



plugs·n·pixels

IMAGE CREATION, MANIPULATION & EDUCATION

Topaz Labs Adjust, Vivacity & Simplify

Kubota Action Dashboard

onOne PhotoFrame 4

Genetica 3 & Vue 7

Alien Skin Bokeh

and more!

HOT PLUG·INS!
AND COOL ACTIONS!

THE LATEST PRODUCTS FROM OUR FAVORITE DEVELOPERS

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In this tight, competitive market,
differentiate your work with these

Hot Plug-ins & Cool Actions

ISSUE #13

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(except as noted)

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Original



topaz adjust, vivacity & simplify

Users worldwide have been discovering these inexpensive but very hot plug-ins

BOX OFFICE

Perhaps the hottest plug-in at the moment is Adjust from Topaz Labs. Adjust creates effects reminiscent of much more expensive plug-ins but at a fraction of the cost.

Adjust offers the user several totally different presets, the results of which can be completely altered using customizable settings under the Exposure, Details, Color and Noise tabs.



Next is Topaz Labs Vivacity, which performs multiple corrective tasks such as noise removal, image enlargement, JPEG artifact repair and sharpening.

But perhaps the most exciting thing about Vivacity is the results you get when you push the Cleaning and Sharpening tools to the extreme!

The examples shown here demonstrate the unique artistic effects that occur when Cleaning and/or Sharpening is overdone. For instance, experiment with increasing the value of each of the setting options under the Main and Advanced tabs.

I especially like the way this effect looks when used on foliage. Another a trick to keep in mind is to first run Adjust to “pop” your image, followed by Vivacity (as shown in the Los Angeles scenic below).

As if these weren’t enough creative options to keep you busy for awhile, Topaz Labs has revived the discontinued buZZ simplification effect with its new Simplify plug-in.



Original



Original



Vignette added in ACD Canvas X

AT RIGHT is an example of using both Topaz Adjust and Vivacity to really “pop” a slightly soft image. First, Adjust was used to increase contrast and details, then Vivacity’s Sharpen option was used at a moderately extreme setting to both sharpen details and add artistic qualities.

BELOW: Topaz Lab’s newest product, Simplify, was recently released. It creates gorgeous detail reduction effects.



Original



Photographed at the street fair booth of www.wildwings.org

Adjust + Vivacity



www.plugsandpixels.com/adjust.html
www.plugsandpixels.com/vivacity.html
www.plugsandpixels.com/simplify.html

M *i* *s* *t* *e* *r* **R E T R O**

PERMANENT PRESS

Turn Photoshop into a printing press – a sloppy, misaligned, vintage offset press at that – using Mr. Retro's Permanent Press plug-in.

Mr. Retro is also known for its line of Machine Wash plug-ins which add serious grunge to images. Likewise, with Permanent Press, contemporary designers can turn back the clock and put the soul back into printed pieces (which have turned sterile with advances in printing technologies).

Permanent Press breathes old life into your new images!



- Palette & CMYK Ink Color Modes
- Ink viscosity & texture effects
- Plate offset, rotation, and trapping effects
- Halftone scale & dot shape effects
- Press edge & pressure effects



NEW

on

PhotoFrame 4

PROFESSIONAL
EDITION



Part of the onOne Plug-In Suite

Optimized Content • Improved Presets • Resizable Image Layer
New Rulers and Guides • Improved Color Picker • New Batch Processing
Improved Random Frames • New Output Options • Updated Look & Feel
Searchable HTML Help • New Video Tutorials • Lightroom & Aperture Integration



Image effect:
Topaz Labs Simplify

onOne PhotoFrame 4, available individually or as part of the onOne Plug-in Suite 4, is a serious retooling of the previous versions of PhotoFrame.

Attention has been given to everything from the overall look and feel, selection of frames and presets (only the best and most useful designs are included) to a light-table inspired Library for viewing, selecting and applying the frames.

You can now resize and reposition the image layer as desired, enabling you to perfectly arrange all of the elements of your composition.

The new Batch Processing option can apply your choice of frames to an entire folder, outputting the results for both print and web, complete with watermark.

To ensure complete flexibility and allow for further editing afterward, there are four options for applying your frame choice to the original image: Apply to New Layer, Apply Each Frame to New Layer, Apply to Current Layer and Apply as Layer Mask.

As with the other offerings from onOne, your creativity is immediately boosted right out of the box, unlike other plug-ins where you must work hard at tweaking settings before getting good results.

