



Lightroom Collections

# Lightroom Collections

This lesson is going to focus on collections in Lightroom. A collection is similar to a music playlist in that it provides a way to organize your images without moving files on your hard drive.

There are a few different types of collections that you should be aware of:

**Smart Collections** A smart collection is a different kind of collection and you can think of it as a predefined search. It allows you to quickly get the results to a search that you have defined in the past.

**Collection Sets** A collection set is basically a container, or a folder, for collections. It gives you a way of organizing your collections.

**Specialty Collections** A specialty collection is like a normal collection that includes module-specific settings. This could include the settings used for printing an image, slideshow settings, etc.

Let's look at each type of collection in depth so that you can begin to get comfortable with each one.

## Basic Collections (Timestamp: 1:47)

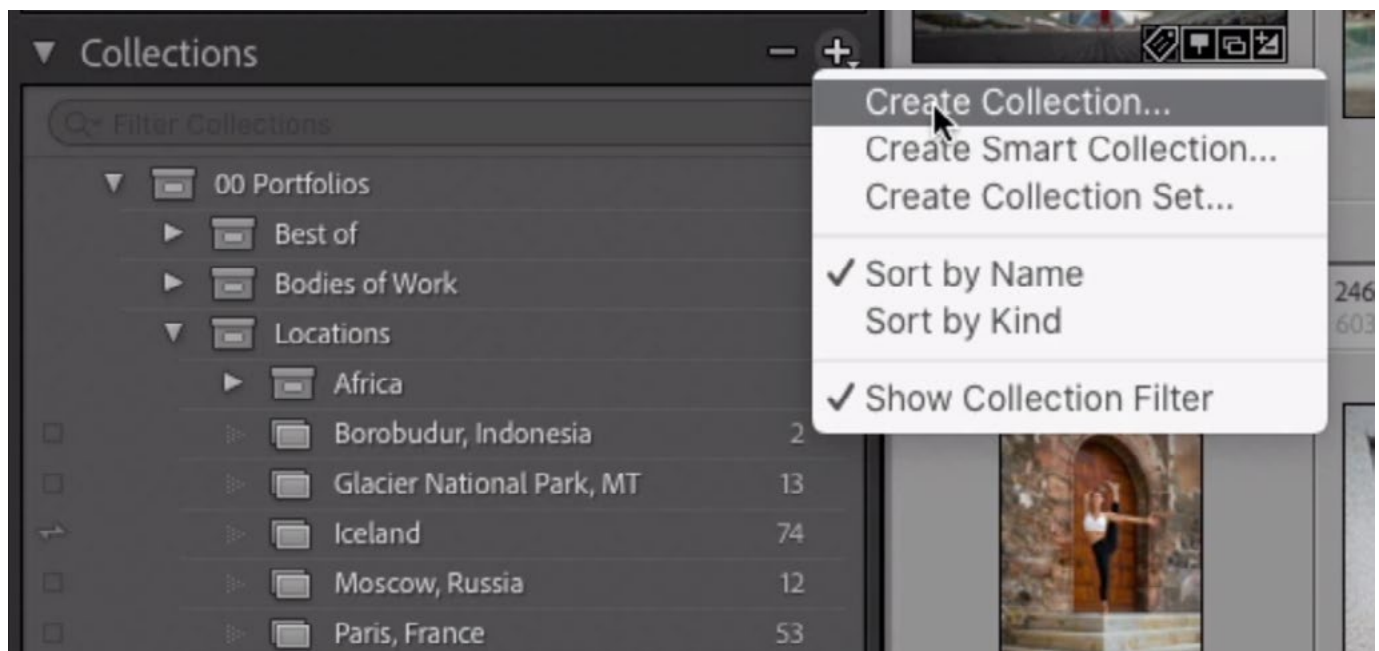
### Essential Concepts:

- Collections are to images what playlists are to music. They are essentially virtual folders that don't move the original images on your hard drive.
- An image can be included in multiple collections.
- Changes made in within the folder list (ex: file name change) are also reflected in collections.
- You can add/move images between collections when the hard drive is disconnected. (You can not do this with regular folders.)
- Deleting an image from a collection does not affect the original file. (You can only delete an image when viewing it within its folder.)

