

Digital Anarchy ToonIt! Photo Photoshop Plug-in

By Stan Sholik



If you're like a lot of professional photographers these days, you're wondering what to do with extra time on your hands. You know you should be creating some new images that could increase sales, but you don't have the inspiration to proceed.

Well, Digital Anarchy has the answer. ToonIt! Photo version 2.0 will not only allow you to quickly and easily create amazing transformations of your images, it's so much fun to use that your free time will simply vanish!

ToonIt! is a Photoshop plug-in for Mac and Windows that, as the name implies, turns images into photo illustrations. What you can't do in Photoshop without a lot of effort, and where ToonIt! excels, is transforming portraits into cartoon- or graphic novel-like creations

But it doesn't stop there. Along with cartooning, ToonIt! includes 45 other presets for your enjoyment, along with controls to tweak the presets to your individual style and then save the tweaks as a new preset.

A number of the presets, such as charcoal, glass and stained glass are related to those found in Photoshop, but ToonIt! includes a wider variety of controls and a more sophisticated interface that makes tweaking the presets easier and more intuitive.

Choosing an image to transform in ToonIt! and the unpredictability of the result is part of the fun and the challenge. Every source image is different and the presets will have a different effect on each. I found that for cartooning people, an evenly lit face with a simple dark background works best. Strong shadows on the face led to some less than attractive

Left: There are a couple of Pop Art Presets. This is Pop Art 2 that I again tweaked to my liking before clicking "OK."



Top: The Impressionism1 Preset produces a painterly effect. I tweaked the setting some to produce this image.

Bottom: The Heat Vision style produces an infrared-looking image. Like everything in ToonIt! it can be tweaked to produce a variety of results.

results. ToonIt! provides a small window containing an evenly-lit woman's portrait below the Preset Manager in the interface that gives you a preview of what the preset you select might look like.

Once you have selected an image and opened it in Photoshop, you access



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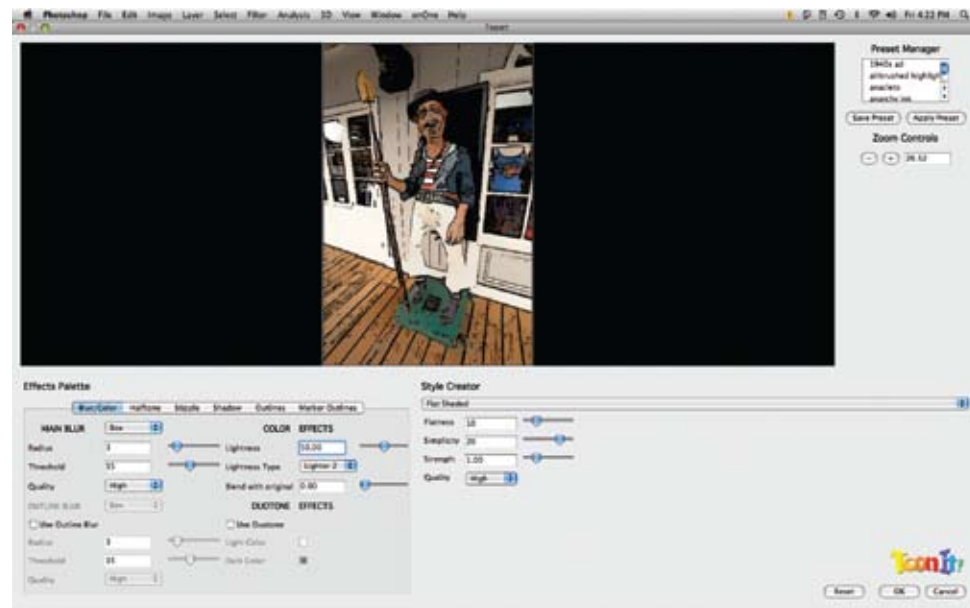
right is the Preset Manager with its much smaller preview window and Zoom Control below. The effect you choose to apply in ToonIt! is resolution dependent, so to accurately preview the effect, the image needs to be zoomed to 100%. However, doing so not only slows down the creation of the preview considerably, it also forces you to scroll all around to see the effect, which makes you lose sight of the look of the effect on the entire image.

Digital Anarchy recommends a zoom setting of at least 20 percent as a good compromise between a reasonably accurate portrayal and a useful amount of visualization of the effect on the full image. I found this to be true in most cases when first applying the effect, but zooming to 100% is essential to see potential problem areas.

Below the Preview window in the interface is the Effects Palette. This is where you control how the preset is applied to your image. There are six effect tabs in the Effects Palette: Blur/Color, Halftone, Stipple, Shadow, Outlines and Marker Outlines. The first four work with the color areas of the image while the last two work with the

ToonIt! from the Filters > Digital Anarchy drop-down menu. The image opens in a new window with the previous effect applied to it.

