SIMPLE GODRAYS

A product by

SICKLEYIELD

User's Manual

Table of Contents

Introduction

Thank you for purchasing the Simple Godrays by SickleYield! This product is intended to provide an easy solution for adding the visible crepuscular rays that are created by light shining through dust and particles. There are other good solutions to this. The advantages to this one are that it is very easy to use, renders quickly, and has no issues with layered transparency in any lighting.

This guide exists to help you find and use all of the features of the product, including some that you might not notice at first. As such, it is recommended that you read all of it before rendering. The product was developed for use in DAZ Studio 4.6 and up, and the instructions are current to that version's menus.

Chapter 1: Finding the Product

The product is found in your DAZ library in Light Presets/SickleYield/SimpleGodrays. This is different from the location of the Easy Godrays freebie you might have downloaded at ShareCG, which was in Props because it contained no actual lighting presets. This product has different Uvs and textures and many more options than the freebie.

In the SimpleGodrays folder, you will find a list of four props and three folders. The four props are unparented versions of the cone, cube, cylinder, and window rays. You may use these if you want to handle parenting yourself, or already have all your scene's lights set up.

The !SmartproppedToSpotlight folder contains a base spotlight and smartpropped versions of the four props that automatically parent to the spotlight. Use Ctrl+Click to load the spotlight if you already have lights in your scene.

The Materials folder contains colored materials for all of the ray props in their own named subfolders. There are also presets to let you hide some of the rays of the WindowBank prop, for smaller or differently-shaped windows.

The Shaders folder contains shaders and tiling options to increase or decrease the number of times a shader repeats across a surface. They are best used with the cube to add atmosphere to an entire scene, but in some circumstances may work with the others.

Now that you know where everything is, let's discuss how best to use it.

Chapter 2: Using the Smartpropped Rays

In order to use the rays as smartprops with a spotlight, you will need to load the spotlight from the ! SmartproppedToSpotlight folder.

The spotlight loads with raytraced shadows on in a default position facing downward at the center of your scene. To use it, double-click the "SYSGSpotLightBase.duf" item, whose icon says "LOAD THIS FIRST."

If you already have lights in your scene, CTRL+CLICK the spotlight and choose Add.

This ensures that the light does not overwrite your existing lights.

Now you can select the spotlight in your Scene Tab, and load one of the rays to automatically parent the prop to the spotlight. If you do not have a Scene Tab you can create one using Window—Panes (Tabs)--Scene. With the prop parented, you can move the spotlight and point it anywhere, and the rays will point there as well.

Chapter 3: Using the Unparented Rays

The main SimpleGodrays folder contains four ray props: The Cone Rays, the Cube Rays, the Cylinder Rays, and the Window Rays.

Sometimes you will find it is easier to move these rays manually in your scene rather than trying to move them smartpropped to a spotlight, especially when you want to place them in a window aperture. In this case, simple double-click on one of the four icons to load the rays prop into your scene. You can find materials for different colors in the Materials folder. The shaders will be dealt with in another chapter.

Loading one of these props will not affect a scene's existing lights, and they are not lights themselves, so you will need to light the scene as well as using them. Then you can simply select the prop and move it to where you want the rays to appear. They can be moved, scaled, and rotated like any other .duf prop in a scene. In fact, scaling them can be very important, because windows and other objects in the scene come in different sizes. Don't be afraid to experiment.

Chapter 4: Shaders And The Cube

The SYSGCubeRays prop can be used a little differently from the others in addition to creating a straight cube of rays. You can also use it to fill a room or a scene with particles of snow or dust.

To use the cube this way, double-click the SYSGCubeRays.duf prop in the main SimpleGodrays folder to load it. Now scale it up until the edges are not visible through your main camera. You should translate it upward so that the bottom "fade out" area of transparency does not touch the ground, if you can. The goal is to place one of the cube's surfaces consistently between the scene and the camera.

The existing ray texture works all right for this, but the shaders work even better. To apply a shader, you need to select the cube twice: in the Scene Tab, and its material in the Surfaces Tab. You can create either of these tabs through the Windows—Panes(Tabs) dialogue if you do not already have them.

