



W_HOTBOX

Wouter Gilsing



USER GUIDE
version 1.0

table of content

Introduction

Hotbox

Hotbox Manager

Preferences

Installation

Transparency on KDE Linux

Troubleshooting

Examples

Contact

Introduction

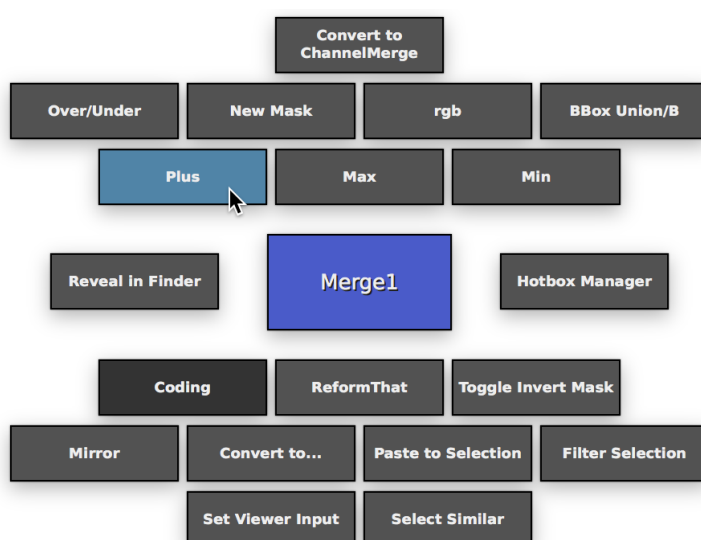
Hi there, thanks for trying out W_hotbox!

In this documentation I'll describe everything there is to know about the features of W_hotbox. It also includes an installation guide, python examples and my contact information. In this first section I'll give a quick introduction of why I started developing this tool to begin with.

It all started with me looking for ways to manage my python scripts better and more efficiently. I especially wanted the scripts to be easier accessible. Before that I was either adding the scripts to menu items or accessing them using shortcuts. Having to browse through menu's kinda contradicted the reason I wrote the scripts in the first place though: speed up my workflow and make things easier. Besides that I felt I was running out of (easy to use) shortcuts as well.

I also wanted to make the process of adding new scripts easier, as I often didn't feel like opening a text editor, saving the script to disk, making the code accessible inside Nuke by adding it to my menu.py and finally having to restart Nuke. Especially small scripts (think of two or three lines of code) although sometimes very powerful, were not really worth saving to a file, and 'wasting' a hotkey on.

To solve these 'problems' I developed what ended up as the hotbox you just downloaded. Users that are familiar with Autodesk Maya will probably recognise that concept. It's basically a fully customisable 'favourites menu' that pops up for as long as you press the shortcut and disappears as soon as you release. The Hotbox Manager allows you to add new scripts on the fly, which are directly accessible via buttons that appear in the menu under your cursor.



