Canary's Composition Helpers   QuickStart Guide

Camera Composition Helpers

1. Find the cameras in your CONTENT LIBRARY tab under /Content/Camera Presets/Composition Helpers

2. Choose a camera that fits the aspect ratio for your image. All cameras are using local dimensions, but you can turn this off later in the PARAMETERS tab if you want to unlock the aspect ratio.

3. Load the camera into your scene. It will load into the default "new camera" position.

4. Switch to the new camera in the VIEWPORT drop-down view. You will see three of the camera's seven guides. All guides can be turned on and off; I've turned on three for each camera to give you a good starting point for setting up your image.

5. Find the camera in the SCENE tab and open it up so you can see the guides underneath. They are named with the aspect ratio and the type of guide. Use the visibility "eyeball" control in the SCENE tab to turn the guides on and off to suit your image.

6. With the camera selected in the SCENE tab, open the SURFACES tab. Each guide has from 1 to 8 different surfaces, corresponding to lines or groups of lines. Use the color and opacity shader presets in /Content/Camera Presets/Composition Helpers/Shaders to change the colors and opacity of the different surfaces.

7. With the helper camera selected in the VIEWPORT, move the view around and adjust the camera as you normally would. The guides are inside the camera and will move with it. The guides are normal props and can be scaled and moved independently by using the controls in the PARAMETERS tab.

8. If you have a camera set up in a scene already, you can copy its position settings to the Composition Helper camera through the EDIT menu. Choose your original camera, click EDIT-->Copy, then choose the Composition Helper camera and click EDIT-->Paste Pose to Selected Item.

9. When you are ready to render, turn off the guides using the "eyeball" control in the SCENE tab, and they will not show in your final render. Set your render dimensions in the PARAMETERS tab for the Camera, not in the RENDER SETTINGS tab, or else turn off "Use Local Dimensions" in the PARAMETERS tab for the Camera after setting your dimensions in the RENDER SETTINGS tab. When "Use Local Dimensions" is turned on for a Camera, it overrides other settings.

Background Composition Helpers

1. Open the ENVIRONMENT tab and change the environment setting from "None" to "Backdrop."

2. Click next to the backdrop color to browse to an image. Browse to /Content/General/Composition Helpers/Backdrops/

3. The backdrops are White guidelines on a transparent base, in PNG format. Load the image you want in the correct aspect ratio for your scene, and then set the background color to whatever you want the guide to be. The white PNG will take on the underlying color.

4. When you are ready to render, go the ENVIRONMENT tab and make sure that the backdrop is set NOT to show in your final render.

Included Cameras

- Display Standard 3x4 (Portrait)
- Display Standard 4x3 (Landscape)
- Display Wide 4x5 (Portrait)
- Display Wide 5x4 (Landscape)
- Golden Ratio 1x1.618 (Portrait)
- Golden Ratio 1.618x1 (Landscape)
- Photo 35mm Slide 2x3 (Portrait)
- Photo 35mm Slide 3x2 (Landscape)
- Custom 10x13 (Portrait) [AKA "Daz Promo"]
- Custom 13x10 (Landscape)
- Square 1x1
- Panorama 8x3 (Landscape)
- Widescreen 16x9 (Landscape)

Included Guides

Rule of Thirds: The popular method of dividing into three and placing focus points at the intersections or on the lines. Thirds guidelines are also available as a built-in camera setting in Daz studio.

Rule of Thirds with Diagonals: Several diagonal lines added, intersecting with focus points.

Golden Mean: The traditional method of dividing into three, with the "Golden proportion." Note: This guide only has the true mathematical "Golden Ratio" when used with the "Golden Ratio" cameras. The others have been scaled to fit their cameras.

Golden Mean with Diagonals: Several diagonal lines added, intersecting with focus points. See note for Golden Mean, above.

Golden Rectangles: Another way of representing the Golden Ratio, with a spiral of rectangles. See note for Golden Mean, above.

Golden Spiral: Another way of representing the Golden Ratio. This guide has the true mathematical "Golden Ratio" for all cameras except the Panorama 8x3. Instead of scaling to fit, it has been rotated to fit the different cameras, while maintaining its proportion.

Renaissance Circles: A set of intersecting Circles, based on various symmetrical and formal Renaissance designs. Good for formal, centered compositions.

Renaissance Triangles: A set of intersecting Triangles, based on various symmetrical and formal Renaissance designs. Good for formal, centered compositions.

Loomis Curves: A set of curves by classic illustrator/instructor Harold Loomis, for informal compositions.

Pogany Curves: A set of curves derived from the "Parsifal" illustrations of Willy Pogany, useful for informal and unusual compositions.

Included Shaders

The shader presets use the DS Default shader, and apply a color to the diffuse and the ambient channels. This means the guides will be visible in your viewport in most lighting situations, and will not take much memory to display in your scene view. The guides are UV-mapped and can be used with any shader you like, of course, like any other prop. The opacity shader presets are a quick way to modify the cutout opacity channel to your liking.

PSD Files

There are Photoshop-format documents in /Content/General/Composition Helpers/Photoshop/ for all of the camera ratios. Each PSD file has the 10 guides in layers, so you can use them in your postwork in any app that supports PSD files. You can choose from black, white, or color guides.

OBJ Files

All guides are included as OBJs that can be imported into any application that uses Wavefront OBJ format. You can find them in /Content/General/Composition Helpers/OBJ/. These guides are not positioned in a camera; they are centered in the scene. An easy way to add them to a camera in most programs is to move the camera to scene center (0/0/0), look through the camera and position the guide (usually by using z-translate), and then parent the guide to the camera. Then you can move the camera to wherever you want it. For best results, position the guide as close to the camera as possible so it does not interfere with objects in your scene.

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