Painterly - Advanced Reference Guide

Introduction

This Advanced Reference Guide is for those users who want to delve into Painterly in a bit more depth. This guide consists of a description of how the Painterly effect is built up, followed by details of how each of the effects on Painterly's *CONTROLLER* layer work. Understanding these two parts of Painterly will allow you to customize the effect in a much more targeted manner. You can use the 5 default presets from the *Painterly Presets* script as a starting point, then customize and save off your own presets.

If you have any questions that are not answered in this guide, please don't hesitate to get in touch via my Videohive user page videohive.net/user/felt_tips

Understanding how Painterly is built up.

If you're intending to fine tune Painterly, it'll be very helpful to understand how the effect is built up. In fact, it's created in layers, much like a real oil painting.

First comes the bare canvas, on top of which is a loose application of paint: the base layer.
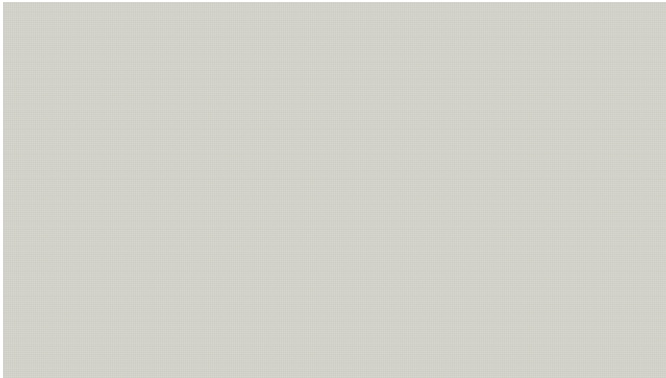
Bare Canvas

Base Layer

Next the low lights and highlights are laid on top. These have the same color as the loose underlying layer, but the distortion and brush strokes are much finer, so build up detail in the painting.
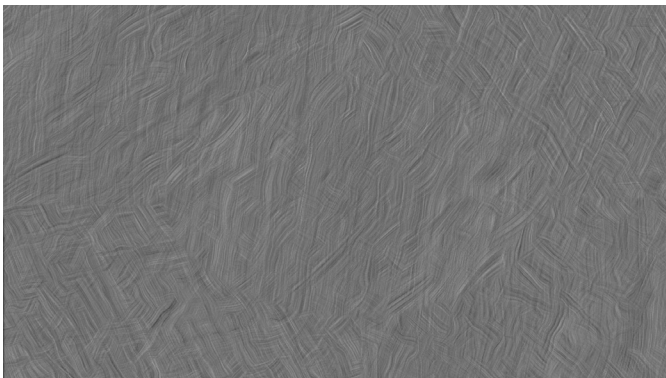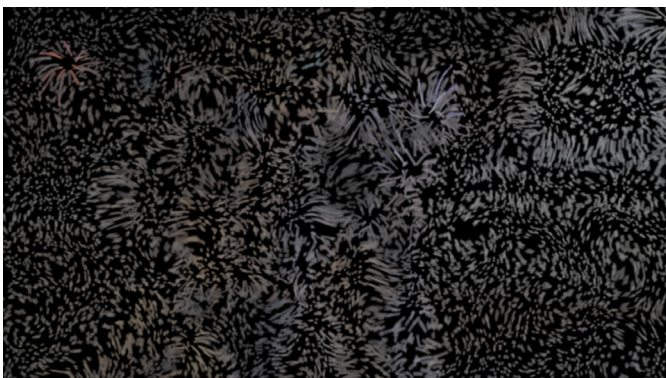

