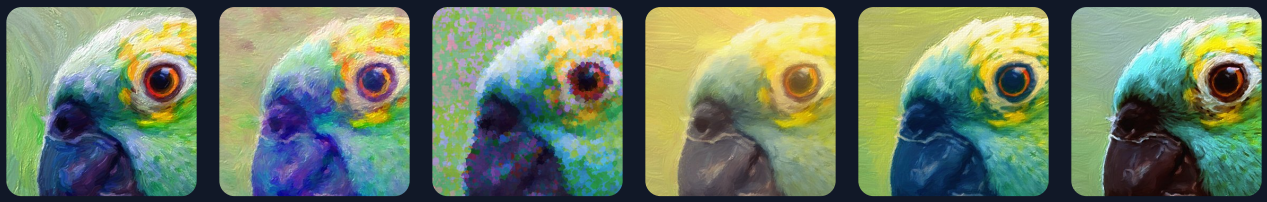
FotoSketcher Studio

USER GUIDE · VERSION 4.70

Turn your photos into art: pencil sketches, ink drawings, paintings and graphic designs, each adjusted with a few sliders.



Free software by David Thoiron · fotosketcher.blogspot.com

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Getting started

FotoSketcher Studio is a free program that turns your photographs into artwork. Its 51 effects are grouped in six categories: Sketch & Drawing, Pen & Ink, Painting, Photo lab, Stylize and Classic Painters.

Your first picture

1. Open a photograph (Ctrl+O, or drop it on the window). It becomes your **source**: the original, which is always kept.
2. Under **ARTISTIC FILTERS** on the left, click a category to open it, then click an effect.
3. Move the sliders on the right. The **PREVIEW** above them changes as you go.
4. Click **Apply effect**. The whole picture is painted, and the result is shown in the middle.
5. Save it with Ctrl+S.

Apply more effects to build on the result, undo with Ctrl+Z, and press S or hold down the right mouse button to see the original again.

Pictures it opens

JPEG, PNG, WebP, BMP, AVIF and SVG files; on Windows also TIFF in Batch mode, and HEIC / HEIF photos from iPhones and many recent phones (see HEIC photos). It saves JPEG, PNG and WebP files, and SVG files for vector results.

FotoSketcher Studio runs on Windows 8 or later (64-bit) and on macOS 10.14 or later (Apple Silicon and Intel Macs).

What's new in 4.70

Classic Painters

Twelve painters, from Van Gogh to Canaletto, each repainting your photo in their own style, with real paint relief. More

3.98 paintings are back

Palette knife, Impressionist, Watercolor 3 and Brushstrokes 3, exactly as in FotoSketcher 3.98, but much faster. More

New effects

Crosshatch 2, Palette transfer, Line halftone, Abstract and Modern art.

Smart eraser

Paint over a thing in the picture and it is gone, the surroundings filled in. More

Pause

Esc or the Pause button stops an effect for a moment: stop it, save the picture so far, or carry on. More

Same result every time

A random seed makes effects repeatable. More

Text and watermark

Rotate, fade, apply or remove them right on the picture. More

Advanced settings

One window for saving options, SVG, the processor cores and the add-ons. More

More pictures and brushes

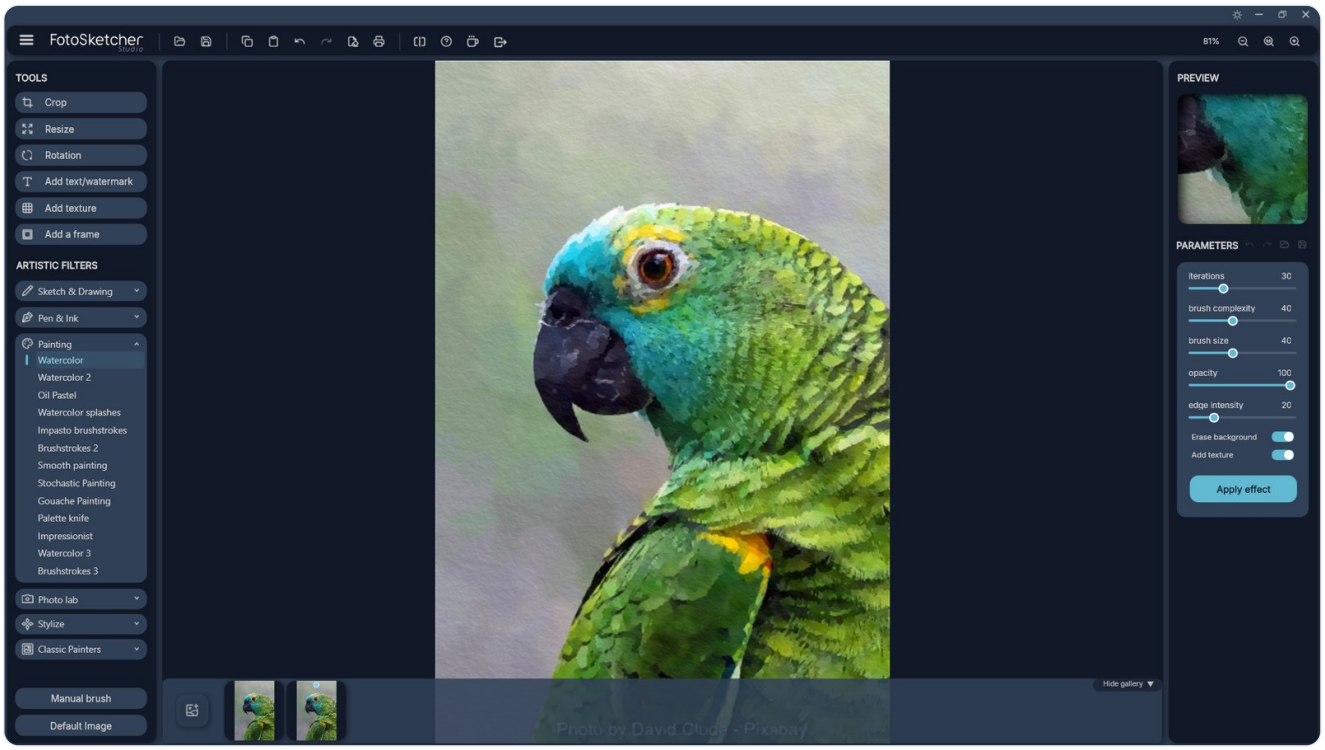
HEIC photos, AVIF pictures, Affinity brush sets. 17 new example scripts.

Also new

Clear the canvas (Ctrl+N), a colour picker that takes colours from the screen, a results folder for Batch mode, and Home to centre the picture.

Every effect is also slightly crisper than in 4.60: pictures are now used exactly as they are opened, pasted or framed.

The main window



The main window, with Watercolor applied to the sample picture.

Top bar
The menu, then Open, Save, Copy, Paste, Undo, Redo, Clear the canvas, Print, Split view, Help, Coffee and Close. The zoom level and zoom buttons are on the right.

Left panel
TOOLS (Crop, Resize, Rotation, Add text/watermark, Add texture, Add a frame), then the six categories under **ARTISTIC FILTERS**. **Manual brush** and **Default Image** are at the bottom.

Centre
Your picture, called the canvas. The history gallery runs along the bottom.

Right panel
The **PREVIEW**, the five sliders of the effect, its switches and the **Apply effect** button.

Click a category to open it; the panel scrolls so its whole list shows. **Default Image** brings back the sample parrot picture.

The menu

Click the three lines at the top left, or press F10. It has three groups: **FILE**, **EDIT** and **HELP**, with each command's shortcut beside it. From the keyboard, the arrow keys move between items, Enter chooses and Esc closes.

Some commands are only in the menu: **Auto-enhance** (E), which corrects the light and colours of a photo in one click, **Advanced settings** (A), **Language** (Ctrl+L) and **Check for update** (U).

Light and dark

Click the sun or moon at the top right, or press M, to switch between the dark and light looks. Your choice and your language are remembered.

