User Manual

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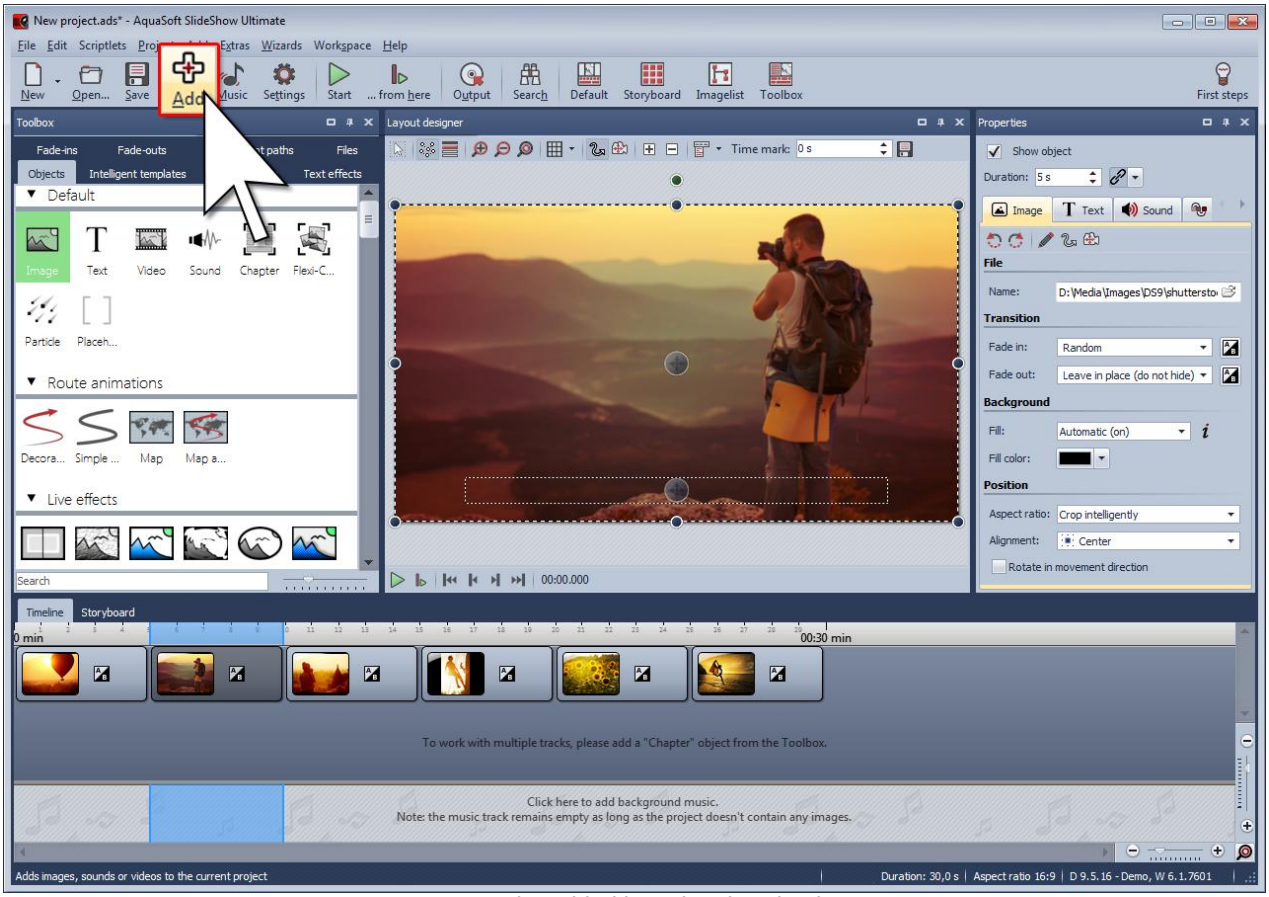
1 First steps

1.1 First steps with AquaSoft Stages



Images can be added by using the Plus-button

1. Add images

Click the Plus-button in the Toolbar and add your images. If you want to add several images at once hold down the Ctrl-key and click the images with the mouse.

- **In chapter "Adding images" you'll learn about other ways to add images.**
- **If you want add captions to your images please read chapter "Text to images".**
- **How to annotate images with an audio commentary, see chapter "Sound Wizard".**

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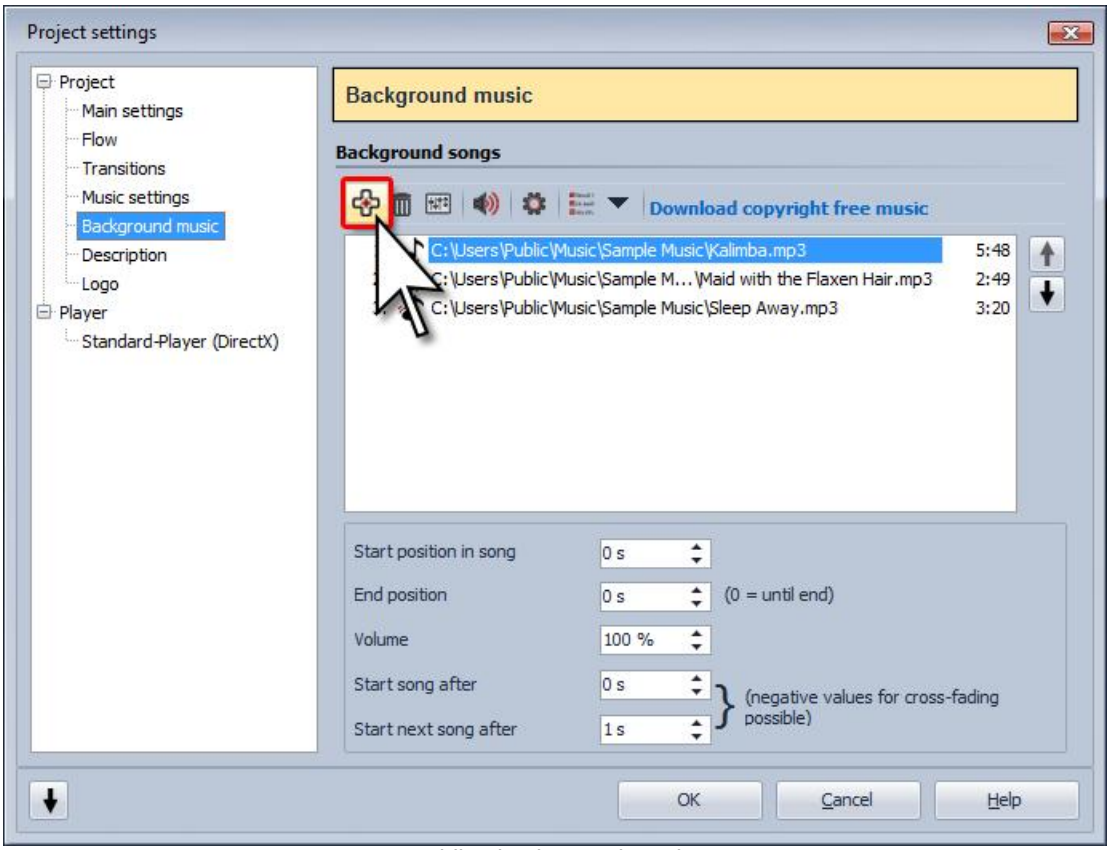

Adding background music

2. Adding background music

Click the Music-button in the Toolbar. This will open the menu for the background music with an empty playlist. You can add songs using the Plus-button in the menu. Confirm with OK to load the songs into the show.

- **In chapter "Background music" you can read everything about music in your presentation.**

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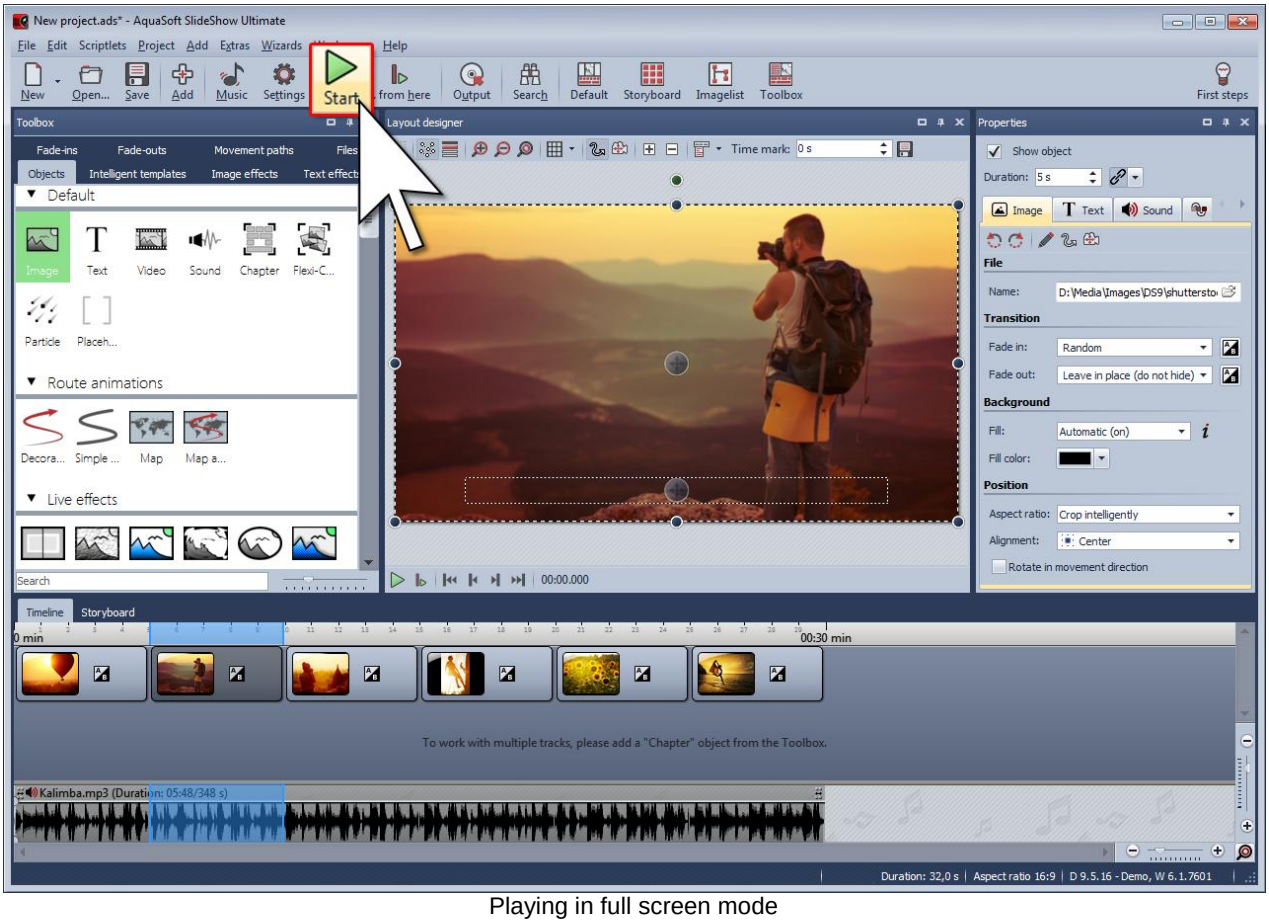

Playing in full screen mode

3. The show can begin

In two steps you have inserted images and music and can now play the show. Click the Play-button in the Toolbar or press the F9-key.

The transitions from one image to another are selected at random.

➢ **In chapter "Transitions" you'll learn how you can define these yourself.**

1.2 Program overview

Structure of the user interface

AquaSoft Stages includes several tools to edit your project. In the following graphics you get an overview over the available controls. We will talk about objects often. All elements that can be added to a project, e.g. images, text, music or collages, are objects.

The description of the controls is given with respect to the Layout view. You can select it via *Workspace / Layout*.

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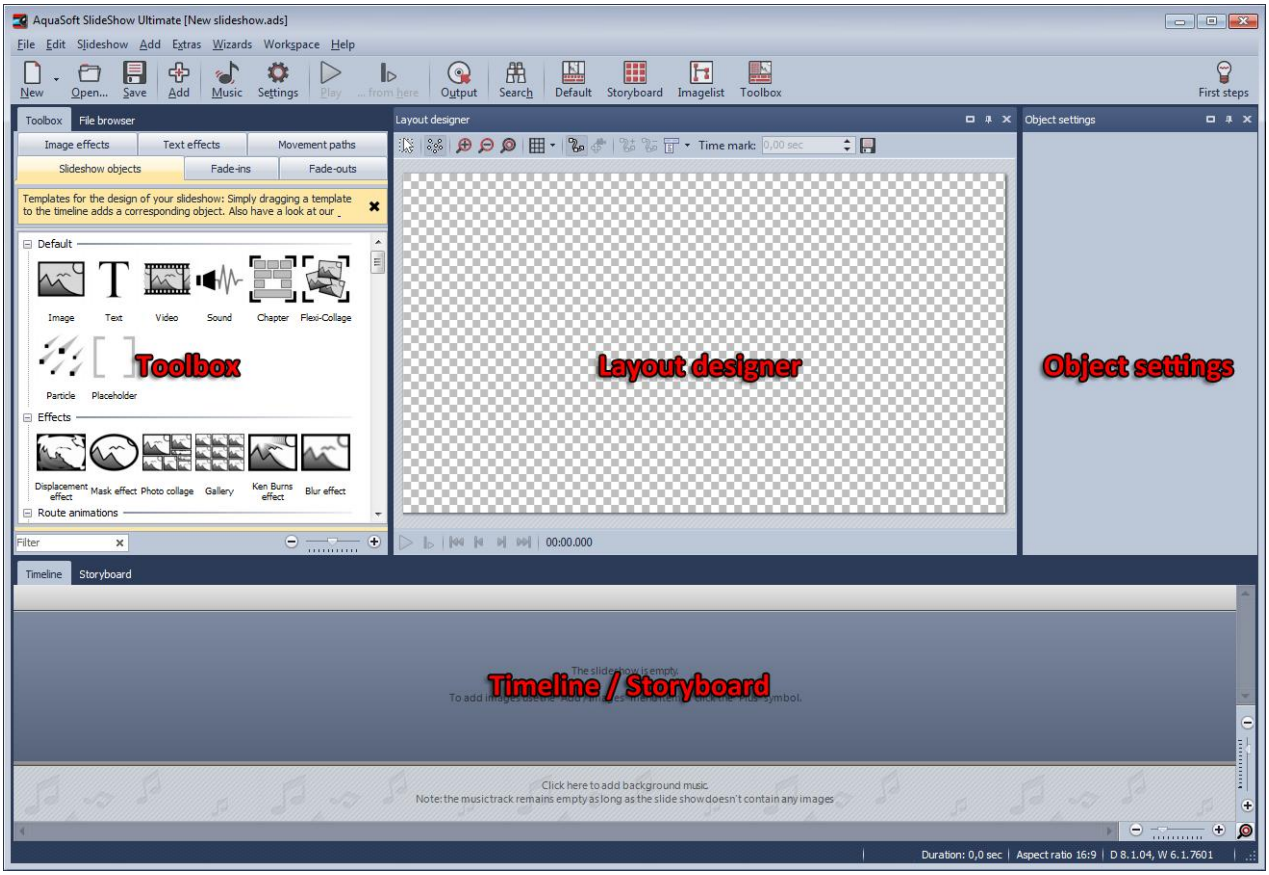
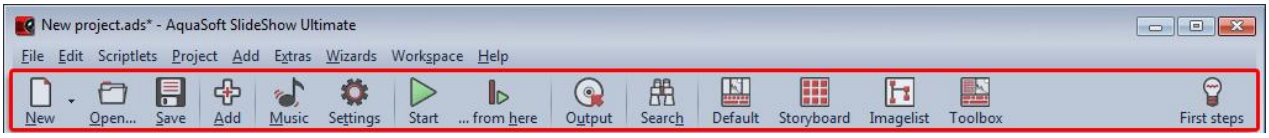


The toolbar



Creates a new empty project.

Opens an existing project.

Saves your project.

Adds images to your project.

Opens the dialog to add background music.

Opens the project settings. These settings only apply to the currently opened project.

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Plays your presentation from the beginning.

Plays your presentation from the current position.

Opens the Export Wizard.

Allows searching for text, file names and keywords inside your project.

Loads SlideShow's *Default* view.

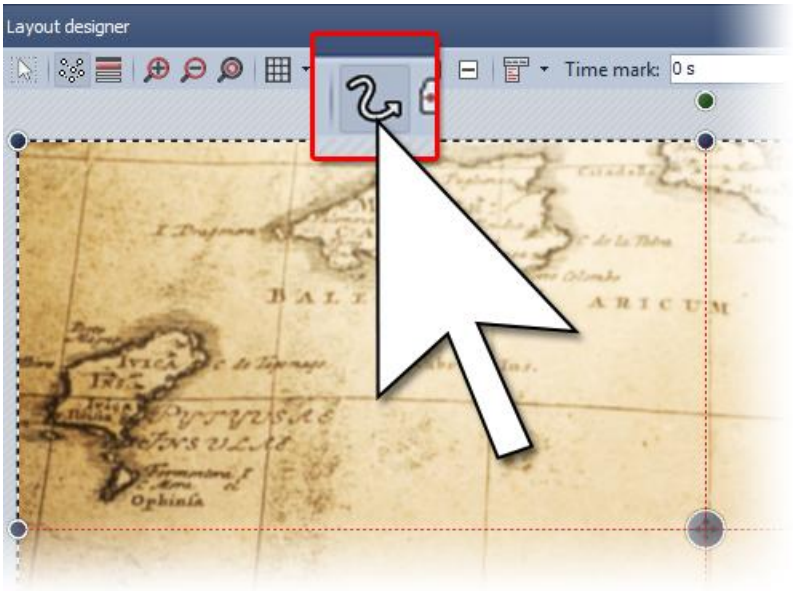
Loads SlideShow's *Storyboard* view.

Loads SlideShow's *Imagelist* view.

Loads SlideShow's *Toolbox* view.

The Layout Designer

The Layout Designer is your preview window. Here you can see how images and text will be displayed on the monitor.



The following icons are available in Layout Designer:

Zooms into the preview in Layout Designer.

Zooms out of the preview in Layout Designer.

Sets the view/window size back to its normal size

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Toggles the raster that objects can be magnetically aligned on

Zoom and camera pans can be set in Layout Designer by defining movement marks. You can find the necessary buttons in the toolbar of the Layout Designer. They will be explained in the respective chapters.

At the bottom edge you can find the navigation controls for replay in Layout Designer.

Replays the presentation from the beginning.

Replays the presentation from the selected object.

The navigation bar changes after the start of the replay.

Pauses the replay.

Ends the replay.

If you pause the replay additional navigation options become available.

Continues with the presentation.

Jumps to the previous object.

Jumps to the previous single picture. This way it is possible to carefully check separate sequences.

Jumps to the next single picture. This way it is possible to carefully check separate sequences.

Jumps to the next object.

There are two distinct areas in Layout Designer - the visible and the invisible area.

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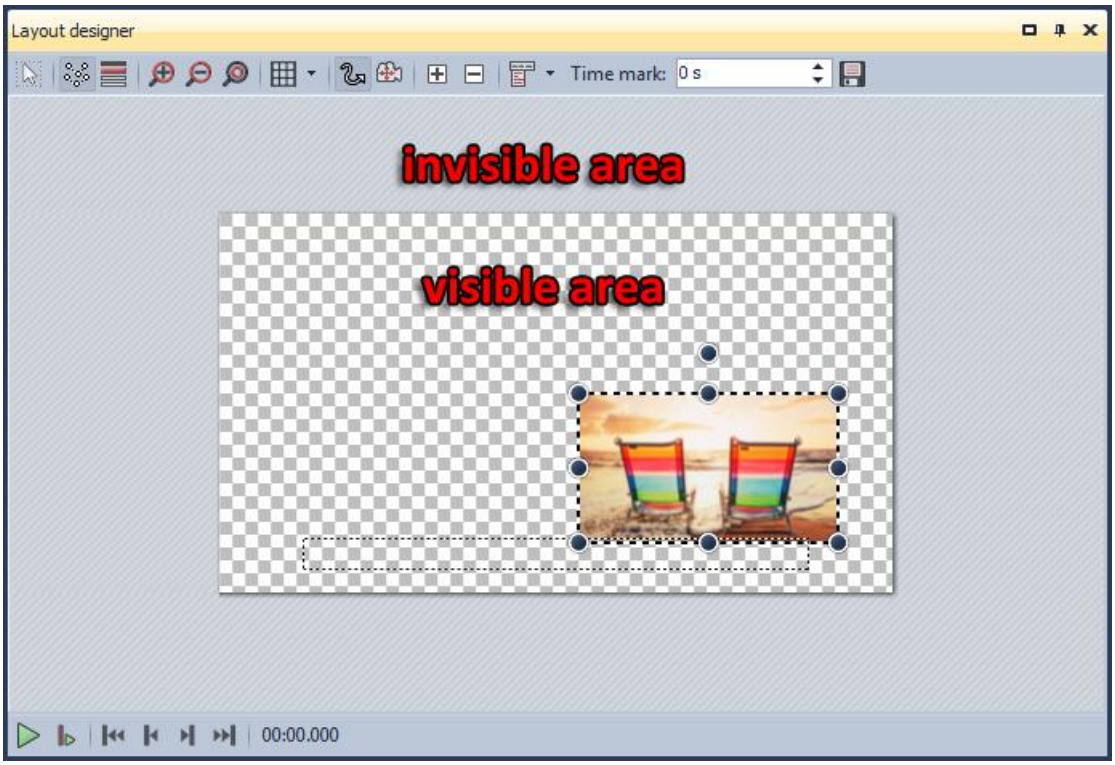

The visible area represents your monitor. Everything inside this area will be displayed later on the monitor. The invisible area is outside the visible area. We need it to be able to let text, images and other objects fly into the visible area. It means that movements can already take place outside of the visible area and then continue to move into the visible area. This way you can for instance let text run from left to right over the screen. The magnifier icons can be used to increase or decrease the size of the visible area.

The Properties

Each object (image, chapter, collages, ...) has certain properties that will be displayed when you select the object in Image list, Timeline or Storyboard. In the following graphic you see the settings for an image. Objects and their properties will be explained in more detail later in this documentation.

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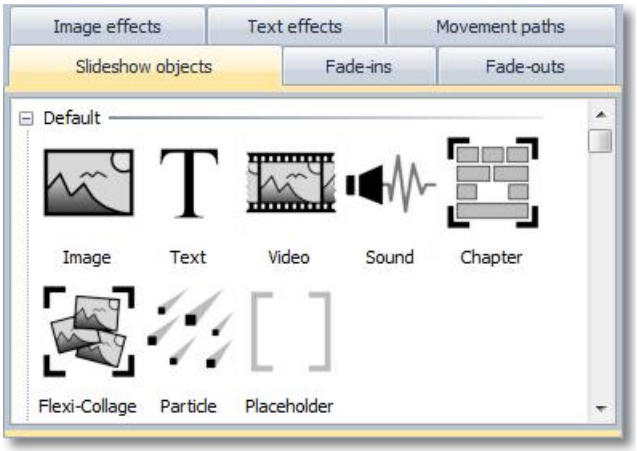
You can specify the duration of your image and its transition, for example. On the Text-tab you can add and format text. And on the Sound-tab you have the option to assign a special comment or sound to your image.

The Toolbox

The *Toolbox* is the place where you find all the objects that can be added to a project. You can click on them and drag them with held-down mouse button to position in the Image list. This process is called drag&drop. By double-clicking an object it will be added at the end of the project.



When you click on the Transitions-tab in the *Toolbox* you find a large selection of pre-defined transition effects. Click on a transition and you will get a small preview of the effect. If you want to assign a transition to an image drag it with held-down mouse button to the image (drag&drop).

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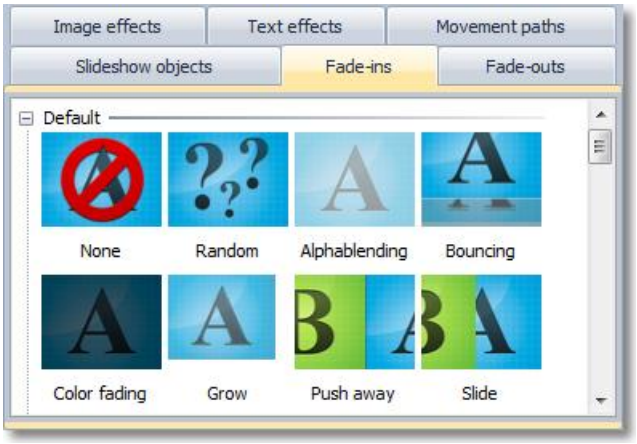

The Timeline

The *Timeline* displays the temporal flow of your presentation and all its images, texts and musical scores. By using Chapters you can create multiple tracks. Images and sounds can be spread over these tracks inside the Chapter. You can find it in the *Toolbox* on the tab *Objects*. Here you learn how to create multiple tracks.

There are two sliders in the bottom-right corner that allow to change the size of the time display and the height of the objects.

The Storyboard

Here you can switch to the *Storyboard*. It shows a small preview, called thumbnail, of all images in the project. This makes it easier to find a certain image in case your show grew rather large. Here too you can change the order of the images by moving them with the mouse.

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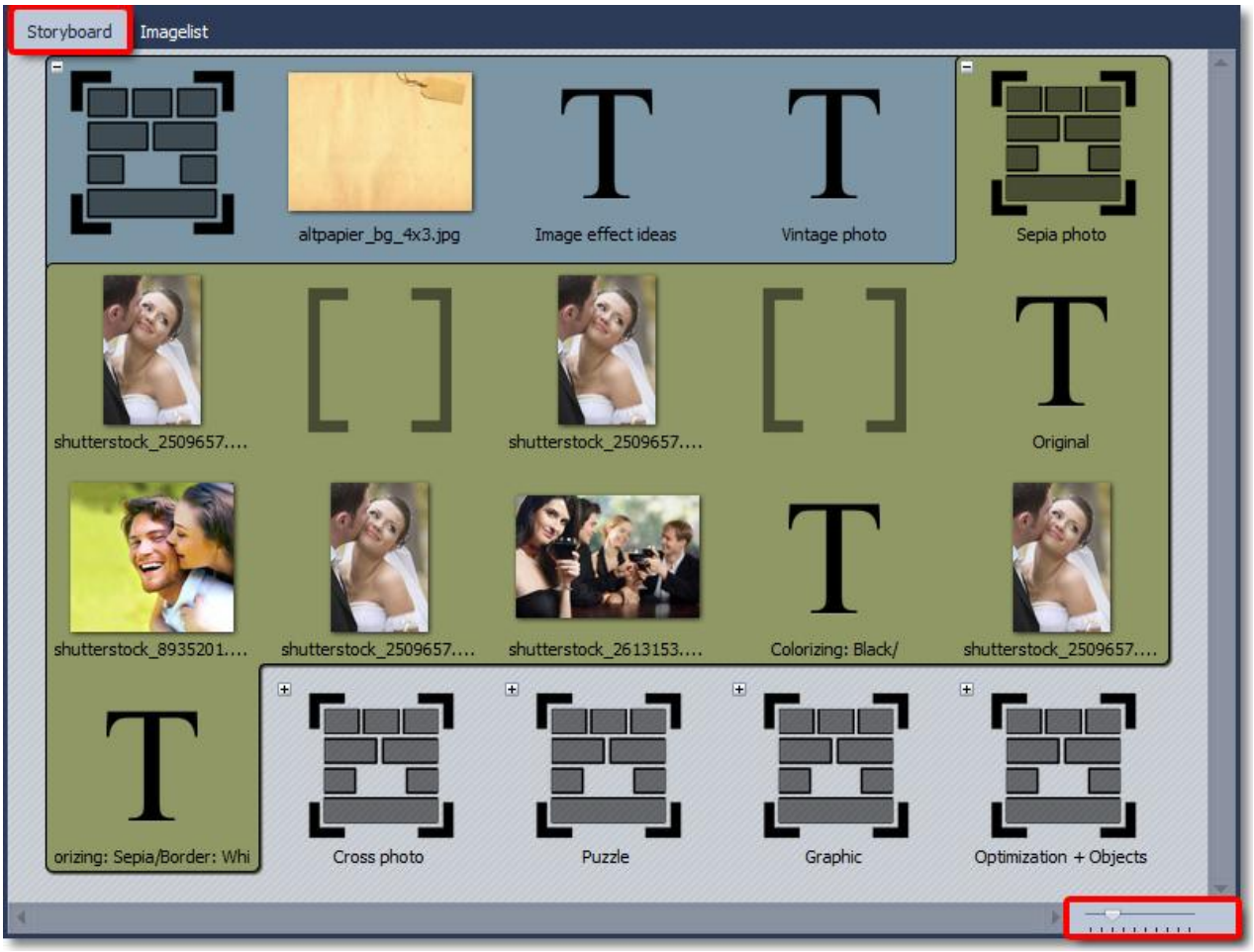

Use the slider in the bottom-right corner to specify the size of the thumbnails.

The Image list

All objects of your current project are displayed in the *Image list*. In addition, further useful information about the objects are displayed as well.

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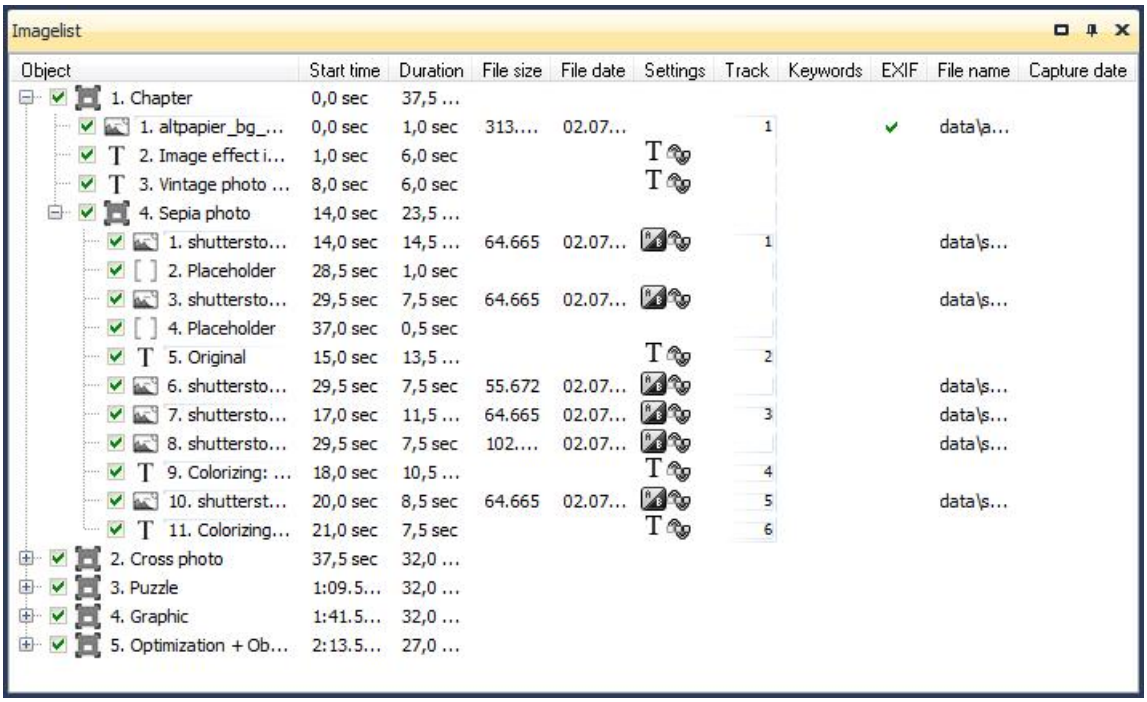

Here you can see the start time and duration of the objects. For images there is an entry for file size, file date and file name. Under *Extras / Program settings / Imagelist* you can select the columns that you want to be displayed.

A check mark in the EXIF column means that the image contains EXIF data (e.g. exposure date, camera model and image resolution). These can be displayed in AquaSoft Stages. More information about this can be found in chapter variables.

Another important column is Track. It shows in which track of the Timeline your object is located. If this entry is empty then your object is in the first track. But you can create multiple tracks inside a chapter, and the column Track informs you about the object's track number. Of course you can also see this in a graphical way inside the Timeline.

You can change the order of the images by moving them with the mouse.

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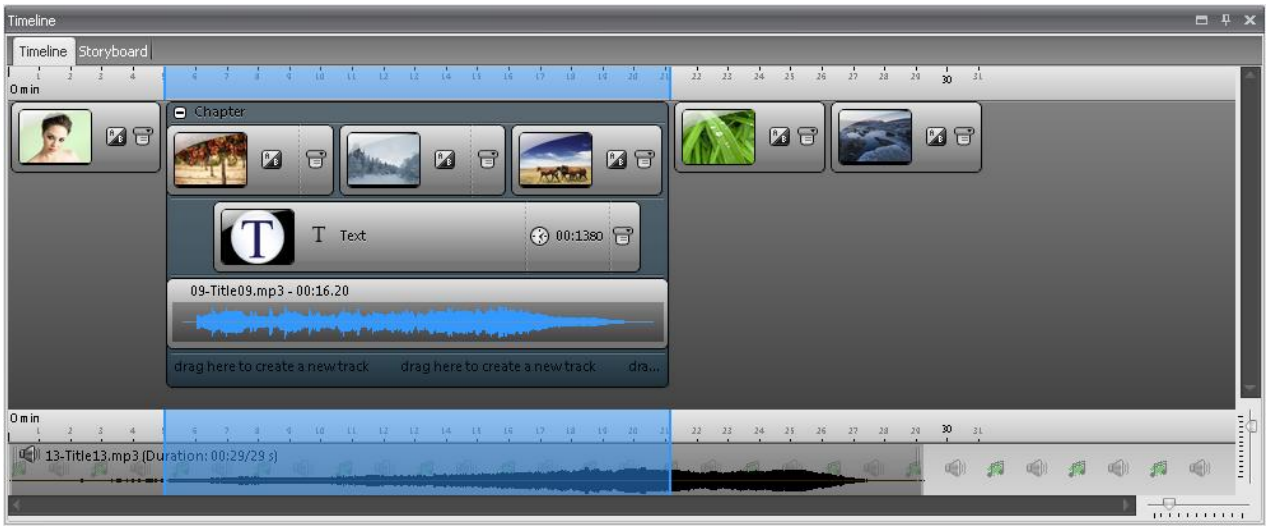
1.3 The Timeline

In the *Timeline* you see the chronological sequence of your presentation. It informs you when an object will be replayed.



Images, text, collages and videos can have different ways to present them. So can images get camera pans, movement paths, transitions and text. The Timeline shows you what kind of animation an object has been assigned.

There are:

- Transition
- Text without animation
- Text with animation
- Image effect
- Movement path
- Camera pan

You can also see the file name and duration in the Timeline. The sliders in the bottom-right corner allow you to adjust how much you wish to see.

By right-clicking an object the context menu for that object will open.

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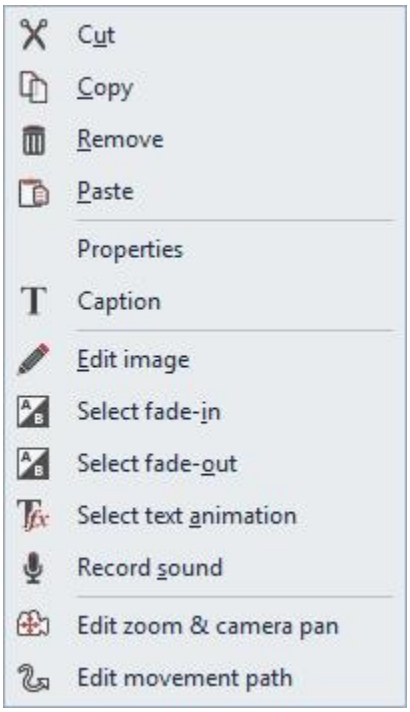

During the replay of a presentation in *Layout designer* a blue line, the playhead, marks the current replay position in the *Timeline*.

This playhead "runs" with the presentation. You can move it after you paused the presentation.

You can change additional settings for the Timeline under *Extras / Program settings / Timeline*.

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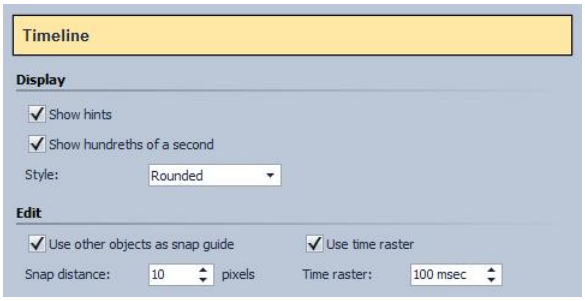


Here you can specify the snapping behavior and the look of the Timeline.

If you want to position an object exactly below another object or at a certain point in time the snapping option can be very helpful.

If you deactivated an image of your project (Show object deactivated), it will not be displayed anymore in the Timeline. The Timeline displays only objects that are supposed to be replayed. If you want to reactivate an image you can do this in the Imagelist or in the Storyboard.

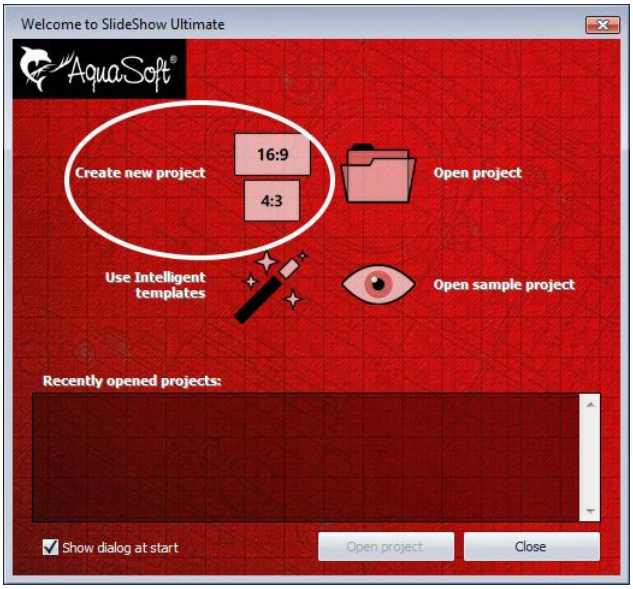
2 Design options in AquaSoft Stages

We recommend to first read the section First steps with AquaSoft Stages prior to the following tutorials. There you will receive an insight into the basic functions of the program.

In the Program overview section the working environment of AquaSoft Stages is explained to you.

2.1 16:9 or 4:3?

At first you have to specify the aspect ratio you want to create your project in. The aspect ratio defines the ratio between image width and image height.



If you want to show your presentation on TV later the aspect ratios of 4:3 and 16:9 come in handy. Older CRT-TVs only support the ratio of 4:3, while modern flat-panel TVs support both 4:3 and 16:9.

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If your images are in format 4:3 or 3:2 (digital single-lens reflex cameras) select 4:3 as aspect ratio.

If they are in 16:9 format select this format respectively.

In case you want to use the format 16:9 even though your images don't have this format, the images need to be adjusted into the 16:9 format. This is not possible without "cropping" the images a little at the top and bottom. Without this cropping it is technically impossible to display a distortion-free image.

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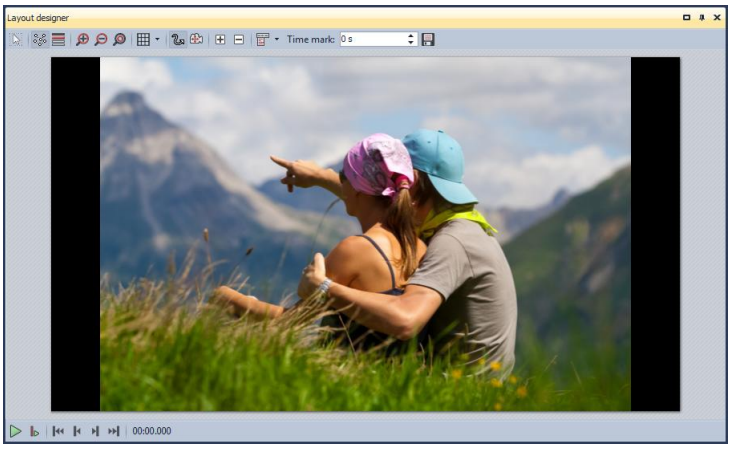
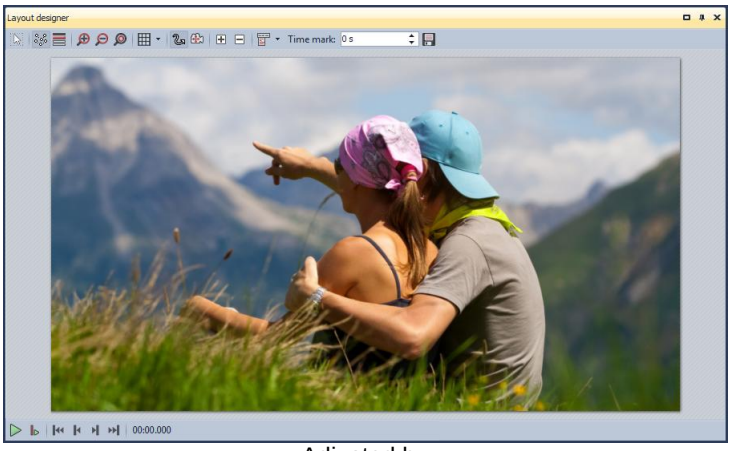
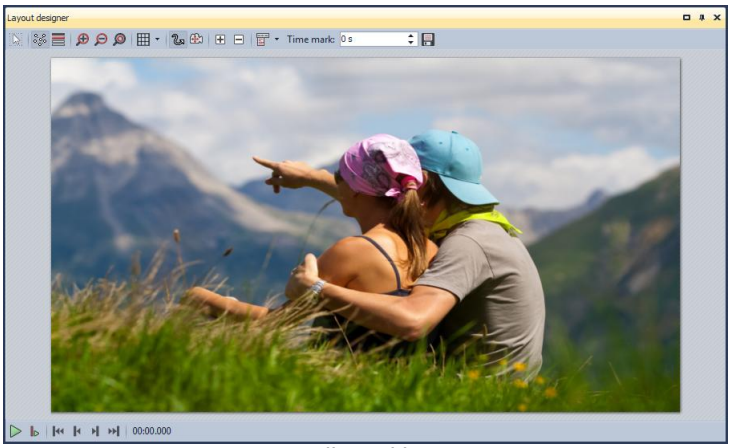


Initial state



Adjusted by
"automatic" cropping



Adjusted by
"automatic" stretching

What do you have to do now?

Insert an image into an empty 16:9 project.

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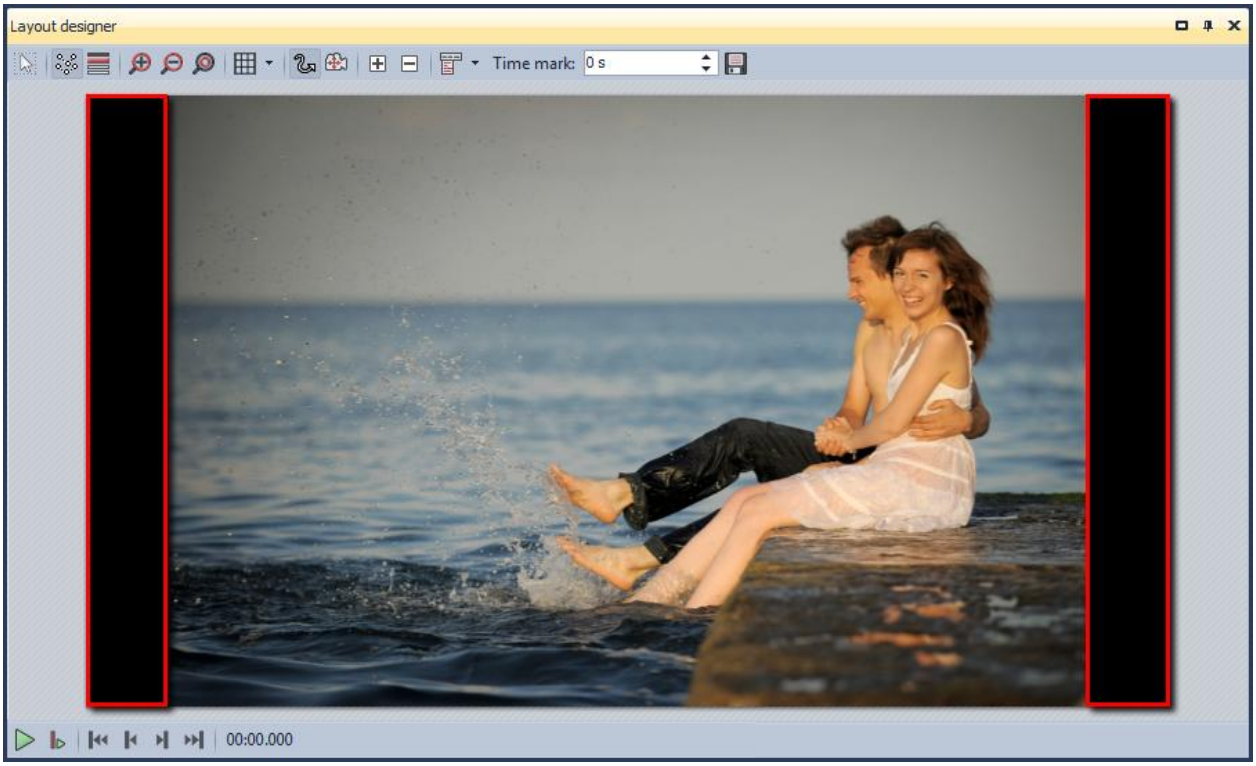

You see the black borders left and right of the image.

Decrease the size of the visible area in Layout Designer by clicking on the icon. Now increase the size of the image by dragging the handles at the corners of the position frame until the black borders disappear. At last position the desired area of the image in the visible area.

Now it should look similar to the next graphic:

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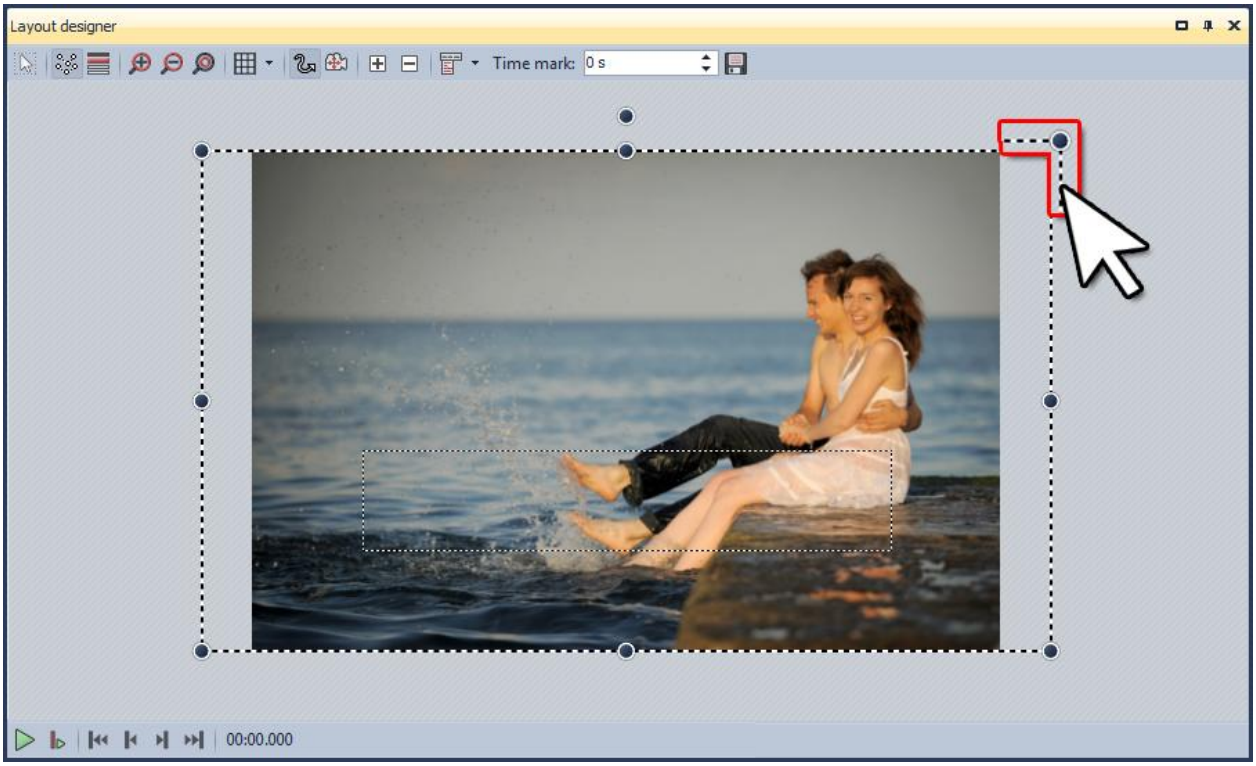
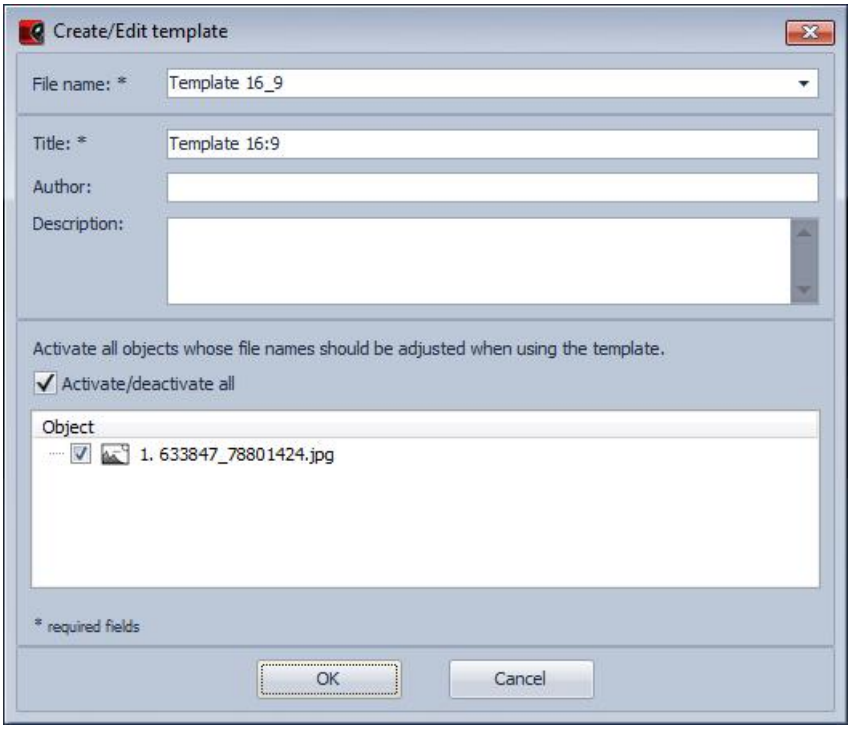


You can save this positioning to a template so that you don't have to repeat this process for every single image. To do this simply drag the image from the Image list to the Toolbox and specify a file name and a title for the template in the now opening dialog. Additionally you can enter the author's name and a description.



After clicking OK you can find the template in the Toolbox under *Objects / Custom objects*.

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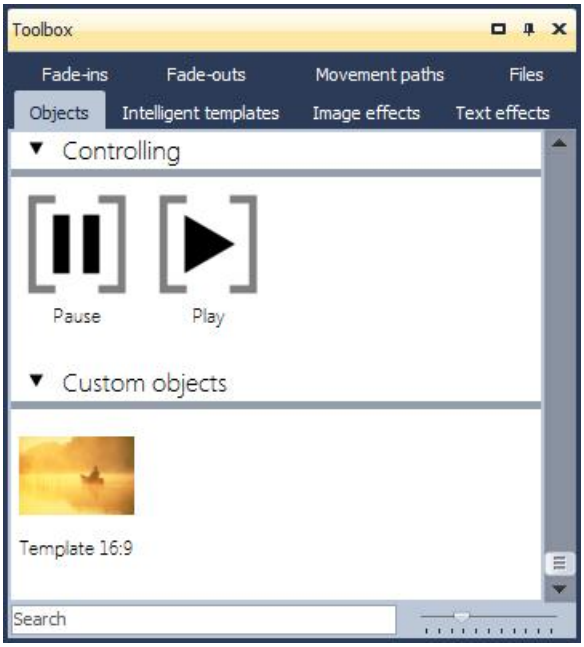

To add additional images in 16:9 format, simply drag the saved template with pressed mouse button onto the Timeline or the Imagelist. The dialog to add images appears. Now select the images you want to add, and they will be inserted with the settings of your custom template.

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2.2 Adding images

In AquaSoft Stages you can add your images in various ways. Some of them are very intuitive to use, while others are more advanced. Learn in this chapter the methods for insert images and find the solution that suits your needs.

About the Plus-symbol

In the Toolbar at the top of the user interface is a large Plus-symbol. Clicking the symbol will open a view of your folders and locations. Select the place where there are one or more images that you want to insert. Select the image or images (Strg-key and click on the image to select multiple images) and confirm with OK.

About the Toolbox

Select the Objects Tab in the Toolbox. In the section Default you will find the Image object. Add it either by double-clicking or drag it with the mouse in the Timeline or Image list to the point where you want to insert an image. It is also possible to drag the Image object on the Layout designer.

After the Image object is placed, the Add files dialog opens again. To select one or more images you can do the same as it was already described in the top section.

About the File browser

Display the File browser. It is located on the left in the Default view, where the Toolbox is displayed initially.

Open the folder where your images are located. Sometimes you have to open the folder structure further to see subfolders. Just click on the little plus icon, which is located in front of the folders.

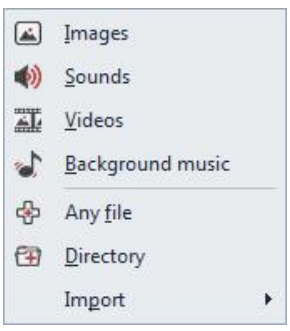
The images are displayed as small thumbnails in the File browser. You can now drag these preview images to the Layout Designer, the Timeline or the Image list.

Per Drag & Drop

If you open a folder where your images are located outside of AquaSoft Stages you can drag the images into the program window of AquaSoft Stages.

Minimize the program window by pressing the Windows key and the down arrow on your keyboard (or click the symbol on the top right of the window to minimize). Now you can easily drag files from a folder or from your desktop to the program.

About "Add"



In the top menu bar, there is the Add item, in which you get several options for inserting various types of data.

If you select the Images option the Add files dialog opens and you can select one or more images.

With the Directory option you can insert an entire folder. If you select this option, a dialog box appears in which you can define exactly which data will be inserted, and whether to include subfolders.

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Using the Import Wizard

In the menu Wizards there is the Import Wizard. With this, you can insert images directly from a camera or scanner into the project. See chapter **"Import Wizard"** for a detailed description.

Using the PowerPoint Wizard

If you have a PowerPoint presentation and want to transfer the slides into your project, then follow the instructions in chapter **"PowerPoint Wizard"**.

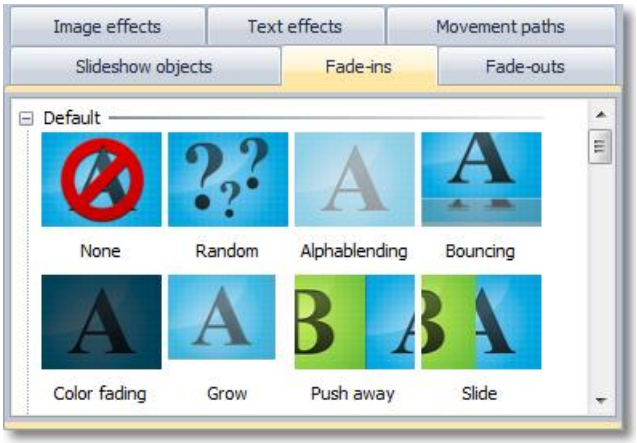
2.3 Transitions

Each image in AquaSoft Stages can get a transition assigned. This can be done by changing the settings in the Properties window, but also via the Toolbox.

Add an image to an empty project. To do this use the -button in the menu bar.

You can add several images at once by selecting them in the file selection dialog. Press the Ctrl-key and click on the images you want to add.

In the Toolbox you find the Fade-ins-tab. When you click on a transition you will get a small preview.



Using Drag&Drop (moving with the mouse) you can now assign a transition to an image. Click the transition with the left mouse button and hold it down. Move the transition to the target image in the Timeline. Release the button when a red border appears around the image.

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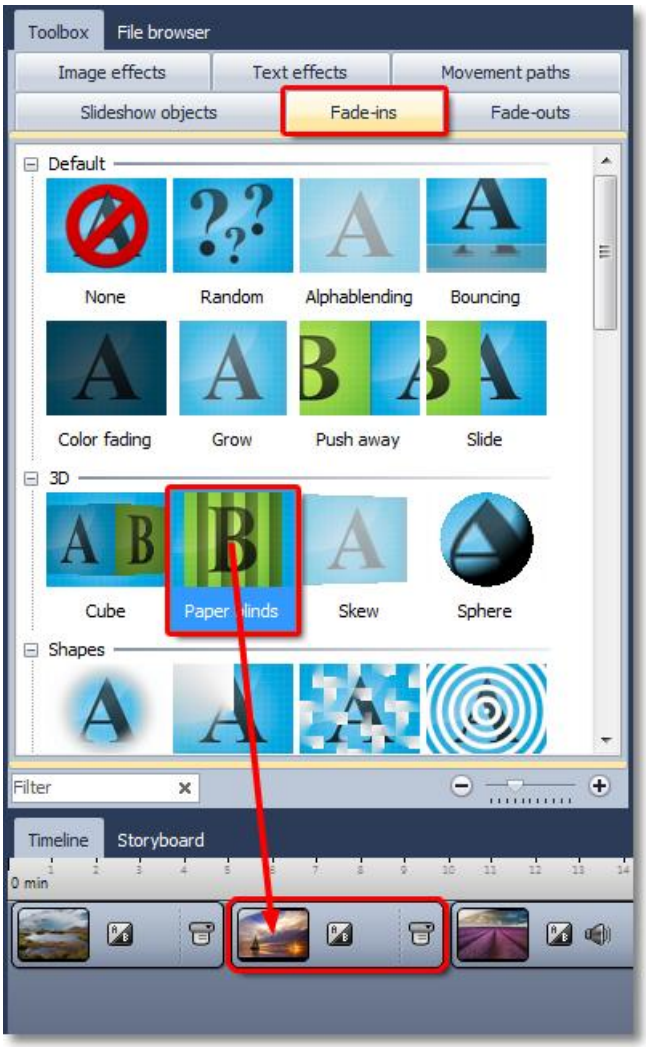

Click on the image and then on to play the image with the transition.

If you would like to assign a Transition to several or all images select these images.

All images = Ctrl + A

Certain images = Ctrl + right click on the image

Select the Transition with the left mouse key, then click right and select Apply. The Transition will be assigned to all selected images.

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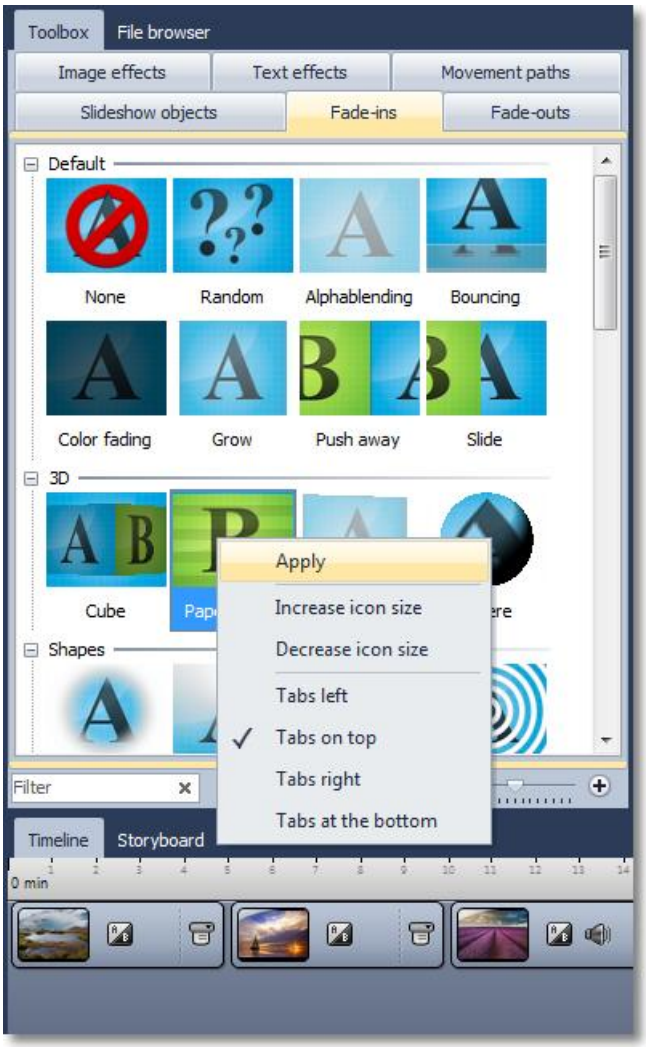

You can see the specified transition in the Object properties of the image. There you can also change it and even customize it. The following text will give a more extensive description.

