

Akvis Artistic Suite Review

Bojan Živković Friday, November 22, 2013



I always wanted to draw and paint. That's my wish from childhood. Unfortunately I lack in skills to paint and draw. Fortunately there are software's which can do that job for me. There are software's which can convert digital images to realistic paintings and sketches. In fact sometimes I can not believe that sketch or painting is generated using software, it is so realistic! Add to paintings and sketches and realistic frames plus cool image edges and effects and you have idea about my today's review of [Akvis Artistic Bundle](#).

About Akvis Artistic Suite

Akvis has lot of quality plugins and tools but I chose set or bundle of products which is most interesting for me, designers and artistic souls. [Akvis Artistic Suite](#) contains three products: [Akvis ArtSuite](#), [Sketch and ArtWork](#). Advantage of bundled products is lowered price or discount of 30%. Good thing with Akvis is that they have several licensing volumes which differs in features but also and in price so everyone can find solution: from strictly home users to those who wants to use Akvis plugins for professional level or to sale their work.

Quality and features are amazing. As already mentioned sketches are so realistic and I can not believe that software is behind them. It is the same and with paintings and frames. Frames are almost live, as I have captured and extracted them few minutes ago.

User interface, controls and options are one of the best parts of plugins (or standalone applications, depend on your choice). Presets are fabulous and in most cases I do not see big need for any further customization. As expected user can create and save its own custom presets. There isn't too many options and controls and in fact user does not need nothing else of what is offered. I like smart proxy previews of effect before actual rendering to entire image but also and built in sharing options not present in most of plugins I know about. To not forget and Print button which allows user to print creation straightly from plugin/standalone application.

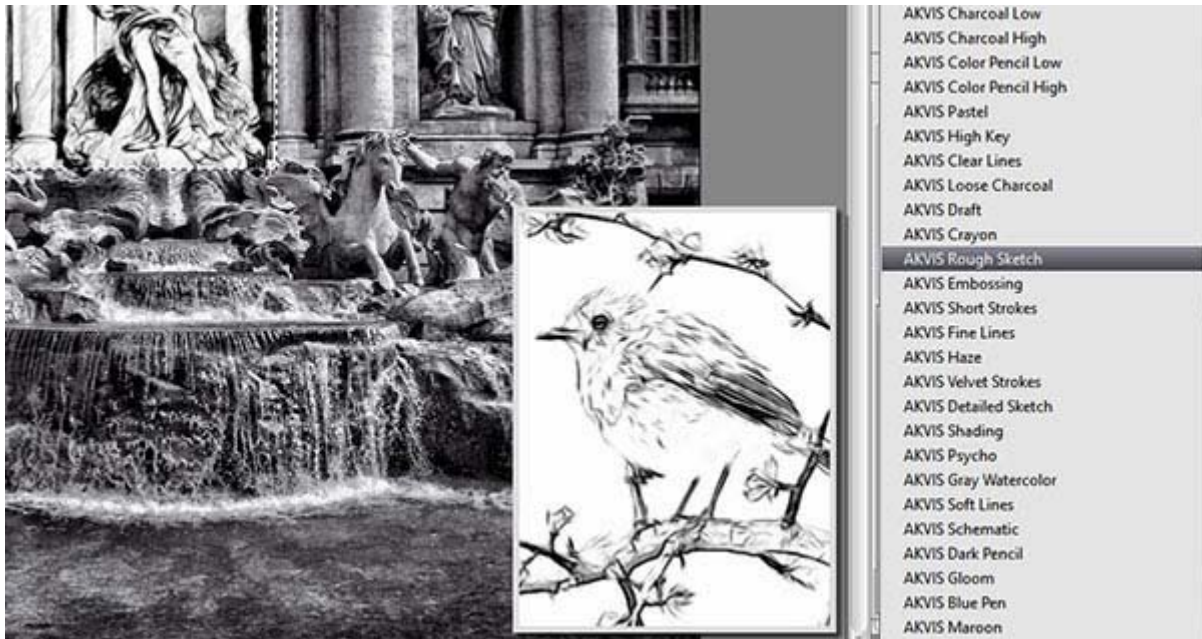
Processing time or time to render actual effect on entire image like sketch or painting is fantastic most of the time. Note that rendering speed depends on effect chosen but also and on resolution or size of image. For images up to 3000px on longer side it is click and done. Putting it all together it is more than worth for the price offered to have this excellent tools especially when they comes as bundle or suite.