Interface size (Windows)

Press Z to make the whole interface smaller or larger, from 50% to 150%. It helps on very high-resolution screens. It changes the size of the panels and text, not the zoom on your picture.

Using the keyboard

Tab and Shift+Tab move through the controls of the window or panel that is open; the selected control is circled in blue, and Enter uses it. In an open category, the arrow keys move through the effects. Esc closes the window that is open.

Opening and saving

Opening a picture

- **Open** (Ctrl+O), in the top bar or the menu.
- Drop a picture file on the window.
- **Paste from clipboard** (Ctrl+V), for a screenshot for instance.

HEIC photos (Windows)

The first time you open a HEIC or HEIF photo, FotoSketcher Studio offers a small free add-on (about 1 MB) that reads them. Click **Download**, and the photo opens. You can also download or remove it in the Advanced settings. HEIC photos can be opened, not saved: save your result as JPEG, PNG or WebP.

AVIF pictures need Microsoft's free *AV1 Video Extension* on Windows, and macOS 13 or later on a Mac.

Saving your work

Press Ctrl+S or click the Save icon. The name offered is the original name followed by `_FS` (you can change this in the Advanced settings). Choose JPEG, PNG or WebP; SVG is offered too when the picture is a vector result (see Vectorize). Ctrl+C copies the picture.

> Save as PNG if you will work on the picture again: JPEG loses a little quality each time it is saved.

Saving the sliders

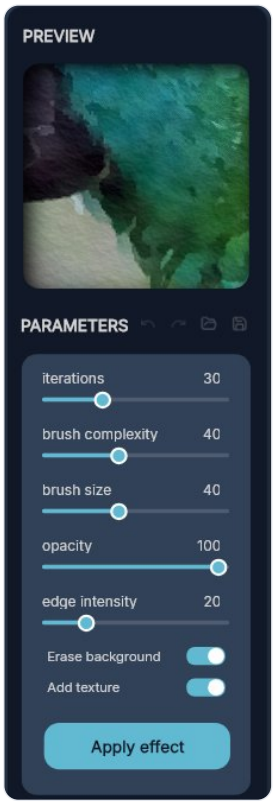
The folder icons next to **PARAMETERS** save and load the slider settings of every effect, in a `.fsk` file. Files from FotoSketcher 3.x open too: their settings are turned into the nearest FotoSketcher Studio effects.

Moving around the picture

Zoom	Turn the mouse wheel: the picture zooms around the pointer. Ctrl+ + and Ctrl+ - (or + and -) also zoom. Ctrl+ 0 shows the picture at 100%, Ctrl+ F fits it in the window. From 10% to 1000%; the zoom level shows at the top right.
Move	When zoomed in, drag the picture with the left mouse button.
Centre	Click the mouse wheel on the picture, or press Home, to bring it back to the middle. The zoom does not change.
Full screen	Double-click the picture. Esc comes back.
The original	Hold down the right mouse button on the picture to see the original for a moment.

Applying effects

Open a category on the left and click an effect. Its sliders appear on the right, and the preview shows the effect on part of your picture.



The right panel

Click the preview for a larger view.

The arrows next to **PARAMETERS** undo and redo your slider changes; the folder icons load and save them.

Double-click a slider to put it back to its default.

Apply effect paints the whole picture. A progress bar shows how far it has got.

> More iterations or a higher quality give finer results but take longer. Try low values first, then raise them for the final picture.

Erase background

When **Erase background** is on, the effect starts from a blank white sheet. When it is off, the effect is drawn over the picture already there: a pen drawing over a watercolour, for instance. Most drawings and paintings offer it; where it does not apply, the switch is greyed.

Add texture

When **Add texture** is on, a texture is laid over the result: the canvas at first, then the last texture you chose with Add texture.

Pausing an effect

While an effect is being applied, press `Esc` or click the **Pause** button next to the progress bar at the top. Then choose:

Interrupt processing	Stops the effect (or press `Enter`).
Save current image	Saves the picture as it is now.
Resume processing	Carries on (or press `Esc` again, or close the window).

In Batch mode and with the Manual brush, Esc still stops at once.

Same result every time

Many effects contain an element of chance, so each run is slightly different. To get the same result every time, right-click the **PARAMETERS** heading and type a number in the **Random seed** box. Empty the box to go back to automatic. The seed is remembered, and is also in the Advanced settings. In scripts, use `SEED`.

> Impasto brushstrokes and Smooth painting are not exactly repeatable, even with a seed.

Sketch & Drawing

Five effects that imitate pencil and pen drawing. The number and name after each effect are those used in scripts.



Pencil Sketch 1 `100 PencilSketch1`

A classic pencil sketch: the edges of the photo drawn as dark strokes on light paper.

Edge threshold	Lower values find more edges.
Edge darkness	How dark the strokes are.
Brightness	The brightness of the whole sketch.
Contrast	Between the strokes and the paper.
Colour intensity	Above zero, the sketch takes the photo's colours.

> For graphite, keep colour at zero and the edge threshold around 20. For coloured pencil, try a colour intensity of 50 to 80.



Pencil Sketch 2 `101 PencilSketch2`

A sketch built from many random strokes, with visible hatching.

Min / Max stroke size	The shortest and longest strokes.
Number of strokes	How dense the sketch is.
Colour intensity	How much of the photo's colour is used.
Quality	Higher values place the strokes more carefully.

> Works especially well with portraits. Try about 30 strokes with a maximum stroke size of 40.



Pencil Sketch 3 `102 PencilSketch3`

Smooth, flowing pencil strokes that follow the shapes in the picture.

Iterations	The number of passes.
Stroke length	The length of the strokes.
Blending	How much the strokes blend together.
Contrast	The tonal contrast.
Colour intensity	Adds the photo's colour above zero.

> For a soft, dreamy look, raise blending to about 50. For sharper strokes, lower blending and lengthen the strokes.



Crosshatch `103 Crosshatch`

Shading built up with layers of fine crossed lines, densest in the dark areas, like a classic pen drawing.

Density	How closely the lines are packed.
Contours	The strength of the outlines drawn over the hatching.
Contrast	From soft and even to strong light and shade.
Stroke length	The length of the hatching strokes.
Line weight	The thickness of the pen lines.

> Suits portraits and buildings with clear light and shade. Raise Contours for a bolder ink look.



Crosshatch 2 `104 Crosshatch2`

Pen hatching in colour: the lines stay dark while the hatching takes the photo's colours. The lines wobble like a hand-drawn line and stop at the outlines.

Colour intensity	How much of the photo's colour the hatching takes.
Line strength	How dark the pen lines are.
Shading	How much shading the hatching builds up.
Hatch spacing	Lower values give denser hatching.
Roughness	From steady lines to loose, hand-drawn ones.

Pen & Ink

Ink drawings, dots and printed looks.

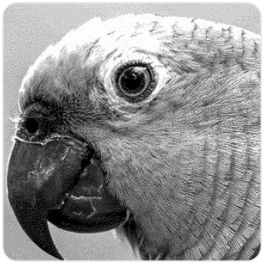


Black & White `200 BlackAndWhite`

A striking black-and-white ink rendering with strong contrast.

Level of details	How much fine detail is kept.
Lighten / Darken	Below 50 darkens, above 50 lightens.
Simplification	Smooths away small details first.

> For dramatic portraits, try a high level of detail with a little darkening.

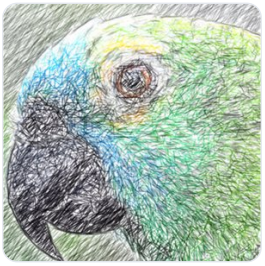


Stippling `201 Stippling`

The picture drawn with thousands of small dots, in black or in colour.

Darkening	The overall density of dots.
Dot size	At 0, single pixels; higher values give round dots up to eight pixels wide.
Colour	0: black dots; 50: the picture's colours; 100: twice as saturated.

