



FotoSketcher Studio

Turn Your Photos into Art
Complete User Guide

Version 4.50
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1. Introduction

FotoSketcher Studio is a free application that transforms your digital photographs into works of art. It offers a wide range of artistic effects - from delicate pencil sketches to vibrant oil paintings, stippled ink drawings to dreamy photo enhancements - all controlled through intuitive sliders that let you fine-tune the result to your liking.

FotoSketcher Studio is available for Windows (64-bit) and macOS (both Apple Silicon and Intel Macs as a universal binary).

1.1 Supported Image Formats

FotoSketcher Studio can open JPEG (.jpg, .jpeg), PNG (.png), WebP (.webp) and BMP (.bmp) images, including PNG files with an alpha channel (transparency). When saving your work, you can export to JPEG, PNG, or WebP format.

1.2 How FotoSketcher Studio Works

The general workflow is straightforward:

1. **Open a photograph** - this becomes your **Source** image, the original that is always preserved.
2. **Choose an artistic effect** from the Artistic Filters section on the left panel.
3. **Adjust the parameters** using the sliders on the right panel. The Preview thumbnail updates automatically so you can see the effect before applying it.
4. **Click Apply effect** to process the full-resolution image. The result becomes your **Result** (also called Destination) image, displayed on the canvas.
5. **Save your work** with Ctrl+S. You can export as JPEG, PNG, or WebP.

You can repeat steps 2-4 to layer additional effects on top of the result, undo any step with Ctrl+Z, and compare the result against the source at any time using the split view (press S) or by holding down the right mouse button.

What's New in Version 4.50

This release adds a new painting effect, a watermark and logo tool, keyboard navigation throughout the interface, and a long list of improvements and fixes across both Windows and macOS. Here are the highlights.

New Gouache Painting effect: A new Gouache Painting effect joins the Painting category, with the thick, opaque colour and matte finish of real gouache.

Watermark and logo tool: The Add text window becomes Add text/watermark. You can now load any image file and place it over your picture, dragging to move, dragging a corner to resize, and fading it with a floating opacity slider.

Watermarks in scripts: A new WATERMARK command lets scripts stamp a logo or watermark onto the image, using the same placement rules as the TEXT command.

Two new example scripts: Two further ready-made scripts are included in the application, both built around the new Gouache Painting effect.

Crosshatch over existing artwork: The Crosshatch effect now honours the Erase background toggle, so you can draw crosshatch lines straight over a painting or drawing you have already made.

Keyboard navigation: Tab and Shift+Tab now move through the controls of whichever window or panel is open, following normal reading order. Enter activates the selected control, and inside an effect category the arrow keys move through the effects.

Faster Watercolour: The Watercolour effect has received a significant speed improvement, along with a fix for a problem that affected certain processors.

Improved before/after divider: The split view divider no longer drifts off the image, stays on the same spot when you zoom, and is correctly limited to the visible part of the picture when scrolled.

Refined light theme: The light theme has been darkened slightly for better contrast and legibility, and the remaining differences between the light and dark themes have been tidied up.

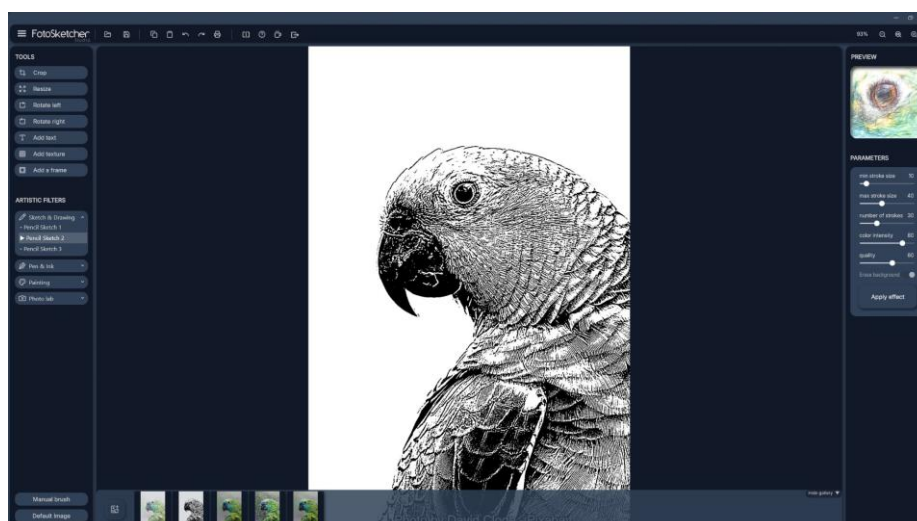
Portable version for Windows: A portable version of FotoSketcher Studio is now available for Windows as a .zip archive, so you can run it without installing anything.

Bug fixes: This release fixes a crash in the Script Editor at interface zoom levels below 100%, the history gallery right-click menu appearing in the wrong place at non-default zoom levels, taskbar flickering with an auto-hidden taskbar at fractional zoom, and Escape and Enter not working correctly in some windows, along with other corrections.

2. Getting Started

2.1 The Main Interface

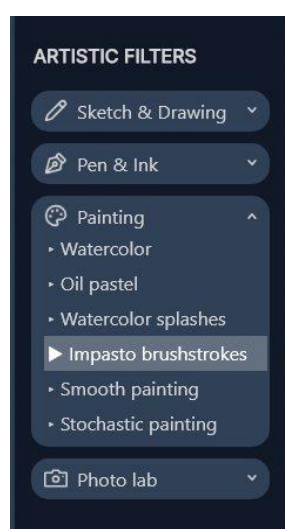
FotoSketcher Studio's interface is organised around a central canvas where your image is displayed, with panels on the left and right providing tools and effect controls. At the top sits a toolbar with icons for common actions. Along the bottom, a collapsible history gallery shows thumbnail previews of your editing steps.



The main interface, showing a Pen & Ink effect applied.

The **left panel** is divided into two sections. The **Tools** section provides buttons for Crop, Resize, Rotate, Add text, Add texture, and Add a frame. Below it, the **Artistic Filters** section contains four expandable categories - Sketch & Drawing, Pen & Ink, Painting, and Photo Lab - each of which can be expanded to reveal the individual effects. At the bottom of the left panel, the **Manual Brush** and **Default Image** buttons provide quick access to these features.

The **right panel** shows a live **Preview** thumbnail at the top. You can click on the preview to enlarge it with a magnifying glass for a closer look at the effect before applying it. Below the preview, the **Parameters** section displays five sliders whose labels and ranges change depending on the selected effect. The **Erase background** toggle and **Apply effect** button sit beneath the sliders. For painting effects, **Load custom brushes** and **Reset brushes** buttons also appear.



The Artistic Filters categories with the Painting section expanded.

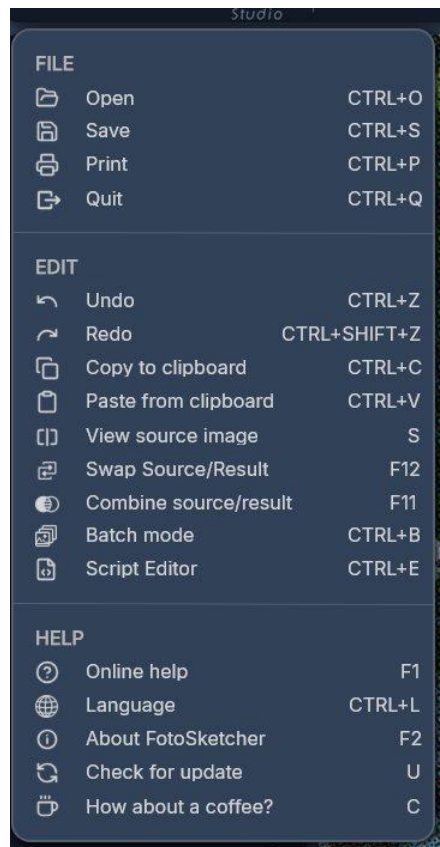


The Parameters panel showing sliders, preview, and the Apply effect button.

