

Custom Font Tools; a guide to selecting the most appropriate tool for your purpose

The custom font tools are a set of python plug-ins for creating, manipulating, organising and decorating files of characters as individual Gimp layers.

There are now so many tools that some users may feel at a loss to know which one to use. This guide will, I hope, help people to choose the right tool for the task they have in mind.

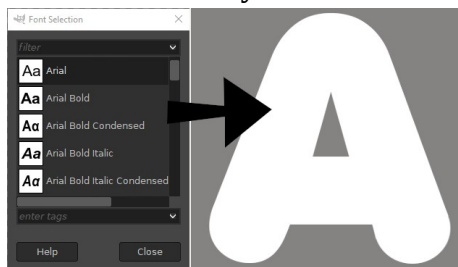
The current tools as of Release 13 (Jan 2021) – new versions since Release 12 are starred:

- Custom Font Artistic Pack
- Custom Font Bevel Reflect 1.6 *
- Custom Font Character Paths *
- Custom Font Distortion Packs 1 & 2
- Custom Font Effects Only
- Custom Font Face Maker *
- Custom Font Folder Thumbnails
- Custom Font Inner Glow *
- Custom Font Layer Utilities *
- Custom Fonts Layers With Forced Margins
- Custom Font Lighting Effects GT Style
- Custom Font Metallic Effects
- Custom Font Noise Effects Only
- Custom Font Outer Glow *
- Custom Font Outlines
- Custom Font Paragrapher
- Custom Font Paths to Layers
- Custom Font Perspex Effects
- Custom Font Sheen N Shine *
- Custom Font Single Path Stroker *
- Custom Font WordWall *
- FontSlab
- Custom Font Kerning Tools

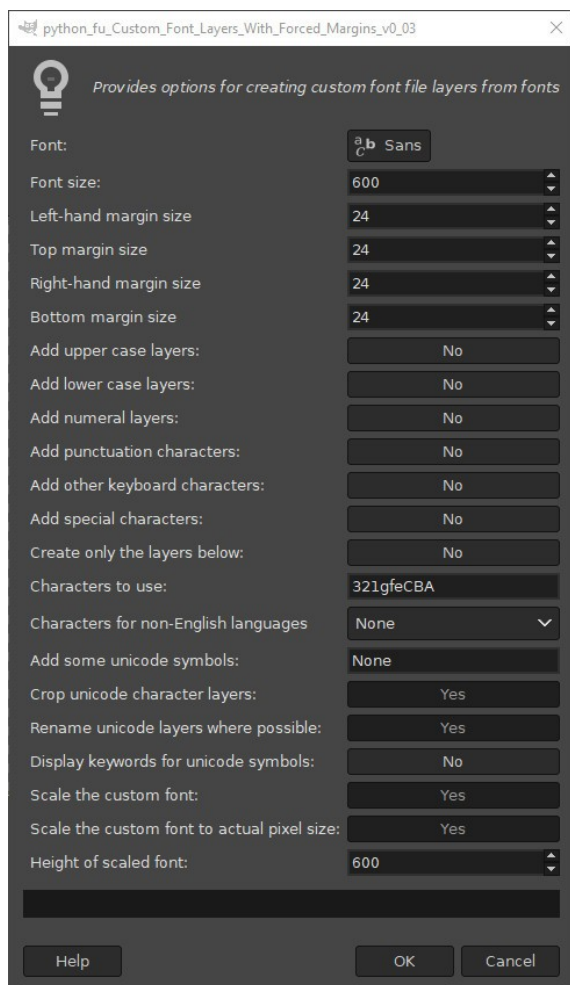
Once downloaded and installed in your user plug-in folder the filters can be accessed from the Filters menu by following the Custom Font Tools entry.

Most of the tools have help-sheets or tutorials and it is recommended that users view these guides by searching on gimplearn.net for more detailed information.

Custom Fonts Layers With Forced Margins:



Use this if you want to turn an existing font into a set of character layers (this plug-in replaces Custom Font Layers from Fonts).



This tool converts any font (True Type etc) used by Gimp into a series of plain filled character layers that can then be worked on in Gimp and saved as an XCF custom font file.

It provides options for adding or removing padding space around the characters within the layers.

There are also options for choosing the groups of characters to convert into layers – including non-English characters and unicode symbols.

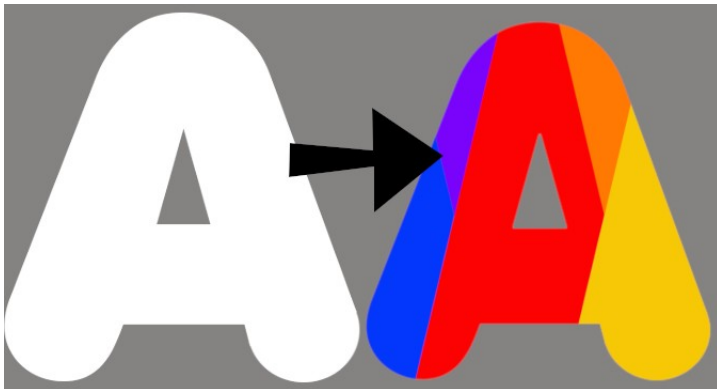
Details found on GimpLearn here:

<https://gimplearn.net/viewtopic.php?f=3&t=2614>

Custom Font Face Making Tools

Use these tools to turn a plain font character into a decorative font character.

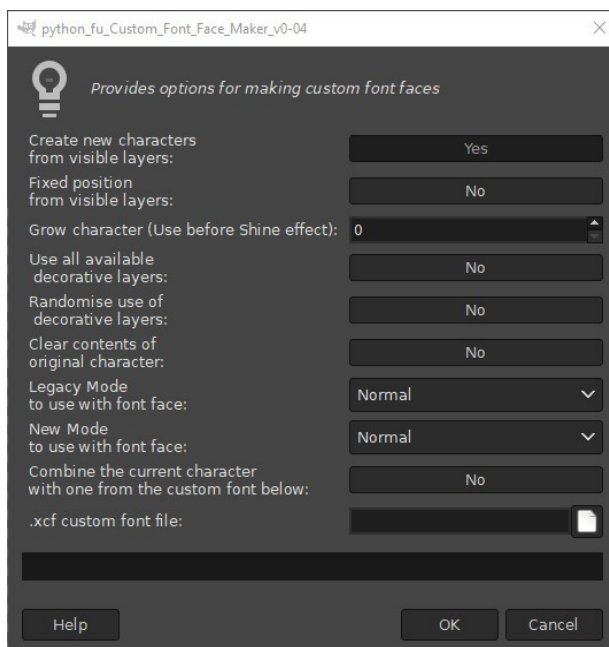
Custom Fonts Face Maker:



Use this tool to turn plain character faces into pretty character faces.

Link to more information:

<https://gimplearn.net/viewtopic.php?f=3&t=2303>

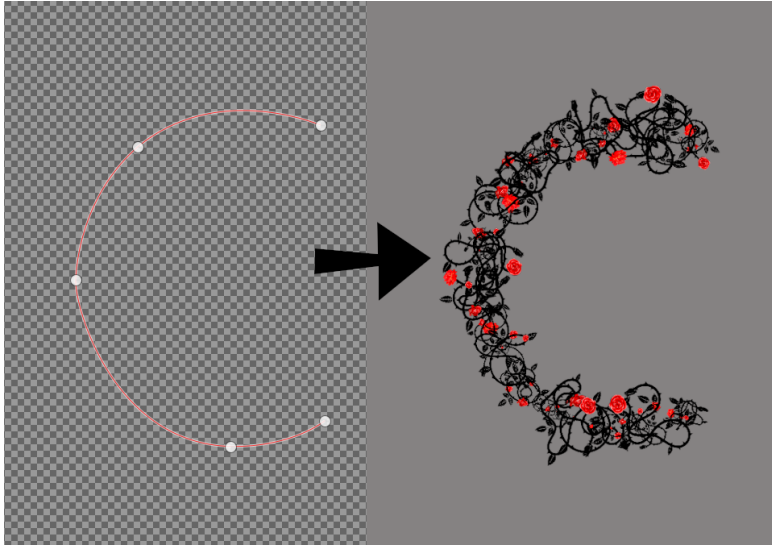


This is the tool that most users will use most of the time.

