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Welcome to CreativEase

Welcome! This help guide holds everything you need to know about Pixelan Software's **CreativEase** collection of visual effects, which are available for several video editing systems. Although the effects are deep and powerful, they do not have a steep learning curve -- a key benefit. Thus there is no need for a thick manual or training CD, or a large time investment by you to use them effectively. (Hooray!) The easy, enjoyable way to learn is to step through this concise guide with any of our effects visible on your screen.

If you are new to CreativEase and are wondering what these plug-ins can accomplish visually in your productions, please visit the CreativEase area of our web site at http://www.pixelan.com/ce/intro.htm. Many example movies and images illustrate each plug-in.

How to Use This Help System

This help guide includes basic info, tutorials, and advanced tips. To access it while using CreativEase, click the **About** button atop the plug-in's controls, then click the CreativEase Help button in the small About dialog that will appear. To view the help anytime, even when not using CreativEase, choose Help from your Start > Program Files > Pixelan > CreativEase menu.

Throughout the help pages, hot links are provided to related topics. Words in this color are commands, buttons, or areas in our plug-in interface. **To browse through topics,** click any section at the left of this page, or click Contents at the top of this window.

The DEMO Version

If you have a **demo**, you can explore the intuitive interface, creative power, and other key features of CreativEase for an unlimited time. The demo is identical to the purchased version EXCEPT all effects have an X over their image. **If you later install thepurchased version, any demo effects in your project will instantly lose their X and retain all effect settings. No need to waste time reapplying the same effects in your timeline!**

Registration

If you purchased **directly** from Pixelan Software, you are ALREADY registered with us -- there is NO need to register. **If you purchased from a reseller**, please register at http://www.pixelan.com/help/register.htm online. By registering, you will be entitled to free technical support, be informed by email about the latest CreativEase updates as they arise, and receive the guaranteed BEST prices on upgrades and future products.

Technical Support

We are dedicated to providing superb support. If you experience a problem, first look over the **Please Read FIRST** text file in your Windows Start > Program Files > Pixelan > CreativEase menu. Common questions are answered there. For further assistance, visit http://www.pixelan.com/help/techsupport.htm for help. From there, you can submit a help form that we will answer promptly by email, usually within a few hours.

Enjoy CreativEase!

Sincerely,
Pixelan Software LLC
Bellingham, WA 98229 USA

Most video clip images used in this guide are from the terrific royalty-free stock footage collection offered by www.creatas.com

Special thanks to our amazing code wizard Ivan Ivanov for making CreativEase's magic possible!

PosterWise Features

Posterize effects in video editing programs look like an afterthought -- only adding a basic ability to limit the quantity of colors in a scene. Color edges remain rough and unattractive, however, so the look is rarely useful. PosterWise in contrast is a CREATIVE break-through in posterize effects, giving you enormous customization power. The plug-in's advanced algorithms allow you to easily form everything from cartoon-like animations from video to beautiful abstract imagery.
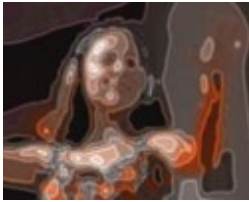
Animate/Cartoon. QUICKLY create cartoon-like animations from video while RETAINING color accuracy/stability over time (unlike typical posterize effects).

Animate Titles in NEW Ways. Apply PosterWise to create unique title/text/logo effects with flowing/changing color.

Smooth Edges. Smoothly anti-alias color regions and borders -- a key factor to make posterizing/cartooning visually appealing.

Electrify! Blend smooth, adjustable borders and other edge effects over your source image to create electricity-like dynamics.

Renew & Revitalize. Easily and attractively revitalize/customize existing clips and stock footage for new projects.

Customize Easily. With intuitive control over colors, edges, details, and blending, customize the effect easily without frustration or lost time.
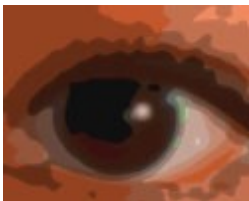
Distill Essentials. Use PosterWise to simplify images to their most emotional/compelling artistic elements.

Enjoy the Power. Choose from several color models (RGB, HSV, HLS, YUV and XYZ) for unique looks. Adjust color channels individually. And much more.

Accent Beautifully. Blend abstract/sensual artistic styles (in many different ways) with details from your source image.

Since virtually all PosterWise controls are bezier keyframable, you can smoothly smoothly vary individual aspects of the effect over time. Therefore you can easily create PosterWise animations that evolve in visual character during your clip. Cool!

PosterWise Tutorial

Apply the Pixelan > PosterWise effect to footage in your Comp's timeline, like applying any built-in effect in After Effects. Start with a pre-made Animation Preset for the effect (select from the menu at the top of the controls), which you can easily modify. Or create a custom effect by manually adjusting. For this latter approach, generally the power of PosterWise can be most easily accessed in three steps:

STEP 1. **In the Main section, set Pre-blur and Posterization first.** That's because they are the most important controls for using posterization to simplify your images. **Add or remove detail** via Pre-blur. Higher values tend to combine and smooth posterize color regions, making regions appear more rounded and abstract.

Source image   Pre-blur = 2   Pre-blur = 15

Adjust the posterization strength per color channel with the three Levels controls. The higher the value, the stronger the posterization.

RGB Levels = 30   RGB Levels = 50

Set color differences by choosing from several color space options in the Model controls. For example, you can choose to match existing colors or emphasize a particular area/color.

STEP 2. **Add a border to the color edges (if desired).** PosterWise features smooth, anti-aliased borders, a major advantage over other posterize plug-ins. Use the Adjust > Border controls to do this. Thin dark outlining will accent edges to create a cartoon-like look. Bold glowing custom-color borders will produce abstract looks. Four border controls allow you to experiment with various border colors widths and styles.

STEP 3. **Enhance other details (if desired).** Additional options are available in Extras section of controls, such as to outline object edges, to restore source details, or to blend the posterized effect with the original image. Unlike the Border controls, applying black/color edges in the Source section will trace OBJECT contours instead of level edges, adding a more sophisticated cartoon-like look. Restore Details will provide more details and realism, while retaining a stylized look. The various Blend modes allow you to fine-tune the effect colors and details. You can reduce or enhance the effect over the entire image or only in select image areas.

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PosterWise Controls In Detail

Pre-blur

Pre-blur adds or removes detail in the PosterWise effect. Higher values tend to combine and smooth posterized color regions, making the regions appear more rounded and abstract. To vary detail during the effect, keyframe Pre-blur.

Source image   Pre-blur = 2   Pre-blur = 15

Two check boxes can modify Pre-blur:

Smart blur -- Turn on to retain more detail when strongly applying Pre-blur, especially within 10% to 30%.

Anti-alias-- Turn on to give all color regions a smooth, anti-aliased edge --- a major advantage over the jagged edges produced by typical posterize effects.

--- Pre-blur occurs before other PosterWise processing. Therefore, it is usually a good idea to adjust Pre-blur first to roughly the value you want before working with other controls.
--- Depending on Pre-blur strength, edge fringing or noise along your image's edge may be emphasized. To avoid that, increase the Crop frame edge by value located below the Pre-blur control. Or apply our powerful CleanCrop effect, if available to you.

Posterization

Model -- Use the Model menu to choose the color space PosterWise will use to process Levels (the posterization strength per color channel -- see below). Each color space can produce different visual results. Five choices are available: RGB (red/green/blue, the default), HSV (hue/saturation/value), HLS (hue/lightness/saturation), YUV, and XYZ. If you desire certain colors in your effect, HSL or HSV can be more intuitive than RGB. Set the H Level control to the colors you want, then adjust the other Level controls.
Lock sliders -- To adjust all three Levels controls (described below) simultaneously to the same value, turn on this checkbox.
Levels -- Three controls provide individual control of the posterization strength per color channel. The higher the value, the stronger the posterization. A 100% value limits a channel to only two colors; 0% allows the maximum (256) colors in the channel to appear. For example, 100% value for all three controls in the RGB color space will create an effect with 2x2x2 = 8 colors.

RGB Levels = 30   RGB Levels = 50

--- To posterize the scene to fewer than 8 colors, in RGB set all Levels to 100, then set one or two Offset controls to -100 or +100. In HSV set all Levels to 100, then set the H Offset and S Offset controls to +100.
--- To vary posterization during the effect, keyframe the Levels controls. PosterWise will then smoothly animate the posterization strength per channel during the effect. This is a major advantage over the integer-only number of levels produced by typical posterize effects, which produce sudden color 'jumps' if keyframed.

Soften -- This control softens the posterized color regions, but not other elements such as Border and Source effects (see below). To vary softness during the effect, keyframe Soften.

Border applied, Soften = 30   Soften = 80

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PosterWise Controls (continued)

Adjust

Offset -- These three controls shift where posterize color boundaries occur (i.e. color 'thresholds') in the image, and which colors per channel are used for posterization. Use it to emphasize certain features or colors in the effect. To vary boundaries during the effect, keyframe any Offset control.

HLS Model, Offset = 0   Offset = 40

Border

To create a wide range of borders around PosterWise color regions, five options are available in the Style menu:

Dark -- Applies a dark border related in hue to the color region it surrounds. Therefore, several colors of dark borders can appear in a clip.
Light -- Applies a light border related in hue to the color region it surrounds. Therefore, several colors of light borders can appear in a clip.
Relief -- Applies an emboss-like depth effect instead of a border.
Custom color -- Applies a single-color border throughout the clip. The color is selected by the eyedropper or color palette in the Color control.
Border over transparency -- Similar to Custom color option above, except all non-border areas of the clip become transparent to reveal overlapping footage in lower tracks of your timeline.
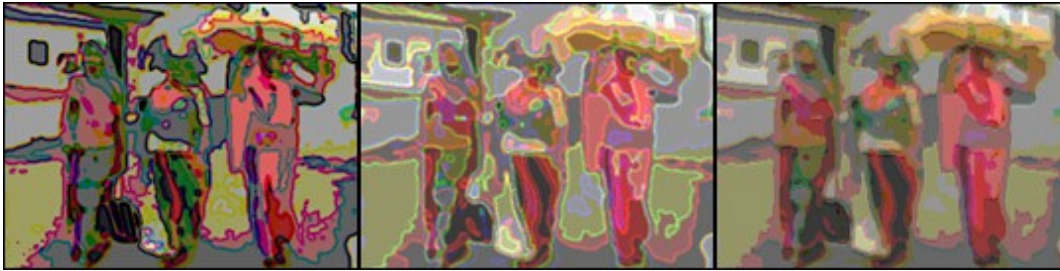
Dark border   Light border   Relief border

Custom color border (white)   Border only (w/ Custom color)   Border over transparency

Border only -- Turn on this check box to have ONLY borders appear in the clip's image, as shown above. This control synergizes with all Style options except Border over transparency.
Color -- To choose a custom border color when Custom color, Border over transparency, or Border only is active**,** use the eyedropper or color palette in the Color control. To match the border color to a color in your PosterWise effect (or any other color on your screen), click the eyedropper, then click on the color desired. To apply a border color than is not already visible on your screen, click the color palette. Then click the Other button at the bottom of the palette to access a standard Windows color picker. The color palette will store your 20 most recent color picker choices.

--- To match the border color to a color in another clip, make the other clip visible on your screen, then open PosterWise for the new clip. Now move the eyedropper tool over the other clip's image and click the desired color.
--- To quickly match the border color to a color in the source clip (instead of the PosterWise effect), temporarily turn on the Border only option (described above). Then use the eyedropper tool.

Width -- To change the width of all borders in the effect, adjust this control. To vary border width during the effect, keyframe Width.
Amount -- To adjust the intensity of all borders in the effect, use this control. Higher values increase the border opacity, especially along its inner and outer edge. To vary the border intensity during the effect, keyframe Amount.

PosterWise Controls (continued)

Extras

To creatively blend portions of a clip's source image with the PosterWise effect, experiment with nine compositing options in the Blend menu produce a wide range of blends between the PosterWise effect and the clip's source image. The options are similar to blending modes found in programs such as Adobe Photoshop. Use the Amount control to set the strength of the chosen Blend option. Higher values show more of the clip's source image blended with the effect. To vary Blend strength during the effect, keyframe Amount.

Normal -- Blends details from the source image uniformly throughout in the image, like a video dissolve.

Lighten -- Only blends in pixels from the source image that are lighter than the PosterWise effect.

Darken -- Only blends in pixels from the source image that are darker than the PosterWise effect.

Add -- Combines color values in the effect and source image, creating lighter colors. Black pixels remain unchanged and white pixels remain white.

