ACTIONS!

table of contents · introduction

Plugs 'N Pixels is dedicated to exploring the use of plug-ins and other imaging applications for creating and manipulating your images. But included in the bag of tricks are helpful assistants that are not so much software as a sequence of instructions that you load into Photoshop, called Actions.

Anyone can easily record an action. The trick is knowing what you are doing along the way in order to get the best results from your steps!

In this issue we take a look at a handful of effective action sets from those action authors who do know what specific steps and settings work well in sequence.

By using these actions, there is perhaps no quicker and easier way to get your work done. There's also the added benefit of learning some new workflow tricks by examining the steps the actions take as they run.

The Image Trends crew (L-R): Dr. Albert Edgar (CTO), Wayne Galella (VP of Engineering) and Michael Conley (VP of Marketing).

Twice every year the National Association Of Photoshop Professionals (NAPP) holds its Photoshop World convention. This is the place to be for up-close exposure to the best instructors and developers in the digital imaging industry.

I enjoy scouring the trade show floor and meeting developers whose products I am familiar with as well as meeting new contacts and discovering new products.

Later in this issue you will join me as we Meet The Developers in Las Vegas! Then we'll take a look at more digital imaging applications and training DVDs.

ISSUE #10

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Final PDF by Acrobat 9 Pro
Text and images by Mike Bedford
(except as noted)

•Plugs 'N Pixels will always be free!•

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EMAIL: mike@plugsandpixels.com

•If you would like your digital artwork or image editing software (applications, plug-ins, actions, etc.) featured in Plugs 'N Pixels, please write Mike at the address above. There is no cost or payment for this worldwide exposure!•
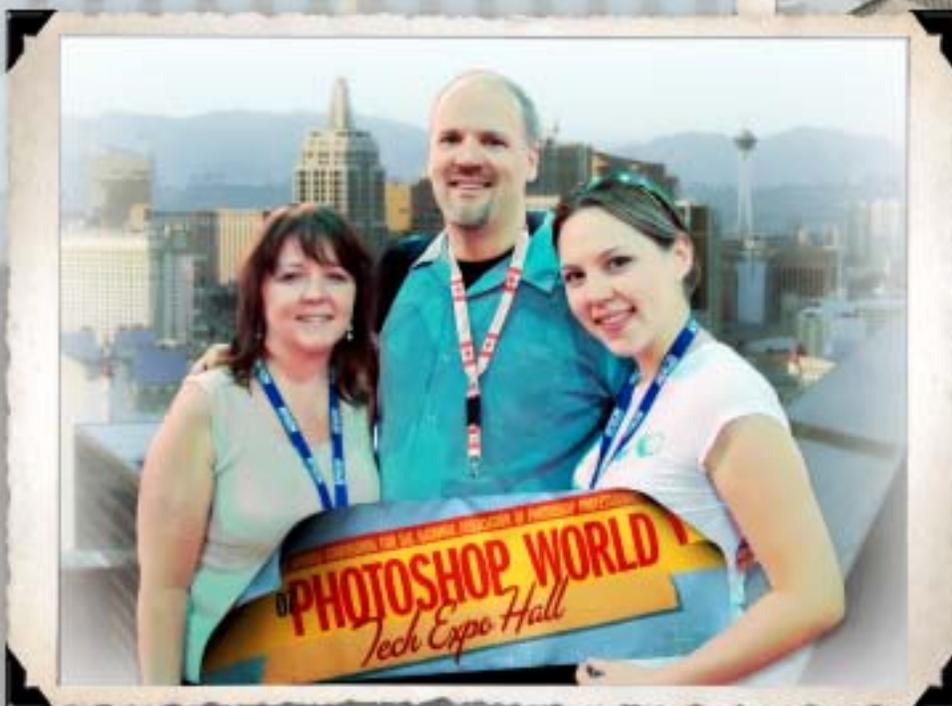
Dave Cross, Senior Developer of Education and Curriculum for NAPP, with his wife Marlene and daughter Stephanie. Dave and Stephanie can be seen on the Photoshop User TV podcast.

A whole industry has grown up around the ability of Photoshop to play back recorded sequences of workflow steps, called Actions. Those who benefit most from action sets are usually professionals (such as wedding and portrait photographers, photo editors, etc.) who handle a large volume of images under tight deadlines. But of course the home user of Photoshop can benefit as well.

I've included high-end as well as inexpensive (even free!) plug-in sets in this issue, so you have an overview of what is available. There are many other actions to choose from, and we will explore more of them in a subsequent issue of Plugs 'N Pixels ezine.