This was originally a part of Custom Font Layer Utilities. It basically adds a new look to existing font faces by copying a visible layer or layers onto each character in turn. Use of layer modes is also provided.

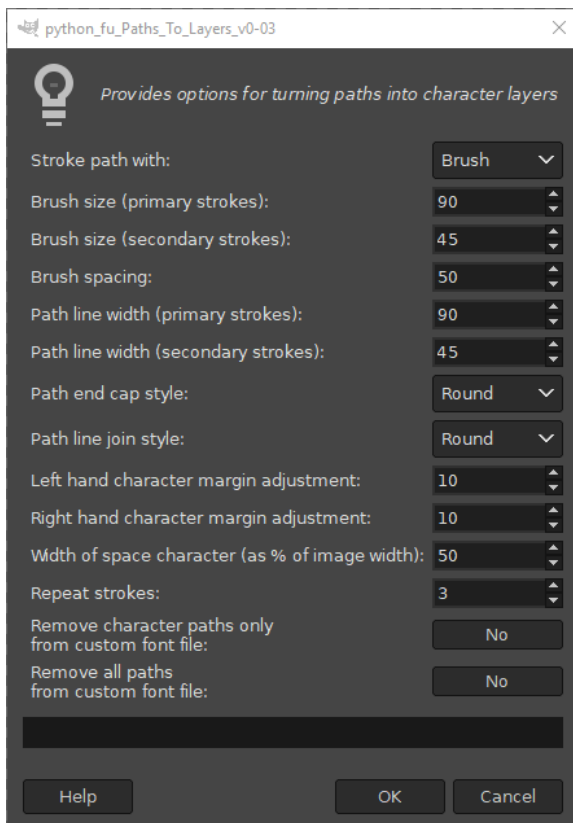
It also provides an option to combine two custom fonts, which can be useful when you have characters with holes in (think mesh style) that require an added outline to make them more legible.

Custom Font Paths to Layers:



Use this tool to turn skeleton character paths into a custom font.

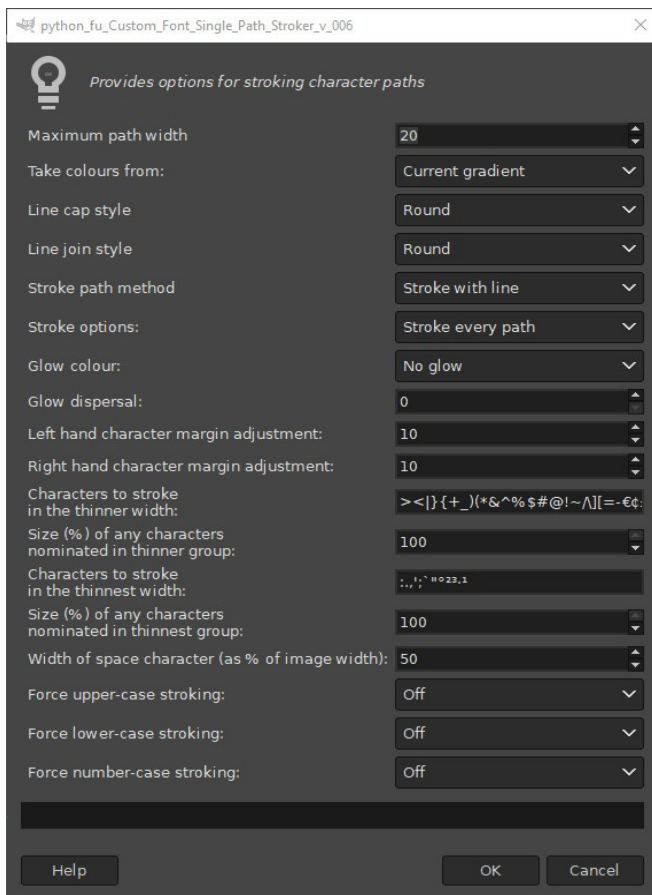
Link to more information
<https://gimplearn.net/viewtopic.php?f=10&t=2090>

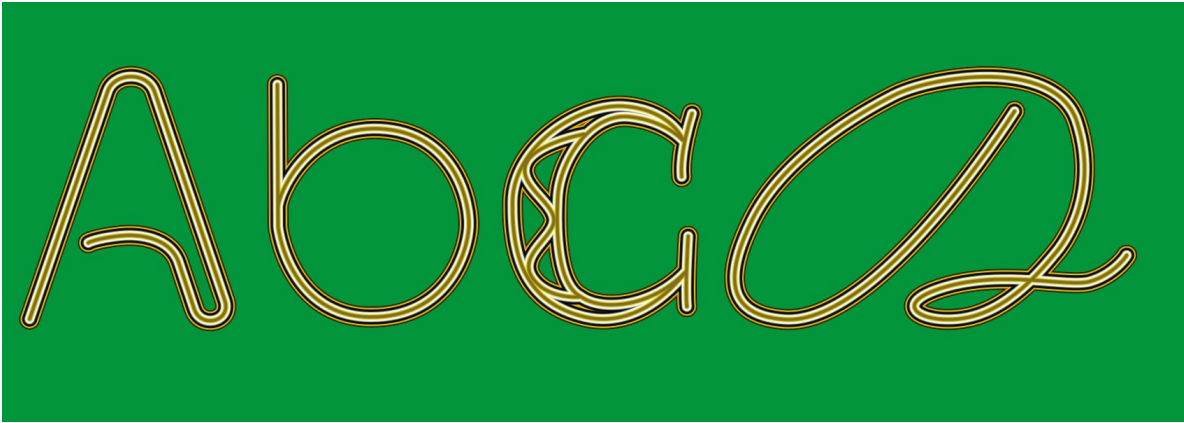


This is a rather specialised tool intended to produce custom fonts with a more natural and/or open style. It requires a series of character shaped skeleton paths which it strokes with the brush tool to create character layers. These effects often benefit from the sympathetic use of brush dynamics.

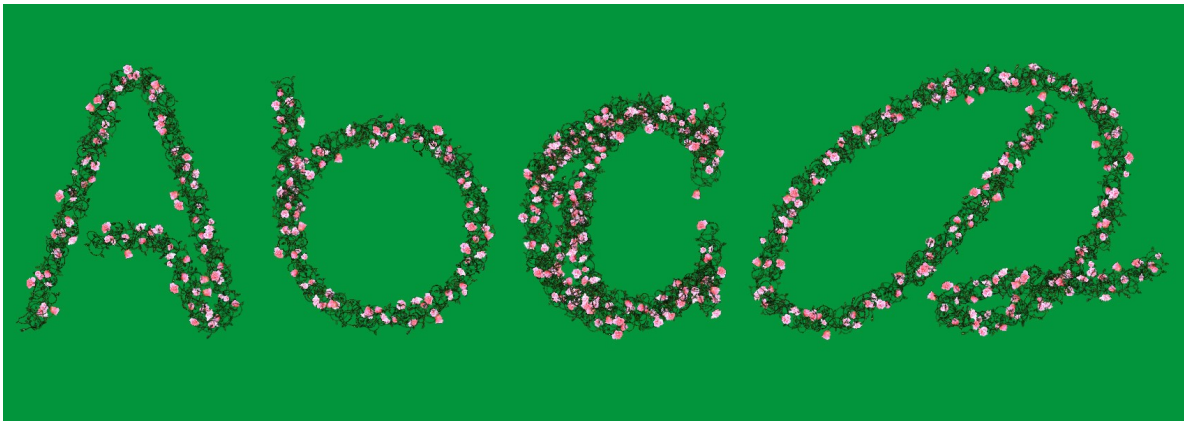
Custom Font Single Path Stroker (Introduced in version 12):

In some ways this filter replicates the output of Custom Font Paths to Layers but it is mainly intended to be used with the line stroking function. It has been updated considerably in version number 0.06 in order to apply kerning path information and to improve the glow dispersal feature.



