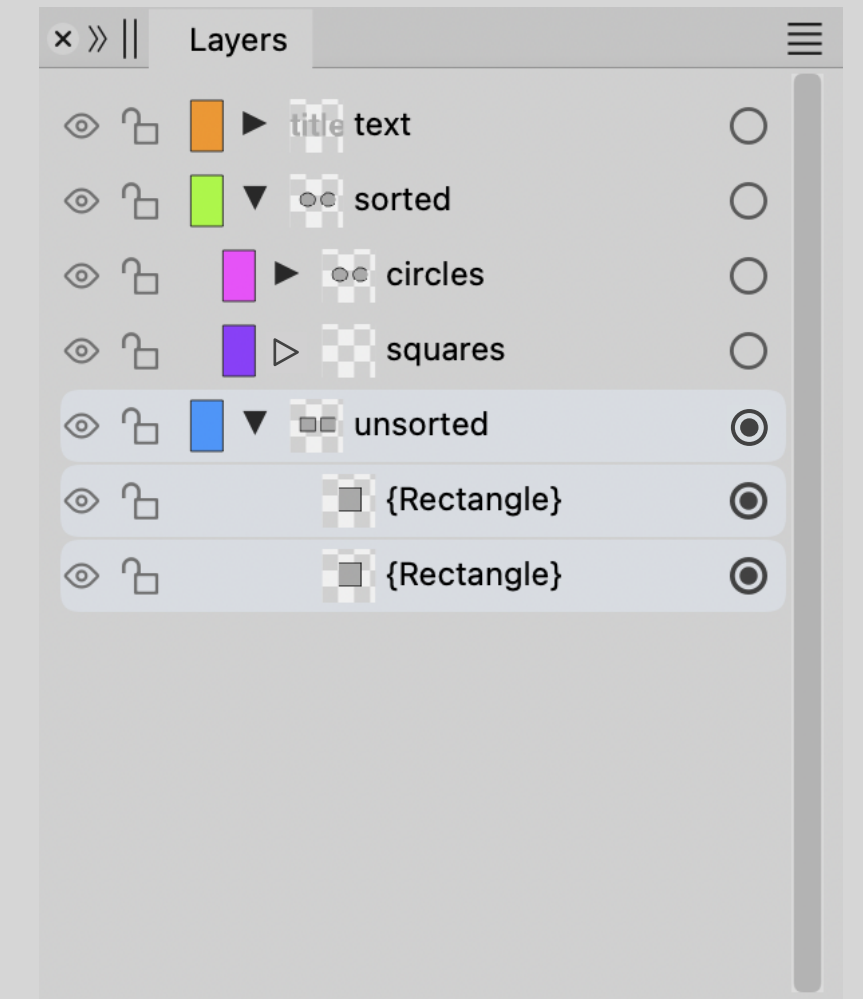
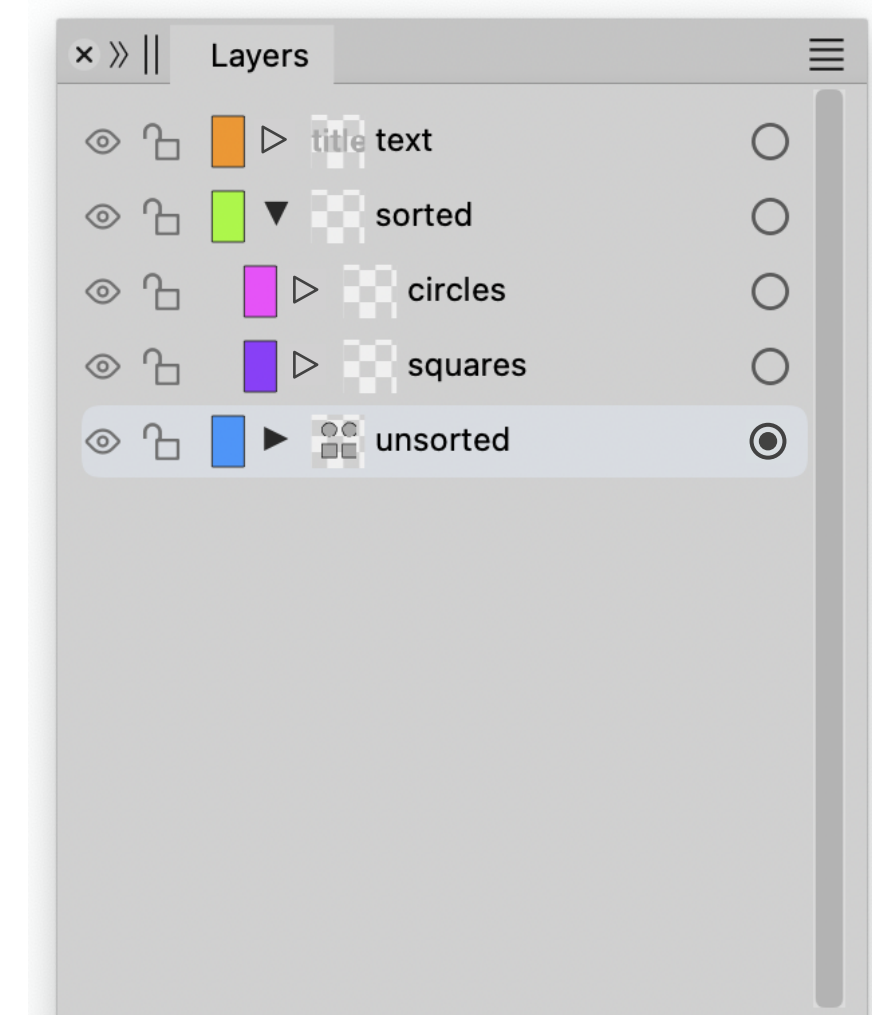
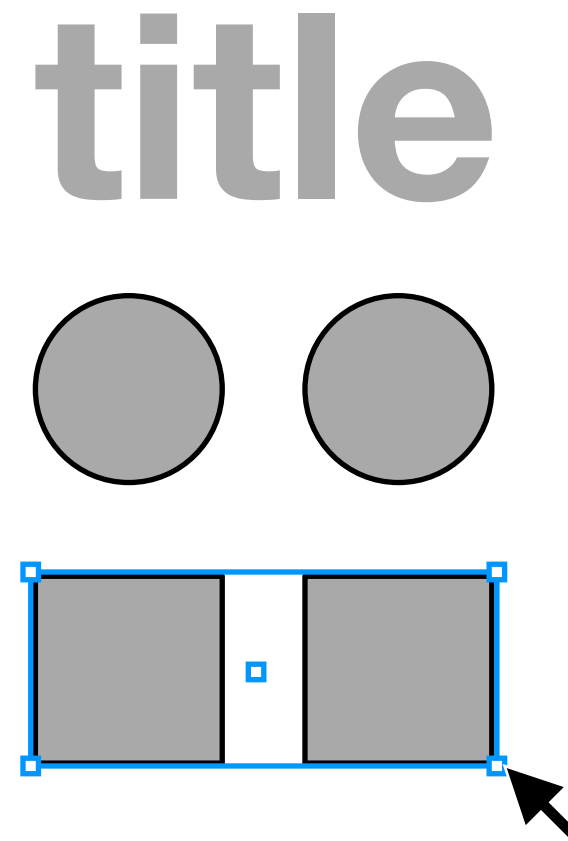
The demo model

