



plugs·n·pixels

IMAGE CREATION, MANIPULATION & EDUCATION

Tools

Size

Opacity

Step

Mode

rgb / rgb2 / sv / wheel

Create realistic digital art using only your computer and artistic software. No art studio mess!

Presets

BW Cloudy Line

Active

Category

Patch

50%

+



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plugs·n·pixels

ISSUE #5

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distribution to the creative
community by Mike Bedford

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Text and images by Mike Bedford

• Plugs 'N Pixels will always be free! •

Please support our affiliate developers
when shopping for your plug-in needs.

For the fifth issue of Plugs 'N Pixels, I ended up being a little daring. You'll notice the emphasis this time around is on natural media applications that enable users to replicate paint, pencil and other traditional art effects using only the computer.

Well, this was daring of me to do because – I don't paint or draw! I'm physically capable, but not properly trained or practiced in the appropriate techniques. Not that this should stop anyone from experimenting and having fun, especially with so many excellent art applications now at our disposal.

It is precisely because these applications are available and improving with every revision that I felt I should bring them to your attention. And lucky for me (a photographer by natural ability), these applications also make it possible to integrate one's photographs into the artwork, whether as a source of color or as a foundation for additional creative artistic effects.

A perfect example of this intermixing of genres is this issue's cover image. As shown in the sequence below, the image began its life as a straightforward digital photo taken at Lake Tahoe in California and Nevada. By adding additional digital effects (a lens flare plug-in for the sun as well as standalone applications for paint and texture effects), I ended up with what might very well pass as a manually painted scenic.

On the following pages you'll be exposed to both my own artistically-enhanced photos as well as advanced digital artwork created by others who actually have the skills to do so. And I hope you'll share my amazement at the maturity and capability of the current crop of natural media applications.

Near the end of this issue you can see the results of Googling "plugs 'n pixels". It seems the ezine and website are being enjoyed by visitors from around the world! We're excited to have been featured in issue 7 of Photoshop Creative magazine (UK); our interview also appeared on PhotoshopSupport's blog.

Fire up your computer and enjoy creating incredible digital artwork without making a mess!



Cover art: Original Lake Tahoe photo, with Knoll Light Factory lens flare and Studio Artist Wet Paint effect.

PD Pro Digital Painter is an affordable Windows-only art studio for those who love to draw, sketch, animate and paint. It is not a photo editing program or an imaging tool. Its primary purpose is to enable you to paint – without the mess.

PD Pro was created out of necessity by programmer and professional animator Dan Ritchie, who needed a more advanced tool than was commercially available. The artwork on this and the next page shows the capability of Dan's application.

Artwork by: Dan Ritchie, Philip Staiger
and Dave Garlick



PD Pro Digital Painter 3.7

Powered by
Project Dogwaffle





PD Pro Digital Painter is loaded with fast or real-time filters for color enhancing digital photos and animations, and producing special effects. It includes many built-in natural media brushes, powerful user-defined custom and animated brushes, fractal particle brushes, full tablet support, layers, artist guides, powerful color gradients and great text tools. There are special effects for sky, snow, wet paint and even useful 3D CG options such as lens flares and direct painting on the Alpha channel.

PD Pro is perfect for the hobbyist on a tight budget who likes to explore colors and shapes, but equally useful for web artists, game content creators, cartoonists and designers, as well as digital photographers and traditional animators.

Version 3.7 includes the following enhancements:

- Menu and GUI changes for better clarity.
- The Buffer menu is now renamed the Image menu
- New Feature:
 - Enhanced store image (formerly store buffer) plugin
 - Added a high pass filter in the convolution sub-menu
 - Added Value-only contrast filter to the adjust sub-menu
 - The sunset and fog filter are faster and now have option panels
 - The wave displace filter is updated, much(!) faster
 - Brush smear mode is calculated internally at a higher precision
 - Using the + key can no longer exceed the maximum size of an internal brush
- A color transform sub-menu under the image menu, including RGB->YUV and back
- Faster Fisheye Filter
- Updated Spherize, Isometric and Weave plugins

PD Pro is available through Plugs 'N Pixels (URL below).

www.plugsandpixels.com/dogwaffle.html





Pointer	Size_Density	Style: Oil - Medium Size	Colors
Auto-sketch Tool	Size & Density		Hue
Pattern Tool		Settings	Saturation
Free Hand		Color Settings	Brightness
What is this?		Advanced Settings	Auto Flood Variants



Gertrudis graphics

Realistic hi-res imitations of traditional media



Gertrudis Pro is one of the better applications available for Windows that will turn your photos into paintings. I am not talking about the common image-editing application filters that apply quasi-artistic effects to your image. I am referring to working with interactive or automatic brush strokes, oil painting, aquarela, crayon and other realistic styles.

