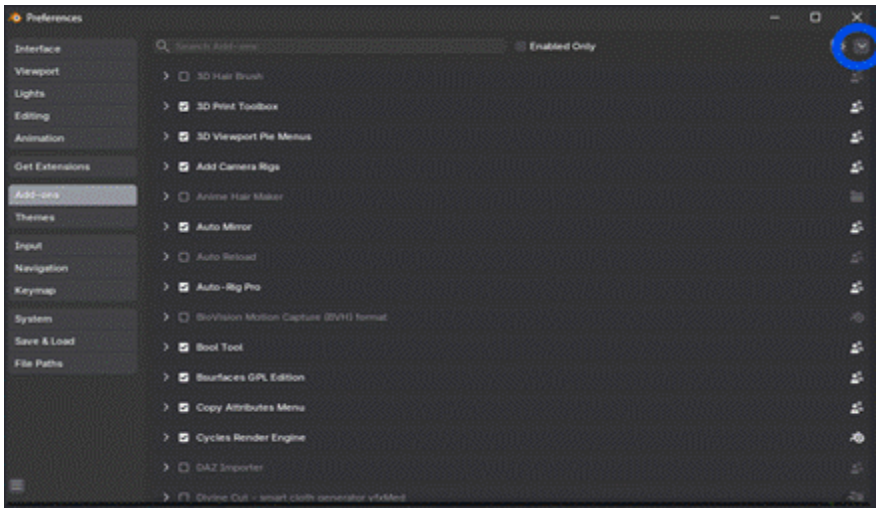
Peek a Node V1.1.2 Quick Start Guide

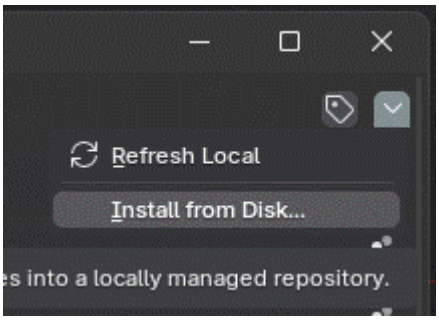
Peek is a hierarchical node management system for Blender built-in the node editors' sidebar. It allows to "peek" the internal structure of a node group without the need to enter it manually.

How to install

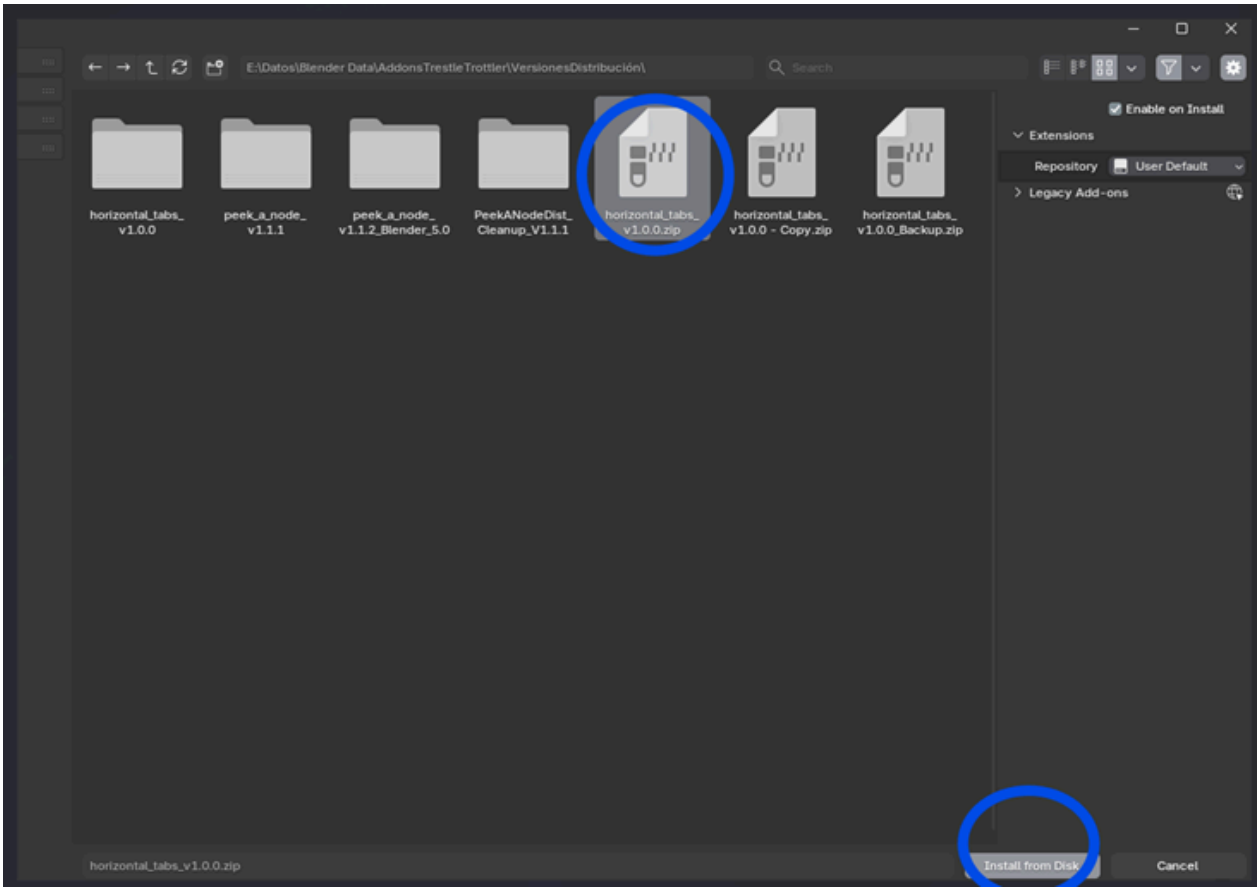
1. **Navigate to blender preferences -> Add-ons tab and select the dropdown.**