Screen -- Lightens/brightens all colors in the PosterWise effect. Black pixels remain unchanged, however, and white pixels remain white.

Hard Light -- Selectively screens colors to produce a result that appears like a harsh lighting on the effect image.

Vivid Light -- Similar to Hard Light, but increases contrast in colors that are lighter than 50% gray. It therefore usually produces stronger colors than Hard Light.

Linear Light -- Similar to Hard Light, but further brightens colors that are lighter than 50% gray. It therefore usually produces stronger colors than both Hard Light and Vivid Light.

Color Dodge -- The lighter the effect color, the brighter the resulting color with this option turned on. Black pixels remain unchanged, however, and white pixels usually remain white.

Six Add options provides several ways to add texture/details from the source image into the PosterWise effect. Use the Amount control under the Add control to set the strength of the chosen option. Higher values show more texture/details. To vary the strength during the effect, keyframe Amount.

Restore details -- Source image details with a "High-pass" (or "unsharp mask") filter are added to the effect.

Relief -- Applies an emboss-like depth effect to source image details.

Color edges 2-way -- Similar to Relief, but applies color to some relief edges instead of only highlighting/shadowing.

Color edges 4-way -- Similar to Color edges 2-way, but applies color to all relief edges.

Black edges 2-way -- Similar to Color edges 2-way, but applies only black or gray to relief edges.

Black edges 4-way -- Similar to Color edges 4-way, but applies only black or gray to relief edges.

None   Restore details   Relief

Color edges 2-way   Color edges 4-way   Color edges 4-way (more Density)

Density -- Determines the visual density of the details produced by the chosen Add option, as shown in the last two images above. Higher values show more extensive Add details. To vary the density during the effect, keyframe Density.

Random and Seed --Used together, these two controls can randomize the colors created in the PosterWise effect, without affecting the color shapes/boundaries. First move the Seed control to a new value. Then drag the Random control as desired. To vary or even cycle colors during the effect, keyframe the Random control. The controls are handy to create unusual treatments and to create fresh effects you may not have realized were possible with PosterWise.

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ChromaWarp 2 Features

Color effects are fairly standardized nowadays in most video editing systems, focusing on usual needs such as color correction, color elimination/retention, uniform tinting, and basic hue changes. For music videos, creative spots, experimental work, and other cutting-edge projects, however, a CREATIVE AND UNIQUE color effect is often needed -- which can be difficult to form with standard effects. That's when ChromaWarp 2.0 becomes handy, giving you the power to:
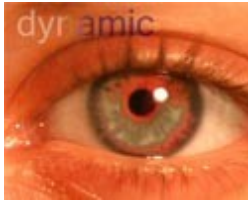
Be Creative Quickly. Quickly add creative color effects, from cutting-edge color distortions to glowing color warps -- in scenes or in titles/logos/graphics.

Color WILD. Easily experiment with color combos from different color spaces, and useful/unusual variations of film negative and other solarized looks.
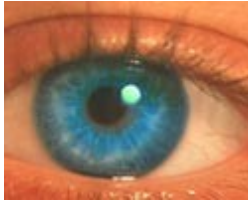
Control WHERE. Gain new versatility for everyday color correction, tints, and brightness adjustments, too! Use hundreds of Pixelan 'spices' to easily mask WHERE such effects will appear, without relying on rotoscoping, mask files, etc.
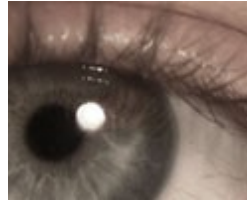
Tint Subtle/FILM-Style. Subtly colorize/tint/tone clips while retaining full clarity and contrast in the image, unlike standard tint effects. Leave select areas untouched for extra realism.

Get Real in The Mixer. Enjoy our industry-unique Mixer control to easily set the color effect in just light or dark areas for fresh looks. Or to realistically animate the effect along the contours and details of your subject or scene.
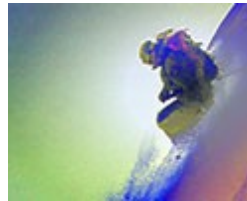
Smoothly Vary. Create beautifully smooth color gradations in your content, from subtle to abstract/psychedelic.

Highlight Your Subject. Softly and ORGANICALLY focus attention on your subject with ChromaWarp, using Photoshop-like blending options.

Enhance Titles/Graphics. Apply color effects, gradations, and highlights (that are far more attractive than 'canned' reflections) to animate titles, logos, lower-thirds, and graphics.

Follow the Motion. Easily alter the color only in light or dark regions of a scene, or cycle from one area to the other, as the effect moves and follows your subject.

Since virtually all ChromaWarp controls are bezier keyframable, you can smoothly vary individual aspects of the effect over time to create incredible cool effects!

ChromaWarp 2 Tutorial

Apply the Pixelan > ChromaWarp effect to footage in your Comp's timeline, like applying any built-in effect in After Effects. Start with a pre-made Animation Preset for the effect (select from the menu at the top of the controls), which you can easily modify. Or create a custom effect by manually adjusting. For this latter approach, generally the power of ChromaWarp is most easily accessed in four steps:

STEP 1. **Find a desired color combination.** ChromaWarp's creative nature encourages experimentation, but to form a particular color distortion, start by gradually adjusting one or more Warp controls from their 1.5 RGB default. The Multiplier control multiplies the value of the three controls above, giving you a quick way to change the strength of all channels at once. If necessary, select other color spaces in the Extras section to find a desired color combo. Below are but a few examples of endless color possibilities -- from subtle to strong. Note that they are NOT the typical uniform tints and color changes produced by most other color effects. ChromaWarp instead adds beautiful color gradients and mixes.

--- To slightly change the image's hue, work in HSV or HLS color space, then adjust H and S controls. (For subtle looks, be sure to set the Output control to 'return' the processing to the original color space, such as Extras > Channel Input > RGB to HSV **and**Channel Output > HSV to RGB.) Note that ChromaWarp preserves highlights and shadows better than most built-in color/tint effects.

--- To create VERY wild color effects, experiment with the Channel Shift controls. These controls alter the color results per channel, without changing the intensity of the ChromaWarp effect. Any whole number value, such as 0.0 or 1.0, does not change the image. In between values, though, can alter the effect significantly. The Multiplier control multiplies the value of the three controls above, giving you a quick way to shift all channels at once.

STEP 2. **Add blurring and blending (if desired).** In the Extras section, increase the value of Blur if you desire beautifully smooth color gradations -- adding an interesting, more abstract look to the scene, from subtle to psychedelic. Then use the Blend menu and Blend Amount control to selectively return details to the scene. Nine compositing options are available and are similar to blend modes in programs such as After Effects or Photoshop. For example, to make the ChromaWarp effect more subtle, choose Blend > Normal. To vary the strength during the effect, keyframe Blend Amount.

Initial effect   w/ Blur   Initial effect   w/ Blur (more)   Blend > Normal

Initial effect   Blend > Normal   > Lighten   > Darken   > Add

> Screen   > Hard Light   > Vivid Light   > Linear Light   > Color Dodge

ChromaWarp 2 Tutorial (continued)
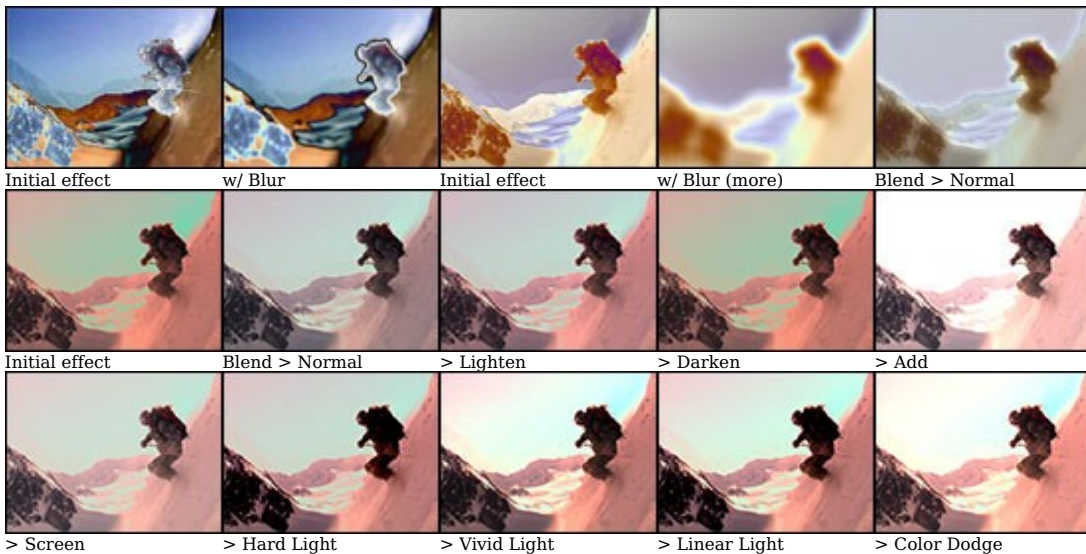
--- To colorize text/logos in creative ways, apply ChromaWarp to an imported GRAYSCALE logo/text image file or to title clips created from a built-in titler in your video editing program. Then set the Blur and desired Warps and Channel Shift. NOTE: ChromaWarp will not alter a still-image's alpha channel, thus you may need to key out the image's black background in your timeline using another key in your system.

Original bitmap   Example effects -- just a few from many creative possibilities

STEP 3. **Keyframe to vary the color effect over time (if desired).** Keyframing the Warp controls from their default value can make a color distortion gradually appear and/or recede. Keyframing the Blur control can lead to interesting abstract defocusing color looks. Keyframing the Channel Shift controls can form unusual color-cycling effects. The variability of a ChromaWarp effect is one of its most unique qualities, so be sure to try our easy keyframing -- it can open up a whole new realm of creative possibilities for you!

STEP 4. **Limit or animate the effect area with a Pixelan spice.** ChromaWarp utilizes the soft/organic power of Pixelan spices (derived from our popular SpiceMASTER plug-in) to geometrically mask where the effect (created from other ChromaWarp controls) will appear within the frame. The Spice Controls section holds controls to be used together with the Options button in the top of the ChromaWarp controls. The Use Spice to control menu in the Spice Effect section provides several choices: Effect Mask, Warp, Channel Shift, and Both.

With Effect Mask selected, you could have the ChromaWarp effect appear only where your subject is rather than over the entire image, for example, or keep the ChromaWarp effect in outer areas to colorfully frame your subject. By keyframing the Position control, you can even have the effect area track your subject's movement. By keyframing the Progress control with an Iris spice, you could have the color effect flow from your subject organically outward to the frame edge. Or wash the blur effect across the screen. (If you are familiar with our SpiceMASTER plug-in, Progress is just like Completion in SpiceMASTER.)

Other Use Spice to control menu choices provide different looks than Effect Mask. Warp uses the chosen spice file to control where Warp will appear most **intense**. Channel Shift sets where Channel Shift will be most intense. Both activates both of the above options -- Warp and Channel Shift. For more info about these options, please see the next page.

Elliptic spice   In soft area only   Animate > Warp   Animate > Both   Mixer applied

To use the clip's luminance (instead of a spice file's luminance) to limit where the ChromaWarp effect appears within the image, set the Mixer control to 100% at the bottom of the Spice section. To mix the spice geometry AND your clip's luminance, adjust the Mixer to an intermediate value, such as 50%. Experiment -- the Mixer is one of ChromaWarp's most unique and powerful controls. As shown in the image example above, the Mixer can be used to limit your effect only on your subject (or any other part of the scene). Last but not least, keyframing the Mixer control can lead to INCREDIBLE color flows within your clip!

Original image   Start of effect...   Flowing...   Flowing...   Full frame

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ChromaWarp 2 Controls In Detail

Warp

These controls determine the intensity of the ChromaWarp effect per color channel, such as Red, Green, and Blue channels in the default RGB color space. The Multiplier control multiplies the value of the three controls above, giving you a quick way to change ChromaWarp's strength in all channels at once. To vary the color warp over time, keyframe any of the controls.

Channel Shift -- These controls alter the color results per channel, without changing the intensity of the ChromaWarp effect. Any whole number value, such as 0.0 or 1.0 or 2.0, does not change the image. Intermediate values, though, such as 1.5, can alter the effect significantly. The Multiplier control multiplies the value of the three controls above, giving you a quick way to shift all channels at once.