PhotoFrame 4 is compatible with the latest Adobe and Apple imaging applications.



www.plugsandpixels.com/photoframe.html



New Platinum Edition 7.0

32 new effects:

Darkroom Edges • Grunge Edges
Painted Edges • Montage Edges
Geometric Edges • Digital Edges
Abstract Edges • Vignette Edges
Edge Brush • Burned Edges
Photo Border • Photo Tabs
Acid Etching • Ambient Brush
Distort Edges • Putty Edges
Smudged Edges • Film Frames
Grunge Frames • Natural Media
Storyboards • Thin Borders
Artistic Frames • Classic Frames
Dual Frames • Quad Frames
Scrapbook Fun • Traditional Frames
Watercolor Frames • Adornments
Transfer • Overlays

Auto FX Software
VISUAL IMAGING SOLUTIONS





Auto FX Software

Auto FX is one of the oldest names in the plug-in business, and with Photo/Graphic Edges 7, they have provided a major update to their original product, first released in 1994.

Photo/Graphic Edges 7, Platinum Edition includes 32 edge, border and frame effects along with an updated interface, rendering engine, content management and previewing system.

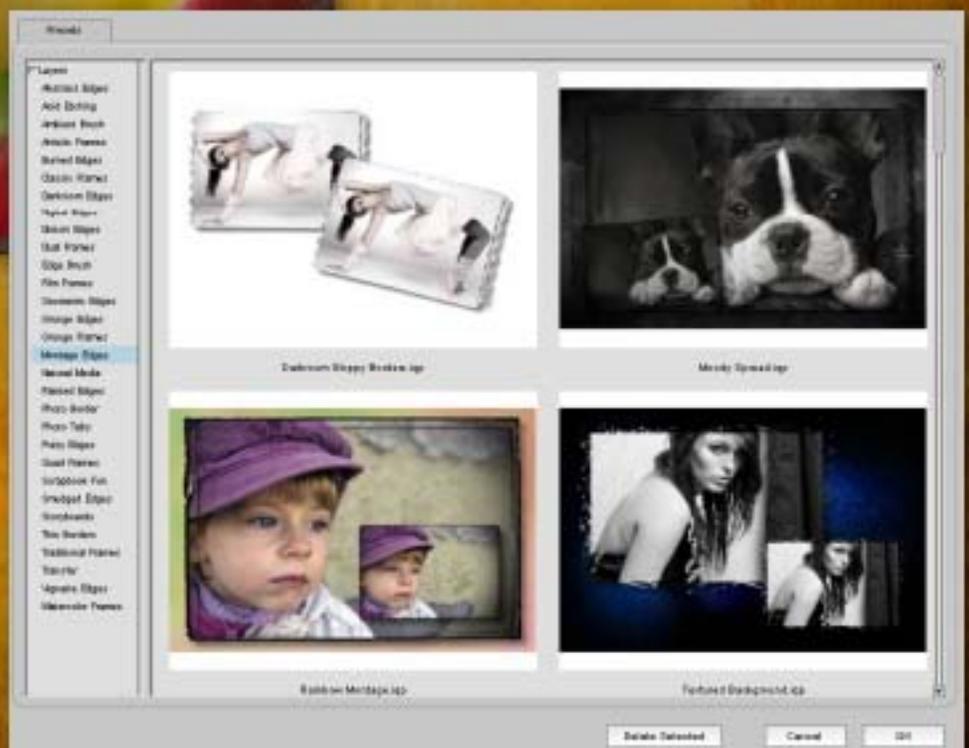
Experimenting with these resolution-independent designs is easy. You can combine different effects together using Effect Layers. Dynamic Transformation Rendering maintains effect quality even after manipulation.



www.plugsandpixels.com/pge.html



Choose from one of the many presets, then edit the frame, frame position, background image and other settings to suit. Layer several effects as desired for endless creative options.





Bokeh

Can't afford a new Canon EF 85mm f/1.2L II? With Bokeh, you don't need one!

Apply custom aperture shapes such as hearts, stars and doughnuts to highlights

With Alien Skin's Bokeh plug-in, you are not limited to conventional blurring effects, because unlike glass lenses, Bokeh allows you to choose exactly where the effect begins and ends, at what angle as well as how much is applied.

