Painterly - Quick Guide

PAINTERLY

oil paint effect for After Effects

Introduction

Thanks for purchasing Painterly. This is a highly authentic effect for video footage, that gives your material the look and feel of an oil painting. It also animates like an oil painting (in so far as oil paintings ever animate!) there are temporal settings that vary the effect believably from frame to frame.

Painterly is built up in a similar way to how an artist applies paint to his canvas, applying delicate glazes over a looser color base, at the same time keeping the impasto - the texture of the paint itself that gives the surface of the painting a lively, expressive feel. The effect is designed to be applied quickly and easily, and for those who want to fine tune, it's fully adjustable.

Painterly is a relatively complex effect for After Effects to calculate and has been optimized from the ground up to render and preview as fast as possible. You can still expect After Effects to spend several seconds rendering a full resolution frame though - it's doing a lot of work! There are however plenty of tools and techniques in Painterly to optimize the previewing and rendering time. See the section *Speed* of this user guide for more details.

I hope you enjoy using Painterly. If you have any comments, suggestions, problems don't hesitate to get in touch via my Videohive user page videohive.net/user/felt_tips

Installation

Painterly is delivered in the form of an After Effects template, so it doesn't really need installation. You just need to open the main file, _Painterly.aep by double clicking it. If you're using the original 2012 release of After Effects CC or CS6, then use the CS6 version, which you'll find in the folder *Other Versions*. In *Other Versions* you can also find different frame rate versions.

Painterly works fine on its own, but I'd also recommend to install the *Painterly Presets* script. This adds some extra tools, such as applying ready-made presets, saving your own presets as well as changing the frame rate of the whole project.

To install the *Painterly Presets* script:

- Find the folder which contains your copy of After Effects.
- In this folder, you'll find a sub-folder called *Scripts*. Inside that is a sub-folder called *ScriptUI Panels*
- Copy the file *Painterly_Presets.jsxbin* from your download into the *ScriptUI Panels* folder.
- Restart After Effects.
- You can now access the *Painterly Presets* script from the *Window* menu.

When you first run the script, you may be asked to *'allow After Effects scripts to write files and access network'*. This is required by *Painterly Presets* because the script needs to write the preference file to disk. You can set the *'allow'* preference by going into *After Effects -> Preferences -> General.*