Action 3

bring the square objects from the layer 'unsorted' to the layer 'squares'

Step 1

Select the circles object on the canvas.



Distribute and organize objects between layers and sub-layers keeping the closed state

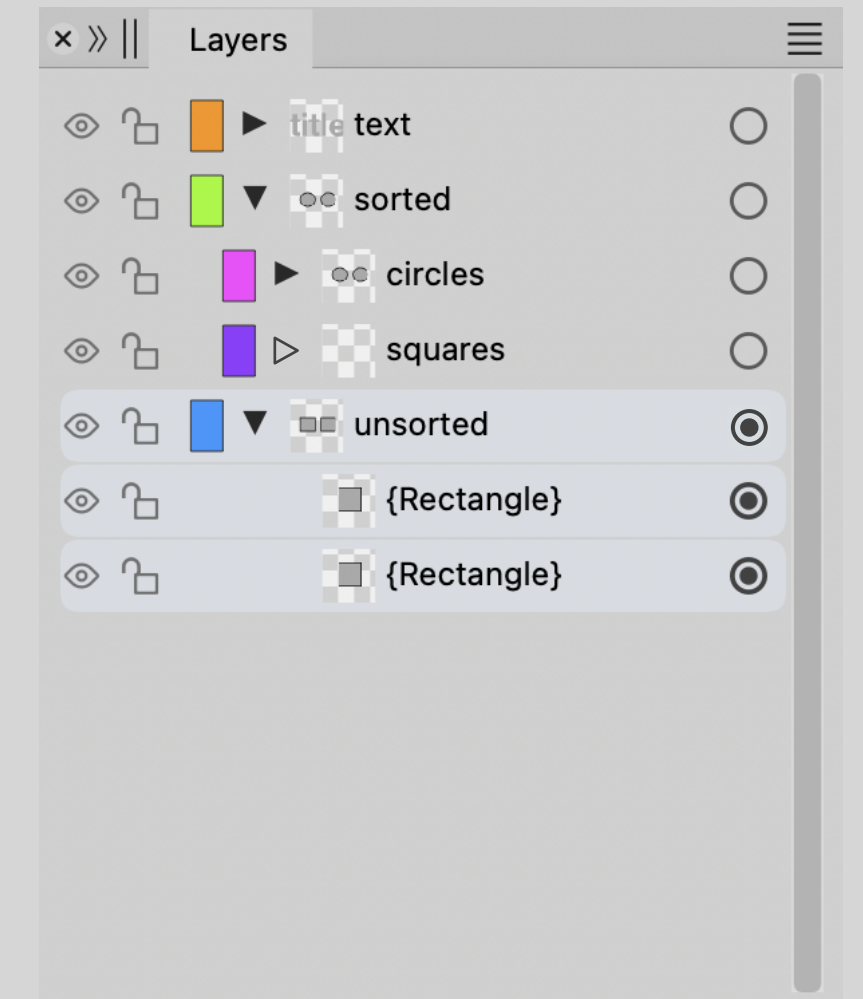
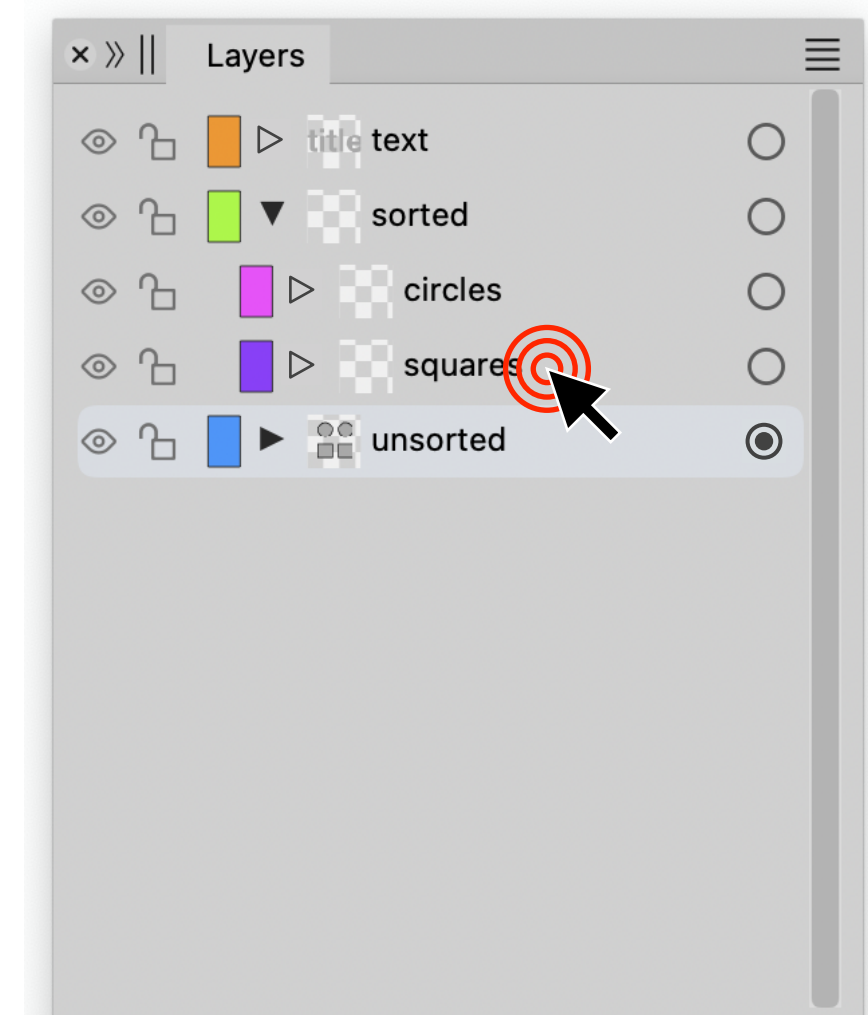
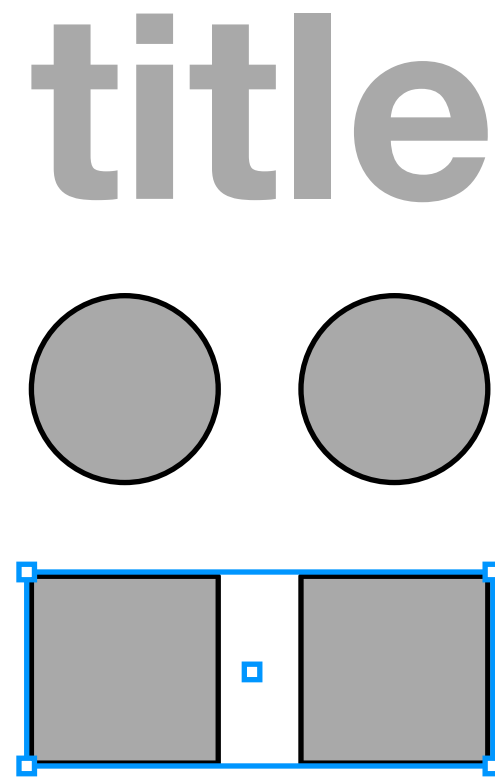
The demo model

