

Mr Contrast

Flaming Pear Software

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What it does

Mr Contrast adds dramatic contrast to pictures. It has controls to drag out every last particle of detail and then subdue the result with glows. The effect is suited to black & white photos, especially infrared imagery, and you can colorize the output to resemble a lith print.

How to install

Illustrated installation instructions are online at www.flamingpear.com/faq.html .

To use this software, you need a paint program which accepts standard Photoshop 3.02 plugins.

Just put the plug-in filter into the folder where your paint program expects to find it. If you have Photoshop, the folder is Photoshop:Plugins:Filters or Photoshop:Plug-ins. You must restart Photoshop before it will notice the new plug-in. It will appear in the menus as Filters->Flaming Pear->Mr Contrast.

Most other paint programs follow a similar scheme.

If you have Paint Shop Pro: you have to create a new folder, put the plug-in filter into it, and then tell PSP to look there.

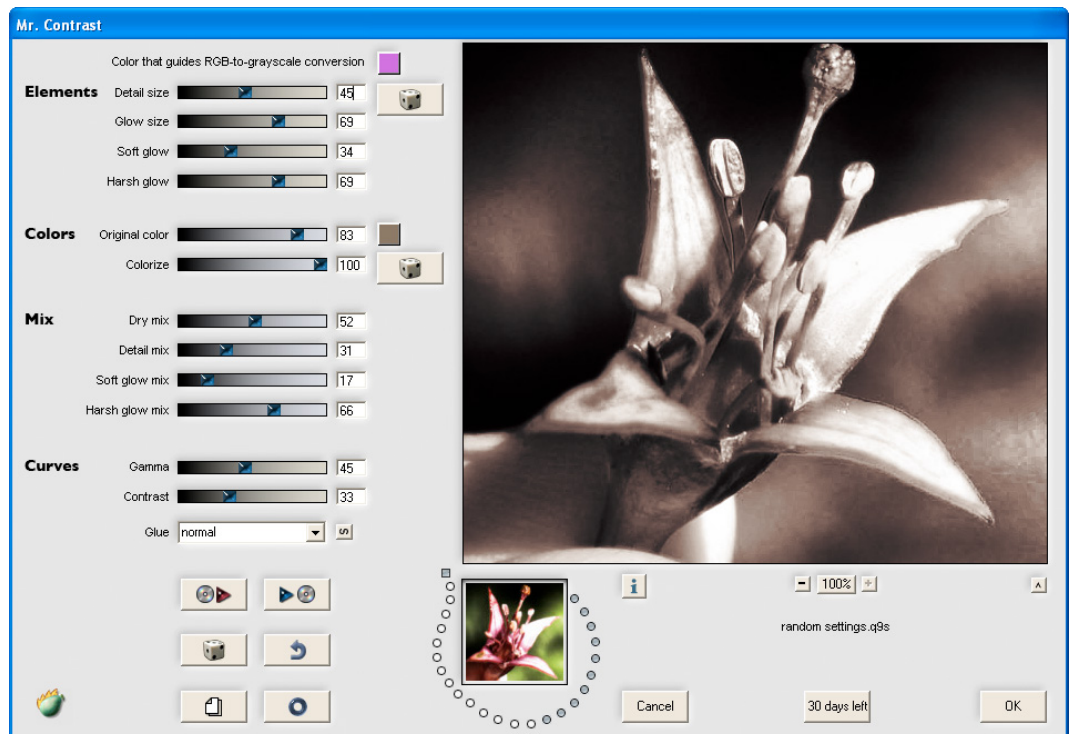
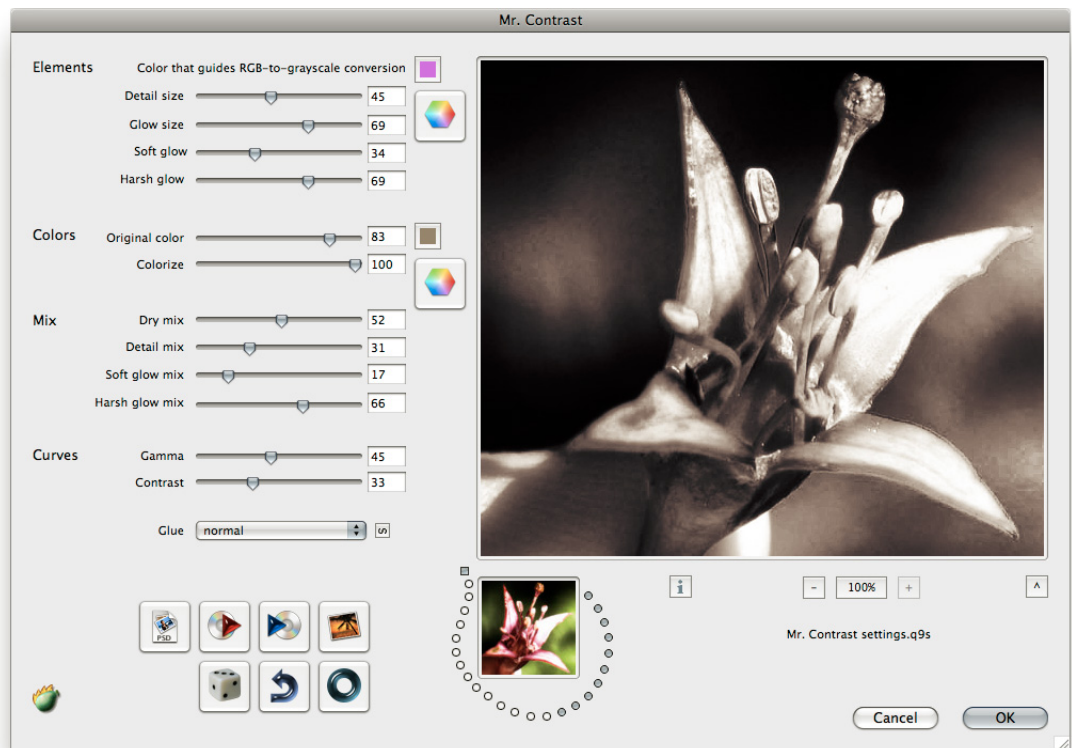
PSP 8, 9, X, XI, and X2:

