MASY
Easy
Caustics

A Manual

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Introduction

Thank you for purchasing the Easy Caustics lighting pack for DAZ Studio 4.6 and up. This guide is intended to help you get the most for your money by using all of the options offered by your new product.

It is highly recommended that you at least skim this document in its entirety before working on renders with your new product. We've done our best to make it clear with the icons, morph names, and utilities, but it's easy to get into difficulties when figuring out a product's features purely by looking at them. That's what this guide is for.

If you find yourself at sea when trying to get a particular look in a particular scene, this is for you. Read on!

Chapter 1: The Base Rig

All files can be found in Light Presets/MASY/EasyCaustics.

Description/Whats included:

EC Lights (folder):

<u>All Lights:</u> This preset loads everything you'll need for lighting the whole scene, prop, or figure that will receive the casutic light effect. Some of the lights are purely to enhance the vessel or prop that will appear to be casting the caustic light.

Including:

• Two specular lights for highlights on glass and metal.

• An UberEnvironment light to cast a dim diffused light over the whole scene. With the intensity set at 50% it insures the caustic area is bright in contrast.

• EC Vessel Spotlight: These two spotlights (one is specular) provide backlighting for the vessel. It is carefully positioned so that it does not cast a shadow from the caustic plane. The lights are grouped with the EC Spotlight so that you can easily scale and reposition as needed.

• EC Spotlight: These two spotlights (one is specular) project the casutic effect. The specular light is turned off by default, it's just there in case you need more highlights. The spotlight(s) and caustic plane need to remain parented or locked together as the distance from the plane and the spotlight spread are finely tuned. The lights are grouped with the EC Vessel Spotlight so that you can easily scale and reposition as needed.

• Vessel Darkside: This is a linear point light that gives a slight glow to the darkside of the translucent vessel. It simulates light that would be passing through the object, the exit point where the casutic light would be eminating. It's best position is opposite the vessel spotlight, just above the surface the vessel is sitting on.

<u>EC Light Rig:</u> This preset loads the main caustic spotlight(s), plane and vessels spotlights. This is the base set up for easy caustic lighting. The lights are grouped so that you can easily scale and reposition as needed.

How to:

The directions are the same whether you're adding the lights to a scene or starting fresh. The lights are saved as a scene subset so they wont replace any existing lights. However the All Lights preset includes UberEnvironment lighting so you may delete this if your scene already has one.

Scale and reposition the caustic set up:

Look through the EC spotlight to position over the vessel. Ideally the caustic area would be opposite the Vessel spotlight, in the shadow side of the prop. If you move the EC Spotlight be sure to look through the vessel spotlight so that it's light does not touch the caustic plane (the vessel spotlight is meant to project under the plane). Don't scale by pulling the spotlight away from the subject, this will blur the caustic effect. Scale the effect by increasing the size of the spotlight. The caustic plane needs to be as close as possible to the object to receive the effect such as a table top, ground plane, etc.

