



VISUAL  
QUICKSTART  
GUIDE

ANDRE PERSIDSKY

# DIRECTOR

## FOR MACINTOSH & WINDOWS

*Teach yourself Director the  
quick and easy way! This  
Visual QuickStart Guide uses  
pictures rather than lengthy*

*ex* **USED** *. You'll be up*

*and running in no time!*

**VISUAL QUICKSTART GUIDE**

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# **DIRECTOR 7**

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**FOR MACINTOSH AND WINDOWS**

**Andre Persidsky**

 **Peachpit Press**

  
macromedia®  
**PRESS**

Visual QuickStart Guide

## **Director 7 for Macintosh and Windows**

Andre Persidsky

### **Peachpit Press**

1249 Eighth Street

Berkeley, CA 94710

(510) 524-2178

(510) 524-2221 (fax)

(800) 283-9444

Find us on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.peachpit.com>

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Editor: Nancy E. Dunn

Editorial Assistant: Laura Sample

Production Coordinator: Amy Changar

Compositor: Owen Wolfson

Indexer: Bill Meyers

Cover Design: The Visual Group

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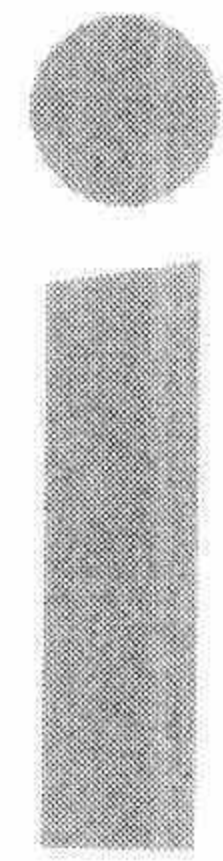
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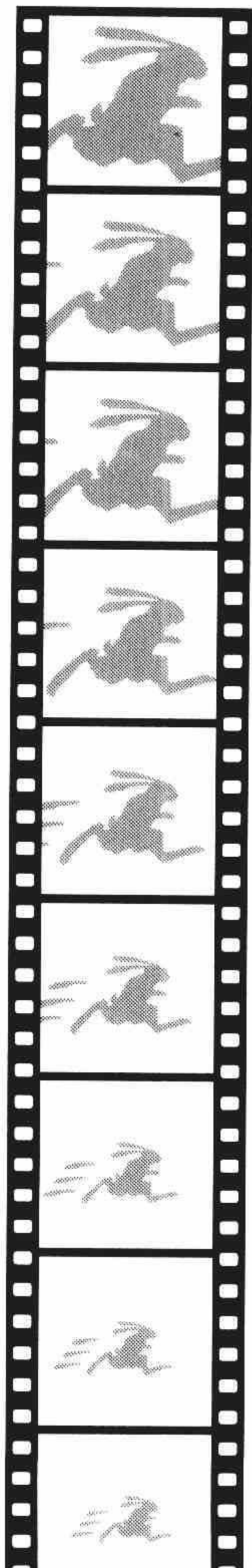
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# INTRODUCTION

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This book teaches the fundamentals of using Macromedia Director, an exciting and challenging program for creating animation and multimedia productions for CD-ROM, your local network, or the Web.

With this *Director 7 Visual QuickStart Guide* you learn how to perform all the steps involved in creating Director projects, or *movies* as most people call them. The book covers how to:

- ◆ Create and assemble cast members in Cast windows.
- ◆ Animate cast members on the stage.
- ◆ Build a movie frame-by-frame in the score.
- ◆ Create and edit cast members in the Paint window or new Vector Shapes window.
- ◆ Control movie playback, set scene transitions, alter color palettes, and add interactive controls to your movies using drag-and-drop behaviors.
- ◆ Produce a Shockwave-format file for distributing a movie on the Internet.
- ◆ Use Xtras, add-on modules that provide extra features.
- ◆ Introduce yourself to Lingo, Director's scripting language.

## About This Book

In the Visual QuickStart Guide format, this book provides clear instructions, supported by many illustrations. Where necessary, you'll find concise explanations—without any distracting fluff. The idea is to get you up and running as quickly as possible through practical examples.

## How to Use This Book

If you have used any other Visual QuickStart guides, you will find this book familiar. Each chapter offers a series of step-by-step instructions for completing essential tasks. As you work through the tasks, you gain an understanding of the program features and how to exploit them. Occasional tips provide hints for working efficiently, and illustrations demonstrate the techniques clearly.

The chapters unfold sequentially. The early chapters assume that you don't know anything that I introduce in a later chapter. You can use this book with the index to find out how to do something, but it's set up to make it easy to learn from scratch as you go through the book from chapter to chapter. You could skim some of the later chapters in the book because they detail how to do perform tasks that not all Director users need, but I recommend that you follow chapters one through five in order. Those first five chapters build on each other to help you quickly learn how to make and play a simple Director movie.

## New in This Edition

This new edition of the book covers the latest version 7 features. Like the program itself, this edition of the book is completely updated to make it even easier to use than previous versions. Also, for the first time both the Macintosh and Windows versions of the program are covered in this one book, although you still have to buy two versions of the program to make movies for both platforms.

## About Conventions in This Book

Different computer books use terms differently, so it's important to know how this book uses common terms.

*Click* means pressing down and releasing the Macintosh mouse button, or pressing down and releasing the left mouse button on Windows.

*Drag* means to hold the mouse button down and then move the mouse. You release the mouse button when you finish dragging.

### Menu Commands

This book writes menu and command choices in the form of Menu name > Command > Subcommand. For example, if I need to tell you to choose Media Element from the Insert menu and then to select Bitmap from the submenu that pops out to the side, I can save us all a lot of trouble if I say instead, "Choose Insert > Media Element > Bitmap."

### Keyboard Shortcuts

This book scatters keyboard shortcuts for commands sparingly throughout the book. There are two reasons for being stingy with the keyboard shortcuts in the step-by-step instructions:

- ◆ It's distracting to have a choice of how to do something when you're trying to learn techniques.
- ◆ We all have so many PINs and passwords to remember that it's smart to be selective about what new things we commit to memory. Once you have worked with the program, you will know which commands you use so repeatedly that it's worth the trouble to learn the shortcut. Then refer to Appendix B for a handy reference to the menus and their keyboard shortcuts.

## About Cross-Platform Issues

Director 7 for Windows and Director 7 for Macintosh differ very little. That's why it makes sense to produce a single book that covers both versions of the program.

### Illustrations

Figures that illustrate the tasks in this book come from both Mac and Windows versions of Director 7. Only a few elements of the program actually offer different choices in the two versions, and the other differences in the figures are merely cosmetic.

### Command and Modifier Keys

Modifier keys for keyboard commands differ on the Mac and on Windows. Where I use the command and modifier keys (such as Shift, Alt, and Option), I say which keys to look for. Here's an example: "Hold the Alt key (Windows) or Option key (Mac) while dragging the Lasso."

The Shift key works the same way on both types of computers.

The Command key on the Mac is the one that has the apple and cloverleaf symbols on it.

### Features That Differ on Mac and Windows

Some techniques are performed differently on Windows and the Mac. Thus, in a few places a step has one method for Mac and one for Windows. Those steps are clearly labeled (and there aren't very many of them).

Even rarer are tasks that differ completely on the two types of computers. In those cases I've written totally different instructions, and I tell you about it in the heading for the task. For example, only the Macintosh can record sounds into Director, and so there is a task called "To record sounds directly into Director (Mac)."

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>ix</b>
	About This Book .....	x
	About Conventions in This Book .....	xi
	About Cross-Platform Issues .....	xii
<b>Chapter 1:</b>	<b>Director Basics</b>	<b>1</b>
	About the Stage .....	2
	About Cast, Score, and Stage Interaction .....	3
	About Sprites and Cast Members .....	4
	About Director Windows .....	5
	About Director's Inspectors .....	6
	Getting Started .....	8
	Customizing Director .....	11
	Creating a Movie .....	14
	Updating Movies .....	18
	Working Faster .....	19
<b>Chapter 2:</b>	<b>Assembling Casts</b>	<b>21</b>
	Creating Casts .....	22
	Importing Cast Members .....	28
	Managing Casts .....	35
<b>Chapter 3:</b>	<b>Building a Score</b>	<b>49</b>
	Using Frames and Channels .....	50
	Working with Sprites .....	53
	Changing Sprite Properties .....	65
	Changing the Score View .....	79
	Setting Markers .....	84
<b>Chapter 4:</b>	<b>Animating Sprites</b>	<b>87</b>
	Tweening .....	88
	Step Recording .....	103
	Real-Time Recording .....	104
	Building Animated Sequences .....	106
	Making Film Loops .....	111
	Animating Color Cursors .....	114
	Imported Flash Movies .....	116

<b>Chapter 5: Playing &amp; Refining Movies</b>	<b>121</b>
Using the Control Panel .....	122
Setting Movie Tempo .....	126
Comparing Target Tempo vs. Actual Tempo ....	128
Locking Playback Speed .....	130
Setting Pauses in a Movie .....	131
Using Scene Transitions .....	132
<b>Chapter 6: Using Paint Tools</b>	<b>135</b>
Getting Started .....	137
Selecting and Moving Images .....	139
Making Shapes and Lines .....	144
Painting .....	149
Using Ink Effects .....	155
Using Color and Pattern .....	157
Painting with Gradient Inks .....	163
Adding Text .....	169
Applying Effects .....	171
Using Ink Masks .....	176
Onion Skinning .....	178
Applying Image Filters .....	180
<b>Chapter 7: Drawing Vector Shapes</b>	<b>181</b>
Creating Vector Shapes .....	182
Editing Vector Shapes .....	187
<b>Chapter 8: Drawing on the Stage</b>	<b>193</b>
Drawing Lines and Shapes .....	194
Making Buttons .....	196
Creating Text .....	197
Setting Colors .....	198
<b>Chapter 9: Managing Color</b>	<b>201</b>
Color Depth .....	202
Color Mode .....	207
Color Choices .....	209
Color Palettes .....	212
Custom Color Palettes .....	214
Tactics for Limited Color Displays .....	221
<b>Chapter 10: Adding Digital Video</b>	<b>237</b>
Importing Movies .....	238
Importing Animated GIFs .....	240
Incorporating Video .....	242
Editing Video .....	247
Changing the Playback Area .....	249