Action 3

bring the square objects from the layer 'unsorted' to the layer 'squares'

Step 2

Modifier 'M'+ click on target layer.



Distribute and organize objects between layers and sub-layers keeping the closed state

The demo model

Action 3

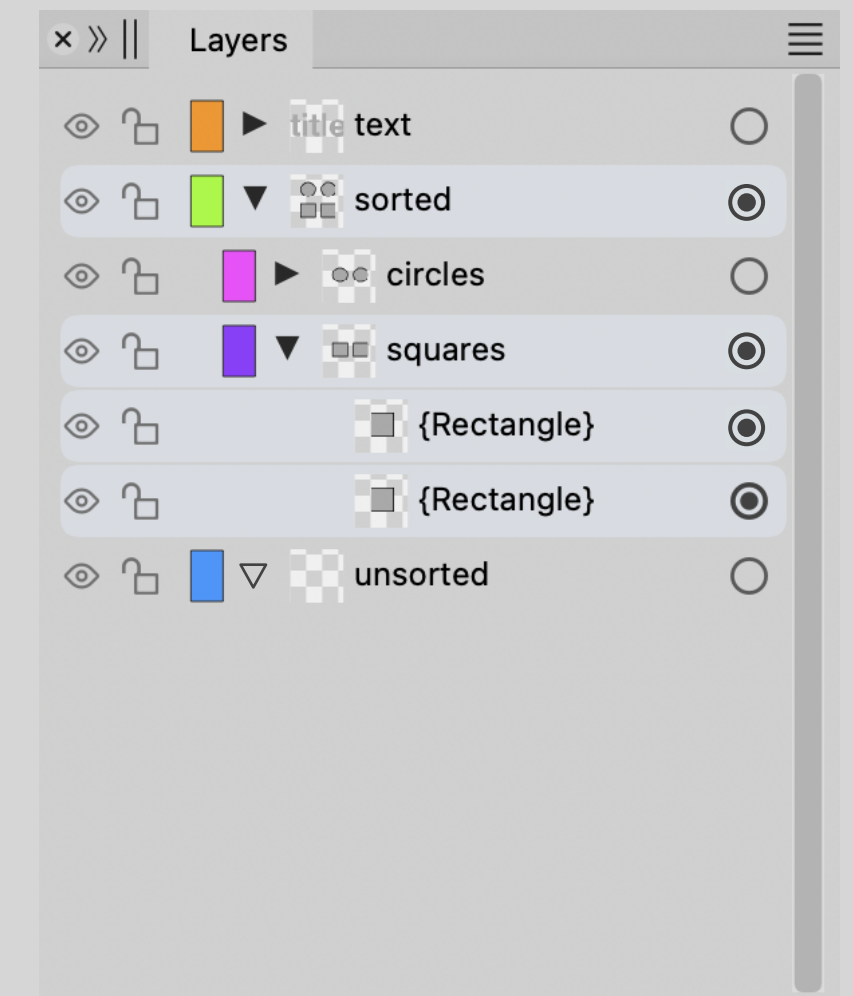
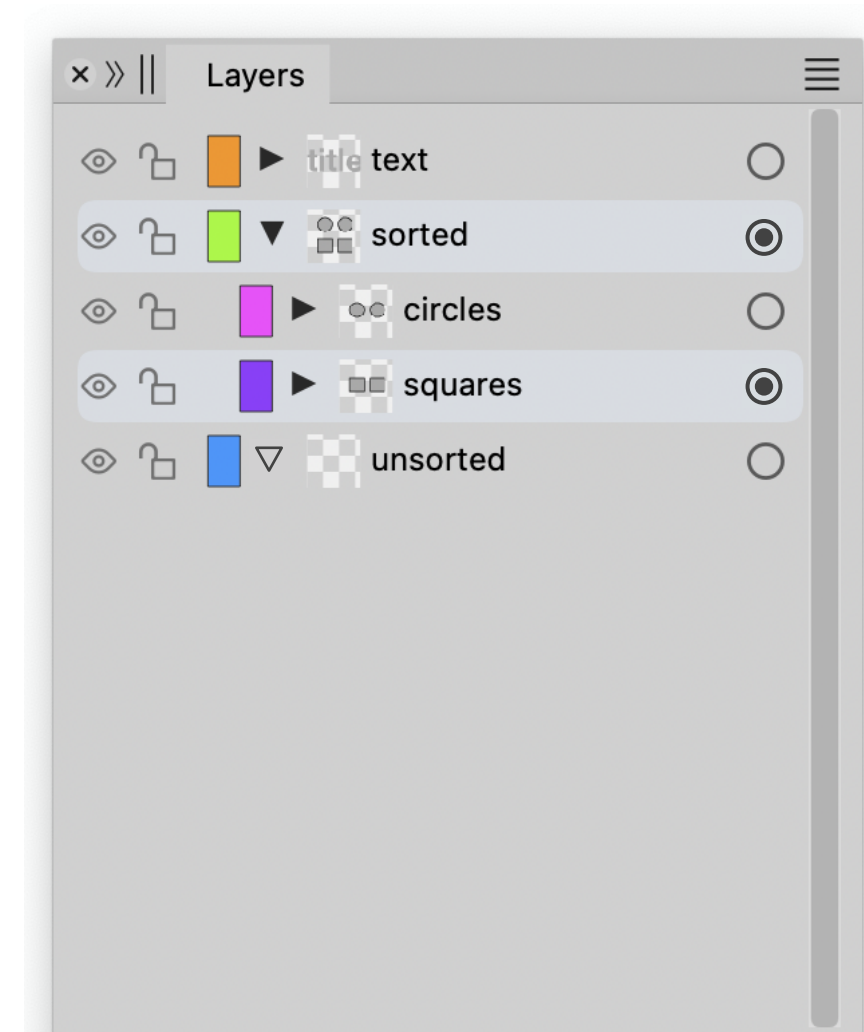
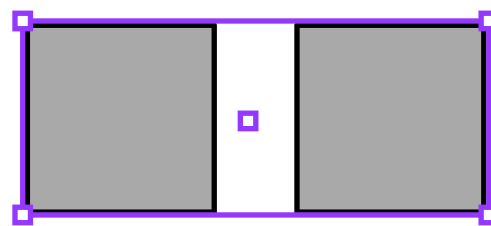
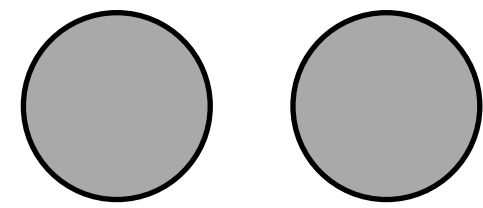
bring the square objects from the layer 'unsorted' to the layer 'squares'

Step 3

Square objects has moved to designated layer while keeping the selection.