Akvis Sketch

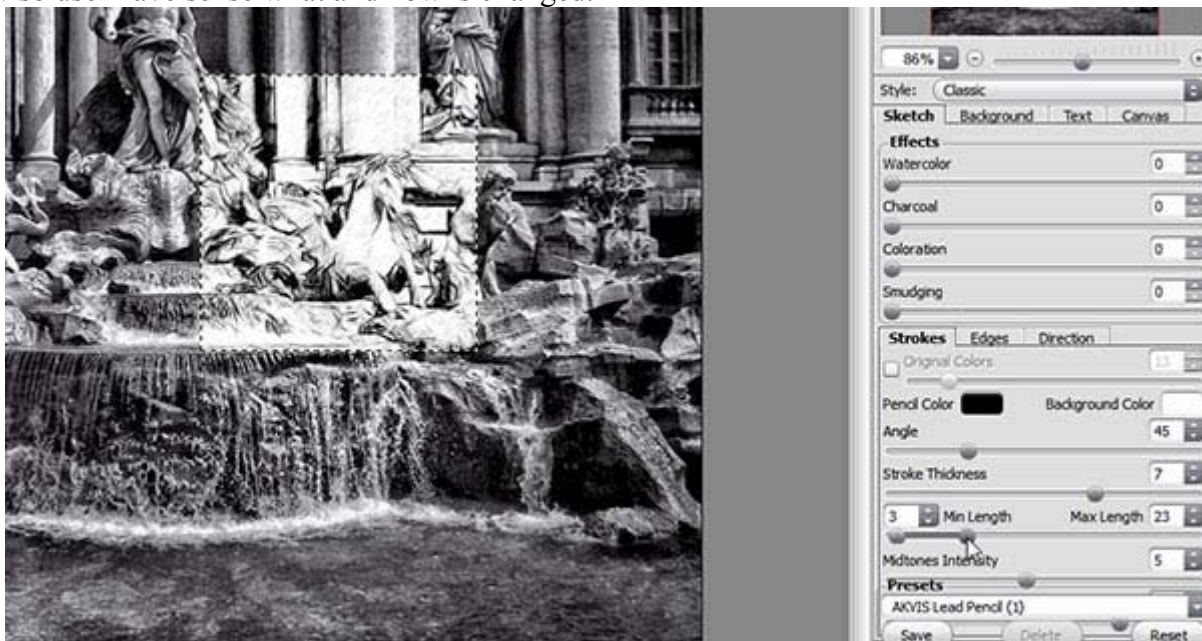
This is my favourite plugin from this bundle. It is so simple to use it and presets are fabulous. In this case I will run it as standalone application - Business version with all features that this product has to offer. There are two options in top right side of the window: Express and Advanced. As expected Advanced mode allows more control over final result and more options for fine tuning. After choosing mode user can choose style from the list with the same name. Options available are Classic and Artistic.



The best part of palette on the right side are presets at the bottom. Each of presets has its own quick preview which is absolutely representative. After choosing preset user has and proxy preview on image which can be hidden by the way using Quick Preview button on the right side of screen. User can also move proxy preview to see instantly result with preset applied on different parts of image.