Extras -- ChromaWarp can process in several different color spaces, including RGB (the default), HSV, HLS, YUV and XYZ. This further expands the color effects it can create for a wide range of imagery. If you have high-contrast or very light or dark clips, for example, a different color mode may create a desirable effect in a way that RGB cannot. The Channel Input submenu converts the event's image to the specified color space before the ChromaWarp effect is processed. Likewise, the Channel Output submenu converts after the effect is processed. Several presets are provided to help you explore the endless array of creative possibilities. (For subtle looks, be sure to set the Output control to 'return' the processing to the original color space, such as Input > RGB to HSV **and** Output > HSV to RGB.)

Blur -- Combining a blur with ChromaWarp's unusual color effects can create an endless range of fresh treatments, from subtle to psychedelic. Possible blur values are from 0% to 100% and are of course keyframable.

Blend

Nine compositing options produce a wide range of blends between the ChromaWarp effect and the clip's source image. The options are similar to blending

modes in programs such as Adobe Photoshop. To set the strength of the chosen Blend option, adjust the Blend A mount control. Higher values show more of the clip's source image. To vary the strength during the effect, keyframe Blend Amount. (For example images, see the prior page.)

Normal -- Blends details from the source image uniformly throughout in the image, like a video dissolve. This is a handy way to make a ChromaWarp effect uniformly more subtle.
Lighten -- Only blends in pixels from the source image that are lighter than the ChromaWarp effect.
Darken -- Only blends in pixels from the source image that are darker than the ChromaWarp effect.
Add -- Combines color values in the effect and source image, creating lighter colors. Black pixels remain unchanged and white pixels remain white.
Screen -- Lightens/brightens all colors in the ChromaWarp effect. Black pixels remain unchanged, however, and white pixels remain white.
Hard Light -- Selectively screens colors to produce a result that appears like a harsh lighting on the effect image.
Vivid Light -- Similar to Hard Light, but increases contrast in colors that are lighter than 50% gray. It therefore usually produces stronger colors than Hard Light.
Linear Light -- Similar to Hard Light, but further brightens colors that are lighter than 50% gray. It therefore usually produces stronger colors than both Hard Light and Vivid Light.
Color Dodge -- The lighter the effect color, the brighter the resulting color with this option turned on. Black pixels remain unchanged, however, and white pixels usually remain white.

Spice Effect

Like our popular SpiceMASTER plug-in, ChromaWarp utilizes our top-rated, industry-standard "spices" to generate fresh effects -- in this case, to geometrically 'mask' **where** the ChromaWarp effect (established from the sections described above) will appear within the frame. Adjust Spice Effect settings together with the Spice Controls described below.

Use Spice to control -- Each of the other options in this menu uses the luminance of a chosen spice file to alter the ChromaWarp effect in some way. Effect Mask limits where the ChromaWarp effect will **appear** in the image. Warp uses the chosen spice file to control where Warp will appear most **intense**. Channel Shift sets where Channel Shift will be most intense. Both activates both of the above options -- Warp and Channel Shift.

Progress -- Based on the selected spice file, this control sets where the above Use Spice to contol effect will be visible. (If you are familiar with our SpiceMASTER plug-in, Progress is just like Completion in SpiceMASTER.) At 0% the effect will appear where blackest pixels reside (in the spice file's grayscale image, not your content). At higher values, the effect will be visible where lighter grays reside in the spice file's image, and at 100% where the whitest pixels exist in the spice file's image.

Softness -- Higher values soften the boundary of the spice mask.

Effect only in soft area -- Use this option to limit the ChromaWarp effect only to the Softness area (set by the above control). Increase the Softness value to widen the effect area. Adjust the Progress control to determine where the effect area appears.
Blur only in effect area -- When turned on, the Blur effect appears only where the ChromaWarp effect appears, not in the area masked by the spice file.

Mixer -- This unique control blends the spice and source clip's luminance to create a mask shape that is determined by your clip. At 100%, purely the SOURCE clip's luminance is used as the effect mask. To mix using the spice geometry AND your clip's luminance, adjust the Mixer to an intermediate value, such as 50%. Experiment -- the Mixer is one of ChromaWarp's most unique and powerful controls. NOTE: Progress must not equal 0 or 100 for the Mixer to have visual impact.

Invert Mixer -- Turn on this option to invert where the Mixer luminance mask forms in the source clip.

Spice Controls

These are controls to position and modify the Spice Effect. If you also have our SpiceMASTER plug-in, the controls work identically. See page 35 for details.

OrganiBlur Features

Built-in directional/radial blur effects typically blur only in one direction, outwardly, or as a spin. All have become overused effects. In contrast, OrganiBlur can create thousands of fresh ORGANIC blur effects AND creative fluid-like looks -- by borrowing technology from our popular SpiceMASTER plug-in.

Swirl and Animate. Swirl and animate blurs over time to tie the effect into motion or other elements of your scene.
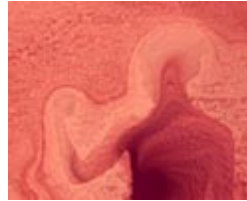
Blur By Brightness. Use the luminance of your clip to set the blur, leading to very unique effects that visually relate to your subject.

Apply the Unique. Easily create numerous organic blur directions that look truly FRESH and ORGANIC instead of cliche.

Abstract & Symbolize. Use OrganiBlur's power to abstract your subject into new forms or symbols.

Make It Flow. Form incredible fluid/liquid effects quickly using OrganiBlur's intuitive controls.

Twist & Turn Titles. Apply to titles/logos/graphics (in fact, any clip with an alpha channel) for terrific twists, spins, and flows.
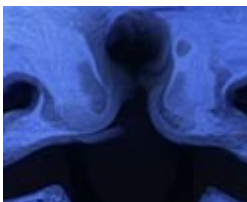
Position & Move. Easily position the blur location in your scene and motion-track it with your subject if desired.
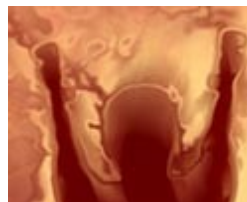
Enjoy Creative Control. Independently adjust position, intensity, softness, angle, spread and other useful blur qualities.
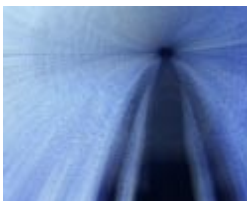
Customize With Spices. Choose from hundreds of Pixelan "spices" to determine the blur's origin, direction and power.

With powerful bezier keyframing for each control, you can smoothly animate individual aspects of OrganiBlur over time -- such as to have the organic blur follow your subject's motion in the scene or to smoothly change in softness or other qualities. Cool!

OrganiBlur Tutorial

Apply the Pixelan > OrganiBlur effect to footage in your Comp's timeline, like applying any built-in effect in After Effects. Start with a pre-made Animation Preset for the effect (select from the menu at the top of the controls), which you can easily modify. Or create a custom effect by manually adjusting. For this latter approach, generally the power of OrganiBlur is most easily accessed in three steps:

STEP 1. **Select the blur geometry.** OrganiBlur uses the luminance of your clip's image or the luminance of a selected spice file (or a variable mix of both) as the basis for the blur. To select from hundreds of available spice geometries (instead of using the default Elliptic1 C spice file), click the Options button at the top of the OrganiBlur effect controls. (For more details about this button and related controls, click here.)

Note: With the Angle control (described further in Step 2 below), you can control the blur direction, thus the default Elliptic1 C spice file for example can also be used for spin, zoom and even spiral blurs. There is no need to select a spice file with exactly the desired blur DIRECTION -- selecting the basic geometry alone is usually enough. Spice files that are curved in their geometry instead of rectilinear usually work best with this effect.

To instead use the clip's luminance to form the blur, set the Mixer control in the Extras section of OrganiBlur to 100%. To mix the spice geometry AND your clip's luminance, adjust the Mixer to an intermediate value, such as 50%. Experiment -- the Mixer is one of OrganiBlur's most unique and powerful controls. keyframing the Mixer control can lead to incredible organic flowing blur effects.

original image	elliptical spice-based blur	luminance-based blur	Mixer = 100

STEP 2. **Adjust the blur direction and power.** With Progress at its default 50%, adjust the Angle control to the desired blur direction. Next use Progress, Amount, and Spread controls to adjust the blur's power. Progress is typically used to ramp the entire effect over time from 0% to 100% or back. (If you are familiar with our SpiceMASTER plug-in, Progress is much like Completion in SpiceMASTER.) Amount controls the overall blur strength.

STEP 3. **Fine-tune the effect.** Spread controls how wide the blur appears from its origin. Ramping controls where within a directional blur the blur appears strongest. For example, with the default Elliptic1 C spice file, set Progress to 50% and Spread to 1.0. Now set Ramping to 100% -- you get a standard radial blur that has the maximum blur at the frame edge. Now set Ramping to 0%. You get a new radial blur effect with its maximum blur at the center.

The Blur menu offers two additional choices. One-way can add distortions to the blurred areas, such as splatter diffusions and other artistic effects. Two-way extends the blur length further.

Depending on OrganiBlur settings, edge fringing or noise along your image's edge may be emphasized. To avoid that, at the bottom of the Main section increase the Crop frame edge by value. Or apply our powerful CleanCrop effect, if available to you.

OrganiBlur Controls In Detail

Blur

Progress -- Progressively sets the extent of the blur established by other controls. Maximum is 50%. No blur appears at 0% and 100%. Thus the control is designed, when keyframed from 0% to 100%, to gradually increase the effect to a maximum and then decrease back to no effect during a clip. To just set a static blur area during the entire clip, there is no need to keyframe -- just experiment with the control to determine its best constant value for your desired effect.

Blur -- Two-way blurs in two opposite directions; One-way in one direction.

Amount -- Controls the overall blur power.

Spread -- Specifies the size of the blurred area, as determined by the chosen spice file and/or Mixer value (see below). Values less than 1.0 blur only part of the image. High values produce a uniform blur over the entire image, which is useful if you do not want to vary the blur amount within the image.

Angle -- The blur direction will follow the luminance gradient's direction unless you use this control to rotate the blur direction. keyframing it can easily create swirling blur effects.

Ramping -- At its 50% default value, the blur power has its maximum at the center of the blurred area and decreases toward the edges. Other values move the blur maximum elsewhere within the blurred area. 0% moves the maximum to the beginning of the blurred area; 100% to the end.

Crop frame edge by -- Depending on OrganiBlur settings, edge fringing or noise along your image's edge may be emphasized. To avoid that, increase this value. Or apply our powerful CleanCrop effect, if available to you.

Extras

Softness -- Blurs the pixel basis used by OrganiBlur. Therefore, it can significantly smooth the blur direction/power variations, especially in fine-textured source images when the Mixer is activated.

Input -- Like our popular SpiceMASTER plug-in, when the default Spice File choice is active, OrganiBlur utilizes our top-rated, industry-standard "spices" to generate the effect. Use the Spice Controls described below to adjust many aspects of the spice file. Or, you can base the OrganiBlur effect on the Image's Luminance, which creates an entirely different/unique effect basis that relates directly to your image content.

Multiplier -- Only applies when Input > Image's Luminance is active. Controls how many times the blur repeats in each direction.

Mixer -- This unique control blends the spice and source clip's luminance to create a blur direction that is determined by your clip. At 100%, purely the SOURCE clip's luminance is used as the basis for the blur. To mix using the spice geometry AND your clip's luminance, adjust the Mixer to an intermediate value, such as 50%. Experiment -- the Mixer is one of OrganiBlur's most unique and powerful controls. NOTE: Progress must not equal 0 or 100 for the Mixer to have visual impact.

Invert Mixer-- Turn on this option to invert where the Mixer-based blur forms in the source clip.

Spice Controls

These are controls to position and modify a spice-based effect (thus Input > Spice File is chosen). If you also have our SpiceMASTER plug-in, the controls work identically. See for details.

BlurPro Features

Typical blur effects alter the entire scene and are difficult to effectively mask, limiting their usefulness for digital video. BlurPro combines several blurs and unique blend/mask tools into one plug-in, making it easy to SELECTIVELY SOFTEN your clips and/or create fresh animated blur effects. You can even use it to nicely SHARPEN scenes without introducing typical sharpening artifacts. BlurPro therefore is very versatile for digital video. You gain the power to:
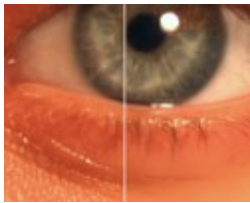
Soften Yet Retain. Soften areas AND retain edge definition (i.e. smooth skin but keep fine hair, eyelashes) so the overall scene does not blur or lose depth.

