Specular Maps

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Tools Needed

* Poser
* DAZ Studio
* Graphic Program

Introduction

Simply said specularity is how “shiny” an object appears. In Poser or DAZ Studio you can set different values to make objects more or less shiny: higher values make the highlights more spread out on the object surface (like in metal objects), while a lower value makes highlights more spot-like (think of plastic surfaces). It is possible to set also a color for specularity and an image map. This tutorial deals with the latter, showing how, through a map, it is possible to set different glossiness areas on the same object.

Step 1 - Specular Maps

A specular map is usually a grayscale/black&white image that works together with the numerical settings for specularity in this way:

- white on the map is for areas of the objects affected by numerical values
- black on the map is for areas where specular settings don't apply.

Without a map an object has the same specular value all over it, while by using a map you can set some parts of it to be more or less “shiny” than others.

In this tutorial I am not going into detail about the different numerical settings, just note that in DAZ Studio a more diffuse shiny is obtained with low glossiness values and high specular values; in Poser you need to increase the highlights value for the same effect.

This is true generally speaking, I suggest to play with the settings to see how they work.
Step 2 - Setting a Specular Map

To specify a Specular Map in DAZ Studio go in the Surfaces tab - Advanced and click on the triangle (red circle in the image below): a dialog appears asking to locate a file.

In Poser you can set a specular map in the material room - Simple tab clicking on the image square as shown below:

or in the Advanced tab by attaching a image_map node to the specular color setting:

Step 3 - Difference in renders with and without a specular map

Below are two Poser 6 renders:

- the first one has no specular map applied. Note how the entire object is shiny.

- the second one has a map applied. You can see that only the central part of the vase is somewhat shiny, while the top and bottom are more dull. That's because we applied a map that is colored black for the top and bottom and white for the center (the map is below)

- Same example rendered in DAZ Studio.

And this is the specular map used:

Step 4 - One more example

The following image is another example that shows how you can completely change the look of an object by using maps:

The images above use bump, color(diffuse), displacement, transparency and specular maps.
Step 5 - Conclusion

The vase used in this tutorial is a freebie by Ravynsworld (Renderosity).

The template used for the maps was created by me with UV Mapper

To learn more about bump, displacement and transparency map I suggest the “Understanding Maps” tutorial