Low lights

Highlights

After this, the impasto layers are added. Impasto is the texture of the paint. There are 6 different impasto layers.
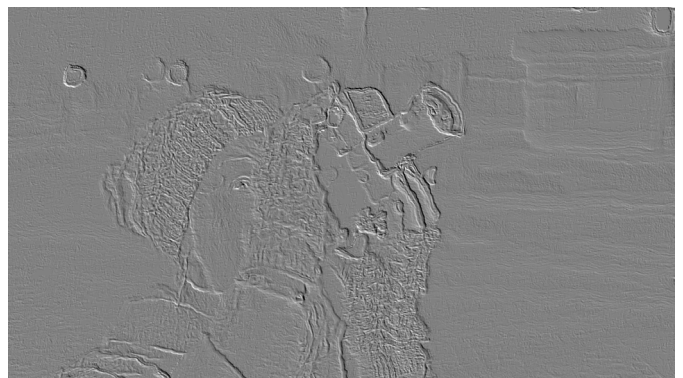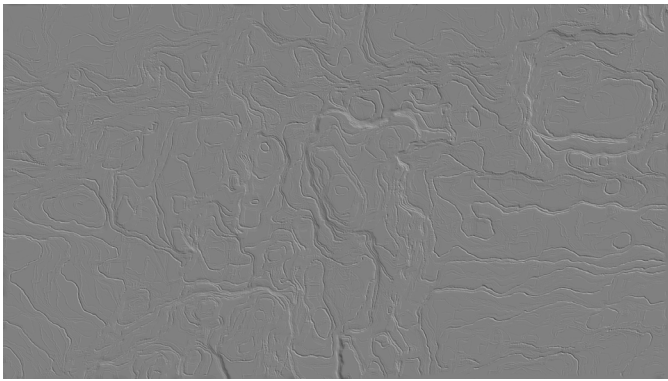

Impasto 1 - Paint Strokes are embedded in the image

Impasto 2 - Heavy, swirly Van Gogh like paint strokes

Impasto 3 - Heavy, expressionistic paint strokes

Impasto 4 - Thickly applied paint effect

Impasto 5 - Rounded, organic thick paint texture
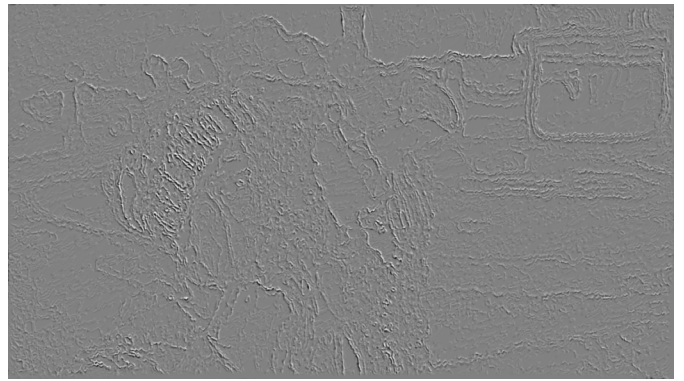
Impasto 6 - Intensive, thick painty spikes

Finally, a high pass is added, restoring some of the lost detail to the image. And also a level of color correction.

High Pass - Puts back lost detail

close up - with (left) and without (right) impasto


Original Image

Final Painterly Image

Fine Tuning Painterly with the *CONTROLLER* layer

Once you've applied a preset you can go in and further fine-tune Painterly. There are many controllers on the *CONTROLLER* layer and you can just play around with them. You're certainly not obliged to use all of them.

Sometimes just playing around with the main TEXTURE effects can achieve a world of difference - and that's my favourite way to use Painterly. But if you're trying to achieve a certain look, it helps a great deal to understand how the Painterly effect is built, what those controllers do, and in which order to adjust them.