If you click on an image in the Timeline with the right mouse button or click the ico a pop-up menu will provide you with the option to select a transition.

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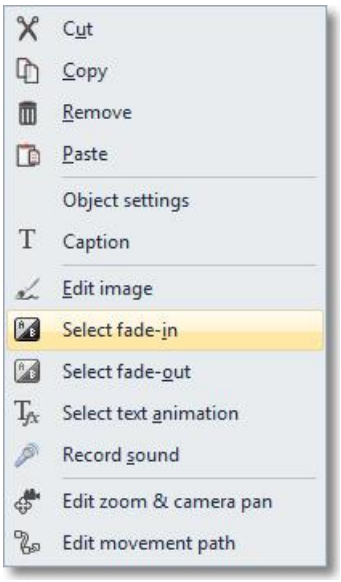

About the Properties

Every object in a project has a set of so called Properties. For example, you can set the Duration, specify a Transition and enter Text. Right now we only want to talk about the Transition. Here. you can find more about Properties.

Click on an image in the Image list or Timeline.

If you don't see Properties in your current view you can open it by right-clicking on the image. Alternatively you can reach the Properties under View -> Controls.

The transition is set on the Image-tab in the Properties.

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In the transition list you can see all pre-defined transitions and select one. Each transition is customizable after clicking on Adjust.

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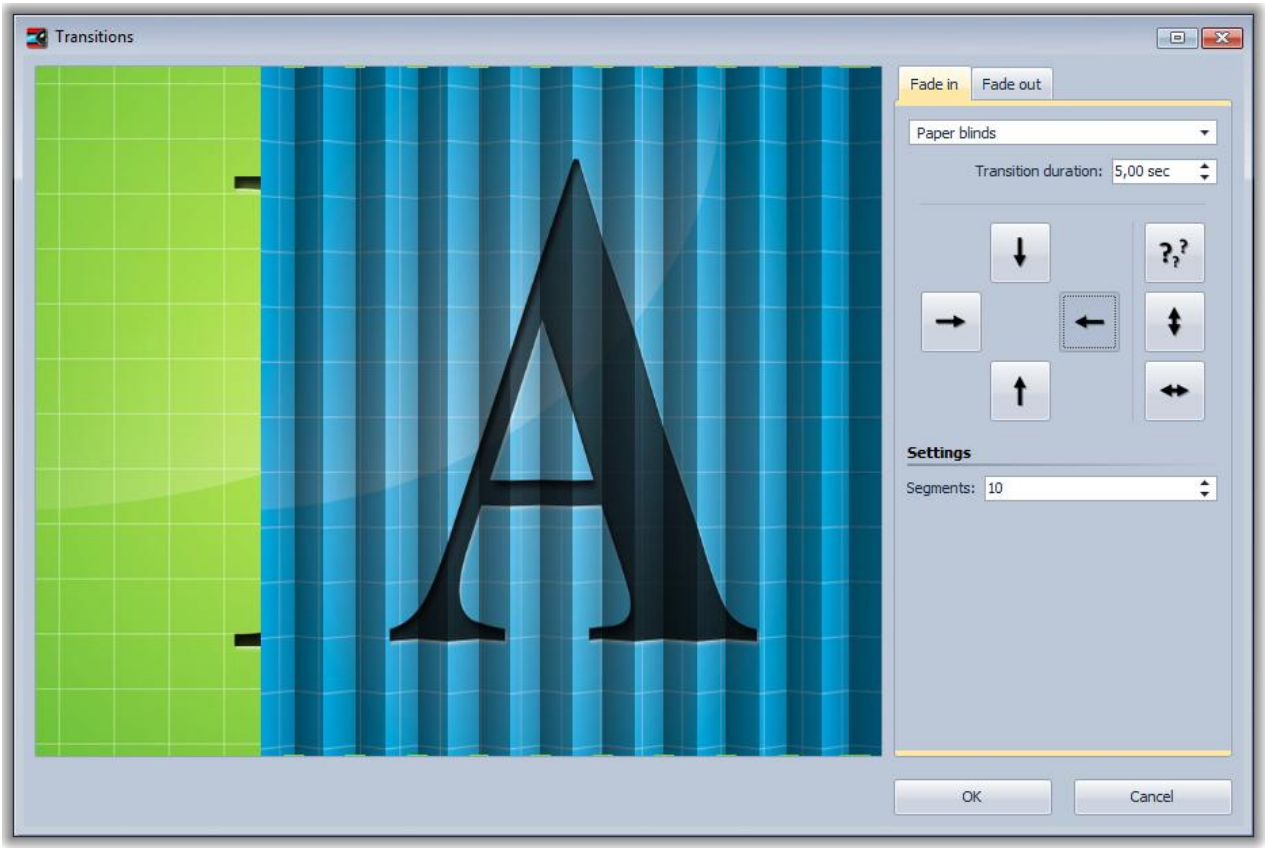

If you want to change the transition for several images at once just select these image in the Image list and set the desired Transition in the Properties. It will be assigned to all selected images.

Via Ctrl+A you can select all objects in the image list. With the held down Ctrl-key and mouse clicks you can select several single images.

2.4 Text animations

Of course a presentation should also have text, and it shouldn't be just simply displayed but it should be possible to animate it.

In AquaSoft Stages you can enter text to an image or display it on a colored background. Texts also can fly over the image along freely definable movement paths.

2.4.1 Text to images

In the *Properties* of an image there is a *Text* -tab. The *Properties* will be displayed when you select an image in the *Image list/Storyboard/Timeline* with a mouse-click.

If you don't see *Properties* in your current view you can open it with a right-click on the image. Alternatively you can reach the *Properties* under *View -> Controls*.

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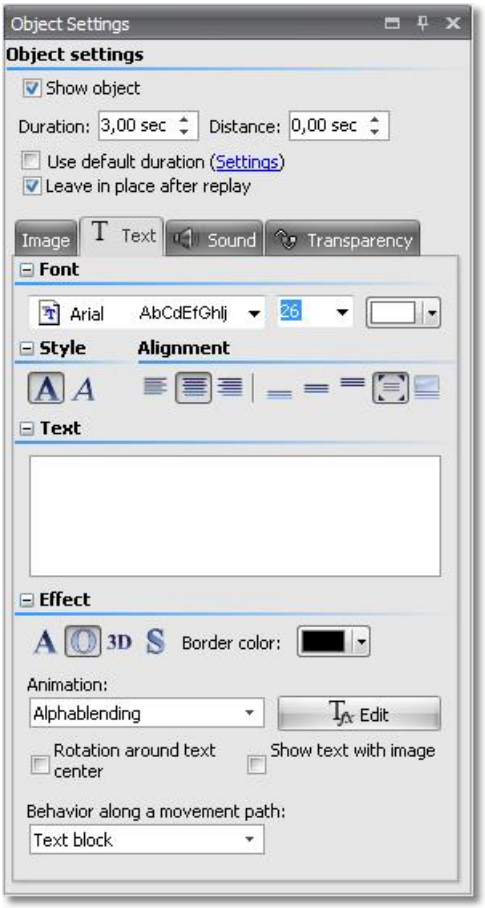

Here you can enter text to an image and assign formatting like font, font size and font color.

The available formatting options are almost self-explanatory due to their icons, and you probably know them already from word processing applications.

The *Alignment* has a small peculiarity, however.

Positions the text at the lower edge of the screen.

The text will be displayed in the center of the screen.

Positions the text at the upper edge of the screen.

Detaches the text to be able to customize its position.

The text will be displayed underneath the image. This also applies when the image is scaled smaller.

Enter the desired image caption into the text field. Specify font and font size. If you want colored text you can change the font color. Select the position of the text. If you want a customized text position click the -button under *Alignment*. All changes are immediately visible in *Layout Designer*. In the customized position the text gets its own position frame. This way you can freely place the text anywhere on the screen.

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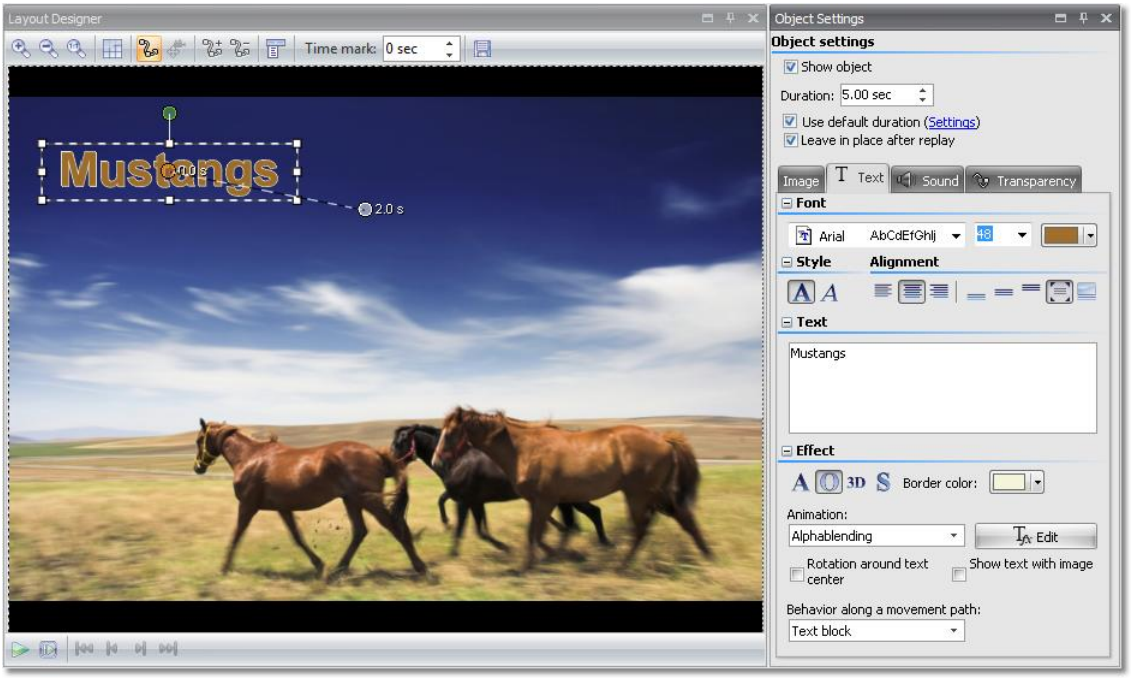

In AquaSoft Stages you can decide if you want the text to be separately animated or to be part of the transition effect of the image it accompanies .

If you don't want a separate text animation please activate the option *Show text with image*.

For text that you want to be animated you can choose from a list of pre-defined animations. Click the *Edit*-button to adjust the settings for the animation. You can also see a preview of the animation in this dialog.

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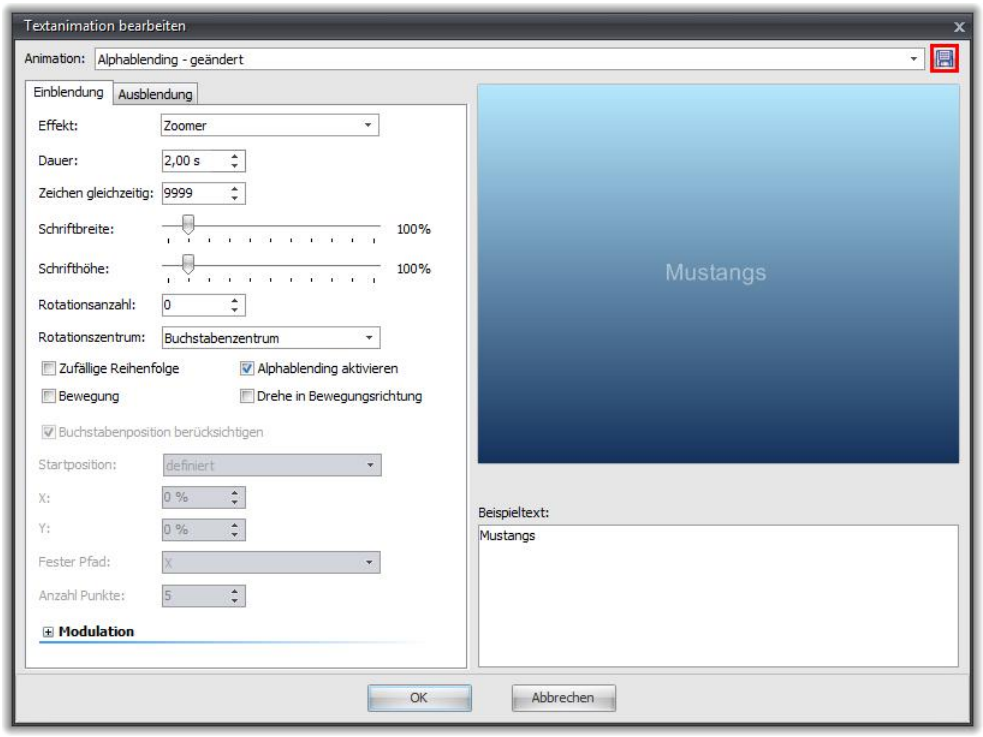

You can also open this dialog by clicking on an image in the *Image list* or *Timeline* and then on *Select text animation*.

Under *Fade out* you can specify if you want the text to stay visible until the end of the image duration and to be included into the transition to the next image or if the text fades out at the end of the image. The duration of the animation specifies when the fade-out is to be started.

If you set 3 seconds then the fade-out starts 3 seconds before the end of the image display.

By clicking the -button you can save the text effect settings you just selected. They will then be stored in the *Toolbox* under *Text effects* and can be reused at any time. Saving text effects is only possible with AquaSoft Stages Ultimate.

After you finished all the adjustments you can then replay the image together with the text by clicking on .

You can find all pre-defined *Text effects* in the *Toolbox* as well. You can use these simply by Drag&Drop, i.e. by dragging them with pressed mouse button to an image.

Select a *Text effect* and you will see a preview of it.

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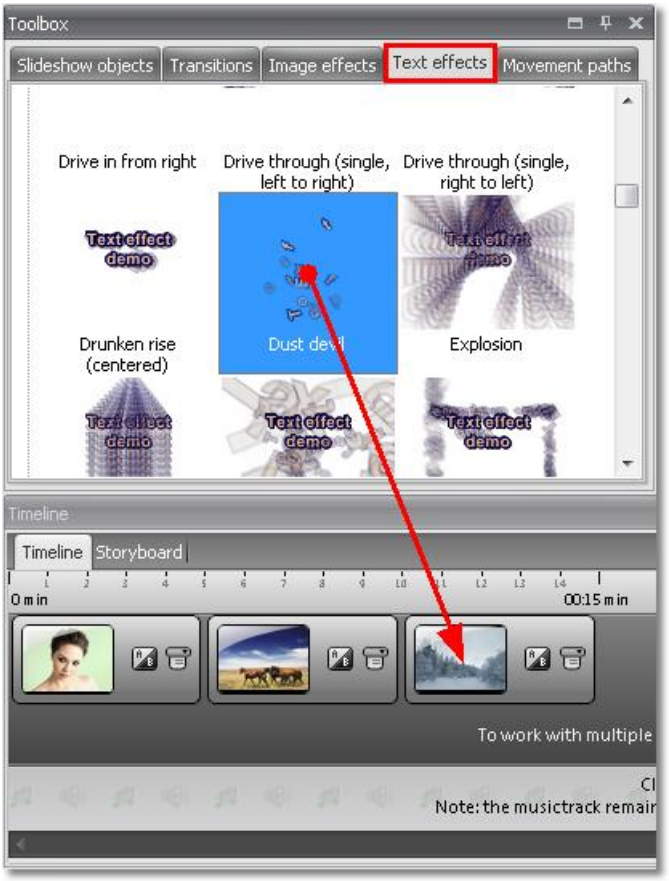

As described above, you can enter and format text on the *Text*-tab in the *Properties*.

2.4.2 Text without an image

In the Toolbox under Objects there is the Colored background. With this you can fade in text independently of images. The Colored background can even be faded in animated.

To insert it, double-click the Colored background or drag the object into the Image list or onto the Timeline with the mouse button pressed down.

When inserting it with the mouse button pressed down, you can also determine the desired position on the Timeline and in the Image list. Should you wish to add the Colored background between two images, drag the object to the desired place with the mouse. A red line will appear between the two images. Release the mouse key to insert the object at this position. This is also possible in the Image list.

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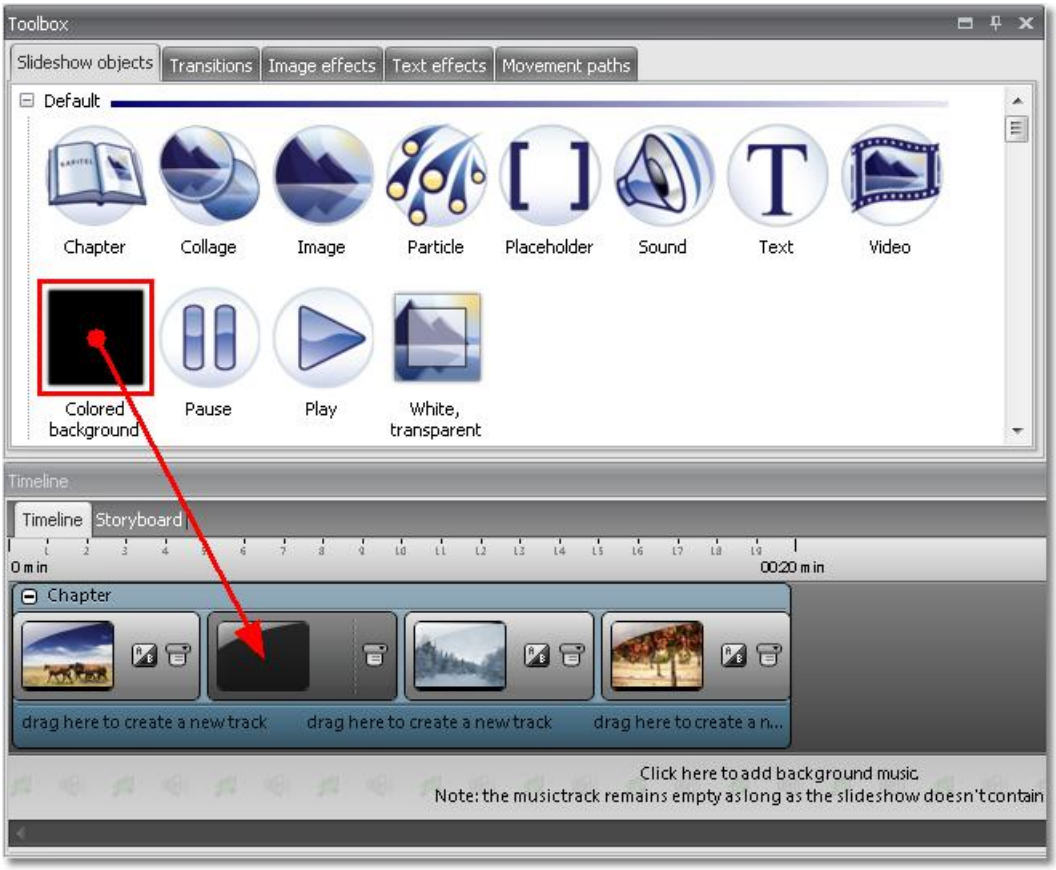

The Colored background is shown on the Timeline as a black image. In the Image list it is listed as black1x1.gif.

The text can now be entered as with a normal image.

On the Timeline, click the object with the right mouse button and select Select text animation.

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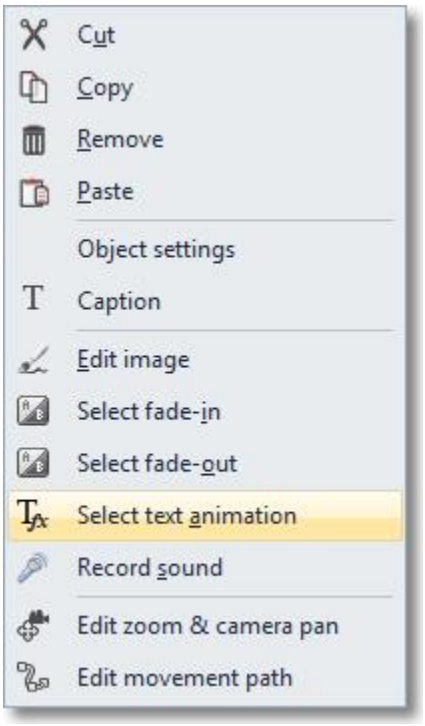
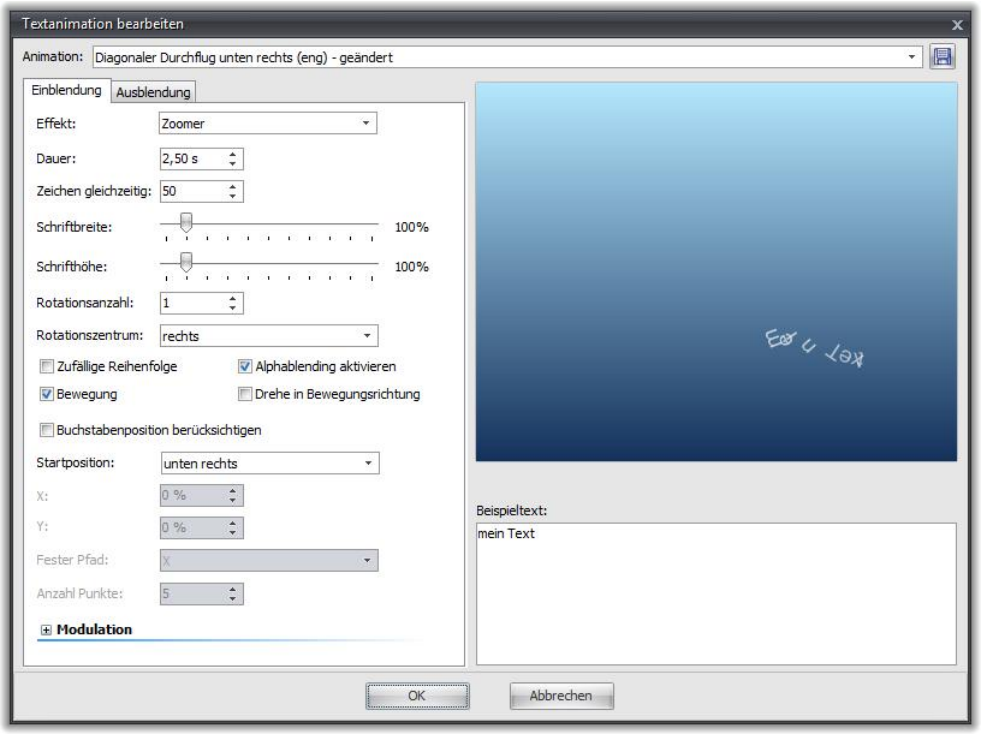


Now the Select text animation window opens. There you can enter the desired text and select and edit a corresponding animation.



Under Fade out you can determine whether the text should remain visible until the end of the image and should be cross faded with the next image, or whether the text should be faded out prior to the end of the image. In this respect, the duration of the animation determines when the fading out should begin.

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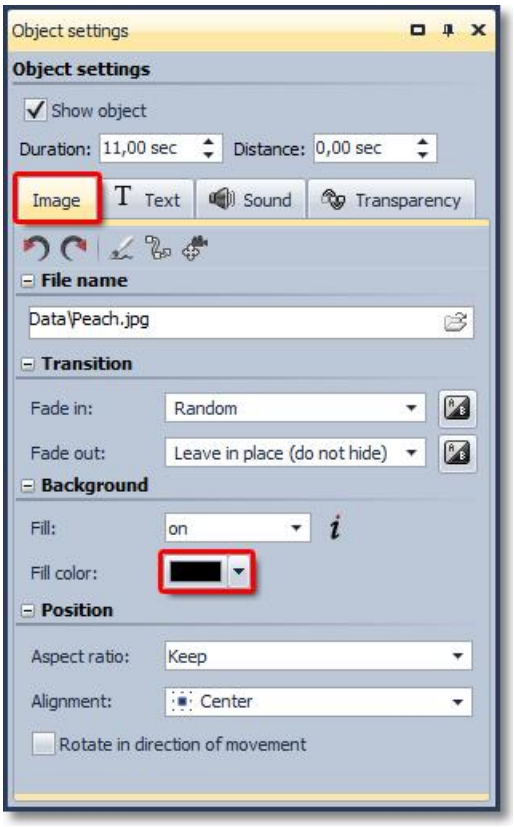
Should you set 3 seconds, the fading out is started 3 seconds before the image finishes.

With OK your entries are accepted and you can use to play back the text animation on the screen.

The background is now shown in black. If you wish to have a different color, you can do this in the Properties of the Colored background. For that purpose, you have to click the object in the Image list or on the Timeline. Should the Properties not be shown in the view available to you, you can also retrieve them by right-clicking the object.



By clicking the selected button you can change the background color.

You can also have the colored background faded in animated. Under Transitions you can select a cross fading effect.

Under Text you can carry out the formatting of the text, as well as change the color of the font.

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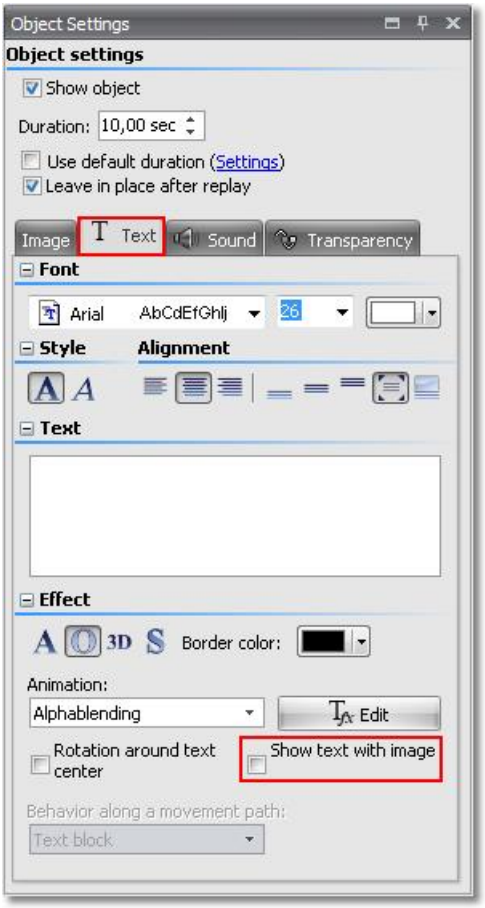

Should the text not be faded in animated, but together with the colored background, check the Show text with image option.

The Colored background can also be used to dim out/fade out images. Should a black background color be set and a cross fading effect selected, it has the effect on the observer of a fading out of the previous image. In this way you can end a presentation in style.

2.4.3 Rotating text

Adding texts to images or a colored background has been described in previous chapters. This chapter is about their rotation functionality.

This feature is only available in AquaSoft Stages Ultimate.

First add a text to an image. This should look similar to the following graphic in *Layout Designer*.

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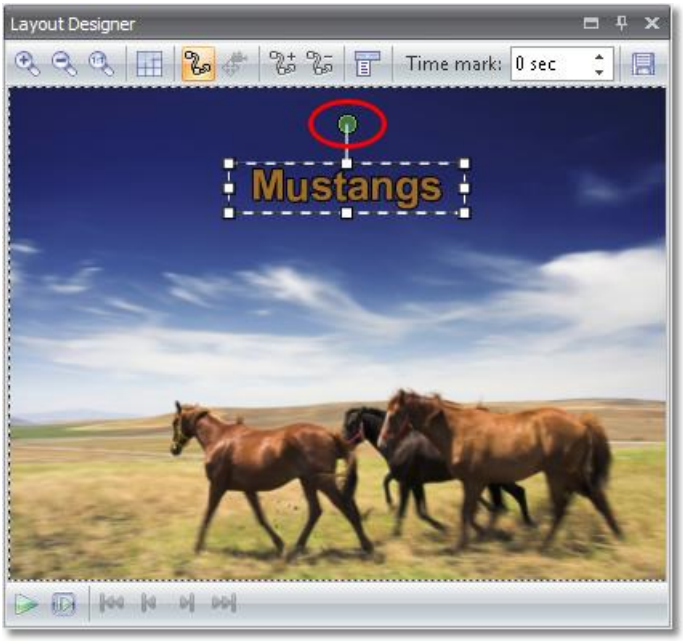
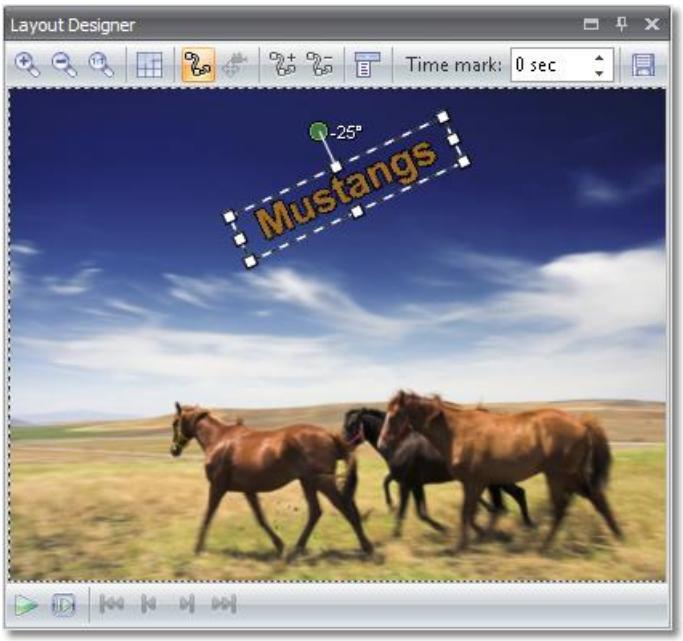


Please note the *green handle* above the text. You can use it to rotate the text. Click the handle, hold down the mouse button and move the mouse in a rotating motion.



The number next to the green handle shows by how many degrees the text has been rotated.

You can find more information about the use of rotated text in chapter Letting texts fly.

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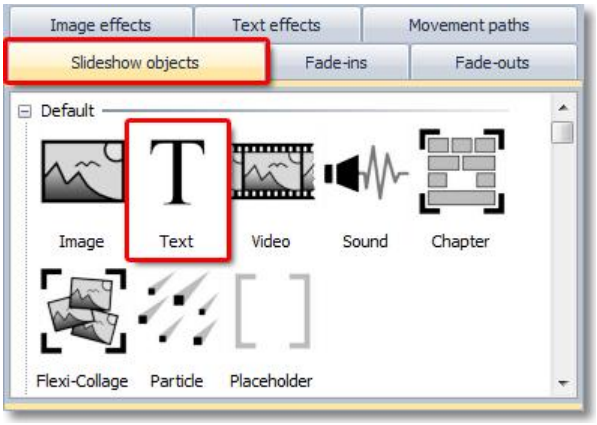
2.4.4 Multiple texts

In AquaSoft Stages there is also the possibility of fading in multiple texts either simultaneously or with a time delay.

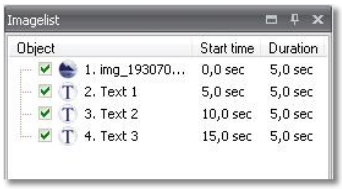
In the *Toolbox* there is the text object for this purpose.

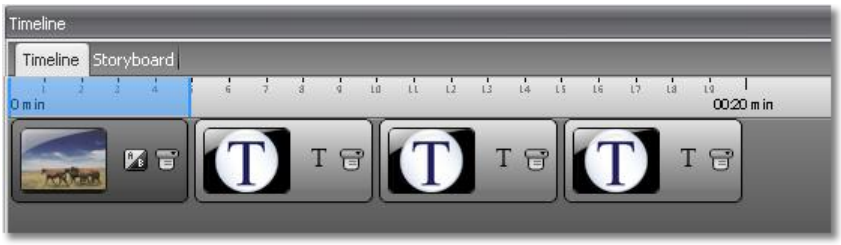


Fading in multiple texts, in sequence

In this example 3 texts to an image appear, in sequence. The number of possible texts is not limited.

Insert an image. Using the *Toolbox*, now add 3 *Text* objects. You can do this with a double-click or by means of drag-and-drop (dragging with the mouse) into the *Image list* or onto the *Timeline*.





Now select the first *Text* object. In that respect, it does not matter whether you click it in the *Image list* or on the *Timeline*.

In the *Properties* of the *Text* object, you can now enter your desired text and carry out the formatting. Position the text in the *Layout Designer*.

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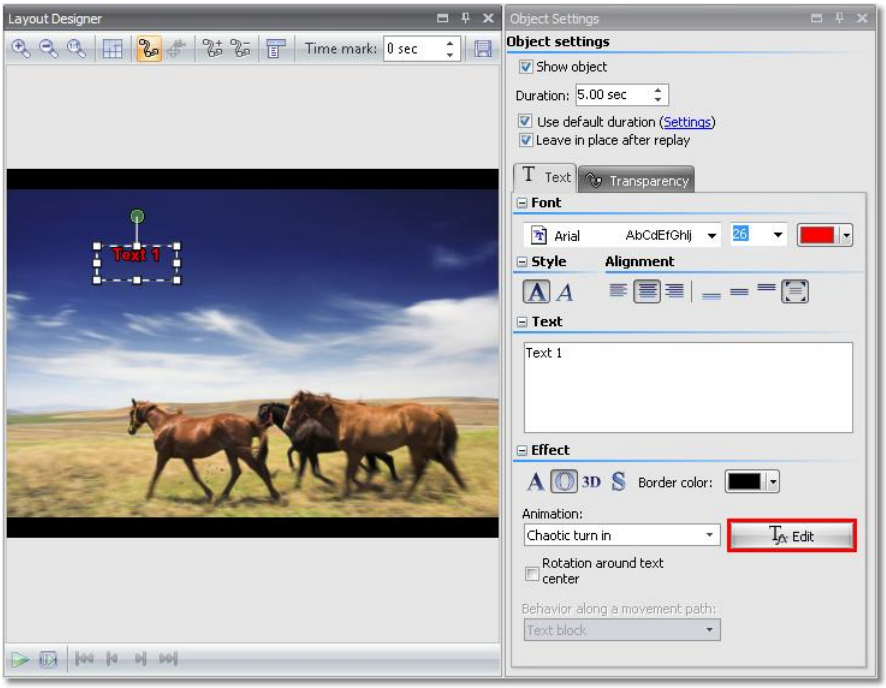
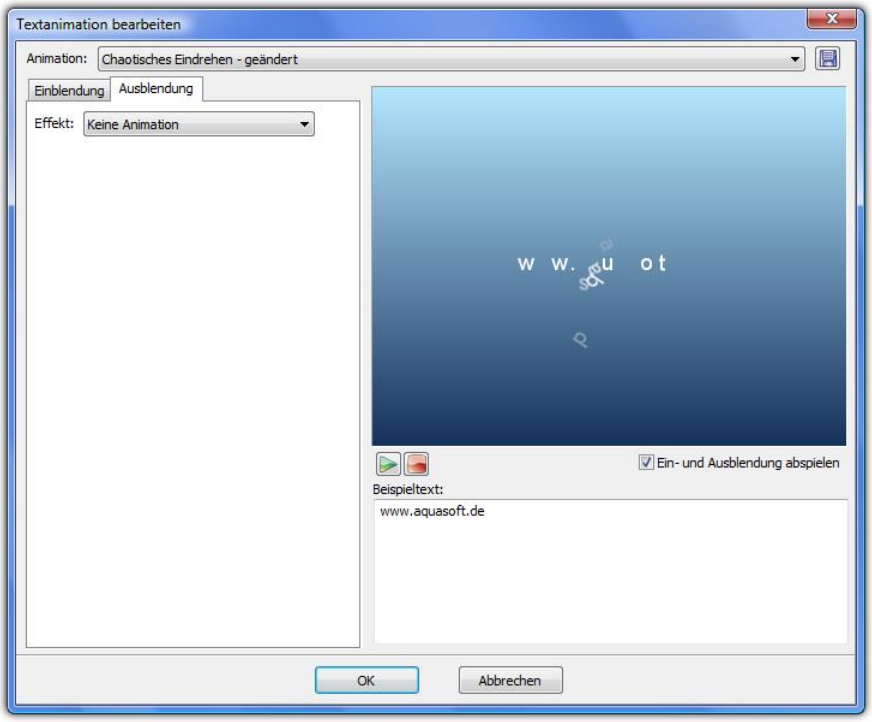


Select an animation and then call the editing function of the text effect via *Edit*.

So that the text is not faded out again before the next text is shown, the *No* fade out option must be set under *Fade out*.



You can also have the text faded out if it is no longer supposed to be visible when the subsequent text is displayed.

Now repeat the steps with the second and third *Text* object.

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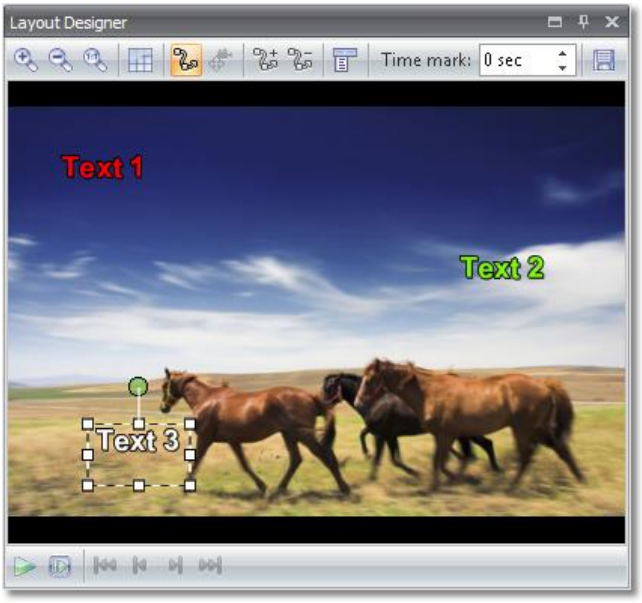
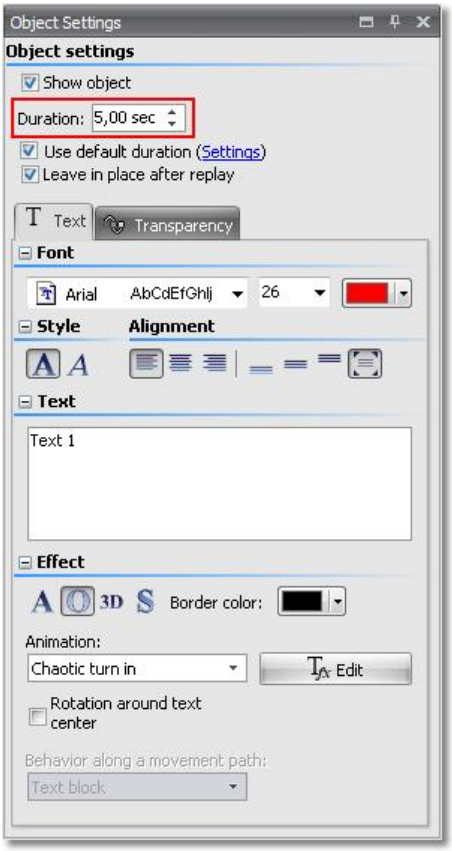


Then play back the little show with .

In the *Properties* of the *Text* objects you can change the holding time of the texts.



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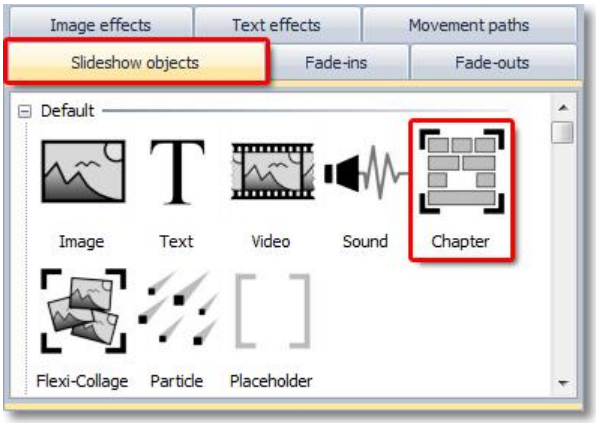
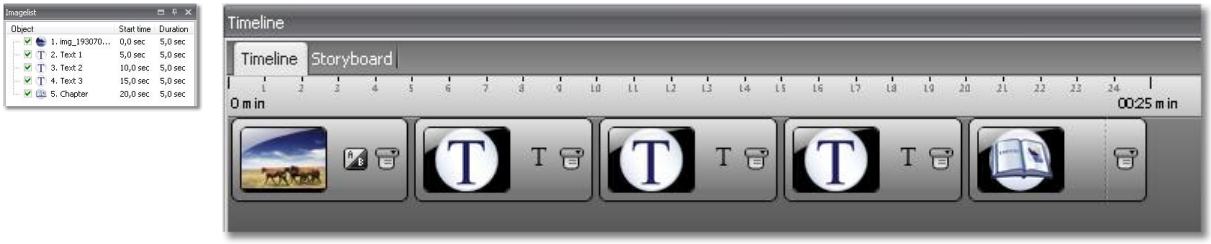
Showing multiple texts simultaneously

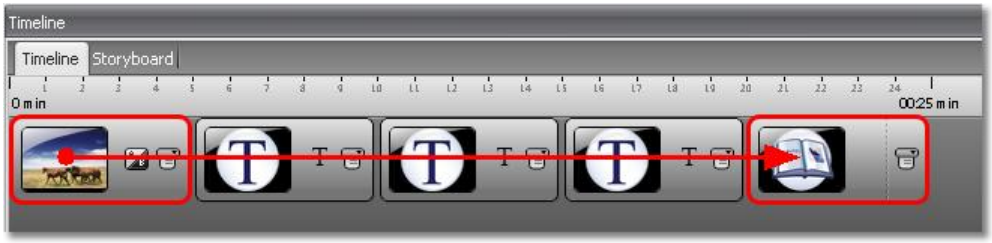
In order to now not show the texts in sequence, but simultaneously, the *Chapter* object is required. Use the little show that you have just created.



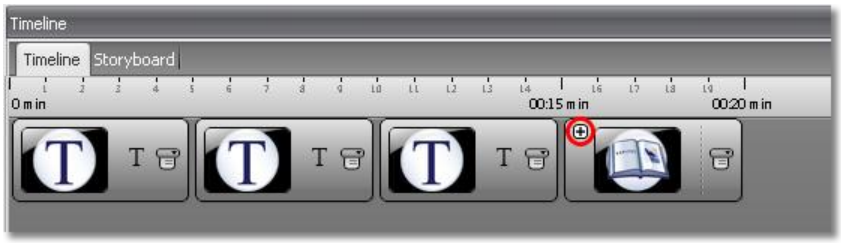
Add the *Chapter* object into your show.



The *Chapter* can have several tracks and therefore show the *Objects* in parallel/simultaneously.



Click on the image on the *Timeline* and drag it with the mouse button pressed down to the *Chapter* object. The *Chapter* is framed in red if you go over it with the mouse. If this red frame appears, "drop" the image.



After that it looks like this on the *Timeline*. You now have to open the *Chapter*. There is a little plus symbol for that.

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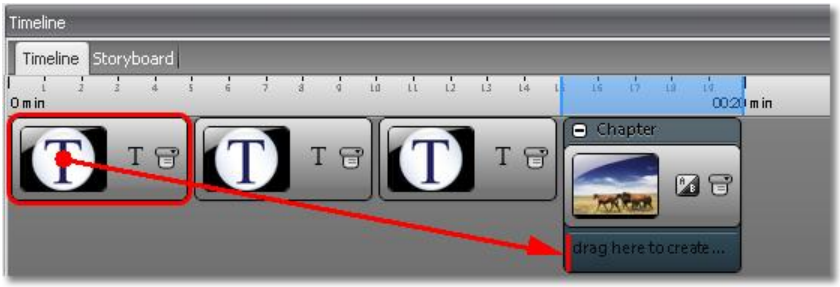
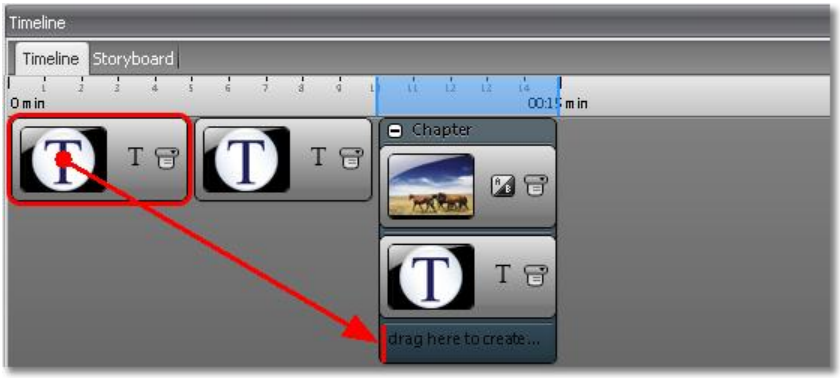


Now drag the first *Text* object into the *Chapter*. Drag it to underneath the image in the *Chapter*. A red vertical bar will appear if you move the mouse to the correct position.



Now drag the first *Text* object into the *Chapter*. Drag it to underneath the image in the *Chapter*.

If you now drag the *Timeline* to make it larger, it must look like in the illustration.

Now play back the show again with . You will see that the image and the texts are all faded in simultaneously.

Using the *Timeline* you can adapt the timing individually. For this, you can simply drag the *Text* objects with the mouse into the starting position.

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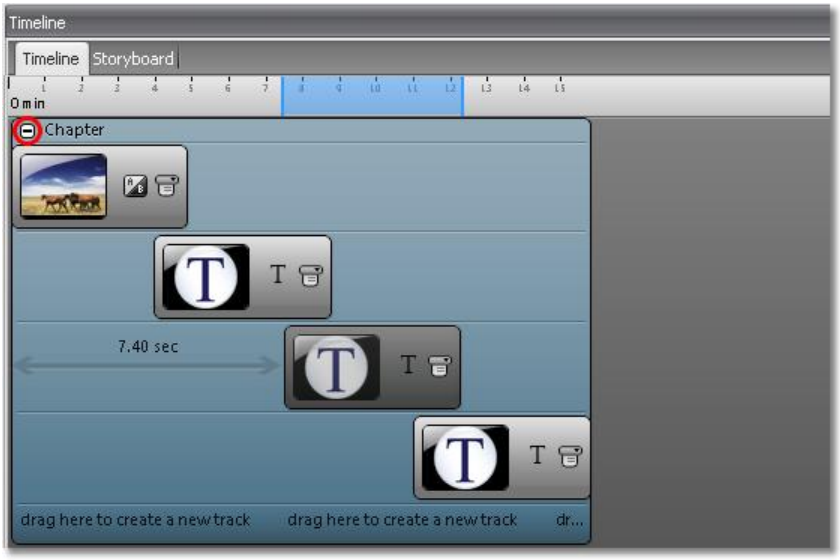


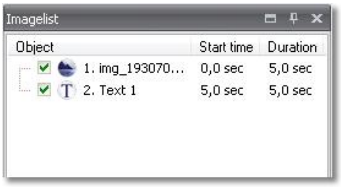
When you don't work on a chapter you can close it by clicking the minus symbol.

2.4.5 Letting texts fly

The *Text* objects which you have already become acquainted with in the previous section can also be animated with a movement path. In other words, they can "fly" across the image.

For this purpose, the *Layout Designer* provides the necessary tools.

Insert an *Image* and a *Text* object into your show.



Then click the *Text* in the *Image list* or on the *Timeline*. In the *Layout Designer* the tools for the movement path are now enabled.

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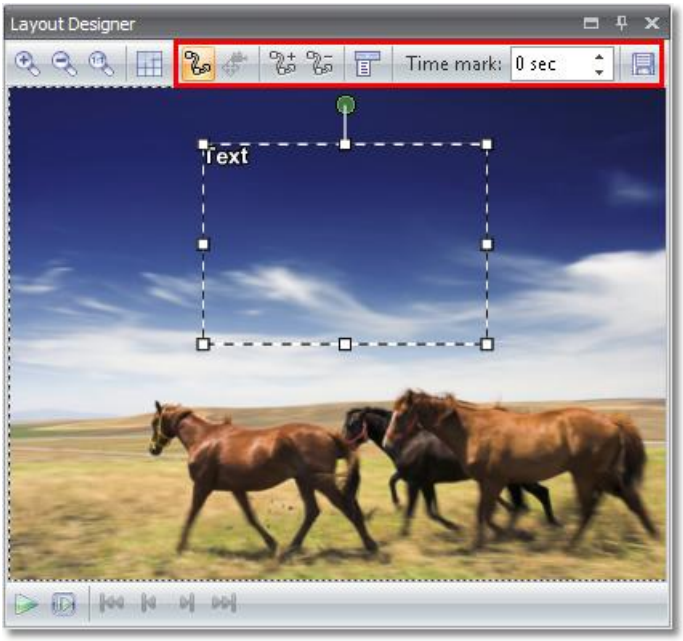
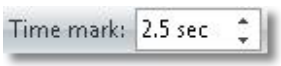


This is the icon for switching, in the *Layout Designer*, into the mode for movement paths. There is yet another mode for camera pans and zoom. Since this function is not available with the *Text* object, the icon for the movement path mode is active.

Use this button to insert new *movement marks*. The course of the movement is established on the basis of these marks.

In order to remove *movement marks* that have been set, the latter must be selected in the *Layout Designer* and can then be removed with this button.

In this respect, an additional menu for the *movement marks* is opened. This is explained more precisely later on.



The chronological course of a path is established with timestamps. They thereby determine how quickly the sequence should occur. That is clarified in an example below.

Newly created movement paths can be saved using this button and later conveniently reused. This function is only available in Stages Ultimate.

Inserting a movement mark

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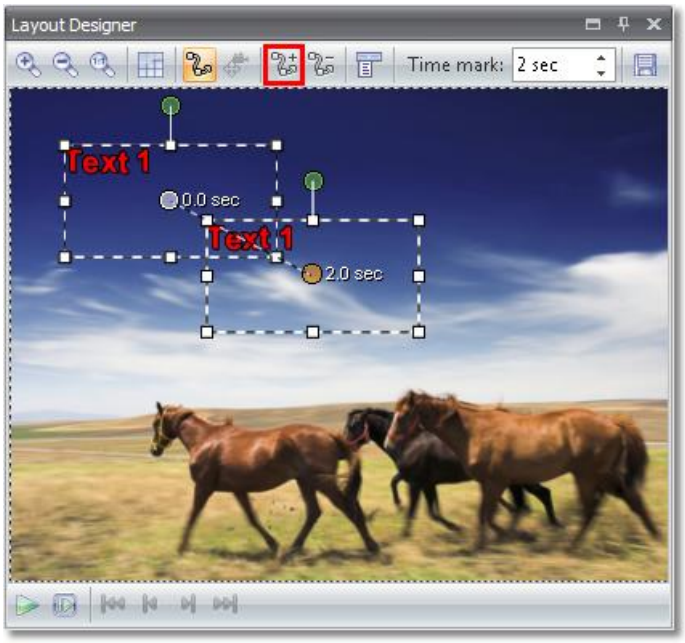
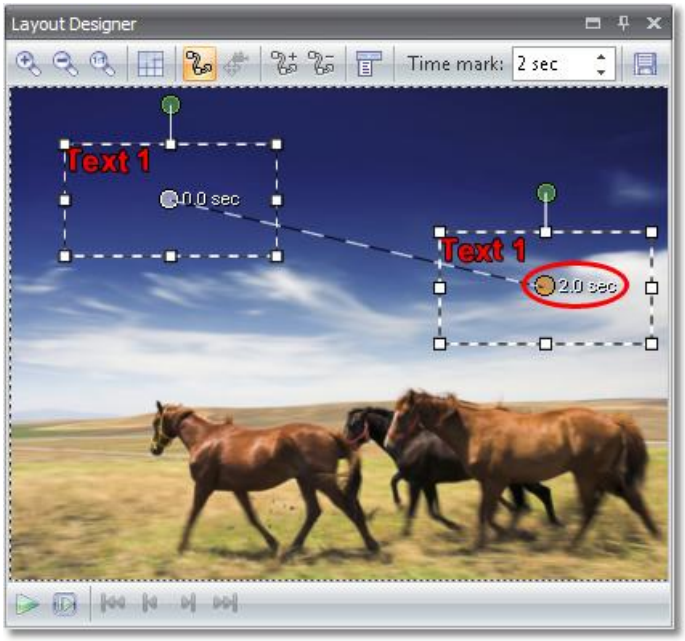


Insert a *movement mark* by clicking .

Positioning a movement mark



You can now drag the *movement mark* inserted in the *Layout Designer*. For that purpose you have to click in the text area and then drag the latter with the mouse button pressed down.

The orange dot shows you which *movement mark* has been selected.

Now you can replay the show by clicking and watch how the text moves.

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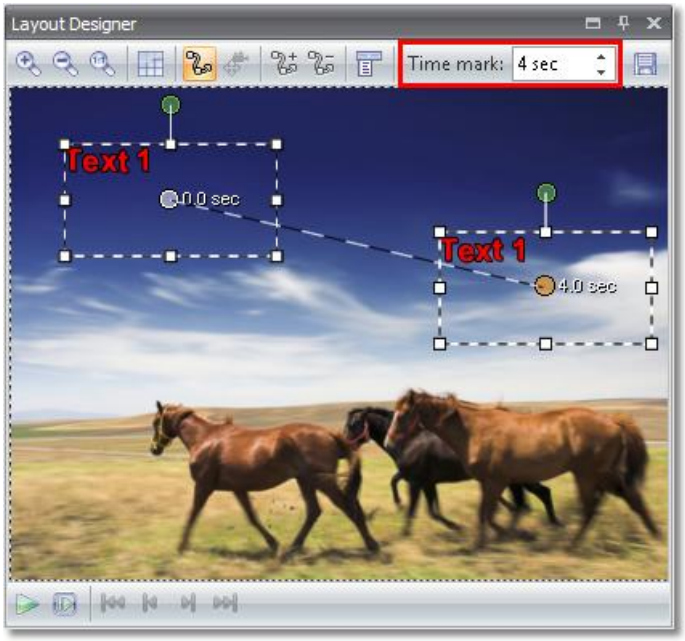
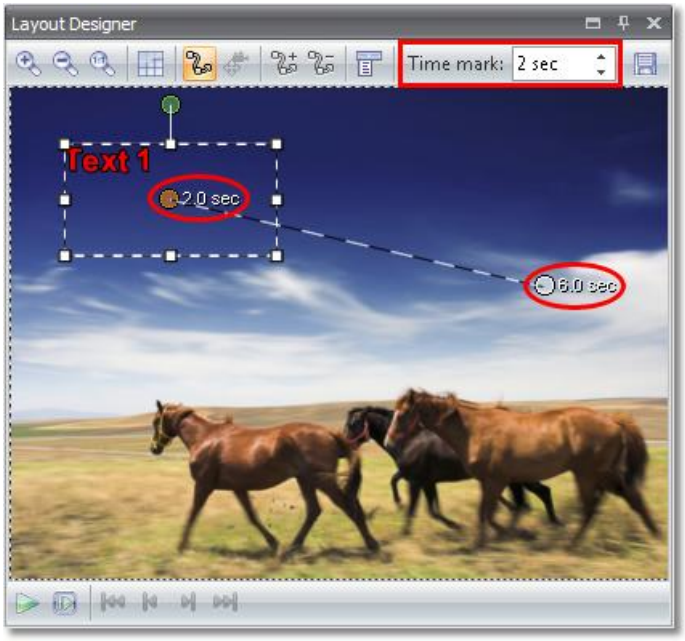
Chronological sequence



With *Time mark* you can control the sequence. If you increase the time, the sequence becomes slower. If you reduce the time, the sequence becomes faster.

First increase the *Time mark* of the movement point and then replay the show.

Starting time



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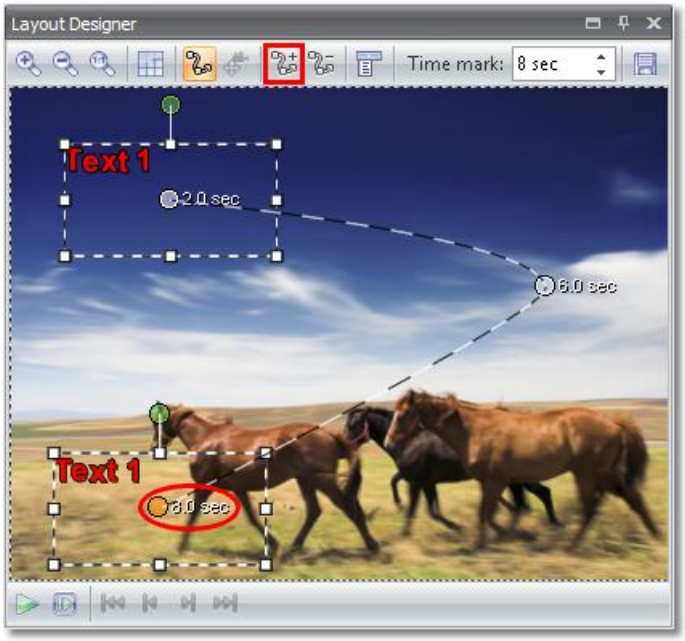
If the movement sequence is only supposed to begin after a time delay, you can increase the *Time mark* with the first *movement mark*. For that purpose, click the *movement mark* and then increase the time unit. The subsequent *movement marks* will automatically be adapted.

Inserting additional movement marks

You can insert as many *Movement marks* as you like. The new *movement mark* is always inserted *after* the previously selected mark.



Select the last *movement mark* and with insert a new mark and position it in the Layout Designer.

Play back the show. You will find that the last part of the movement path elapses faster than the first part. You can control this for the 3rd movement mark via the Time mark.

Hard and soft curves

In the course of movement you can choose between *hard* and *soft* curves. With *Hard curves* the path will run exactly in accordance with the movement marks. With *Soft curves* a round course of movement will take place. You can use both curve types within one path.

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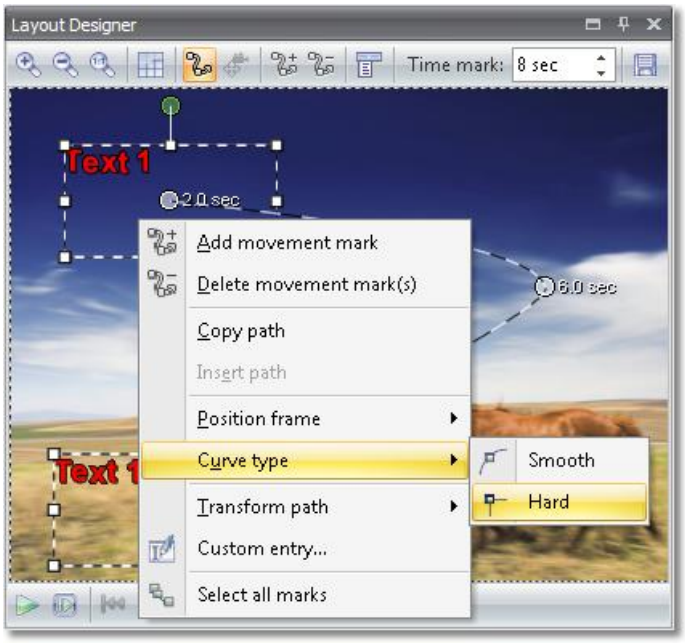
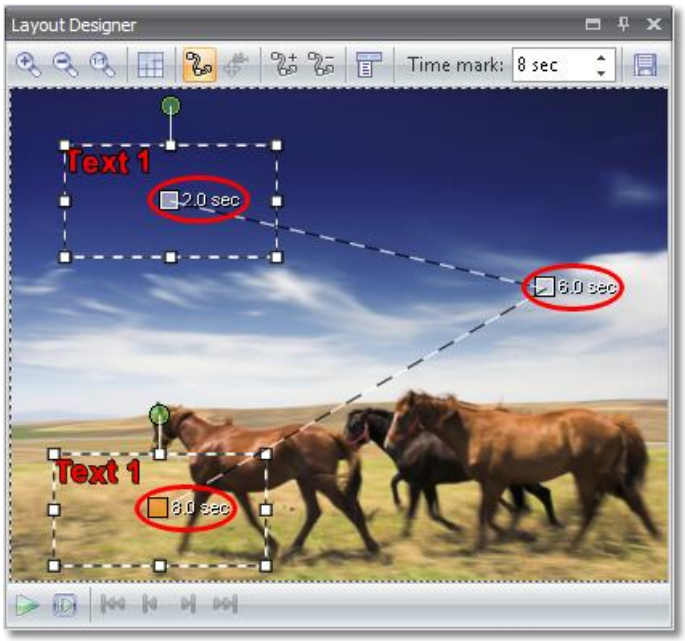


Select a movement mark. Using the right mouse button you will get the menu for this movement mark and can change the *Curve type* there.

