

User_Manual

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Contents

1	User_Manual	1
1.1	Bored? Have a read of this...	1
1.2	Here's some mindless twitter...	2
1.3	Want to install 3D Pro onto your hard disk? It's easy...	2
1.4	Here's your tutor.	2
1.5	What? You need help? Pah!	3
1.6	The Pattern Editor. Hurrah!	3
1.7	The Pattern Editor Options. Hurrah!	3
1.8	The Screen Editor. Hurray!	4
1.9	The Screen Editor Options. Hurray!	4
1.10	What? You don't like my default colours?!?	4
1.11	Ooo, you've put me in a bad mode (bad joke, sorry).	4
1.12	I couldn't fit 'Draw Stereogram' into the icon. :-)	5
1.13	Let's get loading and saving - it's my favourite passtime.	5
1.14	3D animations are great for killing your eyes. ;-)	5
1.15	Sorry about the terrible colour scheme!	5
1.16	No, it's not the ASL file requestor...	5
1.17	The not-technical-at-all section.	6
1.18	A quick history lesson... and what's new	6
1.19	Credits	6

Chapter 1

User_Manual

1.1 Bored? Have a read of this...

#####

- [Introduction](#)
- [Hard Disk Installing](#)
- [Tutorial](#)
- [On-Line Help](#)
- [Pattern Editor](#)
- [Screen Editor](#)
- [Colours Editor](#)
- [Mode Editor](#)
- [Draw 3D](#)
- [Load / Save](#)
- [Making an Animation](#)
- [Preferences](#)
- [Slightly Technical Information](#)
- [History / What's New](#)
- [Credits](#)

1.2 Here's some mindless twitter...

Welcome to 3D Pro, an advanced stereogram making package for any Amiga with 1Mb or more.

This package has the following special functions, not normally present in Public Domain programs:

Simple art package to design stereograms.

An editor, to create patterns, other than the normal random dots.

Loading / Saving of everything.

Tutorial and Interactive help to enable you to get the most from the package.

Many predefined screens and patterns on disk.

This was my project for school (for which I got full marks 8-). This manual is taken straight from the printed User Manual included with the program. It had to be written so that even a complete novice could use it, so I apologise if it's a bit patronising. :-)

1.3 Want to install 3D Pro onto your hard disk? It's easy...

Although 3D Pro will work fine from disk, you may prefer to install it on to your hard disk (Ensure that there is at least 600k free).

The process is so easy, I can't really be bothered to write an install script. To install it, carry out the following steps:

Boot your hard disk as normal.

Insert your 3D Pro disk.

Double click on the disk icon and drag the 3D Pro directory to your chosen place on hard disk.

Then, to run it, simply enter the directory and double click on the icon.

1.4 Here's your tutor.

When you first load 3D Pro, you will be presented with a menu of four options, these are as follows:

Tell me about " **Help** ".

I'm a new user.

I've used this before.

I didn't mean to load this.

If you are a new user, select "I'm a new user" for a short tutorial. This will show you how to use the most basic functions of 3D Pro.

All stereograms are made up of a screen image and a pattern. The screen image contains a depth map. In other words, how much each part of the stereogram comes in or out. Basically, the brighter something is drawn in the screen editor, the more it comes out in the final stereogram. The pattern is what the stereogram is mapped on to. Usually, this is a random dots pattern.

To begin with, the tutorial will show you how to create a random dots pattern. Other patterns can be created, or even drawn yourself. Random dot patterns are useful for very bold objects in the stereogram, as they appear to make objects stick out more. Plasma patterns can be created as well, but these are usually used for very smooth objects.

The tutorial will then lead on to the screen editor. It will instruct you to draw three squares, of different shades. It doesn't matter if the squares aren't drawn perfectly, it's just to help you learn how the different shades of yellow, alter how much objects come out.

Once this is finished, you select "Draw 3D", to draw the stereogram. When this is done, there are a few options, but none of these need to be done in the tutorial, so you will simply be asked to exit the program.

Hopefully, this simple tutorial will help you understand some of the basic functions in 3D Pro.

1.5 What? You need help? Pah!

As well as a tutorial, there is On-Line Help to help you if you are not too sure what an icon does. To activate Help, simply press "Help" on the keyboard at any time and the pointer will change to a help pointer. Now you can select the icon you wish to query, and a short text will pop up to explain its function. The keyboard shortcut for the icon is also included at the end of the text, in square brackets. To then deactivate help mode, press "Help" again, to cancel it. The pointer will then change back to normal.

1.6 The Pattern Editor. Hurrah!

It is here that the pattern is defined. When you first select "Pattern", you are presented with an editing screen consisting of:

Editing box.

Colours.

Scrolling arrows.

Cycle icon.

The editing box is for drawing the pattern in. There are three different types of drawing modes, and these are covered in the [pattern options](#) . The box contains a zoomed in view of the pattern, so pixels will appear as blocks.

The bar of colours is for you to select which colour you wish to use when drawing in the editing box. The selected colour is shown in a box to the right of the screen, under the arrows.