Gertrudis gives you the flexibility to create variations of the existing styles or to create new styles from scratch. The designer can choose the direction of the strokes automatically using an exclusive flow analysis algorithm. Since the size, position and direction of each stroke is recorded, Gertrudis Pro can render the final image at any resolution!

On the previous page, I combined the original digital image and the Gertrudis-generated result in Photoshop using top layer erasure to produce an interesting before-and-after effect.

Gertrudis can operate as a standalone application, or as a plug-in for Photoshop and PD Pro Digital Painter (see pages 3 and 4).



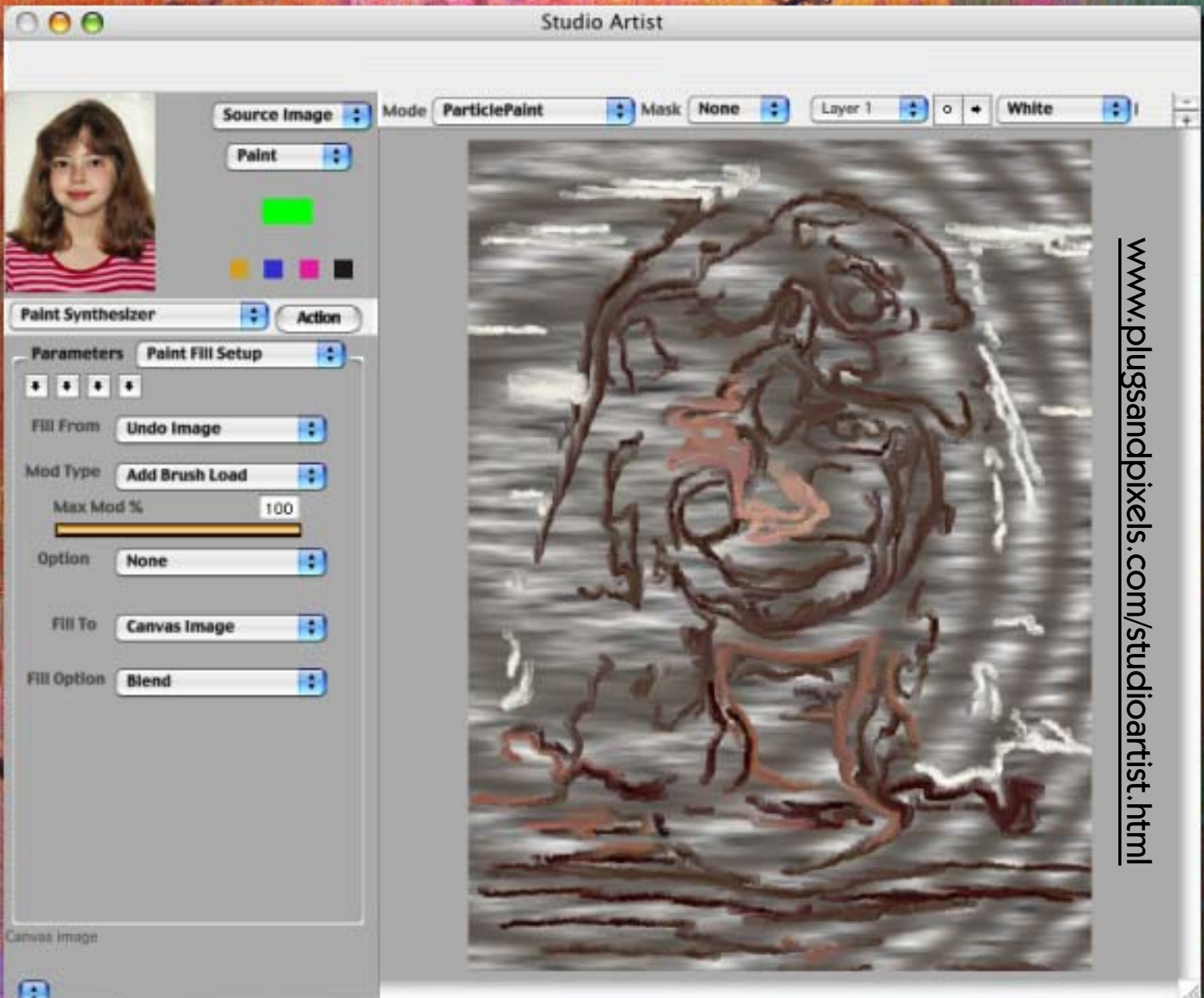
www.plugsandpixels.com/gertrudis.html



SYNTHETIK SOFTWARE

STUDIO ARTIST 3.5

Paint, draw, rotoscope and process images – all in one application



Where to begin explaining what Studio Artist can do? This Mac-only application handles creative tasks as diverse as painting with natural media, rotoscoping movie footage, creating animations and image editing (performing enhancements or adding endless effects). The amazing thing is, these tasks can be performed automatically or interactively! If you've never seen an application actually paint, stroke after stroke until finished, now is your chance.