Actions ×

- ▼ 📁 **gavinsFX**
  - ▼ pop_art
    - ▶ Duplicate first document
    - Flatten Image
    - ▶ Convert Mode
    - ▶ Convert Mode
    - Reset Swatches
    - ▶ Make snapshot
    - ▶ Duplicate current layer
    - ▶ Unsharp Mask
    - ▶ Fade
    - ▶ Diffuse
    - ▶ Fade
    - ▶ Rotate first document
    - ▶ Diffuse
    - ▶ Fade
    - ▶ Rotate first document
    - ▶ Unsharp Mask
    - ▶ Fade
    - ▶ Dust & Scratches
    - ▶ Fade
    - Flatten Image
    - Make snapshot
    - Color Range
    - Feather
    - Curves
    - Set Selection
    - Levels
    - Desatu...
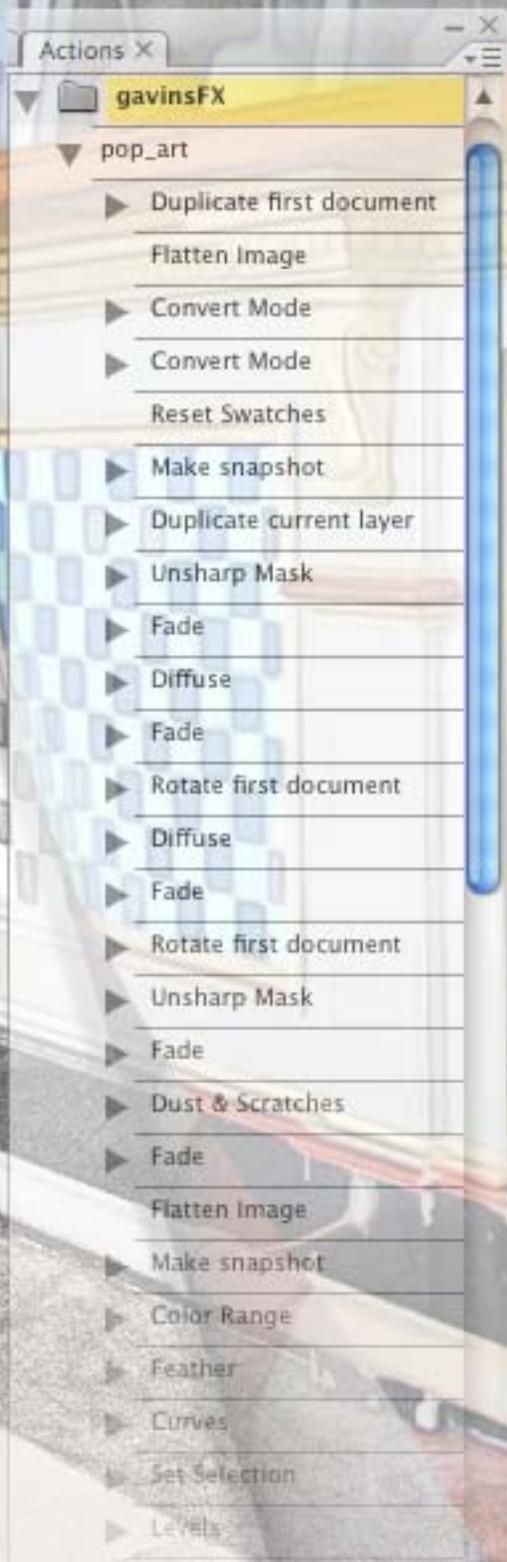
This issue's cover art was created using a few different Unique Imagery actions, created by Gavin Phillips. I ran his actions (Sketchy, Pop Art and Aged) on duplicate layers of the full original image, then used AV Bros. Page Curl Pro plug-in to peel away the various layers from different directions. After trying some transparency and blending mode experiments, I got the final result.

The background image on this page was an earlier attempt at designing the cover art.

The close-up of the girl's face below was treated with one of the free LucisArt-related actions.

LucisArt 7 action

ACTIONS!
As much fun as plug-ins but even easier to use

kubota actions

Actions ×

- ▶ 📁 Kubota Artistic Pak I
- ▼ 📁 Artistic Actions Vol II v2.3
  - ▶ Helpful information–play me!
  - ▶ 8–16–8
  - ▶ Daily Multi–Vitamin
  - ▶ Digital Fill Flash
  - ▶ Smokeless Burn
  - ▶ Lord of the Rings EVERYDAY
  - ▶ Lord of the Rings II
  - ▶ LOTR Return of the King 1.1
  - ▶ LOTR highlight controller
  - ▶ Hawaiian Punch 1.1
  - ▶ Radiant People
  - ▶ Radiance Landscape One 2006
  - ▶ Radiance Landscape Two 2006
  - ▶ Paint it! variation 1 v 1.1
  - ▶ Add canvas texture to painted
  - ▶ Modern Antique 1
  - ▶ Modern Antique 1 with glow 1.1
  - ▶ midbright
  - ▶ Amazing detail finder (CS2)
  - ▶ Amazing detail finder 2 (CS2)
  - ▶ Smarter Sharp with edge mask ...
  - ▶ Smoothner (CS2)
  - ▶ Makeup Artist (CS2)
  - ▶ Angel Glow
  - ▶ Mid Puller
  - ▶ StarBurst vignette
  - ▶ Edge burner
  - ▶ Edge Blur – modified
  - ▶ Edge Blur More
  - ▶ ToneTime – Blue 1
  - ▶ ToneTime – Blue 2
  - ▶ ToneTime – Red 1
  - ▶ ToneTime – Red 2
  - ▶ ToneTime – Green 1

Original

 Kevin Kubota is one of the top 10 wedding photographers in the world, and he makes his customized sets of post-processing actions available to anyone who wishes to emulate his award-winning styles.

 Each of the three Kubota Artistic Tools volumes contains 50 actions for enhancing, color popping, toning, glowing and B&W conversion of your images. Other action sets include Sloppy Borders (created traditionally in the darkroom and scanned) and AutoAlbum for magazine-style albums.

www.plugsandpixels.com/kubotaactions.html

1·click actions

SAVE 15%!
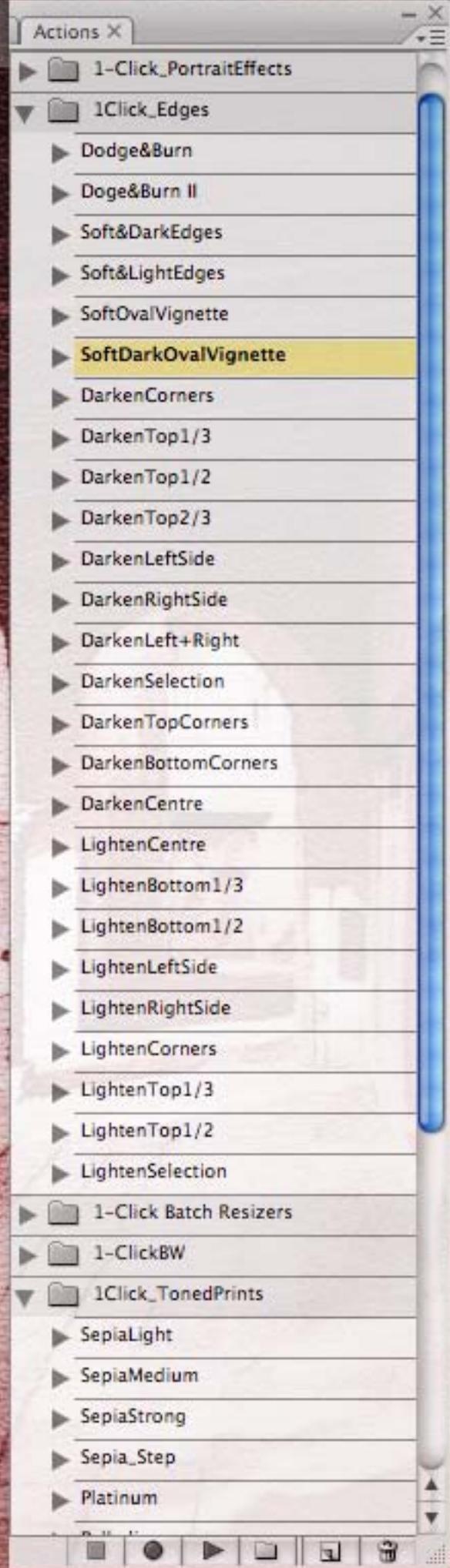
Over the course of seven volumes, Mount Photography's inexpensive 1-Click Actions take you from BW conversions, glows, cross-processing, color pops, toning and split-toning, portrait retouching and effects, dodge/burn and sharpening, up through graduated filters, resizers, edges and finally vintage/cross-process/fades – all the while emphasizing the simplicity of "one click". Emulate film and focus effects, smooth skin, apply vignettes and sunsets, whiten teeth, apply fill-flash and artistic effects.