Change the *Curve type* for all 3 marks.



You will see that the *movement marks* now have a rectangular marking point. Selecting *Soft curves* these points become round.

In order to see the change in the path, play back the show.

Rotating text during movement sequence

In Stages Ultimate you can rotate or swing texts during a movements sequence also.

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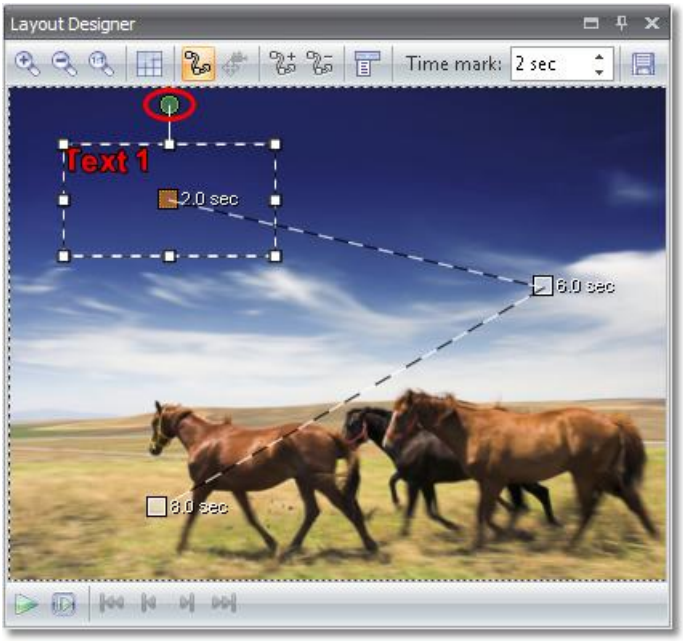
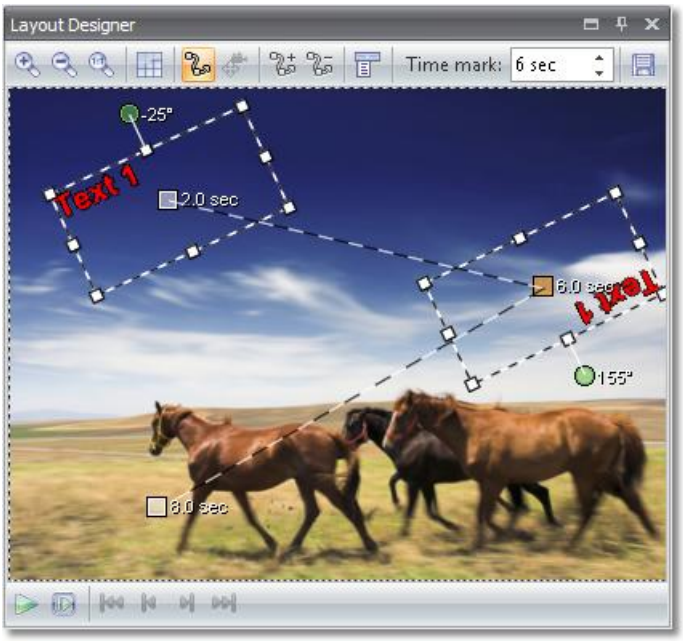
For this purpose there is a green handle above the *Text field*. More extensive information about the rotation functionality for *Text* you can find here.



First rotate the text at the first and second movement marks. Rotations through 360 degrees are also possible, to create complete rotation.



Play back the show. You will see that the rotation center is, in this respect, the midpoint of the text box. Should the rotation center be the center of the text, enable the *Rotation around text center* function in the *Text properties*.

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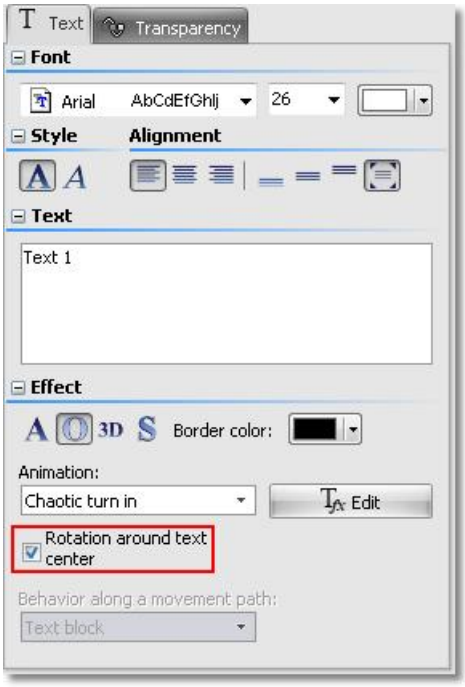
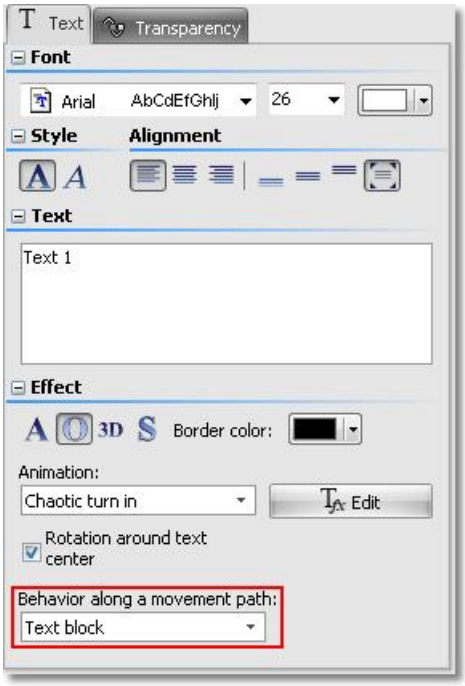


Behavior of text along a movement path

There is another option for text moving along a path.



Use it to let text "snuggle up" to the path as text block or even character by character. The text will rotate according to the path direction.

Letting the text fly in from outside

There are two areas in the Layout Designer. Firstly the visible area, and then the invisible area.

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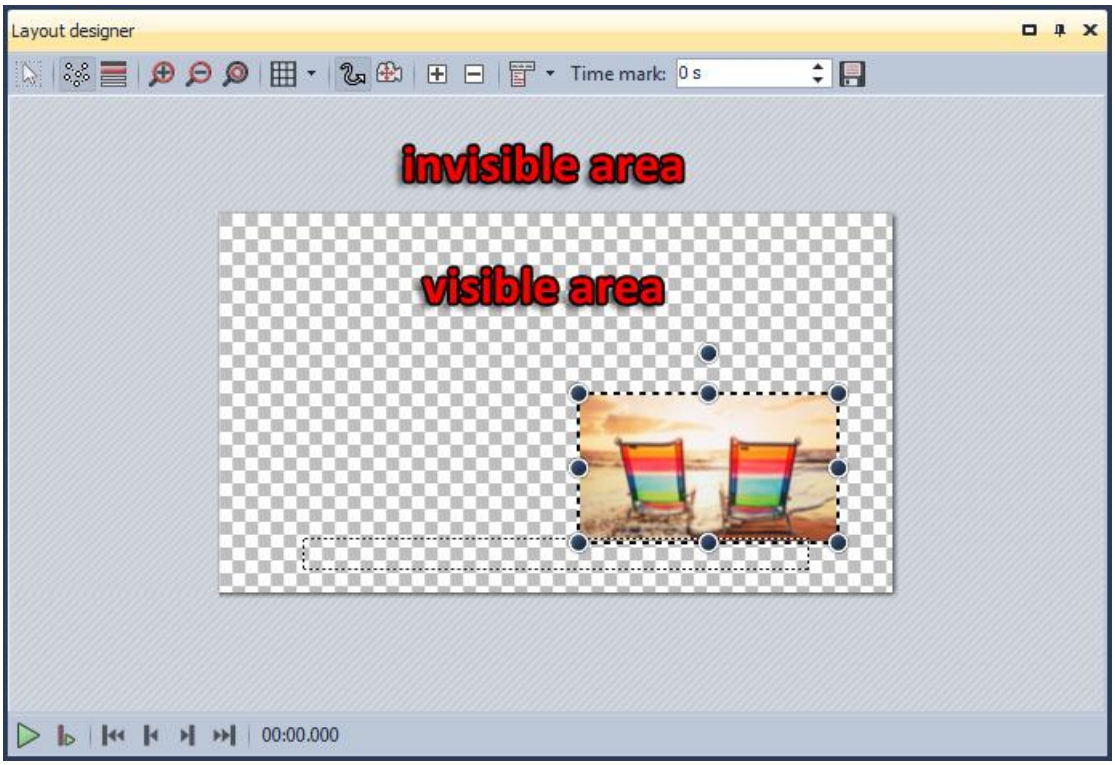

Enlarges the visible area in the Layout Designer.

Reduces the visible area in the Layout Designer.

Restores the normal view/window size.

Continue to use the show you just created. Reduce the visible area with in order to see the invisible area in the *Layout Designer*.

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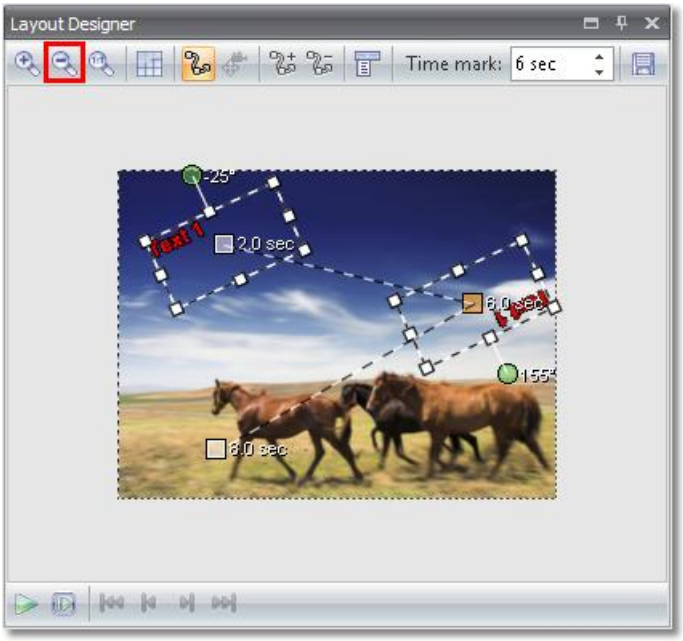
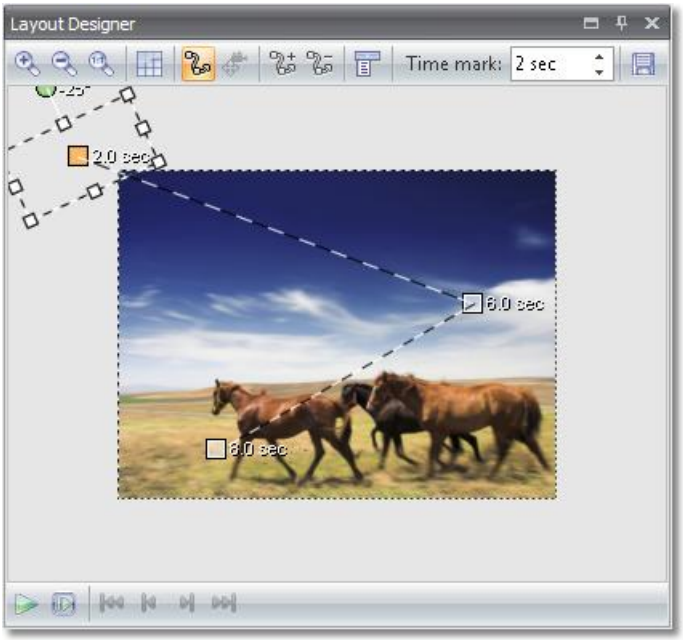


Now select the first movement mark and drag it into the *invisible area*.



Play back the show. The *Text* will now fly into the picture from the outside.

Zoom function for text

Just like rotation, this function is only available in Stages Ultimate.

Traveling along a movement path *Text* can increase and decrease in size. The smallest size is defined by its specified font size.

Select the 2nd movement mark and increase the size of the *position frame* of the *Text*-field.

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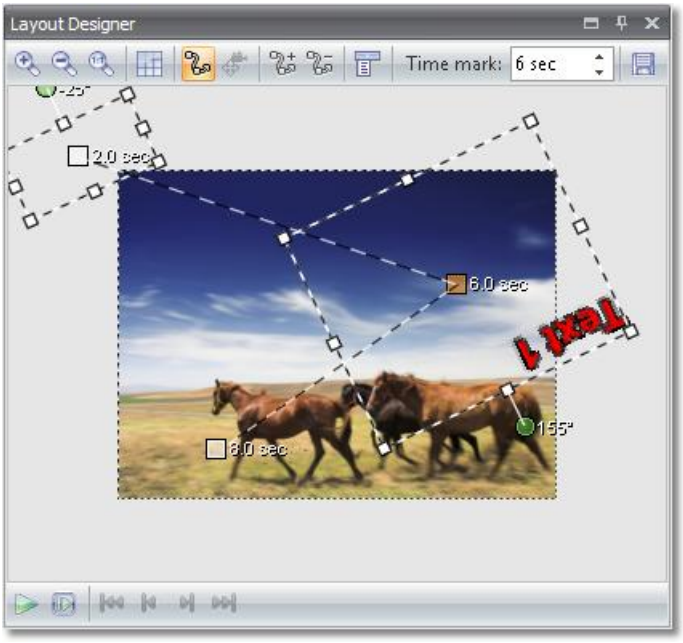
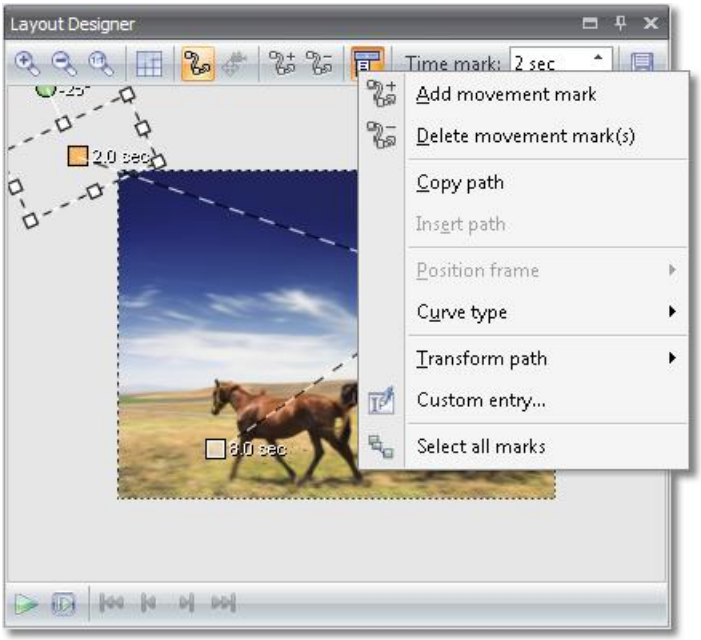


Play back the show. The *Text* will now fly into the picture from the outside.

Further options

Via the context menu for the movement marks can be opened. With a right-click on a selected movement mark, this menu can likewise be opened.



Some options have already been used above. The following further options are available:

A movement path already created can be copied and thus re-used with a Object. If you copy a movement path from a text object, this can also be

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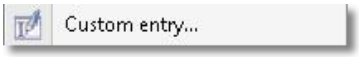
inserted in the case of an image.

With this option, you re-insert a copied path from the clipboard.

If you want to be sure that the text or the image does not change size in the course of your movement path, you can set the Use the size from the previous one option here.

There are hard and soft curves with a movement path. The course of a movement can thereby be modified.

A movement path can also be mirrored or rotated. You will find the available options under this point.

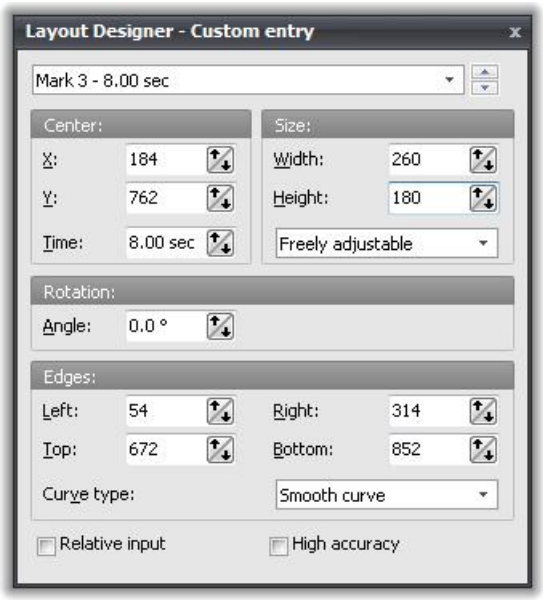


A movement path can also be mirrored or rotated. You will find the available options under this point.

With this all movement marks can be selected. Thereafter it is possible to drag the movement path as a whole.

Manually editing the path

Manually entering the path enables the movement points to be positioned exactly.



The *Layout Designer* is specified with a size of 1000x1000. The center of the image is therefore 500x500. Here you can directly specify the positions and sizes. You can also change between the individual markers in this window.

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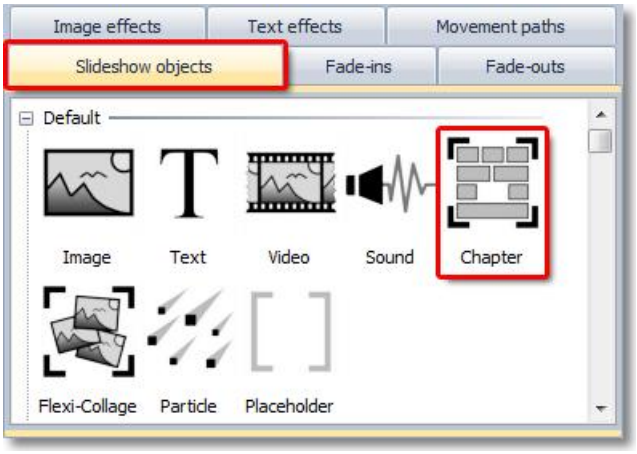
2.5 Multiple tracks

In AquaSoft Stages at first glance you only see an image and music track on the *Timeline*. This serves to provide a better overview. At positions where you require multiple tracks, the *Chapter* object is used.

With this you can connect as many tracks as you want. In that respect, it is not predetermined which objects can contain a track. Therefore you can place images, music or texts on any track.

You will find the *Chapter* object in the *Toolbox* under *Objects*.



The *Chapter* can be inserted by double-clicking. You can, however, also drag it to the desired position on the *Timeline* or in the *Image list* with the mouse button pressed down.

Insert a few images and a *Chapter* into an empty show.

The *Chapter* is inserted as an empty container. You will then have to move the desired objects into the chapter. You can do that on the *Timeline* or in the *Image list* or *Storyboard*. Click on an image and then drag it with the mouse button pressed down to the *Chapter*.

If you go over the *Chapter* with the mouse, the *Chapter* is framed in red on the *Timeline*. Let go of the image there.

The *Chapter* now contains a small *Plus* icon.

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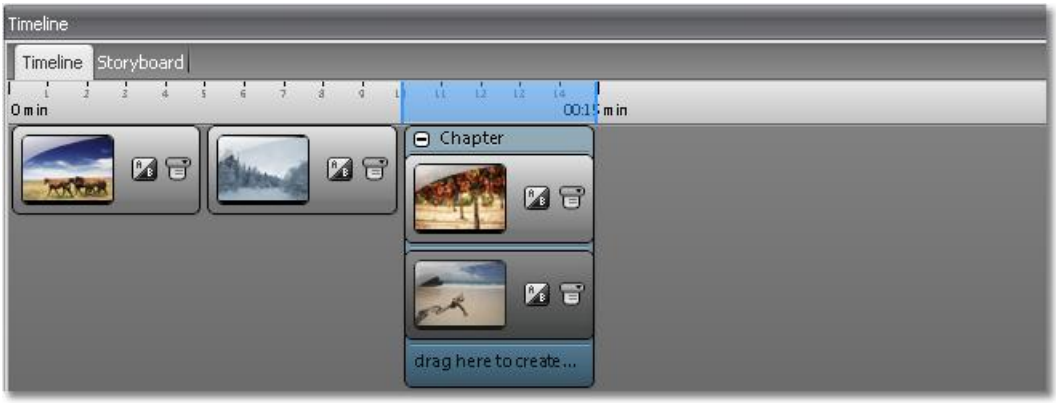
This shows that the objects are to be found in this *Chapter*. By clicking the *Plus* icon you can open the *Chapter*.

Underneath the *Image* object a hint regarding a new track is displayed. To add an image to the second track you need to move it to this track.

The red bar under the first image determines the starting position of the image. The image is inserted at this point.



The reference to a new track now appears under the second image. You can place as many objects as you wish on each track. In that respect, the red bar helps you to insert the objects in the correct position.

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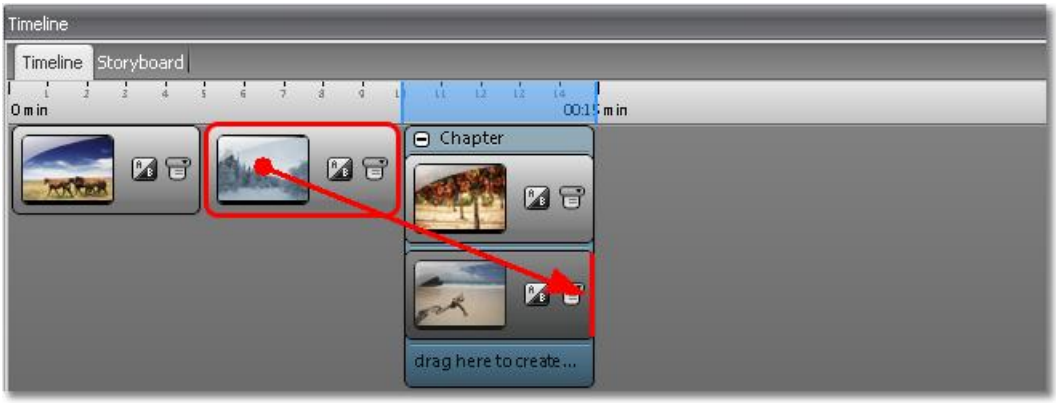

You can also insert *Objects* into a *Chapter* directly from the *Toolbox*. First of all drag a *Text* object onto a new track.

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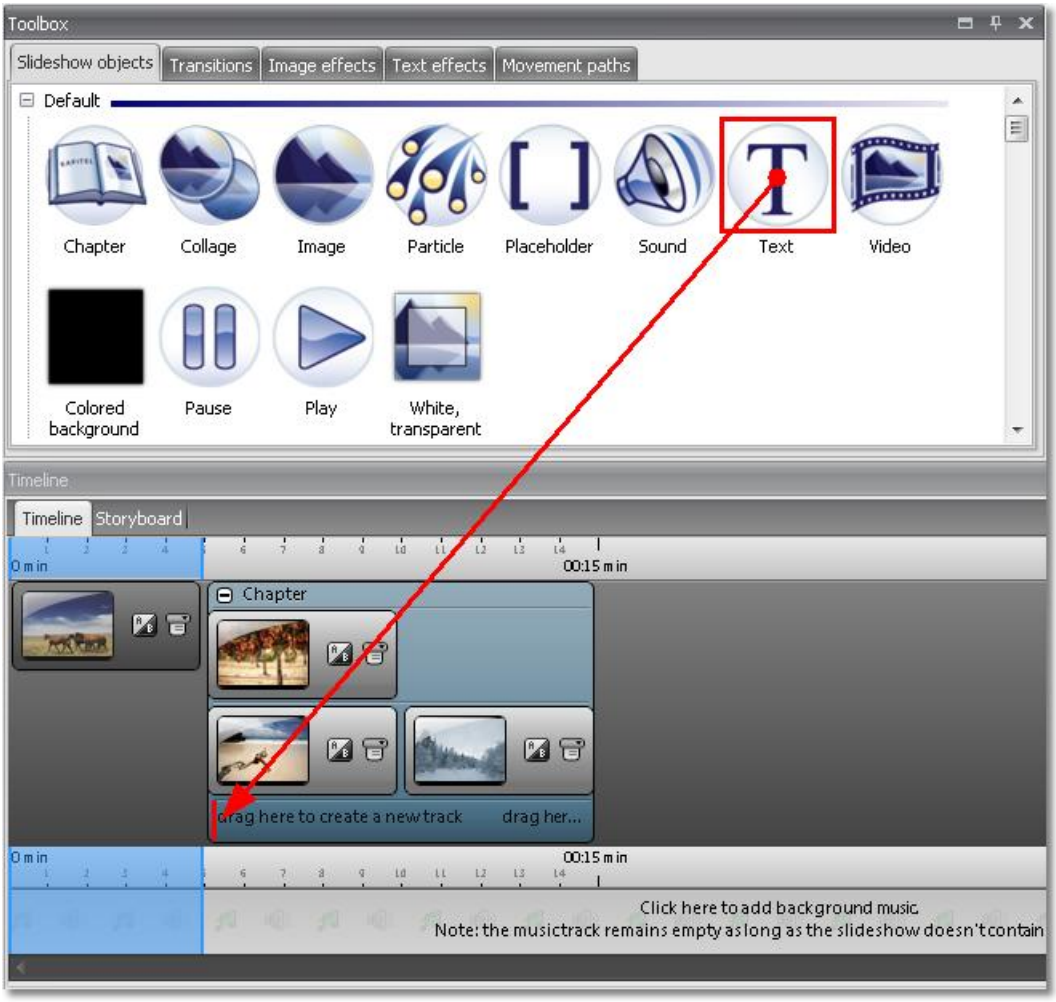

You can change the positions within the *Chapter* by dragging the objects with the mouse. By clicking dragging the beginning and the end of an object, the *Exposure time/Holding time* of an object can be changed.

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The objects within a chapter behaviour in a similar way to a pack of cards. In other words, the object on the lowest track is arranged on top of the other objects. In this example, the text is shown on all 3 images. Should the text stand on the first track, it would be covered up by the images.

Example:

Often we are asked how *Track/Sound* is set for only a few images. The *Background music* should be faded out at this point, but not interrupted.

Insert a few images into an empty show and a *Chapter*.

Then move the images into the *Chapter*. In that respect, the images should all be on one track.

Now drag a *Sound* object from the *Toolbox* onto the 2nd track in the *Chapter* in exactly the same way as the *Text* object was inserted into the *Chapter* above.

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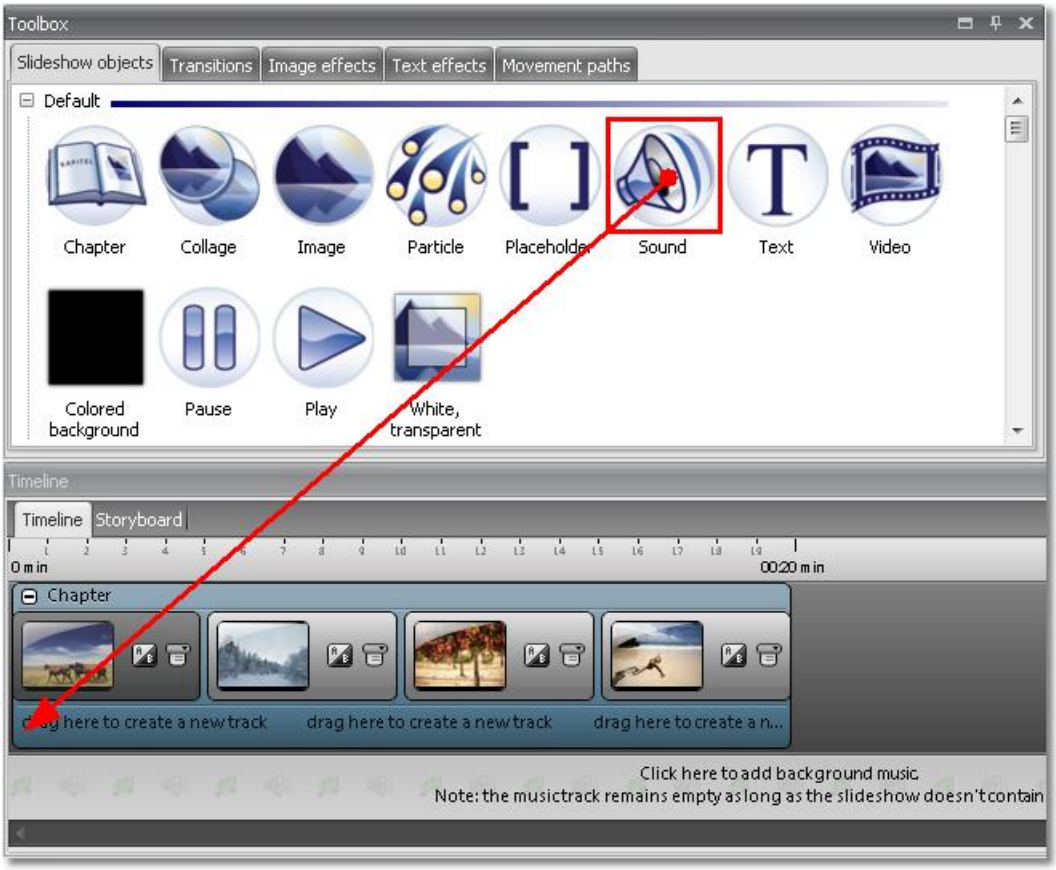

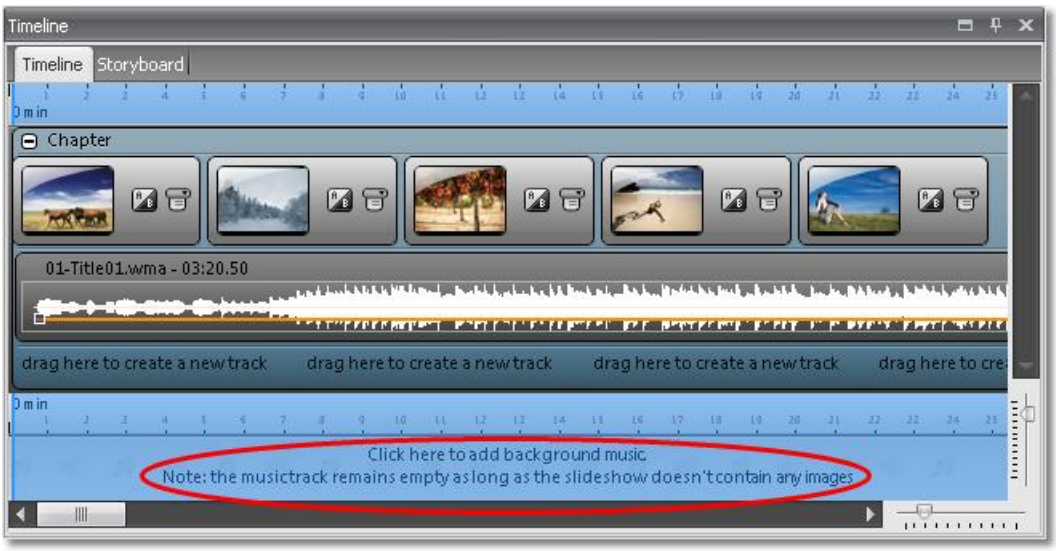

You can add *Background music* by clicking the corresponding track in the *Timeline*. Using the *Plus* icon, you can insert the track.

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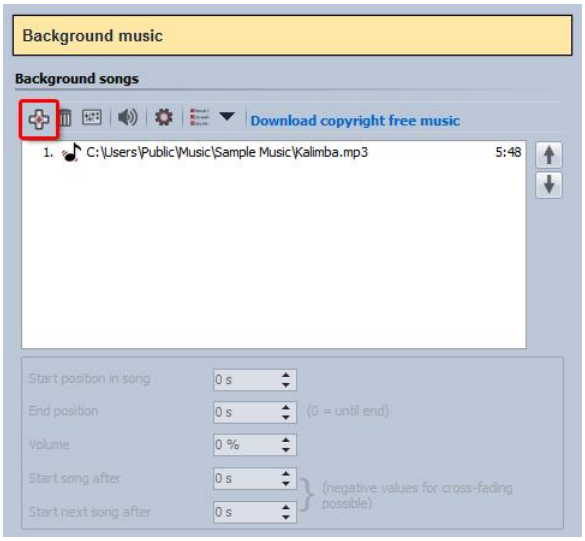
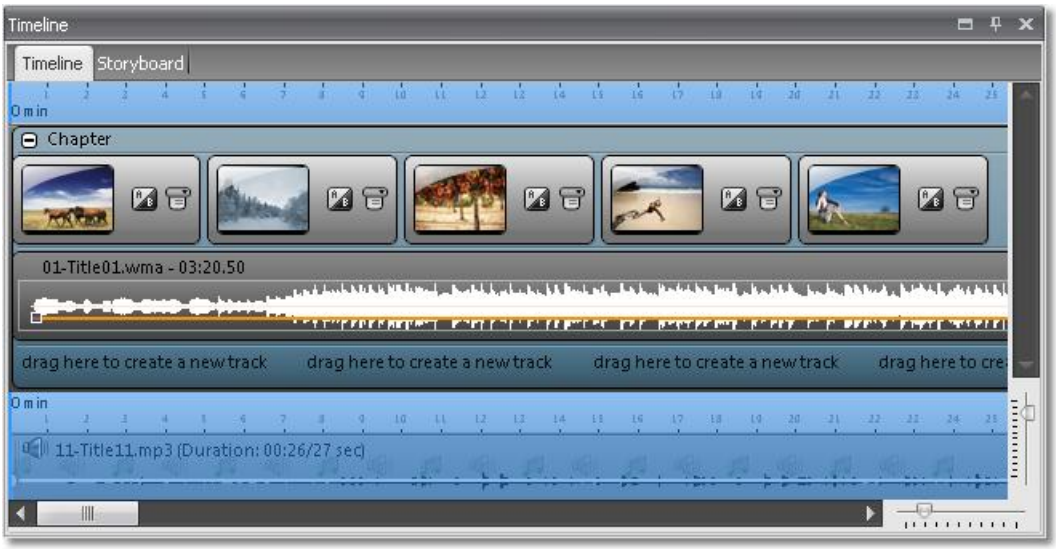


The title is then shown on the *Background music track* of the *Timeline*.



The *Properties* of the *Sound* object should be displayed in the *Properties* window. If not, select the *Sound* object on the *Timeline* by clicking it with the mouse.

Should the playback length of the sounds be too long for you, you can reduce it. The relevant settings are marked in red in the illustration below.

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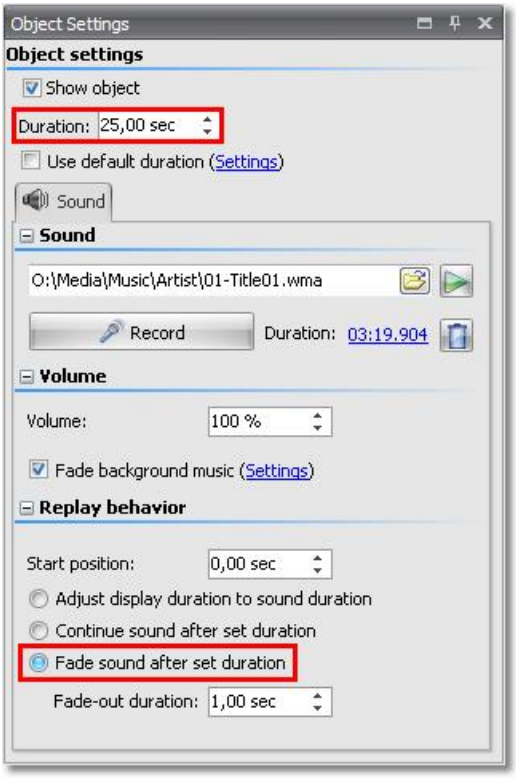
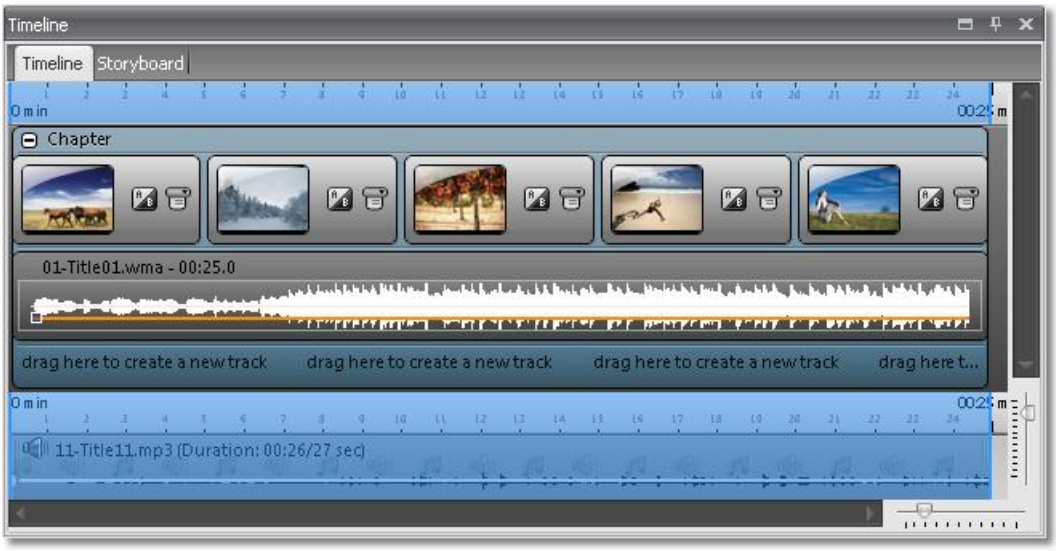


On the *Timeline* you will now see that the *Sound* fits in with the 5 images exactly. The *Background music* is canceled during this period of time. If you insert yet more images behind the *chapter*, you will see how the *background music track* is continued.



Images, *texts* and *sounds* can be combined in a *chapter* as desired.

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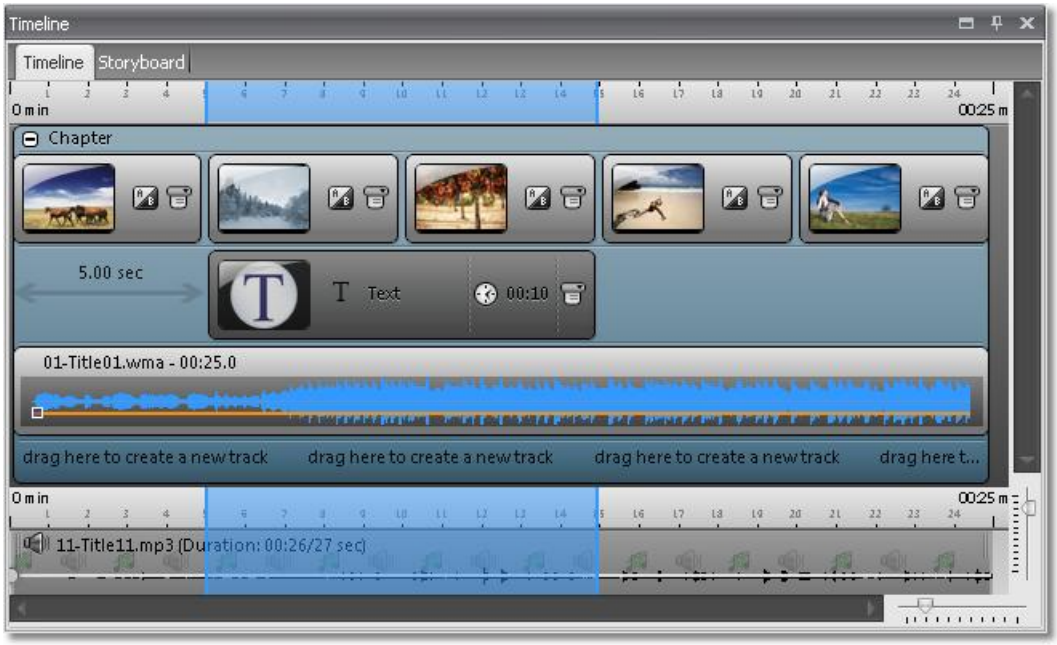

The *Chapter* has a *Minus* icon at the top on the left if it is open. You can close it by that means if you are no longer working on this chapter. That increases the clarity in a substantial show.

By utilizing Stages-Manager you can create a menu for your show where you can jump to these chapters directly. Stages-Manager is already included in Stages Ultimate. You can also add it as plug-in to Stages Premium.

2.6 Ken Burns Effect

You will find an example of the Ken Burns effect in the sample projects supplied with the software.

In AquaSoft Stages you can quite simply apply this effect to your images.

Insert a few images into an empty project. In the Toolbox you will find the Ken Burns effect under Movement paths.

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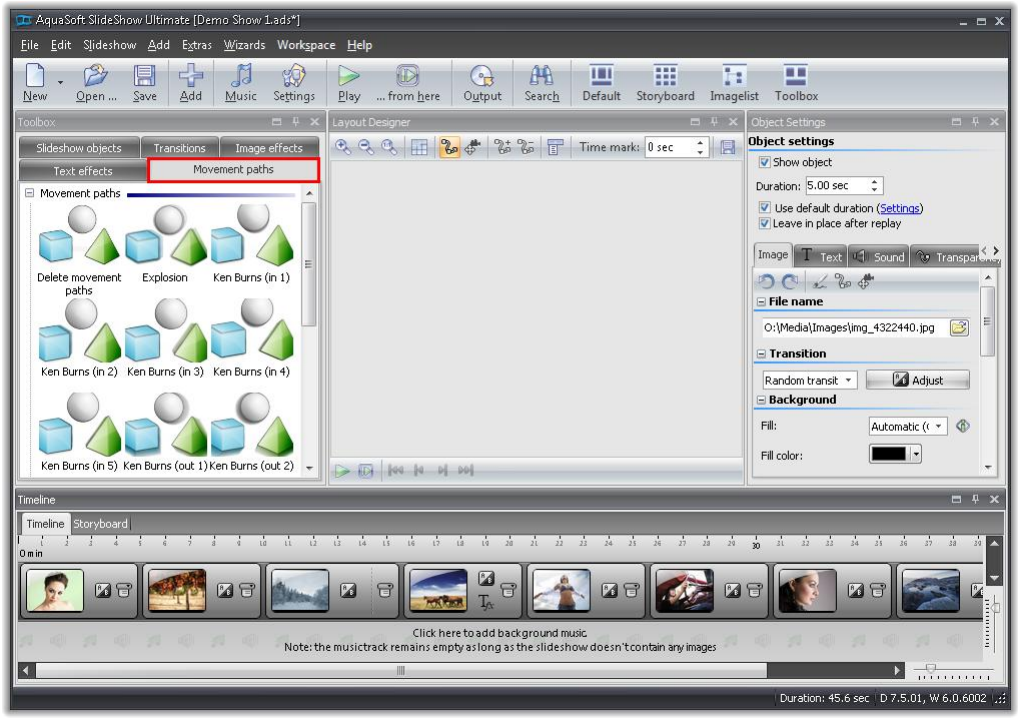
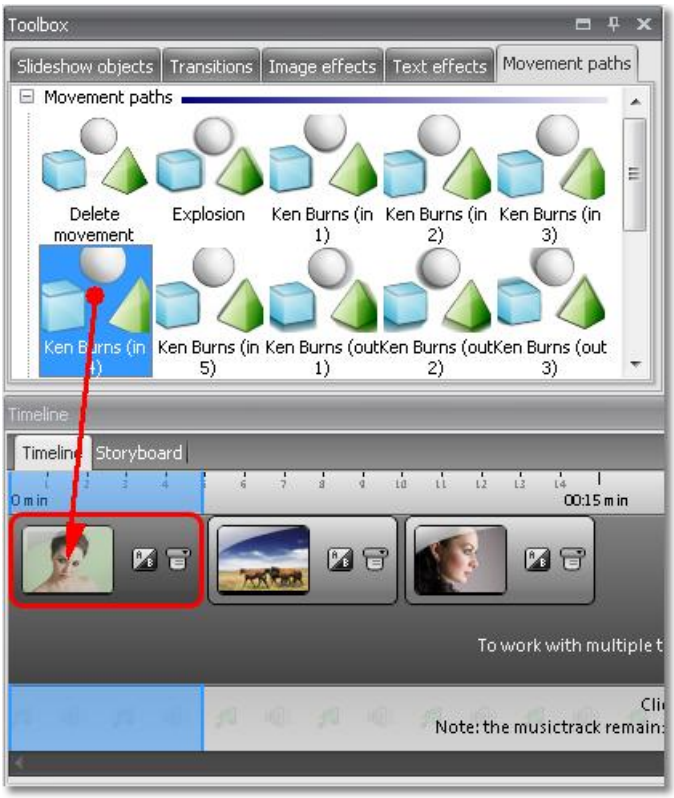


To apply it to an image, simply drag the effect out of the Toolbox onto the corresponding image.



If you would like to assign a Ken Burns effect to several or all images select these images.

All images = Ctrl + A

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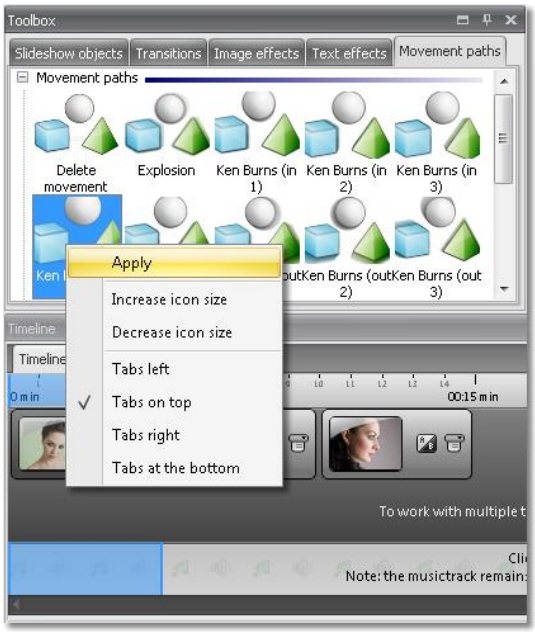
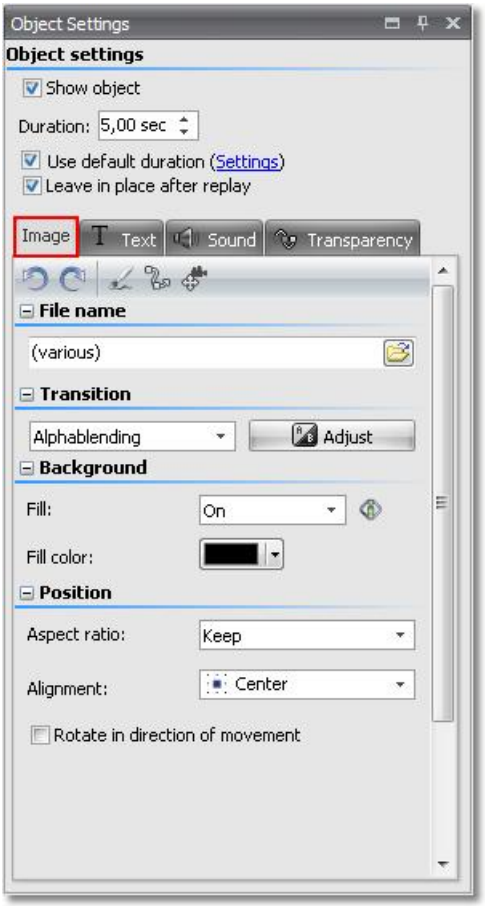
Certain images = Ctrl + right click on the image

Select the Ken Burns effect with the left mouse key, then click right and select Apply. The Ken Burns effect will be assigned to all selected images.



Now select Alphablending as Transition in the Image Properties. The Fill function has to be enabled as well.



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Then play back the show with .

You notice that the transitions could be a little smoother. This can be accomplished by using a Chapter. Add a Chapter to the show. Move the Images into the Chapter and arrange the images in a stair shape. The start of an image needs to be moved slightly underneath the end of the previous one.

Then play back the show with .

The Ken Burns effect is implemented by means of a Camera pan. You can also change this individually. For that purpose, you have to change in the Layout Designer to the Camera pan mode. To do that, click in the Layout Designer.

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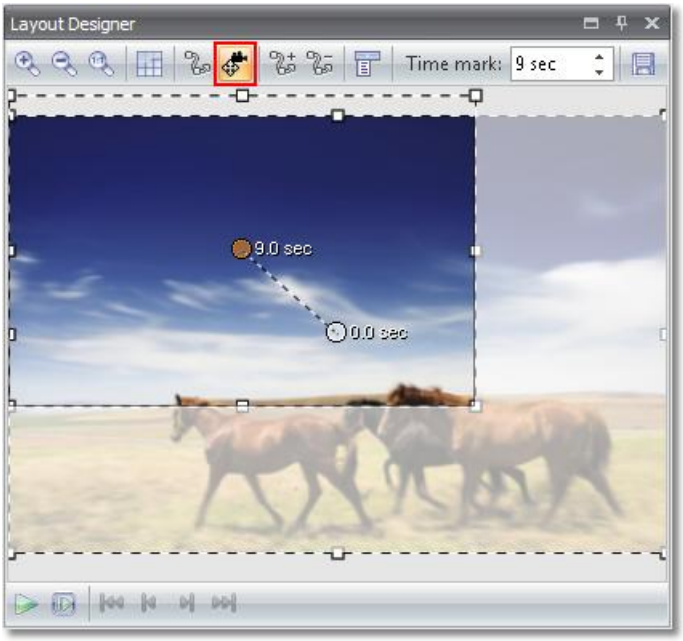

The movement path is now shown in the Layout Designer. How quickly or slowly a movement progresses is determined by means of the time set to the 2nd movement mark. The greater the time, the more slowly the movement is carried out.

In order to change the time and thus the sequence, click the 2nd movement mark in the Layout Designer. The movement mark with 0.0 sec is the first one and therefore the starting position. After you selected the 2nd mark you can change the time set via the image under Time mark. A selected movement mark is shown in the Layout Designer in orange.

When using a Ken Burns Effect only a part of the image section is used at the first movement mark. You will notice the smaller Position frame. Only during the Camera pan will the full image section become visible. Therefore, the Position frame is larger at the second movement mark.

You will find more about movement path in the chapters Movements and Zoom.

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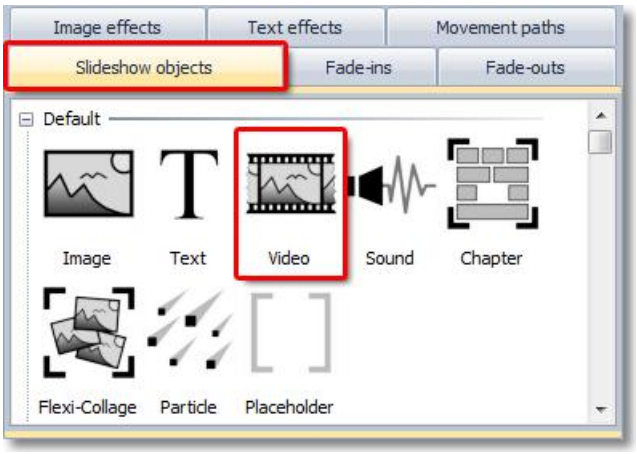
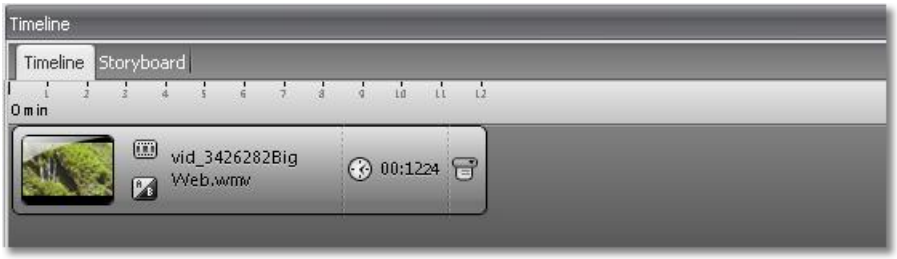
2.7 Adding videos

You can not only use images in AquaSoft Stages, but you can also insert videos.

To insert a video, you will find the the Video object in the Toolbox under Objects.



You can insert it with a double-click or drag the Video object with the mouse out of the Toolbox onto the Timeline or Storyboard or into the Image list.



In the Properties of the video you now have various setting options. Should the Properties not be shown in the view available to you, you can retrieve them by right-clicking the video on the Timeline or in the Image list.

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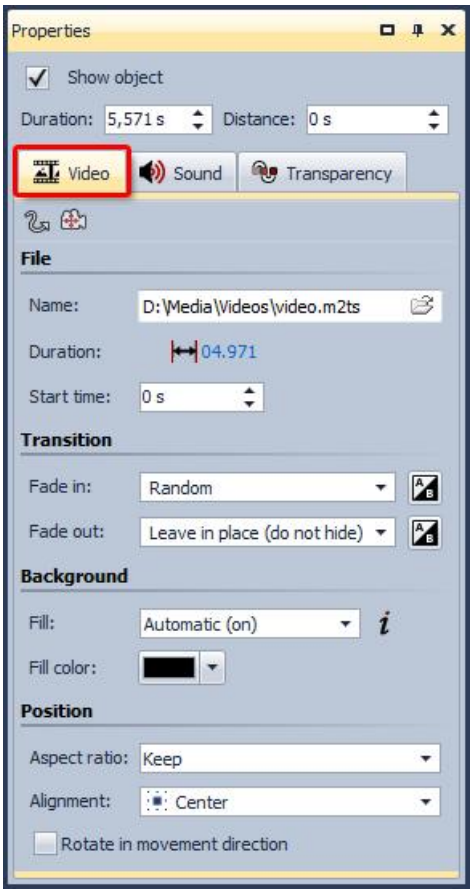

Should the full length of the video not be played back, remove the check mark beside Play back the full length of the video. You can then determine the playback duration individually.

You can crop the video at the beginning using Start time. If you don't want to play the video from the very beginning enter the point of time where you want the video to start. Under Duration specify its playing time. This way you select the part of the video to be played.

Should the video not be intended to be played back full screen size, it can be freely positioned in the Layout Designer. You can also assign a cross fading effect to the video.

The Fill background function enables you to see the previous image during playback of the video or cover it up with a colored background.

Under Sound you can determine whether the background music is supposed to be faded out during the course of the video being played. Should you have your own audio or spoken commentaries in the video, you should use this function.

Further Properties of the video are explained here.

The video can also be animated with a movement path. How that functions exactly you can find out here.

Technical information:

Prerequisite for playing videos is a suitable DirectShow filter. In many cases it already exists on current Windows systems.

Stages 8 comes with its own DirectShow filters for a variety of video formats (AC3, H.264, MKV, MOV, MPEG1, MPEG2, MP4, MTS, M2TS, Qt, TS, WebM).

If your video can not be played in SlideShow, it could be due to a lack of DirectShow filters for the video format. Partly they can be installed later. There are different codec and filter packs available for download. Please refer to the notes to the codec package and also visit the website of the provider of this package. The installation of codecs can also affect other programs.

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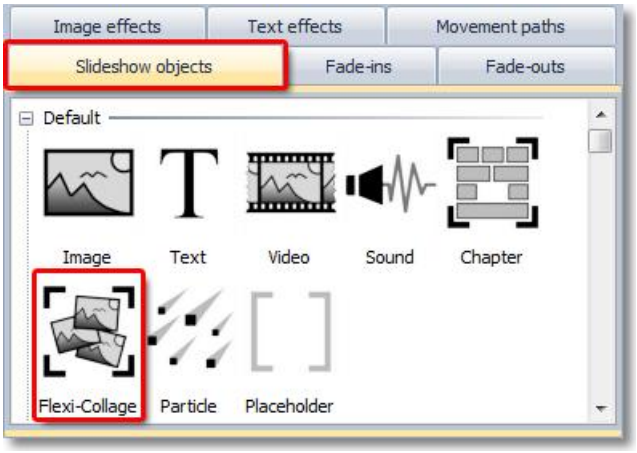
Please visit our FAQ (http://faq.aquasoft.de/index.php?action=artikel&cat=15&id=22&artlang=de) for detailed information.

2.8 Collage

In only a few steps, you can create beautiful collages.

Double-click the Collage object from the Toolbox.



In this way a Collage is inserted into your project. Click this Collage in the Image list or on the Timeline and you will see in the Layout Designer that the Collage is empty at the moment. In order to fill it in, just double-click the Image object from the Toolbox.

In the dialog which now appears, simply select all images to be used for your Collage.

These are inserted into the Collage, since they were selected in the Image list and on the Timeline. If you click ⊞ next to the Collage, you can view all images in the Collage.

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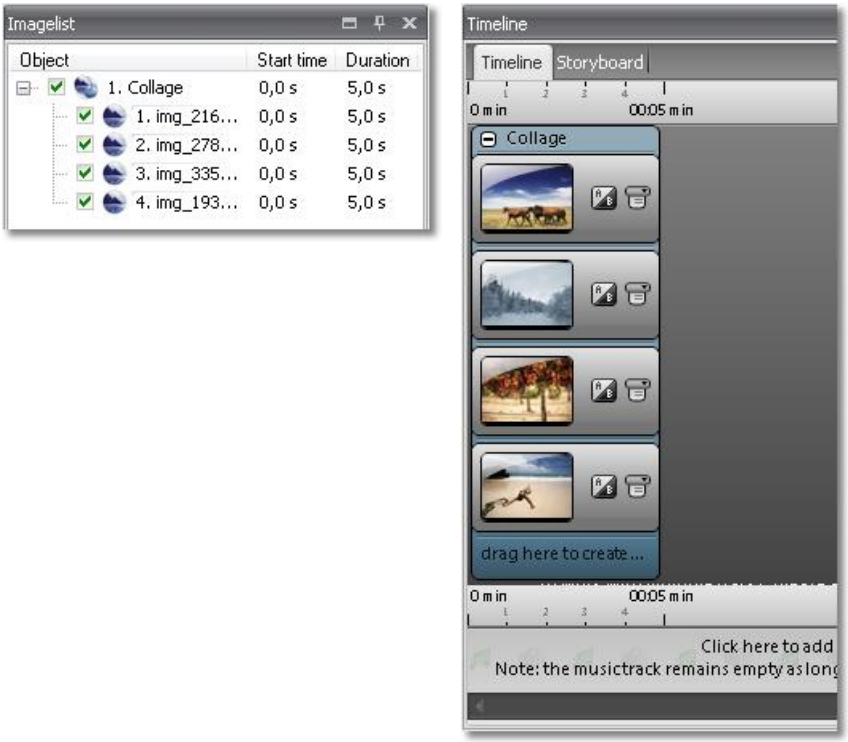
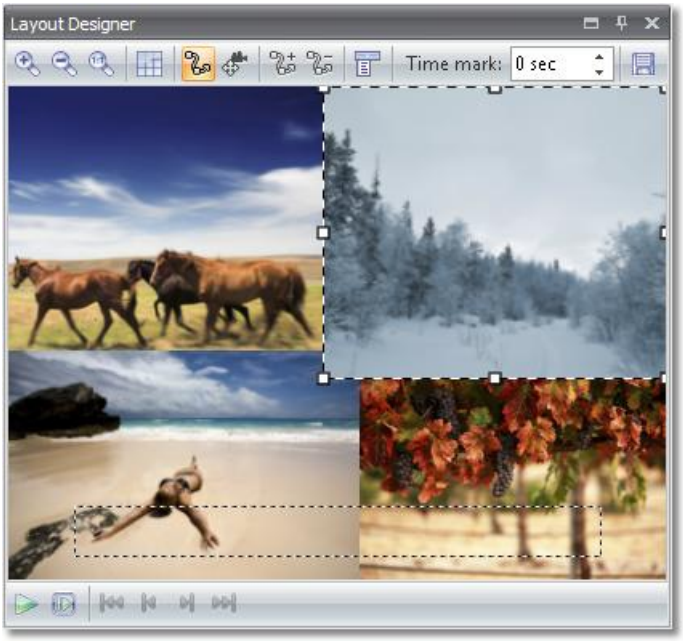


Now simply click on the individual images and drag/maximize/minimize them as you please, until you are happy with the result. You can reduce the images using the positioning framework in the Layout Designer.



Now insert a Text from the Toolbox and position it as you please.