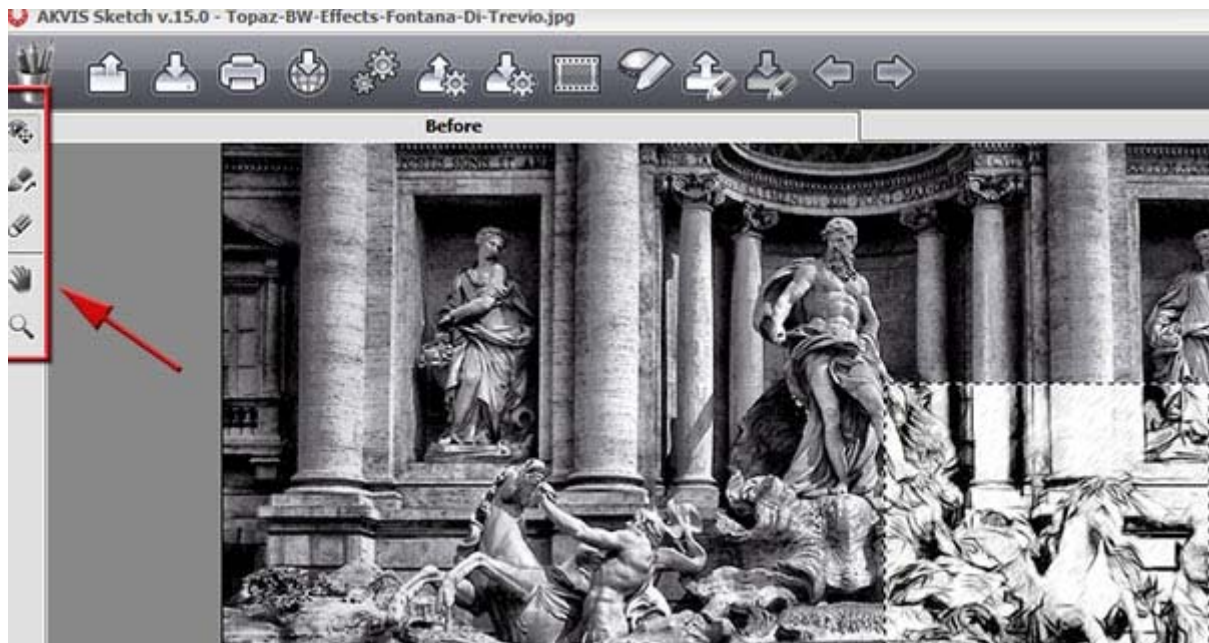


Controls in palette on the right side to fine tune final results are easy to understand but there is also option to go back at any time by choosing preset name from Presets list. Personally I like to play with Strokes options and Stroke Thickness, Min and Max Length. Every adjustment in palette will instantly reflect in proxy preview so user have sense what and how is changed.

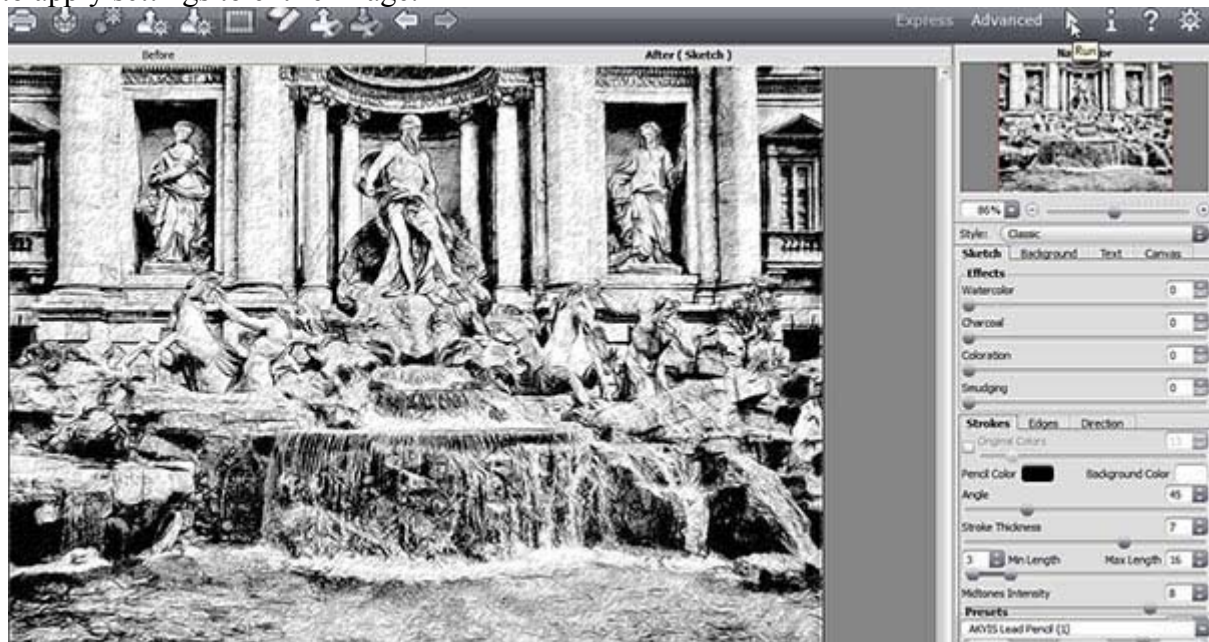


There are several other tabs in palette on the right side which are also fabulous and allows user to blend sketch with original image (Background), to add signature (Text) and to set canvas options (Canvas).

