OFFLINE

OFFLINE

Introduction

The OffLine software offers the possibility to view the effect of various types of moving lights, scrollers and spotlights. Cues made with your light control board, or of course with MSD can thus easily be monitored and, if necessary, edited.
Colours, iris settings, light intensities, movements and gobo selections are all visible on your screen.
For speed, the bitmap gobos used in the ShowDesigner modules can be linked to line drawings available in several libraries. If you want to link a bitmap gobo to a line drawing of your own, you can use the separate Gobo editor provided with the MSD software.

To get a scene for OffLine, you can import a scenefile, which is created by the ShowDesigner. You must make sure that no other program is using the scenefile, because this will prevent OffLine from opening the file.

To ensure easy operating, it is possible to group several fixtures into sections.
Sections can be named and switched on and off, so better impressions of the effects of separate devices or groups of devices can be obtained.
Several different decor parts can be grouped into sections as well. You can decide whether some sections will be visible or not, and whether the light beams will intersect these decor sections.

All used fixtures can also be patched within OffLine. Not only the default (DMX) address can be altered, but also the Input port to use. (Of course this depends on the number of inputs you have mounted in your computer)

Of course the position from which you can view the displayed scene (camera positions) can be altered too. Altered camera positions can be stored, in order to use these camera settings again later on.

Offline initially gets the DMX values from an internal link between OffLine and ShowDesigner. If you want to view the output of another DMX-source (like a light control board), you will need extra hardware. The driver for this hardware can be selected (after it is installed) using the ‘Control | Select Driver’ menu. You also need to select the option ‘Control | Follow DMX’ to read DMX values from the other DMX-source.

The Menu options of OffLine

File

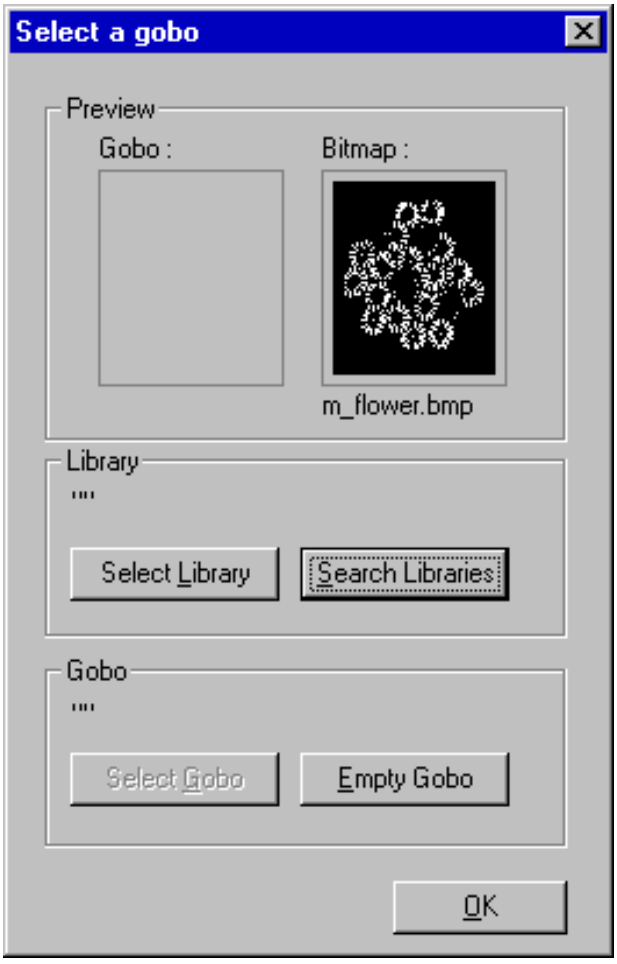
All the options of the File menu concern OffLine files.

New	This option will create a new, empty OffLine file (.osf file) After selecting this option you can use the import option. (See below)
Open	Earlier stored OffLine files can be opened with this option.
Save	Alterations made to an OffLine file can be saved with this option. The original file will be lost.
Save as	This option enables you to store alterations made to an OffLine file in another file. The original file will remain intact.

