

plugs·n·pixels

IMAGE CREATION, MANIPULATION & EDUCATION



The Joy of MONOCHROME

**Convert your images to B&W
using grayscale conversion plug-ins**

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ISSUE #6

Background image effects:

Lucis Art, increase saturation,
duplicate layer, nik Solarization:
Black and White, invert, Andromeda
VariFocus, composite in Canvas X
with directional transparency.

Lower right:

Original color image treated with
Kubota Artistic Tools (Mocha B&W,
Sunglow 2, Vibrant Glow and grain 3
- heavier).

Catalina Island photo by
Mike Bedford

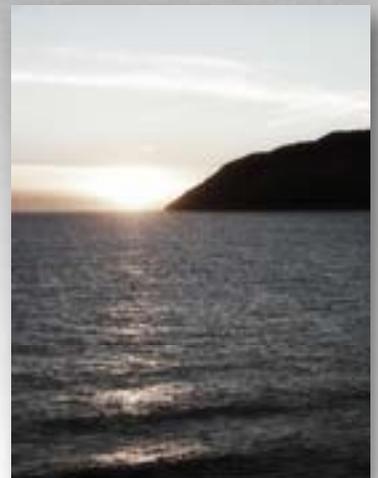
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Final PDF by Acrobat 9 Pro
Text and images by Mike Bedford

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the art of black and white conversion

It wasn't until several decades after the invention of photography that photographic scientists discovered a process for capturing natural color. Beginning with James Clerk-Maxwell's color separation method (1861), Louis Ducos du Hauron's subtractive method (1872), the Lumiere Brothers' Autochrome plates (1907) and continuing through Technicolor (1932), Kodachrome (1936), color Polaroid (1963), C-41 (1973) and eventually digital (1981-present), the color process has reached a state of near-perfection. Even your inexpensive cell phone can capture color stills and videos.

Since true-color capture has become commonplace, the desire for something different has driven photo artists back to monochrome. Ironically, digital imaging technology has advanced to the point where it offers even the casual user the possibility of turning back the clock on color imaging's technical progress over a century-and-three quarters with a single click!

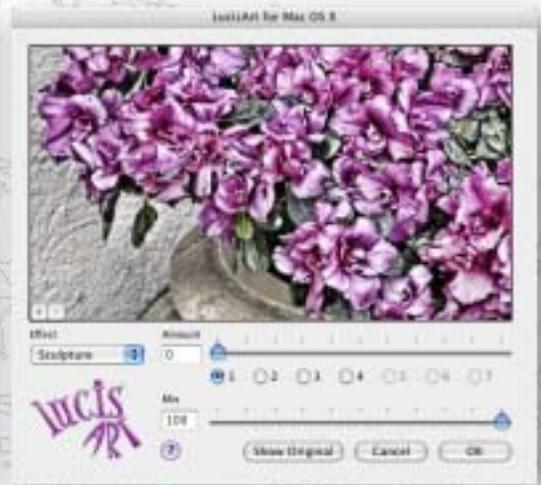
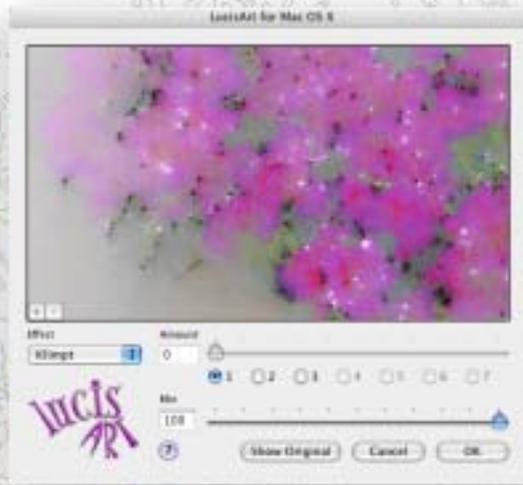


Photo effect by [Auto FX Mystical Tint, Tone & Color](#)
Frame action by John Hartman's [QuickMats 3](#)
Photo by [Mike Bedford/Plugs 'N Pixels](#)

In this issue of Plugs 'N Pixels we offer an overview of several of the various plug-ins and applications that specialize in converting color images into black and white. In most cases, they offer more control and ease-of-use than more "traditional" digital methods of B&W conversion (Channel Mixer, LAB color adjustments and so on).

But first, let's do a couple of tutorials involving single and multiple image B&W conversion using plug-ins and other imaging effects.

tutorial one: color to bw, single image



Here's an interesting procedure for turning a single image into a monochrome work of art.

I began with the photo of the large flower urn (upper left) and duplicated the Background layer. I then treated it with Lucis Art's Klimpt option (above, center). Klimpt creates otherworldly color effects not seen in other products and can stand on its own as a special effect.

Next, I applied Lucis Art's Sculpture setting (upper right) to the top layer. Sculpture smooths and sharpens at the same time, with emphasis on mid-range contrast.

The two layers were blended using the Darken blending mode (shown at left).

Finally, I used Fred Miranda BW Workflow Pro's Smart Mix to achieve the final result (below).



tutorial two: color to bw, two different images



▲ Only two of the cat's nine lives were used in the making of this tutorial!