The art examples you see here were all created without a lick of traditional artistic ability – I just experimented with the multitude of settings offered by Studio Artist. The results, all based on my source image, are as varied as can be. On the next page you'll see this wide artistic variety that can be extracted from a simple portrait.

Studio Artist launches by asking you to choose a Source Image. It almost doesn't matter which one you select; the final results may end up looking nothing like it! Or you can purposely choose to convert your portrait, scenic or still life photo into something special, yet still recognizable.

My source image is shown at right. As I experimented with various Studio Artist presets, I got the wildly varied results shown below. I chose from both Paint and Image Operation effects which included Extreme, Sun Blossom, Multicolor, Chalk, Space Girl, Graffiti and Rancid.

I've used a lot of imaging applications and plug-ins over the years, but Studio Artist takes me places I've never seen before!



Original

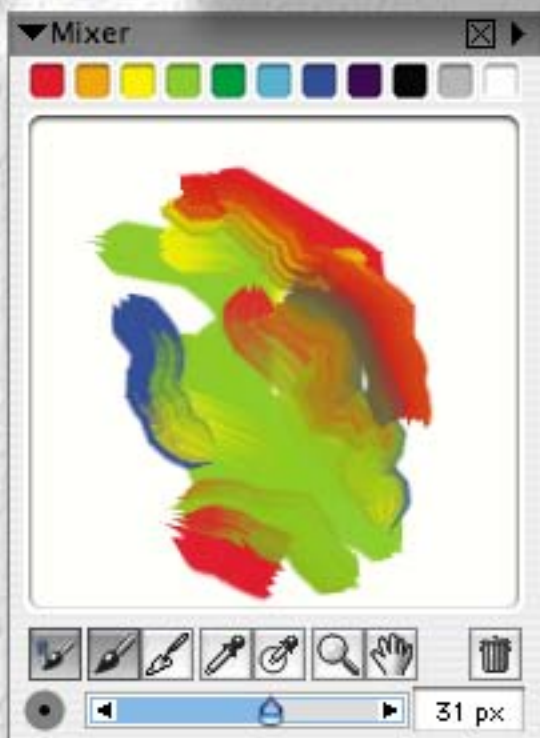
STUDIO ARTIST



Apple blossoms
by F.M. Stendahl,
2006

www.plugsandpixels.com/painter.html

COREL painter IX



Corel Painter is a leading natural media painting application, arguably the granddaddy of them all. Painter lets you simulate a wide range of art tools, from acrylics and airbrushes to crayons and oils, with full control over each genre.

Add art effects to your digital photographs using Painter IX.5's new Underpainting, Auto-Painting, and Restoration palettes, or paint your masterpiece from scratch using random or intentionally created brushes – all in a familiar environment reminiscent of Photoshop, with support for layers, layer masks and channels.

See the list of available art tools and brushes on the following page.

New features in Painter IX.5 include the Photo Painting palettes where you can automatically apply random, hand-painted strokes to your photos. Eleven hours of movie-based training from lynda.com are included free with Painter. Enjoy over 50 movies on two training CDs, hosted by Painter Master John Derry and Tanya Staples.

The Eraser tool removes any medium in your document, while the Rubber Stamp tool offers point-to-point cloning. The Cloner tool provides immediate access to the last-used Cloner brush and brush variant.

Open Corel Paint Shop Pro X files directly in Corel Painter IX.5 (Windows version only). Send images directly from Corel Painter IX.5 to Corel Photo Album 6 (Windows version only). Work seamlessly with Apple iPhoto (requires changing Preferences in iPhoto), Mac OS X Tiger, and run Corel Painter IX.5 on Intel-based Macs with Rosetta.

Support for Wacom pen tablets (Intuos3, Cintiq 21UX and the new 6D Art Pen) is included. Ten new art pen brushes—specifically designed to work with the new Wacom 6D Art Pen—are perfect for calligraphy.

Dual monitors are supported on Windows XP and Windows 2000. Move palettes, toolbars and the toolbox to the outside of the application window.