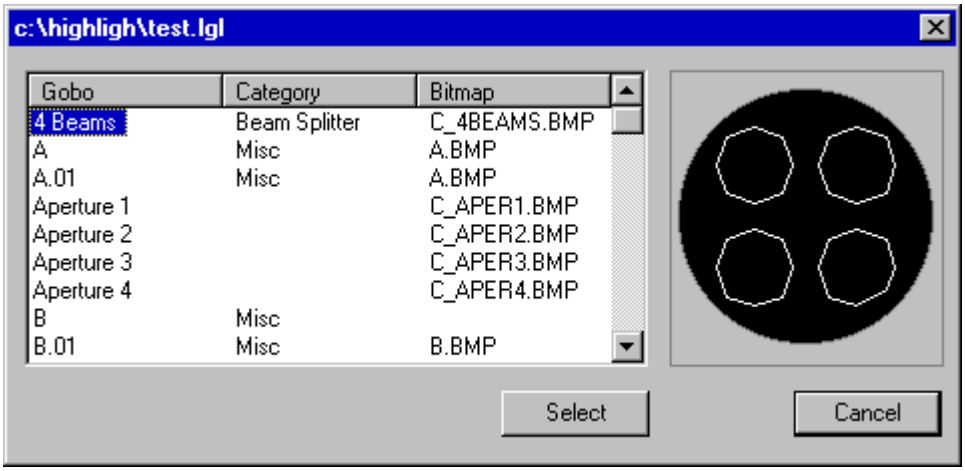
Import

This option enables you to read a scene from a scenefile created by the ShowDesigner into OffLine. After a file is selected, OffLine will read the scene and the fixtures. Any gobos used by the fixtures will be linked to line drawing gobos.
OffLine will search for line drawing gobos with identical names as their bitmap equivalents in predetermined libraries. These libraries can be determined with the option 'Settings | Search gobo libraries' as described on page 14 of this manual.

If no match can be found, the following dialog will appear.



As you can see, two little display windows are present. The one on the left will display a line drawing gobo, the right one the bitmap gobo where no matching line drawing gobo was found for. In order to create a match, there are three possibilities. The first one is to match the displayed bitmap to no gobo at all. In OffLine the bitmap gobo will be represented as a normal beam, so as if no gobo is used. The only action required for this first possibility: Press the 'OK' button. Of course this is a fast way to get on with your work, but it makes it quite hard to determine what gobos are used. It is also possible to link no line drawing gobo, even if a match was found. Just press the Empty Gobo button and the OK button and the selected line drawing gobo will be 'unlinked'. The second possibility is to select other or more search libraries to find a matching line drawing gobo. In order to obtain another or more search libraries you will have to press the 'Search Libraries' button. A window similar to the one as described with the option 'Settings | Search libraries' will appear on your screen (See page 14). After you have selected the search libraries, it is possible that a match can be found. A Line drawing gobo is then displayed in the left window. If you agree to the found match you can press the 'OK' button to go on. The third possibility is to link a bitmap gobo to a line drawing with a different name. To do this you should perform the following steps: First select a line drawing gobo library by pressing the 'Select Library' button. After you have selected a library you can select a line drawing gobo with help of the following window:



After you select one of the gobos on the left, the corresponding line drawing will be displayed on the right. By pressing the select button, you can link the selected line gobo to the bitmap gobo. If this link is not what you wanted after all, you can select another gobo by pressing the 'Select Gobo' button. The window as displayed above will appear again to enable you to select another gobo. The 'OK' button activates the selected link.

1. .....

2. ..... These options represent earlier opened OffLine files. If one of these options is selected, the corresponding file will be opened.

About MSD OffLine This option will present a copyright dialog with information about the current user, the current installed version and the registration number.

Exit Exits the OffLine module.

