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Plug–ins Page by Jack and Sue Drafahl
Flaming Pear Plug–ins
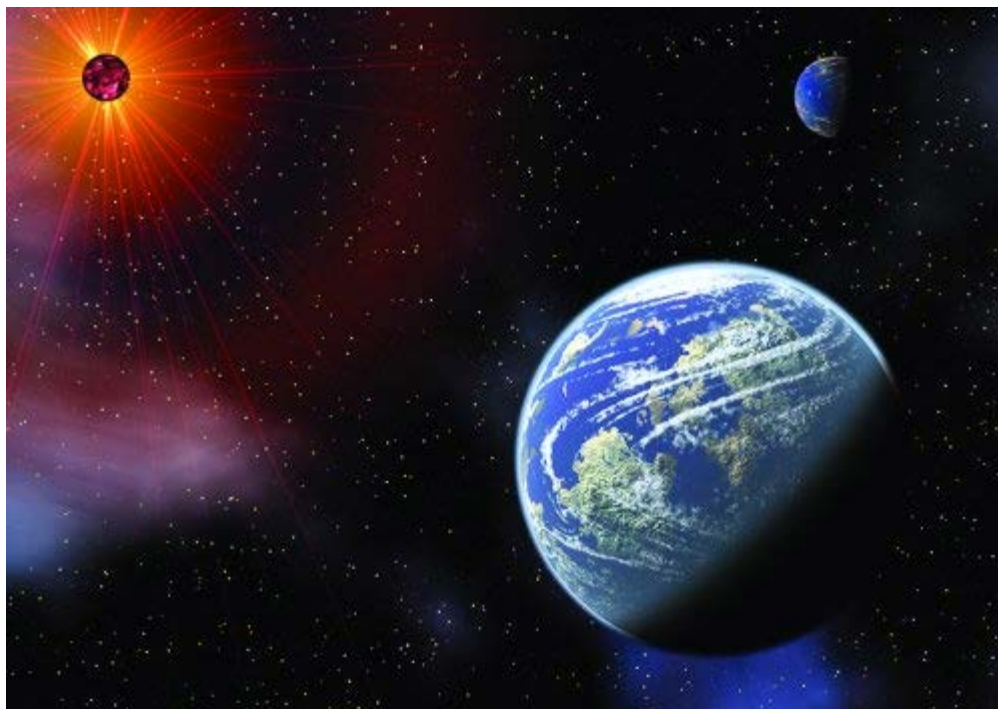
A document was used to create this image before any of the space bundle

plug-ins was applied. The Glitterato plug-in was first used to create the star and nebula background, and the sun was created with the SolarCell plug-in. Finally, the LunarCell plug-in was used to create the planet. The menu for the LunarCell is quite extensive, with sliders for control over the planet, climate, air, clouds and even the density of the cities on the planet.

WHEN WE FIRST HEARD the name "Flaming Pear," we immediately thought it sounded more like a rock group than a software company. In fact, it is a software company that produces some very unusual Adobe Photoshop-compatible plug-in filters designed to take your creative skills to new levels.

The original image (left) was taken in Las Vegas at a shop in New York, New York. When you select the Zephyr plug-in, it swaps color, brightness and contrast to give the image a modern art look. The plug-in has no menu control and directly applies effects to images.

When you first enter their website (www. flamingpear.com), you will encounter a wide variety of plug-in options. Their flagship plug-in is called SuperBladePro. This high-end surface and texture generator utilizes lighting, bevels, texture and grayscale bitmaps to give both images and text realistic 3D effects.
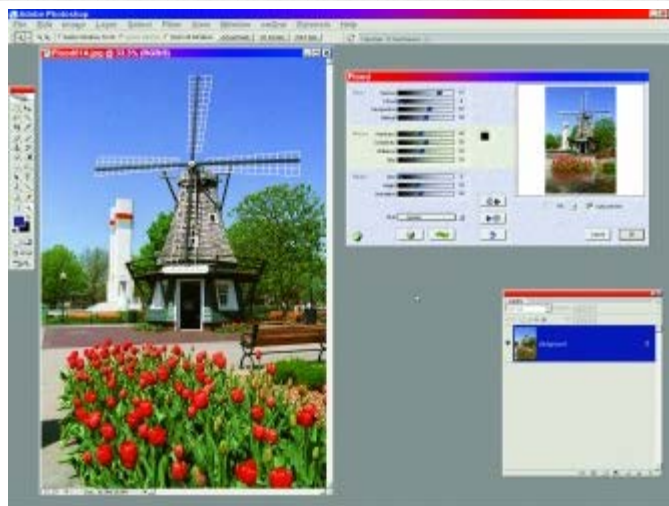
*The original image of the windmill (left) was taken in Pella, Iowa, for a film test. When the Flood plug-in is opened it automatically floods the scene. The Flood menu allows you to control the height of the flood as well as the roughness of the waves. In the first image (smaller image in center), the height of the horizon was set low and the ripple and waviness was low. As the height of the flood was increased in the second image (larger image at right), the apparent wave action in the scene automatically increased.*

Next on the list is the Creative Pack, which includes a series of four plug-in filwww.ters so you can create Organic Edges, Vibrant Patterns, Wavy Colors and Boss Emboss. These filters are an adaptation of the everpopular Furbo Filters.

