

# **Easy Book Illustrations:**

## **Module Four: Paid Illustration Tools, Part 1**

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## Introduction

# Easy BOOK ILLUSTRATIONS

### Module 4: Paid Illustration Tools, Part 1



In lesson 3 you learned what you could do with a number of different illustration tools that you could find for free. In this lesson you will learn about some of the paid illustration tools which are available for use. This will be continued in lesson 5.

This particular lesson will focus primarily on:

- The TOP Paid Illustration Software Options
- Working with Snap Art 3
- And Much More!

Not all tools are created equal; each has its own strong points and weaknesses. A lot of time was taken in determining which tools were best. In other words both cost-free and paid tools were analyzed to see which ones were the best to use specifically for turning photos into illustrations. Some of the TOP Paid Illustration software options include:

**Alien Skin Snap Art 3** – This program is one of the priciest of all the tools. It is \$149. However it was found to be one of the best, and that is why it this lesson will be centered on how to use it.

**Topaz Simplify** – This program will be covered in lesson 5. It is priced much more reasonably, at only \$39.99. It doesn't have all of the features that you can find in SnapArt, but it does have some tools which can be very valuable to some types of authors.

**AKVIS ArtWork v.7.0 & AKViS Sketch v. 14.0** – These programs will also be covered in the following lesson. They are \$72 apiece, or you can find these bundled with another illustration program for about \$150. They will also provide you with great tools for illustrating photos.

**Sketcher (Mac)** – In the previous lesson, you were introduced to Fotosketcher, which is a free PC illustration tool. Sketcher will produce some of the same results as you could get on Fotosketcher. This program only costs \$14.99.

**PhotoSketcher (MAC)** – This program essentially does one thing, but does it well: It produces black & white sketches from photographs. This program only costs \$4.99.

## Introduction to Alien Skin Snap Art 3

### SNAP ART 3 ILLUSTRATIONS:



Easy BOOK ILLUSTRATION



Easily Create Professional-Looking Illustrations, **EVEN** If You Can't Draw!

The pictures above are examples of some of the illustrations that you can create with Snap Art 3, which is a plug-in that you can use with Photoshop. As you can see, these really do look like paintings and illustrations. One of the best features of Snap Art 3 is that you have a lot of flexibility in adjusting the effects. It also has built-in masking tools, which you will see, is one of the most important features of this program.

## SNAP ART 3 ILLUSTRATIONS:



*Easy* BOOK ILLUSTRATION



Easily Create Professional-Looking Illustrations, **EVEN** If You Can't Draw!

The photos above are more examples of what you can do with Snap Art 3. These are made with a completely different set of filters than the previous pictures. The picture on the far left is simply of a dog model which was purchased for only a dollar. All of the illustrations that were derived from this image came out looking like very high-quality illustrations. In fact, all of the illustrations that were created out of editing the photo would make great additions to any children's book.

It is really astounding how technology has improved to where a photo can be changed into a pencil sketch such as the one above in a matter of seconds. Snap Art 3 gives you a lot of control over how much detail shows through from the original photo. For example, if you created an illustration similar to the one on the far right, you would find that you can control how many lines are shown, the thickness of these lines, and overall how the end result turns out.



You'll notice that the photo above is not the greatest, but when the colored picture filter is applied it turns into something that would work in a children's book. Of course, the color had to be adjusted and the saturation had to be enhanced as well. You are likely to find that playing around with the various effects is very fun and can be extremely addicting for some.





The photo above will be the first used to demonstrate what can be done in Snap Art 3. Once you have installed Alien Skin Snap Art 3, it places itself right into the filter folder within Photoshop. You can find these filters by clicking on 'Filter', followed by 'Alien Skins', and then 'Snap Art 3'. Your picture will now pop up in a new interface. This interface is very straight forward, and not at all difficult to navigate.