The pattern is a screen high, so not all of it can be seen in the zoomed view. To edit other parts of the pattern, the arrows on the right are used, to scroll up or down the pattern.

The cycle icon is to go to the [pattern options](#) .

1.7 The Pattern Editor Options. Hurrah!

Load and save are used for loading and saving your pattern for later use. Selecting this will open up the [file requestor](#) . The file type used is IFF, so if you wish, you can create patterns in another art package. To save the pattern using this method, grab the pattern as a brush, ensuring that it is no more than 32 or 64 pixels wide (depending on the resolution) and then save the brush.

The draw mode cycle gadget is to alter what happens when you draw in the pattern editor. The options are:

Freehand - Normal drawing, as if with a pencil.

Spray - Random dots appear around the pointer.

Fill - Fills in an enclosed space.

When you draw a pattern, you may find that when the stereogram is drawn, the pattern is disfigured, and cuts appear in it. To attempt to prevent this happening, select "Distort" to blur the pattern, to make it look less bold. It is a good idea to do this with plasmas.

Random plasmas shapes can be created for the pattern, by selecting "Plasma". Also, all the colours are spread across randomly to make it look smooth.

If you wish to just have a pattern of random dots, simply select "Random", to automatically create one. This saves you hours of work with the spray draw mode.

To completely erase the pattern from memory, select "Clear".

"Okay" exits from the pattern editor options and goes to the main menu, keeping the current pattern in memory.

The cycle icon is for going back to the pattern editor from the options.

1.8 The Screen Editor. Hurray!

The main screen is used for drawing the stereogram image in. This image is the picture viewed when the stereogram is looked at in the correct fashion. The mode of drawing can be changed in the **screen options** , but it will usually be just a simple block whenever you press down on a mouse button. The colour you use can be determined by selecting a colour in the box on the left.

The colours range from blue to yellow. You have to imagine that these colours represent how much objects drawn with them come out. For example, blue is the very lowest layer, and yellow is the most foreground layer. Between these two colours is a mixture of differing gradients. These inbetween colours are the inbetween layers of depth. Below these colours is a small box showing the selected colour.

The cycle icon is used to go to the **screen options** .

1.9 The Screen Editor Options. Hurray!

Load and save are used for loading and saving the screen image as an IFF file, the standard type for art packages. This means that you are able to create the image in an external art package, and load it in for use here.

The draw mode cycle gadget is used to toggle between three options. This sets the type of drawing mode in the screen editor. Most of the time this will be set to small block, but large block can be used for large shapes and fill can be used to fill enclosed areas.

"Clear" is for clearing the entire screen with the darkest blue, so you can re-start.

When you have finished, select "Okay" to return to the main menu. If you want to do more on the screen image, select the cycle icon to flip back to the screen editor.

1.10 What? You don't like my default colours?!?

The default colours for the pattern aren't usually very suitable for the pattern you wish to create. For this reason, there is a colour editor to alter the colours you can use in the pattern editor.

The screen contains the usual load and save icons. Also there is an "Okay" icon for returning to the main menu. Along the side are all the colours. Select the one you wish to change. The box to the left of "Load" displays the current colour.

Altering a colour is quite simple. Each of the colours are made up of an amount of red, an amount of green and an amount of blue. If these amounts are changed, different colours are made. When you have selected a colour to change, the three bars along the middle of the screen labelled Red, Green and Blue will show how much of that colour there is in the selected colour. These can be altered by moving the mouse onto the slider you wish to alter, holding down the mouse button and moving the mouse to increase or decrease the amount. The sliding will take an immediate effect, so you will be able to see the result whilst you are doing it.

1.11 Ooo, you've put me in a bad mode (bad joke, sorry).

It is in here that you decide the resolution and number of colours to be used in the stereogram. It is usually best to just leave this on Lowres and 16 colours. However, it is possible to alter the resolution and number of colours.

The resolution cycle gadget is to toggle between lowres and hires. Lowres is 320x256 pixels (320x200 on NTSC) and hires is 640x512 pixels (640x400 on NTSC). The number of colours can be altered by selecting the colours cycle gadget. The possible number of colours are 2, 4, 8 and 16. For maximum speed, try to keep this number as low as possible, and use a lowres resolution.

If you use the same screen mode, every time you use the program, you can select "Save" to save the mode to disk. Then, every time you start up, the screen mode will be already be set to how you want it.

Once you have finished changing the mode, select "Okay" to return to the main menu. If the mode is any different to how it was before, then the pattern will be erased. If you have altered the mode and you don't want to keep them like that, then select "Cancel" to revert to the old mode, and return to the main menu.

1.12 I couldn't fit 'Draw Stereogram' into the icon. :-)

"Draw 3D" is used to draw the stereogram over the pattern, with the screen image as a depth map. The quality of the stereogram depends on a few things. Here are a few tips, I've learnt from experience:

If the image has come out gradually (i.e. many layers) it is best to use a plasma that has been distorted.

If the image is flat, use a random dot pattern.