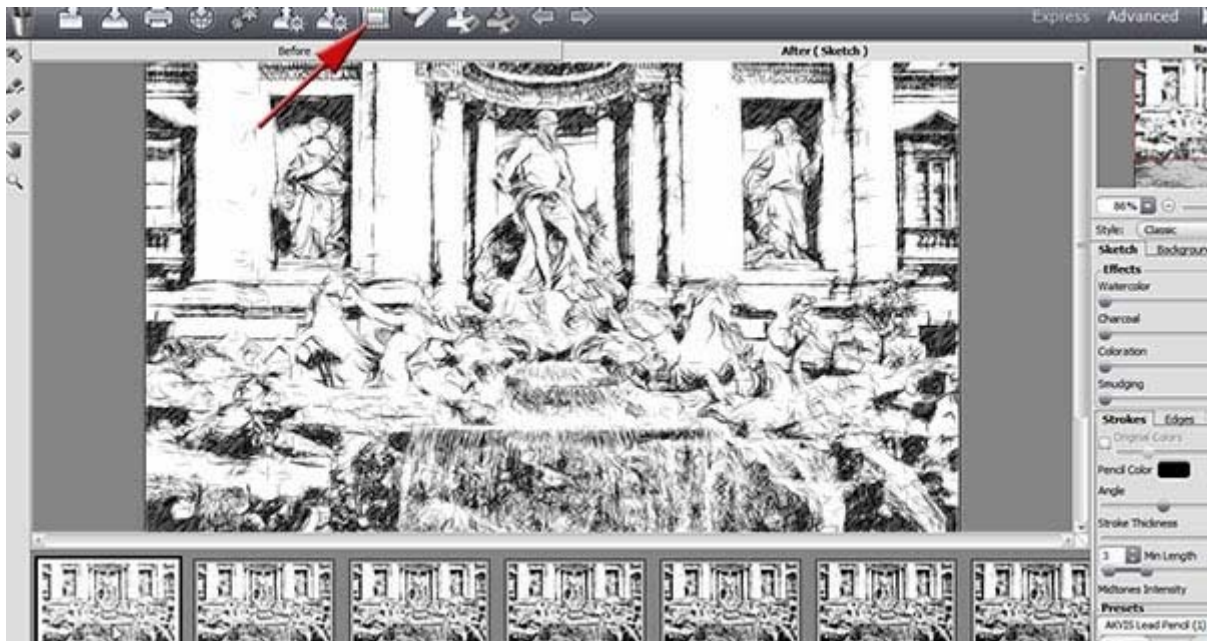
One of coolest option is Stroke Direction which is located in Toolbar on the left side of screen. Beside Stroke Direction there is and Hand, Zoom and Eraser Tools in case you want to erase drawn stroke direction.



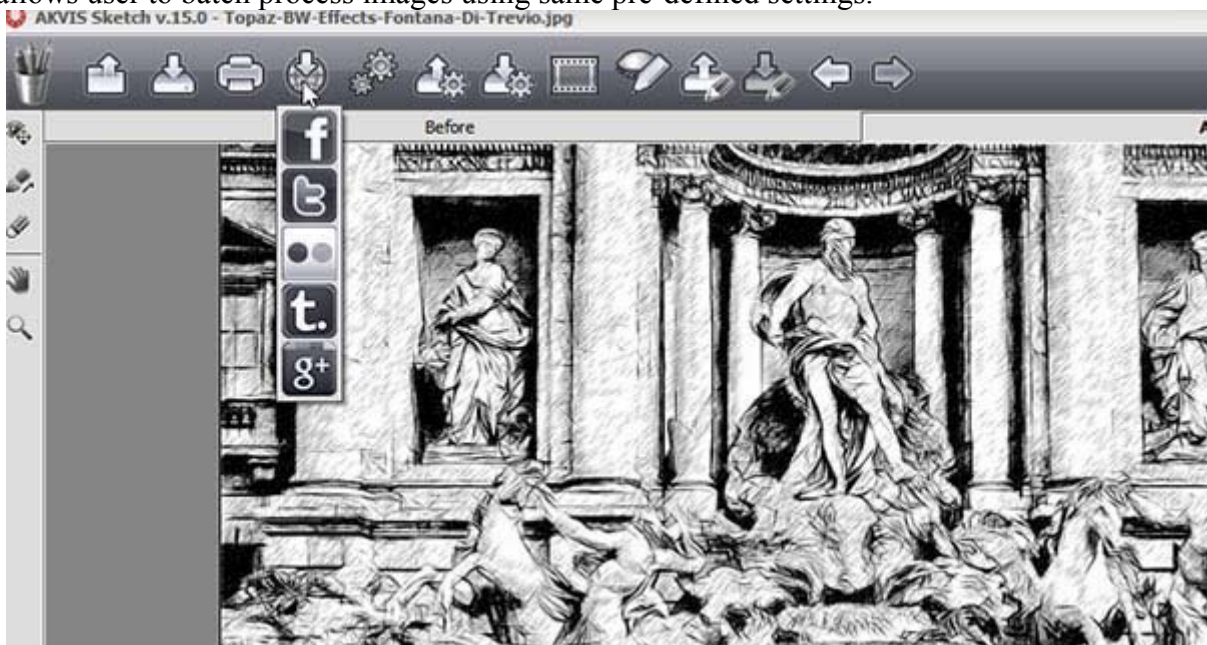
After adjusting or fine tuning preset user can save that preset or to click Run button on the right side of screen to apply settings to entire image.



