

EFX Render Elements ZDepth tools for After Effects v.1.0.2

These plugins will let you make the most use of a ZDepth pass that you often render out from a 3d application. It's a pass that stores the information about the distance from camera for each pixel - there is really a lot you can do with this data.

Hope you'll enjoy them,
Filip Kaczorek

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Installation

The plugins are written in PixelBender.

To install:

- find your After Effects plugins directory, ie.:

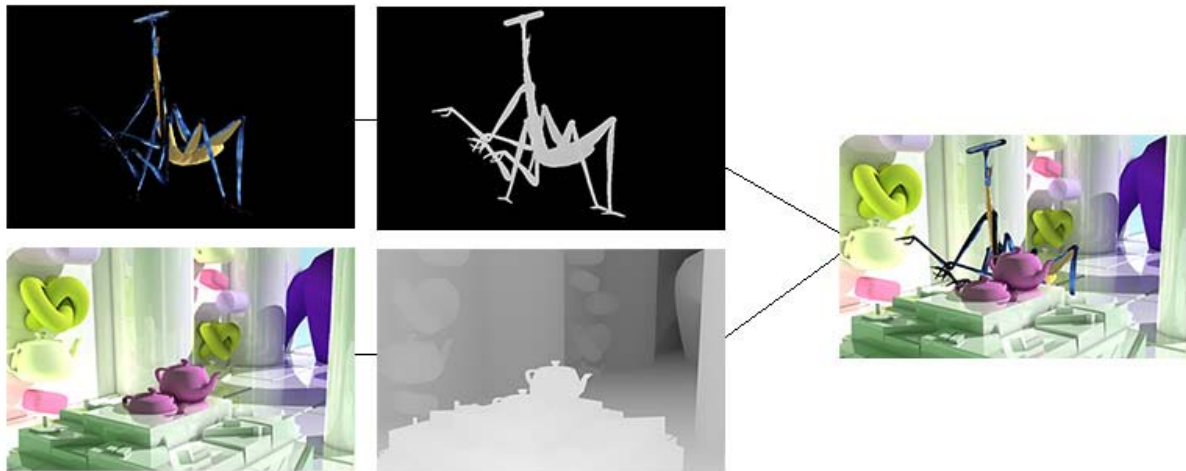
c:/program files/adobe/adobe after effects cs5/Support Files/plugins

- copy the efx plugins to any subdirectory.

It doesn't matter exactly what subdirectory the plugin files are in, as long as they are within the After Effects' main plugins directory.

In After Effects you'll find the plugins in Effects under **EFX RE group**.

Z_Depth Compose



BEFORE

AFTER

The plugin lets you compose a layer INTO a second layer based on ZDepth maps of both of them. On a technical note - the plugin just cuts out parts of the current layer that would be obscured by elements from the background layer.



Input 2 - ZDepth map of the current layer.

Input 3 - ZDepth map of the background layer (the layer you want the current layer to be composed INTO).

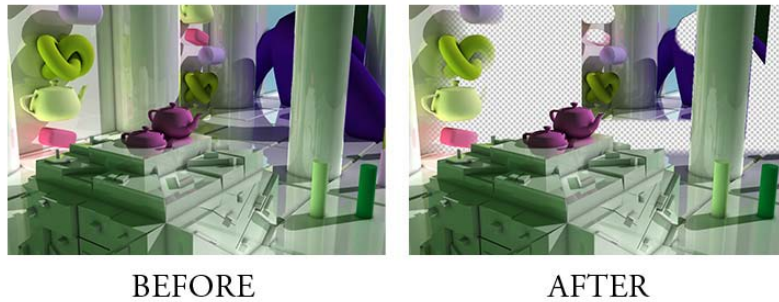
Move in depth - a depth offset. Lets you move the current layer closer or further in depth.

TIP.

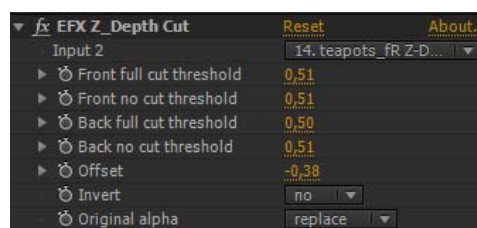
If one of the layers is rendered on transparent background - like the insect above - remember to render a ZDepth pass for it WITHOUT antialiasing. If you render it with antialiasing (nice feathered edge) then the depth data on the edges will be invalid - the real data is mixed with black color of the background and thus changes the stored depth info.

In 3dsMax to render a Render Element without antialiasing uncheck the "Filtered" checkbox in the RE parameters.

Z_Depth Cut



Lets you select pixels based on depth information.



Input 2 - ZDepth map

Front full c.t. - pixels with depth value higher than this will be cut out.

Front no c.t. - pixels with depth value lower than this will have an alpha of 1.

Depths in between will fade out.

Back full c.t. - pixels with depth value lower than this will be cut out .

Back no c.t. - pixels with depth value higher than this will have an alpha of 1 .

Depths in between will fade out.

If definitions are a little confusing remember that in a depth map objects that are closer are brighter, and the ones really far are almost black - so objects close have a high value in a depth map, and the ones far away have a small value.

Offset - an offset value for the entire selection. Lets you perform a depth wipe, for instance.

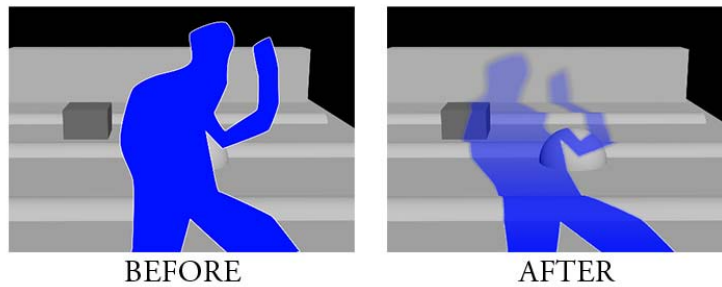
Invert - invert the selection.

Original alpha - the plugin creates a new alpha channel based on depth. This option lets you decide what to do with the original alpha channel, ie.:

A*B - if the layer had transparent objects and you want to keep the transparencies

*The new selection disregards original transparencies so that you can select different parts of the object with different plugin instances. This results in artifacts (no aliasing) on edges of objects that were rendered on transparent background. Use the original layer as an alpha matte or the A*B "Orig. Alpha" mode for a single instance to fix it.*

Z_Depth Shadow



Displaces and transforms the layer so that it looks like a shadow thrown ONTO another layer.



Input2 - ZDepth map of a background layer.

Invert Z_Depth Map - inverts the colors of the ZDepth map.

Move in XY - amount of horizontal and vertical displacement.

Opacity - the amount of drop in opacity with distance.

Opacity falloff - the curve of the opacity drop.

blur - amount of blur of the shadow.

blur gamma - blur curve - lets you set characteristics of a box blur or Gaussian blur.

Absolute move - translate the entire layer.

Show - select what you want to view: original shadow layer, background ZDepth map, final deformed shadow layer.