

CROSSFADE ANIMATION with AFTEREFFECTS

Consider using the Internet as a new presentation medium for photographs. The fluid nature of the medium allows the removal of photography from its present static state, and allows for dynamic change. The trick is to make the dynamics non-narrative and minimal to avoid making a video piece. It is possible to create a dynamic photographic sequence with AfterEffects from a series of jpeg picture files created in PhotoShop.

CREATE the PICTURES

create a series _____ of pictures in PhotoShop
use a size _____ that will fit nicely on screen with sufficient borders
512 x 384 is a reasonable size
save the pictures _____ for the web using FILE> SAVE FOR WEB [CMD] [OPT] [SHFT] s
use jpeg medium _____ to retain quality as well as reduce file size
leave progressive _____ turned off

CREATE the AFTER EFFECTS PROJECT

The composition should appear in the PROJECT window when finished.

create a new project _____ with FILE> NEW> NEW PROJECT [CMD] [OPT] N
create a new composition _____ with COMPOSITION> NEW COMPOSITION [CMD] N
set the width and height _____ to match the picture sizes
adjust the frame rate _____ if desired
12 fps is reasonable for the web
set the duration _____ to the duration of any single frame
(*ex: for 5 seconds set duration to 0:00:05:00*)
AE thinks in minutes:seconds:frames (*video speak = 30 fps*)

IMPORT the PICTURE FILES

The pictures should appear in the PROJECT window when finished.

import the picture files _____ with FILE> IMPORT FILE [CMD] I
navigate _____ to the desired folder
shift click on all files _____ to be imported
do not click on _____ jpeg sequence
hit [OKAY] _____ to import all file at once

SET the STAGE

All pictures need to be dragged onto the stage to be animated. The first picture needs to appear twice. The pictures will appear in the TIMELINE window as icons on separate LAYERS.

click _____ on the first picture in the series
shift click _____ on the last picture in the series
this will select all picture files in the PROJECT window
drag all pictures _____ into the TIMELINE window, under SOURCE NAME
all layers will have a duration equal to the full length of the composition
select only the first picture _____ of the series in the PROJECT window
drag the first picture _____ into the TIMELINE window
place it _____ at the bottom of the stack of layers
all tracks should be the same duration (*ex: 5 seconds*)

CREATING the ANIMATION

RESET the DURATION

open Composition Settings _____ with COMPOSITION> COMPOSITION SETTINGS [CMD] K
reset the duration _____ to the duration of the **entire** piece
(*ex: number of pictures * amount of time each picture will appear*)
(*ex: 10 pictures * 5 seconds each = 50 seconds 0:00:50:00, or -*
(*14 pictures * 5 seconds each = 70 seconds 0:01:10:00*)
the display may look funny until you reset the duration

SETUP the ANIMATION

select all layers _____ with EDIT> SELECT ALL [CMD] A
set up the sequence _____ with ANIMATION> KEYFRAME ASSISTANT> SEQUENCE LAYERS
click on _____ overlap
set duration _____ to half the length of the layer duration
(*ex: 5 seconds each picture duration / 2 = 2 1/2 seconds 0:00:02:15*
AE thinks in minutes:seconds:frames (*video speak = 30 fps*)
set crossfade _____ to front layer only
this will fade the front layer out, revealing the layer behind
(that remains at 100% opacity) keeping overall density consistent

TRIM for the LOOP

cut the length _____ of the **first** layer to half
drag the start point _____ to half the length
cut the length _____ of the **last** layer to half
drag the end point _____ to half the length
drag all layers _____ back to time zero
select all layers _____ with EDIT> SELECT ALL [CMD] A
drag the first layer _____ to time zero
all others will follow, maintaining their relative positions
reset _____ the composition length if necessary
use _____ COMPOSITION> COMPOSITION SETTINGS [CMD] K
reset the duration _____ to the new duration of the **entire** piece, if necessary

TEST the ANIMATION

play the animation _____ by hitting the play button in the control palette
turn on _____ looping

EXPORT the ANIMATION

The best way to get the animation onto the web is with the Flash/ Shockwave format commonly called a SWF. This generates a small file size, by a factor of between 5 to 10% of a QuickTime movie!

export the file _____ with FILE> EXPORT> MACROMEDIA FLASH (SWF)
a SAVE AS dialog box will open
navigate _____ to the desired disk and folder
set the name _____ as desired
click [SAVE] _____
an SWF SETTINGS dialog box will open
set quality _____ to JPEG medium / 5
ignore _____ unsupported features
leave audio _____ off
set options _____ loop continuously, prevent import