<b>Chapter 11:</b>	<b>Adding Text</b>	<b>251</b>
	Creating and Editing Regular Text .....	254
	Importing Text .....	265
	Embedding fonts .....	267
	Creating Field Text .....	269
	Setting Text for Users to Change .....	271
	Setting Text for Hyperlinks .....	273
<b>Chapter 12:</b>	<b>Adding Sound</b>	<b>275</b>
	Importing Sounds .....	276
	Placing Sounds in the Score .....	278
	Matching Sound to Actions .....	281
	Compressing Sounds .....	282
	Using Streaming Shockwave Audio .....	285
	Recording Sounds in Director (Mac) .....	287
<b>Chapter 13:</b>	<b>Creating a Projector</b>	<b>289</b>
	Setting Projector Options .....	290
	Making a Projector .....	293
	Creating a Flexible Projector .....	295
	Protecting Movie Files .....	297
<b>Chapter 14:</b>	<b>Making Movies for the Web</b>	<b>301</b>
	Setting Up .....	303
	Creating Shockwave Movies .....	306
	Making Streaming Shockwave Movies .....	309
	Playing a Shockwave Movie .....	312
	Converting Multiple Movies .....	313
<b>Chapter 15:</b>	<b>Using Xtras</b>	<b>315</b>
	Installing Xtras .....	316
	Using Xtras .....	318
	Adding Casts Member Xtras .....	319
	Including Xtras in Distributed movies .....	321
	Using ActiveX Controls (Windows) .....	325
<b>Chapter 16:</b>	<b>Adding Interactive Behaviors</b>	<b>327</b>
	Assigning Behaviors .....	328
	Using the Behavior Inspector .....	331
	Adding Behaviors .....	333
	Modifying Behaviors .....	337
<b>Chapter 17:</b>	<b>Scripting Lingo</b>	<b>341</b>
	Understanding Handlers, Messages, and Events ..	342
	Writing a Script .....	345
	Making Sprites and Cast Members Interactive ..	357
	Scripting Navigation .....	360

<b>Appendix A: Glossary</b>	<b>367</b>
<b>Appendix B: Keyboard Shortcuts</b>	<b>371</b>
<b>Index</b>	<b>375</b>

# DIRECTOR BASICS

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Macromedia's Director is an extensive multimedia development tool. Use it to create animation, interactive movies, marketing presentations, technical simulations, and even full-scale commercial productions such as entertainment titles for CD-ROM and the Web.

Director's powerful tools take some getting used to because they work differently than any other program you may have used. (If you've done sound-sequencing or digital video editing, you might be in more familiar territory.)

Let's begin with a visual overview of the program so you can see how its parts work together. If you're new to Director, you'll find it worthwhile to take a few minutes to go through this chapter even if you're itching to get started. And you'll be rolling up your sleeves and plunging into the program before the end of the chapter.

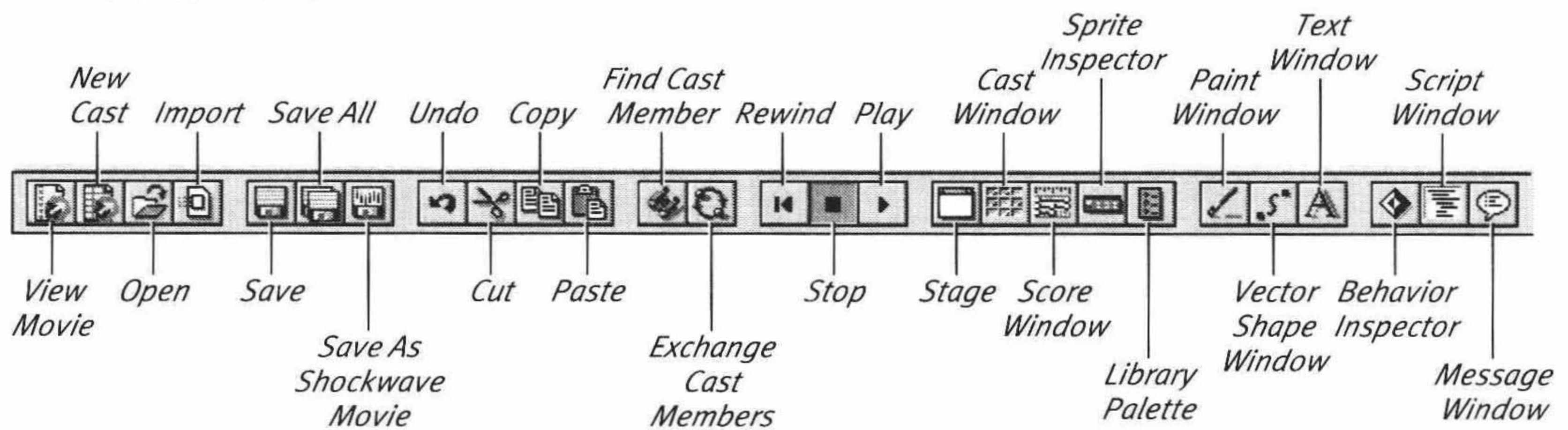
In this chapter you'll learn how to open the program, start a new movie, update movies produced with earlier versions of the program, use the Help system, set preferences, and find shortcuts. You'll also see an overview of the workflow for completing a project.

If you're someone who begins to learn a program by cruising through all the menus, turn to Appendix B, Menus and Shortcuts, for a complete array of the Director menus.

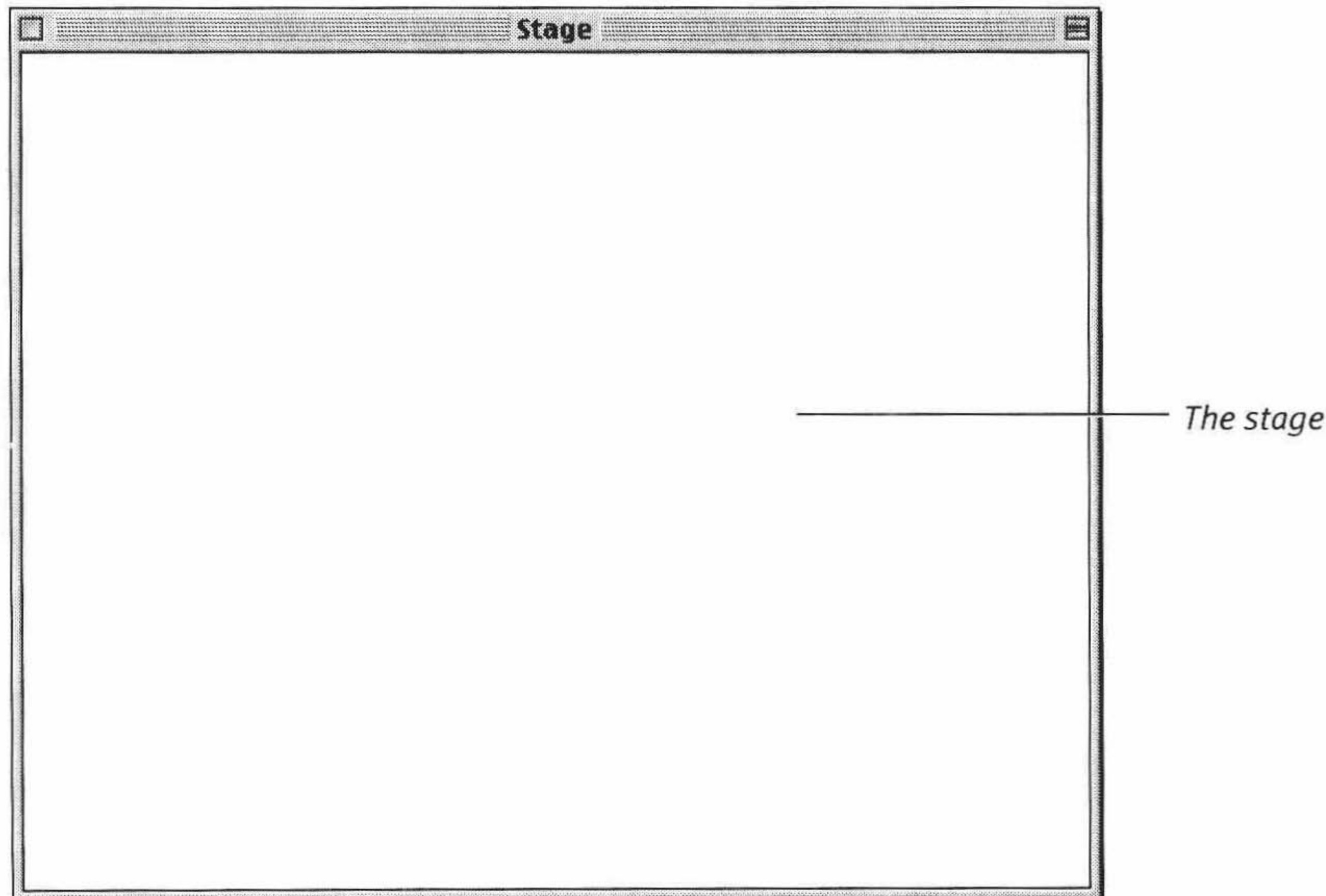
## About the Stage

The Director stage (**Figure 1.2**) serves as the window to the visual elements of a Director movie. Naturally, the stage is empty when you first open the program; it's your blank slate, awaiting your decisions about what to include in the movie.

The toolbar (**Figure 1.1**), which is nearly always visible while you work with Director, provides quick access to the most important Director commands.