2.2 The Menu

Press **F10** or click the hamburger icon at the top left to open the application menu. The menu provides access to all commands organised into three groups: File, Edit, and Help.

You can now work through the menu entirely from the keyboard. Press F10 to open it, use the arrow keys to move between items, Enter to choose, and Escape to close.



The application menu with File, Edit, and Help sections.

2.3 Loading an Image

There are several ways to open an image in FotoSketcher Studio:

Open (Ctrl+O): Click the Open icon in the toolbar or use the menu to bring up a file browser. Navigate to your image and select it.

Drag and drop: Simply drag an image file from your file manager and drop it onto the FotoSketcher Studio canvas.

Paste from clipboard (Ctrl+V): If you have copied an image to the clipboard (for instance, a screenshot), FotoSketcher Studio can paste it directly as a new image.

Tip: When you load an image, FotoSketcher Studio centres it on the canvas and adjusts the zoom level so the entire image is visible.

2.4 Saving Your Work

To save the current image, use **Ctrl+S** or click the Save icon in the toolbar. You can export as JPEG, PNG, or WebP. You can also copy the current image to the clipboard with **Ctrl+C**.

FotoSketcher Studio now helps you avoid losing work. If you try to close the application while you have unsaved changes, it asks you to confirm first. And if you save to a file that already exists, it warns you before overwriting it, so you never replace a file by accident.

Tip: If you plan to apply further effects later, consider saving as PNG to avoid quality loss from repeated JPEG compression.

2.5 Saving and Loading Effect Parameters

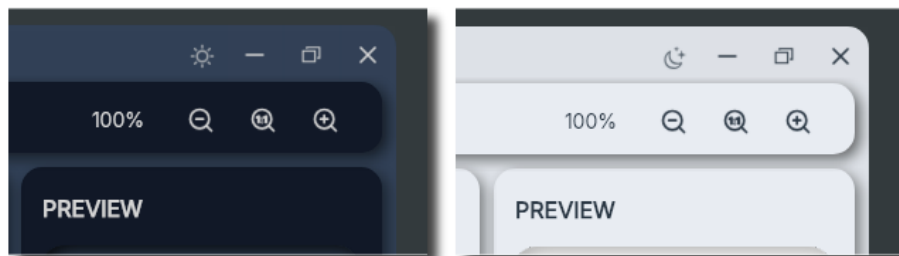
FotoSketcher Studio lets you save all your current effect parameter settings to a .fsk file using the Save Parameters option. This stores the slider values for every effect, so you can reload them later with Load Parameters to reproduce your favourite configurations instantly.

2.6 Light and Dark Mode

FotoSketcher Studio now offers two interface themes: the original dark theme and a new Light mode. A small sun or moon icon at the top right of the window switches between them, and you can change theme at any time while you work.

Your choice of theme, along with your chosen language, is remembered between sessions, so the application always opens with the look you prefer.

In this release the light theme has been darkened slightly so that text and controls stand out more clearly, which makes it more comfortable during long sessions. A number of smaller differences between the two themes have also been tidied up, so checkboxes, close buttons and status colours now look consistent whichever theme you choose.



The same toolbar in dark mode (left) and the new Light mode (right). Click the sun or moon icon to switch.

2.7 Interface Zoom (Windows)

On Windows, you can scale the entire FotoSketcher Studio interface to suit your display. Choose a zoom level between 50% and 150% to make the panels, buttons, and text smaller or larger. This is handy on very high-resolution screens, where the default size can feel small, or whenever you simply prefer a more compact layout. You can also adjust this level with the Z keyboard shortcut.

Note: This setting changes the size of the interface itself. It is separate from zooming into your image, which is covered in the next section.

2.8 Keyboard Navigation

You can now work your way through FotoSketcher Studio without touching the mouse. Press Tab to move forward through the controls of whichever window or panel is open, and Shift+Tab to move back. If no window is open, Tab moves through the main window instead.

Navigation follows the normal reading order of the screen, from left to right and from top to bottom. The control you have reached is circled in blue so you can always see where you are, and the ring only appears while you are using the keyboard - it never shows up after a mouse click.

Enter: Activates the selected control, whether it is a button, a tool, or an effect category.

Arrow keys: Once you are inside an effect category, the arrow keys move through the effects in the list, and Enter applies the highlighted one.

Escape: Closes the current window or cancels the operation in progress.

***Tip:** Keyboard navigation sits alongside the menu navigation introduced in version 4.40. Press F10 to open the menu and move through it with the arrow keys.*

3. Navigating Your Image

3.1 Zooming

You can zoom in and out of your image using the mouse wheel. Scrolling up zooms in; scrolling down zooms out. The zoom is centred on the current mouse position.

You can also use **Ctrl+Plus** (or Ctrl+=) to zoom in and **Ctrl+Minus** to zoom out. The current zoom level is displayed in the top-right corner. The zoom range extends from 10% to 1000%.

3.2 Panning

When zoomed in, you can pan by clicking and dragging with the left mouse button on the canvas.

3.3 Full-Screen View

Double-click anywhere on the canvas to open a full-screen view of the current image. Press Escape to return to the main interface.

3.4 Preview of the Original

Press **S** or hold down the right mouse button on the canvas to temporarily display the original source image. Releasing the button (or pressing S again) returns to the current working image.

4. Applying Effects

FotoSketcher Studio organises its artistic effects into four categories, each accessible by expanding the corresponding section in the left panel. When you select an effect, the sliders in the right panel update to show the parameters relevant to that effect, and a live preview is generated automatically.

The preview is calculated on a small region of the image and displayed in the Preview thumbnail at the top of the right panel. Click on the preview thumbnail to open a magnifying glass view for a closer look. Once you are satisfied with the settings, click the **Apply effect** button to process the full-resolution image.

Processing time depends on the image size, the chosen effect, and its parameter values. A progress bar shows the advancement of the operation. Press **Escape** at any time to cancel.

***Tip:** Higher values for parameters such as “iterations” or “quality” generally produce finer results but take longer to compute. Start with lower values to experiment quickly, then increase them for the final render.*

***Note:** The Erase background toggle controls whether the background is cleared to white before the effect is applied, or whether the effect is drawn over the existing image content. This is particularly relevant for stroke-based painting effects.*

4.1 Sketch & Drawing

The Sketch & Drawing category contains four effects that recreate hand-drawn pencil and pen work.

4.1.1 Pencil Sketch 1

This effect creates a classic pencil sketch by detecting edges and rendering them as dark strokes on a light background.

Edge threshold: Controls edge detection sensitivity. Lower values detect more edges.

Edge darkness: Sets how dark the pencil strokes appear.

Brightness: Adjusts the overall brightness of the sketch.

Contrast: Fine-tunes the contrast between strokes and paper.

Colour intensity: When above zero, the sketch is colourised using the original photograph's colours.

***Tip:** For a traditional graphite look, keep colour intensity at zero and set edge threshold around 20. For coloured pencil, try colour intensity between 50 and 80.*

4.1.2 Pencil Sketch 2

This effect builds up a pencil sketch through repeated random strokes, giving a more organic, hand-drawn quality with visible directional hatching.

Min stroke size: The minimum length of individual pencil strokes.

Max stroke size: The maximum length. The difference creates natural variation.

Number of strokes: Controls the density of the sketch.

Colour intensity: Controls colour from the original photograph.

Quality: Affects the refinement of stroke placement.

***Tip:** This effect works especially well with portraits. Try a moderate number of strokes (around 30) with max stroke size at 40.*

4.1.3 Pencil Sketch 3

A dynamic pencil approach producing smooth, flowing strokes that follow the image contours.

Iterations: The number of rendering passes.