Original

www.plugsandpixels.com/1clickactions.html

imagenomic actions

Actions ✕

- ▼ 📁 Noiseware4
  - ▶ Default
  - ▶ Landscape
  - ▶ Night Scene
  - ▶ Portrait
  - ▶ Film Grain Effect
  - ▶ Stronger Noise
  - ▶ Stronger Luma Noise
  - ▶ Stronger Color Noise
  - ▶ Weaker Noise
  - ▶ Full Noise Reduction
  - ▶ Full (Stronger Noise)
  - ▶ Full (Stronger Luma Noise)
  - ▶ Full (Stronger Color Noise)
  - ▶ Full (Weaker Noise)
  - ▶ Custom
- ▼ 📁 PortraiturePlugin
  - ▶ Default total image
  - ▶ Default skintones only
  - ▶ Default w/skintones mask layer
  - ▶ Default total image w/RealGrain
  - ▶ Default w/Max Sharpness
  - ▶ Max Sharpness only
  - ▶ Medium Sharpness only
  - ▶ Default w/Max Sharp & mask layer
  - ▶ Default w/Medium Sharp & mask l...
  - ▶ SmoothingNormal
  - ▶ SmoothingNormal w/mask
  - ▶ SmoothingNormal w/skintone ma...
  - ▶ SmoothingNormal w/RealGrain
  - ▶ SmoothingMedium
  - ▶ SmoothingMedium w/mask
  - ▶ SmoothingMedium w/skintones m...
  - ▶ SmoothingMedium w/RealGrain
  - ▶ SmoothingHigh
  - ▶ SmoothingHigh w/mask

Imagenomic's Portraiture and Noiseware are both very popular portrait-enhancing and noise reduction plug-ins. Through the use of the free Imagenomic ActionBook actions for each plug-in, it's even easier to get great results with them immediately.
  Using these actions helps automate your workflow for greater efficiency, including offering batch processing capability.
  For this example I used Portraiture's ColorWasher action to achieve a high contrast, low saturation look.

Original

www.plugsandpixels.com/portraiture.html

pencilpixels actions

Pp Atmospheres

Pp Volume 2

Pencil Pixels --- Painting ---

Painting

Oil Paint

Arcrylic

Painting Base1

Painting Base2

--- Painting Textures ---

Canvas Texture

Paint Stroke Texture Lite

Paint Stroke Texture

Light Brush Texture

Paper Surface Texture

Pencil Pixels --- Comic-Toon-Pos...

Toon-Poster 1

Styled Poster

Toon-Poster 2

Toon-Poster Smooth

Comicbook 1-Multifile

Comicbook 2

Sunday Comics-Multifile

Comic-Poster Blend

Pencil Pixels --- Stained Glass ---

Plastic Sun Catcher

Chagall Windows1

Chagall Windows1 larger images

Chagall Windows2

Chagall Windows3

Chagall Windows4

Simple Glass

Jewel Glass

Stained Glass Var.1

Stained Plastic

Gel Window Decoration

Diffusion Stained Glass

Pencil Pixels offers three different sets of Photoshop actions that take your images to places they've never been before, with each volume building on the previous.
Volume 1 focuses on Watercolor, Chalk & Rough Drawing, Easy Pencil, Metal & Foils. Volume 2 adds Painting, Stained Glass, and the Comic-Toon-Poster mini-pack.
The Atmospheres set delves into more esoteric effects such as Chocolate, Concrete, Blackboards, Coins, Camouflage, Fire and Fingerpainting.