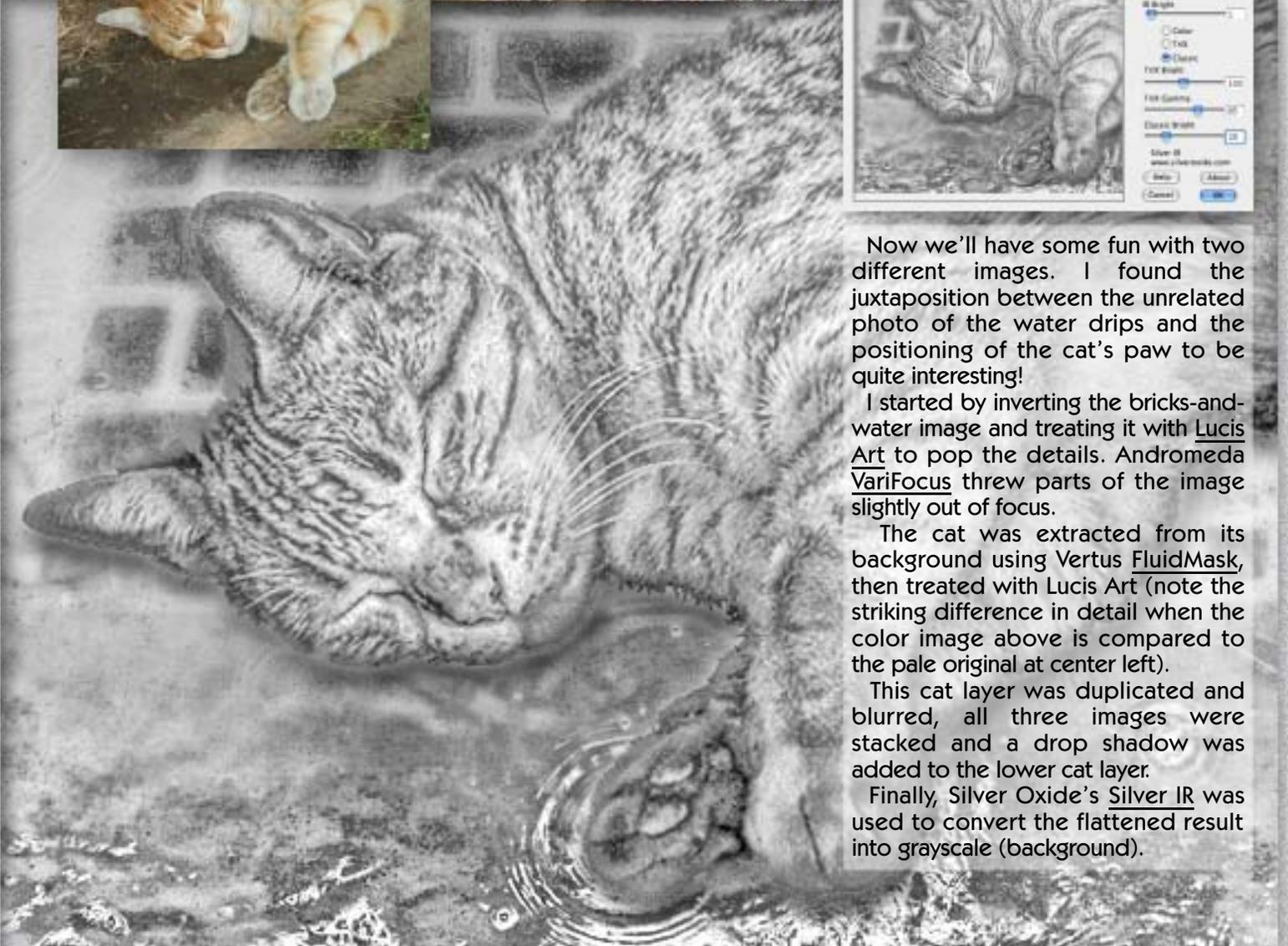
Now we'll have some fun with two different images. I found the juxtaposition between the unrelated photo of the water drips and the positioning of the cat's paw to be quite interesting!

I started by inverting the bricks-and-water image and treating it with Lucis Art to pop the details. Andromeda VariFocus threw parts of the image slightly out of focus.

The cat was extracted from its background using Vertus FluidMask, then treated with Lucis Art (note the striking difference in detail when the color image above is compared to the pale original at center left).

This cat layer was duplicated and blurred, all three images were stacked and a drop shadow was added to the lower cat layer.

Finally, Silver Oxide's Silver IR was used to convert the flattened result into grayscale (background).



auto fx mystical tint tone & color



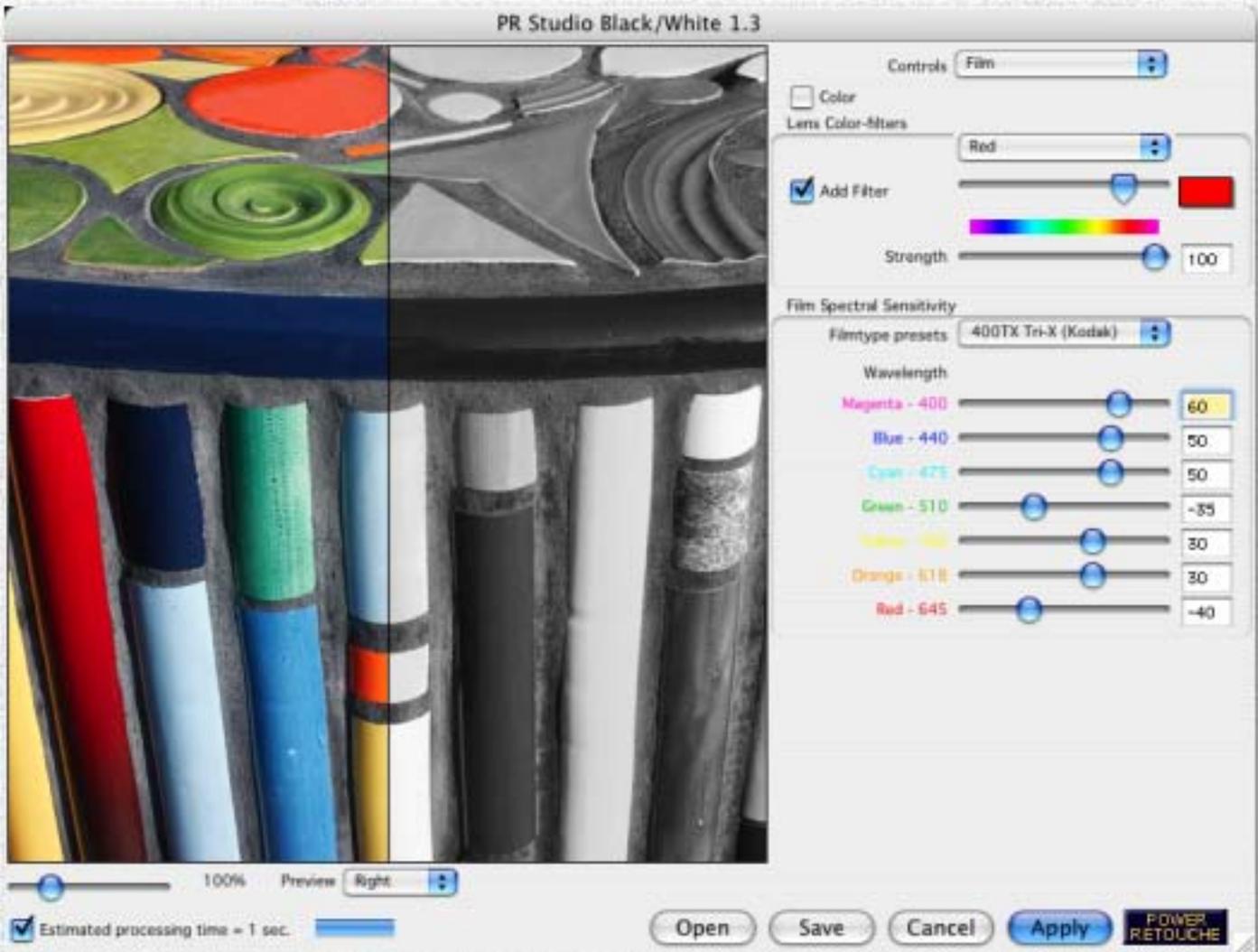
Antique Photo features:

- Works on color or grayscale images
- Complete control over contrast, color, dreaminess, etc.
- Brush on effect locally or apply globally
- Combine with other MTTC effects such as Enriched Black or Tonal Contrast in separate layers
- Other related monochrome effects in the MTTC suite include Black and White



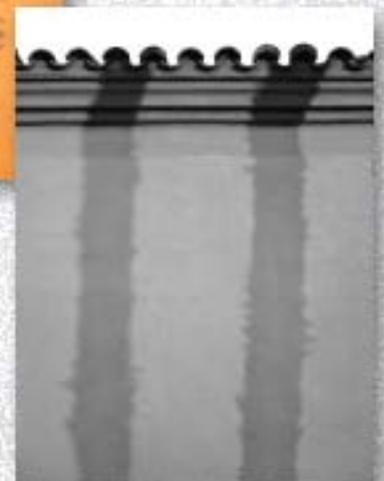
www.plugsandpixels.com/mttc.html

powerretouche studio black/white



Studio Black/White features:

- Replicate the light sensitivity of professional films such as Kodak Tri-X, T-Max, etc.
- Define your own light sensitivity curves
- Use different colored lens filters
- Emulate multigrade printing modes from 00 through 5
- Edit within three adjustable Zones
- Control exposure in f-stop equivalents
- RGB conversion output is cool neutral grey; CYMK conversion output is warm grey



www.plugsandpixels.com/studiobw.html

fred miranda bw workflow pro



BW Workflow Pro features:

- Preset options include 8 color filters, 32 duotones, 18 tritones, 6 quadtones, 3 film grains and 4 dynamic ranges
- Smart Mix mode based on RGB channels
- Manual mode for customized creativity
- Add dynamic range to open shadows and rescue highlights



[www.plugsandpixels.com/
bwworkflow.html](http://www.plugsandpixels.com/bwworkflow.html)

the imaging factory convert to bw pro



Convert to B/W Pro features:

- Scriptable via Photoshop's Actions palette
- User-definable presets for each individual parameter section (Prefilter, Color Response, Contrast, Sepia)
- Optimized engine that favors 16-bit processing (preliminary 32-bit support)
- Resizable preview window offering a live, realtime preview image



www.plugsandpixels.com/converttobw.html

digital film tools 55mm black and white



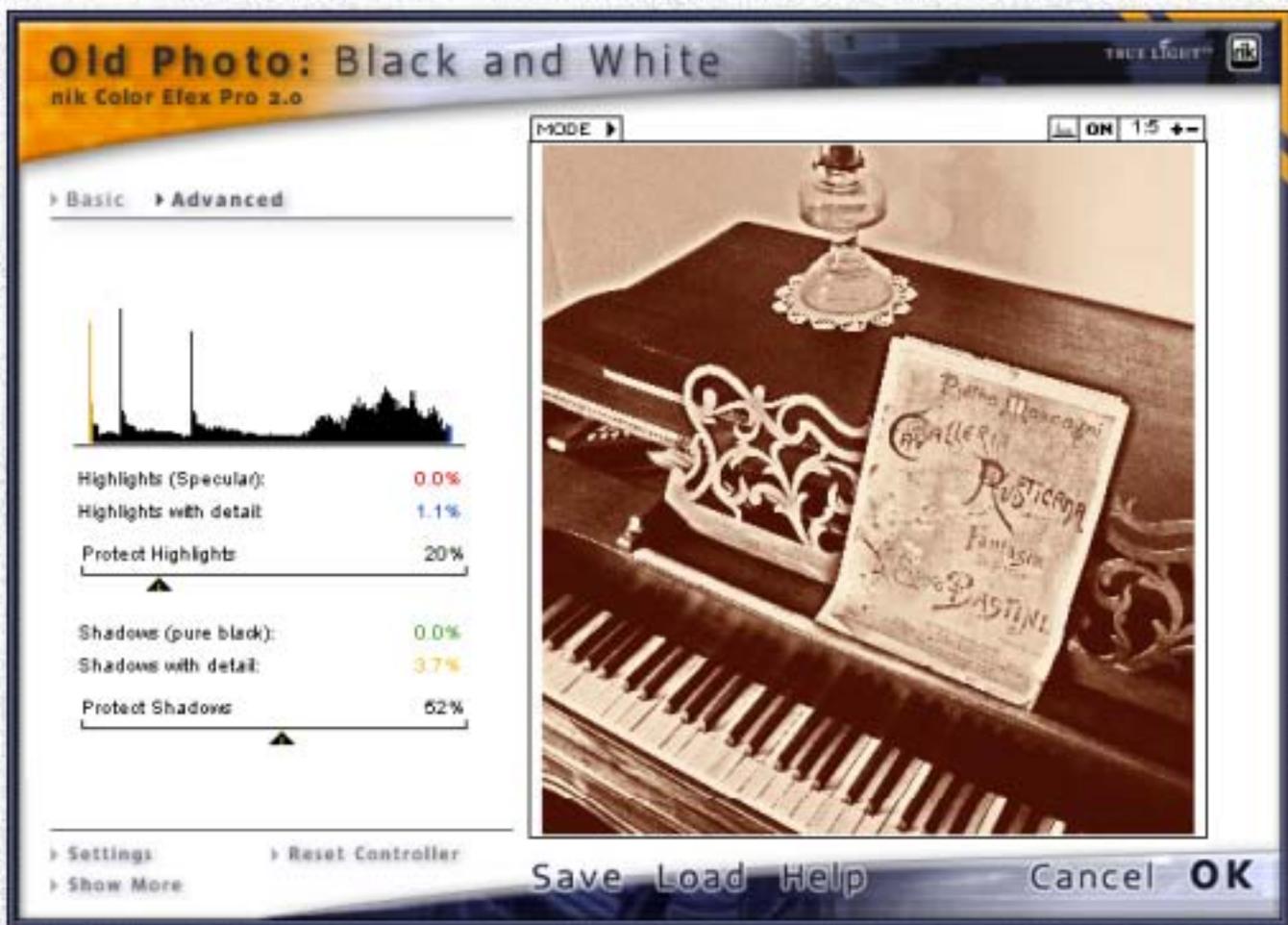
55mm features:

- Suite includes 68 digital optical filters
- Simulation of popular glass camera filters
- Simulation of specialized lenses
- Simulation of optical lab processes
- Simulation of film grain
- Simulation of matte generation
- Simulation of natural light
- Options also include support for color correction and various photographic effects
- 8 and 16-bits per channel processing
- Supports Photoshop Actions



[www.plugsandpixels.com/
55mm.html](http://www.plugsandpixels.com/55mm.html)

nik color efex pro



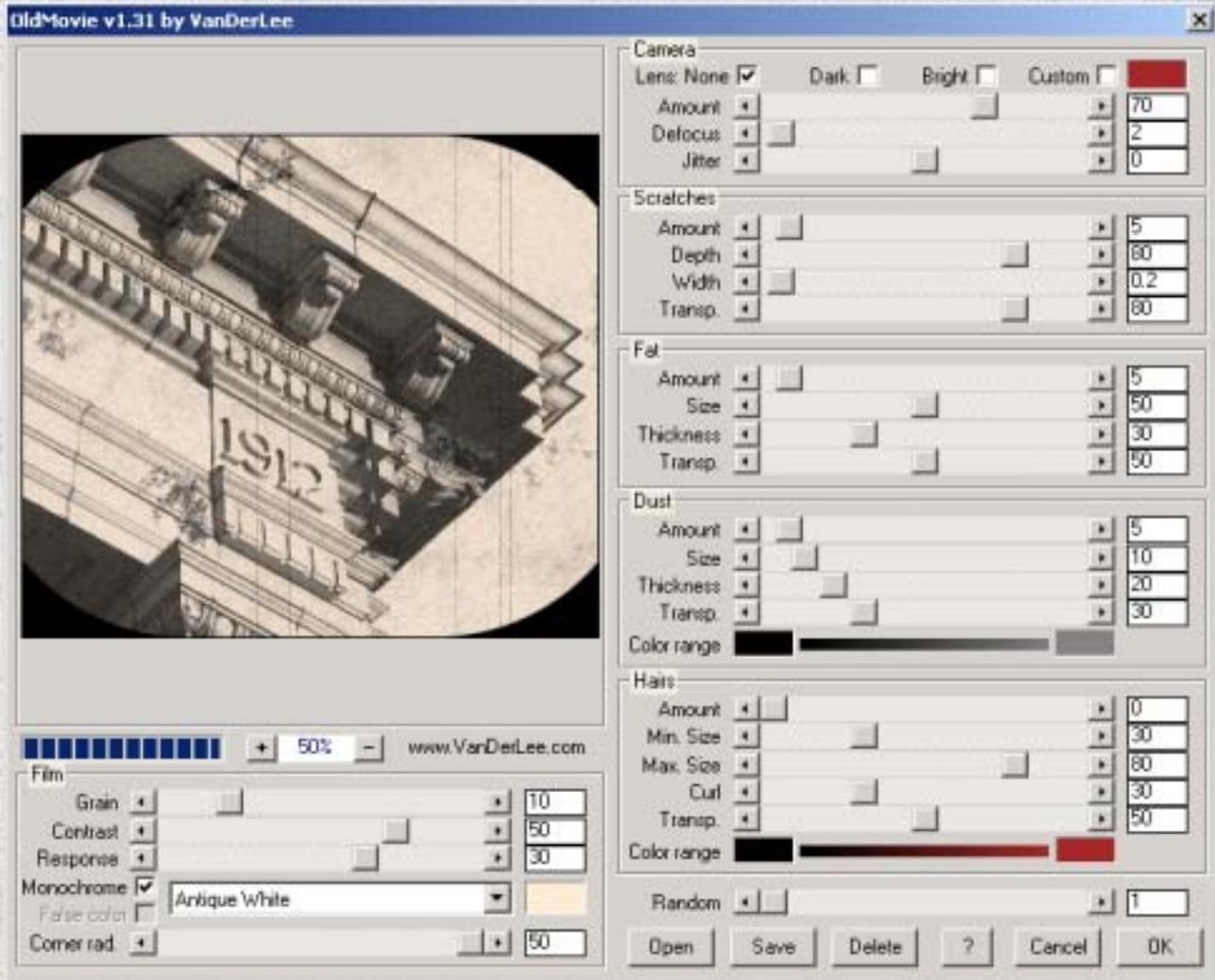
Color Efex Pro features:

- 75 digital photographic filters
- 16-bit functionality
- True Light Color Engine for more natural film-like images
- Advanced panel to customize the effect to match the tonality of the original image
- Selective module to apply the filters to part of the image
- B&W conversion options include Tonal Enhancement, Dynamic Contrast, Old Photo: Black and White and Black and White Infrared



www.plugsandpixels.com/mttc.html

vanderlee oldmovie



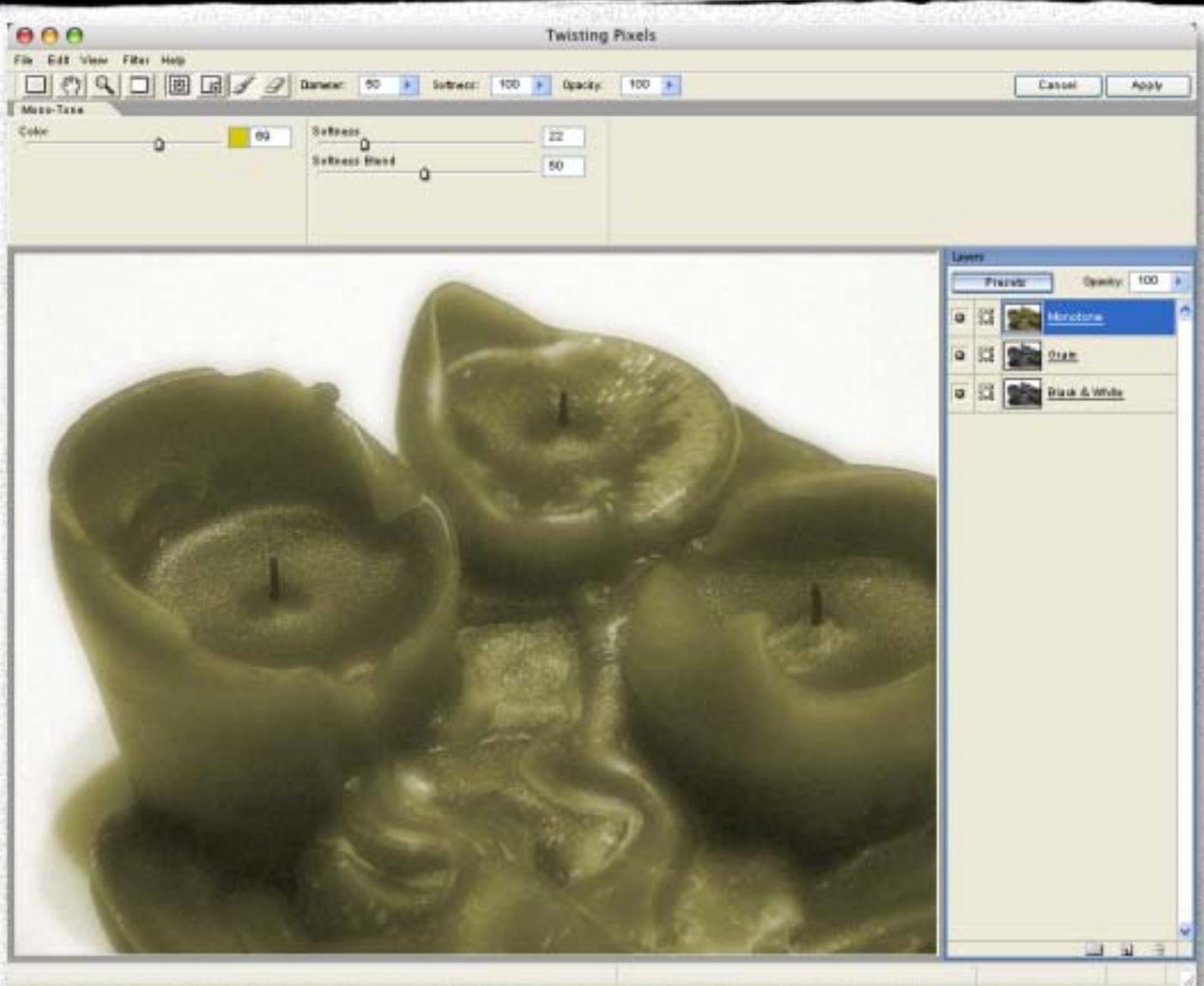
OldMovie features:

- Instantly age photographs with realistic analog-type effects
- Control the quality of the camera itself by defocusing, vignetting, whitewashing or jittering
- Adjust film quality parameters such as grain, scratches, contrast, response, color and format
- Add clumps of dust, hairs and stains from fingerprints