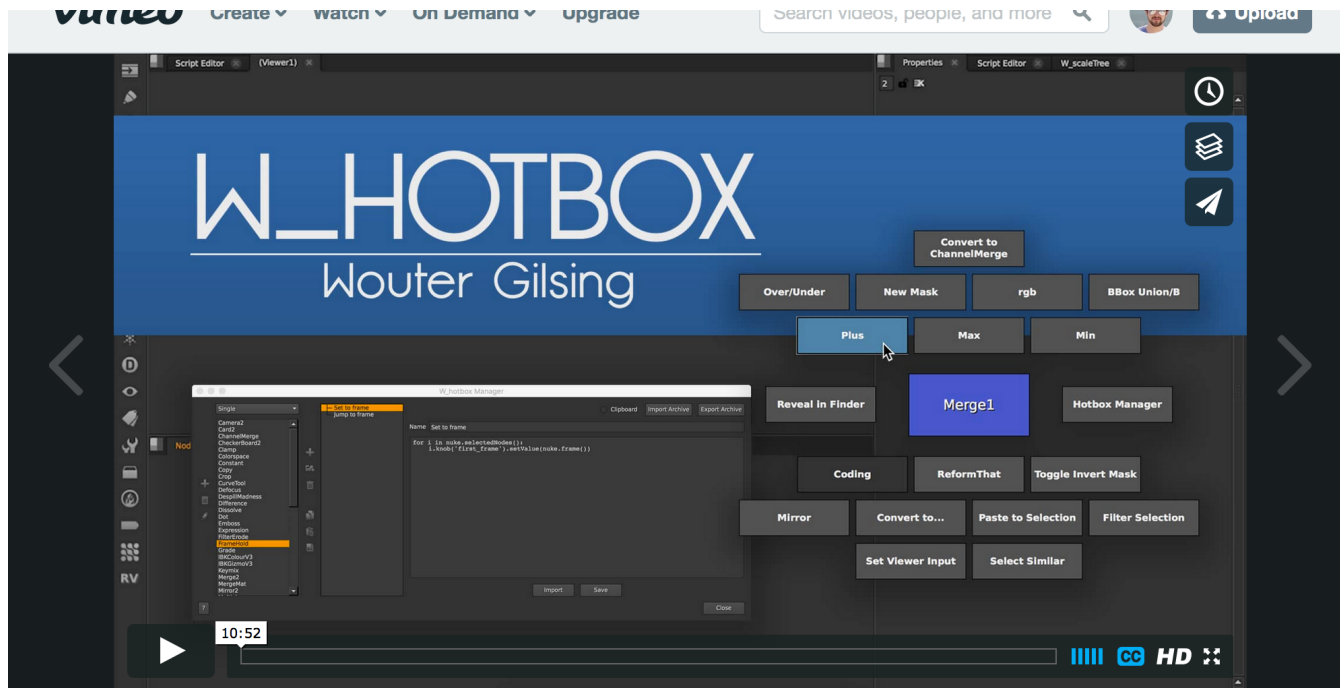
For me it changed the way I interact with Nuke completely. The ability to move any actions to a button that appears near your cursor will save you a trip to the other side of your screen and back pretty often. Besides that I use it a lot to automate repetitive tasks and automate actions I would otherwise probably not have taken time for at all. Think of things that make your script more readable, but don't necessarily contribute to the final image, like (color)labeling nodes.

It's in no way an essential tool, as Nuke functions perfectly fine without it

obviously. Therefore using the hotbox might take a little bit of time to get used to. Besides that it takes a bit of time to add the buttons you want and customize the hotbox to fit your own needs, as everyone works differently. You'll see though, that when you come up with

an idea for a button while working on a shot, it usually takes no more than a few minutes at most to create that button.

Of course, if you know Python to some extent it will make it way easier to write your own more complex buttons. I think though, that you should still be able to create your own buttons to do simple tasks (like modifying knob values and creating new nodes), when you have no programming skills whatsoever. Just install the (optional) buttons that come with the download and copy and paste stuff around. It often takes no more than changing a knob name in a python script to give a button a totally new purpose. I found that these simple tasks are the ones that I personally use the most anyway.



W_hotbox for NUKE

from **Wouter Gilsing** 57 minutes ago

I would like to make you aware of a video I recorded that gives a quick demonstration of the hotbox and will show you everything you need to know to get started.

That video can be found here:

<https://vimeo.com/woutergilsing/whotboxintroduction>

I hope you like it!

Wouter Gilsing

Hotbox

By default the hotbox is launched when holding the 'back tick' key (`), the symbol that shares a key with the 'tilde' (~) and is located above the 'Tab' on most keyboards. This is customizable through the preferences (see the Preferences section of this document for more information).

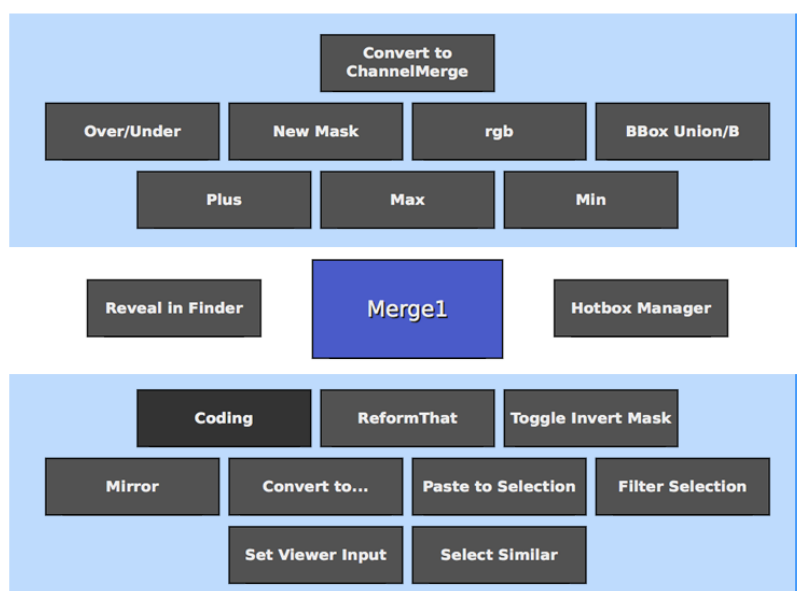
The hotbox will only be accessible for as long as the user holds the key and will disappear upon release.