WEB'ING the ANIMATION

CREATE the HTML PAGE

open your web page _____ from the last critique
resave it immediately _____ in a new location with a new name
 use _____ **FILE> SAVE AS** [CMD] [SHFT] S
 put it _____ in your crit4folder
 along with your swf file from AfterEffects
 call it _____ yournameC4.html

CHANGE the PICTURE to a SWF

select the picture _____ by single clicking on it
delete the picture _____ hit the [DELETE] key
insert a table _____ with 1 row, 1 column, 0 padding, 0 spacing, 0 border
 use _____ **INSERT> TABLE** [CMD] [OPT] T
insert a new picture _____ inside the table
 use _____ **INSERT> MEDIA> FLASH** [CMD] [OPT] F
 the **PROPERTIES** inspector will have different parameters for a SWF file
 loop and autoplay should both be turned on
 select the file _____ with the **FILE** icon in the **PROPERTIES** inspector
refine the table _____ select the table by clicking on the <table> tag
 resize _____ to the exact size of the picture + 2 pixels on each side
 probably 386 x 514 pixels
 set _____ the background color to white by clicking the **bg color** box
 center the table _____ on the page with the **ALIGN** menu

CREATE a LINK BACK

select the table cell _____ by clicking on the <td> tag
 set the link _____ to ../C4index.html
alter the title _____ if desired

CREATE a THUMBNAIL

pick _____ the most representative single picture from the sequence
open it _____ in PhotoShop
create a thumbnail _____ at 96 x 128 pixels
save for web _____ to your crit3 folder

HAND IN the FILES

copy the folder _____ and all files to the Art Shared folder

WEB'ING the ANIMATION from AAE

ALTER the RESULTING WEB PAGE

Exporting as an swf file automatically generates a web page. Open this page in DreamWeaver and tweak to fit the desired design requirements.

OPEN the HTML PAGE

drag the HTML page onto the DreamWeaver icon on the desktop
delete all unnecessary text

ALTER the LOOK of the PAGE

change page propeties with **MODIFY> PAGE PROPERTIES** [CMD] J
set background color to black by clicking on the **COLOR** box
set the text color to white
set the link color to white
set the visited links color to the yellow just above white
set the active links color to the bottom left pink

DESIGN a TABLE

insert a table with **INSERT> TABLE** [CMD] [OPT] T
set attributes 3 rows, 1 column, width 512 pixels, border 0
center the table on the page
select the table by clicking on the **<TABLE>** tag in the **STATUS** bar
align to center with the **ALIGN** menu in the **PROPERTIES** inspector
drag the flash file into the center cell of the table

ADD TEXT

type the artist's name in the top cell of the table
follow with a line break [SHIFT] [RETURN]
center the text with the **CENTER** button in the **PROPERTIES** inspector
type the title of the piece into the bottom table cell
precede with line break
center the text with the **CENTER** button

ADD a BORDER

select the table by clicking on the **<TABLE>** tag in the **STATUS** bar
resize the table increase dimensions by 2 pixels, width and height
type in new numbers 514 x 386 in the **PROPERTIES** inspector
set background color of that one table cell **only** to white
select the table cell by clicking on the **<TD>** tag
click on the BG COLOR box and choose white

ADD a BACK BUTTON

It is possible to make a table cell link to a web page. To make the **FLASH** animation appear to link back to the crit index page, let the table cell be the link.

select the FLASH animation by clicking on it
select the table cell by clicking on the **<TD>** tag in the **STATUS** bar
type the name of the link into the **LINK** box in the **PROPERTIES** inspector,
exactly as follows ../crit4index.html

STYLIZING the TEXT

Stylizing text becomes awkward if the WebSylesAAE style sheet is not available to you. This can only happen if you are working on a computer in class, and have a site properly defined. You can, however, add the link and alter the html code as follows.

LINK to the STYLE SHEET

open the css styles menu with WINDOW>CSS STYLES [SHFT] [F11]
attach style sheet from the palette options menu, or -
click on the link to external style sheet icon
type in the file name exactly as follows
../../../../WebStylesAAE.css

STYLIZE the TEXT

if working without a site defined, the actual HTML code can be changed.
change <div align="center">ARTISTS NAME

to <p class="artistNameW" align="center">ARTISTS NAME</p>
and change <div align="center">
clouds</div>
to <p class="pictureTitleW" align="center">untitled</p>

SAMPLE PAGE

A sample page is available in the class folder. It is suggested that you try to create and alter your own page first, before reverting to the sample.