eye CANDY

for After Effects

Version 3.0 Demo

Quick Start

ALIEN SKIN SOFTWARE

Alien Skin Software, LLC

1100 Wake Forest Road, Suite 101, Raleigh, NC 27604 USA

Email: alien-skinfo@alienskin.com

Voice: (919) 832-4124

Tech Support: support@alienskin.com

Fax: (919) 832-4065

World-Wide Web: http://www.alienskin.com

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Getting Started

Welcome to the demo of Eye Candy® for After Effects, a set of 19 effects that plug into Adobe® After Effects® 3.0 and later. Eye Candy for After Effects is an adaptation of our award winning Photoshop® plug-in and has been optimized for Adobe After Effects. Eye Candy will make your life easier by creating advanced special effects that are quick and easy to use.

This short guide covers the installation of Eye Candy and some basic features that are common among its effects. It clarifies some of the exclusive features of Eye Candy that you will have not encountered with other effects. Once you're familiar with these features, you can plunge into experimenting with Eye Candy. And once you're inlove with the product and you want to order direct, see

System Requirements

Macintosh Minimum

- · PowerPC processor
- · 7.5.1 or later for Power Macintosh
- · 12 MB of physical RAM.
- · Color monitor with 8-bit or greater video card.
- · Adobe After Effects 3.0 or later

Macintosh Recommended

- · Multiple processor system
- · 24 MB of physical RAM.
- · Color monitor with 24-bit.
- · Adobe After Effects 3.1 or later

Windows Minimum

- · Pentium processor
- · Windows 95, Windows NT 4
- · 16 MB RAM physical RAM for Windows 95, 32 MB RAM for Windows NT
- · Super-VGA video card.
- · Adobe After Effects 3.1 or later

Windows Recommended

- · Pentium processor or multiple processor system
- · 32 MB or greater of physical RAM
- · 24-bit or greater Super VGA video card
- · Adobe After Effects 3.1 or later

Installation

Start by making sure you are not running After Effects. If you are, then quit out of it. This is necessary because After Effects only recognizes new effects upon startup.

Insert the Eye Candy for After Effects disk into your computer. Double-click on the setup program ("Install EC for After Effects" for Mac, "SETUP.EXE" for Windows). After the splash screen, the installer will display the license agreement for Eye Candy. Click **OK** when you are finished reading it.

The installer will immediately look for the After Effects Plug-Ins folder. There will be two files ("ECAE Core" and "ECAE English" for Mac, "ECAE.DLL" and "ECAE-ENG.AEX" for Windows) installed to the Plug-Ins folder. It is important not to move or separate these files for Eye Candy for After Effects to work correctly. A settings file will also be saved to your system folder (in the Windows folder for Windows and the Preferences folder on the Mac). If the settings file is moved or deleted, a blank new settings file will be created. To retrieve the original presets, you will need to delete the settings file and reinstall the Eye Candy for After Effects.

How Eye Candy for After Effects Applies Its Effects

You may have some experience with using Eye Candy in Photoshop or another paint program. In Photoshop, a user makes a selection with a selection tool and applies an Eye Candy filter. Many of our filters look at the selection and create a special effect in the shape of selection.

Eye Candy for After Effects works differently. Since After Effects does not Photoshop-like selections, Eye Candy for After Effects looks elsewhere for the selection information—an alpha channel. Each layer in After Effects has an alpha channel which can be defined and manipulated in numerous ways (for more information about alpha channels, consult Chapter 6 in the After Effects 3.0 or 3.1 manual). Almost all footage files imported into After Effects have an alpha channel which Eye Candy for After Effects may use to create effects.

Outer Bevel is the only effect that has problems with this scheme. Outer Bevel looks at the alpha channel transparency to make the selection and then tries to apply shading and highlight outside the selection where it won't be visible. To remedy this, you will need to apply the Outer Bevel to one layer while using the alpha channel from another layer. Suppose you wanted to apply a glass effect to a textured background layer in the shape of another layer, such as a layer of text. You would apply the Glass effect to the textured layer and choose the text

layer's alpha channel via the Alpha Layer control. You can tweak the position of the Alpha Layer with the Alpha Origin tool.

Alpha Layer

The Alpha Layer control in the Effect Controls window allows users to select alpha channel information from other layers in the project and use that information to apply the effect on the current layer. For example, if you had a layer of text and a layer as a background texture, you could apply Carve to the background texture using the alpha channel from the text layer.