www.plugsandpixels.com/oldmovie.html

twisting pixels pixelcreation



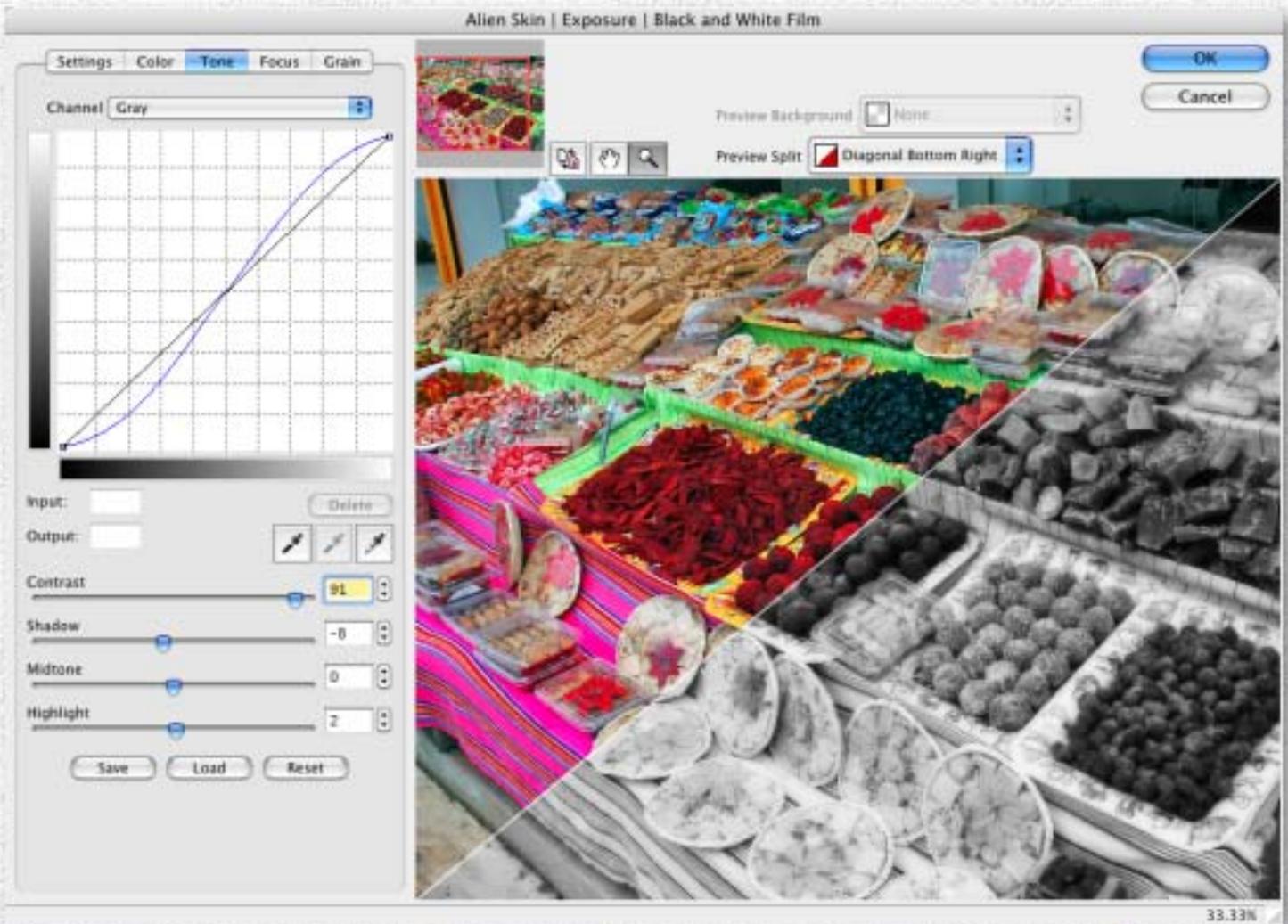
PixelCreation features:

- Use as a standalone app or Photoshop-compatible plug-in
- Create natural elements such as clouds, celestial shapes, Northern Lights, auras, Moon rings and constellations
- Apply effects to images such as colorization, glint, luminescence, tonal blur, intensity, sharpness and vibrancy
- A Black & White option allows grayscale conversion via Brightness and Contrast as well as Channels manipulation



[www.plugsandpixels.com/
pixelcreation.html](http://www.plugsandpixels.com/pixelcreation.html)

alien skin exposure



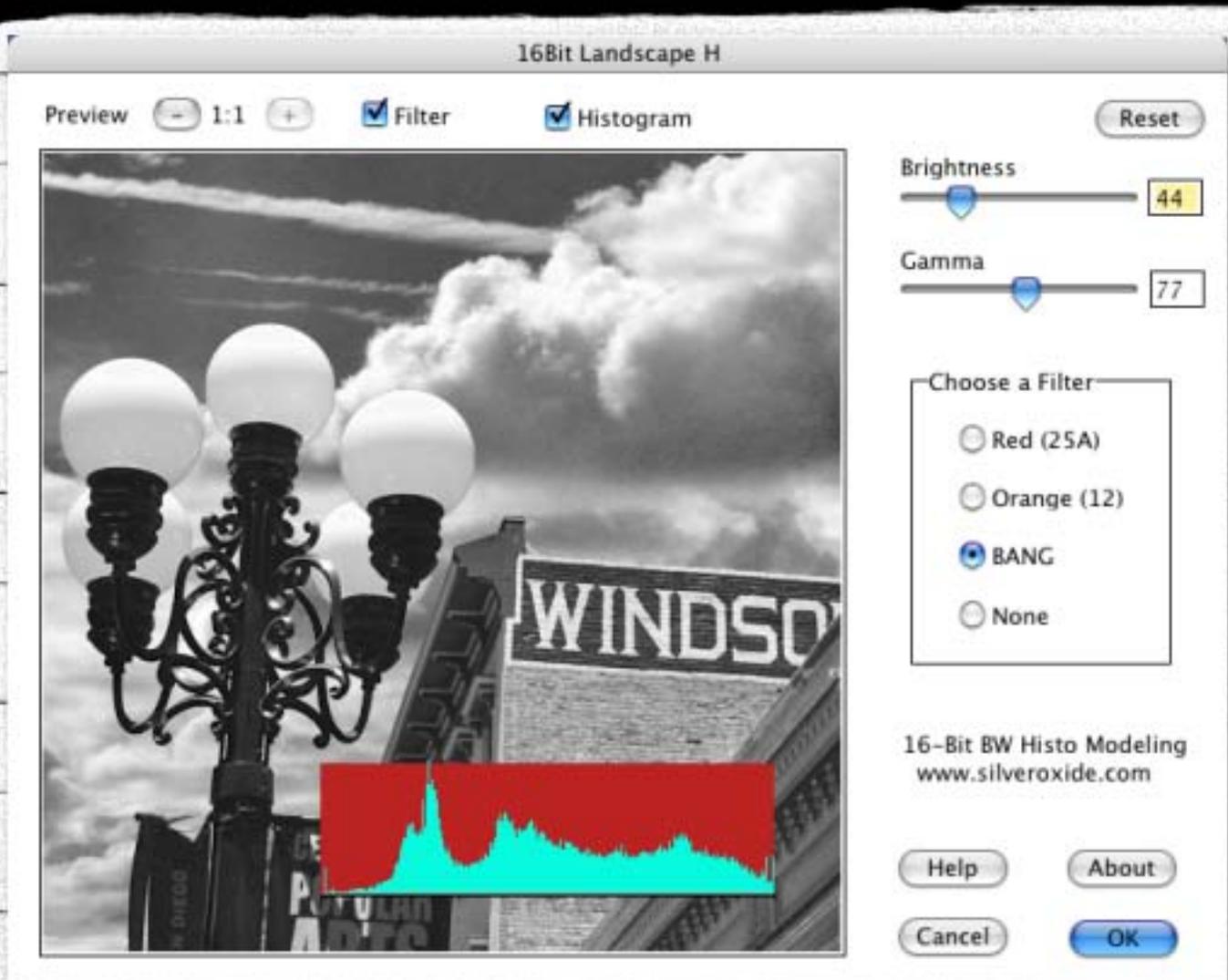
Exposure features:

- Access the unique look of analog film stocks (both discontinued and current) to enliven sterile digital photos
- Operate in the color or black-and-white realm
- Simulate authentic film grain derived from real examples
- Apply color-alteration effects such as color temperature and saturation adjustment, cross-processing, selenium/sepia toning
- Add soft focus for glamour effects
- Apply controlled sharpness



www.plugsandpixels.com/exposure.html

silver oxide 16bit landscape



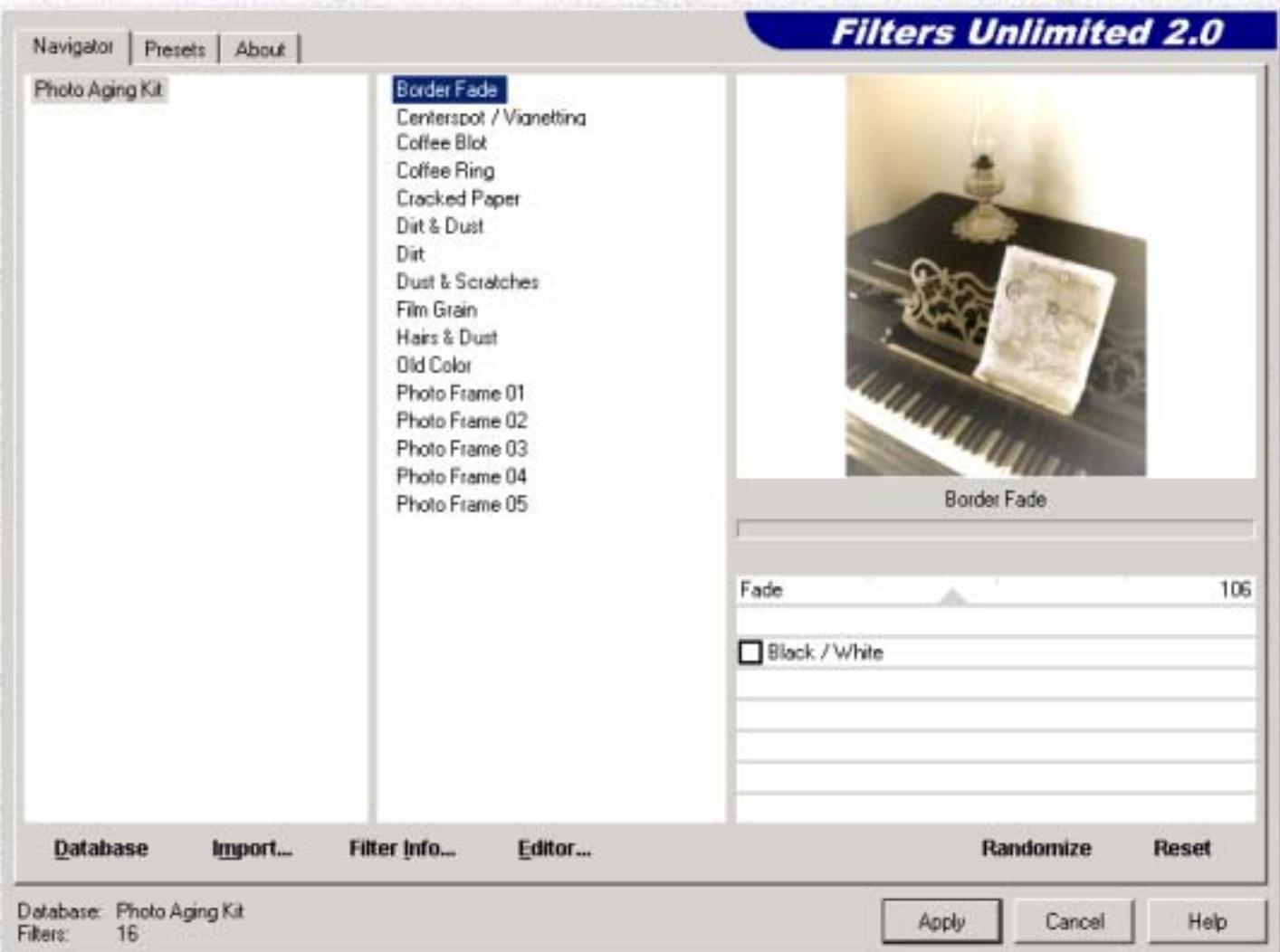
16Bit Landscape H features:

- Support for 8 and 16-bit images
- Brightness and gamma controls
- Red and Orange colored filters for lesser contrast
- BANG filter to specifically affect blue pixels (for deepening sky and water color)
- Histogram visibility to prevent highlight clipping

[www.plugsandpixels.com/
silveroxide.html](http://www.plugsandpixels.com/silveroxide.html)



i.c.net filters unlimited



Filters Unlimited features:

- Preview and apply 350 different filter effects via one plug-in interface
- Add 2000 more filters by accessing online collections
- Build and edit your own filters
- Monochrome conversion and frame edges are accomplished through the free Photo Aging Kit add-on database
- Add dust, dirt, scratches, hairs, film grain and coffee cup rings
- Adjust color, sharpness and saturation



[www.plugsandpixels.com/
filtersunlimited.html](http://www.plugsandpixels.com/filtersunlimited.html)

photo wiz bw styler



B/W Styler features:

- Simulate every aspect of the black-and-white photography process
- Achieve effects not possible with traditional B&W films
- Adjust film type, ISO rating, lens filters, lab development strategy, paper type, color toner, special lab effects and more
- Work with a total of 5 different grayscale conversion techniques
- Control the conversion of the entire color spectrum of the original image
- Mask and apply conversion effects to specific areas of the image



www.plugsandpixels.com/bwstyler.html

kubota artistic tools

| | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| sunlow 2 more | KPD Hollywood Intensity | backlight compensation 1x |
| backlight compensation 2x | **Note re: B&W actions** | "sub-grain" - contrasty |
| "grain" 1 - slight | "grain" 2 - more | "grain" 3 - heavier |
| "grain" 4 - "Z" files | Skin cream 1 | Skin cream II |
| B&W CM warm 1 + snappy | B&W CM warm 2 + snappy | B&W KPZ Grainy film |
| B&W KPZ II CMap grainy fi... | B&W via LAB | B&W via LAB with color |
| B&W punchy+ bump+grai... | B&W Channel Mixer 70/2... | B&W Channel Mixer 45/3... |
| B&W Film/Filter Adjustme... | B&W 100 red | B&W 100 red punchy |
| B&W TastyGlow II | B&W Glow punchy | B&W InfraKev I |
| B&W Edgy | B&W Kevin's secret formula | B&W warming filter |
| B&W Enriching formula | Sepia w/deep black 1 | Sepia w/deep black 2 |
| Sepia w/deep black 3 | Chocolate syrup 1 | Chocolate syrup 2 |
| Eyes & Teeth enhance | Vignette | Vibrant glow |
| x-process I | x-process 2 | KevX-process combo |
| Kubota light GlowSoft | Kubota light GlowSoft vib... | Kubota light GlowSoft hig... |
| Kubota darker GlowSoft | B1K warming | B2K warming |
| Fuji snappy | VPS it | KPD midbright |
| *Note on WB correction a... | too blue - tang -> daylig... | too blue - tang -> daylig... |
| Too warm - daylight -> 1... | Too warm - daylight -> 1... | day to tung filter P5 CS only |
| Helpful information-play ... | 8-16-8 | Daily Multi-Vitamin |
| Digital Fill Flash | Smokeless Burn | Lord of the Rings EVER... |
| Lord of the Rings II | LOTR Return of the ... | LOTR highlight controller |
| Hawaiian Punch 1.1 | Radiant People | Radiance Landscape One ... |
| Radiance Landscape Two ... | Paint it variation 1 v 1.1 | Add canvas texture to pai... |
| Modern Antique 1 | Modern Antique 1 with gl... | midbright |
| Amazing detail finder (CS2) | Amazing detail finder 2 L... | Smarter Sharp with ed... |
| Smoother (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 | ToneTime - Green 2 | Split Tone Warm & Blue |
| Split Tone Blue & warm | Sing the Blues | Deep Red |
| Deep Green | Deep Purple | Select-A-Toner |
| Shadow Select-A-Tone su... | Shadow Select-A-Tone he... | Hot Fudge 1 |
| Hot Fudgier | Hot Fudge with a Cherry ... | Mocha B&W |
| the NEW B&W | the NEW B&W midbright | 4x6 with white borders |
| 4x6 with black borders | 4x6 with white borders & ... | 4x6 with black borders & ... |
| 4x6 with EVEN white bord... | 4x6 with EVEN black bord... | 4x6 with EVEN white bord... |
| 4x6 with EVEN black bord... | make a flattened copy layer | Sloppy border proofs inst... |
| *Rotation Script setup loc... | 1-Open 4x6 sloppy tempL... | 2-Batch Sloppy 4x6 proofs |



Artistic Tools features:

- A collection of over 50 actions prepared especially for professional portrait and wedding photographers
- Add frames and edges
- Create color effects via cross-processing and filtration
- Perform color correction and conversion
- Enhance skin, eyes and teeth
- Adjust lighting
- Black-and-white conversion effects include tonal punch, glows, channel mixing, grain, sepia and infrared

www.plugsandpixels.com/kubotaartistic.html



1-click actions

| | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Darkroom Diffuser | CameraDiffuser | DreamDiffuser |
| DramaDiffuser | EveningWarm | FujiSlide |
| ColorCastRemoval | BWConversion#1 | BWConversion#2 |
| BWConversion#30R... | BW_RedFilter | BW_OrangeFilter |
| BW_GreenFilter | BW_YellowFilter | BWConversion#4HC |
| DigiFill | KiIFlash | IncreaseExposure |
| DecreaseExposure | 1/3NDGrad | 1/2NDGrad |
| 1/2HardGrad | 1/3HardGrad | BWInfrared |
| BWR#1 | BWR#2 | C41asE6 |
| 3pixelblackborder | 6pixelblackborder | 15pixelblackborder |
| 3pixelwhiteborder | 6pixelwhiteborder | 15pixelwhiteborder |
| CrossProcE6-C41 | BW_FujiAcros100 | BW_TriX |
| BW_Tmax100 | BWTMax400 | BW_Delta100 |
| BW_Delta400 | BW_FP4 | BW_HP5 |
| BW_XP2 | BW_SFX200 | BW_HighContrast |
| BWAgfaPan25 | BW_AgfaPan100 | BWAgfa400 |
| SoftGlowLight | SoftGlowDark | 3DGlow |
| PopGlow | Sky_Polar | SepiaLight |
| SepiaMedium | SepiaStrong | Sepia_Step |
| Platinum | Palladium | Cyanotype |
| LithEffect | Selenium | VanDyck |
| Kallitype | Copper | GoldTone |
| Victorian | Blue/Sepia | Blue/Cyan |
| Cyan/Green | Red/Green | Red/Sepia |
| Green/Magenta | Green/Yellow | Cyan/Sepia |
| Yellow/Blue | Yellow/Red | Magenta/Yellow |



1-Click Actions features:

- Choose from 5 volumes of actions
- Apply diffusion effects (Darkroom, Camera, Dream and Drama)
- Add color effects to your images (cross-processing, gradients and split-tones)
- Create various width borders
- Add flash overexposure and glow
- Tone your images with traditional tints such as Platinum, Palladium, Cyanotype, VanDyck, Selenium, Kallitype, Copper and GoldTone
- B&W options include film emulation and color filters (plus infrared and Victorian)

www.plugsandpixels.com/1clickactions.html



closing artwork

Created with:
VanDerLee OldMovie
onOne PhotoFrame

Photo/artwork by:
Mike Bedford



Original