The controllers are divided into sections and should be adjusted roughly in the order that they appear. The following is a brief reference guide to what each controller does. You can find a working example in the video user guide, which will give some more insights into the process.
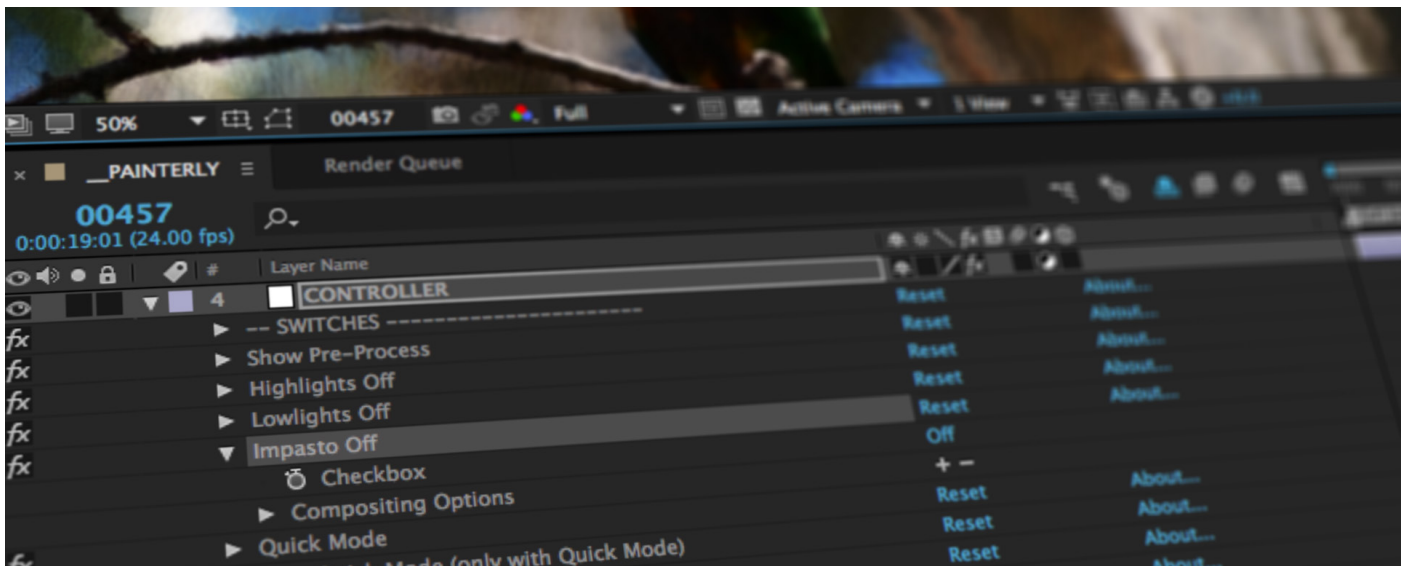
--SWITCHES---

The switches are not really intended to be part of the Painterly effect (apart from perhaps *Quick Mode* and *Render Matte*). They're intended to give you a look at specific parts of the effect in isolation, and give a better and/or quicker idea of the changes you're making.

Show Pre-Process
The first thing that is done with your footage is to pre-process it. It gets brightness and contrast adjusted, posterized (split into a finite spectrum) and blurred. This is because Painterly fundamentally interacts with your image and pre-processing the image changes the nature of that interaction. This switch shows the pre-processing in isolation from the rest of the effect.

Highlights Off
Turns off all highlight layers. Use this in conjunction with *Lowlights Off* and *Impasto Off* to see just the base layer.

Lowlights Off
Turns off all lowlight layers. Use this in conjunction with *Highlights Off* and *Impasto Off* to see just the base layer.

Impasto Off
Turns all impasto off. Use this in conjunction with *Highlights Off* and *Lowlights Off* to see just the base layer.

Quick Mode
Switches off Highlight layers and Impasto layers 3, 5 and 6. This increases previewing and rendering speed. It also produces a nice simplified look that I like to use as a finished product too. It can sometimes look better than full mode! And of course, working in Half Resolution, *Quick Mode* gets even quicker.

Very Quick Mode
This switches a lot of layers and effects off to give a very quick basic idea of how your effect is looking. And of course working in Half Resolution, *Very Quick Mode* gets 'very quicker' too!

Render Matte
Use this if your footage has transparency. Painterly handles footage with transparency, creating nice painterly edges too.

--SURFACE---

Painterly starts with the surface, like the painter does. These effects adjust the type, coarseness and color of your canvas (or board if you choose to use board).

Surface Texture Size / Intensity %
This effects the scale and contrast of your chosen surface.