View

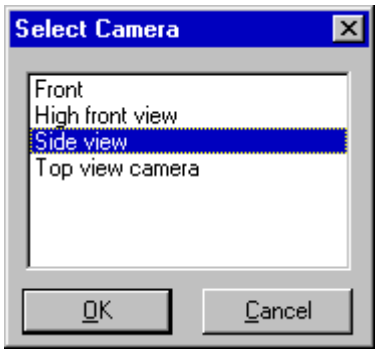
All the options in this menu concern the layout of your screen, and what will be displayed on your screen. Various camera positions can be stored and recalled.

Status bar

If a check mark precedes this option, the status bar will be displayed. Selecting this function will result in switching it on or off.

Select camera

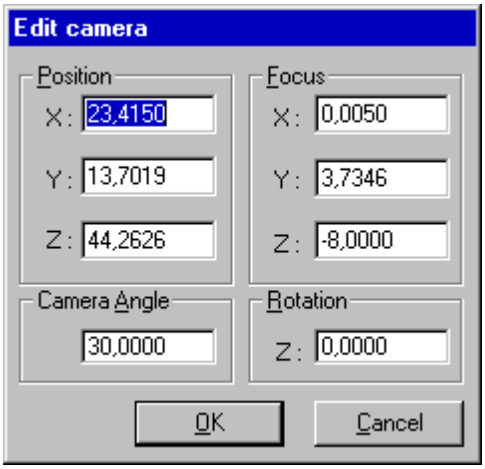
This option enables you to select an earlier stored camera.
After you have selected this menu option, the following dialog will appear:



After you have selected one of the presented cameras, you can press the 'OK' button to activate this camera. Clicking in the 'Cancel' button will result in leaving this function without changing cameras.

Edit camera

This option enables you to alter several camera settings to your own preferences.
Selecting this function results in the following dialog:



The Position part of this dialog enables you to enter values for the X, Y and Z coordinates of the camera that you are presently using.
The Focus part represent the coordinate values of the focus point of the camera. Indirectly, these coordinates determine the direction of the camera.
Changing the Camera angle value (Zooming) will result in a closer or farther view of the scene. It is also possible to rotate the camera around its own length axis by changing the Rotation value.

Save Camera

This option enables you to store your edited cameras.
After selecting this function the following dialog will appear:

In the Name field you can enter a name for the camera you want too save. The ‘OK’ button will store this camera. The ‘Cancel’ button will leave this dialog without saving.

Delete Camera

Selecting this option will result in the appearance of this dialog:

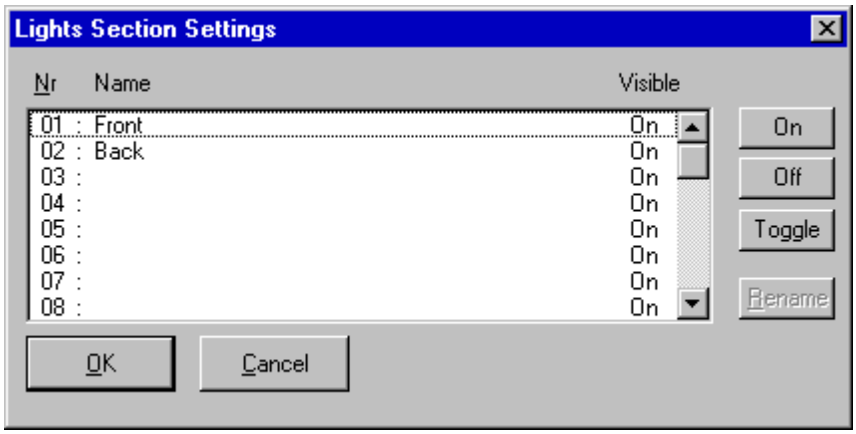
After you have selected one or more of the presented cameras, press the ‘OK’ button and these camera(s) will be deleted.
The ‘Cancel’ button will leave this dialog without deleting.

Sections

The options in this menu enable you to alter several settings for groups of spotlight or decor parts.