In my example of the garden statue, the original image suffered from a busy background which I couldn't control with the camera I was using. But after applying Bokeh twice, I both eliminated the background and added dramatic tilt/shift effects reminiscent of large-format photography.

www.plugsandpixels.com/bokeh.html

Original



Original

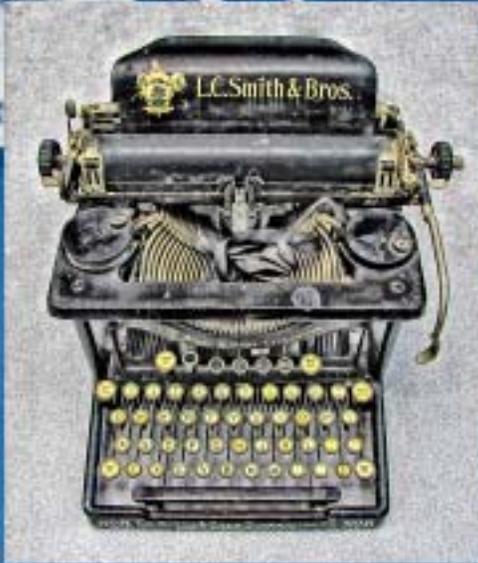


PHOTO CONTRAST MASTER

The popularity of the HDR look has inspired a number of tools with which to create it. PhotoWiz' ContrastMaster is one such plug-in, offering dramatic contrast enhancement, photorealistic painting and HDR-like effects. It is used for both low-contrast image repair and the creative enhancement of properly exposed images.

Using three local and four global contrast adjustment methods, ContrastMaster gives the user a wide range of control over the results. The local adjustments (used separately or together) improve contrast without blowing out highlights. The four global methods (S/H-Contrast, Stretch, Equalize and Polarize) work on the tonal range of the image and help to improve the result even further.

While this sounds somewhat advanced, ContrastMaster offers six modes from the simple Novice mode to the sophisticated Expert Mode, as well as quick presets from a pulldown menu for immediate results. Once you are more familiar with the power behind the settings, you can fine-tune and massage image contrast in ways other software simply can't.



Create both color and grayscale effects with ContrastMaster



IMAGE ENHANCING TOOLS FOR PHOTOSHOP®

CREATIVE WORKSHOPS LIGHTSPEED WORKFLOW

DASHBOARD YOUR PHOTOSHOP®

The action sets from Kubota Image Tools have been very popular with working professionals in the wedding and portrait industries. They offer a wide variety of image enhancement and creative effects such as film stock emulation, glamour glows, darkroom edges, color alteration, traditional keylines and much more.

Kubota has made it very easy to quickly search for any action by genre and apply them to your images via version 2 of their brilliant DASHBOARD. Their goal is to make you “intelligently lazy.” In other words, immediately productive!