www.plugsandpixels.com/pencilpixels.html
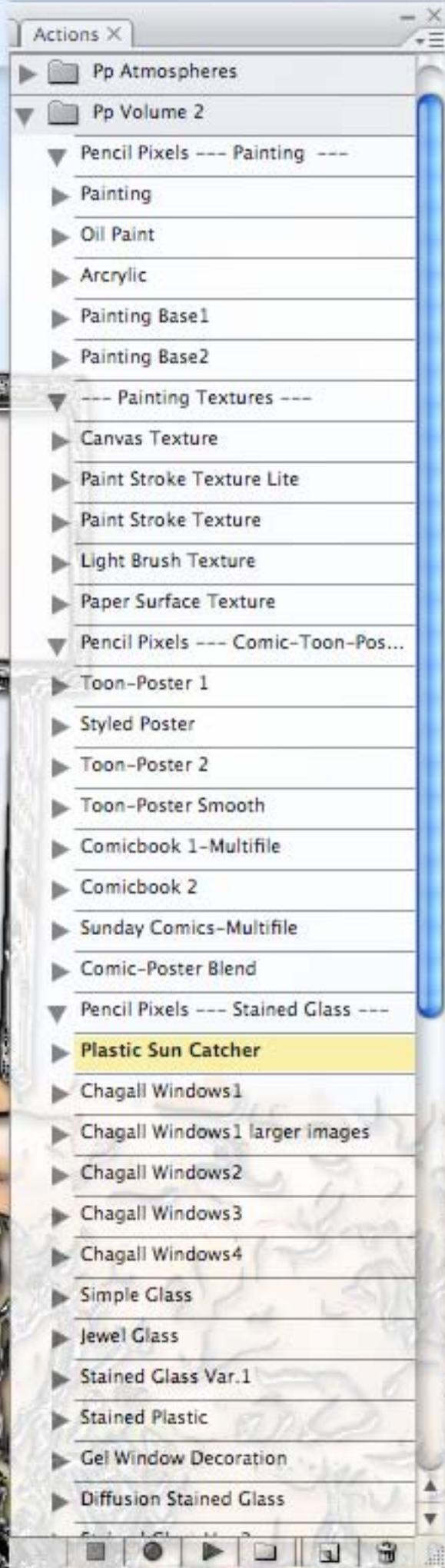
unique imagery actions
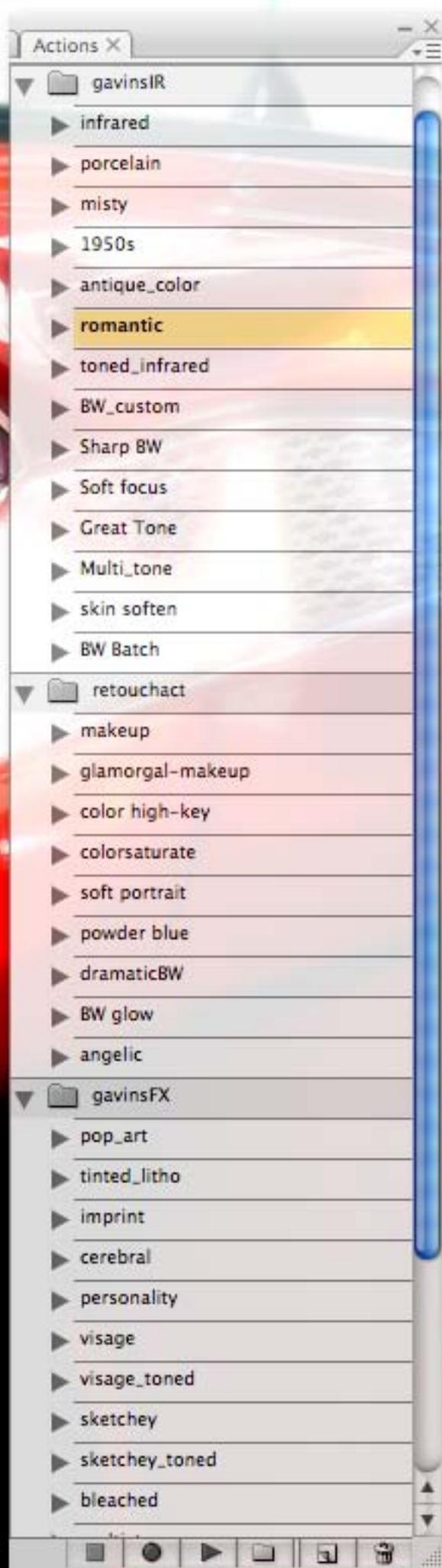
Gavin Phillips, known for his tutorial articles in Rangefinder magazine and his personalized Photoshop training sessions, has created four sets of actions as follows: Infrared & Elegant Tones, Stylish FX, BW, Unique Tones & Sloppy Borders and Portrait/Glamour Retouching.

This issue's cover art was created using a combination of these beautiful actions. The image above was done with the Romantic action alone, with striking results. The actions allow user-interactive adjustments.

www.plugsandpixels.com/uniqueimagery.html

meet the developers

Plug-in developers show their stuff at Photoshop World

Twice a year at Photoshop World (and other imaging-related conventions as well), software developers gather to show off their latest wares. A tech fair is sort of like visiting the Plugs 'N Pixels website – you can see everything in one convenient location!

On these pages you'll meet a handful of plug-in developers I visited in Las Vegas. Developing these relationships helps Plugs 'N Pixels keep you up to date and informed about each new product release.
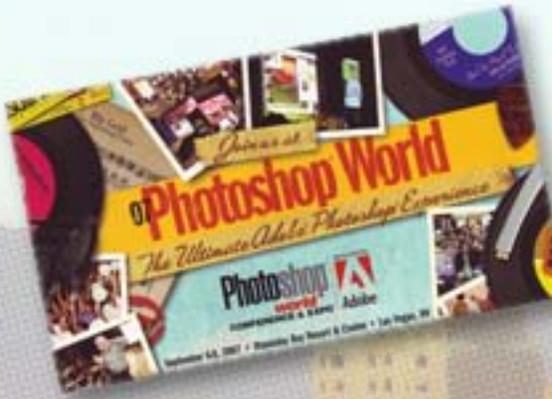
I first saw Tom Summerall of Media Lab (left) at Photoshop World back in 2001. He and his colleague Chris Perkins are a couple of the most energetic presenters I've ever seen! Non-stop demonstrations.

Media Lab has developed two groundbreaking plug-ins for website design: SiteGrinder and PSD2FLA. Both make it incredibly easy to use Photoshop for web page design and export.

media lab

onOne

For Adobe Photoshop, Lightroom and Elements

Genuine Fractals
for Enlargements

Mask Pro
for Masking

Mike Wong of onOne software (far right) joined forces with digital fine artist Jim DiVitale of DigitalPhotoandArt.com to wow the booth attendees with new plug-ins and art giveaways.

onOne is known for such products as PhotoFrame, Genuine Fractals, MaskPro, Intellihance and their new releases, PhotoTune and PhotoTools.

image trends

Michael Conley (Vice President of Marketing) works the crowds at Image Trends' busy booth. Image Trends is comprised of former members of the Applied Science Fiction team, now a division of Eastman Kodak.

Image Trends offers six different products aimed at digital camera and scanner users: AutoMatting, SensorKleen, PearlyWhites, ShineOff, Fisheye-Hemi and DustKleen.

Marco Paolini of Digital Film Tools (below) demonstrates their new masking product, PowerMask. They also offer 55mm, Digital Film Lab, PowerStroke, zMatte and others.

07 PHOTOSHOP WORLD 08
Conference Attendee

Mike Bedford

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PHOTOSHOP PROFESSIONALS
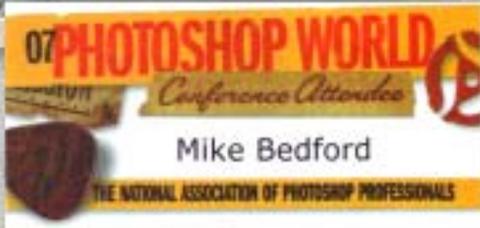
digital film tools

Graphic Authority (below) offers photographers photo edges, frames, brushes and backgrounds. Charlie Mosher does his best to handle the traffic!

graphic authority

nik

Janice Wendt, Manager of Channel Sales for Nik Software, demonstrates Color Efex Pro.