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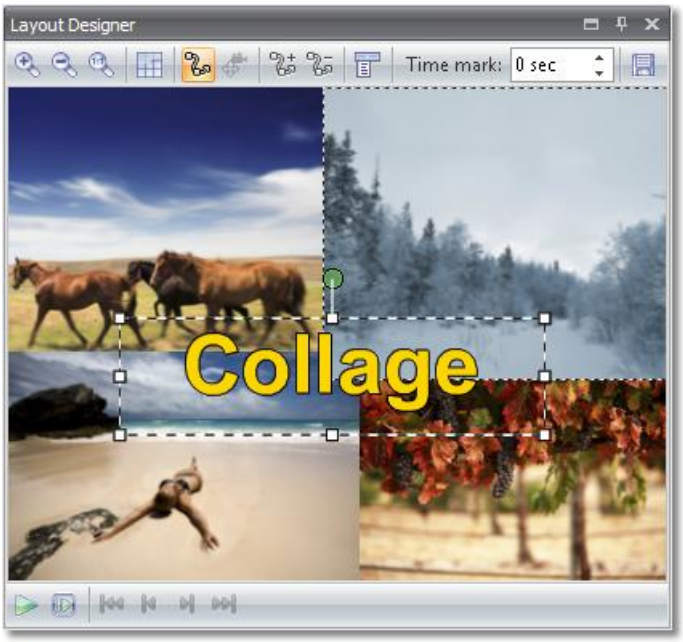
If the Text is not inserted into the Collage now, the Collage was probably not selected when you inserted the Text. Click and simply drag the Text onto the Collage and release the mouse button. This works in the Image list, on the Timeline and on the Storyboard.



Now you have a finished Collage, consisting of your images and a text. The images can also overlap. Likewise you can create an image within image effect by not reducing the size of the first image.

If you select the Collage object, you can change Properties of the collage. You can determine a transition and change the exposure time.

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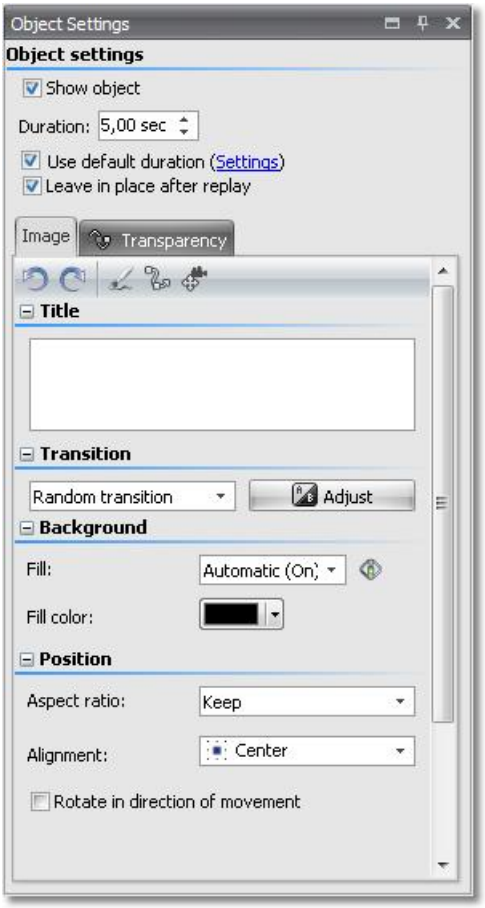

Images and texts within a Collage are not independently animated. To achieve this you need the Chapter object.

As you can see, putting together a pretty Collage is achieved quickly and easily.

As in an image, in a Collage you can zoom and furnish this with a camera pan. Simply try it out.

You will find more about movement path in the chapters Movements and Zoom.

2.9 Movement paths

You already learned about *movement paths* in chapter Text animations.

You can apply *movement paths* to the following *Objects*:

Insert an *image* which you would like to animate with a *movement path*.

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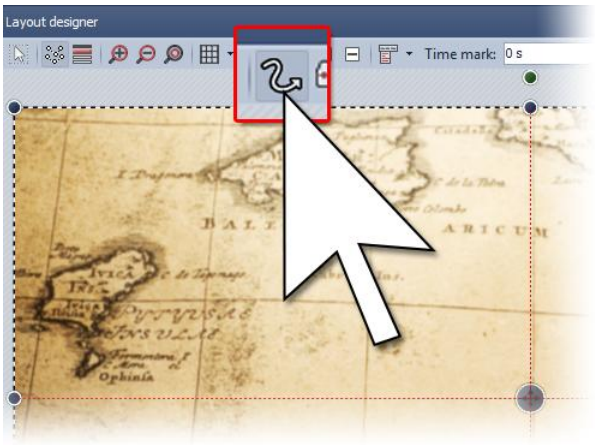
Then click on the *image* in the *Image list* or on the *Timeline*. In the *Layout Designer* the tools for the movement path are now activated.



This is the icon for switching into the mode for *movement paths* in *Layout Designer*.

Using this icon, switch into the mode for *camera pans* and zoom.

Use this button to insert new *movement marks*. The course of the movement is established on the basis of these points.

To remove *movement marks* that have been set, the latter must be selected in the *Layout Designer* and can then be removed with this button.

You can use this to open a further menu for the *movement marks*.

The chronological course of a path is established with timestamps. You can thereby determine how quickly the sequence should occur. That is clarified in an example below.

You custom movement paths can be saved and reused. This function is only available in Stages Ultimate.

2.9.1 Simple movement shots

Your images learn to walk. With a few clicks your images wander over the screen. Simply follow these instructions and you will be quickly and comfortably introduced to the colorful, moving world of AquaSoft Stages.

Create a new project and insert an image.

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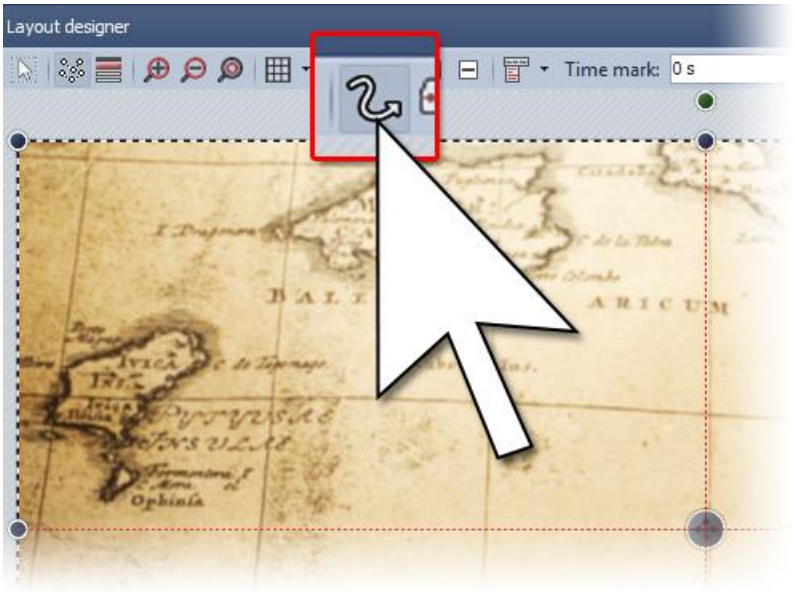
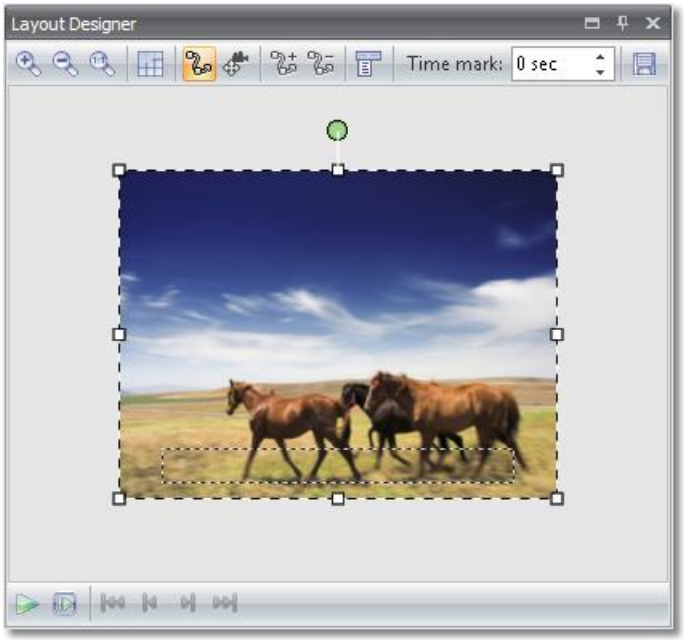
Image

Click on the ***image*** in the ***Image list*** or on the ***Timeline***, so that the ***image*** is displayed in the ***Layout Designer***.



In this example we would like to explain how you can arrange for an image to fly onto the screen from outside. For that purpose, we have to enlarge the invisible area with .



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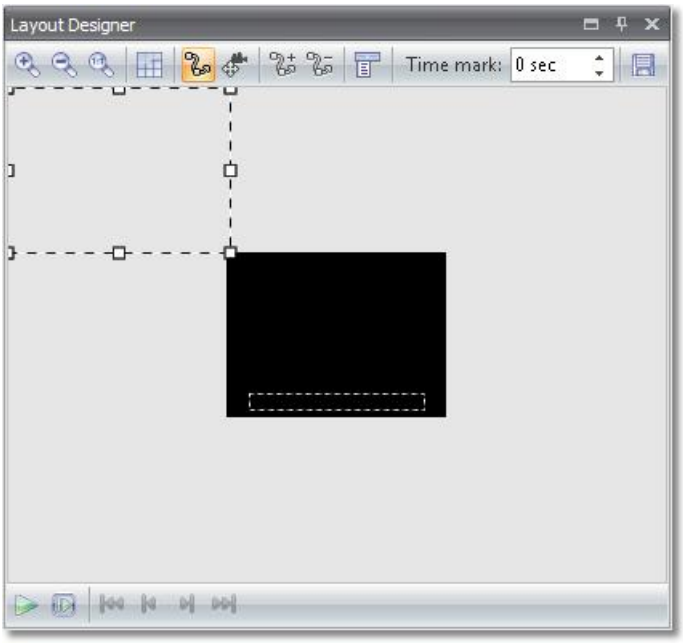
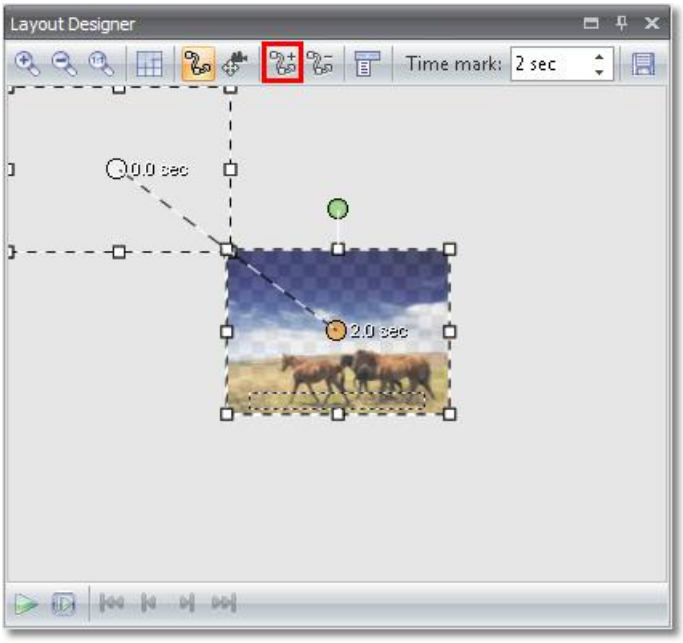
Now move the image into the invisible area.



Now insert a new movement mark with . Then move the newly inserted movement mark into the visible area.



Play back the show. You will see that the image now "flies onto" the screen from the top left-hand corner. Increase the timestamp at the 2nd movement mark and movement becomes slower.

In order to be sure that the image arrives in the center of the screen and also the size of the image is not changed, retrieve the Custom entry once via .

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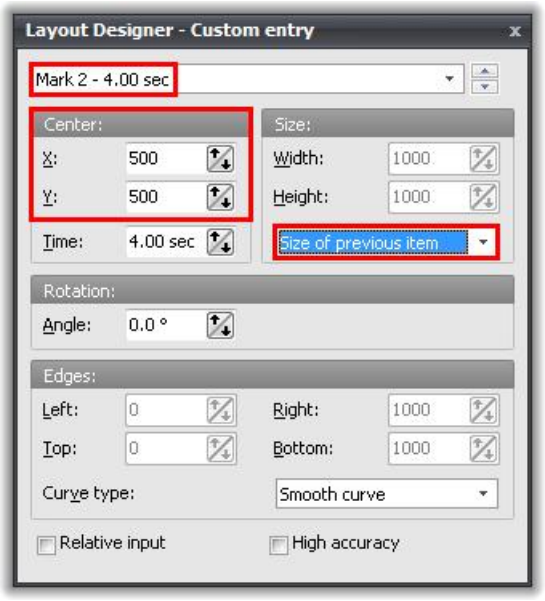

Select Mark 2 and enter 500/500 in the center Also set the Size of previous item. so that the size of the image is not accidentally altered during the path.

The Custom entry assumes a system of co-ordinates in which the Layout Designer is 1000x1000 units wide. Therefore, in order to center our image, enter 500 at X (the horizontal position of the midpoint) and at Y (the vertical position of the midpoint), i.e. half of the respective total extent. You can also use negative numbers. These then refer to the invisible area.

2.9.2 Movements with alterations in size

In the previous example there was no change in the size of the image along the movement path. Now we would like to show you how to change the image size in the process. This way images can grow or shrink.

Images grow

The image with the path set from the previous section also has to be modified slightly.

You should see it like this in the Layout Designer:

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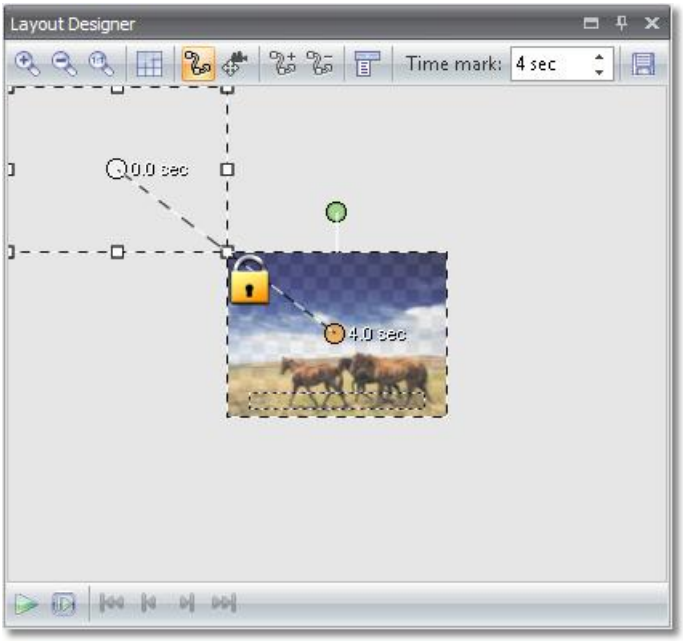
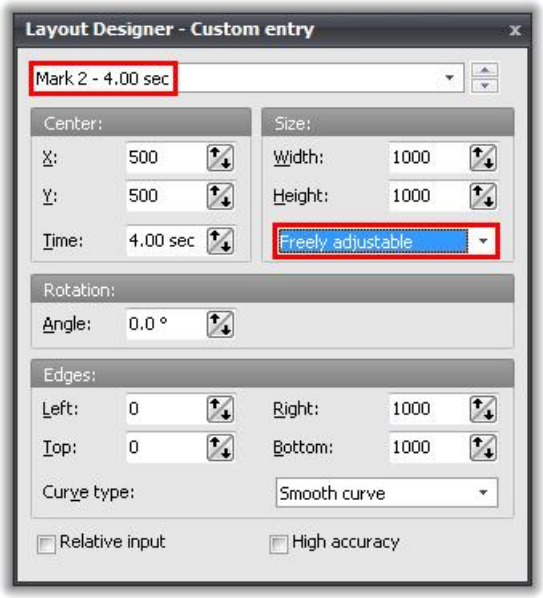


Now open *Custom entry* using the icon.

Select the 2nd mark and change the setting under *Size* to *Freely adjustable*.



Then close *Custom entry*. It is possible to also carry out the next step from this menu, however we are choosing the *Layout Designer* directly.

Using the *positioning framework*, reduce the image at the first mark, i.e. the mark which is outside the visible area. Then move the mark closer to the visible area.

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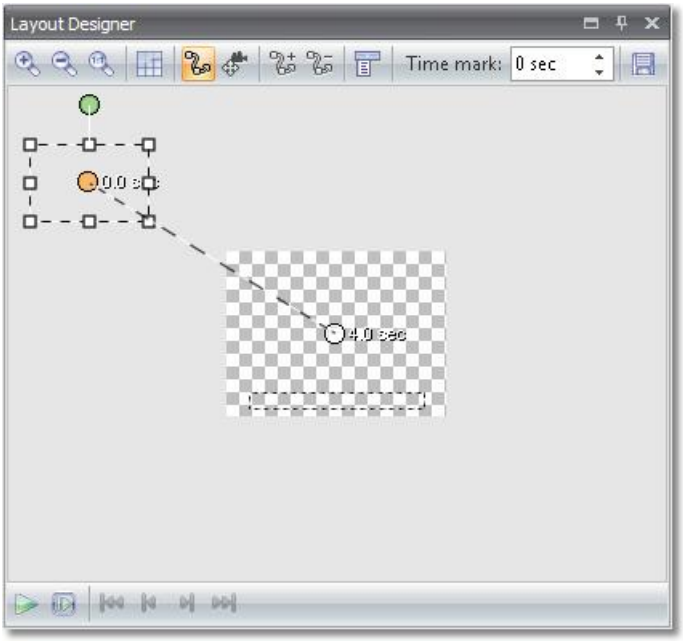
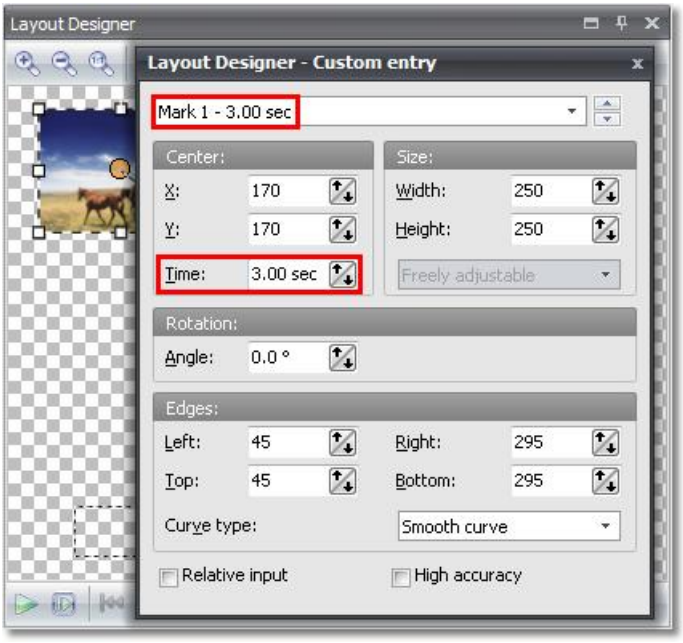


Now play back the show and you will see that the image is larger when it is in motion.

You can select a *Transition*, or also *None*, in the *Properties* of the image.

First of all, position the first mark in the visible area. Then restore the *Layout Designer* to *Normal view* using .

Then access *Custom entry*.



First of all set the values shown in the image. In the *Properties* of the image select a *Transition*. Afterwards play back the effect.

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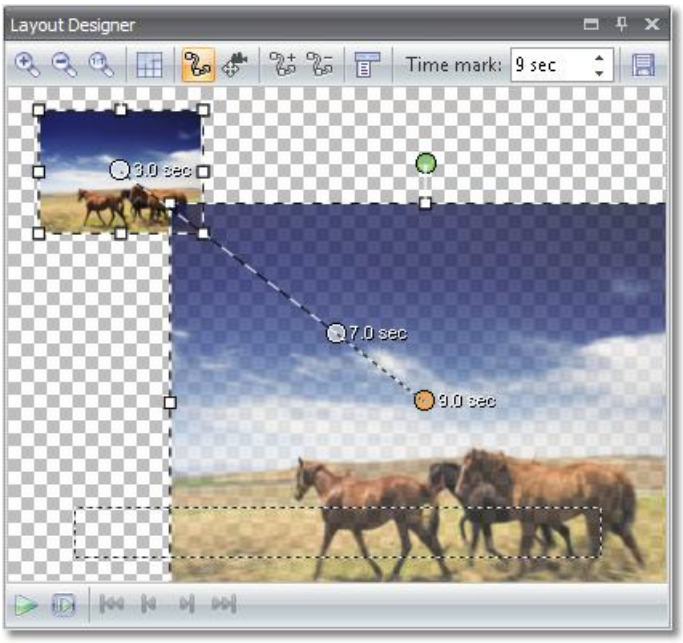
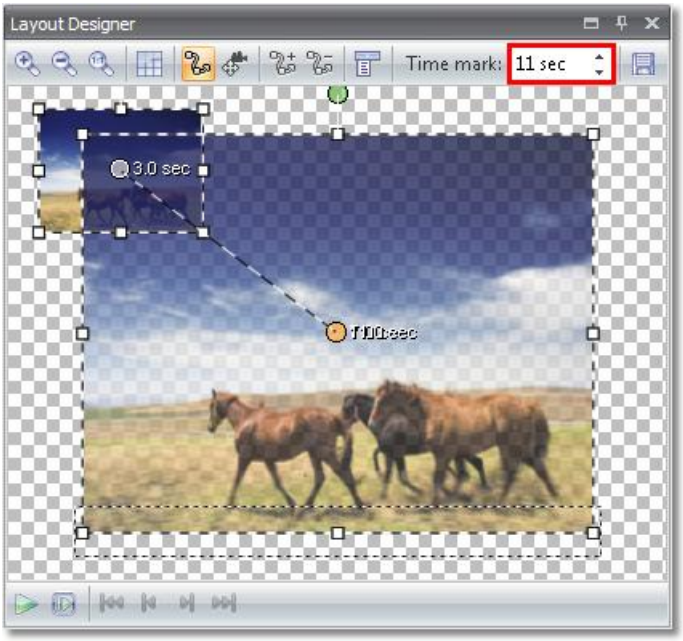
Now the image should fly back to its original position. For this, two additional *movement marks* are required.

Click the 2nd mark in the *Layout Designer* and then insert an additional movement mark with .



This mark is required to allow the image to stand still. The image should not become smaller again immediately. In this case a movement mark can be directly laid over a previous mark. To do that, you only have to drag Mark 3 over the top of Mark 2 now.



Then increase the time at the 3rd mark, as given in the image above. Then insert a 4th mark with . You will not recognize this immediately, since it is inserted exactly over the top of the 2nd and 3rd marks.

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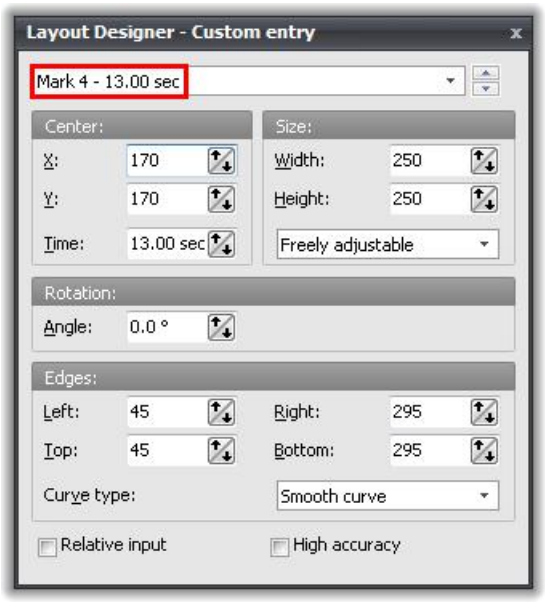
Retrieve *Custom entry* using .

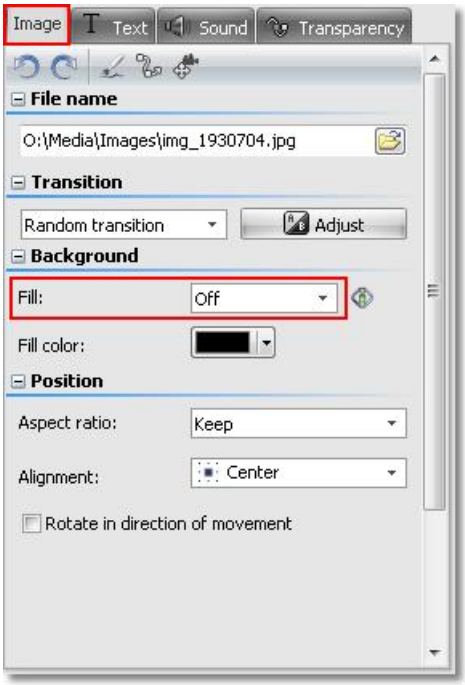


Now, under *Center* and *Size* set the values which have already been used at the first mark.

If you now play back the show, you will see that the image is enlarged and then reverts to its original place.

Now insert a new image into the show. Click on our image above once more and access the context menu using . There select *Copy path*. Now mark the newly inserted image and access the context menu again using and this time select *Insert path*.

In the *Properties* of the 2nd image you have to disable the *Fill background* function.



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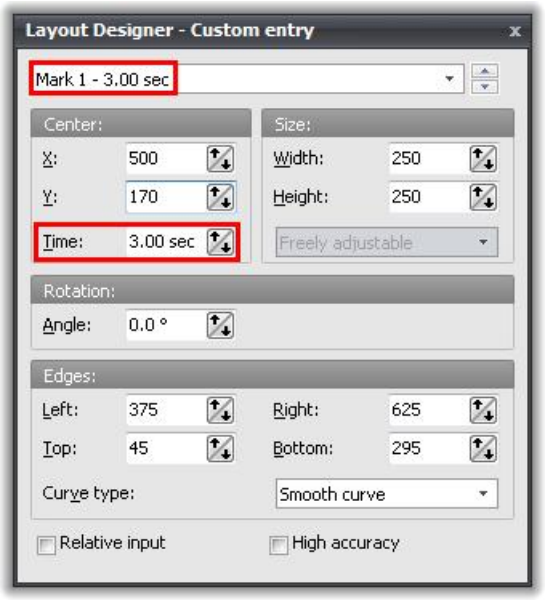
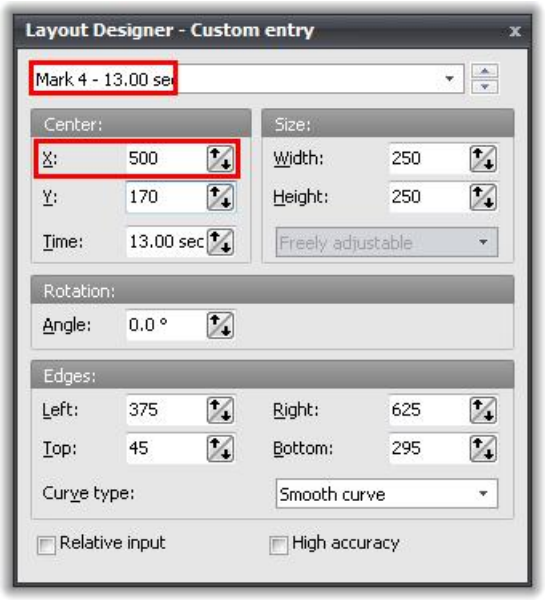
Now we will for once change the positions of the first and last marks. To do that, access the context menu using and accept the settings below once.

Mark 1:



Mark 4:



Then play back the show once in its entirety. And how do you like the effect?

In Stages Ultimate you can use *Rotations*. This is easy to accomplish via ***Custom entry***, too.

Open the context menu for an image via and select the 2nd movement mark. Under *Rotation* set the angle to 360 degrees. Do the same with the 3rd movement mark.

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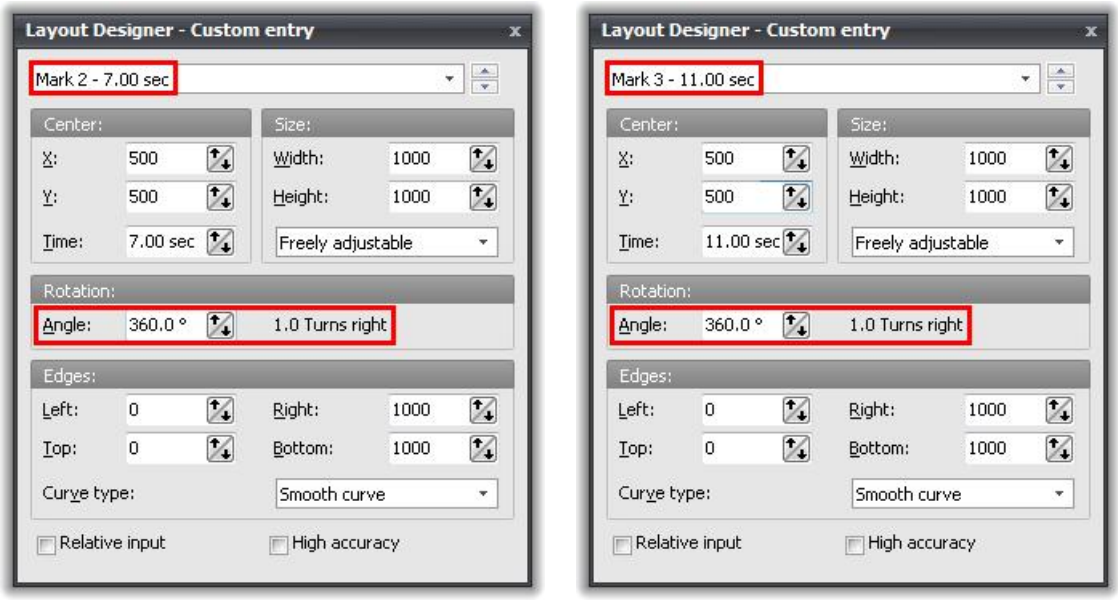
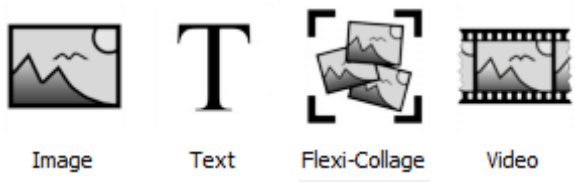


Play back the show.

These *movement paths* can be used on the following *Slideshow objects*:



2.9.3 Movement paths with rotations

Movement paths with automatic rotations can be applied to the following *Objects*:

Images, Collages and Videos can now be rotated automatically directly at the movement path. This way it is possible to correctly rotate cars or planes according to the direction of their path.

This feature is only available in AquaSoft Stages Ultimate.

You can activate this option in the Properties.

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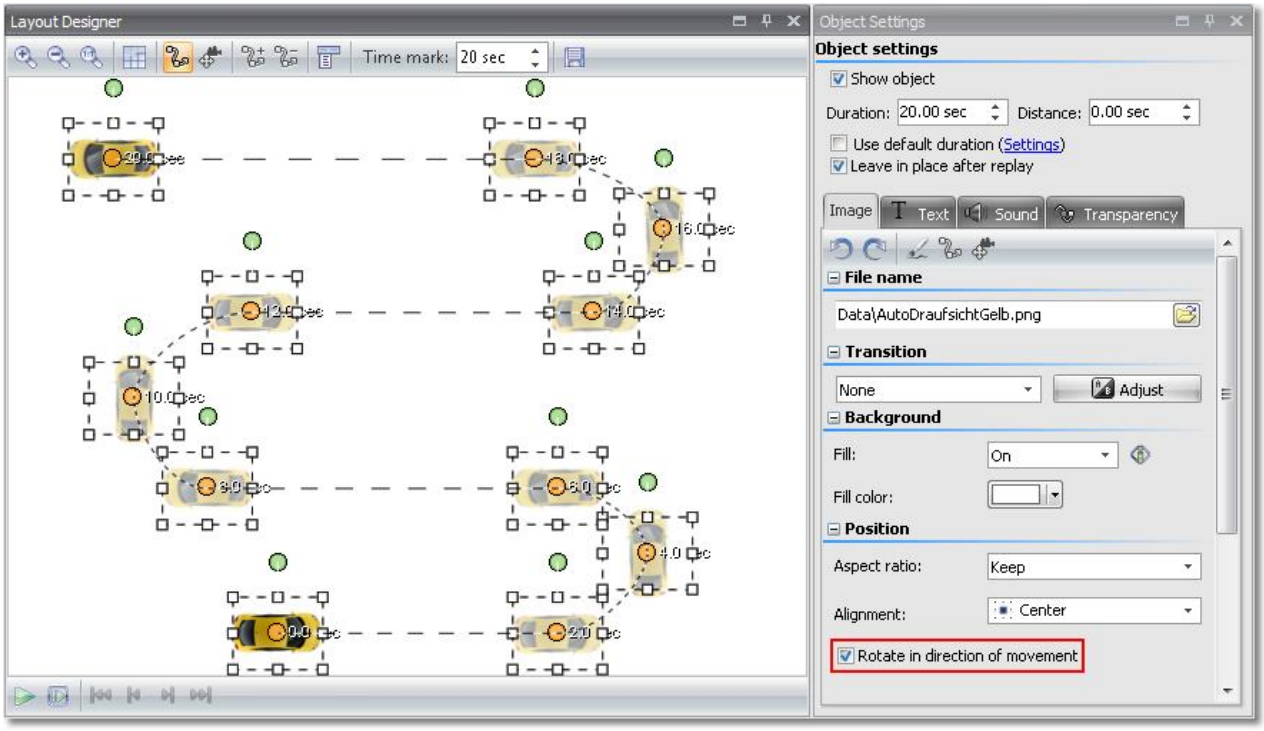

Click the icon and then *Select all marks*. You can see that the the car gets automatically rotated along the path.

2.9.4 Text with movement paths

Just like images, you can also let text move along movement paths. Please read the chapter Simple movement shots first to get to know how to set movement marks.

Create a new project and insert a Text object.

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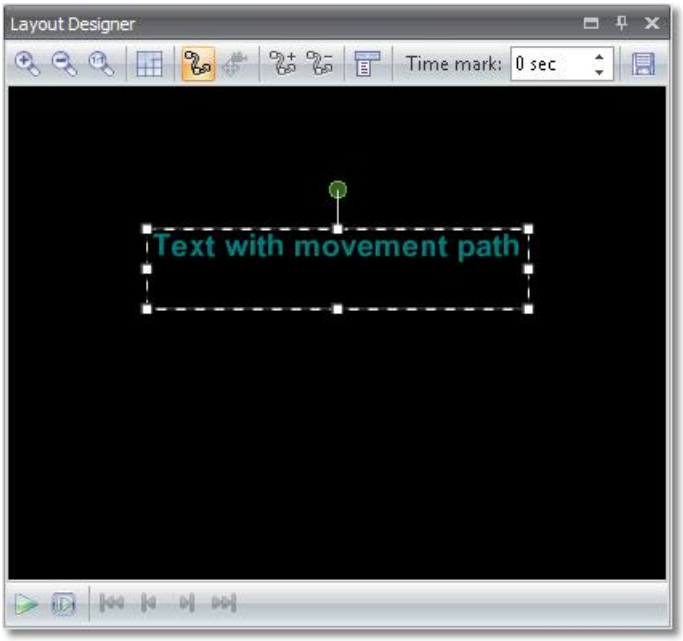
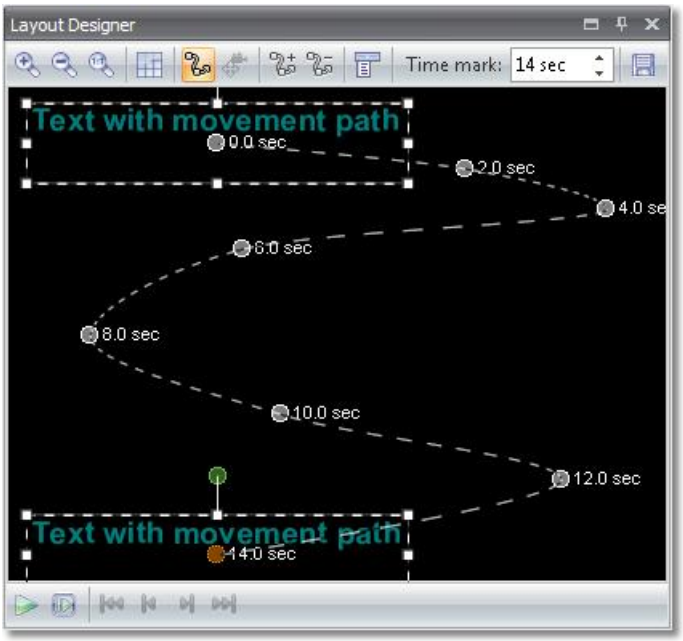


Now use to add several new movement marks. Position them in Layout Designer.



If you replay this small example you will see that the text moves along the path.

In the Properties for Text exists an option to specify the behavior of the text along the path during replay.

This feature is only available in AquaSoft Stages Ultimate.

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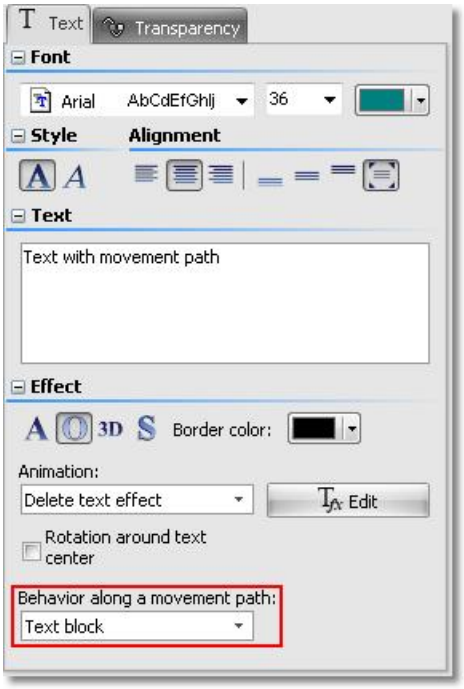
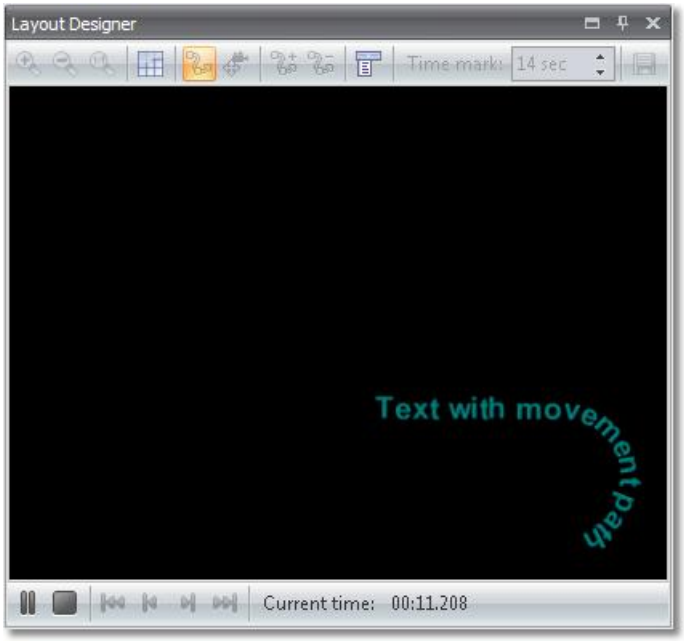


Text block	The text remains horizontally and moves along the path.
Separate characters	The characters are separately animated and snuggle up to the path.
Rotate text block	The whole text gets rotated along the path.
Rotate characters	The characters move separately along the path and snuggle up to it.

Example: Rotate characters



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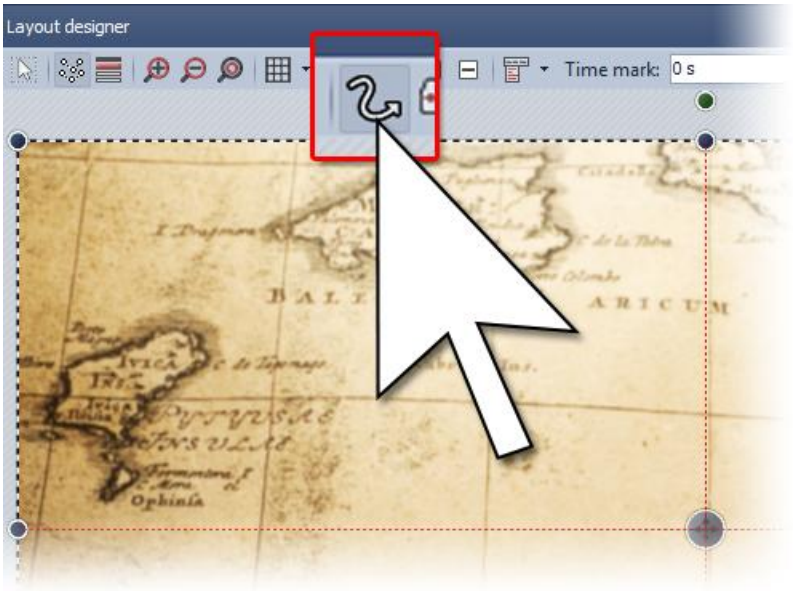
2.9.5 Camera pans

Create a new project and insert an image.

Image

Click on it in the Image list or on the Timeline, so that the image is shown in the Layout Designer and the corresponding tools are enabled.



With camera pans the images must be enlarged beyond the visible area. For that purpose, reduce the display of the visible area with the icon.

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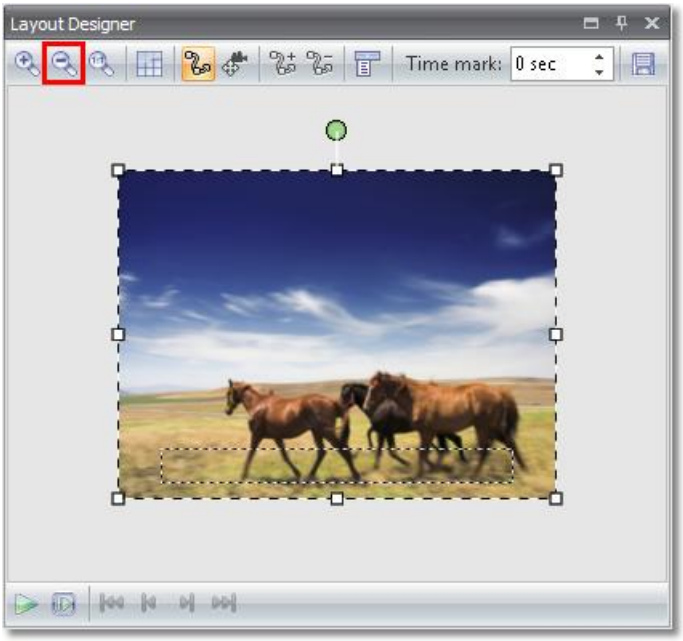
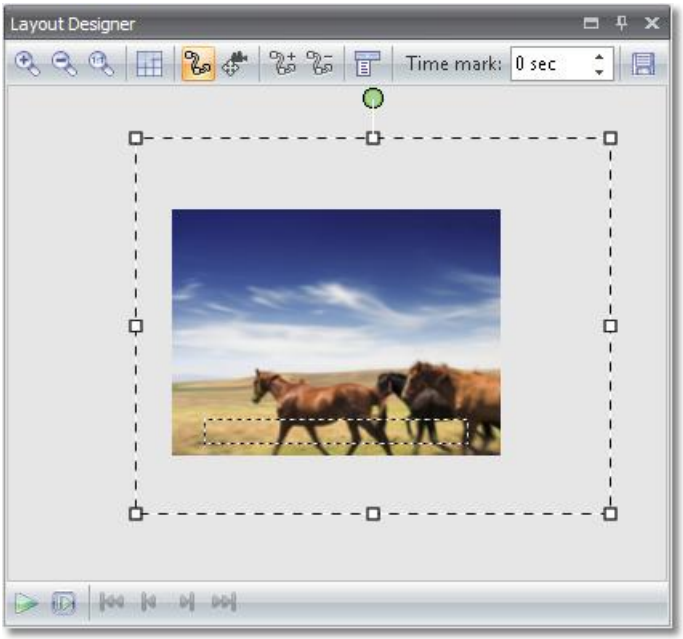


Now enlarge the image using the positioning frame until it looks similar to the image below.



Then, with the , insert a new movement mark and position it to the left of the first movement mark.

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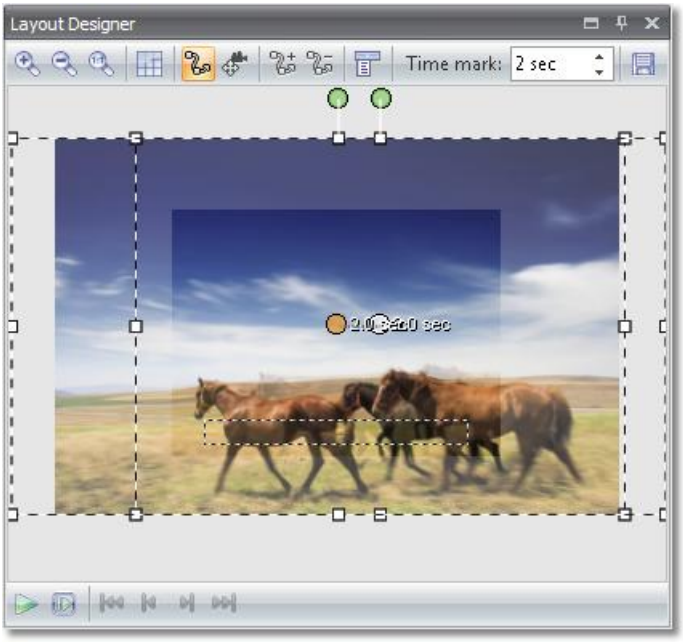
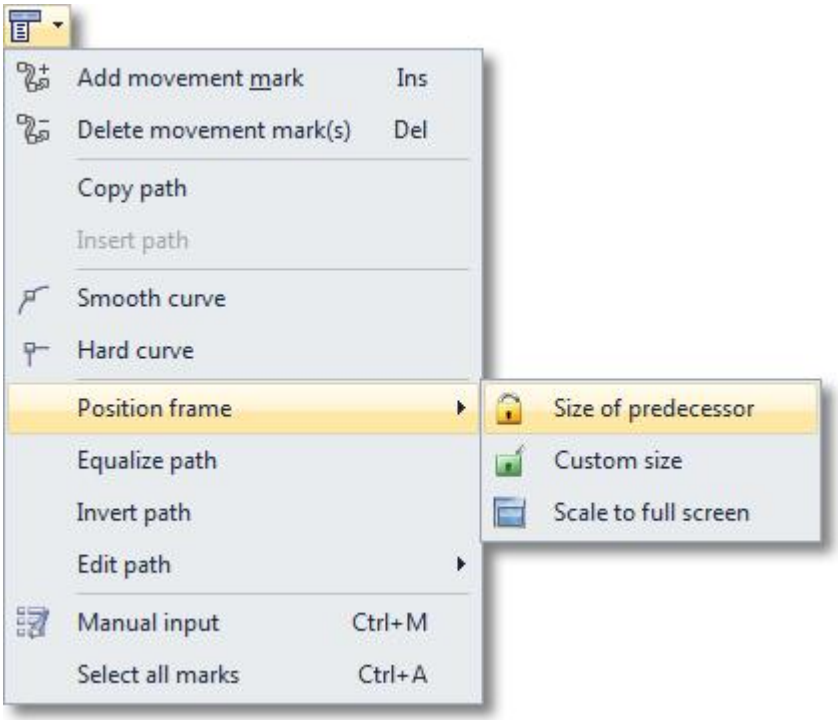


Increase the time at the second movement marker, so that the movement is carried out more slowly. Should you not wish to have any Transition at the beginning of the movement path, you can set None in the Properties of the image.

Then, with the right mouse button, retrieve the context menu at the 2nd movement mark marked. Now, in the latter, select Position frame/Use size of previous item. As a result, the size of the second movement mark is automatically adapted to the size of the previous one and can no longer be changed accidentally.



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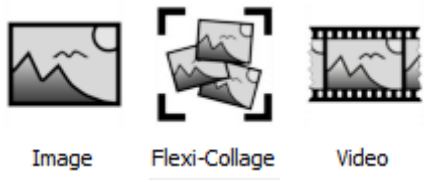
Every image with the setting Use size of previous item is marked in the Layout Designer with a .

Now simply click and enjoy the effect.

2.10 Zoom

With AquaSoft Stages you can also zoom into your images. If you want to show a particular section of an image enlarged, you can generate this using the corresponding tools in the Layout Designer. In that respect, you can freely choose the area which you would like to zoom in on.

You can apply Zoom and Camera pans to the Objects below:



You might find it useful to skim through the movements tutorial first since the zoom function is based on the movement path system.

Zooming into an image easily

Create a new project and insert an image.

Click on the image in the Image list or on the Timeline, so that the image is shown in the Layout Designer and the corresponding tools are enabled.

Select the icon from the upper edge of the Layout Designer to enter the Camera pan mode.

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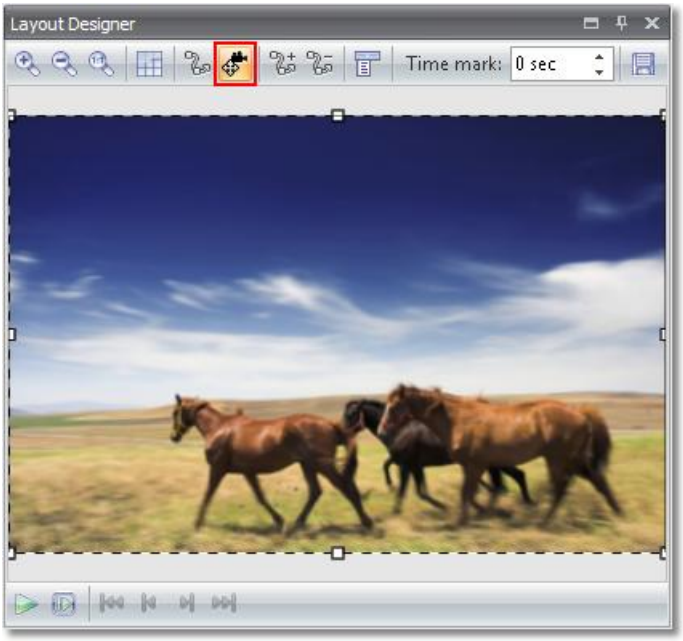
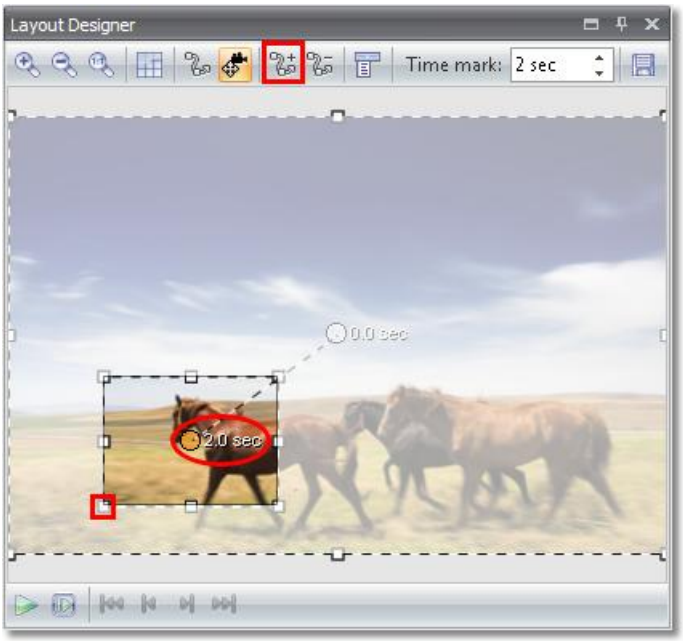


Now click the icon. This inserts a movement mark. A position frame is now drawn around this additional mark. Reduce the size of this mark by means of the position frame and drag the section to the place which is supposed to be enlarged.



So that the Transition does not have a disturbing effect on the Zoom, you can set the Transition in the Properties of the image to None or increase the Timestamps.

The 2nd mark is still marked (orange). First of all set the time there at 4 seconds. Then click the first mark in the Layout Designer and set the value to 3 seconds or more.

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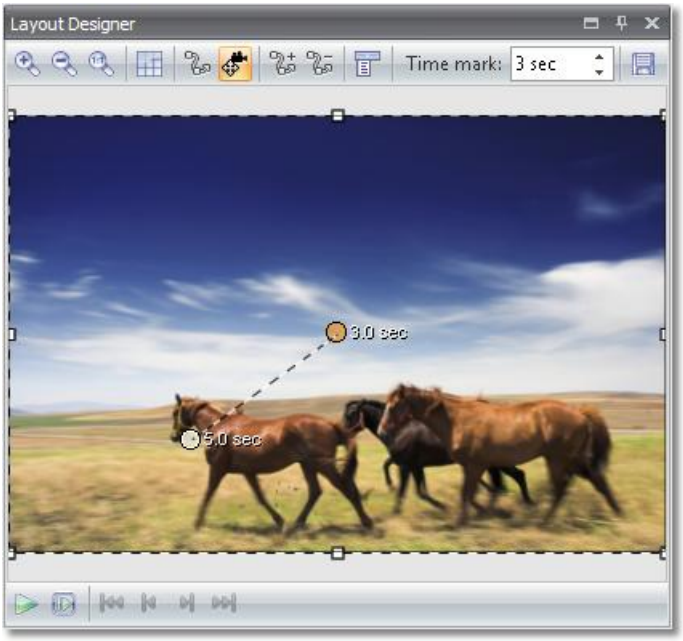

You can see that, by changing the time of the first mark, the subsequent marks also change automatically. In this way the movement set remains unchanged within the path.

The exposure time of an image is increased automatically if the time of the movement path becomes greater than the Duration set in the Image Properties.

After clicking you can play back the zoom effect.

Motion in the image

If you would like to zoom in on several sections of an image, you can now use a movement path in the image. Imagine you have a group photo and now wish to zoom in on the individual persons. However, you do not wish to constantly zoom in and out, but go over the faces in the image.

For that purpose, you can now insert an additional movement mark with the icon. Position the mark at the desired final point.

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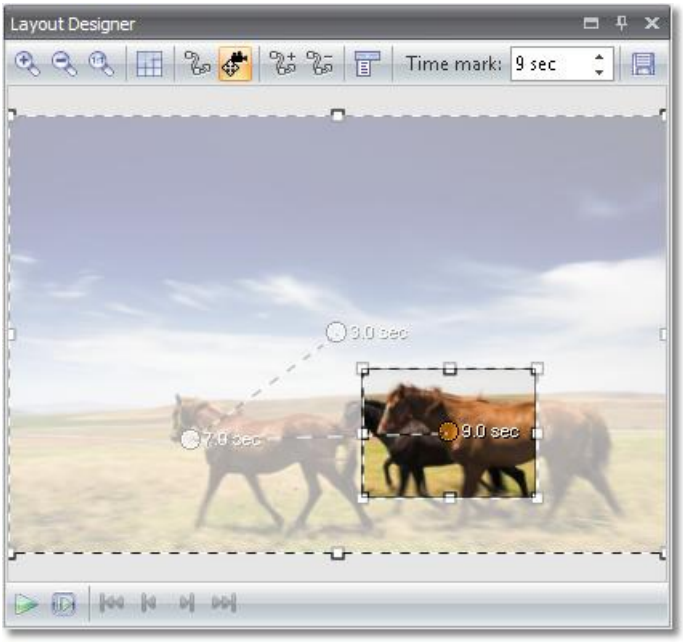
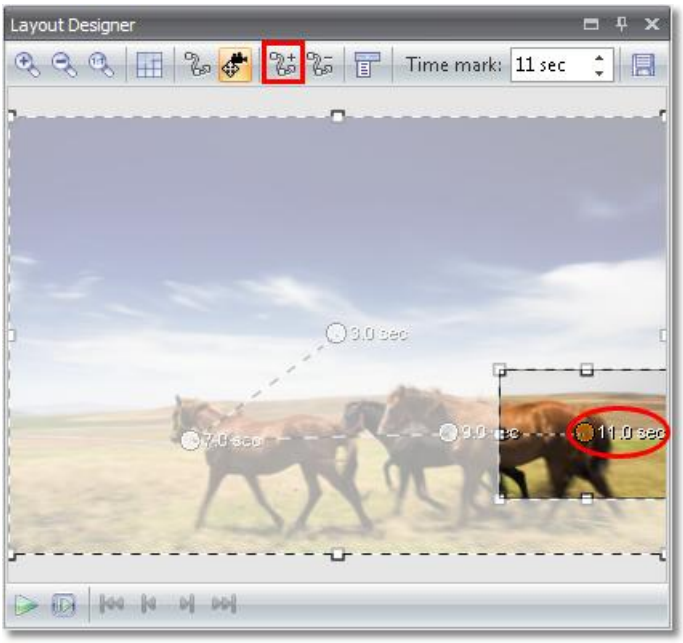


If you now play back the effect, you will now see that a camera pan is possible within the image. Using the time of the last movement mark you can control the speed. If you increase the time, the shot becomes slower.

Zooming out

You can have the image cross faded while you are zoomed in on the section, or first revert back to the overall image size.

In order to revert back to the full size, insert a new movement mark. Please ensure that the last movement mark is selected.



The easiest thing to do is now to use the Custom entry. Retrieve this with a right mouse-click button or by using the icon.

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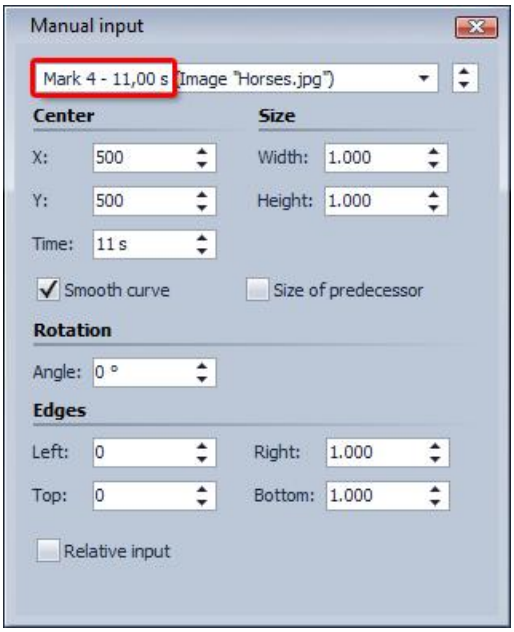
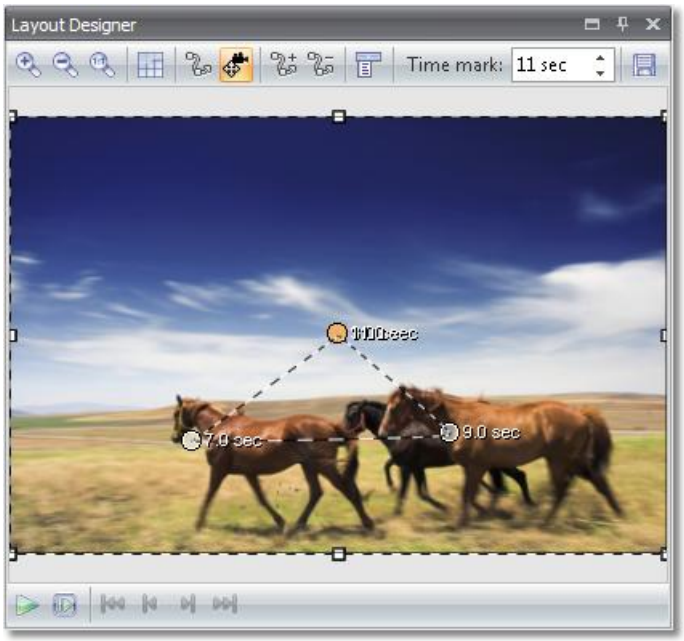


At Mark 4 set 500/500 as the Center and 1000/1000 under Size . As a result, the image at Mark 4 is displayed in its entirety, again.



Now simply click and enjoy the effect.

If you would like to leave the image at the end exposed a bit longer, increase the Exposure time of the image from the Properties. After the end of the movement path, the image then continues to remain on the screen.

When aligning the movement marks, it may occur to you that they snap magnetically to other movement marks and to horizontal and vertical lines of other movement marks. You can prevent them snapping this way by holding down the Ctrl-key on the keyboard when moving the mark.

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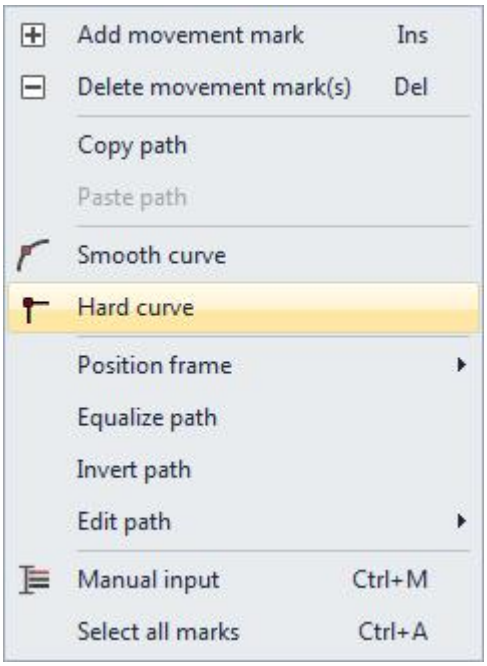
Furthermore, the movement marks are also aligned to the grid which can be enabled using the icon.

