GRAPHICS UTILITY

3DPaintBrush v 1.0

System Requirements
Windows XP/Vista, 1.2 GHz processor, 512 MB RAM, 100 MB disk space

Price	Rs 4,257 (approx.)
Contact	Geometric
Website	www.3dpaintbrush.com

RATINGS

Ease of use	■■■■□
Features	■■■■□
Performance	■■■■□
Overall Rating	■■■■□

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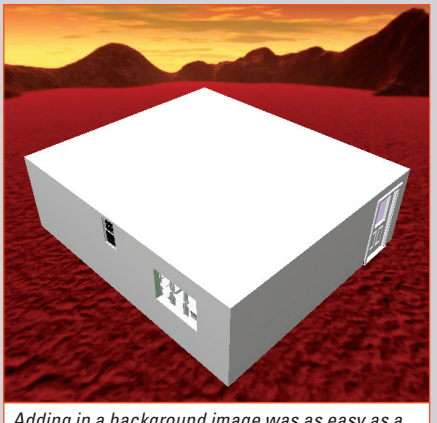
DRAG AND DROP ▸ Working with models in 3D can be quite a hassle. This is especially true if you are not proficient with 3D manipulation software, since using such software requires basic programming skills. 3DPaintbrush boasts of an intuitive user interface and a rich toolset, which even a novice can use to produce creative images and animations in seconds—with no learning curve and zero programming skills. You can choose to drag and drop material finishes onto your models, manipulate material properties, adjust light settings, add backgrounds and environments, combine 3D models in various file formats to create your own custom scene, save and export as standard image formats such as JPG and BMP, and create animations for presentations and video tutorials.

Look and feel

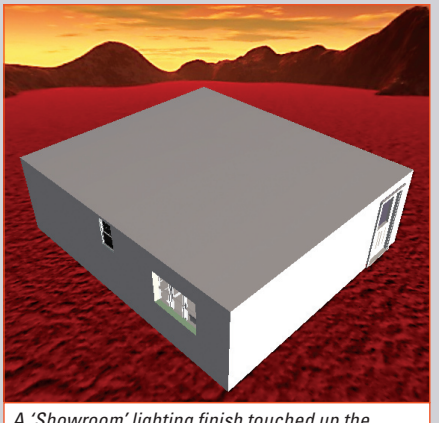
The application is really intuitive which makes it easy to use. A 'Graphics Area' panel which displays a 3D view of the scene is situated in the center of the screen. In this panel, you can select, rotate, copy, paste, delete, hide, show, move and scale components and perform other manipulations to the displayed model. On the left is the 'Scene' panel which aids in navigating around 3D models and displays information about the model currently open. Selecting a component in the 'Scene' panel highlights it by showing the corners of the enclosed bounding box in the graphics area. By clicking the check box displayed in front of the model/component name, you can show/hide the component. The 'Animation' toolbar is placed at the top and is used for creating/running animations. The 'Gallery' on the right of the window stores pre-defined models, materials, lights and animations, etc and has panes for 'Primitives', 'Built-in

Six easy steps to jazz up your 3D model

We started out with a 3D Google SketchUp model, which we imported into 3DPaintBrush.



Adding in a background image was as easy as a drag and drop, with a variety of image choices.



A 'Showroom' lighting finish touched up the model and was the perfect contrast option.

Animations', 'Background', 'Lights', and 'Materials'. The 'Command' toolbar below the graphics area provides links to the most commonly used, or critical functions. The status bar shows error and notification messages, and progress of long operations. The main window is not very cluttered, and devoid of unnecessary buttons. With this type of interface a novice is not intimidated or distracted while working with models.

Features

One of the best features of 3DPaintBrush is its integration with Google SketchUp's 3D Warehouse. Simply click on the menu item '3D Warehouse' and you can import models from a vast library. An Internet connection is necessary to download models. Among the file types supported are: 3DPaintBrush, Google SketchUp, STEP, IGES, Wavefront, 3D Studio, AutoCAD DWG and AutoCAD DXF. Another striking feature is the ability to animate your 3D models and export them to Shockwave Flash for use on your website, or to XAML (Extensible Application Markup Language), for use in Microsoft Expression Blend.