Pixelmator
Image editing for the rest of us

www.plugsandpixels.com/pixelmator.html

flowersgen211.jpg

Tools

Layers

Dot Screen ☑

Edge Work ☑

Flower base ☑

Blending: Overlay
Opacity: ————————— 51%

Brushes

47   63   121   139

39   48   51

Swatches

Dot Screen

Angle: ———————————— 0

Width: ———————————— 6

Sharpness: ———————————— 70

Cancel   OK

Tool Options

☐ Auto Select Layer

Hidden within Mac OS-X are a number of radical <u>Core Image</u> filters. You just need applications to help you access and apply them to your images.

The highly-anticipated Pixelmator has now arrived, using a familiar Photoshop paradigm (with a standard toolbox, a layers palette with blending modes, a filters menu leading directly to Core Image options, a brush set, etc.) to make working with Core Image about as easy as it can be.

Amazingly, Pixelmator was created by just two young brothers who leveraged the power of the Mac OS into an incredible image editor.

If you don't do your digital image editing in Adobe's Photoshop, chances are quite good you're using Corel's Paint Shop Pro instead. PSP has long been known as a viable Photoshop contender and alternative, and each new version keeps nipping at the heels of its competition.

As a Mac user I had not given PSP much thought over the years, but now that Windows runs seamlessly on Mac hardware, I have been exploring Paint Shop Pro Photo X1 and now X2, and I have been quite impressed!

The various image effects shown in the examples here are native to PSP, and the built in image browser makes it that much easier to select images to edit.

It's amazing what Paint Shop Pro can do when compared to Photoshop, and at a fraction of the price!

Original

Corel®
Paint Shop Pro®
PHOTO X2

Susi Lawson Fine Art Photography

Susi Lawson hails from the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia but has reached out to the world via the internet to share the unique and award-winning vision she has achieved through a combination of Photoshop and Painter. Her two DVD training video sets expose the techniques used in her signature artwork, one of which has graced the cover of Photoshop User magazine. The delightful videos will teach you to unlock your inner artist in no time.

100% Photoshop Magic

Video lessons recorded with Camtasia Studio
100% Adobe Photoshop editing!

Creative Tips, Tricks and Techniques
Susi Lawson

Portrait Magic!