## Real-world examples of collections:

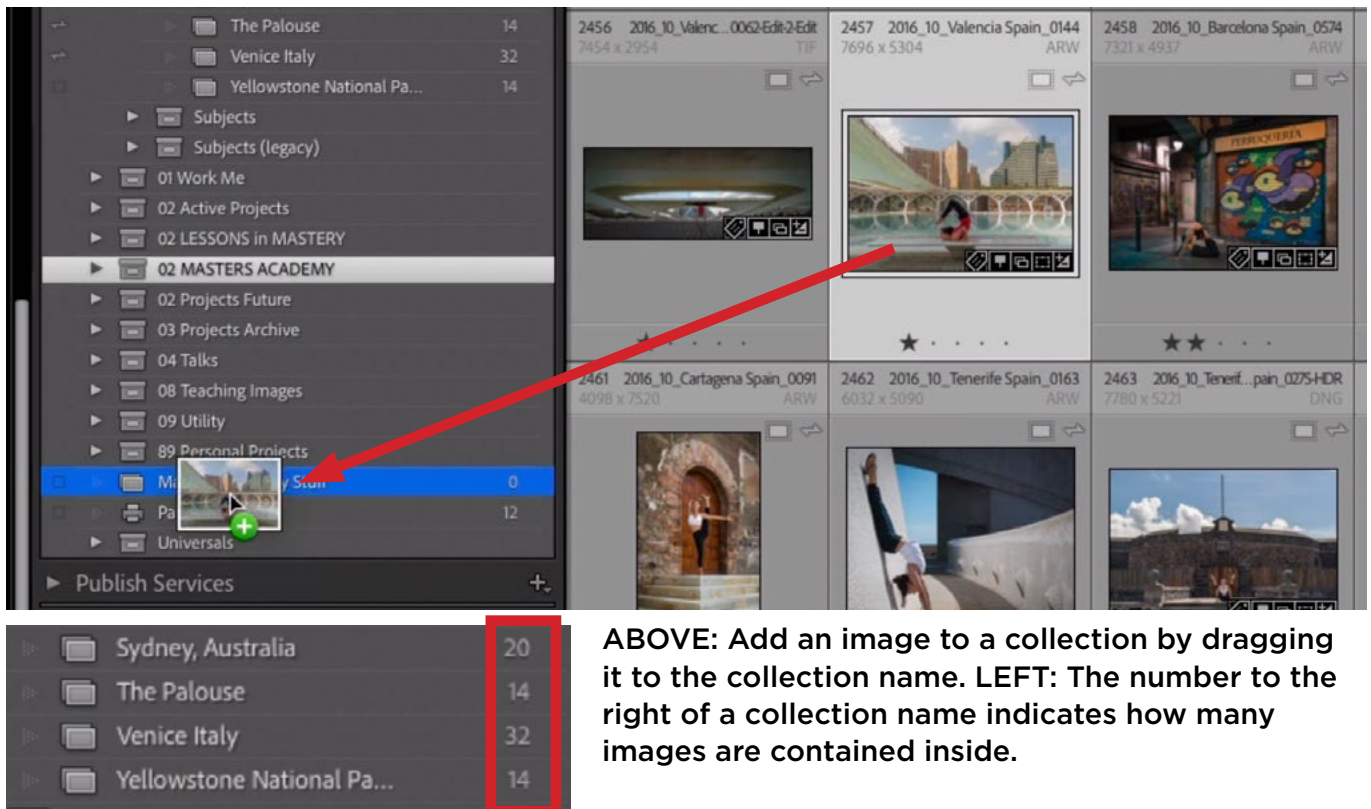
- Christmas photos from multiple years
- Portfolios of your best work (landscapes, portraits, etc.)
- Organize large projects
- Keep track of which images to work on next

**Working with collections** The Collections Panel can be found on the left side of Lightroom's interface. To create a collection, click on the little plus icon ( + ) at the top of the panel and choose Create Collection from the little pop-up menu. A dialog box will appear, prompting you to name the collection. This is where you can also opt to have the new collection appear inside a collection set, but we will cover that later in the lesson. Click the Create button at the bottom of the dialog and the collection will appear within the list inside the Collections Panel. The collections are listed alphabetically.



Create a new collection by clicking on the plus icon at the top of the Collections Panel.

To place an image in a collection, click and drag the image thumbnail from the main image window to the name of the collection within the Collections Panel. A number will appear to the right of the collection name and this indicates how many images are inside the collection. In order to view all of the images in a collection, simply click on the collection name. The collection images will appear as thumbnails in the main image window.



