MagicBackdrops

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COLLABORATORS

	TITLE : MagicBackdrops		
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REVISION HISTORY

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MagicBackdrops

1.1   MagicBackdrops

MagicBackdrops 4

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Release date 9 Dec 1995

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1.2   Legal Issues

Disclaimer

This package is provided "as is" without warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied, including, but not limited to, the implied warranty of fitness for a particular purpose. The entire risk as to the results, reliability and performance of this package is assumed by you.

Preface

This package is freeware, this means that you can copy it freely as long as you don't ask any more money for it than a nominal fee for copying. If you want to distribute this creation you should keep this document and the original icons with it. This package cannot be used for commercial purposes without written permission from the author. The copyright does not comprise the actual images except when stated otherwise in the picture Description section.

Special permission is hereby granted to include MagicBackgrounds in Public Domain collections such as Fred Fish's Amiga Library, AmiNET etc.

1.3 Description of MagicBackdrops

MagicBackdrops is a set of 720×536 8-colour IFF ILBM pictures whose main purpose is to reside in the background of the Workbench screen. If you feel that there might be some other use for them, feel free to take advantage of that, but this was nevertheless the original intention. And what's so great about them? Well, nothing really, I just like them, and I wouldn't be all surprised if someone else does too. That's why I have bundled them together into this archive, and troubled myself writing these docs.

All the images use the MagicWB 2.0 palette (or, are at least supposed to do so). They all have in common that they are gray-scaled versions of already available pictures fetched from near and far. Because of the scaling that has been applied to most of them, the quality of all images isn't excellent, but most look fair. The worst ones aren't included in this distribution at all, and those who barely passed the quality test are distinguished from the rest in the descriptive texts below. The texts stating that an image is "cropped" mean that only part of the image is left, most of the times this is due to my pickiness about keeping the original pixel aspect ratio (thus getting rid of stretched-looking results). This time all the pictures are plain grayscales (however they all were more colourful before my tampering with them).

In this release, there are only "3-Grayscale" pictures, sorted into the two categories "3-Grayscale" and "Math-Art". The reason for this colour absence is (mostly) that I felt confident with all the images the way they turned out (which in turn probably is correlated with the fact that none of them is hand-drawn this time), and the fact that nobody has contacted me stating that there is a demand for more colourful images. The math-art pictures were made with a nifty program I made to try out some whacky ideas I got in physics class, I'm rather fond of them myself. Basically it's the sum of a few (mostly five) interference sources sending out sine waves. I fiddled a bit with the palette for some interesting effects before applying the finished pictures on the final eight-colour MWB screen.

The "3-Grayscale" directory contatins:

Craterlake

As I recall it (it's been a while since I converted these ones), this one was snatched from on of the AmiNET Set 1 CDs.

Fruit

This picture was found in the file areas of the "Eden" BBS nearby, at +46-(0)155-269750

Island

This picture probably also came from AmiNET Set 1.

Rhinoceros

This little cutie was hanging around near the Eden BBS too, thanks Leif Gripner!

SKY007

The final nonartificial image was found on the very same BBS, thanks again.

The "Math-Art" directory contatins:

Chaotic_Spots

This was one of the first products of an early beta version, the palette was modified a bit for the effect. Original resolution was rather low, but that doesn't shine through too remarkably. Number of distortion sources: 5

Diffuse_Ripple

Pretty much the same story behind this one, it too was made in my beta AMOS "Pro" program (five distortion sources).

Dual_Blur

Despite the name, there really are five distortion sources. These names really aren't the easiest thing to come up with, thus their poor quality.

Duo

This was made using but two wave generators, it shows rather well the principles of interference really. A school example, one might say. Quite a lot of precision was lost when converting the picture to three grayscales from the original 256...

Odd_Ripple

Nothing new and spectacular, really, the effect derives from a palette modification here too. Five sources.

Quadra_Blur

Five sources, although rather hard to spot, modified palette, low original resolution.

1.4   What is required to use this package?

The MagicBackgrounds package requires the MWB palette, and a large screen with a pixel aspect ratio near 1:1. DoublePAL 720×550 is my native screen mode, and it is for this all these images have been designed (720×536 actually, since my border eats 14 pixels vertical space). To use this package in conjunction with OS2.x, the NickPrefs package is recommended. OS3.x users should have no problems setting up WBPattern to do the job. Another recommended addition to your hardware is some additional memory; as much Chip memory as possible and preferrably some Fast too; the backdrops eat quite a lot of chipmem (especially those in the "Big" drawer of some releases of MagicBackdrops), but you don't have to by any means.

