

tech note: compositing/keying in FCE

Following are the basic steps involved in compositing/keying video footage. For help with compositing still images, refer to the tech note: "Compositing Graphics in FCE."

Compositing is a process of layering multiple tracks of footage in which one or more tracks has an area (or areas) of transparency. Transparency is created by selecting, or **keying out**, particular color and light values in the footage.

SHOOTING FOOTAGE

You can use the blue screen (available for checkout in the lab office) or improvise your own setup. The most important aspect of shooting footage is to make sure that the area you want to key out (background and/or foreground) has **consistent** color & lighting, i.e. minimize shadows, wrinkles and other variations as much as possible.

KEYING FOOTAGE

When you're done shooting, capture the footage in your FCE project, then follow these steps:

Step #1: Click & drag your clip into the Timeline, and make sure it's selected (click once to select/highlight)

Step #2: Add the **Chroma Keyer** Filter to the clip (Effects → Video Filters → Key → Chroma Keyer)

Step #3: Double-click the clip (in the Timeline) to open and edit the Chroma Keyer settings in the **Viewer** window. As you edit in the Viewer window, watch the results in the Canvas window. (Make sure the playback head in the Timeline is positioned over the clip you're editing; if not, you won't see it in the Canvas window).

Step #4: Use the band sliders to select Hue, Saturation, and Luminance values to key out. You can use one or all of these sliders – the checkbox to the left of each turns them on/ off. You can also use the eyedropper to click-select areas of color from the Canvas window.

Step #5: Refine the selection with the Edge Thin, Softening and Enhance sliders.

Step #6: To refine the selection further, add the **Matte Choker** Filter to your clip (with the clip selected, click Effects → Video Filters → Matte → Matte Choker) and adjust the Edge Thin & Edge Feather sliders.

OTHER EFFECTS

If you want to add any other effects to your footage, simply follow **Steps 1-3** above with the appropriate Filter. Use the checkbox next to the effect name (in the Filter tab of the Viewer window) to turn effects on and off.