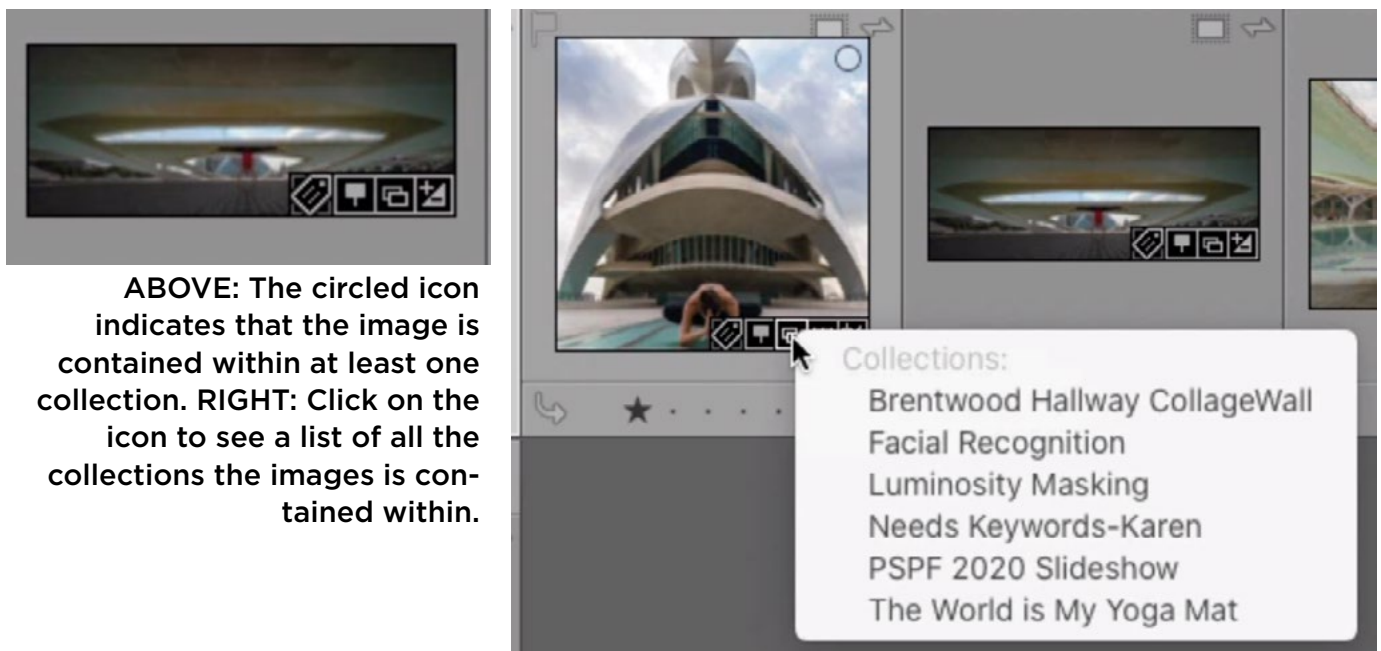
**ABOVE:** Add an image to a collection by dragging it to the collection name. **LEFT:** The number to the right of a collection name indicates how many images are contained inside.

You can remove an image from a collection by clicking on the image to make it active and then hitting the delete key. This will remove the image from the collection but it will remain on your hard drive and inside its original folder.

Let's say that you're viewing an image in a collection and you'd like to see the other images that were shot on that same day, or in that same shoot. You can do this by right-clicking on the image. A pop-up menu will appear and you will

choose the “Go to Folder in Library” option. This will navigate to the image inside your folder list, highlight the folder that contains the image and display all of the images contained inside.

When viewing an image in Lightroom, one or more icons may appear at the bottom of the image thumbnail. If you see the icon that looks like two overlapping rectangles, it means that the image is contained within at least one collection. Click on the icon and a little list will appear, showing you the names of all of the collections that contain that image. Click on one of the names to quickly navigate to the collection.



**ABOVE:** The circled icon indicates that the image is contained within at least one collection. **RIGHT:** Click on the icon to see a list of all the collections the images is contained within.

## Smart Collections (8:26)

### Essential Concepts:

- A smart collection is a predefined search that auto-populates with matching images.
- You cannot drag images into smart collections and cannot remove images via the Delete key.
- Add an image by changing qualities of the image so that it matches the search.

**Smart Collections vs. Filter Bar:** The Filter Bar is what you will find above the main image window when working in the Library Module. You can toggle its visibility with a setting in the View menu. The Filter Bar and Smart Collections are not the same thing.