As you can see, it is very easy to zoom images. Simply insert movement marks and position them as desired – and already motions enters your image.

The movement path can be changed using the Curve type. Select Select all marks by means of the icon and click in the Layout Designer with the right mouse button.

In the context menu which now appears, select Curve type -> Hard.



You will now see the change in the form of the movement mark. This is now square, in order to represent the chosen Curve type.

After clicking you can see the change in the zoom. The pan in the curves is now Hard and is no longer carried out soft.

2.11 Rotations

Just camera pans are not enough for you? You want more zest in your presentation? Add freely definable rotations to your images.

This feature is only available in AquaSoft Stages Ultimate.

The following objects can be rotated:

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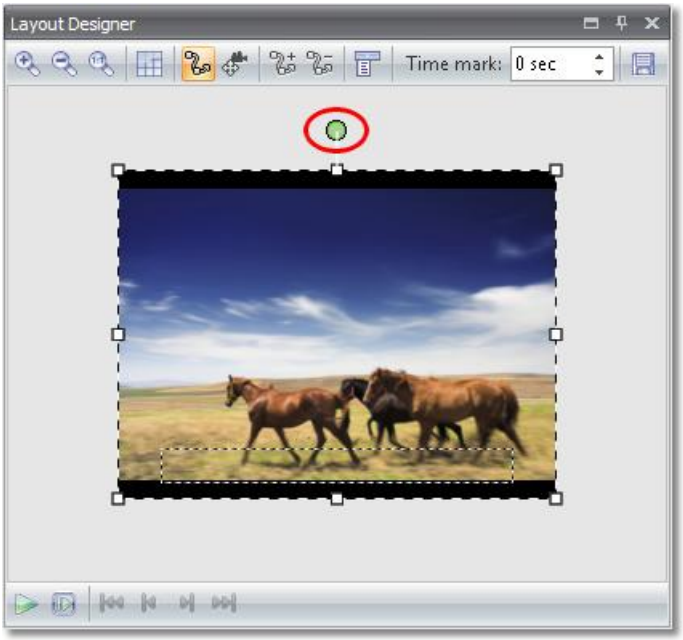
It doesn't hurt to read the tutorial Movements first because the rotations are combined with movement paths. The chapters Rotating text and Letting texts fly give more information about rotating text.

Create a new project and add an image.

Select the image in Image list or Timeline to display it in Layout Designer. The use the button in Layout Designer to zoom out a little.



Now you can use the green handle to rotate the image. Click it, hold the mouse button down and define the rotation angle. Use the Position frame around the image to decrease its size.

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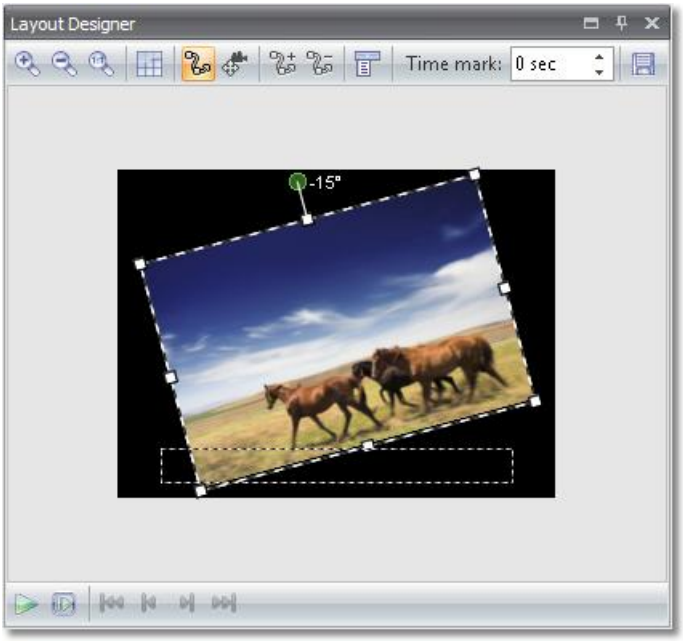
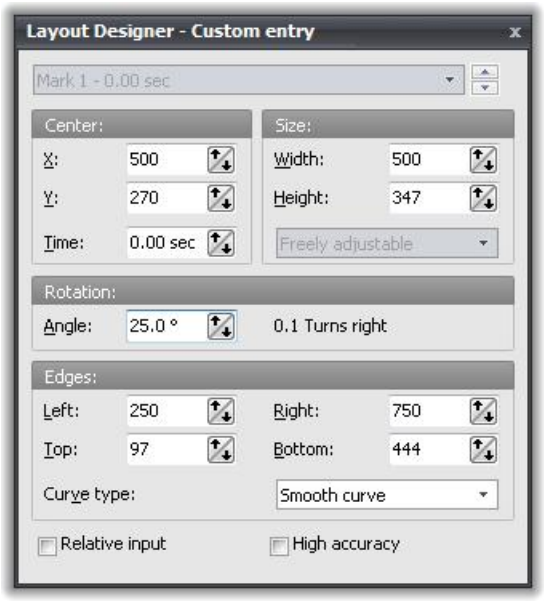


The black area in Layout Designer is the visible area. Images need to be positioned in this area if you want them to be displayed. You need the outside area for special purposes like e.g. images or texts that "fly" in from the outside.

To manually specify the rotation angle click on the image in Layout Designer and select Custom entry.



Now enter the Angle under Rotation.

Beautify your Collages by rotating the images in the Collage. Texts can be rotated this way, as well.

Of course this is not all you can accomplish with the rotation functionality. Would you like to trace your travel route with a car on a map? Then you can learn how to combine movement marks with rotations.

In our example we let the car follow a road. First we add the image of the road using the button. Instead you can add your image of the map.

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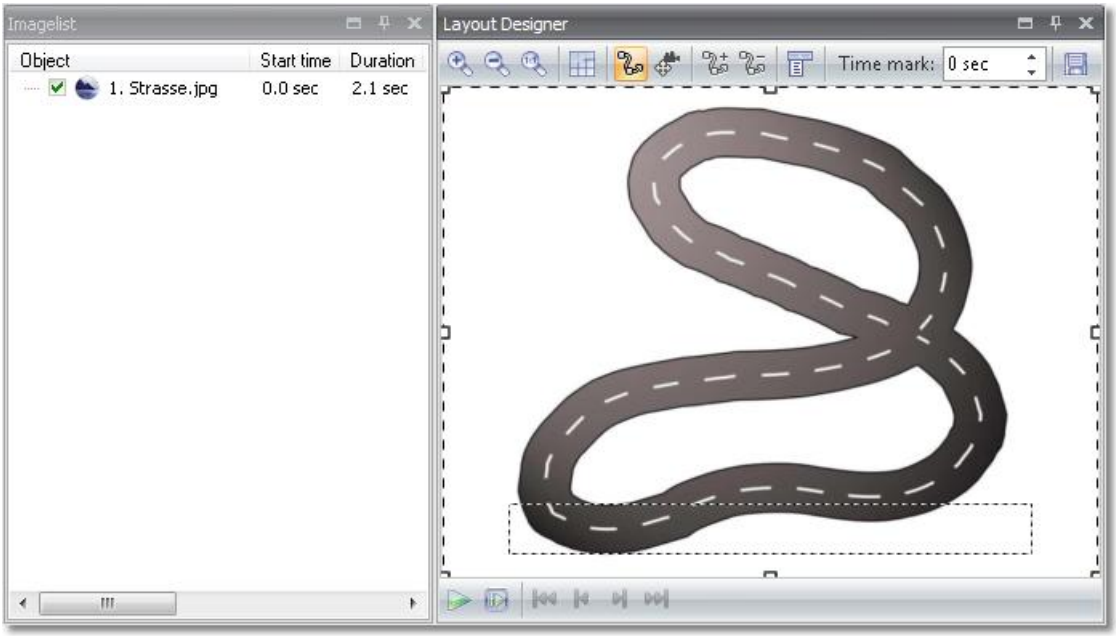
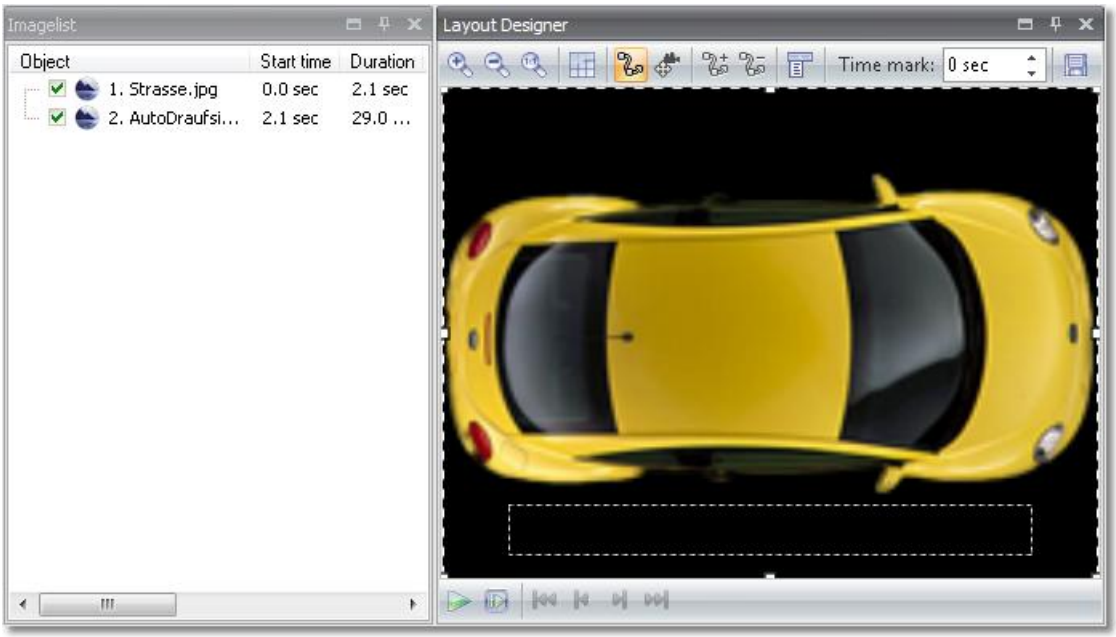


Now we need the car. Preferably it should be a PNG graphic with alpha channel.

Please consult the FAQ about how to create this type of graphic.

Add the car.



Decrease the size of the image using the Position frame.

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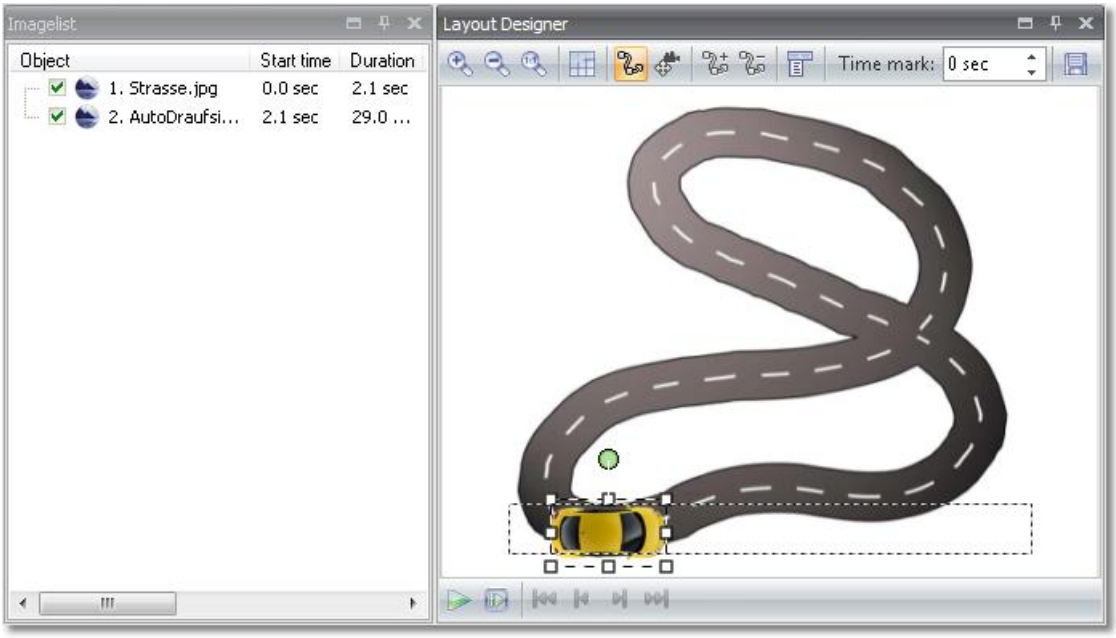
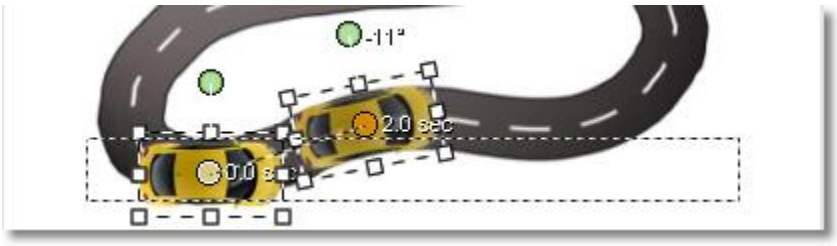


Now you can start the tour. Add a movement mark and rotate the car a little, following the direction of the road.



Add more movement marks and rotate the car accordingly.

You can adjust the time marks for each movement mark individually. Click on a mark, it will then be highlighted. Change the time mark in the menu bar above the image.

Now replay your show via .

Eventually the complete movement path should look similar to the following graphic.

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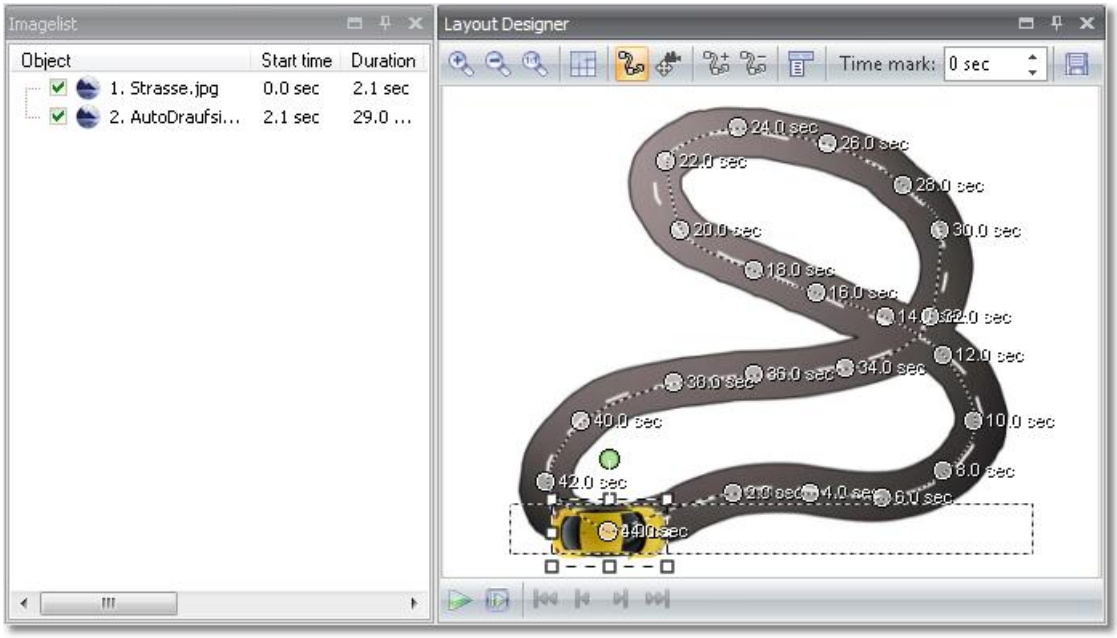
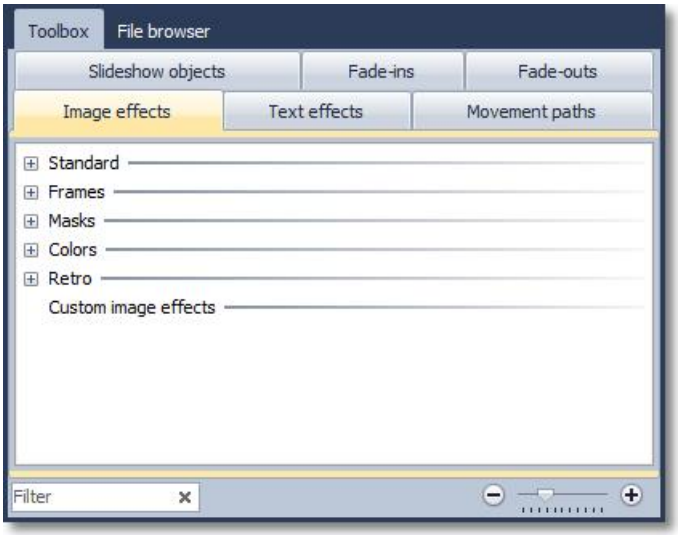


The rotation angle can be larger than 360 degrees. This way you can simulate effects like the skidding of a car out of a curve.

2.12 Image effects

With AquaSoft Stages you can now also apply image effects to your images and in this way present your images even more impressively.

In the Toolbox you will find the Image effects.



The Image effects are subdivided into various categories. With the plus icon you can open up the individual categories.

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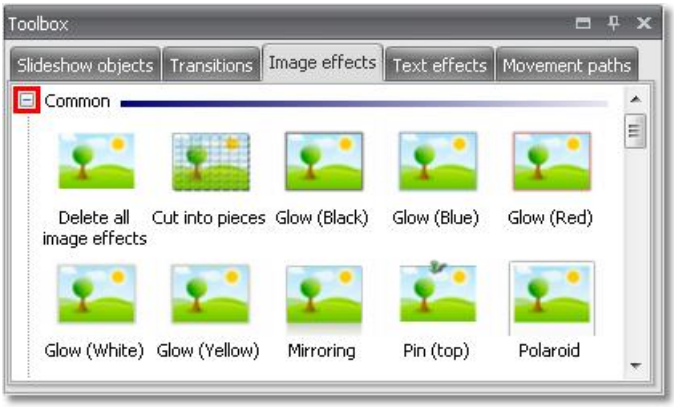
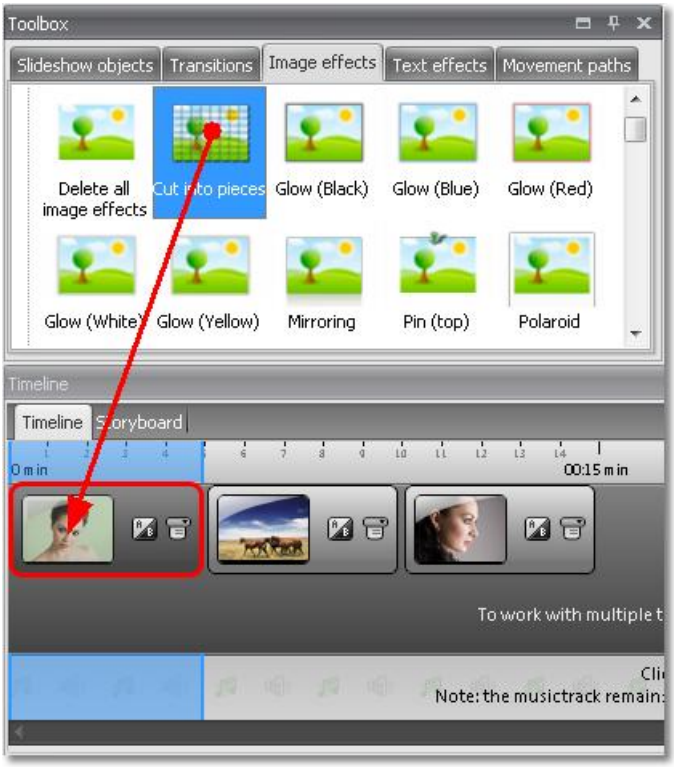


Image effects can be applied to an image very easily. Insert a few images into an empty project.

In order to now being able to apply the Image effects to these images, simply drag the desired effect out of the Toolbox to the image in the Timeline.



You will see the change in the Layout Designer. The effect becomes properly visible when playing back.

If you would like to assign an Image effect to several or all images select these images.

All images = Ctrl + A

Certain images = Ctrl + right click on the image

Select the Image effect with the left mouse key, then click right and select Apply. The Image effect will be assigned to all selected images.

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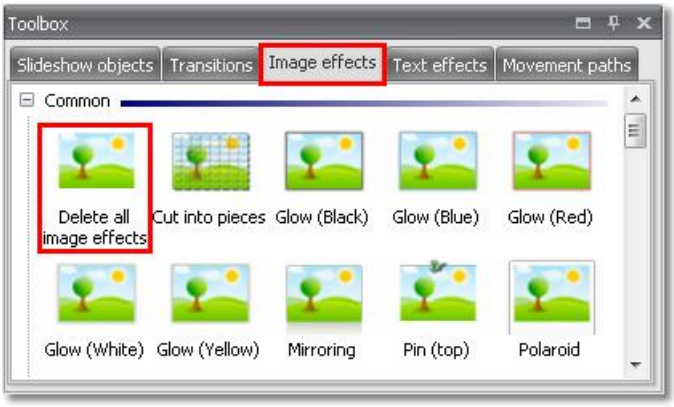
If you want to remove an Image effect again, in the category Common you will find the Delete all image effects object in the Image effects.



Simply drag the latter from the Toolbox onto the image on the Timeline in the case of which you wish to remove an effect set.

In AquaSoft Stages Ultimate you can create and edit such effects yourself. A special Effect editor is available there. It is explained in chapter Image editing.

2.13 Animated transparency

In AquaSoft Stages a transparency behaviour can be assigned to some Objects. This creates impressive effects. For instance, it is possible to let an image or text slowly appear from a black background and later disappear in it.

In this way images and texts can also appear semi-transparent on a previous image.

You can apply the animated transparency to the Objects below:

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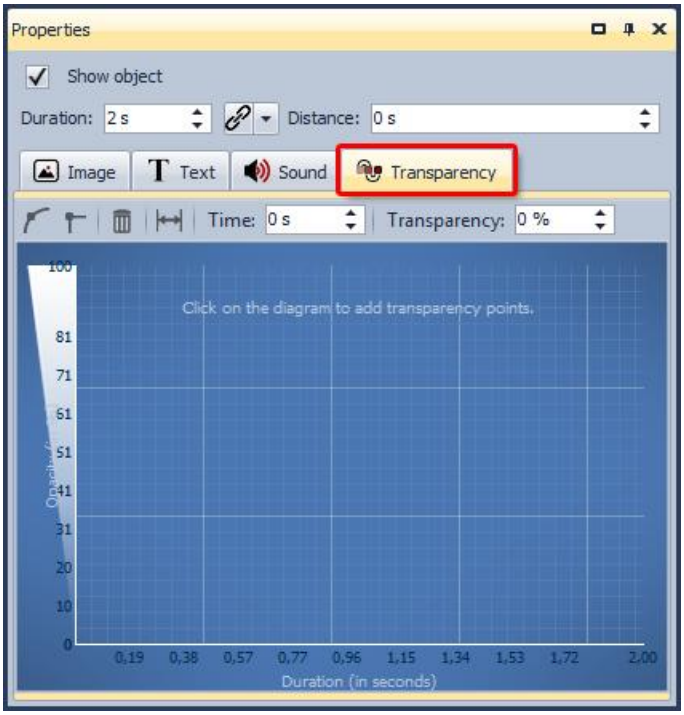
You will find the corresponding possibility for setting them in the Properties of the respective Objects.



Now with the left mouse button set markers in this system, which then form a transparency curve. On the left-hand side you will find the value of the transparency (in %); at 100% transparency the image is completely transparent (i.e. no longer recognizable), at 0% it can be seen completely. Above the curve you will find icons, the meaning of which is:

Points are round, the course of the transparency animation is soft.

Points are square, the course of the transparency animation is hard.

If you have clicked a transparency marker (appears orange), you can delete the marker by clicking the icon.

If you have changed the exposure time of the image or text, you can, by clicking this button, have the transparency set adjusted to the exposure time.

Move the markers by clicking an existing marker and keeping the mouse button pressed down. Now simply move the marker to the desired spot and release the button again. In order to delete the animated transparency entirely, you will have to remove all transparency markers.

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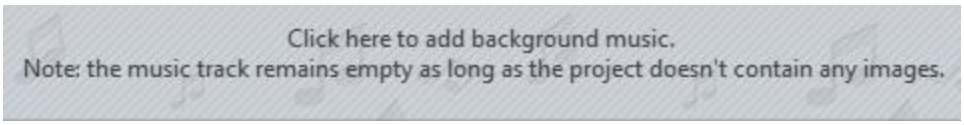
2.14 Background music

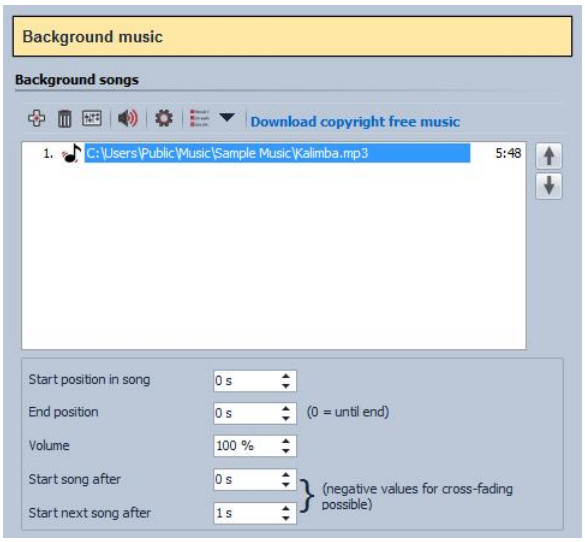
A perfect presentation not only includes impressive effects, but also background music. The Timeline provides its own sound track for Background music.



Click this sound track and the Background music menu is opened.

By means of the plus icon you can insert music onto that menu.

If you click the song, you can make further adjustments.



You can insert one or also multiple tracks. These are then listed below one another in the list. You can change the sequence by clicking the track and moving it in the list with the mouse button pressed down.

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Removes a selected track from the list

Plays back a selected song

Opens the music settings

A track can be gently faded in. In this case state how many second the fading in should last until the full volume should be achieved.

Songs can also be gently faded out. In other words, they are getting more and more quiet prior to the end. Here set the time, how long prior to the end the fading out should start.

Specify here at what volume the track should be played back.

You can delay the start of a track. Specify here the length of the delay.

If you do not want the following track to begin immediately, specify here the length of the break between songs.

It is also possible to only play a section of a track. Here you determine from what point in the song playing should start. For example, 20 secs -> The song begins at the 20th second. The first 20 seconds of the song are not played.

0 -> From the beginning.

Here you can determine when the song should end. In that respect, the timestamp in the song is to be selected again. If you want to end the song after 2 minutes, enter 120 secs here.

Example: Starting and final positions

You wish to only play 1 minute of the song. However, the part of the song which you would like to play back begins at the 45th second.

Starting position = 45 secs

Final position = 105 secs

You will see the music in its own track in the Timeline. The sound wave display will have alternating colors to make it easier to see when a title starts and ends.

The volume of the background music can be set individually. In the next chapter you will learn how this is done.

Only use unencrypted music tracks for your presentations. For legal reasons, AquaSoft Stages does not support the use of music tracks which have been encrypted by DRM or similar procedures.

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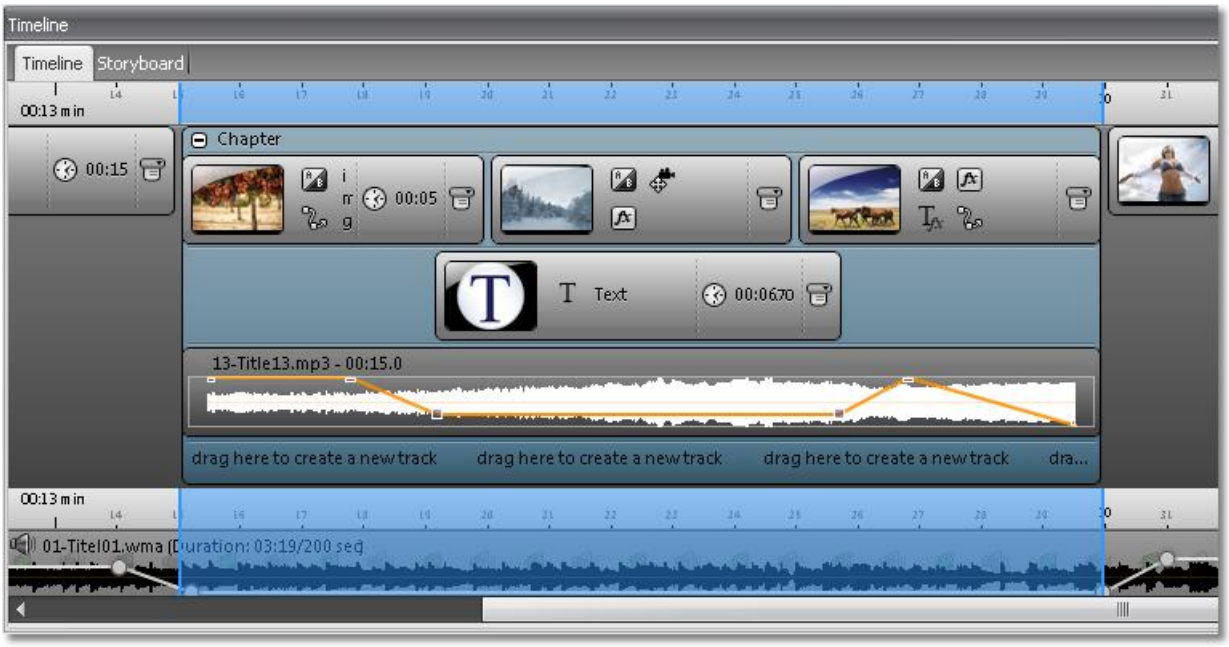
2.15 Custom volume settings

For each title, no matter if it's Background music or a Sound object, you can separately adjust the volume. This happens in the Timeline.

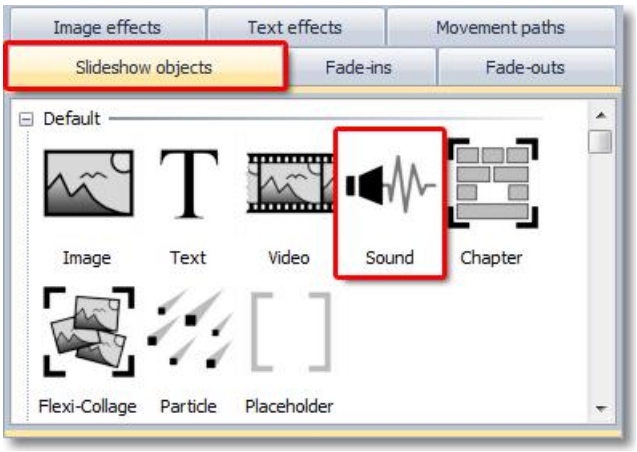


To get the line, click the wave form of the title. Each click creates a mark that can be moved to adjust the volume. A right-click on such a mark will delete it. The line will be removed when the last mark was deleted.

Background music will be automatically faded-out when a Sound object starts. You don't need to do this manually. You can configure the fade-out volume and duration in the music settings.

2.16 Sound objects

If you have undertaken the desired adjustments with an object/image, you can drag it out of the Image list or Timeline to the Toolbox. A window then opens for saving the template. Enter a name there.



Afterwards you will find the template in the Toolbox under Objects -> Custom objects. Click the object and then select the images. These are then inserted with the desired template.

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The Sound-object is usually used if a sound will only be played over the length of a certain number of images. This is accomplished by using a Chapter. You can find an example in chapter Multiple tracks.

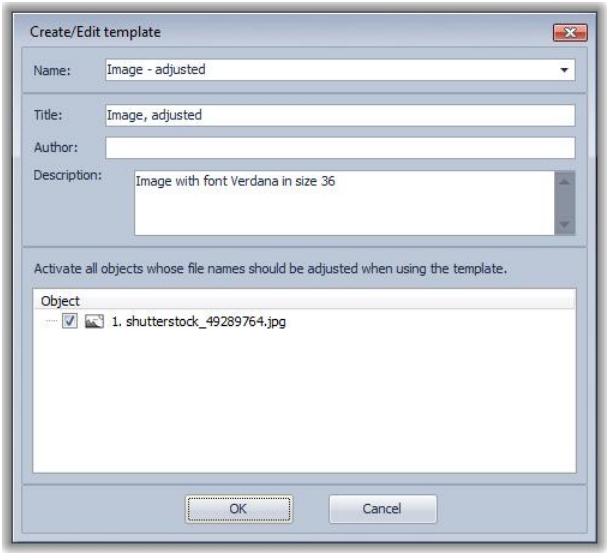
Here you can find a chapter about Sound-properties.

Only use unencrypted music tracks for your presentations. For legal reasons, AquaSoft Stages does not support the use of music tracks which have been encrypted by DRM or similar procedures.

2.17 Saving own templates

After you got a bit familiar with **AquaSoft Stages** there is a multitude of options for own objects waiting for you. The goal is to reuse nicely designed compositions and thus saving of time. The principal is simple. You know the different kinds of objects by now. Together with your comments and settings whole presentations or parts of them came into existence. Some parts are usable only for the project they belong to, in others there are elements that are commonly usable or at least a few times. If you created such elements you can easily save them as new objects.

If you have applied the desired adjustments to an object/image, you can drag it out of the Image list or Timeline to the Toolbox. A window then opens for saving the template. Enter a name there.



Afterwards you will find the template in the Toolbox under Objects -> Custom objects. Click the object and then select the images. These are then inserted with the desired template.

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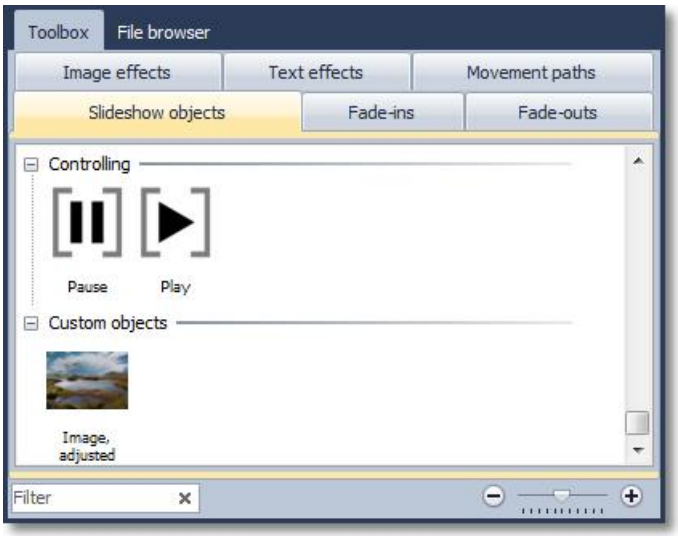
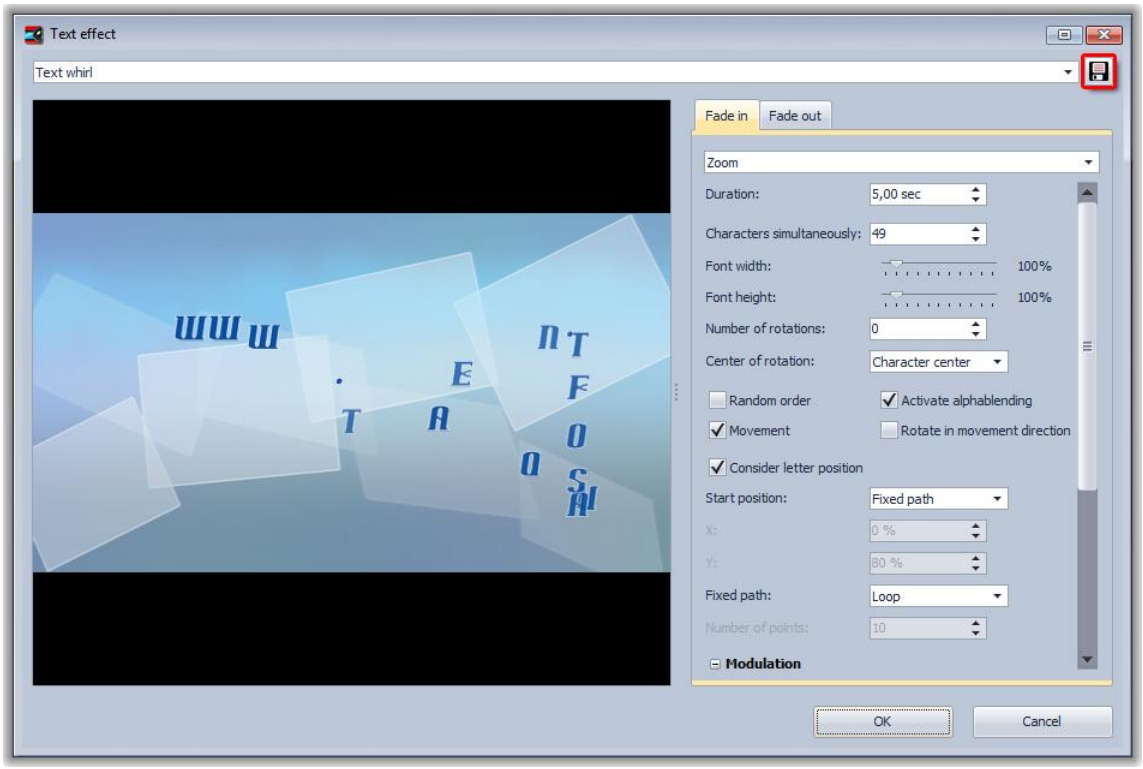


Saving own text effects

This feature is only available in AquaSoft Stages Ultimate.

If you made changes to a text effect and would like to save them, just click on the icon.



A dialog opens that lets you save the template.

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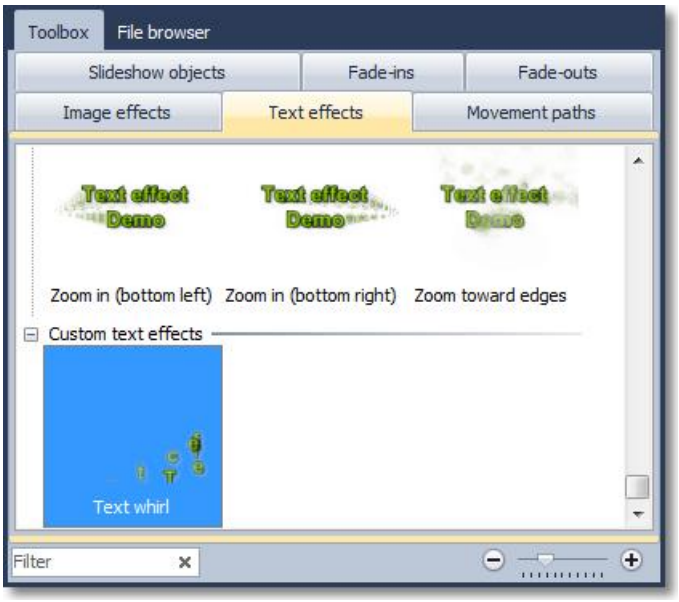
After the Text effect was saved it will be added as a Custom text effect to the Toolbox and can now be applied to other text/images.



Saving own movement paths

This feature is only available in AquaSoft Stages Ultimate.

Movement paths can be saved, as well. Click on the icon in Layout Designer.

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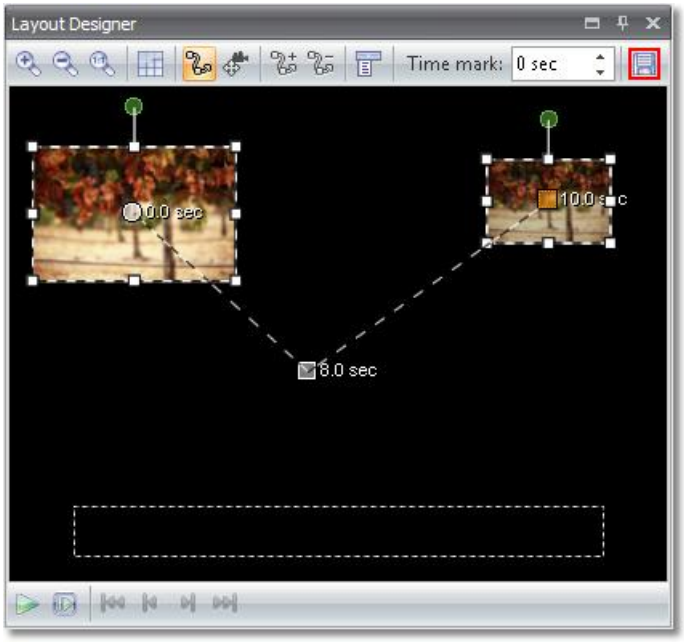
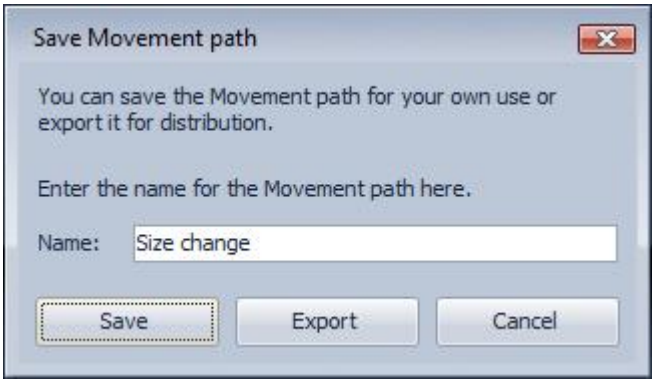
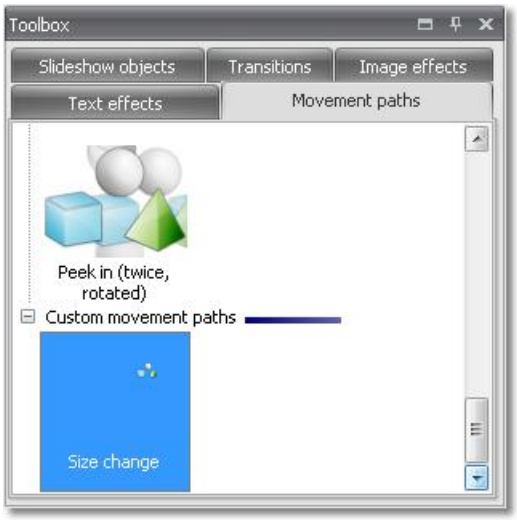


A dialog opens that lets you save the template.



After the Movement path was saved it will be added as a Custom movement path to the Toolbox and can now be applied to other images.



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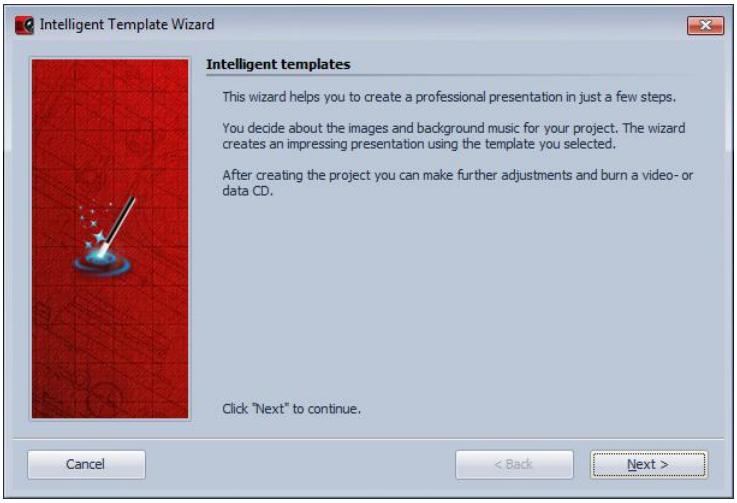
2.18 Using the Intelligente template Wizard

The Intelligente template Wizard contains a series of Intelligent templates which make it easy for you to create your presentation.

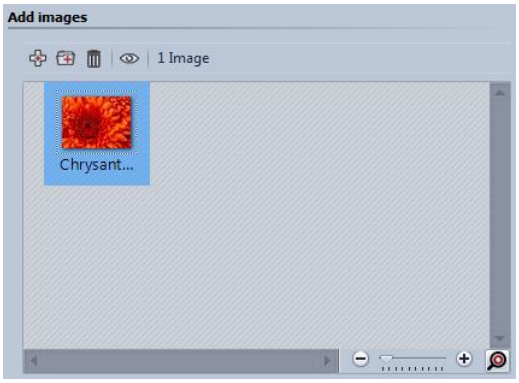
At lightning speed you can select images and music to create an attractive presentation in connection with a style.

Under *File / New / Use Intelligent templates...* you can access the Intelligente template Wizard.



Click Next to begin designing the project.

In the next step please insert images using the Plus icon.



Then click Next.

Now insert your desired background music using the Plus icon.

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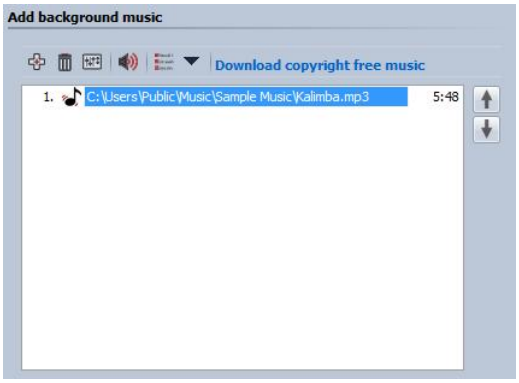
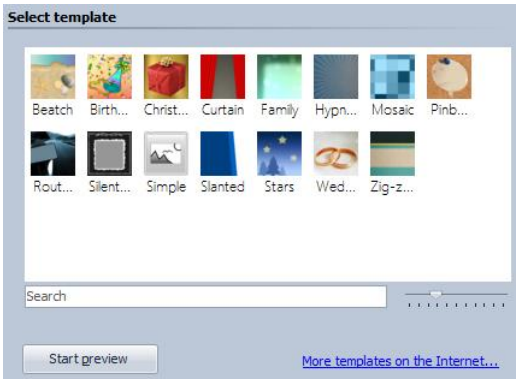


Next click Next.

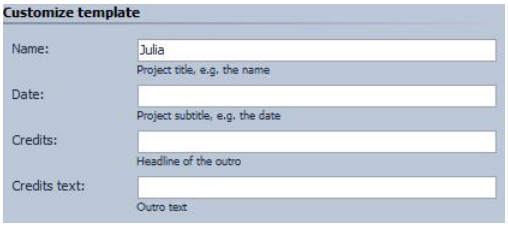
Now select a style template.



With the Start preview button you can inspect the style template.

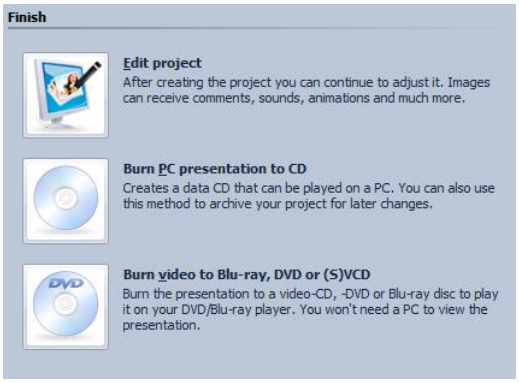
Next click Next.

With some templates you can enter a film title and further personal details.



Next click Next.

Now you can decide what the next step should be.



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Edit project	Opens the style template with the images in AquaSoft Stages for editing. It is now possible to make individual adjustments.
Burn PC presentation to CD	This option opens the CD Wizard and you can record the presentation on a CD or prepare it for passing on. The CD recorded can then be reproduced on a PC (not on a DVD player).
Burn video to Blu-ray, DVD or (S)VCD	This option opens the Video Wizard. The presentation will be recorded on a Blu-ray, DVD or video CD. First the project must be converted into a video.

3 Intelligent templates

3.1 Editing templates

1. Why can't I easily edit an Intelligent template?

When you are using an Intelligent template, you typically only need to add your own objects (photos, music, etc) and not make changes to the structure of the template.
Thus, decorative elements and effects that make up the background of the template are not visible and cannot be edited. This preserves the convenience of the template and keep the project clear.
Because, showing what really went into making the presentation, would mean cluttering up the timeline.

2. How can I edit an Intelligent template?

We don't recommend making changes to templates without having deeper knowledge of how the program functions. You should only attempt to edit a smart template if you know which object is responsible for which effect and how to influence its settings.

If you're sure, proceed as follows:

1. Find and activate the Developer mode under the "Extras" menu. Then restart the program.
2. Open an empty show.
3. Drag an Intelligent template into the timeline.
4. Go to Workspace / Panels / Scripting IDE
5. In the window that pops up click on *generated project* in the upper right hand corner. And make a check mark next to *save project after first layer of the script execution*.
6. Briefly play the show in the layout designer with the small play icon (alternatively you can use the preview feature with the **F7** key) and then hit the stop button. *Note this feature will not work if you hit the pause rather than stop button.
7. Now go back to the script editor and under *generated project* put a check mark next to *open in new program instance*.

The project will open in a new window, where the details of the tracks and elements within the smart template can be viewed and edited. In the timeline click on the plus sign to expand the details of elements. Here you can change, remove, and add elements. But before you make any changes be sure to save your new project under a different name so as not to make permanent alterations to the original template.

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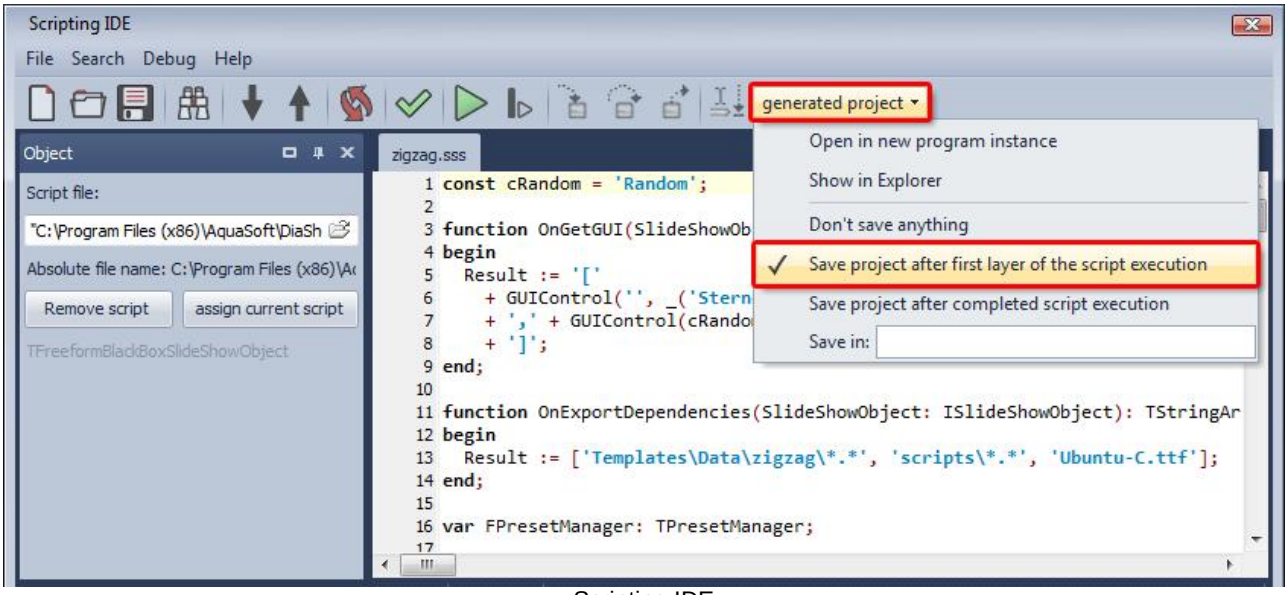

Scripting IDE

Make sure you disable Developer mode after saving your changes, as remaining in this mode may mean a significant loss in loading speed. To disable Developer mode you must uncheck the Developer mode button and then restart the program.

4 Properties of objects

As you have already learnt in the previous sections, there are so-called ***Properties*** for the ***Objects***. In these you can configure specific settings for the respective objects.

You will find the Objects in the Toolbox.

The Properties can be shown fixed on the user interface (always embedded) or also only displayed when required. If you do not show them on the user interface, you can access the Properties at any time by right-clicking the relevant object.

The following fundamental properties are available with every object:

☑ Show object	Determines whether the object should be shown when playing back the presentation.
Duration: 5,00 sec	Here you can set the exposure time. In other words, how long, for example, an image, text or video is supposed to be shown. The cross fading effects take place within this exposure time.
☑ Use default duration (Settings)	In the ***Project settings*** you can set a standard exposure time for your ***Objects***. If you change the exposure time there, this applies to all ***Objects*** in the show in the case of which the standard exposure time was enabled and to ***Objects*** which are newly inserted.
☑ Leave in place after replay	Normally an image or text is cross faded by a subsequent image. In that respect, the image lingers. If it is not desired in the case of a particular animation, the lingering can also be turned off.

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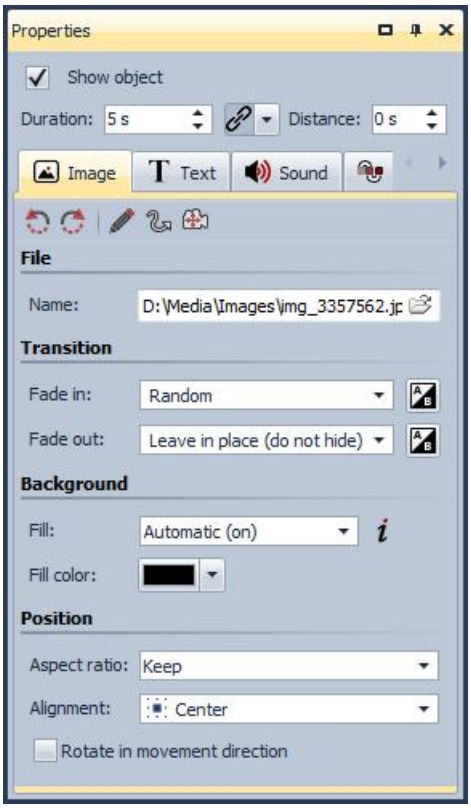
If you deactivated an image of your show (Show object deactivated), it will not be displayed anymore in the Timeline. The Timeline displays only objects that are supposed to be replayed. If you want to reactivate an image you can do this in the Image list or in the Storyboard.

4.1 Image

In the Properties of an Image you can configure the following settings:

Image



Rotates the image counterclockwise.

Rotates the image clockwise.

Opens the Image editor.

Specifies a movement path.

Specifies a camera pan.

File name	Shows the path and file name of your image.

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Aspect ratio	Images have an aspect ratio which is comprised of the height and width of the image. If an image differs from the aspect ratio of the project, it can be decided here how the image should be represented. Keep: The image retains borders when being played back. Crop: Parts are cropped from the edge of the image until the image fits into the correct aspect ratio without edges emerging. Distort: The image is inserted using the aspect ratio of the project, whereby a distortion of the image takes place.
Alignment	Determines the position of the image on the screen.
Rotate in direction of movement	If you assigned a movement path to an image you can let the image automatically rotate along the path. This function is only available in AquaSoft Stages Ultimate.
Fill background	On = Background gets a color filling when display size of the image is reduced. Off = Background doesn't get a filling and the previous object "looks through". For images inside collages or Picture-in-Picture effects it has to be Off. Automatic = SlideShow sets filling to On automatically for images/videos/collages in the first track. If you move an object to the second or a lower track filling will be set to Off. This way Picture-in-Picture effects can be created quickly. If you want to the value to remain select it from the drop-down box.
Transition	Here the Transition can be set or also deselected. For that purpose, in the drop-down list there is None as the first option. With the Adjust button, the transitions can be configured. You can also obtain a preview of all transitions there.

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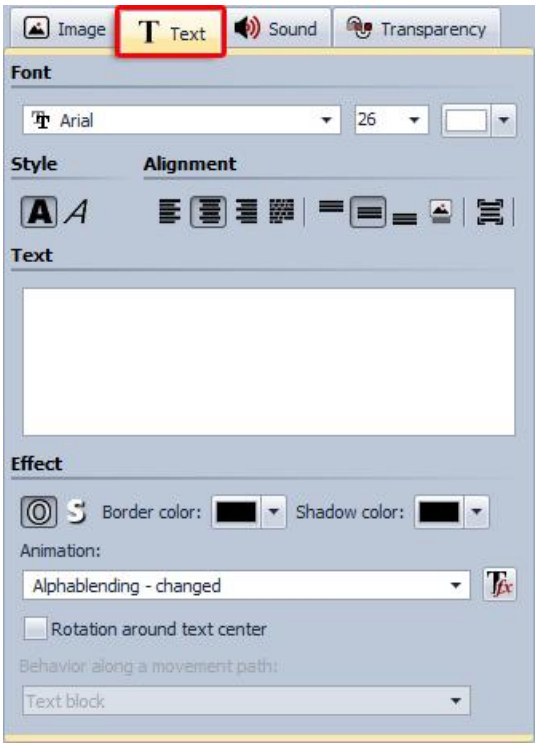
Text



The possible formats are almost always self-explanatory through the icons and you are no doubt familiar with them already from other text programs.

The Alignment, however, has a minor peculiarity.

Positions the text at the lower edge of the screen.

The text is shown in the center of the screen.

Positions the text at the upper edge of the screen.

Places the text freely in order to determine the position in the image individually.

The text is shown underneath the image. That also applies if the image is shown reduced in size.

If you don't wish to have separate text animation, activate the option Show text with image.

Should the text be shown animated, you can select various ready-made animations from the list. You can still adjust the animation using the Edit button. You can also see a preview of the animations there.

Rotation around text center refers to animations in which the text is rotated. Under Edit you can also determine a different rotation center.

With Behavior along a movement path you can specify how text gets displayed when it moves along a movement path. You can choose if the whole text shall move as a block or even as separate characters along a movement path. In the latter case the characters "snuggle up" to the path.

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Sound

Folder icon	Using the yellow folder you can assign commentaries or pieces of music already included to an image.
Play icon	Plays back the music file assigned to.
Record	Opens the Sound Wizard and you can then record a commentary to go with the image.
Volume	Determines the volume of the sound when played back.
Fade background music	You can determine whether the volume of the background music should be faded/decreased when playing back the sound.
Adjust display duration to sound duration	Plays back the sound in its entirety and thereby adapts the exposure time of the image to the length of the sound.
Continue sound after end of image	With this option the image can have a shorter duration than the sound. The sound then simply continues to be played on into the next images until it has come to an end.
Fade-out sound after end of image	Should the exposure time of the image have come to an end, but the sound be longer, with this option the sound is faded out at the end of the image. Under Duration you can set the fading out time.

Transparency

Animated transparency is described in the design options under Animated transparency.

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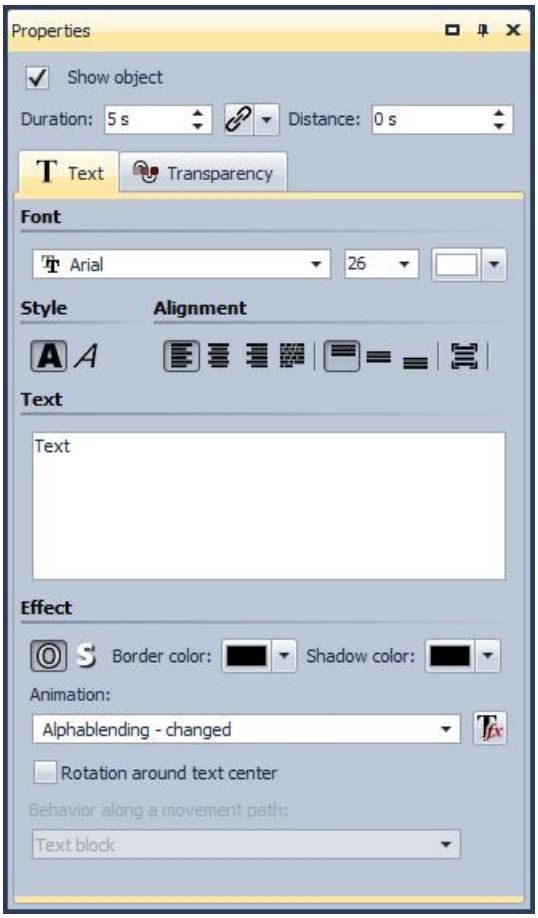
4.2 Text

In the Properties of a Text object you can configure the following settings:



The Text Properties do not differ from the Text Properties for images. In this case only the Show text with image option is not available. The Text object is an independent Object, nonetheless, it can be faded into images and videos.