2. **From the dropdown select the option “Install from Disk…”**



3. Navigate to where you have downloaded the .zip file for the add-on



4. Select it and then click “Install from Disk”

Once installed, please proceed with the guides below.

Global Collections

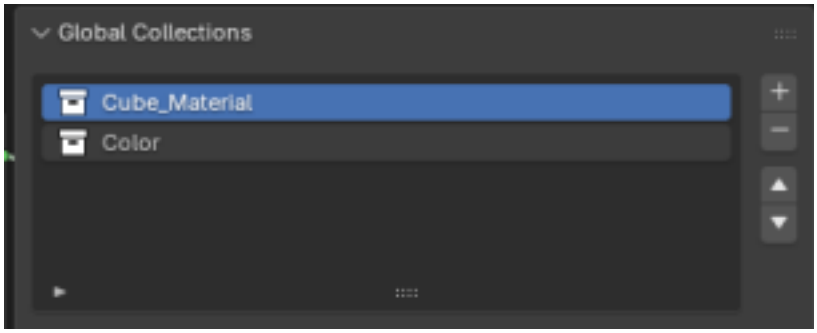


Figure 1 Peek Global Collections Sub-Panel

Global Collections are the easiest way of using peek.

These are node collections that can be seen globally from the peek sidebar panel (Global Collections sub-panel).

You can add/delete and reorder the node collections with the up/down arrows. Next to the Global Collections List.

How to use: Right-click on any node you want to add to the sidebar and select:

From the context menu -> Peek Options -> New Global Collection / Collection Name (When there is at least one collection).

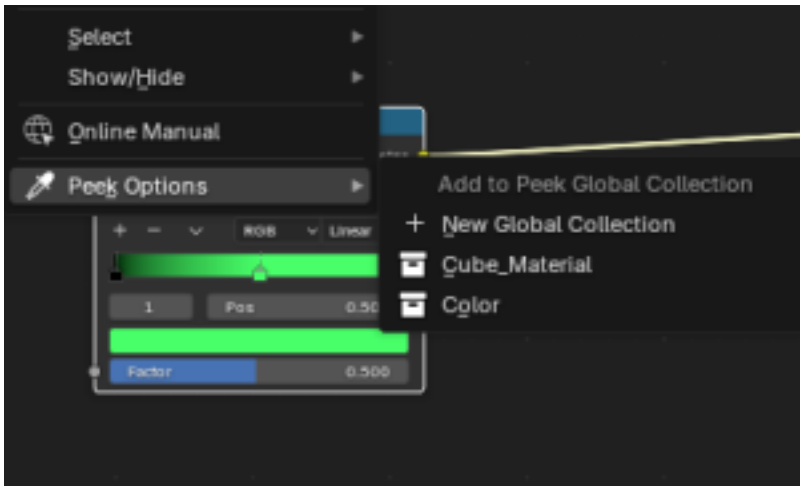


Figure 2 Add Node to Global Collections

Enter the name of the global collection when prompted and the node will appear in that collection.