Stroke length: Controls stroke length along contours.

Blending: Determines how much strokes blend together.

Contrast: Adjusts tonal contrast.

Colour intensity: Adds colour from the original image when set above zero.

Tip: For a soft, dreamy pencil look, increase blending to around 50. For sharper strokes, reduce blending and increase stroke length.

4.1.4 Crosshatch

Crosshatch recreates the traditional pen technique of building up shade with layers of fine parallel lines, crossing them at different angles. The darkest areas gather the densest web of strokes, while the lightest areas are left almost bare, giving the result the hand-worked feel of a classic drawing.

Density: The number of rendering passes. More passes build up denser, richer hatching. Around 75 is a good starting point.

Contours: The strength of the black contour lines drawn around shapes. Higher values produce thicker, more prominent outlines.

Contrast: How strongly the strokes stand out against the paper.

Stroke length: The length of each individual pen stroke. Short strokes give a nervous, scratchy texture, longer ones a calmer and more deliberate hand.

Line weight: How dark and thick the strokes are.

New in 4.50: Crosshatch now works with the Erase background toggle switched off. Leave it off and the hatching is drawn straight over the image already on the canvas, so you can lay a pen drawing over a watercolour or a gouache painting in two quick steps.

Tip: Crosshatch suits portraits and architectural subjects with clear areas of light and shade. Raise the contours for a bolder, more graphic ink look, or keep them low for a softer, sketchier feel. Higher density values build up richer shading.

4.2 Pen & Ink

This category offers effects that simulate ink-based and pen-based drawing techniques.



The Pen & Ink category with its four effects.

4.2.1 Black & White (Dramatic B&W)

Converts the photograph into a striking black-and-white ink rendering with strong contrast and rich tonal depth.

Level of details: Controls how much fine detail is preserved.

Lighten / Darken: Shifts the tonal balance. Below 50 darkens; above 50 brightens.

Simplification: Smooths noise and small details before conversion.

Tip: For dramatic portrait work, try a high level of detail with a slight darkening.

4.2.2 Stippling

Reproduces the image using thousands of small dots, mimicking traditional stipple illustration.

Darkening: Controls the overall density of dots.

Tip: Stippling works best with images that have clear tonal variation - portraits with strong side-lighting or architectural subjects.

4.2.3 Felt-tip Pen

Simulates drawings made with felt-tip markers, producing bold, expressive strokes with visible direction.

Stroke density: Controls how many marker strokes are placed.

Stroke opacity: Sets the transparency of individual strokes.

Stroke length: The length of each marker stroke.

Stroke width: The thickness of individual marker strokes.

Edge intensity: Controls the strength of dark edges overlaid on the marker work.

Tip: For a bold, graphic poster look, use high edge intensity with moderate stroke density.

4.2.4 Comic Print

Comic Print transforms your photograph into a comic book or pop art style illustration. It uses halftone-like dot patterns combined with bold outlines to produce a graphic, screen-printed look reminiscent of comic book panels or pop art.

Dot spacing: Controls the spacing between halftone dots. Lower values pack dots more tightly together for a finer pattern; higher values spread them out for a coarser, more visible halftone effect.

Min dot size: Sets the minimum size of halftone dots. Increasing this adds density to the lighter areas of the image.

Max dot size: Sets the maximum size of halftone dots. Larger dots create a bolder, more graphic look in the darker areas.

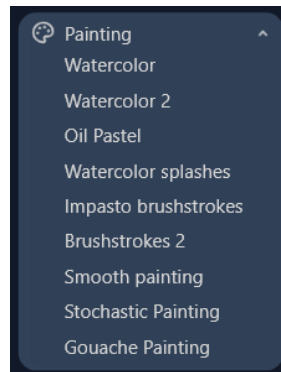
Colour intensity: Controls how much colour from the original photograph is retained. At zero, the result is monochrome. Higher values produce a more colourful, pop art look.

Contours: Controls the strength of black contour lines drawn around shapes. Higher values produce thicker, more prominent outlines, giving the result a comic book quality.

Tip: Comic Print works particularly well with portraits and urban scenes. For a bold pop art look, try high colour intensity with strong contours. For a subtler illustration feel, reduce the contours and use tighter dot spacing.

4.3 Painting

The Painting category is the largest and most varied group of effects, offering styles from loose watercolour washes to thick impasto brushwork.



The Painting category with its ten effects.

4.3.1 Watercolour

Recreates the organic, flowing quality of watercolour painting using radiating strokes that blend and overlap.

Iterations: The number of rendering passes. Around 30 is a good starting point.

Brush complexity: Controls the intricacy of the watercolour strokes.

Brush size: Larger brushes produce a looser, more impressionistic look.

Opacity: Lower opacity creates a more transparent, luminous effect.

Edge intensity: A subtle amount (10-30) helps define shapes.

Tip: Landscapes and flowers are particularly well suited to this effect. Try moderate brush size (around 40) with full opacity and light edge intensity (20).

4.3.2 Watercolour 2

A second watercolour approach that uses a region-growing algorithm to produce a distinct look from the original Watercolour effect. Rather than placing individual brush strokes, it grows colour regions outward from seed points, creating fluid, blended washes with soft transitions that feel more spontaneous and organic.

Density: Controls how many seed points are placed across the image. Higher values produce a more detailed result with smaller colour regions; lower values create broader, more abstract washes.

Region threshold: Determines how far each colour region can grow before stopping. Lower values allow regions to expand further, creating larger, more blended areas. Higher values keep regions smaller and closer to the source colours.

Brightness: Adjusts the overall brightness of the watercolour result.

Edge intensity: Adds dark contour lines from the source image to define shapes within the watercolour washes.

Saturation: Controls the colour saturation of the result. Higher values produce more vivid colours; lower values create a more muted, washed-out watercolour look.

Tip: Try Watercolour 2 when you want a looser, more organic feel than Watercolour 1. The region-growing approach works beautifully with natural scenes and floral subjects. A low density with moderate saturation gives a classic loose watercolour feel.

4.3.3 Oil Pastel

Uses pastel-textured brush stamps placed using a “best of N” algorithm for a convincingly hand-painted look.

Min brush size: The smallest brush size used.

Max brush size: The largest brush size.

Iterations: The number of painting passes.

Quality: Controls how many candidates are tested for each stroke position.

Opacity: The opacity of individual brush strokes.

Tip: For a loose, impressionistic look, use a wide range between min and max brush size.

4.3.4 Watercolour Splashes

Places textured watercolour brush stamps with directional awareness, following the contours and flow of the image.

Min brush size: The minimum splash size.

Max brush size: The maximum size.

Iterations: The number of painting passes.

Quality: Controls stroke placement precision.

Opacity: The transparency of the strokes.

Tip: This effect excels with landscape photographs, particularly those with strong directional elements like rivers or cloud formations.

4.3.5 Impasto Brushstrokes

Simulates thick, textured brushwork typical of oil painting.

Min brush size: The minimum stroke size.

Max brush size: The maximum size.

Iterations: The number of painting passes.

Quality: Controls placement accuracy.

Opacity: Stroke opacity.

Tip: Use relatively small max brush sizes (around 50) with high iterations and full opacity. Still life and nature close-ups work wonderfully.

4.3.6 Brushstrokes 2

A second brushstroke-based painting approach that produces a different texture and feel from the Impasto Brushstrokes effect. This effect uses a different set of brush textures and a more varied stroke orientation, creating results with a looser, more expressive quality.

Brush size: Controls the size of the brush strokes. Larger values produce bolder, more visible strokes; smaller values retain more detail.

Iterations: The number of painting passes. More passes add detail and coverage.

Abstraction: Controls how much the painting departs from the source image. Higher values produce a more abstract, impressionistic result; lower values stay closer to the original photograph.

Saturation: Adjusts the colour saturation of the painted result. Higher values produce more vivid colours.