Reduce Noise/Artifacts. INTELLIGENTLY reduce compression 'block' artifacts, such as from DV/MPEG/JPEG clips, and pixel 'noise' -- by targeting softness ONLY to low-light or solid color regions.
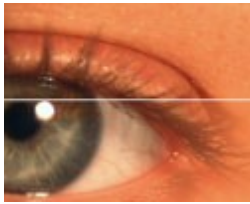
Enhance the Sensual. The opposite of above is also handy... easily soften ONLY certain details (i.e. blemishes, harsh reflections) to produce lush/sensual visuals.
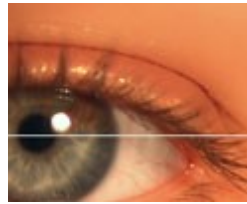
POP Your Subjects. De-emphasize specific details or entire background areas to enhance your scene's center of interest -- where you want your audience to FOCUS.
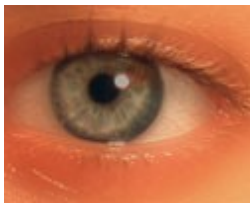
Be Dreamy/Surreal. Apply just the right touch of SELECTIVE softness to make dreamy/surreal looks for wedding videos, dream segments, and other special scenes.
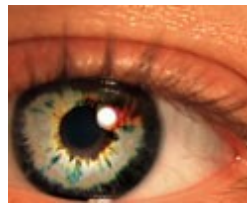
Blur Uniquely/Animated. Apply creative blurs and ORGANIC animation that are difficult/impossible with standard blurs, leading to uniquely new visual effects.
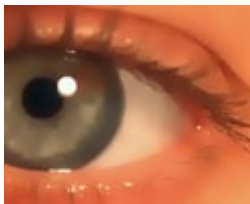
Be Abstract/Arty. Selectively soften scenes STRONGLY (while retaining edge definition) to easily create unique abstract/arty styles.
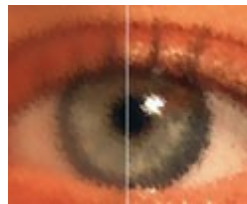
Improve OTHER Effects. Get better/cleaner results by pre-conditioning the image with BlurPro before applying OTHER video effects to a clip.
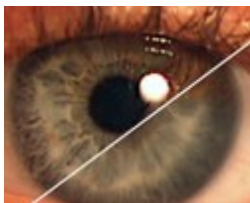
SHARPEN Better, Too! BlurPro is also for sharpening! SHARPEN only desired areas, accenting details more effectively and reducing unwanted sharpen 'halos.'

BlurPro leverages the soft/organic masking power of Pixelan "spices" (derived from our popular SpiceMASTER plug-in) to control blur location and animation. With the powerful Mixer control, you can also use a clip's luminance to define effect areas -- an easy way to soften only light or dark regions, for example, or to create compelling new blur effects. Last but not least, BlurPro's bezier keyframing can form incredibly DYNAMIC blurs that smoothly change and evolve over time.

BlurPro Tutorial

Apply the Pixelan > BlurPro effect to footage in your Comp's timeline, like applying any built-in effect in After Effects. Start with a pre-made Animation Preset for the effect (select from the menu at the top of the controls), which you can easily modify. Or create a custom effect by manually adjusting. For this latter approach, generally the power of BlurPro is most easily accessed in four steps:

STEP 1. **Select the type of blur and set its strength.** In the Type menu, Box, Fast, and Gaussian options are available. Gaussian is highest quality but slowest to render. Adjust the blur's strength with the Blur Amount control. To vary the blur strength during the effect, keyframe Blur Amount.

STEP 2. **Stylize the blur effect.** Use the Style menu to selectively preserve edges, to keep highlights or shadows unchanged, or to sharpen the entire image or only certain edges. BlurPro makes it easy to selectively sharpen some image areas but soften others, thus a wide variety of uniquely beautiful custom looks are possible. Adjust the Style Amount control to determine the style's strength. For Preserve Edges, Unsharp Edges and Blarpen options, Amount sets the "threshold" and therefore an optimal value is typically 10-30%. To vary the style's strength during the effect, keyframe Style Amount. After activating a style, you may need to fine-tune Blur Amount further (see Step 1 above).

ORIGINAL image   Preserve Edges   Preserve Edges (more)   Blur Light

Blur Light (more)   Blur Dark   Blur Dark (more)   Unsharp Mask

Unsharp Mask (more)   Unsharp Edges   Blarpen   Blarpen (more)

Blarpen (softer)   High-Pass   Light Relief   Light Relief (more)

Light Relief (softer)   Dark Relief   Dark Relief (softer)   Relief

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BlurPro Tutorial (continued)

--- Blur Amount and Style Amount can be set to extreme values to create some very unique looks. And keep in mind you can apply BlurPro more than once to the same clip to emphasize certain features with each pass. Abstract effects, very cool animated looks, soft dreamy styles, and more are possible. Experiment!

--- Depending on BlurPro settings, edge fringing or noise along your image's edge may be emphasized. To avoid that, increase the Crop frame edge by value located below Blur Amount. Or apply our powerful CleanCrop effect, if available to you.

STEP 3. **Blend the effect with the source image (if desired).** Blending the effect with the source image can produce a different look than simply decreasing Amount controls. Experiment with the Source control if you desire to strengthen detail or color in your clip while still retaining some softening. Higher values show more of the clip's source image. To vary the strength during the effect, keyframe Source.

Original image   Preserve Edges (high)   Source > Amount = 50

TIP: While adjusting settings for a subtle BlurPro effect, to more easily see where it will modify the image, temporarily choose Style > High-Pass.

STEP 4. **Limit or animate the effect area with a Pixelan spice.** BlurPro utilizes the soft/organic power of Pixelan spices (derived from our popular SpiceMASTER plug-in) to geometrically mask where the effect (created from other BlurPro controls) will appear within the frame. Open the Spice Effect and Spice Controls sections to reveal the controls.

You could have the BlurPro effect appear only where your subject is rather than over the entire image, for example, or keep the BlurPro effect in outer areas to softly frame your subject. By keyframing the Position control, you can even have the effect area track your subject's movement. By keyframing the Progress control with an Iris spice, for example, you could have the blur flow from your subject organically outward to the frame edge. Or wash the blur effect across the screen. (If you are familiar with our SpiceMASTER plug-in, Progress is just like Completion in SpiceMASTER.) Using the powerful and unique Mixer control, you can alter the spice geometry to match your content, so that BlurPro effect is in just light or dark areas. The creative possibilities are nearly infinite!
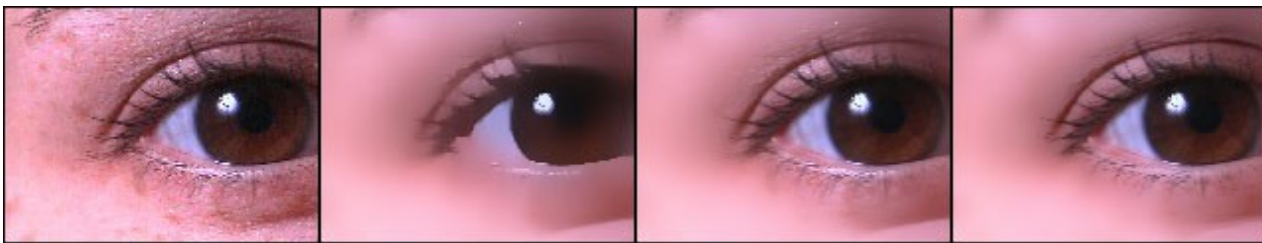
Original image   Gaussian Blur (high)   Elliptic spice over eye to preserve detail.   Mixer applied to modify elliptic mask to match eye

Note that to see Mixer results, Spice Effect > Effect must be set to Mask and Progress must not equal 0 or 100.

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BlurPro Controls In Detail

Type

Box, Fast, and Gaussian are available in the Type menu, with Gaussian highest quality but slowest to render (just like in Photoshop) and Box fastest but lower quality. Set the blur strength (radius) with the Amount control. To vary the blur strength during the effect, keyframe Blur Amount.

Depending on BlurPro settings, edge fringing or noise along your image's edge may be emphasized. To avoid that, increase the value of Crop frame edge by which is located below Blur Amount. Or apply our powerful CleanCrop effect, if available to you.

Style

Use the Style section to create many useful variations of a standard blur. This is where BlurPro's unique power becomes evident. Ten options are available in the Style menu. To set the strength of the chosen Style option, adjust the Style Amount control. To vary the strength during the effect, keyframe Style Amount. For example images of each option below, see the prior page.

Preserve Edges -- This option blurs the image, but retains high-contrast details. It works especially well with the Gaussian blur. The Amount control controls the extent of preserved details. This is a great way to nicely smooth/remove slight blemishes on a subject or image.

Blur Light -- Use this option to soften light areas of an image, while retaining detail in dark areas. Increasing the Amount reveals more dark area detail.

Blur Dark -- The inverse of the above option: blur only dark areas, while retaining detail in light areas.

Unsharp Mask -- This option increases contrast around high-contrast edges, just like the similar effect in Photoshop. The Amount control sets the radius of the sharpened area. The greater the radius, the larger the edge effect and potential "halo". Unless you desire an abstract look, small values therefore usually appear best. What is unusual about BlurPro is the easy combination of blurring with Unsharp Mask, allowing you to selectively blur AND sharpen the image. Note that you must have at least a some Blur > Amount active to apply this sharpening.

Unsharp Edges -- Similar to Unsharp Mask, but here the Amount control works as a threshold control instead of radius. The threshold determines how different a pixel must be from adjacent pixels to be sharpened by this option. Thus you can easily enhance only high-contrast details. Use the Source control (see below) to decrease the overall effect.

Blarpen -- This funny-named option strengthens high-contrast edges but simultaneously softens the rest of the image. It is a great choice to easily produce surreal "dreamy" looks while retaining detail, such as for wedding videography. Like for Unsharp Edges, the Amount control works as a threshold control -- how different the pixels must be from adjacent pixels to be affected by this option. Useful values are typically from 10-30%. Use the Source control (see below) to decrease the overall effect.

High-Pass -- This option retains only the image details engraved over a gray background. By itself, a high pass look is not often desirable, but in BlurPro it can be combined with the Source control (see below) to variably bring color back into the image. Cool!

Light Relief -- Adds a light "relief" look selectively to highlights in the blurred image. A creative way to enhance highlights.

Dark Relief -- The inverse of the above option: adds a dark relief look only to darker areas in the blurred image.

Relief -- Choose this option to apply a relief effect to the blurred image. In combination with the Source control (see below) you can selectively retain color and details.

Source

Use this control to variably blend the effect with the original image. Higher values decrease the overall effect's strength, usually creating a different look than simply decreasing the Source value.

Spice Effect

Like our popular SpiceMASTER plug-in, BlurPro utilizes our top-rated, industry-standard "spices" to generate fresh effects -- in this case, to geometrically mask **where** the BlurPro effect (established from sections described above) will appear within the frame. Adjust Spice Effect settings together with the Spice Controls described below.

Effect -- An on/off control for the spice effect.

Progress -- Based on the selected spice file, this control sets the area where the BlurPro effect will be visible. At 0% the effect will appear where blackest pixels reside (in the spice file's grayscale image, not your content). At higher values, the effect will be visible where lighter grays reside in the spice file's image, and at 100% where the whitest pixels exist in the spice file's image.

Softness -- Higher values soften the boundary of the spice mask.

Effect only in soft area-- Use this option to limit the BlurPro effect only to the Softness area (set by the above control). Increase Softness to widen the effect area. Adjust the Progress control to determine where the effect area appears.

Mixer -- This unique control blends the spice and source clip's luminance to create a mask shape that is determined by your clip. At 100%, purely the source clip's luminance is used as the effect mask. To mix using the spice geometry AND your clip's luminance, adjust the Mixer to an intermediate value, such as 50%. Experiment -- the Mixer is one of BlurPro's most unique and powerful controls. NOTE: Progress must not be 0 or 100 for the Mixer to have visual impact.

Invert Mixer-- Turn on this option to invert where the Mixer luminance mask forms in the source clip.

Spice Controls

These are controls to position and modify the Spice Effect. If you also have our SpiceMASTER plug-in, the controls work identically. See page 35 for details.

RiseShine Features

Although most video editing programs can apply depth to titles, such as bevels, the results tend to look "engineered" rather than artistic. Also, built-in lighting controls, if they exist at all, tend to provide unconvincing highlights and no ability to creatively gloss surfaces, unless you detour the title into complex motion graphics software. That's where the convenience and power of RiseShine pays big dividends. Instantly and easily add beautiful, realistic depth AND apply glossy/wet surface treatments as desired -- not only to titles, logos and graphics but ALSO to regular video clips!

Leave Flat Behind. Quickly add realistic, smooth depth to titles, logos, lower-thirds, or alpha-channel graphics -- forming attractive 'objects' rather than flat fonts.