Deselect, job done

title



Distribute and organize objects between layers and sub-layers keeping the closed state

The demo model

Action 4

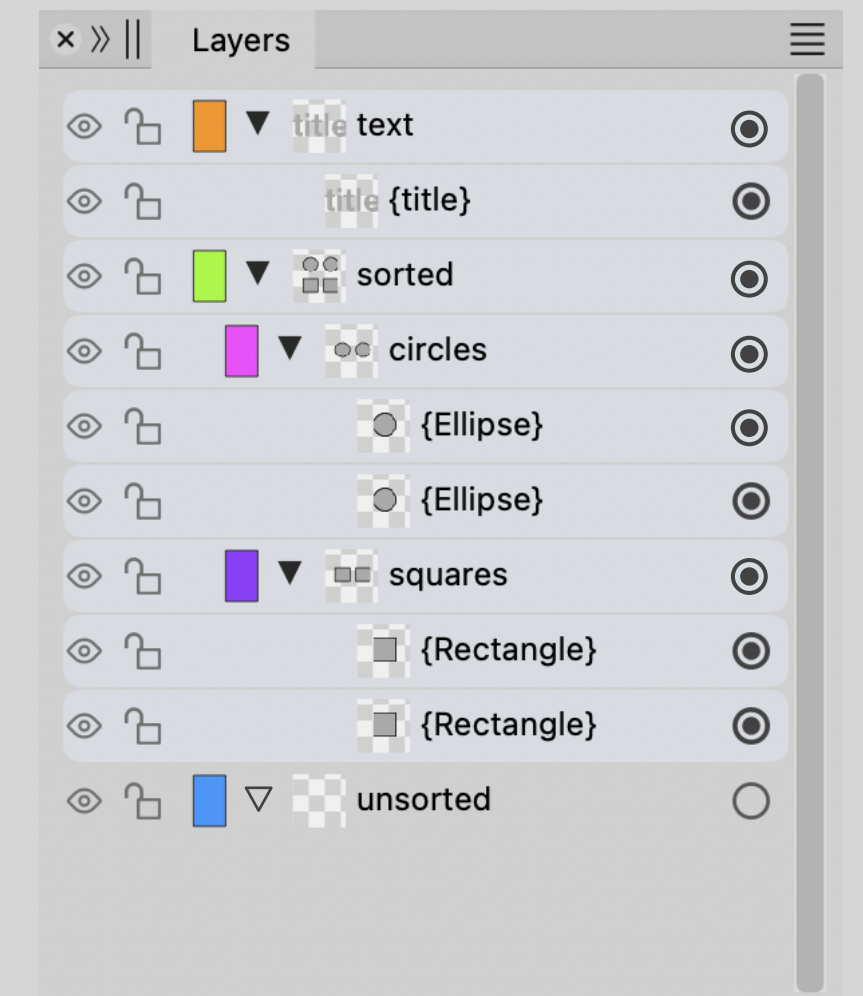
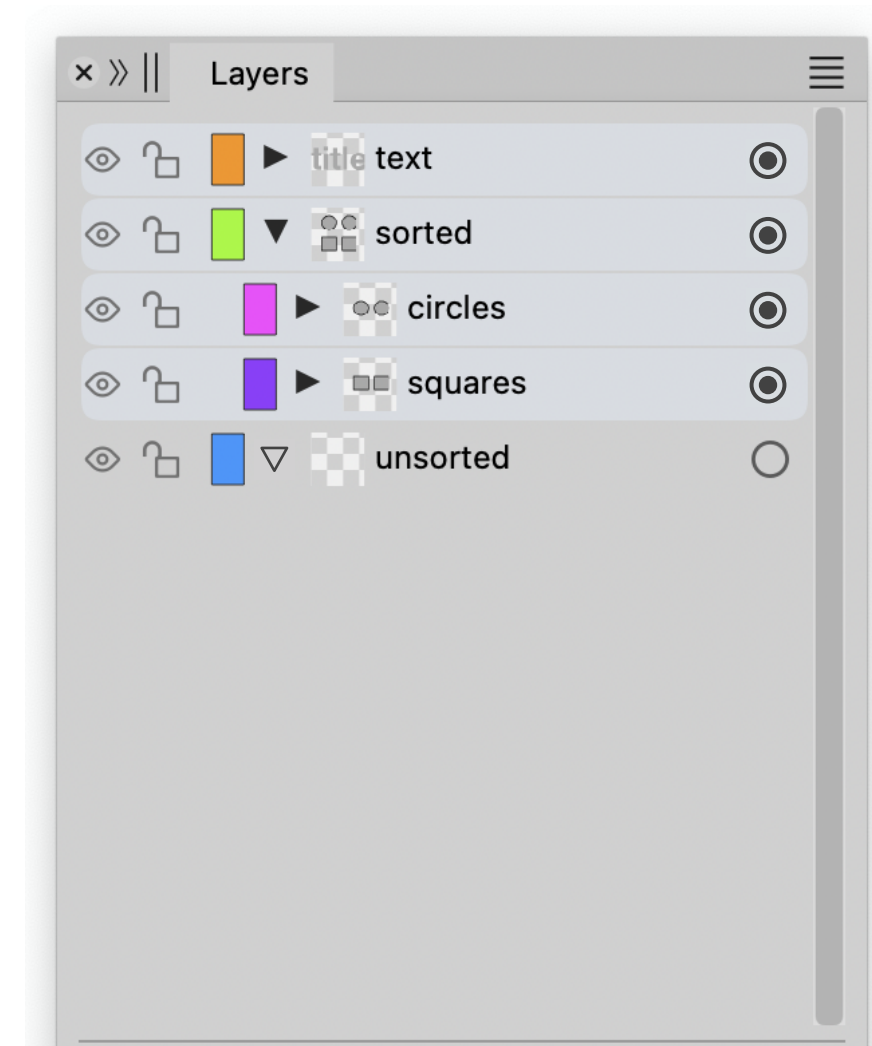
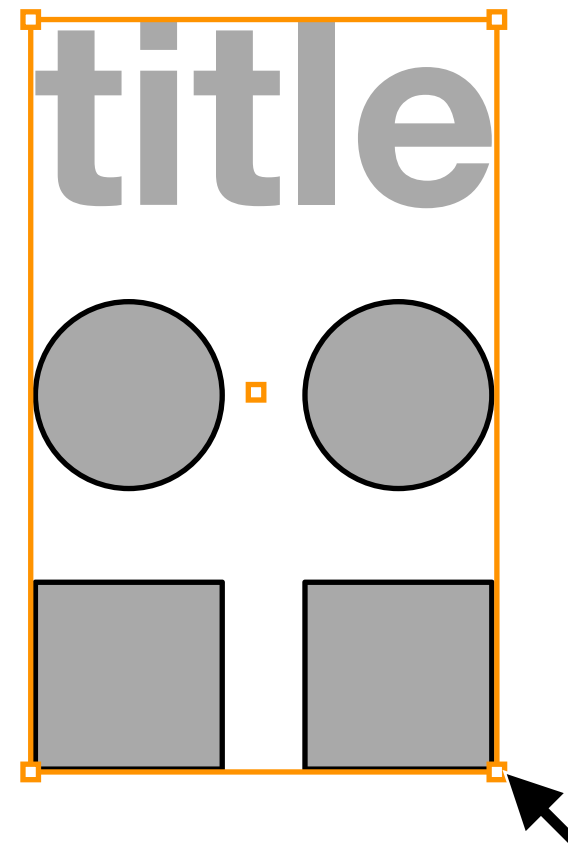
bring it all back to the layer 'unsorted'