The buttons that show up when launching the hotbox can be divided in two categories. At the top you'll find the buttons that are selection specific and change according to the selected nodeclasses. The buttons at the bottom half will always be there, no matter what is currently selected. Buttons are activated by clicking.

The bigger button in the centre is the 'selection indicator'. This button will display the name and colour of the currently selected node class.

Buttons that are coloured a darker shade of grey are menus, and will open a new set of buttons when activated. When browsing through submenus, clicking the button in the centre will take you back to the root level.



SELECTION
SPECIFIC

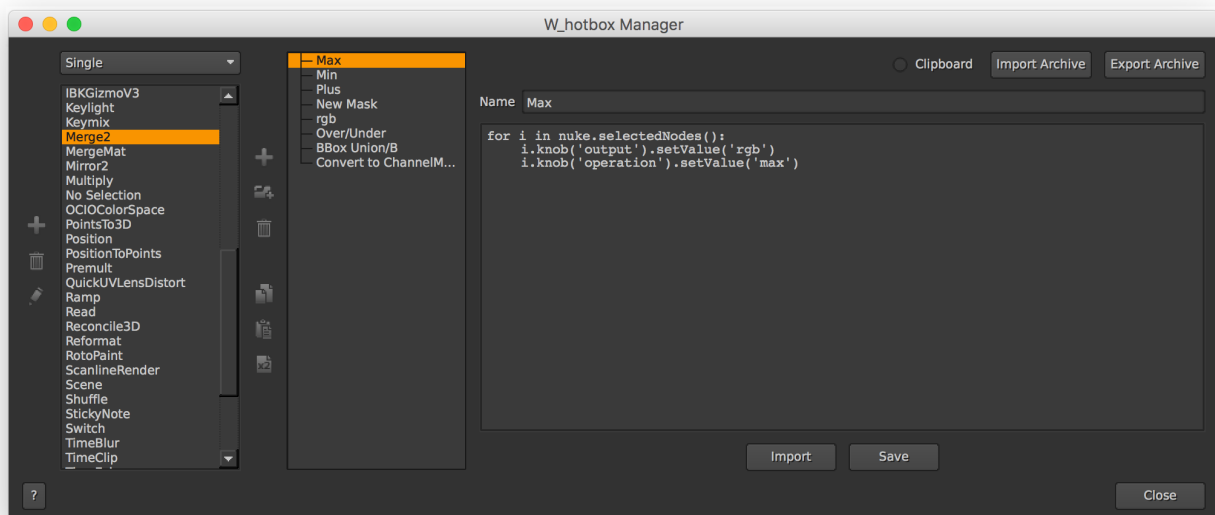
ALL

Hotbox Manager

Without buttons the hotbox is pretty useless, to add and modify buttons the user can use the Hotbox Manager. To open up the manager, open an instance of the hotbox and click the button right of the 'selection indicator' button, saying '*Hotbox Manager*'.

Alternatively the Manager can be launched by clicking the '*open hotbox manager*' button found under the W_hotbox tab in Nuke's Preferences Pane, or by clicking '*Edit/W_hotbox/Open Hotbox Manager*'.

The window that pops up is the manager. The manager can be divided in three sections. From left to right: the classes column, the buttons column and the script editor. From now on items living in the first and second column will be referred to as 'classes' and 'buttons' respectively. The user is supposed to build it's selection up from the left. When selecting a class the button column will no longer be greyed out. When a button is selected the user can make modifications to that button using the script editor.