More info about where to find this in the video user guide.
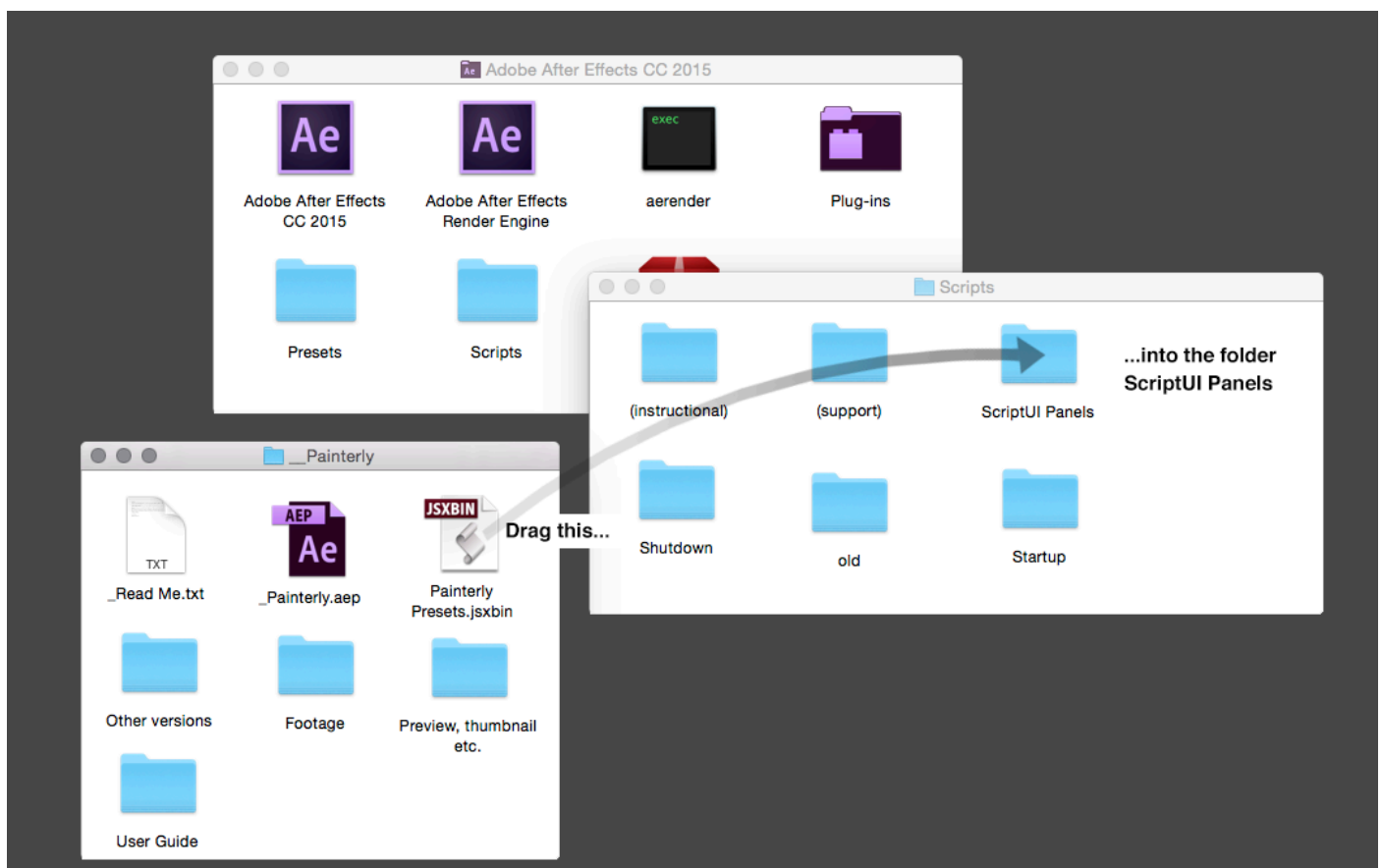
Basic Usage

Painterly is designed to be simple to use for those who want to use it simply and to offer depth and adjustability to those who want to delve deep. This user guide covers the basic usage. For those who want to get further into Painterly's painterly possibilities, be sure to check out the *Advanced Reference Guide* too.

The basic use of Painterly is very simple.

