

Particle Systems in After Effects CS 5

Demystifying Special Effects

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Particles Step-By-Step

- ❖ Create a new Comp (Project)
- ❖ Insert Background video or image
- ❖ Insert a solid layer
- ❖ Insert a camera
- ❖ Edit particles
- ❖ Duplicate and combine
- ❖ Pre-compose layers for additional effects

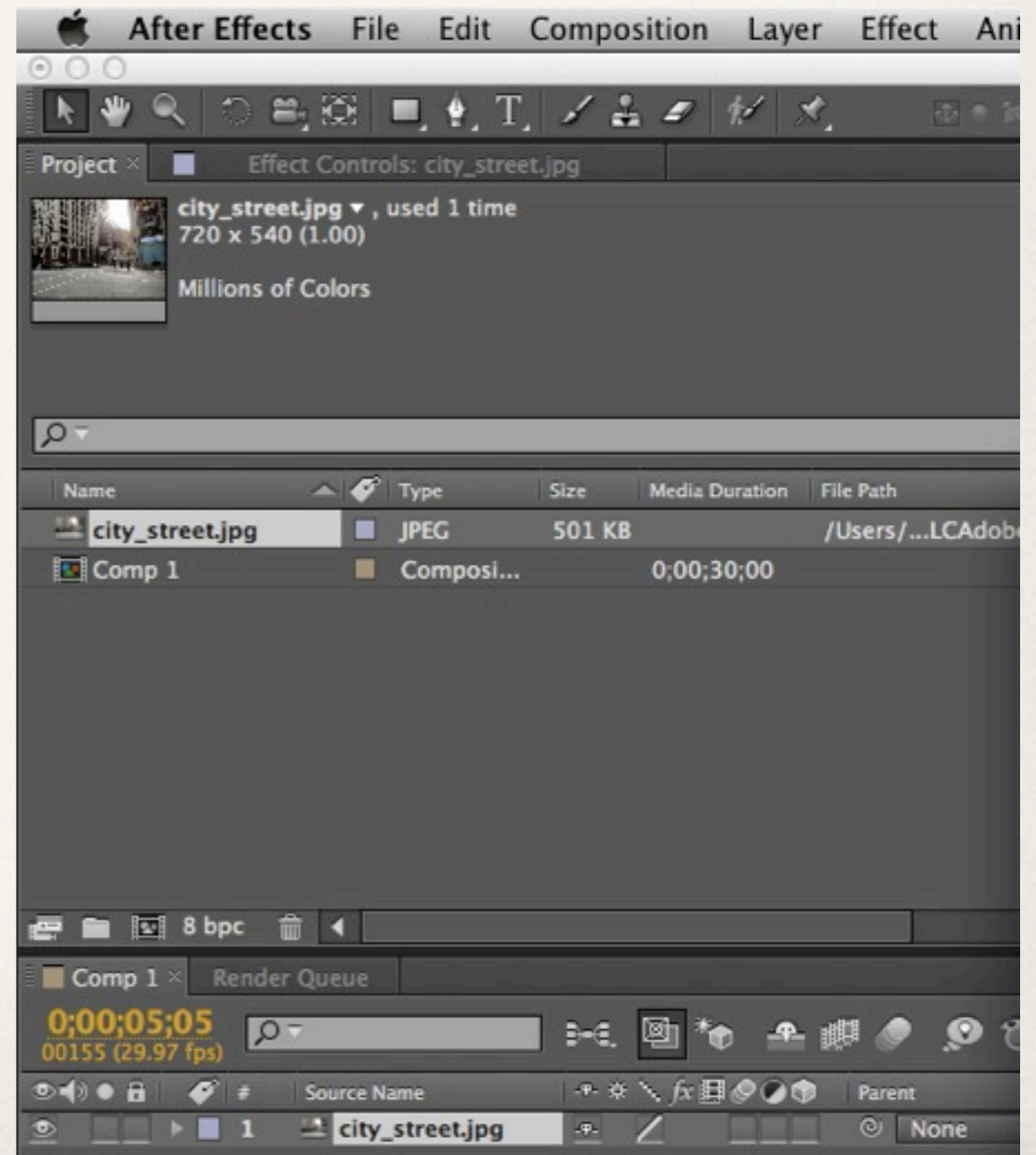
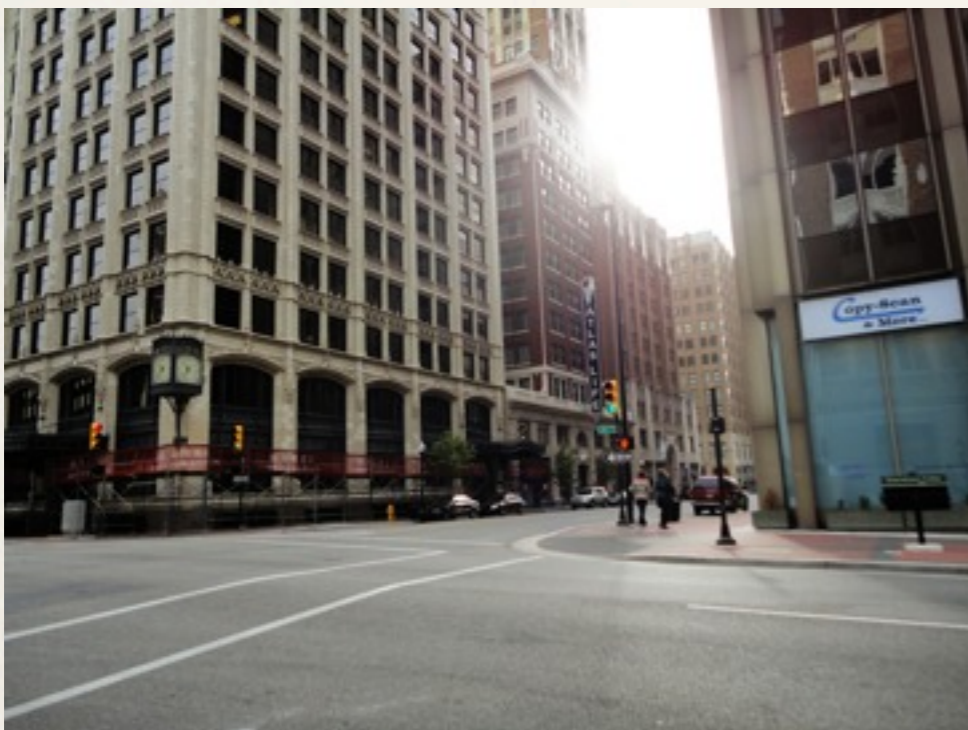
Create a Comp

