Lesson 7

Applying Transitions and Effects

Once you have the basic structure of a scene, you can begin to open a whole new avenue of creativity by adding graphics and effects. It doesn't matter what type of program you're creating; these additions can be as simple as a cross-fade or as fantastic as a morphing transition. Many effects are subtle, even hidden, while others are meant to be attention grabbers. In this lesson, you'll work with a sampling of DaVinci Resolve 17's tools for creating visual interest in the edit page; but more importantly, you'll learn the concepts of adding transitions and effects so you can confidently continue to explore on your own.

EDIT

Time

This lesson takes approximately 65 minutes to complete.

## Goals

Fading Clips In and Out

Many programs start with a fade transition (fade-in) and end with one (fade-out). When you fade, you're mixing two elements. One element is a video clip, and the other is a completely black frame, or in DaVinci Resolve, an empty part of the timeline.

1. Open the Age of Airplanes project, if necessary.

   As in the previous lesson, we'll start by importing a new timeline that is all set up for us to learn about effects in the edit page.

2. Select the Rough Cuts bin and then choose File > Import > Timeline.

3. In the File browser window that opens, navigate to the R17 Beginners Guide lesson folder, select the Lesson 07 folder, and import the CH07 FX (Resolve).drt.
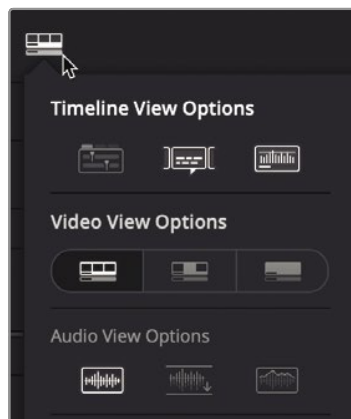
   The CH07 FX (Resolve) timeline is added to the Rough Cuts bin and loaded into the timeline window.
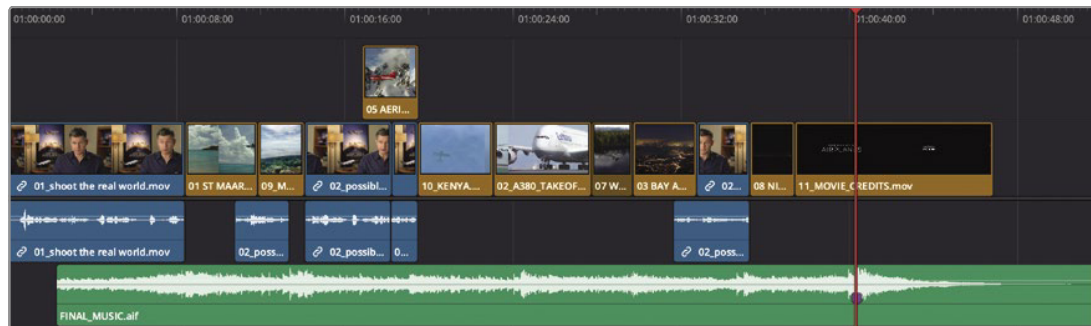

4. Choose Workspace > Layout Presets > Big Trim > Load Preset to use your previously created layout.

   You'll also customize the timeline view to make the audio tracks smaller and the video track larger.

5. On the far left side of the toolbar, click the Timeline View Options menu.

6 Drag the Audio Track Height slider to the left.

7 Drag the Video Track Height slider about 3/4 to the right, and click the Timeline View Options button again to hide the options.
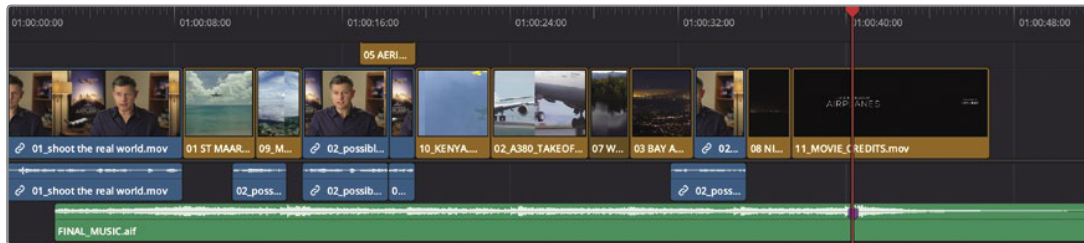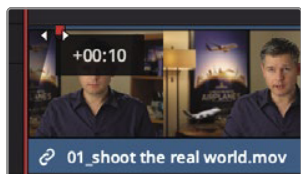

8 Position the playhead at the start of the timeline.

9 To begin our Age of Airplanes promotional trailer, you'll add a very quick fade-in.

10 In the timeline, place the pointer over the "01_shoot the real world" clip.
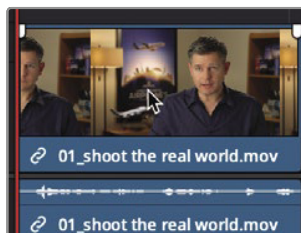
Two fade handles—video fade handles, in this case—appear in the upper-left and upper-right corners of the clip.