- Import your footage into After Effects (*File -> Import*) and drop it into the composition *Footage*
- Resize it to fit the composition if necessary (right-click the layer and choose *Transform -> Fit to Comp*)
- Go to the main *_PAINTERLY* composition and choose *Add to Render Queue* from the *Composition* menu.
- Enter your desired render settings in the *Render Queue* window and press *Render*.
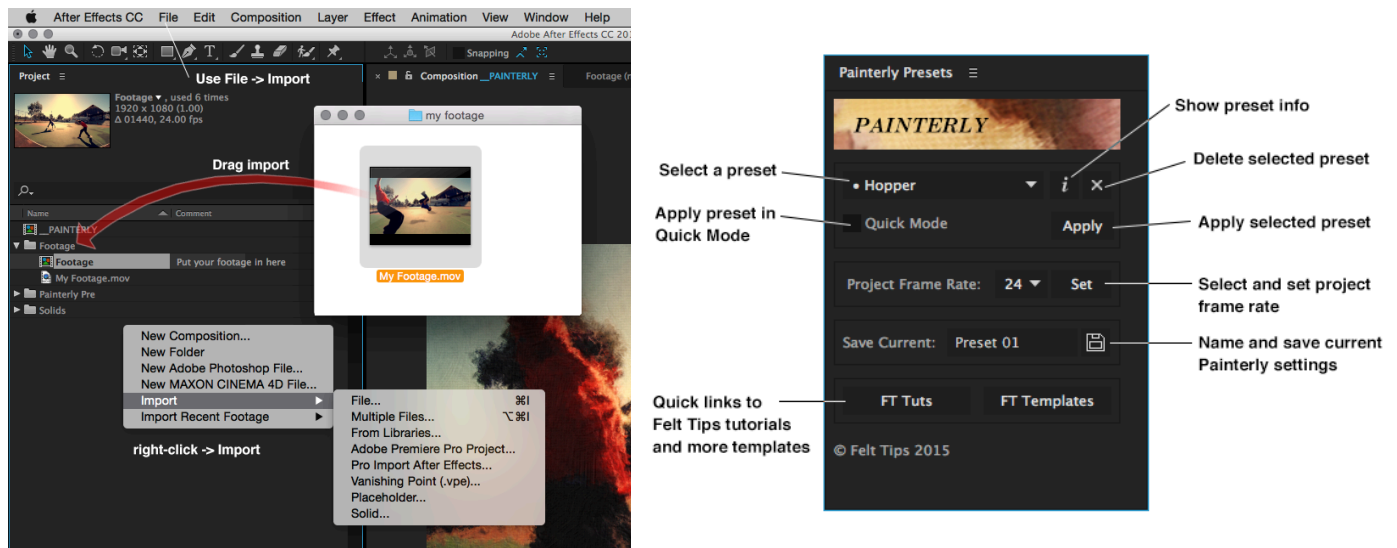
Importing a file and the Painterly Presets interface.

You may of course want to apply a different preset than the default look. In order to do this, you need to have the *Painterly Presets* script installed (see *Installation* - Page 2) and from inside After Effects, you call it up by selecting it from the *Window* menu.

Use *Painterly Presets* to apply a different preset to your footage. Make sure you are in the composition *_PAINTERLY* and select the preset you want from *Painterly Presets* dropdown menu - there are 5 installed as default. To see information about the selected preset, click the *i* button to the right of the preset name.

Once you have selected a preset, click *Apply*. If you have *Quick Mode* checked, the effect will be applied in *Quick Mode* which speeds up previewing and rendering. You can still switch out of *Quick Mode* at any time via the *CONTROLLER* layer in the composition *_PAINTERLY*.

When you apply presets, keyframes are added to your timeline, allowing you to mix different presets in the same footage, for instance if your footage has edits. One thing to note about applying presets or otherwise setting keyframes is that you should set keyframes on even numbered frames if the effect is set to animate every 2 frames, or frames that are divisible by 3 if it's set to animate every 3 (and so on). It's not a big deal, but if you don't you may find that the keyframes you apply don't have a visible effect until the next frame.

Once you've applied the preset, you can tweak it using the controls on the *CONTROLLER* layer. These controls are fun just to play around with (be sure to switch to Half Resolution in After Effects for more speed). Full details about what each of the effects does can be found in Painterly's *Advanced Reference Guide*.

And if you do fine tune Painterly, you can save your own presets, using the *Painterly Presets* script.

Speed

An effect as detailed and authentic-looking as Painterly consists of a lot of separate layers and effects. Many hours of work have been put into optimizing Painterly, but because of its complexity you can still expect it to take several seconds to render or preview each frame. To speed things up there are several tools built into *Painterly* and various techniques (that also apply to After Effects in general) that make the process quicker and more fun.