The third filter on their list is our favorite and is simply called Flood. It allows you to submerge and flood just about anything. Using sliders, you can change the height of the water, reflections, ripples, and perspective to create a realistic look.


Original image was a 360° VR fisheye image merged from three circle fisheye images. The composite image was imported into the Flexify 2 plug-in and converted into a 24-block tile image, with each tile representing a slightly different Flexify view.
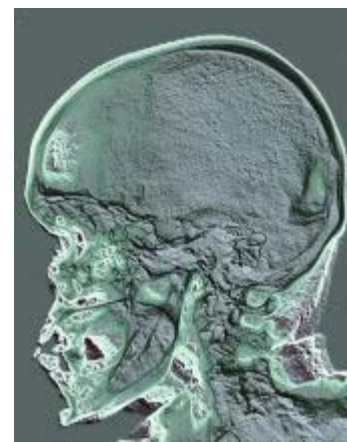
An original X-ray was copied onto slide film and then scanned to a digital image. The random dice icon was clicked several times until this image appeared on the edit screen. The height and relief sliders where then used to exaggerate the effect.

Another group of filters, called the Designer Sextant, allows you to apply several dreamy effects to your images. You can drench your images in coats of lacquer or churn them into a swirling mass. The images can be warped into deformed shapes or glitter with polish, and you can even add a touch of glare.

If you want to work with panoramas and fisheye images, you should consider using Flexify 2 to bend and reshape these images. Polymerge allows you to combine several images into one, and Tesselation turns any graphic into seamless patterns. Other creative enhancements to images and selections can be accomplished using Mr. Contrast, Hue & Cry, or the India Ink plug-ins. Flaming Pear's website also has a "Goodies & Freebies" section with several plug-ins, icons and patterns for use with your images.
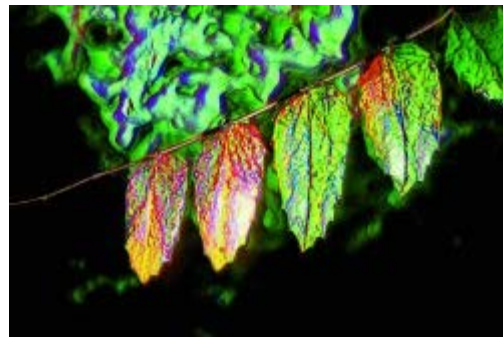
The Boss emboss plug-in produces some startling effects. (original at left)

Working down the product list, we come to a series of plug-ins that are out of this world—LunarCell, SolarCell and Glitterato. When you put these three filters together, you can instantly create stars, suns, planets and nebulae with realism that resembles Hubble images.

The original image (left) was taken for a film test many years ago and is of the back door to a small shop along the Oregon Coast. The Aetherize filter is a kind of posterization plug-in that randomly swaps colors and at the same time increases color saturation. The main menu uses a pair of dice icon that can increase/decrease saturation or change the color swapping scheme.

Most of the Flaming Pear plug-ins have extensive sliders, adjustments and presets to provide a wide variety of creativity. Each menu has a thumbnail preview that can be zoomed in or out and moved about. A unique feature of most plug-ins is the dice icon, which picks random settings and applies them to your image.

An image with a lot of straight lines was treated with the Swerve plug-in, which, as the name implies, creates curves and swirls from straight lines.

To give you an idea of how extensive these plug-in menus can be, let's look at the LunarCell plugin. It contains controls for planet size, land texture, crater size and texture, climate controls, and cloud coverage. In addition, there are blending modes for the surface of the planet, slider controls to raise or lower the water level on the planet, and adjustments to the atmosphere around the planet.

Several shapes were imported from the Photoshop shape library and then rasterized into bitmap layers. The SuperBlade Pro plug-in was then applied to each layer modifying one of the more than 25 sliders that change texture, bevel, lighting and transparency of the layer. You can also roll the random dice or pull from the preset list of hundreds of Superblade Pro effects.
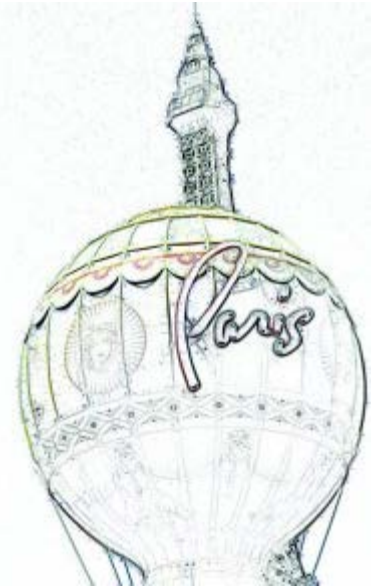
The original image was taken at the Paris Hotel in Las Vegas. The Organic Edges plug-in was applied using the "Roll the Dice" icon until a line drawing of the image was achieved. The Colorize control was then applied.

If you are not sure just what each of these plug-ins can do for you, take a look at the Flaming Pear Gallery for examples. The Flaming Pear website has a download section that allows you to download any of their filters and try comthem out. All the plug-ins currently listed on the Flaming Pear page feature both Windows and Macintosh versions available for download. Best of all, most allow you to try the plug-ins for up to 30 days before you have to purchase them. So, log onto www. flamingpear.com, and get your creative juices flowing.

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