Akvis Sketch 17

by L. Davenport

Akvis Sketch is a standalone program plus a Photoshop plug-in that will convert your photos into pencil sketches, charcoal, or watercolor drawings.

The Akvis Sketch Interface:

At the top of the window is the **Control Panel** that holds many of the standard save/import etc controls including batch controls.

To the left is the Sketch **Image window** that has a Before and After tab which lets you see if you are getting your desired results before applying it to your photo.

In the upper right corner is the **Navigator Window** that lets you scale the photo, plus it has a red box that surrounds the area that is currently visible in the Image window (helpful for large photos).

Under the Navigator Window is the **Settings Panel**. This holds the Parameter controls that let you further modify your photo. Here is a list of some of the Parameter tools that are available:

The first parameter to choose is whether you want the Classic or the Artistic styles.

- The **Classic** style lets you create color or black & white drawings with well-defined contour lines.

This is a close-up of the castle window. It is set to the "Classic" (fine) style plus I have it showing the "Original Colors" rather than as an all black & white sketch. If you look closely you will see the fine diagonal sketch lines on the walls and the dark outlines of the window and building edges. Just like a hand-drawn sketch.

- The **Artistic** Style is a looser hand drawn style (see the screenshots shown at the top of the next page).

There are four tabs: Sketch, Background, Text, and Canvas.

- The **Sketch** tab contains controls for Effects, Strokes, Edges, and Direction.

- **Effects**: If you want to make your image look like a watercolor drawing, simply adjust the Coloration slider. The higher you move the slider, the more color shows through (from the original photo). By adjusting the watercolor settings, you can smooth out some of the cross-hatching. It makes it seem like you are drawing on wet paper. Once you are satisfied with the results, simply click the Run button and your photo is instantly adjusted.

- The **Edges** tab contains: Sensitivity, Detail, and Intensity controls.

- The **Strokes** tab contains: Pencil & Background Color, Angle, Dispersion, Stroke thickness, Min. and Max length, Hatching Density & Intensity, and Cross-hatching controls. Tweaking these controls can completely change the look of your photo/sketch. For example, you can change the angle and pitch of the strokes, make the hatching denser or finer, etc. When you hover your cursor over one of the Parameter controls, an explanation of the Parameter's function is displayed at the bottom right of the Akvis Sketch window.
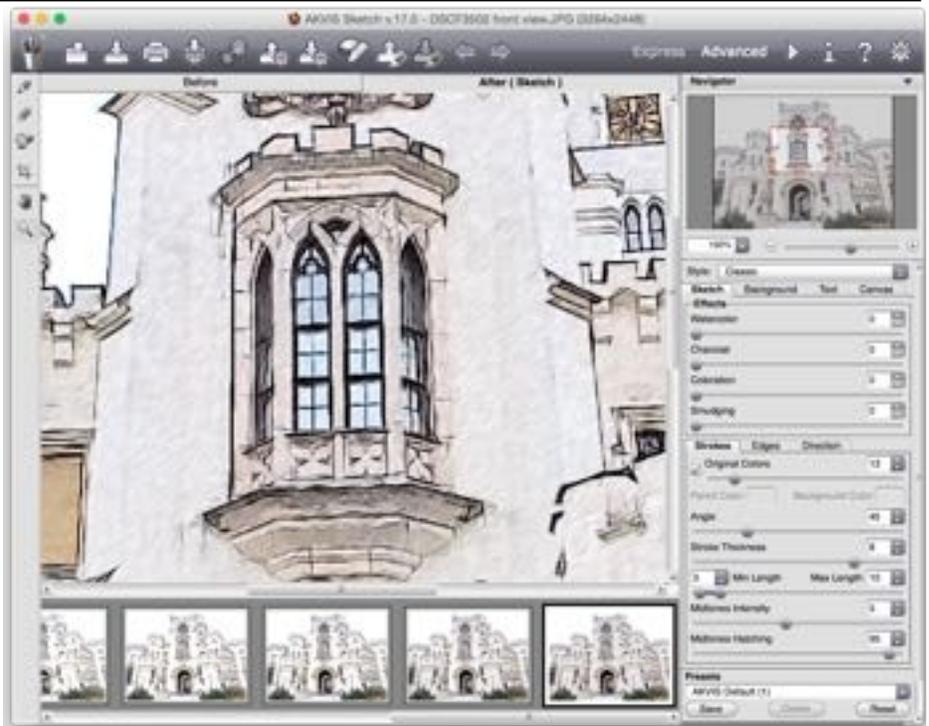
- The **Background** tab has controls that let you blend the original photo and drawing or blur some parts of the image.

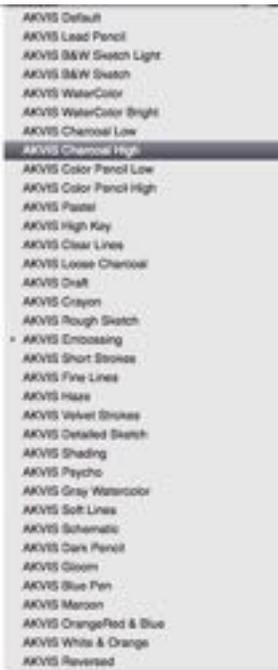- The **Text** tab gives you the tools to add a text or watermarks to your drawing.

- The **Canvas** tab lets you apply a texture to your image, e.g. a canvas texture to simulate the roughness of drawing on an actual canvas, corrugated paper, brick wall, etc.

You can use the Batch Processing feature if you have several images that you want to apply the same settings to.

Since I have the Akvis Sketch Deluxe version, I was able to not only test the Stand Alone ap-

The Akvis Sketch "Classic" mode comes with 35 ready-made presets. The "Sketch" mode comes with around 60 presets. The Presets menu lets you see (via a image of a bird) what each preset looks like before choosing it.

This image has the Embossed preset applied.

This is drawn in the Artistic mode with loose angled strokes.

plication, but I was also able to test the Akvis Sketch Plug-in with my Adobe Photoshop CS6. The plug-in worked exactly like the stand alone version. No compatibility problems, etc.

If you are interested in Akvis Sketch, I suggest you go to **Akvis' You-Tube web page** and watch the Sketch videos.

Click on this link if you would like to see a short **B & W animation** on how to change a B & W video into a cartoon.

The Akvis web site has many **Sketch examples and Tutorials**. This is a great way to see what Akvis Sketch can do before downloading the demo.

The Skinny

Evaluation: Akvis Sketch accomplishes what it sets out to do- convert photos into works of art. If you are interested, I suggest you download the demo and see if it suits your needs. BTW: I used Final Cut Pro, Adobe Photoshop, and the Sketch plug-in to successfully create a (colored) animation of a person walking down the sidewalk! Now that I know how to do it, it is a breeze to make short animations. I will be making more animated cartoons in the future.

This is drawn in the Classic mode that has well-defined contour lines.

Requires:

> Minimum requirement: Mac OS X 10.6-10.10 (32/64 bit), Intel/G4, 1 Gb RAM, 100 Mb free hard drive space
> Recommended requirement: Mac OS X 10.6-10.10 (32/64 bit), Intel/G5, 4 Gb RAM, 2 Gb free hard drive space
> Compatible Image Editor's (if you'r not using the stand-alone version): Photoshop or Photoshop Elements

Company: **Akvis**

Price: Home (non-commercial license): Standalone or plug-in $72
> Home Deluxe (non-commercial license): Standalone & Plug-in $89
> Business (commercial license): Standalone & Plug-in $154
> Academic license for Home and Home Deluxe: 30% off discount

Available Trial copy