Edit Light sections

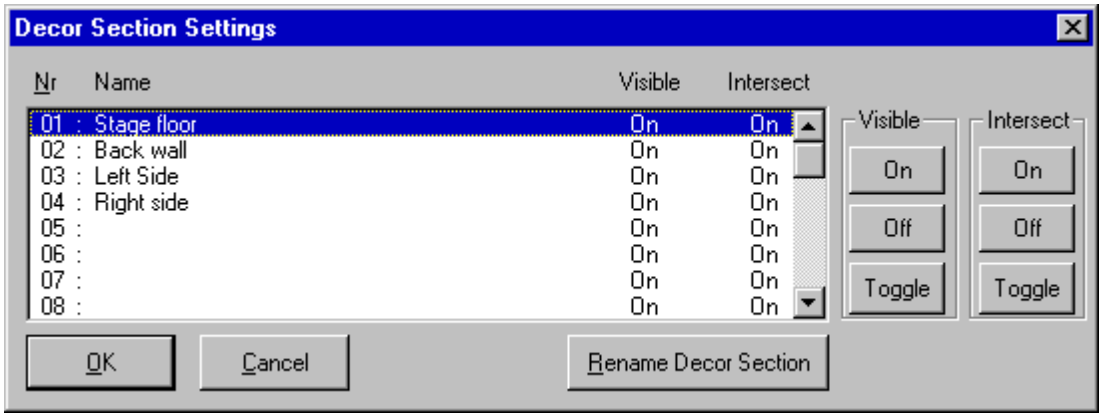
This option provides the possibility to alter settings for groups (sections) of spotlights. Selecting this option will result in the appearance of the following dialog:



On the left side of this dialog, a list of several sections is displayed. By selecting one, you can rename this section by pressing the 'Rename' button or switch on or off the visibility of the effect of this section by pressing either the 'On', the 'Off' or the 'Toggle' button. To determine which spotlight will belong to what section you have to select the function Spots/Info... (See page 10).

Edit Decor sections

This option enables you to alter the properties of groups (sections) of decor parts. Selecting this function will result in the appearance of the following dialog:



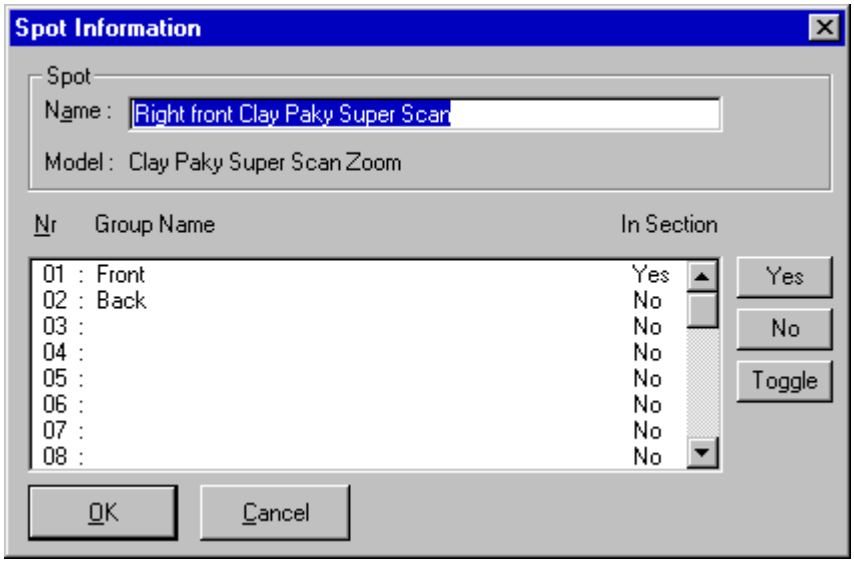
As you can see, this dialog is very similar to the one of Light sections. This dialog however, not only provides the possibility to determine whether a section of decor parts will be visible or not, but also whether the light beams of the spotlights will intersect with these decor parts.
After selecting a section on the left of this dialog, you can rename this section by pressing the ‘Rename Decor Section’ button, and alter the Visibility and Intersect properties of this section by pressing the corresponding ‘On’, ‘Off’ or ‘Toggle’ buttons. After you have pressed the ‘OK’ button, the alterations made will be activated.