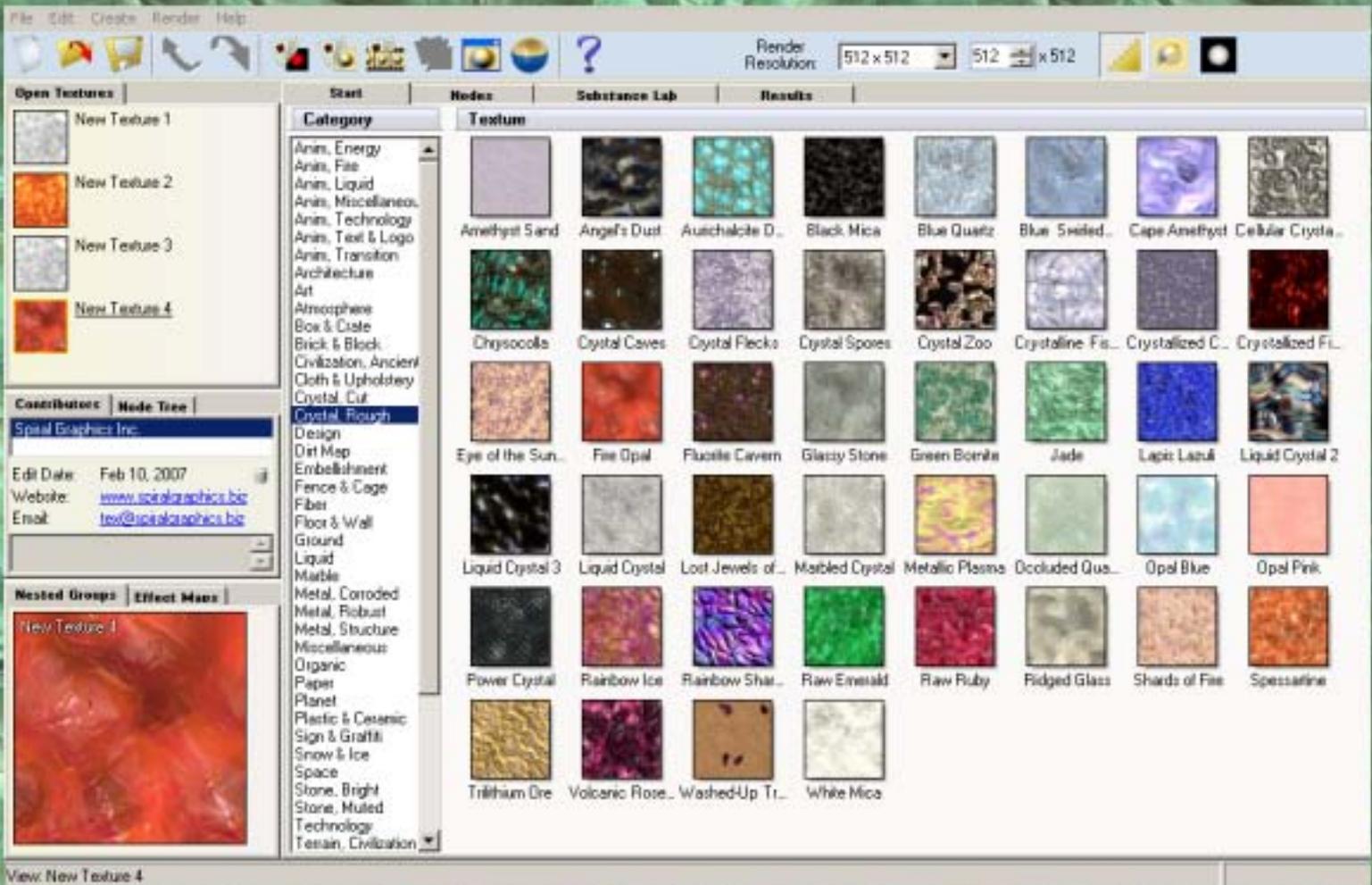
www.plugsandpixels.com/kubotaactions.html

Spiral
Graphics

Genetica™

Are you an illustrator or 3D artist in need of textures for your projects? Genetica 3 is the answer. Using a node-based method of texture construction, Genetica enables artists to build up and customize the elements that go into building a complex texture, then render and export the results at any resolution.