11 At the start of the clip, drag the handle toward the center of the clip until the tooltip reads +00:10.

You've added a 10-frame fade-in to the start of the scene.

**12** Play the start of the timeline to watch the fade.

> **TIP** You can drag the playhead from the start of a clip to where you want the fade-in to end, and then in the Trim menu, choose Fade In to Playhead.

Adjusting fade handles is a fast and easily accessed method for placing and refining fade-ins and fade-outs.

Adding Cross Dissolves

You can add the same transitions you applied in the cut page. The Effects Library includes all the same options. However, the method of applying the standard cross dissolve is different. The quickest way to add a cross dissolve is through the menu option or keyboard shortcut.

**1**   In the timeline, go to the cut between the "10 KENYA" clip and the "02 A380 TAKEOFF."
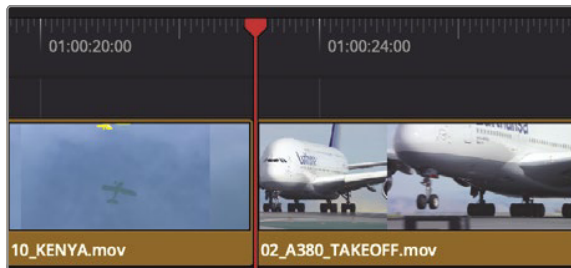
2   Press the / (forward slash) key to play over the two clips.

This will be a less abrupt cut if you blend these two clips softly into each other. To achieve this, you'll add the default cross-dissolve transition.

3   Drag the zoom slider to zoom in to the clips you'll will work on.

> **TIP** You can hold down the middle mouse button to pan in the timeline.

4   As if you were going to perform a rolling trim, locate the mouse pointer directly over the edit between "10 KENYA" clip and the "02 A380 TAKEOFF."
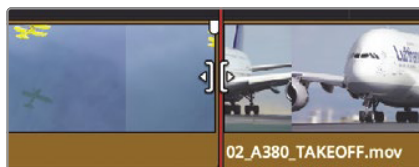
5   When the pointer changes to a rolling trim cursor, click the cut to select it.

The green rolling trim handles appear on both sides of the edit point.

6   Choose Timeline > Add Transition or press Command-T (macOS) or Ctrl-T (Windows).
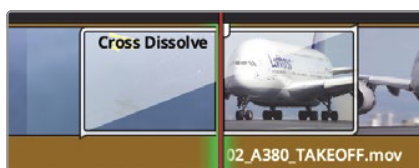
A dissolve with a one-second duration is added to the edit point.

When creating a transition, frames from the two clips will overlap. That is, half of the transition frames are taken from the unused portions of the outgoing clip and half from the incoming clip. These video handles, which you used for trimming in Lesson 6, are now used to extend clips to support the transition.
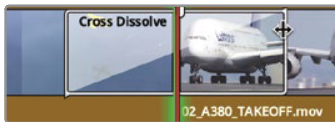
**7** Play the two clips to view the dissolve.

Shortening and Lengthening Transitions

Changing the duration of a transition can be done just like in the cut page by dragging the transition directly in the timeline.

1 Place the mouse pointer over the right edge of the dissolve between the "10 KENYA" clip and the "02 A380 TAKEOFF."

2 Drag the right edge to the right until the tooltip reads +00:12.
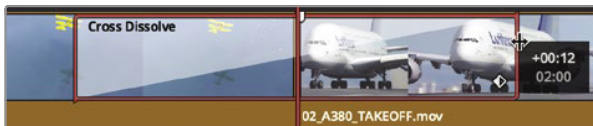
As you drag, the transition is extended by twelve frames on both sides of the edit to create a 2-second dissolve. This dissolve transition is aligned to the center of the cut, so the transition will extend the same number of frames on each side of the cut regardless of how long you make it. How long can you make a transition? That depends on the length of the two source clips in the bin.