Nodes in a global collection are bound to the specific material to which they belong.

Important Note: Nodes in a node group previously added to peek using the global collections will be pruned when you start using the “Peek Node Group”.

(See Peek Node Group usage below)

Peek Node Group

The advanced features of peek are available when using node groups.

How to use: Right click on a node group and select:
From the context menu -> Peek Options -> Peek Node Group.

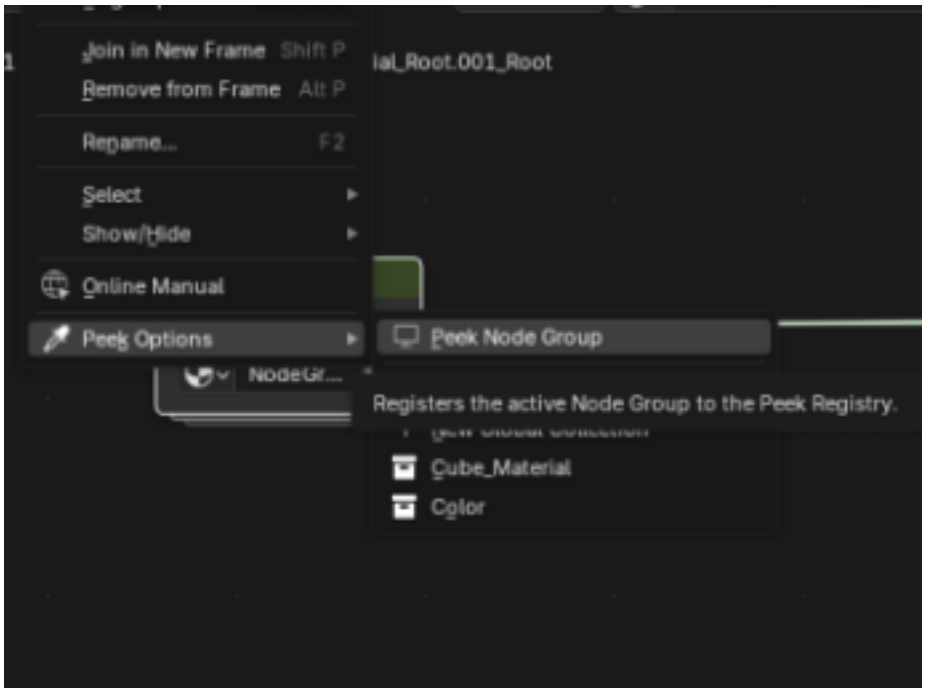


Figure 3 Add node group to Peek Hierarchy

This will add the node group to the **Peek Hierarchy*.** Once the node group is in the Peek Hierarchy you can navigate inside it and choose the nodes you want to manage in the sidebar from that node group.

Right click on a node within a peeked node group and select:

From the context menu -> Peek Options -> New Collection / Collection Name (When there is at least one collection).

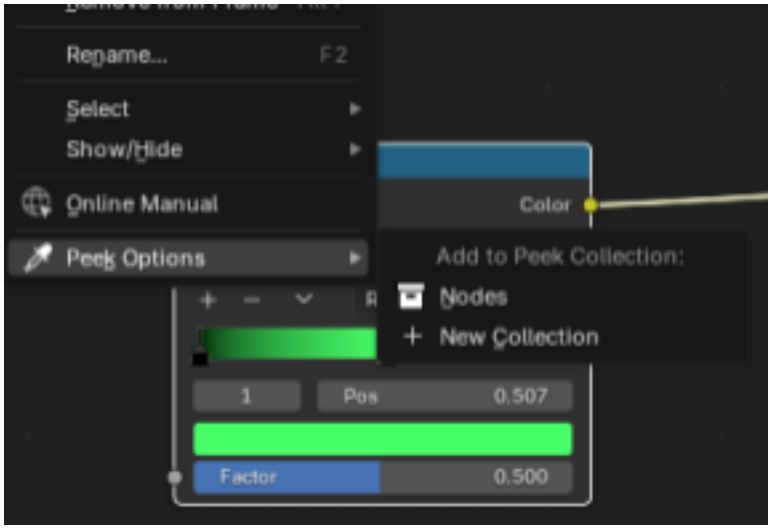


Figure 4 Add "peeked" node to a Custom Collection

You will be prompted to enter a collection name. Default is "My Controls". Once you've done that **the node can be found on the Custom Collections sub-panel.**