> Works best with clear light and shade, such as side-lit portraits or buildings.



Felt-tip pen `202 FeltTipPen`

Bold felt-tip marker strokes that follow a direction.

Stroke density	How many strokes are placed.
Stroke opacity	How transparent each stroke is.
Stroke length / width	The size of each stroke.
Edge intensity	The strength of the dark outlines.

> For a bold poster look, use a high edge intensity with a moderate density.



Comic print `203 ComicPrint`

A comic book or pop art print, with printed dot patterns and bold outlines.

Dot spacing	Lower values give a finer pattern.
Min dot size	Larger values add dots in the light areas.
Max dot size	Larger values give bolder dark areas.
Colour intensity	0 gives black and white.
Contours	The thickness and strength of the black outlines.



Ballpoint pen `204 BallpointPen`

Short, thin ballpoint strokes layered to build up the shading. Detail is kept even in dark photos.

Line thickness	The thickness of the strokes.
Edge intensity	The strength of the strokes along the outlines.
Darkening	The overall darkness of the shading.
Density	How many strokes are laid down.
Precision	Lower values give a quick, loose sketch.

Painting

From loose watercolour washes to thick oil paint.

> Palette knife, Impressionist, Watercolor 3 and Brushstrokes 3 are FotoSketcher 3.98's Painting 4, 10, 1 and 7: the same settings give the same picture, several times faster.



Watercolor `300 Watercolor`

Soft, flowing watercolour made of overlapping strokes.

Iterations	The number of passes; about 30 is a good start.
Brush complexity	How varied the strokes are.
Brush size	Larger brushes give a looser look.
Opacity	Lower values give a more transparent, luminous result.
Edge intensity	Darker edges around shapes; 10 to 30 is usually enough.

> Suits landscapes and flowers. Try brush size 40, full opacity and edge intensity 20.



Watercolor 2 `301 Watercolor2`

Colour spreads out from many points like wet paint, in soft blended washes. Looser than Watercolor.

Density	Higher values give more detail, lower values broader washes.
Region threshold	How far each colour spreads.
Brightness	The brightness of the result.
Edge intensity	Dark outlines around shapes.
Saturation	Higher values give more vivid colours.



Oil Pastel `302 OilPastel`

Textured pastel strokes with a hand-made look.

Min / Max brush size	The smallest and largest brushes.
Iterations	The number of passes.
Quality	Higher values place each stroke more carefully, but take longer.
Opacity	The opacity of each stroke.

> For a loose, impressionistic look, leave a wide gap between the min and max brush size. Accepts custom brushes.



Watercolor splashes `303 WatercolorSplashes`

Watercolour brush marks that follow the direction of the shapes.

Min / Max brush size	The smallest and largest splashes.
Iterations	The number of passes.
Quality	Higher values place strokes more precisely.
Opacity	The opacity of the strokes.

> Suits landscapes with a strong direction, such as rivers or clouds. Accepts custom brushes.



Impasto brushstrokes `304 ImpastoBrushstrokes`

Thick, textured oil paint brushwork.

Min / Max brush size	The smallest and largest strokes.
Iterations	The number of passes.
Quality	Higher values place strokes more precisely.
Opacity	The opacity of the strokes.

> Try a max brush size around 50 with many iterations and full opacity. Accepts custom brushes.



Brushstrokes 2 `305 Brushstrokes2`

A looser, more expressive brushstroke painting.

Brush size	Larger values give bolder strokes, smaller ones keep more detail.
Iterations	More passes add detail and coverage.
Abstraction	Higher values move further from the photo.
Saturation	Higher values give more vivid colours.
Opacity	The opacity of each stroke.



Smooth painting `306 SmoothPainting`

A clean, polished painting with precisely placed strokes.

Max brush size	The size of the strokes.
Iterations	The number of passes.

> Works well for portraits. Start with a max brush size around 35.



Stochastic Painting `307 StochasticPainting`

Thousands of randomly placed, overlapping strokes.

Min / Max brush size	The smallest and largest brushes.
Iterations	The number of passes.
Precision	Lower values give more abstract results.
Opacity	The opacity of the strokes.



Gouache Painting `308 GouachePainting`

Thick, opaque paint with a flat, matte finish and bold areas of colour.

Iterations	More passes give thicker coverage; about 70 is a good start.
Brush size	Larger values give a bolder result.
Precision	How closely the strokes follow the photo's colours.
Strength	How visible the brushstrokes are.
Contours	Dark outlines around shapes; about 30 works well.

> Suits landscapes, still life and flowers, and photos that look muddy with the watercolours. Add a light canvas texture afterwards.



Palette knife `309 PaletteKnife`

Thick paint laid on with a knife, in flat, crisp-edged strokes.

Min / Max brush size	The smallest and largest knife strokes.
Iterations	The number of passes.
Opacity	The opacity of each stroke.
Precision	How closely the strokes follow the picture.

> Accepts custom brushes, and has an SVG format switch.



Impressionist `310 Impressionist`

Loose, lively brushstrokes in the spirit of the Impressionists. Strokes stop at strong edges.

Min brush size	The smallest brush.
Iterations	The number of passes.
Abstraction	Higher values give a looser result.
Strength	How pronounced the strokes are.
Saturation	The colour saturation.



Watercolor 3 `311 Watercolor3`

A classic watercolour with soft blending and paper texture.

Blending	How much the colours run into one another.
Edge intensity	The darker edges around shapes.
Iterations	The number of passes.
Brightness	The brightness of the result.
Paper texture	How much paper grain shows.



Brushstrokes 3 `312 Brushstrokes3`

A brushstroke painting mixing small and large strokes.

Min / Max brush size	The smallest and largest brushes.
Iterations	The number of passes.
Edge intensity	The darker edges around shapes.
Precision	How closely the strokes follow the picture.

> Accepts custom brushes.

Photo lab

Photo corrections and photographic looks.



Orton filter `400 OrtonFilter`

A blurred copy blended with the photo, for a soft, glowing, dreamlike look.

Glow radius	The amount of blur in the glow; try 40.
Exposure	The brightness of the glow.
Strength of effect	The mix between the photo and the glow.
Vibrance	Livelier colours.
Darken / Lighten	Shifts the tonal balance.



Adjustments `401 Adjustments`

Basic photo corrections. The middle of each slider leaves the photo unchanged.

Luminosity	The brightness.
Contrast	The tonal contrast.
Vibrance	Livelier colours, gently on colours already strong.
Structure	Brings out fine detail; about 15 is a good start.
Blur / Sharpen	Left blurs, right sharpens.

> Apply Adjustments last, after your artistic effect.



Vintage / Sepia `402 VintageSepia`

The warm, faded tone of an old print.

Colour intensity	At 0, pure sepia; higher values let the colours show.
Strength of effect	How strong the vintage tone is.
Vignette	Darker corners.
Grain	Film grain.
Blur	A slight softening, like an old lens.



Retro film `403 RetroFilm`

The colours and grain of an old film photograph.

Saturation	The colour saturation.
Warmth	Warmer colours.
Contrast	The tonal contrast.
Grain	Film grain.
Vignette	Darker corners.



LUTs `404 LUTs`

A colour grading preset (a LUT), as photographers and film-makers use. Click **Select LUT...** to pick one of the 18 built-in presets or load your own `.cube` file.

Intensity	How strongly the LUT is applied.
Luminosity	The brightness.
Contrast	The tonal contrast.
Blur / Sharpen	Left blurs, right sharpens.
Saturation	The colour saturation.

Built-in presets: Architecture, Blues, Cinematic, Cinematic saturation, Cyan skies, Film print, Film tone 1, Film tone 2, Golden hour, HDR, HDR natural, Kodachrome, Monochrome artistic, Monochrome balanced, Monochrome vintage, Portrait, Rich colors, Vibrant light.



Denoise `405 Denoise`

Cleans up noisy, grainy or slightly blurred photos.

