Glaze

Glass With Real Thickness — Volumetric Refraction for After Effects

User Guide · v1.0.0

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1 Installation

Easy Install (Recommended)

The easiest way to install and license is by using the aescripts + aeplugins manager app:
https://aescripts.com/learn/aescripts-aeplugins-manager-app/

To install a trial, select "Add Trial" from the "Account" menu.

Step	Action
1	Install and open the **aescripts + aeplugins Manager** app, then sign in with your aescripts account.
2	Find **Glaze** and click **Install**. The Manager copies the plug-in to the correct Plug-ins folder and handles updates automatically.
3	Restart After Effects. Glaze appears under **Effect → nebulaf → Glaze**.

macOS — Installer (easiest)

Step	Action
1	Double-click **Glaze-Installer.pkg**. (First time: if macOS blocks it, right-click → **Open**, or System Settings → Privacy & Security → **Open Anyway**.)
2	Follow the installer. Enter your Mac password in the standard dialog when asked.
3	The installer finds your After Effects Plug-ins folder automatically and installs Glaze. Restart After Effects.

> No Terminal, no manual copying — the `.pkg` auto-detects After Effects (Beta / 2022–2026), installs the plug-in, clears the download quarantine, and signs it for you.

macOS / Windows — Manual Install

OS	File → Folder
Windows	Copy `Glaze.aex` to `C:¥Program Files¥Adobe¥Adobe After Effects <version>¥Support Files¥Plug-ins¥`
macOS	Copy `Glaze.plugin` to `/Applications/Adobe After Effects <version>/Plug-ins/`

Quit After Effects before copying, then restart it. Glaze appears under **Effect → nebulaf → Glaze**.

> 🍎 **macOS — if Glaze shows as "unknown plugin":** use the **Glaze-Installer.pkg** above (it clears the quarantine and signs the bundle). If it still does not load, run **"Glaze Diagnostics.command"** and send the output to support.

Requirements

Item	Requirement
Host	Adobe After Effects 2024 or later (2024 / 2025 / 2026).
Windows	Windows 10 / 11 (x64). GPU acceleration via **NVIDIA CUDA**. Without an NVIDIA GPU, Glaze renders on the CPU automatically.
macOS	macOS 11.0 (Big Sur) or later. Apple Silicon (M-series) and Intel (Universal binary). GPU acceleration via **Metal**.

Licensing

Step	Action
1	Apply Glaze to any layer.
2	In the **Effect Controls** panel, click **Options** at the top of the effect.
3	Paste the license string you received from aescripts.com.
4	Click **OK** — Glaze is registered instantly.

Floating licenses: enter `@REMOTE` in the license field when an aescripts License Server is configured on your network.

Trial: runs with a watermark until you enter a license (Options… at the top of the effect, or via the aescripts + aeplugins manager).

2 Quick Start

Glaze reads the layer's own alpha and builds thickness from it, so you can drop it straight onto a text, shape, or logo layer — no track matte or precomp setup required — and get glass with real depth rather than a flat distortion. Assign a Background Layer for what shows through the glass.

🎯 Add a Layer → ✨ Apply Glaze → 🍼 Pick a Preset → 🎚️ Tune Sliders

Step	Action
1	Add any layer — an image, a solid, or a **text / shape / logo** layer.
2	Apply **Effect → nebulaf → Glaze**.
3	Set **Background Layer** to the layer (or precomp) you want to see through the glass.
4	Pick a look from **Material Preset** (Clear Glass, Frosted Glass, Crystal, Liquid Glass, …).
5	Choose a **Distortion Mode** (Solid / Liquid / Chaos / Crystal / Real Glass) for the overall refraction character.
6	Fine-tune with the sliders (Refraction Index, Thickness, Specular, Fresnel, …).

Moving a still image? On image, footage and solid layers **World Lock** switches on automatically, so the refraction stays locked to the world as you move the layer. Shape, text and pre-composed layers already track correctly, so World Lock stays off for them.