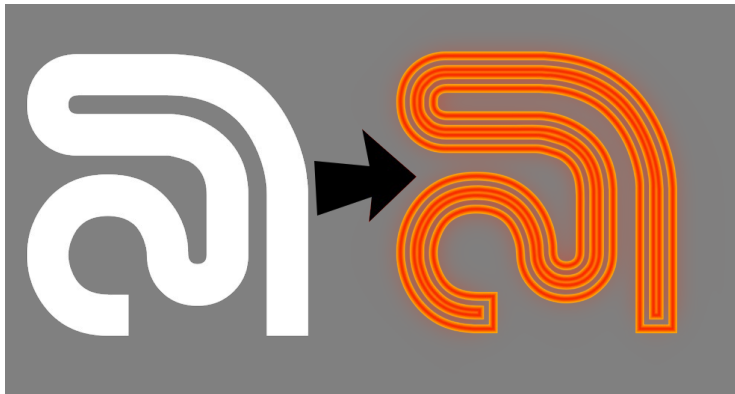


There is a brush stroking option and it will quite happily use the same character paths as Custom Font Paths to Layers.



More information at <https://gimplearn.net/viewtopic.php?f=3&t=2701>

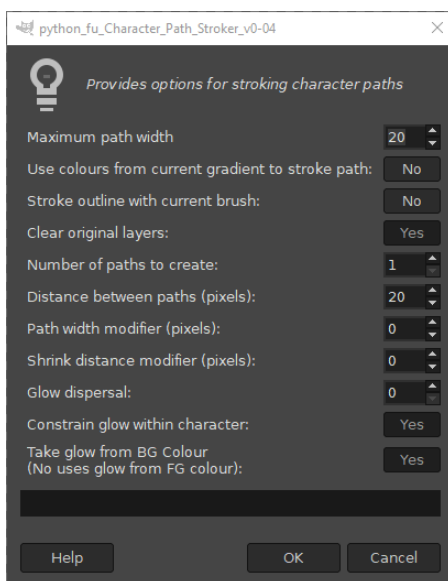
Custom Font Character Path Stroker:



Use this tool to turn a plain font face into a font face made up of a number of stroked paths.

Link to more information here:

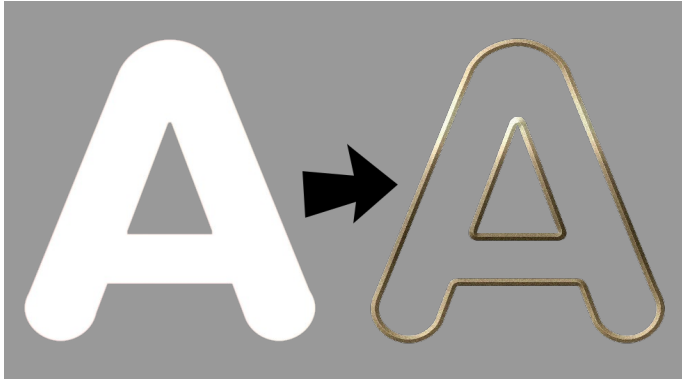
<https://gimplearn.net/viewtopic.php?f=3&t=2257>



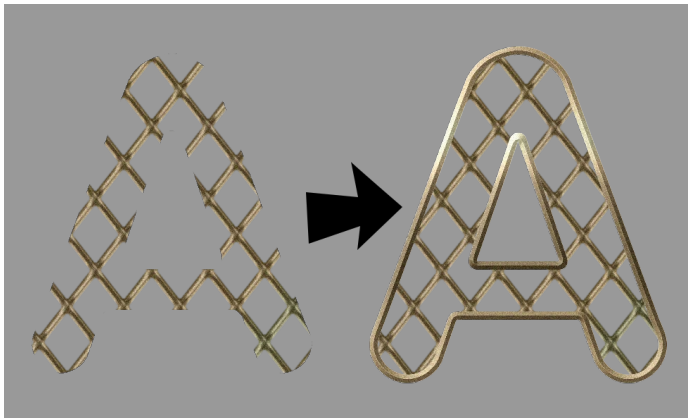
This tool creates a path from a character and strokes the path with colours taken from the current foreground and background, the current gradient or the brush tool.

It can be used to outline characters but there are also options to create multiple paths and to add a glow effect.

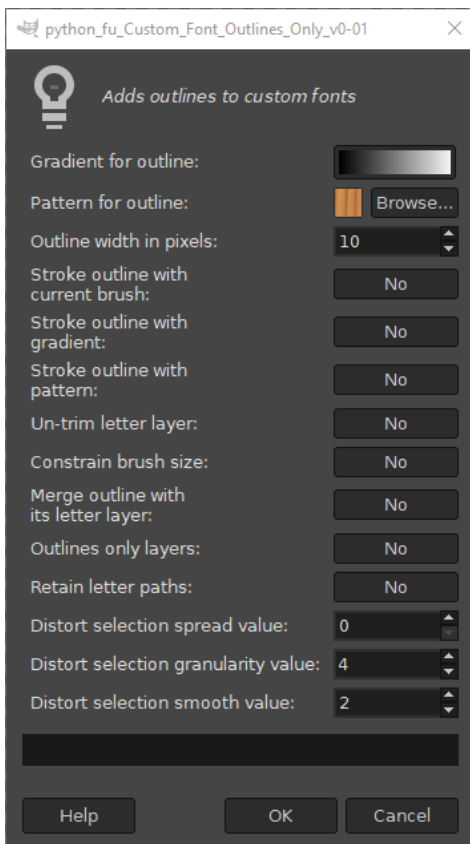
Custom Font Outlines Only:



Use this tool to turn a font face into an outline only font...



...or add an outline to an existing custom font.



This tool creates an outline for a custom font character using the current foreground colour, brush, gradient or pattern. The resultant outline can be added to the existing character or used as a new outline custom font character.

There are options to distort the outline.

If you need a set of custom font character paths you can also do it by using an option in this tool.

More outline examples



Custom Font Lighting Effects GT Style

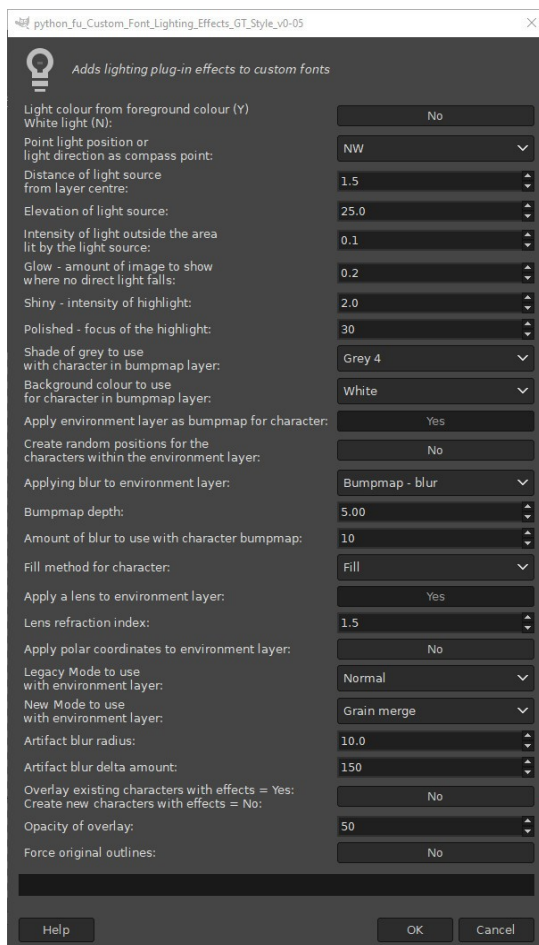
This plug-in applies the Lighting plug-in to all the characters in a custom font file. Since the Lighting plug-in does not work properly when called from another plug-in, this implementation works in a slightly different way.