Despeckle	Removes stray specks and coloured dots, keeping thin lines.
Noise reduction	Smooths grain in flat areas such as skies and skin, keeping edges sharp.
Detail preservation	Higher values keep more texture but remove less noise.
Colour noise	Smooths coloured speckles.
Unblur	Restores sharpness lost to a slight blur.

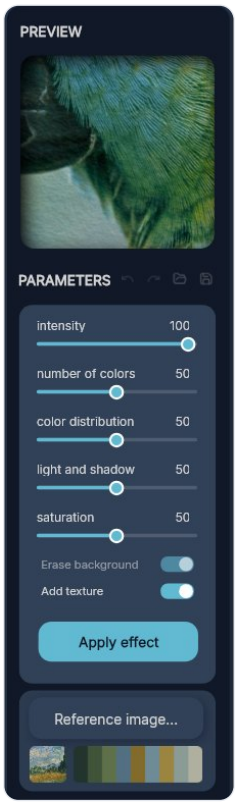
> Apply Denoise before an artistic effect on a grainy photo.



Palette transfer `406 PaletteTransfer`

Gives your photo the colours of another picture, a painting for instance. Click **Reference image...** under the sliders to choose that picture; it is shown under the button with the colours found in it. Until you choose one, Van Gogh's *Wheat Field with Cypresses* is used (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Open Access).

Intensity	How strongly the colours are changed.
Number of colors	From 2 to 16 colours taken from the reference.
Color distribution	0: each colour moves to the nearest one of the palette; 100: the palette's colours take the shares they have in the reference.
Light and shadow	Takes on the reference's spread of light and dark.
Saturation	The colour saturation.



The Palette transfer panel. The reference you choose is kept until you close the program.

Stylize

Graphic designs: mosaics, cartoons, patterned tiles, vector illustrations and abstract compositions.



Mosaic `500 Mosaic`

The picture rebuilt from small round dots of colour, packed together.

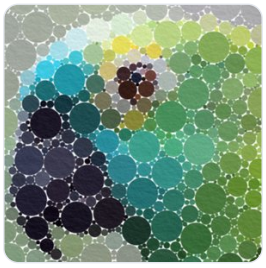
Iterations	More passes fill the picture more completely.
Min / Max dot size	The smallest and largest dots.
Colour tolerance	Lower values follow the photo's colours more closely.
Quality	Higher values give a finer result but take longer.



Cartoon `501 Cartoon`

Flat areas of colour with ink outlines.

Smoothing	How much the colours are flattened.
Edge detail	Higher values outline smaller details.
Edge darkness	How dark the outlines are.
Colour intensity	The strength of the colours.
Edge thickness	The thickness of the outlines.



Circles `502 Circles`

The picture rebuilt from overlapping circles of colour.

Iterations	More passes fill the picture more completely.
Min / Max disc size	The smallest and largest circles.
Colour tolerance	Lower values follow the photo's colours more closely.
Quality	Higher values give a finer result.



Triangles `503 Triangles`

The picture rebuilt from triangles of colour, for a faceted look.

Iterations	More passes fill the picture more completely.
Min / Max triangle size	The smallest and largest triangles.
Colour tolerance	Lower values follow the photo's colours more closely.
Quality	Higher values give a finer result.

> Mosaic, Circles and Triangles have a **Draw shape contours** switch that outlines every shape.



Truchet tiles `504 TruchetTiles`

Small patterned tiles (arcs, diagonals, waves and more) whose lines thicken in the darker areas.

Tile size	From 10 to 150 pixels, whatever the size of the picture.
Line thickness	50 is the tile as designed.
Colour from image	How much of the photo's colour the tiles take.
Contrast	The contrast of the pattern.
Strength of effect	How strongly the tiles replace the photo.

Select tiles... opens a gallery of 17 tile families. Shape the chosen tile with **Shapes per tile** (1 to 8), **Line thickness**, **Curvature** (0 straight, the middle circular arcs, 100 strongly curved), **Solid fill** and **Tiles turned** (0 all the same way up, 100 turned at random). **Save tile set...** and **Load tile set...** keep your tiles in `.fst` files; click **Use these tiles** to go back.



Vectorize `505 Vectorize`

Flat colour shapes with smooth outlines: a true vector illustration that can be saved as an SVG file and enlarged without losing sharpness.

Number of colours	From 2 to 64.
Smoothing	Removes grain before the shapes are drawn.
Minimum detail size	Higher values keep only the large details.
Contour simplification	How much the outlines are simplified.
Curvature	0: straight-sided shapes; 100: flowing curves.

Saving as SVG

Choose **SVG vector image (*.svg)** in the Save dialog. It is offered while the picture on screen is the vector result: any later effect, text, frame, texture or blend removes it (resizing and rotating do not). Above 100% zoom, the shapes stay perfectly sharp.

The **Contours only (SVG)** switch draws outlines only, with no fill, for cutting machines and plotters. Their colour and width are in the Advanced settings. For filled shapes with outlines in one SVG, combine a Contours only result with a filled result of the same picture, in Normal or Multiply mode.

Palette knife, Line halftone and Abstract have an **SVG format** switch: when it is on, their result can be saved as SVG too.



Line halftone `506 LineHalftone`

Parallel lines that thicken in the dark areas, like an engraving or a banknote.

Line spacing	From about 3 to 40 pixels.
Angle	The direction of the lines, 0 to 180 degrees.
Flow	0: straight lines; higher values bend them along the shapes.
Waves	Makes the lines undulate.
Colour	0: black on white; 100: the photo's colours.



Abstract `507 Abstract`

Flat areas of colour crossed by long straight lines, for an abstract composition.

Abstraction	Higher values merge areas into fewer, larger ones.
Minimum detail size	Higher values make small details disappear.
Contour simplification	Higher values give straighter, more angular edges.
Diversity	Low values keep the photo's colours; high values use freer ones.
Number of cuts	The straight lines crossing the picture: none at 0, up to 3 in the first half of the slider, up to 40 at the top.



Modern art `508 ModernArt`

A cubist-style picture: the photo broken into angular areas and painted with brushstrokes. Its sliders are those of the Classic Painters.

Classic Painters

Twelve painters, each repainting your photo in their own style. The strokes follow the shapes in your photo, each painter has brushes of their own, and the paint has real relief. You can watch the canvas being painted.



Classic oil
Flowing strokes in the photo's own colours.



Van Gogh
Thick paint and swirling skies.



Monet
Short dabs of colour side by side.



Cézanne
Patches of colour in parallel strokes.



Seurat
Small dots of pure colour.



Rembrandt
Dark, warm tones with bright highlights.



Sargent
Broad, flat strokes laid once.



Turner
A golden haze of transparent colour.



Gauguin
Flat areas of pure colour on coarse canvas.



Renoir
Soft warm skin, blue-green shadows, feathery strokes.



Hopper
Hard warm light against cool shadow.



Canaletto
Clear light, flowing brushwork, crisp fine touches.

Close-ups at full size, with the Colour slider at 75 and Relief at 60, so the differences show.

In scripts: 600 `ClassicOil`, 601 `VanGogh`, 602 `Monet`, 603 `Cezanne`, 604 `Seurat`, 605 `Rembrandt`, 606 `Sargent`, 607 `Turner`, 608 `Gauguin`, 609 `Renoir`, 610 `Hopper`, 611 `Canaletto`.

The sliders

Every painter has the same five sliders. The default settings give each painter's intended look.

Brush size	Makes all of the painter's brushes smaller or larger.
Level of details	Higher values give finer brushwork, low values a loose, broad painting. Little changes above about 70.
Colour	50 is the painter's palette as designed. Above 50 the colours are stronger and more vivid, below 50 weaker and duller.
Relief	The thickness of the paint, from flat (0) to very thick (100).
Canvas texture	How much canvas weave shows: none at 0, double at 100.

> On large pictures, the Classic Painters take longer than most effects. They leave one or two processor cores free so your computer stays responsive.