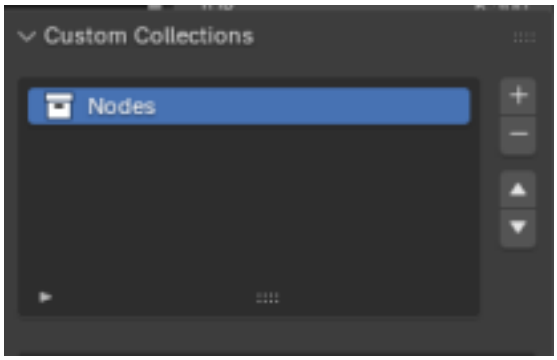


Figure 5 Custom Collections sub-panel

You can add/delete and reorder the node collections with the up/down arrows next to the Custom Collections List.
***The Peek Hierarchy** shows both the node group and the material where the node group exists. This makes it highly convenient to navigate between node groups across your blender file.

The Peek Hierarchy Operations and Node Group Operations

The Peek Hierarchy has 3 Main Operations:

These can be found from the Dropdown arrow next to it.

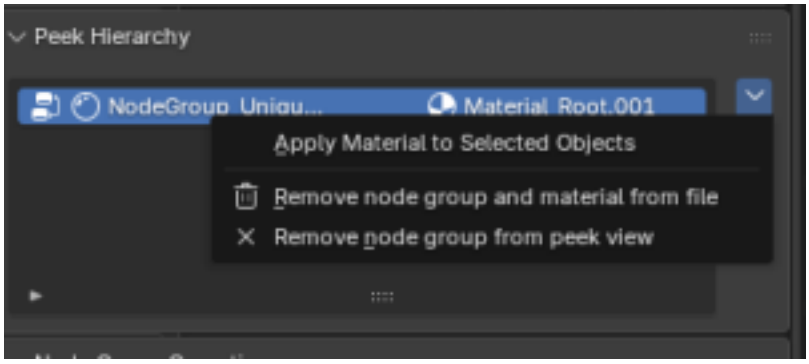


Figure 6 Peek Hierarchy Operations Context Menu

1. **Apply Material to Selected Object:** This operation will apply the selected material from the Peek Hierarchy to all the selected objects in the 3d Viewport.

2. **Remove node group and material from file:** This operation will safely mark node groups and materials to be removed when you close the blender file. In general, this option is safe to use. However, it is recommended to save your blender file before using this operation.

3. **Remove node group from peek view:** This operation will remove the peeked node group from the peek hierarchy. Useful if you want to use Global Collections for that node group instead of Peek Hierarchy.

Node Group Operations

When a node group is added for the first time to peek it is taken as a Root Material for Peek. And it has the following operations:

Create Unique Variant: It will create a unique variant of the current material on the currently selected objects in the 3d viewport. It retains the same node collections but can be changed independently from its parent / root material.

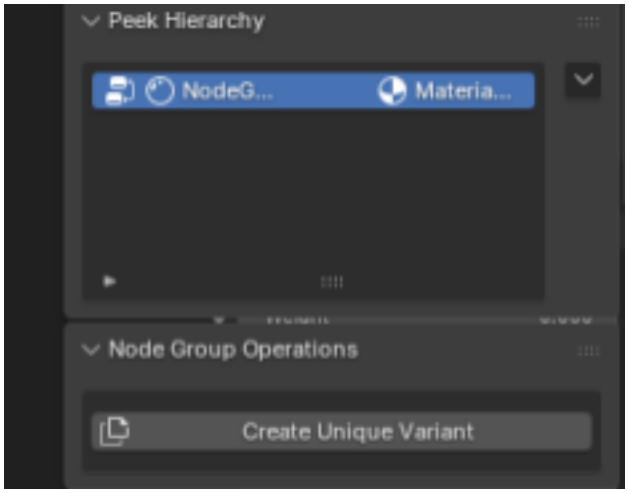


Figure 7 Node Group Operations Sub-Panel Location

Once a unique variant is created it is seen in the Peek Hierarchy as a child of its parent / root material and can be used to safely iterate over the material settings without changing or destroying the original root material but can also be used to save variants of a material in an organized manner.