Use Board Texture(not canvas)
This sets the texture to be that of textured art board instead of canvas.

Surface Color
This is the color of your surface. Generally, paint will cover the whole surface, so it won't make much difference, but used in conjunction with the following effect....

Surface show through %
This allows some of the surface color to show through. Painterly automatically selects areas that have a similar color to the underlying surface and doesn't put paint on these.
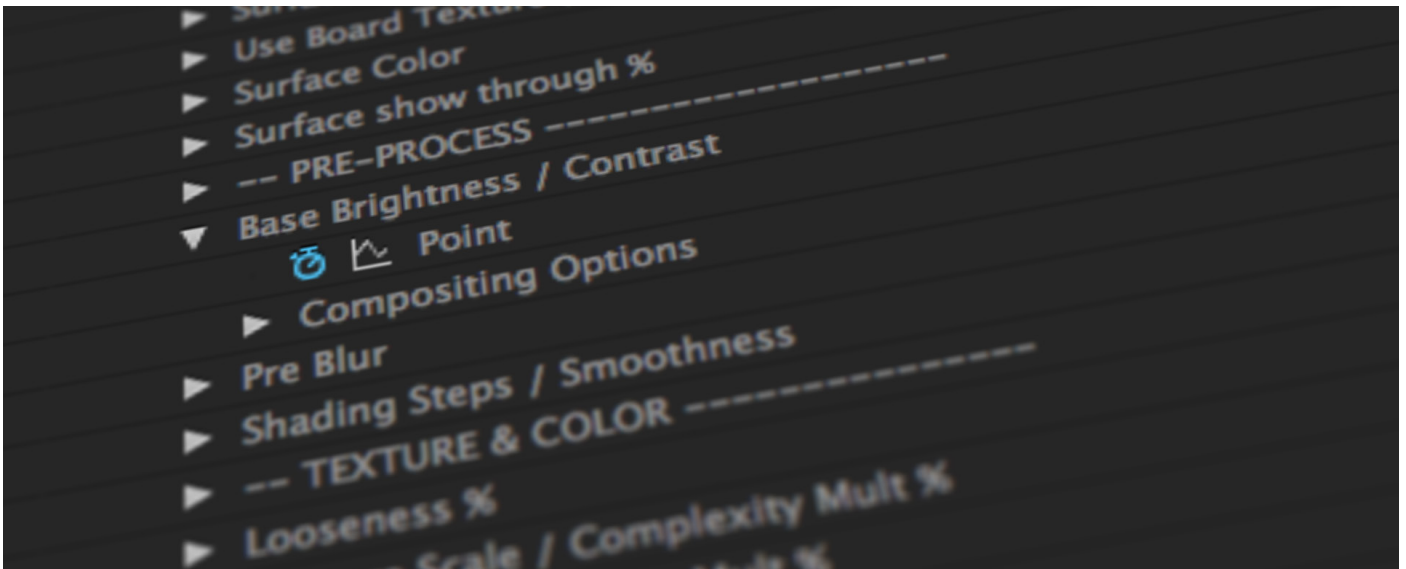
-- PRE-PROCESS------

Painterly is an effect that truly interacts with your image, so adjusting the underlying image can produce very different results. The pre-processing attributes allow you to adjust the very basics of your image in place, before you make it look truly painterly. On the other hand, you can get the whole look how you want it, then come back to *PRE-PROCESS* and experiment with changing these properties to surprise yourself with what effect it has. To see the pre-processed image in isolation, use the *Show Pre-Process* switch (see p.4)

Base Brightness / Contrast
This adjusts the brightness and contrast of your image. Sometimes, slightly darker images with a bit less contrast work better with Painterly (paint is bright, but not as bright as reality). You can add contrast back in later on by boosting the highlights (see below) or adding a contrast adjustment layer to the whole thing.

Pre Blur
Painterly uses a blurred image to mimic the first rough coat of paint the painter puts down.