Spots

The options in this menu all have to do with spotlights, sections of spotlights, and the patch properties of these spotlights or sections.

Info...

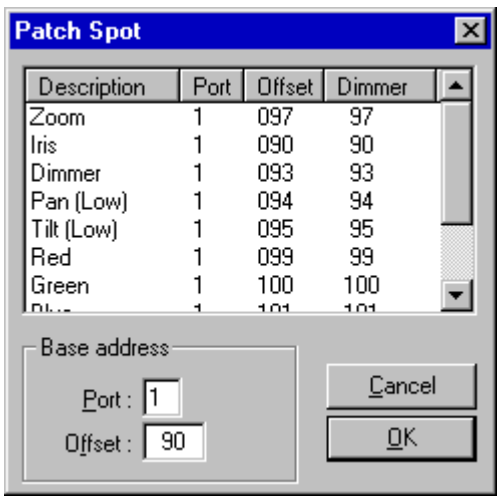
This option enables you to name and to place a spotlight in one or more sections. This function is only available if you have picked a spotlight on your screen. After you have selected this option the following dialog will appear on your screen:



You can enter a name in the Name field at the top of this dialog. Just below this Name field you will find the model of the spotlight of the device you have picked.
After selecting a section in the presented list, you can determine whether the picked spotlight has to be part of the selected section by pressing either the 'Yes', 'No' or 'Toggle' button.
The 'OK' button will activate the alterations made, the 'Cancel' button will ignore these changes.

Patch...

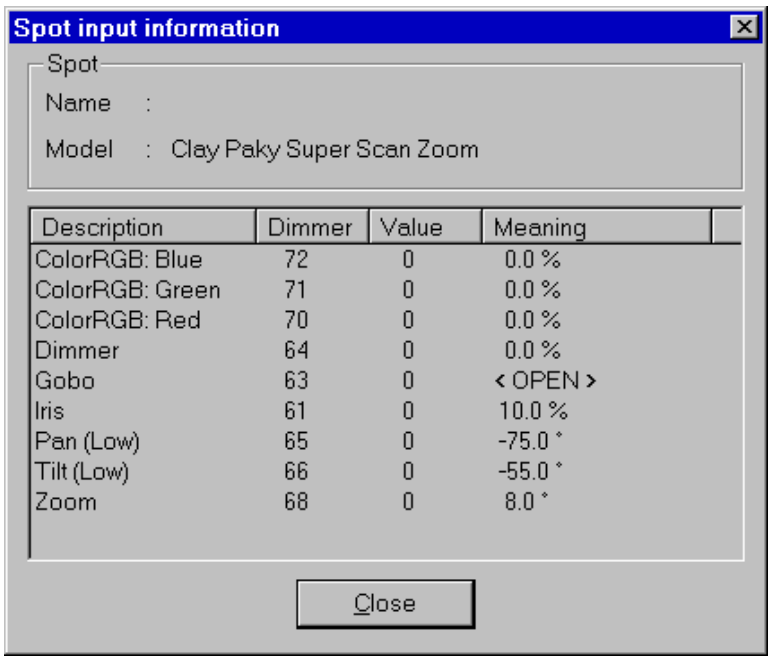
This option enables you to change the patch for a picked spotlight.



If a device has a fixed base address, only the base offset can be altered. Otherwise all the effects of the fixture can be patched to other addresses. After you have selected an effect from the list, you can change the Offset address by entering a new value in the Offset field. Entering the correct port number in the Port field can change the port to which you want the picked spotlight to react on. The symbol next to this field will indicate whether this port is available or not.
The 'OK' button will activate the new patch settings for the picked spotlight, the 'Cancel' button will disregard these settings.

Check DMX-values...