Resolution
Painterly is built from effects that scale well - in other words, Painterly looks pretty much the same at Half Resolution as it does at Full Res. So it's a very good idea to use Half Res for previewing. It's about 4 times quicker and if you're previewing at below full scale, you'll hardly notice the difference (see image below). Once you've got the effect the way you want, check it once in Full Res before rendering.
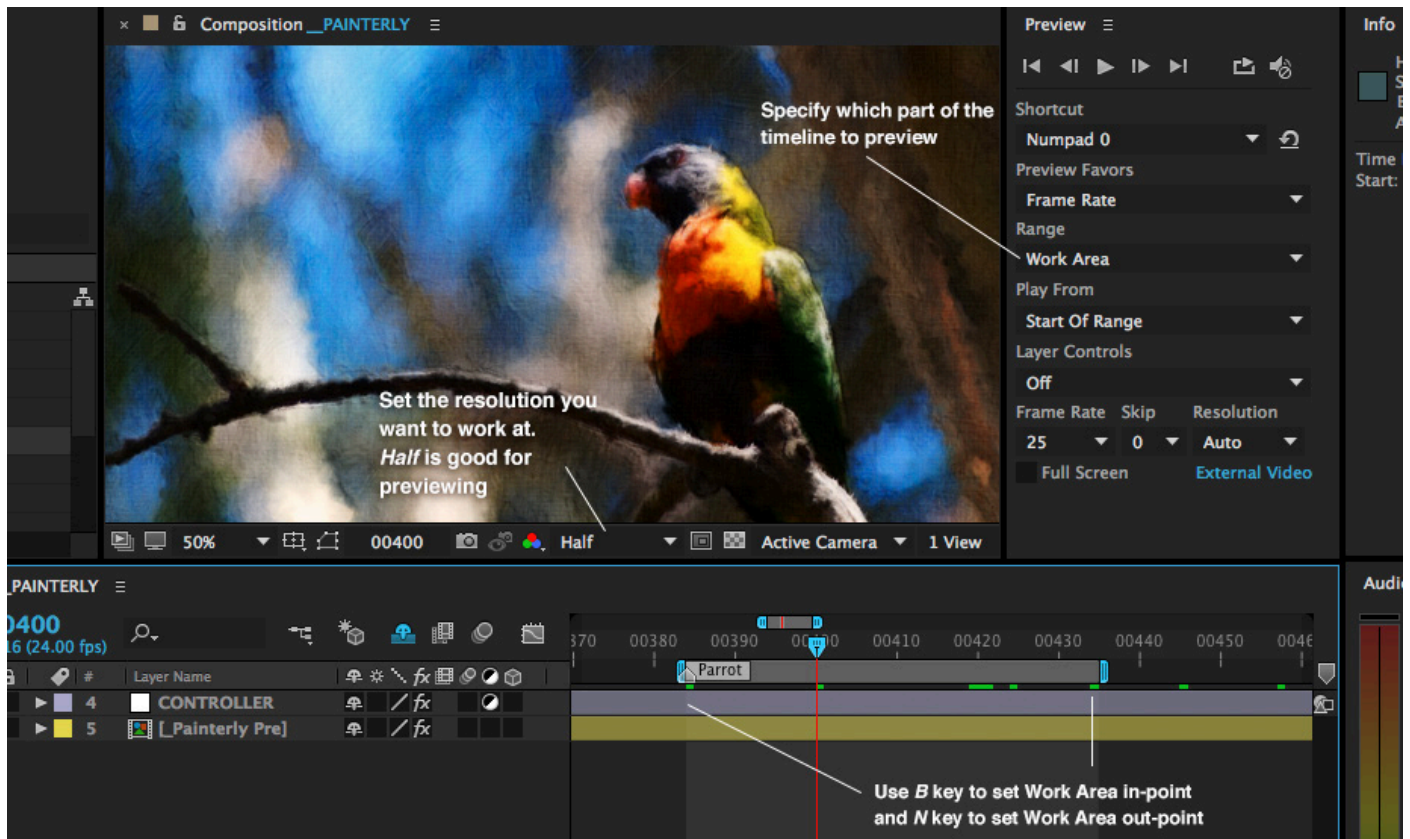

Work smart
When initially setting your look, choose a single frame to work on that characterizes the footage and get the effect set up for that frame (remember to make it an even numbered frame if you're animating every 2nd frame). Once you're happy, check it in Full Res. Try previewing a 1 or 2 second chunk to see how it moves. Use the *B* and *N* keys to set the beginning and end of the Work Area to the current time. Then you can just preview this part of the timeline. (see image).