	<input type="radio"/>	Blender Bristle
	<input type="radio"/>	Blender Brush
	<input type="radio"/>	Blender Palette Knife
	<input type="radio"/>	Bristle Brush
	<input type="radio"/>	Clumpy Brush
	<input type="radio"/>	Clumpy Thin Flat
	<input type="radio"/>	Dry Bristle
	<input type="radio"/>	Dry Brush
	<input type="radio"/>	Dry Clumpy Impasto
	<input type="radio"/>	Dry Palette Knife
	<input type="radio"/>	Grainy Blender
	<input type="radio"/>	Grainy Dry Brush
	<input type="radio"/>	Grainy Impasto
	<input type="radio"/>	Impasto Oil
	<input type="radio"/>	Impasto Palette Knife
	<input type="radio"/>	Mixer Thin Flat
	<input type="radio"/>	Oil Palette Knife
	<input type="radio"/>	Oily Bristle
	<input type="radio"/>	Smeary Impasto
	<input type="radio"/>	Soft Blender Brush
	<input type="radio"/>	Soft Grainy Brush
	<input type="radio"/>	Soft Grainy Impasto
	<input type="radio"/>	Tapered Oils
	<input type="radio"/>	Thick Wet Impasto
	<input type="radio"/>	Wet Brush
	<input type="radio"/>	Wet Impasto
	<input type="radio"/>	Wet Oily Blender
	<input type="radio"/>	Wet Oily Brush
	<input type="radio"/>	Wet Oily Impasto
	<input type="radio"/>	Wet Oily Palette Knife

IX.5

It's very possible that the most popular natural media applications may prove daunting to beginning painters or those who are not comfortable with creating art on the computer. No worries! Ambient Design of New Zealand has the perfect solution: ArtRage 2.

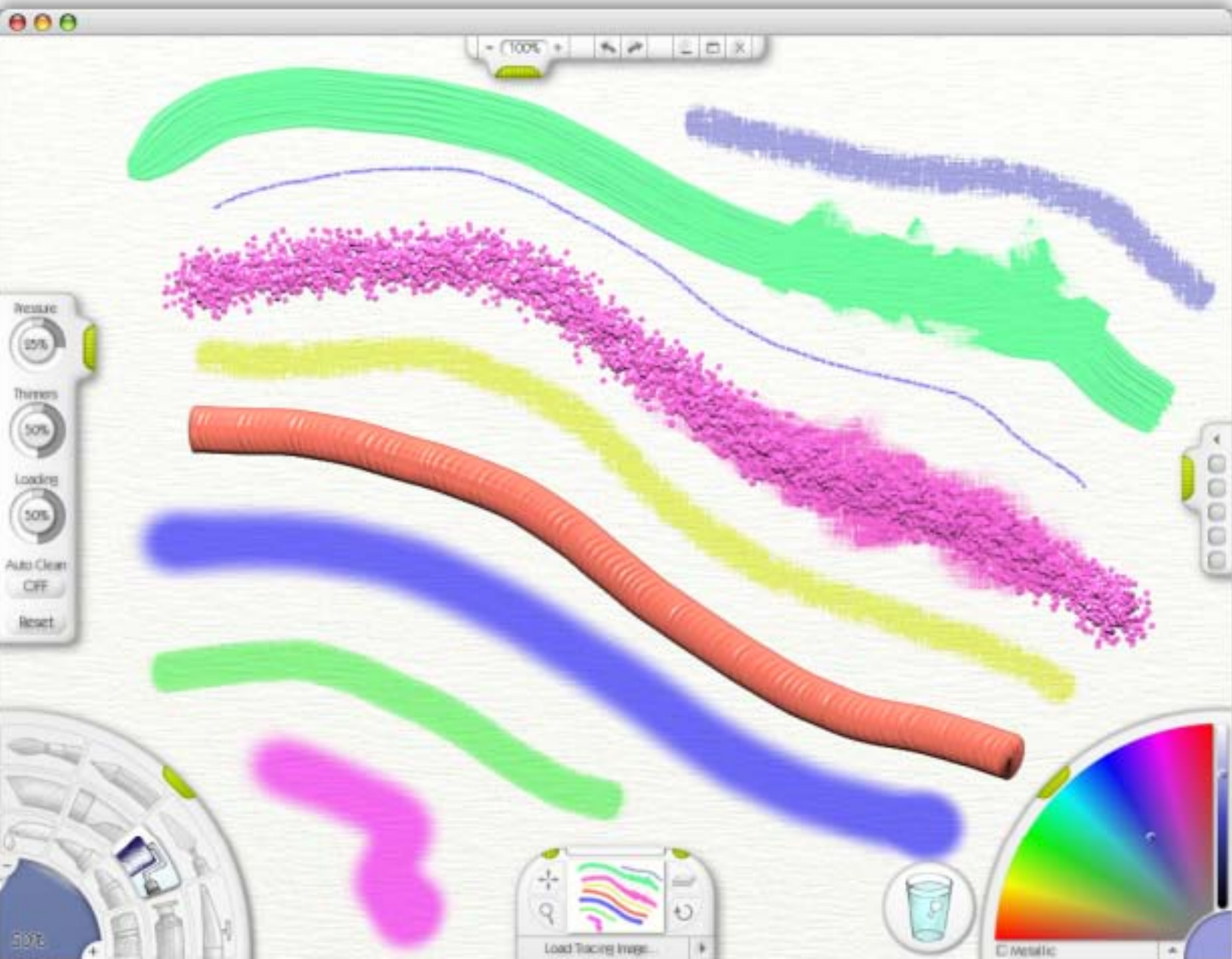
I confessed earlier that I am not a painter, either naturally or by training. ArtRage is the only one of this issue's featured applications that I actually tried painting with, using traditionally-inspired methods. It couldn't be easier! Choose one of 12 paint tools from the wheel at the lower left of the interface, and just start painting. The results look and react just like their natural counterparts, complete with texture, depth and blending interaction. The process is so easy even children will take to ArtRage immediately.