Timeline is another fantastic and unique option. It is represented as film icon and allows user to choose state of sketch while software (or artist) was building it. It is something like from the early stage to the final sketch. Ha! How cool is this feature!



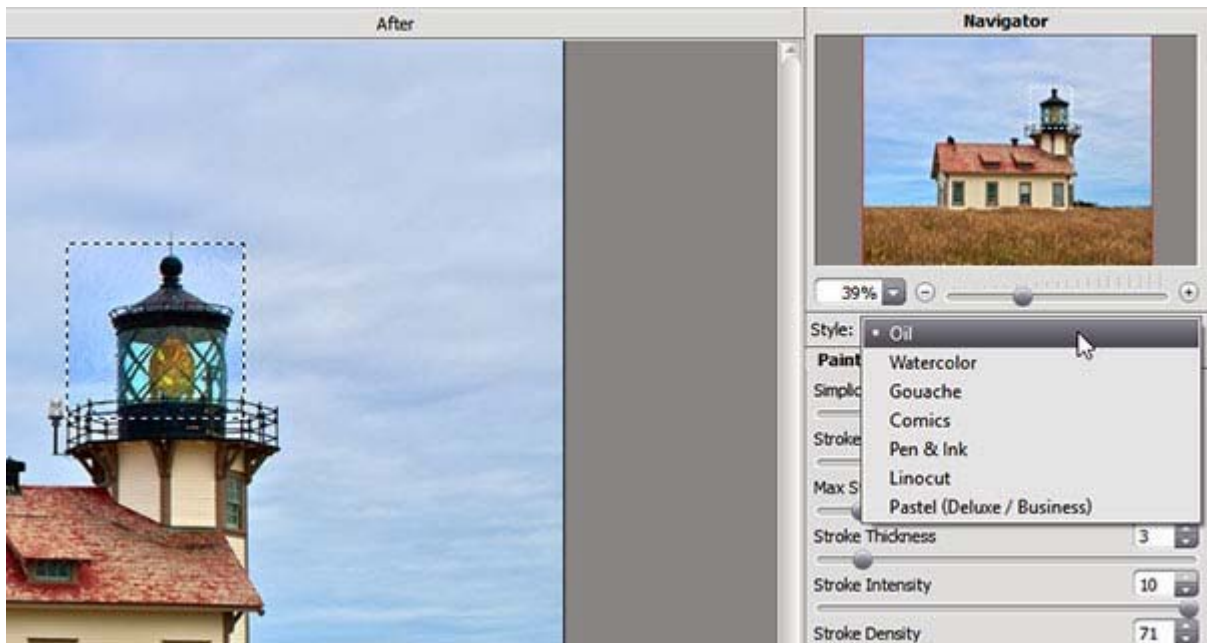
Another cool part or function are sharing options to share sketch across social media sites: Facebook, Google+, Tumblr, Twitter and Flickr. Next to Share button is another cool built in feature: Batch Processing which allows user to batch process images using same pre-defined settings.



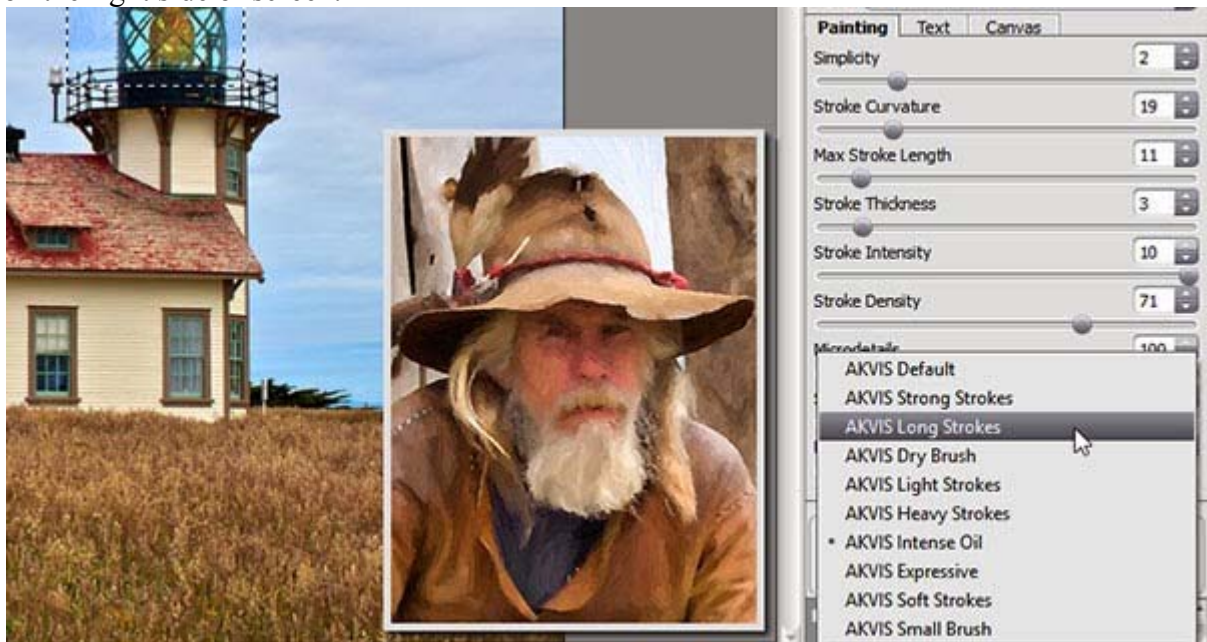
That's pretty much everything I want to introduce and mention in this quick overview. For more details and step by step tutorials just press Question Mark icon on the right side of screen to open Akvis Sketch Help page in web browser.