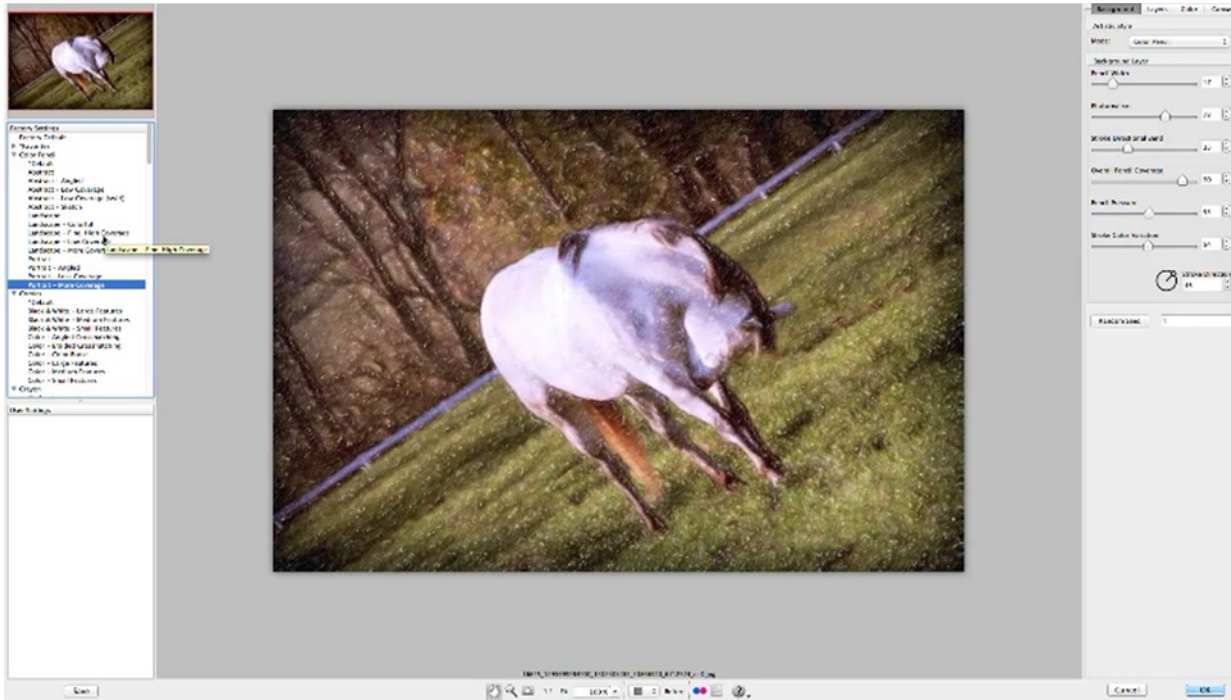
One of the coolest features of this plug in is that there are a vast number of filters available, including:

- Colored Pencil
- Comics
- Crayon
- Imposto
- Oil Paint
- Pastel
- Pen & Ink
- Pencil Sketch
- Pointillism
- Stylize

- Water Color

These presets come with the program, and each is broken up into a range of settings. These include: multiple variations of “Abstract”, multiple variations of “Landscape”, and multiple variations of “Portrait”. The one you choose would usually depend on the subject matter that you want to focus on as well as the audience that you expect to view your illustrations. Each one of these sub-filters can be adjusted individually. So, you have a large expanse of options available to you. Some of the things that can be adjusted are the:

- Background layer(s)
- Colors
- Canvas
- Lighting
- Thickness of the strokes/lines



By playing around with the various settings, you will see that as you go through the list of sub-filters, you picture will become more and more defined. In other words the portrait settings seem to be much more defined than the others, the landscape is kind of middle ground, the abstract setting is, of course, more abstract. So, you are basically going from the most abstract to the most defined as you go down the list within each category. Keep this in mind when you are thinking about what you want the end result of your picture to be. Also, taking a little time

to look at each of these individually will give you a better idea of what you can do with this program.

## Using Snap Art 3



One of the major advantages of using Snap Art 3 is that you can use the mask to control certain areas of the picture and then control what is happening with this particular mask. Look at the picture above. This picture above was done by choosing 'Abstract – Sketch'. As you can see, it is not very detailed at all. So, what if you wanted to add more detail around the horse's head? You would begin by clicking on the 'Layers' tab. Then move to the bottom of the screen where you will find the hand tool, magnifier, and a little box with a circle in it, this is the detail mask. Select the detail mask. Now, at the bottom of the Layers pallet, you will see a Mask Tool which will allow you to control the size of the mask brush. Sliding to arrow to the left makes it bigger, and sliding it to the right makes it smaller.