The Unique Variant has the Following Operations:

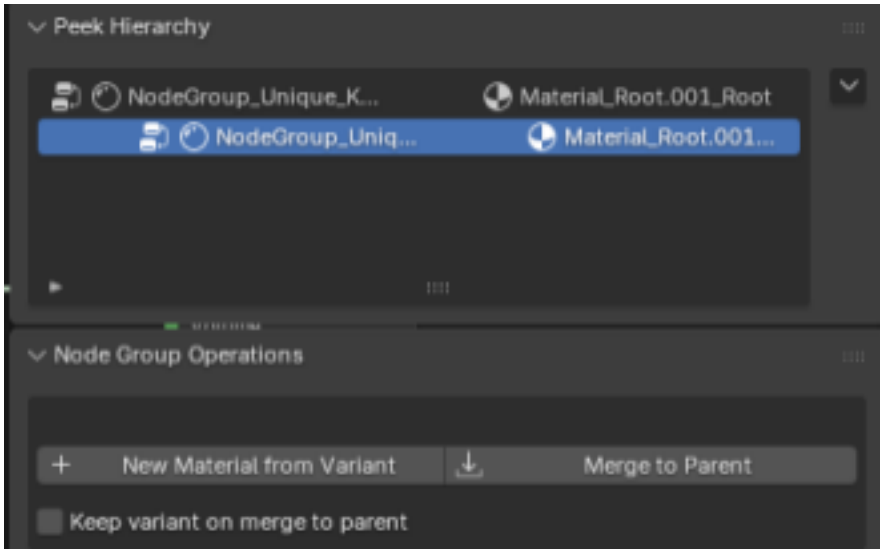


Figure 8 Unique variant child of a Root Material

1. **New Material from Variant:** Promotes the variant to an independent new material and safely removes the variant material from the blender file.

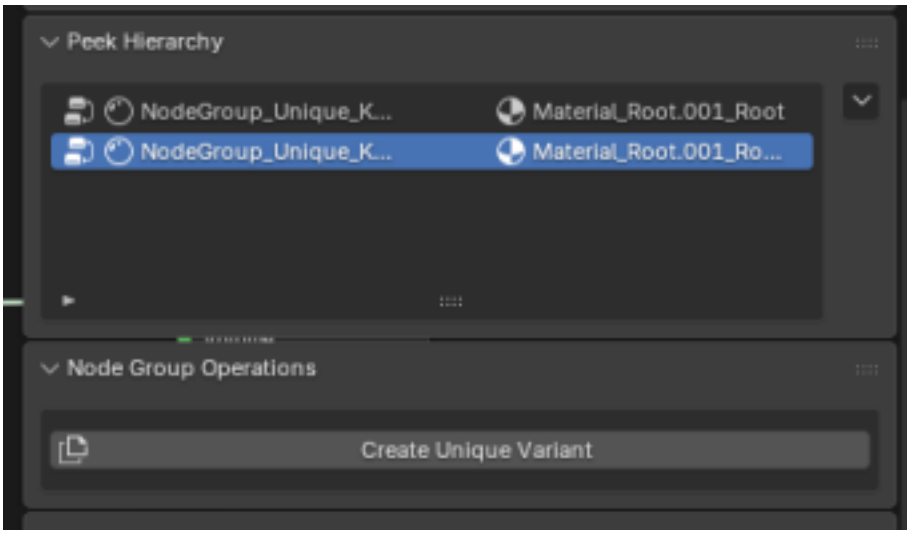


Figure 9 Unique variant is not a child anymore when promoted to New Material

2. **Merge to Parent:** Commits the changes of the unique variant into the parent material by default deletes the variant material. The variant material can be kept if the “Keep variant on merge to parent” option is turned on. The kept material will be assigned to the active object in the 3d viewport.

