

Akvis Chameleon

Photo Collage Creation Software

Akvis <<http://akvis.com/en/products-photo-editing-software.php>> builds creative tools for digital images. I've been exercising Chameleon for the last couple of weeks.

One of the really handy procedures that imaging software can do is to extract a portion of the image. There are two good reasons to isolate a portion of an image: first, it could be combined with another image in a collage, and second, the background can be de-emphasized.



This picture with an awful background was taken under pressure. It is almost impossible to pose these two and get a good picture. They tend to mug on camera.

By extracting them first, we can use a different background or blur the existing background. Believe that extraction is tedious. The extract process in Photoshop requires the user to trace the edge of portion to be saved. We need patience, time, steady nerves (absolutely no coffee), and a good mouse. Done right, we will end up with a pretty good fragment that can be placed on another background.

There are other programs or plug-ins that offer something better. Chameleon does two things that recommend it: it makes extractions almost easy and it blends the foreground and background.

The Process

After installing the Chameleon folder in your image editor's plug-in folder, it will appear as a plug-in or filter. Chameleon approaches the extraction process in two steps.

The first step (Grab Fragment) saves the designated portion of the image. Before selecting the Grab Fragment you can isolate a smaller piece of the graphic with the marquee or lasso, or you can use the whole graphic. When you select Filter > AKVIS > Chameleon - Grab Fragment, Chameleon saves the portion of the graphic.

The second step is where we get down to business. Select the background graphic on which we will place the saved fragment. Go to Filter > AKVIS > Chameleon - Make Collage. This is where we work with the fragment and the background, where we extract the portion of the saved graphic.

Chameleon improves on the extraction process by allowing us to rough in the fragment. Just use the blue pencil to zip around inside of the edge of the portion to be extracted. Then use the red pencil to zip around outside of the edge.

I use the word "zip" advisably because generally this procedure works well. However, the program will look for an edge between the blue line and the red line. It's not nice to make the program guess which edge you have in mind. In the close-up, placement of the blue line inside was accomplished quickly and easily. The red line requires more care if we want to exclude the shadow.



We placed the final result on a plain green background.

Modes

Chameleon shines when it comes to merging two graphics. There are three modes; each handles the merging in a slightly different way.

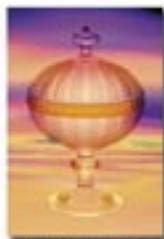
* **Montage.** In the Montage mode the program combines images to create a seamless photo montage. It transfers selected objects to a new background and makes the irrelevant parts of the pasted fragment fade away. The object does not change its color range or opacity. This mode is good to use for creating photo collages with people (pasting a person into a new background). We used this mode to create the graphic above.

• **Chameleon.** In the Chameleon mode the program adjusts the inserted object to the target image color range and smoothes the object's borders. It looks similar to the way a chameleon adapts to the environment.

• **Blend Mode.** In the Blend mode the program does not only smoothes the borders of the inserted object and adjusts its color range, but it also makes the object semi-transparent, so that the texture and the relief of the primary image can be seen through. Use this mode if you want to "dissolve" the inserted image in the background.



Montage mode

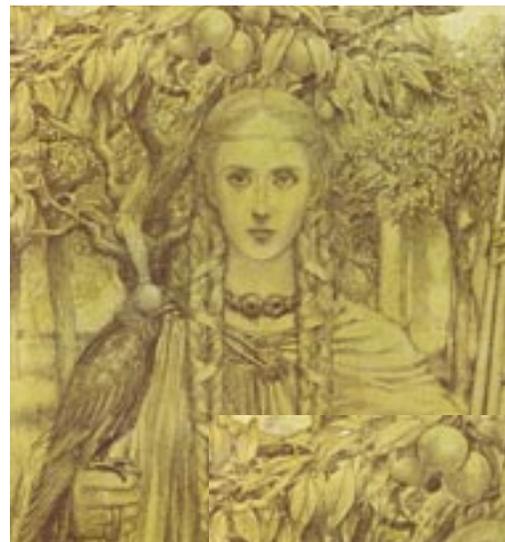


Chameleon mode



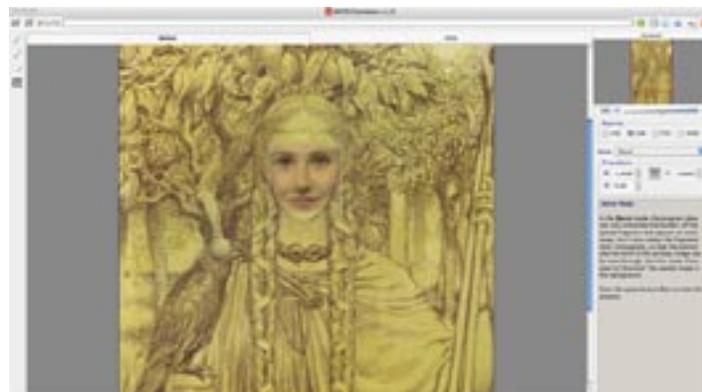
Blend mode

We used Blend mode to convert my granddaughter to a fairy princess. Before combining the two pictures, I removed the princess' eyes, mouth, and most of her nose. I left a bit to facilitate the placement of the new face.



Tools

On the left side of the window are the two pencils, blue and red, and an eraser. The right side includes a zoom slider, opacity buttons (which allow us to see through the fragment during placement), and a mode selector. We can also re-size or rotate the fragment.



Chameleon sells for \$75 — not quite in the shareware range, but very competitive with other like programs. Figure in the easy of use and easy learning curve and this is definitely a winner. 🗑️