Step 1

Select all objects on the canvas.

Note

Problem: selection frame can not have multiple (layer) colors so first or last color is used.



Distribute and organize objects between layers and sub-layers keeping the closed state

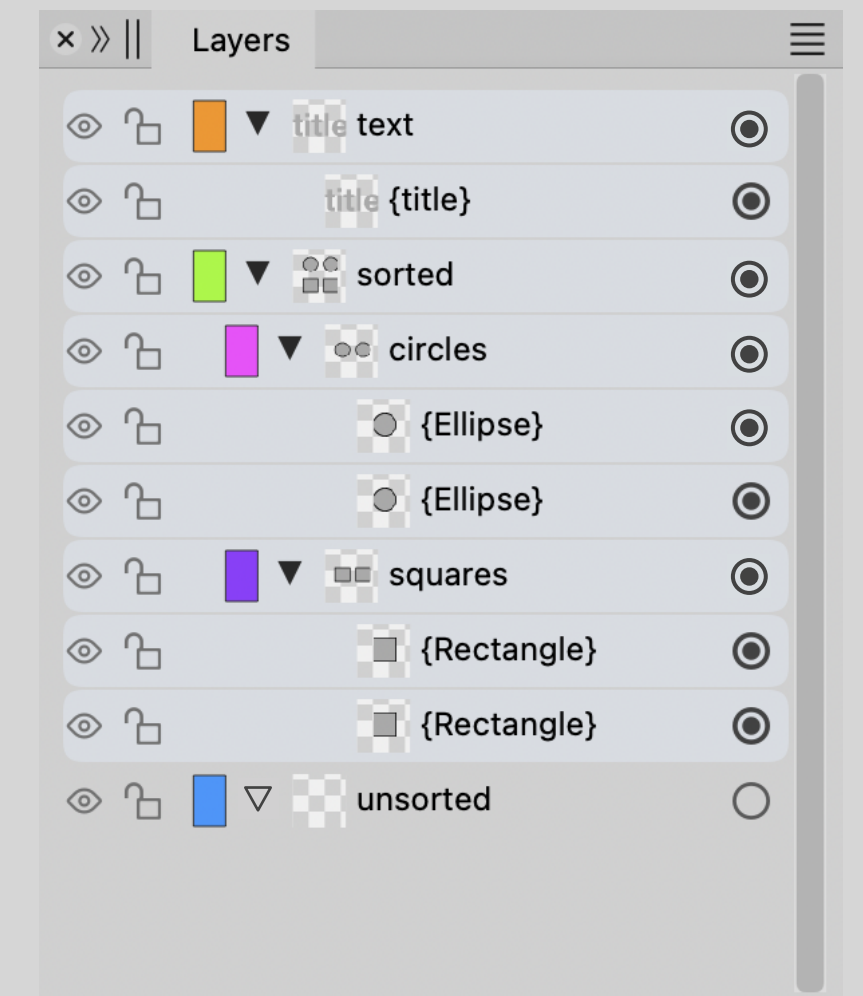
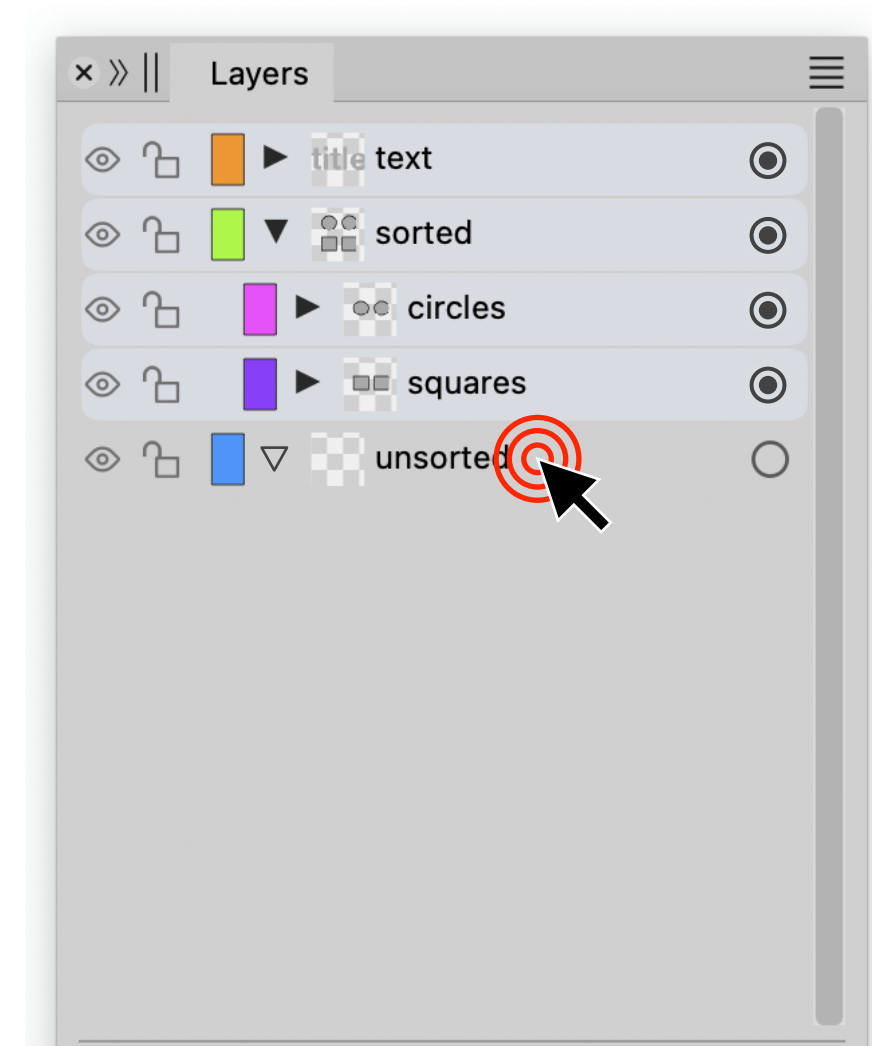
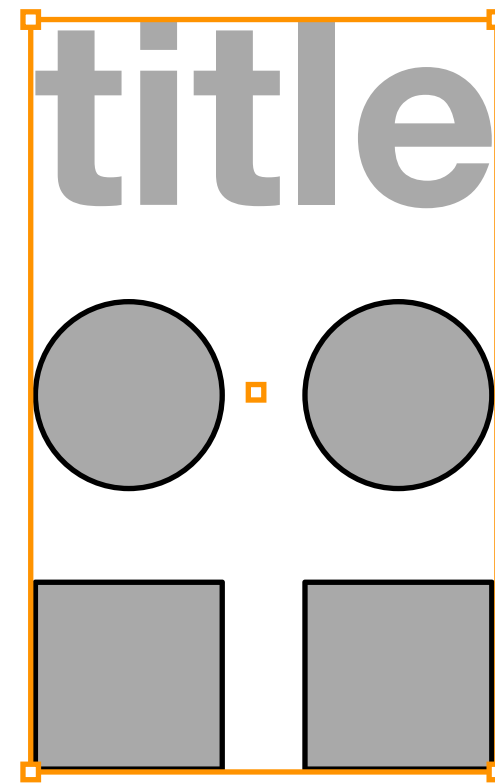
The demo model