The default settings offer a good basis to start experimenting with but I highly recommend reading the filter guide to become familiar with its principals and differences when using lighting effects in this way.

Link to the help guide here:

<https://gimpearn.net/viewtopic.php?f=3&t=2372>

The image below, beginning from the left, shows a character without any extra effects, then the same character using the shine effect and bumpmap from the Effects Only filter and, lastly, the same character using the Lighting Effects filter.



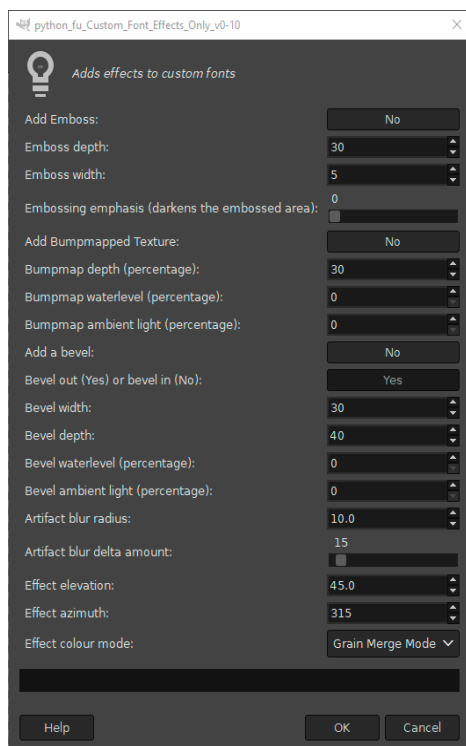
Although by default the filter creates new character faces it can also overlay different lighting effects on top of an existing character, as long as there is an image (environment) layer present in the file.

The filter also saves a text layer (called Legend) as part of the custom font file which records the Light Effects settings used so you can always look at how the characters were originally created.

Custom Font Face Modifying Tools

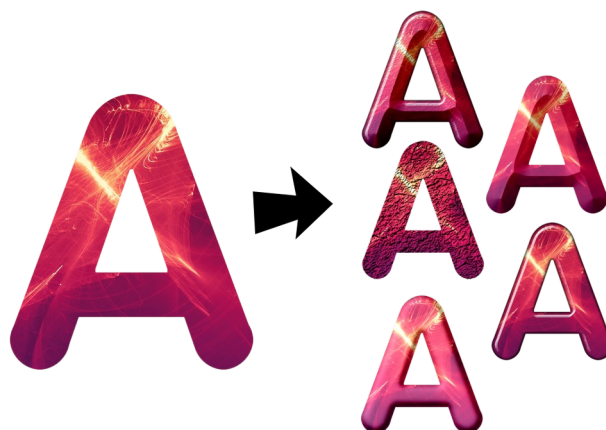
These tools apply various filters to all the character layers in a custom font file to hopefully add something extra to the font's appearance. You can of course apply filters manually one layer at a time – if you have the will-power.

Custom Font Effects Only:



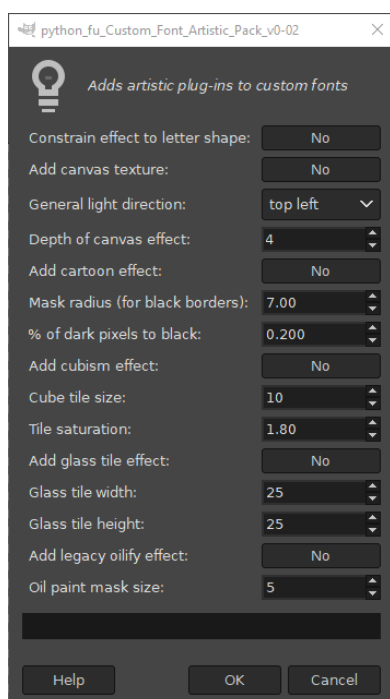
This has options for applying an emboss, a bumpmap (taken from an additional layer) and a bevel to every character in a custom font.

The effects can be applied in any combination – but of course multiple effects add to the time taken to complete the process.

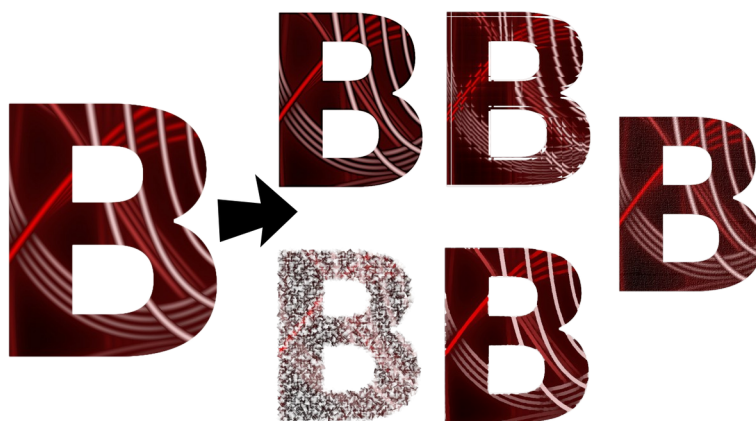


Link to more information (please note the Shine option detailed there is now in Sheen N Shine):
<https://gimplearn.net/viewtopic.php?f=3&t=1907>

Custom Font Artistic Pack:

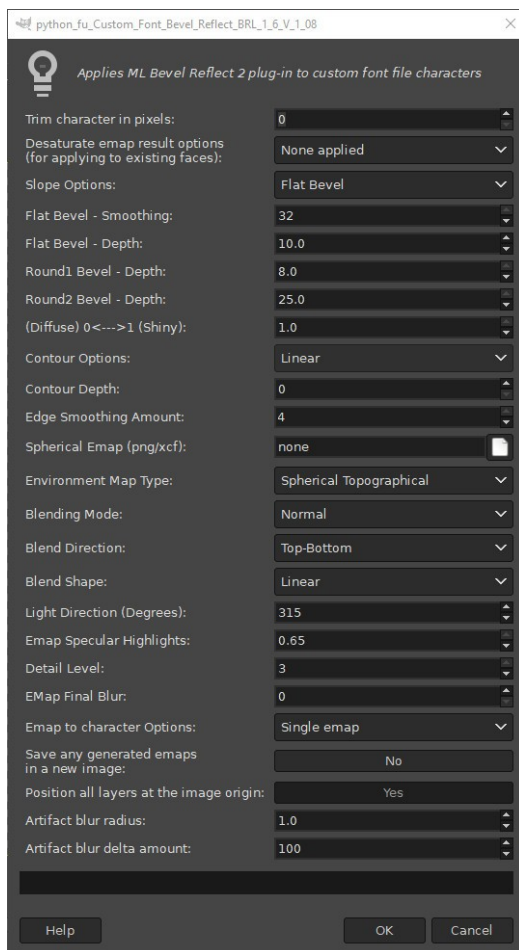


This tool provides a quick way of applying some of Gimp's Artistic filters to all the character layers namely the Canvas filter, the Cartoon filter, the Cubism filter, the Glass Tile filter and the Oilify legacy filter.

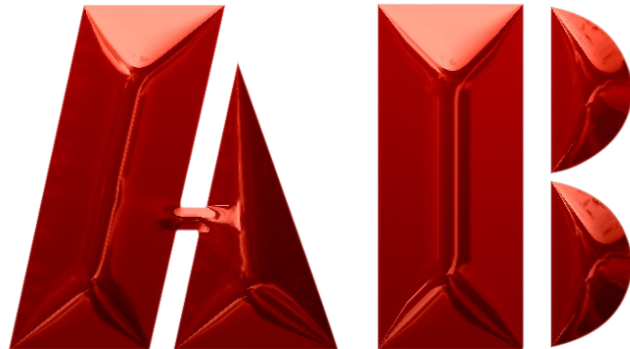


Most of the filters have a number of options available for customising the effects for the size of font.