Choose the menu File-> Preferences-> File Locations... In the dialog box that appears, choose Plug-ins from the list. Click "Add." If you are using PSP 8 or 9, click "Browse". Now choose the folder that contains the plug-in.

The plug-in is now installed. To use it, open any image and select an area. From the menus, choose Effects->Plugins->Flaming Pear->Mr Contrast.

Quick start

When you invoke Mr Contrast, a dialog box will appear.



If you just want to see some effects quickly, click the dice button until you see an effect you like; then click OK.

Using the dice is the easiest way to use Mr Contrast. If you want to hand-tune your own effects, it helps to learn the controls, which are arranged into four groups:

[Elements](#)

[Mix](#)

[Curves](#)

[Colors](#)

...and a few other controls that affect the whole image.

Mr Contrast's capabilities and controls are explained below.

Elements

Mr. Contrast works by making several different gray versions of your image, and then combining them. The controls in the Elements group influence these ingredients.

Color that guides RGB to grayscale conversion:

If your starting image is in color, Mr. Contrast first converts it to shades of gray. Hues in the picture similar to this guide color tend to become paler shades of gray; different hues tend to become darker shades of gray. The effects is much like placing a colored filter on the lens of a camera and then taking a black & white photo.

Click the button to change the color.

If your starting image is grayscale to begin with, this control is ignored.

Nearby is a **rainbow button** that will pick a random color for you.

The resulting grayscale image is the "dry" version of the picture, and from it the detail, harsh, and soft versions are created.



color button



rainbow button



original image



result of red guide color



result of blue guide color

Detail Size: This control changes contrast in a complicated way. When you choose a size with this slider, it emphasizes features of that size; ignores anything smaller; and diminishes the contrast of anything larger.

In parts of the image that are featureless, grain will get amplified. If you are starting with JPEG-format images, use the highest-quality ones you can, because this control will accentuate the blocky JPEG artifacts.



small detail size



large detail size

Glow Size sets the blur radius for the soft glow and the harsh glow.

Soft Glow is a soft-focus version of the input image. This slider controls the brightness of the glow.

Harsh Glow is a more severe kind of soft focus that tends to make the image dark. This slider controls the strength of the glow.



soft glow



harsh glow

Mix

Dry mix

Detail mix

Soft mix

Harsh mix

These sliders set the proportions for mixing the four versions of the image that were created in the Elements section.



a mixture of the dry, detail, soft, and harsh versions

Curves

Gamma influences the brightness of the image. Black and white don't change, but all the gray levels between do.

Contrast biases dark shades toward black, and light shades toward white. In technical terms, it produces an S-shaped tone-mapping curve.



higher gamma



higher gamma +
higher contrast

Colors

Although Mr. Contrast is geared toward making black & white output, you can keep the original color or add your own.

Original color will combines the greyscale result with the picture's original hues. This control sets the vividness of the color from zero (grey) to double.

Colorize lets you tint the result with your own color. You can choose the color with the **color button**, or get one randomly from the nearby **rainbow button**.