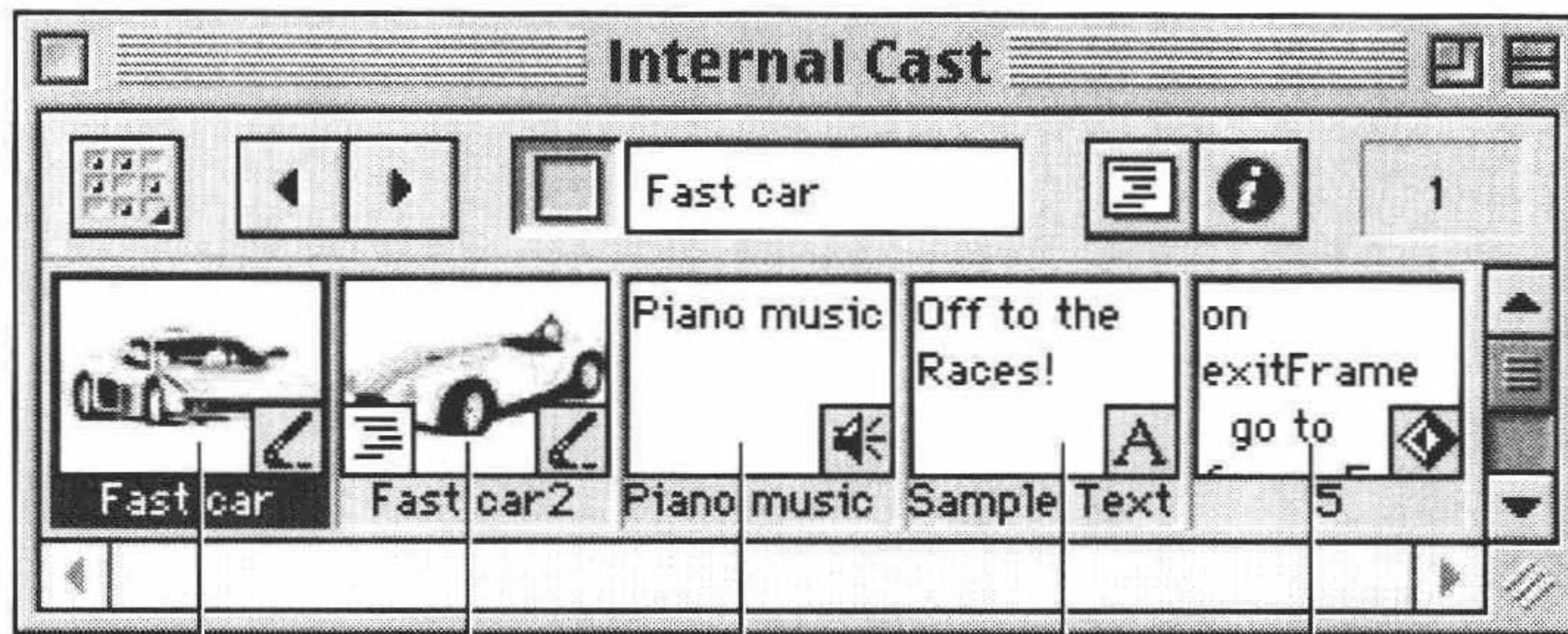
**Figure 1.1** The toolbar provides buttons that act as handy shortcuts to Director commands.



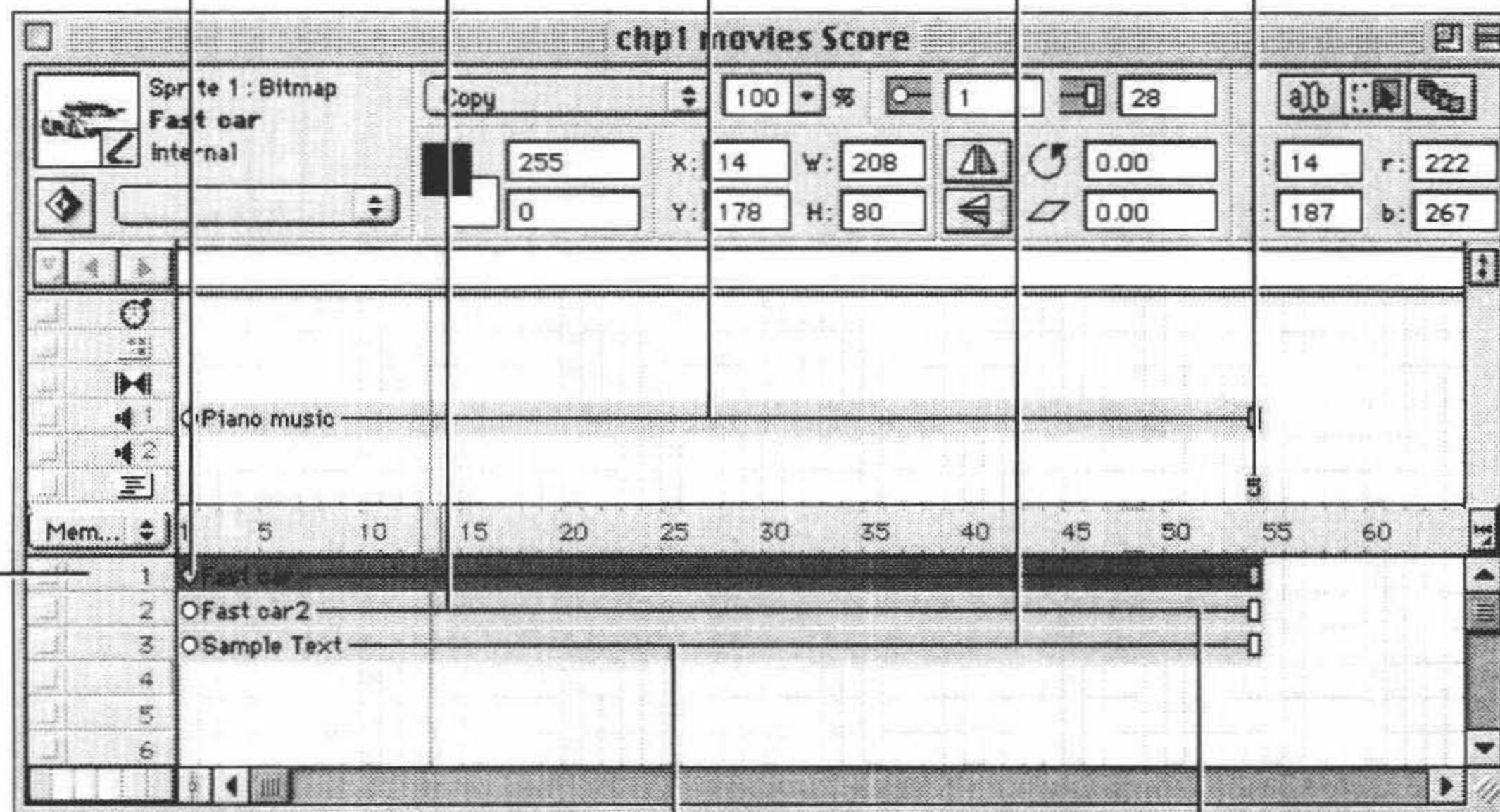
**Figure 1.2** The stage opens empty when you first launch Director. Here you compose elements of your movie and play it back for review. On the stage you control the position of visual elements within the playback area.

## About Cast, Score, and Stage Interaction

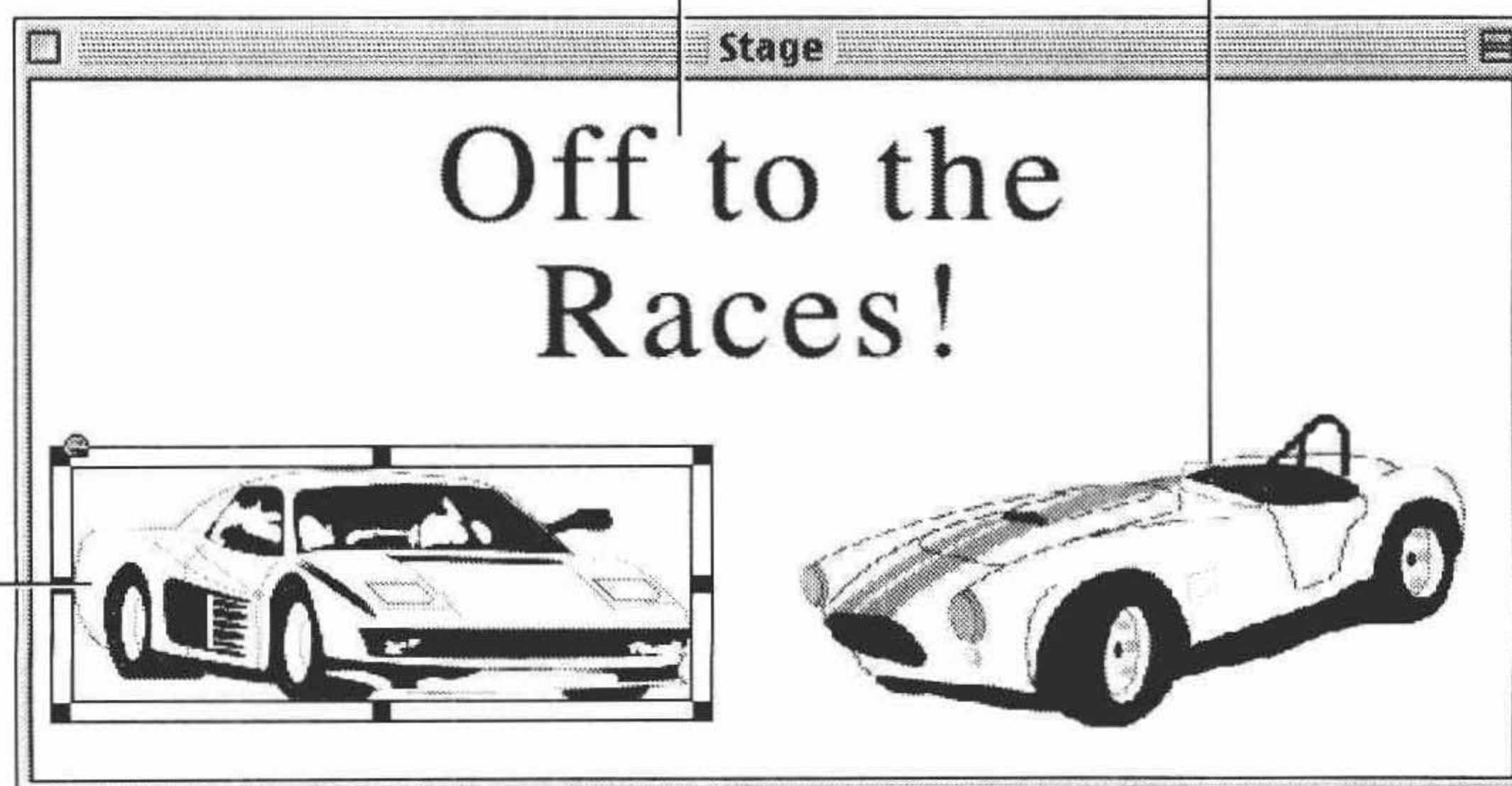
You build a Director movie by organizing cast members (**Figure 1.3**) in the score (**Figure 1.4**). This is the only way to control nonvisual elements that you can't see on the stage (**Figure 1.5**). You also use the score to set how long things remain active in the movie.