Opacity: The opacity of each stroke.

Tip: Try Brushstrokes 2 alongside Impasto Brushstrokes on the same photograph to compare the different textures. Increase abstraction for a more expressive, painterly feel.

4.3.7 Smooth Painting

Uses template matching to place brush strokes with precision, producing a clean, polished painting.

Max brush size: The size of brush strokes used.

Iterations: The number of refinement passes.

Tip: Particularly effective for portraits. Start with a max brush size of around 35.

4.3.8 Stochastic Painting

Takes a random, exploratory approach to stroke placement, building up through thousands of overlapping marks.

Min brush size: The smallest brush size used.

Max brush size: The largest brush size.

Iterations: The number of painting passes.

Precision: Controls how closely the algorithm matches the source. Lower precision allows more abstract results.

Opacity: The opacity of brush strokes.

Tip: For abstract interpretations, try low precision with large max brush size.

4.3.9 Gouache Painting

Gouache Painting recreates the look of gouache, the opaque water-based paint that sits somewhere between watercolour and oil. Where watercolour is thin and transparent, gouache is thick and covering, drying to a flat, matte finish with visible brushwork and bold, solid areas of colour.

Iterations: The number of painting passes. More passes build up thicker, more complete coverage. Around 70 is a good starting point.

Brush size: Sets the size of the gouache strokes. Larger values give a bolder, looser result; smaller values keep more of the detail from the photograph.

Precision: Controls how closely each stroke follows the colours of the source image. Lower values allow a looser, more abstract interpretation; higher values stay closer to the original.

Strength: Controls how pronounced the individual brushstrokes are, from barely visible to deep and clearly marked. Higher values make the brushwork stand out strongly; lower values give a smoother, more blended surface.

Contours: Controls the strength of the darker outlines drawn around shapes to define them. A moderate amount (around 30) helps the painting hold together.

Tip: Gouache suits subjects with strong, simple shapes - landscapes, still life, and flowers in particular. Because the paint is opaque, it holds its colour well over dark areas, so it is a good choice for photographs that come out muddy with the watercolour effects. Try following it with a canvas texture at a low strength for a convincing painted surface.

4.4 Photo Lab

Photo Lab offers enhancements and adjustments that work with the photograph's existing content.

4.4.1 Dream Glow (Orton Effect)

Applies an Orton-style glow, blending a blurred version of the photograph with the original for a soft, luminous, dreamlike quality.

Glow radius: Controls the blur amount on the glow layer.

Exposure: Brightens the glow layer.

Strength of effect: Controls the blend between original and glow.

Vibrance: Boosts colour saturation.

Darken / Lighten: Shifts the tonal balance.

Tip: Ideal for landscapes, macro flower shots, and portraits. Try a glow radius of 40 with moderate exposure and strength.

4.4.2 Adjustments

Provides essential image correction tools in a single interface.

Luminosity: Adjusts overall brightness. Centred at 52.

Contrast: Modifies tonal contrast. Centred at 52.

Vibrance: Boosts colour saturation intelligently. Centred at 55.

Structure: Enhances local detail and micro-contrast. Around 15 is a good starting point.

Blur / Sharpen: Centred at 52. Left blurs; right sharpens.

Tip: Apply Adjustments as a final step after your artistic effect to fine-tune the overall look.

5. Manual Brush Tool

The Manual Brush lets you paint an effect selectively onto specific areas using your mouse, rather than applying it uniformly across the entire image.

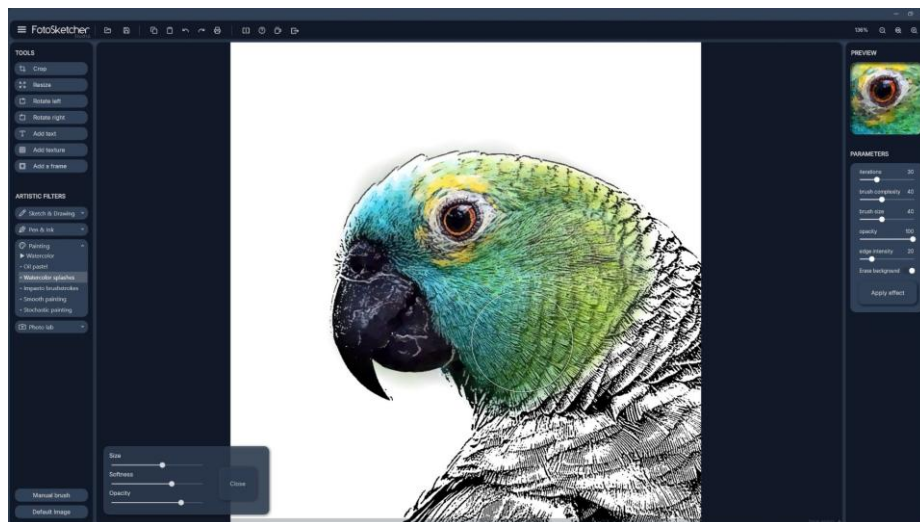
5.1 Entering Manual Brush Mode

Select the effect you wish to paint with and adjust its parameters. Then click the **Manual brush** button at the bottom of the left panel.

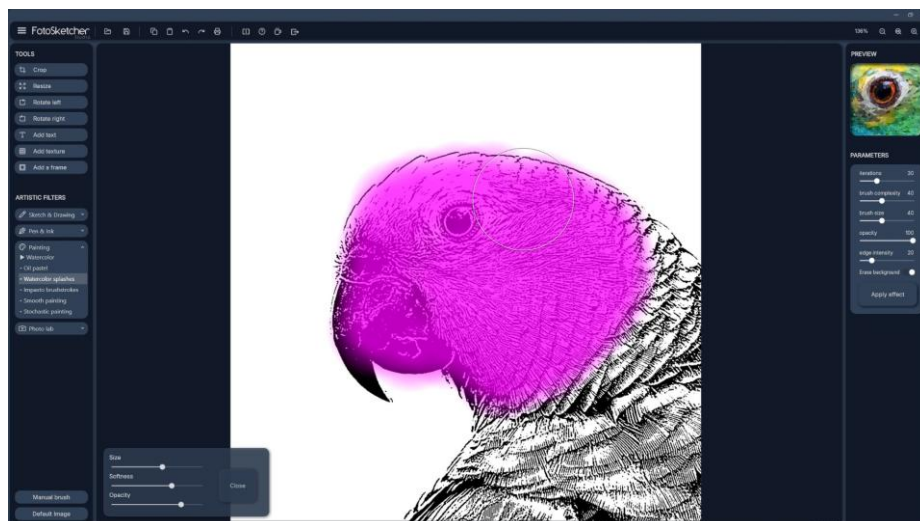
***Note:** An image must be loaded and an effect must be selected before the Manual Brush button becomes active.*

5.2 Painting with the Brush

Your cursor changes to a circular brush indicator. Click and drag on the canvas to paint. A pink/magenta overlay shows the area being painted before the effect is applied.



Manual Brush mode: the circular cursor and floating Size / Softness / Opacity controls.



The pink mask shows the area where the effect will be applied when the mouse button is released.

5.3 Brush Controls

Size: Controls the diameter of the brush.

Softness: Determines the feathering of the brush edge. Zero is hard-edged; higher values create a gradual fade.

Opacity: Sets the transparency of the effect applied by each stroke.