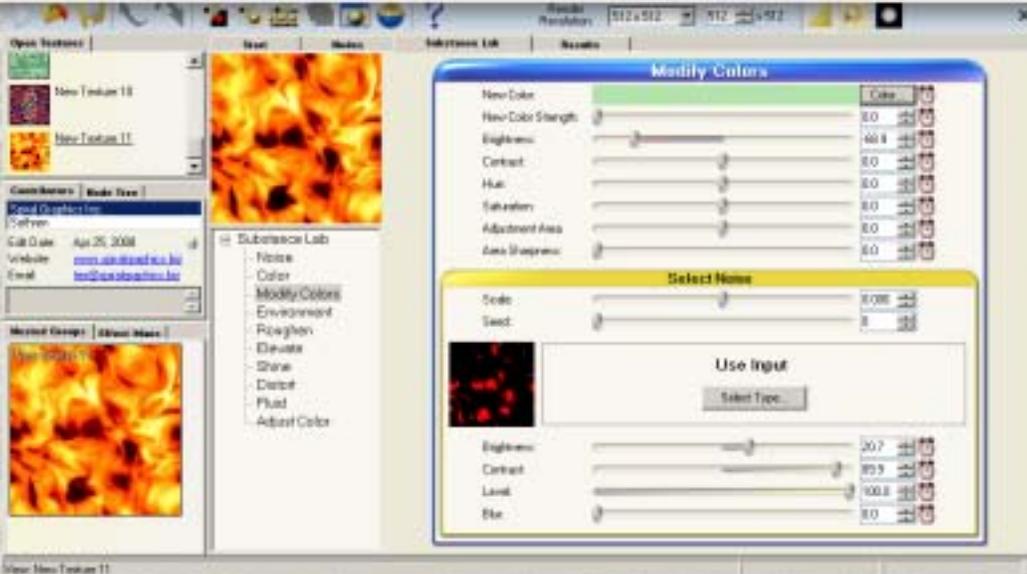
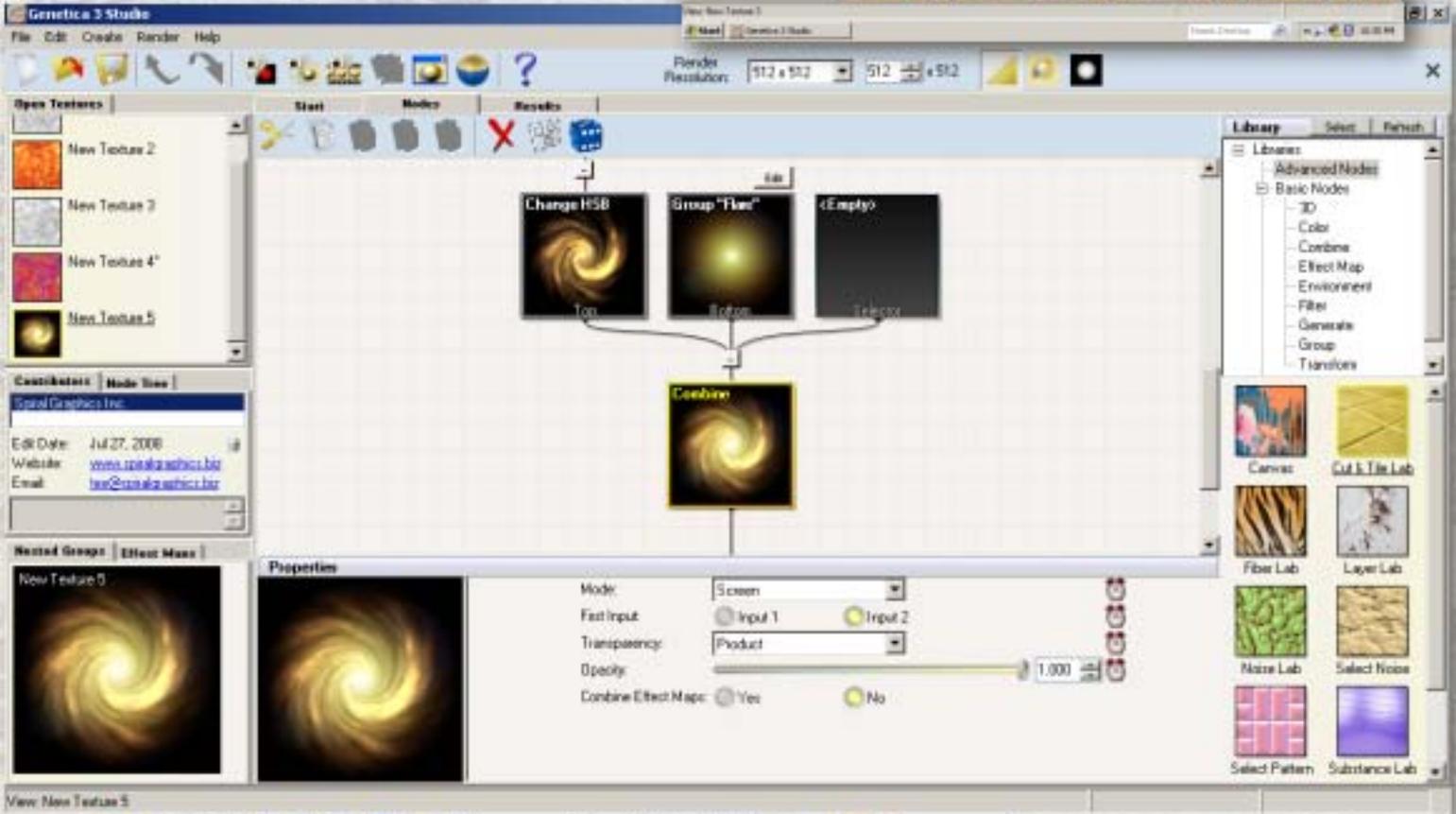
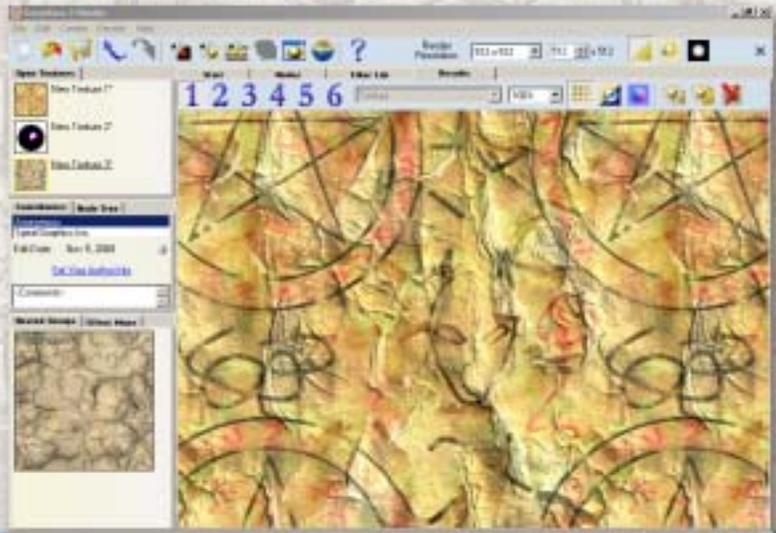
You can begin the process by using one of the over 1000 animation or static presets (arranged in categories such as Atmosphere, Cloth & Upholstery, Embellishment, Fiber, Liquid, Metal, Paper, Space, Stone, Technology and many more). The screenshot below shows examples from the Crystal, Rough collection (Fire Opal selected).