**Figure 1.3** Cast members, stored in Cast windows, are the multimedia elements that comprise a movie. Cast members can be images, animation sequences, text, sounds, GIF animations, transitions, and more.



**Figure 1.4** The score shows a detailed grid that represents all the details of a movie — over time.

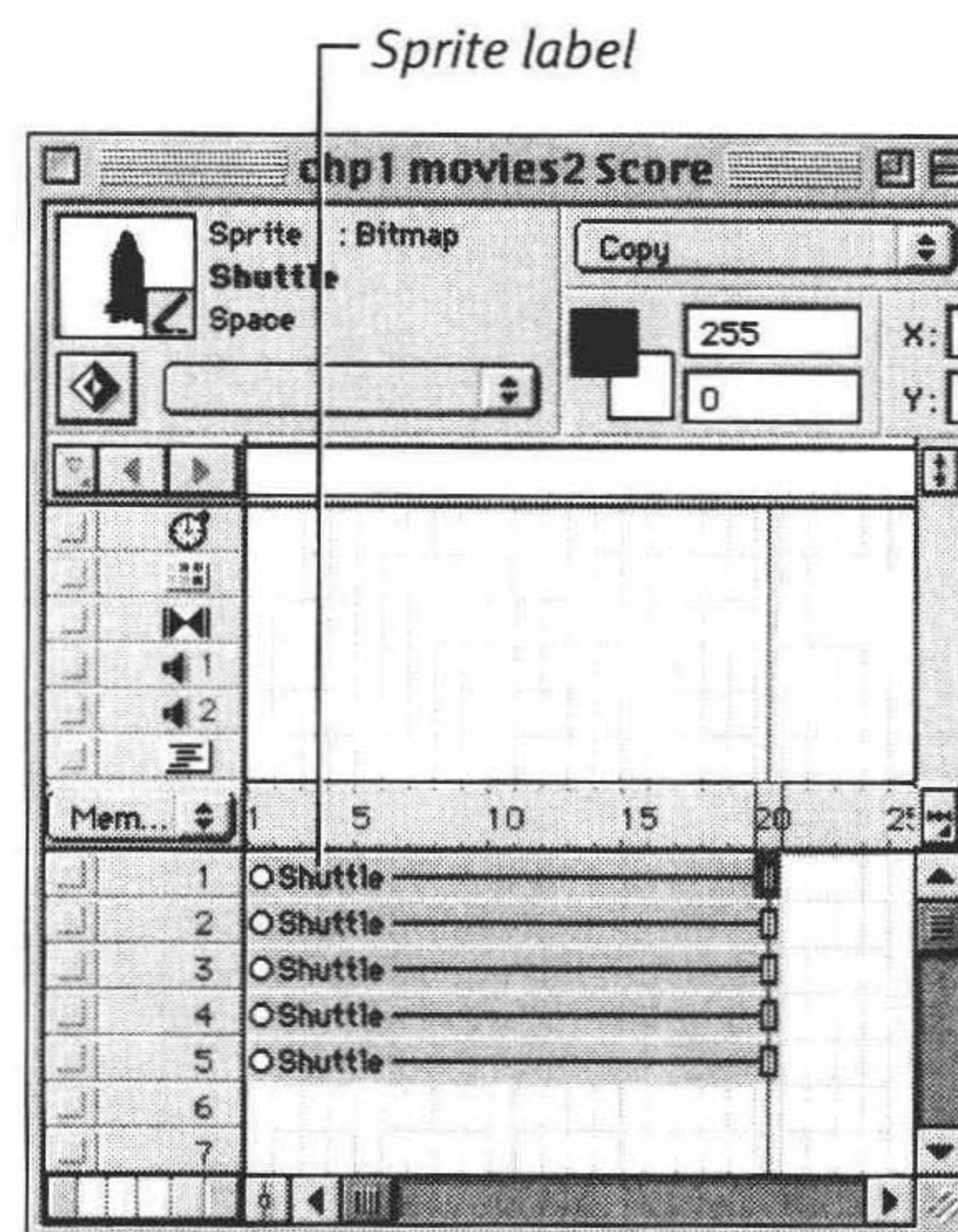


**Figure 1.5** You arrange images of the cast members in position on Director's stage to set the scene for one frame of the movie, which is a lot like a single frame of a Hollywood movie, or a single photograph in a roll of film. Then you rearrange the cast manually or with Director's commands to animate the scene over a sequence of frames.

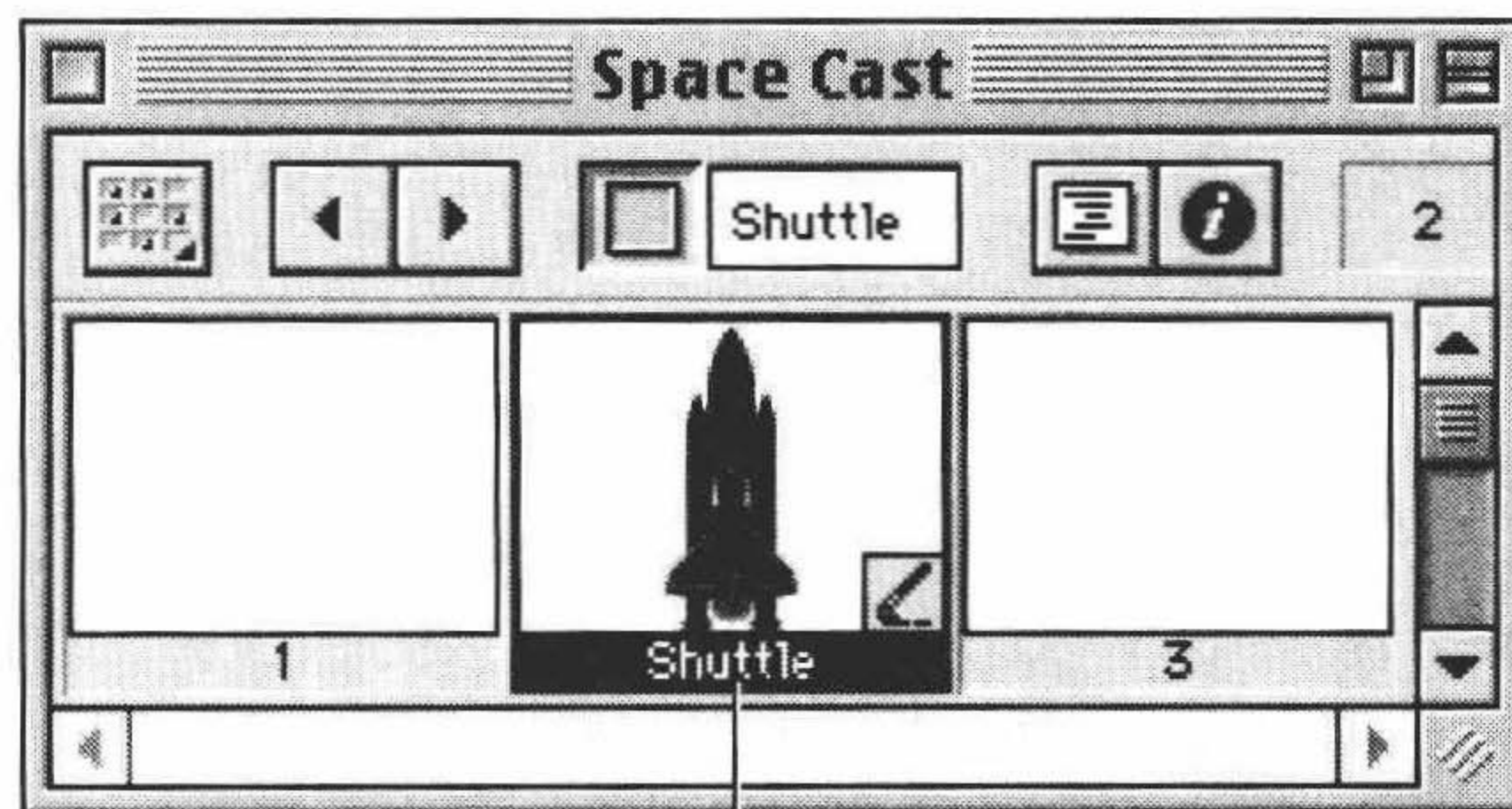
## About Sprites and Cast Members

When you add a cast member (**Figure 1.6**) to a frame, you don't add a bulky copy of the cast member; you add an object called a *sprite* (**Figure 1.7**). The sprite points to the cast member but takes up very little space on disk and in computer memory, so you can make a movie of many frames populated with many sprites without overflowing your hard disk.