These images show screencaps from the promo images and give an idea of scale relationship and position between prop and the EC Spotlights.
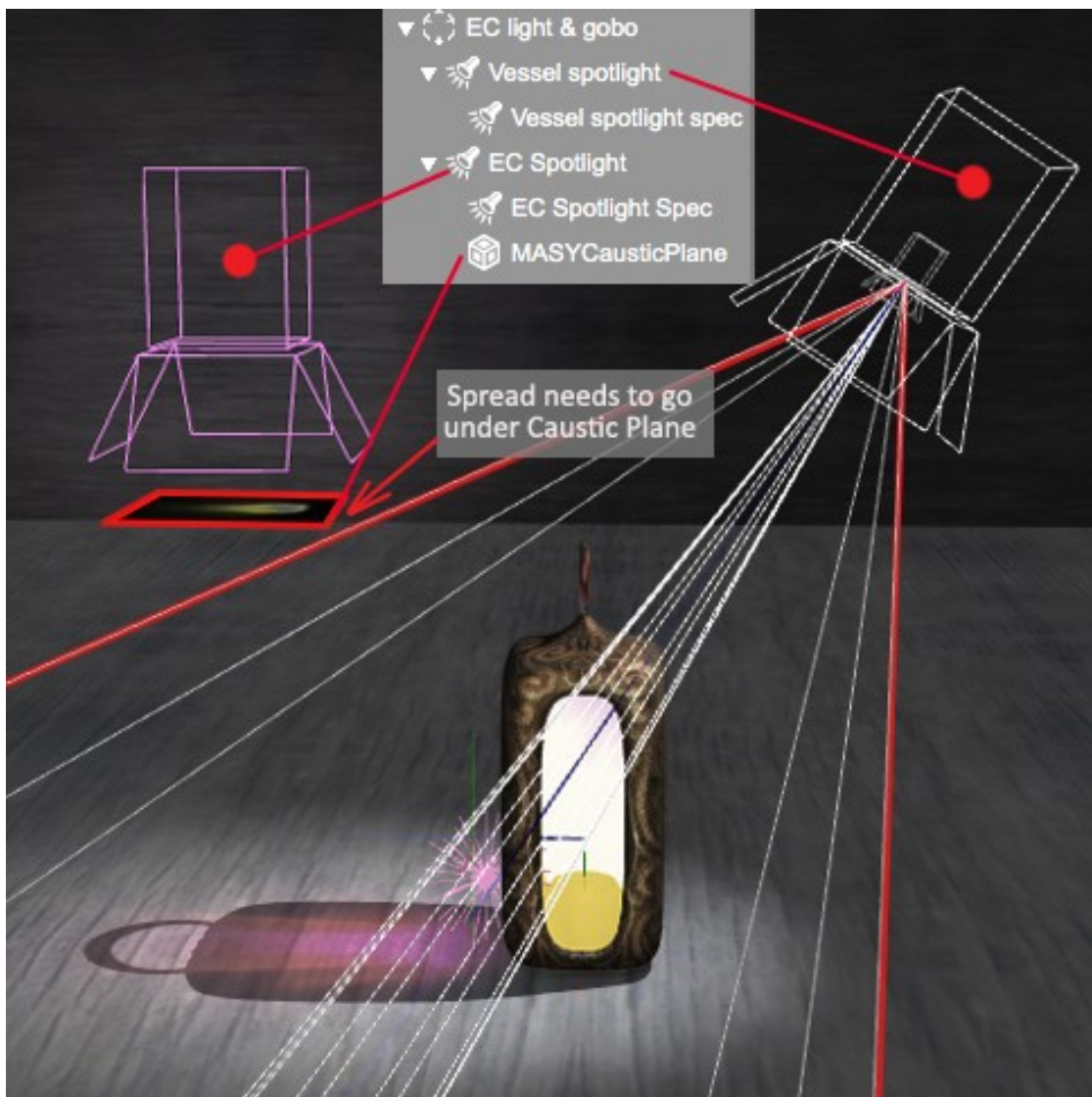