

Third Party Shaders

You can make any third-party Arnold shader available inside MAXtoA, whether the shaders come from other plugins for Arnold such as MtoA, or from other third-party shader collections.

Installation


The recommended way to install third-party shaders and plugins is to use the `ARNOLD_PLUGIN_PATH` environment variable. For example, set the `ARNOLD_PLUGIN_PATH` environment variable like so:

```
ARNOLD_PLUGIN_PATH=C:\Program Files\Autodesk\Arnold\maya2020\bin
```


Alternatively, the shader files can also be placed in the 'Plugins/MAXtoA' folder of your 3ds Max installation


Customizing Shader User Interfaces

MAXtoA will automatically create a default user interface for shaders. If you need to tweak the UI, you can do so by adding metadata to shader node and parameters. Adding metadata can be done in the shader code with the `AiMetaDataSetX()` API functions or by creating a `.mtd` text file next to the shader's dll, with the same base name. We suggest you study the `.mtd` files provided with the MAXtoA installation ('Plugins/MAXtoA/en-US') for inspiration.

 In general, any shader compiled for Arnold 5 should work with MAXtoA, as well as any OSL shader that works in Arnold.

- Shaders that return a "Closure" will show up as a 3ds Max **Material**.
- Shaders that return any other data type will show up as 3ds Max **Map**.

 There are several third-party shader resources available for the Arnold plugins, as listed on the Arnold renderer [website](#).

 These third-party shaders, extensions, and integrations are not developed or supported by Autodesk but are provided for your convenience.

