This book is designed to solve a very specific problem—flatness. Two-dimensional motion graphics designers and animators routinely hit a brick wall. You have these flat objects occupying a manufactured world, and the illusion of depth is just not enough—you want it to turn in space. More so, you have a client who is demanding that object turn in space, and you need to meet that request (or, let’s face it, someone else will).

![Figure 1.1 2D object turning in 3D space.](image)

This usually leads folks to look for plug-ins for After Effects, or a three-dimensional animation application. Then a new roadblock appears (or several)—how do I use these things? First, 3D is a lot more difficult than 2D. Second, beginner resources for 3D software start you from the very, very beginning, and you may not have the time to spend spinning cubes.

This book will explore several options for 2D motion graphics artists. First, we’ll take advantage of the new and not-so-new 3D tools in Adobe software, which are quite useful and may solve a large percentage of your concerns. Second, this book will address existing tools that can be added to After Effects, like third-party plug-ins that add 3D functionality to AE. Third, we’ll dip into 3D software including Cinema 4D, ZBrush, 3dsMax, and others, starting you in the direction of developing your 3D skill set.

**TIP**
You may spin cubes in this book; I promise to keep it brief.
How to Use This Book

If you are familiar with either of my two previous textbooks, *The Visual Effects Arsenal* (Focal Press 2009) and *Creative Motion Graphics Titling* (coauthored with Yael Braha; Focal Press 2010), then you won’t find what I am about to say all that surprising. My teaching motivates my textbook writing. I am as fascinated by how people learn as I am by what they learn.

Students and professionals want books that address specific problems and solve them. They are not nearly as motivated by the guts of a software package as they are by what it can do for them. This book is designed to take people who know 2D motion graphics and animation and get them on the right path to learning 3D. This book won’t teach you everything you need to know about 3D motion graphics—learning everything about 3D animation is a lifelong pursuit.

The aim of this text is to get you started in 3D by introducing you to available options that can be added with relative ease to an existing 2D animation skill set. In many ways, this book is designed to be 3D animation from the very, very beginning. This book does assume some foreknowledge of standard 2D tools (such as Adobe After Effects, Adobe Photoshop, and Adobe Illustrator). 3D packages will be introduced like 3dsMax, Cinema 4D, ZBrush; and After Effects plug-ins like Trapcode Particular, Trapcode 3D Stroke, and more.

Even though you will be introduced to numerous tools that have infinite applications, techniques will be the focus of this book. What’s the point of learning an incredibly complex tool if you don’t get to see what it does?