Quick Mode, Very Quick Mode and Switches
Painterly has a built in *Quick Mode* and *Very Quick Mode*. These switches are available on the *CONTROLLER* layer in the main composition, *_PAINTERLY*. *Quick Mode* gives you a speed boost of about 50% and still looks great (even for a final render). Impasto layers 3, 5 and 6 and the highlight are not active in this mode. *Very Quick Mode* looks rough, but it's nice and fast.
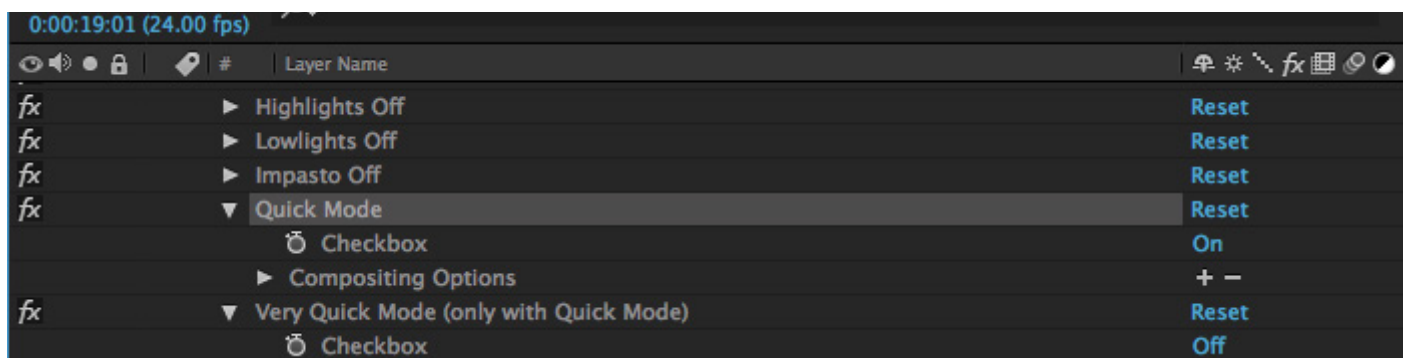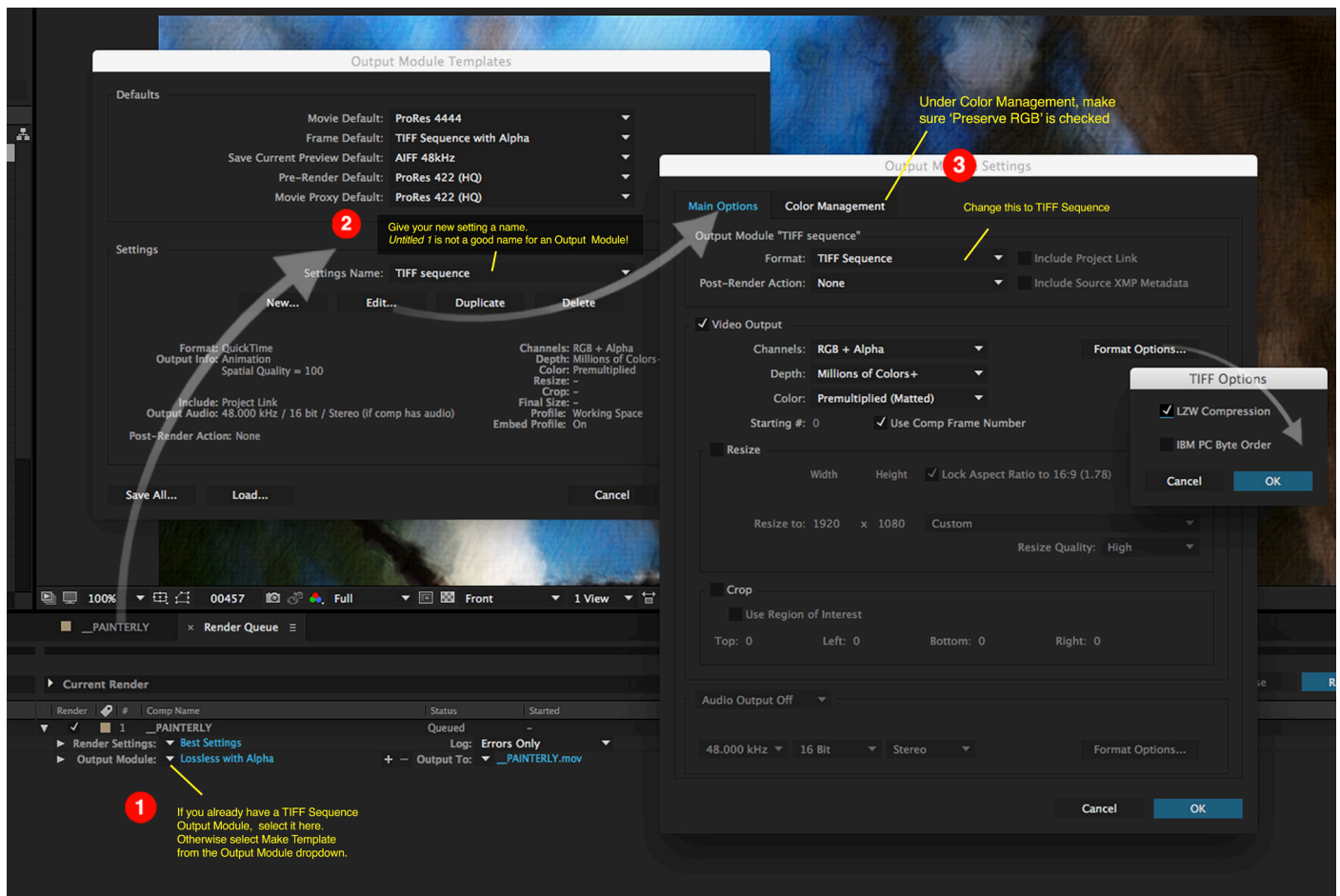
Rendering Tips