3 Continue dragging the right edge away from the edit until the selected edit will not extend any further.

The transition can extend only so far because you will eventually run out of handles on one of the clips, which means that no more media is available to create a longer transition.

Customizing Transitions

Each transition has several adjustments that you can use to customize its appearance. Some of the simpler transitions, such as the cross dissolve, have fewer parameters than specialty transitions such as wipes. In every case, customization controls appear in the Inspector.

1 Double-click the Cross Dissolve transition in the timeline to open it in the Inspector.
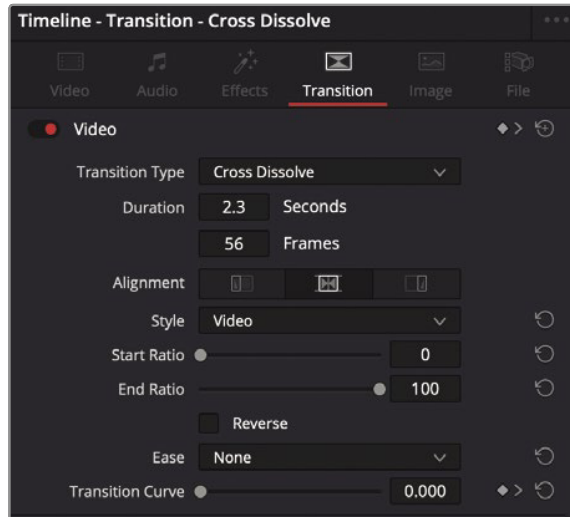
> **TIP** If you find it difficult to select a transition, drag the zoom slider to zoom in on the timeline until you can select the transition icon without accidentally selecting the cut point.

The Inspector displays the transition parameters. The upper half of the Inspector includes parameters common to all transitions. These include Duration, Alignment, and Transition Style. The lower half, below the style menu, includes parameters specific to the current transition.

2 In the Cross Dissolve Style menu, choose Film.

The Style menu allows you to choose from a variety of Cross Dissolve styles. The Film dissolve mimics the subtle luminance and acceleration response of a dissolve optically generated for film. You can further increase the acceleration curve by choosing an Ease In & Ease Out acceleration.

3 In the Ease menu, choose In & Out to create a smoother transition.

4 Play the modified Film Dissolve to view your changes.

Now that you've customized a transition, you'll learn how to save it for repeated use.
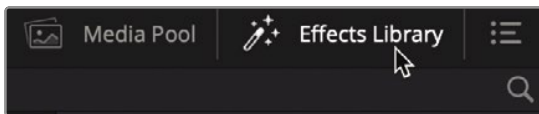
Saving Custom Presets

After customizing a transition, you can save that transition and its customizations into the Effects Library for use in future projects.

**1** In the timeline, right-click the customized Cross Dissolve transition.
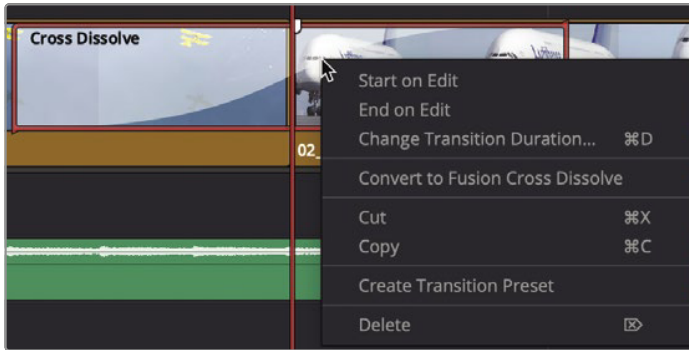
2 In the pop-up menu, choose Create Transition Preset.

3 In the Transition Preset dialog, enter the name **Cinema Dissolve**, and click OK.

Saved presets are saved into the Effects Library.

4 In the upper-left area of the Interface toolbar, click the Effects Library button.

The Effects Library contains all transitions, titles, and filter effects. The categories along the left side make it easy to find the effect type you're looking for.

5 In the sidebar, select the Video Transitions category.

All custom presets are located at the bottom of the Effects Library in the User section. The icons are highlighted in yellow to make them easier to identify.

6 Scroll half-way down the Effects Library to locate your saved preset in the User category.

If your saved preset is something you plan on using as a signature transition throughout a program, you may want to save it as the standard transition. The standard transition has the benefit of being the transition that can be added from the Timeline > Add Transition menu or a keyboard shortcut.