Synergize with Other FX. RiseShine synergized with OrganiBlur, FlowTexture, or PosterWise easily creates a wide range of unique looks for titles, logos, graphics, etc.

Polish the Gloss. Apply an adjustable shiny gloss/polish to your title objects -- much more compelling than the typical dull glints in most built-in titlers.

Look Uniquely Glassy. By applying RiseShine together with OrganiBlur, you can create fantastic glass/marbled fonts unlike anything else in the industry.

Adjust the Reflections. Lighting is easily adjustable and bezier keyframable, allowing you to move reflections on objects as the title moves, for further realism.

Add Shine/Depth to Video. RiseShine isn't just for titles! It can also usefully add shine and depth to regular video clips, targeted to the luminance of the imagery.

Light the Neon. Incredibly cool and REAL neon looks can be instantly produced from virtually any regular font, and can be pulsed and flowed easily.

Wet Your Subjects. RiseShine can seamlessly add a convincing wet surface look to your video subjects, even if the footage was not originally shot with a wet look. Wild!

Power Your Fonts. Use RiseShine to quickly modify your existing common fonts into fresh, creative new looks that can change and evolve over time.

Since virtually all RiseShine controls are bezier keyframable, you can smoothly vary individual aspects of the effect over time to create incredible flowing font changes and effects!

RiseShine Tutorial

Apply the Pixelan > RiseShine effect to footage in your Comp's timeline, like applying any built-in effect in After Effects. Start with a pre-made Animation Preset for the effect (select from the menu at the top of the controls), which you can easily modify. Or create a custom effect by manually adjusting. For this latter approach, generally the power of RiseShine is most easily accessed in two steps:

STEP 1. **Set the general strength and gloss.** Adjust the first four controls -- Intensity, Softness, Gloss, and Height -- until a desired look is generally reached. These controls tend to have the most profound impact on the RiseShine effect. If you are applying RiseShine to a title clip or other alpha-channel graphic, be sure to select Alpha in the Channel submenu AND turn on the Mask with Alpha Channel check box.

Instead of using a clip's luminance (pixel brightness/darkness) or alpha channel to mask the RiseShine effect, you can choose an RGB color channel in the Channel submenu. This is handy if your scene features well-defined color objects that you want to focus the effect on.

STEP 2. **Fine-tune the effect.** Use the remaining controls and Extras section to fine-tune the effect.

Depending on RiseShine settings, edge fringing or noise along your image's edge may be emphasized. To avoid that, in the Extras section increase the Crop frame edge by value. Or apply our powerful CleanCrop effect, if available to you.

RiseShine Controls In Detail

Intensity --Determines the strength of the overall effect, from 0% to 100%, produced by all other controls below.

Softness -- Blurs the light source to soften the overal effect and reduce details.

Gloss -- Higher values increase the visual hardness of the reflections, thus creating a realistic wet/glossy look.

Height -- Higher values increase the height of the shine/reflections (or font depth if applied to a title or other alpha channel graphic).

Ambient -- Adds a constant value to the overall lighting, which can moderate font depth produced by the Height control.

Shadow -- Strengthens shadows/relief in the effect, which can produce a feeling of greater depth especially with a title or other alpha channel graphic.

Channel -- Luminance is the default and the most likely choice for most video clips, which uses the clip's luminance (pixel brightness/darkness) to mask the RiseShine effect. If your scene features well-defined color objects that you want to focus the effect on, instead choose an RGB color channel. For titles or other alpha channel graphics, however, always choose Alpha.

Mask with Alpha Channel -- To create RiseShine's unique depth/shine effects in titles or other alpha channel graphics, always turn on this option.

Extras

Angle -- Sets the angle of the simulated light, from 0 degrees (image right) rotating counter-clockwise to 360 degrees (return to image right).

Blend -- In addition to the usual Normal light blending, Add and Multiply are provided to vary the effect.

Light 2 -- Adds a secondary light source, which in a video clip can bring more detail back into the effect. On a font or other alpha channel graphic, it extrudes the edge of the text/graphic, which sometimes can better define the element against its background.

Invert Light 2 -- Inverts the above control's effect.

Crop frame edge by -- Depending on RiseShine settings, edge fringing or noise along your image's edge may be emphasized. To avoid that, increase this value. Or apply our powerful CleanCrop effect, if available to you.

FlowTexture 2 Features

FlowTexture 2.0 is the next generation of our unique flowing displacement effect tool. It is much more powerful than standard displacement effects, which tend to be not very adjustable and only create a few kinds of (mostly unattractive/unusable) wave/ripple/emboss looks. FlowTexture instead creates fully-adjustable realistic water drops AND creates an almost infinite array of other liquid-like effects -- from abstract 'etchings' to amazing organic flows.

Add Fluid Dynamics. Easily create custom water drops and other dynamic fluid effects that are more attractive than standard wave effects.

Animate and Flow. Quickly form amazing smooth liquid looks and molten effects that ebb and flow over time.
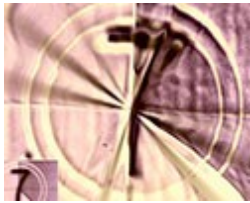
Aim At Your Subject. Easily position the flowing effect wherever desired within your images, such as where your subject is located.

Invigorate Backgrounds. Use FlowTexture to improve/freshen stock clips in your collection for use in new projects.

Create Depth Interest. Subtlely deform and texture your images in unconventional but realistic ways to add visual interest.

Energize Stills/Titles. Use FlowTexture to easily provide realistic flex and change to still-image clips and titles.
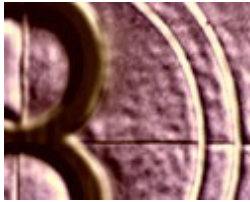
Match Your Content. Use the unique Mixer tool to build waves or distortions shaped like your clip's content.
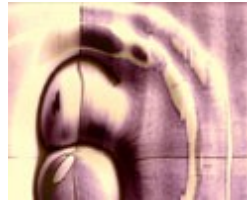
Enjoy Full Creative Control. Control reflections, lighting, softness, and other visual qualities to enhance the effect's realism.

Deform with Spices. Base the wave/distortion geometry on any one of hundreds of Pixelan top-rated 'spices'.

With powerful bezier keyframing, you can smoothly vary individual aspects of the FlowTexture effect during your clip, leading to incredibly dynamic distortions.

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FlowTexture 2 Tutorial

Apply the Pixelan > FlowTexture effect to footage in your Comp's timeline, like applying any built-in effect in After Effects. Start with a pre-made Animation Preset for the effect (select from the menu at the top of the controls), which you can easily modify. Or create a custom effect by manually adjusting. For this latter approach, generally the power of FlowTexture can be most easily accessed in four steps:

STEP 1. **Select the displacement geometry.** FlowTexture uses the luminance of your clip's image or the luminance of a selected spice file (or a variable mix of both) as the basis for displacement. By default, it uses the clip's luminance to form the displacement, since the Mixer control is 100% at the bottom of the Displacement section. To instead select from hundreds of available spice geometries, set the Mixer to 0% and click the Options button at the top of the FlowTexture effect controls. (For more details about this and related controls, click here.) To mix the spice geometry AND your clip's luminance, adjust the Mixer to an intermediate value, such as 50%. Experiment -- the Mixer is one of FlowTexture's most unique and powerful controls. keyframing the Mixer control can lead to incredible flowing distortion effects. For a flowing effect, keyframe Progress.

Original clip	Oval spice making waves	Mixer = 50	Mixer = 100

Depending on FlowTexture settings, noise along your image's edge may be emphasized. To avoid that, in the Light section increase the Crop frame edge by value. Or apply our powerful CleanCrop effect, if available to you.

STEP 2. **Fine-tune the displacement.** Generally, you should first set the Waves control (overall number of waves) and the Spread control (distance between waves). Then fine-tune further by adjusting the Height control (overall refraction strength). Additional controls provide more subtle fine-tuning.

The Ramping control moves the maximum wave height from the inner wave toward the outer wave. The Rotation control controls the refraction direction.

And the Softness control blurs the distortion to create a more liquid-like look. All of these controls are keyframable to create wonderful evolving effects.

STEP 3. **Adjust the lighting (if desired).** Depending on the look you desire, controls in the Light section of FlowTexture can add further realism. Intensity adjusts the light's power and Angle sets its direction. The Softness control controls light/shadow details independent of the Displacement > Softness control. Use the Blend menu to make the light brighter/harsher if desired.

STEP 4. **Add texture to the effect (if desired).** Click the Texture tab to access additional enhancements to consider. If you have our SpiceMASTER 2.x plug-in, the Texture controls here are similar. They provide variably-sized organic particle texturing to the effect. First adjust the Amount control to set a desired strength. X Size and Y Size control the texture's size. Density sets the extent of texturing, and activating the Motion control will put the texture into random motion. As mentioned above, all of these controls are keyframable to vary the texture enhancement during your clip.

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FlowTexture 2 Controls In Detail

Displacement

This section determines the basic character of the displacement effect. To vary the effect over time, keyframe any of the controls.

Progress -- Sets the progress of the effect, typically keyframed from 0% to 100%. Note that 0% and 100% are identical, which is handy for creating a FlowTexture effect that smoothly grows and then recedes during the clip.

Height -- Determines the "refraction strength" -- how much the image is distorted by the displacement waves.
Waves -- Sets the number of waves radiating from the displaced edge. The control can range from 0.0 to 10.0 waves (up to 100.0 can be entered in its text box), but for most effects values below 3.0 or 4.0 will be ideal.
Softness -- Can significantly smooth the wave results, especially in fine-textured displacements. And reduce potential banding in very simple spice geometries. An important control for creating realistic waves.
Spread -- Sets the relative distance between waves. The control can range 0.0 to 1.0, but up to 10.0 can be entered in its text box.

Ramping -- Higher values move the maximum wave point from the inner wave toward the outer wave. The control ranges from 0.0 to 1.0.
Rotation -- Controls the refraction direction.
Mixer -- Use this to mix the luminance of the selected spice file and the luminance of the image as the basis of the displacement effect.
Invert Mixer -- Inverts the image's luminance to provide a variation.

Light

This section sets the character of the simulated light on the waves.

Intensity --Sets the strength of the simulated light on the waves, from 0% to 100%.
Softness -- Controls light/shadow details independent of the displacement detail set by the Displacement > Softness control.
Crop frame edge by -- Depending on FlowTexture settings, edge fringing or noise along your image's edge may be emphasized. To avoid that, increase this value. Or apply our powerful CleanCrop effect, if available to you.
Angle -- Sets the angle of the simulated light, from 0 degrees (image right) rotating counter-clockwise to 360 degrees (return to image right).

Blend -- In addition to the Normal light blending, Add and Multiply are available for harsher light looks.

Texture

This section can add variably-sized organic texturing to the displacement effect.

Amount -- Determines the intensity of the texture.
X Size and **Y Size** --These controls stretch the texture horizontally or vertically. Values range from 1 (single pixel) to 100 (frame width or height). This enables you to create random streak effects (increase one control much more than the other), large particles (increase both controls, but stay below the 100 maximum), weaves, and other cool textures. Several presets show the creative possibilities.
Density -- Higher values reduce the density of the texture elements.
Motion -- Progressively adds random movement/animation to the texture elements during the effect.

Spice Controls

These are controls to position and modify a spice-based FlowTexture effect (i.e. when the Mixer is not 100%). If you also have our SpiceMASTER plug-in, the controls work identically. See for details.

GrainPlus 2 Features

Standard noise plug-ins are all similar -- not very customizable and with only limited usefulness for video. At the other end of the spectrum are third-party film-grain plug-ins which tend to be hard-to-learn, single-purpose and relatively expensive. GrainPlus is an affordable, versatile, easy-to-use alternative to both. It gives you the power to:

Add Filmic Grain. Apply subtle luminance-based grain to emulate contemporary film. This is very different than just lightly applying noise, as in standard effects.

Synergize With Spices. Use Pixelan 'spices' to easily mask the grain/noise effect to only where you want it within the image, such as specific words in titles.

Customize The Look. Quickly form and compare hundreds of creative variations of grain/noise effects -- great for video as well as titles/logos/graphics.

Mutate Bigger. Turn noise into other amorphous objects in your scene, located wherever you desire. Independently adjust strength, height, width, softness, and color.

Maintain Brightness. Apply grain/noise without changing the image's brightness (unlike usual noise effects) to keep your clip sequence consistent.

Change Randomly. Experiment with random luminance/hue changes and other abstract time-based effects. Then blend the effect with your source clip.

Streak & Scratch. Add film scratches, streaks, single-color noise tints, and other creative noise variations -- all easily customizable.