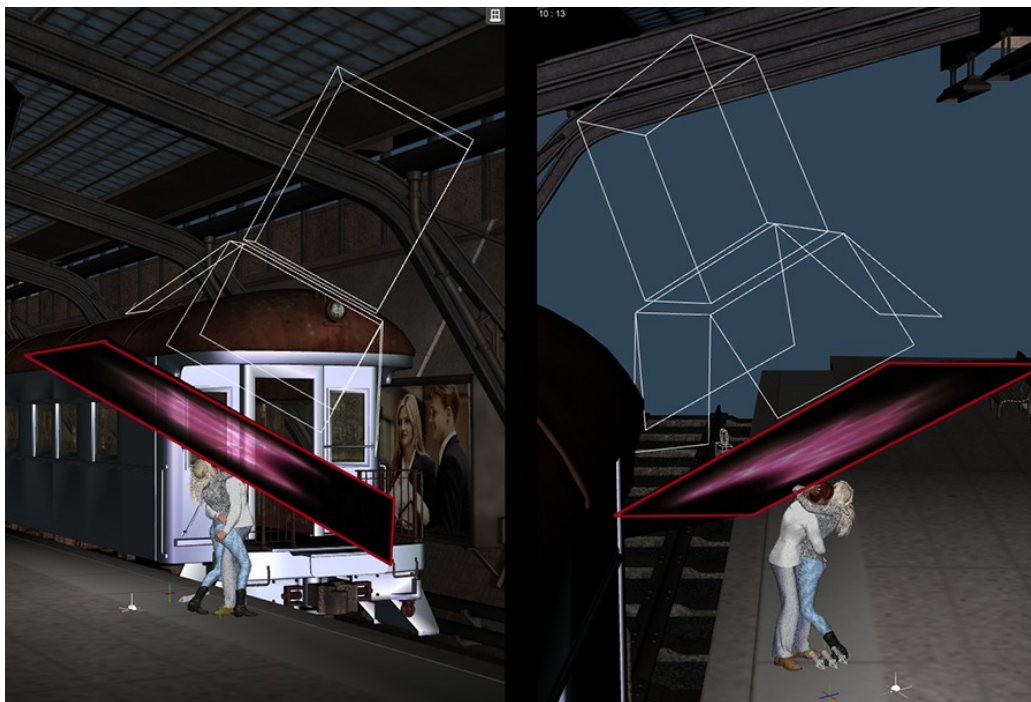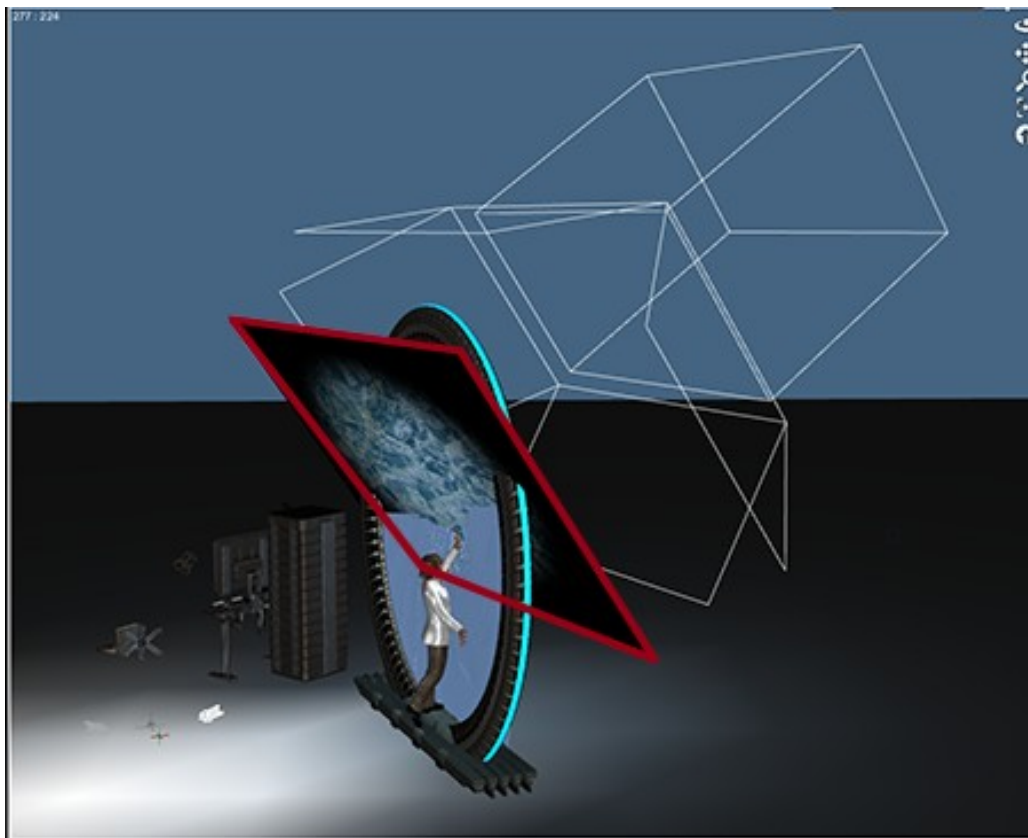
The lamp in this image is set to: Parameters Tab/Display/Cast Shadows/OFF