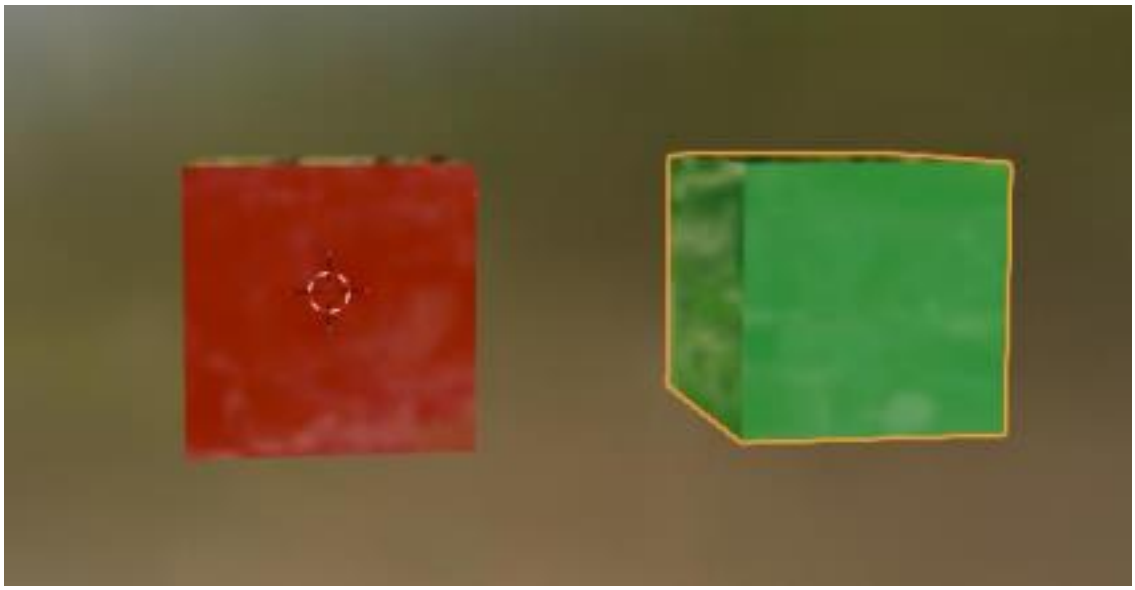


Figure 10 Unique Variants - Merget to Parent operation demonstration: Red Cube on the right (Root Material / Parent). Green Cube on the Left. (Unique Variant)