Video lessons created with Camtasia Studio Software

Fine Art Portrait editing with artist-photographer
Susi Lawson
Using Adobe Photoshop and Corel Painter IX
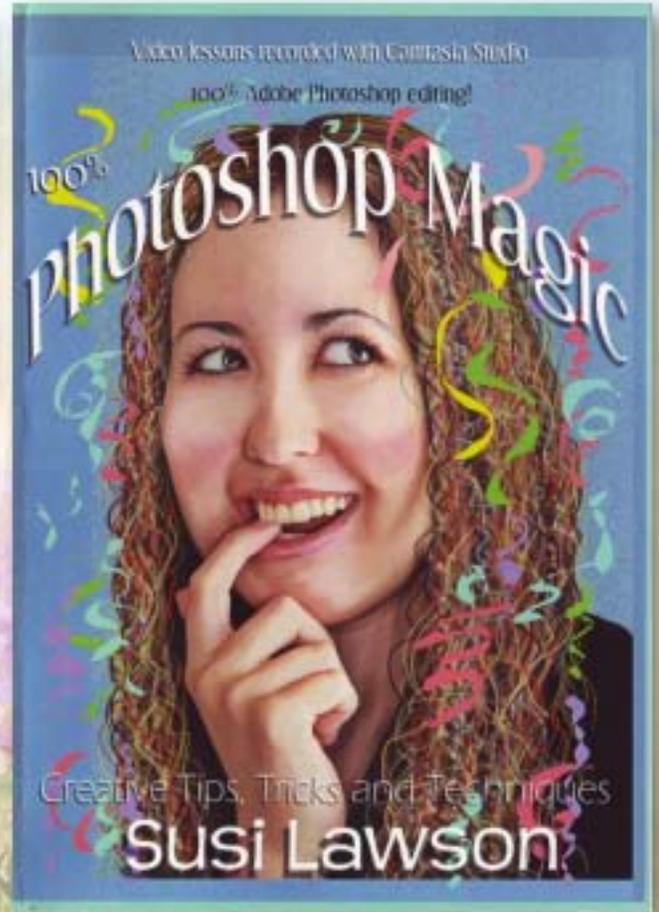
The top screenshot shows a sample video from Photoshop Magic. The bottom screenshot is from Portrait Magic, which teaches fine-art techniques using Photoshop and Painter.
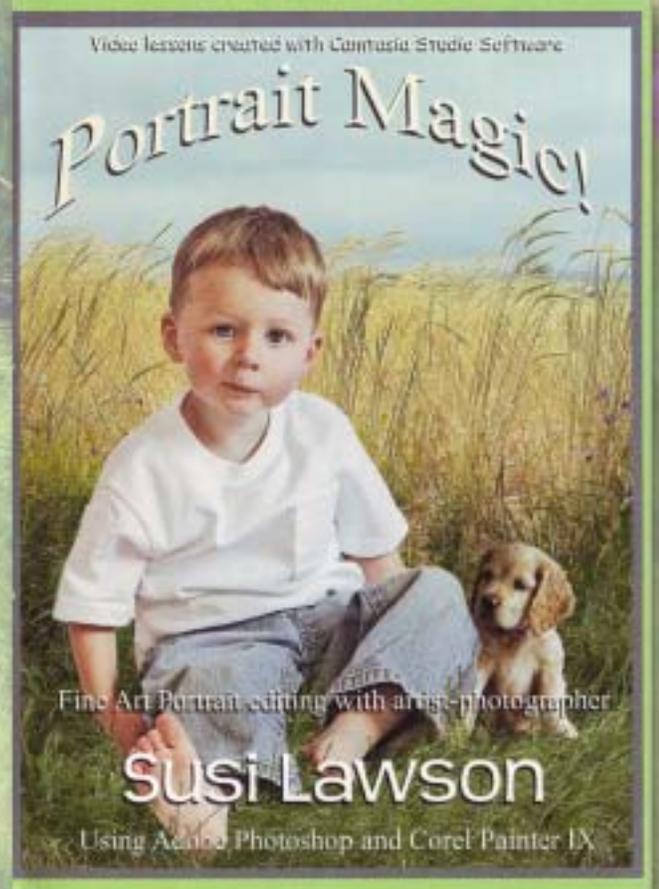
www.plugsandpixels.com/portraitmagic.html
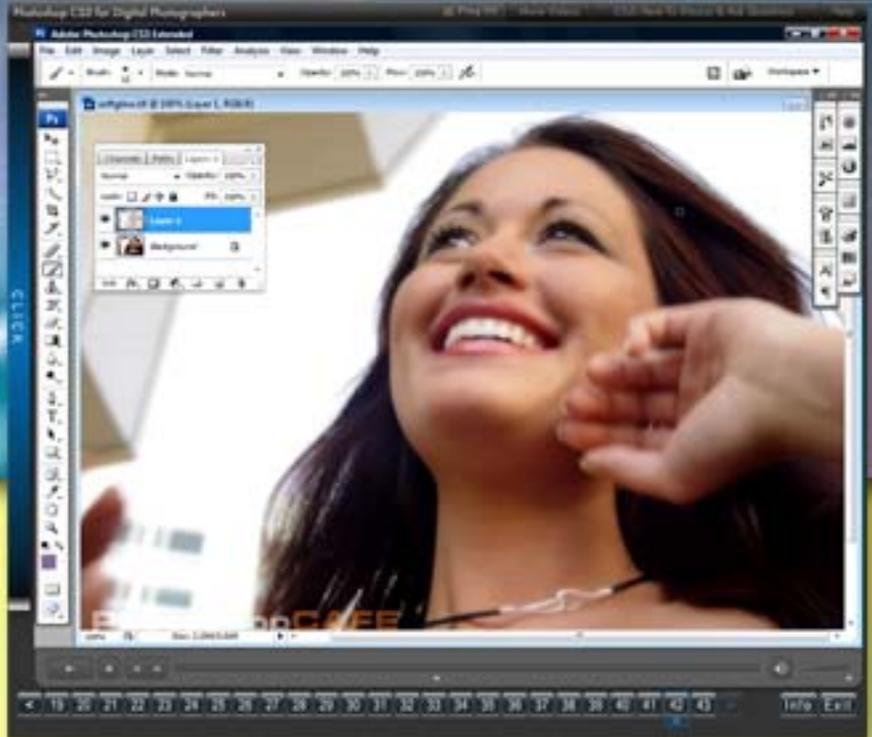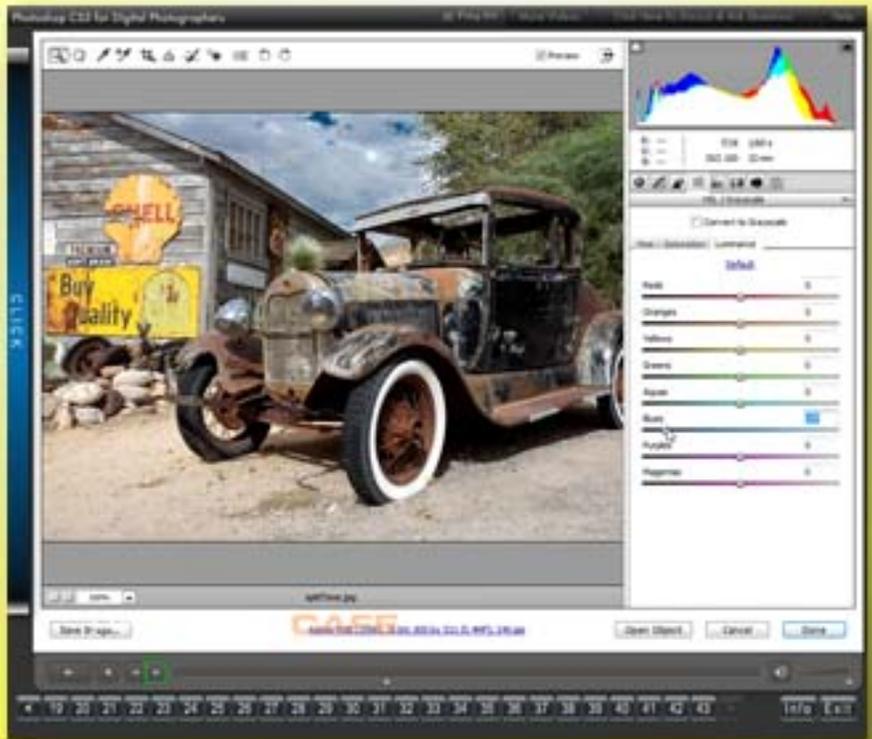
featured artist:
jill balsam

Jill S. Balsam of Visual Design Technology uses not traditional but digital paints, digital canvases and digital brushes. A vast and never-ending supply of creative digital software is available to her at the computer. "These are the tools that, in my own eyes, have made me an artist."

Jill created the large butterfly (background) image using LucisArt's Klimpt effect on a duplicate layer, which was then masked to reveal fine details such as legs and antennae. Noise Ninja was also used for blur effects.

The "Flamingos on a Rock" (lower left) also makes use of LucisArt, while the lotus blossom above it was created using Corel Painter.