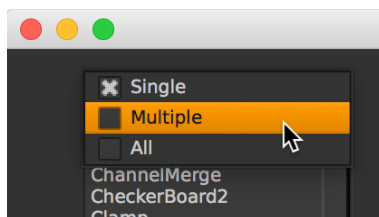
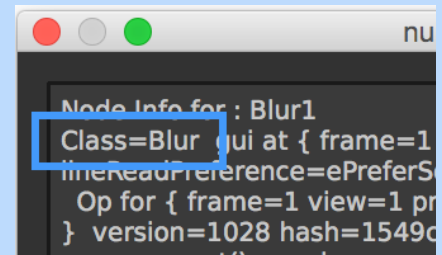


Adding new classes

In order to make a button show up when a specific node is selected the user should start by creating a new entry for the nodeclass.

To add a new nodeclass simply click the '+' icon to the left of the far left column. This entry should have the exact same name as the nodeclass of the node the user wants to associate with the buttons.

The class of a node can be found by hitting 'i' with the node selected, while being in the Node Graph. Most of the nodeclasses are pretty straightforward: 'Grade' for a grade node and 'Blur' for a blur node for example. However, some nodes have an other, more complex nodeclass than you would expect. The class of a merge node is called 'Merge2' and 'OFXuk.co.thefoundry.keylight.keylight_v201' is the nodeclass of the Keylight node, to name a few.



Before adding a class, you should make sure you are in the right mode. Above the column a pulldown menu is located, which displays the current mode of the Manager. There are three modes; Single, Multiple and All. Where or when a button will appear depends on what mode you add it to.

Single

'Single' is the most common mode. As the name suggests it deals with a single nodeclass at the time. For example; all the buttons that are added to a class called 'Blur' will appear when the selection of nodes solely exist of nodes of that specific class. It doesn't matter how many nodes are selected at once, as long as they all share the same nodeclass.

No Selection

It's also possible to add buttons to the hotbox that shows up when nothing is selected. This can be done by assigning buttons to a nodeclass called 'No Selection'. This nodeclass will be created by default and can be found in the 'single' mode.

Multiple

The Multiple mode deals with buttons that show up when a selection holds multiple different types of nodeclasses. When adding a new class to the classes column, nodeclasses can be separated by using a '-':.

For example: Buttons added to a class called "Transform-Grade-Blur" will show up when the current selection contains at least two of those node classes. Again, similar to the Single-mode, when a different kind of node is selected as well, the hotbox won't show any of the buttons added to the "Transform-Grade-Blur" class at all.

All

The buttons defined in the All section will appear no matter what nodes are currently selected and those buttons will appear at the bottom half of the hotbox. Since the All section does not take the current selection of nodes in account, the user can start adding buttons right away without having to define a nodeclass first. The class column will therefore stay greyed out in this case.

Groups

Besides being able to add a 'Group' class (by adding a class called 'Group' in the Manager as you would do for any other node) the user is able to define specific classes for groups. In this case the hotbox will have a look at the name of the selected nodes as well.

Currently, groups with a name ending in a number should be added in the Manager with those numbers remove (e.g. 'myCustomSnippet_v13' should be added as 'myCustomSnippet_v'). Numbers at another index of the name won't cause any problems. This only applies to instances

Adding new buttons

After having added a class, the user can move on to the second column where you add the actual buttons.

Clicking the '+' sign left of the column will get you a new button, called 'New Item'. When selecting that button you will notice the script editor is no longer being greyed out, and you are now able to make modifications to the name and the associated python script of the button.

The script editor is the area where you define the actual python code that get executed when hitting the button. Python-wise you should threat your code exactly the same as you would do in Nuke's script editor.

When a script or the name of a button is modified, the user should hit either the save button or ctrl-s (or cmd-s when using OSX) in order for the changes to take effect. Closing the manager or switching to another button or class will discard all changes.

The button underneath the '+' sign will allow the user to create submenu's. Those submenu's can hold other buttons or submenu's. Placing a button or submenu inside a submenu can be done by dragging and dropping it on top of the submenu.

As of its current state. Dragging and dropping buttons from and to submenu's can be a bit buggy at times. If you experience any problems after having dragged and dropped buttons, it might help to run the repair tool (see the 'Troubleshooting' section of this document).

The three last buttons left of the buttons column are to copy, paste and duplicate, respectively. *Duplicate* will create an exact copy of the selected button in the currently selected class. *Copy* and *Paste* allow the user to copy a button from one class to the other. Simply click the *Copy* button to place the button in the manager's clipboard (which differs from the system's clipboard and will be emptied every time the manager is closed), navigate to the class you want the button to copy to and click *Paste*.



