



Version: 1.1

Plugin and User's guide last update: 03-2018

Compatibility: After Effects CS6 and later

'Layer Sculptor' is a plugin for After Effects built to distort layers based on maskpaths.



Parameters description:

1_MASK PARAMETERS

Mask 1, Mask 2...: lets you select the masks used to distort the layer.

Inbetweener: creates and sets new masks for better distortion control.

Mask mode: can be **Selection time** or **Reference mask** (see **How the plugin works** below).

Ref mask 1, Ref mask 2...: lets you select the masks used as a reference to distort the layer (appear only in **Reference mask** mode).

2_SHAPE PARAMETERS

Num samples: number of samples along the masks.

Num sub-samples: number of samples from one mask to the next.

Fill last mask: fills the last mask with layer's texture.

Bezier tension: defines the tension of the curve interpolating between masks (requires at least 3 masks).

Centroid mode:

Centroid calculation method. Can be:

_ **Auto (bicubic):** centroid is computed from polygon's mass and verts average, with bicubic interpolation.

_ **Auto (linear):** centroid is computed from polygon's mass and verts average, with linear interpolation.

_ **Manual (bicubic):** centroid is defined by user, with bicubic interpolation.

_ **Manual (linear):** centroid is defined by user, with linear interpolation.

Verts average <-> mass centroid: defines the centroid calculation method (Auto mode only).

Centroid: defines the centroid (Manual mode only).

Preserve last mask alpha: keeps last mask's alpha like After Effects does.

Selection time: defines the 'no distortion' time of the masks.

Invert overlaps: inverts polygon's drawing order.

Overlaps method: defines polygon's drawing order. Can be:

_ **Distortion amount:** polygon is drawn from the least distorted to the most distorted parts of the layer.

_ **Distance from centroid:** polygon is drawn from the furthest to the closest of centroid.

3_SOURCE PARAMETERS

Source: source layer to be distorted. If set to 'None', the layer source is used.

Source time mode: sampling time of the source. Can be:

_ **Current time:** layer is sampled at current time.

_ **Selector:** layer is sampled at 'Source time selector' time (in frames).

Source time selector: defines sampling time of the source (in frames).

OTHER PARAMETERS

Composite mode: can be None, Over original, Over source (alpha test) or Under source (alpha test). The 'alpha test' modes composite the source with the distorted layer, computing overlaps and transparency.

Opacity: distorted layer's opacity.

Transparency overlaps: transparency calculation method. Can be:

_ **Fast transparency:** fastest method, can create artefacts with low transparency pixels.

_ **Double pass:** pixel perfect transparency, requires 2 rendering passes (slower)

HOW THE PLUGIN WORKS:

Layer Sculptor distorts your layer according to masks positions.

The default mask mode is **Selection time**, with default time set to 0.

It means your layer will be distorted according to masks' animation, **compared to their shape at time 0**.

You can set and animate the **Selection time** to define the shape that will be used as comparison.

For example, if your mask morphs between a square at time 0 and a circle at time 100, a **Selection time** of 0 means your layer will morph from a square to a circle, the square being your undistorted layer texture. With a **Selection time** set to 100, the layer will morph from square to circle, but the layer's texture will undistort from square to circle, the circle showing undistorted texture.

This method requires **keyframes** to see any distortion.

New in v1.1, you can use **Reference mask** method.

Instead of comparing each mask to its shape at **Selection time**, the plugin will compare each mask to a **reference mask**. The **reference mask** can be the same than the distortion mask, in this case the texture won't be distorted by this mask. This is a good way to define a limit to your distortion.

This feature allows you to distort a video based on animated masks.

If no reference mask is selected, the default **Selection time** behavior will be used.