© Jill S. Balsam

featured artist: danielle

"I've always been impressed with some of the photo freebies from Harald Heim and find good use for them.
"In Photoshop, I used his PhotoWiz PhotoFreebies Sepia with the setting on colored (default setting 0). This changed the blue sky to a soft orange. Then in PhotoWiz PhotoFreebies Luma Negative I used the full setting of 255 Blend making the sky a rich brown, with the tree and birds looking like an ivory etching."

www.thepluginsite.com

PHOTO FREEBIES
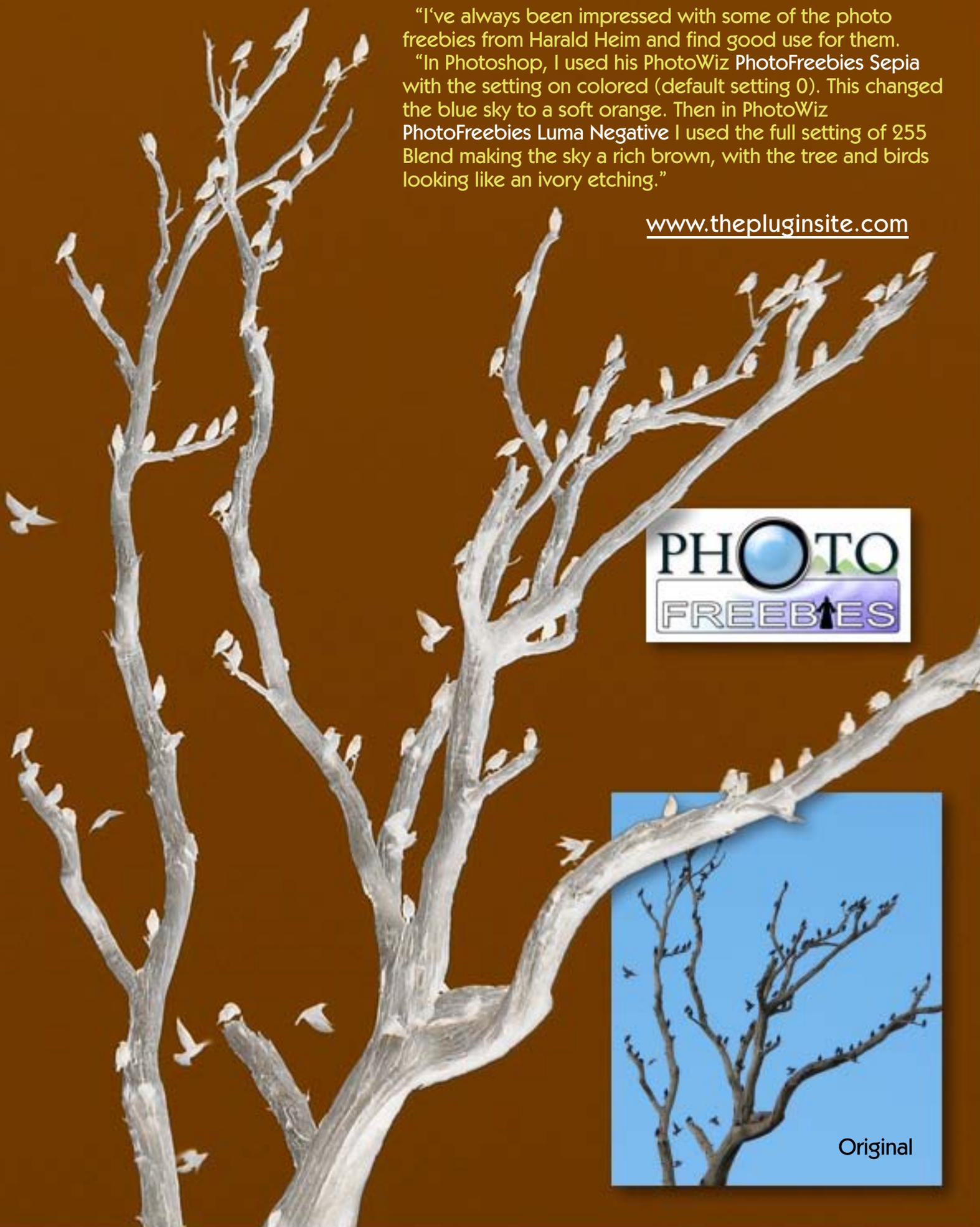
Original

digital imaging resources

By now you know the Plugs 'N Pixels website is an incredible resource for quickly gathering information about Photoshop plug-ins, creative and productivity applications and training materials. But tucked away under the small "forum links" area is a gateway to scores of other imaging resources! Quickly visit as many forums as you can handle to discuss your imaging techniques or questions about cameras and software.

plugs·n·pixels: links

This list of links is intended to help you find the most useful and informative places on the web to discuss Photoshop and computers with others, to find answers to your creative or technical problems, to locate stock photos and pur...

Browse Photoshop books:	Barnes & Noble	Amazon.com	
Photoshop forums:	PixelAddiction	Planet Photoshop	The Plugin Site
	Tek-Tips	Pro PHOTO BASICS	Broadband Reports
	TeamPhotoshop	Fred Miranda	Creative Cow
	Photoshop CS3 (Adobe)	Photoshop Cafe	Talk Graphics
	Rookie Designer	Ultrafhoto	Digital Image Cafe
	Digital Media Net	Purephotoshop	PhotoshopTechniques
	Lunacore		
Photoshop news:	Photoshop News	PhotoshopSupport	Creativepro.com PS
Photoshop tutorials:	[Large list of tutorials]	Heathrowe	Cambridge In Colour
	PhotoshopLover	Bruce Philcott	Russell Brown
	DesignerToday	Photoshop Creative	Janee's Tutorials
	PhotoshopSupport	Ultrafhoto	Tutorial Outpost
	Entheos	Picture Correct	Capital Tutorials
	Tutorialized	RadientVista	Uber Pages
	TheDesignWorld	tutorial tomb	Dr. Photoshop
	Melissa Clifton	Lunacore	
Photoshop blogs:	Living Photoshop	John Nack On Adobe	Photoshop Tutorials
	Lunacore	One onOne With Mike Wang	
Photoshop podcasts:	Photoshop TV	Unofficial Photoshop	Attention Photoshop
	Dr. Photoshop	PhotoWalkthrough	2 Minute Photoshop
Plug-in-specific forums:	Fluid Mask	Digital Film Tools	Alien Skin
	Power Retouche	Auto FX	Depth Of Field Gen...
Plug-in-specific websites:	PluginsWorld	GRAFNET	Filter Forge wiki
Lightroom blogs:	Lightroom-News		
Photography forums:	s5000	Photography Review	Luminous Landscape
	The Imaging Resource	Phototakers	Amateur Photographer
	Digital Photography News	TexasPhotoForum	Pro Photo Forums
	Passion For Pixels	ephotozine	Pro Photo Community
	PhotographyTips	Model Mayhem	Digital Photograph...
	Digital Image Cafe	onlinephotographers	Photochimp
	digitalimaging-uk	Glamour 1	Shutterlab
	Pro PHOTO BASICS	dpchallenge	Photographs99
Photography blogs:	The Photo Assistant	John Beardsworth	rawformat
	PhotographyBLOG	PictureCorrect Photography	The Simple Photo Bl...
	Kbb Ruf12 Living		
Photography podcasts:	thecandidframe		
Photography news:	PMA Newsline	Rob Galbraith	Digital Imaging Rep...
Photography tutorials:	Artworld	The Light's Right Studio	ACD Digital Photo T...
Photo equipment reviews:	The-Digital-Picture	Digital Photography Review	Steve's Digicams
	Megapixel.net	LetsGoDigital	SLRoday
Graphics forums:	Graphics.com	All Graphic Design	design-talkboard
	Plugin.com	The CAFE	Spoono
	Rookie Designer	TheDesignWorld	tutorial tomb
Graphics news:	Creativepro.com Graphics	Designorati	
Computer forums:	OverclockersClub		
CG forums:	CGTalk		
3D/terrain forums:	Poserpros	Vue	Bryce
	Plugin.com	Terragound	Ashundar
	Strata Cafe	Terragen 3 discuss...	
Corel Painter forums:			

