

Corel Bryce 4.1

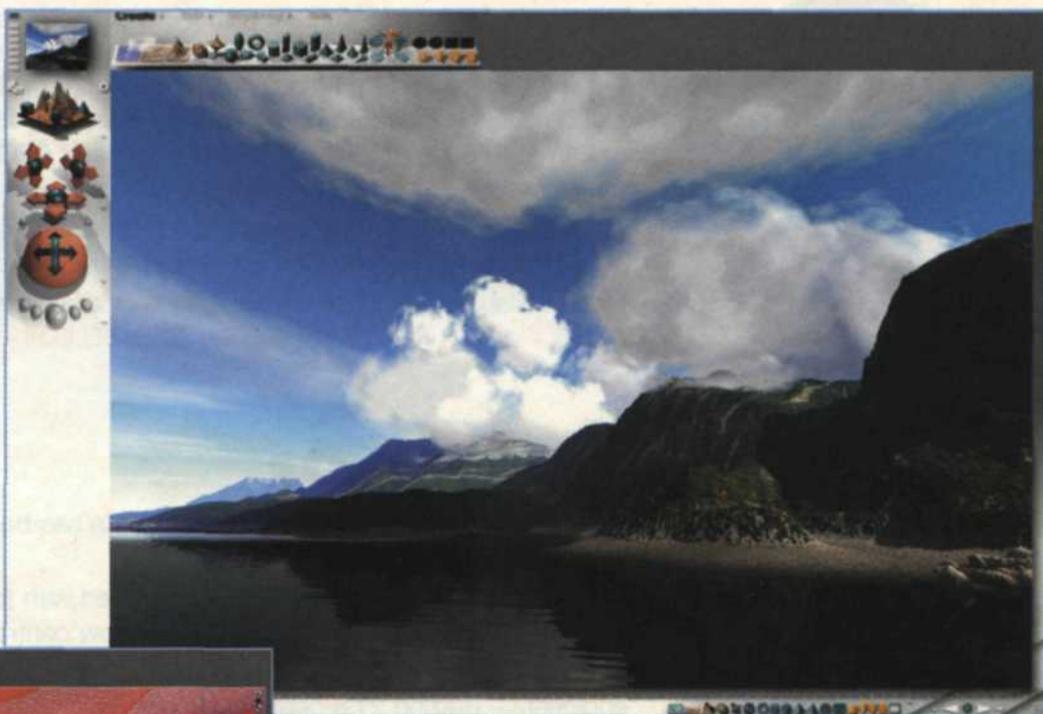
Add a third—and even fourth—dimension to your photos

Text & Images by Jack and Sue Drafa

When you look at some of the fabulous still and video imagery today, you may scratch your head and wonder, how dey do dat? As far as we know there are no dinosaurs walking the earth, and we have not yet gone into warp speed in our space travel, yet today these effects are commonplace. Images that once seemed impossible are now possible thanks to a very powerful 3D image editing program called Bryce 4.1.

Our first introduction to Bryce was back at version 2, when it was under the MetaTools banner. We wondered how a program named after a National Park could survive in this very competitive software world. After using the program for a short time, and with a couple of magazine covers under our belt, we knew this was the program for us. It evolved to Bryce 3D and Bryce 4 while under the new company name of MetaCreations, and became a trusty companion to our 2D photo-

competitive world, it is common for software programs to be sold to other companies, only to be absorbed and never heard of again. Fortunately that is not the case for Bryce. The Corel Corporation, famous for Corel Draw and Word Perfect, has proudly included Bryce as part of their software line. Bryce 4.1 remains intact, and has already been improved



Above: The best part of Bryce is that, after creating a scene like this one, you can save the clouds, mountains, water and other 3D objects, and then import selected parts into new scenes.
Left: 3D grid lines are used to align objects before final rendering.



editing programs. We were completely happy with the program, then we heard it had been sold to Corel. In today's

to blend with the other Corel imaging programs.

So, why would you would want an editing program that goes beyond two dimensions? Two-dimensional photo-editing programs operate using the x and y axis. The image is flat and lacks depth. Thanks to all the new leading-edge technology in this area, the additional creative controls allow you to design whatever you can dream. The movie special effects that were once restricted to Hollywood are now all within your reach. Simply use your computer and Bryce software to fulfill your wildest dreams.

Corel Bryce 4.1

Bryce is primarily designed as a 3D editing program, where you work with 3D objects that have an x, y, and z axis. Each object can be rotated, scaled, stretched, moved within the scene and even coated with hundreds of realistic materials. You can also construct objects from scratch by loading in basic shapes such as circles, cubes or cones and mixing them together to make some very complex and unique objects. Bryce takes it even one step further by adding the fourth dimension of time. It is now possible for objects to move along a path throughout the scene over a predetermined length of time.

There is a lot more to Bryce than most people could use in a lifetime. Best of all, while the program is able to produce very complex effects, it is still very easy to use. Bryce also features a 3D library offering a variety of images for you to load such as airplanes, insects, buildings, trees, mountains, sky, water or household products. If you search the Web, you will also find dozens of pages with free Bryce objects for use in your images.

When you work with background objects, such as mountains, a second editor inside Bryce, called the terrain editor, lets you fine-tune how these background objects appear within a scene. One of the most creative aspects of Bryce is the ability to use 2D images to create 3D shapes. When you import any 2D file as a shape, Bryce will convert it to a grayscale image and use it as the structure of the 3D object. For example, you can take a portrait of someone's face, and use it as the geometry for creating a mountain. The result is a mountain of rock that takes on the features of the person's face. You can even make rocky text pushing its way out of the ground. So you see, the creative potential with Bryce is limitless.

You can also import 2D pictures with an alpha channel mask and incorporate them into a 3D scene. We used this function to create an aerial view of a scuba diver standing on a small Fijian island at sunset. The diver was photographed in 2D on our back deck, the aerial sunset image was created in the computer and the fourth dimension of time came from Bryce. We

started with a close-up of the diver and then backed away with the motion controls. The files were then rendered into a video file and used in a digital slide show. We will

be covering digital slide shows in an upcoming article, so stay tuned.

Bryce takes this new technology even one step further. You can load Digital Elevation Maps (DEM) from USGS



Bryce lets you import letters (3D letters above, 2D letters converted to 3D in Bryce by combining them with a 3D object, below) and images, add fog and haze, edit terrain, and much more.

off the Web, and create your own maps of any region in the United States. These files have aerial views of almost every square inch of the United States. Once the file is downloaded, you simply import it into Bryce and it will duplicate the land mass in 3D. Want to create your own

Devils Tower? No problem with Bryce and the DEM file.

We decided to give it a try and have a P-38 Lighting WWII aircraft fly over Crater Lake, Oregon. Sounds pretty easy, except that we wanted the shot to be looking down on top of the plane as it flew over the lake. No problem! We download the DEM of Crater Lake, added some clouds, and then imported a 2D picture of a P-38 that we had taken at a local air show. In no time at all, we magically had our picture.

If you really like image editing and want to expand your creativity, you need to consider the world of 3D. It's not just for gamers. You never know, it might be your new extension to the new digital world. Corel's Bryce 4.1 is a software program that can take you to a whole

new dimension.

For information on Corel products, contact Corel Corp., 800/772-6735; www.corel.com. ■