The screenshot at right shows a preset texture after it has been rendered to the default specifications. After rendering, you export your texture for external use for 2D or 3D work.

Below is the Genetica Nodes area, where you can explore and fully edit the separate elements that comprise each texture. Select a node and adjust its parameters as desired by tweaking the settings or dragging in additional preset textures. If you're adventurous you can roll the dice and see what random chance does for your texture or any part thereof.

Save any results you like as presets to be accessed via the Library and applied to new work.



The screenshot at left shows another example of the level of customization of textures possible with Genetica, in this case modifying color attributes in the Substance Lab.

Genetica also provides HDRI environment editing (including 32-bit output), professional drawing tools, hair and fiber labs, a batch processor, etc. The Studio version supports animated textures and effects, with presets.

FILTER FORGE



One application. Over five thousand effects!



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

Original



With its node-based system of filter editing, Filter Forge enables you to edit every aspect of the existing presets or to create your own.

While Filter Forge is perfectly capable of generating seamless procedural textures on its own, I prefer to use it as a monster image effects application for my own images. It's like having an endless supply of plug-ins, each with radically different results!

Drawing from the several thousand user-created presets available for download, I took this simple photo of a cat and applied the effects as seen at top and at right. As you can see, Filter Forge should be near the top of your post-processing toolset. Nothing else comes close.



Vue 7

Digital Nature

The alien craft has laid down a chemtrail grid in preparation for their exploration of planet Earth. Their glaring spotlight searches for objects of interest in the seaside landing zone...



With the new Vue 7 Infinite from e-on software, you can engage your artistic imagination by creating lifelike scenes that illustrate what your mind's eye envisions.

Natural environments, exactly as you want them.