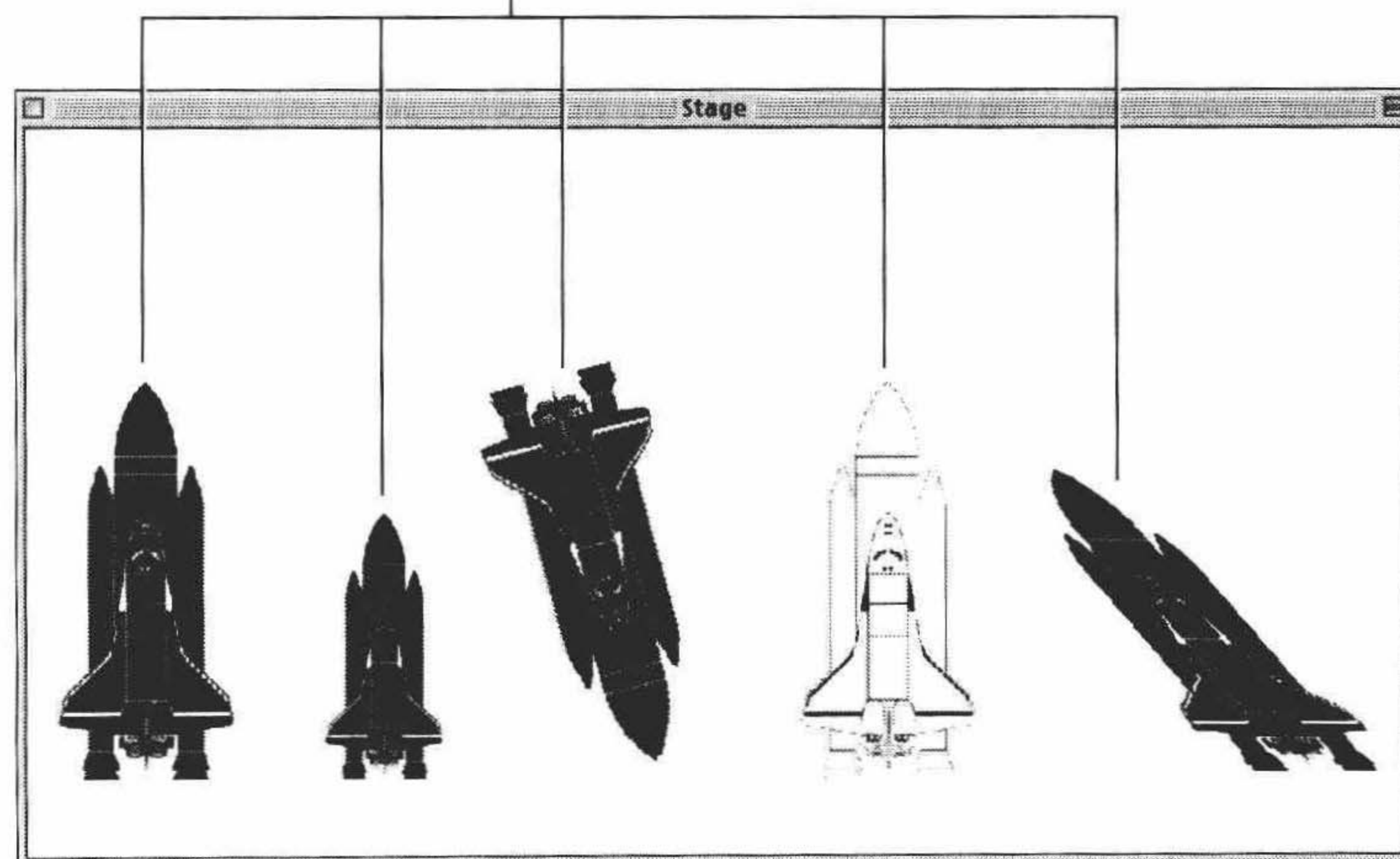
You can base many sprites on a single cast member. Each sprite of a cast member can have unique properties that define how, where, and when the cast member appears in a movie. You can think of a cast member as a template, and a sprite as an instance of the cast member. You can build a scene with only a few sprites (**Figure 1.8**).



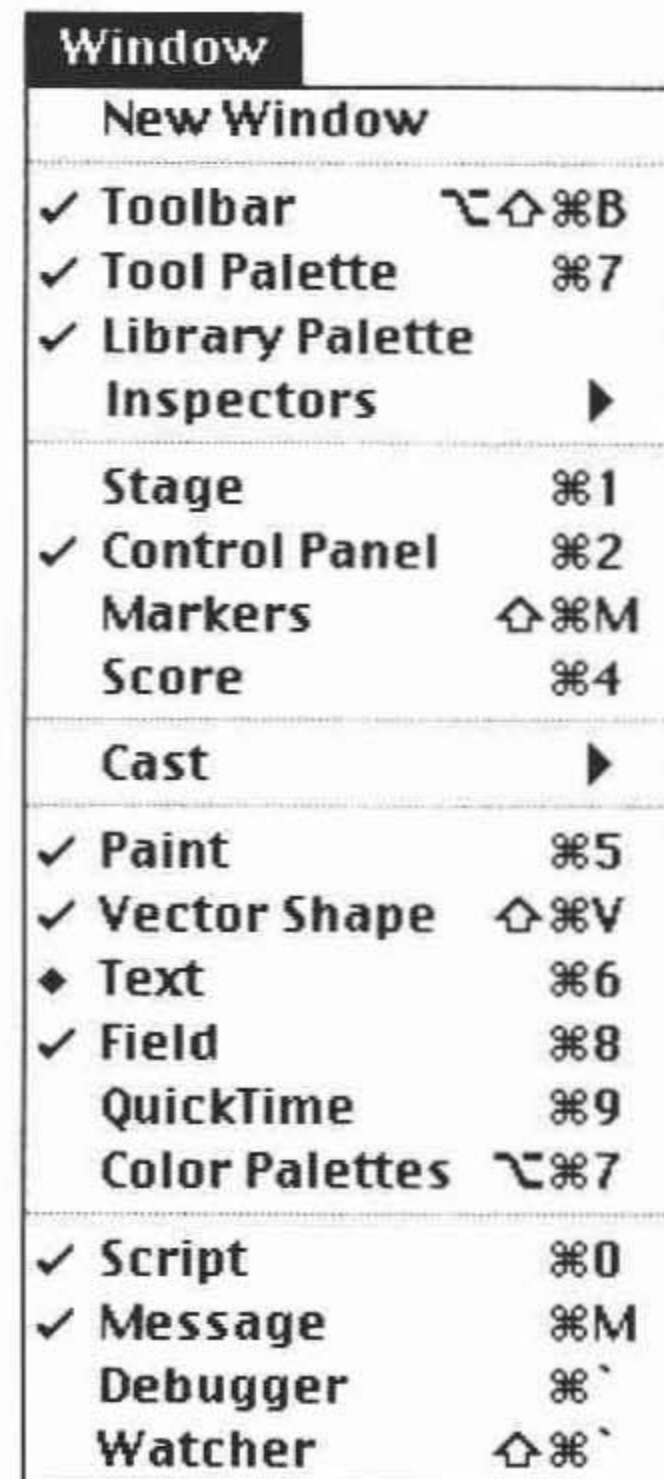
**Figure 1.8** Look at the sprite labels in the score to see that all five of the sprites come from the shuttle cast member.



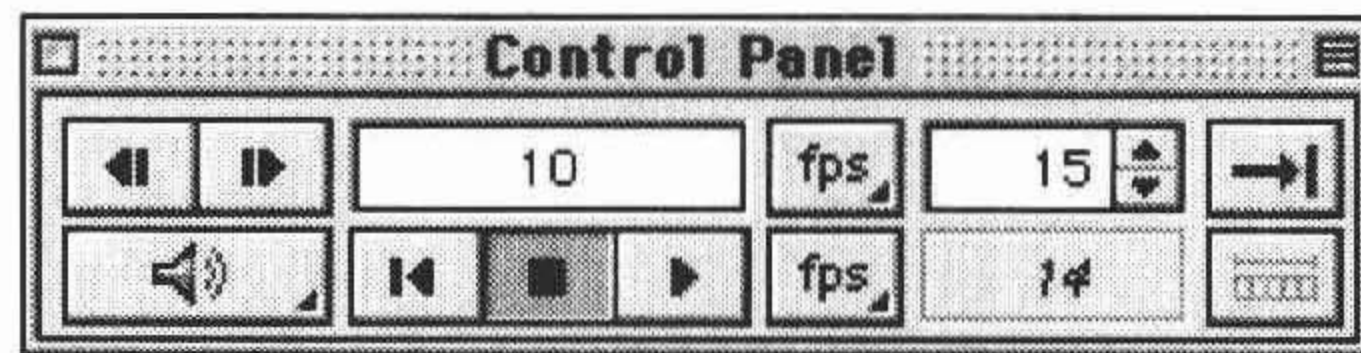
**Figure 1.6** You can create many sprites in a movie from a single cast member. They can all look alike, or you can change their appearance and add effects so they look very different.