💡 **Background & reflections:** Assign a **Background Layer** at the top of the effect — that is what Glaze refracts through the glass. Assign an **Environment Map** for custom reflections. If Background Layer is empty, a built-in studio environment is used instead. The layer behind Glaze in the timeline is *not* picked up automatically.

3 Presets & Modes

Material Preset

One-click starting points. Choose Custom (Use Sliders) to drive everything by hand.

Preset	Look
Custom (Use Sliders)	No preset — full manual control.
Clear Glass	Clean, transparent glass with sharp refraction.
Frosted Glass	Soft, diffused "glassmorphism" blur.
Crystal	Faceted crystal with hard edges and sparkle.
Clean Water	Thin, watery refraction.
Liquid Glass	Thick, rounded "liquid glass" (Apple-style) look.
Design Glass	Stylized UI/design glass panel.
Glass Marble	Spherical marble / lens ball refraction.

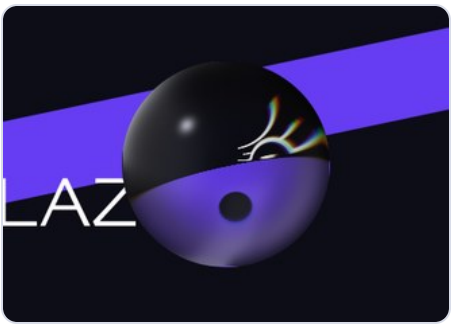
Distortion Mode



Solid



Liquid



Chaos



Crystal



Real Glass

Same background and settings — only Distortion Mode differs.

Mode	Character
Solid	Solid dome glass — even, controlled refraction.
Liquid	Rounded liquid-glass distortion with soft edges.
Chaos	Organic, uneven distortion for artistic looks.
Crystal	Faceted crystal. Shows the **Crystal** controls (Facet Random / Size / Seed / Edge).
Real Glass	Thick solid-glass optics — strong center magnification with the image wrapping around at the rim.

Quality (default **Auto**) controls sampling for reflections, environment and blurs:

- **Auto** — light while you drag or scrub; full quality when the preview settles (recommended).
- **Draft** — always light / fast.
- **Normal** — balanced.
- **High** — best quality (use when judging final look, or for render).

Clear glass with little blur may look similar across modes; the difference is clearest with Glass Blur, Roughness, Reflection Blur or Prism.

4 Controls Reference

GLASS Refraction & Glass



Thickness 20



Thickness 55



Thickness 95

Thickness controls how strongly the background bends.

Control	What it does
Refraction Index	Strength of bending (IOR). Higher = stronger lens distortion.
Thickness	Perceived glass depth / dome height.
Smoothness	Surface smoothing of the refraction.
Chromatic Aberration	RGB color fringing at the edges (subtle split).
Prism / Rainbow	Stronger spectral rainbow along the rim — independent of Chromatic Aberration.
Clarity	Transparency. 100 = fully clear; lower adds a soft blue-green tint.
Edge Darkness	Darkens the rim for a defined crystal contour.
Flip Refraction X / Y	Invert the refraction direction horizontally / vertically.

CRYSTAL Crystal — controls show in Crystal mode

Control	What it does
Facet Random	0 = regular sectors; higher = irregular crystal facets.

Control	What it does
Facet Size	Size of the facets (%). 100 = automatic, scaled to the shape.
Facet Seed	Changes the random facet arrangement — dial in the pattern you like.
Facet Edge	Sharpness of the facet ridges.

SURFACE Surface & Texture



Roughness 0



Roughness 60



Glass Blur 70

Roughness frosts the glass; Glass Blur softens the background behind it.