Action 4

bring it all back to the layer 'unsorted'

Step 2

Modifier 'M'+ click on targetlayer.



Distribute and organize objects between layers and sub-layers keeping the closed state

The demo model

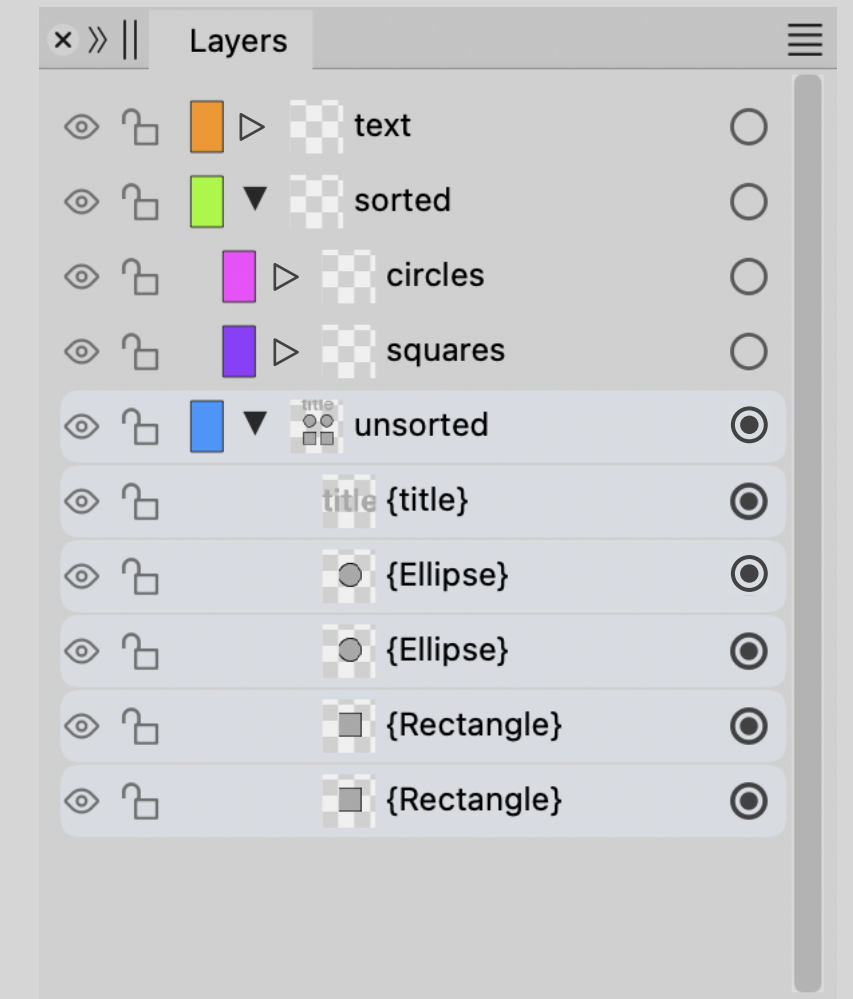
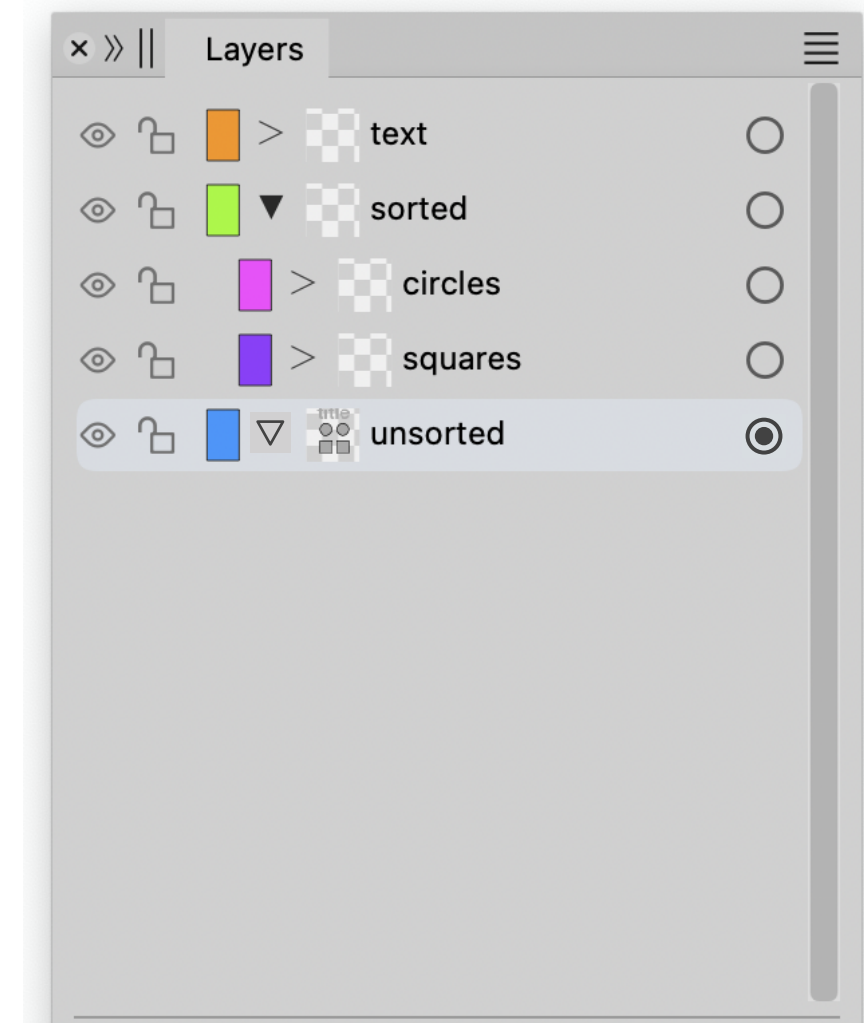
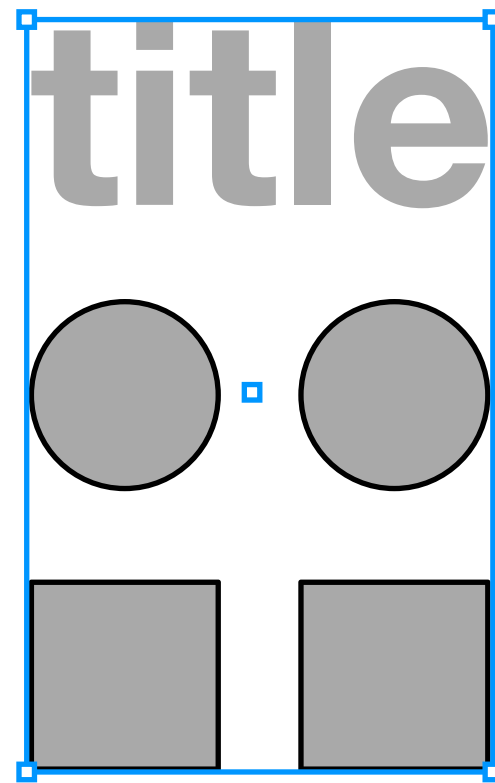
Action 4

bring it all back to the layer 'unsorted'

Step 3

All objects has moved to designated layer while keeping the selection.

Deselect, job done



Distribute and organize objects between layers and sub-layers keeping the closed state

Reference

From the Freehand manual:
Using Layers, Symbols, and Styles
page 292

To move an object to another layer using the Layers panel:

- 1 Select the object.

The object's layer name is highlighted in the Layers panel.

- 2 In the Layers panel, click the name of the layer to which you will move the selection.

By default, clicking a layer name moves a selected object to that layer.

Note: If this procedure doesn't work correctly, check your panel preferences. See the following procedure.

To prevent selected objects from automatically moving to other layers:

- 1 Display panels preferences by doing one of the following:

- In Windows, press Control+H, then click the Panels tab.
- On the Macintosh, press Command+H, then click the Panels category.

- 2 Deselect Clicking on a Layer Name Moves Selected Objects, and click OK.