Maya - Assigning and Editing Materials

Step 1  ·  Working with materials in Maya is done through the HyperShade using shader networks. There are shaders specifically for mental ray and Maya’s other rendering programs, although many of them can be mixed depending on your needs. This tutorial will go through setting up mental ray specific shaders called “mia” materials. These have presets that will cover many of the common materials on products. To best work with assigning and editing shaders, open the saved layout HyperShade/Outliner/Prep in the modeling window (A) and make sure the attribute editor is active (B).
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Step 2

Here is a list of all the different areas in this layout: A - Library elements, B - Shaders current in the file, C - Work area for creating and editing shaders, D - Outliner where you select geometry, E - Modeling window, F - Attribute Editor for selecting preset and editing parameters.
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Step 3

To locate the "mia" type shaders in the Library, type “mia” in the search box under the Create tab. Click once on the top selection, “mia_material” (B). The shader icon appears in the work area (D). To assign the shader to geometry, select the geometry in either the modeling window or the Outliner (C). To make sure the group is selected, use the up arrow on the keyboard. Right mouse click and hold on the shader icon and swipe uppers to choose “Assign Material To Selection” (D).
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Step 4  
To select a preset for a mia_material, make sure it is active in the Attribute Editor. You can do this by selecting it in the work area (A). Then, click and hold on the “Preset” button and highlight one of the material choices. Usually, you will choose to “Replace” all the attributes with the new Preset.
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Step 5 • You can learn about many of the parameters under the mia_materials by simple hovering the mouse over the parameter name or value (A).