Filtering	Smart Collections
Interactive	Predefined
Active source	Predetermined source
Inclusion only	Combine inclusive & exclusive

**Real world examples of smart collections:**

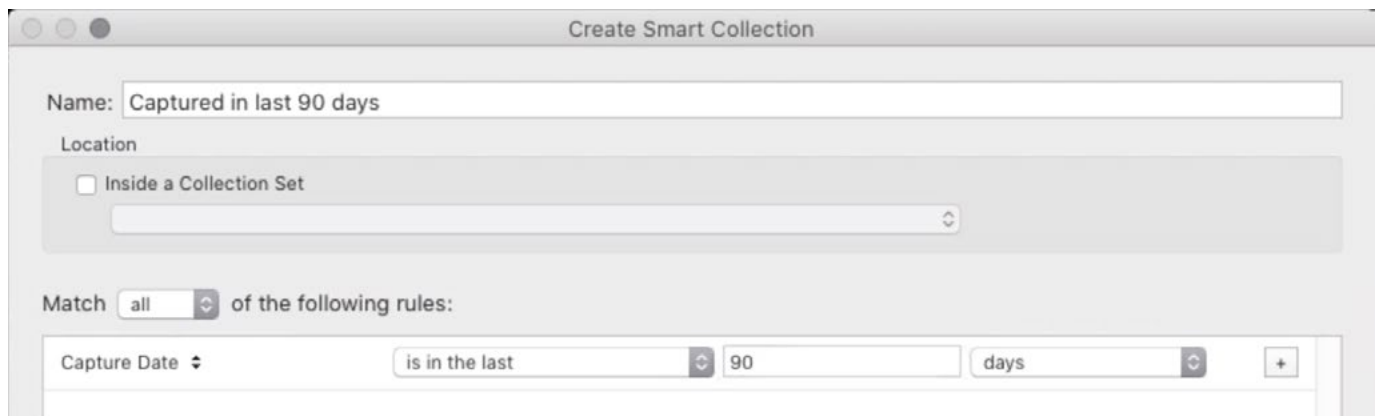
- Auto-collect images in folders called “Skies”
- Show images edited within last 30 days
- Show images captured in the last 30 days and that have been adjusted
- Find outtakes that have Smart Previews
- Show images with GPS location within California

**Working with smart collections** To create a new Smart Collection, click on the little plus button at the top of the Collections Panel and choose “Create Smart Collection.” A dialog box will appear where you can give it a name and create rules for what images should go into the Smart Collection.

Create a rule by clicking on the dropdown menu at the left side of the main window (the white area) and choose the first type of criteria you’d like to use. You’ll have many choices such as rating, date, label color, file name, etc. Once you choose a rule, you’ll get further settings pertaining to that rule. For example, if you choose rating as a rule, you will have to choose how many stars and whether you should include images that are greater than or equal to, equal to, etc. If you would like to add another rule, click on the little + button to the right of the first rule.

If you'd like to create a smart collection that will automatically include images that were shot in the last 90 days, you would set up the following rules:

- First menu: Capture Date
- Second menu: Is in the last
- Third field: 90
- Fourth menu: days



**The above smart collection rules would be used to create a collection that automatically includes all images that were captured in the last 90 days.**

If you'd like to create a smart collection that will automatically include images that were *edited* in the last 90 days, you would set up the following rules:

- First menu: Edit Date
- Second menu: Is in the last
- Third field: 90
- Fourth menu: days

After setting up all of the rules for your Smart Collection, click the Create button.

In the Collections Panel, all Smart Collections can be recognized by the little gear icon that appears next to the Smart Collection name. To the right of the name is a number, which indicates how many images are inside the Collection.

## Collection Sets (20:48)

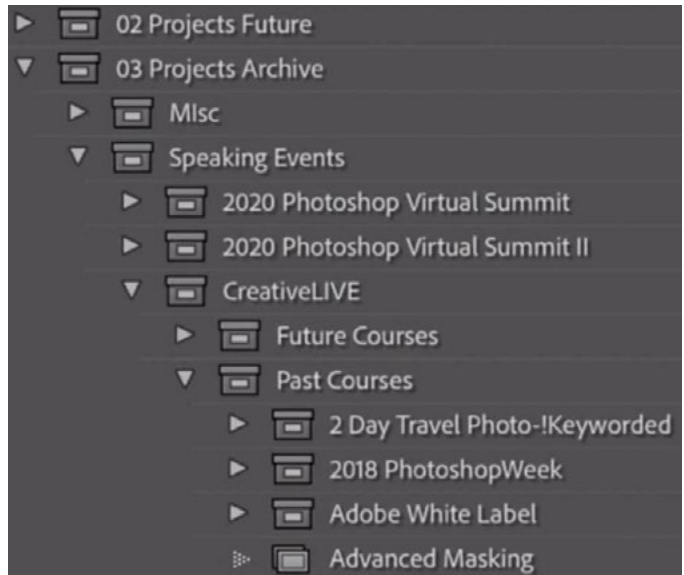
### Essential concepts:

- A collection set is a method for creating organizational structure in the collection list.
- A collection set cannot contain individual images. It can only contain collections and other collection sets.
- Collection sets can be nested to create a hierarchy.
- Clicking on a collection set will display the contents of all the collections contained within.

