

## **EFX Render Elements ZDepth tools for After Effects**

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

To install:

- find your After Effects plugins directory, ie.:

Windows:

***C:/Program Files/Adobe/Adobe After Effects CS6/Support Files/Plugins***

Mac:

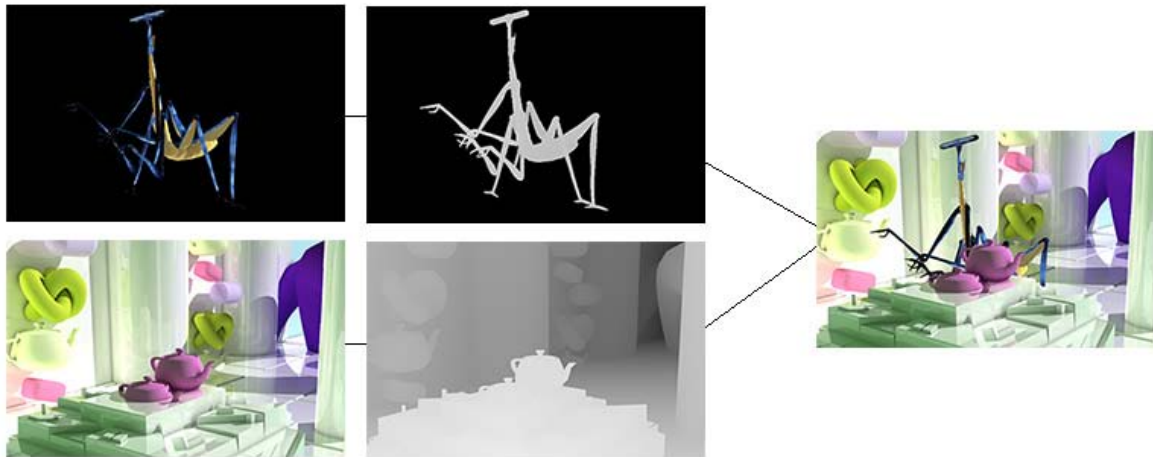
***/Applications/Adobe After Effects CS6/Plugins***

- copy the efx plugins folder that corresponds to your After Effects version.

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**.

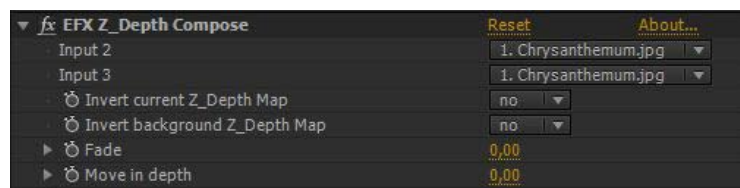
## Z\_Depth Compose



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).

**Invert current ZDepth map** - invert the values of the depth map for the current layer.

**Invert background ZDepth map** - invert the values of the depth map for the background layer.

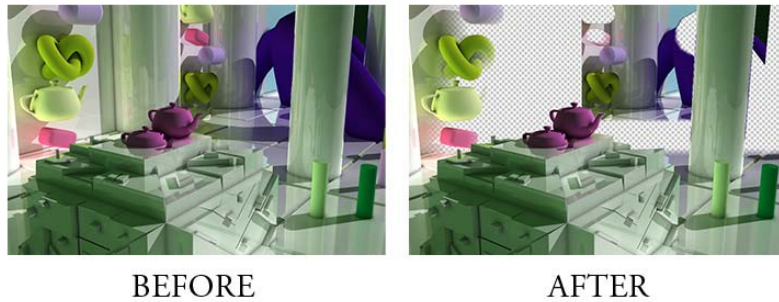
**Fade** - amount of fading (soft edge) between layers in places where they intersect. Helps remove some aliasing artifacts in places where the current layer interpenetrates the background layer.

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

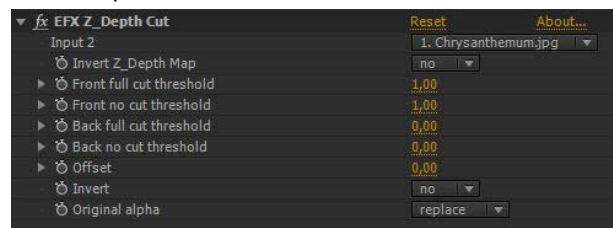
*TIP.*

*If one of the layers is rendered on transparent background - like the insect above - and you see some weird artifacts on its edges (as if the edges were at different depth than the rest) make sure you're interpreting the alpha channel for the depth map properly. Usually this happens when the alpha is set to straight instead of premultiplied.*

## Z\_Depth Cut



Lets you select pixels based on depth information.



**Input 2** - ZDepth map

**Invert ZDepth map** - invert the values of the depth 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.

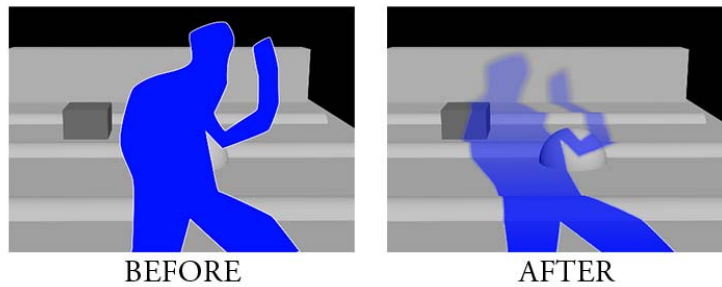
**Invert** - invert the selection.

**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.