Appearance

By default, the hotbox will query the font to use from the nuke preferences to make sure the hotbox matches the rest of the Nuke interface. However, the appearance of the text inside the hotbox buttons is customizable on a per button level, as it supports the use of html tags.



The figure above shows an example of the most commonly used tags. Those effects can be achieved by surrounding the name of the button with the following code:

```
<i>...</i>
<b>...</b>
<s>...</s>
<u>...</u>
```

Italic
Bold
~~Strike-through~~
Underline

```
<font size = "15">...</font>
<font face = "Comic Sans MS">...</font>
<font color = "Red">...</font>
```

Size
 Font Family
 Colour

Colours can be assigned by using either the name of the color (like in the example given, "Red") or as a hexadecimal number. A detailed list of color names and their corresponding hexadecimal number can be found here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/X11_color_names#Color_name_chart

Images are also supported by using the following tags

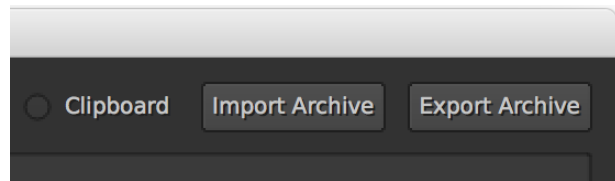
```

```

The buttons have a resolution of 105 x 35 pixels. When assigning an image of a different resolution, no scaling will be applied.

Exporting and restoring settings

To easily share settings between different machines, the user can choose to export an archive file to disk. When clicking the 'Export Archive' button the user will be prompted to select a location where the file will be saved. This .hotbox file can be reimported by hitting the 'Import Archive'.



Alternatively, the contents of the contents of the .hotbox file can be directly imported from, or exported to the systems clipboard. Simple tick the 'Clipboard' bullet next to the two import/export buttons. The contents that are copied to the clipboard are encoded and will be decoded when imported.

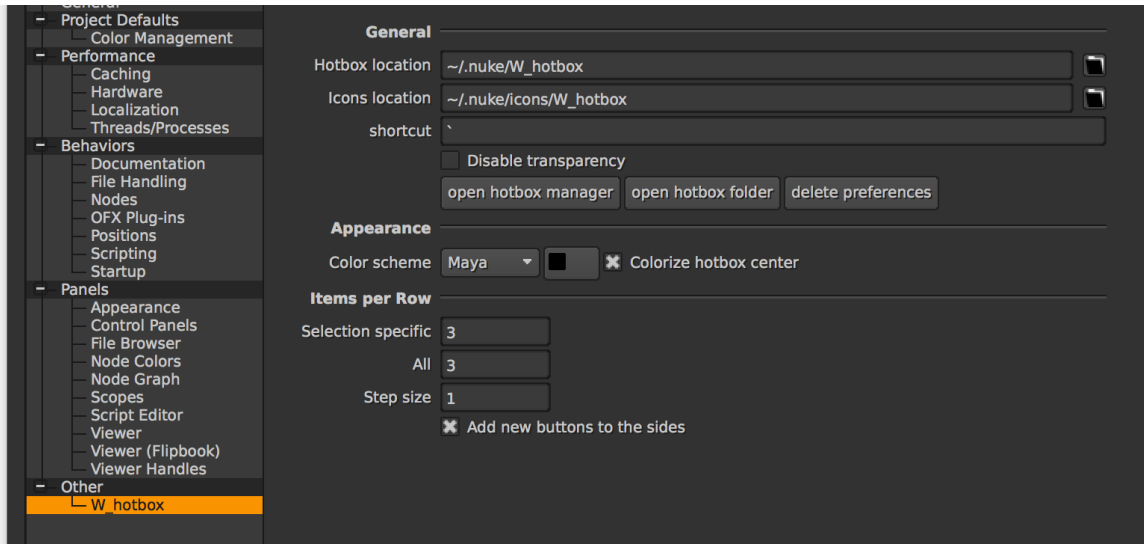
Be aware that by importing an archive, you will overwrite all the current settings and that this can not be undone.

Currently importing an archive generated on a machine running OSX or Linux won't work on a machine running windows **when using the clipboard**. However, sharing buttons by writing them to an archive file will work as expected.

Importing archives using the clipboard on a machine running OSX or Linux will work as expected.

Preferences

When Nuke is launched for the first time after installing the hotbox, several knobs will be added to Nuke's preference panel. These knobs can be found under the W_hotbox tab.