1.5   Usage of MagicBackgrounds

Users of OS2.x should get hold of the NickPrefs package and use WBPicture to set up the backgrounds.

3.x users don't need additional programs, since WBPattern is quite sufficient. Just tell WBPattern what picture(s) to use.

1.6   How do I make my own Magic Backdrops?

First of all, you'll probably need a program similar to ADPro; I doubt very much that anyone wants to do a picture like this manually. This explanation assumes you have a copy of ADPro up and running.

This step by step guide shows you how to make the grayscale backdrops (or rather how I made these ones).

1. The first step would probably be to find a picture that you like, and feel that you'd want to use. Preferrably, it should be larger than or equal to the size of your Workbench screen. This is the most troublesome step, especially if you decide to draw one from scratch yourself, but that is all up to you.

2. Now load ADPro.

3. Set the render screen to whatever screenmode used by your Workbench screen, the number of colours should be eight. If you have several pictures you consider converting, locking the screenmode and depth could be convenient.

4. Turn on dithering, Floyd-Steingberg should be enough for most people.

5. Load the picture into ADPro.

6. If the image has some kind of border you don't want in the finished picture, it is time to crop it now.

7. In case the picture is smaller than the desired screenmode, scale it up, making sure you keep the pixel aspect ratio intact (or correcting it if necessary).

8. Run the "Colour to gray" operator.

9. Load the MagicWorkbench palette (or grab it from your workbench). If you don't have it, load it from one of the pictures in this archive.

10.Swap the first and fourth colours.

11.Lock the palette.

To make a 3-grayscale picture, keep reading here, for 5-grayscale images, skip the next section.

12.In the Palette Control window, Set the number of used colours to three, and the "offset colour zero" to three as well.

13.Run the "Dynamic Range" filter, setting the Minimum/Maximum values to 123/175.

14.Render the picture.

15.Save your finished picture!

To make a 5-grayscale image, keep reading here.

12.In the Palette Control window, Set the number of used colours to five, and the "offset colour zero" to one.

13.Render the picture.

14.Save your finished picture!

There still remains one step, though. The pictures should be remapped to use the MagicWB palette (remember we swapped the first and fourth colour?), and for this purpose I have used Personal Paint (It can be made using ADPro's AREXX scripts too, but I feel that's too slow). The procedure with this program is as follows:

1. Load the picture (making sure you have the page size smaller than or equal to that of the loaded file)

2. Open the palette window and exchange the first and fourth colours.

3. Select "Remap" from the "Colour" menu.

4. Resave the picture.

This procedure might not be necessary, it depends a bit on what program is used to show the pictures/put them in the backdrop of the Workbench etc, but for OS3.0 (v39) users, it is necessary, since IPrefs isn't very good at remapping the images on its own (it messes up the grayscales). If you think that you don't need to remap the images because they work on your system anyway, but intend to spread them to other people, think again. If possible, convert them to the standard palette, thus saving a great deal of trouble for people who maybe don't have the means to.

1.7   Known bugs

Well, any real "bugs" probably don't exist in this package, largely because there are no executable files included. However, someone might notice an incorrect colourmap or something similar, but so far I haven't found any. If anyone does, don't hesitate to contact me. People have already noticed me of fuzzy parts of the documentation of MagicBackdrops 1; the copyrights were not very defined and could be misinterpreted.

1.8   Yet to be done

Well, what is missing in MagicBackgrounds?

All I can think of is additional backdrops of your preference, since I have run out of fresh images... If there is a picture you really like which you would like to have "converted" to this style, contact me! It isn't all unlikely I might do it for you, if you can't do it yourself (ie you maybe don't have the needed software). The size of the finished image could be any size you want, not necessarily that of my preference (720×536).

Still, nobody has contacted me stating that they like (or dislike, for that matter) MagicBackdrops. If I don't get any response, I'm quite likely to stop distributing them; why should I, if nobody uses them anyway. Send me a mail, you don't have to write much; stating that you use/like MagicBackdrops would do wonders in itself. By the way, I understand English, Swedish and some French as well.

Any other ideas and suggestions are very welcome as well.