**Figure 1.7** All these shuttle sprites come from the same cast member.

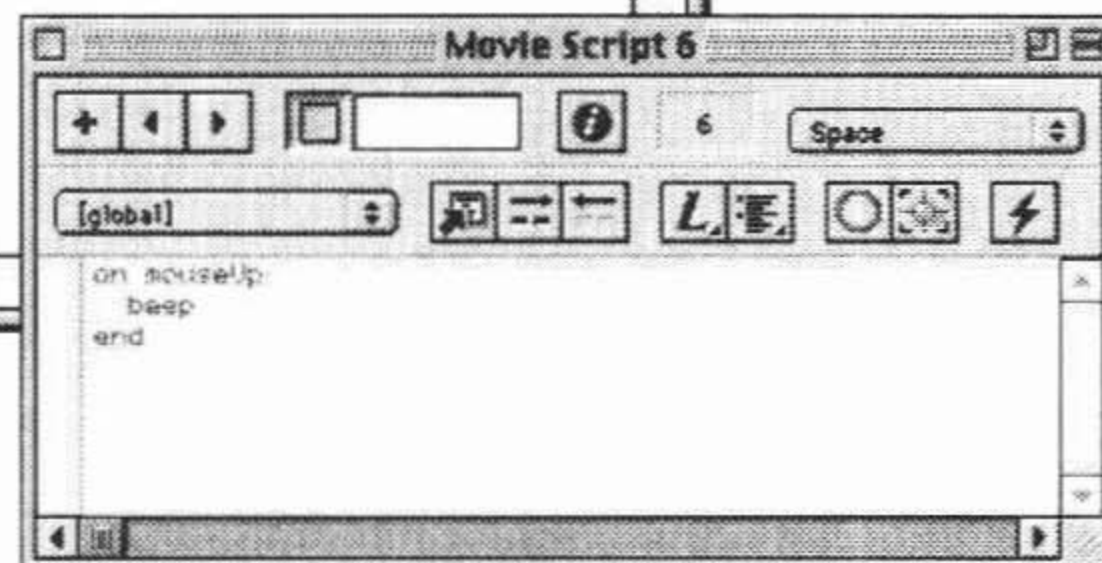
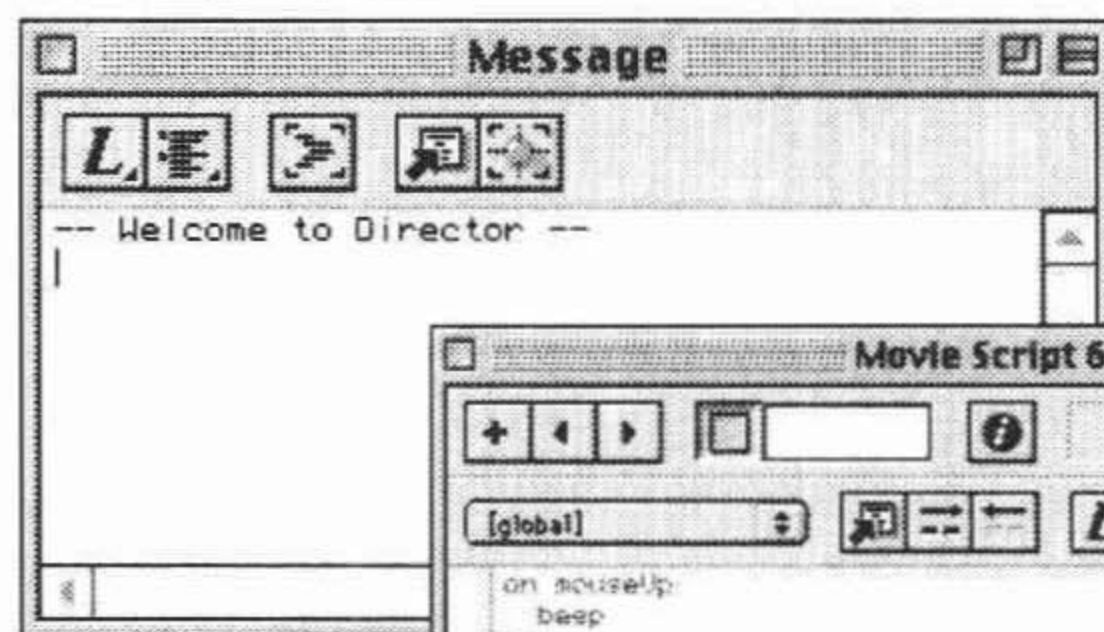


**Figure 1.9** A checkmark along a Window menu item means that its window is open. A diamond indicates the active window.

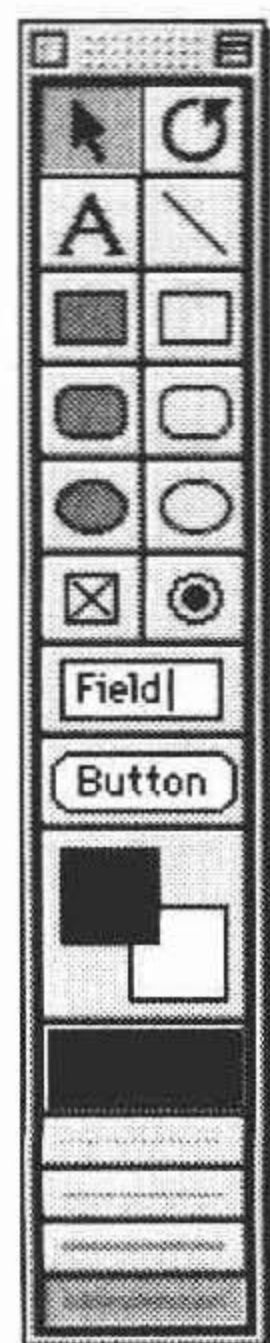


Playback Control Panel

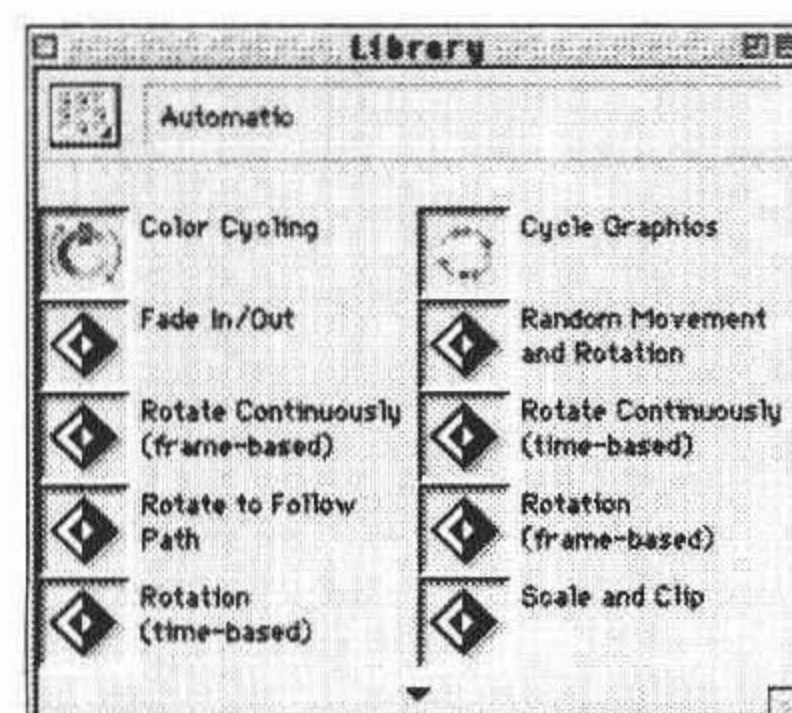
Message window



Script window (for writing and editing control code in Lingo)