Terrain

Position

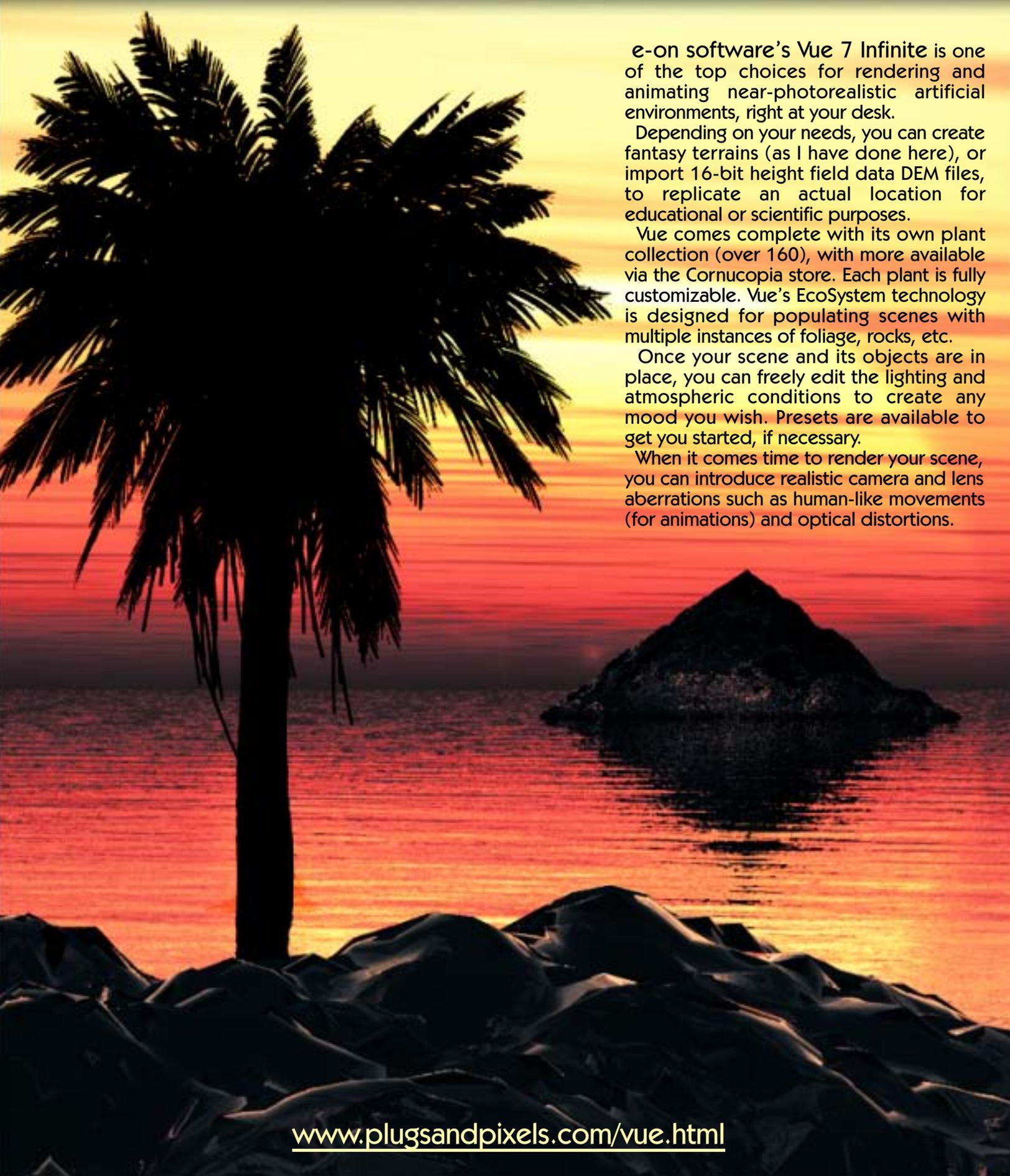
X: -12.59m

Y: -147.4m

Z: 74.992m

Main camera





e-on software's Vue 7 Infinite is one of the top choices for rendering and animating near-photorealistic artificial environments, right at your desk.

Depending on your needs, you can create fantasy terrains (as I have done here), or import 16-bit height field data DEM files, to replicate an actual location for educational or scientific purposes.

Vue comes complete with its own plant collection (over 160), with more available via the Cornucopia store. Each plant is fully customizable. Vue's EcoSystem technology is designed for populating scenes with multiple instances of foliage, rocks, etc.

Once your scene and its objects are in place, you can freely edit the lighting and atmospheric conditions to create any mood you wish. Presets are available to get you started, if necessary.

When it comes time to render your scene, you can introduce realistic camera and lens aberrations such as human-like movements (for animations) and optical distortions.

featured artists



<http://robertphoto.wordpress.com>



Topaz Labs Adjust has been a hot topic on various photo forums, with members discovering the inexpensive software and sharing the results with others.

Here are some examples from this issue's Featured Artists, Robert Photo (Northern VA, top) and Alex Feldstein (below), both members of the Nikon Cafe forum.



Background: onOne PhotoFrame



www.nikon.cafe.com

The Nikon Cafe forum contains discussions about most every aspect of photography, including general camera gear, printers, color management, retouching software, lenses and business (ie, making money).

There are also challenges and contests, as well as galleries for every type of photography.

Drop by and become part of the discussion.



<http://alex.f.smugmug.com>

© 2008 Alex Feldstein



closing artwork

Photo and artwork by:
Mike Bedford

Created with: Topaz Labs Adjust and
Vivacity; onOne PhotoFrame