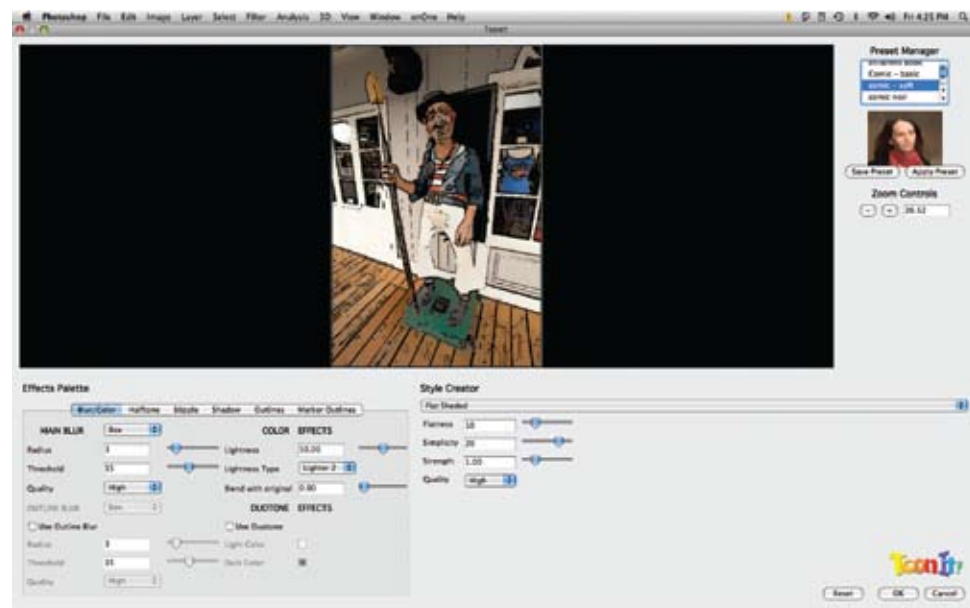
The largest area of the ToonIt! interface is taken up by the Preview window. To its



Top: The ToonIt! interface is dominated by a preview of the working file. The first time you open an image in ToonIt!, the image will be processed with the default comic settings shown here.

Middle: The Preset Manager in the upper right of the interface includes 45 pre-built looks as a starting point for your experimentation.

Bottom: The 12 groups of styles in the Style Creator panel provide you with a place to fine tune the choices made in the Effects Palette.



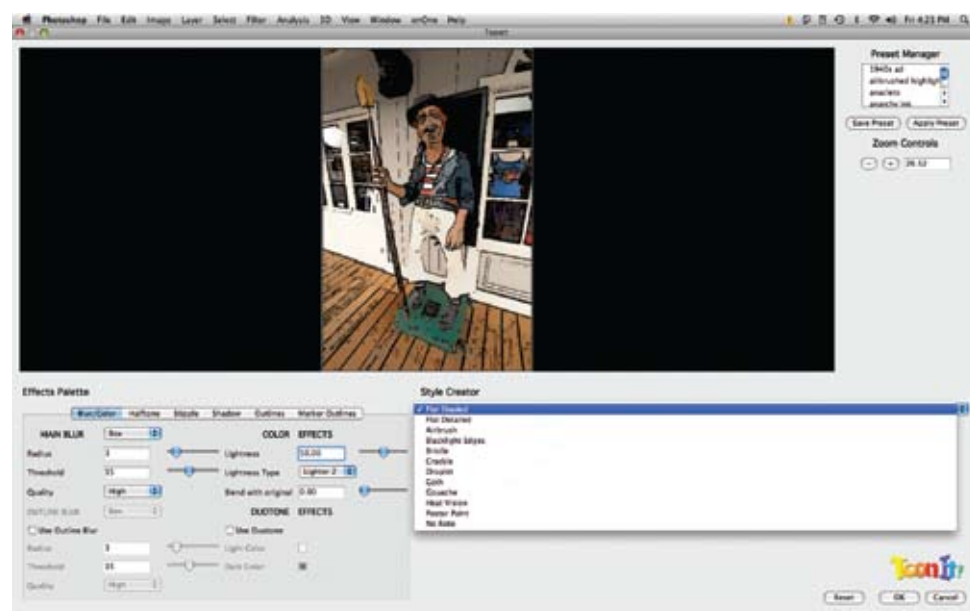
outlines added to the image.

To the right of the Effects Palette is the Style Creator panel. It has 12 groups that you use to fine-tune the result achieved in the Effect Palette. Since you can adjust all of the effects in the Effect Palette as well as tweak the result in the Style Creator, there are an enormous number of possible results from a single image with each preset. Fortunately, there is also a Reset button to take you back to the default ToonIt! cartoon look if you want to start again.

What I missed however, was a button that would take me back to the original, untransformed image. Or, better yet, a control that would allow me to see the original image side by side with the ToonIt! image.

Effects you choose from the Effects Palette and the Style Creator panel are applied immediately to the preview image, though it can take a few seconds for the preview to redraw. When you are happy with the result in the preview, you select the 'OK' button, ToonIt! does its work and sends you back to Photoshop. ToonIt! applies the result to the active image layer, so to be safe it is best to duplicate your original image before opening the software. This also gives you the option of blending the ToonIt! result with the original image for even more creative options. It took between 15 and 30 seconds for ToonIt! to render various combinations of effects on 10MB files.

ToonIt! Photo is compatible with Photoshop 7 to CS3 and Photoshop CS4, 32-bit and 64-bit as well as Photoshop Elements 5.0 to 7.0.



Left: The Flat Detailed style in the Style Creator panel produces more color fields in the cartoon than the Flat Shaded style. I created this result using the default settings. Adjusting the slider to higher settings would produce even more color fields.

Bottom: This is the result of using the Gouche Preset at its default settings and blending it back with the original at 50%.

Compatible operating systems are Mac 10.3.9 or greater and Windows 2000, XP Home, XP Pro and Vista 32-bit and 64-bit. Demo versions of ToonIt! that never expire but watermark the image are available for download from the Digital Anarchy Web site, www.digitalanarchy.com. The site also provides video tutorials, a downloadable manual and sample photos. The suggested retail price of ToonIt! Photo v. 2 is \$159. Registered owners of previous versions can upgrade for \$99.

With ToonIt! Photo, the results can range from outrageous to barely noticeable if they are blended with the original image. The software opens up your creative channels and can result in saleable portrait, fine art and even commercial images. And best of all, experimenting with ToonIt! will fill many hours of downtime!

Stan Sholik is a contributing writer for NewsWatch Feature Service. He is also a commercial photographer with over 30 years of large format studio and location experience.