www.plugsandpixels.com/links.html

Site hosted by HostGator

featured forum · photozo

There are many forums dedicated to the discussion of digital imaging, some with emphasis on software, some on hardware and others both. For example, Photozo Digital Photography Forum (see screenshot above) averages 5000 posts a month. They offer members a gallery, as well as downloads.

Another popular forum, this one dedicated to plug-ins and digital imaging applications, is The Plugin Site, with 4381 registered users.

The Plugs 'N Pixels Links page also directs visitors to various blogs, as well as forums related to 3D artwork and communities for graphic design. It's a great page to visit regularly to keep up to date with the latest.

www.plugsandpixels.com/psdmag.html

Photoshop Solutions For Designers magazine contains advertising and reviews contributed by Plugs 'N Pixels! Check it out at Borders and Barnes & Noble stores

Cast magic on Photoshop

STRIKE A 3D POSE

.PSD Editor in Chief Ewa Samulska at Photoshop World

PHOTOSHOP WORLD
September 6-8, 2007

Sarah Convention Center

Courtesy Ewa Samulska

Backdrop Designer

Sitegrinder

Kubota's Artistic Tools
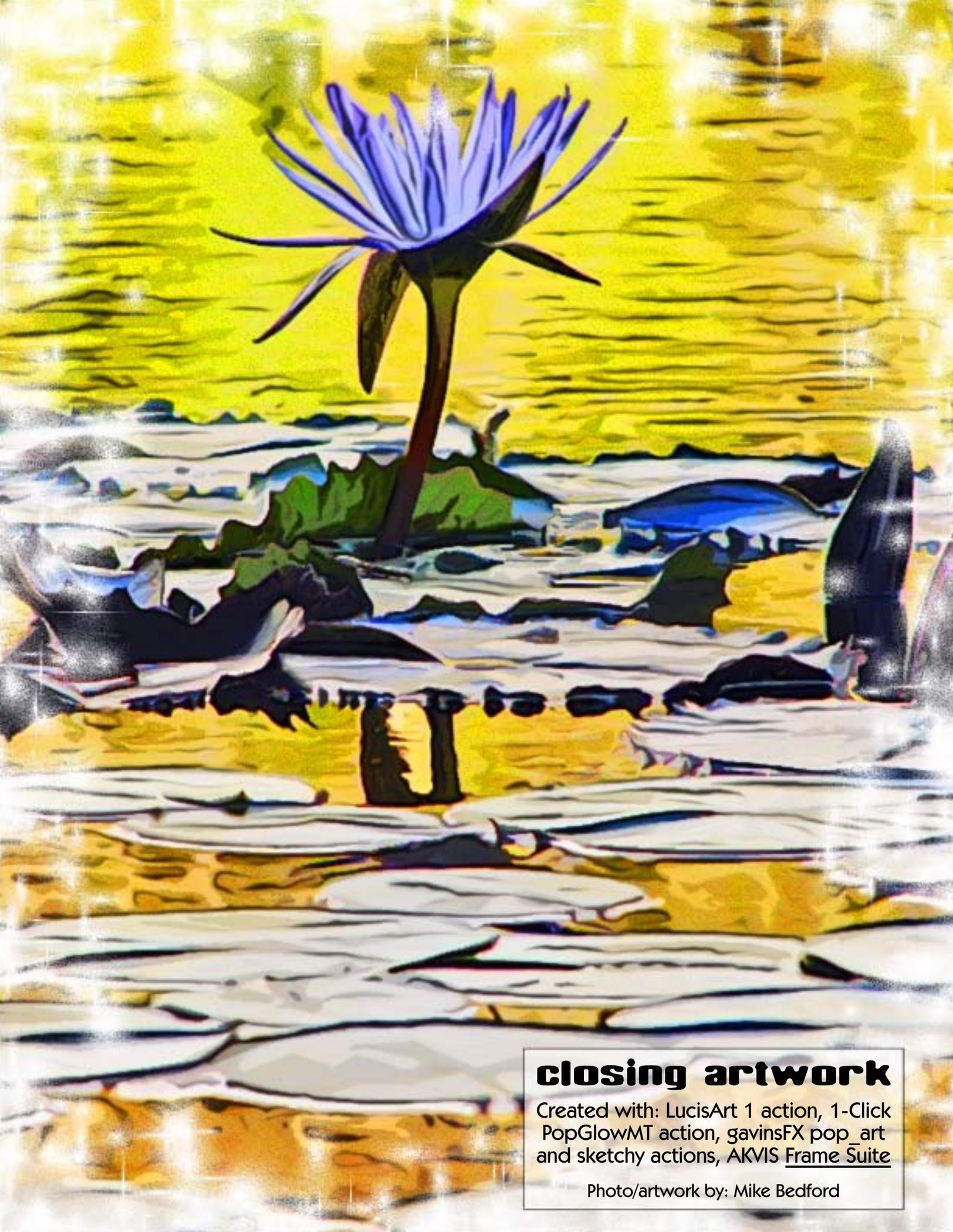
1-CLICK ACTIONS

closing artwork

Created with: LucisArt 1 action, 1-Click PopGlowMT action, gavinsFX pop_art and sketchy actions, AKVIS Frame Suite

Photo/artwork by: Mike Bedford