5.4 Finishing

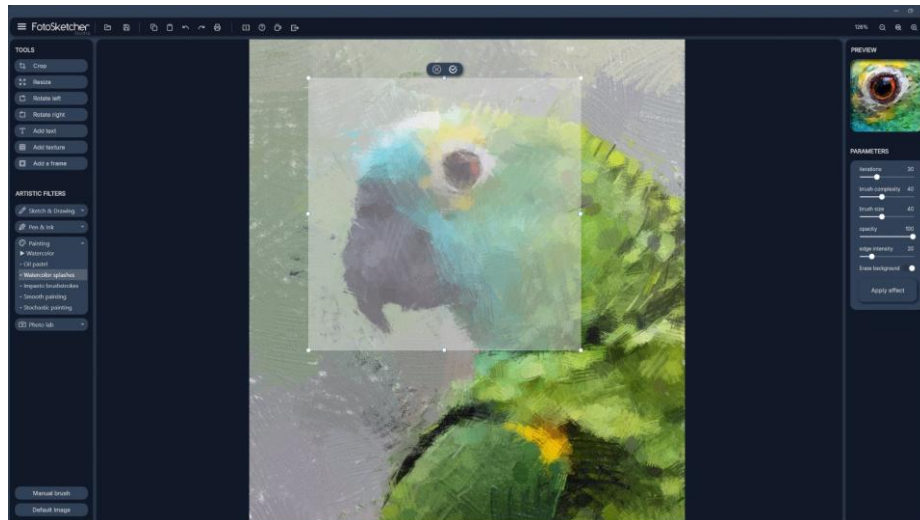
Click **Close** on the floating panel (or press Escape) to exit Manual Brush mode.

***Tip:** The Manual Brush works with any effect. Try painting a pencil sketch effect over a colour photograph, or use Dream Glow on just the background of a portrait.*

6. Editing Tools

6.1 Crop

Click **Crop** to enter crop mode. Drag the edges or corners of the selection rectangle. Press **Enter** to apply or **Escape** to cancel.



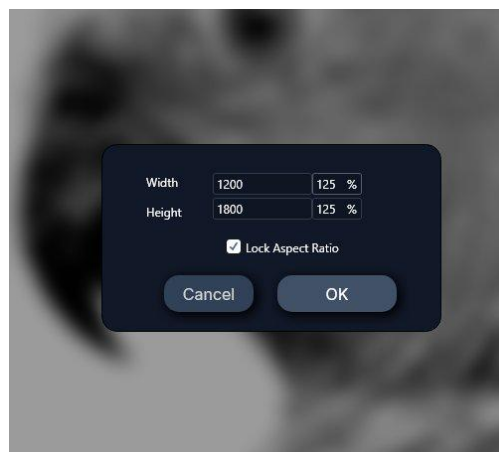
Crop mode with the selection rectangle and confirm/cancel buttons.

6.2 Rotate

Click **Rotate left** or **Rotate right**, or press **L** (anticlockwise) or **R** (clockwise).

6.3 Resize

Click **Resize** (or press **Ctrl+R**). Width and height are linked by the **Lock Aspect Ratio** checkbox. You can specify sizes as pixels or a percentage.



The Resize dialogue with locked aspect ratio.

6.4 Text and Watermark Tool

Click **Add text** to activate the text overlay. A text entry window lets you type your text and configure its appearance:

Font family: Choose from any installed font, with a live preview of each font.

Font size: Set the text size with plus/minus buttons. Also resize interactively by dragging handles on the canvas.

Font style: A colour picker lets you choose text colour and opacity.

Shadow: Enable a drop shadow for readability against busy backgrounds.

Adding a watermark or logo

The same window also lets you place an image over your picture. Click the watermark button to choose a file - a PNG with transparency, a JPEG, or any other supported image - and it appears on the canvas ready to be positioned.

Moving: Drag the watermark anywhere on the picture.

Resizing: Drag one of the corner handles. The proportions are always kept, and the opposite corner stays where it is.

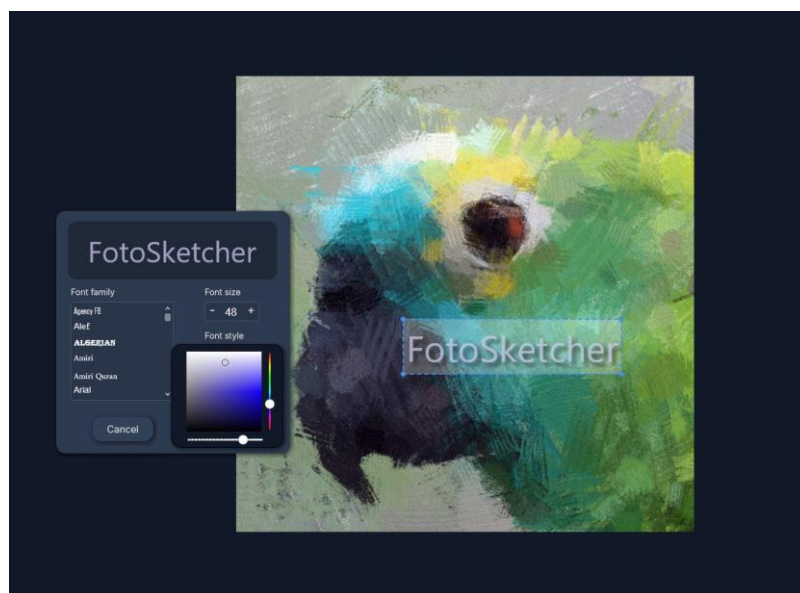
Opacity: A small opacity slider follows the selection box, so you can fade the watermark from barely visible to fully solid.

Starting size: A watermark is placed at a quarter of the width of your picture, centred in the current view. It is never enlarged beyond its own resolution, so it always stays sharp.

Tip: If your logo was saved on a large canvas with empty space around it, that transparent border is trimmed away automatically when the file is loaded. The watermark is then positioned by what you can actually see rather than by the invisible padding around it, so it lands exactly where you expect.

The watermark is drawn underneath the text layer, so you can combine the two - a logo in one corner and a caption in another - and apply them together in a single step.

*Tip: Watermarks can also be added from a script with the **WATERMARK** command, which is described in section 10.2.5. This is the quickest way to sign a whole folder of images at once using Batch mode.*

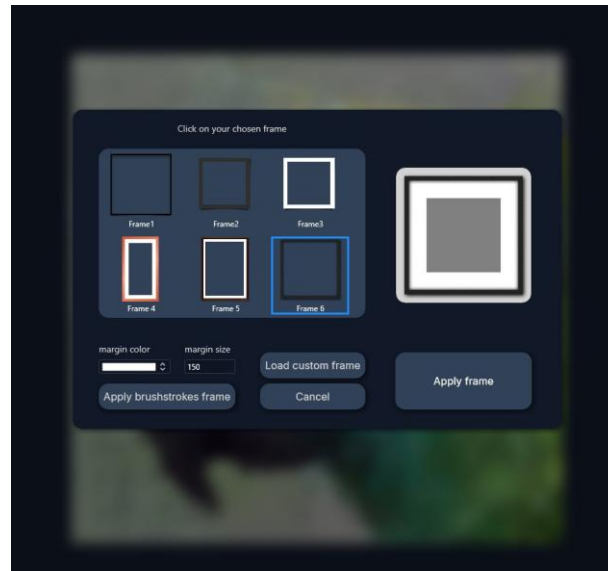


The Text tool with font selection, colour picker, and a text overlay with resize handles.

7. Enhancements

7.1 Frames

Click **Add a frame** to open the frame selector. Click a frame to preview it, then click **Apply frame**. Customise **margin colour** and **margin size**, or use **Load custom frame** to import your own.