Akvis Artwork

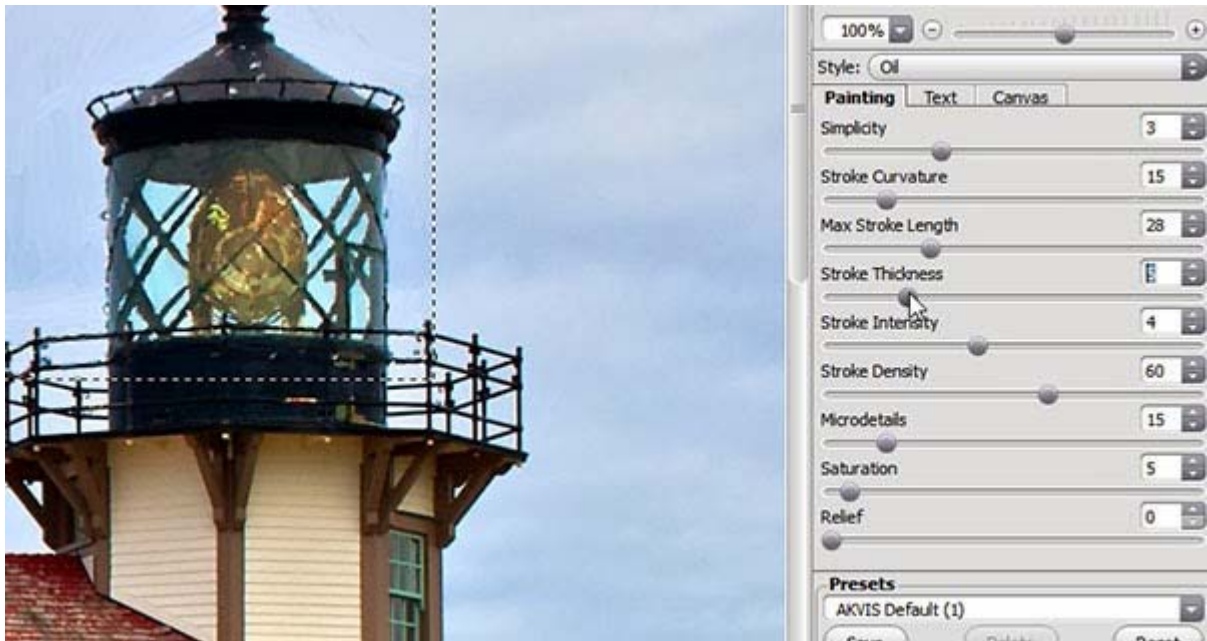
Avis ArtWork 8.0 is very similar to Sketch. The only and main difference is that this product is converting images into paintings instead of sketches. There isn't Basic/Advanced mode but there are more options to choose from Style drop down list: Oil, Watercolor, Gouache, Comics, Pen and Ink, Linocut and Pastel which is available in Deluxe/Business version.