Alpha Layer Origin

The default Alpha Layer Origin is plotted at the coordinates 0,0 in the composition window (the upper left-hand corner). The Alpha Origin control allows for adjusting or offsetting the Alpha Layer's position.

The Pitfalls of Alpha Channels in After Effects

While allowing you to access other layers' alpha channels is a powerful tool, it may cause some unexpected results. This is because when Eye Candy for After Effects accesses alpha channel information from another layer, it only has access to the alpha channel from when the file was first brought into the Composition from the Project Window. It does not reflect any changes made to the channel during while in that Composition. This means that if you import an EPS logo, place it in a Composition and resize the logo, the alpha channel accessed by Eye Candy for After Effects does not reflect the resizing. For example, if you create a New Solid in a composition and apply Basic Text to that Solid, Eye Candy for After Effects will not be able to read the alpha channel information from that Solid.

This is a limitation in After Effects, but there is a way around it. If you Pre-Compose the layer containing the selected alpha channel, any modifications done to the alpha channel will be correctly passed when selected with the Alpha Layer option.

Here's an example of how this situation might arise:

Say you wanted to rotate some shrinking type with an Outer Bevel on a textured background layer. You have already created a layer of text that is rotating and shrinking. Pre-compose the solid and footage item selecting the "move all attributes into the new composition" option. Next, apply Outer Bevel to the textured background layer. You will see no effect until you choose your newly Pre-composed layer's alpha in the Alpha Layer control in Outer Bevel.

Eye Candy's Motion Parameters

Besides making all of the parameters from Eye Candy keyframeable over time, we added some new motion parameters not in the original Photoshop set to give you more control over some of the effects.

Flow

Several effects (Glass, HSB Noise, Fire, Smoke, Fur, Jiggle, Swirl and Weave) feature flow parameters. Because Flow takes place in clumps or blobs, Flow, simply stated, is the movement of an effect's clumps across an affected layer. For example, clumps of Fur move across footage and wisps rise off of fire affected footage; Weave's adjustable ribbons and gaps move seamlessly across layers and Swirl's eddies move in lines across objects as the individual cells whirl. Flow has either or both of two adjustable parameters: Speed and/or direction— These are explained below.

Flow Speed

Use the Flow Speed parameter to adjust the rate at which an effect crosses a layer. There are two easy ways to adjust Flow Speed. The horizontal slider gives a range of values between zero and 100 pixels per second of control. Double-clicking on the Flow Speed value will bring up the Slider Control dialog box where you can enter a value up to 999 pixels per second. Lower values yield slower flow rates. If

you assign glass a Flow Speed of 10 pixels per second one flaw in the texture can easily be followed with the eye. At higher rates, like 999 pixels per second, the flaw would flash across your field of view.

Flow Direction

In some of the effects featuring flow an additional parameter, Flow Direction, adds 360 degrees of directional control to the effect's movement. Zero degrees is an upward motion, 90 degrees is due east, 180 degrees is straight down and so forth. This parameter has two associated methods of control: The first is a compass slider that provides an easy and visually self-explanatory way to gauge the direction in which your effects will travel across footage. Secondly, double-clicking on the Flow Direction value brings up the Slider Control dialog which provides a more exact (to single degrees), keyed entry.

Undulation Speed

Several effects in Eye Candy (Fur, Glass, HSB Noise, Jiggle and Swirl) give users command over a phenomenon called Undulation. Undulation takes place in blobs or cells spread randomly throughout its parent effect. In effects with this parameter, users can manage the undulation incrementally in degrees per second. After 360 degrees of phasing a footage item looks the same as it did at 0 degrees of

the cycle before: Then it begins its next cycle. In the Effect Controls window, the slider enables undulation speed adjustments between 0 and 640 degrees per second. Double-clicking on the value in the Effect Control will give you access to the Slider Control window in which you can enter a value of up to 6400 degrees per second. Lower numbers slow the undulation and, you guessed it, higher numbers accelerate it.

Since this parameter can be keyframed over time, the effect it has on footage can be dramatic, with one effect conveying different visual impacts. For example, in Fur you might make a windblown eddy in tall grass or at a different rate simulate the movement of a porcupine's quills. In Glass you can create a reflective watery surface or an oozing jelly. The best way to create amazing special effects is to experiment. With all of the new parameters, variations in a single effect can be endless.