Shading Steps / Smoothness
Next Painterly posterizes the image, splitting it up into a finite number of colors that are then smoothed together somewhat. This effect controls the number of shading steps and the smoothness with which they're subsequently blended. Don't vary the *Smoothness* too far from its base value of around 63. *Shading Steps* of between 5 and 15, together with *Smoothness* values between 60 and 67 seem to work best.

--TEXTURE & COLOR----

This is the main part of the Painterly effect, that makes the most difference to the image. If you only play with some of the effects on the *CONTROLLER* layer, these are the ones to play with!

Looseness %
Effects the amount of distortion to the brush strokes and hence how loosely painted the image feels.To get a better idea of how this is effecting the base image, you can turn highlights, lowlights and impasto off using the switches detailed in the *SWITCHES* section above.

Texture Scale / Complexity Mult %
This setting effects not the amount of looseness, but the size of the paint daubs and how complex (detailed / spattery) those daubs are. Maybe try to imagine *Looseness %* as how drunk the artist was, *Texture Scale* as how fat a brush he was using, and *Complexity Mult%* as how worn out that brush was! However you choose to think of it, this double controller allows you to adjust the scale and complexity independently of one another and independently of the overall Looseness setting. *Mult* simply indicates that the effect is a multiplier. 100 is the neutral value, 200 will double the effect, 0 will effectively turn it off.

Base Only Looseness Mult %
Another multiplier. *Looseness %* effects the looseness of the whole image. This multiplier allows you to independently effect the looseness of just the base layer. At a setting of 0, the Base Layer won't be loose at all, at 200, the base layer will be doubly as loose as the rest. 100 is neutral.

Impasto X %
(Where X is a number from 1-6). These 6 effects control the intensity of the various impasto layers. Impasto is the effect where you can see the actual texture of the paint in the image. It makes for a lively, intensive surface. Think of Van Gogh's sunflowers. Impasto 3, 5 and 6 have no effect in *Quick Mode.*

Detail from Original %
All of this painterliness can make your original image start to get a bit lost. Maybe this is an effect you want, but if not, *Detail from Original %* allows you to put some of the original image's detail back.