If you want your text to be moving along a movement path, please have a look at chapter Text with movement paths.

Transparency

Animated transparency is described in the design options under Animated transparency.

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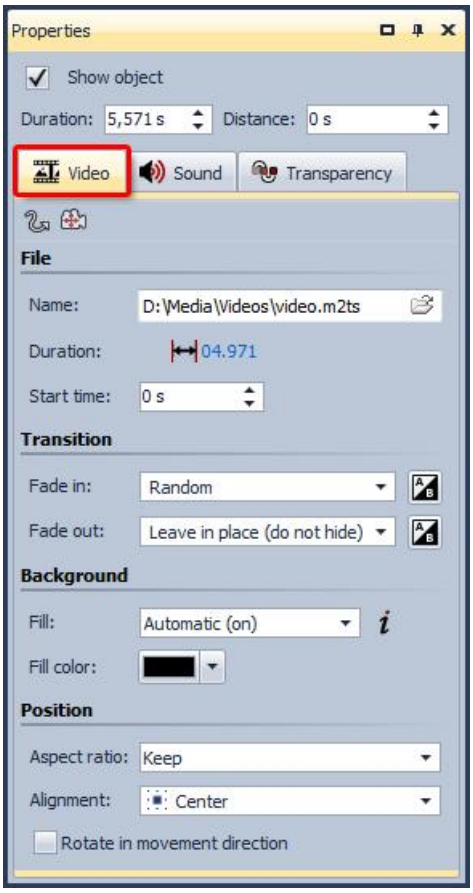
4.3 Video

With the Video object you can configure the following settings in the Properties:



Video

File name	Shows you the path and file name of your video. Using the yellow folder you can also exchange the video for another video file.
Duration	If you have once changed the playback time of the video, you can set the correct video length again with a click on the time.
Start time	Here you can specify from which position a video is to be replayed. If you don't want to show the first ten seconds enter 11.
Play back video entirely	If the option is selected, the full length of the video is played back. If you deselect the option, you can set the playback duration individually.
Aspect ratio	Videos, just like images, have an aspect ratio, which consists of width and height of the frames. If a video differs from the aspect ration of the project you can here decide how to display the video. Keep: The video retains borders when being played back. Crop: Parts are cropped from the edge of the video until the video fits into the correct aspect ratio without edges emerging.

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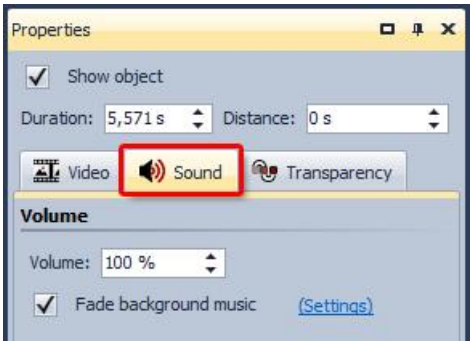
	Distort: The video is inserted using the aspect ratio of the project, whereby a distortion of the image takes place.
Alignment	Determines where the video is supposed to be positioned on the screen.
Rotate in direction of movement	If you assigned a movement path to a video you can let the video automatically rotate along the path. This function is only available in AquaSoft Stages Ultimate.
Fill	On = Background gets a color filling when display size of the video is reduced. Off = Background doesn't get a filling and the previous object "looks through". For images inside collages or Picture-in-Picture effects it has to be Off. Automatic = SlideShow sets filling to On automatically for images/videos/collages in the first track. If you move an object to the second or a lower track filling will be set to Off. This way Picture-in-Picture effects can be created quickly. If you want to the value to remain select it from the drop-down box.
Transition	Here the Transition can be set or also deselected. For that purpose, in the drop-down list there is None as the first option. With the Adjust button, the transitions can be configured. You can also obtain a preview of all transitions there.

Sound



Here you can determine if the background music should be faded out when the video is played back. If the video does not have its own sound, but perhaps a noise has been recorded, set the volume of the video to 0% and remove the check mark beside Fade background music.

Transparency

Animated transparency is described in the design options under Animated transparency.

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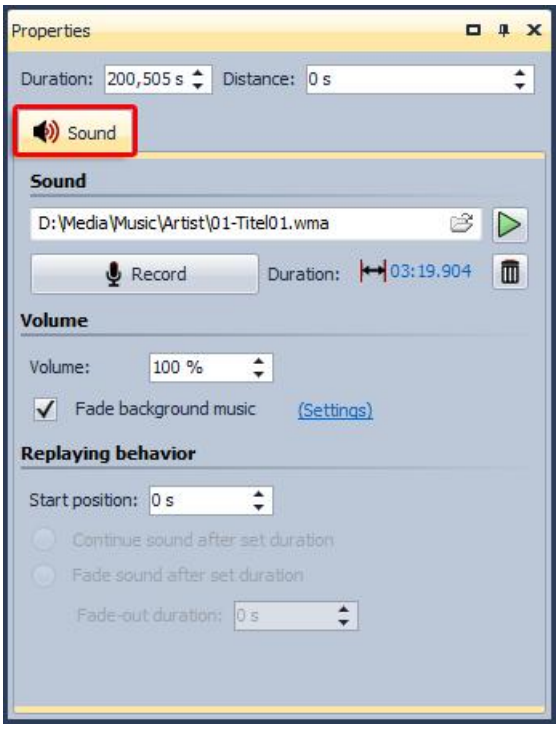
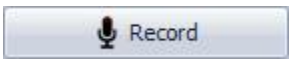
4.4 Sound

With a Sound object the following settings are possible:



With the folder icon you can insert or remove a music file. The track selected is shown on the left next to the icon.

Plays back the music file



Opens the Sound Wizard. With this you can record a commentary for the image via a microphone connected to the PC. You can find more on the Sound Wizard here.

Volume	Displays the volume at which the sound is supposed to be played back.
Fade out background music	If this option is enabled, the background music is faded (volume decreased) when the music file is played back.
Start position	Determines the position in the sound when it will start
Continue sound after set duration	With this option the sound can receive a shorter exposure time. The sound is then simply played on into the next images until it has come to an end.
Fade sound after set duration	Should you wish to only play back the sound for a certain period of time and then end it, you have to select this option. Under Duration you can set the fading out time.

The volume of a sound object can be controlled individually. You will learn more about this in chapter Custom volume settings .

Only use unencrypted music tracks for your presentations. For legal reasons, AquaSoft Stages

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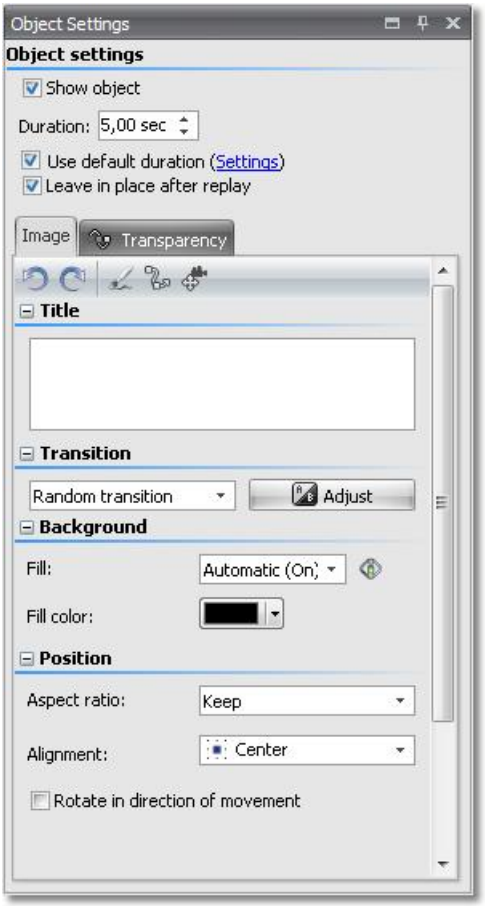
does not support the use of music tracks that are encrypted with DRM or similar methods.

4.5 Collage

With Collage objects you have the following possibilities for settings:



Image

Title	Here you can enter the title for the collage. It serves for a better overview in large projects.
Aspect ratio	Images have an aspect ratio which is comprised of the height and width of the image. If a created collage differs from the aspect ration of the project you can here decide how to display the collage. Keep: The collage retains borders when being played back. Crop: Parts are cropped from the edge of the collage until the collage fits into the correct aspect ratio without edges emerging. Distort: The collage is inserted into the aspect ratio of the project, whereby a distortion of the image takes place.
Alignment	Determines the position of the Collage on the screen.

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Rotate in direction of movement	If you assigned a movement path to a collage you can let the collage automatically rotate along the path. This function is only available in AquaSoft Stages Ultimate.
Fill background	On = Background gets a color filling when display size of the collage is reduced. Off = Background doesn't get a filling and the previous object "looks through". For images inside collages or Picture-in-Picture effects it has to be Off. Automatic = SlideShow sets filling to On automatically for images/videos/collages in the first track. If you move an object to the second or a lower track filling will be set to Off. This way Picture-in-Picture effects can be created quickly. If you want to the value to remain select it from the drop-down box.
Transition	Here the Transition can be set or also deselected. For that purpose, in the drop-down list there is None as the first option. With the Adjust button, the transitions can be configured. You can also obtain a preview of all transitions there.

Transparency

Animated transparency is described in the design options under Animated transparency.

4.6 Chapter

In the Properties of the Chapter only a section name can be specified. This serves to provide a better subdivision of your show. This chapter name will be loaded into Stages-Manager later,provided it is installed. The chapters can thus later be selected individually in a CD/DVD menu and played back.

4.7 Particles

The Particle object shows your images in a minimized form and moves them on the screen.

This feature is only available from <%PRODUCERPROGRAMNAME_R_ORIG%> Premium.

In the Properties of the Particle object you can adapt the representation to your wishes.

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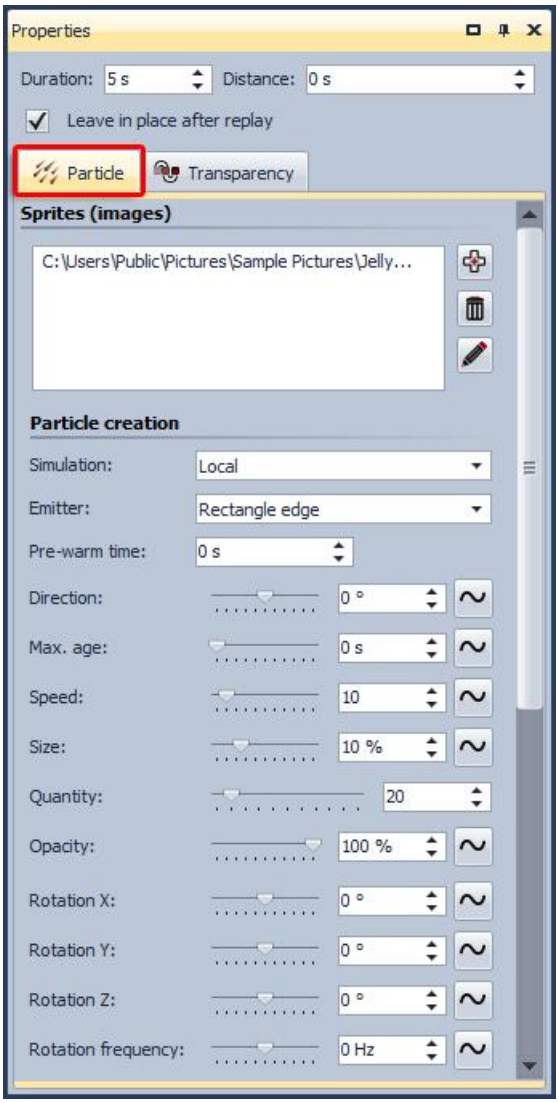
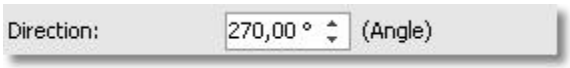


Inserts additional images into the Particle object.

Removes selected images from the Particle object.

Allows to edit the selected image.



Under Direction you can set in which direction the particles disappear.

Directions:

0 degrees = the particles move out of the image towards the right
90 degrees = the particles move out of the image towards the bottom
180 degrees = the particles move out of the image towards the left
270 degrees = the particles move out of the image towards the top

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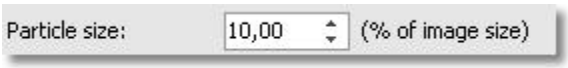
You set the pace of the movement under speed. The higher the value is, the faster the particles fly over the screen. A value of 0 means no speed. The particles won't move.



Here you determine the size of the particles. The size will be calculated based on the size of the Position frome in Layout Designer. If the Position frame takes up the full in Layout Designer and Particle size is set to 10% then the Particles will be 10% of the size of the Position frame. If you reduce the size of the latter the Particles become smaller, accordingly.

With the number of particles, you set the quantity of particles shown.

Here you can select an animation for the particles.

Here you set how strongly the movement should be carried out. The higher the number, the stronger.

The frequency specifies how often the movement is carried out. The smaller the number, the lower the number of movements.

The Particle object can in addition also be provided with movement paths. In AquaSoft Stages Ultimate you can even rotate the Particle object.

5 Controlling the presentation

5.1 Automatic course

It is standard for the images in a presentation to be automatically played back in sequence. In that respect, you determine in the Properties of the objects how long an image, text or collage is shown and when to switch to the next object.

No special settings are necessary to accomplish this with AquaSoft Stages.

5.2 Manual control

Should you wish to move on manually during the presentation, you can configure the Player accordingly in the Project settings.

The Project settings always refer to the current project.

From the menu bar you can open the Project settings using the icon. Alternatively you can also open the dialog using *Project / Project settings*.

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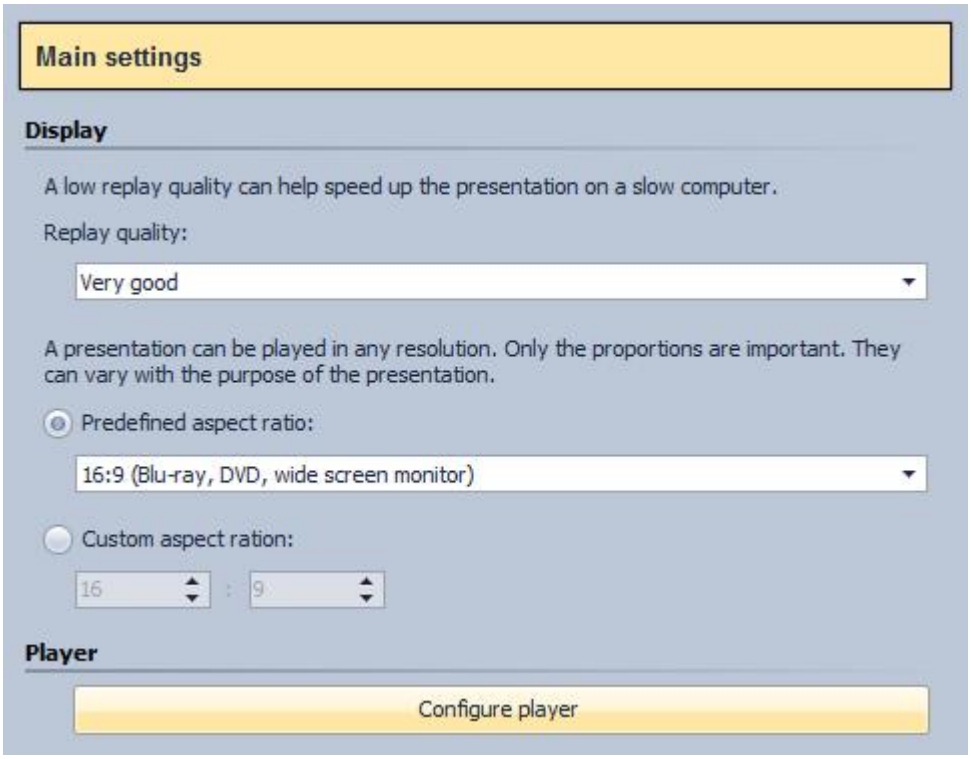
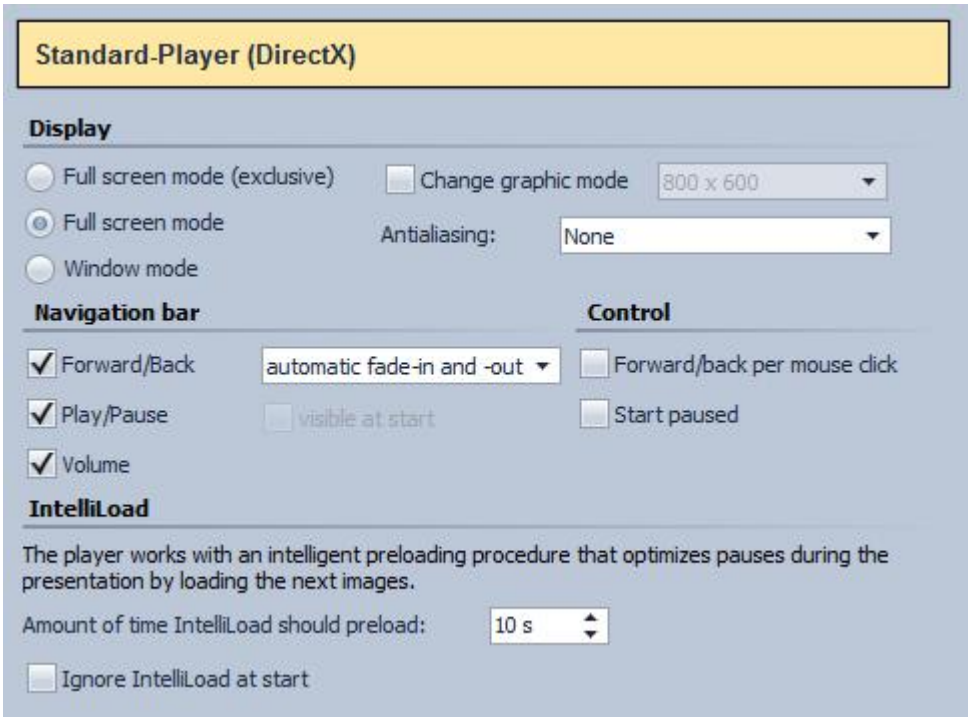


Via the Main settings you can access the Player configuration directly.



The *Start paused* option switches the presentation over to being continued manually. You can then continue the presentation using the cursor and scrolling keys.

If you activate *Forward/back* per mouse click in the dialog, you can continue your presentation by clicking the mouse.

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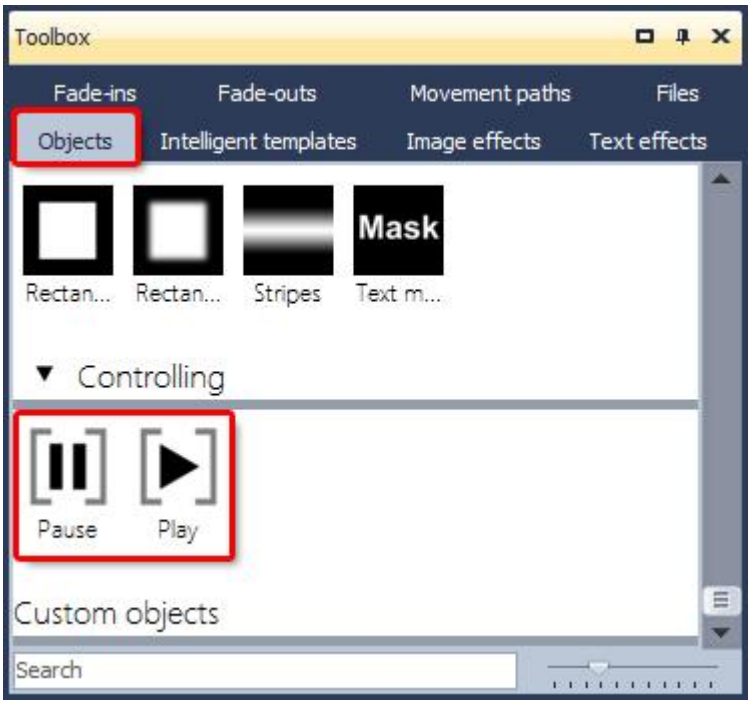
5.3 Automatic and manual course mixed

With AquaSoft Stages it is likewise possible to continue parts of the presentation manually and let other parts play back automatically. You can alter this as you please.

In the Toolbox you will find two objects for this purpose:



These two objects make it possible to switch between continuing the presentation manually and letting it run automatically. By double-clicking or by drag-and-drop you can insert the objects into your project.

If you, for example, insert the *Pause* object behind the 3rd image, the presentation will stop before the 4th image and wait for you to continue using the keyboard or mouse.

The manual replay can be interrupted again with a *Play* object. For that purpose, insert the *Play* object at the point where the automatic course is desired.

Artificial pause:

You can also insert a *Play* object directly behind a *Pause* object. Thus, the show will be stopped at the image before the *Pause* object and, as soon as you continue, the presentation continues to run automatically.

You can also use the Space bar to pause the presentation during replay. When you hit the Space bar again the presentation continues.

If you export your project as a video DVD, this function of the two objects is lost. To pause a video DVD, you have to use the pause key on the remote control.

5.4 Repeating the presentation infinitely

From the menu bar you can open the *Project settings* using the icon. Alternatively, you can also open the dialog via *Project / Project settings*. Under Presentation end you can enable the *Repeat current presentation* function.

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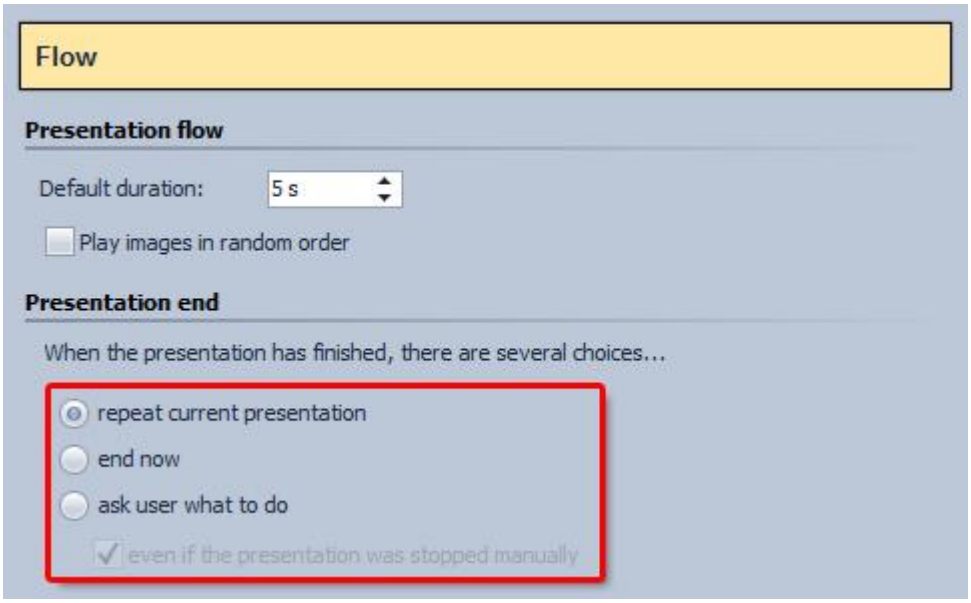

If you export your project as a Video-DVD this functionality will be lost. If you create your Video-DVD with SlideShow-Manager you can there activate the repetition of the of replay.

6 Export options

6.1 DVD-Player

For the DVD player your project must be converted into a video and then burned as a video DVD. This function is provided by the Video Wizard and by Stages-Manager. Stages-Manager can even burn multiple shows on one DVD that can then be selected in from menu.

Video Wizard

With the Video Wizard you can quite easily burn your presentation onto a DVD/BD and thus play it back on the DVD/BD player. Under Wizards you can open the Video Wizard.

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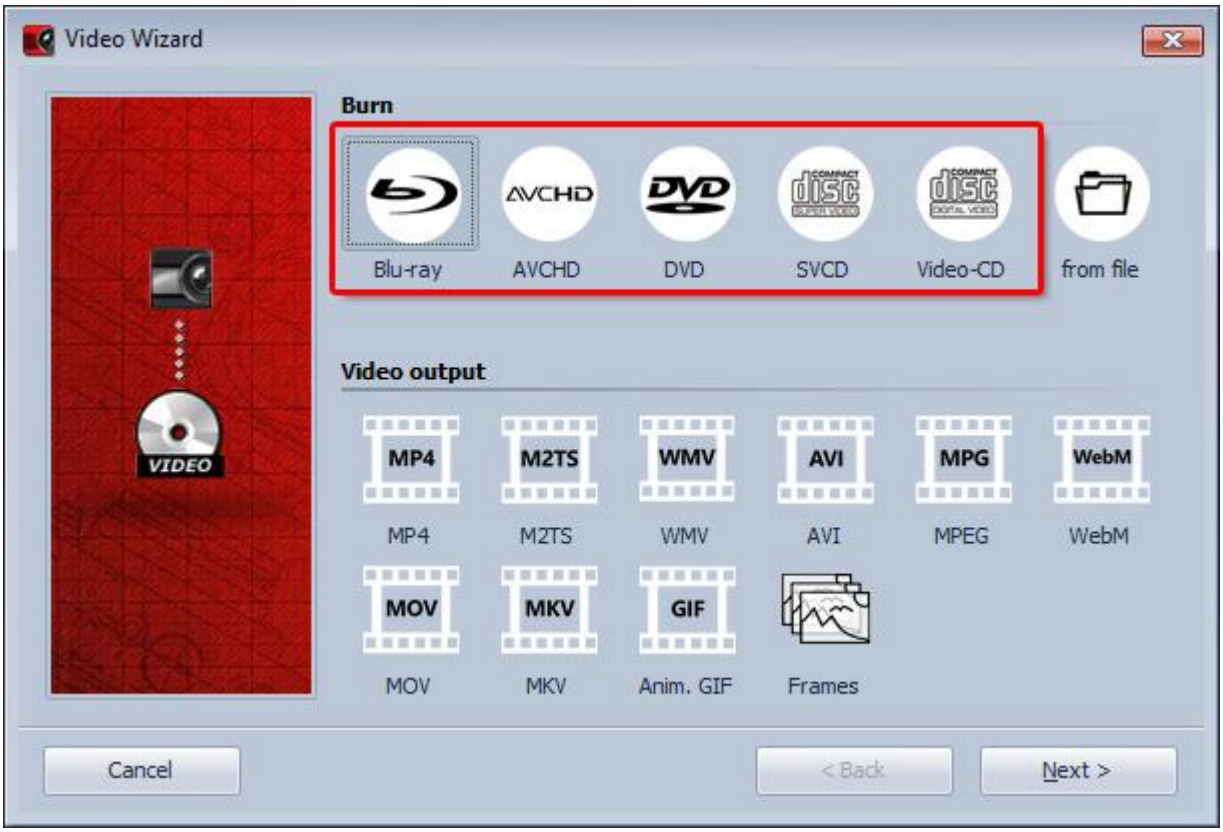

Blu-ray
If you have a Blu-ray burner, use this option in order to directly burn a Blu-ray.
Resolution: 720x576

AVCHD
If you have a DVD burner, you can burn in HD-quality and load the disc into the Blu-ray player. Select this option to create an AVCHD for your Blu-ray player.
Resolution: 720x576

DVD
Creates an MPEG 2 video and burns it onto a DVD as a video DVD.
Resolution: 720x576

SVCD
Creates an MPEG 2 video and burns it onto a CD as an SVCD.
Resolution: 480x576

VCD
Creates an MPEG 1 video and burns it onto a CD as a VCD.
Resolution: 352x288

Select the DVD option. Only use VCD or SVCD if you have a CD burner and no DVD burner. In this case we recommend SVCD. It has a higher resolution than a VCD and thus thus result on a TV is better. Then click Next.

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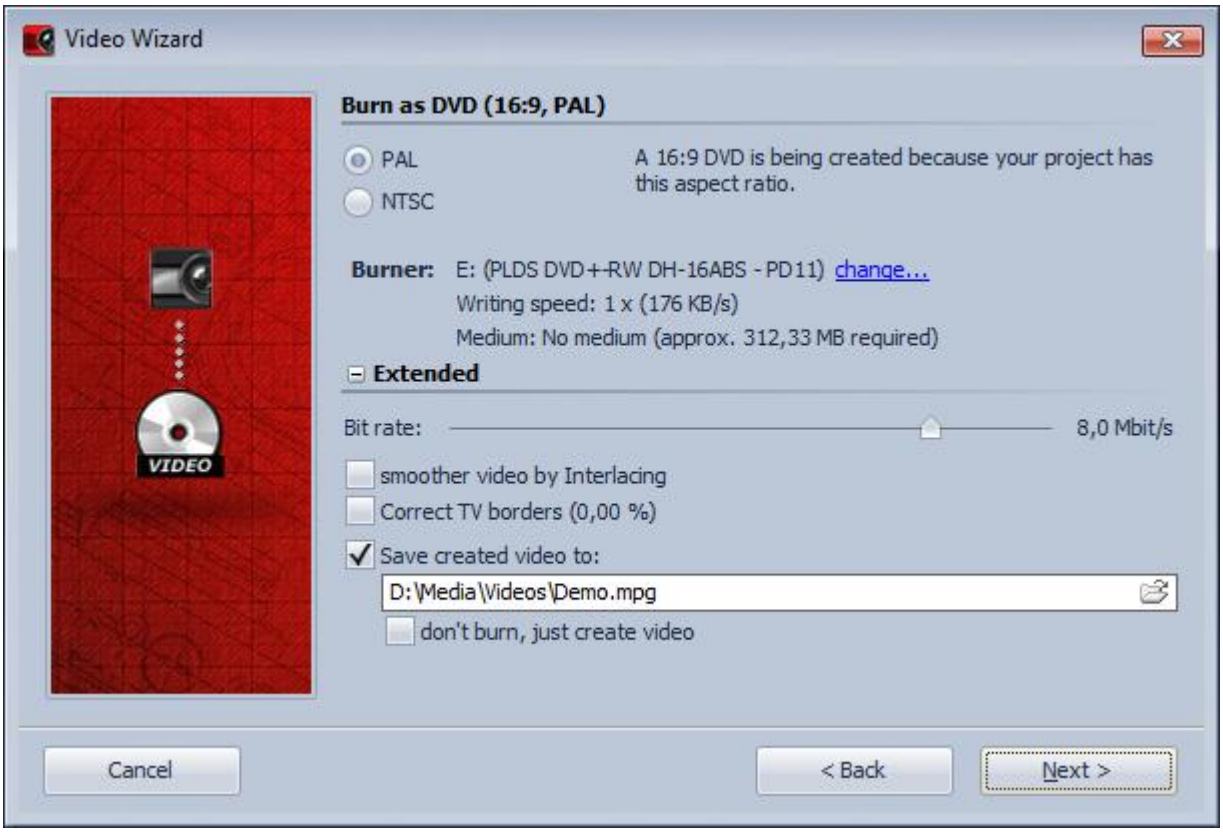

In the settings dialog you can set various options. The TV border correction is required if the television frame covers up the visible area at the edge. E.g., the first character could be missing or be displayed incompletely from text that starts directly at the edge. Or the top or bottom of the characters could be chopped off. These settings depend on the TV and manufacturer.

The Video standard is automatically set to PAL, the European video standard. NTSC can also be set if you need the American video standard. The aspect ratio is automatically adjusted to the aspect ratio of your project. If you have created a 16:9 show, PAL (16:9) is automatically set. With a 4:3 project PAL (4:3) is selected. A 4:3 project can not simply be burned as 16:9 presentation, and vice versa.

Before the DVD can be burned, it must first be converted into a video. An *.mpg-file is created in the process. This needs to be saved to the hard disk prior to the burning process. You can decide the storage location and the name under Video file. You can also choose to activate the option to delete the video file after the burning.

Then click Next and Create video. The process of the video creation can require some time.

If you want to burn more than one CD/DVD with your show you don't need to repeat the process of the video creation for each one of them.

You can access the Burn video on CD/DVD option in the Video Wizard.

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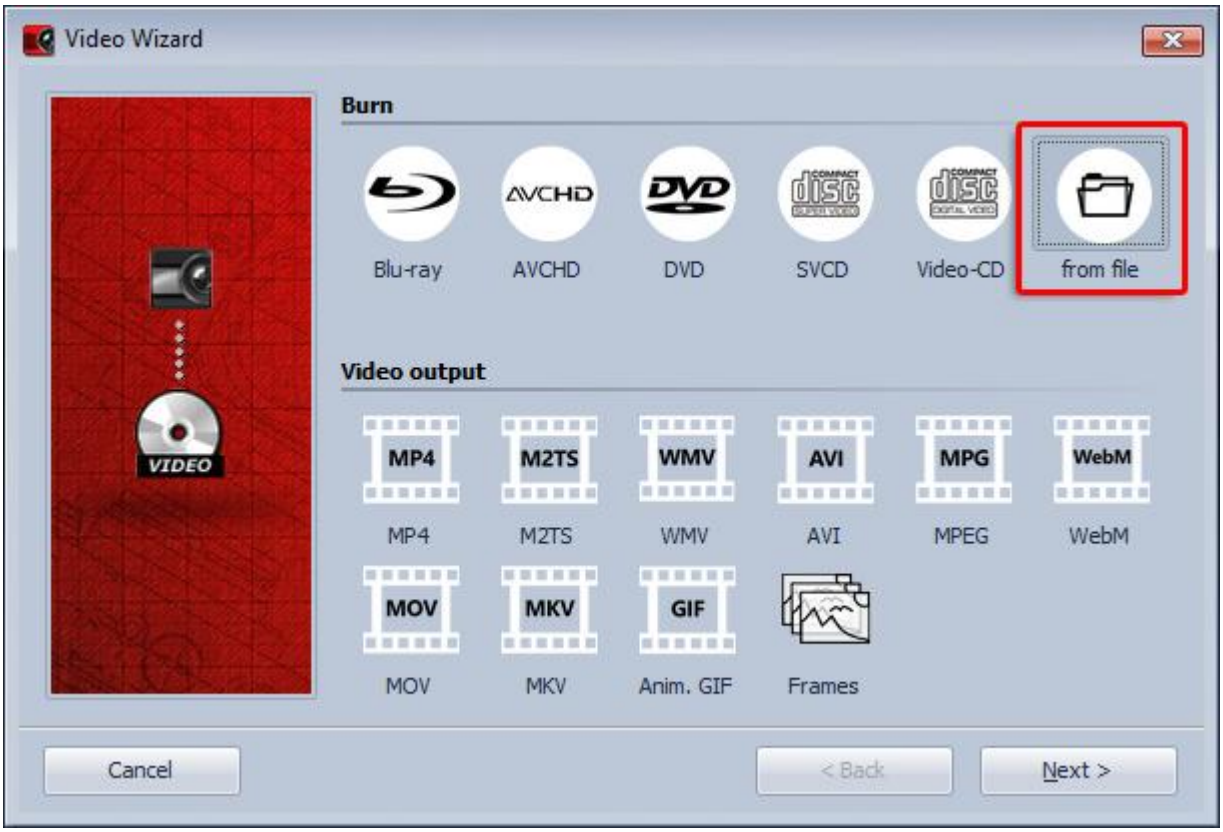
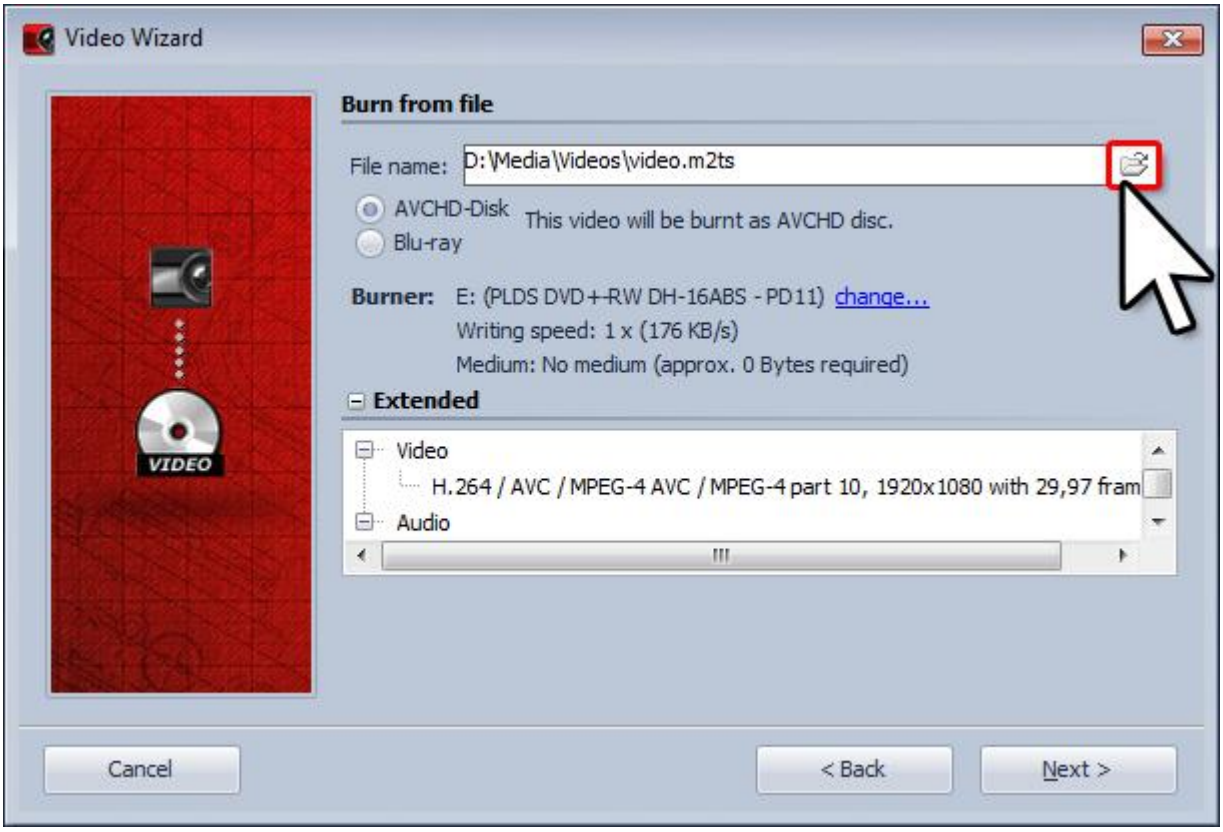


Here you can burn a video file already created (mpg video), which you have saved on your hard disk, onto a CD/DVD.



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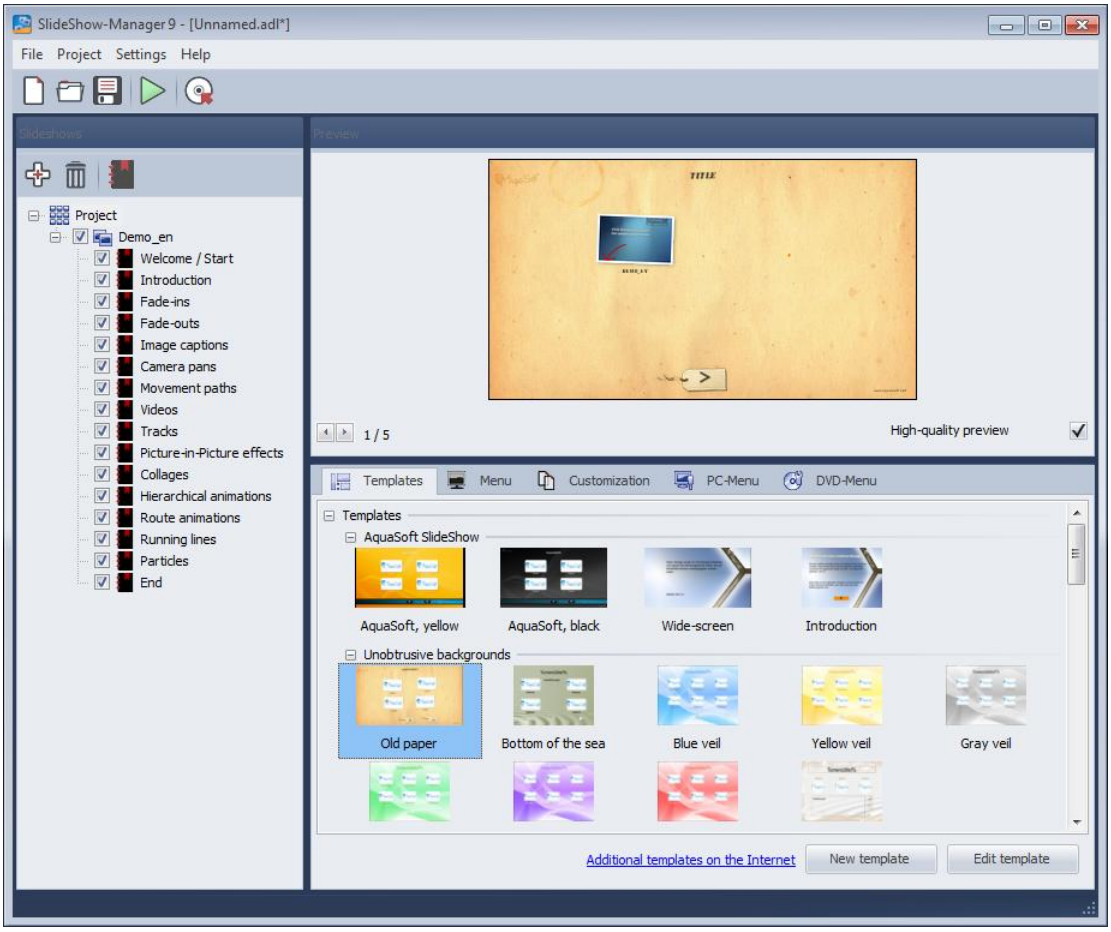
Specify the relevant mpg file and what type of video is concerned.

SlideShow-Manager

You can also use SlideShow-Manager to burn your CDs/DVDs. It allows to burn multiple projects on one DVD and to create a DVD menu.

You can open SlideShow-Manager from the Wizards menu.



Select a template for your DVD menu and adjust the individual settings for the menu.

Under DVD-Menu specify aspect ration and video format.

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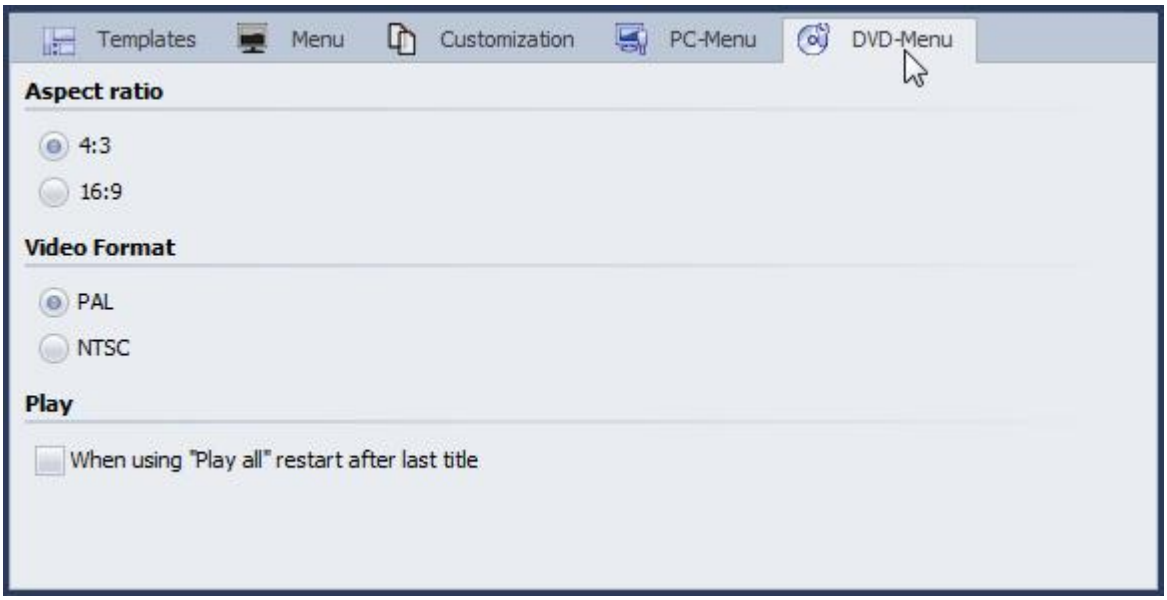
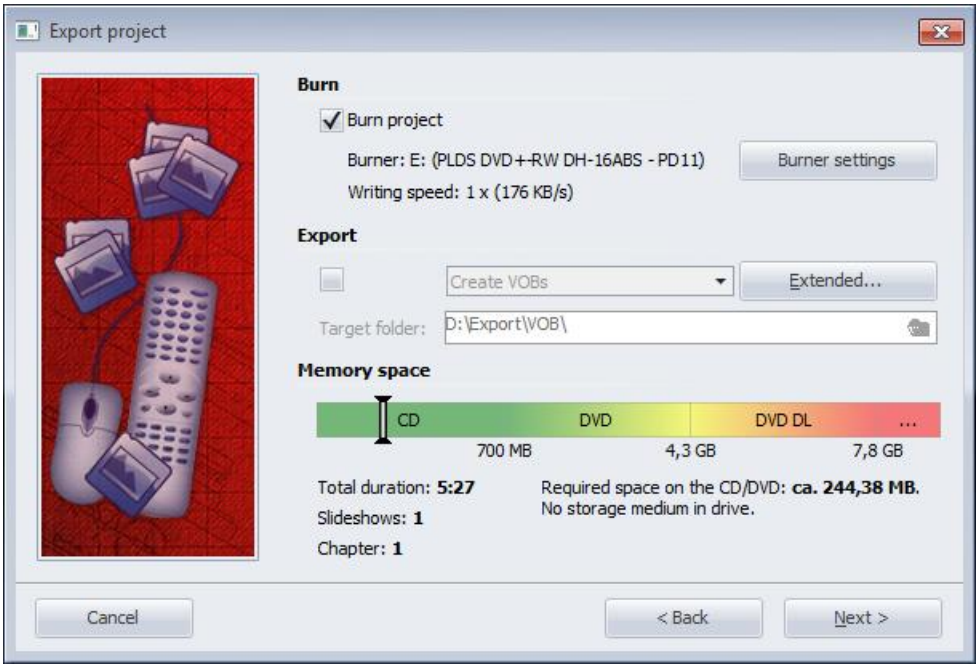


By clicking the button a dialog for burning the projects opens. Select Video DVD.



With Burn project you create a video DVD. Click "Next" and "Export project".

You can find an extensive description of SlideShow-Manager in the help files of SlideShow-Manager. You can find it under "Help" in SlideShow-Manager .

6.2 PC presentation

Your presentation can also be played back on a different PC, on which AquaSoft Stages is not installed.

The CD/Archiving Assistant will assist you in burning your project with all the data to a CD/DVD or archiving them on the hard disk.

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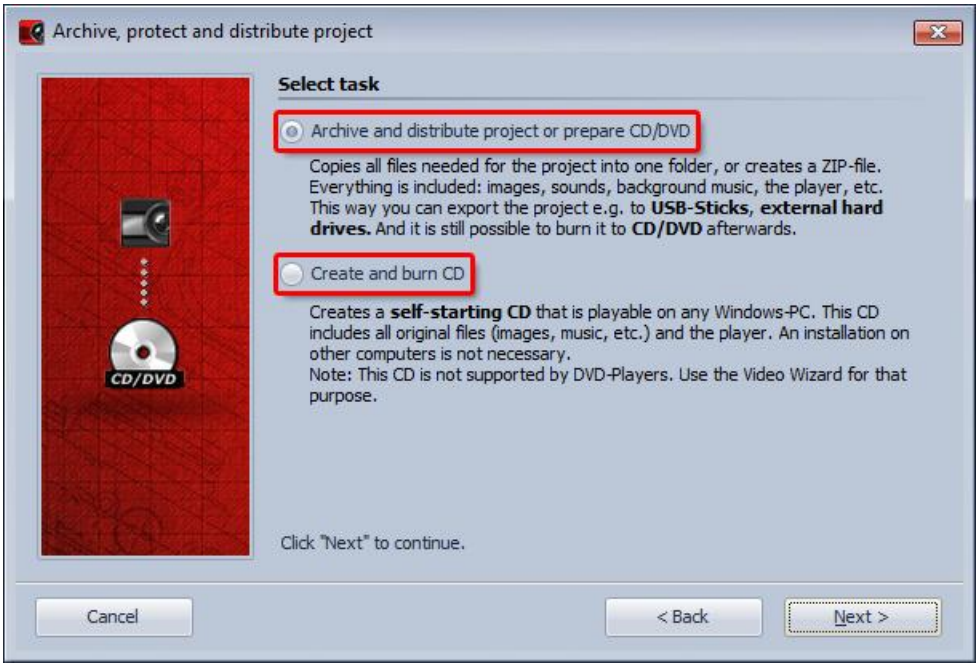
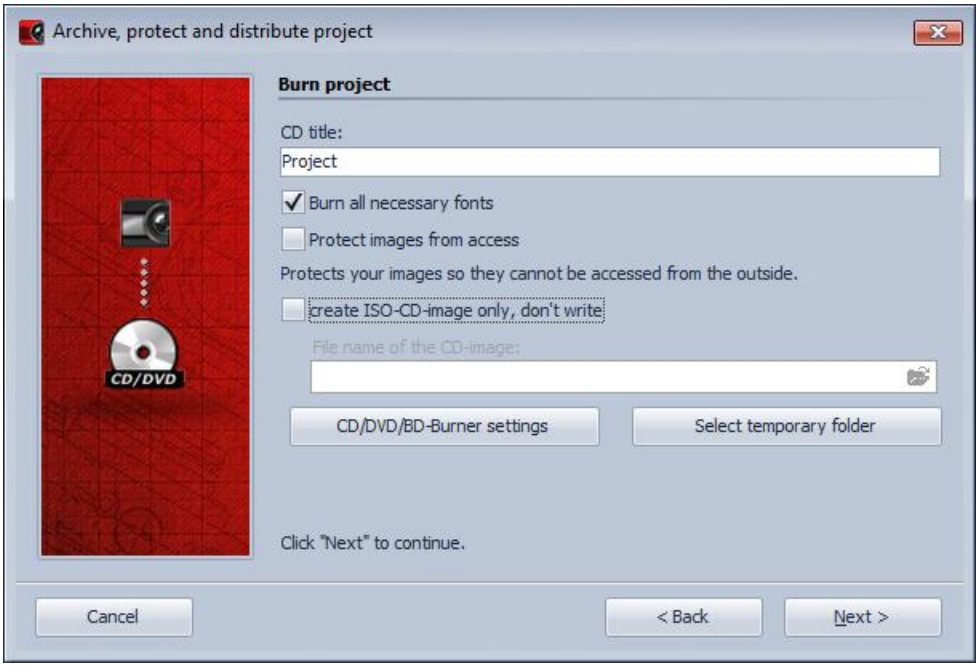
Under Wizards you can open the CD/DVD and Archive Wizard.



After selecting the task, click Next.

Creating and burning a CD:



Specify a title for the CD/DVD. This title is used as the name of the CD/DVD.

Should you use fonts in the case of which you are not sure that they are installed on other PCs, you can also burn them onto the CD/DVD.

Protect images from access:

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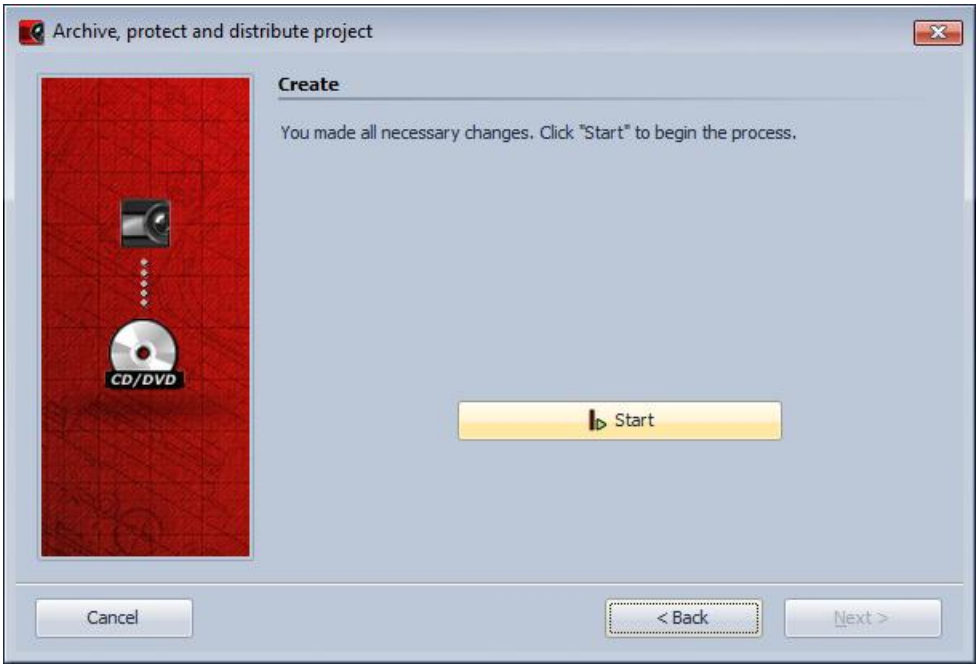
Should you wish to pass on the CD/DVD, however not permit access to your images, you can have your images protected. This function is not suitable for archiving, since this project can no longer be edited. It can only be played back. It is no longer possible to restore the images. You should not delete your original images from the hard disk.

If you only want to create an ISO select the respective option. In this case the show will not be burned.

Click Next to start the selected process.

Archiving the project, preparing the CD or passing on the presentation

This option enables you to save all data (ads file, images, music) in a common directory. This option is also very well suited to archival storage. In this way the project can also be saved on external data carriers (hard disks, USB sticks …).



In order to save disk space, you can pack all the data into a ZIP archive.

If you use fonts in the case of which you are not sure that they are installed on other PCs, you can copy these as well.

You should copy the player in order to be able to play back the show on computers on which AquaSoft Stages is not installed. Without this player you cannot otherwise play back the presentation.

Click Next and then click Start. Now all necessary data for the presentation will be copied into the folder specified or combined into a ZIP archive.

6.3 Additional video formats

With AquaSoft Stages Premium and AquaSoft Stages Ultimate you can convert your shows into further video formats.

For that purpose, select the User-defined video option in the Video Wizard. In the dialog you can now select additional formats under Video format.

Check in advance with which codec videos have to be created, so that your DVD player plays them back (Operating Instructions). Then check whether this codec is installed on your PC. If not, you have to install the codec.

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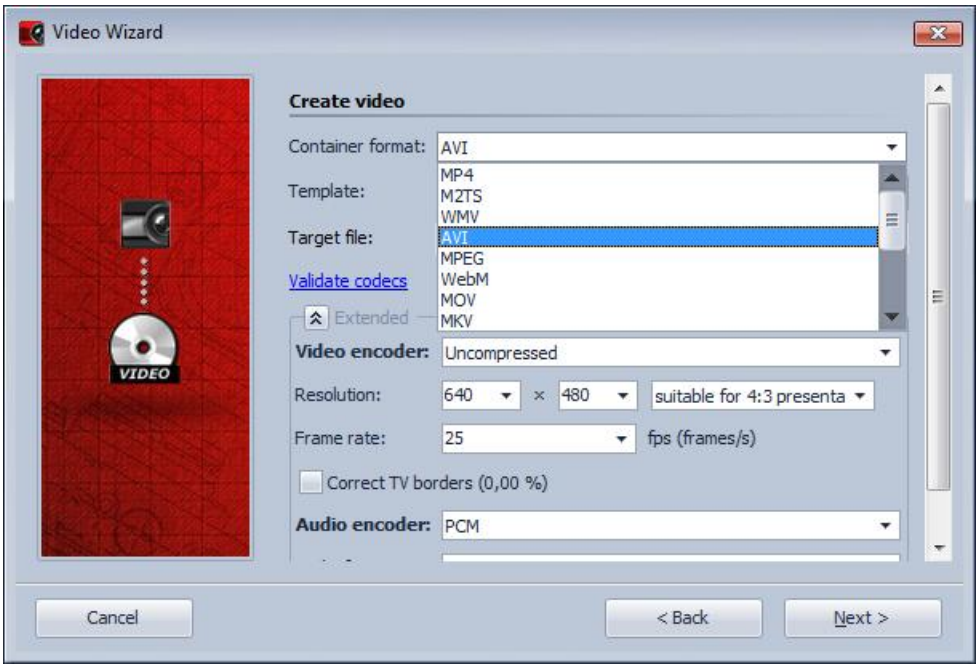

AVI-video

AVI is a widely used video format and will be played by newer DVD players.

Set the desired resolution and under Compression, you select the appropriate codec.

Please check first which codec has to be used for the creation of these AVI-videos so that your DVD-player will be able to play them (Operating instructions). Check to see if this codec is installed on your system. If not, you must install the codec. AquaSoft Stages doesn't provide any codecs.

In our FAQ you can find further informationen.

Please note that an AVI video should not be larger than 2 GB. Most players will not play a large AVI movie.

Not every codec supports all resolutions.

WMV-video

This format is only available in AquaSoft Stages Ultimate.

For the creation of a video in WMV format, you should install a recent version of Windows Media Player.

Using the WMV format, you can use a very high resolution for the video. The finished video can be played with Windows Media Player. Currently, only a few DVD players support this format.

6.4 Archiving a project

Often you have invested a lot of time into a comprehensive and sophisticated presentation. As to not lose your work in case of a hardware crash you can archive the complete project with all containing files (images, music, comments).

The CD/DVD and Archive Wizard offers you the opportunity to burn the complete show with all the data onto a CD/DVD or export it to an external drive.

This procedure is explained in the PC Presentation section.

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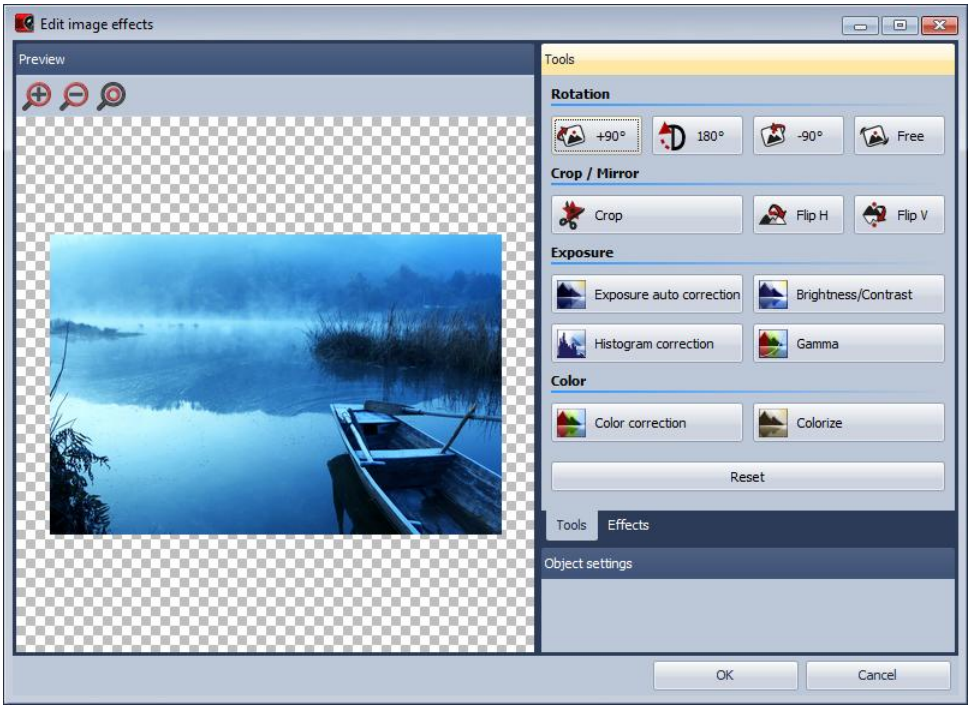
6.5 Additional export options

There are other export option that you can read about in chapter Export Wizard.

7 Image editing

7.1 Integrated image editing

It is our goal to provide you with all necessary tools in one single program, the AquaSoft Stages. Therefore we integrated image editing functionality that allows you to enhance your pictures for the project. Of course there are specialized image editing applications that go far beyond the capabilities of the image editing module in AquaSoft Stages but it should be possible to solve the most important tasks inside the program.



Use the right mouse button to click on the image and select the option Edit image. There are functions to crop and rotate images, for color correction, adjustment of brightness and contrast and some filters like blurring. By using the magnifying buttons (just like in Layout Designer) you can adjust the size of the display of the image or image segment.

None of the provided image editing functions modifies your original image.

The modification only affect the display of the images inside the presentation.

7.2 AquaSoft Image effects

The Image effect editor is only available in AquaSoft Stages Ultimate.

