



## Sketch 7 ▼

### PHOTO-TO-SKETCH CONVERSION SOFTWARE

Review by Dave Huss

Sketch is described by its developer as software for converting photos into pencil sketches and watercolor drawings. This is the fifth such product I've reviewed in the past few years. All of these "instant artist" programs use impressive-looking samples for which the company made a grand effort to find the best photos to showcase the effects, but when I applied them to different photos the results were usually far less impressive.

My first observation was that Sketch 7 offered only pencil and watercolor (all the others offered at least 8–10 effects). I installed it as a plug-in and then applied the filter to a portrait using the default settings. Wow! It really looked like a pencil sketch. I opened another portrait and it too was made to look like a real pencil sketch. I spent most of the evening converting more than 60 photos with subjects as diverse as a fashion model to a pudgy gondolier in Venice, and all the results were impressive. Sketch may do only a few effects but they're kick-butt effects. It also includes masking tools that allow you to isolate the application of artistic effects to part of the photo.

Whether you're using Sketch as a standalone application or a plug-in, the operation is the same: You move sliders to control the different parameter settings and click the Preview button. The interface isn't terribly intuitive but not bad either. AKVIS offers many tutorials on its website. They're a little sparse but the necessary information is there and I strongly recommend viewing the first couple of tutorials before beginning. Sketch 7 can work on 16-bit images for those who want huge files and slow rendering times. ■

Company: AKVIS Software Inc.

Price: \$72

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▶ Platform: Mac and Windows

▶ Rating: ◆◆◆◆◆