You can render Painterly how you like. Just add it to the Render Queue. Choose *Composition -> Add to Render Queue*.

There are lots of rendering options in After Effects, but my main tip - not just for *Painterly*, but for After Effects in general is to render not to a movie format, but to an image sequence. The huge advantage of this is that unlike a movie you can re-render just a part of an image sequence without having to re-render the whole thing. You can also check your frames to make sure they look right during the render. You can stop and restart the render at any time without problems. The only downside is that you need to convert the image sequence to a movie. But this is quick and easy. Once the image sequence is ready, import it back into After Effects, add the original sound and render it out to a movie format.

Here's the procedure step by step:

- Go to the *Render Queue*. Make sure that the main comp *_PAINTERLY* is set to render a TIFF Sequence. If you don't have a TIFF sequence option, you can set one up as shown below. Then hit *Render*.

- Once the TIFF sequence has finished rendering, choose *File -> Import to* import it. Select any image from the sequence, and making sure the TIFF sequence checkbox is checked (see below), click *Open*.
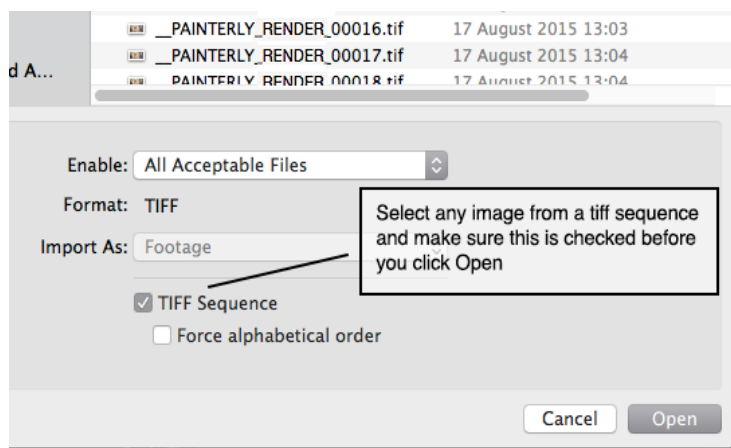
- In the Project window, check that the imported TIFF sequence is being interpreted at the correct frame rate (see below, left). If you need to change it, right-click the footage and choose *Interpret Footage -> Main*.
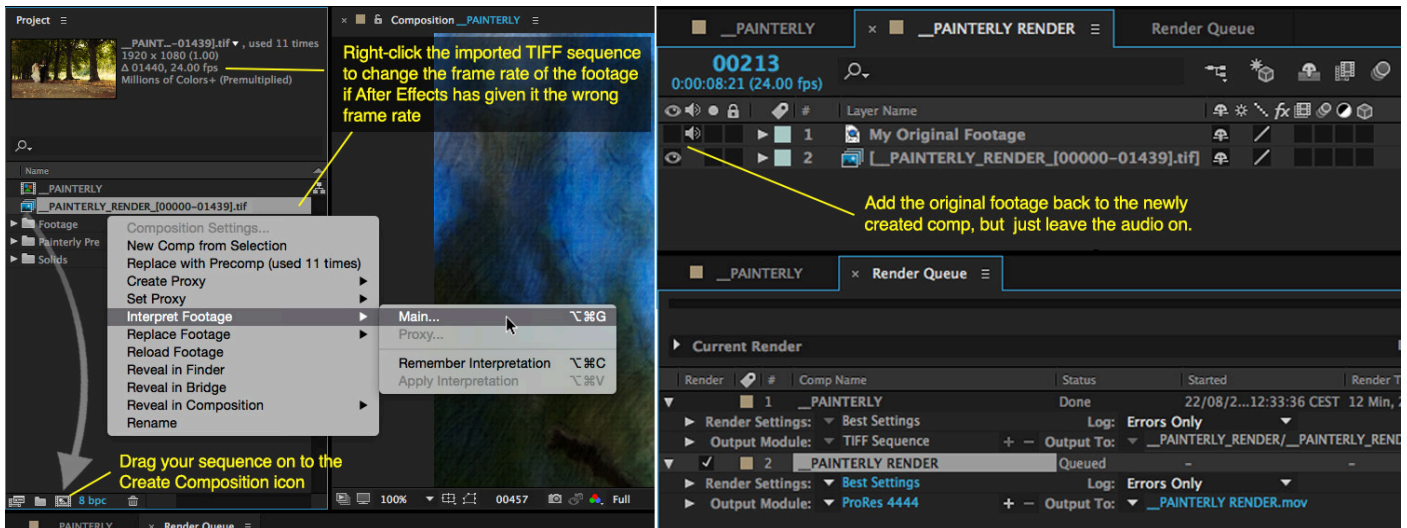
- Drag the footage onto the *Create New Composition* icon at the bottom of the Project window

- Add your original video footage to the new comp, but turn off it's visibility. This adds the audio back to the clip

- Finally add this new comp to the Render Queue (*Composition -> Add to Render Queue*) and render using your desired movie settings.

Render times vary from computer to computer. But in general when rendering a Full Resolution image sequence, you can expect a minute of footage to take around 90 minutes to render (or about an hour if you use *Quick Mode*).

Finally...

I really hope you enjoy using Painterly. If you have any problems, questions, comments, suggestions or even if you'd like to show me the results of how you put Painterly to use, please don't hesitate to get in touch - ben@felt-tips.net

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