Change Caustic Material: click on the plane in the scene tab or viewport, click on the material in the surfaces tab and then click on the shader you'd like in the Caustic Materials folder.

Change Color of the caustic area: Some color variations of the caustic plane have been included (Caustic Materials folder) but if you'd like to get more specific change the color of the spotlight.

There are color variations for some of the shaders. Note that on some of these the diffuse map may not change when a new shader is loaded but the color projected will still change.

Replace/Load a different spotlight: If you want to use a different spotlight: unparent the EC plane, click on & copy (command C/MAC) the EC Spotlight & delete it, bring in your new spotlight and click/paste (command V/MAC). Then parent the plane with the new spot.

Chapter 2: The Props and Scenes

These exist so that you can sub in your own items, but also so that you can look over how things are set up for creating your own scenes.

The scenes are found in Light Presets/MASY/EasyCaustics/EasyCausticsScenes.

The Base Room Corner contains a prop with two wooden walls and a floor. The purpose of this is to provide a place to put objects when creating still-life scenes; it can also be used for larger scenes when the camera is meant to be in close. Some additional wood options for this are found in the Scene Materials folder.
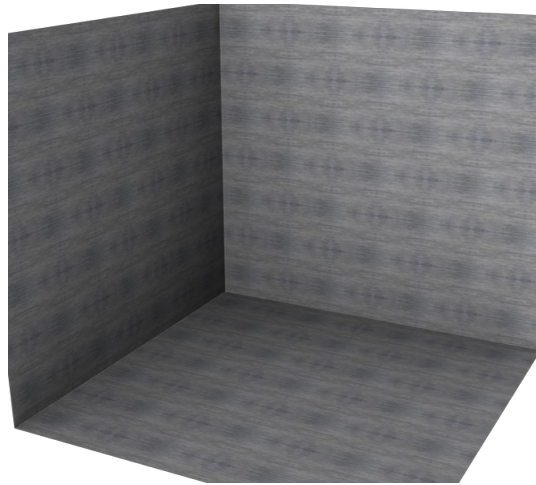