1.9   How to get in touch with the author

If you'd like to contact me, here's my name and addresses:

Snailmail:

Johan Sundström, Nyponvägen 210, S-613 38 Oxelösund, SWEDEN

E-Mail:

johan_sundstrom@augs.se (this address might change in the near (?) future, but it should be correct at least until February 20, 1996)

This might be the last archive in the MagicBackdrops series, since very few people have contacted me to encourage the production of more MagicBackdrops. There might not be any demand for them, so chances are I'll just keep my images to myself. Compiling distributions like these take unneccessary time if few benefit from it. Also, I've got new priorities nowadays. I've found that someone "special", what do you know, my next production the world gets to see might be a set of poems? He who lives shall see...

1.10   The author wishes to thank people...

The author wishes to thank these people for various reasons:

Person in question... for...

Martin Huttenloher .....the creation of MagicWB

Stefan Stuntz ....his excellent MUI package

Stefan Boberg ....the splendid archiver LhA used to compress this archive

Dietmar Eilert ....GoldED, the editor used to create this document

Pauli Porkka .........D.A.S ModulePlayer, a truly great MUI application

Jonathan Potter ....Directory Opus, the one of its kind

Stefan Becker ....ToolManager, a truly great program-launching environment

Nicola Salmoria &

Richard Waspe ....their StatRAM device who helped me a lot at various times

Peter Stuer ....the DOSTrace docs who were used as a model for this file

Chris Hülsbeck ......the music of Turrican I&II - both masterpieces!

Douglas Adams .....writing great litterature!

Roman Patzner ....his icons, and recently for RomIcons 10, which, among other things, featured a good-looking font which I adopted and used for the grayscale icon in this distribution. (Looking for a representative postcard right this minute, Roman!)

Mattias Eriksson ......sometimes interesting chats over the phone

Johan Wärlander .....discussing philosophy and lots of other topics

Ola Spjuth ....friendship ;-)

Fredrik Mellström .....snailmail exchange of interesting software, not to mention occasional chats

Joakim Brostedt .....some pics for this and earlier versions of MagicBackdrops

Henrik Dikvall ....for his well-assorted BBS (Titanic, +46-(0)11-142017) from which I found several of the best images so far

the Amiga community ..contributing to the publicly avaiable Amiga software

...and finally the author of Øyvind Falch for the original idea for this product and all of you who have sent me pictures for future MagicBackdrops. I'm not entirely certain that there will be a release 5 though, but I won't say anything for sure.

1.11   The History of Magic Backdrops

Version 1.0

Initial release.

Featured pictures:

3-Grayscale/ 5-Grayscale/ Coloured/

Artheel AHGP0438 Windows'95.Colour

Charlotta AHGP0439

DPG-920 AHGP0444

DPG-1000 Hajime-69

DPG-1622 Windows'95

DPG-1635

DPG-1933

DPG-2006

DPG-2197

DPG-2531

Elite6

HoseShower

Michelle

Niki Taylor

Paulina Poritzkova

Sanctuary

Schneide

Teri Peterson

Version 2.0

Straightened up the Copyright section.

Corrected the presentation of the procedure used to create a MagicBackdrop.

New type of images: extended height pictures, in the Big/ drawer.

Added History section.

Made an icon of my own for the document (really only a cut and paste operation; the pattern was drawn by Martin Huttenloher, and the template was made by Roman Patzner).

Made some (boring) imagedrawers, and updated the main drawer icon.

Featured pictures:

3-Grayscale/ Big/

BUNNY001 CGPB01

DPG-1370 DS-F-100

Joan Pamela8

Lili&Sussi Pamela9

Pamela6

Pamela7

Pamela11

Pamela12

PumaLizard

ShortHair

Shower

Version 3.0

Modified a little of this and a little of that in the documentation.

Added a paragraph stating that I like response, in the To do section

Improved general quality of supplied pictures (in this release)

Made a new icon for the 3-Grayscale directory (using a font drawn by Roman Patzner)

Fixed the History section you're reading right now to be able to show the supplied pictures from the document itself (for this to work, Multiview has to be in your command path)

Featured pictures:

3-Grayscale/

040pic

AmigaLogo

Debbie3

Dolphins

DPG-688

Elephants

Emma Sjögren

Horsehead Nebula

Jean-Luc Picard

Lake Louise

Seal

Sorceress

Warping

Water

Version 4.0

Corrected a few small errors in the documentation

Redrew the icons for the documentation and the main drawer (which uses the above mentioned font by Roman Patzner)

Featured pictures:

3-Grayscale/

Craterlake

Fruit

Island

Rhinoceros

SKY007

Math-Art/

Chaotic_Spots

Diffuse_Ripple

Dual_Blur

Duo

Odd_Ripple

Quadra_Blur