

These two projects should give an idea how animated "sprites" can be used as particle textures. In this case we've chosen to create a swarm of butterflies with shadows, using Particle World. Thanks to the Texture Time control it's possible to give the animated butterflies, textured on the particles, a time offset to give them more individual motion as they "fly". Texture Time has been set to From Start, which will "play" the animation from the animation's start frame on particles as they're born over time.

P Real Butterfly:

1) First we created the "C Butterfly" comp, 160x160, and added Layer 1, butterfly wing, from butterfly.psd to it. We scaled down the wing to fit the comp and named it "Left Wing". Then we duplicated "Left Wing", flipped the copy horizontally and named it "Right Wing" and we positioned both wings side by side. Then we added Layer 3, butterfly body, from butterfly.psd. We scaled it down and positioned it to match the wings.

2) Then we tilted all three layers 35 degrees by changing their X-orientation.

3) Next we added a wiggle expression to Left Wing layer for Y-rotation. Then we linked the Y-rotation for the Right Wing layer to the Left Wing layer, using the pick whip, and changed it to negative by adding a "-" in the new expression for Right Wing.

4) Then we added a Light and selected Spot for Light Type. We positioned the light to light up both wings as they're flat and put the Left Wing in shadow as it rotates upwards.

5) Next we add a Null Object, to which we add a wiggle expression for the X and Y position and the Z-rotation. Then we parent the three butterfly parts and light to that Null Object.

6) Now we created a new comp, "C Main". In "C Main" we first created a new Solid, named it "PW Butterflies", and then we added "C Butterfly", and turned off the visibility for "C Butterfly". Then we applied Particle World to "PW Butterflies" and selected Textured Disc for particle Type, and selected the "C Butterfly" comp as texture layer and set Texture Time to From Start. We're using Textured Disc because you can set randomness to particles' initial rotation, using the Initial Rotation control, and you can also control the rotation speed, using the Rotation Speed control. We set very low values for both controls. Then we changed the Birth and Death colors to white to get the original colors of the butterfly and we keyframed Birth Rate and the Producers' X-position. Other controls that we changed values for were Velocity, Inherit Velocity, Gravity, Extra, Extra Angle, Birth and Death Size, all to get the look of the animation we were after.

7) Then we duplicated the "PW Butterflies" layer and named it "PW Shadow". In the Options dialog for Particle World, we selected Render Settings and set the particles to render Above Floor and Projected on Floor to create the shadow. We set down particles Max Opacity and we changed the Transfer Mode to Black Matte.

8) We added some Box Blur to the "PW Shadow" layer.

9) Lastly we created a new solid and applied Ramp for the background.

P Butterfly:

This project is more or less identical to "P Real Butterfly", but we've created the butterfly using solids and we've only used wiggle expressions for the wings rotation.