Location on disk

The first two knobs have to do with the installation of the hotbox. By default the hotbox will be installed in the .nuke folder located in the users home directory. If the user would rather pick a different location, he can define that here.

Shortcut

The shortcut that launches the hotbox is also customisable. As of right now, the user is only able to change the shortcut to a single keystroke without a modifier key. After changing the shortcut, Nuke needs to be restarted in order for the changes to take effect.

Colors

The color scheme dropdown lets the user have the option to change the highlight color of the buttons. By default this knob is set to 'Maya' to mimic Autodesk Maya's muted blue tones. Alternatively the user can pick 'Nuke' for a bright coloured orange, or 'custom'. When going with 'custom' a custom colour can be chosen using the color tile next to the dropdown menu.

By default the center button of the hotbox will change colours depending on the current selection. When unticking 'Colorize hotbox center' the center button will be coloured a lighter tone of grey.

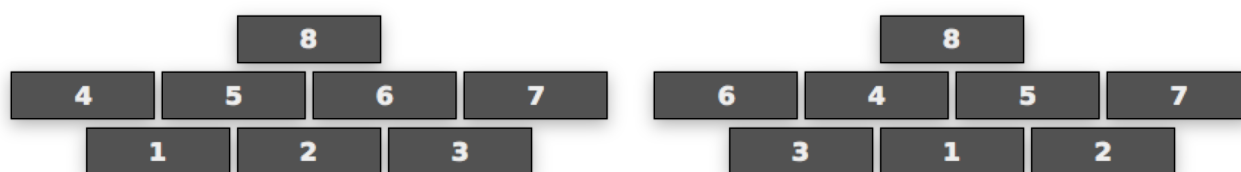
Items per row

The 'Selection specific' and the 'all' values represent the maximum amount of buttons a row can contain (in respectively the upper and lower half of the hotbox). When a row's maximum capacity is reached a new row will be started. This new row's maximum capacity will be incremented by the step size, resulting in the triangular shape when having multiple rows.

When 'Add new buttons to the sides' is enabled, new buttons will be added left and right of the row alternately, instead of to the right.

In the image below you can clearly see the difference between the two modes (whereas left is disabled and right is enabled). The '1' button in the middle of the bottom row, was located exactly in the middle when there where only one button. As you can see in the left image however, when this user added more buttons, it got slowly pushed more towards the side and ended up at the very left of the row.

In the right image the option was enabled. This way any existing buttons will hardly change position when new buttons are added, taking muscle memory in account. This function is turned on by default.



Installation

- 1 Copy `W_hotbox.py` and `W_hotboxManager.py` to a folder that's part of the nuke plugin path.
- 2 Append `menu.py` with the following code:

```
import W_hotbox, W_hotboxManager
```

- 3.a Copy the folder named `'icons'` to your `.nuke` folder. (If you would rather place the icons elsewhere, make sure to follow step 3.b. If you decide to put them in the default location, you can skip step 3.b)
- 3.b Launch Nuke. Open the Preferences Panel and navigate to the `W_hotbox` tab. change the path pointing to the icons folder to the folder you placed the icons in step 3.a.

Step 4 is optional. The download ships with a set of buttons ready to use with the hotbox. The hotbox will function fine without those, but the user has to add buttons himself before the hotbox becomes useful. The buttons that ship with this download are easily removed if the user would rather start from scratch himself.

- 4 Open the Hotbox Manager by either:
 - Launching it from the hotbox itself,
 - Clicking `Edit/W_hotbox/Open Hotbox Manager`,
 - Choosing `'open hotbox manager'` from the preferences panel.Click the button saying `'Import Archive'` at the top right of the Manager, while making sure the `'Clipboard'` knob next to it remains unchecked. A file browser appears. Navigate to the file called `'buttonBundle.hotbox'` that came with the download and hit `'open'`.

Deinstallation

- 1 Open the Preferences Panel and navigate to the `W_hotbox` tab. Click the button saying `'delete preferences'`. Exit the Preferences Panel by hitting `'cancel'` and exit Nuke.
- 2 Make sure to manually remove all the files that were manually added during the installation.
- 4 Remove the code that was added to `menu.py`.
- 3 Inside the `.nuke` folder a folder called `'W_hotbox'` was created. Delete this folder.