To attempt to eliminate the impression of steps in the stereogram, use an un-distorted plasma with a high resolution screen. Sometimes "cracks" will appear in the background pattern. If this happens, distort it.

To make stereograms easier to see, guides may be used. These are two circles close to each other that the viewer blurs together to make three. The "Guides" cycle gadget allows you to have either no guides, guides at the top and guides at the bottom.

1.13 Let's get loading and saving - it's my favourite passtime.

On the main menu, there are options to load and save everything as one file. This includes the screen image, the pattern, the colours and the mode. The main use of this is for frames of an **animation**. Selecting "Load" or "Save" will take you to the **file requestor**.

1.14 3D animations are great for killing your eyes. ;-)

This option is to make it easier to make animations using stereograms. To create the animation, make each frame using 3D Pro and save them using "Save" in the main menu. Save each frame as "Frame n" where n is the frame number from 1 onwards. When each frame is done, select "Animation". The **file requestor** will come up. Select the last frame in the sequence. Then, all the frames inbetween will be turned into stereograms and saved as "3D Frame 1", "3D Frame 2" etc. These frames can then be loaded into an animation package to create an animation.

1.15 Sorry about the terrible colour scheme!

In this menu, you can decide how you want the program to look like. The menu consists of two cycle gadgets, "Background" and "Icon". Selecting the cycle gadget will alter the colour of the background and the icons. To save these preferences, so the program remembers them for later use, select "Save". Otherwise, select okay to simply use the new preferences or cancel to revert to the old colours.

1.16 No, it's not the ASL file requestor...

The file requestor is used whenever you wish to load or save data. It is pretty simple to use, but for inexperienced users, here's a list of what everything is:

Load and save are used to load or save the file that you have selected, or typed in. Load will load the selected file, if it exists and is of the right file type (i.e. Screen file or Colours file). Save will require you to select the box along the top and type something in as a file name. If no file name is inputted when "Save" is selected, the file will not be saved.

Amigas can have many devices or disks available to them (i.e. Hard Disks, Floppy Disks or Ram Disks). To select which one of these disks you wish to save on, select "Disks" for a list of available disks and assigns. Select one to change to that disk. If you select DF0: (Floppy disk drive) and there is no disk in the drive, then nothing will happen.

It is likely that you will want to save your work in directories or drawers. However, if you have gone into a directory and you wish to go out of it, select "Parent" and you will be taken to the previous directory.

If you have decided you don't want to load or save a file, select "Cancel" to exit the file requestor and return to what you were doing.

A list of the files in the current directory will be displayed in the large box to the left. This list can be scrolled up and down by selecting the arrows next to it. To select a file, simply click with the mouse button, on one of the files. The name of the file will appear in the top box. Then select "Load" or "Save" to load or overwrite that file.

1.17 The not-technical-at-all section.

This section is mainly for the more experienced users. It explains how to use Virtual Memory, as well as a few other things.

Virtual Memory is a process which enables the program to use the hard disk or floppy disk as memory. 3D Pro has this capability. To use this feature, simply load the file "3D_Temp.config" into any word processor. This file tells the program the place to use as virtual memory. This defaults as "t:". This is a temporary place in ram to store information. However, you can change this to anything, such as "Work:Rubbish/" or "DF0:Trashcan/". Make sure that there is always enough room on the disk, (about 512k) and that the path name has a "Return" after it. Also make sure that it is write enabled all the time.

The file "3D.config" is the preferences file and "3D_Mode.config" is the mode configuration. These are altered in the program, so don't change these. If they are not present, defaults will be set.

You can flip between 3D Pro and Workbench by pressing the left Amiga key and "A".

Error messages:

"Can't Load File" - This is when you are trying to load a certain file, that the program can't load for some reason. For example, the file may not exist, the disk may be corrupt or you have taken out the disk whilst it is trying to read it.

"Can't Save File" - This message is given when the program is unable to save a certain file. This could occur for many reasons. The disk could be corrupt, there isn't enough free space on the disk or the disk is write protected.

These are the only error messages needed, as it is impossible to cause errors anywhere else.

Known errors/bugs:

When printing is finished, 3D Pro sometimes crashes. This is a bug of AMOS, as far as I know.

1.18 A quick history lesson... and what's new

v1.02 December 1995

Nothing new. I just rearranged a few things to make it work on all systems.

v1.01 November 1995

Now **flipable between 3D Pro and Workbench**

Fully compatible with Cachefont (no longer needs font file either)

Squashed the font up a bit (by mistake!)

v1.00 November 1995

First release.

1.19 Credits

Everything done by me, Ben Wyatt. I can be contacted via e-mail at bwyatt@paston.co.uk or via snail-mail (chortle) at 167 Oak Street, Norwich, Norfolk NR3 3AY (UK).

And if you like this, why not get some of my other stuff on aminet:

Knockout.lha - game/2play

Bounce.lha - game/jump

Blobs.lha - game/2play

Oh, and this is completely free, but only distribute with all the files included and unaltered. PD companies are welcome to distribute this, if they really want to.