- ❖ Create a New Composition - Makes a new project for you
- ❖ Choose your preset wisely



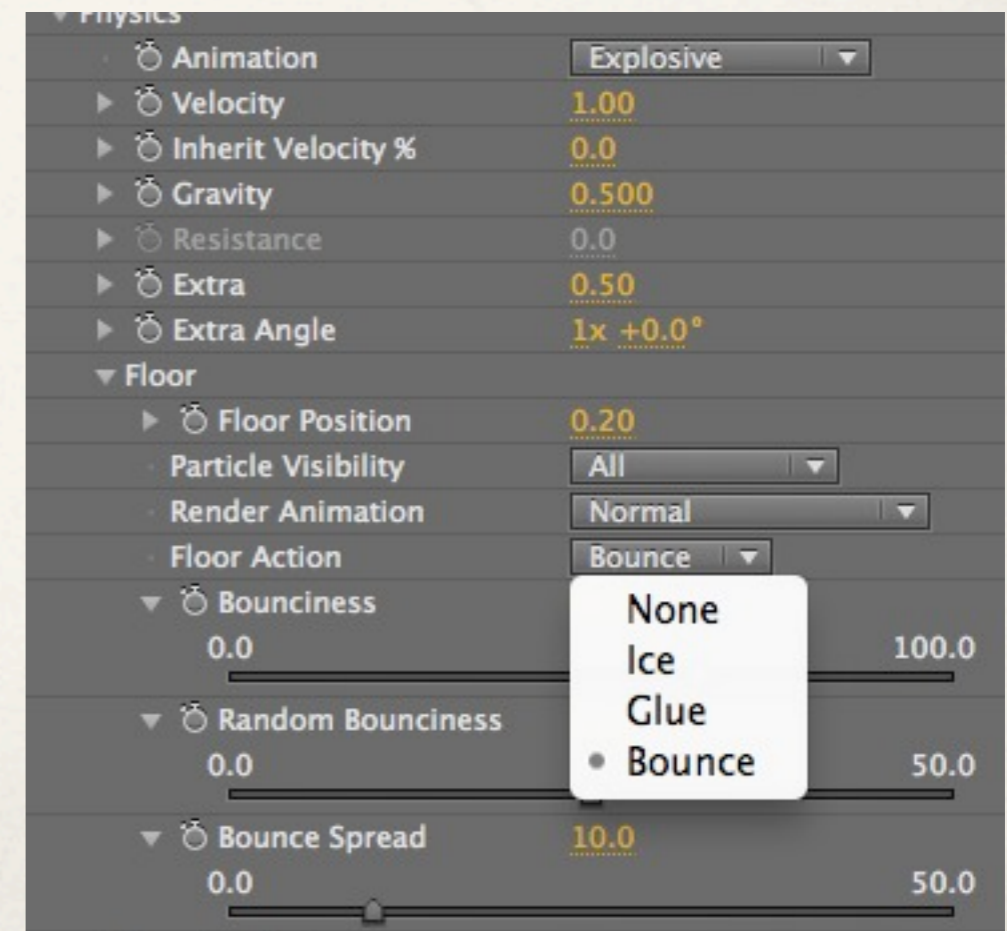
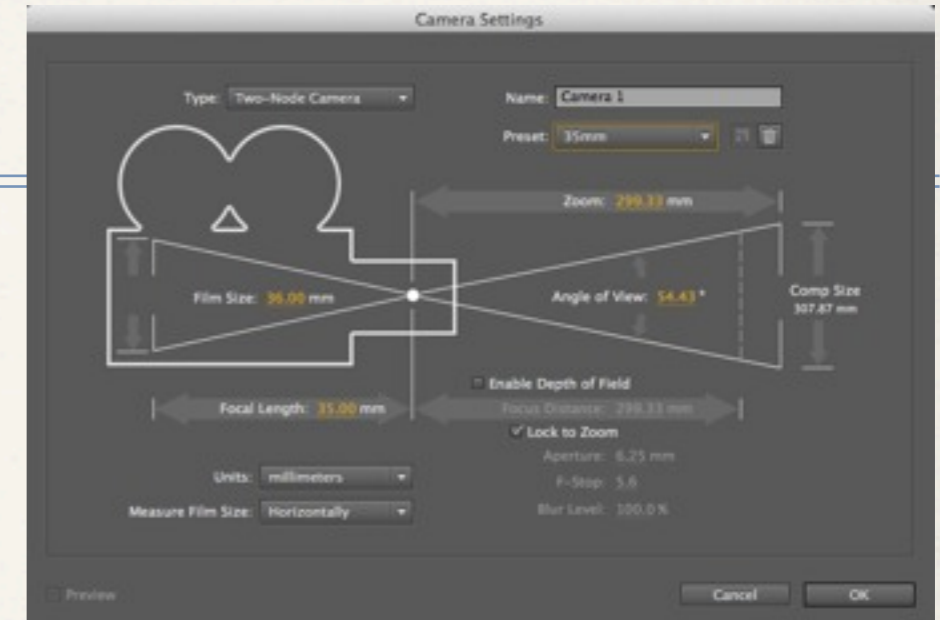
Insert a Background

- ❖ Import your video, which should match your project preset.
- ❖ Use a still image if you do not have any video.