> Try several painters on the same photo and compare them in the history gallery.

Manual brush and Smart eraser

Paint an effect onto parts of the picture only, or erase things from it.

1. Choose the effect to paint with and set its sliders.
2. Click **Manual brush** at the bottom of the left panel. The pointer becomes a circle.
3. Drag over the picture. A pink overlay shows where the effect will go; it is applied when you release the mouse button.
4. Click the cross on the brush panel, or press Esc, to finish.



Size: the diameter of the brush.
Softness: 0 gives a hard edge; higher values fade it.
Opacity: how strongly each stroke applies the effect.
Smart eraser: erases instead of painting.

Pressing Ctrl just after the click moves the picture instead of painting.

> Paint a pencil sketch over parts of a colour photo, or an Orton filter glow on the background of a portrait.

Smart eraser

Turn on **Smart eraser** and paint over something you want gone: a passer-by, a sign, a wire. When you release the button, it disappears and the surroundings are filled in.

- Paint over the whole thing, its shadow included.
- Lines crossing the area (a roof line, the horizon, the edge of a wall) are carried on across it; textures such as water and foliage stay sharp.
- A thin stroke along a pole or a wire takes what lies beside it.
- If a trace remains, paint over it again: each new stroke also redraws the earlier ones close to it.
- What you erase is erased from the original too, so it does not come back when you apply another effect.

Softness and opacity do not apply while the eraser is on.

> **Optional add-on (Windows, 64-bit, free, 29 MB).** A small neural network that first works out what lies behind the thing erased, so that edges going on behind it stay straight and in place. It is offered the first time you turn the eraser on; you can download or remove it at any time in the Advanced settings. Everything runs on your computer; nothing is sent anywhere.

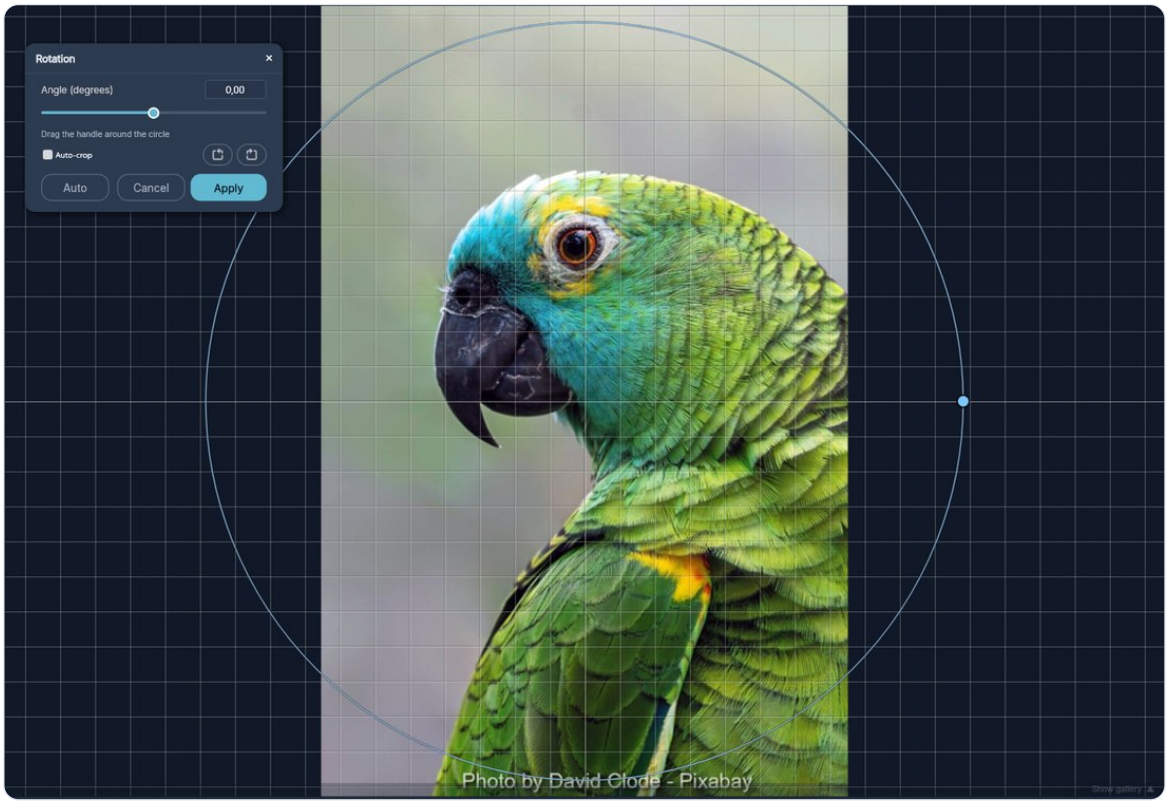
Crop, rotate, resize, text

Crop

Click **Crop**. Drag the edges or corners of the frame, then press Enter or click the check mark to crop; Esc or the cross cancels. The size of the frame shows at the bottom right.

Rotation

Click **Rotation** or press F. A circle appears on the picture.

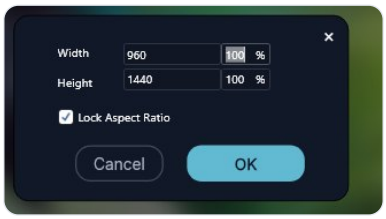


The Rotation window, with the circle and its handle drawn on the picture.

The handle	Drag it around the circle to turn the picture.
Angle (degrees)	Type an exact angle, to a hundredth of a degree, or use the slider.
Quarter-turn buttons	Turn the picture a quarter left or right (or press L and R). The fine angle you set is kept.
Auto	Straightens the picture by finding its main lines.
Auto-crop	On: the picture is cropped so no empty corners remain. Off: the picture grows to fit.

Click **Apply** to keep the rotation, or **Cancel**.