Once you have the cube and the material selected, go to the SimpleGodrays/Shaders folder. Here you have the Dust and Snow shaders with their tiling presets. Double-clicking on a shader will add it to the cube. Check first to see if the scale of the particles is appropriate to what you want in your scene. If not, you can click the Tilex1, Tilex5, or Tilex10 options to cause it to tile one, five or ten times. Ten is the smallest "size" of particles.

Because these props render fairly quickly and efficiently with both UberEnvironment and Advanced Ambient lights, you may want to use both a dust cube and some cone or cylinder rays in the scene, as with this scene:

This scene contains three SimpleGodrays props: The cube with a snow shader applied and two cylinders with the broader rays material option. (Each color material comes in a version with wider or narrower rays.)

The important thing to note when using props this way is:

Layering ray props intensifies opacity at the edges.

So in order to make best use of them in your scene, you may need to further turn down the Opacity channel in the materials of your non-cube props (in this case, the two cylinders). You will be surprised at how visible a cylinder ray or cone with opacity at only 5% can still be when it is layered with a cube that has a shader applied.

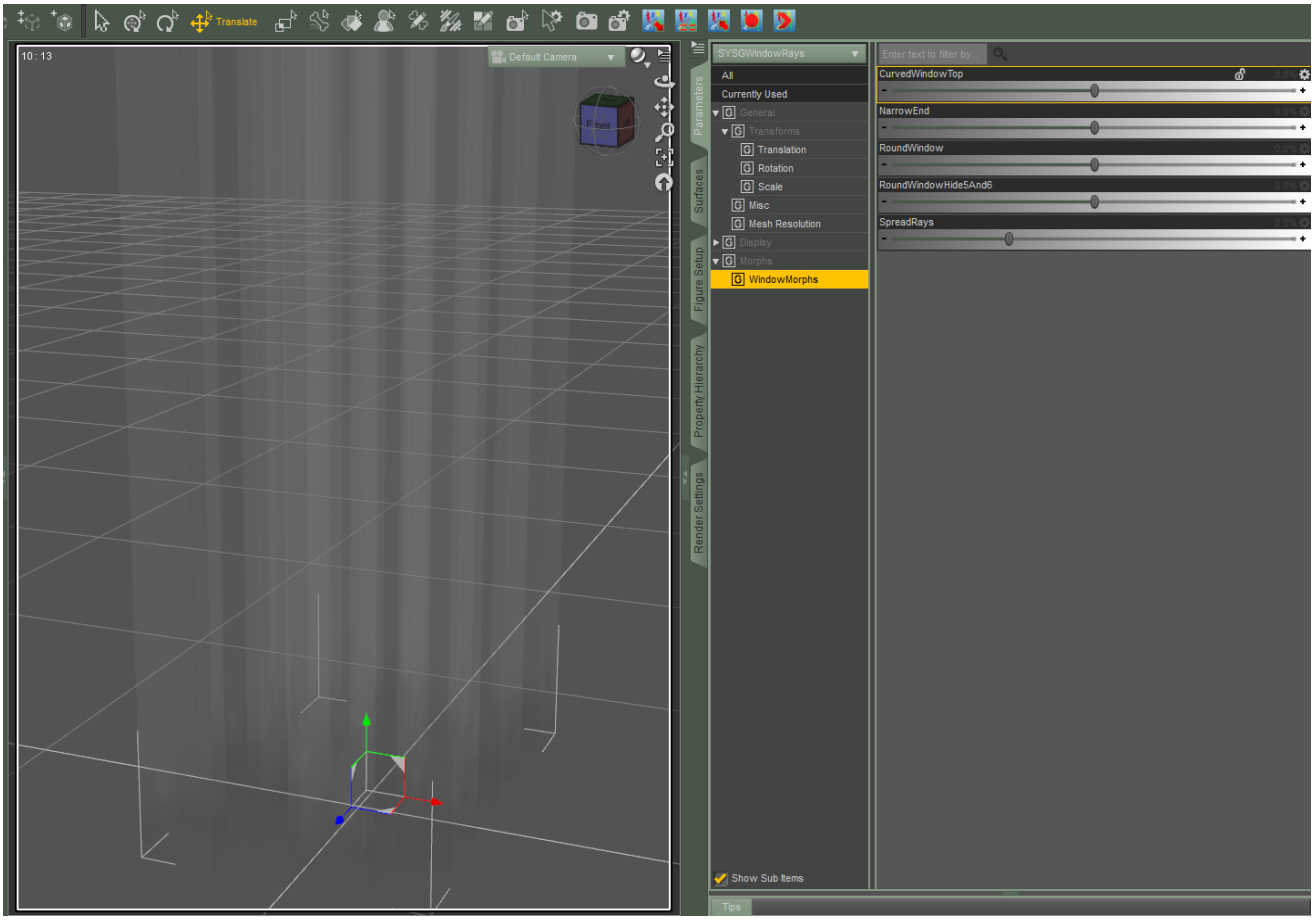
The Opacity channel is found in the Surfaces tab when a prop is selected. If you do not have a Surfaces tab, you can create one using Windows—Panes(Tabs)--Surfaces.