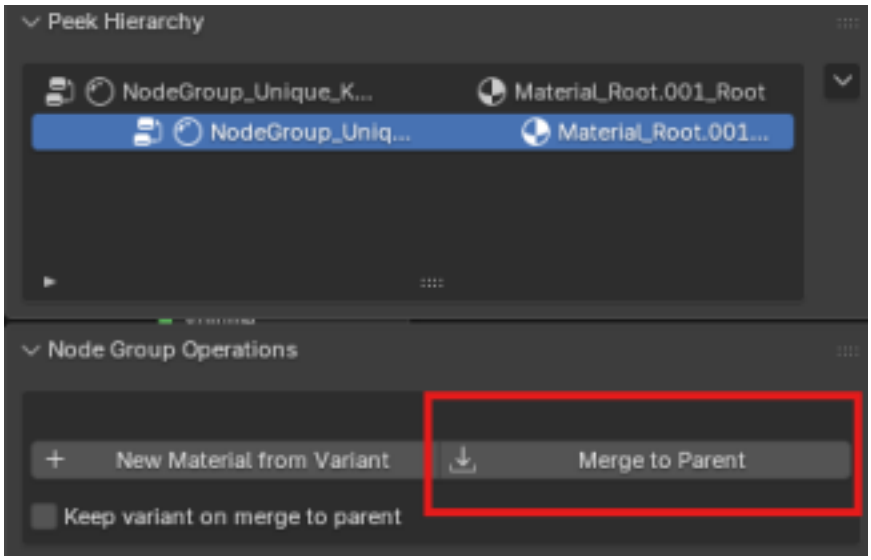


Figure 11 Running Merge to Parent Operation - Node Group Operations Sub-Menu

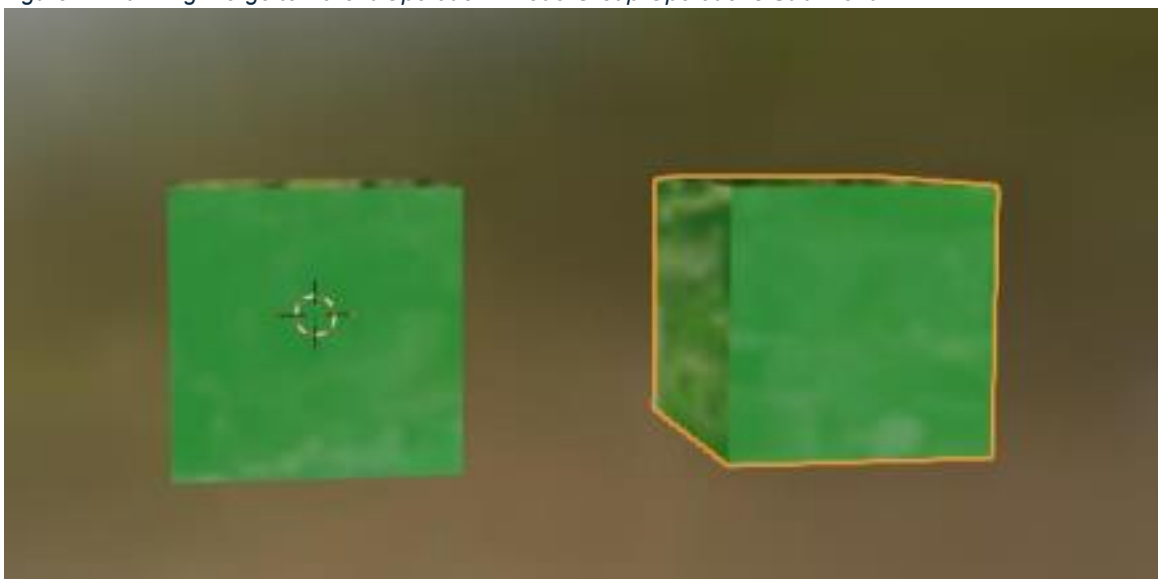


Figure 12 The variant has been committed into the parent material. The variant is removed and both cubes now use the same material

You can keep as many variants as you want without committing to the parent root material.

Nodes Context Menu

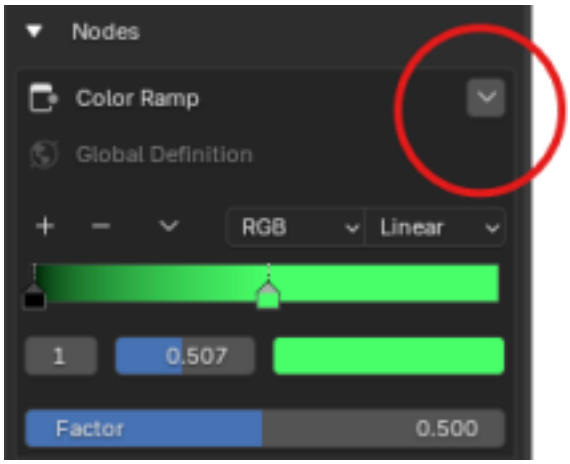


Figure 13 Nodes Dropdown menu location

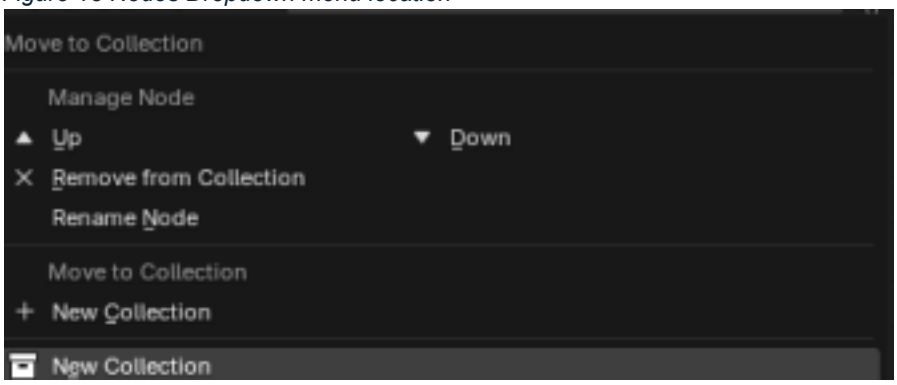


Figure 14 Nodes Dropdown menu options

Nodes have the following operations:

1. **Up/Down Arrows**: Move the node above or below other nodes inside the current collection.

2. **Remove from Collection:** Will remove the node from all collections, must be re-added from the Peek Options context menu.

3. **Rename Node:** Will rename the node's label.

4. **Move Collection:** It moves the node to another existing collection available for that Node Group or a New Collection.