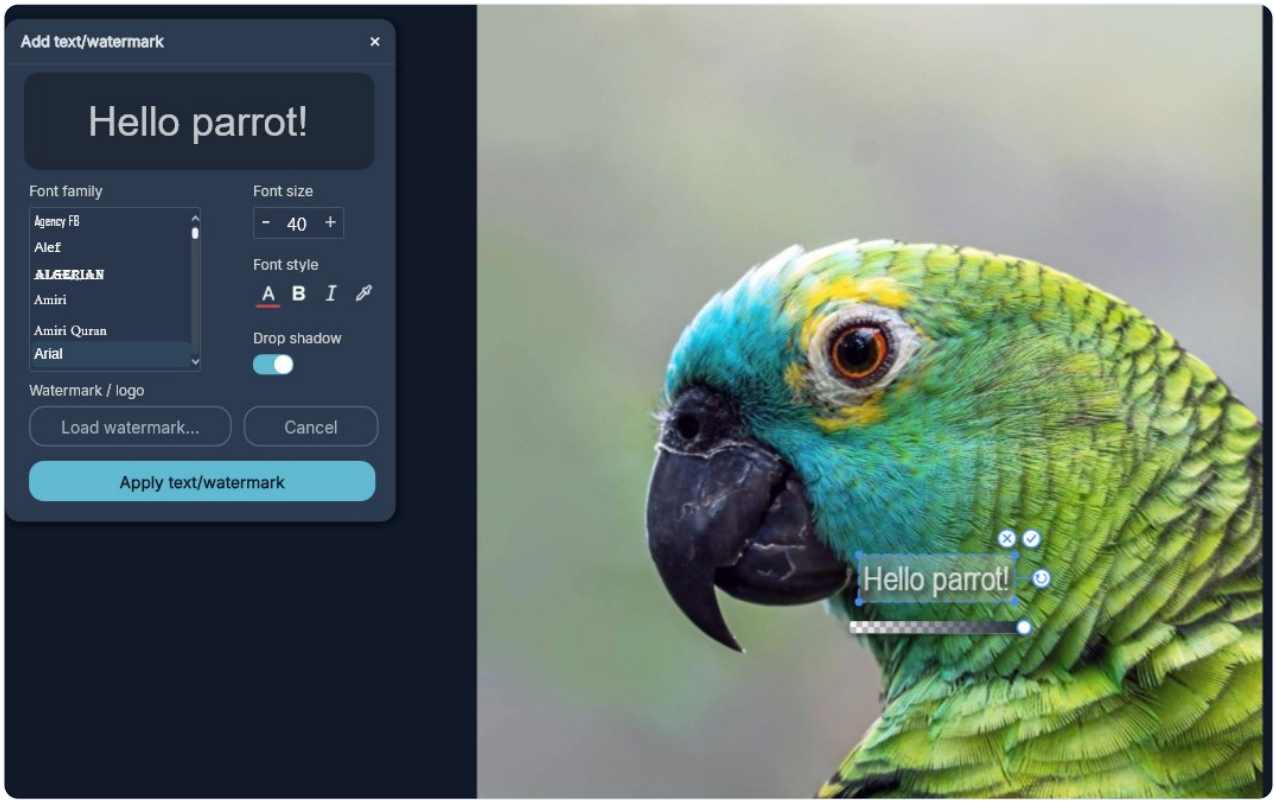
Resize



Click **Resize** or press Ctrl+R. Type the size in pixels or in percent. With **Lock Aspect Rat** the width and height change together.

Text and watermark

Click **Add text/watermark** and type your text in the box at the top of the window. A text box appears on the picture.



The text window, and the text on the picture with its handles.

Font family	Any font installed on your computer.
Font size	The **-** and **+** buttons, or drag a corner of the text box.
Font style	Colour, bold and italic. The pipette takes a colour from anywhere on the screen.
Drop shadow	Keeps the text readable on busy backgrounds.

Click **Load watermark...** to place a picture, such as a PNG logo with a transparent background. Drag it to move it; drag a corner to resize it. The first click brings back the last watermark you used, at the same place and size; click again to choose another file. Text and watermark can be applied together.

On the picture, the text box and the watermark both have:

Rotation handle	Drag to rotate (hold Shift for 15° steps); double-click to straighten.
Opacity bar	Drag to fade the text or watermark.
Check mark and cross	Apply, or remove.
Arrow keys	Move the box (with Shift, ten times as far).

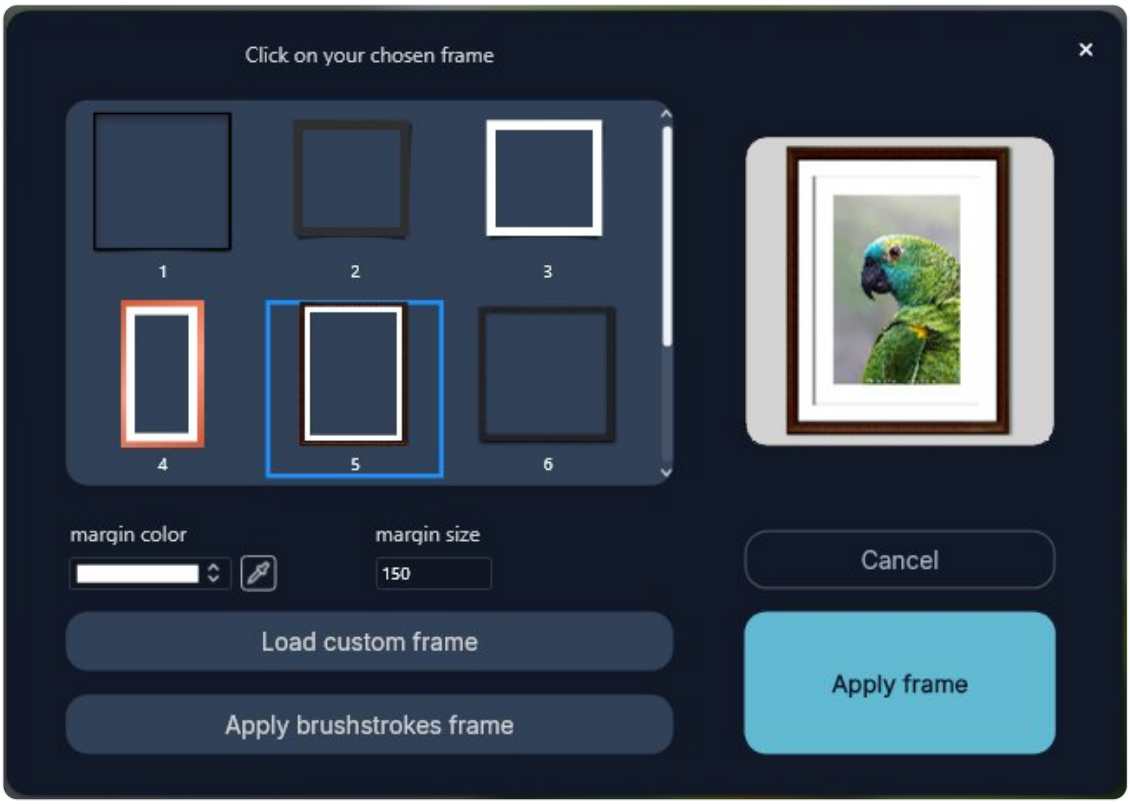
> To put the same watermark on many pictures, use the `WATERMARK` script command with Batch mode.

Clear the canvas

Click the page icon in the top bar, or press Ctrl+N, and choose a colour: the result becomes a plain sheet of that colour, the size of your picture. Your original is kept, so an effect applied next (with **Erase background** off) is painted onto that coloured sheet.

Frames, textures, brushes

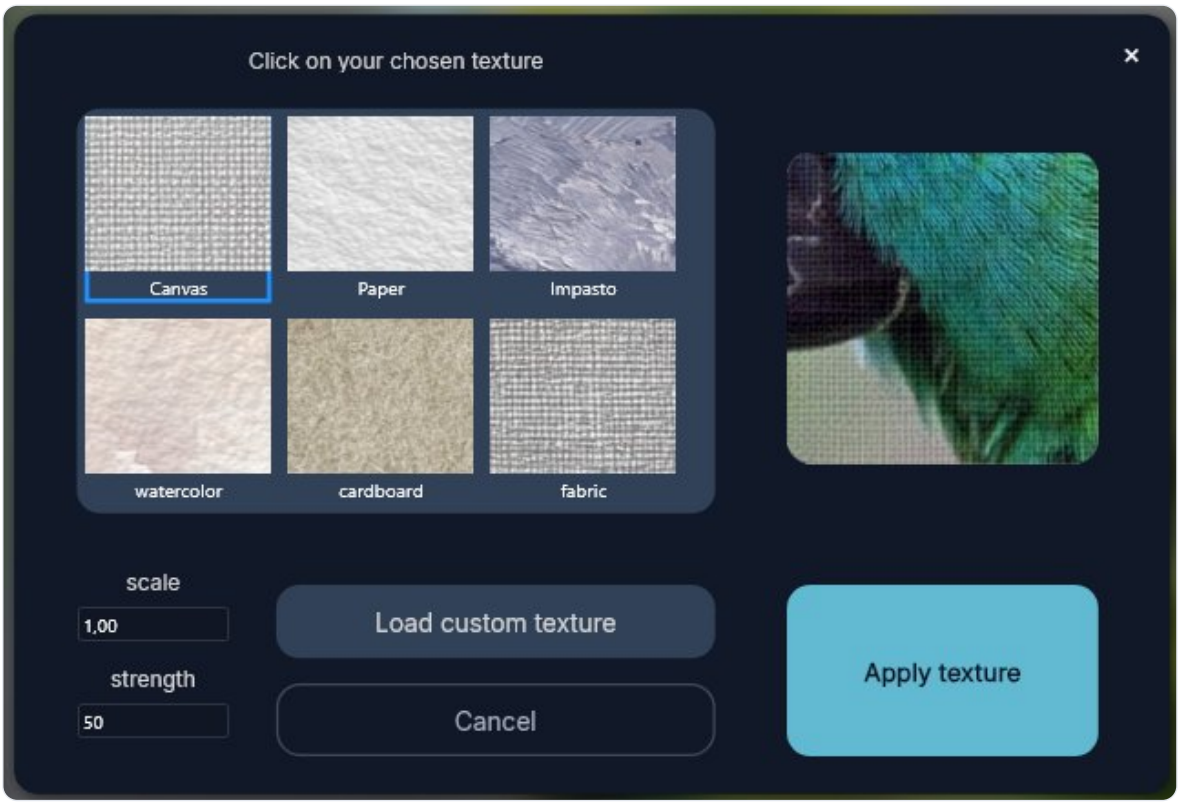
Frames



Click **Add a frame**, click a frame to see it on your picture, then **Apply frame**.