With Image effects graphics can be optimized or spiced up. From a simple shadow over pleasing frames and collages to branched effect chains (Multiplicating) many things are possible. Complex effects are combined from different basic modules and allow non-destructive image editing (the original image always stays untouched).

When you click on an image in the Image list or Timeline you can select the menu item Edit image.

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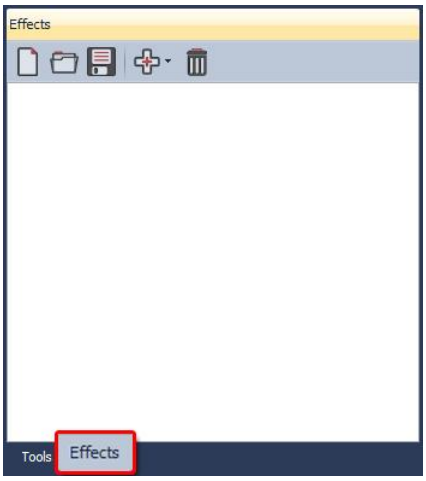
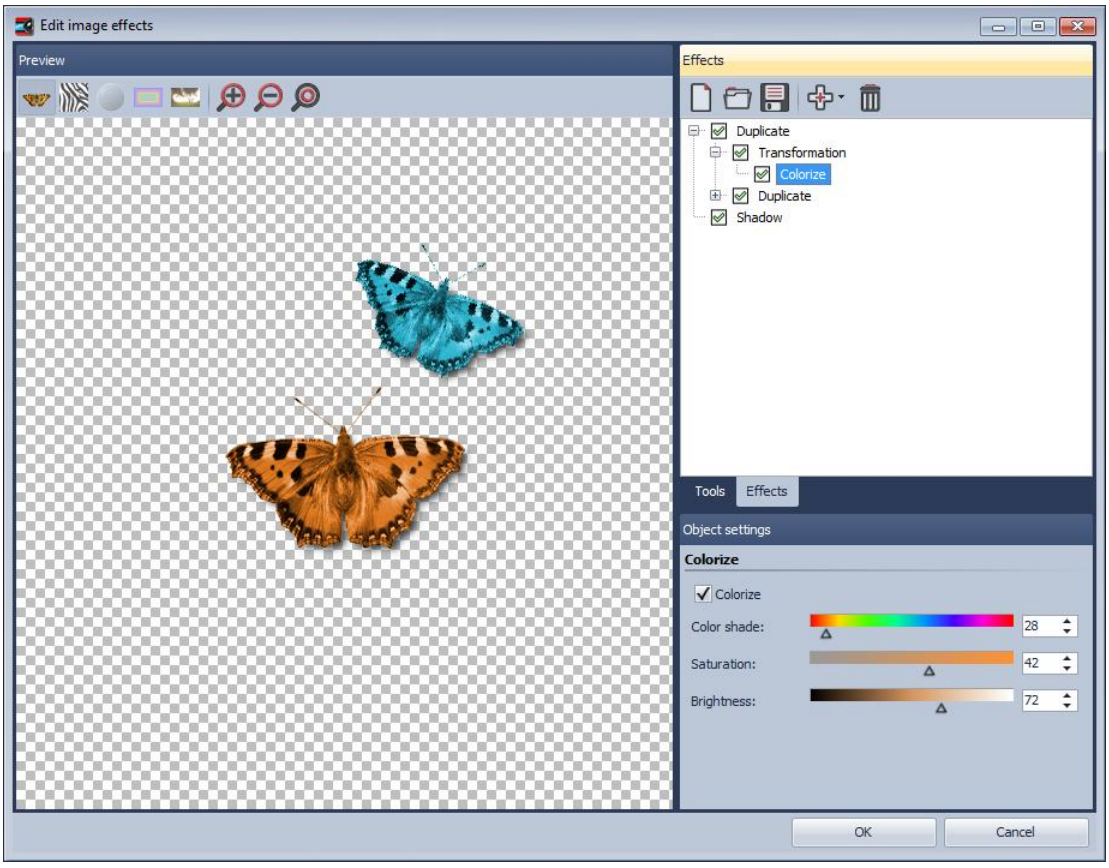


Under Effects the Image effect editor opens.



With the help of the Image effect editor those effects can be assembled and saved to be reused later. Let's just start with a shadow effect and improve our skills to create a "self-border" later.

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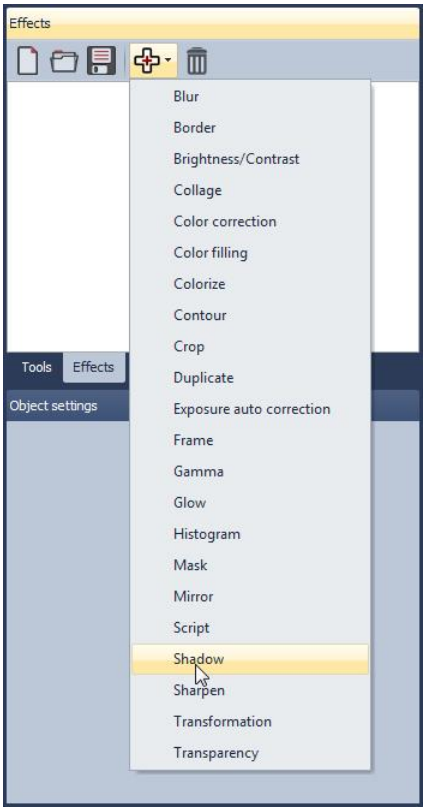
7.2.1 A simple shadow

You need only a few clicks to assign an unobtrusive drop shadow to an image.



Sub-effects are simply added via the menu. Thus add the sub-effect "Shadow".

Note: The number of available sub-effects in your version of the application can differ from that in the image above.

Now you can see that the shadow has been added to the previously empty "effect list". On the right side of the dialog appear controls that let you adjust the settings of the shadow to your liking.

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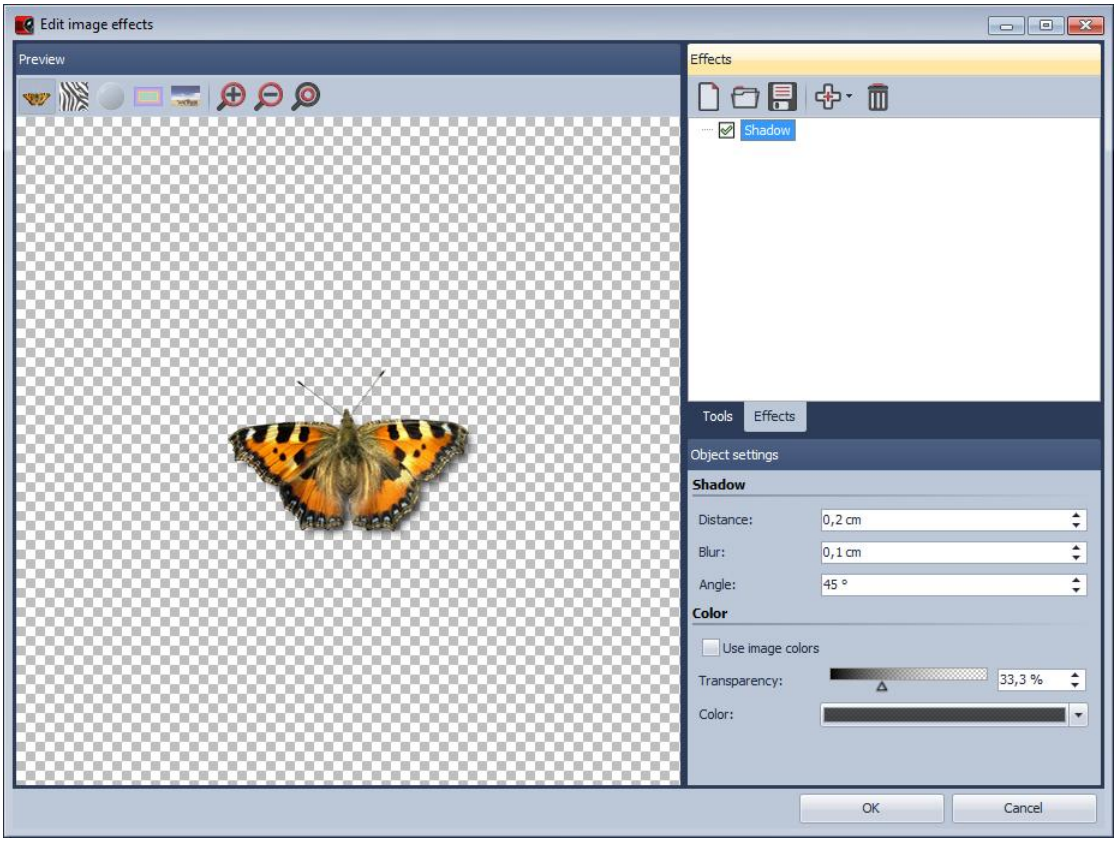

At the bottom-left the shadow effect is showcased on the butterfly graphic.

Each sub-effect can have very different settings. How each of them affects the result you can find out best by trial and error. In our specific example the offset of the shadow from the original image, the angle of the incidence of light, the strength of the blur and the transparency of the shadow can be specified.

That's all there is to it. Clicking OK applies the shadow to your image. Of course, all the settings can still be edited later. The original graphic is never changed.

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7.2.2 A "self-border" using multiplication and transformation

We want to achieve an effect that used the image itself to create a semi-transparent border. The result will look similar to the picture below:

The basic idea of the solution looks like the following:

1. Enlarge the image and assign semi-transparency to it
2. Overlay the semi-transparent image with the original image

Here an important functionality is utilized that is also crucial for the creation of many other complex effects: Multiplication.

To achieve 2. at all a copy of the original image needs to be stored to be able to overlay the image that might already be changed by previously assigned sub-effects. The multiplication effect allows exactly this. By using it the normally flat list of effects will become a tree, because the multiplication effect can have child elements. The sub-effects can be moved around via drag&drop.

All effects that are children of the multiplication effect are "served" with that state of the image data source that has been current at the branching point, no matter in which way and how much a different child element has changed the image.

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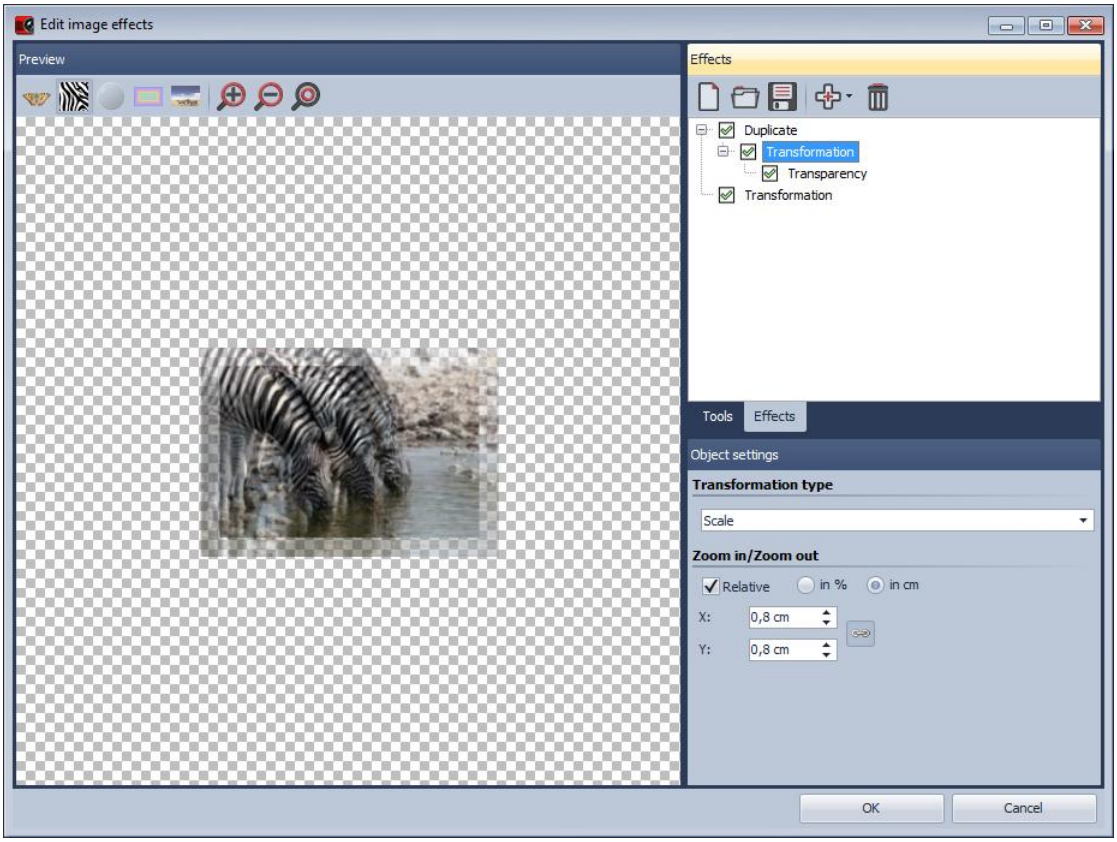

Here you see the completed effect: The multiplication effect got a transformation assigned as sub-effect that enlarges the image by a few millimeters. To that the transparency effect is assigned to make the image semi-transparent.

Now we need to use a little trick: To display the original image again we simply add a second transformation to the multiplication. Only this time no offset, rotation, etc. is set. So the image stays the same.

Note: Child elements of multiplication effects can have child elements themselves.

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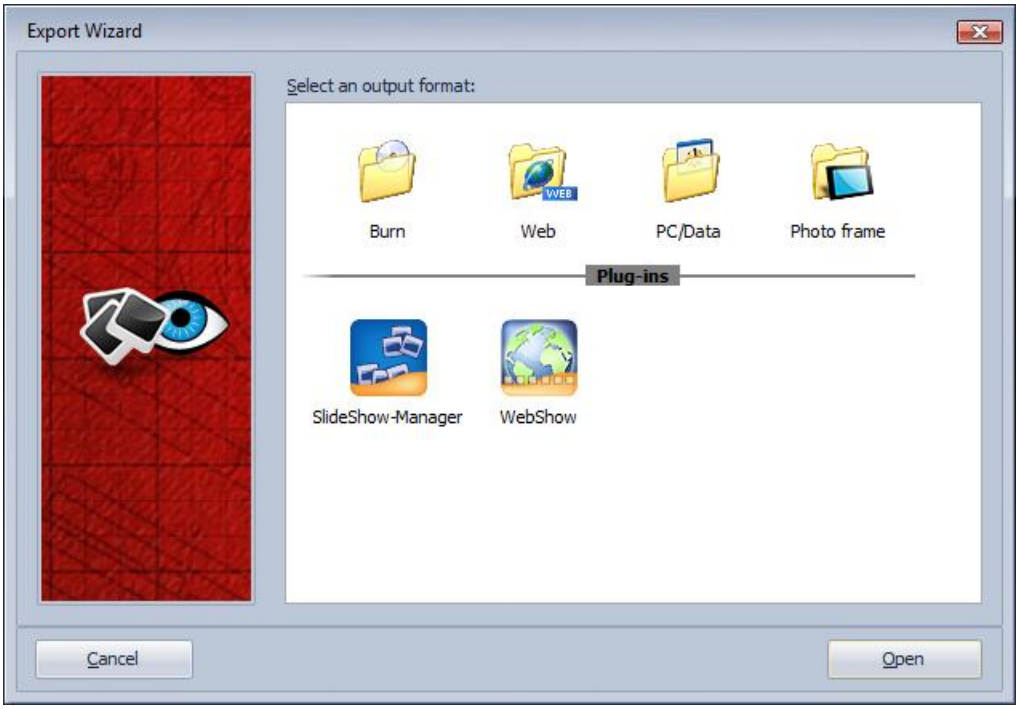
8 Wizards

8.1 Export Wizard

The Export Wizard will assist you in burning your finished projects onto a CD/DVD or archiving them, or also saving them as a video, to the hard disk.

You can access the Export Wizard via *Wizards / Export Wizard*.



Burn

Select this menu item if you would like to record your project onto a CD/DVD.

PC/Data

Select this option if you would like to archive your project and all associated data (images, music) on the hard disk or save it to the hard disk as a video.

If you would like to burn your project onto a CD/DVD, click *Burn* and then click Open (or double-click CD/DVD).

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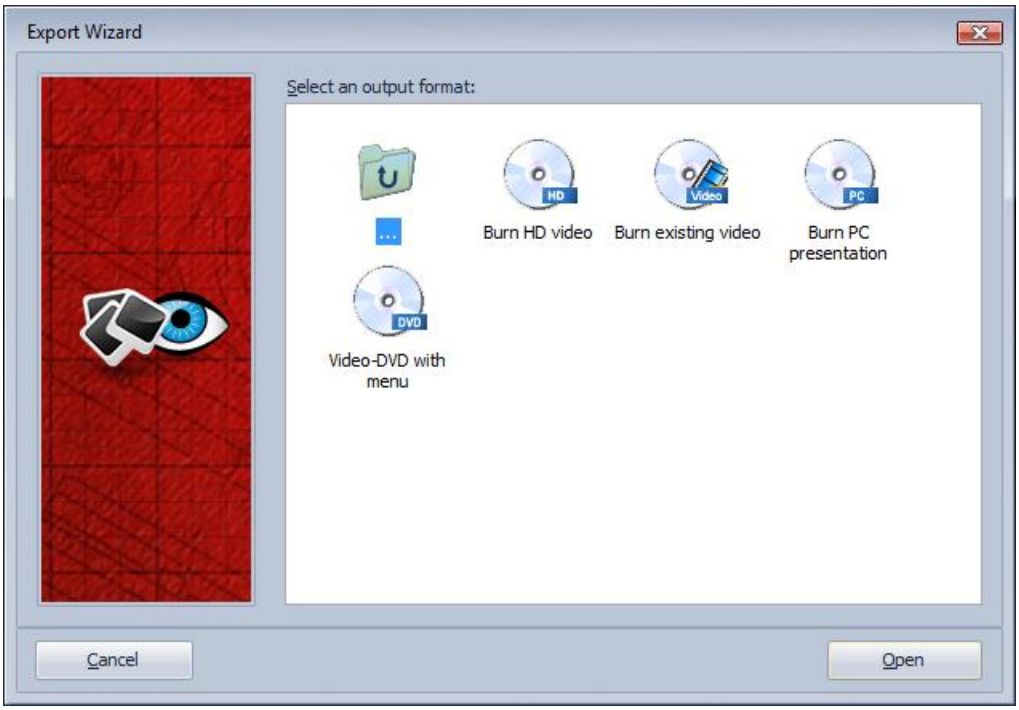

You now have several possibilities.

For the DVD player:

Video VCD
Creates an MPEG 1 video and burns it onto a CD as a VCD.
Resolution: 352x288

Video SVCD
Creates an MPEG 2 video and burns it onto a CD as a SVCD.
Resolution: 480x576

Video DVD
Creates an MPEG 2 video and burns it onto a DVD as a video DVD.
Resolution: 720x576

Burn a video already created
Should you already have created the video, you can, in this way, burn the video onto a CD/DVD.

You can find out whether your DVD player plays back VCD and SVCD from the operating manual.

Note:

If you encounter difficulties replaying a burned VCD/SVCD/DVD on a DVD-player it can help to reduce the burning speed in the settings for the CD/DVD-burner and/or to change the brand of the CDs/DVDs.

You can find additional information in chapter DVD-player.

For the PC:

Burn a PC-presentation:
With a PC presentation, the images are not converted into a video. This CD/DVD can only be played back on the PC (Vista/Windows 7/Windows 8). These CDs/DVDs are also well suited to archiving a show, since all pieces of music and images incorporated in the project are copied onto the CD/DVD.

Should you only wish to save your show on the PC, without burning it, you can open PC/data in the first step in the Export Wizard.

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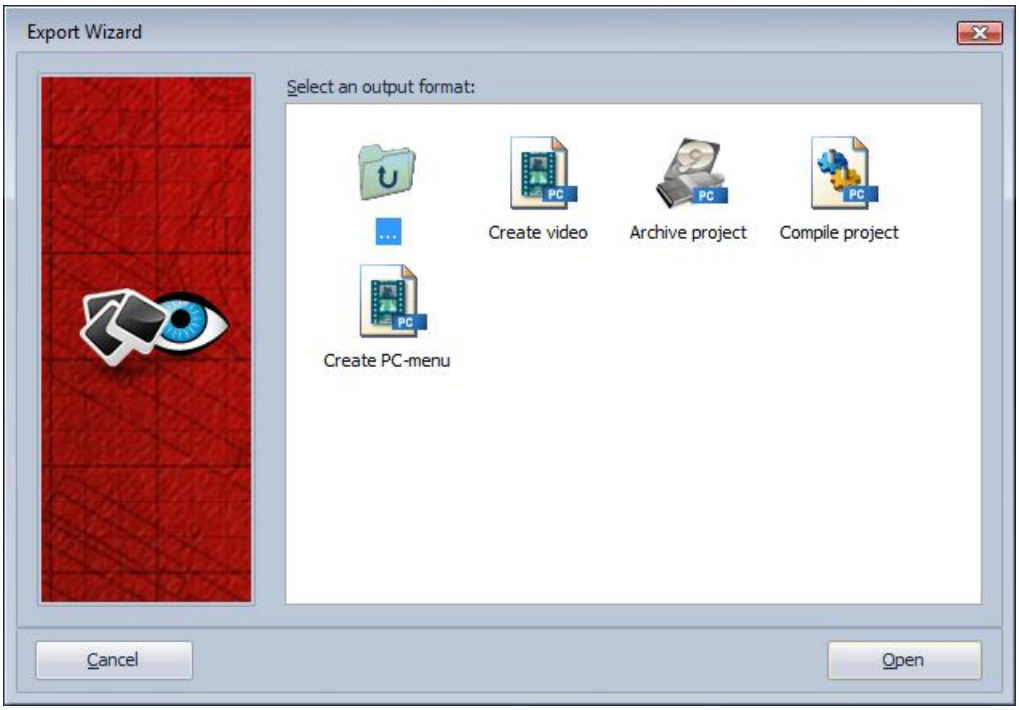

Grayed-out plug-ins are active only if you have installed the respective software. SlideShow can pass your project or the pictures of your project to other AquaSoft programs via the plug-in system.

The Export Wizard accesses the relevant wizard, according to the task selected.
For output for DVD-player or for video creation it calls the Video Wizard.
For output for PC it opens then CD/DVD and Archiving Wizard.

8.2 SlideShow-Manager

SlideShow-Manager allows to burn multiple projects to a CD/DVD. It creates a CD/DVD menu that allows to navigate to a certain presentation.

If you're using Stages Premium and want to use SlideShow-Manager you need to upgrade to AquaSoft Stages Ultimate.

You can find an extensive description of SlideShow-Manager in the help files of SlideShow-Manager. A short description is included into this manual in chapter DVD-Player.

8.3 Sound Wizard

Using the Sound Wizard you can record spoken commentaries and noises for your images using a microphone connected to the PC.

You will find the *Sound Wizard* in the menu under *Wizards*.

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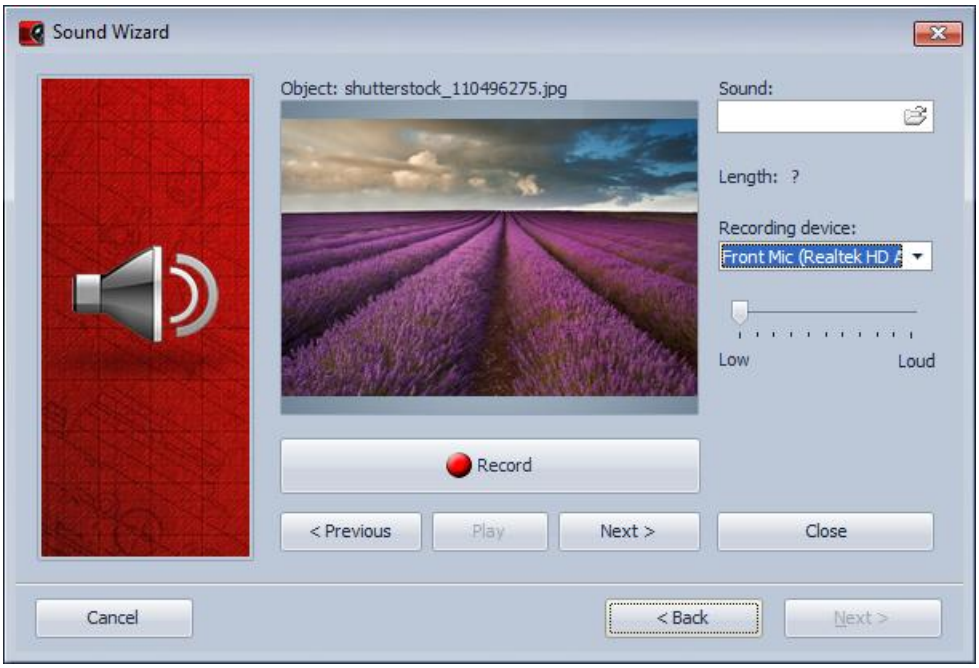
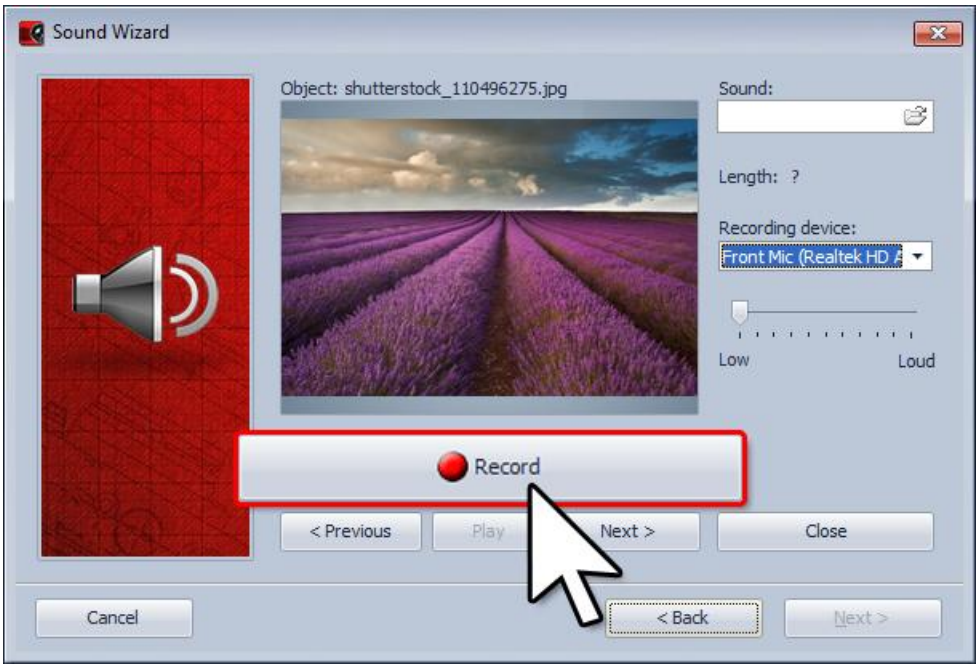


You can save the resulting files in the project directory or in a separate directory.

Under Record settings you can decide the settings with which the commentaries should be recorded.

Then click Next.



Now all the images in the project with which you can include a commentary will be shown to you in sequence. To do so, simply click Record and then speak your commentary on the relevant image. Should you make a mistake while recording, you only need to re-record the commentary for the selected image.

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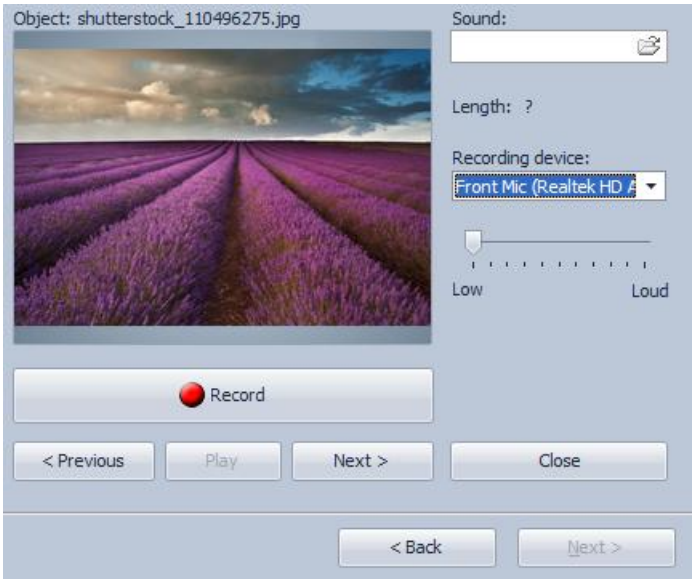
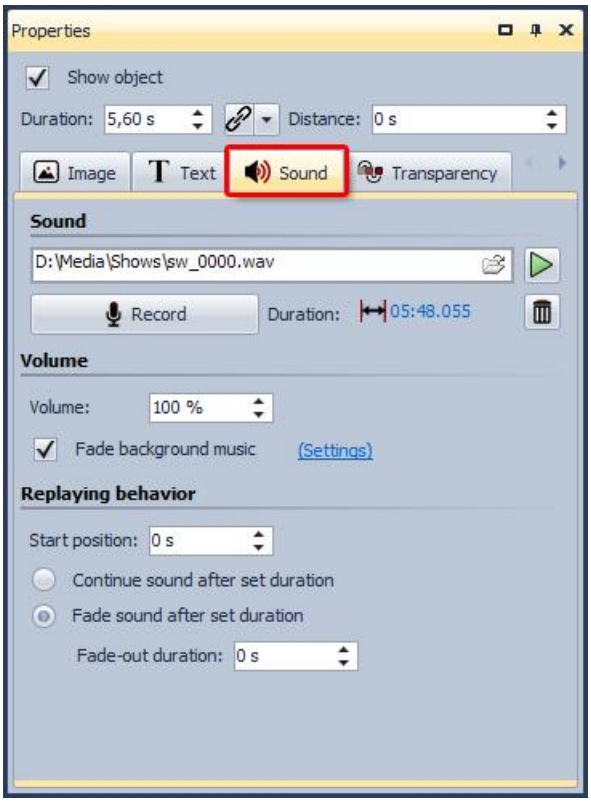


With Play you can listen to your recording. In order to get to the next image, click Next. Once you have finished recording, close the Sound Wizard.

The *Sound Wizard* automatically matches up your images with the commentaries recorded. You can find the recorded file in the *Properties* of the relevant image. The recording can also be played back here, using the button.



The *Sound Wizard* can also be started directly from the *Properties* of an image. For that there is the Record button.

The length of the image is automatically adapted to the length of the commentary.

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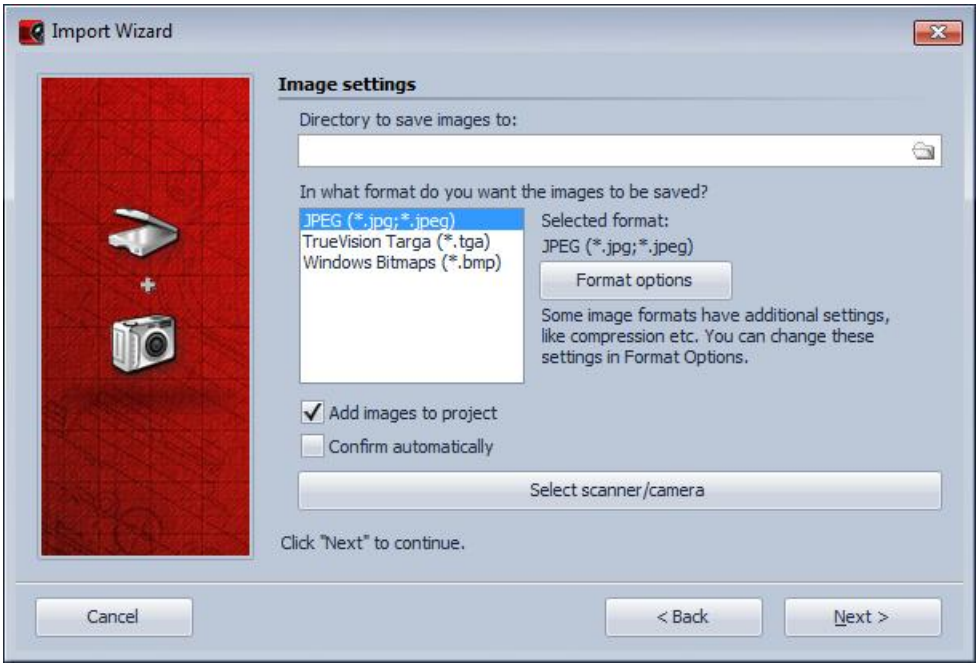
8.4 Import Wizard

With this wizard you can import your images from a scanner or from your digital camera, as long as these devices respond to the TWAIN32 interface. The images are saved and included in the Image list. They can either be improved with the editing function immediately or later.

You can access these under *Wizards / Import Wizard*.



Specify a Target directory in which the images should be saved. Selected the desired file format and, if necessary, adjust the Format options.

If the images are supposed to be directly included in the Image list of the project, enable this function.

Then select the scanner or camera.

Next click Next and then click Start. Your images are now imported.

8.5 PowerPoint Wizard

With the *PowerPoint Wizard* you can import your PowerPoint presentations into the project. A prerequisite is that MS PowerPoint (Version 8 or later) is installed on your PC.

During the import the individual slides are saved as images. All animations and effects will be lost in the process, however.

You can start these under *Wizards / PowerPoint Wizard*.

Specify the File name of the PowerPoint file to be imported.

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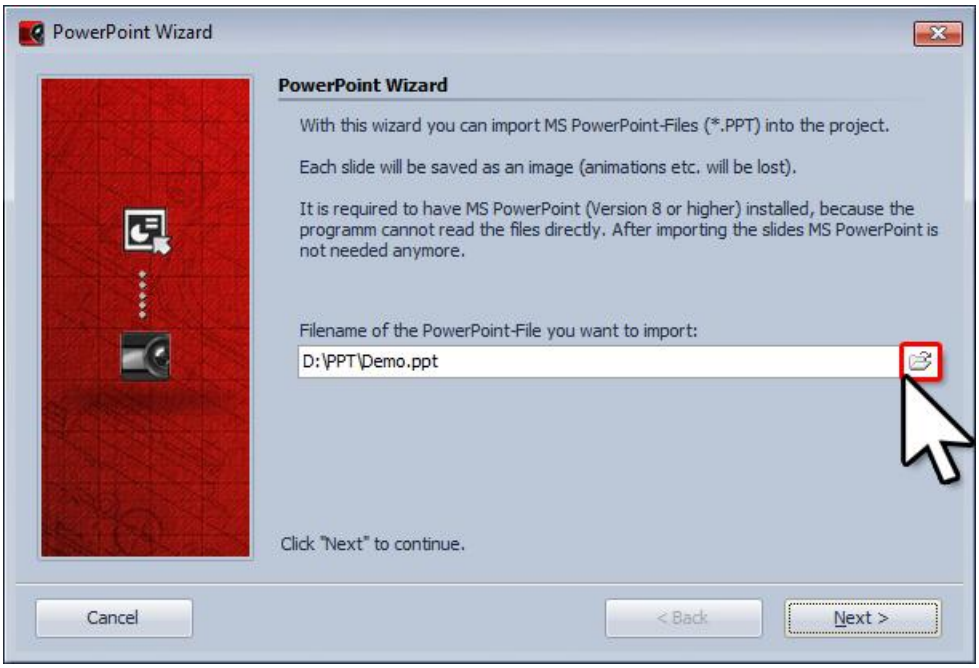
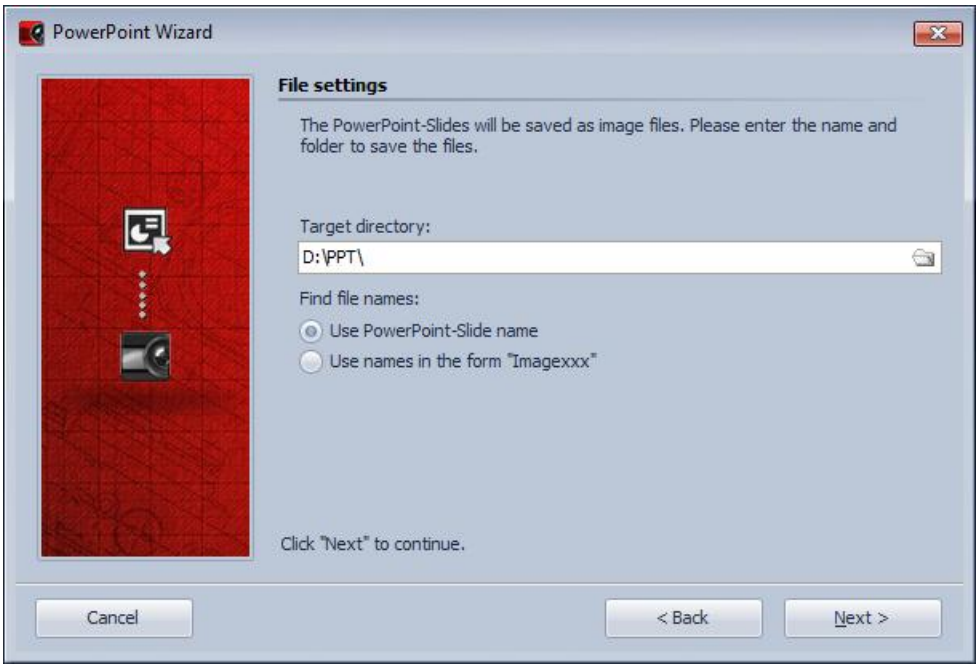


Then click *Next*.

Specify a Directory in which the images should be saved. You can use the slide name as the file name or use the form Imagexxx.



Click *Next*.

Now you can set the image options. Select the desired resolution and the image format. Under *Format options* you can configure additional settings relating to the image format.

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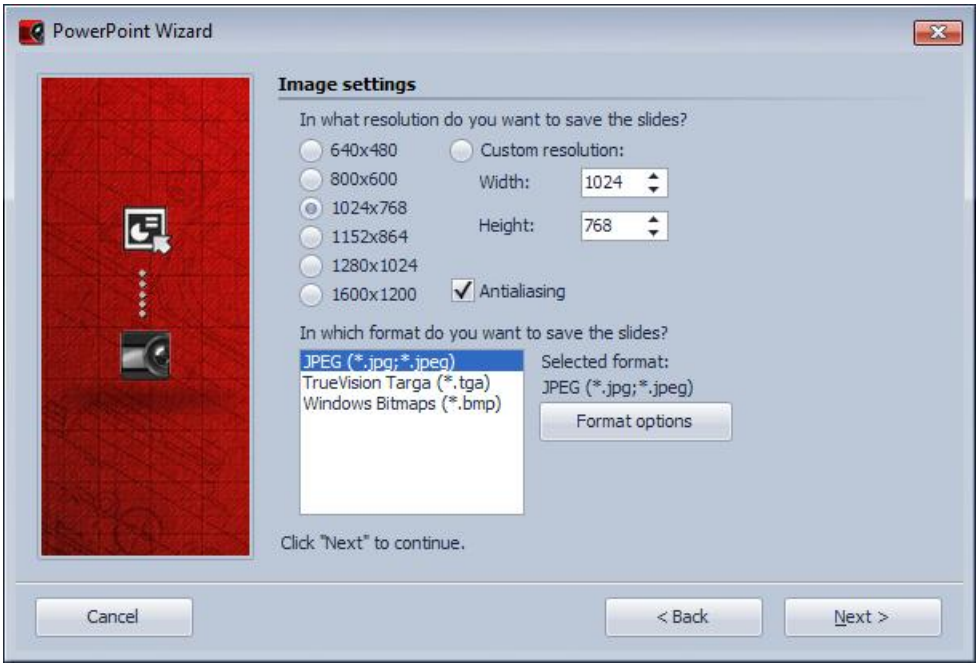
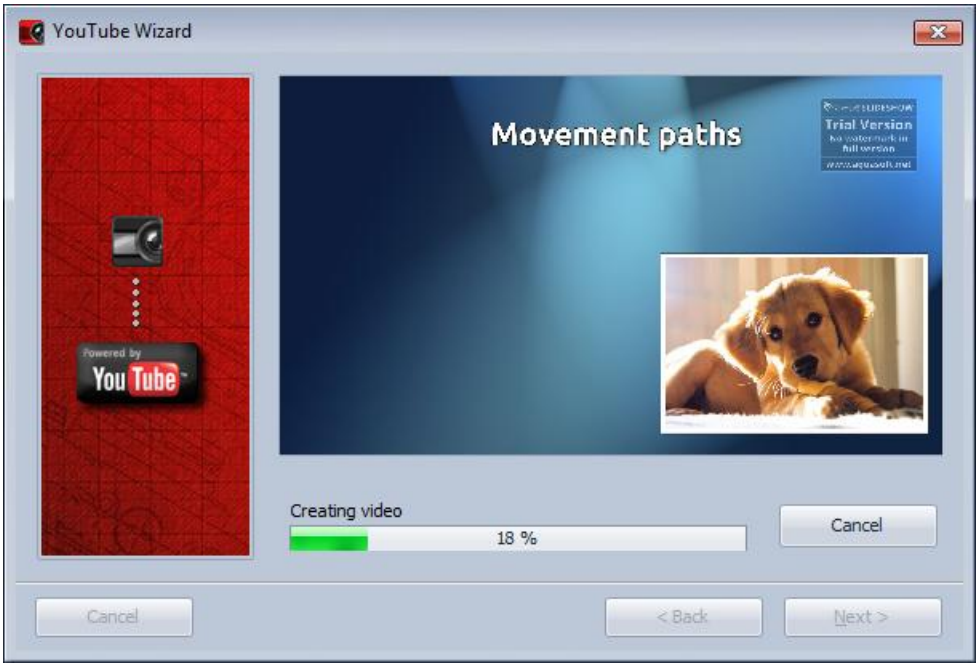


Click *Next* and then click *Import*. The slides are now converted into image files and inserted into your project.

8.6 YouTube Wizard

This wizard allows you to directly upload your presentations to Youtube (http://www.youtube.com). To be able to do this you need an account with YouTube. If you don't have an account the creation of one can be initiated from within the wizard.



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8.7 Video Wizard

In order to show your presentation on the television, you can create a CD/DVD for the DVD player with the Video Wizard. You can access this under *Wizards / Video Wizard*.

An exact description of the wizard can be found in the DVD Player section.

8.8 CD/DVD- and Archiving Wizard

The CD/DVD and Archiving Wizard will be explained extensively in chapter PC-Show.

8.9 Photo Frame Wizard

Using the Photo Frame Wizard you can transmit your project as individual images or as a complete video on a digital photo frame.

Export as separate images

Firstly, specify the resolution of your frame. If you are not sure what resolution your device has, you will generally find details in the corresponding manual or on the manufacturer's web site.

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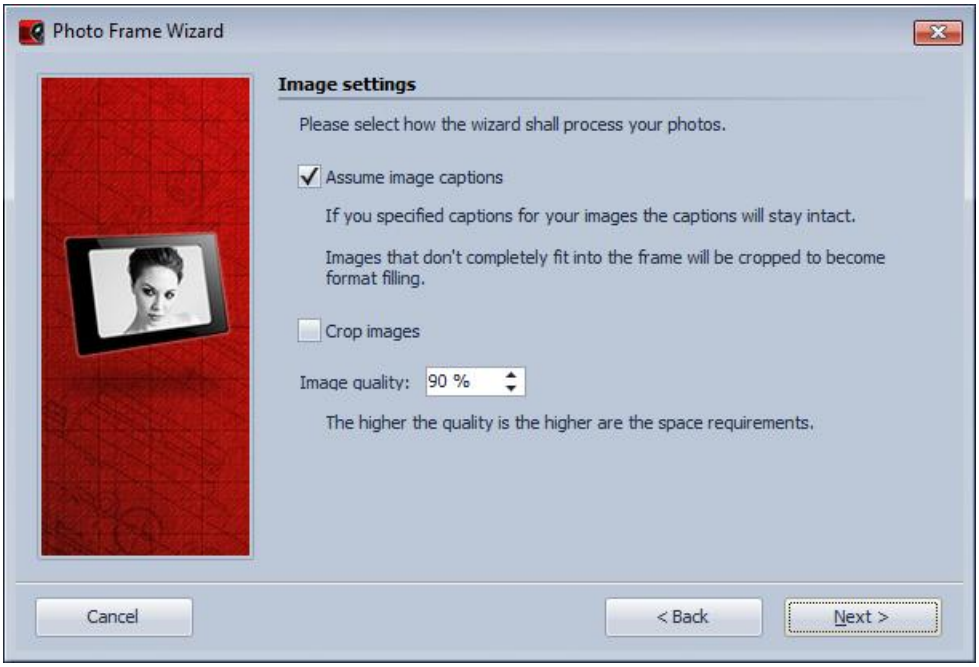
Text can be included with your images, text animations will be dropped, though. The text becomes a static part of the image.

If your images have a different aspect ratio than your photo frame you can use the option *Crop images* to display them full frame.



In the last step select the storage location for your images. This can be the photo frame, a USB stick or a memory card.

Click *Start*. The wizard now computes your images in accordance with the predetermined settings and copies them into the target directory.

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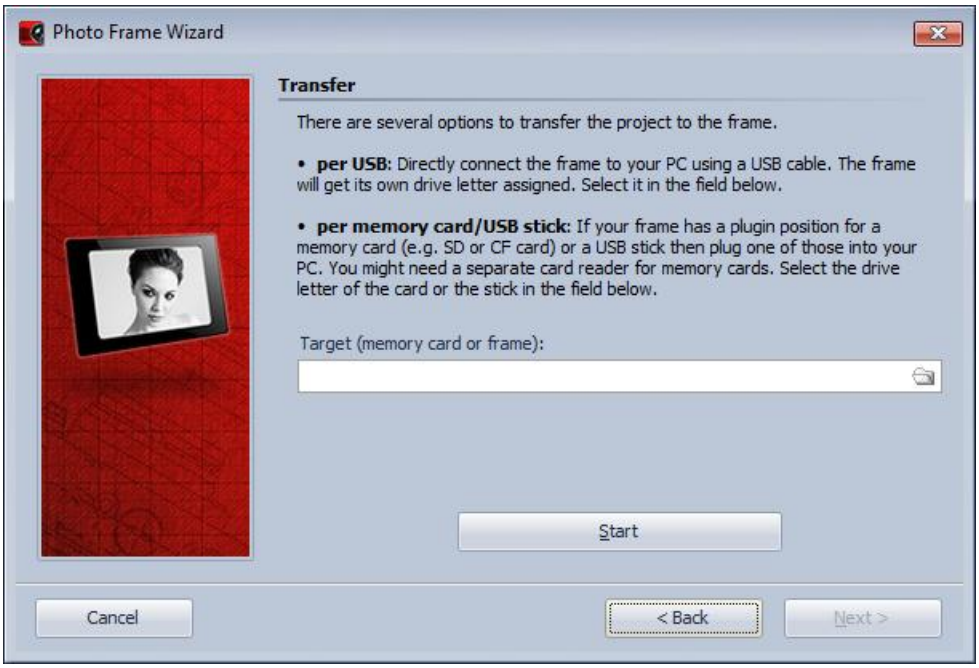

Transmitting a project as a video

If you want to transfer the whole project as a video please verify beforehand that your photo frame supports *Motion JPEG videos*.
This information should be provided in the manual of the photo frame.

In case your project has a different resolution than your photo frame you can now activate the option to correct the aspect ratio and fill the remaining borders with black. This way the images won't get distorted. You can also decide to integrate sound and music into the video, which only makes sense if your photo frame is able to replay them.

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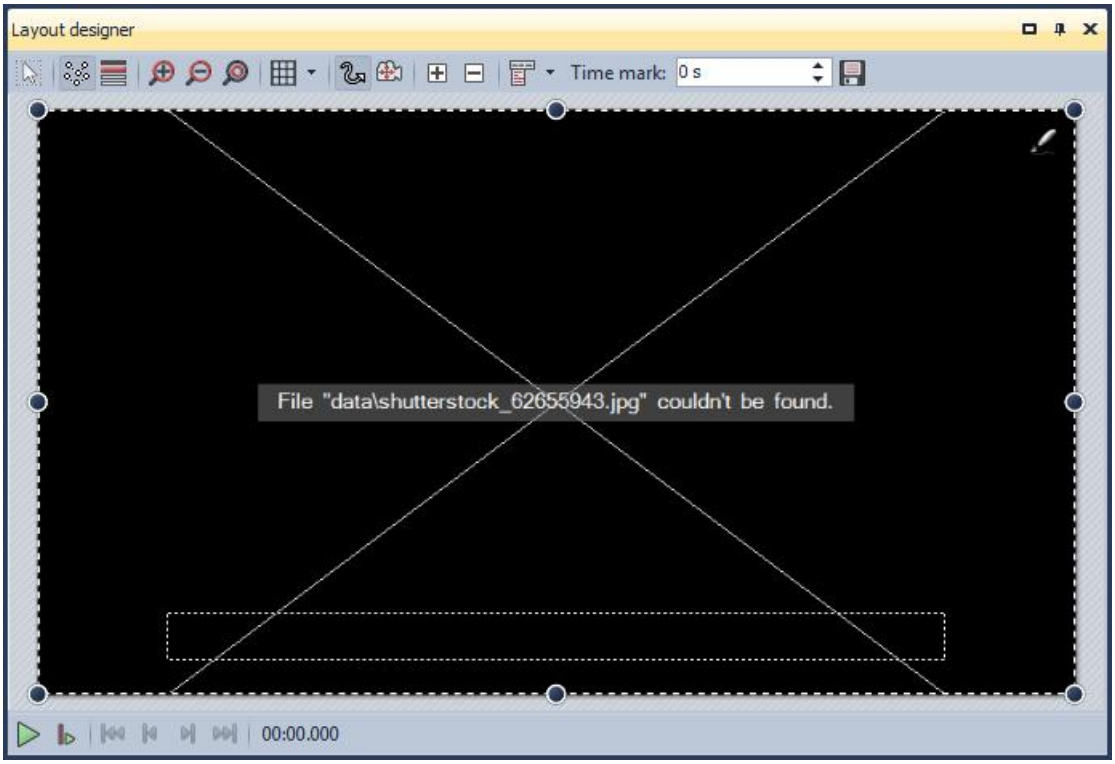
In the last step select the storage location for the video. This can be the photo frame, a USB stick or a memory card.

8.10 Find missing files

AquaSoft Stages only saves links to your images and music which you use in the project. Should you move, delete or rename your images. AquaSoft Stages can no longer access them. You will then see the following notice in the Layout Designer.



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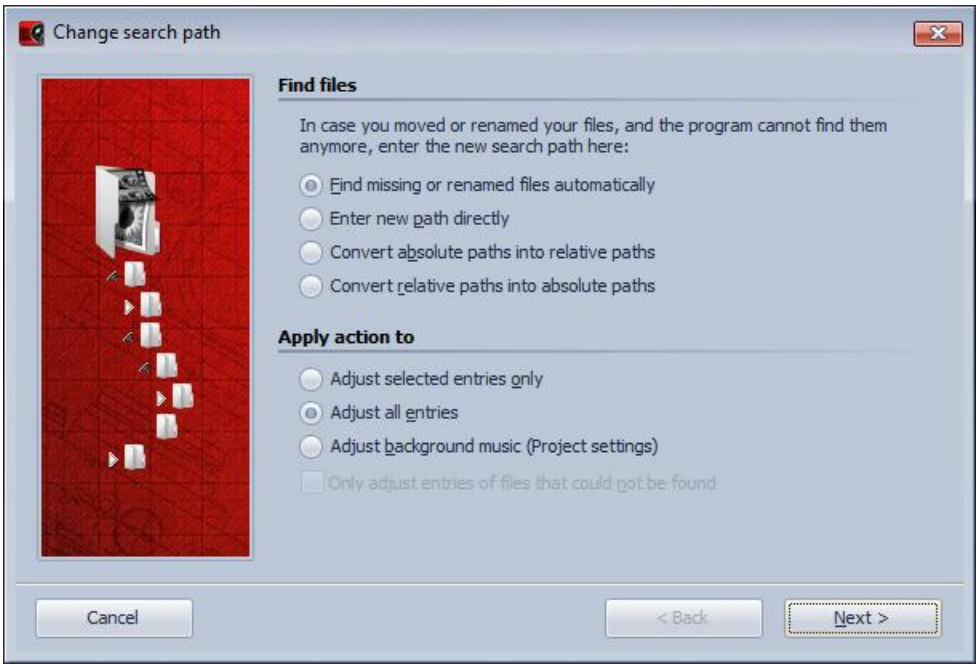
AquaSoft Stages cannot retrieve/recover deleted images.

Under *Wizards / Find files* you can call the Search Path Wizard.



Here you have several search possibilities.

If you are not sure where the files sought are located now, activate the automatic search.

If you know exactly in which directory your images are located, you can also directly specify the path.

If you want to convert the path from absolute (details of paths are saved in their entirety) to relative (details of paths are saved in relation to the location of the ADS file) or vice versa, select the relevant option.

Then specify the entries that should be adapted.

Click Next.

Now select where your images should be sought.

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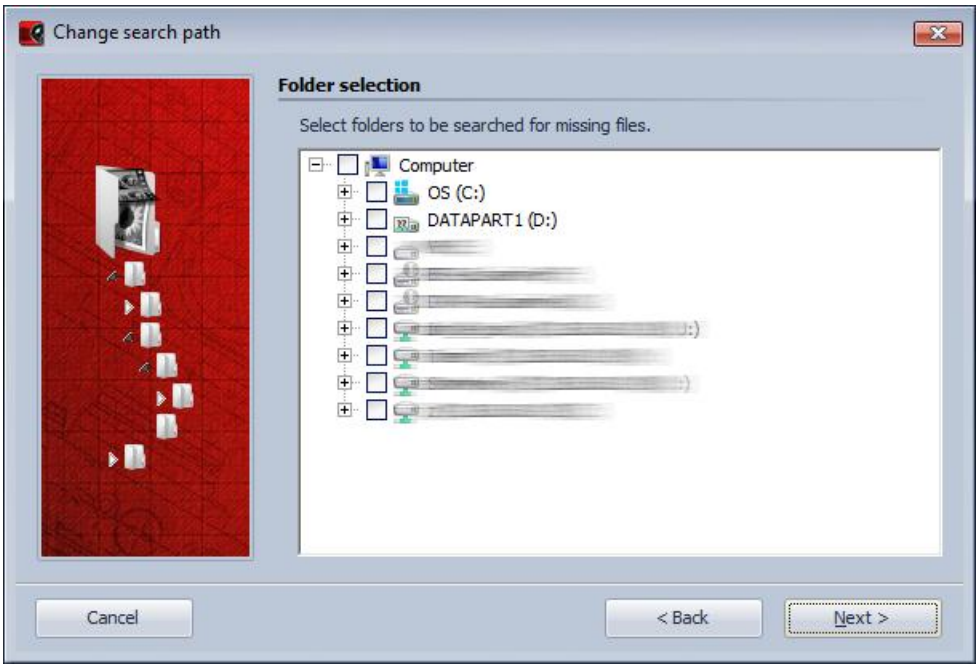
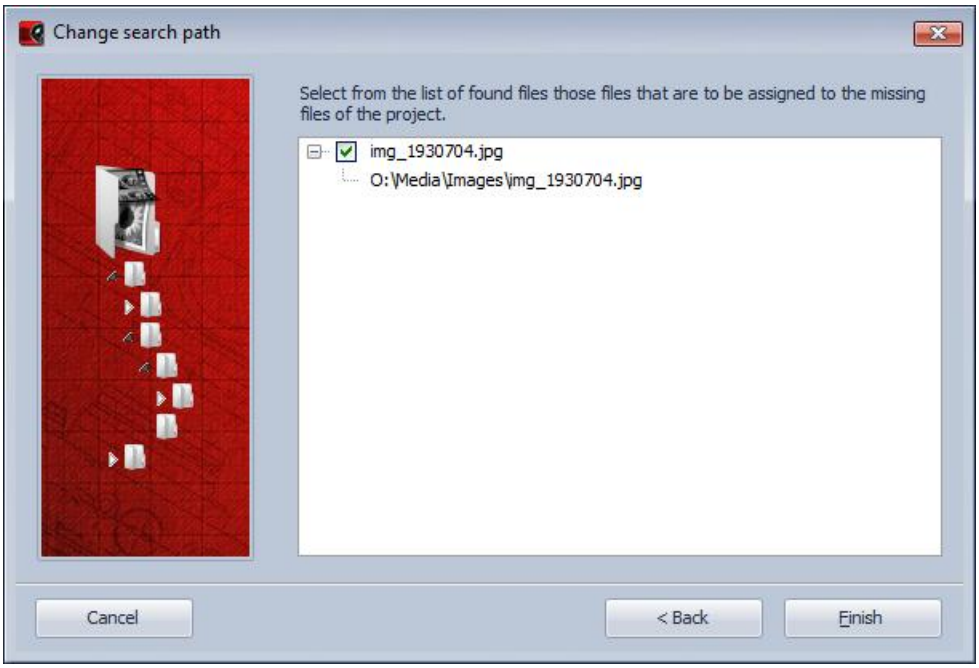


Click ***Next*** and the search starts. Afterwards the results of the search are shown to you.



Click ***Finish*** and your project is updated.

9 Variables

In AquaSoft Stages there is the possibility of having certain image information displayed as a text in the image, e.g. the date taken, the file name or the path to the image. This occurs by means of Variables.

These have to be specified in the format below in the Text field in the Properties of an image:

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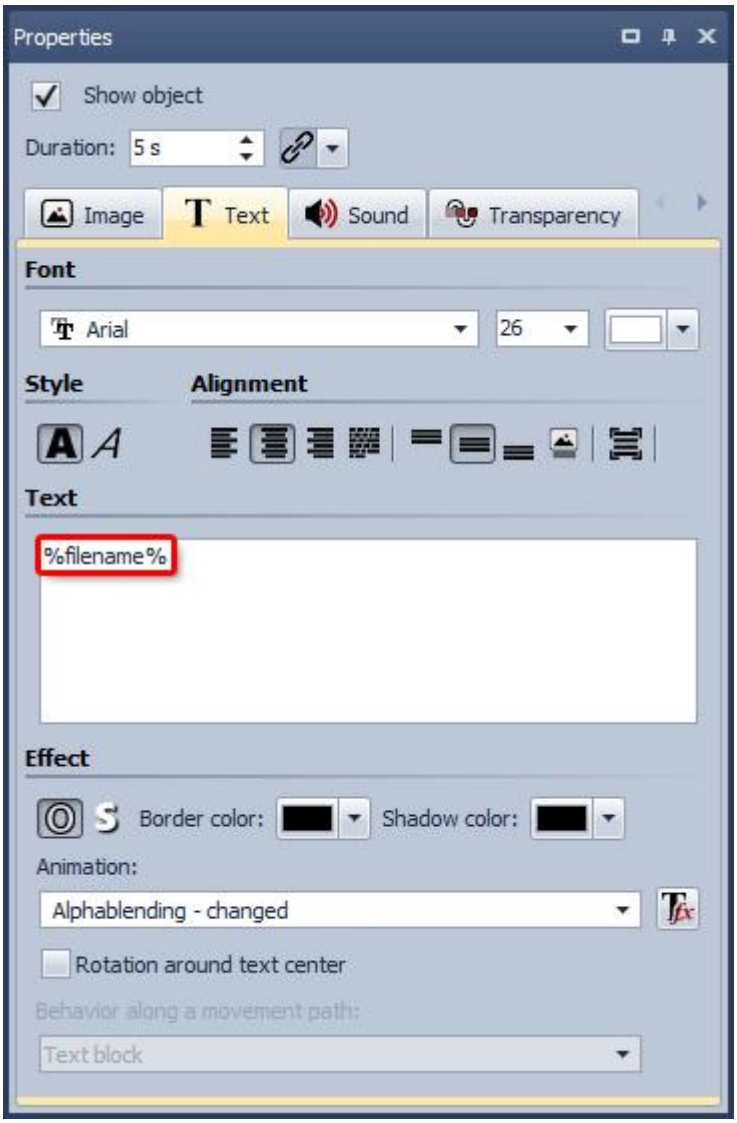

In principle, Variables have to be enclosed between two % signs.

In the Layout Designer you will then see the implementation of the Variables.