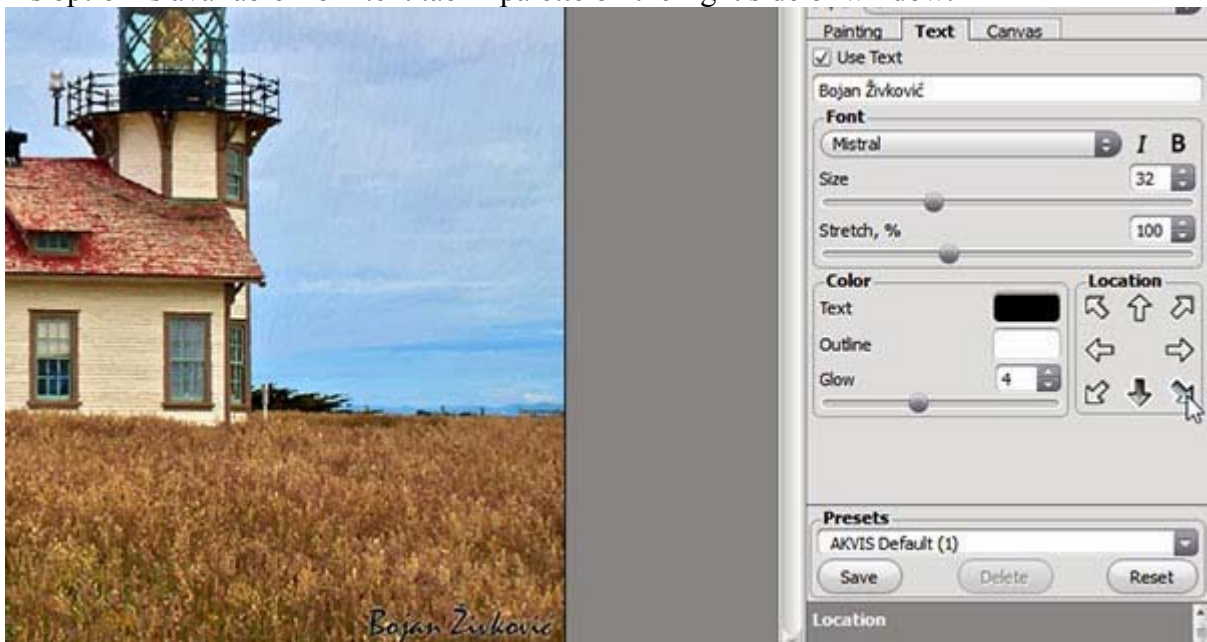
Presets are starting point and there are several built in presets available for each style from the bottom of palette on the right side of screen.



Usually after choosing preset I am playing with 2-3 options like: Simplicity, Stroke Length, Thickness and Details sliders until I get desired result in proxy preview. My favorite styles are: Oil, Pen and Ink, Watercolor and Pastel, by the way.



One of very cool options is to add signature using your favorite font and to position it exactly where you want. This option is available from text tab in palette on the right side of window.