ArtRage



www.plugsandpixels.com/artrage.html





This page shows a bit of what's possible with ArtRage. I began this piece using a tracing photo of some ivy. ArtRage picked up the colors from the image and transferred them into the paint as I swished the brush around in my best imitation of an artist.

Since ArtRage supports layers, I created a new one and loaded a photo of the flower as a tracing image, swished the paint around some more, then added thin black strokes as a nice touch. I saved the art as a layered PSD file, and added an outer glow to the flower in Photoshop.

The inset screenshot shows my attempt at tracing some trees... Not too bad!

If you can't wait to get started yourself, there's a free lite version of ArtRage 2, or the full version is only \$19.95.





topaz adjust

SAVE \$70!

When you
purchase the
Topaz suite

www.plugsandpixels.com/adjust.html

Instant HDR with
a single frame!



Reveal hidden
details in the
shadows while
bringing highlights
under control

Original



ADJUST DOES MORE THAN HDR!

While the results of this example are impressive enough, Topaz Adjust does much more than revealing highlight and shadow detail in extremely contrasty images. Starting with any of the 18 presets, you can do anything from simple exposure adjustment to controlling detail, color and noise, achieving corrective and artistic effects once reserved for plug-ins costing several times more.

topaz denoise 2

www.plugsandpixels.com/denoise.html

Dead pixels and horrible digital noise abound in this long-exposure image of a California forest fire. The shot was taken in 2003 with a 4-megapixel consumer camera at night, so the odds were against getting a clean image from the start.

Topaz Labs' DeNoise 2 plug-in handled both problems with very little tweaking, resulting in a clean yet still-sharp final version of the image.

Topaz Adjust has a lite version of DeNoise built in, but this standalone version offers even more control over color noise, smoothness, JPEG artifact repair, amount of added grain, etc.



AFTER DeNoise

Buy four Topaz plug-ins
(Adjust, Simplify and DeNoise)
PLUS the new Clean 2 in the
Topaz Photoshop Plug-in bundle
for only \$129.99 (save \$70)!

BEFORE DeNoise

buZZ.X from Fo2PiX transforms your photos into works of art in seconds. Images are reduced to their underlying colors and lines by careful removal of details without actually diminishing the quality and form of your image. You have full control over the process through use of sliders after choosing the type of filter and region effects you wish to apply to the image.

Each of the eight buZZ.X plug-ins in the set (Simplifier One, Simplifier Two, Simplifier Three, Highlights Color, Highlights White, Lowlights Black, Pure Color and Simplifier HSV) contains at least one version of the Simplifier. The Simplifier removes unwanted detail from an image without blurring, distortion, loss of focus, color, and edges, thus retaining the important features.

A photograph captures every last detail, but pictures are not about detail, they are about the judicious use of lines and colors. buZZ.X is the key contribution to turning a digital photograph into a work of art.

Since buZZ.X simplifies the image in a unique way, any or all of the treatments or effects that you apply will be different from anything you have experienced before, even if the description of the effect seems familiar.



