

ANDROMEDA CUTLINE FILTER

Reviewed by Roberta Mikkelson

Andromeda Software Inc. is a graphics software company with an extensive multi-platform line of imaging plug-ins for Adobe products. As Adobe Photoshop is my favorite program, all of Andromeda's filters interest me.

I chose **Cutline Filter** because of my background. I am a professional artist with a B.F.A. in Illustration and a minor in Printmaking. For the last five years I have had the pleasure of knowing and working with the well known wood engraver John DePol. He has taught me the old fashion way of creating a wood engraving: carving the end grain wood with a special tool, line by line, inch by inch, sometimes taking weeks to finish a piece.

When I read about **Cutline Filter** I knew it was worth looking in to. The filter is designed to "...take an image and apply black and white lines that may be cross hatched in the shadow areas as the lines become thicker; or subtly break up into dots in the highlight areas as the lines become thinner. The result is a digital engraving that emulates the classic old world engraving techniques."

I wasn't disappointed. It was very easy to get up and running and the user manual on the CD is very helpful. I started out with a black and white photograph—it works best with a high contrast photo. I followed the sample's settings and within minutes clicked on the OK button and viewed it in Photoshop. I was amazed that in such a short time I created an image that would have taken me weeks to complete if I had engraved it by hand.

My one complaint is that it is hard to view the results while in the "Cutline" plug-in. If you enlarge the image, the lines are not well defined. I discovered that an image looked horrible in cutline but looked great in photoshop and printed even better.

The interface is wonderful. If you fly over a window or bar a description appears in the "helper" box. This explains or reminds you of how that particular

tool works. The interface is clean, simple and very user friendly.

Next I tried applying the filter to a drawing. The filter replaces the gray tones in a photo or illustration so creating one in Photoshop was a breeze. This time I made a selection in Photoshop, brought it into cutline applied the filter and was done within seconds.

There are many adjustments you can make in **Cutline** such as the type of line; cutline, elliptical or wavy elliptical. There are also choices as to applying the filter to the highlight or shadow areas. You can also position the curvature or angle of the lines.

Then there is the "stamper" tool. This enables you to design a custom curve in your piece where you can shape and angle the curves. And, as I stated before, you can make a selection in Photoshop, bring it into cutline and apply the filter to that particular area.

With **Cutline Filter** I am able to produce many more engravings and I may retire my wood blocks and tools!

PLUG-IN:
A hardware or software module that adds a specific feature or service to a larger system.

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Editor's note: Current versions require Adobe Photoshop 4.0 or higher or other host that accepts Photoshop compatible plug-ins. These include versions of PhotoPaint, Picture Publisher, Paint Shop, Premiere, Director and Color-It. If your image editing program is not listed here, and it accepts Photoshop compatible plug-ins, download the demo version of the filter from the Andromeda site and try it out.