**Working with collection sets** After you've started to create collections, you'll probably want to start organizing them. One way of doing that is to create collection sets. To do this, click on the little plus icon to the right of the Collections heading and choose "Create Collection Set" from the menu that pops up.

A collection set is similar to a folder, but it doesn't actually reside on your hard drive. If you choose to create a collection set, you will get a dialog box where you'll be prompted to give the collection set a name and then click the Create button. You will see the new collection set in the Collections Panel, and it will have a little file box icon next to it.

A collection set is essentially a container for collections. That means that you can drag Collections into this set. You can right click on the name of the collection set and choose to create a new collection set, either inside a current collection set or on its own.



**In this Collections Panel, you can see that we have a lot of collection sets within collection sets.**



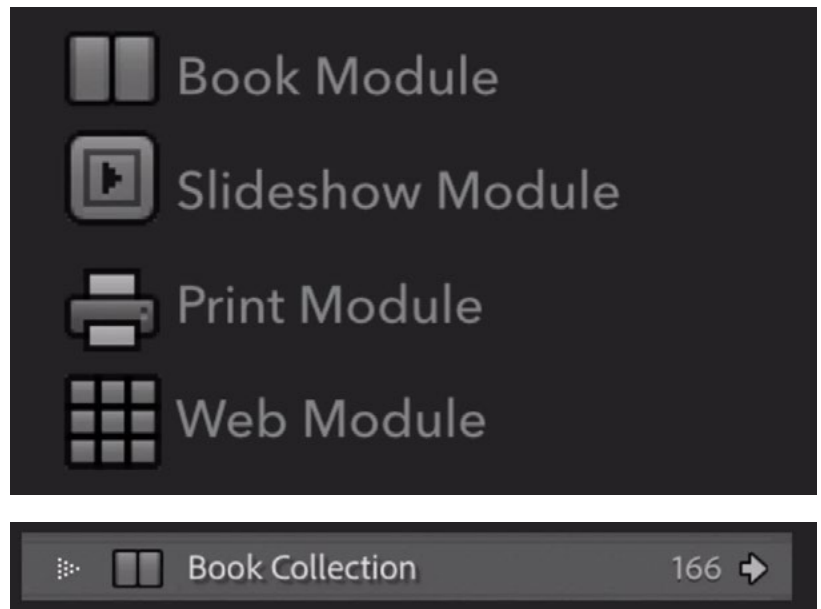
## Specialty Collections (25:53)

There is another type of collection that I like to call specialty collections. These will not only contain images, but they will also contain settings that are specific to a particular module in Lightroom. For example, let's say that you use the Print Module to create a print setup for an image that uses a particular border, caption, etc. By using a specialty collection, you can quickly get back to that same setup so that you can make the same print again in the future.

### Essential concepts:

A specialty collection is a collection that includes settings from another module:

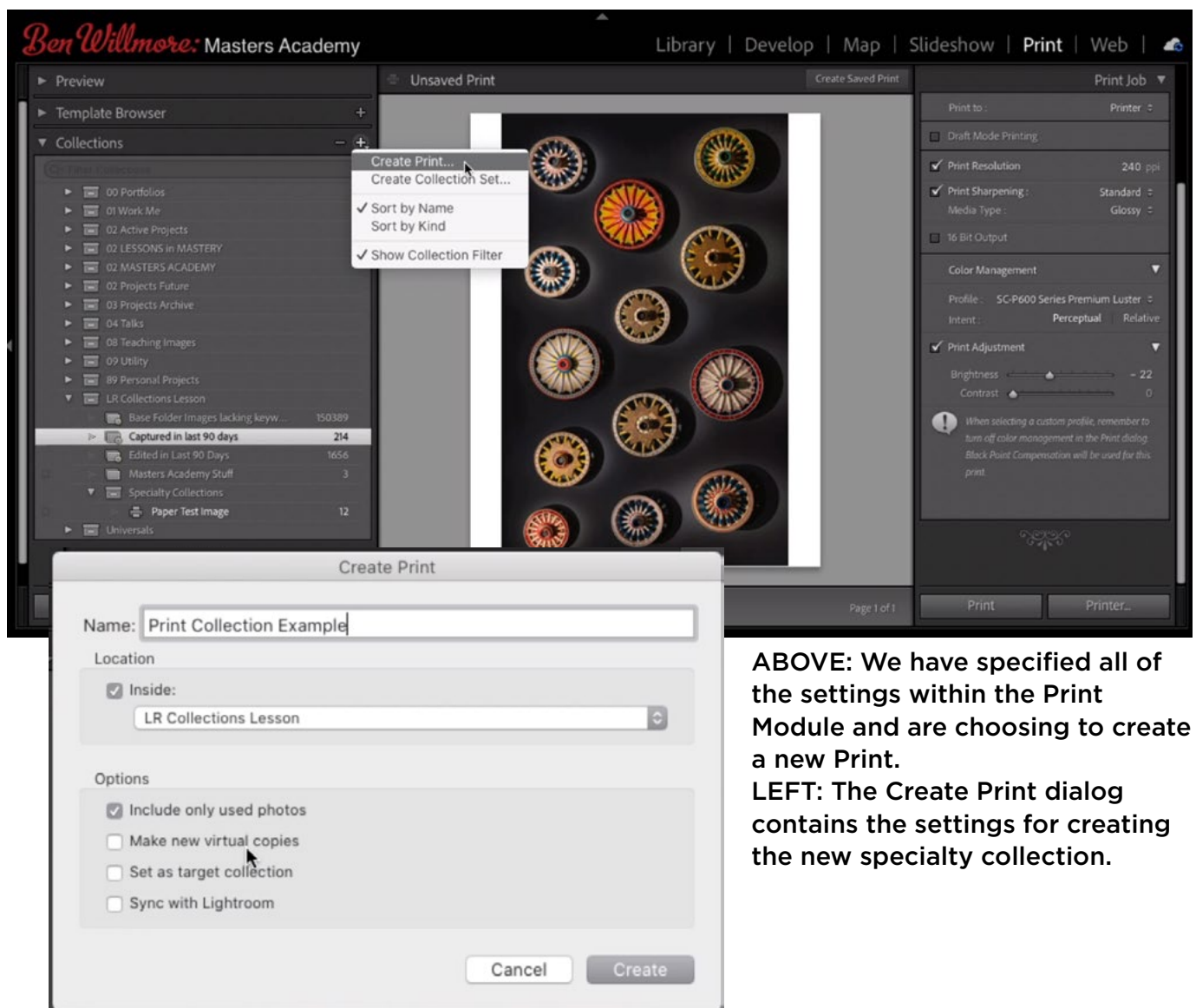
Click on the right-pointing arrow to the right of a collection name to bring you back to the module with the images and settings.



### Real world examples:

- Book layout from trip to Africa
- 13" x 19" prints of images that are ready to sell
- Slide show of last vacation to music
- Web gallery of images for client to select favorites

You will create one of these specialty collections after you have set up the appropriate settings within the particular module you're using. From within that module, click on the little plus icon at the top of Collections Panel and choose "Create..." If you are in the Print Module, this option will be called "Create Print." If you are in the Slideshow module, the option will be called "Create Slideshow," etc. A dialog box will appear with some options. Name the collection at the top of this dialog and use the "Inside" setting to determine whether this collection should be stored inside of a particular collection set. There will be additional check box settings where you can choose what photos to include, whether it should create virtual copies, etc.



**ABOVE:** We have specified all of the settings within the Print Module and are choosing to create a new Print.  
**LEFT:** The Create Print dialog contains the settings for creating the new specialty collection.

## The Quick Collection (32:25)

### Essential concepts:

- The Quick Collection is a temporary collection for mini projects.
- It is not found in the regular collection list. It is instead located in the Catalog Panel, on the left side of Lightroom's interface. It is always available here.
- Add images to the Quick Collection using the same method as with other collections, by dragging images on to its name. Remove an image by clicking on it and then tapping the Delete key.
- Right-click on the Quick Collection and some options will appear. Here, you can clear the collection, removing all images. You can also choose the Save option in order to save the Quick Collection as a normal collection.

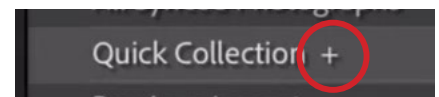


**The Quick Collection is always located within the Catalog Panel, on the left side of Lightroom's interface.**

### Real world examples:

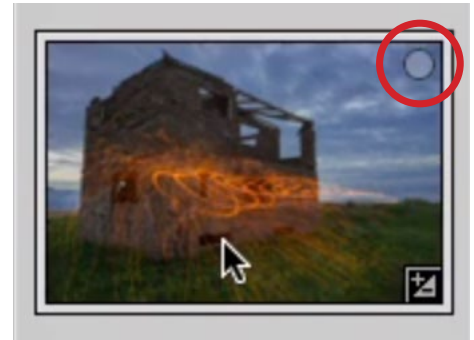
- Wife asks for high-resolution versions of 12 images I've texted her in the past
- Speaking event requests six example images for promotions
- Choosing images for an upcoming Masters Academy lesson before narrowing down to what will be included in a permanent collection.