Insert a Solid

- ❖ Layer->New->Solid
- ❖ Effect->Simulation->CC Particle World
- ❖ Layer->New->Camera
- ❖ Physics->Floor-Floor Action to Ice
- ❖ Producer->Position to disappear
- ❖ Alter Radius to control spread
- ❖ Set Physics->Velocity
- ❖ Set Particle->Particle Type, Birth Size, Death
- ❖ Set Birth Rate (just below Grid) and longevity

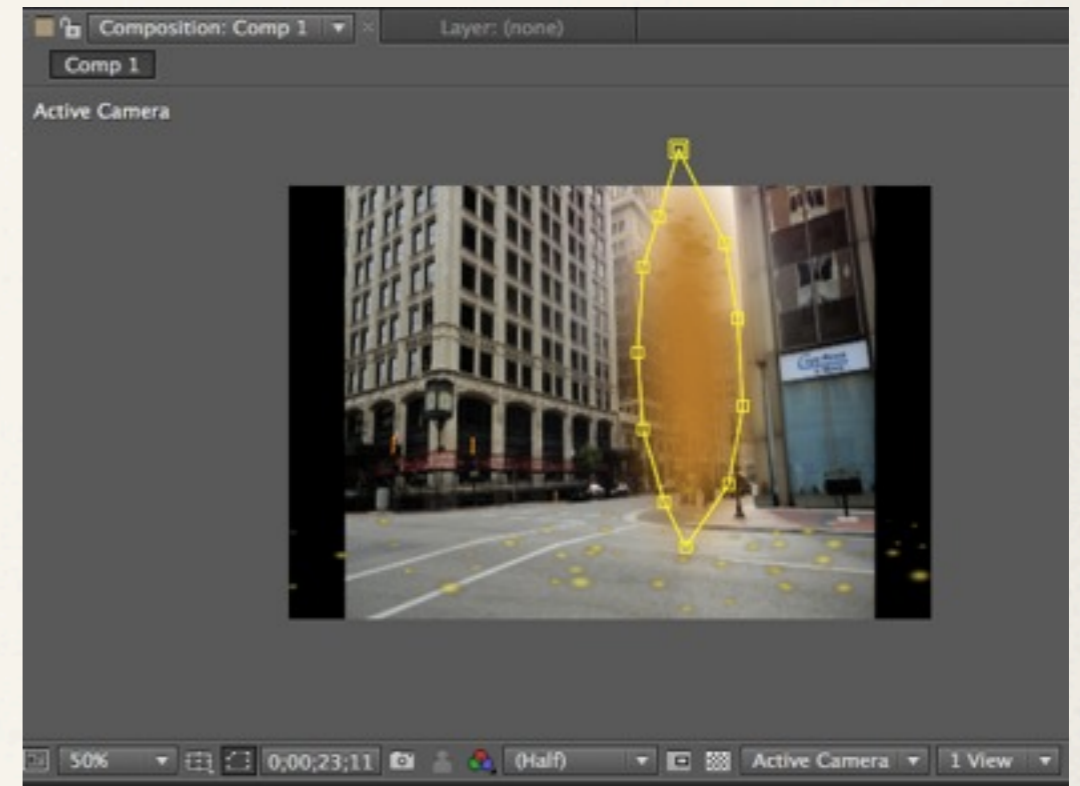


Create a Vertical Vortex

- ❖ Duplicate the particle, and change Physics to Twirl
- ❖ Change Producer to smaller particles, Radius as zero
- ❖ Physics->Velocity and Gravity to zero
- ❖ Producer->PositionY & Radius Y increased to create vertical stream
- ❖ Increasing Physics->Velocity spreads them out
- ❖ Go negative with Physics->Gravity, which allows particles to spin upward

Create a Shaped Glow

- ❖ Layer->New->Solid and choose a color
- ❖ Turn off the solid layer (eye square of the layer)
- ❖ Use the pen tool to outline the area, and turn the layer back on
- ❖ Go to the Layer Mask, open the arrows to feather, which should be set as Add



Precompose Layers

- ❖ Duplicate the Camera
- ❖ Select Camera, Core, and Twister layers
- ❖ Holding Shift, select Layer->Pre-Compose, give it a name, OK
- ❖ With new comp selected, select Effect->Distort->Turbulent Displace
- ❖ Alter the Evolution dial for the effect
- ❖ Alt-Click (Option-Click) on the Evolution dial to create an expression: $\text{time} * 200$ - which creates a moving twist over time

Summary

- ❖ Insert a solid and apply a particle effect
- ❖ Create a camera to place the solid in the proper 3D space
- ❖ Modify the particles
- ❖ Create effects layers
- ❖ Pre-compose layers and add additional effects