7 In the Effects Library, right-click your saved preset, and choose Set As Standard Transition.
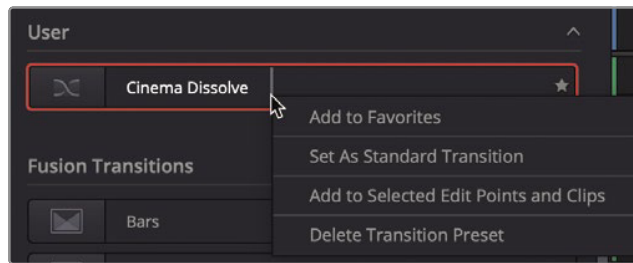

The new standard transition displays a red tag to the left of its name to identify it as the standard transition. It is now the standard transition for all projects you create on this system.

Applying Transitions and Filters from the Effects Library

Like the cut page, the edit page includes many types of transitions, each with a unique visual style. Other transitions may not be as useful storytelling tools as the dissolve, but they can be handy in specific situations. Because other transitions are not as commonly used, you add them directly from the Effects Library and not by using a keyboard shortcut.

1 Scroll to the top of the Effects Library.

2 From the Effects Library, drag the Blur Dissolve transition over the existing cross dissolve in the timeline.
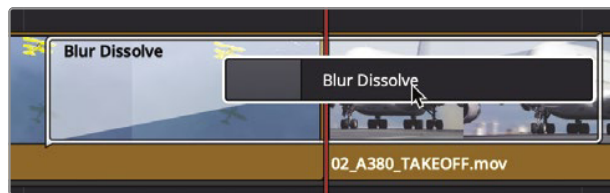

3 Release the mouse button to replace the cross dissolve with the blur dissolve. The blur dissolve combines a cross dissolve with a horizontal or vertical blur.

4 Play the timeline to view the blur dissolve.

The Inspector has specific controls for each wipe or transition effect you apply.

Applying Filter Effects

The Effects Library also holds filter effects that you can use to create unique visual effects or to solve common visual problems.

1   Press Shift-Z to see the entire timeline.

2   Position the playhead at the start of the "03_BAY_AREA_LIGHTS" clip and play over the clip.
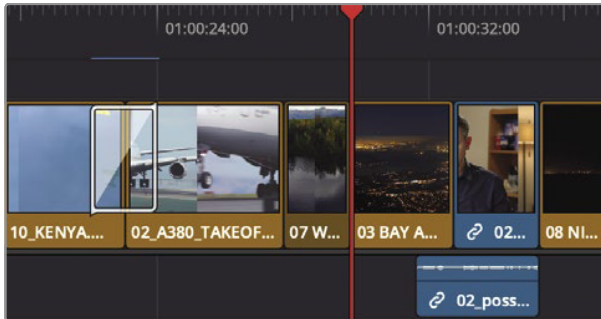
    This clip appears a little flat, so we should try to add a nice effect to make it pop. Luckily, DaVinci Resolve has a dozens of filters that you can preview before you even apply them.

3   In the Effects Library, select the OpenFX Filters category from the sidebar.
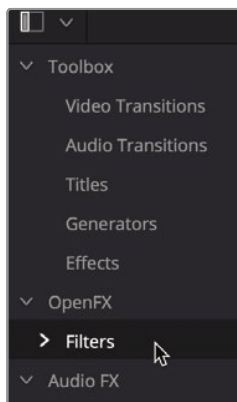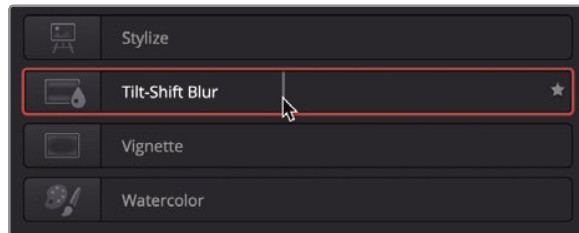

    Let's try a few effects from the Stylize category.

4   Scroll down the Effects Library until you locate the Resovle FX Stylize category.

    You can preview an effect from the Effects Library just by moving your mouse pointer over the name of the Resolve FX.

5   Position your mouse pointer over the Tilt-Shift Blur effect in the Stylize category.

The Tilt-Shift Blur filter is previewed in the viewer as if it has been applied to you clip. If you decide you like the effect, it's easy to apply.

