Software Review: Two from AKVIS

By Tanya Mattson, Computer Users of Erie

I reviewed two pieces of software from AKVIS: Chameleon, which is a photo collage creation application and Artwork, which turns photos into works of art. Both can be stand-alone or Photoshop plug-ins.

AKVIS Chameleon

To use Chameleon as a stand-alone, you open the program and then open an image (as a plug-in one opens their photo editing program, then the desired image, then filter, akvis, then Chameleon (Artwork works the same way – just choose Artwork). Once the image and the program is open, you can make a selection, copy it (to the clipboard) one goes to Grab Fragment from the Filter menu. Next, open a second image and both images will be visible in the 'Before' tab.

Quick note: Chameleon gives you four different kinds of 'effects', or modes.

In Montage mode, both images are combined. The second image is edited to the top of the background (first image).

In Chameleon mode the software smoothes the borders and adjust the color along the second image into the background or first image. In this mode the color of the second image will change to the background image.

The Blend mode takes the process further. It smoothes boarders, adjusts the color and it makes your second image semi-transparent. Texture from the background will show through your second image.

And finally the Emersion mode is sort of like the Montage mode, the difference being that the second image is not on top of the background but it embeds it with only certain parts being visible.

In all of the modes, the opacity of your pasted image can be 25%, 50%, 75%, or 100%.

The Before and After tabs in the Chameleon Image window let you go back and forth from the image area and the end result.

Using Chameleon was fun. It can be used to extract an object such as a tree, person, etc. from one photo and insert it into the the the other.

Now some screen shots:

This first one is the Before image:

End result:

An example of the Blend mode:

AKVIS ArtWork

  This plug-incan transform photos into paintings using various techniques. They are Oil, Watercolor, Comics, Pen & Ink, Linocut, and Pastel.
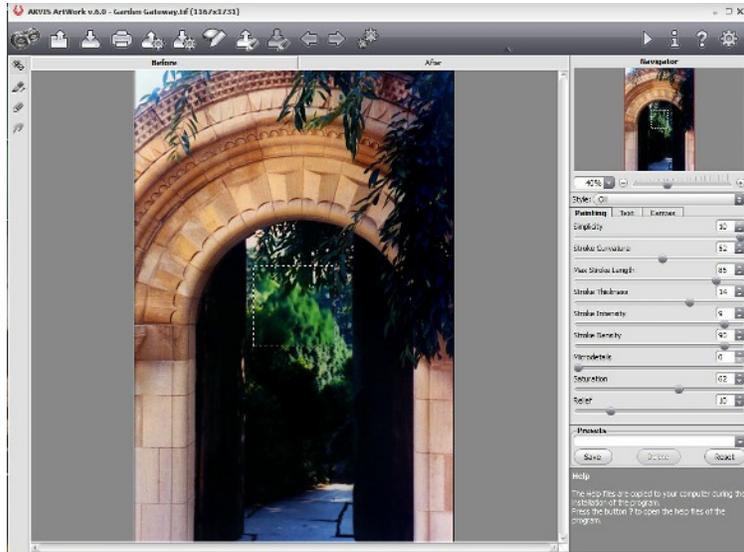
  Using the watercolor effect
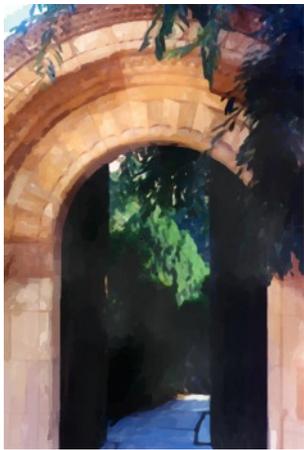
and the oil effect

The effect you choose is applied to the entire photo. If you want to have it only affect a certain area of the image, you would then use a layer mask to mask out the effect where desired. This would only work best from within Photoshop (or the editing software you use), rather than from the stand-alone applet output, as there are no layers applied to the image in the stand-alone version; rather, the effect is embedded into the image itself, permanently changing it.

  There are a variety of controls available for you to fine-tune the effects applied to your image. You also have some pre-defined presets, which can be used to give you a starting point for how the image is manipulated. Select one, and adjust the sliders to achieve the results you wish.

  Both programs can be downloaded for a 10-day free trial. Go to http://akvis.com, and check out these two products, as well as the rest of their offerings. There have been reviews of several other plug-ins from AKVIS in this newsletter in the past; you can contact the Editor to see if the one you are interested in has been reviewed.

  The retail price for Chameleon is $75, while Artwork goes for $72 (these prices are for the Mac or Windows versions). Note that if you order the Windows platform application, you receive both the stand-alone version as well as the plug-in. For Mac users, you need to choose which version you wish. There is no bundled option for Mac users.

  Delivery is via electronic download. The programs are small in size, and download fairly quickly, even on a fast dial-up connection.

  AKVIS makes some unique and creative add-ons for your image editing software. They give you more creative choices than what is available by default, and they work as advertised.

  If you want to transform your ordinary, run-of-the-mill photos into something new and eye-catching, these two applications can give you a wide range of choices to turn your creativity loose.

Photos ©2011 Copyright Tanya L Mattson Photography.