Custom Font Bevel Reflect 1.6 (New to Release 13)



This tool requires the additional installation of the MLBevelReflect plug-in (which does all the hard work) and is, basically, a Python interpretation of the original script by GnuTux. It produces wonderful highlighted characters using an environment map layer (emap).

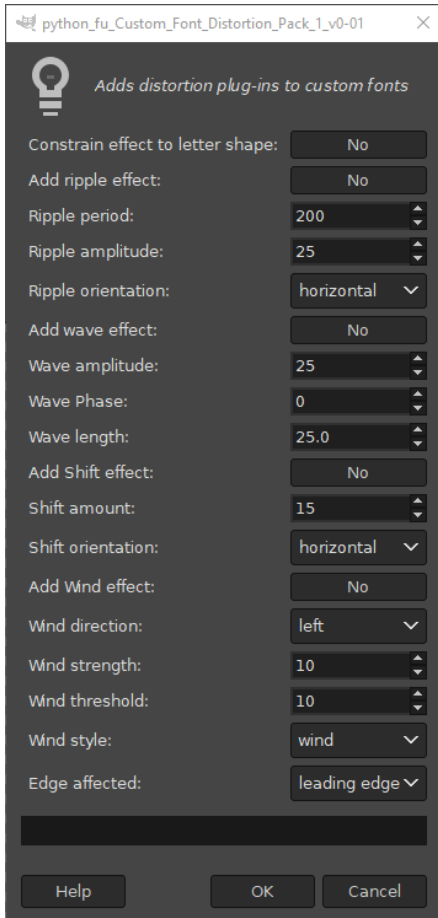


More details can be found in the guide with this link:

[Guide to original Bevel Reflect Version](#)



Custom Font Distortion Packs 1 & 2:

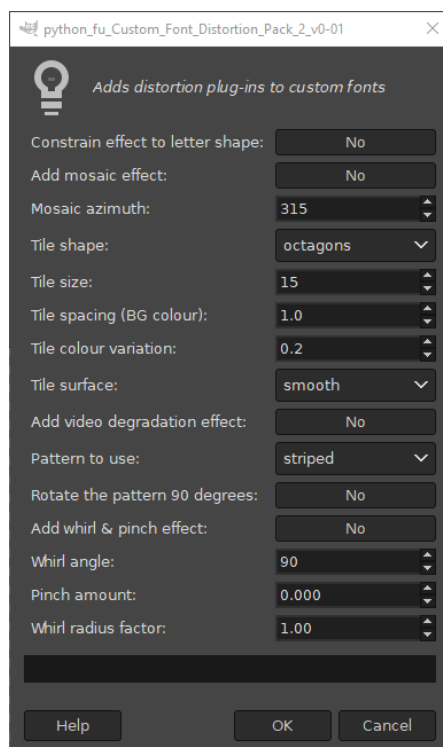
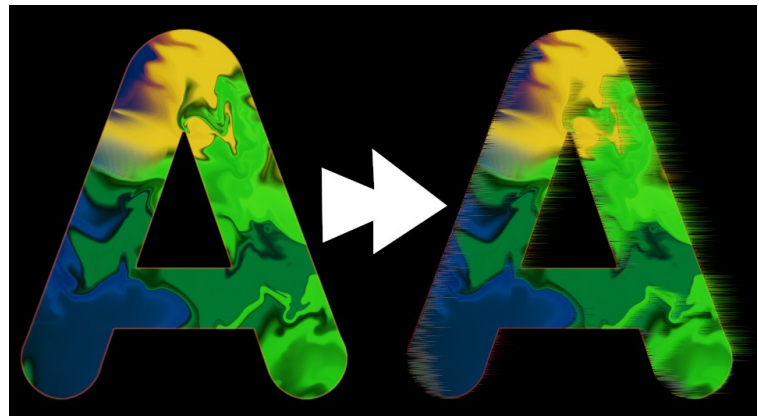


Pack 1 adds options for applying ripples, waves, shifts and wind distortion effects to each character.

More information here:

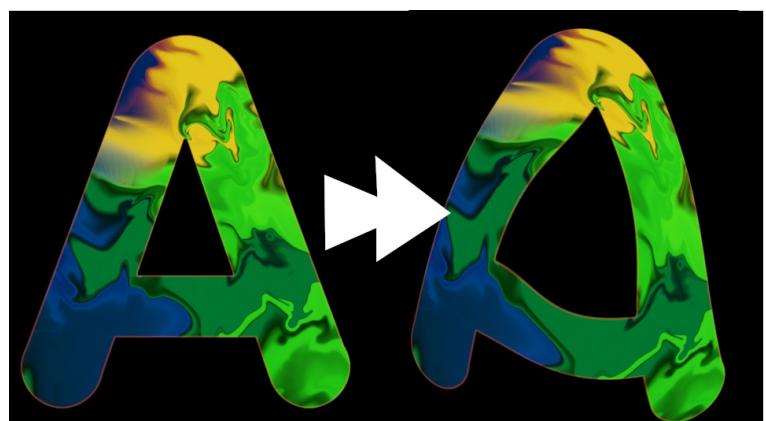
<https://gimplearn.net/viewtopic.php?f=3&t=1907>

Wind effect added below:



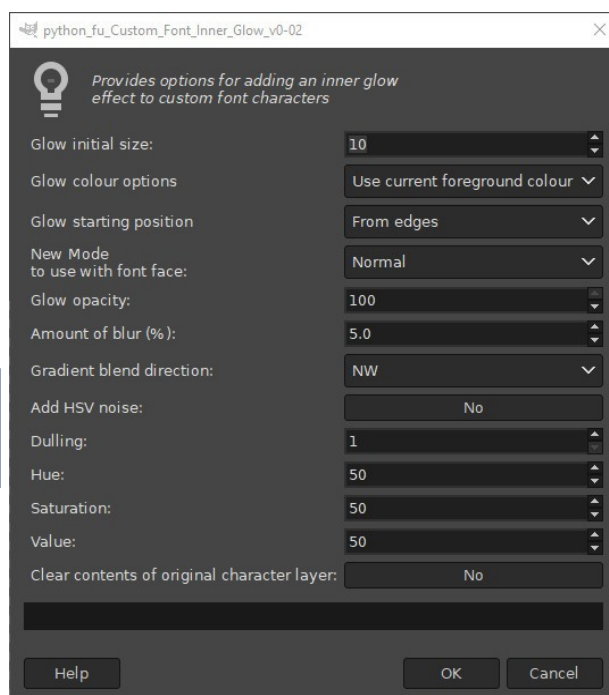
Pack 2 adds options for applying mosaic, video degradation and whirl and pinch effects to custom fonts.

Whirl and Pinch added below:

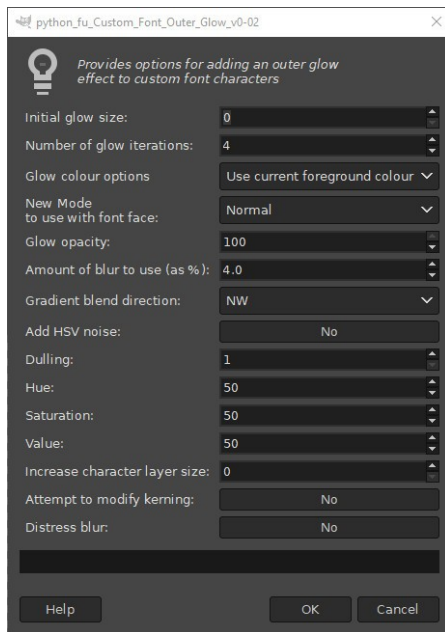


Custom Font Inner Glow (Introduced in Release 12)

This is my take on adding an inner glow to custom font characters.



