

Product Information

Published by: Meta Creations

Web: <<http://www.metacreations.com>>

List Price: \$450

System Requirements

Power Macintosh

System 7.5 or later

Minimum of 16 MB application RAM

(24+ MB recommended)

Hard drive with 30 MB free space

CD-ROM drive

What do you get if you cross Fractal Design Detailer and Painter 5.0? Painter 3D is the latest addition to the MetaCreations Painter family. Like all MetaCreations products promises to be a "standard setter."

Painter 3D allows you to interactively paint texture, bump, highlight, reflection and glow properties directly on 3D models in real-time. It also includes advanced brush capabilities with over 100 Natural-Media brushes and image-editing effects. Together with up to 32 multiple undos, this program is a joy to use.

he 3D field has never been an easy one due to the complexity of defining and working in multiple space environments. Anyone familiar with working in 3D knows that there are two phases for making 3D scenes: constructing the polygons and dressing them up. Programs like Specular's Infini-D are adept at both stages while programs like Painter 3D specialize in just the "dress up" phase. As you would expect "specializing" in a particular field should imply excelling at it. Painter 3D shines through in a way all its own.

A first look at Painter 3D makes Painter users "feel at home." Even MetaCreations itself admits that many features were simply imported from Painter. It is not until you start importing the DXF files that the differences start showing. The most noticeable one is the "Maps Manager Palette." The Maps Manager palette lists the six map types that you can apply to objects: Texture, Bump, Highlight, Reflection, Glow, and Environment. This controls the overall appearance of an object.

Once a ready made object is imported in Painter 3D (mind you the program has very limited modeling capabilities; cubes, spheres, cylinders etc.) you can then use the "Maps Manager Palette" and the brushes to paint directly on the 3D model. You can even apply visual effects and lighting to the 3D objects. The program is very simple to use, packed with features, and quiet speedy (for what it does anyway). Not exactly a heavy weight, but think of it in the Poser line of applications.

The two obvious drawbacks in Painter 3D are the price (which is way too much for a program of this caliber) and the lack of all professional rendering modes (raytracing, phong, etc.)—though models can be re-exported and rendered in other applications.

Summing up, I love Painter 3D's idea but there are far too many things missing to make this software deliver its promise. However, just as Poser was turned into a killer-app over the course of three versions, Painter 3D holds a very big potential to do even better than the latter.

Copyright © 1998 Jamal Ghandour, <jghandour@atpm.com>. Reviewing in ATPM
s open to anyone. Contact <reviews@atpm.com> for more information.