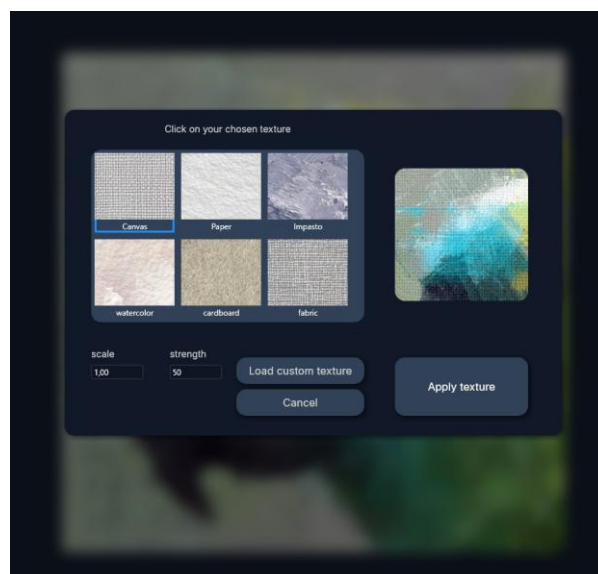
The Frame selector with built-in frames, margin controls, and the Apply brushstrokes frame option.

The **Apply brushstrokes frame** button creates a painterly border made of textured brushstrokes.

This release also adds a new frame to the built-in collection, giving you one more ready-made border to finish your artwork.

7.2 Textures

Click **Add texture** to open the texture selector with six built-in textures: Canvas, Paper, Impasto, Watercolour, Cardboard, and Fabric. Adjust **Scale** and **Strength**, or load your own with **Load custom texture**.

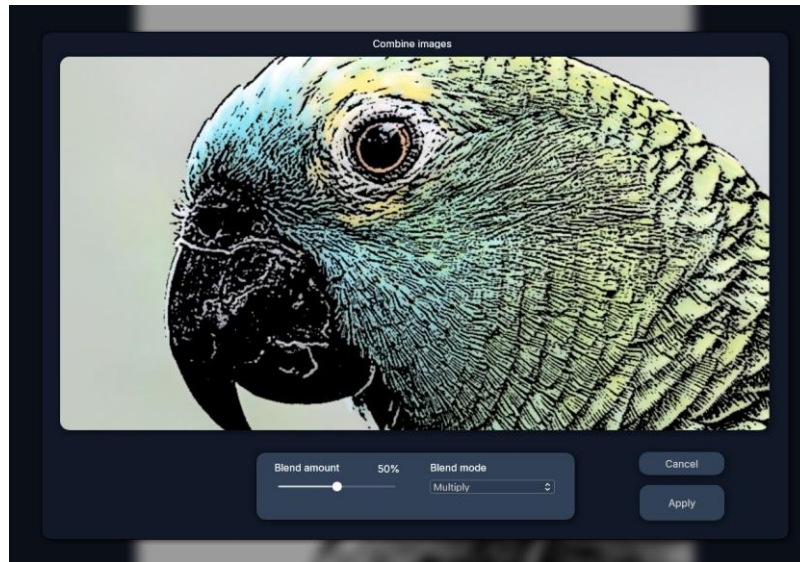


The Texture selector with a canvas texture previewed on the right.

Tip: A canvas texture applied over a painting effect looks remarkably like a real painting. Use a subtle strength (around 30-50).

7.3 Combine Images

FotoSketcher Studio can blend two images together. Drag and drop a thumbnail from the history gallery at the bottom of the window onto the canvas, or press **F11** to combine the source and working images. The Combine Images dialogue provides a **Blend amount** slider and a **Blend mode** selector (Normal, Multiply, Screen, Overlay, and more).



The Combine Images dialogue with Blend amount and Blend mode controls.

7.4 Custom Brushes

Load your own brush textures using the **Load custom brushes** button in the right panel (visible when a painting effect is selected). You can select PNG files or ZIP archives. Click **Reset brushes** to revert to the built-in set.

Tip: Custom brushes can dramatically change the character of painting effects. Experiment with unusual textures.

8. History and Comparison

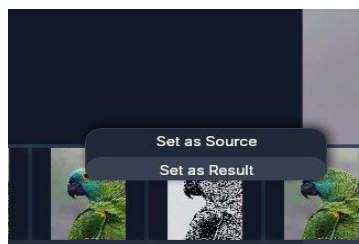
8.1 Undo and Redo

Press **Ctrl+Z** to undo or **Ctrl+Shift+Z** to redo. Each step reverts to the previous state, including effects, crops, rotations, and text.

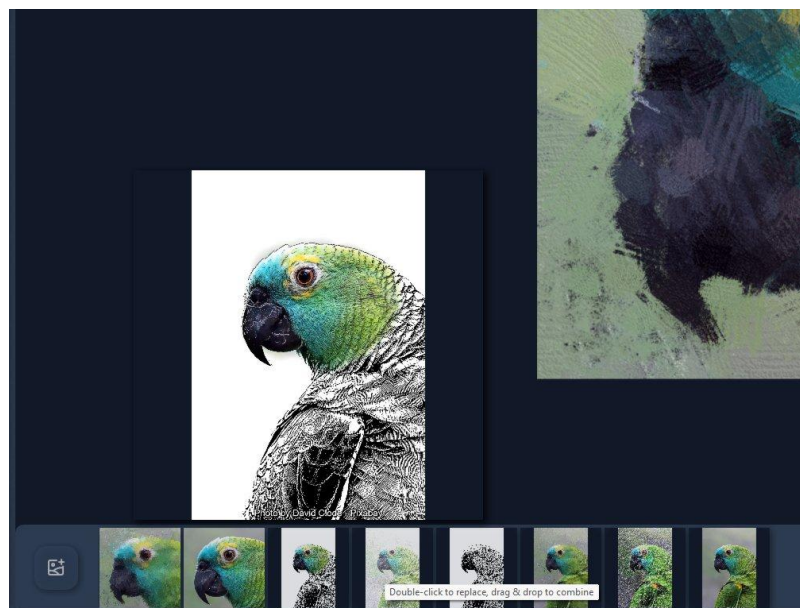
8.2 Image History Gallery

A collapsible gallery strip at the bottom shows thumbnails of each editing step. Click **Show gallery** / **Hide gallery** to toggle it. Hover over a thumbnail for an enlarged preview.

To use a thumbnail as your starting point, right-click on it. A context menu appears with two options: **Set as Source** (makes it the new source image) and **Set as Result** (makes it the current working image). This gives you full flexibility to go back to any previous state as either source or result.



Right-click a thumbnail to set it as the new source or result image.



The history gallery with thumbnails and an enlarged preview popup.

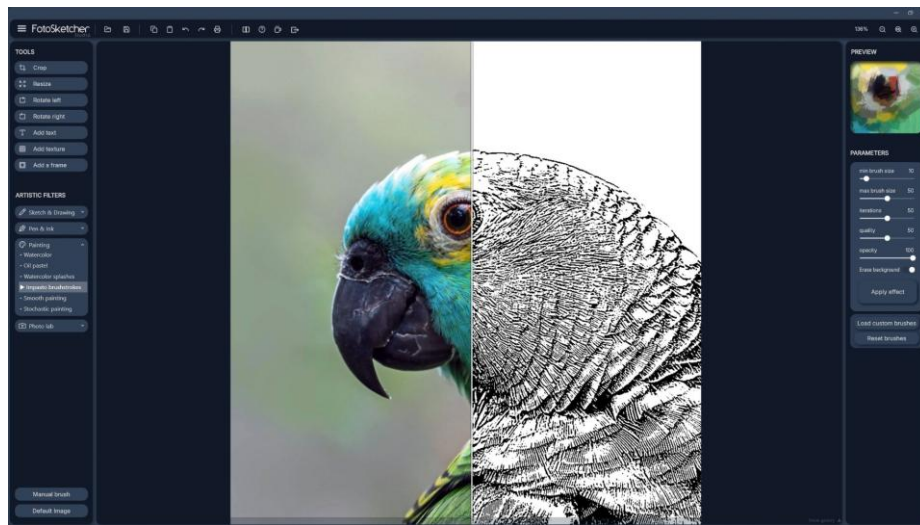
You can also add external images to the gallery using the Add button at the left of the gallery strip, or drag and drop a thumbnail onto the canvas to combine it with the current image.