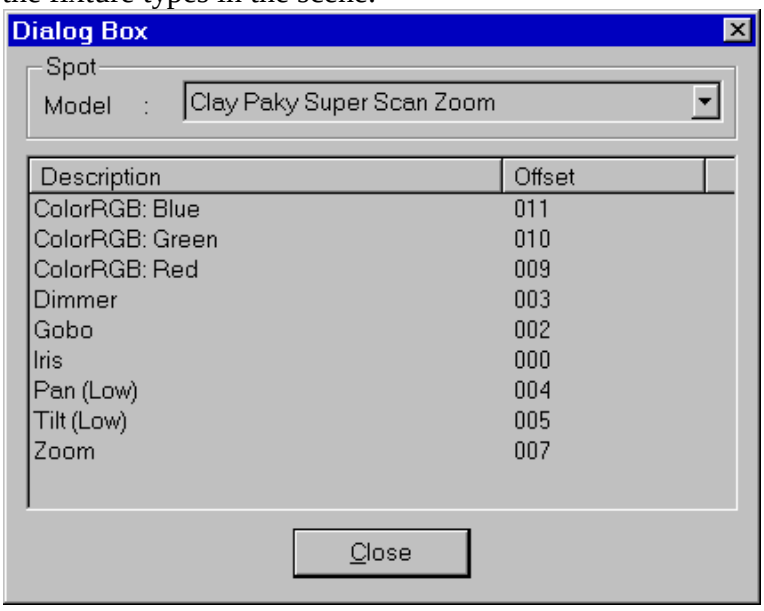
This option allows you to view the current DMX values for a picked fixture, and what the meanings of these settings are.



By using the buttons above the list you can sort the list of functions of the picked fixture.

Model Info...

This option allows you to view the offsets of the effects for all the fixture types in the scene.



By simply selecting a fixture type in the top field, you can see the offsets of all the effects in the list.

Patch selection to

This option offers you the possibility to patch a selection to another input port, if available. After selecting this function a list of available ports to choose from will be presented.
To create a selection you can either use the function Select section, or use your mouse to draw a rectangle on the screen, all the fixtures present in the rectangle will be selected.

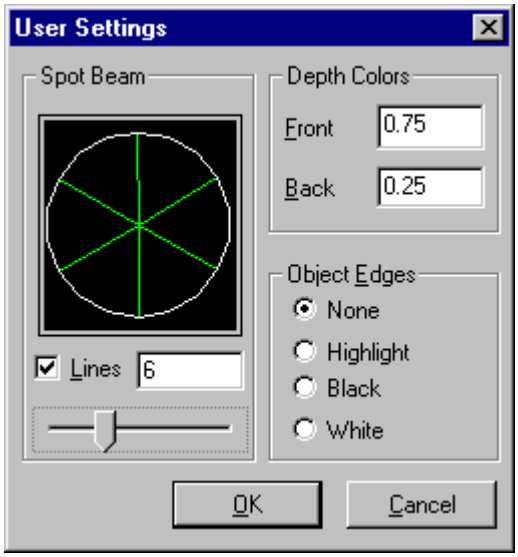
Select section

This option makes it possible to select a section. After selecting this option a list of available sections will be presented.

