

PhotoKit Color brings darkroom effects to digital photography with Photoshop actions that emulate the artistry of filters and chemical processes.

## No mess, no stains

PhotoKit Color by PixelGenius simulates several film photography and darkroom processes. Billed as a plug-in, it's actually a set of Adobe Photoshop actions that use the program's built-in adjustment, layers and filter tools in unique ways.

PhotoKit Color is divided into eight different sophisticated filter effects, each with three to 21 specific sets of actions.

That's 103 different effects that are easily accessed through just two drop-down menus in the PhotoKit Color section of Photoshop's Automate utilities.

The plug-in has eight primary effects: Cross Processing, Color Overlay, Split Toning, Tone Enhance, Color Enhance, and CC (color compensation), CT (color temperature) and RSA (rule seeking algorithm) Color Correction.

PhotoKit Color gives photographers correction effects that mimic the color correction filters used in enlargers. With the original image in the center, the filters are, clockwise from top right: .30CC Magenta; .30CC Cyan; .30CC Blue; .30CC Green; .30CC Red; .30CC Yellow.



Cross Processing emulates the effect of developing E6 color transparency film in C41 color negative chemistry, and vice versa. It also selectively applies color tints to the processed image and offers a light or strong option for each conversion.

Split Toning, which is used on artistic and display film prints, emulates the use of chemicals to apply one color to the shadow sections of a black-and-white image, and another color to the highlights. This effect also works with black-and-white conversions from color files and color images. The color combos include blue/sepia, red/green, and yellow/blue, among others. While Split Toning works well on various types of images, it's not particularly effective on images with large shadow sections. It's difficult to see when there is no detail in shadow areas.

Color Overlay works with color images and is similar to the Split Tone filter set. It applies one of nine overlay color options, then generates a split tone effect between the highlight and shadow colors. The overlay colors are red, green, emerald, blue, cyan, violet, magenta, yellow, and orange.

The Tone Enhance effect adjusts image exposure or contrast. The exposure section acts like opening or closing an enlarger's lens by one-quarter f/stop. The contrast section emulates the effect of leaving a print in the developer too long or removing it prematurely. Tone Enhance, which includes a filter that boosts only the mid-tones of the image, is also part of the original PhotoKit filter set.

Photographers who have struggled to generate an accurate color print using nothing more than an enlarger and a

handful of color compensation filters will appreciate the CC action set. In the darkroom, even with auxiliary color measuring devices, the process often ends in failure. But PhotoKit Color's CC corrections precisely apply yellow, red, magenta, blue, cyan and green digital filters, no matter the color space of the file.

The CT action applies either a warming orange or cooling blue, much like using warming and cooling lens filters. They're similarly designated as well: Orange 1/8, 1/4, 1/2, 3/4 and Full; and Blue 1/8, 1/4, 1/2, 3/4, and Full. Of all the PhotoKit Color filters, these are the quickest to apply.

The RSA Color Correction effect uses three methods to eliminate colorcasts. One provides general color



PhotoKit Color's extensive filter set includes a wide variety of effects. Pictured here: upper left, Contrast Mask 3; upper right, a combination of Blue Darken and Red Darken; lower right, Red Overlay; lower left, Red/Sepia Split.

correction, and the others should be used for removing unwanted tints or strong colorcasts. Colorcasts can be

extremely troublesome, especially in images that are over-saturated and don't respond well to the filters. It's a

good idea to ensure the image's saturation levels are correct before applying this effect.

The Color Enhance section, strictly a digital imaging effect, does two things: modifies a specific color or color range while changing the contrast of that or another color. The blue darken + Mask filter, for instance, dramatically darkens blue skies without affecting the other sections, clouds included. With this filter, you can change the desired effect with the Photoshop layer opacity setting to determine the strength of the applied effect. Every PhotoKit Color filter is applied as one or more Photoshop layers, so the original image remains unaltered.

PhotoKit Color can be used to apply very interesting effects to digital images. It's a handy addition for any photographer who needs automated image toning, optimization, and correction. Available for both Macintosh and Windows systems, it's downloadable at [www.pixelgenius.com](http://www.pixelgenius.com). The demo version runs for 10 days. The registered version lists for \$99.95, and is well worth the expense.

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