Tool palette

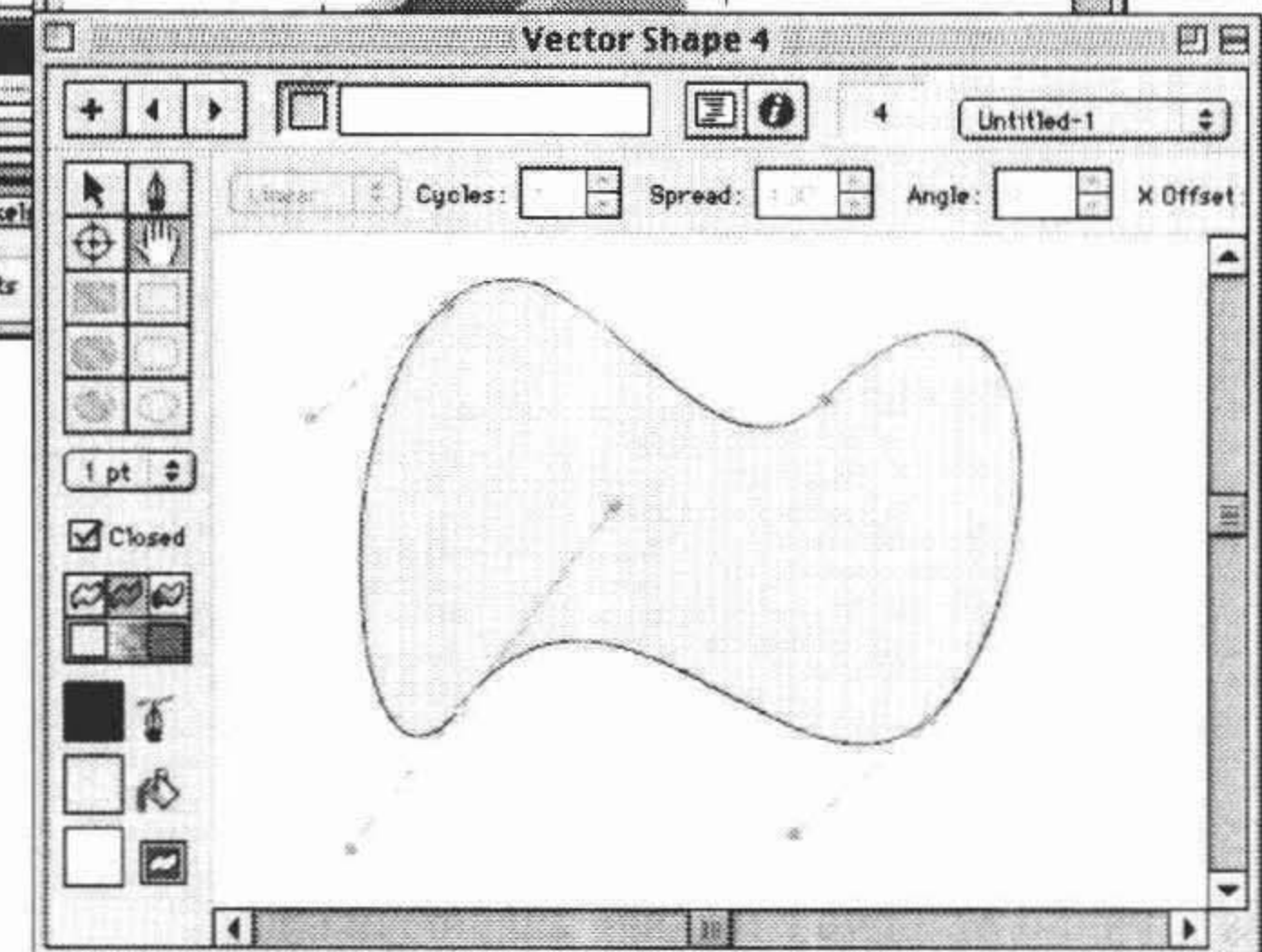
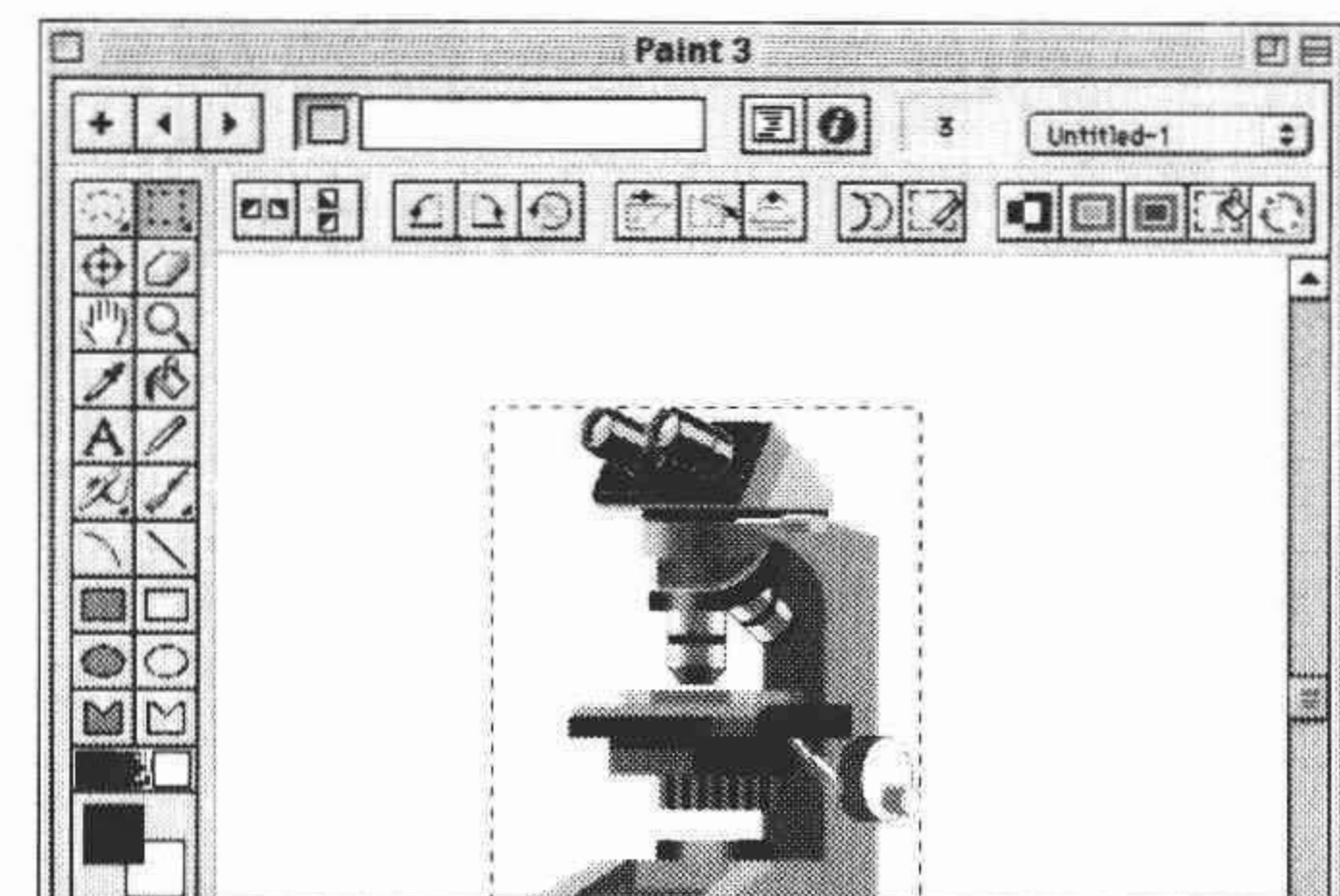


Library palette

## About Director Windows

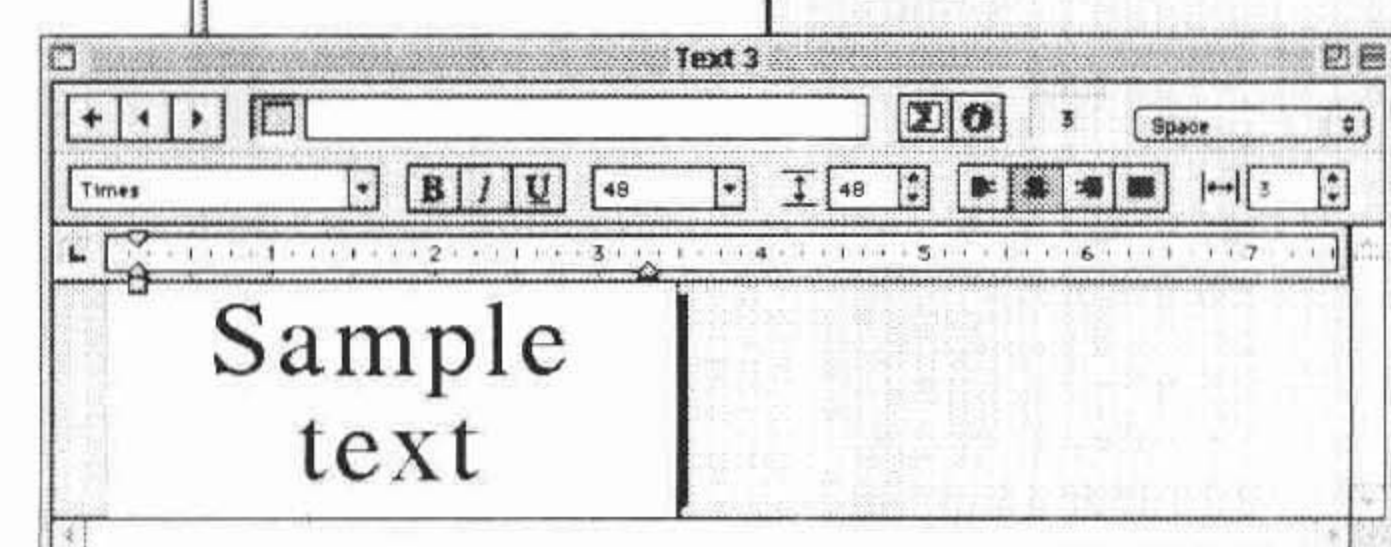
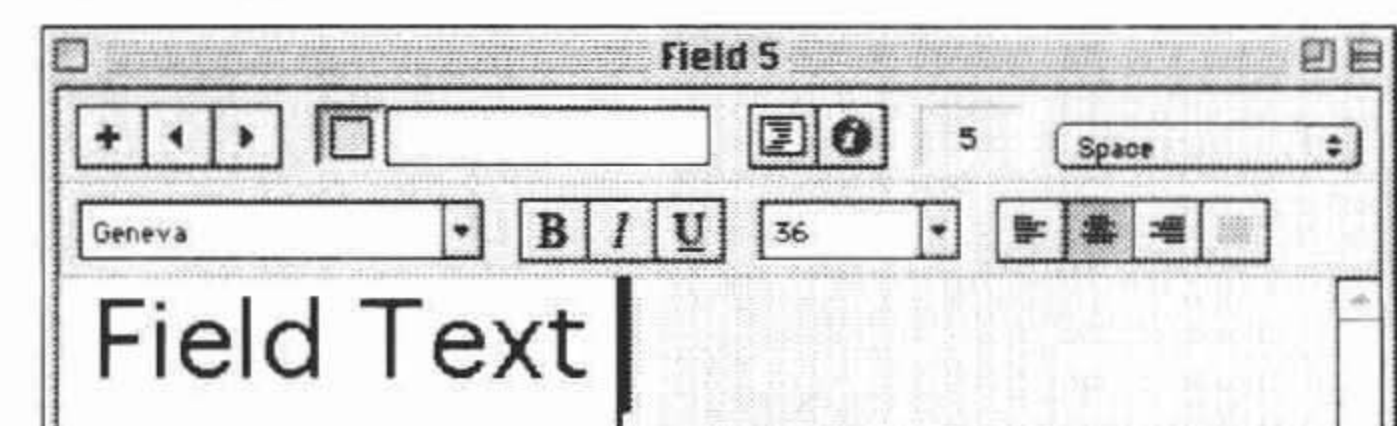
In addition to the stage, score, and Cast windows, Director provides work windows for specific tasks that you perform as part of making a movie. The Window menu lets you access the work windows and tools of Director. Later chapters explain how to use these tools.

Paint window



Vector Shape window

Field Text window



Text window

# About Director Inspectors

In addition the menus, dialog boxes, and toolbars that probably seem familiar if you've worked with other Mac or Windows programs, Director has *inspectors*. Inspectors give you a glimpse of the details of elements of a Director movie.

You access inspectors through the Window menu (Figure 1.10).

## To open an inspector:

- ◆ Choose Window > Inspectors > *Inspector name*.