6   Drag the Tilt-Shift Blur effect onto the "03_BAY_AREA_LIGHTS" in the timeline.
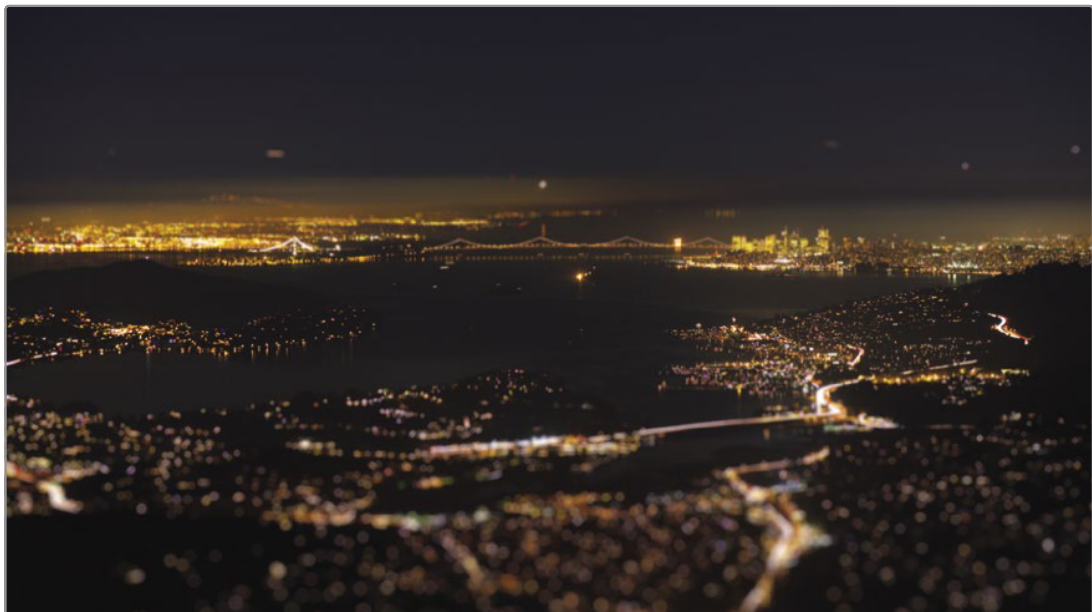
If you're using the free version of DaVinci Resolve, a dialog box indicates that this effect is available only in the Studio version.

However, you can still try it out without upgrading, although the results will include a watermark.

7   Click Not Yet to continue.

You have many parameters available in the Inspector to customize its look.

8   In the timeline, select the "03 BAY AREA LIGHTS" clip, and then at the top of the Inspector, click the Effects tab.

When a Resolve FX is applied to a clip, the Effects tab in the Inspector displays an OpenFX tab.

You can quickly compare the filtered shot to the original by disabling the effect in the Inspector.

9   At the top of the Inspector, click the Disable button to the left of the filter effect's name. Click it again to enable the effect.
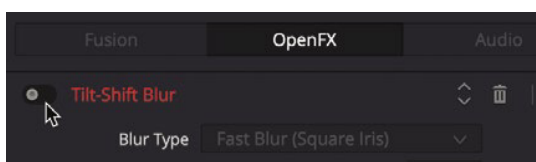
If you change your mind and no longer want to use this effect, you can remove this effect from the timeline.

10 Click the trash can icon at the top of the Inspector.
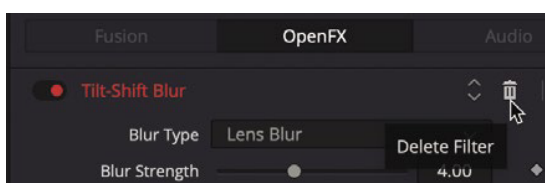
Effect choices are neither right nor wrong. You can use as many or as few as you think you need to tell your story. The only potential wrong is the final result. You must always ask yourself if an effect helps set the right mood or atmosphere for the story. Does it help to steer audience attention in the right direction? If the answer is yes, then try it. Ultimately, your own aesthetic will help you decide.

Using third-party effect plug-ins

OpenFX is a cross-platform visual effects plug-in standard used by DaVinci Resolve and Fusion software as well as other applications. Popular plug-in packages—such as Boris FX Continuum, Sapphire, and Red Giant Universe—can be added to DaVinci Resolve to perform many stylized operations that would be otherwise difficult or impossible to perform using only DaVinci Resolve's standard tools. These plug-ins can be applied in the same ways you would apply other items from the Effects Library.

The installation and licensing of plug-ins is managed by each vendor's installer. Once installed, OpenFX plug-ins appear in the Effects Library and in the OpenFX category.