Set the **margin color** and **margin size**, or use **Load custom frame** for your own. **Apply brushstrokes frame** paints a border of textured brushstrokes.

Textures

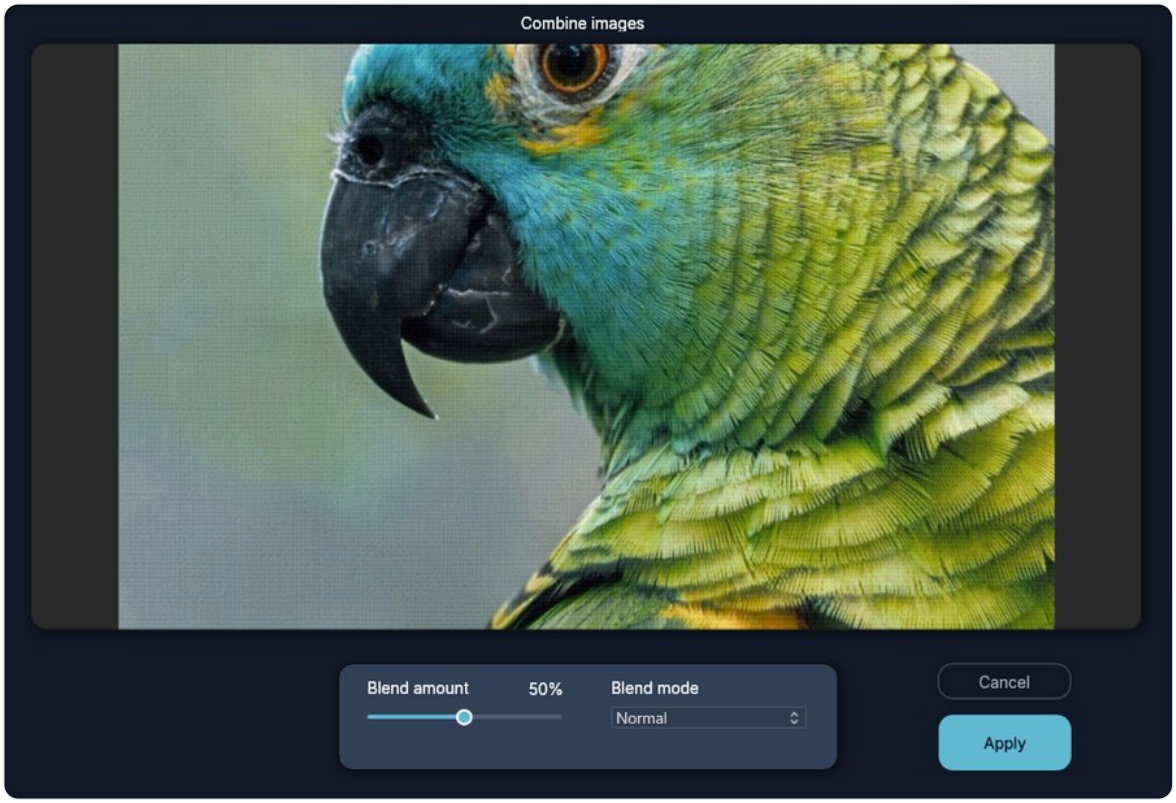


Click **Add texture**, choose a texture, set its **scale** and **strength**, then **Apply texture**.

> A canvas texture over a painting looks remarkably real. Use a strength of 30 to 50.

Combining two pictures

Drag a thumbnail from the history gallery onto the picture, or press F11 to combine the original and the result. Set the **Blend amount** and the **Blend mode** (Normal, Multiply, Darken or Lighten; scripts offer more), then click **Apply**.



The Combine images window.

Custom brushes

With Oil Pastel, Watercolor splashes, Impasto brushstrokes, Palette knife and Brushstrokes 3, click **Load custom brushes** to paint with your own brushes. You can load PNG pictures, ZIP files, Photoshop brush sets (`.abr`) and Affinity brush sets (`.afbrushes`), several at once. Brush sets open in the **Select brushes** window: untick the brushes you don't want and click **OK**; **Save PNGs** saves the selected brushes as PNG files. **Reset brushes** brings back the built-in ones.

History and comparison

Undo and redo

Ctrl + Z undoes, Ctrl + Shift + Z redoes: effects, crops, rotations, text and everything else.

The history gallery



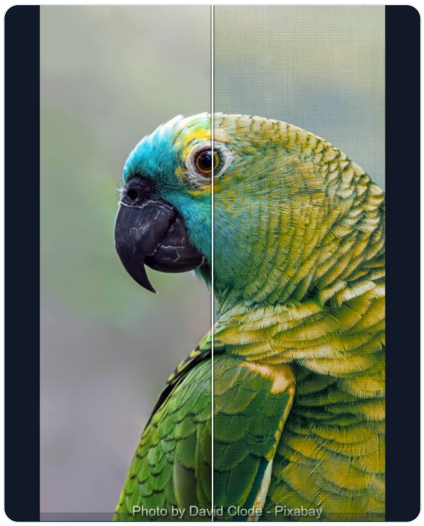
Each step of your work is a thumbnail along the bottom.

- Point at a thumbnail for a larger view.
- Right-click a thumbnail and choose **Set as Source** or **Set as Result** to go back to that step.
- Drag a thumbnail onto the picture to combine the two.
- The button on the left adds pictures from your computer to the gallery.
- **Hide gallery** / **Show gallery**, at the right, folds it away.

Swap

F12 swaps the original and the result, to use the result as a new starting point.

Split view



Press S, or click the split view button in the top bar: the original is on the left of the line result on the right. Drag the line to compare. Press S again to leave.

Batch mode

Apply the current effect, or a script, to many pictures at once. Press Ctrl+B.

1. Add pictures with **Add files...** or **Add folder...** (tick **Include subfolders** for the folders inside), or drop them on the window. **Remove from list** and **Clear** take them off. JPEG, PNG, BMP, WebP, AVIF, TIFF, HEIC and SVG are accepted.
2. By default, the current effect is applied with its current sliders. To run a script instead, use **Load script...** or pick an example script under **Advanced**.
3. Choose where the results go: **Save in the same folder** as each picture, or **Save in this folder:** (type a folder, or click **Choose...**; a folder that does not exist yet is made for you).
4. Click **Start batch**. Esc stops.

Each result gets `_FS` added to its name. JPEG, PNG and WebP keep their format; other pictures are saved as PNG, and vector results as SVG (the format and the suffix can be changed in the Advanced settings). Two results with the same name get `(2)`, `(3)`... A picture that cannot be opened is skipped.

Script mode

A script chains effects, blends, text, textures and frames into one sequence, to run on one picture or on many in Batch mode. Press Ctrl+E to open the Script Editor.

The Script Editor

Write the script in the text area. The **Insert command** buttons on the right add each command with the right syntax. **Open** and **Save as** load and save scripts (`.fss` files), **Run** runs it. While it runs, the editor is minimised so you can watch the picture build up.