Age Your Footage. Scratch and decay your footage to emulate old film looks.

Buzz & Flash. Create visual buzzing, roving lights/flashes, and dynamic weaving patterns. Work in different color spaces (RGB, HSV, HLS, YUV and XYZ) to further expand the range of effects.

Since virtually all GrainPlus controls are bezier keyframable, you can smoothly vary individual aspects of the effect during your clip. With the powerful Mixer control, you can also use a clip's luminance to define the effect areas, a very easy way to add grain to light or dark regions, for example.

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GrainPlus 2 Tutorial

Apply the Pixelan > GrainPlus effect to footage in your Comp's timeline, like applying any built-in effect in After Effects. Start with a pre-made Animation Preset for the effect (select from the menu at the top of the controls), which you can easily modify. Or create a custom effect by manually adjusting. For this latter approach, generally the power of GrainPlus can be most easily accessed in three steps:

STEP 1. **Set the grain.** First work with the Location and Strength controls, plus the three checkbox options at the bottom of the Grain section. When the grain has the basic look you desire, next adjust Density and X Size/Y Size controls. Setting one or both Size controls to high values (but less than 100), for example, can create cool horizontal/vertical streaks or large particles. The Density control increases the quantity of grain particles in the image. The Motion control puts the grain into random motion during the clip.

| Original (100% crop) | Strength = 20 | Y increased | Density decreased |

STEP 2. **Enhance further with cool Extras.** The Color Model controls give you the flexibility to adjust the grain/noise in each color channel individually. This makes it easy to set a desired color of monochromatic grain/noise, or to balance a color noise mix as desired. Working in other color spaces of the Color Model menu further expand the possible colors and looks. For example, you can apply noise only to the S (saturation) channel of the HSV or HLS color model to produce a desaturated or over-saturated grain instead of typical noise. For more extreme effects, experiment with YUV and XYZ models.

Also available in the Extras section is a Blend menu. Nine compositing options produce a wide range of blends between the GrainPlus effect and the clip's source image. The options are similar to blending modes found in programs such as Adobe Photoshop. To set the strength of the chosen Blend option, adjust the Blend Amount control. Higher values show more of the clip's source image. To vary the strength during the effect, keyframe Blend Amount.

| Unblended grain | 50% Normal | 100% Hard Light | 100% Color Dodge |

STEP 3. **Limit or animate the effect area with a Pixelan spice.** GrainPlus utilizes the soft/organic power of Pixelan spices (derived from our popular SpiceMASTER plug-in) to geometrically mask where the effect (created from other GrainPlus controls) will appear within the frame. Adjust Spice Effect settings together with Spice Controls.

You could have the GrainPlus effect appear only where your subject is rather than over the entire image, for example, or keep the GrainPlus effect in outer areas to frame your subject. By keyframing the Position control, you can even have the effect area track your subject's movement. By keyframing the Progress control with an Iris spice, for example, you could have the grain effect flow from your subject organically outward to the frame edge. Or wash the grain effect across the screen. (If you are familiar with our SpiceMASTER plug-in, Progress is just like Completion in SpiceMASTER.)

To use the clip's luminance (instead of a spice file's luminance) to limit where the GrainPlus effect appears within the image, set the Mixer control to 100% at the bottom of the Spice Effect section. To mix the spice geometry AND your clip's luminance, adjust the Mixer to an intermediate value, such as 50%. Experiment -- the Mixer is one of GrainPlus's most unique and powerful controls. keyframing the Mixer control can lead to unique grain/noise flows within your clip!

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GrainPlus 2 Controls In Detail

Grain

Six controls in the Grain section determine its basic character:
Location -- Choose from these options to create uniformly distributed noise or to concentrate more noise in light or dark areas of your clip.
Strength -- Determines the intensity of the noise.
X Size and **Y Size** --These controls stretch the grain/noise horizontally or vertically. Values range from 1 (single pixel) to 100 (frame width or height). This enables you to create random streak effects (increase one control much more than the other), large particles (increase both controls, but stay below the 100 maximum), old film looks (increase Y Size only, then increase Density to provide random occasional film scratches), weaves, and other cool textures. Several presets show the creative possibilities.
Density -- Lower values decrease the density of the grain/noise elements.
Motion -- Progressively adds random movement/animation to the grain/noise during the effect.

Three checkbox options can modify Grain:

Color noise -- Turn on to create color noise instead of monochromatic noise.

Light & dark grain -- Adds light AND dark noise particles instead of only light OR dark ones.

Invert-- Inverts the grain/noise if Light & dark grain is ON; otherwise it switches light and dark grain/noise particles.

Channels

Color Model -- Allows you to add grain/noise in different color spaces. RGB (the default), HSV, HLS, YUV and XYZ are available. Working in other color spaces can dramatically change the noise's look. For example, adjusting the S (saturation) channel in the HSV or HLS model creates a desaturated or over-saturated grain instead of typical noise. For more extreme effects, experiment with YUV and XYZ models.
R, G, B -- Three controls are available to control the grain/noise intensity in each color channel. For example, you can set the color for monochromatic noise. Note: Dark noise particles visually appear in an opposite color to the light ones. If you add noise in Blue channel, for example, the light noise particles will appear blue, but the dark ones will be yellow.

Blend

Nine compositing options produce a wide range of blends between the GrainPlus effect and the clip's source image. The options are similar to blending modes found in programs such as Adobe Photoshop. To set the strength of the chosen Blend option, adjust the Blend Amount control. Higher values show more of the clip's source image. To vary the strength during the effect, keyframe Blend Amount.
Normal -- Blends details from the source image uniformly throughout the image, like a video dissolve. This is a handy way to make a GrainPlus effect uniformly more subtle.
Lighten -- Only blends in pixels from the source image that are lighter than the GrainPlus effect.
Darken -- Only blends in pixels from the source image that are darker than the GrainPlus effect.
Add -- Combines color values in the effect and source image, creating lighter colors. Black pixels remain unchanged and white pixels remain white.
Screen -- Lightens/brightens all colors in the GrainPlus effect. Black pixels remain unchanged, however, and white pixels remain white.
Hard Light -- Selectively screens colors to produce a result that appears like a harsh lighting on the effect image.
Vivid Light -- Similar to Hard Light, but increases contrast in colors that are lighter than 50% gray. It therefore usually produces stronger colors than Hard Light.
Linear Light -- Similar to Hard Light, but further brightens colors that are lighter than 50% gray. It therefore usually produces stronger colors than both Hard Light and Vivid Light.
Color Dodge -- The lighter the effect color, the brighter the resulting color with this option turned on. Black pixels remain unchanged, however, and white pixels usually remain white.

Spice Effect

Like our popular SpiceMASTER plug-in, GrainPlus utilizes our top-rated, industry-standard "spices" to generate fresh effects -- in this case, to geometrically 'mask' **where** the GrainPlus effect (established from the other sections described above) will appear within the frame. Adjust Spice Effect settings together with the Spice/Position controls described below.

Effect -- An on/off control for the spice effect.

Progress -- Based on the selected spice file, this control set the area where the GrainPlus effect will be visible. At 0% the effect will appear where blackest pixels reside (in the spice file's grayscale image, not your content). At higher values, the effect will be visible where lighter grays reside in the spice file's image, and at 100% where the whitest pixels exist in the spice file's image.

Softness -- Higher values soften the boundary between the GrainPlus effect and no effect areas -- as determined by the selected spice file's geometry.

Effect only in soft area-- Use this option to limit the GrainPlus effect only to the Softness area (set by the above control). Increase Softness to widen the effect area. Adjust the Progress control to determine where the effect area appears.

Mixer -- This unique control blends the spice and source clip's luminance to create a mask shape that is determined by your clip. At 100%, purely the SOURCE clip's luminance is used as the effect mask. To mix using the spice geometry AND your clip's luminance, adjust the Mixer to an intermediate value, such as 50%. Experiment -- the Mixer is one of GrainPlus's most unique and powerful controls. NOTE: Progress must not equal 0 or 100 for the Mixer to have visual impact.

Invert Mixer-- Turn on this option to invert where the Mixer luminance mask forms in the source clip.

Spice Controls

These are controls to position and modify the Spice Effect. If you also have our SpiceMASTER plug-in, the controls work identically. See for details.

SpatterFlex Features

Spatter looks have been around for years, but are not compelling or useful because their grain tends to randomly appear UNIFORMLY over the ENTIRE image. Ugh. In contrast, SpatterFlex gives you wonderful Pixelan 'spices', our trademark adjustable softness, our industry-unqiue Mixer tool, and many other intuitive controls to give you complete creative control over the spatter look. That transforms spattering into a sensitive, organic, artistic tool for your video images -- as well as terrific distortions for titles and graphics.
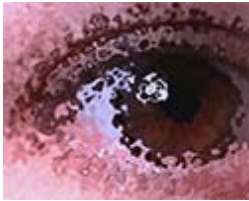
Enjoy the Organic.
SpatterFlex's organic, variable, flowing visual quality is far more compelling than standard texture effects or overlays.

Flex Titles/Graphics.
Randomly distort titles, logos, graphics, etc. easily without having to detour into motion graphics software.
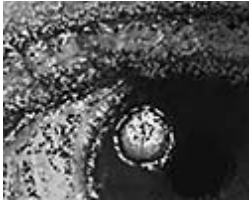
Add Artistry. Break out of the box of cliche "art" effects bundled in most editing programs, by utilizing SpatterFlex's many controls to create attractive new looks.

Enhance Sensitively.
Enhance your title fonts with sensitive texture/grain that is not applied uniformly, creating attractive new (yet readable) looks.

Flex the Particles. No longer are you stuck with a few particle/grain looks. Instead, flex the shapes over time, emphasizing horizontal or vertical if desired.

Be Creatively Free. Powerful but easy-to use bezier keyframing and intuitive controls allow you to focus on creativity instead of reading a thick manual.

Control WHERE. Use the amazing power of Pixelan spices and the industry-unique Mixer tool to easily set where the effect will appear, to choose what to accent.

Adjust the Density. Reduce the grain density in SpatterFlex to create flying debris and other particle swarms that fly over your subject. Cool!

Distort Your Subjects. Use very large "invisible" particles to form organic, random distortions -- a fresh look compared to the usual wave effects.

Since virtually all SpatterFlex controls are bezier keyframable, you can smoothly vary individual aspects of the effect over time to create fantastic flowing effects!

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SpatterFlex Tutorial

Apply the Pixelan > SpatterFlex effect to footage in your Comp's timeline, like applying any built-in effect in After Effects. Start with a pre-made Animation Preset for the effect (select from the menu at the top of the controls), which you can easily modify. Or create a custom effect by manually adjusting. For this latter approach, generally the power of SpatterFlex is most easily accessed in three steps:

STEP 1. **Set the general location and amount of spatter.** Use the Type and Amount controls together with the Spice Effect controls.

SpatterFlex uses the luminance of your clip's image or the luminance of a selected spice file (or a variable mix of both) as the basis for where patter particles will appear. To select from hundreds of available spice geometries (instead of using the default Elliptic1 C spice file), click the Options button at the top of the SpatterFlex controls. (For more details about this button and related controls, click here.)

To instead use the clip's luminance to form where spatter particles appear, set the Mixer control in the Extras section of SpatterFlex to 100%. To mix the spice geometry AND your clip's luminance, adjust the Mixer to an intermediate value, such as 50%. Experiment -- the Mixer is one of SpatterFlex's most unique and powerful controls. keyframing the Mixer control can lead to incredible organic flowing blur effects.

STEP 2. **Adjust the spatter size, softness, and motion.** With Spice Effect > Completion at its default 50%, adjust X Size and Y Size controls in the Grain section. Turning on the Hard particles check box can create a more varigated look. To change the spatter to more of a molten effect, use the Softness control. To set spatter particles in motion during the clip, which is almost always desirable for a more realistic look, increase the Motion control.

STEP 3. **Fine-tune the effect.** Type > One-way tones down the overall spatter effect. Ramping controls where within the effect spatter will appear strongest. Angle can add a various OrganiBlur-like swirling blurs behind the spatter look.

Depending on SpatterFlex settings, edge fringing or noise along your image's edge may be emphasized. To avoid that, increase the Crop frame edge by value. Or apply our powerful CleanCrop effect, if available to you.