**The Target Collection** By default, a little plus sign will appear to the right of the Quick Collection's name. This little plus sign represents the Target Collection. There



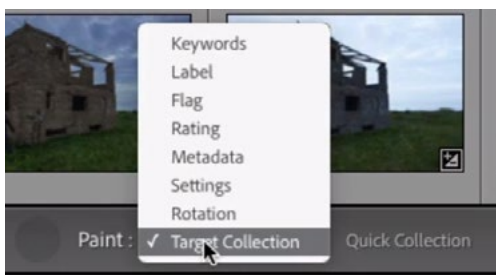
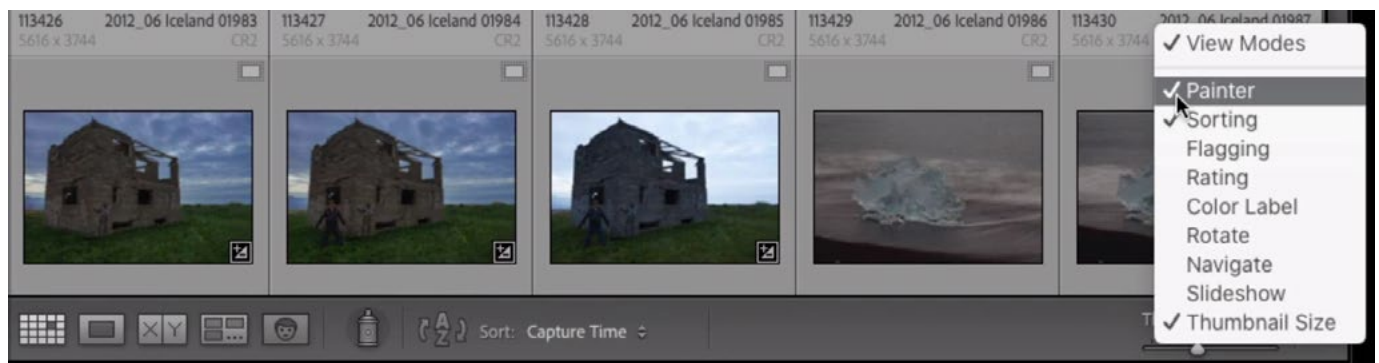
are features in Lightroom that allow you to quickly add or remove images from whichever collection is deemed the Target Collection. Unless you have manually changed it, this will always be the Quick Collection.

When scrolling through your images, you can very quickly add an image to the Target Collection by clicking on the image to make it active and then tapping the B key. Alternatively, you can click on the little circle that appears in the top right corner of an image thumbnail when you hover your cursor over the image. You need to be careful when using these commands, because the same commands also remove an image from the Target Collection. This makes it easy to accidentally remove an image.



**Click this little circle to add or remove an image from the Target Collection.**

**Add images using the spray can** You can also add images to the Target Collection by using the spray can, which can be found within the Toolbar, below the image window. If you don't see the Toolbar in your interface, know that you can toggle its visibility by tapping the T key. If the Toolbar DOES appear, but the spray can icon is not visible, know that you can click on the little menu on the far right side of the Toolbar in order to specify what settings should appear. Make sure that the item called "Painter" has a check mark next to it.



**ABOVE:** The menu on the right side of the Toolbar can be used to specify what settings should appear in the Toolbar. We are ensuring that the Painter check mark is turned on. **LEFT:** After activating the spray can, we're using the Paint menu to specify that it will be applying the Target Collection.

Click on the spray can to make it active. When you do this, a Paint menu will appear. Click on this menu and make sure that it's set to Target Collection. This means that when you apply the "spray paint," it will be adding the images you "paint" into the Target Collection. Use the spray can to click on the image you want to add to the Target Collection. You can also click and drag across a larger number of images in order to add them all to the collection. Note that this tool will not remove images. You can only add images using this method. This prevents you from accidentally removing images.



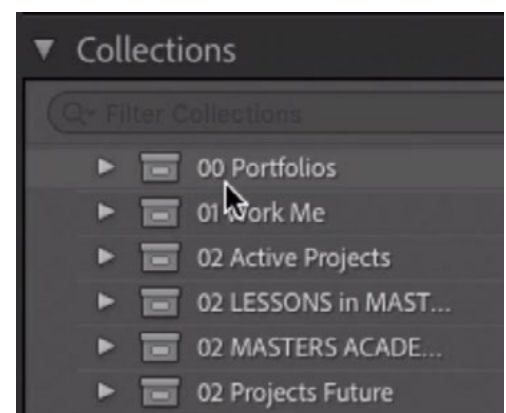
**Click on an image with the spray can and it will be added to the Target Collection.**

**Change the Target Collection** By default, the Quick Collection is set as the Target Collection. You can change that if you want another collection to be the Target Collection. If you change the Target Collection, then you can use all of those methods above for quickly adding or removing images from the specified collection.