- 36 example scripts are built in: open one, run it and adapt it.
- An insert button fills the current line when it is empty, and otherwise adds the command on a new line below.
- **Effect (current)** writes the `EFFECT` line for the effect and sliders now selected: the easiest way to get it right. With a built-in LUT, or with Palette transfer, it writes the line that selects it too.
- Lines starting with `#` are comments. Numbers can be written with a point or a comma (`0.5` or `0,5`).
- **Open** can import several scripts at once, including from a ZIP file.
- **Show Script Help** lists every command.

Commands

Command	What it does
`EFFECT <id> <p1> ... <p5>`	Applies an effect with five slider values. Use the number or the name shown with each effect in this guide (not case-sensitive): `EFFECT 300 30 40 40 100 20` or `EFFECT Watercolor 30 40 40 100 20`.
`RESET`	The next effect takes its colours from the original photo again, painted over the current result.
`CLEAR` / `NOCLEAR`	Erase background on or off for the next effect.
`ENHANCE`	Auto-enhance.
`CANVAS [#RRGGBB]`	Clears the canvas to a plain colour; the next effect (with `NOCLEAR`) paints the photo onto it.
`SAVE <slot>` / `LOAD <slot>`	Keeps the working picture under a name, or brings it back. `src` (the original) and `dst` (the picture when the script started) always exist.
`SWAP`	Swaps the original and the result.
`BLEND <slot> <opacity> [mode]`	Blends a saved picture onto the working one. Modes: normal, multiply, screen, overlay, darken, lighten, softlight, hardlight, difference.
`TEXTURE [#N] [strength scale]`	A texture (#0 is the first).
`FRAME [#N] [margin [#AARRGGBB]]`	A frame (#0 is the first).

Command	What it does
`FRAME brushstrokes <width> [colour] [brush=N]`	A border of brushstrokes.
`FONT <name> <size> [style] [colour]`	The font of the following `TEXT` lines. Put names with spaces in quotes.
`TEXT <x> <y> '<text>' [options]`	Writes text, at pixels or percentages (`50% 50%` is the centre). Options: `size=`, `color=`, `font=`, `style=`, `shadow=on|off`.
`WATERMARK <x> <y> "<file>" [width=] [alpha=]`	Places a picture. Width in pixels or percent of the picture width (25% by default); alpha 0 to 100.
`RESIZE <width> <height>`	In pixels or percent.
`SEED <n>` / `SEED AUTO`	The same seed gives the same result. Ends with the script.
`SVG PATHS [#RRGGBB] [width]` / `SVG FILLS`	Outlines only, or filled shapes, for the next Vectorize. Vectorize must be the last step that changes the picture (`RESIZE` is allowed).
`ANTIALIASING ON|OFF`	Smooth or hard pixel edges in saved SVG files.
`CONTOUR ON [colour]` / `CONTOUR OFF`	The Draw shape contours switch of Mosaic, Circles and Triangles.
`LUT_FILE <path>` / `LUT_EMBEDDED <name>`	The LUT used by `EFFECT 404`: a `.cube` file, or a built-in one by name.
`PALETTE_FILE <picture>` / `PALETTE_EMBEDDED`	The reference picture of Palette transfer (`EFFECT 406`), or the built-in one.
`TRUCHET_SET <file>` / `TRUCHET_TILE ...`	The tile used by `EFFECT 504`: from a `.fst` tile set (`TRUCHET_TILE #N`), or described as `<family> <bands> <weight> <curve> <fill> <jitter> [seed]`.

Examples

Two watercolours blended, with text, a brushstrokes frame and a texture:

```
# Watercolour, kept, then blended with a second one
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 #FFFFFFFF
TEXT 50% 98% 'My Art' shadow=on
FRAME brushstrokes 20 #FFFFFFFF
TEXTURE #2 30 1
```

Filled shapes and outlines in one SVG:

```
RESET
SVG PATHS #000000
EFFECT Vectorize 30 15 50 35 35
SAVE outlines
RESET
SVG FILLS
EFFECT Vectorize 30 15 50 35 35
BLEND outlines 100 multiply
```

A Van Gogh that comes out the same every time:

```
RESET
SEED 1234
EFFECT VanGogh 40 60 50 50 50
```

Advanced settings

Settings that do not change the picture on screen. Open them from the menu, or press A. Each row has an info icon that explains it, and every value is remembered.

Setting	What it does
JPEG / WebP quality	1 to 100; 90 by default. Used by Save and Batch mode.
Resolution (dpi)	Written into JPEG and PNG files; 300 by default.
File name suffix	Added to the name of saved pictures; `_FS` by default. `{effect}` puts in the effect's name and `{parameters}` its slider values.
Batch output format	Same as source, JPEG, PNG or WebP. Vector results are always SVG.
Antialiasing when saving SVG	On by default. Off gives hard pixel edges, for pixel art.
Open SVG files at	Automatic, 1024, 2048 or 4096 pixels, the original size, or a size of your own.
Contours only: colour and line width	For the Contours only (SVG) switch of Vectorize. Empty colour: each outline keeps its shape's colour.
Check for updates at start-up	On by default.
Seed	The random seed; empty for automatic.
Processor cores used by the effects	Automatic uses all but one or two, so the computer stays responsive.
Smart eraser add-on	Download or remove the Smart eraser add-on (Windows).
HEIC photos add-on	Download or remove the add-on that opens HEIC photos (Windows).

Printing

Press Ctrl + P. Choose the **Printer** (the gear icon sets it up), **Landscape** or portrait, the **Scaling** (Best Fit, Stretch to Fill or Original Size), the **Image DPI** for Original Size (300 is usual for photos) and the **Margin** in millimetres. The paper preview shows the result.

Keyboard shortcuts

Keys	Action
Ctrl + O	Open a picture
Ctrl + S	Save
Ctrl + C / Ctrl + V	Copy / paste the picture
Ctrl + P	Print
Ctrl + Z / Ctrl + Shift + Z	Undo / redo
Ctrl + N	Clear the canvas
Ctrl + R	Resize
Ctrl + B	Batch mode
Ctrl + E	Script Editor
Ctrl + L	Language
Ctrl + Q	Quit
Ctrl + Shift + N	Reset everything to the defaults (right-clicking the Close button does it too, after asking)
Ctrl + + / Ctrl + -, + / -	Zoom in / out
Ctrl + 0	Picture at 100%
Ctrl + F	Fit the picture in the window
Home	Centre the picture
F1	This help
F2	About FotoSketcher
F10	Menu
F11	Combine the original and the result
F12	Swap the original and the result
A	Advanced settings
E	Auto-enhance
F	Rotation
L / R	Quarter turn left / right
S	Split view
M	Light or dark look
Z	Interface size (Windows)

Keys	Action
U	Check for updates
C	Buy the author a coffee
Tab / Shift+Tab	Next / previous control
Enter	Confirm
Esc	While an effect is applied: pause it. Otherwise: cancel or close
Arrow keys	In an open category: move through the effects. With text or a watermark being placed: move it (Shift: ten times as far)
Mouse wheel	Zoom around the pointer
Wheel click	Centre the picture
Drag	Move the picture when zoomed in
Right button held	Show the original
Double-click	Full screen

Tips and questions

- **Large pictures take longer.** Make them smaller (Ctrl+R) before slow effects.
- **Layer effects.** For example Adjustments, then a painting, then a texture or a frame.
- **Clean noisy photos first** with Denoise.

The result differs a little from the preview.

The preview shows only part of the picture, at a lower resolution.

An effect is taking too long.

Press Esc, then **Interrupt processing**. Next time, make the picture smaller first.

I want to go back to the original photo.

Press Ctrl+Z until you are there, or right-click the first thumbnail of the history gallery and choose **Set as Source**.

The same settings give a slightly different result each time.

Set a random seed.

SVG is not offered in the Save dialog.

SVG is offered only while the picture is a vector result, before any further effect, text, frame, texture or blend.

The picture is no longer in the middle.

Press Home or click the mouse wheel on it.

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Buy me a coffee

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