Control	What it does
Roughness (Frosted)	Frosted diffusion, strongest at the rim and sharp in the center.
Glass Blur	Uniform background blur across the whole surface (glassmorphism). 0 = none.
Glass Tint	Amount of color tint in the glass body.
Bump Map	Surface relief source: Off / From Glass Texture / Bump Layer / **Fractal Noise (Auto)**.
Bump Layer	Layer used when Bump Map = "Bump Layer".
Bump Strength	Depth of the surface relief.
Bump Scale	Grain size of the built-in fractal noise (see section 6).
Bump Evolution	Animates the built-in fractal noise (see section 6).

Roughness vs Glass Blur: Roughness frosts the *edges* while keeping the center readable; Glass Blur blurs the *entire* surface evenly. Combine both for realistic frosted glass.

✨ **Fractal Noise (Auto):** Set **Bump Map → Fractal Noise (Auto)** for built-in procedural surface detail — **no extra layer and no position-linking required**. Tune grain with **Bump Scale** and animate the flow with **Bump Evolution** (see section 6). Bump Strength is auto-set when you switch to this mode.

LIGHT Lighting & Reflection



Fresnel Intensity 0



Fresnel Intensity 150



Fresnel Width 0



Fresnel Width 100

Fresnel Intensity sets the rim sheen; Fresnel Width sets how far it reaches inward.

Control	What it does
Light Angle	Direction of the key light for speculars and shading.
Specular	Intensity of the glossy highlight.
Specular Blur	Softness of the highlight.

Control	What it does
Specular Color Mode	Auto (average of the environment) or Custom.
Specular Color	Custom highlight color (when mode = Custom).
Env Reflection	Strength of environment/background reflection on the glass.
Reflection Blur	Blur of the reflected environment (glossy vs mirror).
Fresnel Intensity	Bright rim light at grazing angles (Fresnel edge).
Fresnel Width	Width of the Fresnel band, fading inward.
Fresnel Blur	Softness of the Fresnel edge.
Rim Wrap	How far the rim highlight wraps around the edge.
Inner Light	Soft glow from inside the glass body (opposite the key light).
Inner Light Color	Tint of Inner Light (default white).

ENV Environment

Control	What it does
Studio Light	Built-in HDRI environment: Classic / Big Softbox / Two Windows / Off.
Studio Reflection	How much of the built-in studio mixes into the reflections (0 = map/background only).
Environment Mapping	Spherical (full 360° wrap) or Flat (billboard plane).
Environment Size	Zoom of the environment map. Larger = tighter framing.
Env Rotation	Rotate the reflected environment.
Environment Offset X / Y	Pan the environment reflection. Independent of World Lock (which locks the refracted background).
Studio Parallax	How much the built-in studio reflection shifts as the layer moves.

Assign an **Environment Map** at the top of the effect for custom reflections (and rim sheen). What you see *through* the glass comes from **Background Layer** (or the built-in studio when that picker is empty). Set **Studio Light → Off** to disable the built-in environment entirely.

Background Layer uses After Effects' standard layer picker. Next to the layer name, choose how the layer is sampled: **Source** (raw pixels — usual choice), **Masks** (include that layer's masks), or **Effects & Masks** (include effects and masks on that layer). Use the latter only when you want those treatments visible inside the refraction.

WORLD World Lock

Control	What it does
World Lock (Still Image)	Keeps the refracted background locked to the world when you move an image, footage or solid layer. Turns on **automatically** on those layers.
World Lock Position	Driven automatically by the layer's position — normally you never touch this.

Shape, text and pre-composed layers already track correctly when moved, so World Lock stays off for them. Environment Offset is a separate control for panning reflections — it does not replace World Lock.

SHADOW Shadows & Caustics

Control	What it does
Drop Shadow	Contact shadow strength beneath the glass.
Shadow Distance	Offset of the drop shadow.
Shadow Spread	Softness / spread of the drop shadow.
Shadow Color	Tone of the shadow (default black).
Inner Shadow	Shading inside the glass body.
Inner Shadow Spread	Softness of the inner shadow.