Transparency on KDE Linux

Other than on Windows and Mac OSX, the hotbox might have some trouble displaying correctly on Linux running a KDE environment. However, this is easily resolved.

- 1 Open the System Settings Panel and choose 'Desktop Effects' from the 'Workspace Appearance and Behaviour' section.
- 2 Check the option 'Enable Desktop Effects on startup'
- 3 Navigate to the 'Advanced' tab and switch the compositing type to 'XRender'
- 4 Open the 'All effects' tab and disable every effect that you don't need. Remember that without Desktop Effects enabled, all of these effects were turned off.
- 5 When enabling the desktop effects, a nasty blue glow will be visible around the window that is currently in focus. To get rid of this blue outline, open the System Settings Panel again and choose 'Workspace Appearance' from the 'Workspace Appearance and Behaviour' section.
- 6 Under 'Window Decorations', with your current style selected, click 'Configure Decoration'. Navigate to the 'Shadows Tab' and disable both the 'Active Window Glow' and the 'Window Drop-Down Shadow'

Alternatively, the user can decide to leave all the system settings the way they are and simply disable the transparency of the hotbox completely. The background of the hotbox then will be coloured a solid grey to fit in with the rest of the Nuke interface, rather than the solid black.

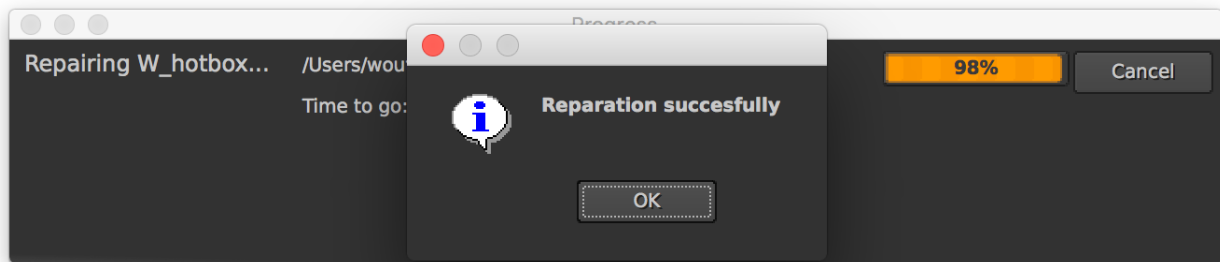
- 1 Open the Preferences Panel and navigate to the W_hotbox tab. Tick the checkbox saying 'Disable Transparency'. This option is also available on Windows and Mac OSX if the user desires so.

Troubleshooting

Repair

When the hotbox is not working as expected, the first thing that can be done is running the repair tool.

This tool can be found in the menu under *Edit/W_hotbox/Repair*. This will loop through all



the currently existing buttons and will make sure everything is named the appropriately.

If this did not fix your problem, the user can have a look under the hood. The hotbox folder can be opened in several ways.

- Launching it from the hotbox itself, by clicking the button saying 'Open in File Browser/Explorer/Finder'.
- Clicking *Edit/W_hotbox/Open Hotbox Folder*,
- Choosing 'open hotbox folder' from the Nuke preferences panel.

Rather than deleting them all individually by clicking the bin icon in the manager, it's possible to erase the buttons of the hotbox in bigger amounts as well. You can do this by using the cleaning tools that can be found under *Edit/W_hotbox/Clear*. It's possible to either delete everything or once ('Clear everything') or by section ('All', 'Multiple' or 'Single').

Examples

This part of the documentation is targeted towards people without proficient knowledge of Python. It won't touch on any hotbox specific features, but just will provide examples of very commonly used snippets of code that can be copied and modified to create very useful actions to assign to a hotbox button.

Example 1

Changing a node's knob's value

Goal: To create a button to quickly change the values knobs of the currently selected nodes using the hotbox. In this example we will focus on the Merge node and change the knobs called 'operation' and 'output'.

The following code will iterate over the selected nodes. When writing scripts for hotbox buttons it's always a good idea to include this loop, in order to make the script work when having multiple nodes selected (even if you're not planning on using the button on multiple buttons at the same time, it won't hurt either). For more information on this subject, you can search for 'for loop python' on google or youtube, as there are a lot of great, free resources.

```
for i in nuke.selectedNodes():
```

For every node that's encountered the script will first set the value of the knob named 'output' to 'rgb' and when that's done value of the knob named 'operation' will be changed to 'min'.

```
    i.knob('output').setValue('rgb')
    i.knob('operation').setValue('min')
```

The name of a knob can be found by hovering over it in the properties bin.