Fo2PiX



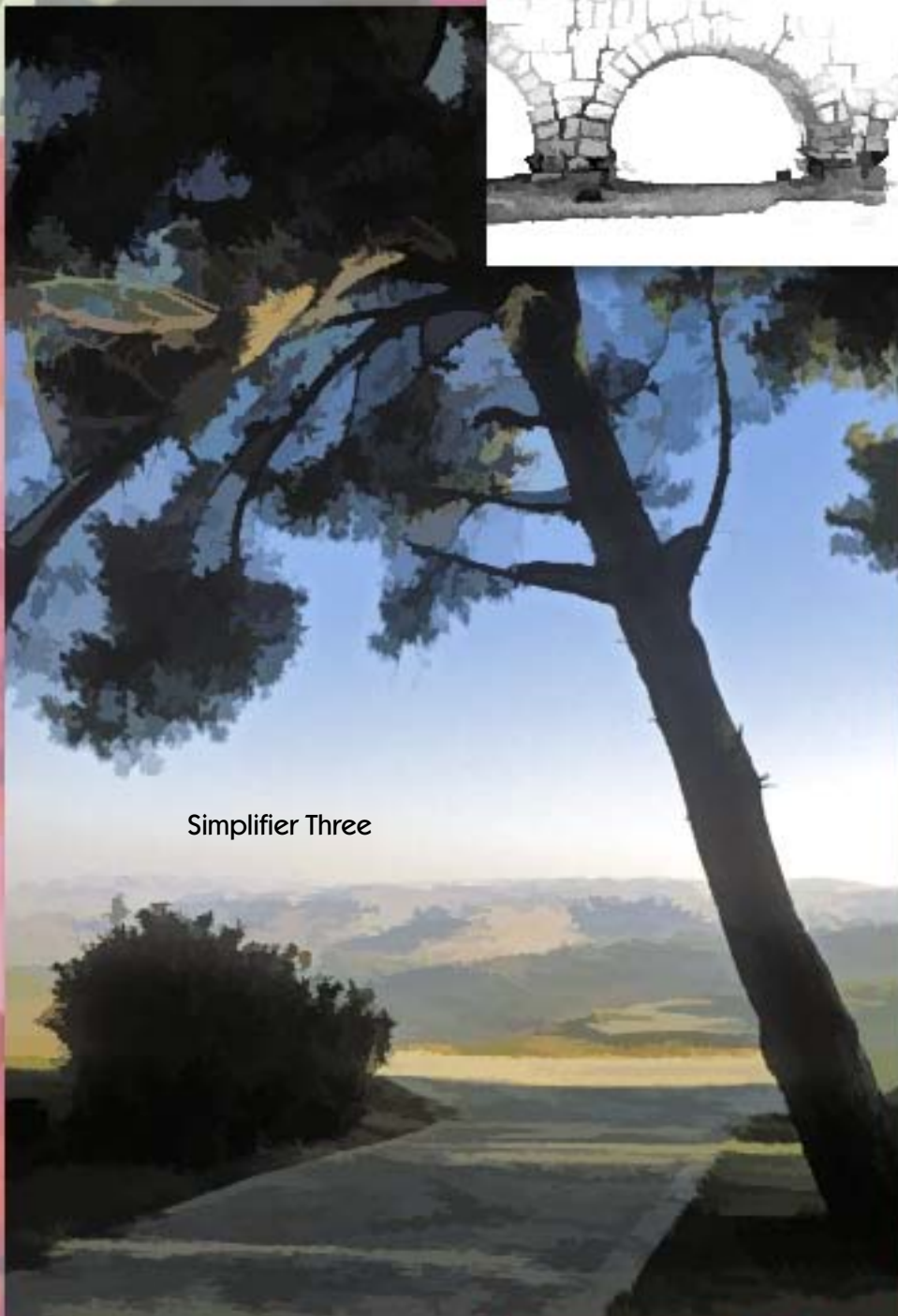
For the examples on this page I used the Lowlights Black and Simplifier Three plug-in options on photos I took in the Middle East. After some minor experimentation with the slider options, I achieved these beautiful results.

If you would prefer an approach that is a bit more automatic, three sets of buzz.X Actions (totalling 32) are available that produce special artistic effects on single or multiple layers.

These sets include: Accentuated Fine Black Flecks, Accentuated Fine White Flecks, Black and Gray Squares, Black-Edged Flecks, Colored Squares, Color Patches 2, Fine Scale Highlights, Fine Scale Lowlights, Molten Edges, Pure Color Highlights, Ragged Edges and Smooth Light Areas.