Troubleshooting

If you have trouble with any of the effects in Eye Candy for After Effects, please read through this section. We also maintain a more up-to-date troubleshooting guide on our web site (http://www.alienskin.com). We have tried to collect the most commonly asked questions here. If you get really stuck, then the best way to get help is to send us electronic mail via: support@alienskin.com

Problem: Why can't I use Eye Candy for Photoshop in After Effects and vice versa?

Solution: Eye Candy for Photoshop was specially designed to work with Photoshop. After Effects does not support the Photoshop plug-in specification needed for Eye Candy to work. Likewise, Eye Candy for After Effects was specially designed for After Effects and cannot be used as a Photoshop plug-in.

Problem: The effects do not appear in the Effects menu.

Solution: Remember that after you have installed new effects, you must restart After Effects for them to become available. If you have restarted After Effects, go to the Plug-Ins folder in After Effects and make sure that the two Eye Candy for After Effects

files are present and in the same folder (Windows: ECAE.dll and ECAE-ENG.aex, Mac: ECAE Core and ECAE English). If they are not present, reinstall Eye Candy for After Effects.

Problem: Every time I try to apply an effect, I get an error message, "Error: Couldn't locate file 'ECAE Core'."

Solution: Go to the Plug-Ins folder in the After Effects and make sure that the two Eye Candy for After Effects files are present and in the same folder (Windows: ECAE.dll and ECAE-ENG.aex, Mac: ECAE Core and ECAE English). If they are not present, reinstall Eye Candy for After Effects.

Problem: Outer Bevel creates little or no effect at all.

Solution: Outer Bevel adds highlights and shading around the **outside** of an alpha selection. The Outer Bevel shading and highlights will only appear on opaque areas outside the selection. Outer Bevel requires a thick band of opaque pixels around the selection to make a noticeable effect. Refer to the Outer Bevel section on page 39 for more information.

Problem: One of the effects seems to have no effect on the image.

Solution: This problem is usually due to the use of extreme parameter settings. For instance, setting opacity to 1 for Cutout, Glow or Motion Trail will make a nearly invisible effect. A long trail length in Motion Trail will have a similar effect if the Just Smear Edges setting is off. Another possibility is that you have made your selection in a mostly transparent part of a layer and you are using an effect that does not affect transparency. Finally, you may have a layer selected that is hidden behind other layers.

Problem: Eye Candy for After Effects doesn't work with a graphics program that says that it uses After Effects plug-ins.

Solution: Just because a program says it uses After Effects plug-ins doesn't always mean that we are compatible with it. Not every software company strictly follows the plug-in standard. If you have a question about Eye Candy's compatibility with other software, please don't hesitate to email Alien Skin Software at: support@alienskin.com

Problem: An effect makes After Effects or your entire computer crash or freeze up.

Mac Solution: You may have an extension conflict. To determine whether you have an extension conflict, restart your computer while holding down the Shift key. You may release the Shift key after you see the message "Welcome to Macintosh. Extensions off." Then try the same effect operation. If it now works, then you have a control panel or extension installed in your computer that is incompatible with Eye Candy. Please try to identify the problem extension and inform Alien Skin Software about the conflict.

Windows Solution: Make sure that your computer system has the minimum requirements to run our software. Try exiting out of other programs before you run After Effects in case there is a conflict. Please try to identify the problem program and inform Alien Skin Software about the conflict.

Credits

After Effects specific programming
   Finley Lee

Core graphics programming:
   Jeff Butterworth

Manual:
   Andy Spencer
   Skip Elsheimer,
   Scott Gilliam

Eye Candy for After Effects logo:
   Rumi Humphrey

Example artwork:
   Steve Graham
   Scott Gilliam
   Andy Spencer

Testing:
   Skip Elsheimer

How to Order

Once you're inlove with Eye Candy 3.0 for After Effects, you'll find that ordering is even easier. The best way to order is via our secure order pageon our web site at: http://www.alienskin.com. You can email us your order. Send payment, shipping, and contact information to orders@alienskin.com. You can call us direct at (919) 832-4124. Or you can print this page and fill out this form and their either fax it to (919) 832-4065 or mail it to: Alien Skin Software, LLC

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