Chapter 5: The Window Rays Prop Morphs

The prop called SYSGWindowRays has a special function: it is intended for use with windows that have multiple smaller panes. You can see this use here.

The rays prop has special morphs to help facilitate this use with different windows from different artists, since no two props are just alike. **You can access these morphs in the Parameters tab under the heading Morphs/WindowMorphs.** They will not appear in the Shaping tab. If you do not have a Parameters tab, you can create one using Windows—Panes(Tabs)--Parameters.

You can see the location of the morphs in the picture on the next page.



The prop, as you can see, loads straight up and down, so you can best see the results of some of these morphs from the top view.

The CurvedWindowTop morph curves one end of the rays to form the shape of a window with a curved top, the traditional “tower” window of many fantasy scenes. The end that curves is nearest the viewer in the above picture.

The NarrowEnd morph narrows the top end of the rays, causing them to taper toward one end. This is best combined with the SpreadRays morph, which moves the rays out away from one another. Both of these were used in the first scene in this chapter to create the impression of light through panels in glass.

The RoundWindow morph shifts the rays into a shape that is rounded when viewed in top view. This is for use with round windows. If you want a round window with fewer rays, use the RoundWindowHide5And6 morph and combine it with the materials presets called !HideRays05 and ! HideRays06 from SimpleGodrays/Materials/WindowBank.

The materials folder options let you hide or show any of the six rows of rays that the window prop has. This makes it flexible for use with different sorts of paned windows (in a door, in a wall, in a skylight, etc.).

Appendix: For Those Installing Files Manually In Windows

This section is for those who do not use the DAZ Install Manager to install content for DAZ Studio. If this is the case, you probably downloaded the product as a .zip file.

In order to correctly install the product manually, you need to know where your DAZ Studio Library is located. If you allowed the DAZ Studio installer to use its default settings in Windows Vista or Windows 7, the My DAZ 3D Library folder is located in Libraries/Documents/Public Documents.

The location in Program Files is normally where the program's .exe and other such files are kept, and in a default install this is not where content normally should go (at least in the case of this set of lighting helpers).

If you have found your My DAZ 3D Library folder, the next step is to unzip the zip file you downloaded in another location. Copy the folders INSIDE the folder called Content, not the Content folder itself, and paste them inside the My DAZ 3D Library folder. You should get a popup asking you if you want to merge folders. Say Yes To All. If you do not get this popup, you may not be installing to the correct location.

The Content folder is used by Install Manager but is not part of the regular Library install in latter versions of DAZ Studio.

If you have a non-default installation, you need to find where your /data and /Light Presets folders are located, and then copy the contents of the zip file's Content folder and paste over them. Choose Yes to merge. Make sure they are the correct /data etc. folders and not ones that were installed by accident or in error (they probably should not be inside a folder called Content).