Lowlights Black



Simplifier Three



Actions sets

Bright Colour Wash	Coloured Edges
Colour Patches	Gloss Layer
Ink	Palette Knife
Pure Colour Wash	Sketch 1
Sketch 2	Soft Colour Wash
Watercolour	BUILDERS YARD
FRONT DOOR AND VINE	FRUIT SELLER
LIGHT BLOWS IN	PORSCHE BOXSTER
WOODLAND PATH	ANNA PORTRAIT SKETCH
SAN FRANCISCO AT NL...	NEWSAGENT
ACCENTUATED FINE BL...	ACCENTUATED FINE W...
BLACK AND GREY SQU...	BLACK EDGED FLECKS
COLOUR PATCHES 2	COLOURED SQUARES
FINE SCALE HIGHLIGHTS	FINE SCALE LOWLIGHTS
MOLTEN EDGES	PURE COLOUR HI-LITES
RAGGED EDGES	SMOOTH LIGHT AREAS

BenVista photoartist

PhotoArtist lets you choose a painting style or mix and manipulate different painting styles. Select a painting color, pick a special brush, and apply it on the on-screen canvas or paper. By combining different effects, the artistic possibilities are endless. PhotoArtist is equipped with the right tools to turn your photos into great looking pieces of art.



- Original
- Aquarel
- Sketch
- Cartoonify
- Blur
- Negative
- Grayscale
- Bleed
- Impressionism
- Oil painting**
- Screening
- Texturize
- ✓ Watercolor
- Paper drawing
- Crayon
- Colorize
- Embroidery
- Crystalize
- Glow
- Color boost
- Fine sketch
- Charcoal
- Canvas

The operation of PhotoArtist is very straightforward:

Open your photo, choose a paint style from the pull-down menu, pick a preset from the list and either apply it to the entire image, or brush it on manually. That's it!



Keep up to date with plug-ins

Plugs 'n Pixels produces plug-ins e-zine

A free plug-ins e-zine detailing the range of Photoshop-compatible plug-ins is available to download at the Plugs 'n Pixels site.

The tutorials in the e-zine are highly informative and provide inspiration for your creative projects. The e-zine, also called Plugs 'n Pixels, is currently on its fourth issue. Each issue comprises of 20 pages of information on the best the plug-in world has to offer – for example Lucis Art, Vertus Fluid Mask and PowerRetouche. The site aims to help



Plugs 'n Pixels will help you with plug-ins

you navigate quickly and easily through the seemingly endless list of creative software and related titles. Featured in the premiere issue of the e-zine was a tutorial about using plug-ins to create a fiery image – the perfect way to liven up designs.

"The goal of the Plugs 'n Pixels site is to help people find their way through the plug-in jungle. We have a working relationship with over 100 different developers, so the site is continually updated with new product information and demonstrations," said Mike Bedford, developer of Plugs 'n Pixels.

Visit www.plugsnpixels.com to check out the e-zine and tutorials for yourself.

ACTUALITE 2D/3D :



Plugs n pixels

Plugs n pixels est le nom d'un e-zine gratuit consacré à l'infographie 2D. Conseils, astuces, tests, autant de choses qui intéresseront les mordus de la retouche d'image crative. Et pour son prix, il n'y a pas de quoi se priver.

Le site : Plugs n pixels

www.stumbleupon.com

StumbleUpon



Reviews of plugsnpixels.com (7K)

Plugs N Pixels: Directory of Plugins & Creative Imaging Applications

People who like this page



cchevy



RamSheep



penman2

www.criteriondg.info

26 de Enero de 2006

Plugs 'N' Pixels

Escrito @ 9:50 am :: Skeku



Plugs'N'Pixels es una web que se dedica a la exhaustiva tarea de recopilar listados de plugins y de programas para algunas de las facetas que puede tener el mundo del diseño, todo ello acompañado de imágenes lo cual es de agradecer. Además publican regularmente un e-zine en el que hablan sobre todos ellos. Tiene muy buena pinta asique me lo guardo en favoritos. Como la mayoría de este tipo de webs, la información está totalmente en inglés pero es un buen punto de partida

para ir probando plugins de Photoshop :P

www.graphics.com

Selections from the Discussion Forums

Adobe Photoshop: Photoshop Plugin Ezine Now Available

Plugsnpixels has announced the second issue of an ezine covering Photoshop plugins, available as a free PDF download. Graphics.com members seemed to like the first one.





photoshop blog - January 2006

The Photoshop blog offers the latest Photoshop news and software updates, Photoshop tips and tutorials, and creative "thoughts" from authors, as well as Photoshop topics: [Submit Article](#)

... comments on this article... [Submit Comment](#) [Like this article](#)

THURSDAY - JANUARY 19 2006

So many people email me these days I can't keep them all. I've been getting a lot of emails from people who are looking for a place to post their work. I've been thinking about this for a while now. I've been thinking about this for a while now. I've been thinking about this for a while now.