8.3 Swap Images

Press **F12** to swap the source image and the working image. Useful when you want to use the current result as the new starting point.

8.4 Split View

Press **S** to toggle split view. A vertical divider separates the original photograph (left) from the current image (right). Drag the divider to compare.



Split View showing the original photograph and the Impasto Brushstrokes effect.

Tip: Split view is invaluable for judging the impact of an effect.

New in 4.50: The divider has been reworked in this release. It now stays exactly on the part of the picture you left it on when you zoom in or out, it no longer drifts off the edge of the image, and it stays within the visible part of the picture when you scroll around.

9. Batch Processing

Batch mode lets you apply the current effect to an entire folder of images at once. Press **Ctrl+B** or select **Batch mode** from the Edit menu to launch it.

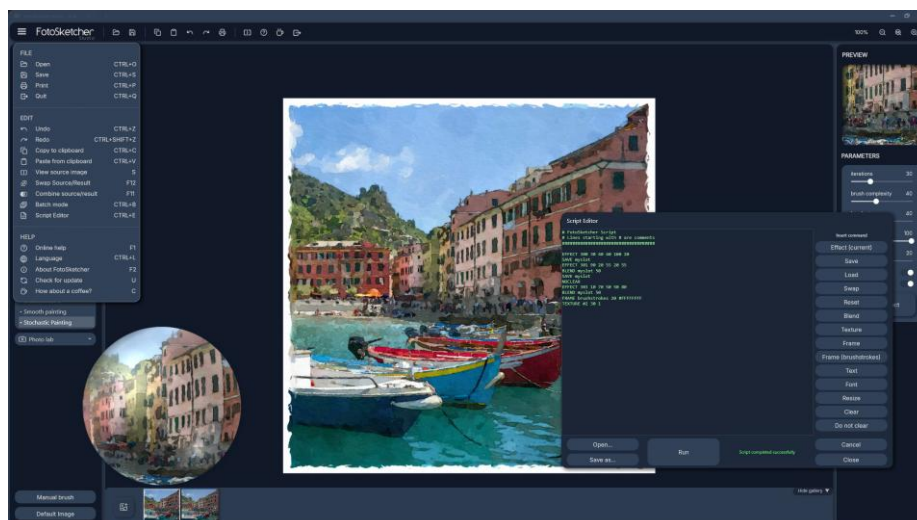
Select a source folder containing the photographs you wish to process. FotoSketcher Studio will apply the currently selected effect (with its current parameter settings) to each image in the folder, saving the results with a _FS suffix alongside the originals.

Progress is displayed for each image. You can cancel the batch at any time by pressing **Escape**.

***Tip:** Batch mode is especially useful for creating a consistent artistic style across a series of photographs - for a gallery show, a photo book, or animation frames.*

10. Script Mode

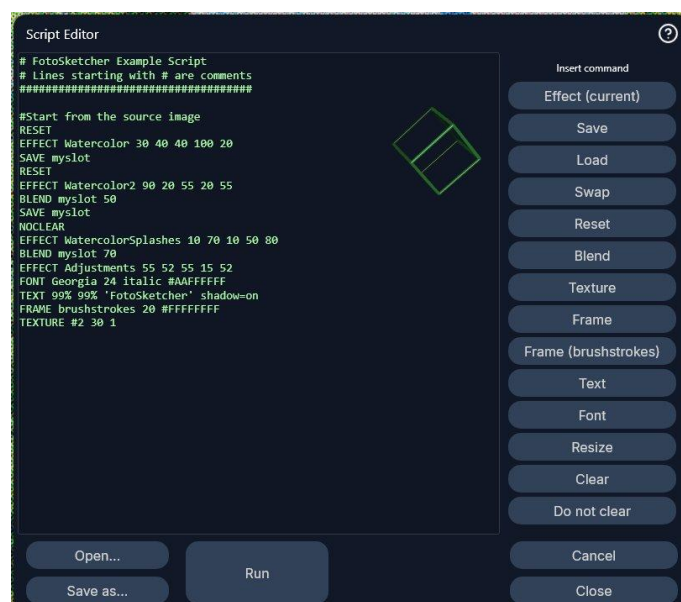
Script mode is one of the most powerful features in FotoSketcher Studio. It lets you write and run scripts that chain multiple effects, blend intermediate results, add text, textures, and frames - all in a single automated sequence. Press **Ctrl+E** or select **Script Editor** from the Edit menu to open it.



The Script Editor open alongside the main interface, with a completed script and its result.

10.1 The Script Editor

The Script Editor window provides a text area where you write your script, and a panel of **Insert command** buttons on the right that generate the correct syntax for each command. At the bottom, **Open** and **Save as** let you load and save scripts as .fss files, and **Run** executes the current script.



The Script Editor with Insert command buttons.

Lines starting with **#** are comments and are ignored when the script runs. This is useful for documenting what each section of your script does.

To help you get started, FotoSketcher Studio now comes with a set of example scripts built right into the application. Open one from the Open button in the Script Editor to see how it is

put together, run it on your own photo, and adapt it to taste. They are a great way to learn what scripts can do.

When you press Run, the Script Editor now minimises out of the way so you can watch each step build up on the main image. It reappears automatically when the script finishes.

Two further example scripts have been added in this release, both built around the new Gouache Painting effect. They show how the effect can be layered and blended with others, and they make a good starting point for your own experiments.

10.2 Script Commands

10.2.1 Image Pipeline

RESET - Reloads the original source photograph as the working image. Use this before applying a new effect chain.

```
RESET
```

CLEAR - Erases the background to white before the next effect (like checking the Erase background toggle).

NOCLEAR - Keeps current pixels before the next effect, allowing layered looks.

10.2.2 Applying Effects

EFFECT <id> <P1> <P2> <P3> <P4> <P5> - Applies an effect with the specified parameters. You can use either the numeric ID or the effect name.

```
EFFECT 300 30 40 40 100 20
```

```
EFFECT Watercolor 30 40 40 100 20
```

The Insert command button **Effect (current)** captures the effect and parameter values currently set in the main interface, which is the easiest way to get the right syntax.

Available effect IDs and names:

100 PencilSketch1	300 Watercolor	400 OrtonFilter
101 PencilSketch2	301 Watercolor2	401 Adjustments
102 PencilSketch3	302 OilPastel	402 VintageSepia
103 Crosshatch	303 WatercolorSplashes	403 RetroFilm
200 BlackAndWhite	304 ImpastoBrushstrokes	
201 Stippling	305 Brushstrokes2	
202 FeltTipPen	306 SmoothPainting	
	307 StochasticPainting	
	308 GouachePainting	

10.2.3 Slots (Save and Load Intermediate Results)

Scripts can save the working image into named slots and reload them later. This lets you apply an effect, save the result, then apply a different effect and blend the two together.

SAVE <slot> - Saves the working image into a named slot.

LOAD <slot> - Replaces the working image with a saved slot.

SWAP [<slot>] - Exchanges the working image with a saved slot. Default slot is **src** (the original source photo).

```
SAVE myslot
```

```
LOAD myslot
```

```
SWAP src
```

Two reserved slots are created automatically: **src** (the original source photo) and **dst** (the working image at script start).

10.2.4 Blending

BLEND <slot> <opacity> [<mode>] - Blends a saved slot onto the working image.