Control	What it does
Caustics Intensity	Brightness of focused light patterns (caustics).
Caustics Size	Scale of the caustic pattern.
Caustics Color	Tint of the caustics (default white / neutral).

5 Saving & Loading Presets

Button	Action
Save Preset…	Save the current settings to a `.glaze` file.
Load Preset…	Load settings from a `.glaze` file.
Set Default Folder…	Choose the default folder for your presets.

> Presets store all slider values so you can reuse a look across projects. Share `.glaze` files with teammates who also have Glaze installed.

6 Animating the Surface (Fractal Bump)



Bump Off



Strength 8



Strength 20



Strength 20 / Scale 300

Fractal bump adds surface detail without any extra layer. Bump Scale sets how fine the grain is.

The built-in fractal bump gives moving, organic surface detail without any extra layer.

Control	What it does
Bump Map = Fractal Noise (Auto)	Turns on the built-in procedural bump.
Bump Scale	Grain size of the noise (small = coarse, large = fine).
Bump Evolution	Animates the noise. **0 = static.** Keyframe or increase the value to make the surface *flow*.
Bump Strength	Depth of the relief.

> 💡 **To animate:** set two keyframes on **Bump Evolution** (e.g. 0 → 300). The surface flows continuously — no position linking, no external Fractal Noise layer needed.

7 Beyond Glass — Chrome & Metal

Glaze is not limited to transparent glass. Turn the refraction down and the reflection up, and the same layer becomes polished chrome — using nothing but the built-in studio environment, so no HDRI image is required.



Chrome — built-in studio only



Softer metal — Studio Light: Two Windows · Reflection Blur 50

No HDRI needed — these use the built-in studio environment alone.

Control	Chrome	Satin metal
Thickness	10	10
Clarity	100	100
Env Reflection	100	100
Studio Reflection	100	100
Fresnel Intensity	200	200
Reflection Blur	0	50
Background Layer	Leave unassigned so the studio is reflected	

> Change **Studio Light** (Classic / Big Softbox / Two Windows) to reshape the highlights, and **Env Rotation** to spin the reflection into place.

8 Performance & GPU

Platform	Acceleration
Windows	**NVIDIA CUDA** GPU. Falls back to multi-threaded CPU when no NVIDIA GPU is present.
macOS	**Metal** GPU (Apple Silicon & Intel). Falls back to CPU if Metal is unavailable.

- **Quality is the main speed control.** Leave it on **Auto** for day-to-day work, or force **Draft** / **High** when you need them.
- Large **Reflection Blur**, **Glass Blur**, and **Specular Blur** values cost the most — raise them last.
- GPU acceleration is used automatically inside After Effects' Multi-Frame Rendering pipeline.

9 Troubleshooting

What you see	What to check
Glaze does not appear in the effect list	Make sure the plug-in went into the *same* After Effects version you are launching, then restart AE. On macOS, run the bundled `Glaze Diagnostics.command` and send us the output.
Nothing happens / the layer turns black	The layer needs an alpha shape. A full-frame opaque solid has no edges, so there is nothing to build glass from.
The background does not show through	Assign a **Background Layer**. With none assigned, the built-in studio environment is refracted instead. If your background is several layers, pre-compose them first.
Grainy or speckled result	Set **Quality** to High. The stronger the blur, the more samples it needs.
Slow playback	Lower **Quality**, and keep **Roughness**, **Glass Blur** and **Reflection Blur** modest — those cost the most.
Reflections swing too much while moving the layer	Lower **Studio Parallax** (0 locks the reflection completely).
A watermark appears over the render	The licence is not registered yet. Use the **Options…** button at the top of the effect.

10 Notes & Liability

- Glaze is provided **as-is** without warranty. Save your project before applying effects.
- The developer assumes **no liability** for data loss, project corruption, or downtime.
- GPU results can differ slightly from CPU due to hardware precision; this is expected.

Support & updates: your Glaze product page on aescripts.com.

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