Example 2

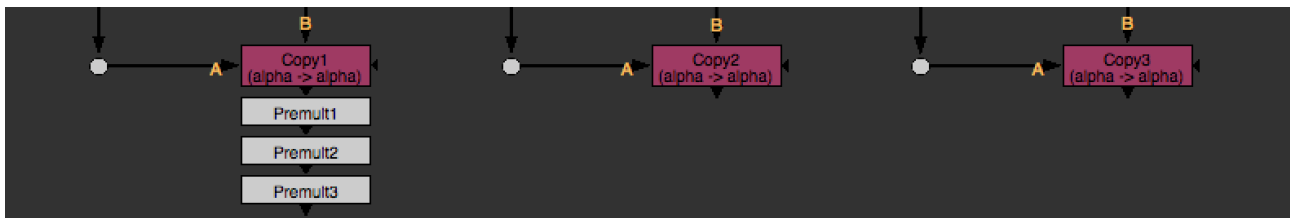
Creating new nodes

Goal: To create a button to create a Premult node for the currently selected nodes using the hotbox. In this case we'll assign this button to the Copy nodeclass, as it is pretty common to create a premult node after a creating a copy. For the sake of this example, we will also change the channel knob from its default 'rgb' to 'all'.

Similar to Example 1 we could use this as our code:

```
for i in nuke.selectedNodes():
    premultNode = nuke.createNode('Premult')
```

This will do the job if we only have one node selected at the time. However, if we would have more than one Copy node selected at the same time, this code would break and result in something unwanted similar to what is shown in the image below.



Because 'Premult1' will become selected after its creation, 'Premult2' will be connected and placed underneath 'Premult1'.

To solve this problem, every time a new Premult node is about to be created, the Copy node that new Premult node is supposed to connect to needs to be selected.

Since there's no built-in python command to deselect every node, we'll start off by writing our own.

```
def emptySelection():
    for i in nuke.selectedNodes():
        i.knob('selected').setValue(False)
```

Now we can move on to the part of the code that will take care of the creation of the new nodes.

```
for i in nuke.selectedNodes():
    emptySelection()
    i.knob('selected').setValue(True)
    premultNode = nuke.createNode('Premult')
```

As we don't really want the last Premult node that was created to stay selected at the end, we can call our deselection function once again.

```
emptySelection()
```

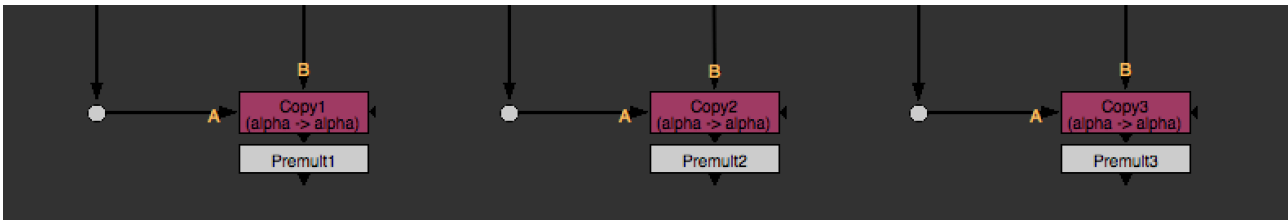
This is what the completed code would look like:

```
def emptySelection():
    for i in nuke.selectedNodes():
        i.knob('selected').setValue(False)

    for i in nuke.selectedNodes():
        emptySelection()
        i.knob('selected').setValue(True)
        premultNode = nuke.createNode('Premult')
        premultNode.knob('channels').setValue('rgb')

    emptySelection()
```

As shown in the following image, this will work as expected:



Contact

If you encounter any bugs, you can report them by sending an email with a description of your problem to woutergilsing@hotmail.com.

Please mention 'W_hotbox' in the subject of the email and include the following:

- Version of the hotbox (this can be found in the 'About dialog' which can be accessed by clicking the '?' button in the Manager.)
- Version of Nuke
- Version of your operating system.

Simply clicking the email address in the 'About dialog' will automatically compose an email with all these specifications filled in.

I can't promise anything, but I will try my best to resolve any problems.

Feedback and feature requests are highly appreciated.