Opacity is a percentage (0-100). Available blend modes are: normal (default), multiply, screen, overlay, darken, lighten, softlight, hardlight, difference.

```
BLEND myslot 50
BLEND myslot 70 multiply
```

10.2.5 Texture, Frame, Text, and Watermark

TEXTURE [#N] [<strength> <scale>] - Applies a texture overlay. Use #N for a specific texture index, or omit to use the current selection.

```
TEXTURE #2 30 1
```

FRAME [#N] [<margin> [<color>]] - Applies a frame. Colours are specified in #AARRGGBB hex format.

```
FRAME #1 30 #FFFFFFF
```

FRAME brushstrokes <width> [<color>] [brush=<N>] - Applies a painterly brushstrokes border.

```
FRAME brushstrokes 40 #FF000000 brush=80
```

FONT <name> <size> [<style>] [<color>] - Sets the default font for subsequent TEXT commands.

```
FONT Arial 48 bold #FFFFFFF
FONT "Times New Roman" 36 italic
```

TEXT <x> <y> '<string>' [options] - Draws text on the image. Positions can be in pixels or percentages. Optional inline overrides include size=, color=, font=, style=, and shadow=on|off.

```
TEXT 50% 50% 'Hello'
TEXT 99% 99% 'FotoSketcher' shadow=on
```

WATERMARK <x> <y> "<file>" [width=<px or %>] [alpha=<0..100>] - Draws an image file onto the picture as a watermark or logo.

Placement works exactly like the TEXT command. Positions can be given in pixels or as percentages, and the percentage is read as a position within the picture: 1% 1% sits near the top left corner, 99% 99% near the bottom right, and 50% 50% is centred.

width: The width of the watermark, in pixels or as a percentage of the picture width. Defaults to 25%. The height follows automatically, so the proportions are always preserved.

alpha: The opacity of the watermark, from 0 (invisible) to 100 (fully solid). Defaults to fully solid.

```
WATERMARK 99% 99% "C:\logos\signature.png"
WATERMARK 50% 50% "C:\logos\signature.png" width=40% alpha=35
```

Tip: The Script Editor has a Watermark button that opens a file browser and inserts the finished command for you, so you do not need to type the path by hand. As with the interface, transparent borders around the image are trimmed automatically before it is placed.

10.2.6 Resize

RESIZE <width> <height> - Resizes the working image. Accepts pixel values or percentages.

```
RESIZE 1920 1080  
RESIZE 50% 50%
```

10.3 Full Example

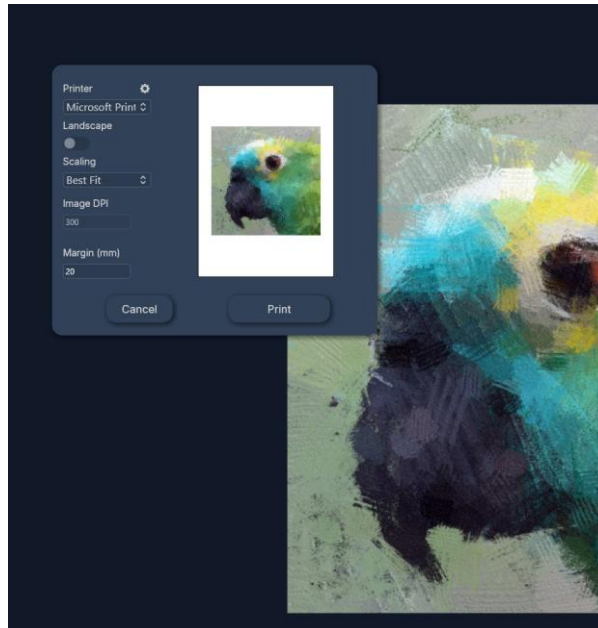
Here is a complete script that applies a watercolour effect, saves the result, applies a second effect, blends them, adds text, and finishes with a brushstrokes frame and texture:

```
# Apply watercolour, save, then blend with a second effect  
RESET  
CLEAR  
EFFECT Watercolor 30 40 40 100 20  
SAVE myslot  
RESET  
NOCLEAR  
EFFECT Watercolor2 90 20 55 20 55  
BLEND myslot 50  
FONT Arial 24 bold #FFFFFFF  
TEXT 50% 98% 'My Art' shadow=on  
FRAME brushstrokes 20 #FFFFFFF  
TEXTURE #2 30 1
```

Tip: Use the *Insert command buttons* to build your script interactively. Each button inserts the correct syntax with the current settings, so you don't need to memorise the command format.

11. Printing

Press **Ctrl+P** to open the print dialogue.



The print dialogue with printer selection, scaling options, and a live paper preview.

Printer: Choose from any connected printer. Click the gear icon for printer setup.

Landscape: Toggle between portrait and landscape orientation.

Scaling: Best Fit, Stretch to Fill, or Original Size.

Image DPI: Print resolution when using Original Size. 300 DPI is standard for photographs.

Margin (mm): Page margins in millimetres.

12. Keyboard Shortcuts

Shortcut	Action
Ctrl+O	Open an image
Ctrl+S	Save the current image
Ctrl+C	Copy the current image to clipboard
Ctrl+V	Paste an image from clipboard
Ctrl+P	Open the print dialogue
Ctrl+Z	Undo the last action
Ctrl+Shift+Z	Redo the last undone action
Ctrl+R	Open the resize dialogue
Ctrl+B	Launch Batch mode
Ctrl+E	Open the Script Editor
Ctrl+L	Change language
Ctrl+Q	Quit the application
Ctrl+Plus / Ctrl+=	Zoom in
Ctrl+Minus	Zoom out
F1	Open the online help
F2	About FotoSketcher Studio
F10	Open the menu
Tab	Move to the next control
Shift+Tab	Move to the previous control
F11	Combine source and result images
F12	Swap the source and working images
R	Rotate image 90° clockwise
L	Rotate image 90° anticlockwise
S	View source image / Toggle split view
U	Check for updates
C	Support the author (buy a coffee)
E	Enhance image
Z	Adjust the application zoom level (Windows)
Escape	Cancel current operation
Enter	Confirm current operation
Mouse wheel	Zoom in / out (centred on cursor)
Left-click drag	Pan the image (when zoomed in)
Right-click hold	Preview the original source image
Double-click canvas	Open full-screen view

13. Tips and Troubleshooting

13.1 Performance Tips

Image size matters. Very large photographs take longer to process, particularly with painting effects. Consider resizing before applying effects.

Preview before committing. The live preview renders quickly. Click it for a magnifying glass view to inspect details before applying.

Cancel at any time. Press **Escape** to cancel a long-running effect.

13.2 Getting the Best Results

Start with a good photograph. Good lighting, clear subjects, and strong composition produce the most compelling artistic results.

Layer effects thoughtfully. Apply Adjustments first, then a painting effect, then a texture or frame. Or use Script mode to automate complex chains.

Use the Manual Brush for selective work. Paint an effect only where it is most effective.

Experiment with custom brushes. Different brush textures dramatically change the character of painting effects.

13.3 macOS Notes

FotoSketcher Studio runs natively on macOS as a universal binary, supporting both Apple Silicon (M1, M2, M3, M4 and later) and Intel-based Macs. The feature set is identical to the Windows version.

This release brings further macOS corrections and interface layout improvements, keeping the Mac build fully in line with the Windows version.

On Windows only, FotoSketcher Studio is also available as a portable version: download the .zip archive, unpack it wherever you like, and run the program without installing anything.

13.4 Common Questions

My image looks different in the preview vs. the final result. The preview is calculated on a small region at reduced resolution. The full Apply operation processes the entire image, so there may be subtle differences.

An effect is taking a very long time. Some effects with high iteration counts take a while on large images. Press Escape to cancel if needed. You might also want to reduce the size of the source image for faster processing (press Ctrl+R to open the resize dialogue).

I want to go back to the original photograph. Use Ctrl+Z repeatedly, or right-click the first thumbnail in the history gallery and select Set as Source.

About FotoSketcher Studio

FotoSketcher Studio is developed by David Thoiron and is available as a free download.

For the latest news, updates, and tutorials, visit the FotoSketcher blog at fotosketcher.blogspot.com.

If you enjoy using FotoSketcher Studio and would like to support its continued development, you can buy the author a cup of coffee through the link in the application (press C or use the Coffee menu option).

You can also click on the following button :



Thank you for using FotoSketcher Studio. Enjoy turning your photographs into art!