SpatterFlex Controls In Detail

Spatter

Type -- Two-way spreads the spatter effect in two opposite directions from any origin point; One-way in one direction. Generally, Two-way creates a stronger effect.
Amount -- Controls the overall spatter power.
Angle -- The underlying blur under the spatter look will follow the luminance gradient's direction unless you use this control to rotate the direction. keyframing it can easily create swirling OrganiBlur-like effects underneath the spatter particles.
Ramping -- At its 50% default value, the spatter power has its maximum at the center of the spatter area and decreases toward the edges. Other values move the spatter maximum elsewhere within the spattered area. 0% moves the maximum to the beginning of the spatter area; 100% to the end.

Crop frame edge by -- Depending on SpatterFlex settings, edge fringing or noise along your image's edge may be emphasized. To avoid that, increase this value. Or apply our powerful CleanCrop effect, if available to you.

Grain

X Size and **Y Size** --These controls stretch the spatter particles horizontally or vertically. Values range from 1 (single pixel) to 100 (frame width or height). Several presets show the creative possibilities.
Softness -- Determines the egde softness of the spatter particles. High values can create molten looks.
Density -- Lower values decrease the density of the spatter elements.
Motion -- Progressively adds random movement/animation to the spatter during the effect. Highly desireable for a more compelling look.

Hard particles -- Turn on this checkbox to create a more varigated spatter look.

Spice Effect

Effect -- Like our popular SpiceMASTER plug-in, when Mask is chosen, SpatterFlex utilizes our top-rated, industry-standard "spices" to generate where the spatter effect will appear within the image. Use the Spice Controls described below to adjust many aspects of the spice file.
Progress -- Based on the selected spice file, this control sets the area where the effect will be visible. At 0% the effect will appear where blackest pixels reside (in the spice file's grayscale image, not your content). At higher values, the effect will be visible where lighter grays reside in the spice file's image, and at 100% where the whitest pixels exist in the spice file's image.
Softness -- Alters the spice/luminance pixels used by SpatterFlex, especially when the Mixer is activated.
Effect only in soft area -- Use this option to limit the effect only to the Softness area (set by the above control). Increase Softness to widen the effect area.

Mixer -- This unique control blends the spice and source clip's luminance to the spatter look will appear within the clip's image. At 100%, purely the SOURCE clip's luminance is used as the basis for the spatter. To mix using the spice geometry AND your clip's luminance, adjust the Mixer to an intermediate value, such as 50%. Experiment -- the Mixer is one of SpatterFlex's most unique and powerful controls. NOTE: Progress must not equal 0 or 100 for the Mixer to have visual impact.

Invert Mixer -- Turn on this option to invert where the Mixer-based blur forms in the source clip.

Spice Controls

These are controls to position and modify the Spice Effect. If you also have our SpiceMASTER plug-in, the controls work identically.

StepMotion 2 Features

StepMotion is a simple but powerful plug-in for image ghosting, trailing, and other time-delay effects which are especially useful in high-motion footage. Unlike standard "echo" or "ghosting" effects that simply combine frames from two or more instances during a clip, StepMotion can produce a more attractive, progressively-faded visual echo to motion in a scene. StepMotion allows you to:

Enjoy Independence.
Independently control/vary the delay and intensity of the effect, from bold "time echos" to very soft "time blurs."

Go Dark. Adjust StepMotion to
only emphasize dark ghosting when desired for a unique effect.

Look Dreamy. Slow down your
clips and apply StepMotion to create terrific dream looks -- for special segments, wedding or religious videos, etc.

Trail Titles/Graphics. Add
beautiful dissolving motion trails to ttitles, logos, and graphics that are more attractive than standard echo effects.

Emphasize Light.
Independently emphasize light elements while not ghosting dark areas.

Play with Motion. Use
StepMotion to softly hint at, or slowly reveal/hide, moving objects within a scene.

Since all StepMotion controls are bezier keyframable, you can smoothly vary individual aspects of the effect during a clip, leading to wonderfully evolving imagery.

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StepMotion 2 Tutorial

Apply the Pixelan > StepMotion effect to footage in your Comp's timeline, like applying any built-in effect in After Effects. Start with a pre-made Animation Preset for the effect (select from the menu at the top of the controls), which you can easily modify. Or create a custom effect by manually adjusting. For this latter approach, generally the power of StepMotion can be most easily accessed in two steps:

STEP 1. **Adjust the Delay times.** Higher values create longer delay times. For ghosting and soft dream-like effects set Light and Dark to the same value. To instead create dark or light object trails behind the moving subject, set Light and Dark to different values. Long delay times can produce interesting effects. You can make some objects slowly appear and/or disappear, or even completely remove moving objects from the background. For example, you can modify a high-speed sunrise clip to be without people/cars flashing by and without wind-blown trees jerking.

STEP 2. **Adjust the Reaction controls.** While Delay controls vary the delay time (thus set the ghosting/trails length), the Reaction controls control the trail's style/visibility. Negative values add blur to moving elements in the scene; positive values produce contrast trails that visually enhance the moving objects.

StepMotion 2 Controls In Detail

Delay

Light/Dark -- These controls allow you to individually control whether the ghosting develops from darker or lighter areas (or both). The higher the value, the more the ghosting will appear. To vary these values during the effect, keyframe either or both controls.

Reaction

Light/Dark -- These controls control whether the ghosting is dark or light (or both). Values range from -1.0 to 1.0. Positive values tend to posterize the image (limit the color range); negative values tend to create dreamy, ephemeral looks. To vary reaction during the effect, keyframe either or both controls.

--- A good way to approach these controls is to compare the four combinations of extreme values (-1,-1; -1,1; 1,-1 and 1,1) with your particular visual event, then moderate the values as desired.

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StepTime 2 Features

Standard "posterize time" effects output a lower frame rate to create a simple stop-action 'stutter' look to motion in a scene. Standard "echo" effects provide multiple "trailing" frame images but do not dissolve those attractively or flexibly. StepTime goes further than either, giving you the ability to easily:

Blend Stop-Action. Freeze frames per a desired interval, then adjustably blend the action in-between, leading to a more attractive/unique stop-action effect.

Adjust the Source. Adjustably blend the effect with your source clip to further customize the effect.

Echo Only Light or Dark. Choose to visually echo only light or dark pixels in your image, if desired, for a more sophisticated look.

Control the Dissolving. Get independent control over the stop-action timing AND the amount of dissolve/blending of in-between frames.

Since virtually all StepTime controls are bezier keyframable, you can smoothly vary individual aspects of the effect during a clip, leading to terrific evolving imagery.

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StepTime 2 Tutorial

Apply the Pixelan > StepTime effect to footage in your Comp's timeline, like applying any built-in effect in After Effects. Start with a pre-made Animation Preset for the effect (select from the menu at the top of the controls), which you can easily modify. Or create a custom effect by manually adjusting. For this latter approach, generally the power of StepTime can be most easily accessed in two or three steps:

STEP 1. **Adjust the effect's tempo.** You may find it easiest to set the Tempo value while the effect's preview plays.

STEP 2. **Fine-tune the effect's style.** Adjust the Style and Blend menus and Hardness control as desired. Blending the source video and the StepTime effect produces more of a ghosting/echo look rather than a low frame rate or stop-action effect.

NOTE: A clip's mask and any previously applied effects are ignored when StepTime is applied. The workaround is to apply StepTime before other effects are applied to the footage.

StepTime 2 Controls In Detail

Style -- Selects the style of the stop-action effect. Stop-Action shows a 'classic' stop-action look -- frozen frames appearing periodically. Freeze Behind shows stop-action frames that dissolve behind the video action, much like a progressive "echo" look. Freeze Ahead creates the inverse effect: video action plays into a frozen frame that appears ahead.
Blend -- Controls the blending that occurs between full-strength frozen frames. Standard produces a traditional dissolve. Darken accents dark object area; Lighten accents light object areas.
Tempo -- Sets how often a frozen frame will appear -- in number of frames. A maximum value of 30, for example, means that a full-strength frozen frame will appear once per second in a 30 frames-per-second clip.
Hardness --Determines the strength of StepTime's dissolve between full-strength frames. From 0% to 100% is possible. Low values retain the dissolve. 100% creates a "hard" look -- only full-strength frames appear with nothing shown between.
Source -- Higher values show more of the source video blended with the effect, thus this is another way to moderate the effect's visual strength.

To vary any of the above control/color controls during the effect, keyframe one or more of them.

CleanCrop Features

Cropping removes unwanted frame edge 'noise' in video clips, such as from tape-based camcorders. However, standard tools stretch/zoom the remaining (inside) image out to the frame edge, introducing distortion and loss of sharpness. Or they cover up noise with a simple hard-edged color border, forcing you to edit with a sometimes-inappropriate look to get clean images. Amazingly, over digital video's history, no one has solved this problem well -- until CleanCrop!

CleanCrop retains the original image's clarity/sharpness by replacing noise with SIMILAR pixels as nearby source pixels, creating NATURAL-LOOKING results. Detailed/textured areas continue to the edge, as do soft/solid color areas. CleanCrop also can SOFTLY BLEND the frame edge (corrected or not) to any color or to show lower clip layers, either of which can be more appealing and useful than a hard-edged border.
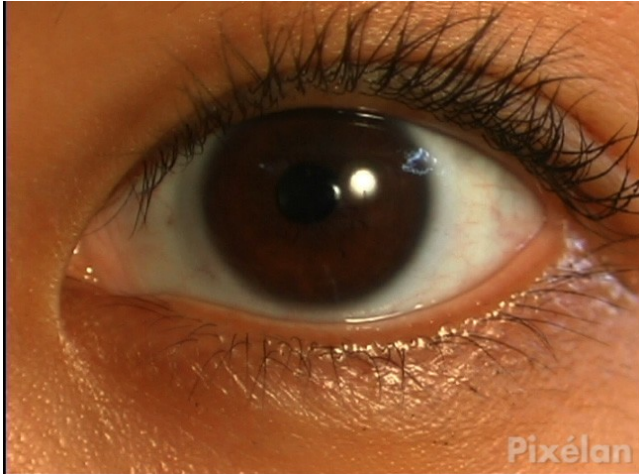

This 648x480 clip has extensive noise & chromatic errors along the left edge, luminance errors along the bottom edge, and a subtle graying for one pixel along the right edge. All typical problems with source video clips.

Standard built-in crop applied from a popular editing program, stretching the image to hide problems. Note the loss of sharpness throughout the clip.
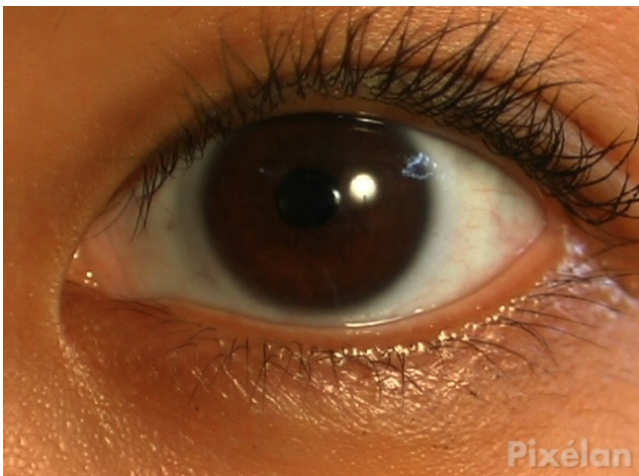
CleanCrop's magic! Edge problems are seamlessly removed, no matter if there is detail or smoothness -- AND original sharpness/positioning is retained!

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CleanCrop Features (continued)
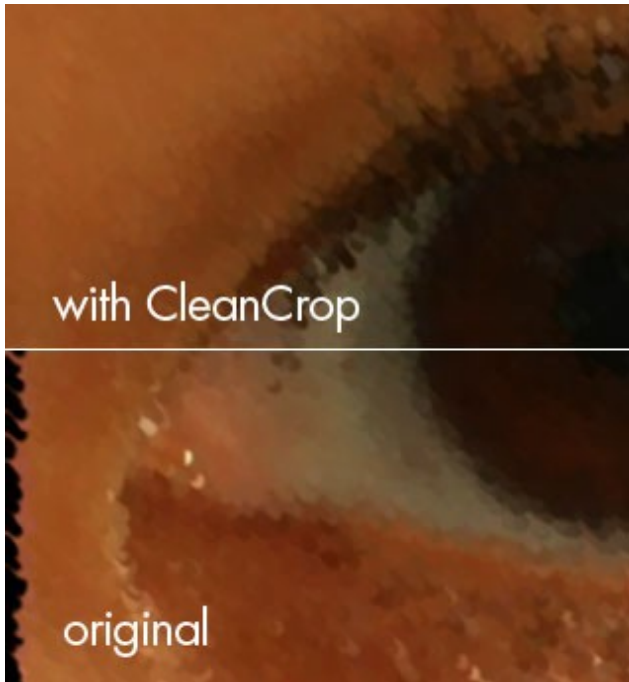
CleanCrop also can pre-condition your clips to greatly improve the edge results of ANY OTHER video effects that rely on blurring, sharpening, or distortion in some way.