Highlight Intensity % (Hi 1, Hi 2)
Much of the detail comes into the picture courtesy of the highlights. There are three highlight layers. And this controls the first two of them. When you adjust these, it's not so much the case that you'll see the highlights get lighter or brighter, but you'll see painterly detail start to appear in the highlights, over the top of the base layer.
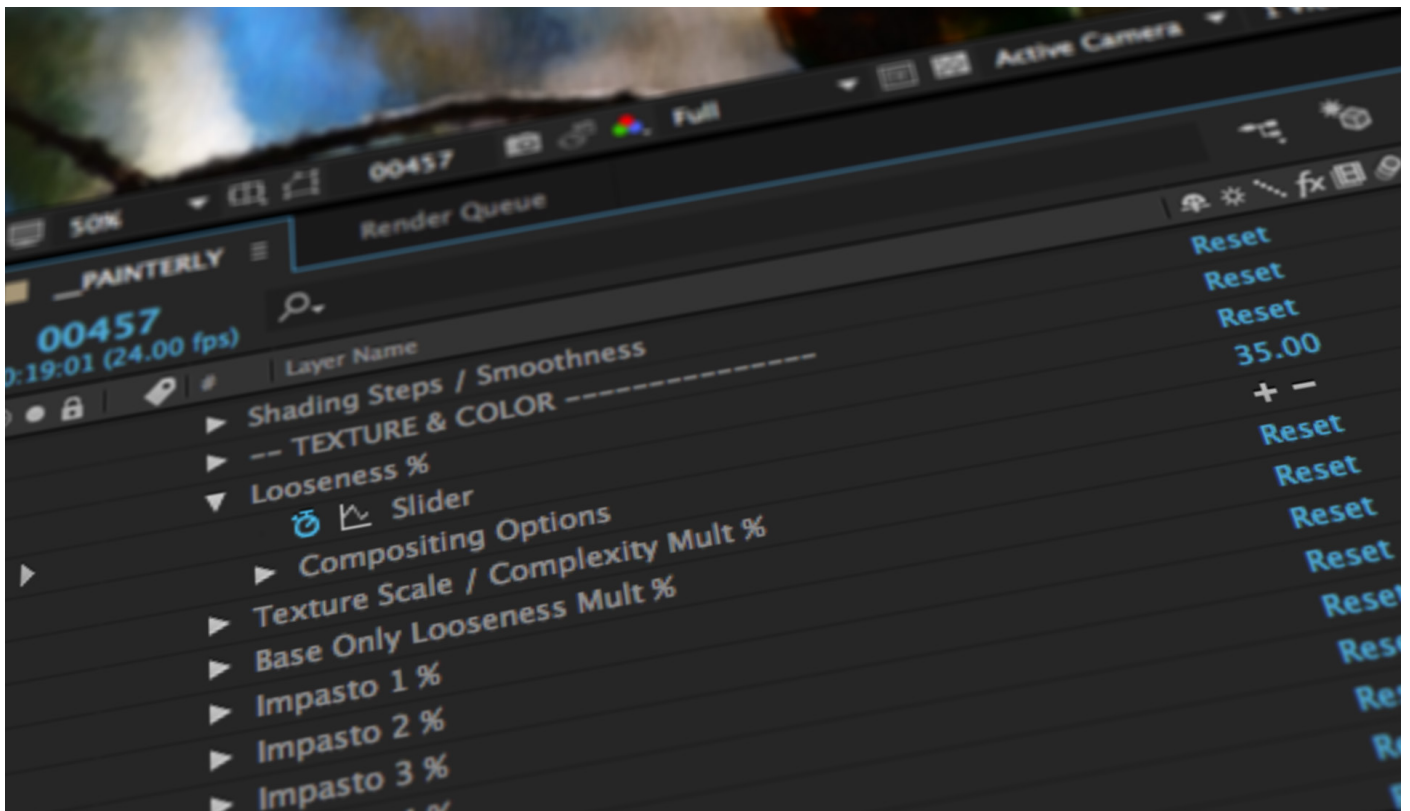
Highlights Boost %
This is the third highlight layer, which uses an additive overlay mode and this layer will make your highlights get brighter, and your overall image will appear punchier and more contrasty. Has no effect in *Quick mode.*

Color Intensity %
This slider, as the name suggest allows you to adjust the color intensity. Painters like to use nice bright colors - sometimes colours that are brighter than a natural image. This slider boosts the color, adds a little contrast and warms the colors very slightly too. Negative values do the opposite.

Scale Up
This slider (also a %) scales the image up just a little bit. As the distortions and textures accumulate in Painterly, the edges of the image can get rather ragged. This allows you to scale those ragged edges out of the picture.

--TIME----

Unlike a real painting, Painterly is an animated effect and so needs some time controls.

Animate Every Xth Frame
Painterly actually works very well when it only animates every other frame, otherwise the detail can be overwhelming.

Variance Amount %
Painterly automatically puts the brush strokes in a slightly different position from frame to frame, but there is another way that Painterly can change from frame to frame: all of the settings that you've set up until now can change from frame to frame too. Some frames can be painted more loosely, some tighter; some frames can be brighter, some darker; some can be more textural, some smoother and so on. In Painterly, this is called *Variance*. At 0, there is no variance, at 100 the effect varies radically from frame to frame.

Variance Randomness %
The way that *Variance* alters the style from frame to frame is set here. At a *Variance Randomness* of 0, Painterly will pulse quickly but smoothly from setting to setting, loose to tight, textural to smooth etc. As *Variance Randomness %* increases, consecutive frames become more and more different to one another.

Registration Variance / Smoothness %
This double effect does a similar thing for the registration of the image. *Registration* is the image landing in the same place at the same size on consecutive frames. For higher *Registration Variance*, the image will wiggle around more from frame to frame. The *Smoothness* works in a similar way to that described above.