What made you decide to embark on this project? I decided to do this because I wanted to see if I could do it. I wanted to see if I could do it. I wanted to see if I could do it. I wanted to see if I could do it.

How did you come up with the idea for this project? I came up with the idea for this project because I wanted to see if I could do it. I wanted to see if I could do it. I wanted to see if I could do it.

As this isn't a 100% free website, how do you make money? I make money from the ads on the site. I make money from the ads on the site. I make money from the ads on the site.

As for the Plug & Pixel website, it's a collection of quality content... I've been thinking about this for a while now. I've been thinking about this for a while now. I've been thinking about this for a while now.

So people come to download the PDF primarily, or do you find they surf the site as well?



I've been thinking about this for a while now. I've been thinking about this for a while now. I've been thinking about this for a while now. I've been thinking about this for a while now.

How often do you plan on releasing new issues of the PDF eZine?

I plan to release new issues of the PDF eZine every month. I plan to release new issues of the PDF eZine every month. I plan to release new issues of the PDF eZine every month.

Do you plan to always keep the PDF eZine available as a free download?

I plan to keep the PDF eZine available as a free download. I plan to keep the PDF eZine available as a free download. I plan to keep the PDF eZine available as a free download.

How does a plugin site go about getting listed in your wonderful directory?



I've been thinking about this for a while now. I've been thinking about this for a while now. I've been thinking about this for a while now. I've been thinking about this for a while now.

OK, now we really want to know this - what are your all-time favorite "must-have-without-them" plugins?

My all-time favorite "must-have-without-them" plugins are... I've been thinking about this for a while now. I've been thinking about this for a while now. I've been thinking about this for a while now.

OK, now we really want to know this - what are your all-time favorite "shoot smarter tips and tricks"?

My all-time favorite "shoot smarter tips and tricks" are... I've been thinking about this for a while now. I've been thinking about this for a while now. I've been thinking about this for a while now.

Thank you, and we wish you continued success.

A Great Photoshop Plug-in Resource

As if Photoshop wasn't overwhelming enough, there are tons of plug-ins that you can buy to help you do amazing things. The trouble is, where do you find these great plug-ins?

One of the best places is Plugs-N-Pixels. It's basically a "one-stop-browsing" site to see different plug-ins and what they do.

So instead of bouncing all over the Internet looking at different plug-ins, try Plugs-N-Pixels first.

The site also produces a free e-zine that goes more in-depth on these plug-ins and lets you see how they can be used.

For direct mail, I find most plug-ins a bit of overkill. But every-so-often, you see a plug-in that either does something automatically that you had been doing manually (thus, saving you time), or you find one that sparks your creativity and is useful for a future project.

It's just good to know what's available to you.

POSTED BY MIKEKLASSEN AT 8:13 AM

mikeklassen.blogspot.com



Om Plug-Ins

plugs-n-pixels: ezine har laget en 20 sider PDF om tredjeparts plug-ins.

PDF-en inneholder både veiledning og eksempler fra flere leverandører av plug-ins.

For å laste ned, klikk [her](#)

Photoshop

- alienskin
- layersmagazine
- plugins
- PlugsNPixels ezine
- shoot smarter
- tips and tricks

I really enjoyed reading it as I'm sure plenty of others did as well. Thanks for publishing such a fine eZine and putting it out there for everyone to enjoy. I'll be looking forward to future editions.

Btw, I really liked what you did with that Stratocaster on the last page. Really cool effect, I could picture that as a poster hanging on the wall at the local music shop. / Tetrode

Thanks for the heads-up... I've bookmarked it. I've always hoped for a comprehensive website about photoshop plugins. / oldcsar, Luminous Landscape forum

...the website is actually pretty cool. Even if you don't download the programs it recommends, it's a good place to get some editing ideas... if you're stuck in that creative rut. / Meysha, ThePhotoForum

Sometimes it's hard to keep up with all the Photoshop plugins, so I like this ezine which highlights what's out there. / Mike Klassen, Direct Market Layout & Design

www.studio101.no

www.photoshopsupport.com

closing artwork



Original

Created with:
buZZ Simplifier Three
Lucis Art Sculpture
nik Color Efex Polarization
and Vignette Blur
onOne PhotoFrame

Photo/artwork by: Mike Bedford