Custom Font Outer Glow (New to Release 13)



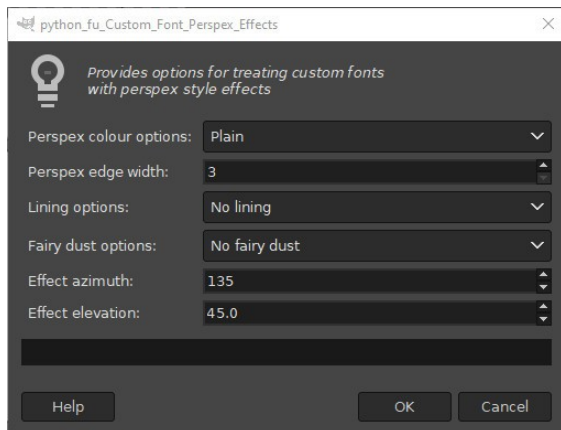
This is my take on adding an outer glow to custom font characters. It provides options for adding the glow in different colours and thicknesses (you may need to increase the size of the layer to accommodate changes) and for adjusting existing kerning path information.



Some gradient glow examples can be seen below.



Custom Font Perspex Effects (Introduced in Release 12)

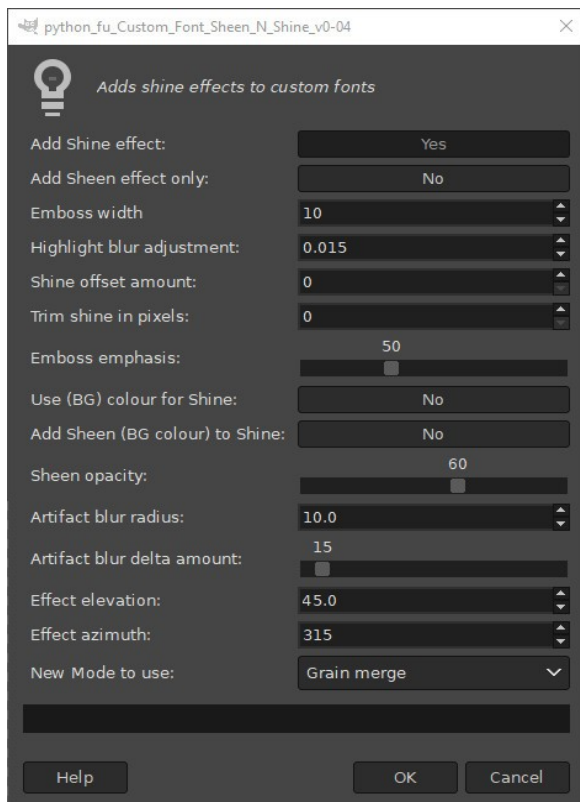


This filter, based on KWard1979's Glass script, has options for adding colour, lining and fairy dust (noise) to character layers in the style of perspex sheet lettering.

Some example outputs with a filled circle behind the character to show the translucent nature of the effect:

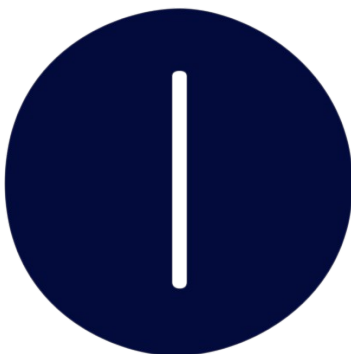


Custom Font Sheen N Shine (Introduced in Release 12)

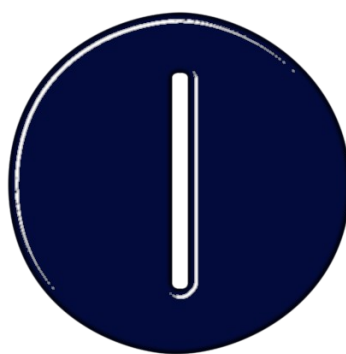


This filter is the new home for the Shine effect that used to be part of the Effects Only plug-in. It now provides an extra option to add a delicate sheen effect to the surface of each character.

Example outputs:



Character without effect

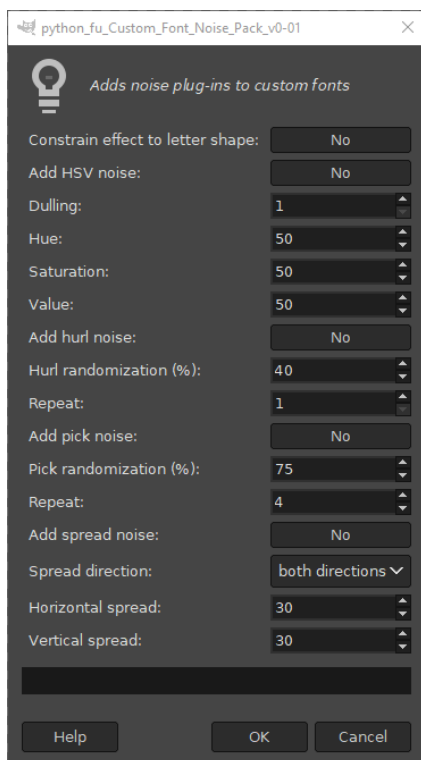


Shine effect applied



Shine and Sheen applied

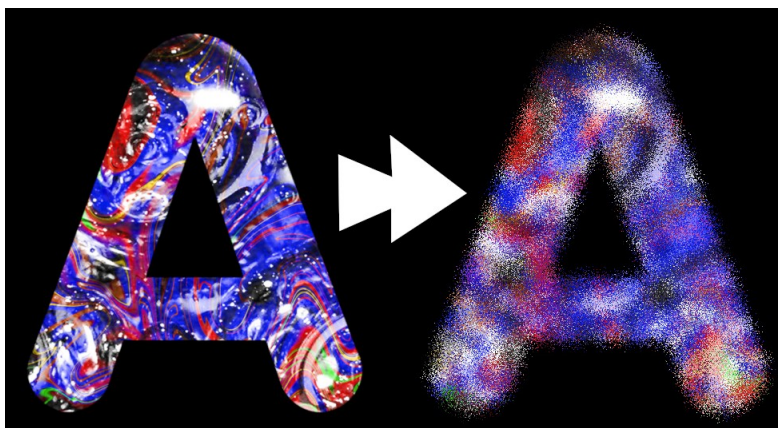
Custom Font Noise Pack



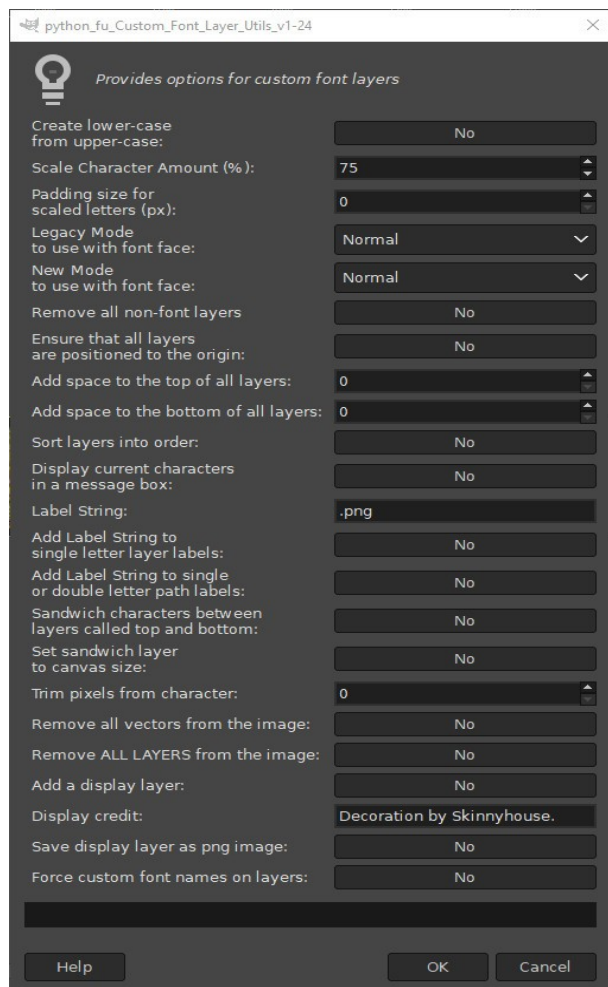
This tool provides a quick way of applying some of Gimp's Noise filters to character layers to add texture and interest to character faces. Think glow, grunge and fairy dust.