The 'Lights' panel in the Gallery toolbar gives users the ability to add various pre-defined lights to the current model—simply double-click or drag-and-drop a light model to apply it to the current scene. You can further modify light source characteristics such as color, direction, spread angle, concentration, position and attenuation. The 'Background' panel provides a mechanism for users to specify a pre-defined or custom background for the scene. To apply a background, simply double-click or drag-and-drop an image in the graphics area. You can access a range of built-in choices or create your own. The 'Primitives' panel allows users to add various pre-defined shape primitives such as a cube, cylinder, cone, torus, spring or sphere, to the current scene. Using the 'Animation' controls, you can create specific animations. For instance, in a car model, select the tire component and drag-and-drop the 'Green' axis component from the 'Animations' Gallery, which will rotate the tires along the Y-axis. Another method to create animations is to drag-and-drop 'Position' markers from the 'Animations' panel; move your camera around, modify the frame rate and voila! Hit the 'Play' button and it's all done.

3D SNIP: This is a separate utility with which you can import 3D models from virtually any application on your PC, even from games. When you run the tool, it starts as a system tray icon with the default preferences of the hotkey toggle as [F12] and the default folder as 'My Documents'. With this running in the background, simply shift the focus to the application with the 3D image you wish to import and hit [F12], and the 3D model will be visible in the 'Showcase' window.

Performance

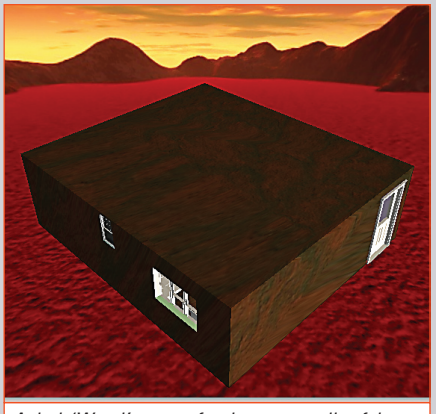
While creating models from primitive shapes was a little clunky, importing models from Google SketchUp was convenient—we could color it quickly using the 'Materials' library, and hide or unhide components from the 'Scene' panel. Some of the modifications we made included importing a background image, and adding a 'Dark wood' texture to the outside walls of our model house, as well as wood panelling textures to the inner walls. From a drab grey color scheme, we jazzed it up to a colorful representation of what it might look like. In 'Lighting', we tried a high contrast light scenario and also a typical showroom light setting. The use of 'Primitives' for adding text in 3D and creating an animated video was quite easy. Since this animation is exportable to Shockwave Flash formats, embedding it into a website for viewing is the best way to bring an air of professionalism to your site—especially if you are pursue a career in designing.

FOR: Fast rendering and import of 3D graphics make it a boon for artists.

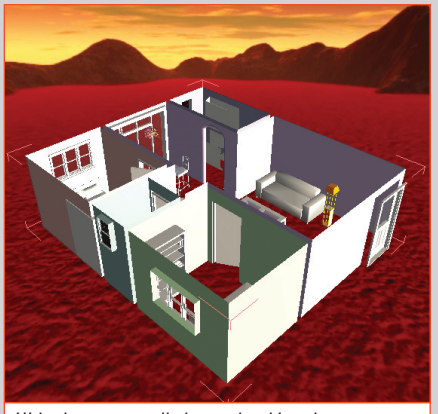
AGAINST: The system can get a bit sluggish. The solution to this problem is to close all other applications.

Features

- Creates photo-realistic content in seconds
- Maximizes 3D data usage
- You can reuse & enhance your models
- Supports a wide range of formats
- Captures 3D data from any application
- Integrates 3DWarehouse
- Creates animations
- Combines multiple files
- Creates content for the Web and Microsoft Expressions Blend



A dark 'Wood' texture for the outer walls of the model house complemented the landscape.



Hide the outer walls by unchecking the corresponding component on the 'Scene' panel.

After working on the interiors, adding colors, textures and primitives, our model looks great.