CleanCrop Tutorial

Apply the Pixelan > CleanCrop effect to footage in your Comp's timeline, like applying any built-in effect in After Effects. Start with a pre-made Animation Preset for the effect (select from the menu at the top of the controls), which you can easily modify. Or create a custom effect by manually adjusting. The first four submenus set the quantity of cropped pixels for each frame edge. To quickly set all sides equally and simultaneously, turn on the Adjust all checkbox.

To adjust the appearance of replacement pixels, use the Mirror control. That submenu determines the relative blending of mirrored "good" pixels to linearly extended "good" pixels. A value of 50% is good starting point for many images, some clips may require a different mix.

To replace cropped pixels with a soft blend to a chosen color, increase the Amount control that is under the Custom color control. Click the eyedropper in the Custom color control to choose a color from anywhere from your clip. Or use the standard Color Picker in After Effects to set a color.

To instead replace the color with lower clip content, turn on the Show lower clips check box. The Amount control will then set the blending of lower clip content to replacement pixels.

How to Choose a Spice File

Several CreativEase effects can utilize our unique 'spice' files to guide where the effect will appear within the image. Adapted from our popular SpiceMASTER plug-in, spices are simple in concept but wonderfully organic, flexible, and useful. Two-hundred resolution-independent spices are provided, with additional spices available as an add-on from our web site. Spices work much like an alpha channel mask, but are variable based on the value of the Spice Effect > Progress control. Setting Progress to 0, the effect appears only where blackest pixels reside in the spice file's image (NOT your clip's image) located at the center of a CreativEase effect's window. Intermediate values mask the effect to appear only where grays reside in the spice image. And finally, a Progress value of 100 limits an effect to only where the whitest pixels exist in the spice image. By keyframing the Progress control, the CreativEase effect will animate/flow during the clip, as shown below, which can add powerful visual dynamics to the effect.
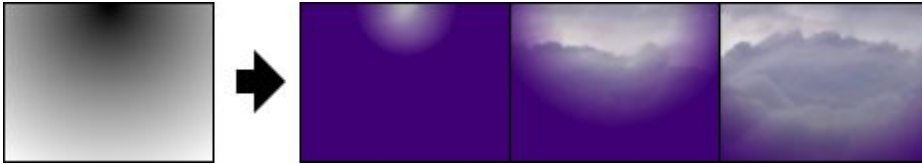
How to Choose a Spice File

1. Click the Options button at the top of the controls for the applied CreativEase effect. The Library window will then appear.

2. Click a subfolder in the Library's left section, as shown below. Thumbnail-size previews of available spices will then play side-by-side in the right section so you can visually compare and choose the best design for your desired effect.
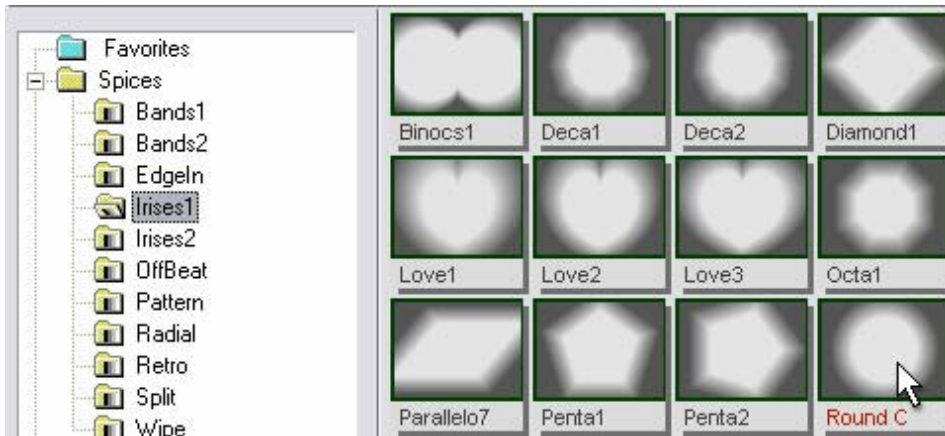
Note: To see subfolders, click the "+" next to a folder in the left section, if necessary. Subfolders organize the huge quantity of effects into distinct styles.

3. Double-click a thumbnail in the Library's right section to select the effect and close the Library.

Tips

--- Use the Mixer control to modify the spice's geometry partially or entirely by the luminance (grayscale values) of your clip. This powerful feature can quickly produce an enormous new range of mask geometries that visually relate to the imagery in your clips. Try the control and see for yourself!

--- Almost ANY still-image can be loaded as a custom spice file, giving you even more creative flexibility. For example, you may want to use a client logo graphic to define the effect area. **The luminance (grayscale values) of the loaded image will determine the geometry of the mask.**
To load a custom spice file (bypassing the Library), Ctrl-click the Options button to get a standard Open dialog box. Then navigate to and select the file.
To instead add one or more new still-images into the Library PERMANENTLY (so they are always available to you), see Adding/Deleting Effects in the Library. Note that such images are NOT resolution-independent like our unique spice files. For cleanest results, therefore, any loaded still-image should match the final frame size of your output (i.e. 720x480 for DV).

--- To combine spice designs to create a 'new' spice effect, apply the effect more than once to the same clip, but choose different spice files each time (or invert, flip or move the same spice). This technique multiplies hundreds of provided spices into an near-infinite range of effect designs!

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Flip, Reverse, Move, or Rotate the Spice Mask

After choosing a spice file, you can adjust it several ways, such as flipping or reversing the effect mask, moving it to a new position, or putting it in motion. You can even rotate it and create terrific spin effects. Use the controls in the Spice Controls section of a CreativEase effect to better tie the effect to your content, or to add variety when repeating an effect. Position, Rotation, Horizontal Flip, Vertical Flip, Invert Spice, Oversize to Spin, and Auto-Adjust are available. Position and Rotation are keyframable, allowing you to move and/or spin the effect within the image over time.

--- When rotating a spice, **be sure to also turn on the Oversize to Spin option if you are using an Iris spice** -- to keep the spice size consistent during spins. (CreativEase normally will slightly vary a rotated spice's size to ensure it covers the entire frame.)

--- Moving or rotating certain spices may reduce the range of grayscales in the visible frame. If you also are keyframing the Progress control from 0 to 100, the spice mask may not start/end exactly at the actual beginning or end of the effect. To compensate (especially if an iris-like effect), turn on the Auto-Adjust option. Applying some Softness also can be useful, especially for effects that last several seconds.

If the results are not satisfactory, turn off the Auto-Adjust button and manually adjust the effect's first (and/or last) Completion keyframes up (and/or down) (such as 20% - 80% instead of the default 0% - 100%) to fine-tune the effect's visual timing.

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Customizing the Library

With hundreds of available spices, choosing one could be tedious. Fortunately, CreativEase (like our popular SpiceMASTER plug-in) includes a visual, interactive Library -- a great tool to compare and select the best spice for your desired effect. The Library shows spices as small side-by-side thumbnail animations -- much better than trying to choose from a long list of file names or icons!

How to choose a spice file is covered on this page. Below shows how you can customize the Library and use its powerful management features. For example, you can create virtual folders of favorite (or project specific) spices. Spice file names can be color-coded for later reference or to help you mark and narrow choices. Also, you can adjust viewing options to tailor the Library to your working style.

Customizing the Library Display

To customize the Library display, click its Toolbar buttons to change the thumbnail style, softness, play direction, speed, and size. Equivalent commands are also in Library menus.


a. Play/Stop Preview -- Play or stop the thumbnail animations. Stopping will reveal the grayscale design that represents each spice's geometry.
b. Preview Speed -- Speed or slow the animation.
c. Reverse Preview -- Play forward only or reverse loop.
d. Preview Softness -- Play with or without edge softness.
e. Change Preview Size -- Increase or decrease the thumbnail size.

Keep in mind you also can adjust the size and location of the Library window (and drag between its two sections to adjust their width). You also can minimize the Library window.

Tips

--- To play only one spice animation in the Library while others do NOT play, click the Play/Stop Preview button to stop all animation. Then right-click a thumbnail and choose Animate. Repeat as often as desired, such as when you have narrowed your choice to two or three spice candidates.

--- To color a thumbnail name as a way to mark possible effects (such as favorites, or potential choices), right-click the thumbnail and choose a color. The color will remain until you right-click and choose Black.
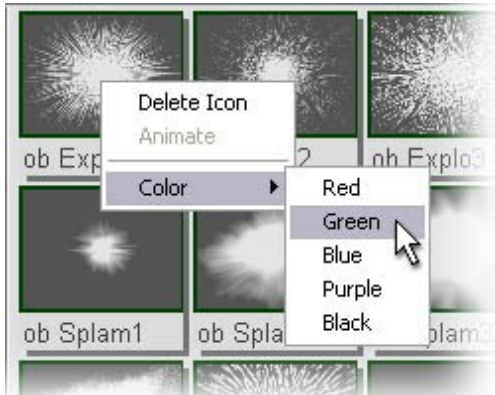
--- To hide part of the Library to have more viewing space for thumbnails, you can uncheck the status bar, toolbar, or left section in the Options menu of the Library. Also, you can toggle the Library window's tiling (automatic placement under the main CreativEase effect window) with the Tile Library Window command.

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Customizing the Library (continued)

Organizing Existing Spices

Create "virtual folders" to further organize Library spices into any group, such as spices for a particular project or type of production. Virtual folders only exist within CreativEase. Create as many as you want, with no penalty in disk space or speed. **A Favorites virtual folder is already created for you,** ready made to accept spices from anywhere else in the Library. **To create another virtual folder,** click the blue Add Virtual Folder button (shown below) in the Library toolbar (or choose Edit > Add Virtual Folder).

Then enter the desired name of the folder in the small dialog box that will appear. The new virtual folder will then appear at the top of the Library's left section. To later rename of the virtual folder, right-click it and choose Rename Folder.

To add a spice effect to the Favorites folder (or your virtual folder), first display the spice in the Library's right section, then drag and drop its thumbnail into the Favorites folder (or your virtual folder) in the Library's left section. A duplicate will then reside there (no additional disk space required).

Tips

--- To create a subfolder within a virtual folder, right-click the blue virtual folder in the left section and choose Add SubFolder.

--- To delete an unwanted spice or folder, right-click any thumbnail (or folder) in the Library, then choose Delete Icon (or Delete Folder). Or select a folder in the left section and choose Edit > Delete Selected Folder. Either way, a warning dialog box will appear to confirm your choice. Deletion will ONLY remove it from the Library display, NOT from your drive. That way it can be restored later if desired (see below).

--- To refresh/restore/update a Library folder's contents, right-click the folder in the Library's left section, then choose Refresh Folder.

Adding/Deleting Effects to the Library

The Library holds several hundred spices that ship with CreativEase, plus there are additional collections available as add-ons from our web site. This provides a range wide enough to cover most effect mask designs you will ever need. However, the Library is open-ended so you can add other still-images you have created (or acquired elsewhere). For example, you may want to use a client logo graphic to define the effect area. **The luminance (grayscale values) of the still-image will determine the geometry of the mask.**

An existing Your Custom Files folder is already visible in the Library, handy for adding other still-image files to the Library. That folder is located at ..\Pixelan\CreativEase\Shared Files\Spices\Your Custom Files within your editing software's folder (except for the Sony Vegas/Vegas Movie Studio version which has a separate Program Files\Pixelan folder). Simply drop a new file into the Your Custom Files subfolder and it will automatically appear the next time you open the Library.

To add an individual effect to a different Library folder than the Your Custom Files folder, first create a virtual folder in the Library (unless you want to add it to the existing Favorites virtual folder). Then right-click the virtual folder and choose Add Spice. (Or with that folder selected, click the Add Spice button in the toolbar, or choose File > Add Spice.) In the Open dialog that will appear, navigate to and select the desired file.

To permanently add an entire folder of additional effects to the Library, click the yellow Add Source Folder button (shown below) in the Library's toolbar (or choose Edit > Add Source Folder). This can be handy if you have a entire set of gradient or alpha wipe files, for example, from another product that you wish to have available in the Library.

In the dialog that will appear, double-click the drive that holds the additional folder of effects. Navigate until you can select that additional folder of effects, then click OK. The selected folder will then appear in the Library's left section, like any spice folder.

To delete an effect or folder, right-click any thumbnail (or folder) in the Library, then choose Delete Icon (or Delete Folder). Or select a folder in the left section and choose Edit > Delete Selected Folder.