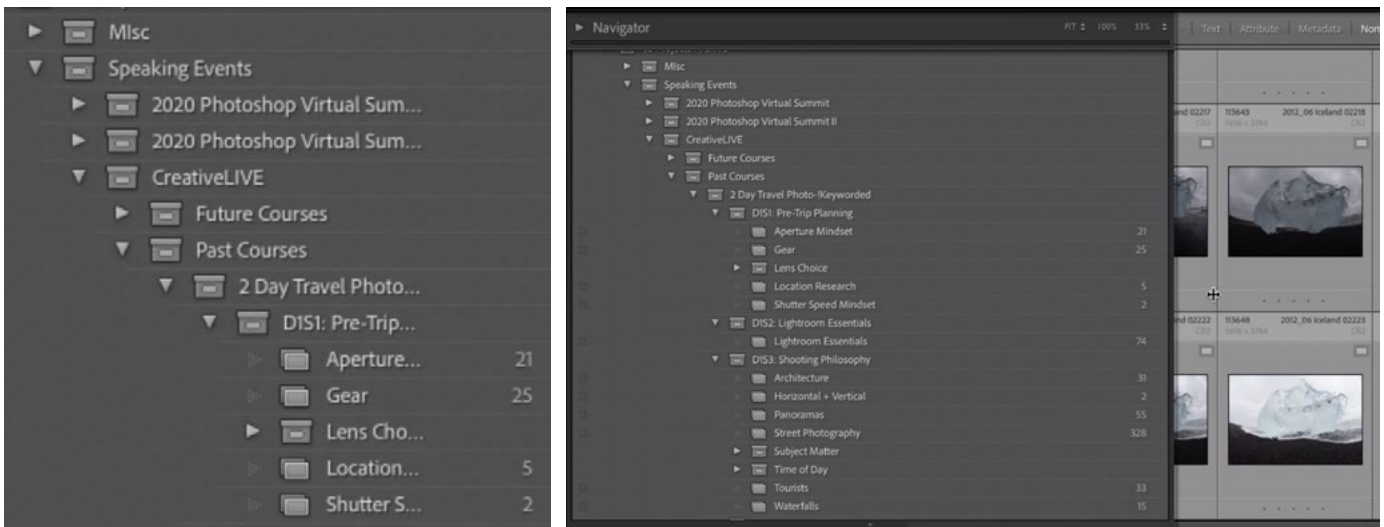
You can set a collection as the Target Collection by right-clicking on the name of the collection and choosing the "Set as Target Collection" option from the pop-up menu that appears. You will see that little plus sign appear to the right of the collection name, indicating that the collection is designated as the Target Collection.

## Extra Tips (41:00)

**Control order of collections** The collection list is sorted alphabetically, by file name. If you would like to control the order in which the collection appear, use numbers at the beginning of the collection names. For example, if I want my Portfolios collection set to appear at the top of the collection list, I will name it "00 Portfolios."



**Expand sidebar containing Collections Panel** You can make the left sidebar wider or narrower by clicking and dragging on the vertical divider bar between the sidebar and the main image window. When doing this, you'll find that there's a limit to how wide that sidebar can be. This can make it hard to see the names of collections that are deep within an indented hierarchy of collection sets (see screen shot). In order to expand the sidebar further, hold down the Option key (Alt on Win) while clicking and dragging on the vertical divider. This will release the constraint, allowing you to expand it without limit.



**LEFT:** When the left sidebar is contracted, some of the collection names can become hidden. **RIGHT:** By holding down the Option key (Alt on Win) while expanding the sidebar, it releases the limit on how far it can be expanded.

**Expand or Contract all Collection Sets** When you have a lot of collection sets within collection sets, you will find that Lightroom remembers what sets have been expanded or contracted when you close and open the base set. If you expand that base collection set, it will expand all of the included sets that were expanded in the past. If you would like to contract a collection set AND all of the collection sets inside of that set, hold down the Option key (Alt on Win) and click on the little disclosure triangle to the left of the collection set name. Now, when you click to expand the set again, all of the included sets will be contracted. You can also use the same shortcut to expand all of the contained sets.