The Moroccan Lantern Scene contains the moroccan lantern prop and a light setup that goes with it, looking as if light is shining through the red side of the lantern.
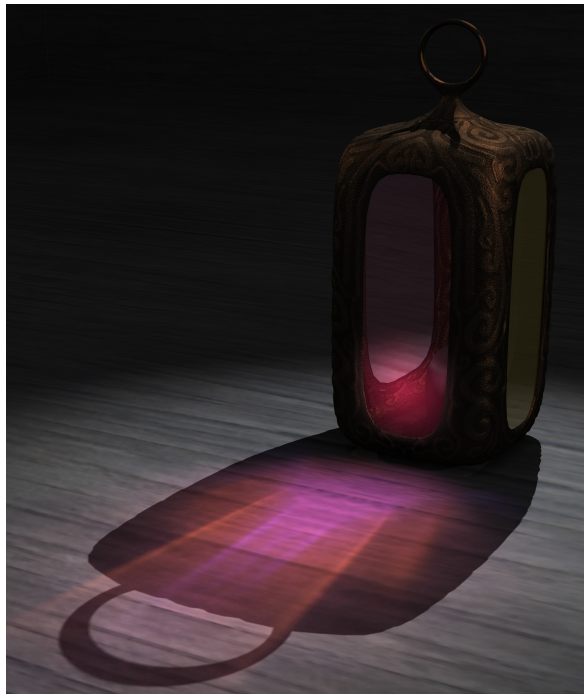
Since the render settings are saved with the scene, you can see what render settings work best with these lights. A different set of settings is included with the other scene preset, the Wine Glass Scene.
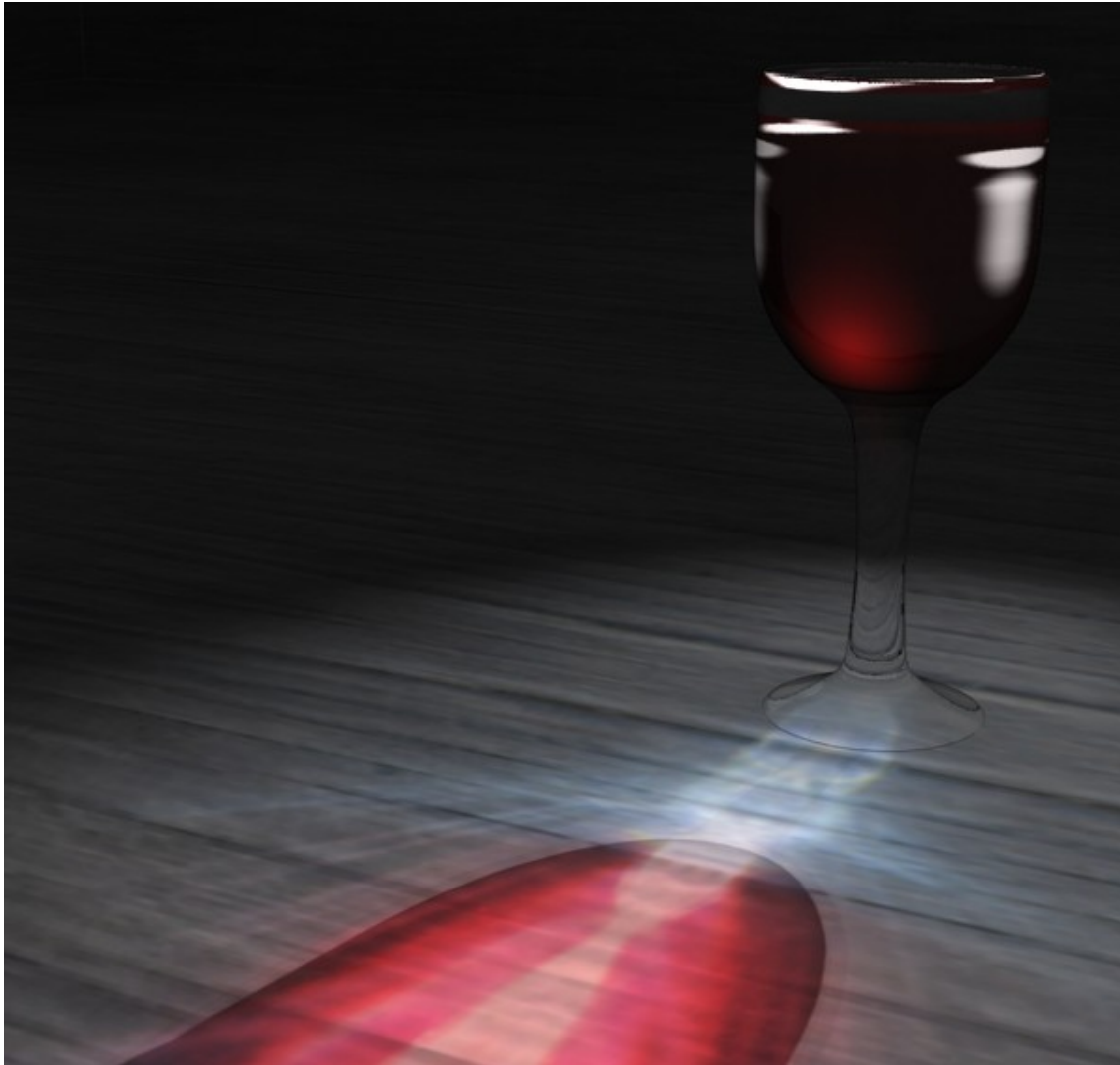
As you can see, different caustic materials for the light plane are included for these different sorts of looks, and there are many others for your use as well (see chapter 1).

This brings us to the props themselves, which are included both for your testing use and to help you get started with creating your own caustic scenes.

Bottle01 is a plain single-layer bottle with a cork that goes well with the "tall bottle" caustic preset.

Bottle02 is a more complex bottle mesh that takes longer to render, but can produce more complex-looking light and refraction effects in your scene.

The Lantern has a different colored glass panel on each side and a candle inside for the look of the classic Moroccan lantern, a unique décor object.

The wine glass (also with water and wine shaders) is here to provide the ultimate test of your render rig with its multiple layers of refracted transparency.

You can find these items in Light Presets/MASY/EasyCaustics/EasyCausticsProps. Materials for the props are in a subfolder called Prop Materials.