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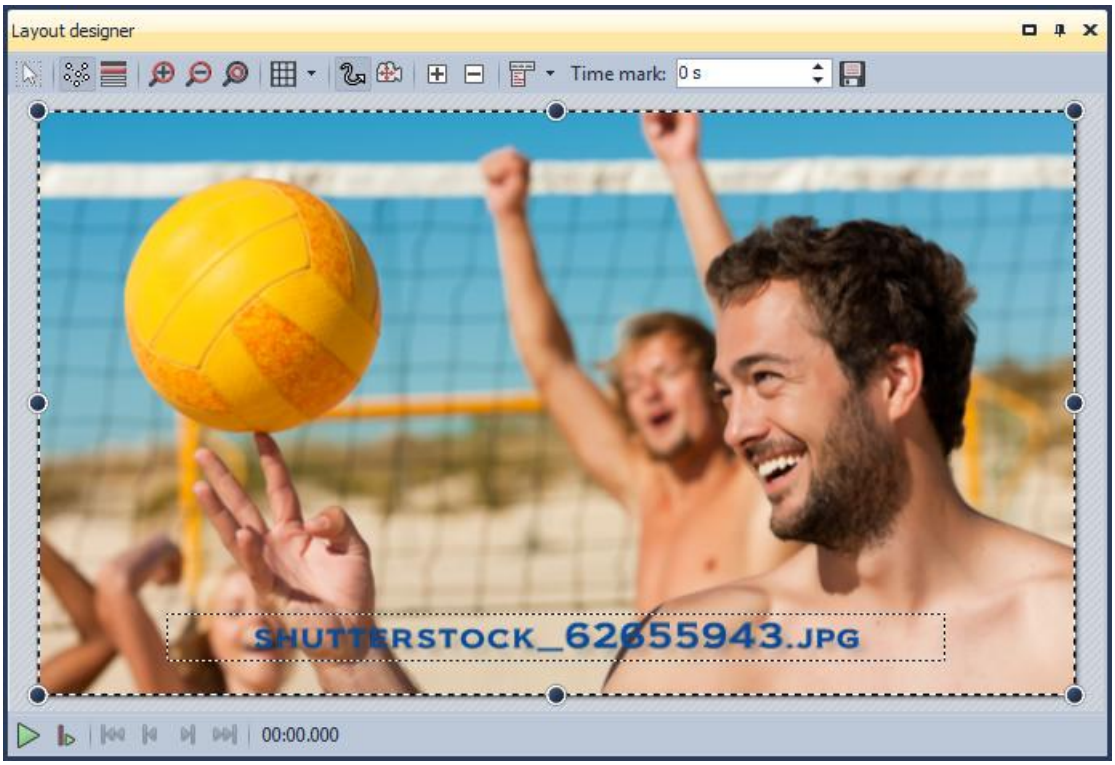

EXIF information on your images can also be included using Variables. In that respect, your image must contain EXIF data.

You can check this by clicking on an image and then having the meta-data displayed under View -> Controls. Should these be empty, your image does not contain this data.

You will find a list of all possible Variables in the program under Tools -> Program settings -> Plug-ins.

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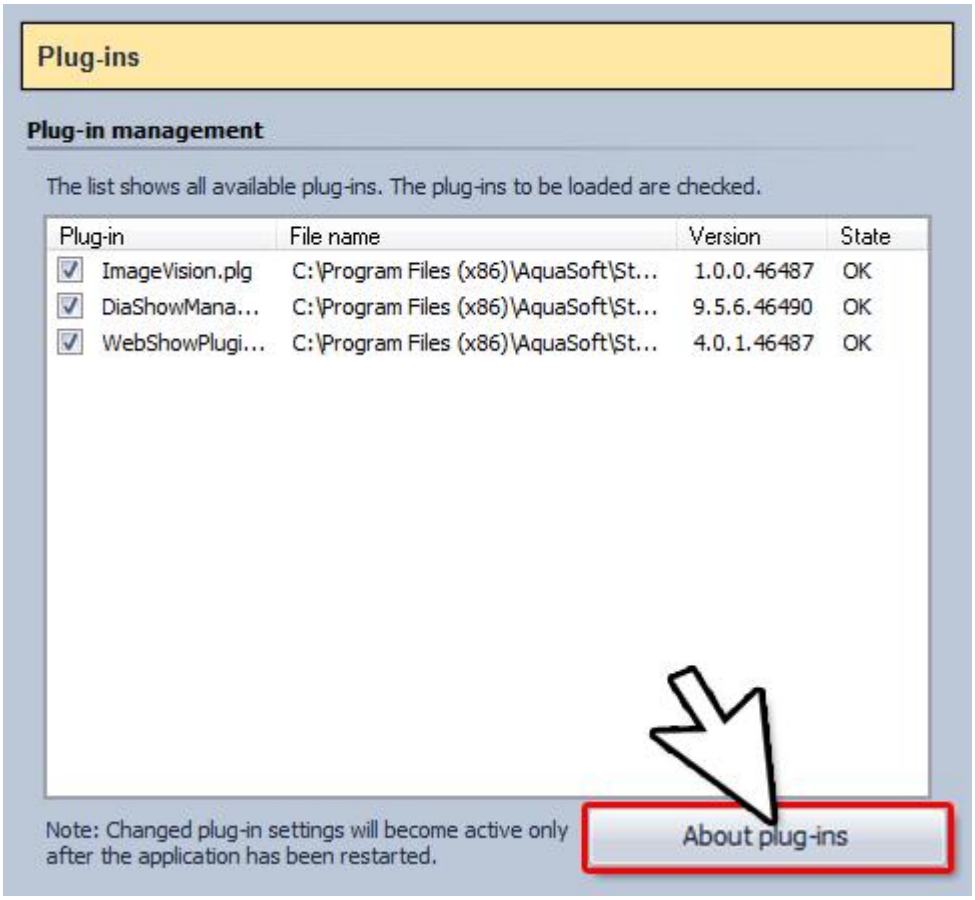
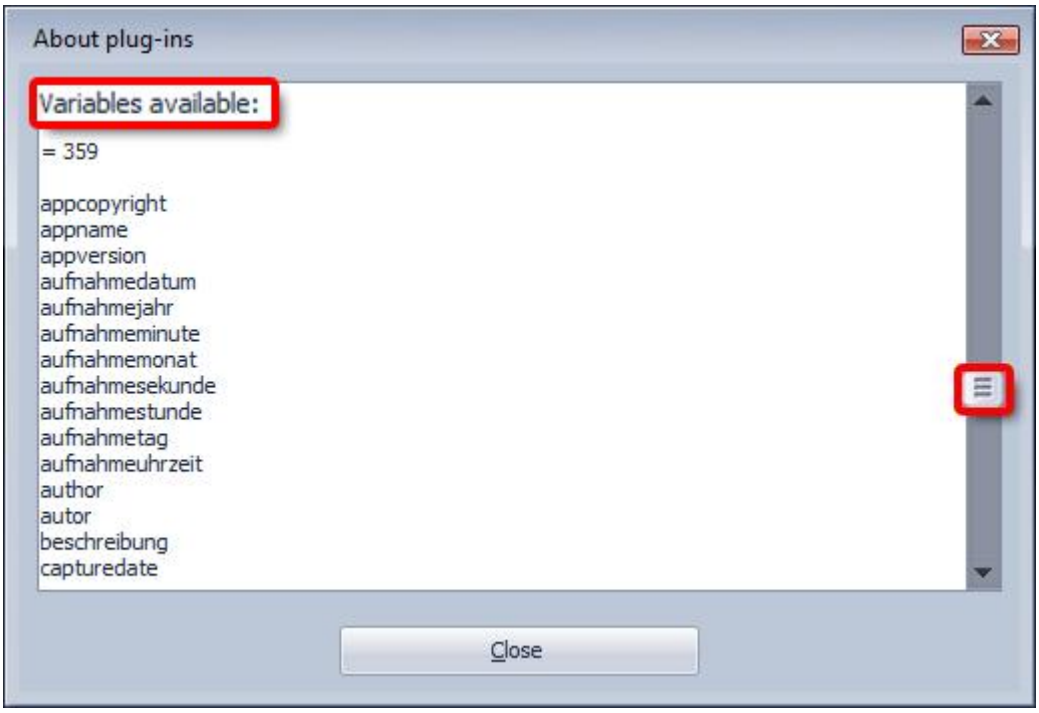


After clicking the About plug-ins button a window is opened, in which the Variables are listed.



You have to scroll down a bit in order to get to the list with the Variables.

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10 Settings

10.1 View settings

In Stages you can choose from different pre-defined views on the main toolbar an under *Workspace*. If you want to add other modules to the current view you can select from the menu under *Workspace / Controls*.

Please have a look at our screencast to learn how to create your own favorite layout. The screencast is available at the following web address:

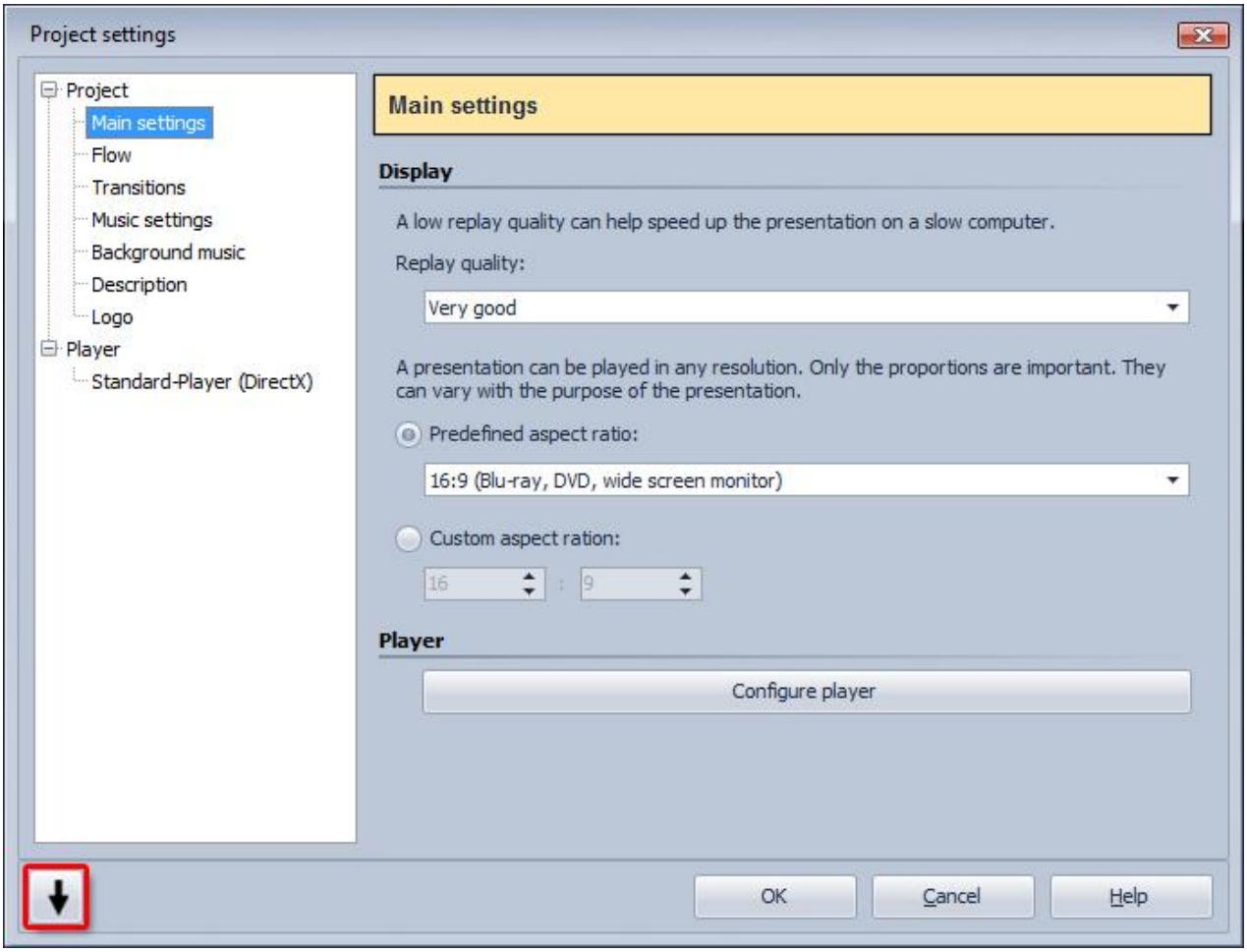
http://aquasoft.de/download/flash/edit_view_cast/ansicht_editieren.html

10.2 Project settings

The project settings can be individually changed for each project.

Under Project / Settings you can access the window for the project settings. You can also access the settings directly via the button in the menu bar.

Basic settings:



Here you can change the Standard exposure time of your images, as well as select a Random playback sequence for your images.

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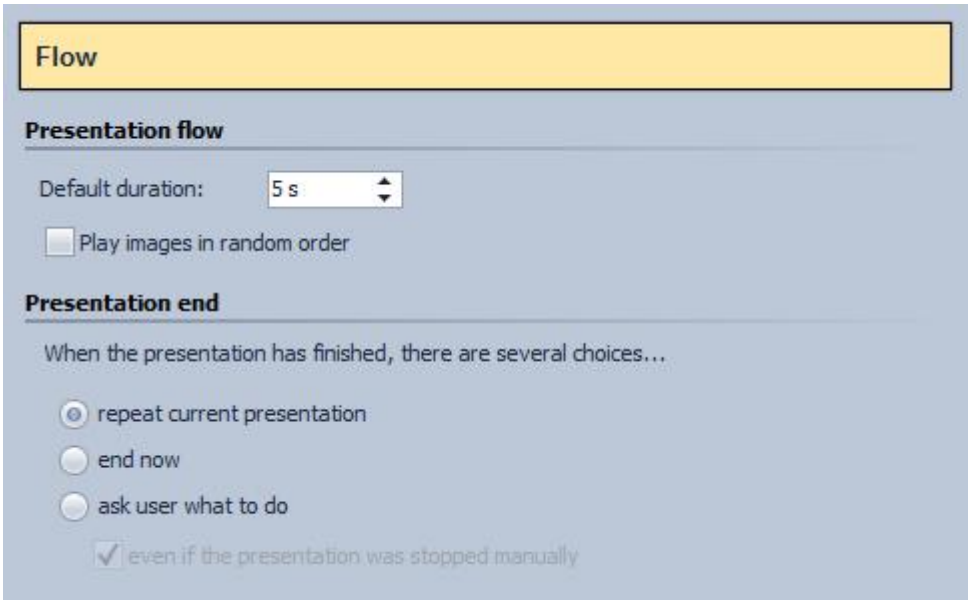
You can adjust the "display quality" according to the performance of your computer here. The higher the quality the higher is the required performance. This setting is of no importance during the creation of the video. It concerns the quality when replaying the show using the AquaSoft Stages Player. If the "display quality" is too high for your PC this can lead to a jerky replay experience of your presentation.

You can likewise set the Aspect ratio of your show here. Should this not correspond to the aspect ratio of your images, you will get edges or you fit your images into the desired aspect ratio.

For the Standard Player (DirectX) a DirectX 9c-compatible graphics card with at least 64 MB memory is required. It is also mandatory that you use the manufacturer's current graphics card driver!

You will find settings for the corresponding Stages Player further on in this section.

Presentation flow:



Here you can change the Default duration of your images, as well as select to Play images in random order.

Presentation end:

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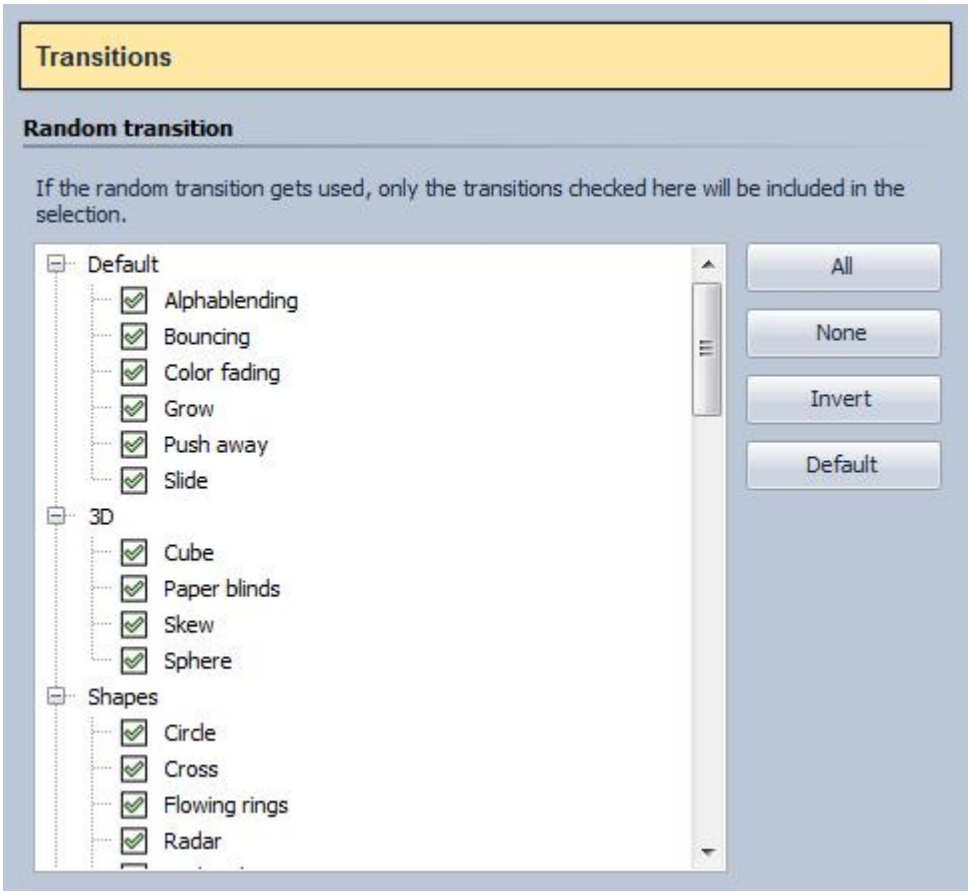
Here you can decide what is supposed to happen at the end of the presentation played back. Do you want the presentation repeat itself or stop after the first run? You can also let the viewer decide.

Transitions:



Here you can select which transitions are supposed to be included in the Random transition. All those with green check marks are included, all those with a red cross are not included.

Music settings:

The music settings are explained in further detail here.

Background music:

The topic of background music is dealt with in detail here.

Description:

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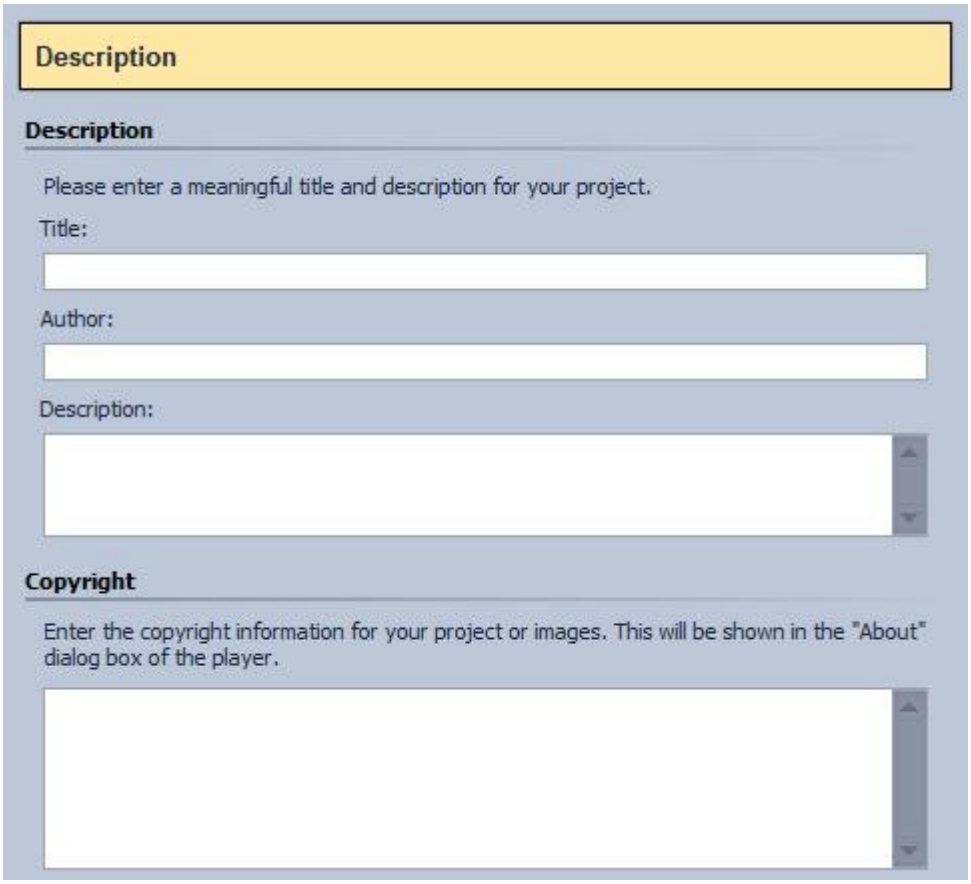
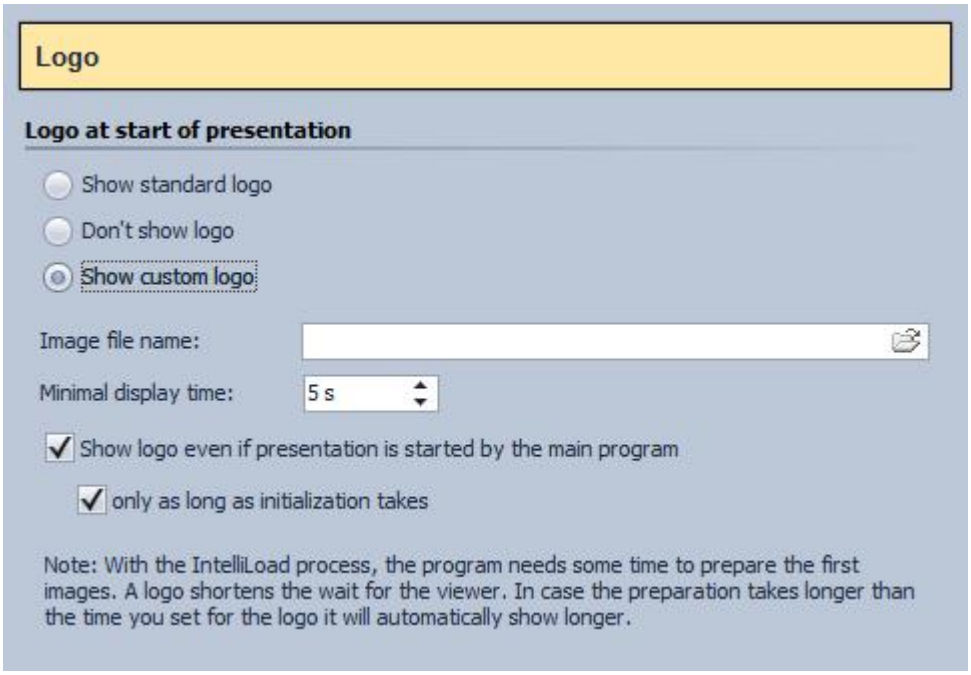


You can individually personalize your project. Here you can specify a title, author and a description of your project.

Logo:



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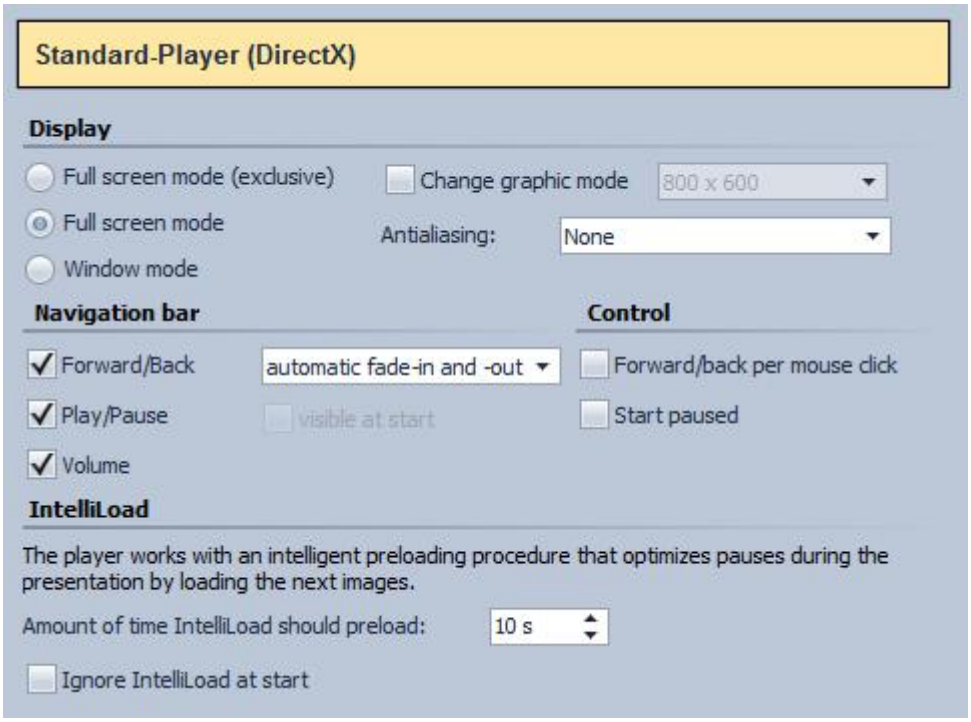
If you want to start your presentation with a Logo you can select and image here. You can also simply omit a logo.

Standard player:



The AquaSoft Stages Player takes on the task of playing back a presentation. Here you can decide the settings for it.

Select here if you want the show to be replayed in full screen or window mode.

Use the settings for Antialiasing to remove ugly artefacts at the edges. The best way to recognize the difference is by rotating a black square in front of a white background and closely watching the edges. If the option is set to Automatic the level with the highest possible quality will be used. The other option cause 2x,4x,8x,16x oversampling of the image, with correspondingly increasing effort. This requires a lot of computing power of the graphics board and can lead to jerkiness at high resolutions and older and cheaper boards. Nonetheless, the gain of quality is, depending on the displayed contents, remarkable. Older graphic boards should be used with the option None.

You can also specify the setting for the Navigation bar, i.e., how and when you want it to be displayed.

Under Control you can select if you want the show to be started automatically after clicking Play or if you want it to wait for an input, i.e., if you want manually control your show. You can also activate the option to control the image change with the mouse.

The IntelliLoad specifies how many seconds of the show should be loaded in advance.

If you want to use the selected settings as default for every new project then click As default. These settings will then be automatically assigned to all future projects. By clicking the button Original settings you can reset all settings to the factory values.

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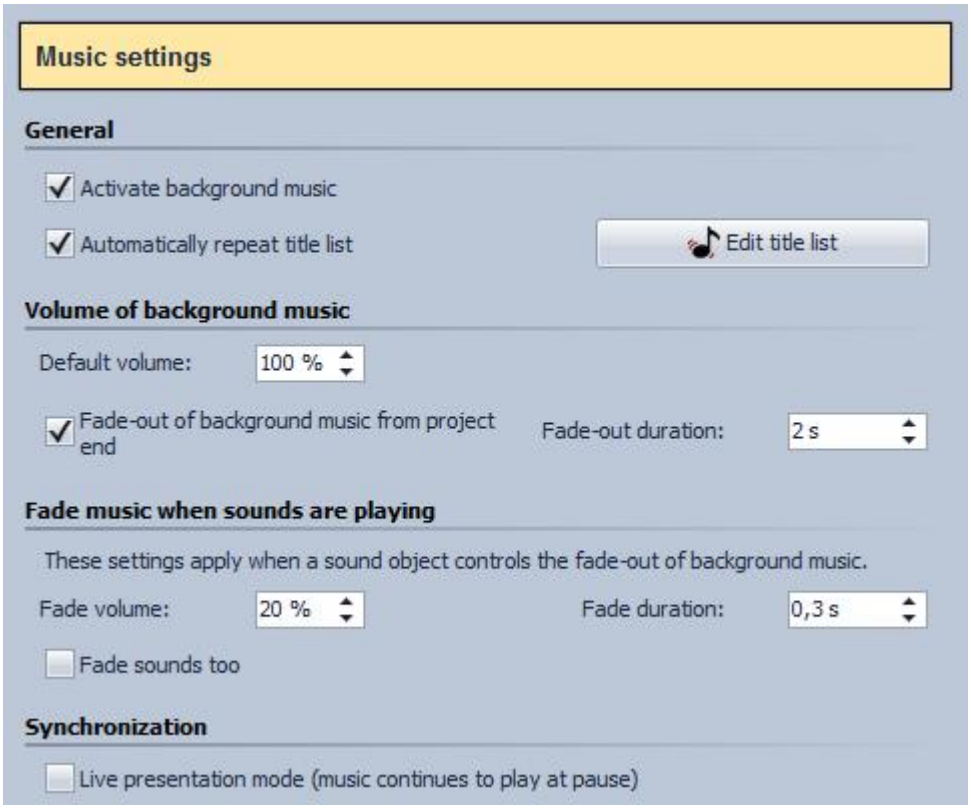
10.3 Music settings

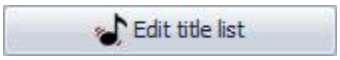
You can reach the music settings via Project / Settings / Music settings.



The Music settings can be set as desired for each project. The standard settings are illustrated.

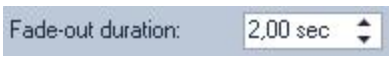
You decide here whether background music is supposed to be included in your project or not.

In the Background music menu you can insert several tracks to provide background music for your show. Here you can decide whether this list should be repeated if all tracks have been played and the project has not yet come to an end.

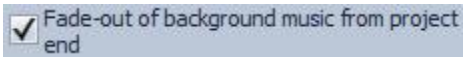


Via this button you can access the Background music menu and can remove or insert tracks there.

Here you can set at what volume the tracks should be played back (100% = full volume).



Here you can specify the length of the fading out.



The background music can be gently faded out towards the end of the presentation or simply broken off.

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If you use Sound objects or have recorded commentaries for your images in your show, it is expedient to fade out the background music when playing back these objects. Specify here to what volume the sound should be faded out.

0% = Fade out completely
100% = Do not fade

Determines over what period of time the music should be faded.

Here you can specify whether the background music should also be faded with included Sound objects.

If you use breaks and continue manually during the show, you can decide whether the music should also be interrupted during an image break, or whether it should continue. If a check mark is placed, the music stops during a break.

10.4 Program settings

The Program settings refer to the basic settings of the program and not to the individual settings for your project. For the project created by you, the project settings are decisive.

Under Extras / Program settings you can access the program settings.

Plugins:

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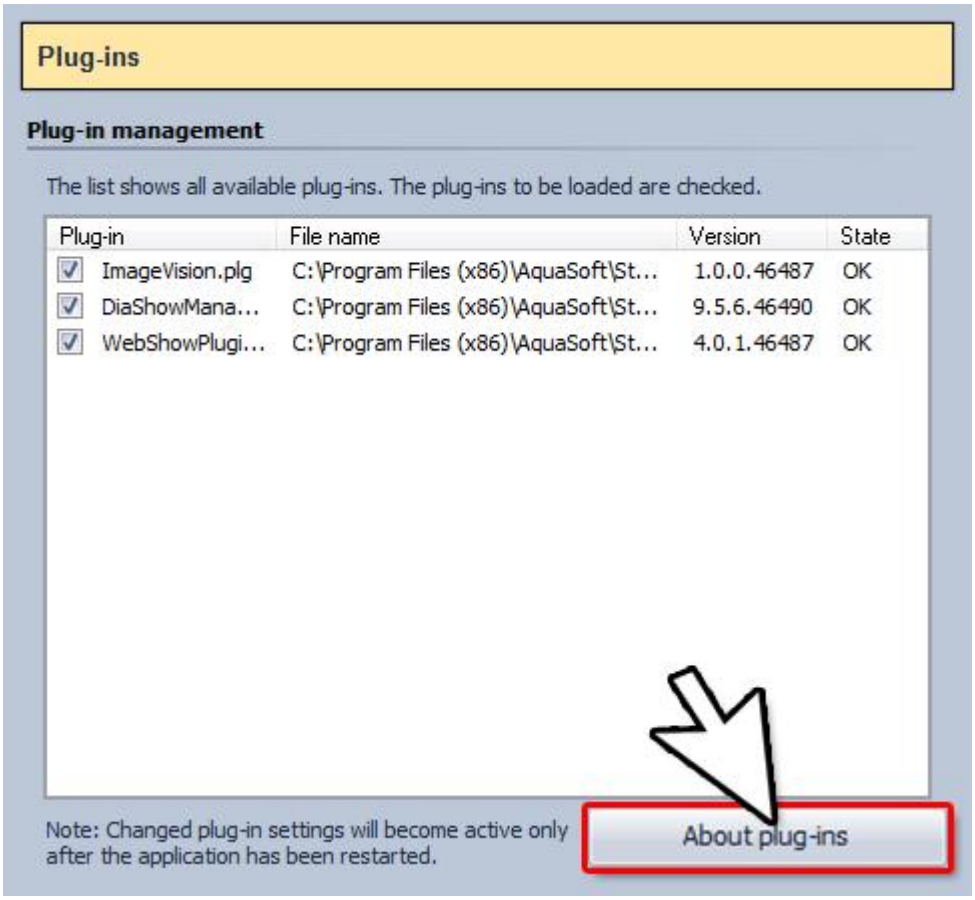
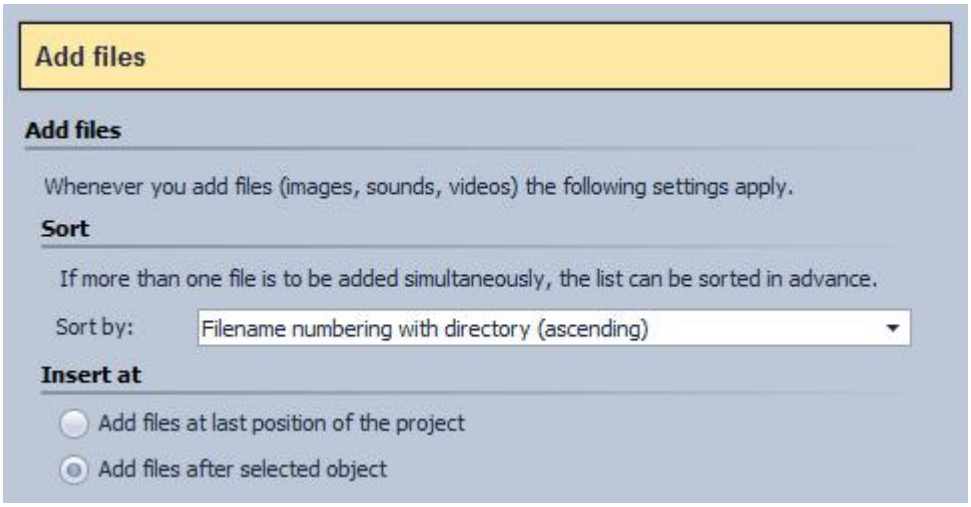


Contains a list of all plug-ins additionally installed which have been installed by additional AquaSoft applications.

Add files:



Here you can determine how files are supposed to be inserted into a project and how they should be arranged in this project.

User interface:

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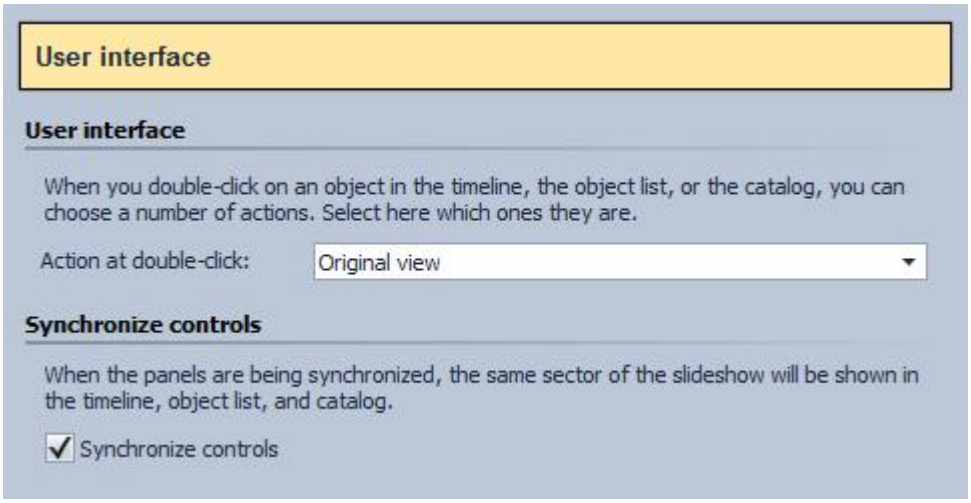
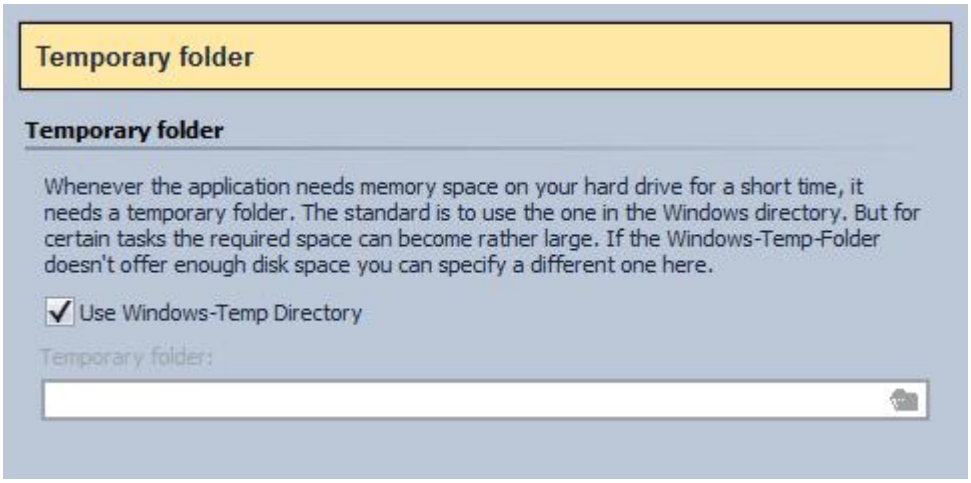


Here you will find additional setting options for the user interface of AquaSoft Stages.

Temporary directory:



AquaSoft Stages from time to time requires temporary disk space on the hard disk. Here you can specify in which directory temporary files may be buffered. A lot off memory is necessary during video creation. If the Temp directory doesn't provide enough space you can specify another directory here.

Language:

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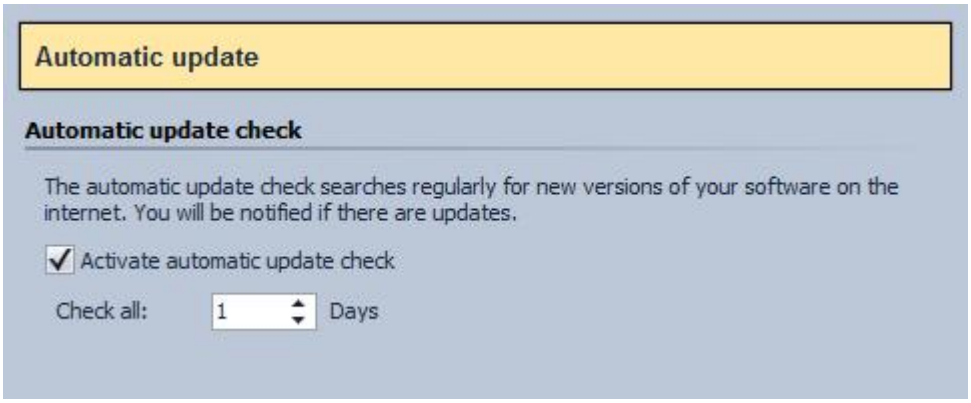
AquaSoft Stages supports several languages, which you can change here.

Automatic update:



Here you can set the intervals at which AquaSoft Stages is supposed to check for updates. This way you always stay up to date. An Internet connection is required for the update check.

Record sound:

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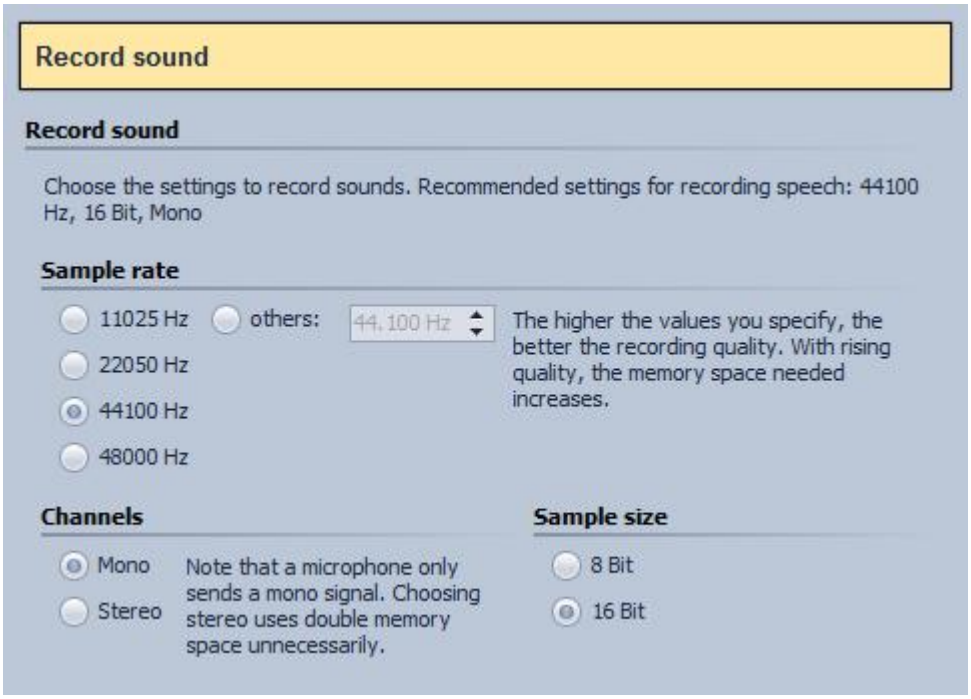
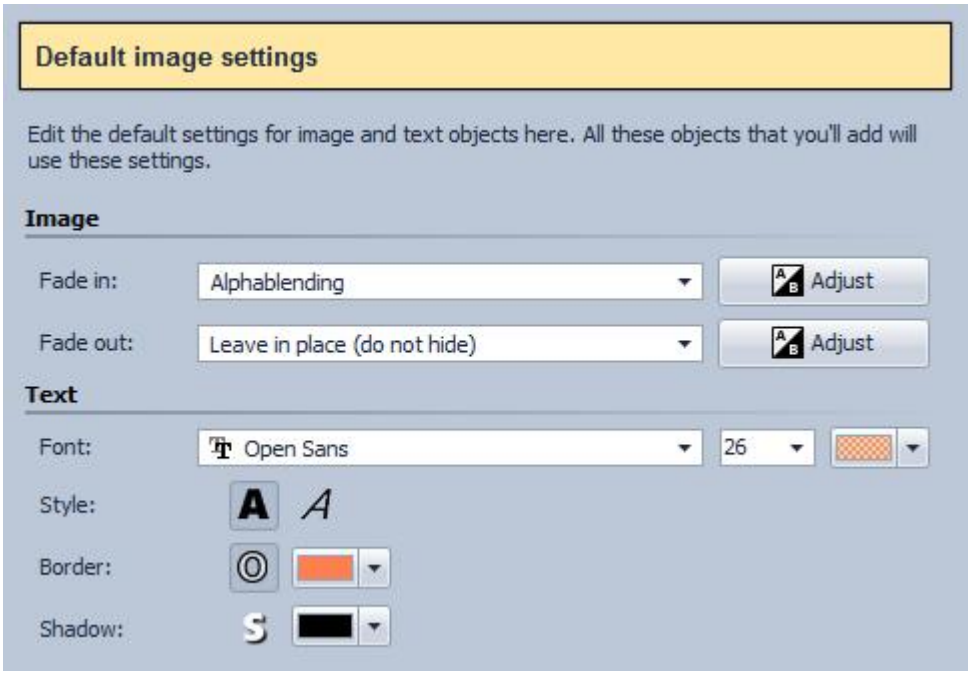


Using the Sound Wizard you can record spoken commentaries for your images by means of a microphone connected to your PC. Configure the recording settings here.

Default image settings:



Here you can determine which settings will be used for newly inserted image and text objects.

Confirmation:

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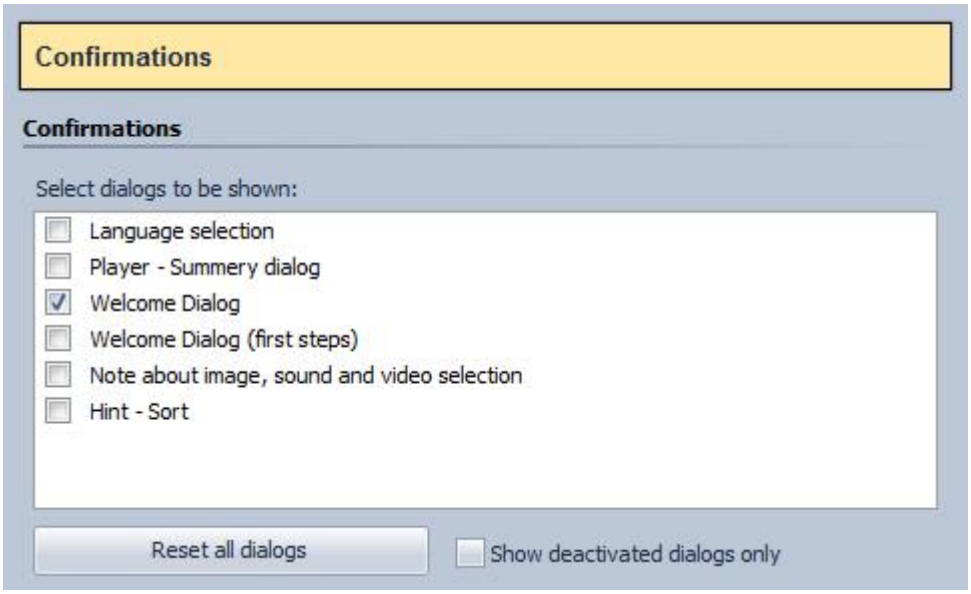
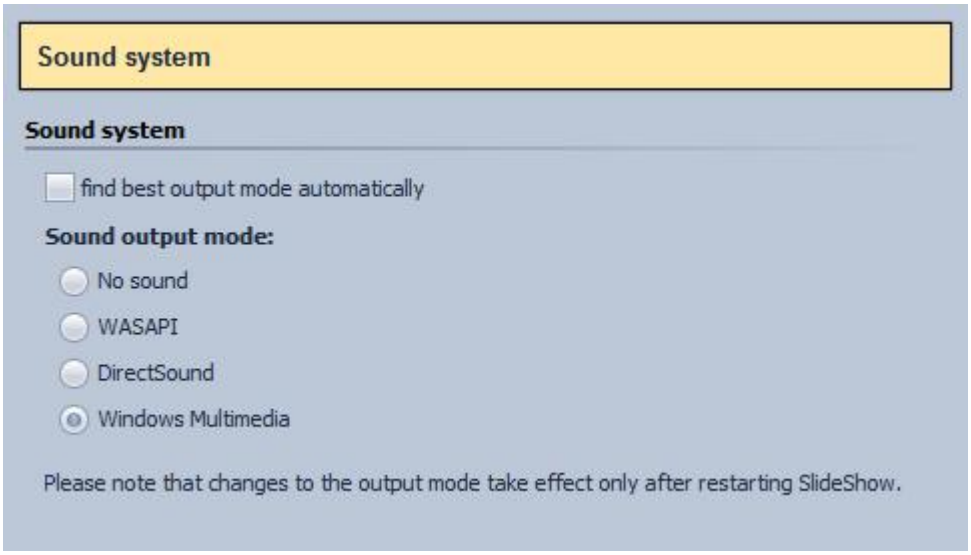


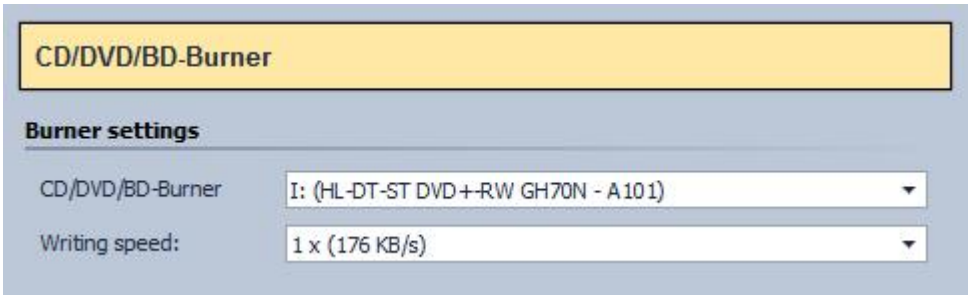
Select the dialogs to be shown here.

Sound system:



The Sound system takes on the task of playing back the music included in the project. Should you have irregularities when playing back the music, set the setting to Windows Multimedia here and then restart AquaSoft Stages.

CD/DVD/BD writer:



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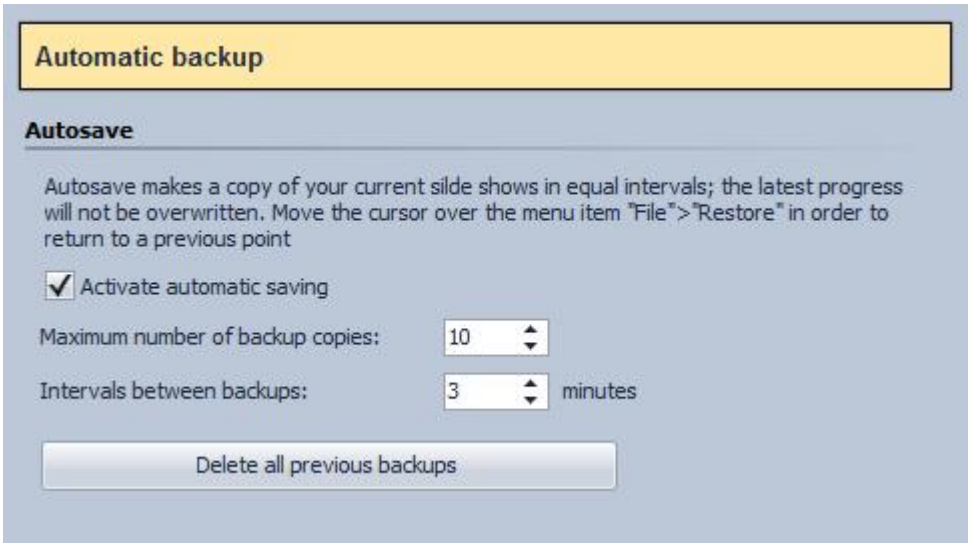
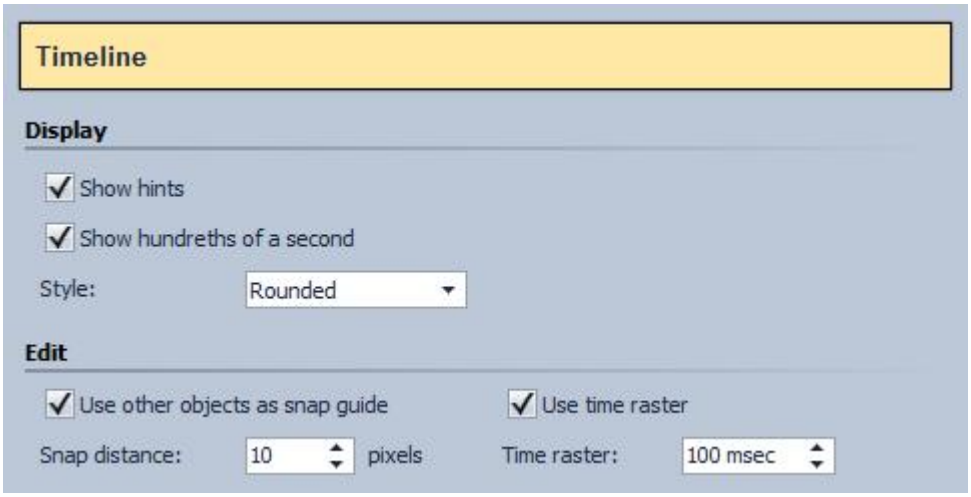
Here the recognized CD/DVD/BD writers are shown.

Automatic saving:



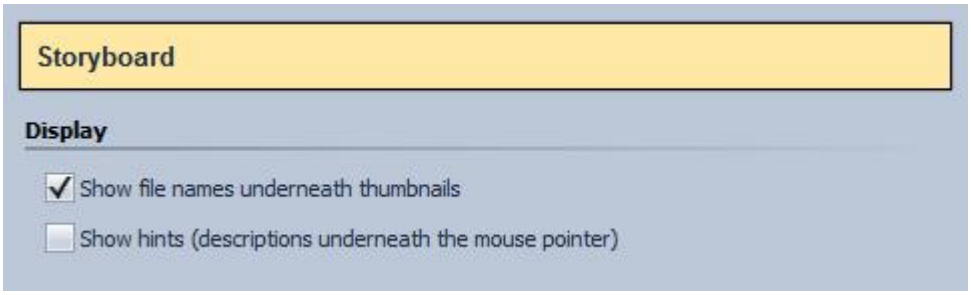
Here you can determine whether backup copies should automatically be generated while you are working on a project. Under File / Open / Restore you can access an earlier status of your work.

Timeline:



Configure the settings of the Timeline here.

Storyboard:



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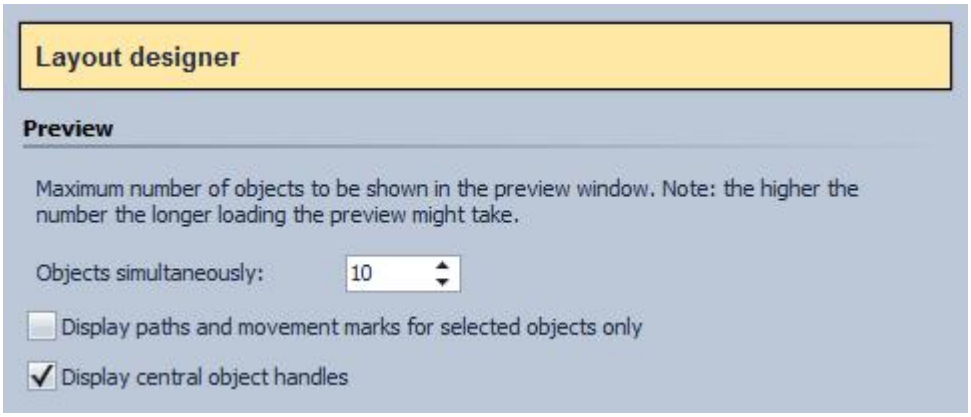
Configure your settings for the Storyboard.

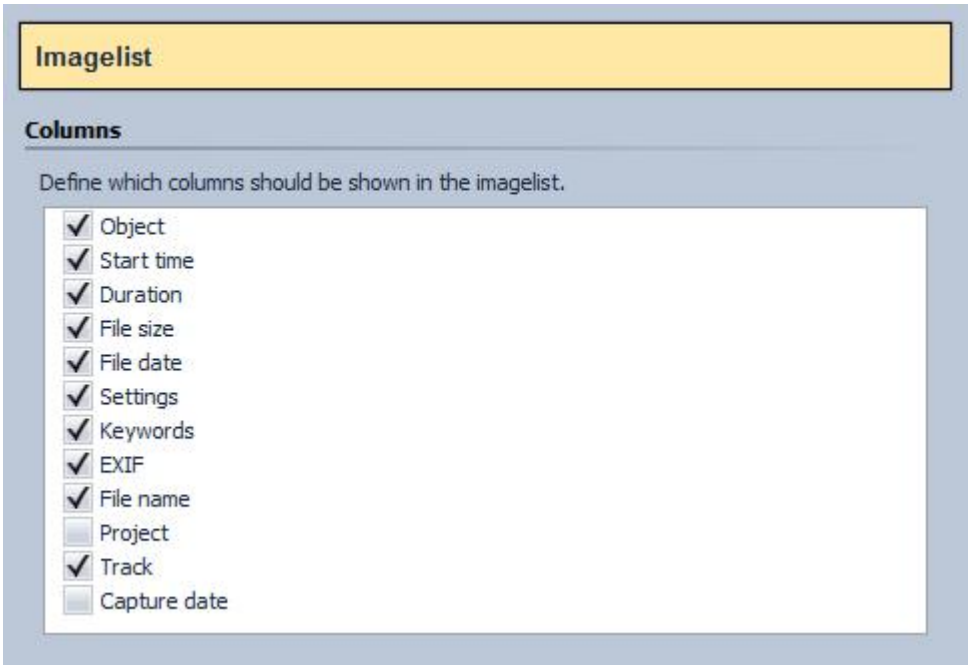
Layout Designer:



You can configure settings for the Layout Designer here.

In a submenu, you can determine more precisely how the Grid should look like and how the objects are to respond to the Grid.

Image list:



Here you can select which information should be displayed in the Image list.

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11 Technical information

11.1 Common preparations

Directories

In order to achieve a good result quickly and effectively, you can make some minor preparations in advance. AquaSoft Stages saves an image list and, in that respect, keeps an eye on all directories specified.

File formats

AquaSoft Stages supports, inter alia, the following image formats.

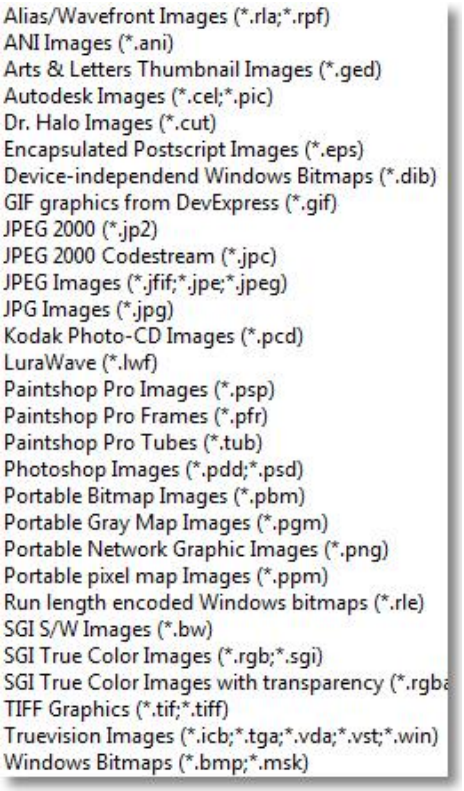

Image formats

Sound formats

Video formats

Please note that MID and RMI files cannot be used when creating the video with the Video Wizard.

Only use unencrypted music tracks for your presentations. For legal reasons, AquaSoft Stages does not support the use of music tracks which have been encrypted by DRM or similar procedures.

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11.2 Installation

To install AquaSoft Stages we suggest at least the following system setup. More resources will lead to higher quality playback:

Hardware

CPU - 2 GHz, Multicore processor recommended
Graphics board - DirectX 9c (must support shader model 2)
RAM - 2GB
Harddrive - 150 MB (burning (S)Video-CDs may need space up to 1,2 GB for a short time, burning Video-DVDs may take up to 10 GB temporarily)
CD/DVD/BD-burner - (optional)

Operating system

Vista, Windows 7, WIndows 8

32bit as well as 64bit systems are supported.

11.3 Full screen mode with different screen resolution

You can modify the graphic mode for the full screen display in the player settings. When switching the screen resolution Windows can only assign a fixed or no frame rate at all. Since we can't know your graphics card/monitor combination we omitted the assignment of a fixed frame rate. This was done to prevent any danger for your monitor. Windows automatically switches to one of the possible modes, which you can change yourself. (see *Control panel / Display / Settings*)

This hint is only of interest if you want to work with a modified full screen mode. The problem does not exist in window mode.

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12 Ordering AquaSoft Stages

The easiest way to order a product by AquaSoft is to visit our Online Shop. Here you can always find the newest offers and also bundles (combinations of several products), which you can save a lot of money with. In addition you'll receive the newest updates.

13 AquaSoft

13.1 If you have problems

The AquaSoft-homepage offers software on the topics of education, image editing and image management as well as further shareware and freeware for download.

Visit our homepage at www.aquasoft.net. You will find downloads, FAQ, forums and information on our products.

If you have trouble with an AquaSoft product or questions, criticism, praise, please proceed as follows:

- Check the manual or the according help file.
- Try finding an answer in the FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions).
- Visit the respectivee forum. There users can exchange experiences and can ask questions. Write your own entry. Sometimes it is easier for another user to understand the question than for a whole team of developers - and the answer might come quicker, too.
- Only after those steps didn't succeed, write or call us. We take your suggestions as important help, but we also need time to advance the software.
- The contact email address is: info@aquasoft.de

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AquaSoft Stages - Help

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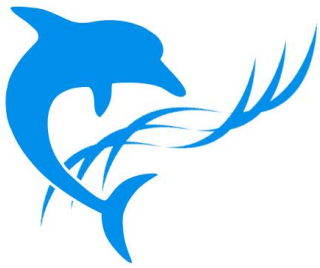
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