

Software Review - AKVIS Points v1.0

AKVIS Points v1.0
Review by Mark Mattson, Computer Users of Erie

Over the years, many reviews of different software packages have appeared in these pages. The more recent ones have been on different image editing tools and applications, due to the overwhelming adoption of digital cameras and our Digital Photo SIG.

A fair number of them have been on the AKVIS products. This review showcases their newest product addition, Points.

AKVIS is a small company based in Canada that produces some unique digital image editing packages. To date, about half of their products have been reviewed for this newsletter, and they have all been quality products. Some of them produce effects that you can't find elsewhere, or would need to do lots of processing in your image editor to duplicate.

What does Points do?

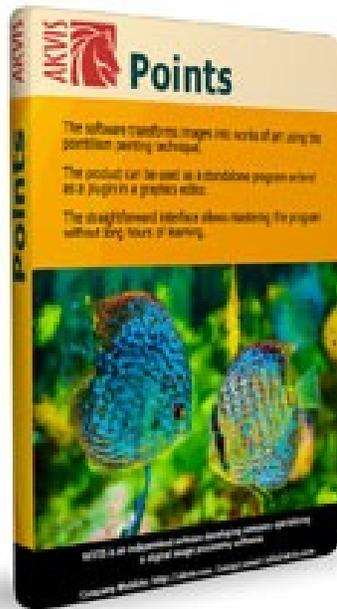
Points allows you to take your digital image and convert it to one that reflects the old painting technique known as Pointillism. This technique dates back to the Impressionism era of painting, about 1886. One of the more well-known painters that used this technique was Georges Seurat.

Pointillism is characterized by using individual dots or dabs of paint to form the image, rather than long brush strokes. If you are close to the painting, you can see the individual dots of color that make it up. But if you are far enough away, it appears to be a blended mix of colors, not unlike conventional painting techniques. The only drawback to the

pointillism technique is that it could take a lot of time to produce a large painting.

If you're adventurous enough, and have some time on your hands, you COULD probably reproduce the effect using only your image editor. By using a blank layer, you could set up a brush to produce points of color to match those of your original. However, to be truly effective, you'd need to vary the size of the dots, make changes to some of them as far as color goes, and many other factors.

Rather than spend a lot of extra time and effort, simply use Points instead.



The Interface

AKVIS has been producing their products using the same style of interface for the last few years, to make it easier for users to move between them and not get confused. Points continues this tradition:



Another feature that makes using an AKVIS product easier than others is that you can use it as either a stand-alone application, or use it as a plugin from within your image editor. Either way, you get the same functionality.

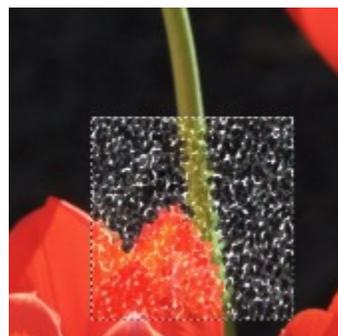
To begin enhancing your image, open it in the interface:



From here, you can now begin to enhance your images, using the slider controls in the right pane.

If you're unsure how to adjust the effects sliders, below the preview pane are some samples you can use to see how the effect works. Simply click one of them and it applies the effect to the image in the preview pane.

One of the easiest ways to learn how to use the application is to load an image and just play. You may be pleasantly surprised by what you can come up with by making various adjustments. As you make changes, the preview box shows you what the results are from your adjustments.



When you like what you see, press the Run button (next to the I (info) icon) to apply the effect to the entire

image. The image on the left is the final results from my adjustments, while the one on the right is one produced by an AKVIS pre-loaded preset, Bubbles. There are many more presets to try as well.



Where to get it

Points is available for electronic download direct from the company's website: <http://akvis.com>.

If you run Windows, it is available in either 32 or 64 bit versions, which include both the plugin as well as the standalone programs. If you run Mac, the plugin and standalone versions are sold separately. In any case, the package costs \$49 for whichever version you select.

Your system will also need to be running Windows XP, Vista, 7 or 8 (32/64 bit), or Mac OS x 10.6-10.10 (32/64 bit). Best results on a PC system require an Intel i5 or equivalent CPU with 4 GB RAM and 2GB drive space, plus a video card compatible with DirectX9+, running at 32bit color depth and 128MB video memory. Mac users need to be running an Intel-based system with 4 GB RAM and 2 GB drive space for installation.

If you wish to try before you buy, there is an evaluation version of the Points package available. Just download and install, and you can try it for 10 days to see how it can enhance your images.

Points is a fast and easy way to turn your photos into works of art that would be hard to achieve by other methods. Get the trial version and see for yourself.