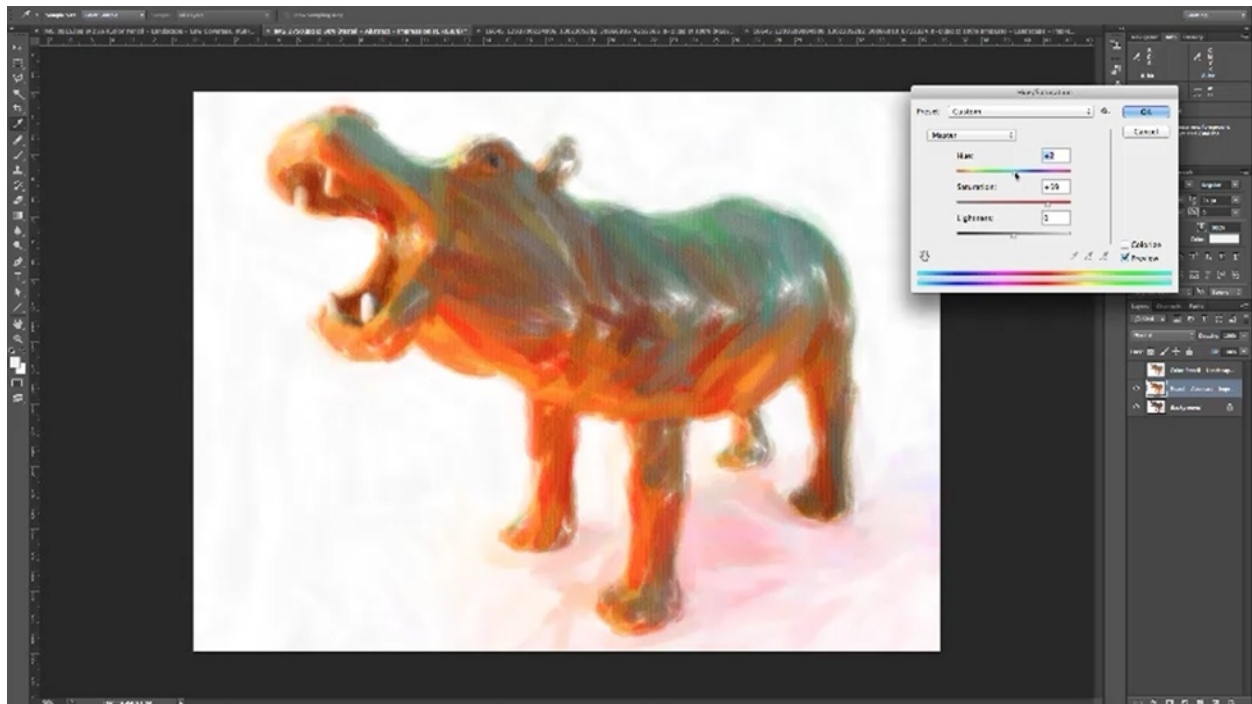
You can also choose to add to the mask or subtract away. Right now you want to add to the mask. Select this and then begin masking the front end of the horse's head. Immediately you will see that it is already much more defined than it was at first. Now, as you change the settings the only part that is affected is the part that has been masked. This will also allow you to change the brush strokes, the pencil width, the stroke color variation, etc, but only in masked part of the picture.



The picture shows the end result of masking the head and the tail to bring out more detail in them. The differences are small, but should be noticeable if you compare this one with the previous one. Another great thing about Snap Art is that the program will remember the mask, even if you change to a different filter or style. In other words, the style may change, but the amount of detail in these areas will stay the same. If you want get rid of the mask, you simply have to hit 'Clear' and it will go back to the original settings. The fact that you have so much control over the detail in this way is one of the best aspects of using this plug-in.



Looking at the pictures above you will notice that the eye and teeth of the hippo in the top picture does not show clearly. You can make them more pronounced by creating a mask over the eye and teeth and then increasing the photo realism. Now in the picture on bottom you can see that these features are much more defined in the bottom picture. This was done by masking the eye and the teeth, which added the detail back in.



Once you have this picture back in Photoshop you can use additional effects as well. For instance, if you were going to create a children's book you may change the hue to make the colors brighter. The picture above shows this.

Sometimes when you have a photograph, details in the background may show up more obviously than they did before. This is an easy fix. In Photoshop, you simply type in Ctrl+L to bring up the levels pallet. On the pallet there are three eye droppers that you can choose from on the left side of the menu. Starting from the left the first is for shadow, then midtown, and then highlight. If you click on highlight, and then click on an area where there are spots in the background, it will set it to the color that you have pre-set. If the color is pre-set to zero, it would change these areas to be pure white.

