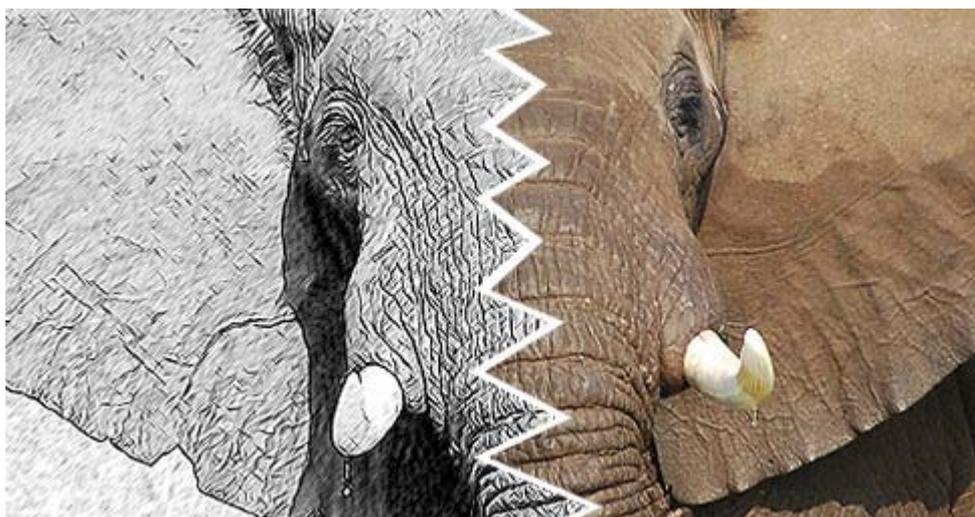




DTG says:

- "These top programs compete to the very top of the winner's circle"
- Alien Skin Snap-Art and Akvis Sketch

BEST Photoshop Drawing Plug-Ins



Hardly a week goes by without someone writing in for a quick, easy way of converting digital photos or Photoshop images into art. Most frequently they ask about pencil or pen and ink sketches. We've spent hours writing tutorials and describing the hundreds of processes available in Adobe Photoshop, or Adobe Photoshop Elements in order to accomplish those goals. This year however, two companies took on the challenge to create a plug-in that would accomplish wonderful natural media conversions of photos with a click or two.

BEST IMAGE EDITING SOFTWARE OF 2006

When time came to decide who would sit on the coveted DTG BEST roster for 2006, we came up with a stone-sober draw. We could not choose between Akvis Sketch and Alien Skin Snap Art. Both plug-ins are superb -- both accomplish a host of variations and effects, and both are rich with user-friendly interfaces.

AKVIS Sketch plug-in

If you've always wanted to draw but didn't know how, AKVIS Sketch 2.1 is the right software for you. This smart plug-in for photo-to-sketch conversion will help you to embody your creative ideas.

Akvis conjured a revolutionary algorithm that allows you to convert a photo into a pencil sketch in a few mouse clicks. The batch mode conversion (Photoshop and Corel Paint Shop Pro) allows you to automatically convert a series of images, thus even creating comics from videos!

You can make any photo look like B&W or color drawing, imitate the technique of graphite or color pencil, charcoal or watercolor painting -- and here's the good news: Sketch runs on Microsoft Windows 2000/XP/NT and on Macintosh Mac OS X 10.4, PowerPC G3 and above

Sketch is also *FAST*. We have to say, it tops *Snap Art* by a wide margin. Once you set up the parameters, the sample image is shown almost immediately. With Snap Art it takes as much as a minute to render the effect -- the *ONLY* down side. And, in contrast to the similar standard filters built-in to Photoshop or PSP that offer an approximate sketch -- AKVIS Sketch provides a convincing result that comes very close to hand-drawn works of a human artist. As shown in our illustration above.

See: a [BEFORE](#), and [AFTER](#) example
See: [Demonstrations of the plugin's features](#)

For a free trial, AKVIS offers 10 days of fully functional use -- it's compatible with Adobe Photoshop and Photoshop Elements, Corel Painter, Corel Photo-Paint, and Paint Shop Pro, ACD FotoCanvas, and Ulead PhotoImpact. AKVIS Sketch sells for \$72 USD, downloadable from akvis.com

Alien Skin Software *Snap Art*

Add Snap Art to your arsenal and you'll never want for an artistic effect -- ever again. We've bragged about Alien Skin products many, many times -- since the dawn of Photoshop! It works equally well for both Windows and Mac users!

This an all new plug-in for Adobe Photoshop and other image editors creates convincing, one-click natural media with no laborious hand editing. Artists, photographers, and designers can now give a hand-crafted look to any digital image.



Snap Art introduces several effects never seen before in a plug-in -- most notably it can recreate an image with a comics look, complete with shading and half-toning. Popular painting techniques are quick and easy in Snap Art. Digital artists can render a still life with pointillism as a Neo-impressionist might. Craft a rough and rocky landscape in dry brushed watercolor or thickly textured impasto. In addition, Snap Art emulates a number of traditional drawing effects such as colored pencils, charcoal for softer shading, and hard, soft and oil pastels.

Snap Art also features a variety of brushes, pencils, pastels, and pens, as well as an assortment of canvas and paper types. Snap Art works with 16-bit images and is scriptable with Photoshop actions. Context-sensitive help and an online manual keep things easy to understand.

Check out this easy to use interface!

See: [a ton of other examples!](#)

Snap Art sells for an estimated street price of \$149. Registered users of other Alien Skin products can purchase Snap Art for \$99 when ordering direct. Snap Art is a plug-in for Adobe Photoshop CS or later, Adobe Photoshop Elements 4 or later, or Corel Paint Shop Pro Photo XI or later. Snap Art requires 512 MB RAM and 1024x768 or greater monitor resolution. Windows users must have a Pentium 4 or later processor and Windows XP or later. Macintosh users must have a G4 or G5 PowerPC processor and Mac OS X 10.3.9. Get all the info at www.alienskin.com

Who wins? BOTH

As we said earlier, both these programs will take an honored spot in your image editing tool box. Both have strong points which compliment and contrast from each other. Both are stable and robust -- offering fluent operations on any image. You can take our endorsement that both will serve you well. Just tell them that Fred sent'ya!

Until next time... *keep on drawing!*

Fred Showker

Fred Showker, Editor/Publisher



Source: http://www.graphic-design.com/DTG/Reviews/akvis_vs_alien.html