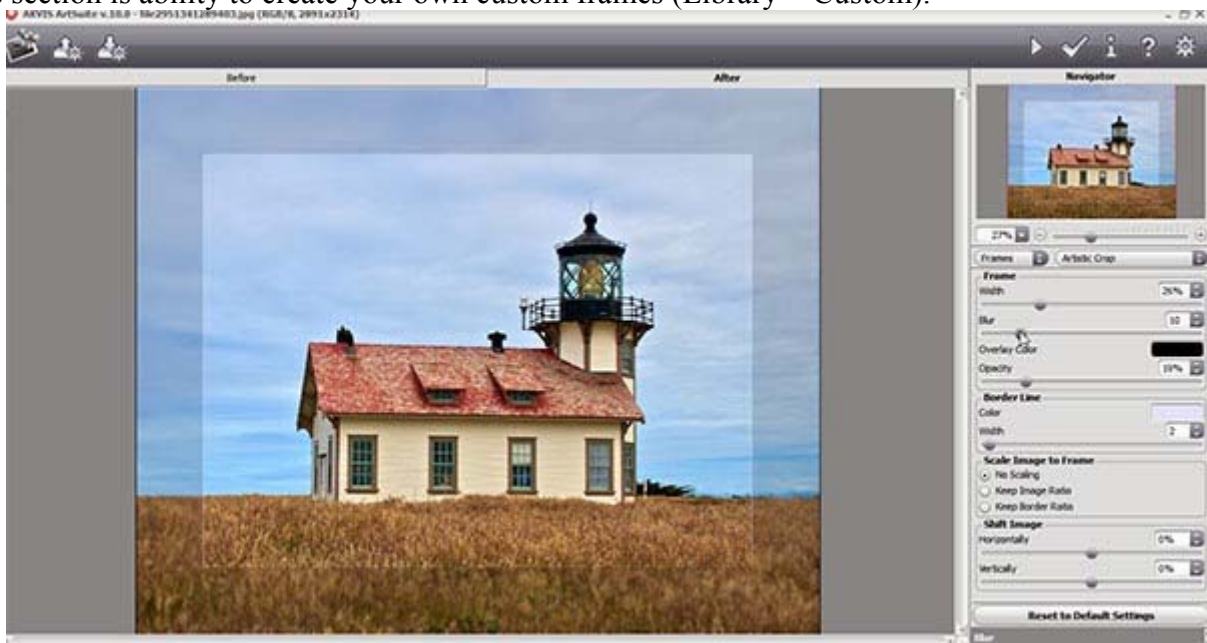


Akvis ArtSuite

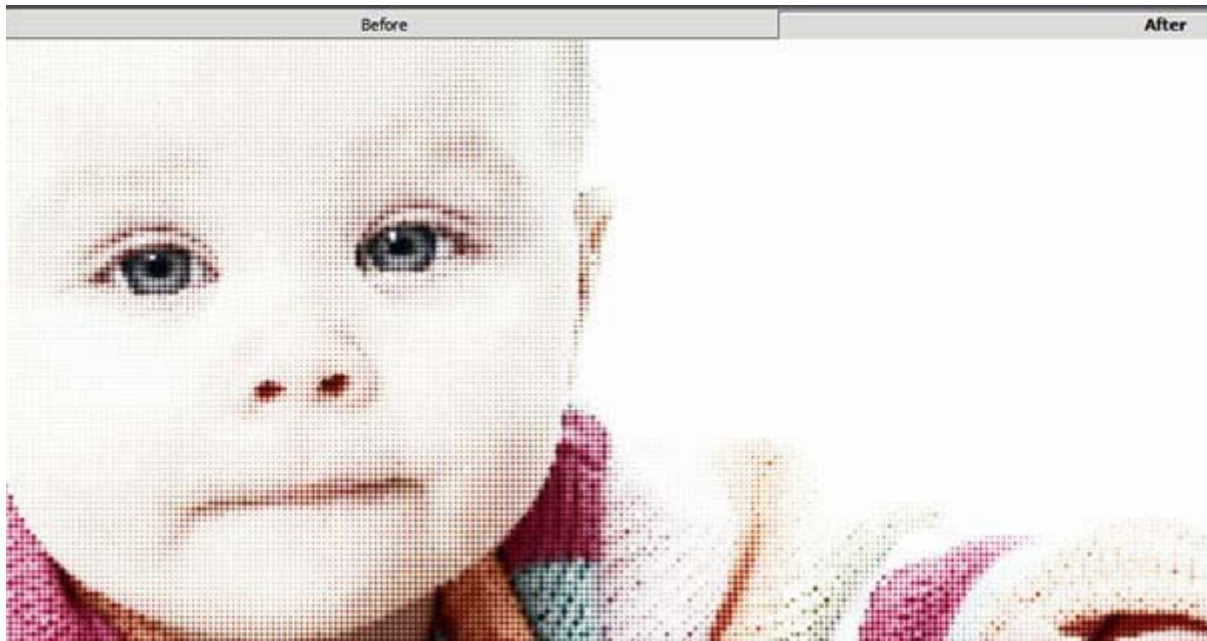
This is plugin for anyone who likes frames, borders and special effects. Who doesn't? This app works alone because there are lot of effects which can be used before adding frames but it works excellent and with Akvis ArtWork to decorate paintings using frames from my favourite collection of frames: Classic Frames > Antique. Beside Antique Collection I like and Wooden frames which are also scary realistic.



In Frames section (drop down list just below Navigator) I want to highlight and Page Curl, Spray and Frost edge effects, Artistic Crop and off course Hand Painted Frames which are fabulous. Another cool option in Frames section is ability to create your own custom frames (Library > Custom).



Now what about Effects? Effects are also fabulous with again fabulous presets which in most cases actually does not need almost any further refinements although you can refine every preset and even save it for later use. My favourites in Effects section are Black and White and Halftone which will leave you without breath from the first use. There is and huge library with textures (Effects > Textures) which you can use to blend them with image. If you have your favourite textures for this kind of effects, there is option to import and use them from Library > Custom.



System requirements and Compatibility

Akvis products can be installed on [Windows XP+ \(32/64 bit\) and Mac OS X 10.4-10.8 \(32/64 bit\) computers](#). As a plugins Akvis products can be used with wide variety of host applications: Adobe Photoshop (ver 6+ including Photoshop CC), Adobe Photoshop Elements (all versions), Corel PaintShop Pro, Corel Painter, GIMP, Xara Extreme...

Languages

Akvis products are available with translation to several languages: English, Deutsch, French, Espanol, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese and Russian.

Volume licensing

There are several volumes of licensing which you can choose during trial period and when purchasing products: Home (Plugin), Home Standalone, Home Deluxe and Business. More about licensing read on official page. Features and pricing differs from volume to volume but also and permissions of use.

Download trials

Akvis trial products are available for 10 days what is more then enough to ensure in their quality and usability. Here is [link to download Artistic Bundle](#) with advantage of -30% for this particular collection but you can [download and test individual products from Downloads page](#).

Source: <http://www.designeasy.co/2013/11/akvis-artistic-suite-review.html>