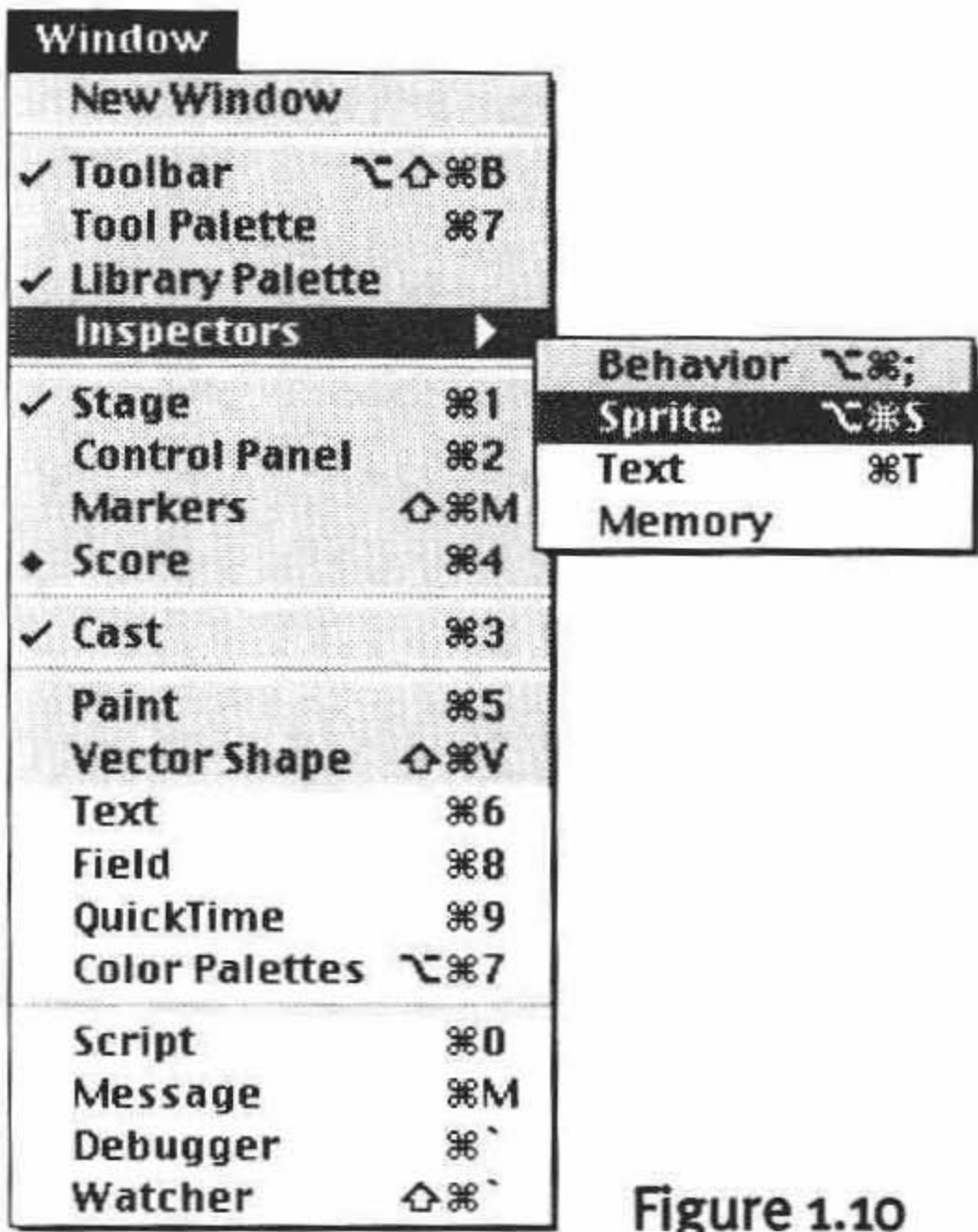


Figure 1.10

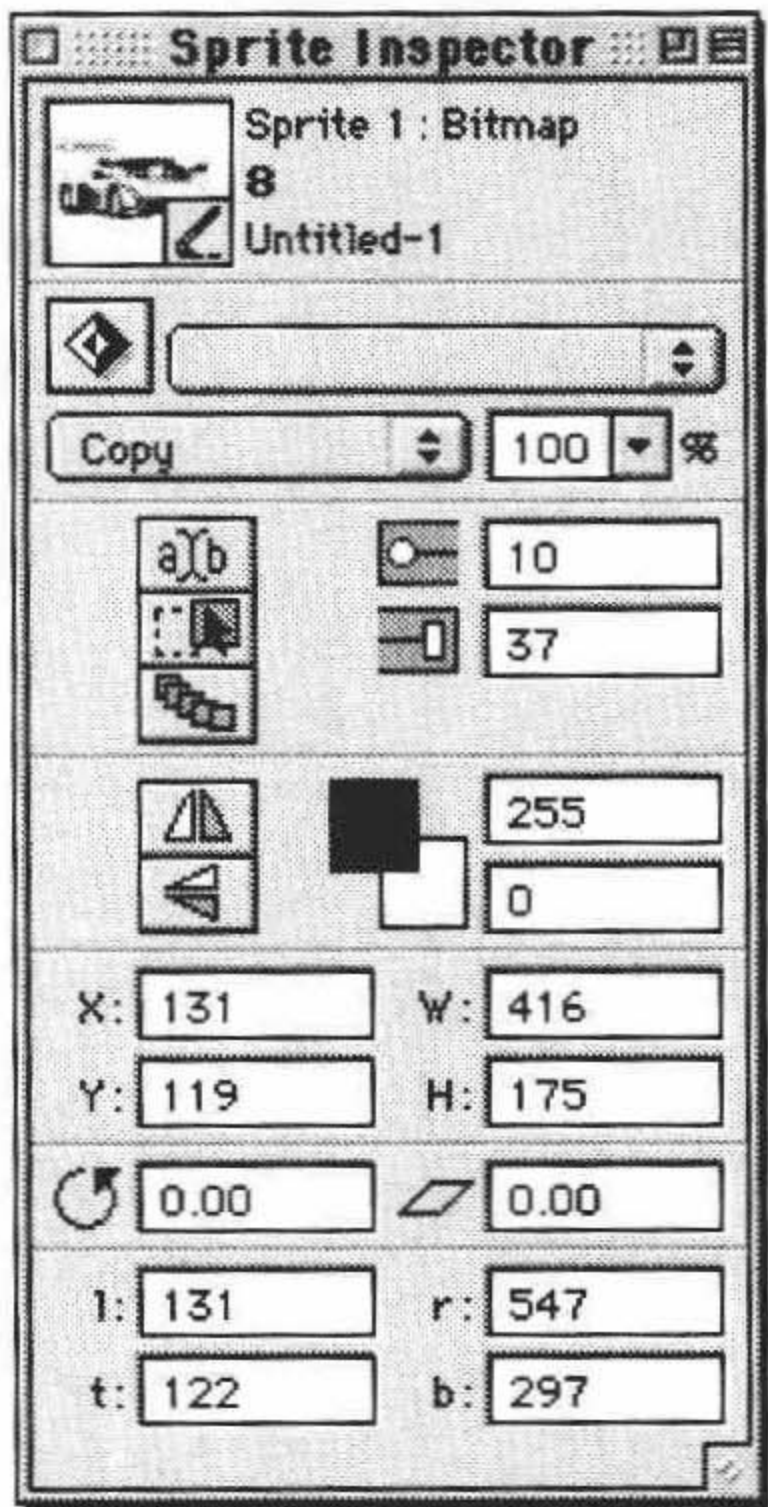


Figure 1.11 Use the Sprite Inspector to confirm sprite settings or to control many of the properties used to animate sprites.

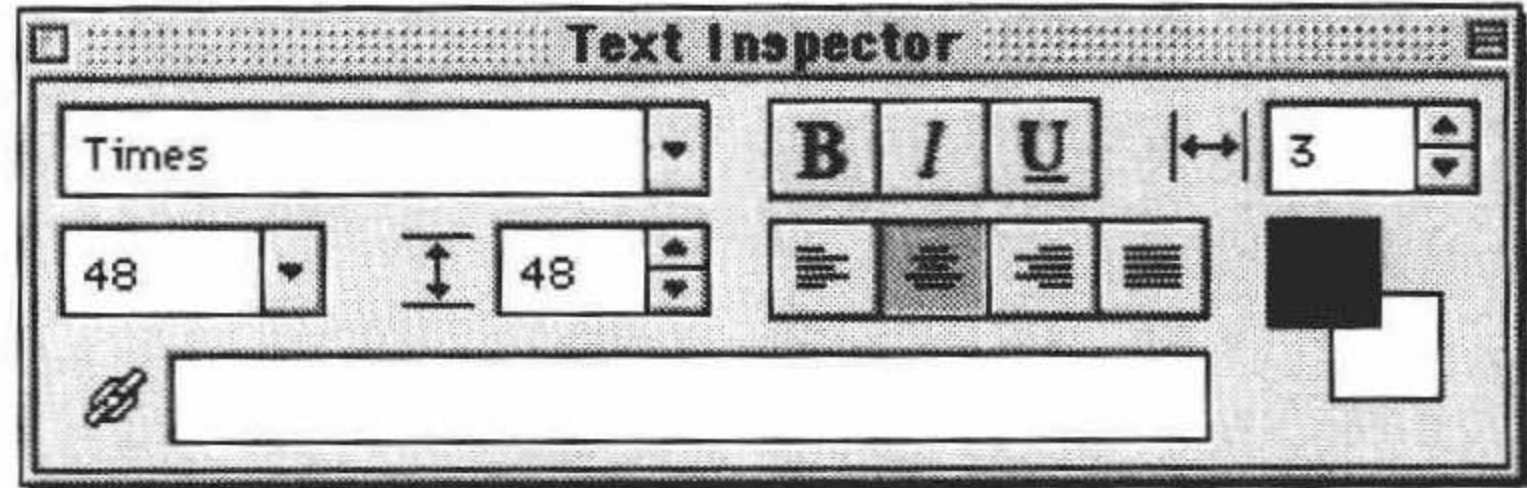


Figure 1.12 Use the Text Inspector to check text settings of to adjust some of the text formatting properties. This is also where you set text to act as a hyperlink (see Chapter 11, Adding Text).