<https://gimplearn.net/viewtopic.php?f=3&t=1907>

Spread Noise added below:



Custom Font Layer Utilities:



This tool mainly provides a set of utilities for working with character layers in order to speed up the process of creating custom fonts rather than altering the appearance of the characters.

Most of the options are self-explanatory.

The option to create a set of lower-case letters does require an additional path (base_line.png) to be first added to the custom font.

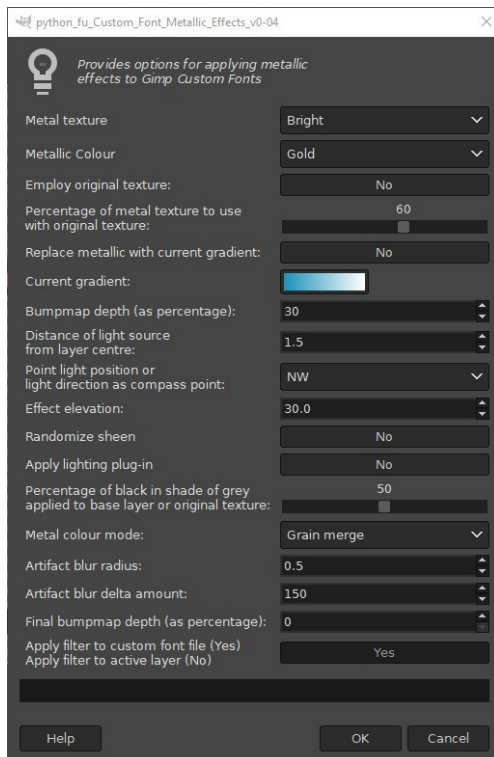
More information about sandwich layer characters like this:



<https://gimplearn.net/viewtopic.php?f=3&t=2032>

Custom Font Metallic Effects:

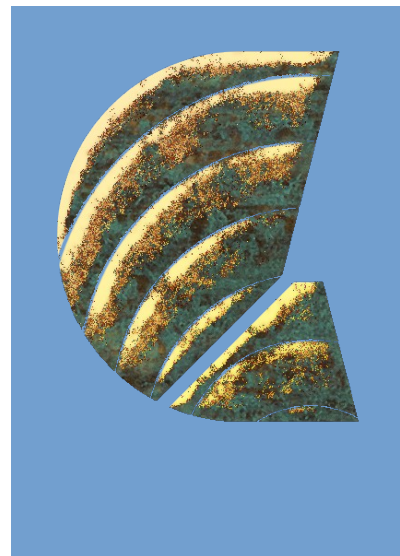
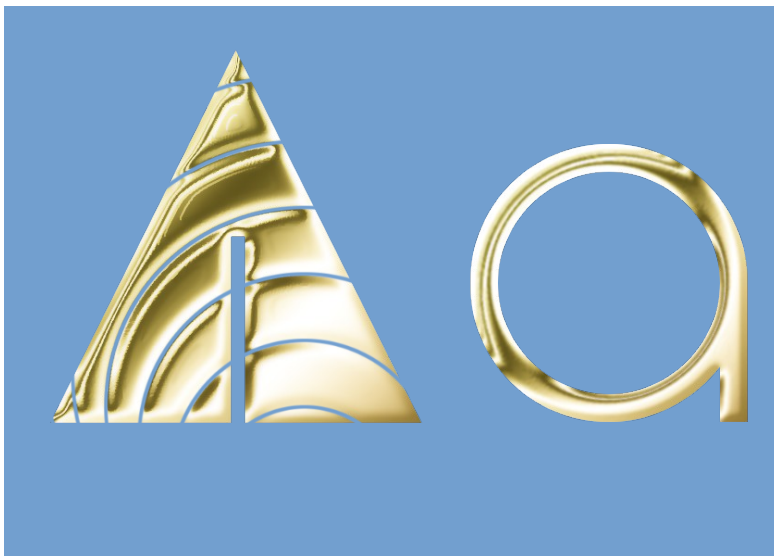
This plug-in can apply a range of metallic effects to an existing plain, or patterned, custom font.



Further details can be found on GimpLearn:

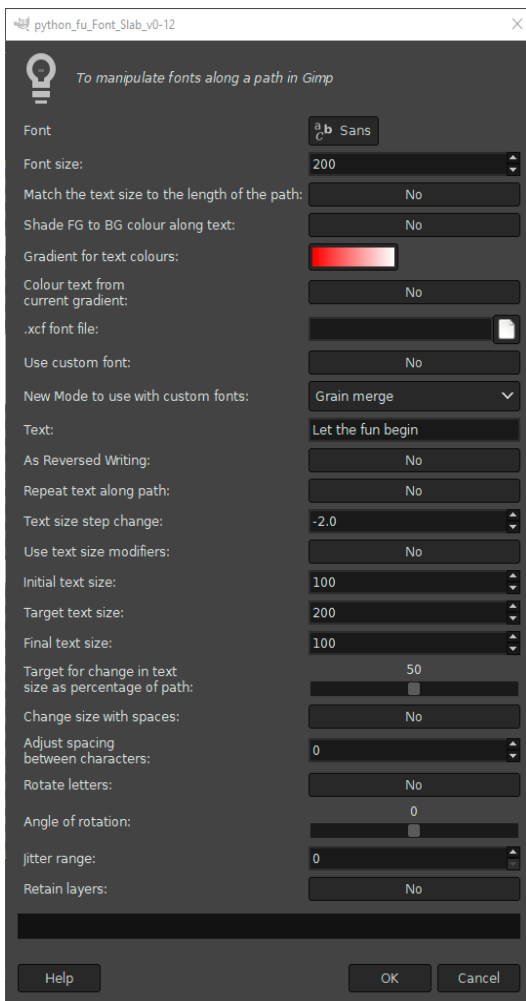
<https://gimplearn.net/viewtopic.php?f=3&t=2577>

A couple of example outputs:



Custom Font using Tools

FontSlab



This tool provides the options for writing text along a path using both normal and custom fonts.

It provides a number of options for doing this:

Colouring normal fonts

Changing the size of text along the path

Altering the space between characters

Reversing text along the path

Repeating text along the path

Rotating characters

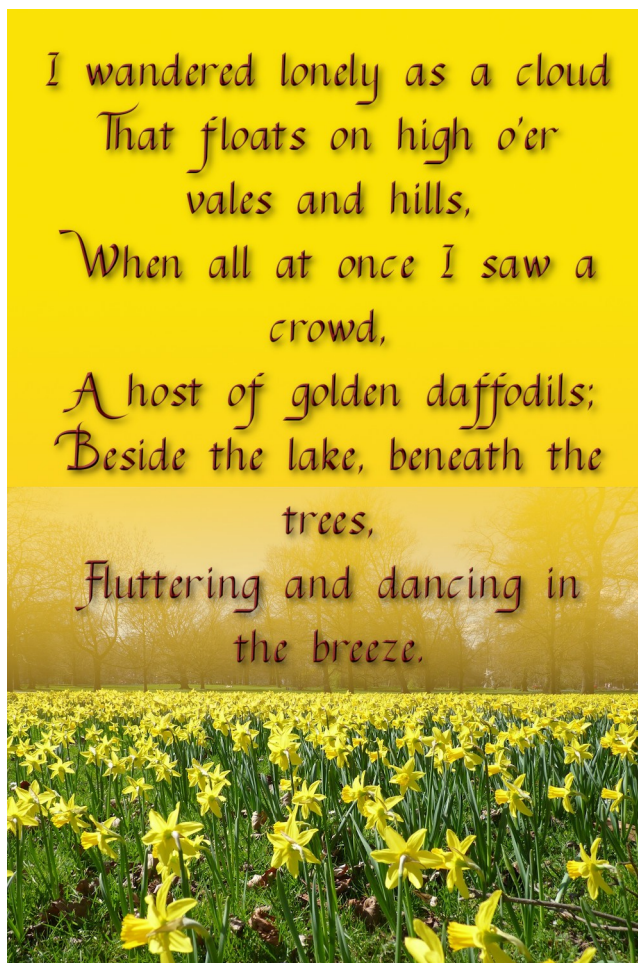
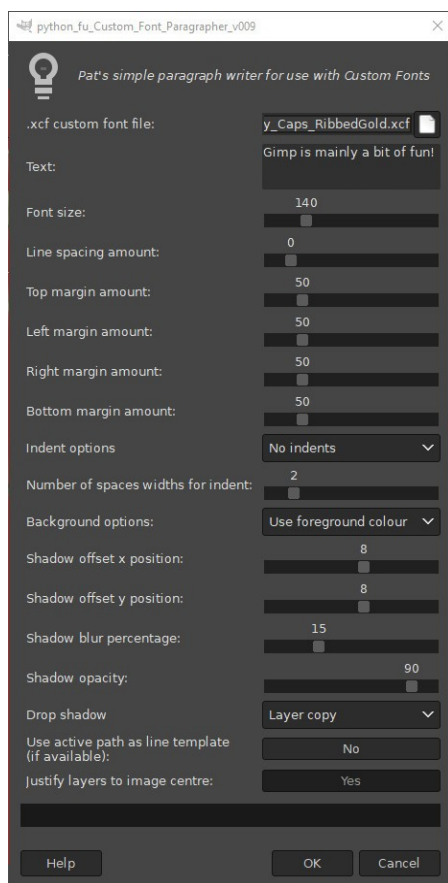
I made a series of five tutorials for Version 0.02 of FontSlab that cover these options and are still relevant to the latest version. Search gimpearn.net for this FontSlab Version 0.02 for Gimp 2.10 Tutorial.

Below: FontSlab effects applied to a range of custom fonts



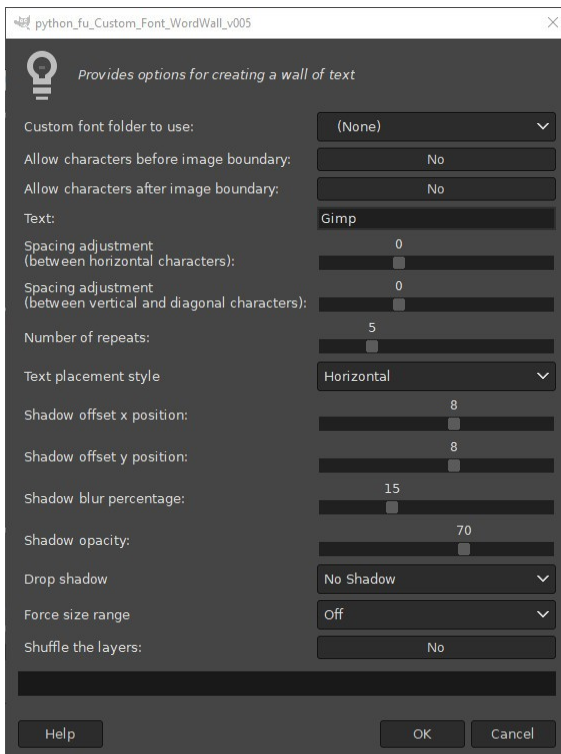
Custom Font Paragrapher (Introduced in Release 12)

Paragrapher was made at the request of Pat625 – a great source of encouragement and support to all at GimpChat and GimpLearn. It simply writes text onto a series of lines in the chosen custom font and is suitable for greeting cards, verses and song lyrics etc.



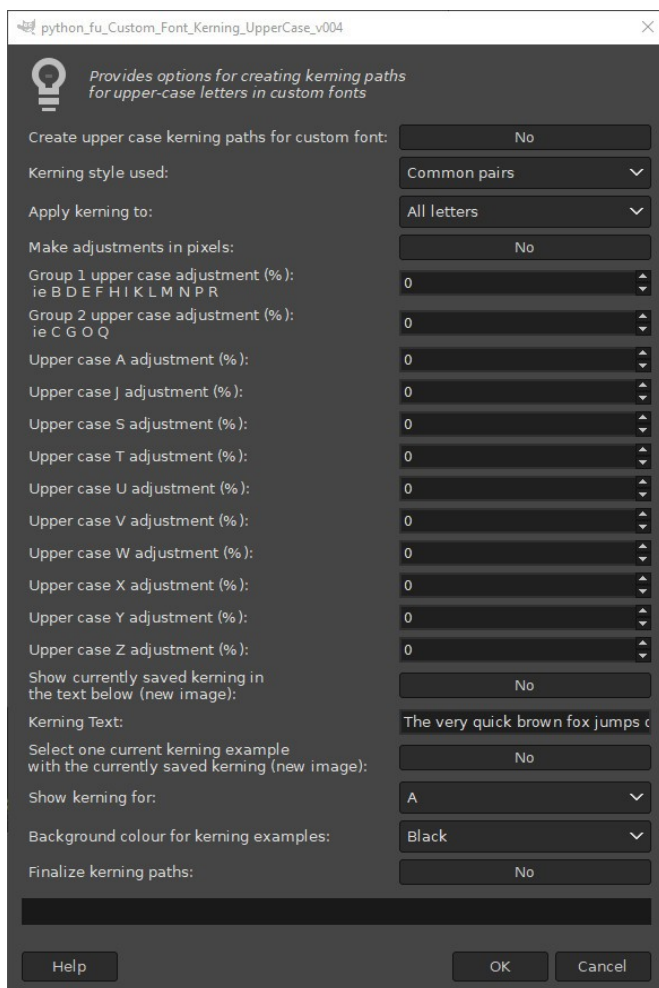
Custom Font Wordwall (Introduced in Release 12)

This filter creates a wall of words, using the text provided, in a range of sizes from the nominated folder containing custom fonts.



More information at <https://gimplearn.net/viewtopic.php?f=3&t=2638>

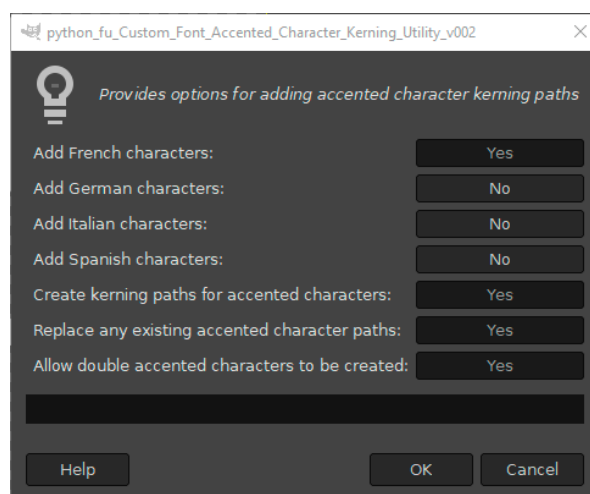
Custom Font Kerning Tools



This is a set of three filter tools (upper-case filter shown here) that can be used to generate custom font kerning path pairs. More detailed information can be found here: Please note that you need to have FontSlab installed for these to work properly.

<https://gimplearn.net/viewtopic.php?f=3&t=2553>

There is also a utility for adding accented character kerning pair paths.



Custom Font Folder Thumbnails

And finally there is a small plug-in that can be used to create a thumbnail image (in png format) to accompany each custom font file in a named folder.