Settings

User preferences

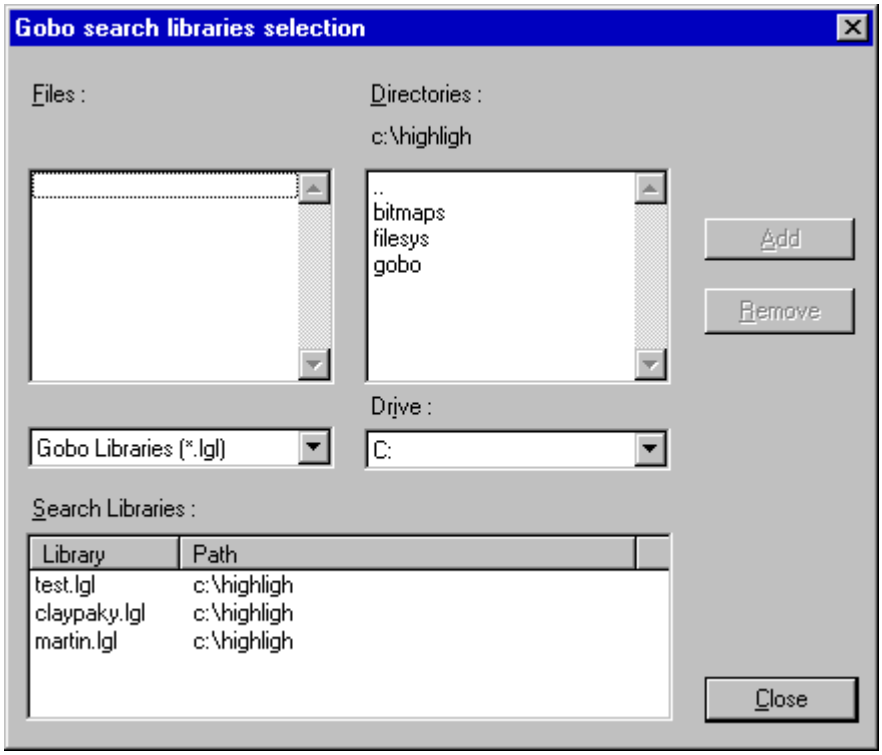
Various settings can be altered to your own preferences.
These settings can be changed in a dialog that looks like this:



The Spot Beam field allows you to change the beam representation in OffLine. By clicking the 'Lines' check mark box, you can switch on or off the lines between the 'footprint' of the spot and the fixtures. In this example, 6 lines will be drawn between a fixture and its 'footprint'. This number can be changed too. If you would like to have a more accurate beam representation you could enter a higher value or move the slider to the right. This setting has only effect on spots that don't have a gobo in them. Please beware of the fact that if the computer has to draw more lines, the speed of the drawing process will be reduced.
The Depth Colour field enables you to determine the depth impression of the decor parts. As you might have noticed, all the decor parts have a dark and a light side. How dark and how light these sides will be can be changed by entering other values in the 'Front' and 'Back' fields. It is recommendable not to use the values 0 (completely dark) or 1 (fully light).
The 'Object Edges' field allows you to alter the way the edges of the decor parts are represented. You can choose between no representation (None), highlighted representation (Highlight), black edges (Black) or white edges (White).
The 'OK' button will activate the new user settings, the 'Cancel' button will disregard these.

Gobo Search libraries...

This option enables you to add or remove a number of libraries in which OffLine will search when it needs a matching line drawing gobo for a bitmap gobo. The following dialog allows you to locate and select libraries to add or remove from the list of libraries to be searched.



In the directory field you can select the directory you would like to select a library from. If there are any libraries available, they will be in the file list on the left of this dialog. (A standard line drawing gobo library has the extension .lgl). After you have selected one ore more libraries in this list, you can add these libraries to the list at the bottom of the dialog, the 'Search Libraries', by pressing the 'Add' button. If you select one or more libraries in the 'Search Libraries' list, you can remove them from this list by pressing the 'Remove' button. The 'Close' button closes this dialog. All the changes you made here are automatically saved.

Always on top

This menu option can be used to make OffLine appear on top of other applications when the other application is active. This option can be switched on and off. When this option is on, a checkmark will be displayed in front of the option in the menu.

Control

HOLD

This menu option is used to stop OffLine from reacting to changes in the DMX values. When you select this option the green circle in the status bar changes to a red circle and this menu option changes to Control | GO. Selecting the Control | GO menu options reverses this process and starts the reading of DMX values.

Setup Driver

This option displays a dialog box, which you can use to change the settings of the driver. If the driver does not support the feature, the menu option will be unavailable.

Select Driver

This option allows you to select a new driver for the OffLine and the ShowDesigner program of MSD. You need to restart the program if you want to use the new driver.

Follow DMX

If this option is switched on, the program will read DMX values from the driver into the internal link between OffLine and ShowDesigner. You can use this option to check DMX values coming from an external source (for instance a light control board). DMX from external source will overwrite values set by the ShowDesigner periodically. If this option is turned off, OffLine will use the DMX values set by the ShowDesigner.