

Piranesi is an exceptional computer software that allows users to create single image renderings. These images can be photo-realistic or similar to traditional commercial art such as water colours, pen and ink, tempura etc...the possibilities are infinite. Its ability to incorporate entourage with depth and add artistic effects and fills without masking are unsurpassed. SketchUp models lend themselves particularly well to creating the geometry needed for an artist to create stunning works with Piranesi. Piranesi is not in competition with 2D visualization programs; **it is an art medium** where each artist creates unique images and over time develops their own style.

The following tutorials are the methods one artist uses to create “water colour” effect renderings.

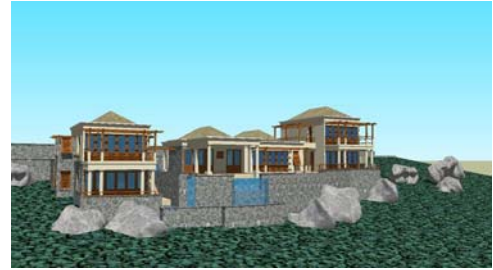
1. Ensure that your Sketch Up model is complete and with all materials applied; this will assist in the Piranesi painting process. Spending time creating detailed models will provide opportunities to capitalize on during the rendering process in Piranesi.
2. When your model is complete compose your view to be rendered with an expectation of what the final rendering will look like. Pay attention to shadows, depth and highlighting points of interest. Generally speaking, renderings with the subject slightly off center are more dynamic and with the subject directly in the center of the view.
3. The checklist prior to exporting and .epx files is:
 - a. Turn off “display edges” in the “Styles” dialog box under the “Edit” tab. Natural objects don’t have lines at every edge or corner. Shadows and subtle changes in colour will indicate to the viewer where the edges or transitions are. You can re-paint the edges in Piranesi if needed during the rendering process.
 - b. Turn on shadows and adjust to create drama in the image. Ensure the subject is primarily in direct sun with the shadows falling to the sides and/or back.
 - c. SketchUp is usually displayed with the camera set in “Perspective” mode. As an artist, decide if the camera option “Two-Point Perspective” creates a better view.
 - d. Note that your view cannot be changed once exported and the axis will not be displayed in Piranesi.
4. Exporting to a Piranesi .epx file:
 - a. Select the pull down “File, Export, 2D graphic” in SketchUp. This will open up a dialog box.
 - b. Within this box, designate the new file name and destination using standard Microsoft Windows conventions. Select the “Export Type” and pick “Piranesi Epix (*.epx) option.
 - c. Pick the “Option” button to enter into the parameters for this .epx file.
 - d. It is recommended to un-check the “use view size” box and input a width of 4800 pixels, the height in pixels will automatically adjust. This number of 4800 pixels will yield a 300 dpi image on an 11x17 (A3) page with a ½” border all around (16 inches x 300 pixels per inch = 4800 pixels width for this .epx file). This file size also prints well on 24”x36” posters (A1). This pixel number works for most cases, you can adjust as needed.
 - e. Ensure the “Export Edges, Export Textures and Export Ground Plane” boxes are checked.
 - f. Pick the “Okay” button and then the “Export” button. This will generate the exported .epx file to be used in Piranesi.

5. Generating the Piranesi rendering:
 - a. Open the .epx file in Piranesi using the “File, open” pull down. You will now see exactly what you exported from SketchUp.
 - b. Start by adding the sky fill, “Tweaking” this texture for best fit and effect. This sets the tone for the entire image and generally gives the direction the painting techniques such as water colour, photo realistic, etc.
 - c. Add entourage such as people, trees, vegetation, new textures and text. Note that Piranesi’s sizes the objects in relation to their location in the image. Entourage placed closer to the front are automatically bigger than those placed farther to the back. As an artist, place the objects to compose the scene drawing the eye towards the main subject.
 - d. Some of the most valuable tools in Piranesi are the ability to Fade, Overlay and adjust transparency of the objects you are placing or filling in the image and the ability to selectively control which elements are affected using the “Locks.”
 - e. Once the image is embellished, save a copy and then pick the “Re-Render” button. This will prepare the image for the artistic rendering techniques by combining all your entourage into the original image. **This step is essential.**
 - f. Fill the entire image with the “Global Fill” paint bucket and all locks off. Your image will temporarily disappear behind a curtain of white (or any colour and/or texture you pick). This will set you up to restore your image and apply painterly effects. I prefer pure white as it lends itself well for incorporation into presentations and brochures.
 - g. Select a brush (Sponge Brush 3) with a large diameter (750 pixels) and set the “Render Action” button to “Restore” with a “Blend” amount of 5%.
 - h. Making slow and patient progress, selectively pick on the image to restore it back to a visually appealing state. The brush mentioned above is patchy and restores the image with un-even intensity. Keep the outside borders of the image non-uniform and restore the subject more than the surrounding entourage. The image will start to look like a water colour painting almost immediately.
 - i. Restore can also be accomplished with the paint buckets and various combinations of the locks. Experiment with restoring only the windows on a building or the vegetation closest to the front of the view. Selectively restoring certain surfaces on an object will help illustrate changes in direction without the need for edge lines.
 - j. Continually experiment with fills, fades, textures, etc. and use the undo button to reverse any unwanted results until the image is what you are expecting. Add highlights (lens flare brush), filters and final embellishments like line extensions with the “Pen” tool to complete your image.
 - k. The .epx file cannot be used by other programs in its native state. The image must be exported into a standard format like .jpg or .tif. Once you consider the image finished, select “File, Export” and use Window’s standard conventions for naming, file type and location. Ensure the “RBG” option is selected in the “Epix Channel,” this is the default setting.

Support images:



Final SketchUp Model



Final Model with Shadows on & Lines off



Entourage added



Embellishments added



After White Fill, selectively Restore



Final Signed Rendering