'Colorize' overrides 'Original color'. If 'Colorize' is set to maximum, any influence from 'Original color' is discarded.



original color



colorized



color button



rainbow button

Other controls

Dice: This randomizes the settings. Click it as much as you want to see different effects.



dice

Reset: Gives you the factory settings.



reset

Glue: Lets you combine the result image with the original, instead of replacing it. The **next-glue** button advances to the next glue mode.



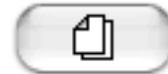
next glue

Send to photo manager: Sends the result to iPhoto (on Macintosh).



send to photo manager

Export to PSD: Renders the result to a .psd file.



export to PSD

Make Gallery: Builds a web page showing all the presets in a folder that you choose.



make gallery

Plus, % and minus buttons: If the selected image area is bigger than the preview, these buttons let you zoom in and out. Drag the preview to move it.

Load preset: Presets are files containing settings. To load one, click this button and browse for a preset file.



load preset

Save preset: When you make an effect you like, click this button to save the settings in a file.



save preset

Undo backs up one step.



undo

Info: briefly explains the controls.



info

Three more buttons:

OK: Applies the effect to your image.

Cancel: Dismisses the plug-in, and leaves the image unchanged.

Register: Allows you to type in a registration code and remove the time limit from the demo.

Memory dots

Although you can [save your settings permanently to files](#), you can also stash settings in memory dots.

Click an empty dot to stash the current settings in it.

Click a full dot to retrieve its settings.

Hover the mouse over a dot to see what it contains.

Option-click to erase a dot on Macintosh.

Right-click to erase a dot on Windows.

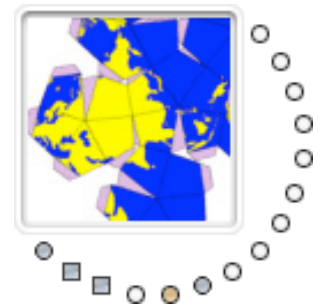
If a dot is orange, Mr Contrast's currently using that dot's settings.

Dots remember their contents until you erase them. If you'd rather make a temporary dot that forgets when you exit Mr Contrast, control-click it. Temporary dots are square.





When you start Mr Contrast, it puts the starting settings in a temporary dot. That way it's easy to start over without exiting the plug-in.

On Mac, you can drag-and-drop settings files from the central memory well.

You can build a web page showing how the current image would look with every memdot setting. Just option-click (Mac) or right-click (Windows) on the big memdot image.



memory dots

-  empty
-  full
-  current
-  temporary

Hints

Mr. Contrast works best on pictures with lots of fussy detail, photos with clouds, and infrared black-and-whites.

If you change the “Colorize” color, but the picture doesn't change: Set the “Colorize” slider to 100.

If you click the dice, and everything changes except the color buttons: The color buttons have their own separate randomizers. Try clicking either of the big rainbow-colored buttons.

[Marco Pauck](#) has pages and links about infrared photography.

Version history

Version 1.64

Fixes previews in 16-bit color.

Version 1.61

Fixes issues with stability and misaligned freeform selections in previews.

Version 1.6

64-bit version for Macintosh.

Version 1.5

64-bit version for Windows.

Version 1.4

Adds convenience features to the interface. The Mac version is resizable.

Version 1.3

Fixes a Windows problem where the plug-in wouldn't remember its registration when it was installed in one user account but activated in another. Fixes a Macintosh problem where the plug-in could have bad settings or crash when installed on a machine for the first time.

Version 1.22

Universal binary for Macintosh. Preset files have icons. Works as a Smart Filter in Adobe Photoshop CS3 Macintosh.

Version 1.2

Much faster. Adds two new glue modes.

Version 1.1

New glue modes. Works in 16-bit-per-component color.

Version 1.06

Recordable as a Photoshop action.

Version 1.04

Adds more glue modes and the next-glue button.

Version 1.02

Adds more glue modes and fixes a crash that could happen when using the menus under Windows XP.

Version 1.01

Adds new glue modes: Color, Luminance, Linear Light, and Pin Light. Fixes the appearance of text in the interface when running under Mac OS X 10.2.3.

Version 1.00

The first public release.

How to purchase

You can place an order online [here](#). A secure server for transactions is available.

Questions

The software, documentation, and supporting materials are made by Flaming Pear Software. Answers to common technical questions appear on our [support page](#), and free updates appear periodically on the [download page](#).

Trouble with your order? Orders are handled by [Kagi](#); please contact them at admin@kagi.com.

For bug reports and technical questions about the software, please write to support@flamingpear.com.

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